

**FILM AND SOCIAL CHANGE: IDEOLOGY, CLASS, AND
PLURALISM IN SELECTED EAST AND WEST AFRICAN FILMS**

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M88/10714/2008

**A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS,
FILM, AND MEDIA STUDIES IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN
FILM STUDIES OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

October, 2018

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Mwalimu Marius B. N, Okubo, my late mother, Ursula N. Okubo; who opened my eyes and mind on the importance of education at a very early age of my life, at a time in my community, when education for the girl child was not considered necessary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In writing this study, I faced various challenges; however, the mighty hand of God led me through it all. My profound gratitude goes to my two supervisors; Dr. John Mugubi and Dr. Rosemary Nyaole-Kowuor, for guiding me throughout the writing of this study. I would also like to thank the former head of the Department of Film and Theatre Arts, Dr. Emmanuel T. Shikuku, who was constantly available to assist me while writing this study. Many thanks to the Vice-Chancellor, Kenyatta University - Professor Wainaina and immediate former Vice - Chancellor, Professor Olive Mugenda, as well as all my colleagues at the school of Creative Arts, Film, and Media studies

My appreciation also goes to Dr. Wallace K. Mbugua whose advice and direction helped me to reach this far. Many thanks to my mentors and good friends in the creative Arts industry like including Cheick Oumar Cissoko of Mali, Prof. Kimani Njogu of Twaweza Communications, Prof. Wangari Mwai, Dr. Clenice Owino, Dr. Njoora and Dr. Margaretta Wa Gacheru.

A lot of thanks to; Wycliffe Omwansa, Norman Shitote, Veronicah Kareri, Ken Otunga, Dan Maguthi from ICT Directorate, Gabriel T. Kimani, Addamms Mututa, Patrick Ndung'u, Esther Mugwe and Stephen Kirogo for their immense intellectual contributions during the various stages leading to the completion of this study. Special thanks to my late colleague and friend Mrs Hellen Simiyu who led the secretarial services for long periods of this study. God rest her soul in peace. I also thank global friends at the 67th Locarno International Film Festival - Switzerland – Fillippo Manzini and the entire staff of the 67th Festival in 2014, as well as Claude Teisson, vice president of Festival Du Film Court d'Aigues-Vives of France and Michael Marus for your valuable support.

Finally, I give special thanks to my family; my husband Kinuthia Mungai, and my children Susan, Peter, Benjamin and Joy whose love and support while putting this writing together gave me strength to carry on. Many thanks for your love and prayers that have seen me through it all. May the Almighty God bless you all.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Declaration.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Content.....	iv
Operational Definition of Terms	vii
Abstract.....	ix
1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Film and Social Change	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	5
1.4 Research Objectives	5
1.5 Research questions	6
1.6 Hypothesis of the Study	6
1.7 Significance of the study	6
1.8 Scope of the study.....	7
1.9 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	8
1.9.1 Ideology and Film Criticism	8
1.9.1.1 Cinema, Social Narratives, and Ideology.....	11
1.9.2 Film and Social Struggles	13
1.9.2.1 Film and Socio-Ideological Transmission.....	20
1.10 Theoretical framework.....	24
1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	26
1.11.1 Research Design.....	26
1.11.2 Population	27
1.11.3 Sample Size	27
1.11.4 Sampling Techniques	28
1.11.5 Data Collection Techniques.....	28
1.11.6 Data Analysis	29
1.11.7 Ethical Considerations.....	29
2.0 CHAPTER TWO: NARRATIVES ON EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY AS	
SOCIAL DIALOGUES	31
2.1 Introduction	31
2.1.1 Global Terrorism: From Nairobi to the World	32

2.2 Cinema and Social Narration of War on Terror: Pre-reflections	34
2.3 The Materiality of Innocence	40
2.4 Religion and Ideology of Violence.....	51
2.5 Conclusion	58
3.0 CHAPTER THREE: FROM A SPACE OF CLASS-STRUGGLES TO STRUGGLES OF CLASS	58
3.1 Introduction:	58
3.2 Peeling Off: From Social Inequality to Hierarchies	60
3.3 From Social Struggles to Fugue Spaces.....	70
3.3.1 Contrapuntal View of Space	76
3.4 Space and Struggles of Class	79
3.5 Conclusion	89
4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: FROM POST-COLONIAL AESTHETICS TO SOCIAL PLURALISM.....	91
4.1 Introduction	91
4.2 From Third Cinema Aesthetics to Alternative Social Voices of Diversity	92
4.3 Contingencies of Africanness as Post-colonial Aesthetics.....	105
4.4 From Ethnic Occlusion to Social Pluralism	116
4.5 Conclusion	125
5.1 Summary of the Arguments	126
5.2 Summary of Findings.....	130
5.2.1 The Directors.....	130
5.3 Emerging ideas and Recommendations	134
REFERENCES:	137
Appendix 1: Selected Photos of the Researcher with Filmmakers	146
Appendix 2: Author at International Film Festival, Switzerland	148
Appendix 3: INTERVIEWS SCHEDULES	149
Appendix 4: TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS	150
Appendix 5: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS	197
Appendix 6: SPEECH BY PIONEER FILM MAKER	214
Appendix 7: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER, KU GRADUATE SCHOOL.....	216

Appendix 8: NACOSTI RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION217

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. *Africanness* – The attributions actuated through characterization of the African.
2. *Class struggles* - Used in the Marxist sense to suggest conflicts between hierarchical social group.
3. *Contrapuntal space* – Refers to the creative ways in which the boundary between social and economic classes is challenged and disfigured, often causing social change.
4. *East African Film* – Refers to any film made by a filmmaker from East Africa, or narrating about East Africa’s social reality.
5. *Ethnic occlusion* – The tendency to associate oneself with their ethnic group from which people from other ethnic groupings are excluded.
6. *Extremism* – An ideology on which beliefs are extended to include paranoid ideas and often violent actions.
7. *Film narrative* – The story within the film, and not just the plot or actions.
8. *Fugue Spaces* – The liminal space from where a counterpoint to the overall narrative is made possible.
9. *Hierarchies* – The ordering of society into social and economic enclaves, often manifested in different material zones of space.
10. *Ideology* – used in the sense provided by Bordwell & Thompson (1997, p. 479) as a “relatively coherent system of values, beliefs, or ideas shared by some social group and often taken for granted as natural or inherently true.”
11. *Imperialism* – In postcolonial Africa, imperialism stands for not just the political takeover, but ideological and socio-cultural degradation or domination. This is the sense in which it is used in this study.
12. *Interventionist Strategy* – Those ideological musings encapsulated within the films, which reveal themselves through the film’s subtle nuances.
13. *Moral narrative* – A narrative that inculcates corrective thinking about situations, actions, or situations using diegetic and non-diegetic labels.
14. *Narrative voice* – The film narrator’s point of view through which the film message unfolds.

- 15. *Pluralism*** – Used here in the sense suggested by Ghai & Cottrell (2013) who refers to as pluralism as “a particular kind of policy advocated for adoption in multi-ethnic or multi-cultural states” (p. 1). The idea of pluralism is to bring together parties which seem initially opposed, so they can function together for the common good and progress of all.
- 16. *Postcolonial Aesthetics*** – A mode of thinking and narration about Africa in the context of changing political consciousness. Cinema in this era seeks to ascertain sovereignty in the context of emerging post-independence realities.
- 17. *Social Change*** – Used here to refer to the way the film influences its audiences towards an alternative view of their social realities.
- 18. *Social Ideology narratives*** –
- 19. *Social Realities*** – Refers to the diegetic narrative subject and its relation to a real-world phenomenon.
- 20. *Social spatial arguments*** – Discussions about the convergence of space and social representations which we see in film.
- 21. *Struggles of class*** – The way one tries to fit in a social and economic enclave, yet does so with great struggles and at personal cost.
- 22. *Terrorism*** – A global form of violence based on extremist ideologies.
- 23. *Third cinema*** – refers to counter-cinema practiced especially in postcolonial states. It seeks to mitigate, beside other aspects, social re-awakening of the masses.
- 24. *West African Film*** – Refers to any film made by filmmaker from West Africa, or narrating about West Africa’s social reality.

ABSTRACT

This study examined contemporary African cinema narratives with a view to guiding a socio-ideological reading of the narratives. Specifically, it has drawn connections between the film's diegesis and the non-diegetic space to which the film addresses. The study addressed three key issues; social and ideological narratives, class struggles, and pluralism of narrative voices. The films analyzed were selected from East and West Africa. From West Africa, the study analyzed Kwaw Ansah's *Love Brewed in the African Pot* (1981), Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako* (2006), and Veronica Quarshie's *A Stab in the Dark* (1999). From East Africa, the study analyzed Wanuri Kahiu's *From a Whisper* (2008), Judy Kibinge's *Killer Necklace* (2009), Bob Nyanja's *Malooned* (2007) and Gavin Hood's *Eye in The Sky* (2015). The main thesis is that films empower people to alter their social and ideological positions by influencing their consciousness about their lives. Since this was a study of films, this research concerned itself with the signifying process of film elements. Consequently, the main theory was Semiotics that proposes the analysis of textual elements as signifiers, often with hermeneutic references outside the film. It was a qualitative study, using quasi-comparative approach to combine cross-cutting ideas into coherent arguments about film and social change. The study is significant in that it provides a template that can be applied in studies of cinema and the many social situations of national importance such as; negative ethnicity, governance, family, religion, modernity and tradition, and terrorism to name just a few. These are exemplary of what the study refers to as social change.

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the thesis by giving background information to the study. Starting from the general perspective of art and social change, the study funnels its discussion into how film uses its language and elements to achieve social intervention. These arguments have been explored in detail in later chapters. As discussed below, the overriding focus of the analysis was how film can be read as a tool for social change, not in the sense that it instantly coerces its audiences, but in the sense that its subtle language offers a mode of persuasion to the viewer, thereby activating conversations about social and moral issues. In the following subsection, the study grounds these arguments sequentially, following the chapter outlines.

1.1 Film and Social Change

The role of film critique has been a subject of various academic debates. Meyer (2010, p. 57) argues that “it is all too simple to mobilize a critique that remains grounded in a paternalistic, if not colonial, idea of cinema as a medium for education and enlightenment,” adding that “the vantage point from which (such) criticism have been raised so far is inadequate because they fail to take into account the conditions under which film production and consumption now take place.” Here, Meyer suggests the importance of seeing film in relation to its non-diegesis. The audience, the consumers of the film, is the primary focus of discussion about how such contextual reading potentially leads to a process of social change. While cautioning that art can not be simply reduced to “its ideological components.” Njogu (2007) notes that “art is affected by social influences and it equally influences society; sometimes in fundamental ways” (Njogu, 2007, p. 1). This hints of a connection between artistic works including cinema, and the social spaces in which they are produced. Njogu’s words can also be expounded as a rationale that artistic works reflect social realities. Postcolonial African art forms use form, content and style to reflect the hybridity of experiences. Film, just like music, artifacts, drawings, paintings, claims an important role in this negotiation of social discourses.

To set the record straight, the study is not claiming that it can quantify, or prove with qualitative certainty that films inculcate, either immediately or afterwards, a behavioral change among the cinema audiences. In fact, the study does not even try to drive

an argument or suggest even remotely such ethnographic or sociological claims. Rather, the argument herein is that the various films discussed, originating from the so called Global South, a region also referred to as 'Third World', contain ideological residues associated with this region. By residues the study infers stereotypical arguments that suggest that the Third World is full of poverty, cultural and governance issues, social problems, and primitivity. Recently, the region has been seen as a source and target of terrorism. It is this study's proposition that the way the directors exploit cinema elements to discuss these issues potentially incite subliminal discourses that pose significant questions about social experiences in Third World. It is this role of actuation which comprises, so to say, diegetic activism, and hence can be discursively discussed as acts of campaigning for social change. Thus, to tune its argument of how film negotiates social messages, the study addresses three questions.

The first question is; what residues, in the form of social narratives and ideologies, which bear a relation to the wider debate of Third World Cinema, are addressed in these films? This question seeks to illuminate the prevailing social messages within the various artistic works, and to show ideology as a flexible as well as an oxymoronic idea. The study responds to this question in the second chapter that is titled Moral Narratives and Extremist Ideology. Even though the focus here is extremism, other scholars have equally examined how ideology is embedded in other works of art. As regards art and social change, Ntarangwi (2007, p. 13) analyzes Swahili music and notes that Swahili musical practices, just like "their cultural identity, are a reflection of the complexity that surrounds their social and cultural activities and the meanings they carry", adding that they "reflect the contextuality, fluidity and transformations that have become the defining factor of Swahili cultural activities and processes (ibid, 2007, p. 13)." One such song is Maulidi Juma's *Vishindo vya Mashua*, which invokes familiar symbols to expose the resilient spirit of the artist's culture, while elevating the song as an inspiration for courage and boldness. In this sense, Ntarangwi (ibid) draws a connection between an art form, in this case a song, and its form and content, and the discourse of socio-ideological performance. What is interesting for this study is the manner in which films can be read as a verisimilitude of the "complexity that surrounds their social and cultural activities" (Ntarangwi, 2007, p. 13). This echoes

Makhanya and Dlamini's (2003, p. 58) view of art as 'a way of knowing', especially engaging with the crucial question;

in what useful ways then, could our artistic pursuits – perhaps as a generation of Africans who are painfully conscious of their loss of control over the spiritual and material reins of their destinies – creatively express our preoccupations with the past, present and future cultural challenges?

Here, Makhanya and Dlamini are concerned with the extent to which ideology as described by Sutherland and Feltey (2010) and Modisane (2010) pins down ideas and human thoughts to establish political, social, and cultural consciousness. Plencovich (2012) has indicated that ideologies act as the mainstay of people's culture while shaping individuals to remain in the social circles of their environment. These are developed by language and communicative practices (Koven, 2014). Specific focus is on global religious extremism.

The second question is; what arguments are made about space, a signifier of the Third World, and how do they actuate social struggles? This question calls for a deconstruction of class struggles as simultaneously forms of struggles of class offers an incisive view of how class struggles confirm social problems. Similarly, this study discusses this issue in the third chapter which is titled From a Space of Class-Struggles to Struggles of Class. Ross (2001, pp. 81-82) decries lack of recognition of the role of film in mitigating social ideologies, lamenting that past historical leaders "never fully grasped the crucial role that movies have played in shaping the ways in which generations of Americans would look at and think about the meaning of class, class conflict, and class identity." Of course, these issues have been picked up as can be reflected in contemporary Hollywood cinema where government leaders have heavily invested in cinema as machinery for social conditioning. Such propagandist role takes place alongside the need to render life meaningful for its audiences within and outside the diegetic space. Mugubi (2009, p. 12) posits that "content and form are inseparable in film", further adding that film critics have "offered various perspectives of its artistic standard ... [and] mostly, lamented its dramatic consciousness that does not extend beyond the parlour audience mentality". Mugubi is calling for a broader engagement with discourse in African cinema, which must extend

beyond the local mindset of, say, verisimilitude and culture, to perhaps conceptual thinking about the film such as has been done in this research. This resonates with Thackaway (2003) who notes that “films act as a very potent socialization medium that shapes ideas, styles, attitudes, and cultures of nations” (p. 3); and Solomon, cited in Fitzgerald (2012) in his book Filmmaking for Change who states that “every film is a cultural encyclopedia” of a society. It is a view that is widely articulated (see, for instance, Kafewo (1999) cited in Nguri (2016)). This study’s focus is not just the neorealist tendencies of Third world cinema, but more, the role of space in representing and interpreting such mimesis.

The third question is; through whose gaze are these residues and the resultant social discourses articulated, and to what extent can this gaze be challenged by using pluralistic gaze? This study approaches this question by showing how the selected films confront the lack of African authentic narrative even in matters of social justice, and skepticism of political and ethnic pluralism. It respond to this question in a chapter titled Post-Colonial Aesthetics to Social Pluralism. By answering these three questions, the study also allays a range of arguments that resonates with various scholarly voices. Again, the findings of scholars like Grasse (2004) who, analyze Brazillian **bossa nova** and rap music are important building blocks of the argument. Grasse (ibid, p. 292) notes that “musical meaning enters a broad scope of intelligible relations of social conditions and developments. As texts, **bossa nova** and rap become allegorical in their conflation and conflict with social history and interpretations of Brazilian experience.” This argument makes this connection between popular culture and social spaces. Thus, it provides a basis to discuss not just content, but formal aspects of art forms, which then reveals how art uses spatial metaphors as signifiers of social histories. Wa Mutonya (2007) suggests that artistic works should be interpreted as texts, in the context professed by Fairclough (1992, p. 4) as “any product of social interaction, whether spoken or written”. One such text likened to film in its coded representation of reality is painting, which for Cheeke (2008, pp. 120-121), “seems to be grounded in the physical realities, the materiality, of the world... (showing remarkable interest) in the capacity for writing to represent the solidity of life, the gravity and tangibility of objects, and there being the physical world in its non-sentience or non-consciousness”. This power of the image to replay reality in an aurally-engaging manner, Warmingtona, Van Gorp and Grosvenor (August 2011, p. 458) considers a

“dialectic between reality and image” which makes it possible to engage with social realities through cinema, for instance. The discussion herein sought to show how philosophies, thoughts, and social ideals of the African characters connote deeply wedged biases (Freedon (2001) and Knight (2006)) which deny him an accurate gaze, and therefore a voice.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is need for African cinema to set itself free from global biases which have traditionally adopted a degrading narration of the African continent by using native characters as props for advancing western views and biases. By such liberation, the African cinema should seek to set free its inherent histories and therefore the communities who are the recipients of such diegetic conversations. But this effort calls for a forked approach. On one hand is the African filmmaker who gives the African an alternative voice to show African situations using accurate African gaze. On the other hand, is the film critic who must be free from the dogmatic attitude of intellectual subservience. Arising from these two issues is the need to adopt a cross-disciplinary reading of film in relation to how the diegetic contexts energize conversations in the African communities. The new collective consciousness being called for collates social experiences, ideology, and above all, new ways of postcolonial critique of African cinema. This is entry point as of this study as it reads various postcolonial films about Africa and show how these films’ diegetic discourses play agency to social change. By this approach, the study makes significant and unique contribution to contemporary conversations about film and social change in Africa for it is through such effort that scholars would guide audiences in appreciating how the films construe social messages (Elliot (2016) and Knight (2006)).

1.4 Research Objectives

This study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To discuss narration of extremist ideology as social dialogues.
- ii. To explore space of class-struggles and struggles of class as social-spatial narratives.

- iii. To examine post-colonial aesthetics and social pluralism as narrative interventionist strategies in these films.

1.5 Research questions

To achieve the stated objectives, this study answered the following research questions:

- i. How does the narrative of extremist ideology in these films construe social dialogues?
- ii. What social-spatial narratives are provoked by the films' staging of class-struggles and struggles of class?
- iii. How do the social-ideological narratives precipitated through the various film narratives relate with postcolonial aesthetics and pluralism?

1.6 Hypothesis of the Study

This study hypothesizes that African films are rich in social and ideological messages, and that these can be explained through cross-disciplinary analysis of the films. Further, the researcher asserts that such an instance of analysis potentially plays midwifery to the film's potential to effect social change.

1.7 Significance of the study

Despite many alternatives existing for social learning of any community, film poses a significant advantage over other approaches in that it communicates from within the cultural memory of the society. Thus, "when a film is analyzed both as a vehicle of representation and in the context of its production, distribution, and reception, it can be a valuable source for both history and historiography" (Murray, 2002, pp. 41- 42). This inherent transference of representations makes film a very powerful tool of social analysis as well as social influence. This study attempted a social critique of film, thus explicating ways in which diegetic discourses mirror social and ideological discourses in the source culture. The reading that the study has carried out opens deeper understanding of the film as a social conversation, and thus provides framework for guiding the viewers to access the consciousness within such films. This may, even if at a subliminal level, influence behavioral change among film audiences in Africa. Analysis of the film's conceptual blocks

in the form of semiotic codes can promote a productive discussion about films in social discourses. The major result of this study is that it has provided a theoretical praxis between films and social conversations which enable it to play an active role in the reconstruction of social issues in a manner particular to its form (Soulliere (2003) and Surette (2007)). Such knowledge is crucial in several ways.

One, to the filmmakers, they must understand that they “act as cultural intermediaries germinating oral and visual styles and themes that are currently stored in exile, waiting for suitable conditions before returning home” (Tomaselli & Eke, 1995, p. 117). Sissako’s *Bamako* and Nyanja’s *Malooned* have already showed dedication to bringing historical social issues to the fore of contemporary cinema narratives. Two, to the social activists, the knowledge gleaned from the research is invaluable to cultural critics, social practitioners, filmmakers and even social scholars in guiding future interpretation of filmic texts and in providing concrete knowledge that can be applied in production and consumption of alternative narratives, what Barthes (1977) recognizes as the third signification as it affords an in-depth analysis of the role of African cinema in influencing the viewers’ consciousness to see alternative sides of what is often passed as undisputable reality. Hood’s *Eye in the Sky* and Kahiu’s *From a Whisper* challenge one such ideology, religion and extremism. Three, to film critics, such an enterprise cannot be denied credit for reinforcing further studies of film’s “active role...both in shaping and in reflecting the cultural history [of Africa] ...in the twentieth century” (Murray, 2002, p. 44). It is time to take forward postcolonial African thoughts by such scholars as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, Frantz Fanon, and even Ali Mazrui, and interpret them within popular cultural discourses such as film. Besides, studies of African cinema can be expanded by engaging with its meta-discourses in more broad ways, such as cross-disciplinary analysis. Four, to audiences, the study has provided a more enlightened way of viewership. Not any more should the film be seen as an entertainment media with thematic orientation, it must also be seen as an ideological tool that can easily condition policy, social behavior, and ideologies.

1.8 Scope of the study

This study analyzed various films about East and West Africa. These include Gavin Hood's *Eye in The Sky* (2015) and Wanuri Kahiu's *From a Whisper* (2008) which are the basis of the arguments in chapter two; Judy Kibinge's *Killer Necklace* (2009) and Kwaw Ansah's *Love Brewed in the African Pot* (1981) which is analyzed for the discussions in chapter three; and finally, Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako* (2006), Bob Nyanja's *Malooned* (2007), and Veronica Quarshie's *A Stab in the Dark* (1999). Other films briefly cited include Tosh Gitonga's *Nairobi Half Life* (2006), Sam Afua Kessie's *A Letter from Adam* (2014), and Nathan Collett's *Kibera Kid* (2006). Hood, Kahiu and Kibinge have focused on East Africa while Ansah, Sissako and Quarshie have focused on West Africa. The study has not worked with themes, but concepts as signifiers of social and ideological discourses. This means that the study's approach is premised on the assertion that the films' diegetic spaces can be used as sites of ideological interventions, implanting within the audiences' liminal views and interpretations of their social and ideological worldview. The study provides more supporting scholarship on social consciousness and ideology, space, and social struggles, and finally, narrative gaze and pluralism in the literature review section which follows the theoretical framework.

1.9 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter offers various scholarly insights about film in social and ideological intervention. The discussions here are divided into three parts, matching to three major objectives of the study. In the first subsection, the study discusses existing academic research that connects film to social narratives and to ideology. In the Second, the study has discussed space in relation to social struggles. Third, the study has discussed African cinema in relation to postcolonial aesthetics, and especially social pluralism. This approach not only fulfills the objectives of this study, it also lays ground for and rationalizes the arguments that the study has made in methodology and theory sections of the study.

1.9.1 Ideology and Film Criticism

The term 'ideology' was coined by Count Antoine Destutt de Tracy, an 18th century French materialist who sought to morph the process of interpreting social enlightenment from metaphysics to the arena of ideas, beliefs, and social consciousness. Karl Marx also contributed to what became as Germany ideology, especially his concept of ideology as a science of false consciousness, a view that has been widely explored by later ideology scholars including Hegel. In recent times, notable ideology scholars including Terry Eagleton have enriched contemporary discussions about ideology. Eagleton (1991) admits the lack of a single all-encompassing view of the term ideology, settling for at least three definitions: "the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life"; "forms of thought motivated by social interests"; "the medium in which conscious social actors make sense of their world"; and "the indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to a social structure" (Eagleton, 1991, pp. 1-2). These definitions are summed up in her later description of ideology as a form of "semiotic closure", a view that not only hinges on the signification processes of film, but also provides widely helpful conception of the term within the cinematic perspective. Adding to these voices, Althusser (1971) interprets ideology not as spurious rhetoric but as "a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (p. 163).

From these views comes the beginning of contemporary discussions about the significance of ideology in cultural studies. This new thinking is popularized in contemporary literary criticism by scholars such as Kavanagh (1995, p. 309) who defines current ideology theory as that which "tries to understand the complex ways through which modern societies offer reciprocally reinforcing versions of "reality", "society", and "self" to social subjects". Already, ideology not only enters the discourse of literary studies, but is also implicated in social debates within literary works. In the same breath, Kavanagh (1995, p. 311) defines ideology as a:

social process that works on and through every social subject, that, like any other social process, everyone is "in", whether or not they "know" or understand it. It has the function of producing an obvious "reality" that social subjects can assume and accept, precisely as if it had not been socially produced and did not need to be "known" at all.

This definition resonates with Giannetti (2013, p. 412) who considers ideology as a body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture. The term is generally associated with politics and party platforms, but it can also mean a given set of values that are implicit in any human enterprise—including filmmaking.

The reason the study starts with these different views is to bring together different perspectives on what ideology is, and what it can do to modern cross-disciplinary scholarship, which is where the current study of film is situated. The relationship between film and social interventions is intrinsic to the ideological nature of the medium itself, as it sprouts from social conditions best explained in Marxian terms.

Consequent to these expanded definitions, and since they recognize the role of ideology and social discourses in shaping liminal consciousness of the subjects, what then comes to play in this study is the interplay between ideology, social narratives, and cultural mediums such as cinema which serve to disperse these socio-ideological narratives. Bordwell & Thompson (1997, p. 63), two renown film scholars, have provided a more elaborate connection between film and ideology in their argument that the “explicit or implicit meanings” of films are always imbued with specific social norms, or “symptomatic meanings”, adding that these social values revealed within the films are “considered a social ideology”. These perspectives serve to suggest how film has been utilized in social negotiation in various national platforms.

This study enters these discussions by reading ideological and social narratives within film. It also takes a further step by showing how such socio-ideological narratives work as passive tools of activism, persuading the viewer towards a course of action. Whereas such actions may shift from audience to audience, and vary with different readings of the films, it still suffices to argue that ideology and social narratives entice the viewers to understand important dimensions of their social life. One way of thinking about the interplay of ideology and cinema is to assess the fluid affiliation between the reading of the film and performing social behaviors in a way that resonates with the ideological, spatial, or conceptual truths. It is on this rationale that the study asserts that films can potentially

influence the viewer's behavior, as testified by the work of such film audience scholars as Staiger (2005).

1.9.1.1 Cinema, Social Narratives, and Ideology

The extent to which films influence social consciousness is well recognized. Sutherland and Feltey (2010, p. 36) argue that “movies are a particularly important vehicle for the transmission of cultural norms and understandings”. Peck (2005, p. 744) affirms this statement by noting that “fictional media sources, including film and television, may... have persuasive effects on public attitudes and beliefs”, especially through their depiction of popular cultural embourgeoisement, a fact conceded by Appel (2008) and Appel & Richter (2007). Sloan (1988) also notes the role of film in negotiating cultural experiences between workers, while Radovic (2008, p. 173) “emphasizes the role of the media in spreading nationalistic hysteria through ‘hate speech’”. Whereas other scholars like Gibson (2011, p. 530) calls for an analysis that extends “beyond the mere fact of mediated sociality to the kind of cultural expression which this tends to produce”, Choi (Fall 2011, p. 174) is of the opinion that “the discussion of (cinema) can (not) tiptoe around the questions of...national consciousness in (its diverse) manifestations”. Both scholars are conjoined in their call for seeing cultural expressions as a display of national consciousness, and therefore of national ideology.

Recognizing the role of film in rebuilding national identities and creating various ideologies among the citizenry, Calhoun (2006, p. 16) points out the importance of not thinking of it as “exceptional, about to vanish, a holdover from an earlier era lacking in contemporary basis.” Choi's (Fall 2011, p. 182) view of film as a direct player in national ideological apparatus is worth noting as proposes an enquiry into “how National Cinema is implicated within complex social processes and institutions, which catalyze both conformity and defiance, loyalty and infidelity, stasis and change (ibid, p. 182).” It is what Choi (ibid) calls complex social processes and institutions’, which imbue cinema its mediation role in the social context. Similarly, they are the focus of this study whose inquiry engulfs, among other aspects, the symbolic codes of the film's language as well as the audience interpretations of the same. It is equally important to note that film ideology is closely related to any film's signification, where it acts as an “important dimension or

“instance” of social practice that develops within and alongside other important instances of social practice, including the political, in the way that publishing houses and movie studios flourish in the same social space alongside political parties (Kavanagh, 1995, p. 312).”

The primary interest was however inquiry of how filmic texts intersect with social ideologies and its role in actively or passively transmitting cultural ideas which “contribute to the social reproduction of (our) society” (Sutherland & Feltey, 2010, p. 36). This social reproduction through films is essentially a reproduction of ideologies, which is made possible by the film’s “role in the battle for control of the mind’s eye” (Ross S. J., 2001, p. 82). The allusion to the mind’s eye suggests the film’s capacity to influence not just emotionally, but also intellectually. Such an enormous influence is what, for this study, has been proposed as social negotiation, or simply, ideological influence whose end is behavioral control. What these scholars are proposing is recognition of the need to start seeing cinema’s social narratives as nodes from which ideologies are being dispersed.

Other scholars who have made the study of film’s socio-ideological interventions a subject of their inquiry include Kang (1997) and Surette (2007) who point out that media reflects a shared social space in which collective opinions, attitudes, and beliefs are developed and negotiated in various ways, the most important of which is that between the viewer and the medium. For instance, while commenting about the ideological interaction between Maori and films about their life, Thornley (2011, p. 107) notes that Maori “bring their own specific indigenous worldviews to the process of watching”. In return, the film renders its symbolic apparatus to the service of popular culture, as in the case of Greece where “cinema became a vehicle for publicly projecting the nation’s geopolitical unease” (Hess, May 2011, p. 62) in moments when political and social desperation was at its peak. Radovic (2008, p. 174) notes that “at the beginning of the 1990s the national-religious ideology promoted in the media had as its aim a campaign to justify the war and distract citizens from the growing problems within Serbian society”. Additionally, Radovic (2008, p. 169) observes that “many Serbian films produced during the 1990s depicted the socio-political problems and drastic changes in society that took place with Milosevic’s rise to power”. All these views coalesce into a more solid view of ideology as a framework of socio-ideological intervention, which is indeed the core of this study. Moreover, these

filmic endeavors instantiate opportune intersections between conceptions of prevailing social conditions and artistic enterprise which crosscuts Marxist ideologies and cinema aesthetics to create an understanding of social issues. This discussion is useful for guiding subsequent interpretations of religious extremism and terrorism as ideologies that have been embedded in Gavin Hood's *Eye in The Sky* (2015) and Wanuri Kahiu's *From a Whisper* (2008).

1.9.2 Film and Social Struggles

Africa's socio-cultural realities have been narrated in many creative fronts, including oral, written, and symbolic literatures. However, with the coming of mass media, the effect of media on social change has been widely experienced. Ross (2006, p. 157) notes that in the role of "especially film, the most important entertainment medium (in post-world war II) ...played a crucial role in eroding traditional regional and class-based patterns of leisure and establishing a more international, 'class-transcendent' and 'socially standardizing' 'mass culture'". Tomaselli and Eke (1995, p. 114) also comment on representations of social struggles within cinema, pointing out how such struggles have been "transplanted into other sites of resistance, including those in First World where class conflicts have taken on a racial/ethnic character." This view is also echoed elsewhere, for instance, the Editorial Staff (July 1924, pp. 1-2) which suggests that cinema "is 'the sole method' for transforming both (a nation's) culture and the way it is represented to the outside world." Another scholar, Hess (May 2011, p. 56) has upheld that (Third) cinema is "a vehicle for promoting cross-cultural communication and projecting the national community beyond the borders (of a country)." Elias (2000, p. 17) calls for a study of "social class - and, so, of aesthetic ideals" which are the embodiments of the national social and ideological consciousness. Social class is a signifier of social order, and therefore cultural patterns within any given society. Addressing these social classes entails identifying with their different ideological positions and evocation of their mediated sociality. For the case of films such as Judy Kibinge's *Killer Necklace* (2009) and Kwaw Ansah's *Love Brewed in the African Pot* (1981), social class and social struggles are central to the narrative of their respective societies.

By focusing on class struggle and struggles of class within these films, the study seeks to combine the effort with other academics of media for social change, which is a growing research interest in the world today. Argo, Idriss, and Fancy (2009, p. 4) affirm that “introduction of new media technologies and platforms – print, radio, silent film, “talkies”, television, and now internet and “new” media technologies – has been accompanied by renewed debate about and research into media’s impact on society”. Media and viewership is however, not a new case. America’s controversial blockbuster silent film, D. W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation* (1915), incited Black Americans to revolt against depiction of the black person as animalistic, sparking what critics have considered revolting audiences. Its engagement with Ku Klux Klan iconography created a space for social negotiation where contrasting cultural ideologies could be negotiated beyond the screen. Similarly, Nazi-era film, Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will* (1935) also created widespread social unrest which has been attributed to its propagandistic approach. Why people would strongly associate with a film message to the extent of revolt is of course open to various theorizations. What is clear however is that films sharpen our understanding of such relevant issues as social histories and mediated consciousness, and serve as an ideological conduit capable of representing a new vision of (identity) to both domestic and international audiences” (Hess, May 2011, p. 58). The question of identity is important for this study, which is addressed in the second objective where this study discusses the framing of social classes and social hierarchies, and how these confer upon characters a sense of their identity.

African cinema is often seen as an integral part of Third Cinema, a Latin American film movement that started in the 1960s to protest neo-colonialism, the capitalist system, and the Hollywood model of cinema as mere entertainment for commercial purposes. Kuhn and Westwell (2012, p. 427) describe Third Cinema as “films of decolonization or militant alternatives – at the levels of both form and content to Hollywood and to European art cinema; alternatives both stemming from and struggling against post-colonial conditions of poverty and underdevelopment.” The term was coined in the manifesto *Towards a Third Cinema*, written in 1976 by Argentine filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino. Kuhn and Westwell (2012, p. 427) state that:

Solanas and Gettino's manifesto considers 'First Cinema' to be the Hollywood production model that promulgates bourgeois values to a passive audience through escapist spectacle and individual characters. 'Second Cinema' is the European art film, which rejects Hollywood conventions but is centered on the individual expression of the auteur director. Third Cinema rejects the view of cinema as a vehicle for personal expression, seeing the director instead as part of a collective; it appeals to the masses by presenting the truth and inspiring revolutionary activism.

This observation relates to the issue of class, a feat that features prominently in the selected films. Besides, this study considers film as an agent of social change. African filmmakers by creating films that address issues that affect the masses they arouse in the audience revolutionary activism and a paradigm shift in the way the African audience views societal issues like poverty, tribalism, corruption among others. Kuhn and Westwell (2012, p. 427) further observe that Third Cinema's core concept of "cinema of liberation" has been viewed as relevant wherever post-colonial conditions of poverty exist. Solanas and Gettino (1976) also argue that traditional exhibition models may also be avoided. Examples of early African films that towed Solanas and Gettino's line of argument are Ousmane Sembene's *Ceddo/Outsiders* (1977) and Burkina Faso's Gaston Kaboure's *Wende Kuuni/Gift of God* (1983).

The argument here is that directors use of cinema elements to concretize the argument that "film does not exist on film stock or on the screen, but only within the mind, which provides its reality (Aumont, Bergala, Marie, & Vernet, 1983, p. 184)", meaning that our understanding of the characters is not bound by what we see on screen, but the subliminal messages that sprout after we see films. Other relevant creative efforts that shape the film's ideological stature, like editing, offers a "compulsory and deliberate guidance of the thoughts and associations of the spectator (Pudovkin, 2005, p. 81)". Further, it must be acknowledged that African Third Cinema directors are "part of their societies, in relating to and exploring everyday activities. Editing and encoding in African films reflect this common sense in which the world is interconnected through language (Tomaselli & Eke, 1995, p. 116)". Their work, set in their use of the shot, is critical to engagement with their

discourse of signification. This study shows how they work as engaging and informative avenues of discussing social agency as they provide “alternative paths, interpretations and choices towards expressing a new African consciousness, may surface” (Makhanya & Dlamini, 2003, p. 57).

Another interesting point that contributed to the study is how cinema’s interventionist role often hinges on the film’s ability to persuade its audiences towards a desired course of consciousness. Analysis of filmic aesthetics and ideologies thus enter an on-going scholarship conversation on film’s mediation in social change at a tangent of art and its social inflections. Some of the recent thoughts on the subject, include Moen’s (2011, p. 171) reiteration of “cinema’s place (as) often paradoxical and divided, (in which) film still offers a rich site through which to examine attempts to conceive of aesthetics as a site of politics.” Such an argument reifies a critical stance which abridges cinema’s embedded elements into its communicative role, drawing attention from its narrative per se while shifting attention to “the *mise-en-scène* as the real subject of interest” (ibid). Aumont, Bergala, Marie, & Vernet (1983, p. 184) also support this view, saying that “from the simple illusion of movement to the full and complex gamut of emotions, and passing via psychological phenomena such as attention and memory, the entire cinema is created to address the human mind by mimicking the mind’s own mechanisms”. These scholars affirm that film significantly apes crucial aspects of the society, thereby availing itself as a vehicle for ideological and social negotiations both actively and passively. To discuss the role of film in social interventions is to find an acceptable grounding to support the argument that film usefully reflects its source culture through the *mise-en-scène*. In turn, reflecting culture means that film “reflects dominant attitudes in society and also play a pivotal role in the shaping of our perceptions and ideas” (Welsh, Fleming, and Dowler, 2011, p. 457), a fact echoed by Sutherland and Feltey (2010, p. 37) who maintain that;

movies that in some way purport to depict society in a naturalistic, if not perfectly realistic way often will present characters whose natural abilities or positive qualities allow them to achieve a level of success that characters in similar positions but without the necessary abilities or qualities are highly unlikely to experience.

What then is the role of the filmmaker in the wider cultural space. As Tomaselli and Eke (1995, p. 116) concedes, the “task of recording and articulating African philosophies has now fallen on African filmmakers”, meaning that the filmmaker’s role in the society is expanding from archiving culture, to constructing cultural dialogues. This represents a direct route through which a film’s socio-ideological narratives are embedded in everyday spaces. Cinema achieves its signification “symptomatically, as a metaphorical figure for social indictment . . . an allegorical text to be deciphered, a form of social colonies where the truth of a society can be ‘read’” (Stam, 2003, p. 45). Neorealism especially in Third World films provide an ideological conduit for various socio-ideological interventionist agendas (Hess, May 2011) especially in the rural areas where “it drives people’s interest in areas where oral traditions prevail, and it can be used extensively and effectively for learning and decision-making” (Plencovich, 2012, p. 425). Verisimilitude in film suggests that it is saturated with social nuances of its source culture including the idea of social class, which is the focus in this first objective of the study.

Further, the study also highlights various thoughts on how film influences social consciousness. Ross (2006) has argued that all popular media evince significant multiplicity of influences and uses on their audiences. He asserts that:

recent research on the contemporary relationship between media and social change has emphasized that the more developed and ubiquitous a medium becomes, the more users it acquires; and the more users it acquires, the more differentiated they and the possible uses of the medium become (ibid, p. 193).

Argo, Idriss and Fancy (2009) have noted that such abstract arts as cartoon drawing have had similar impact on audiences. One of the most notable is the “Danish cartoon controversy erupted in 2005-2006 (when) a cartoon printed in a relatively obscure local newspaper in a Scandinavian country (led) to both governmental and popular protests, including serious vandalism and even loss of life, thousands of miles away” (Argo, Idriss, & Fancy, 2009, p. 5). The preceding arguments aim to validate the idea that media, in its many forms that includes film, has serious social impact on the consciousness of its

audiences. Films can influence the social behavior of viewers, often to revolt and commit violence as proved through the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and Kenya's 2007 Post-Election Violence where radio presenters were held culpable for incitement. However, media has not just been used as a site for negative social reinforcements but for positive affirmations as well. For instance, in the post-genocide Rwanda, many social organizations have used media, including radio and film to foster social cohesion and progress (Paluck, 2009). These efforts were not just focused on alternative media, but extended to film as well. Such prominent donor-funded films such as Terry George's *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), Nick Hughes' *100 Days* (2001) and Raoul Peck's *Sometimes in April* (2005) all document the horrors of the genocide with the primary premise of discouraging a similar recurrence. Similarly, films other films that have emerged in the aftermath of these atrocities to try and resolve warring communities by appealing to a reform of their conscience, therefore aiming for social and ideological reconfiguration. These films include *Shooting Dogs* (2005), *Sometimes in April* (2005), *A Sunday in Kigali* (2006), and many more, have used the trope of war as a deterrence to the masses that they should no more fight again. In Kenya, *Ni Sisi* (2013) and *Heal the Nation Documentary* (2011) were set in the backdrop of the 2007 / 2008 post-election violence. Again, these films use the *mise-en-scène* and composition of war, often with a realist approach, to caution against the dangers of violence. Such potential has not gone unnoticed.

The Gates Foundation has also used film to advance strategic priority matters such as public health and education causes. Population Services International have used film in various health campaigns. As argued by Argo, Idriss, & Fancy (2009, p. 6)

Pioneering efforts to use media (including dramas) to popularize practices that would enhance public health by organizations such as Population Services International (established in 1970) have in turn inspired conflict-sensitive news and entertainment programming produced on every continent and in virtually every media format by organizations like Search for Common Ground and Fondation Hirondelle.

Setting up Participant Productions (renamed Participant Media in 2008) with the motto “Media That Entertains and Compels Social Change” in 2004 marked the start of important milestone in films mediation of social change. Among the most successful films bred from this effort is *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) which focuses on climate change in the world. At this point, it is significant to analyze ways in which the film influences people’s attitudes. What exactly is the connection between a film’s message and the behaviour of the viewer? Noting the relevance of media in influencing social change, some scholars have tried to explain relationship between film images and social change thus;

Persistent media depictions of identity groups or situations in a particular way... establish “scripts” in the minds of media consumers (i.e. an association of people from a certain ethnic, religious, or racial group with aggressive or violent behavior for instance). When they then encounter these situations or members of these groups in real-life, they may be primed to understand and judge them (and to act accordingly) based on these scripts (Argo, Idriss, & Fancy, 2009, p. 33).

Part of the ideological persuasion is also packaged within cinema aesthetics. As Moen(2011, p. 175) argues, “the potential of film aesthetics to draw out a vision of the world that is structured according to a system different from that of narrative underlies other aspects of...understanding of cinema’s social role in addition to its...potential...to educate”. For this study, while it would inevitably delve into typologies of various media platforms, it was focused on the way that a film critic can interpret film narratives in a way that influences the film audiences to understand how the film is interacting with them subliminally. The aim has been to highlight how ideologies interact with the narrative’s aesthetics at various levels to generate compelling persuasions and stimulate behavioral response among film spectators. Some of the likely focus areas for understanding this filmic role were postcolonial films which invoke larger cross-disciplinary debates about visual media and social consciousness.

The study sums up these views by citing Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis (1992, p. 186) who assert that the “specific function of the cinema, as support and instrument of ideology, is to construct the subject by the illusory delimitation of a central

location, thus creating a ‘phantasmization’ of the subject and collaborating in the maintenance of bourgeois idealism”. The point here is that while interpretations appended upon film images may significantly differ from region to region and from time to time, and that their modes of mediation may be contestable, that they mediate ideologies is not in question. While this may posit cinema as a center of pluralities (Choi, Fall 2011, p. 177), Yoshimoto (2006) cautions against this problematization suggesting that ideologies and social messages survive

not because films are routinely produced and completed at multiple geographical locations in several national territories by a heterogeneous group of film-makers of different nationalities...nor ... because films are watched by heterogeneous groups of audiences located both within and outside particular national boundaries...but the unreflective use of identity as the one determining factor in discussions of (cinema), regardless of whether such identity is conceptualized as homogeneous (as an embodiment of national character or essence) or heterogeneous (hybrid or straddling transnational cultural flows) (p. 259).

Working from the thesis that within cinema’s diegetic space lies a rich hub of meanings which can be tapped for social mobilization, control and negotiation, the study has focused the analysis to these entrapped meanings in the selected films from East and West Africa.

1.9.2.1 Film and Socio-Ideological Transmission

As already noted, there is consensus that film plays a crucial role in influencing consciousness of the audiences. Whereas that seems to be well documented, what is needed is a discussion of how we can approach the study of film so as to highlight its agency in social change. One of the approaches is suggested by Harvey (2001), quoted by Ross (2006, p. 159), who argues that “examining the social impact of commercial entertainments involves studying not only the discourse surrounding them, but also their patterns of availability and uptake, their potential to exert any socially unifying effect, as well as the wider social and economic context in which they were embedded”. Tomaselli and Eke (1995, p. 111) reinforce this approach in their assertion that “a more comprehensive

approach would examine how such texts are produced, and how different audiences make meaning of them”. This approach advocates for a consecutive multiple interpretation of film not as a medium of linear temporalities, but as a conduit to be interpreted through non-diegetic and diegetic symbols.

The former involves a study of the film audiences, the recipients of social messages, for a conceptualization of such film messages within the realism of the cultural and ideological space in which it was produced. Reading the film mainly focused on cinematic influences, where human persuasion, by way of *mise-en-scène*, props, characterization, composition, and dialogues, is possible. Hansen (1983, p. 151) concedes the suppleness of the filmic text to ape social realities, by affirming that “in the effort to (re-)align itself with the cultural standards ... the cinema implicitly adapt(s) the mechanisms of exclusion and abstract identity characteristic of the paradigm”. For this study, analysis of how films have been integrated into paradigms of social change involved direct conversations with film audiences in the form of focus group discussions. From these, invaluable insights about how the film’s diegetic projections of ideology and social consciousness were evident in the audience’s responses to the researcher. Some of the key questions asked included, for instance, what sort of ideological persuasions were precipitated among the audiences through the films’ narrative; and what societal social aspects are anticipated in the film’s messages. By analyzing the responses, this research could delve into the polemics of diegetic ideologies as a gestation point for more covert manifestations within the behavioral aphelia of the masses.

The latter deals with how film elements work as a discourse of and by themselves, whether in isolation or in resonance with each other. Comolli (1985, p. 28) argues that

What the camera registers in fact is the vague, unformulated, untheorised, unthought-of-out world of the dominant ideology... reproducing things not as they really are but as they appear when refracted through the ideology. This includes every stage in the process of production: subject, ‘styles’, forms, meanings, narrative traditions; all underlie the general, ideological discourse.

Against this light, this study examined how film has been integrated into various facets of socio-cultural and socio-political negotiations, for after all, “film, like any other historical source, tells a carefully constructed and selective story about its subject” (Murray, 2002, p. 49). This essentially refracts Hess’s (May 2011, p. 58) assertion that within the extremely wobbly “social and political environment in which it exist(s), the medium of cinema (has become) a canvas on which the populace could project its collective hope for the future and imagine a more prosperous, politically stable, modern, and diplomatically independent” (society). This imagination is made possible by the medium’s ability to integrate ideology within its images, and accentuate meanings though other elements like sound, *mise-en-scène*, lighting, costumes, stage craft, setting and a whole range of other equally important signifiers. When all these are packaged, we have a discourse working through the images.

From these two approaches, a reading of film narratives and the contexts from which, and into which they address themselves is possible. What is needed next is approaches to understand discourses within the film, and not just the narratives. Even if, in theory, there is consensus that these aspects of film may be instrumental in influencing identities and social behaviours, there are various considerations that may help focus studies of film and social discourses.

First, “any evaluation of the social role of film...must therefore abandon assumptions of a standardized cultural product consumed by an increasingly uniform ‘mass’ audience” (Ross, 2006, p. 193). The film critic must not see film in terms of its genre conventions, nor should an interpretation of social discourses within film be guided by such. In fact, Choi (Fall 2011, p. 185) cautions that film scholars

must stop bullying (cinema) based on a conventional understanding of the national as a moribund regime of uniformity, inertia, and immobility. This antediluvian take fails to grasp how sensitized, provoked, and punctuated a domain/signifier the national (cinema) has been and progressively become as a result of incessant encounters with competing valences of democracy, cosmopolitanism, populism, despotism, multiculturalism, subalternity, and globalism.

Instead, we must see the film's elements; characters, cinematography, *mise en scène*, props, aesthetics as signifiers of unique narrative codes, as embodiments of different voices in communication with each other. By adopting this approach, the researcher aimed to show social intervention as a synthesis of, and not an automated function of film.

Second, Murray (2002, p. 41) suggests that film does not just serve “to distract miserable illiterate audience... (but) also (seeks) to inform, persuade, disturb, comfort, and entertain its viewers (as it) has gained acceptance as a serious form of artistic and cultural expression”. If then, film is not a uniform cultural product which imprints itself on the audiences' perceptions, how can it influence the viewers? And if so, where would one situate such interpretations? The key point of intersection between film and social change thus becomes its ability to negotiate perceptions across multiple levels of social awareness. The shot, the basic unit of filmic interpretation, feeds the film's narrative, and by so doing, empowers it with the potential to influence mass culture whose “chief role (is) to lull the general public with escapist fantasies while ensuring that a modicum of ideology (is) transmitted via this otherwise rather unremarkable entertainment industry” (Ross C. , 2006, p. 181). The study has termed this transmission as subliminal. Every shot, every scene, every sequence, and every act, is shot and edited to achieve this harmony of signification. By harmony the study does not mean that these signifiers must tell the same thing, or even if they did, that it must happen at once. Even clashing codes that disrupt a commonsense interpretation of film comprises a signifier that adds to, and not subtracts from, the film's main narrative. Contextual reading of the film's basic building element, the shot, would pre-empt, about the Aristotelian metaphor of the ‘mirrors’, a discourse of perceptions as audiences and film messages refract each other. To penetrate such an entanglement invites us to shift from the thematic plane, which is the plane of narrative, to the conceptual plane, which is the plane of discourse.

Third, Wayne (2001, p. 6) provides an interlocutional strategy by suggesting that “cinemas do not designate geographical areas, but institutional structures/working practices, associated aesthetic strategies and their attendant cultural politics”. Modisane (2010, p. 133) considers these aesthetic strategies as aspects of “public critical potency”. Murray (2002, p. 45) thinks that “film (is) implicated in this project (of cultural politics and

aesthetic strategies) from the beginning, and a comparison of ethnographic documentaries from different periods can highlight the changing relationship between ‘scientific’ representation and political control”. All these perspectives feed the study of social and ideological discourses in that they explicate the arena of social and ideological agency in films. In summary, the discursive interaction between discourses within film is possible “in the relationship between the camera and the subject mode of specular reflection” (Baudry, 1986, p. 295). In the next subsection, the study would review various discussions about the concept of Third Cinema, and how these have helped to shape cinema analysis, especially by positing approaches that disrupt stereotypical reading of African cinema.

1.10 Theoretical framework

In their book, New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and Beyond, Stam, Burgoyne, and Flitterman-Lewis (1992) foils the practice of film criticism with the esoteric discipline of cine-semiology, which is based on analysis of film as a system of signifying codes. More poignantly, the trio heavily references the works of Christian Metz, an authority and pioneer in cine-semiology, who suggested that the goal of semiotics is the “study of discourses, of texts, rather than of the cinema as an institution, an entity much too multifaceted to constitute the proper object of the filmo-linguistic science” (Stam, Burgoyne, & Flitterman-Lewis, 1992, p. 35). This suggestion opens cinema to the approach that the study used in this study, which is to see films as visual texts, and not just infinitesimal manifestation of genre conventions. In this sense, the study has leaned heavily on semiotics film theory. This theory owes its basics to early film critics, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, whose theorization on the role of image in creating meaning provides salient approaches to film analysis. Semiotics theory lends itself to scientific inquiry in that it is formulaic, simplified by Danesi (2002, p. 3) as follows:

in semiotics the actual physical form of a representation, X, is generally called the *signifier*, the meaning or meanings, Y, that it generates (obvious or not) is called the *signified*, and the kinds of meanings that can potentially be extracted from the representation (X = Y), in a specific cultural ambiance, is called *signification*.

The reason the study start with this formula is because the approach to analysis of how film functions in transmission of social discourse is reliant on how the film reader understands the reciprocal connection between the signifier and the signified. Evans and Hall (1999, p. 2) have cited the role of image interpretation in making meaning through their thesis that “we cannot turn back to the pre-semiotic assumptions of reflectionism; we cannot any longer think of social experience as existing in a pre-linguistic realm, abstracted from the signifying systems which in fact structure it”. This can be interpreted to imply that even though meaning is intelligible through cinema’s signifying elements, filmic images in this case, within these same signifying systems are embedded social messages. This had several implications for the adoption of semiotics theory.

First, the researcher allayed the idea of embedded discourse with Giannetti’s (2013, p. 417) view that “ideology is another language system in film, albeit an often disguised language that usually speaks in codes”. This assertion lends semiotics to the service of sociological reading of film. Consequently, the researcher has found semiotics film theory to be a useful tool in decoding social and ideological signifiers within the films’ elements. What Giannetti terms as disguised language relates to the film’s coded meaning, including social symbols. Moreover, it is the researcher’s view that this fusion between film text and social codes is more pronounced in Third World’s neorealist cinema where “films have become a new kind of text through which we are provided stories, frames and representations of social life” (Sutherland & Feltey, 2010, p. 7). In this sense, film narratives and the accompanying images through which they unfold, concoct what Sutherland and Feltey (2010, p. 7) call “social texts of culture, socialization, identity, inequalities and social structures.” It is within the objectives of this study to establish how these social aspects are manifested in the selected films.

Second, it is evident that semiotics was an appropriate theory for this study because of its rather flexibility in relation to methodologies of cinema studies. In tandem with the methodology, close reading, semiotics made it possible to discuss what Mitchell (1994, p. 16) calls the “complex interplay between visibility, apparatus, institutions, bodies and figurality”. Semiotics was useful in the analysis of the shots as units within which meaning has been inscribed. Such an analysis and interpretation was guided by the realization that “meaning is constituted not in the visual sign itself as a self-sufficient entity, nor

exclusively in the sociological positions and identities of the audience, but in the articulation between viewer, viewed, between the power of the image to signify and the viewer's capacity to interpret meaning" (Evans & Hall, 1999, p. 4). Again, this relationship loops back to Danesi's (2002) formulaic relationship between the signifier, the signified, and the process of signification.

By these two overtures, the researcher could articulate how cinema from East and West Africa potentially engage in social intervention through their coding of neorealist images. Semiotics was the main theory because that it made it possible to interpret the films at the level of shots, and to decode the various cinematic elements, especially composition and *mise-en-scène*.

1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section, the study gives the research method applied in this study. There are various subsections detailing research design, population and sampling, data collection and analysis techniques which were deployed in this study.

1.11.1 Research Design

Research design answers the question about what data was required, what methods were used to collect and analyze the data, and how such data answered the research questions and objectives. The study was quasi-comparative, leaning on Kothari's (2008) and Mugenda and Mugenda's (2003). Recommendations, and on social criticism of film on the other. Data for the study was gathered from analysis of films, interviews with filmmakers, focus group discussions with film audiences, and research resources including books and journals. From these sources, the researcher sought to discuss how films are being used to expose underlying social discourses and aesthetic strategies that augment criticism of Eagleton's (1991) ideology critique, that is, "recounting to someone what is awry with their situation, from an external, perhaps 'transcendental' vantage-point" (p. 13). The role as a critique in this study has been to guide the viewer and film scholars, through close reading of film shots, to focus on those social issues which they can relate to from within their socio-cultural stand-point. Furthermore, analysis of the film's influence on the

audience, or what Eagleton refers to as “enlightenment” (ibid, p. 13) recounts the role of films’ narrative spines in influencing social perceptions.

1.11.2 Population

In qualitative research, population refers to a totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). The population for the study is East and West African film industries, from which the samples are drawn. This choice is important to elicit comparative data from both East and West Africa as a way of guaranteeing the viability and reliability of the study. Also, the specific target is Eastern and West African films which focus on issues of social importance to the contemporary society; culture education, health, integration, and development for instance. Focusing on these films is significant for the study because it placed the research efforts within an enterprise of national relevance.

1.11.3 Sample Size

These purposively sampled seven African films representing East and West African regions. Initially, the study sought to analyze Wanuri Kahiu’s *From a Whisper* (2008), Judy Kibinge’s *Killer Necklace* (2009), Kwaw Ansah’s *Love Brewed in the African Pot* (1981), Bob Nyanja’s *Malooned* (2007), Veronica Quarshie’s *A Stab in the Dark* (1999), and Sam Afua Kessie’s *A Letter from Adam* (2014). However, two more movies were added to the study. These include Gavin Hood’s *Eye in The Sky* (2015) and Abderrahmane Sissako’s *Bamako* (2006). The rationale for this addition is that these films broaden the argument, and indeed strengthen the entire thesis by offering poignant narratives and points of view which enhance the initial focus areas. Secondly, the addition was made on the basis that the initially sampled films had not provided enough material that could ground the discussions in individual chapters. Indeed this also explains why the study has also made references to other films not on the primary reference list. These include Tosh Gitonga’s *Nairobi Half Life* (2006) and Nathan Collett’s *Kibera Kid* (2006). The rationale is that these additional films add value to the thesis argument on social, ideological and pluralism issues. The choice of these films was informed by their relevance to the subjects of study, and by the

ability of the researcher to access most of the filmmakers for interviews. The films were analyzed in clusters as follows;

Gavin Hood's *Eye in The Sky* (2015) and Wanuri Kahiu's *From a Whisper* (2008) are the basis of the arguments in chapter two; Judy Kibinge's *Killer Necklace* (2009) and Kwaw Ansah's *Love Brewed in the African Pot* (1981) support the discussions in chapter three; and finally, Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako* (2006), Bob Nyanja's *Malooned* (2007), and Veronica Quarshie's *A Stab in the Dark* (1999) are analyzed in chapter four. The rest of the films; Tosh Gitonga's *Nairobi Half Life* (2006), Sam Afua Kessie's *A Letter from Adam* (2014), and Nathan Collett's *Kibera Kid* (2006), are briefly cited to support various arguments. From this argument, it is evident that the sample size is justified by the objectives of the study. The lean sample made it possible to carry out focused analysis, with enough leeway to analyze the film's impact on its audiences.

1.11.4 Sampling Techniques

To meet the study's objectives, this research used purposive sampling technique to identify the sampled films. The key consideration was those East and West African films that make significant claim to social and ideological issues, to class struggles, and to preference of narrative voice in postcolonial African cinema. The main criteria for inclusion was the narrative correlation with the study's objectives. Ideological, cultural, social, and political debates were considered as potential sites of inquiry for this research.

1.11.5 Data Collection Techniques

This study used both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was gathered from observation and content analysis of the films. Emphasis was on close reading of the various films to collect information relevant to the three main objectives of the study. The study also used interviews with film experts and focus group discussions. Secondary data was gathered from academic journals, books, and scholarly articles. The researcher also visited various repositories, both online and offline libraries, to collect information related to the study. These libraries include Kenyatta University's Post-Modern Library, Moi University's Margaret Thatcher Library, and University of Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library, among others.

To meet the first objective, data collection focused on the films' engagement with social and ideological discourses. The specific interest was Islamic religious extremism, terrorism, and counter-terrorism. For the second objective, data collection focused on information about class hierarchies and social struggles. Specifically, the study sought information about views of self and other. For the third objective, emphasis was on the idea of skewed narrative voice and cocoons in postcolonial African cinema. Key to this effort was narratives about neocolonial colonialism by western imperial institutions and negative ethnicity in modern political societies in Africa.

1.11.6 Data Analysis

Wyer (2004), in his infamous heuristic principle, suggests that formation of judgment by the human mind is not based on a complete array of all the information available in their memory, but only on a subcategory of all the available information which they consider enough to reach that judgment. Jo and Berkowitz (1994, p. 45) affirm this perspective, upholding that “people witness, read or hear of an event via the mass media, ideas having similar meaning are activated in them for a short time afterwards, and... these thoughts in turn can activate other semantically related ideas and action-tendencies”. This extrapolation of diegetic with non-diegetic information suggests the possibility to link film with social discourse. Film ideology serves as the connector of these two spaces. To analyze film ideology is to analyze “key institutions and (social) values and analyzing how the characters relate to them” (Giannetti, 2013, p. 418). For this study, therefore, ideological, and aesthetic interpretations were carried out through close reading of setting, *mise-en-scène*, dialogue, costuming and the narrative spine. This approach is further informed by Flick's (2002, p. 241) idea that “video research not only consists of analyzing video material, but also how a corpus of material is produced, which can then be analyzed”. The implication therefore is that the researcher's effort to read images contextually benefited the study greatly.

1.11.7 Ethical Considerations

In research, ethical concerns respect for people (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012) and subjects involved in the study. The choice of participants for focused group discussions had

no moral issues as the selected films were rated for public consumption. The respondents were also informed in advance about the purpose of the study, so that their willing participation in the interviews and focus group discussions implied informed consent. In addition, necessary clearance and notification were sought from the postgraduate research department of Kenyatta University.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: NARRATIVES ON EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY AS SOCIAL DIALOGUES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the issue of art and ideology, which is the second research objective. As already noted in the first chapter, there are two key questions that need to be answered to satisfy this objective. The first concerns the ideological aspects which are negotiable through artistic spaces which seek to clarify the prevailing messages within the various artistic works. The second looks at artistic elements within film that make these negotiations possible, that is, the intricacies of symbolic representation of social and ideological issues within the artistic framework of the films under study. In the case, it is Gavin Hood's *Eye in The Sky* (2015) and Wanuri Kahiu's *From a Whisper* (2008). To answer both questions, then, it is urgent to also discuss the filmic representations of the ideological dimension of trauma, which is seen to be the result of terrorism. The study attunes the analysis to a tri-forked cross-disciplinary study of film spanning between a technological medium like film, a global agenda like terrorism and counter terrorism, and how these link with the human social life and the ideologies that come with it.

The main objective is to explicate the way the content of the films provide context for analysis of ideological perspectives raised within the film. The chapter starts with a summary of terrorism in Nairobi. This will provide background information about the later arguments. Then the study shall continue to discuss the embeddedness of social narration within the films' diegesis, what Turner (1999, p. 48) calls the "system of values", as represented through various film elements; cinematography, *mise-en-scène*, and composition. The study uses systems here as an ideological reference to imply the cultural orientations upon which terrorism is often discussed: religious, global, domestic, and so on. Other matters that the study discuss here include the construction of religious binaries as ideological binaries, the use of space as a tableau on which ideological patterns are mapped, and the use of aerial space to map out global hegemonic narratives. From here, the study classifies subsequent arguments into two broad subsections. The first deals with the materiality of innocence. By materiality the study means the essence of innocence as an ideological element that can spell out travesty of morality such as typified by the films' debate of violence. The second deals with interconnectedness between Islamic religion and

violence, that is, how Islam and its symbols have been appropriated within the films to create and continue a conversation of irrationality and absurdity. The result of these is seen to be violence and trauma. The approach in all these sections is to use close reading of the film language, including cinematography, composition, montage, and even dialogue to support and propel the discussions.

2.1.1 Global Terrorism: From Nairobi to the World

On August 7th 1998, something happened in Nairobi that captured the attention of many global security agencies. The American embassy in Nairobi was bombed in a synchronized attack that also saw the American embassy in Dar es Salaam attacked by terrorists. The significance of these two attacks, especially the one in Nairobi, on the global war on terror cannot be overlooked since they were the very first incidences in what has spawned to become global war on terror lead by America. As Pogge (2009, p. 105) notes, the “most notable attack until [the September 11 twin towers terrorist attack in New York which killed about 3,000 people in America] was the car bomb attack on the U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi of 7 August 1998, which killed 257 people including 12 U.S. citizens”. From these dual events, widely seen as an assault not just on the American nation but also an attack on global stability, was born a new public dilemma: how to deal with morality of terrorism in the aftermath of violence that extends beyond the site of blast, penetrating the lives of individuals.

From the ashes of this brutal past, terrorism has entered Nairobi’s mainstream narrative discourses, including those that concern the social lives of individuals whose loved ones lost their lives. It is therefore most telling when films harness terrorism to open far-reaching memories of how such an event could become the center of far-reaching ideological discourses. The interest therefore is based on the ideological imaginations that emerge in the post-1998 period, and the various issues that are raised and questioned through various popular mediums. The first proposition in this chapter is that these two post-1998 films from Nairobi city which deal with terrorism; Gavin Hood’s *Eye in The Sky* and Wanuri Kahiu’s *From a Whisper*, think about Nairobi as a site from which various ideological narratives advances.

Eye in The Sky, the most recent of the two films, tells the story of Alia Mo'Allim (Aisha Takow), a Muslim girl who lives with her father in Eastleigh, a mainly Somali dominated estate in Nairobi. The director recounts about a transnational aerial drone operation between America, United Kingdom, and Kenya whose security officers synchronize an operation targeting a terror cell preparing for an attack in Eastleigh. Using an undercover agent, Jama Farah (Barkhad Abdi) as their surveillance ground man and close-range surveillance personnel, a drone pilot in Nevada targeting al-Shabab in Nairobi, the mission controllers led by British Colonel Katherine Powell (Helen Mirren) in the United Kingdom are trapped by the decision of whether to hit the terrorists, led by a radicalized United Kingdom citizen, Susan Danford aka Ayesha Al-Hady (Lex King), and risk killing Alia. This becomes a moral decision when the initially capture mission becomes a kill mission in which two drone bombs are fired into the compound killing not only the terrorists, but also Alia. The film uses linear narration.

In *From a Whisper*, the other film, Kahiù tells the life story of Tamani, a young girl whose mother dies in the 1998 American Embassy bomb attack in Nairobi. The conflict in the film is built around Fareed, the terrorist who is preparing to launch a suicide attack at American Embassy in Nairobi. His friend, Abu, a security officer working near the place of the blast, is a moral aid to Fareed, while often seeming to disagree with radicalism. The film however incorporates various ideological issues, the biggest of which is post traumatic disorder and how it destabilizes Tamani and his father, Sam (Godfrey Odhiambo). Tamani's character revolves between her childhood Tamani (Samara Migwi) and teenage Tamani (Corrine Onyango). Using graffiti, she claims the trauma of the bomb blast and gives it an ideological face. Unlike Hood's film, Kahiù's narrative is told in a shambled temporality in that it mixes time and space in an often confusing temporal sequencing.

The question that cross-cuts both films is that of moral duty to preserve life, which we see through juxtaposition of innocence with violence. The thesis is that the widespread consciousness about terrorism that we see in these films about Nairobi, set in the country's battle with global terrorism networks, are simultaneously ideological narratives of relevant issues that can be traced to the question of terrorism. The study does not seek to authenticate the various films which the study shall discuss as ethnographic narratives, or historical archives of these events or later events elsewhere, but the study want to draw attention to

how such films, inspired by the reality of spreading global terrorism, could offer an opportunity for a closer collaboration between cinema and ideological narration.

2.2 Cinema and Social Narration of War on Terror: Pre-reflections

Rotten Tomatoes' description of *Eye in the Sky* starts with a curious quip: 'The moral implications of modern warfare are confronted in Bleecker Street's powerful drama, *Eye in the Sky*'. This movie database site summarizes Hood's narrative of war on terrorism from a human point of view, which in turn tunes the arguments about how we can access the ideological facet of films. Whereas the film would look like an obvious technological blockbuster about modern weaponry and the advanced counter-terrorism possibilities, curiously, it has been reviewed elsewhere as a story about "legitimacy of the "war on terror" so much so that other technological issues and "performance skills serve for the most part to sugar-coat a big lie" (Laurier, 2016). This statement is important because it casts slander on the characterization and legitimation of violence and also seems to sprout from Rotten Tomatoes' view. In fact, Laurie (2016), on the same website, discredits the whole operation as unnecessary and uncalled for "scare-tactic scenarios", asserting that

The false presentation of reality involves important plot contrivances. The filmmakers early on remove the possibility of capturing the suicide bombers. Why? There are only a handful of them and they are taking their time making videos and loading their vests with explosives. There is no reason why this should be any more than a Kenyan police matter.

Exaggeration of risk then becomes a misleading force in engaging America and United Kingdom in such an operation while sidelining Kenyan forces who could easily handle the threat without need for drone bombing. The implication then is that the aerial perspective adopted in most of the film, which is the perspective of the western militaries here represented by the drone, could be a signifier of moral detachment which is necessary in promoting war on terror narrative even in scenarios where the risk is controllable. The question then is, is *Eye in the Sky* deliberately misleading the viewer to buy into a skewed perspective of terror to justify Alia's death without demanding moral culpability? As the

study shall argue, the final scenes uphold this account as the American commander tells the two drone pilots that they did a good job. This moral uprightness then becomes a new ground for staging the question of morality as the film ends with a flashback shot of Alia's memories as she plays with her hoop just the way we saw her at the beginning of the film. The use of drones in Hood's film thus immediately brings along these connotations of murder, both on the targeted individuals and on incidental casualties. Further, placing Alia's family at the center of this violence while the people who planned and carried out it have no remorse beyond a veiled unease results in the example of war on terror as sanctioned, senseless murder.

In this sense, we can see the drone as a tool of violence against the human person. The film's stance against terrorism can thus be read alongside the bigger question of how to deal with war technology responsibly. The 'presence' of the American and United Kingdom security forces in the form of aerial drone surveillance and bombing is a continuation of a Muslim-as-terrorist discourse seen elsewhere around the world (see for instance Pogge; 2009). That Hood can dig into this religious narrative with ease is further facilitated by this global narrative of counter-terrorism through remote surveillance and counter insurgency. The use of drones in this film however poses a critical dilemma about global morality, and hence social and social questions of war. As Walsh (September 2013, p. 1) asserts, the

objectives of ... drone strikes are to punish and to deter insurgent and terrorist organizations...by killing and creating fear and uncertainty among current members. They also seek to deter insurgents and terrorists from engaging in more violence, as well as to deter others from joining or supporting these movements.

Similarly the film, *From a Whisper* evokes the experiences that people go through in times of emergencies and tragedy. The bomb blast brings to attention the psychological and religious inclinations that pervade global terrorism discourses. There are two distinct religious groupings in the film. Sam and Tamani embody the Christian religion, which is a victim of Islam, embodied by Abu and Fareed. The director deploys stylistic approaches,

especially nonlinear, and often, discordant temporality, to make Tamani's journey a confusing one. Her childhood and adulthood are merged through erratic back and forth narration that avoids a linear progression of events, but calls attention to the huge disharmony between the two religions between which she is caught. Abu is her comforter and moral supporter, yet, he is also seen as a failure in the sense that in his capacity as a security officer and friend to the suicide bomber, he failed to stop the bomb blast that killed her mother. Putting side by side these two roles thus draws attention to the enigmatic discourse at play within the film. While anti-Abu's Islamic interpretation of the Quran is anti-radical, it does not absolve him of his culpability as he is seen to have had prior knowledge of Fareed's intended suicide bomb mission. On the other hand, Sam's and Tamani's sense of victimhood elicits trauma. It is a mutual feeling which we also see in Fareed.

When we analyze Kahiu's film at a superficial level, we can read the film as an effort to discourage suicide bombers from their dogmatic ideological orientation, set in the character of Fareed. But Kahiu also raises another important issue, which is that the discourse of religious violence needs to be revisited. That the war on terror can be fought not just by machines but social weaponry at the level of the religious is not in doubt in the film. It is noteworthy that the film seeks liberation from religious radicalization and from the social trauma that lingers in the aftermath of terrorist attack. But there is a more important social narrative that runs within this film, that of avoiding culpability. When we evaluate the character of Abu who is occasionally paired with Tamani in the film, we are faced with the possibility that he, a security officer whose friend caused the death of Tamani's mother, is trying to assuage his guilt by mediating the gap between Tamani and her father. From the readings of these two films, the study can argue that ideological narratives within these two films take the form of vindication in the face of obvious culpability. The tensions between perpetrators and victims are a chiasmic one that cannot be easily bridged with mere comfort or believe. Radicalization can then be a term that applies to both the terrorists and those who fight terrorism as well.

Despite the understandable cynicism between various disciplines of scholarship on how to read cultural narratives, anthropology and sociology for instance, there seems to be a consensus that film has the potential to influence ideological narratives. In a discussion

of *From a Whisper* after it premiered during the 6th Annual WOCFAF - Women of Color Arts and Film - Festival held at the Carter Presidential Center Atlanta on March 25th 2010, Dr. Violet Johnson, a renowned Africana Studies scholar at Texas A & M University, summarizes the film as follows:

This movie is not about government, it is not about politics, it is definitely not about the west. It is not about what a party handles terrorism better than the other, or what civilization is better prepared to deal with terrorism or what civilization is not. It is not about terrorism, this is about real people it is about families, it is about emotions from anguish to anger, to forgiveness. It is about decisions, personal decisions, from deceit and secrets and lies, to honesty and openness and finally forgiveness, and the process of forgiveness itself.

In these remarks which appear in a YouTube video file that was posted in 2013, Dr. Violet Johnson easily moves one from the conceptualization of a globally controversial subject, terrorism, to an ideological interpretation of the violence associated with terrorism. In fact, her words apply as much to Hood's *Eye in the Sky* where remote counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency measures quickly become subject to ideological considerations. By this shift of focus, Johnson (2013) manages to create a connection between the narrative of global terrorism and the societies in which such events occur. Gavin Hood's *Eye in The Sky* and Wanuri Kahiu's *From a Whisper* are primarily narratives about pressing ideological and cultural concerns, especially terrorism which is on the forefront of global conversations. They are stories of hope, fears, anxieties, and aspirations of the people in circumstances that are very difficult and often threatening to dismantle the society. This is the same logic with which the study considers them exemplary of the objective for this chapter. This assertion has been echoed elsewhere. Webster & Mertova (2007) discuss the connection between narrative inquiry approaches and ideological influence of narratives where they argue that

Narrative inquiry approaches to human experience and the construction and reconstruction of personal stories blend in such a way that they highlight issues of complexity and human centredness that are of concern to many researchers. These are recalled in the form of critical events that are instrumental in changing and influencing understanding (p. 71).

This quote elicits the connection between how we understand narratives and the human experiences at the center of those narratives. By citing these words, the study aim then to import this important conceptual view of human experiences in narratives, what the study call ideological narratives, into a reading of films. At the center of this transposition is what Webster & Mertova (2007, p. 73) calls a “critical event”, which “reveals a change of understanding or worldview by the storyteller”. A ideological narrative in this sense becomes a link between world occurrences on one hand, and the significance they hold for those involved at the present, and even afterwards, in the form of trauma, on the other hand. Trauma is an important connector here because the films that the study analyze in this chapter are centered on post-violence trauma associated with global terrorism. Moving this reading of ideological narratives to the field of cinema, Sheila Leddy of The Fledgling Fund, an organization that sponsors the production of films for social and ideological change, summarises this connection thus:

we believe that storytelling through film can be a powerful tool to engage audiences. A film, and the story it tells, can create a greater awareness of complex problems, and just as importantly it can highlight possible solutions. It connects viewers to its characters and can inspire those viewers to become involved in, or reconnected with, social change efforts. We begin to understand how an issue plays out in the lives of individuals, families and communities (Leddy, 2012).

Leddy (2012) seems to attest to the wide reaching impact of film narratives, born of the subliminal interaction between the viewer and the film medium, and which can influence our worldview and how we make sense of the events around us. In the field of film theory, which is where strategies for analysing this connection lies, the debate is torn

between whether to discuss film from its formal elements such as formalists do, or from its mimetic aesthetics as realists do. As such, this debate presents a double forked opportunity to merge the two views, which is what the study attempts in this chapter.

Looking at the directors of the two films, one realizes at once that their ideas on terror and violence easily suggest their interest in ideological narration. This claim is based on recent studies that have looked at how film style can be a tool for framing and ideological perspectives and thus making ideological arguments. Disclosing the findings of a research about the relationship between film style and narration, Redfern (2014, p. 21) notes that “[d]ifferent types of shot are used to create the narrative perspectives”, which range from “ambiguous mode of narration” to what is termed as “an epistemological puzzle for the viewer”. The implication of this suggestion is that film’s formal elements present fertile sites for interrogating and interpreting the relationship between the narrative and its ideological agency. Ideological narration then, as the use of filmic elements to create narrative perspectives, can be treated as a formal slate in which filmic “images, as well as words, carry connotations” (Turner, 1999, p. 54). Turner seems to continue an ongoing debate among film theorists, especially formalists and realists, on how to approach film analysis when he asserts that

A filmed image of a man will have a denotative dimension—it will refer to the mental concept of ‘man’. But images are culturally charged; the camera angle employed, his position within the frame, the use of lighting to highlight certain aspects, any effect achieved by colour, tinting, or processing, would all have the potential for social meaning. When we deal with images it is especially apparent that we are not only dealing with the object or the concept they represent, but we are also dealing with *the way in which they are represented* (Turner, 1999, p. 54).

What we gather from these statements is that film images and film language work synchronously to code and decode the ideological discourses inherent within the film itself. This is important because it provides a formula for understanding the interface between cinema and ideological narration. The study enters this conversation by positing that both

Hood and Kahiū are leveraging on this cross-mediation to persuade the viewers to see their films from a humanistic perspective. The important issue then is the methodology of accessing these ideological narratives, which in the case is critical event.

Feeding into the construction of these ‘film’s ideological statements’ is Klapproth’s (2004, p. 35) view that stories ought to be understood as “*social units of exchange*, in relation to the social and ideological institutions and practices within which they are produced... [and] relate to other forms of discourse practiced within the culture of their origin”. Fitting into Klapproth’s description of culture as a web of discourses, this assertion then introduces a multi-perspectival analysis of (film) narratives, extending the purview from mere thematic analysis to contextual analysis. Here, semiotics provides anchor to the analysis of film narratives as ideological discourses. The analysis proceeds from this array of thoughts.

The argument so far has been geared towards a moralistic reading of counter-terrorism in Hood’s film, and terrorism in Kahiū’s film. Both directors seem to favor a neo-realistic reading of their films through deliberate use of realistic events, a decision that seems to authenticate their quasi-documentary films. For Hood, it is the ideological profiling of Muslims, in this case in Eastleigh estate in Nairobi city which is occupied almost exclusively by Somalis, who are Muslims by faith, while for Kahiū, it is the religious profiling of Kenyan Arabs as Al Shabab. Having narrowed down the discussion of cinema and ideological narration into a question of morality, the study now focuses on the use of innocence as an ideological paradigm.

2.3 The Materiality of Innocence

The idea of innocence as a moral and hence an ideological discourse is normally articulated by use of cinematic techniques as well as deploying innocence among characters as a persuasive tool. The innocence of such characters as victims, and children therefore become a centre of attraction of sympathy from the audience hence giving it material value. It becomes a commodity that can be sold to the audience through various cinematic codes and modes. It is these codes and modes as revealed in the selected films that this discussion now turns to.

The problem of the global war on terror is the continuous “defending [of] severe violations of basic human rights as necessary responses to terrorist threats” (Pogge, 2009, p. 106). And the reason is, on the part of citizens involved, a moral one. As Pogge (2009) further suggests;

our moral judgement that these terrorist attacks are exceptionally heinous... lends special urgency to fighting this terrorism as the effort promises not merely a reduction in the risk of harm each of us is exposed to, but also the suppression of a dreadful moral evil. Because we perceive these terrorist attacks as so exceptionally heinous, we attach to their suppression an importance that is greatly disproportional to the immediate harm they inflict (p. 107).

From this statement, then, it is arguable that narratives of terror are irreducible to just incidences, or operations. To be fully appreciated, they must be seen from a moral grounding which is, ultimately, the justification of the violence and its aftermath that is involved in this war. But this morality of violence cannot be comprehensively understood without understanding the other end of the spectrum; the innocent casualties of this war. This is the focus for the remainder of this section.

If Hood’s and Kahiu’s films are to be understood as ideological narratives, the notion of violated innocence should be at the center of this understanding. This is because in both films, the directors dwell on the lingering harm that terrorism leaves in families. In *Eye in the Sky*, Hood focuses the film on Alia’s innocence. The film starts at her home compound where the father is making her a hoop while her mother is baking cakes in the family wood oven. The composition of these initial scenes shows Alia’s vulnerability as a child, so that when new see her later selling the cakes that her mother baked, we are reminded of her family situation. Being at the center of the film, this young girl’s innocence becomes a big debate, and decisions in the film narrow down to whether the joint American and United Kingdom forces have the moral capacity to determine her right to life. As the film ends with her as a casualty of the attack, there is no moral resolution to the dilemma, especially when she dies. The parents and the commanding team that bombed her vicinity are all seen as remorseful, perhaps mitigating culpability for the latter. The trauma of war

is even greater in the hospital scene which shows her father hugging her dead body (see figure i).

In this medium shot, the director gives prominence to Alia's face, which seems battered and caked with blood. Her father's head, seen from the back, is also filled with dried blood stains, adding to the aura of horror. The question that arises at this point then is whether the commanders of the mission were justified to take away her life to possibly save more civilians from terrorist attack. It is also implicit in the nostalgic ending of the film which shows a flashback of Alia in her jovial days playing hoop at her home. The choice of a close-up shot fills in the gap of the missing drone which remains out of sight for most of the film. The distance that it creates between itself and its subjects is collapsed in this shot which reifies the reality of its violence upon the lives of its victims. In the next shot (see Figure ii), we see Alia's parents mourning her death.



Figure i: A medium close-up shot of Alia's father holding her head as her body lies on a hospital bed after her death. The shot is a freeze frame from Garvin Hood's film, *Eye in the Sky* at time frame 01:31:56.

This medium long shot in Figure ii is composed to highlight the parents' collective trauma. The foreground is empty, except for the bed on which Alia's body is lying. Both parents are holding Alia's head and staring into her face. They are soaked in blood. In the background, there is an open door, beyond which there is only a wall. This *mise-en-scène* shows the space as a place of abandonment. The dark shades used in the scene also amplify this aura of abandonment, so that we can read the dullness as an index of the dark results

of war. As their only child, clinging to her body recreates another version of their family in this hospital room, which is contrasted to their original happy family which we see at the beginning of the film. This temporarily then constitutes a paradigm of how war changes the ideological conditions of its victims, often disrupting families irreversibly. The emptiness of the room, with only the parents and their dead daughter after the doctors have left can be read as a signifier of the emptiness in their lives. The shot then zooms out so we can see the doctors standing on the foreground, again adding to the aura of collective sorrow of war. This zooming out movement is combined with a cut transition into the mission command room in America where we see the drone pilots staring at the screens. The camera movement becomes a continuation device that binds the two shots, miles apart, into the questionable aftermath of war.



Figure ii: A medium shot of Alia's parents mourning her death. The shot is a freeze frame from Garvin Hood's film, *Eye in the Sky* at time frame 01:32:03.

The contrast between the shot of deathbed and this command room connotes an important question of the equitability of trauma in violent social events such as seen in this film. On one end, we see Alia's parents undergoing great agony as they hug the lifeless body of their daughter. This image brings along connotations of how death has disrupted the family and how it continues to affect the family. The family here represents the continuity of the war not just as an event, but a violent means of ideological configuration. On the other end, we see the drone pilots as just workers under command to deploy military technology. For them, the screens in their room do not represent death, but represents the

completion of a mission. This detachment is represented in the form of a drone camera feed (see Figure iii) that maps the site of bombing in coordinates and technical aerial information.



Figure iii: An aerial long shot showing a drone perspective of the compound in Eastleigh where the terrorists have been bombed by the drone. The shot is a freeze frame from Garvin Hood's film, *Eye in the Sky* at time frame 01:24:15.

In this shot we see an aerial shot of the compound where the suspected terrorists were congregated. The shot is seen after the first drone strike, just before moments before the second strike. The destroyed house is seen at the center of the screen while Alia's body, at this point invisible, is just short distance from the wall. What this composition style achieves is creation of boundaries by adopting two lenses of narration. From the joint American and United Kingdom command base's point of view, this scene is seen from a technological and mission point of view. The addition of cross-airs at the center of the shot invokes a sense of lockdown of the target, and effaces the story of the civilians. This means that these markers of precision and coordinates provide narrative agency to the detachment with which we see the attack. From the humanistic point of view, seen in the shots when Alia's parents come to pick her up, there are no technical details as the scene does not reflect a view from the drone, but a view from the actual scene of violence. This provides a humanistic view of the attack, which contrasts with the technical one we see through the aerial drone's perspective.

It is also curious that Alia's parents are transported to the hospital by the hitherto hostile radical Islam men who control the area. When we see them dismantling their machine guns from the pick-up to give room to the stricken Alia, especially at a point when they have just had an attack, we are coerced to question their radicalism. Who, then, between the radical Al Shabab and the foreign military, values life more? This question, cued by this contrasting perspective on war, demands of the viewer to make a judgment about whether these far away military officers are morally justified to destroy a family a continent away. There is a deep sense of sorrow cultivated in these rooms. Why would a film that purports to be on a mission to save lives end with a nihilistic scene where innocent lives are lost? Again, this is a moral question which touches on the ideological implications of global war.

More importantly, innocence is a hard currency for raising and negotiating morality. The study has discussed these foregoing discussions in Hood's film because it provides background setting for analyzing Wanuri Kahiu's *From a Whisper*, the other film about terrorism in Nairobi, as an ideological narrative. The idea of innocence as a moral and hence an ideological discourse in Kahiu's film are articulated in the way the director deploys, among other cinema techniques, innocence as a persuasive temporal discourse. Similarly, when we look at Kahiu's film, *From a Whisper*, the aftermath of the bomb blast is explicated using Tamani's character. As already pointed out, there is no linear narration of her life, but an erratic one, where the film keeps shifting between her childhood and teenage, between her home and her dilapidated gallery. It is from within this gallery (see Figure iv) where many clues of her inner suffering are expressed.

This shot is taken from the scene when Abu visits Tamani's improvised art gallery from where she does most of her graffiti work. The shot captures the moment when she gets hold of the file which shows the details of her late mother, including the obituary in a print media. In the foreground is a defocused partial view of Abu. In the middle ground are the love-shaped creations which we later see in the memorial park. Tamani is at the background. The composition of the shot raises an important issue about Tamani's graffiti, that of her connectedness to the discourse of violence within the film. In the scene from which this film is extracted, we first get to understand her trauma as she understands, for the first time, how her mother died.



Figure iv: A reverse shot showing Tamani inspecting the file with documents about her mother's death in the 1998 Nairobi bomb blast. Abu's shirt is visible on the side, with a blue color. The shot is a freeze frame from Wanuri Kahiu's film, *From a Whisper*, at time frame 00:35:54.

To make sense of this shot, one may have to understand the various functions of graffiti in social change. One of these is establishing and marking territories. Ley & Cybriwsky (1974, p.491) points out that graffiti “identify tension zones related to social change”, further adding that the “conquest of territory, even in fantasy, is always an act performed for an audience. Locations have a meaning; to claim access to an inaccessible location is to make a claim of primacy for oneself” (Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974, p. 494). One possible interpretation of these words is that graffiti empowers the artist to possess a space, but also the connotations associated with that space. In *From a Whisper*, Tamani's obsession with graffiti is an attempt to claim ownership of the trauma of the 1998 bomb blast in which her mother died. She often uses spray cans at night to paint her graffiti images and leave them around the compound of the memorial park. When later Abu, the security officer in charge of the park, pounces on her, she leads him to her improvised gallery where the above painting is shown as one of the central images in her collection of works.

By her actions, both physically painting around the memorial park and painting emotions of the event in her gallery, she claims and in fact possesses the pain of loss, the violence, and the social disintegration which pervades most of the film's narrative. Graffiti is a refusal to let the spectral gaps in her life to be lost as the paintings help her to 'find' her mother who has been missing in her life since childhood. At the end of the film, when we see her and her father inside the bomb blast memorial park, we are reminded that her paintings are at the center of the park's paintings gallery, so that then her effort shifts from individual memory of the blast, to a collective societal memory of the blast. On the small grass lawn, next to her paintings are love-shaped creations pinned to the lawn in memory of those who perished in the blast. They are objects that contemplate the loss of life. But these too, like the graffiti, can be read as a message of love to the survivors, giving the film a humanistic ending.



Figure v: long shot of Tamani seated next to the plaque of the names of the victims of 1998 Nairobi bomb blast, which is located at the memorial park. The shot is a freeze frame from Wanuri Kahiu's film, *From a Whisper*, at time frame 01:12:14.

In this shot we see the older Tamani seated next to the names of the 1998 bomb blast victims. The wide-angle framing emphasizes her frailty, or the precariousness of her life. It can also be read as a representation of her traumatic consciousness. Whereas she stands out as an epitome of love seeking to cancel out evil, that her ability to prevail in embodying this love is paired with Abu's inability to stop evil foments an uneasy binary, hence the climate of uncertainty that we see in the opening of the film as the city is a subdued space. This binary of good versus evil brings into mind the mimetic nature of this film, already evident in the neorealist approach adopted by the director. Kahiu uses the actual place where the 1998 bomb blast occurred, with the images of the adjacent Cooperative Bank towers, the ruins of the American Embassy, and later, the memorial park dedicated to those who lost their lives in the blast. In a way, then, by using this quasi-

documentary approach, the film amplifies the innocence of the victims, as we get to see Tamani seated next to the plaque with the names of the victims (see Figure v). Among the names is that of her mother. The red-heart shaped creations which adorn the green lawn adjacent to the concrete paved space with the plaque also serve to memorialize the event.

With her mother's name on the plaque and in one of the heart-shaped flowers, the *mise-en-scène* of the shot functions as a memoir of the social trauma that came after the terrorist attack. Again, it brings human thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and emotions to our lives, marking the end of Tamani's psychological journey of pity and discovery in the process of searching for her mother. At this point it is perhaps worth recalling the words of Dr. Violet Johnson¹ who comments that *From a Whisper* brings out 'creativity at healing' as a 'role of art that is being emphasized'. She continues to assert that 'there are artists who push an agenda of rehabilitation through art... some of these artists are not artists that are trained in a structured way'. Art then functions as what she terms as an 'avenue' for psychological issues which affect characters in their various stations and situations in life, and by extension, the human society at large. The choices of cinematography serve to inform, educate, entertain, socialize, and empower the viewer on ideological issues that affect them.

This is probably what the resolution of the film attempts to achieve when we see Tamani and her father finally becoming a better family through forgiveness. The film relives the bombing of the American Embassy in Nairobi on the 7th August, 1998, in which many innocent people lost their lives. It tells of how Abu, a quiet and hard-working officer tried to stop the terrorist attack plot in vain. It also brings to our attention a young and rebellious artist by the name Tamani who is in a desperate search of her 'missing' mother who was killed in the bomb blast. In the scene when they are at home with her father after the death of her mother (see Figure vi).

In this shot, the young Tamani (Samara Migwi) is cuddled by her father Sam (Godfrey Odhiambo). Both father and daughter are positioned at the foreground, towards the left of the screen. The daughter is asleep on her father's laps while Sam is weeping, staring out off the screen. On the screen right are stuck some pieces of paper with letters of

¹The quoted words are my own transcription of the video available at Oupipeestudios's YouTube channel. The link to the discussions is: <https://youtu.be/JxCgG47t10>

the alphabet, again adding to the aura of innocence. Coming towards the end of the film, this shot closely mirrors the one of Alia's death discussed earlier (see Figure i and ii). It evokes the sad memories of Fareed's suicide bombing that led to the death of Tamani's mother. Again, the violence of the attack is translated into social experiences which linger in the aftermath of the war.



Figure vi: A medium close-up shot showing the young Tamani cuddled by her father at home after her mother's death in the 1998 Nairobi bomb blast. The shot is a freeze frame from Wanuri Kahiu's film, *From a Whisper*, at time frame 01:06:17.

When we later see the older Tamara's distraught life after growing up without a mother, and the use of actual footage from the bomb blast, the film urges us to recall the trauma of the bomb blast and the innocence it shuttered. The disruption of the family through the death of the mother is provocative in the way it implicates random acts of attacks in the morality of life and death, and of the social structures like family upon which societies thrive. Using the trope of innocence, the films persuade the viewer to see terrorism beyond the act of violence that is instantaneous and fleeting, but to notice especially the trauma that it leaves in the lives of those whose families are affected. By this reasoning, then, *Eye in the Sky* and *From a Whisper* presents themselves as archival narratives of the social scars of terrorism.

It is also interesting when we see Abu washing his feet, a Muslim ablution ritual in which one cleanses themselves to make their prayers heard by Allah. There are two variations, the partial cleaning known as Wudhu and the comprehensive cleaning known as *Ghusl*. In this case, Abu only carries out the partial cleansing of himself, only cleaning the feet just after the bomb blast, before proceeding to the Mosque. If this action symbolizes his desire to wash his burden of guilt arising from his failure to stop Fareed from bombing the embassy, the partial cleansing could be suggestive of his interconnectedness with the Muslim faith where he partially sees Fareed as a justified martyr, while on the other hand, the guilt of seeing Tamani's misery in life makes him reach out to her despite their religious differences. It is a dilemma that remains unresolved as Abu never really gets to divulge much about his character, apart from that he is easily persuaded by the teachings of his religion. In this section, the study has argued that innocence of the characters in these films, especially Alia in the *Eye in the Sky* and Tamani in *From a Whisper*, provides narrative propulsion and hence material basis for deliberating the ideological and moral aspects of terrorism.

However, since the films do not offer a conclusive moral rendering of the war on terrorism, this judgement is left to the viewer. As a guiding principle, one may have to seek an answer to whether the violence and deaths seen in these films seem to justify the greater good of the characters involves. In short, the morality of innocence is on trial, and there is a guiding debate which may help in shedding light on this enterprise. Pogge (2009) notes that:

When the greater good an agent intends to achieve with her action will not be a good for the innocent persons this action will harm, then that good can justify the action only if it greatly outweighs the harm this action foreseeably inflicts. (This requirement is often thought to be especially significant when the harm to be inflicted is a means to attaining the purported good, rather than a foreseeable side effect.) For such a justification to succeed, it is further required, of course, that the harm be necessary for achieving the greater good in question, so that the same good could not have been achieved using any other less harmful means (p. 110)

Whereas *Eyes in the Sky* attempts to give moral justification for bombing the terrorists to the extent that the death of Alia seems justified, again, the moral story that lingers after the film has ended has to do with trauma and forgiveness particularly by those deemed as innocent and victims of the global terrorism and global war on terror. In an interview held on 19th January 2016 with *From a Whisper* director, Wanuri Kahiu at her Karen office in Nairobi, she opens up about her own terrorism film, pointing out that she targeted the “people who were affected by the bombing, and those who had firsthand knowledge of the bombing.” She also alludes to the lingering impact of terrorism in her assertion that “there is also trauma that we go through as a nation that we do not process”. She finally reveals that her message is hinged on the ability to forgive:

Compassion... that two generations can help each other heal. The act of forgiveness...the ability to forgive someone who has truly hurt you...and that forgiveness is never ending. It is an active process as opposed to just being a word “I forgive you”. It is in being able to see this person every day and say hi and the next day and the next... and move on without bitterness.

Without offering to resolve the moral dilemma of forgiveness in post-traumatic narratives such as seen in these films, the study shall proceed to the next section where the study discusses the films’ view on religion and violence. This may perhaps offer equally important clues that can aid this moral puzzle.

2.4 Religion and Ideology of Violence

For a while now, the history of global terrorism is tied to a discourse of radical Islam. The proliferation of this generalization has upset various discourses of society, including, and especially, those about production of citizenship. But more importantly, it has given rise to global narratives which have in turn seemed to justify later narratives of war and counter war. Speaking about war on terror, Soueif (2009, p. 28) notes that “Amnesty has rightly described this ‘war on terror’ as a war on human rights. It is also a contest of narratives: stories that the protagonists tell about themselves, about their enemies, and about what is happening now”. Such narratives are the building blocks of

competing worldviews, which, as seen in the films that the study has used in this chapter, have made their way into contemporary cultural discourses.

Eye in the Sky teaches us the power of what Morrow & Torres (2002, p. 99) terms as “normative discourse”. These scholars further assert that the “problematic of modern democracy is thus closely linked to the formation of subjects capable of citizenship”. During focus group discussions of Kahiu’s film, *From a Whisper*, with youthful filmmakers at Kenyatta University, various issues emerged (See appendix 5 FGD II) . One was that the “would-be bomber believes that through religion, he will be able to make some revenge.” This statement, coming from a viewer, flags an important social and ideological agenda that is at the center of the film. There is the view that violence is a redemptive tool from both sides of terrorism. On one hand, the suicide bomber, Fareed, believes that he is fulfilling his religious duty to defend Muslim holy lands from occupation. In this sense, his violence becomes a route to war and to his in which death is the ultimate path to his perceived heroism. On the other hand, when we read Kahiu’s film alongside Hood’s *Eye in the Sky* which deals with the same issue of redemptive violence, counter terrorism is also seen as a violent process. Just like Fareed’s conviction of heroism and saving the world of Muslims from danger of Kaffir occupation, the joint American and United Kingdom drone mission is based on a firm believe that it is their duty to exterminate terrorists to protect civilians. Their bomb attack in Eastleigh is thus seen as an act of heroism, which easily mitigates the aura of war with a humanistic mission.

Gavin Hood’s film offers an important starting point for discussing the increasingly central role of films in narrating social issues particularly between religion and justifications of social violence. In this film, though it seems like drone warfare on global security networks working against terror threats is the main subject of narration, what is in question is the discursive morality in combating global terror. Innocence is brought to bear on decisions of military operations to the extent that it elicits a moral debate of drone war on terrorism and what it means in the eyes of civilian casualties. On one end is the decision to kills her fellow United Kingdom citizen turned terrorist, Susan Danford aka Ayesha Al-Hady (Lex King), while on the other is the need to preserve the life of Mo’Allim who lives next door to the terrorists’ compound. This juxtaposition of moral obligation to defend and to preserve life at the same time bundles nihilistic efforts against global terrorism with

moralistic decisions of civilian casualties particularly when they are of a different religious orientation. The question of terrorism, whether it is only when radical groups harm civilians, or whether it must encompass actions of governments who endanger or kills civilians while combating the actions of these individuals is highly emblematic of the tactic of social negotiation that permeate all spheres of public discourses, including national security.

When we look at the character of Colonel Katheirne Powell (Helen Mirren), we see how civilian obligations are imported into the discourse of citizenship. In her capacity as the mission commander, she is faced with the duty to supervise United Kingdom citizenship in the sense that her pursuit of the radicalized Susan Danford, now known with her Islam name Ayesha Al-Hady, represents a national interest in managing citizenship. Of importance is that her change of name to an Islamic religious one suddenly qualifies her for execution by all means including violence and as part of war on terror. The idea of extremist ideology and Muslim fundamentalism that is at the center of the film serves to legitimize intolerance among radical citizens. But the take home from this mission to capture, and later to kill Ayesha Al-Hady is not that she dies before the seeming preparation to carry out a terrorist attack is implemented. It is rather to be observed that she is bundled together with Muslims. Kenyan Somalis, the inhabitants of the Eastleigh estate where the film's diegesis is set, are predominantly, if not exclusively Muslim. The choice of this community and associating Eastleigh with a dominantly Al Shabab ideology of violence recalls into question the idea of Islamic morals, and the religion upon which those morals are founded. Hood is therefore selectively associating Somalis with radicalism, and thus perpetuating a view of Islam as a religion of terror.

Drawing from the discourse of Islamophobia and hauntology associated with the Muslim character, Kahiu attempts a moralistic, even humanistic presentation of the Muslim in a manner that refuses outright generalization of the character of the Islam, while highlighting terrorism as an act of ideologically misguided individuals and not merely an authentication of a murderous view of Islam. One of the highpoints in Kahiu's film is when Abu (Ken Ambani) is imploring Fareed (Abubakar Mwenda) not to get involved in the bombing of the American Embassy. Here is a transcription of his words and a translation adopted from the screen subtitles of the film:

Fareed Hakuna chochote kilicho chetu duniani hii. Si ardhi, rasilimali, wala maisha ya mwanadamu yeyote. Mwenyezi Mungu mwenyewe atuambia katika Quran: 'Kwa yeyote yule atakaemua mtu ambaye hajaua wala hajafanya ufisadi katika nchi basi ni kama kuwa huwa amewaua watu wote. Na ikiwa kuna mtu atakayemuacha mtu hai, ama amsaidie mtu kuishi, ni kama amewapa uhai watu wote'.

(Fareed there is nothing in this world that is ours. Not land, possessions, or other people's lives. It is written in the Quran: 'He who kills an innocent man who has never been corrupt, then he is killing all humanity. And if someone helps save another or helps them to live, then it is as if he has saved all humanity'.)

The words of this conversation are drawn from Quran 5:32, and they provide useful cues of the spiritual dimension of terrorism on one hand, and the sanctity of life on the other. What Abu tries to achieve is to point out not just the meaninglessness of loss of life through suicide bombing, but also the vanity of the action on the part of the bomber who loses his life in the same action. Abu then tries to create a reciprocal chiasmic link between the teachings of Quran in Islamic religion and the social impact of the interpretations of the teachings of this religion.

One of the biggest ideological walls that the director attempts to crumple is the question of Islamophobia. Whereas mainstream discourses show the Muslims as a suspect community (see, for instance, Miller; 2009), Kahi seems to borrow Breen-Smyth's (2014, p. 223) view that "'suspect community" is not an embodied community, but an imagined one, whose boundaries are permeable and shifting and in the eye of the beholder". Through Abu, whose character is an antithesis to Fareed, we are faced with a divided view of radicalism, and of the sense of humanity upon which radical dialogues are based. Abu challenges a blanket 'othering' of the Muslim community which is associated with religious outlaws like Fareed. Based on this view, then, violence by or against Muslims is a meaningless tool that not only contravenes the religious doctrine upon which it is founded, it also cancels out the justification by liberation that it promises its perpetrators.

The viewer is faced with an ideological imperative to question the moral narrative espoused in this apposition of characters; Abu who confronts the morality of his religion, and Fareed who immerses his immorality in skewed religion ideologies. By embedding these ideologies in religion, Kahiú flags down how “constrained cognitive possibilities” (Morrow & Torres, 2002, p. 99) play a part in propelling individuals towards a particular direction. These constraints are represented in Kahiú’s film in the through the metaphor of the sky. In this film, the sky is both a reference to a higher deity, and hence a signifier of the spiritual presence of that deity which is the basis of Islamic faith, and a signifier of the relationships that are possible between subjects and higher authority. These two references, articulated in these films, are the basis of the moral debate in the films.

For Hood, the sky is the upper perimeter from where street-level experiences can be challenged. The film, using drone (see Figure i), caricatures the hierarchic power upon which moral decisions can be effected. While terrorists seem in control of the ground surface where armed religious fanatics go around Eastleigh reinforcing Islamic beliefs of dressing, this patronage is challenged by America’s aerial superiority. It is then, upon this basis, that the film also construes a view of America and United Kingdom as ‘gods’ over the Kenyan sky. For Kahiú, the sky is a void from where the unknown can articulate its presence through a subjective gaze of the ground. One, it establishes a top-down gaze that flattens Nairobi city’s horizontal geography (see Figure vii) from point of view of the sky. This wide-angle aerial shot of the city is important because it obliterates the notion of boundaries. This is important because boundaries, in the form of spiritual fissures and moral beliefs, later becomes central to fomenting the film’s narrative of a city contested by varying moral camps.

In this shot, the *mise-en-scène* of the city comprises some high-rise buildings and a street in the middle of the frame. The shot is accelerated, so that we see it as a time lapse where cars move in staccato phase. What is peculiar in this shot is the way it is composed to obliterate the people within the city, so that we see the city as a uniform space. The lack of humans can be read a signifier of absent relationships, judgements, or capacity for ideological participation. But, as it becomes apparent in subsequent sections of the film when we start to see humans, the city is a tentacle that blends many opposed human activities and relationships, at which point we can think of this initial framing as an act of

concealment. This concept is key to analyzing the city's religious and extremist ideological events which are concealed through a variety of strategies. Fared camouflages himself with worshippers in the mosque while the older Tamani (Corrine Onyango) camouflages the nostalgic void in her life with clandestine graffiti and improvised painting studio.



Figure vii: An aerial shot of Nairobi city seen at the opening sequence of Wanuri Kahiu's film, *From a Whisper*, at time frame 00:00:26.

Another possible reading of this shot relates to the way the city is narrated in the context of religious radicalism. Kahiu seems to pose the question of which, between the general city space and the values of cohesion that are presumed in this aerial shot, and the Islam religion which is introduced as a secluded, boxed practice, takes precedence in the narrative of ideological violence. Again, such a reading is not premised on any superior adjudgment of either the city or the Islamic faith, but on how the director deploys montage and cinematography as tools of ideological narration. Whereas the film starts with these aerial images of the city, towards the end, we see equally significant views of a mosque.

The static shot of the city uses accelerated motion to generate anxiety in the streets. Further, the high camera positioning framing the city from an aerial view adds on to the ignominy of the shot, so that we are faced with a discourse of erasure. The city is quickly passing away, metaphorically giving way. In a total reversal of this cinematographic style, in the shot of the Mosque (see Figure viii), the director uses a low camera position, thus

amplifying the power of the Islamic religion to which the Mosque is a signifier. Also, the shot uses slow motion so that we see Abu moving slowly into the Mosque. This contrast is important cue of how the director posits the power of religion in the city's ideological events. We can make several deductive arguments form this comparison.



Figure viii: A low angle shot of Abu and the Mosque in Nairobi city seen near the end of Wanuri Kahiú's film, *From a Whisper*, at time frame 01:03:51.

One, that the idea of the Mosque as a superior space that overshadows the city, or has the capacity to influence the events of the city coerces the viewer to notice the power of religion in Nairobi's ideological discourses. Furthermore, the viewer is also confronted with this discourse of superiority through characterization. The characters are dominantly Muslim, with Abu, Fareed, and their associates taking center stage. Sam and his daughter, Tamani are the only Christians. Clearly, these numerical differences imply a domination of one religious discourse over the other. The other distinction is based on professional influence. Whereas Abu oversees security, and hence able to monitor and influence the operations of radicalized individuals, Sam is just a worker who has no access to such information. This narrative typecasting frames the narrative's premise of hierarchies, and hence of power, which is what is being recalled in this low angle image of the Mosque.

Just before the conclusion, it is important to point out something intriguing that is noticeable in these two films; the reversal of victimhood. Whereas in Kahiú's film Muslims

seem to be the perpetrators and Christians the innocent victims of terror violence, in Hood's film, the Muslims are the victims of violence against terror. There is a pun in the manner that both construe a reversal of violence, and hence constituting an enigmatic view of the ideological dimension of violence. The question then is, can the two films, and the discourse of violence which they narrate, be adjudged from a religious dimension, or should it suffice to only analyze this discourse of violence from only the social impact, which does not seem to rely upon any religious grouping. The approach here has been to analyze the films from only the ideological perspective. The reason the study points out this other possibility is because it could be a good basis for further studies of the films.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the study has made three discussions in support of the reading of Hood's *Eye in the Sky* and Kahiu's *From a Whisper*, both films dealing with terrorism, as ideological narratives. First, that cinema as a medium lends its language and stylistic conventions in the service of subtle ideological messages. The study made a theoretical case that film narratives, when subjected to theories of image reading, supply cues of how the medium can deliver ideological messages, even if only subliminally. Second, the study has also argued that the idea of innocence is widely exploited in these films to articulate terrorism as an ideological discourse. This means that beyond the violence and technology of this violence, whether perpetrated by suicide bombers or anti-terrorist government agencies, is subject to a humanistic or moralistic reading, which, again, takes us to the ideological dimension of terrorism. Third, and this is the final argument, the study has highlighted the central role of Islamic religion in incorporating the discourse of violence within these films. The films give heavy emphasis that radicalization of Muslims, and the global effort to defeat this radicalization, are both efforts which leave social scars in the form of trauma. The conclusion then is that both Kahiu and Hood are ideological activists in the sense that they articulate salient ideological issues through their films.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: FROM A SPACE OF CLASS-STRUGGLES TO STRUGGLES OF CLASS

3.1 Introduction:

In the previous chapter, the study discussed the social discourse of morality and ideology of terrorism, and how these plays out within recent films depicting terrorism in Nairobi. The argument traced the transition from social and religious forms to ideological forms of the diegetic social narrative within the films. Here, social change was mediated through ideological persuasion. In this chapter, the study continues in another tangent that of space and class struggles and how these transforms to struggles of class. To show how films negotiate social aspects, the study reverts to two key questions which the study identified earlier. One, what social aspects are negotiated through filmic spaces; and two, through which filmic elements are these negotiations made possible? To elaborate on the first, one would lean on Lefebvre's (1991) categorization of space into physical, mental, and social, and discuss how these continue to manifest through characters. On the second one, one would analyze how films deploy their various elements, especially cinematography, to suggest a framing of consciousness about social class, spatial belonging, or even mental awareness of the implications of one's socio-economic level. The role of space in this analysis is that the study sees it as a host to the various social debates. By space the study means the diegetic setting where characters stage their actions. The study shall discuss Judy Kibinge's *Killer Necklace* (2009) and Kwaw Ansah's *Love Brewed in the African Pot* (1981). The former recounts low and high-class struggles embodied by slum life and wealthy family, respectively and go to show how these embody social and material space within physical space. The latter approaches class struggles through social prestige and careers, and spell out the agony that ensues when mental spaces conflict with physical and social spaces. The chapter has three sections.

The first focuses on socio-economic classes in Nairobi, and proceeds to show the construction of hierarchies. It will proceed by taking a neorealist reading of some of the films in an attempt to give a stereotypical representation of the African city as a site where various social and economic contestations have taken root. The second section discusses the way that the low classes fight back their marginality by setting up alternative hierarchies, and thus evade the obvious socio-economic gulf that alienates them from the higher social classes in the city. The third section deals with deconstruction of class struggles as simultaneously forms of struggles of class. Besides the two main films mentioned above, the study occasionally also refers to Bob Nyanja's *Malooned* (2007),

Tosh Gitonga's *Nairobi Half Life* (2012), Gavin Hood's *Tsotsi* (2005), Ralph Ziman's *Jerusalem: Gangster's Paradise* (2008), Nathan Collett's *Kibera Kid* (2006), and Diego Quemada-Diez's *I Want to be a Pilot* (2006) to advance various arguments.

3.2 Peeling Off: From Social Inequality to Hierarchies

During the interview with *Killer Necklace*'s director and producer, Judy Kibinge, held on 17th December 2015, she disclosed that “societies, social groups and families can be influenced by the film” further adding that “people can reflect on the issues of the film, the characters, the scenes to negotiate social change in our society (See Appendix 4, Transcript II). So, *The Killer Necklace* asks the viewer to think about the characters, the scenes, the storyline and all combination of factors in the film to affect social change or class matters”. In the same interview, Kibinge points out that the “specific social issue is the gap between the rich and the poor, materialism and how obsessed the modern era in the African city is ... much more materialistic. The film addresses urban crime, love of different classes”. The director identifies what she makes out to be the cornerstones of her social story, which can then be broadly categorized as events within social and mental spaces. Her words are the basis of the analysis of her film as narrative in which class struggles in the city of Nairobi are well articulated to convey the workings of social spaces. Consequently, this aura of class struggle and space is used to compliment the narrative of social and economic inequalities which then implicates characters in the diegetic social discourses. Using the term hierarchies synonymously with socio-economic classes or class differences, the discussion is positioned within the economic themes, the conditions of the characters in terms of their means of livelihood, and survival as portrayed in the narratives. It is these complex of class struggles that drive the story's idea of unmasking classes and in so doing, destabilizing hierarchies. Class struggles or struggles of whatever nature present to film social critics an opportunity to examine the film's interventionist role as an art that reflects the society. David Mulwa, a film actor and lecturer, in an interview reveals and confirms the above assertions that films for social change, “show character(s) struggling to free themselves from whatever shackles that hold them down to a “new world” of enlightenment better, happier life and a greater rapport between individuals.” (See Appendix 4 transcription XV for this interview).

As earlier stated, Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis's (1992, p. 186) claim that the "specific function of the cinema ... is to construct the subject by the illusory delimitation of a central location, thus creating a 'phantasmization' of the subject and collaborating in the maintenance of bourgeois idealism", which brings us to the question of how hierarchies are perpetuated in film. Luce (2016) explains "'phantasmization' of the subject" to mean that "he who informs and in doing so represents himself, shaping his own origins and informing his alleged naturalness." This is the definition the study applies to the interpretation of the various films about Nairobi city which often emphasize how characters override social and economic differences to represent themselves and articulate their position in the social and economic hierarchies. While this study is hinged on the film *Killer Necklace*, it is nevertheless important to sample out the portrayal of the class struggles in other films set within Nairobi, the city of interest.

When Tosh Gitonga's film, *Nairobi Half Life* premiered in Nairobi in 2012, its reception was phenomenal in the sense that reviewers flagged it as a neo-realistic film which finally captures important aspects of Nairobi city not previously seen. Todd McCarthy of Hollywood reporter (2012) summarized the film as follows:

Nairobi Half Life could be accused of recycling dramatic as well as societal clichés about shantytown life, gangs, police corruption, violent lifestyles and so on. But not only does the film come across as fundamentally honest and vividly realistic, the protagonist is a kid whose criminal ways, which are forced upon him, hopefully represent just a phase on his way to achieving what he really wants, which is to become an actor. The way these two strands intersect is not only humorously inconsistent but downright funny at times, as the young man literally runs from one world to another in pursuit of his far-fetched dream.

This review elicits various issues about the way this film has been read. One, that it is a stereotypical narrative of Nairobi city which reflects the norms of other urban ghetto tales of the Third World. Two, that there are dual spaces in the city, one for the poor characters like Mwas (Joseph Wairimu), the protagonist, and the gangs; and the other for

the well off. Three, and this is important for the later discussion of Judy Kibinge's film, *Killer Necklace*, that of social and economic classes within the city. In a 2012 interview with John Burnett of America's National Public Radio (NPR), a multinational multimedia news organization and radio program producer, Tosh Gitonga says that his film is also a lesson to those from upcountry wishing to migrate to Nairobi city. "Now, maybe they can even prepare better, get a better understanding of the Nairobi that they want to go to," he says. His words resonate with Todd McCarthy's review, which could mean that his film is a social realist film. These neorealist readings can be collectively discussed as an attempt to give a stereotypical representation of the African city as a site where various social and economic contestations have taken root. The result is hierarchies which are well revealed in a number of films set in African cities especially the "other half" of these cities hence creating binaries. One such film is Gavin Hood's 2015 gangster film, *Tsotsi*.

Binaries can be thought as expressions of the remnants of hierarchic discourses of social and economic segregation. They often entail using spatial composition as a language that naturalizes marginality in spatial discourses. In the more segregated cities like Johannesburg, spaces like Hillbrow have been the site of such representations of not only marginality, but resistance to marginality. It is therefore significant that films like Gavin Hood's *Tsotsi* (2005) would focus on the reification of social inequalities using composition of space. In *Tsotsi*, post-apartheid social and economic inequalities are at the center of the film, which uses the character of 'David' Tsotsi (Presley Chweneyagae), a poor slum dweller (see Figure i), and contrasts it with that of John Dube (Rapulana Seiphemo), a middle-class black, to show the betrayal of the post-apartheid dream of equality. What the study find interesting is the way poverty, and hence social marginalization, is characterized through spatial and material elements.

Here we see the characters who play the gang of youth criminals in Johannesburg coming out of Tsotsi's rusted shack in Soweto township. The shot is set at a higher space relative to the rest of the slum buildings, so that Tsotsi inhabits a higher hierarchic level. As the study shall argue in the next section on the creation of fugue spaces, the composition of this shot presents a deviance from 'normal', that is, concretized forms of social production of urban hierarchies, to ingenuous ways of dismantling these stereotypes through creation of alternative hierarchies. Later, in the film, the director uses a wide angle

shot to show Tsotsi's neighborhood (see Figure ii). In this shot, emphasis is given to the homogenous structures which then constitute the slum space. By incorporating characters within the shot, the film makes the shot an everyday event, thus naturalizing the social isolation of the space from the upper sections of Johannesburg where John Dube lives.



Figure i: A wide angle shot of Tsotsi and his gang in Gavin Hood's film, *Tsotsi*, at time frame 00:01:31.

In his research about space and racial relations in Johannesburg, Lupton (1992, p. 66) notes that the “social relations which structure the class position ... is also organized across space... [where those of lower tiers are] located mostly on the periphery of the city”. By choosing Johannesburg, Lupton is dealing with a concept of extreme social and economic polarities which are at the center of Johannesburg's apartheid history. He further adds that what “appears merely as a fight over rent and urban renewal is essentially a struggle between capital and a mainly working-class population” (Lupton, 1992, p. 68). Emphasis on the dilapidation of Tsotsi's neighborhood is thus an attempt to caricature his social standing, which is one of marginality.

The role of this shot is to place the gangs in a specific socio-economic tier. This also fulfills the role of positioning them in a low-tier end of social and economic hierarchies. It is also conceivable, through the film's opening sequence where they pierce a rich man to

death in a commuter train that their placement in Soweto slums also brings along connotations of their mental inferiority as they are seen as poor savages. It is these discourses, hinged on social and mental assumptions that the film sets out to disprove using the baby. Just as the study shall discuss about Judy Kibinge's use of the golden necklace in her film in *The Killer Necklace*, both the golden necklace and the baby that Tsotsi keeps in his house mediate an overlap between different social and economic spaces and groupings. Both also challenge the stereotypes associated with spaces and social discourses, so that we begin to comprehend how the films are working to dissolve such assumptions.



Figure ii: A wide angle shot of Tsotsi's neighborhood in Soweto township in Gavin Hood's film, *Tsotsi*, at time frame 00:29:18.

These two shots (Figures i and ii) are significant since they provide a reference for the rest of the film. Especially when we see Tsotsi later in the film staying with the baby in this room, we see how this action constitutes an attempt to overcome social hierarchies associated with his slum status through mobility into a mental space where we can see him as equally human to John Dube. Caring for the baby negates his stereotyped identity of a tsotsi, a criminal, who is ruthless and has no value for human life. He easily adapts to his role of 'fatherhood', and gives caring for the baby priority over crime. We can therefore argue that though the physical space identified within these shots, and the social space that they construe for Tsotsi weigh him down, these limitations are easily overcome through his humane actions. Equally, playing father for the baby is the highest form of merging both classes, so that he assumes the role, and by extension, the class expectation associated with the baby's rich family. The lingering question then is whether his social and physical space

and the struggles that he undergoes trying to transcend his limits, frame successful transcendence into a mental space where he is no longer bound by hierarchies.

In a similar framing of hierarchies in Ralph Ziman's *Jerusalema: Gangster's Paradise* (2008), the reference to inequalities is more covert, where we see the characters of Lucky Kunene (Rapulana Seiphemo) and Zakes Mbolelo (Ronnie Nyakale) struggling to gain social and economic mobility in an environment where blacks are excluded from social and economic participation by default. The fixity of this marginalization is embodied by Nazareth (Jeffrey Zekele) whose character spans from a freedom fighter returning from exile and looking for an opportunity. His character questions not only the physical processes through which post-apartheid space is made in South Africa, but more, the idea that the narrative of rainbow nation is doomed by failing to abolish physical, social, and mental spaces. At the moment of his death, we can see Nazareth as an embodiment of the rigid boundaries that demarcate these spaces. His physical struggles do not lead to social mobility as he dies a poor man. What these films questions then is the role of spaces in economic, political, mental, and social cohesion.

I have quoted this films long since they help the study establish the long trail of film expressions of the class struggles of characters in African megacities. It further help the study situate the portrayal of class hierarchies due to social and economic contestations in the film *Killer Necklace* within a continuum of other films set within African cities. As Lefebvre (1991, p. 12) notes, the "need for [spatial] unity may be expressed in other ways ... ways that serve to underscore its importance", seeing Tsosti and his gang, and later Nazareth and other black characters in *Jerusalema: Gangsters Paradise* as 'others' in Johannesburg is to fail to appreciate the need to integrate youths, of which they are an embodiment, in mainstream political and economic activities. The study gives these examples from South African movies because they bear great connotations of spatial segregation by narrating Johannesburg, a city founded on strict apartheid rules. They contextualize the argument about representations of class struggles.

Coming back to representations of Nairobi city, the study wishes to clarify a few curious observations. Gitonga's film seems like a continuation of earlier representations of space as an indexical marker of social and economic differences which we see in films like Nathan Collett's *Kibera Kid* (2006) and Diego Quemada-Diez's *I Want to be a Pilot* (2006).

The implication therefore is that there is a semiotic potential within these films to convey salient social issues using various elements of cinema narration, especially cinematography. In *Kibera Kid* we see a myopic view of the city's poor, which is also amplified in *I Want to be a Pilot*. In both, the image of the garbage site is important in documenting the social position of the characters. With these slum-city differences in mind, we can then start to appreciate Judy Kibinge's film, *Killer Necklace* (2009).

This film tells the story of Boo (Stephen Mwangi), a naïve young student of accounts and Noni (Mary Otieno), a house girl. While Boo lives a life of struggle in Majengo slums, Noni is employed in a rich family living in Kitisuru, an upper-class Nairobi suburb. The dramatic conflict here is built on Noni's desire to have Boo buy her a gold necklace, which Boo cannot afford. Between his ailing grandmother (Theresia Njeri) and his friend Jonah (Abubakar Mwendwa), Boo's character is brought to test. Yet, it is not the conflict of love, crime, or humaneness that take the center stage in this film. Rather, from a semiotic perspective, it is the way the director uses *mise-en-scène* and cinematography to create an aura of lowlife that voices the mood of struggle that then becomes the driving force in representing Boo as a character of low social standing that we see in the entire film.

Boo's struggles cannot be overlooked because they represent a way of occupying the city's lower socio-economic tiers. The gap between the rich and the poor in the *Killer Necklace* construes a reasoned view of materialism as a forerunner to crime and other social evils. Through this story of a young man from the slums of Nairobi who falls in love with a girl from a wealthy neighborhood, Kibinge uses the motif of Noni's materialistic demands which lead Boo to take up crime to satisfy her jewelry taste to bring out the notion of class struggles in the city. Whereas the pair hides their socio-economic status from each other; Mbugua borrowing clothes and a car to impress and Noni the domestic servant pretending to be her wealthy employer's child. Whereas their alter-selves helps to overcome the limitations of a deeply rooted class prejudice and segregation which would otherwise not allow them to socialize, the greatest achievement is the way it reveals the plain realities of how a serene suburb and a chaotic slum can be peeled off to show other layers not ordinarily visible. This symbolism is most vividly embedded in Jonah's action of peeling off a section of the yellow line from the car as soon as they arrive back at the slums from visiting Noni in an uptown residence (see Figure iii below).

The *mise-en-scène* of this close-up shot comprises only two elements; Jonah, who is peeling off the yellow sticker from the car, and the car which is his status symbol. Using a close-up shot frames Boo out of the shot, so that the scene communicates his marginality within the higher social status represented by the shot. In Nairobi, public service vehicles, which include taxis, are mandated to have a yellow band around their body. This is what Jonah achieves by using this stick-on yellow sticker on the car. They are also regarded as signifiers of prestige to those who hire them. When Jonah drives Boo and Noni to the upper-class home which she pretends to be her father's house, Boo is showing off his ability to afford taxi transport to show a higher social standing to Noni.



Figure iii: A low angle shot of Jonah peeling off the yellow sticker from his car in Judy Kibinge's film, *Killer Necklace*, at time frame 00:11:33.

By missing out from the shot where we see only the driver and the taxi, then we can interpret the shot as a rendering of Boo's lingering marginal social status in the city. Even though he has used the car pretending to be a taxi, peeling off is a symbolic gesture of unmasking Boo's social status of a poor slum dweller. In fact, Jonah immediately tasks him with the duty to clean the car. He also tells him that he will need his jacket and shoes back, which Boo is at this point wearing. These pronouncements and actions unmask Jonah so that when we see him rebuking Boo in the next scene to join crime, we understand his action of peeling off as a signifier of an unmasking of his own identity as well.

The low framing, on the other hand, shows the importance of this unmasking to the general film narrative. In a way, it is the starting point for the narrative of class struggles. The close-up shot metaphorically brings us closer to the realities of struggle which both characters go through, which have been hidden so far. There have already been some hints of their social class, when both Jonah and Boo did not like the taste of wine, which Jonah laments it has urine taste. Taste, again, unmask the class differences as wine is associated

with upper class characters who, to risk a cliché, have made it in life. Within the context of this interpretation, the dull color of the shot precipitates apprehension within the shot which is divulged in several symbolic instances and situations. Boo's grandmother is bedridden with sickness and Jonah lives a lowlife sustained on theft, for instance. But he has a taste for good life; he likes shisha and women.

This peeling can also be interpreted as a debate of how stereotypes associated with hierarchies are challenged through haunting revelations. Noni, who pretends to be the daughter from an affluent family, is easily found to be a servant. Just like Boo who uses his friend's car pretending it is a taxi to gain social mileage, Noni is using her privileges to live in the uptown home to gain social mileage and make demands for costly jewelry. Jewelry here shows a status, and therefore a social and mental space to which different characters aspire. It also represents ambitions to clear these obstacles, in other words, it represents an overlap between two initially opposed ends of socio-economic hierarchies. It also reflects hierarchies. The study use reflection here as intimated in the words of Lefebvre (1991) who argues that "Reflection sometimes conflates and sometimes draws distinctions between those 'levels' which social practice establishes, in the process raising the question of their interrelationships" (p. 12).

I have cited Lefebvre here because his conception of space is disruptive as well as revolutionary in the way we can approach analysis of space in film. He provides a formula, so to say, of how we can continue from the point of social inequalities, which is a thematic one, to the point of conflated hierarchies which is conceptual. In this sense, film locations and characterization convey more than socio-economic differences, they confer upon the process of habitation connotations of the various socio-economic, and even political forces at play within the specific societies referenced by this diegesis. The seemingly separated uses of space or incursions into spaces such as premised in the films that the study analyze in this chapter are therefore suggestive of the various, often ingenuous ways, in which spaces overlap. When towards the end of the film we see the father of the house giving the mother the golden necklace that Boo had brought for Noni (see Figure iv), we are faced with one such moment when an object facilitates an overlap between the lower and the upper-class members of the society. But, it does not abolish the idea of hierarchies. This close-up shot gives prominence to the two characters, the wife and husband who are

celebrating their 23rd marriage anniversary. The characters occupy approximately three quarters on the right side of the screen's horizontal plane, leaving some space to the left of the screen. This composition introduces two important readings.

First is the way Noni is missing in the shot. Just like we have seen in Figure iii where Boo is framed out of the taxi shot, here Noni is also missing in what then becomes both a family portrait as well as a class portrait. In the first case of family, Noni is missing from this portrait because she is not family, but a house cleaner who then cannot participate in such an intimate family moment. She is only a house cleaner who cannot fit within such an important moment as celebration of a marriage anniversary.



Figure iv: A medium shot of Father giving Mother a golden necklace in Judy Kibinge's film, *Killer Necklace*, at time frame 00:36:14.

In the second case of wealth, she is missing because she is not in the same social class as her employers. But the shot also unravels deeper cracks in social hierarchies presumed by the expensive gift. When we see husband dressing his wife with a golden necklace, we are led to believe in their love, in their union, and in the stability of their marriage. Although they embody upper class family, yet, and this is the second point, we already know that the husband has tried to sexually assault Noni, and further that he has not bought this golden necklace for his wife. Instead it was dropped by Boo when he found him sexually assaulting Noni, for whom he had bought the expensive gift. This information, withheld from the wife, sets up a void on her part. This void is represented by the screen space that is adjacent to her in the shot's framing (see figure iv above). The framing shifts weight towards the husband who is cheating on her without her knowledge. But we

also know that by cheating with the house girl, the husband is also creating an overlap between the two social classes represented in the consummation of this act. His upper class is morphed with her lower-class status so that as she is elevated to a higher level, he is demoted to a lower status and thus we get to see him as, in the sense anticipated in films like *Jerusalema: The Gangster's Paradise*, a desire to reach out 'across' the hierarchies. It is in this respect that the study also read the use of dull colors as a strategy that reifies the anxious disposition of the characters. This see-saw view of social struggles within hierarchic spaces can further be understood through the notion of fugue struggles, that is, back and forth, reciprocal attempts to fuse social classes. This is most obvious in Kwaw Ansah's film, *Love Brewed in the African Pot*.

3.3 From Social Struggles to Fugue Spaces

Kwaw Ansah's film, *Love Brewed in the African Pot*, uses space as a signifier of various interpretations that are possible about the social and economic groupings and struggles. For instance, when he uses a long shot of the ocean beaches teeming with happy people, he is creating a sense of communal camaraderie. Here, social, and economic barriers, the basis of class struggles in the film, are flattened out and erased by the celebratory mood as we see characters congregate to revel in their own version of togetherness. The most celebrated event is the wrestling match between young men at the sands of the beach. It is here where Aba and Joe first cross the barriers of their different socio-economic tiers when Aba sneaks from home to come and cheer Joe who eventually wins the matches for the day. It is also here, at the beach front, where Joe proposes to Aba later in the movie. In comparison, the lawyer who wants to marry Aba confronts her in the market place, almost sneaking on her, and demanding her love rather than politely proposing. This gesture, buoyed on his material opulence and his own sense of lofty social status in the community, spells out the role of material opulence and especially education in designating social hierarchies. These are later seen as enclaves within which characters are slaves to their own mental and social ideals.

The shots of Joe and Aba at the beach construe an ambience of freedom and union. Joe's 'open' world appeals to Aba more than the lawyer's material possessions, including his social standing as a lawyer, which confines him in a cocoon of self-importance. This

contrast points towards the role of class differences in enforcing, often, arbitrary boundaries. Composition of space, in this sense, bears an anecdotal relationship with the debate of deeper social structures gradually revealed in the various films. The implication then is that we cannot not just fail to notice the various reciprocal struggles within and across these structures. First, the film shows struggles over economic abilities as simultaneously struggles to override social and economic relationships in the city that are skewed by default against the poor. In the same way, which is the second point, Judy Kibinge's use of social struggles between upper and lower socio-economic classes in Nairobi city, typified by Noni's host family and Boo's slum home respectively, ought to be read beyond the mere social tensions that they precipitate through, for instance, unequal resources. They could also be iconic of larger social struggles which define capital in equalities, and thus present the problems that have historically defined Nairobi's aristocrats, here embodied by the family in the wealthy neighborhood, and the proletariats, represented by the slums. Third, to understand this construction of social classes, there is need to think back to the history of slums in Nairobi as one of exclusion from mainstream economic activities, and hence as a process of conditioning the psyche of the slum dwellers to see themselves in relation to the upper socio-economic tiers. Kibera slums, the oldest and the biggest slum in Nairobi, was established in 1910 as an outpost where Nubian ex-soldiers were housed by British authorities at the time. Wanjiru & Matsubara (2017, p. 28) documents the slum's history as follows:

Kenya's Sudanese (Nubians), the first settlers in Kibera were originally from South Sudan. In Kenya, they served as soldiers for the British King's African Rifles (KAR) during World War 1. In 1911, Nubians were settled informally, by the British government in the KAR training ground a few kilometers south west of Nairobi city center. The settlers were mainly survivors and widows of Sudanese soldiers fighting for the British KAR.

From this description, we see the slum as a site of abandonment, of precarious existence, and of marginal subsistence cast off from the main city. Starting as a jungle outpost for those of lowly tiers in the then Nairobi's white capitalist hierarchies, the slum

came to be renamed “‘Kibra’ a Nubian word for jungle” (Wanjiru & Matsubara, 2017, p. 28) this is important because it is this symbolism of struggles that Judy Kibinge invokes in her film, *Killer Narrative*. The focus is however not how this film uses verisimilitude to depict urban struggles, but about the creative ways in which the director challenges marginality within the slums, by using struggle as a connector between upper class and lower class social and economic tiers.

In a rather curious turn in the representation of class struggles in Judy Kibinge’s *Killer Necklace*, she brings to the fore the threshold of class struggles. Using Boo’s character, we get to see how his relationship with Noni mentally and socially pushes him to the boundary where he must find his own version of ‘class’ that does not rely on physical movement to the upper neighborhood where he is obviously a misfit. This ‘class’ starts with the montage of shots of Jonah’s car driving into a slum area as they come from visiting Noni. This shot carries with it a poignant image of a low-class dwelling and the life of poverty that is endured there. In contrast, however, the prominence of Jonah’s car in the frame mirrors his stature in the said neighborhood, thus establishing a counterpoint to socio-economic hierarchies premised by the entire film.

Not only that, but this symbolism of opulence in the slum creates a counterpoint to the notion of poverty which we earlier see through various attributions of space, material possessions, and lifestyles of characters who live there. This counterpoint to the overall imagery of struggles is what the study call fugue struggles. In this film, it is best exemplified in the shot of Boo at the frontier of the slum (see Figure v).

This shot comes just after Boo has committed his first crime of theft in the city, robbing a woman after tip off from Jonah. He had bought the necklace for Noni and gone to give it to her only to find her being sexually molested by her employer. He drops the necklace, a signifier of his inability to bridge the socio-economic gulf between his lower social status and that of the wealthy home, and went away.



Figure v: A wide shot of Boo contemplating the slum from its edge in Judy Kibinge’s film, *Killer Necklace*, at time frame 00:31:17.

The most notable elements of this shot are use of color, *mise-en-scène*, and composition. The *mise-en-scène* of the shot picks on this uneventful attempt to bridge the social gap between himself and Noni. The director uses a dark hue that shows Boo and his surrounding with an aura of pessimism. Also, in view of the events preceding this shot, the dull colors of this shot represent his dim prospects of ever bridging this divide by merely ascending the economic ladder.

On the foreground, the shot shows Boo squatting at the edge of a cliff. In the middle ground, there is a deep valley. In the background are the dilapidated structures of the slum. The valley between Boo and the slum represents the gap in his life. Socially, he does not seem able to reach out to Noni. Physically, he has lost his leverage as he learns that Noni is not the daughter of a rich man but a house cleaner. Mentally, he has also discovered the hidden problems that exist there. The first time we saw him with her, he tries to kiss her but she is not keen to enter this phase of intimacy as she gets him out of bed and busies him with wine. The second time he finds her being sexually molested by her employer. Both actions thus do not bring him closer to her, but widens the gap between them, thus, literally, dimming his hopes for a successful relationship with her. Thus, the *mise-en-scène* of a chasm and the dim colors of the shot which, conceptually, frame his social struggles as vain efforts which cannot overcome the socio-economic gap between them.

Finally, the composition of the shot presents an important perspective of social struggles and how these struggles shift, through a creation of alternative boundaries of marginality that does not depend on existing spatial binaries. As already indicated, composition of spaces, the slum and the uptown, signify opposed social and economic tiers. By extension, then, these represent different forms of struggles within the film. By using a long shot here, the filmmaker grants the character a lot of space, which though could signify a form of overwhelming void, it suggests freedom. He is seen outside the slum, hence outside the constraints of space which we associate with the slum when we see him with his ailing grandmother, or when he visits Jonah's house where close framing restricts him

generating a feeling of oppression. This shot, then reverses the idea of class struggles in Kibinge's *Killer Necklace*, which, while reminding us of the passive entrenchment of hierarchies in urban spaces, and by extension, embeddedness of social and economic hierarchies in spatial formations through which we get to see these hierarchic symbols, still has a counterpoint such as the one implied by this shot. In view of such a counterpoint, the slum in Kibinge's film presents the slum as a fugue space. This is actualized in two ways.

On one hand, the slum dweller provides contrapuntal reading of class struggles. We have Jonah, a ghetto outlaw who thrives on crime. Yet he is a humane individual who supports Boo in his education and life, and supports Boo's ailing grandmother. Here, crammed together in very poor conditions, the characters struggle each day to earn a living but show greater care for each other than is seen in uptown. Noni even pleads with Boo to take her out of the uptown home where she works. While in the slums the characters seem to be happy with each other, in the affluent family, there is remorse, deceit, and material greed. On the other hand, the slum, and the struggles that it embodies, empowers the characters to escape their insignificance in the city through dissociation. Whereas Boo cannot afford to pay for his college fees and even buy his grandmother medications, Jonah stands by his side and slowly makes him change his mind about relationship with uptown which, so far, has only brought him heartbreak. In the film, the slum offers less social struggles than the affluent estate, and, for Jonah, less economic struggles compared to characters like Noni. The contrast then deconstructs clichés of affluence as absence of struggles. The actual spaces used as the setting of the film, Majengo slums as the poor space, and Kitisuru as the affluent neighborhood, seek to give these two possibilities to counter a sense of realism to the discourse of class struggles.

There are moral lessons that we can derive from, and which stem from narration of space and social struggles. Starting from a socio-economic and spatial framing in *Killer Necklace*, this question seems to lead towards what the study discussed in the previous chapter on ideology. However, the difference is that there are some moral issues raised which fit social morality, but cannot be subjected to ideological enquiry. The first of this concerns materiality or what can be termed as the social currency of morality. Njeru (Sam Kihiu), the gardener in the lavish home, is a confidant of the obviously prohibited love affair between Boo and Noni. The agreed mode of negotiation is money which earns Boo

not only opportunities to visit his lover but also Njeru's protection. For instance, the day Boo was discovered inside the compound, Njeru stepped in and introduced him as a city municipal officer who had come to inspect the water meter.

Later, after Boo has bought the necklace for Noni, we see him tossing notes of money to Njeru, who happily collects them musing loudly whether it is his retirement pack. The character of Jonah is also instrumental in advancing a materialistic view of life. When we see him getting a haircut after the initial sequence of the film, he is surrounded by women. The scene is no different when Boo visits him wanting to join crime. At the narrow corridor leading to Jonah's room, there are two prostitutes who seductively follow him until he enters the house. There he finds Jonah with female gangsters, drinking beer and smoking shisha. Noni, Boo's love interest, perhaps best exemplifies the materiality of life in the city. By pretending to be from a rich family, she makes strenuous demands on Boo to buy her a gold necklace. It is in trying to find this necklace that Boo changes his morality from an honest young man to a city criminal. Finally, the mother of the affluent house also enlivens this material discourse in the way she responds to her husband's 'gift' of a necklace. Whereas she is initially harsh towards him, she immediately seems to cozy up as he gives her the necklace, which then gives their relationship a material dimension. What we learn from all these characters is the inseparability of material desires from immorality. This is perhaps the euphemistic connection that Kibinge seeks to establish by titling her film *Killer Necklace*. The necklace is a signifier of materialism in this film, with a potential to 'kill', metaphorically, the morality of all the characters involved.

Kibinge's film easily caricatures Kwaw Ansah's *Love Brewed in the African Pot* (1981). This film is a contemporary narrative about love and relationships, desire, hope, loss, despair, betrayal, and blackmail. It tells the story of love between Aba Appiah (Anima Misa) and Joe Quansah (Reginald Tsiboe) who, having different social and economic backgrounds falls in love and marries. Aba is considered an educated girl, but she chooses to become a dressmaker instead of going to university. Aba's father Kofi Appiah (George Wilson) and her mother Araba Mansah (Jumoke Debayo), are initially opposed to this marriage as they want their daughter to marry Mr. Bensah (Kofi Yirenkyi), a lawyer and son to the local councilor. Joe, on the other hand, is a semi-literate auto-mechanic. The

film's dramatic turn is when Joe becomes insecure and ruins their marriage soon after Aba becomes pregnant.

In the literature review, the study cited Stam's (2003, p. 45) argument that a film can be interpreted "symptomatically, as a metaphorical figure for social indictment . . . an allegorical text to be deciphered, a form of social colonics where the truth of a society can be 'read' in its waste products". By constantly referencing the class differences between Aba and Joe, the film draws attention to the social and economic gap between the two characters, and thus propagates a narrative of inequality that coerces the audiences to see their life experiences as signifiers of insurmountable boundaries. Because of this social and economic boundary, the viewer is also led to see Joe's pain of loss, the courage, and the strength to find hope in the face of all adversity as a struggle to overcome class boundaries. But unlike Boo who is required to provide material object as a proof of his love, Aba requires trust from Joe to appreciate her great love for him.

What is interesting to note in this case is that Kwaw Ansah reverses the class incursions we see in *Killer Necklace* where Boo aspires for higher social class. Here, Aba aspires for a more human life that only the lower social class status can assure. It is also curious that the film not only shows the class struggles and the pain that comes in challenging this boundary, but also the creative ways in which this boundary is challenged and disfigured, often causing social change. The study refers to this as the contrapuntal dimension of space, and it is the focus of the discussion in the next sub-section.

3.3.1 Contrapuntal View of Space

It is Edward Said (2003), the postcolonial theorist, who popularized the idea of contrapuntal reading of text to mean establishing relationships simultaneously in the course of textual analysis. Contrapuntal reading involves interpretation of a text's biographical and historical contexts simultaneously with the creative manipulations within it.

Even though space centered mainstream theoretical discourse came many years earlier, it was Lefebvre's (1991) that attempted some serious theorization of space in relation to human sociologies. Lefebvre (1991, p. 12) notes that "When we evoke 'space', we must immediately indicate what occupies that space and how it does so: the deployment of energy in relation to 'points' and within a time frame". In this respect, being in space is

not only the physical occupation, it also references the status of the occupier, and this in turn references other relationships that have been invoked, directly and indirectly, by the occupier. The study should perhaps point out an example at this moment, to show this relationship. When we look at the various films which the study shall discuss in more details in the rest of this chapter, there is constant reference to social classes, which are then reified through material composition and habitation of space. Boo in *Killer Necklace*, Otieno in *Kibera Kid*, Joe in *Love Brewed in the African Pot*, Tsotsi in *Tsotsi*, and Lucky Kunene in *Jerusalema: Gangster's Paradise* are characters who reside in poor sections of their respective societies. These characters highlight socio-economic inequalities and the resultant hierarchies. However, in respect to Lefebvre's space theory, their marginal spaces should also be read alongside their socio-economic disposition, so that they are signifiers of the broader issues within the society; Boo and Otieno represent Nairobi's history and present dimensions of social marginalization embedded in economic policies, Joe represents the euphoria associated with education and the perceived social status that it bestows upon individuals, Tsotsi and Lucky Kunene espouse the lingering and mutating faces of apartheid in present day South Africa and hence invoke the governance policies upon which these inequalities are based. We can see then how Lefebvre's theory comes to play when working with film texts. This proposition has a bearing on how we interpret film settings.

First, it links the analysis of composition and *mise-en-scène* to the various diegetic discourses, including those that hinge on class struggles. This is what Shepherd (2017) means when he asserts that space represents a "pillar of societal norms that reinforced Capitalist values, ultimately giving more power to the ruling hegemony", adding that it is "important to identify, name and critique complex social exchanges taking place in the formation of virtual and real space". This can be interpreted to suggest that social norms match to social strategies for preserving both hierarchies and categories upon which real spaces such as we see in *Killer Necklace*, or virtual spaces such as we see in *Love Brewed in an African Pot*, persists. The implication of this assertion to the study is that it anchors the analysis of social class as simultaneously hierarchical structure. Character misdeeds, seen by infiltrating different classes, spell out the complexity of the social exchanges that are possible between the different classes.

Second, it is important to regard spaces through the simpler actions of daily lives of characters inhabiting them. Again, Shepherd (2017) provides a striking framework in the argument that

The study of space can be closely linked to the day to day. Think about the various spaces we inhabit daily, the spaces we occupy in the cycle of a week. What do we do in these spaces, who makes us do them? For what purpose? What relational and expressive options are we given in social space; what social spaces are offered to us in a time where we see the systematic and on-going erosion of common space, side by side with the expansion of sites of explicit consumerism, i.e., the shopping center.

What comes to mind then is the way space can use arbitrary activities to advance powerful statements about human conditions, relationships, and trajectories. The idea of contrapuntal space draws from this interaction between space and day to day activities, which is the level at which film sequences, scenes, or shots can be analyzed. In fact, Lefebvre (1991, p. 7) links semiotics to reading of space, but with a caution that when “codes worked up from literary texts are applied ... Any attempt to use such codes as a means of deciphering social space must surely reduce that space itself to the status of a *message*, and the occupying of it to the status of a *reading*”. Even though it seems that he is dismissing the possibility of a semiotic reading of space, Lefebvre is paving way for his later clarification of the intersection between space and semiology, which is within the analytical scope of film. This is seen when he says that:

It is possible, and indeed normal, to decipher or decode spaces. This presupposes coding, a message, a reading and readers. What codes are involved? I use the plural advisedly, for it is doubtless as correct apropos of space as it is in the cases of philosophical and literary ‘readings’. The codes in question, however, still have to be named and enumerated: or else should this prove impossible, the questions of how and why this is so should be answered, and the meaning of this state of affairs explained (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 160).

For the case of film, the pertinence implied in this statement can be read simultaneously with other concurring voices. In an interview with David Harvey in 2013, Hiba BouAkar and Nada Moumtaz of Jadaliyya, an independent magazine by Arab Studies Institute, posits several key questions about space and its significance in social movements. They ask several questions: “Why do urban struggles matter in projects of social change? What is the importance of reclaiming public space in social movements? And at this gloomy global moment of extreme urban disparities and social inequalities, how do we re-think what is possible?”

It appears that such questions provoke us to find the connection between struggles and social agitations, and between the various categories of space which in essence is reading such spaces contrapuntally. It could be noted that these agitations must not be explicitly regarded as constituting marginality, but must also be seen as referencing some forms of not so direct forms of inclusion. The “distance that separates ‘ideal’ space, which has to do with mental...categories, from ‘real’ space, which is the space of social practice” reifies a contrapuntal nature as “each of these two kinds of space involves, underpins and presupposes the other” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 14). The argument for a contrapuntal reading of space is that this would allow us to question the signification of space both ways; upwards into higher social hierarchies, and downwards into lower tiers. It is upon this salient role of space in social narration that the study starts the reading of space class struggles in *Killer Necklace* and *Love Brewed in an African Pot*.

3.4 Space and Struggles of Class

The right to love and pursue love is an important moral high point in Kwaw Ansah’s film, *Love Brewed in the African Pot*. Aba is free to choose her marriage partner, even when her choice of Joe is clearly against the will of her parents. To this extent, her actions translate to a collapse of the socio-economic boundary that separates her from Joe. There are two things that proceed from her ability to exercise this fundamental right. One, she deconstructs the way class struggles is initially viewed within the film, so that the various sites where these binaries are embedded; mainly the home and the workplace, no longer fortify the class clusters, but are opened as places where characters struggle with their own

sense of class, what the study calls struggles of class. Two, this shift to struggles of class then postulates the dimming of differences between the social classes, which, as the study shall discuss, are articulated through cinematography. But before the study does so, the study would briefly like to contextualize the concept of classes as cocoons in which characters are bound by certain world-views, which when severed exposes their inner struggles within their cocoons. The study does so by referencing the interesting paradigm of cocoons in Bob Nyanja's film, *Malooned*.

When the film was released in 2007, it was widely seen as a campaign against tribal and ethnic cocoons in Kenyan population. The film tells the story of Di (Gabriella Mutia) and Luther Godfrey Odhiambo. Di, a female character, finds herself stuck overnight inside a in the ladies' toilet of the 15th floor of a Nairobi skyscraper with Luther, a male character. The star characters are meant to symbolize two rival tribes, Kikuyu and Luo ethnic groups respectively, who are trapped inside an inescapable location. The two characters, Luther and Di each have pressing duties to meet but cannot do so because of being in a locked-up location. As such, they are forced to forego their commitments and face the immediate task of coexisting. From the story of Luther and Di, one can deduce that there is need to work together to get out of a difficult situation. There are two social vulnerabilities that are played out in the film: Luther fears that he may be adjudged an aggressor to the female character. On her part, Di fears that if anything happens to Luther, she may be stereotypically misjudged as an evil Kikuyu woman who hurt a Luo man.

By using a secured setting for the film, Nyanja puts the two ethnicities at task to face what they have always considered impossible. As both characters try to look for solutions to get out of the toilet, they are faced with more serious problems; their inability to collaborate is impaired by their different ethnicities. By putting aside their differences, the characters foster an edutainment reading that for Kenyans, mistrusting and judging one another based on ethnicity or sexual orientation may not offer a solution. Instead, erasing tribal differences can make them overcome their seemingly impossible issues which, in the national space, include poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, corruption, and many other social problems.

In a 2007 interview with Ogova Ondego of [Art Matters](#), an entertainment website in Kenya, Nyanja reveals that the title of his film is a "corruption of 'marooned', as to be

marooned on an island. The word in the middle spells ‘loo’, a toilet”, further cautioning; “watch out you don’t get *Malooned* in a toilet next time”. In a later interview with Kevin Mwachiro of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Nairobi bureau, the interviewer describes *Malooned* as a film about “the prejudices and stereotypes that exist between different ethnic groups in Kenya. The prejudices depicted in the movie also touch on the ethnic nature of Kenyan politics”. Nyanja goes on to make a call for ethnic unity: “Let’s get out of our prejudiced toilets and work as a nation...By talking, we will discover we like one another even more than we know”, a call which, as Mwachiro reiterates, is also an expectation that the “movie will foster a spirit of reconciliation among Kenyans”.

These comments suggest that *Malooned* seeks to diffuse ethnic tensions in Kenya especially in the wake of the 2007-2008 post-election violence that was witnessed after the disputed election results. The conversation between Luther, a Luo man, and Di, a Kikuyu woman, concretizes this reading:

Luther: All those times that you have betrayed us counts for nothing. Jaramogi, he gave up his ambitions because of Kenyatta. And how did he repay him? He got kicked out. You people, you are just so thankless.

Di: That’s how politics goes.

Luther: Lies. All lies. So, if anything it’s you people who ought not to have anything against us.

Di: I am not just ‘you people’, I am Diana Wanjiru Mwangi. And I just saved your sorry ass.

Luther: Thank you. Thank you so much.

Di: ...If anything would have happened to you I would have been blamed.

Luther: Why? You didn’t do anything.

Di: It’s because of where I come from. I can just see the headlines: ‘Gold-digging Kikuyu woman kills Luo man. Rich Luo man in a toilet.

In this dialogue, Luther and Di pre-empt Kenya's historical present, that is, it renders the country's political history which continues to manifest even in the present. *Malooned* was released at a time when there was an electioneering mood in 2007-2008. The film was shot during the then ongoing political campaigns for presidential elections. It depicts the differences in political opinion and the philosophy between the Luos and the Kikuyus in Kenya or the Kikuyus and 'the rest'. The filmmaker developed the story based on putting one character, a Kikuyu – the woman and the other character a Luo – the man, holed up in a public toilet to address political differences and ethnicity using social framing. The important issue raised here is the issue of negative ethnicity in Kenya that led to the post-election violence of 2007-2008.

The reading that arises from this conversation overtly references the need to revisit Kenya's sense of nationalism. Nyanja suggests that we are 'stuck' in one country or 'Loo' (restroom) called Kenya, and by this gesture of an impossible unity, he spells out the need for unity. Just as the characters are completely in one area without outside access, Kenyans are stuck together within the territorial boundaries and should work together. Even though there is no trust among the characters, the resolution of the film showing Luther and Di detaching themselves from their old relationships (a marriage and a kid family respectively) to become lovers foresees a chronicle of national reconciliation. The film contends that different ethnic communities need to put aside their differences for the country the way the two characters did and managed to get out of the toilet.

Two things emerge from the foregoing conversations. One, that we get to understand the film's central idea as one of isolation, or being marooned, in individual ethnic enclaves. The corrupted title 'malooned' only brings along the connotations of filth, of waste, and of the uselessness of these cocoons. Two, the call not to be malooned is a social call against being stuck in divisive and unnecessary cocoons, so that ethnic animosities are deconstructed and flattened out. We see them as unnecessary barriers. Because Luther and Di represent identifiable ethnicities in the film, Luo and Kikuyu respectively, they also embody the political history of these two ethnic groupings which have lingered in Kenyan politics to date. By coming together at the end of the film, the film presages the erasure of the political gulf, thus indulging in not just the harsh political standpoints about Kenya, but also in the possible collapse of these political and ethnic

cocoons. In this sense, Nyanja moralizes Kenyan politics, making a reconciliatory argument which can be read beyond the diegesis and projected into the actual political landscape in Kenya. It is this connection which elicits the social interventionist role of *Malooned*. This film refocuses contemporary discourses of citizenship in Kenya away from cocoons and towards a cohesive future.

The same theme of cocoons is also presented in *Love Brewed in the African Pot* where Aba is torn between maintaining the ideals of her social class and make his father happy, or collapse these walls and open the struggles that are concealed behind the segregation barriers associated with social classes. The director has compelled the audience to recognize how clash of classes has brought in negative actions like family turmoil.

In the first instance, we can argue that the film deconstructs the way we initially view class struggles within the society so that the various sites where these binaries are embedded; mainly the home and the workplace, no longer fortify the class clusters, but are opened as places where characters struggle with their own version of class. Kofi Appiah's family starts out as the ideal, moralistic, upper class home that enjoys good social standing. There is show of family unity and normal family life where the children are happy and the parents are content. But we soon learn, when he does not attend a community function but instead sends his donation, that his family is marooned by the trappings of socio-economic grandeur, and that this has isolated him among the community. We then start to understand his secured family life as a naturalization of his mental space in which he is exceptional, and believes his children to be so.

Furthermore, by opening his family to scrutiny, it reveals how the idea of social classes contravenes his social norms, so that his idealistic pre-occupation with occluding himself brings no meaning to his sense of self. Instead, it confines him to an inner war in which his perceived status functions as a cocoon that works against him. In this film, the antagonism between Aba's and Joe's families is purely material and idealistic. Material because it is his perceived poverty that foremost makes him unsuitable to marry Aba. And idealistic because he is illiterate, and hence of lower social standing. What the director achieves with this contrast is to map out social processes like marriage being entangled in class struggles. In the sequence of Aba's wedding, we however get to see these class

struggles shifting to struggles of class as Aba's father is caught between the traditional communal world and his mental marooned world of modernity.

At the time of Aba's and Joe's traditional wedding in the village square (see Figure vi and vii), Aba's father is alone at home. He has chosen to skip his daughter's wedding rather than be enjoined in the traditional community which he considers way below his social status. The director uses an introspection approach and shows us Kofi Appiah's wishful imaginations of a Christian wedding (see Figure viii and ix). The simultaneity of the physical traditional and the mental Christian weddings, and the study call them weddings because they invoke equal weight in Appiah's mind, provides a contrasting framing of two opposed social ideals, and thus accentuate his struggles to fit within his social class at a time when he is expected to descend and mingle with the people he regards as of lower social status. To this extent, the juxtaposition and simultaneity of both versions of Aba's wedding deconstructs the way we initially view class struggles within the society so that Kofi Appiah's house is a quasi-traditional, quasi-modern; or quasi-low-class, quasi-high class respectively. These two weddings also show the struggles to separate the physical, social, and mental spaces when they overlap within the discursive process of wedding which is communal by nature. This struggle can be seen in the medium closeup shot of Aba and her mother, Araba, as they think about her father's absence.



Figure vi: A medium close-up shot of Aba and her mother, Araba, discussing his father's absence from her wedding in Kwaw Ansah's film, *Love Brewed in the African Pot*, at time frame 00:51:20.

This medium shot is snipped from the sequence of Aba's and Joe's wedding. Its framing emphasizes a daughter-mother moment as Aba and Araba briefly converse about her father's absence from the wedding. In the background are some of the other community

members who have congregated to celebrate the event. Soon after this moment, Araba goes to look for Appiah who has not attended her daughters traditional wedding ceremony. Meanwhile, the director also uses wide angle shots to highlight the traditional ambience of this wedding (see figure vii). This shot is framed to emphasize the traditional performance and the communal presence in the event, so that later when we see Appiah boycotting the event, we understand his boycott in the context of the wider communal structures from which he is excluding himself. In the foreground are some of the members of the community, in the middle ground is an open arena where some performances, which include dancing and singing are continuing. In the background is another group of the community members in attendance. The extensive coverage of the wedding event shows it as a successful community event. It gives it legitimacy and approval from the entire community. What then should we make from Appiah's decision not to take part? Is such an approval not also a call to notice and question his exclusion? There is strong motivation to recognize Appiah's self-exclusion from social participation as evidence of his inner struggles with his mental ideals of class. At the same time, the visual style of these films is equally significant in increasing the view of Aba's narrative as a counter-narrative to the ideals of modernity in which his father is perpetually marooned. This shift to Appiah's inner struggles of class then postulates the dimming of differences between the social classes, which, as the study shall discuss, are articulated through cinematography.



Figure vii: A wide shot of community celebrating Aba and Joe's wedding in Kwaw Ansah's film, *Love Brewed in the African Pot*, at time frame 00:51:53.

In *Love brewed in the African Pot*, the director extensively uses dark color hues and dark lighting. This gives his film a neo-noir look, which improves the story's aura of gloom. Gloom here, created through this cinematography choice, connotes a concept by which we can discuss the struggles of class which ends with total collapse of the characters. It is the same visual strategy that Judy Kibinge uses in *Killer Necklace* to darken the mood of the film. Such hues lead the viewer to experience the dullness of the narrative, and thus get enjoined in the process of narration. Given the many uncertainties in the film surrounding the inertia or even rigidity of social hierarchies, how best can this neo-noir ambience be interpreted?

Abrams (2007, p. 7) argues that with neo-noir the “character is “divided” against himself, although not so much emotionally ... as epistemologically: divided in time as two selves, and one is looking for the other”. Read in the context of Kwaw Ansah’s film, the character of Appiah construes this paradigm of a neo-noir filmmaking where he is torn between himself and the society, and between his opposing mental viewpoints. Whereas in this film Aba’s and Joe’s lives are complicated because of differences in their social classes, they are uncoordinated with Appiah’s worldview, and hence represent a dimming of his hopes for a well-off suitor for his daughter. Again, this fits within the purview of neo-noir filmmaking, which has been linked to various social discourses. Neo-noir is instrumental in “placing of social issues, like race, class, and gender... at the forefront of dark cinema, basically because they have come to the forefront of contemporary society” (Abrams, 2007, p. 8). The question then becomes what issues that Kwaw Ansah is bringing to the forefront of his film? The most outstanding concerns social and class issues, embodied by the character of Appiah.

As this wedding is going on, the director cuts to another parallel sequence that shows Aba’s father inside their home dressed for a modern wedding (see Figure viii). In this shot, the use of composition emphasizes a sense of emptiness, thus making the character look forlorn. Standing at the foreground, Appiah is surrounded by furniture. He has no friend, which isolates him from the community which he has repeatedly refused to identify with all along. The use of sepia tone for this image augments this isolation, by initiating a mismatch between his color scheme and that of the community outside. Isolating himself from the community during his daughter’s wedding represents his inner

struggles which, on one hand, demand of him to maintain a modernist social stature, and on the other, his social obligations to his community and his family. As this shot ends, he sits down on a chair and then the camera zooms in to his face and transitions to a scene of church wedding, revealing his inner fantasies. This is an introspection of his inner struggles.



Figure viii: A medium shot of Aba's father inside the house alone after absconding her daughter's wedding in Kwaw Ansah's film, *Love Brewed in the African Pot*, at time frame 00:52:47.

The eventual expression of these struggles can be seen in this image where the happy father is seen with his daughter during her 'church wedding' (see Figure ix). The shot is framed at a close-up so that their smiles are given prominence. It also frames out all the other characters so that the symbolism of the wedding is confined to the father's fantasies about his daughter's ideal wedding. It is therefore most telling as this shot jump-cut to Aba and Joe inside their matrimonial home. This shot is dark and with neo-noir hues, adding to eerie the feeling associated with cross-class relationships.



Figure ix: A close-up shot of Aba and her father in the introspection shot in Kwaw Ansah's film, *Love Brewed in the African Pot*, at time frame 00:55:15.

By extension, these differences are bundled with different expectations from their families. While Aba is educated, Joe is semi-illiterate. Joe comes from a fishing family and this background does not augur well with Aba's parents who feel that their daughter deserves to marry a lawyer. Joe's father warns his son that he is playing with fire by marrying Aba, an issue that is emphasized when they have their first marital conflict as Joe repeatedly invokes their social differences, alerting the viewer to the role of perceived socio-economic differences in their lives. Simply by belonging to different socio-economic tiers, Joe and Aba are considered a mismatch. The greatest gloom, however, is that which exists inside the characters' lives. In Kofi Appiah's home, Aba ends in a mental hospital after the failure of her marriage to Joe. On his part, Joe undergoes emotional trauma due to his inferiority as he believes Aba has been unfaithful to him. In their final reunion inside the mental hospital, the director does not give a decisive result, rather he suggests, by having Joe carry Aba out of the room where their parents and hospital staff are congregated, that the father may indeed be a more likely candidate for the mental hospital where he remains. This however does not abolish the socio-economic barrier that has kept them insecure nor erase the emotional trauma.

Finally, the other form of class struggle which can be discussed using the gloom concept concerns the inner struggles that characters undergo when they are caught between tradition, a symbol of the primitive social class they flee from, on one hand, and the problems of modernity, which is their preferred social lifestyle, which cannot be resolved, on the other hand. The divide between the civilized society and the traditional society is given prominence using the two families, where Aba's family is superior to that of Joe in terms of modern education. This means that the Aba family likes to be associated with the modern ways as opposed to the Joe's family which seems happy to be in the other league of traditions. When Aba refuses to marry a rich lawyer, he seeks the services of a witch doctor who casts a spell on the two lovers bringing confusion between them. Her father realizes that her madness could not be cured with modern medicine, he takes her to witchdoctors who heal her. Through this incidence, we see Appiah's family as a transitory family; with traditional roots, but modernist ideals. His formal employment seems to be the only distinguishing reason as it confers on his family an elitist expectation. On the other

hand, Joe comes from a family of fishers, which, in the same way, confers on him a lowly social status.

The film uses the marriage gifts brought to the family by Aba's suitors to concretize this classification. While Joe's father brings traditional brew to the family of Aba, the family of the rich lawyer brings modern gifts like money. This is the conflict that we see later in the film when Appiah is fantasizing about his daughter's Christian wedding while, at that moment, she is undergoing a traditional wedding ceremony. At this point, we can then see the essence of dark neo-noir lighting in conveying the tensions within the narrative. While Appiah remains isolated at home, the audience is being invited to be a detective to his secret misery, and to 'open up' his mind and inspect the fantasies. This then explains the role of the introspection shot that, technically carried out as a flashback by zooming to the character's face and transitioning into his 'thoughts', it however defies characterization as a flashback and instead becomes a parallel present. The two weddings, the physical one in the community arena, and the mental one inside Appiah's mind, happen concurrently. Only that his daughter Aba and his wife Araba do not know this. Through these two approaches, the first focusing on domestic and public spaces, and the other using cinematography to expand a story of struggles of class, Kwaw Ansah delivers useful social commentaries on the effect of social and economic class struggles in disorienting characters within shared spaces. Just like other directors discussed earlier, Ansah lingers on moral aesthetics of cinema and by extension, on social issues that plague societies entangled in such moral decisions.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the study has discussed the connection between space and social struggles, and how this forms significant social conversation. The study made three key readings. First, that the films use space and characterization to peel off the notion of social inequalities as simultaneously an issue of justifying socio-economic hierarchies. These often take a spatial dimension as the main reference point as we see in Judy Kibinge's *Killer Necklace* where the choice of settings compares Mukuru slums with Kitisuru, an upmarket estate. In turn, this comparison construes performance of classes and thus foments arbitrary boundaries between communities occupying either spatial tier.

Second, the study has discussed how characters, especially those in lower spatial tiers, try to use their marginality to set up alternative hierarchies in which they are able to ascend beyond their occlusion. Referring to *Killer Necklace* and *Love Brewed in the African Pot*, the study has discussed Boo and Joe, respectively, transcend hierarchies and spatial boundaries thus lifting their own social standing without necessarily moving to the upper-class tiers. The study refer to the resultant social spaces as fugue spaces.

Third, the study has discussed how, especially among the upper class social tiers, characters also struggle with the ideals of their social standing. The study refers to this as struggles of class. The study has used *Love Brewed in the African Pot* as the primary text, and focused on the character of Appiah who idealizes modernity while existing within a traditional framework. Again, the point is that whereas marooned life decrees a perceptible form of contrasts between upper and lower socio-economic tiers, the theme of class act is clearly questioned in many scenes. The films' role in interviewing social enclaves cannot be questioned in that there is clear attempt to show the urgency for social reforms.

Although the chapter used only two films as primary texts, it supported the arguments by extensively referring to similarly engaging films Bob Nyanja's *Malooned* (2007), Tosh Gitonga's *Nairobi Half Life* (2012), Gavin Hood's *Tsotsi* (2005), Ralph Ziman's *Jerusalema: Gangster's Paradise* (2008), Nathan Collett's *Kibera Kid* (2006), and Diego Quemada-Diez's *I Want to be a Pilot* (2006).

Overall, the films portray deviance behavior rooted in the general condition and daily struggles of ordinary people. They are also documentations of prevailing belief systems, values, traditions, and culture, and therefore embody the philosophies of their diegetic societies. By packaging social messages about reformed societies in their various elements, these films redirect the behavior of the characters, and by the extension the viewers, towards specific social gaps. For instance, class struggles and struggles with class are exemplary approaches of how the film takes on an interventionist approach to important social issues.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: FROM POST-COLONIAL AESTHETICS TO SOCIAL PLURALISM

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, the study has discussed how the various films raise ideological and social standpoints, and by so doing, postulate important debates that often lean on neorealist style of narration. The idea of Islamic religious ideology and terrorism as an inherent result of that ideology still pervades much of present-day global social and political conversations. This is obvious in for instance, the specialist social hybrid approach to terrorism by the Center for Social and Economic Studies (2002). Equally, the notion of space hierarchies and class struggles which the study has discussed in a later chapter is also part of global conversations today (see, for instance, Bond & Ruiters; 2016 and Eckert; 2017). By focusing on these issues, the films can be said to have adopted a neorealism approach to social narration.

Through this mimetic approach, then, another possible reading arises. This concerns how the films, focusing on the so called Third World, indulge in matters that shape Third World conversations today. It is severally documented that the broad label of Third Cinema and African Cinema, cannot be divorced from its affinity to neorealism in the sense explained by Schipper (1985), Eyoh (1998), and Niang (2012), or social and political expediency in the sense discussed by Ukadike (1994) and Diawara (1992). It is for this reason, then, that the study undertakes to discuss the aesthetics of such films as forms of resistance, of highlighting what Sisk (1995, p. 259) calls the elusive social contract that would “not eradicate identity politics... [but] would recognize and protect ethnic, linguistic and religious rights through a bill of rights without making “ethnicity the basis of national unity”. This corresponds to the third and final objective of the study.

In this chapter, the study seeks to show how African films are working to re-orient diegetic and peri-diegetic introspection towards the African subject who for a long time has remained marginal element, part of the props necessary to foster western ideology of the illiterate, animalistic, degenerative African. And this, from a social framing, construes a discourse of social intervention through pluralistic campaigns. The chapter shall analyze Abderrahmane Sissako’s *Bamako* (2006), Bob Nyanja’s *Malooned* (2007), and Veronica

Quarshie's *A Stab in the Dark* (1999). It shall be divided into three parts. Part one discusses the use of aesthetics of Third World filmmaking to advance social messages. Given that such messages are not necessarily 'heard' in the global arena, the study shall follow up this argument in the second part that discusses contingencies of African-ness, that is, how the idea of being an African is contested through political hegemonic discourses even in the postcolonial state. The connecting factor between this part and the third part is that the study considers this African alienation as a continuity of Africa's own inherent problems. In this third part the study discusses how ethnic occlusion, a microcosm of global marginality, is mitigated through pluralism.

4.2 From Third Cinema Aesthetics to Alternative Social Voices of Diversity

This subchapter will discuss the notions of tolerance to difference of views as espoused in selected films. It is premised on the idea that the tolerance of difference of colour, race, ethnicity, gender religion or even race is a precursor to pluralism. In the first chapter of Wayne's (2001) book titled *Third Cinema as Critical Practice: A Case Study of The Battle of Algiers*, the author makes a rather interesting commentary on the role of Third Cinema in what he calls "social and cultural emancipation" (p. 5). In response to his rather rhetoric question of 'What is Third Cinema,' he answers that;

Above all the term designates a body of theory and filmmaking practice committed to social and cultural emancipation. This body of filmmaking is small, indeed tiny in terms of world cinema output. Yet Third Cinema films are amongst the most exciting and challenging films ever to be made, their political and cultural significance amplified by their proximity and intervention into the major historical processes of the epoch (Wayne, 2001, p. 5).

This observation asks us to re-orient our thinking of Third World cinema, and African cinema specifically, so we recognize the inherent relationship between such cinema and the social, cultural, and political realities from which it emanates. This thinking resonates with the possibility that the aesthetics within such films traverse various possible

readings of the continent's social, cultural, and political realities. In other words, Wayne is highlighting the situations of African cinema within the global discourse of neorealism cinema comprehensively documented by Giovacchini & Sklar (2012). This resonates with Kwaw Ansah's words in an interview with the researcher, where he advises any African filmmaker to "ensure that you have a strong true story to tell and tell it very well truthfully" (See Appendix 4 transcript VI). First, from a technical point of view, Third Cinema film could be read as an interface between Africa's lingering social configurations and the global stage where these are, within a historical system of propaganda, subverted. But whether these can be articulated without justifying such subversion remains an enigmatic issue in the sense that the film itself originates from the First World, and therefore carries along the tentacles of social reproduction that are embellished in the capitalist and colonial thinking from which it arises. For instance, the question of *auteur* is pronounced even more when we consider the role of the director in imagining the scope of the film itself, and hence the focus of the narrative, which in many instances, originate from directors trained outside the continent. It is also questionable, considering the problems inherent in Africa's social, political, and economic activities, whether the West's representation of the continent is a misrepresentation or an account of possible realities.

By and large, and this is the second point, we are faced with a situation where we must recognize the intervention, or emancipation, premised on local reproduction of 'realities' as a microcosm of larger structures within the continent that imbricate not just the diegetic communities but also the larger systems of human social and cultural fusions within the continent. Rather, we cannot think of this emancipation outside the post-colonial thinking within which we are inherently reborn, and continuously immersed through daily actions. The perspectives of African-ness cannot be sufficiently explored through only cinema from the continent, but also the meta-discourses within such cinema which allows us to access possible counter-discourses. This study discusses some selected readings about postcolonial cinema in Africa, starting with Diang'a (2013) who notes that Third Cinema provides a counter-discourse to the prevailing Western oriented cinema representations of, among other Third World regions, Africa. She notes that;

The cinema that emanated from this need for cultural and political emancipation had to be loaded with pedagogical messages that would

inform not only the oppressed of his predicament and the need to move out of it, but would also tell the ‘oppressor’, about the misconceptions delivered to him via the several cultural artifacts from both early voyageurs and colonial artists operating within first and second cinema. The cinema worked towards contesting mediated images of African from the Western cinemas and television newscasts (p. 48).

Diang’a here raises important points about the way we can approach the study of African cinema. One, she proposes that we should see such cinema as a discourse of cultural and political emancipation, which then could be read alongside similar views (see Wayne (2001) and Ukadike (1994) for instance) to suggest the need for seeing cinema as a dialogic medium between the continent’s social narratives and the global techno-capitalism which sustains an ideological isolation between Africa and the rest of the world. Two, and this springs from the above role, African cinema is a counter cinema in the sense that it gives an alternative image of the continent which may influence how the ‘oppressors’ make out the continent in the context of postcolonial realities and its alternative and plural voices. Of course, such a call presumes the neutrality of the spectator which may not always be given, but which is now being demanded through the African cinema’s nonrealistic approach. What comes to mind in reading this notion of African cinema ‘fighting back’ western misrepresentation is whether the new narratives that are emerging from the continent highlight its diversity, effects of global encroachment, or rather global intrusion on African affairs, or just think about ways of artistic defiance. The response to this would be that such films ought to be seen as discourses, fighting to localize the African gaze, to the African situation. This is a view supported by Timothy Njooora who in an interview for this study affirmed the need for Kenyan films (African films) promoting the Kenyan image (African image). (See appendix 4 transcript X).

Sembene Ousmane, an early cinema personality in postcolonial considered the father of Africa’s postcolonial cinema, has used the medium to ‘voice’ the continent’s lull voices which have not been articulated in colonial narratives and thereby advocating for its plurality. As Ukadike (1994, p. 295), another postcolonial African cinema scholar, suggests, “concern for Africa’s freedom and dignity is also foremost in Sembene’s

cinematic analysis of the continent's problematic emancipation". Terming it 'problematic emancipation,' he invokes the technical and political leeway possible in what he further calls "mirroring today's realities" (295) so that films like *Camp de Thiaroye* "not only shows us the processes the colonizers used to chew away Africa to its bare bones but also the tradition that sometimes reflects the muteness of Africa in the so called new world order (read: new world disorder)" (Ukadike, 1994, p. 295). Muteness here is a strong conceptual metaphor that connotes, among others, the lack of 'voice' through cinematic styles which adopt a western view.

Further, there are other concerns about the role of contemporary African filmmakers in the ongoing modes of artistic, and hence ideo-political intrusion into the African society. As Armes (2006, p. 68) suggests, although "[e]xploring the realities that surrounded them and communicating these via the screen seemed initially the key demands made on filmmakers...there is a certain continuity with the mood of the 1960s – exemplified by the writings of Frantz Fanon – which sought a new awareness of national identity in all countries emerging from colonial rule." By recalling this connection here, Armes alerts us to the never broken reality of subversion in Africa, and equally persistent reality of protest through such mediums as African cinema. This temporal continuity thus questions whether we can think of and discuss the present without also invoking this past, and the other way around. This sort of tunneling of the representational effort has seeped into current cinematic efforts such as can be seen in Veronica Quarshie's *A Stab in the Dark* (1999), whose work is largely seen as an effort to fight back social ills. This Ghanaian director has positioned herself as a gender and social activist using her cinema productions to campaign for social change. In a 2016 interview with the researcher, she adds her voice to Africa's postcolonial cinema criticism, noting that:

The main intention in developing the story was to address social issues devoid of elements that border on superstition like witchcraft and spiritual elements as the only way of solving problems. Hordes of the video movies at that time usually resolved issues by spiritual means. Second, we wanted to raise the image of women in the videos. (See Appendix 4 Transcript IV)

The point she is making is that her film is an attempt to highlight social issues affecting women. These include dominant masculinity such as we see by contrasting Kate and her father. Despite their intense conflict that follows when her father decides to have sex with Kate's friend, Effe, Kate cannot confront her father directly, but makes her case through her mother. This is in tandem with the African culture that forbids children from directly confronting their parents. But this portrayal also questions the role of this dominant order in continuing social ills. That the father's authority to kick Kate out of the house cannot be contested, not even by his wife, polarizes the society. In this way, the account makes several social interventions by pinpointing the moral liability of male chauvinism in social order. The narrative of sexual interests around Effe starts with Dan, Kate's young brother, who seems interested to have a relationship with Effe. The idea of father and son wanting the same woman is one of taboo, so that when we see Koffi, the father, having sex with the young woman after he employs her as his secretary in his office, we are also seeing the son, Dan, who has been deprived of love.

Later, Effe's social position within Koffi's life shifts from one of a young employee, to a concubine, which poses a huge question of morality. When Koffi chases his daughter, Kate from home, we are then confronted with a moral imperative requiring us to notice Effe and Koffi's sexual affair as an action that changes the social condition of the family. In this respect, family life is emblematic of the larger society where poverty, embodied by Effe, becomes a force that challenges social norms by inculcating social woes. Furthermore, although this film seems to focus on the sexual immorality of Effe, a poor girl who is hosted by her friend, Kate, in their rich family, it is also a commentary on the role of poverty in continuing social malaise. The take home is not only this hegemonic sub-narrative, but rather the overall narrative of silences and poverty about these silences, and the ills that result within the African society at large.

There is a moral story to be read about the nature of the African subject whose hard life circumstances are blamed on poverty. The idea of moral realism is then triggered as we think about how characters like Effe try to overcome their social and economic challenges. Effe in this film is a signifier of a poor society that is limited by its own lowly socio-economic conditions, and in this respect, she is comparable to the leading poor female

character, Melé, in Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako* (2006) in that she embodies the woes of the poverty that drives individuals through paths that in turn lead to the disintegration of the community. For Effe, it is the destruction of Koffi's marriage while for Melé, it is the ruination of her marriage to Chaka. The ruin of the family in both cases suggests the disintegration of Africa's social institutions through poverty, which in turn, as voiced in *Bamako*, cannot be separated from the global institutions which have enforced exploitative financial policies on Africa.

Bamako tells the family story of Chaka (Tiécoura Traoré) and Melé (Aïssa Maïga) whose marriage is in a downfall. It starts with the lone image of Chaka returning home at dusk. The scene is lit in dull lighting and uses cinematography that emphasizes gloom. This choice of lighting and setting could be understood within the narrative's focus on the problems of poverty in Africa, and the challenges it poses to social cohesion. This film alerts the 'world' to gloom of Africa's rise against the injustices imposed upon the continent. Built around an ongoing law suit against International Monetary Fund and World Bank for their role in oppressing Africa, Sissako's film alerts us to the Western arrogance and the need for an assertive African who must not shy from a legal battle with the West, but should face the West's diminutive discourse of Africa.

The film poses various consecutive narratives, but here this study shall focus on only three of them. The first and the main narrative is about the trial of International Monetary Fund and World Bank by Malians who feel they have been tricked to ruining themselves and to subjecting themselves into economic slavery. This trial is at the center of the narrative and takes place in the village courtyard. The "trial becomes a space in which Malians are able to speak, to protest, to contest, and to do so outside the bounds of what is authorized. Their speech, precisely because it is unauthorized, challenges the authority of the order in which it participates" (Oscherwitz, 2015). This reading invites us to see the courtyard trial as a counter-discourse to Western stereotyping of African governance, so that we understand the accoutrements that contribute to poverty and emaciation of African citizens namely, Western economic enslavement.

The second narrative is based on Chaka's and Melé's marriage struggles. While Melé tries to succeed in her music career in traumatic circumstances, even more so when her husband dies, she embodies the everyday struggles that citizens undergo and her

character maps out the social catastrophes that lie in the wake of Western financial destabilization in Africa. The breakup of her marriage is symbolic of the larger breakup of the African nations from the Western imperial institutions. The largely reversed roles within her marriage, where she works out to provide for the marriage while her husband remains home and takes care of their daughter is a powerful symbol of how social order African nations has been reversed. Again, the death of her husband is metaphorical of the tragic end that arises from such reversal, where Africa is oppressed to death. From this narrative staging, we can see how Sissako is using social situations and institutions to caricature broad social and economic issues at a global level.

The third and final narrative that this study shall also allude to concerns the lives of ordinary citizens who go on about their duties around the trial space, but are not bothered to take part. This aloofness frames the skepticism with which Africans protest western influences, so that the “internal (indigenous) and external (foreign) dynamics of the struggles within these societies ... [come] to a halt” (Ukadike, 1994, p. 27). The external struggles are embodied by the legal voices while internal struggles are embodied by Chaka’s musical career and her marital struggles, and the daily lives of the Malians that unfolds outside the courtyard. But it is even more concretized in the characterizations of the African witness (see Figures i and ii) who are seen as the most realistic representatives of the Malian state. This study suggest so because, whereas the case is argued from a legal perspective, the narrative unfolds from a social and human perspective that cannot be articulated in the large document folders on the lawyers’ table, but are embedded as part and parcel of the character of these witnesses, starting with their characterization to their disinterested dialogues. Such resignation could also signal the “colonial-think” so that the oppressor seems invincible.

These three concurrent narratives are essential in drawing connections between poverty in Mali, and the state’s engagement with imperialistic global institutions, and therefore enhancing the realism of the postcolonial narrative. We get to understand not only the trial within the confines of law, but also through the lenses of the victims on whose behalf the trial has been convened. In this sense, *Bamako* is a film that “explores the experiences and consequences of neo-colonialism in the African nation and by extension the Global South as a whole” (Oscherwitz, 2015, p. 82). How then can we speak of such a

presentation as an attempt to Africanize the African thought when the West is at the center of the film narrative? If we factor in this question in the analysis of the trial, it shifts from legal arguments to trial of the bodies and life circumstances of the Malians going about with their daily routines. Sissako's *Bamako* vests these struggles within the corpus of various characters. The first of these is Zegue Bamba.



Figure i: A medium shot of Zegue Bamba, a witness who is refused the opportunity to testify in Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako*. Screenshot at time frame 00:03:43.

At the start of the trial, Zegue Bamba comes from the audience and stands on the witness dock. Yet he is denied an opportunity to testify. In this shot we see him as he tries to give his witness testimony. It is perhaps the dialogue that results which alerts us to the trial's obsession with process, to the extent that it blots out the social justice it is convened to administer.

Zegue Bamba: Words are something...they can seize you in your heart. It's bad if you keep them inside.

Court Usher: You can say what you have in your heart when the time comes. Since he hasn't asked you to speak, stop now and sit down.

Zegue Bamba: It doesn't matter... the goat has its ideas but so does the hen. When you come for something you have to do it. You must know why you

are here. But coming and leaving without speaking... my words won't remain within me.

At the outset, Bamba's words may fail to elicit any attention, especially his reference to the goat and the hen. But when later the first lawyer who addresses the court frames the debt that African countries owe to western financial institutions in social terms, we understand Bamba's words as a call to reframe the idea of poverty which is what the first witness, Madame Traore, explicates in her argument that shifts from poverty to pauperization. The point she makes is that whereas huge chunks of the domestic budget goes towards repaying the debt, people are left without social amenities and structures. The debt thus cannot just be seen as an economic transaction, but a social process of neocolonialism whose effects are not just economic but also social. Denying Bamba a chance to speak is denying to hear about pauperization which he embodies, the social dimension of the debt.

The relationship is governed by lies, hypocrisy and cynicism. Everything is done to make sure Africans are unaware of the system's rapacity. That is what I denounce when I say the impetus is northern but the theft is local, done with our complicity... I would rather we talk about pauperization than poverty... Why should the fate of people depend on their ability to produce and sell abroad?

Here, Madame Traore draws attention to the role of economic exploitation, and how the terms of western economic interventions are calculations to reinforce poverty. Similarly, defending the west, Mr. Rappaport interrogates Mr. Keita, the second character in whom Sissako's *Bamako* vests the struggles of Malians. Keita summarizes African pauperization, what he calls 'imposed destitution' using social references. He says:

we are bogged down in anti-development, malnutrition, undernourishment, chronic illiteracy, chronic unemployment, and even the total lack of decent living conditions. As we can see, promiscuity reigns... What does this lead

to? The total degeneration of the foundations that represented our society's key values.

Oscherwitz's (2015, p. 82), reading of Third World cinema is tangential to the discussion of Africanization of cinema in Africa, when, for instance, he posits that for postcolonial Africa, "the chief currency of colonial-think...is as much the image as the word, and perhaps more so, that circulates and perpetuates colonial think in both the Global North and the Global South". The image is an aliterative term that can be taken to imply cinema as well, so that the idea of a colonial-mentality cannot be divorced from the images of Africa. Cinema is a key medium through which such images are propagated. This alludes to a popular thought about Africa which nevertheless, is hinged on the morality of the narratives which are told about the continent. Africanization of the African cinema thus happens in tandem with the moralization of the African subject, or the African character as we would see in film.



Figure ii: A medium shot of Mr. Keita, a witness who testifies in Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako*. Screenshot at time frame 00:46:52.

Rothman (2004) also raises similar issues, arguing that

In the original theatrical melodramas of the early nineteenth century, heroine and villain declare their moral natures. Announcing themselves to be human exemplars of the occult forces of good and evil, they perform acts of "self-nomination." But in films, human beings never stand revealed by their own gestures alone. They are always also revealed by the camera (p. 87).

Rothman here raises various issues. The first is concerned with how the characters within the film could, and should be seen as examples of opposing forces. Their attributions

of heroin or villain spouse essential character traits which are built on, and continue to build, a moral and social narrative within the film. Second, the idea of ‘self-nomination’ takes center stage in exhibitions of their features, meaning that their actions should be read within the context of the social stories set in their own characterization. This argument leads us to the next point which Rothman (2004, p. 87) makes in the discourse of nomination, espoused in the statement that

the camera can “nominate” a human subject as an exemplar of evil only by revealing at the same time that this figure’s villainy is inseparable from the camera’s bond with him or her – that is, only by nominating itself as well, and thereby implicating the film’s creators and viewers. When human beings appear inhuman in films, as they often do, the camera is instrumental in creating their inhumanity.

By this statement, the scholar alludes to the need to see the camera, the narrator in cinema, as a strategic device for choosing both the characteristics of the characters which are to be developed and brought forth, and the qualities suggested by these characteristics as well. If we look at the film as a (social) narrative, the ‘I’ of the film becomes a guiding point of view of how, in the context of the Third World, these images nominated by the camera constitute a ‘way of seeing’ (Berger, Fox, Blomberg, Dibb, & Hollis, 1972) the Third World, and by extension construe a narrative about how, specifically, the African continent is being imagined and represented in its postcolonial cinema narratives. Such can also be said to constitute a social consciousness about the issues about which the film narrates.

The implication therefore is that as the viewer, we are faced with a techno-social - ideological prism where our reading of the image cannot be divorced from the social and ideological leanings presumed by the cinematography, and by extension, the ‘I’ of the narratives. The ‘I’ here has two inclinations. One, it refers to the diegetic camera persona who, by attaching with specific characters and ‘following’ these characters, maps out an ideological pattern which we are presented through montage, *mise-en-scène*, and composition. Two, it could also infer to the viewer who, through association with the film narrative through spectatorship, is incited and bound by the semiotic conventions which

mediate meaning between the viewer and the film image. In the former, the assumption is that the camera, despite being guided by the director and other technical staff during the production, does not reproduce their thoughts per se, but ‘sees’, and therefore exposes a personalized version of an authentic narrative that bears the trappings of its exoteric potential as a narration device. In the latter, the viewer, being detached from the narrative, is also seen as a persistent narrator in his or her own right in the sense that interpretation of the image is not guided by a pre-programmed way of seeing, but occurs at once and insidiously during the process of viewership. The viewer establishes a new narrative that befits their mental and emotional history. This study will demonstrate and argue the case by a brief collated reading of Judy Kibinge’s *Killer Necklace*, Tosh Gitonga’s *Nairobi Half Life*, Bob Nyanja’s *Malooned*, Wanuri Kahiu’s *From a Whisper*, and Gavin Hood’s *Eye in the Sky*.

By their narrative focus, these films set up a sense of realism which echoes prevailing social issues. But their narrative aesthetics also intimate of alternative, or alter-voices so to say, about the mainstream narrative that attempts to whitewash a rather obscene view of social issues. Judy Kibinge’s *Killer Necklace* is concerned with how the city space has become a microcosm of development inequalities in the nation. Boo’s social struggles mirror Kenya’s history of socio-economic inequalities which place slum dwellers at the bottom of socio-economic hierarchies while those in plush suburbs are considered of higher tiers in this consumerism hierarchies. This arbitrary formation of social classes is premised upon the material and spatial inequalities as expressed in the film’s mise-en-scène. It is no different from Tosh Gitonga’s *Nairobi Half Life* where we see socio-economic hierarchies being performed alongside social struggles of the characters. Mwas’s desire to belong within the city is a simultaneous attempt to force his way into a higher socio-economic bracket, and hence a higher socio-economic power to which he is fiercely resisted. But these two films give the voice to the marginal characters, Boo and Mwas respectively, who then get to showcase their social station, even if only idealistically. The two films thus highlight the alternative social issues as predicated on class differences.

On a different approach but same issue of class, Kwaw Ansah’s *Love Brewed in the African Pot* is concerned with how social classes are performed, and by extension, how they become baits for inside struggles, that is, characters who, trapped within the idealism

of their own social classes, end up struggling to ‘fit’ within circumstances that clearly question the very basis upon which such classes are established. This film could be seen as a story about Aba, but it is about her father who must fight to ‘hatch’ himself from the imperial mentality in which he is enslaved. The film is conceptually comparable to Bob Nyanja’s *Malooned* where Di and Luther are poised as embodiments of opposed ethnic groupings in Kenya. *Malooned* restages the ethnic differences that blind ethnocentrists from the reality of pluralism. The director proposes that these ethnic categories comprise forms of slavery for the characters, so that they are obliged to overcome their cocoons for their collective good. This need to ‘hatch’ out of the cocoons then becomes the link between *Malooned* and *Love Brewed in the African Pot* where Appiah is required to come out of his ideals of social and mental class to be enjoined with the rest of the society for the greater collective good.

Another interesting point, this time ideological, is raised in Wanuri Kahiu’s *From a Whisper* where Islamic religious ideologies are brought to the fore of a terror narrative. Fareed, the suicide bomber, is trapped in his religious ideology in which he believes himself to be chosen as a suicide bomber for a higher good. This conviction then becomes a form of enclosure which binds him within an ideological space from which he cannot escape. Yet, the viewer is left with a feeling that the director used Fareed only to open the desperate world of the suicide bombers. There is a need to pop out, literally, the ideology of terrorism through counter-ideological approaches which would work to diffuse social, economic, religious, and political tensions that are the seeds of terrorism. As far as we hold Islamic faith in contempt, and fanatics like Fareed, we see the need for the society to adopt a more social role. This call is envisioned in the Center for Social and Economic Studies (2002, p. vii) which argue that it is “evident that while the scientific, technological, and military aspects are essential parts of understanding and containing terrorism, every aspect of that phenomenon yields human and social dimensions”.

This ideological conviction is reversed in Gavin Hood’s *Eye in the Sky* where instead of Islamic terrorists following their conviction of bombing for the fulfillment of their ideological destiny, it is the Western forces, embodied by United States of America and the United Kingdom joint military operation who are walled in their belief that they are obliged to bomb a compound in Nairobi to save the city from terrorist attack. Here, the

moral call is for the Western forces to reconsider their ideological position, which, poised as Anti-terrorism, is also anti-Islam, and to factor in their military operations the social impact of their war actions.

The thread that runs in the films sampled above is the idea that a blind eye is turned towards the notion of pluralism be it in religious, class, or ethnic terms. The treatment of the notion of diversity or lack thereof therefore becomes a launching pad in the subsequent discussions on how social narratives then use social aesthetics to concretize their messages. The point of departure from the ongoing dialogue is that the study seeks to discuss how the camera's narration conflates with the spectator's narrator to divulge, or shall we say shift, the social narratives of African cinema towards aesthetics of African-ness.

4.3 Contingencies of Africanness as Post-colonial Aesthetics

In The Location of Culture (1994), Homi Bhabha coins a rather witty phrase, DissemiNation, which he figurates through the description of the native foreigner. Arguing that there is a “conspiracy of silence around the colonial truth, whatever that might be” (p. 137), he talks about the;

Gatherings of exiles and *émigrés* and refugees; gathering on the edge of ‘foreign’ cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or cafes of city centres; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another’s language; gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of underdevelopment, of other worlds lived retroactively; gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present (Bhabha, 1994, p. 139)

Bhabha here invokes the forlornness of the alienated subject, and thus makes commentary about the marginal nature of such an individual who lies not only in the present, but also, retroactively, in the past. Within the context of *Bamako* and *Malooned*, this present-past, in the sense that the past has never been erased, but continues to be seen and in fact experienced in present circumstances, is a very powerful symbol of how the

african subject continues to live in circumstances that owe their beginning to the colonial architecture. For *Bamako*, it is the postcolonial reality of oppression that borrows from colonial empires and is embedded in the present poverty of Malians. The characters in this film are “exiles and *émigrés* and refugees” in their own country, “gathering on the edge of ‘foreign’ cultures,” cultures of exploitation of the native through skewed social, political, and economic policies. The forlorn images of the ordinary Malians going about their lives outside the courtyard show how the colonial past in which their participation in matters pertaining to their destiny is not required still lingers in their consciousness. Mr. Keita, a witness in the trial, asserts:

When I step out into the street, believe me, I don't meet other Malians. I see everything in Mali but Malians. A man who is hungry, a man without healthcare, a man who is never educated but is left in total obscurantism, is a man who will negate himself and be in total denial. He is a man who will become alienated, lost and deprived.

The Malians described in these terms are, literally, refugees in their own country. For example, when we see images of poor citizens loafing outside a trial courtyard in which their fate is being discussed, which is the way Sissako represents Malians in *Bamako*, we are presented with two versions of signifiers. One, the Malians, who embody the poor state of the nation, and two, the legal teams and the court judges, who embody western philosophy of justice intruding upon, and detached from, the everyday Malian reality. It is when we find out that the trial does not end with foreclosure, but with death of a citizen, that we are guided back to how the seeming justice was in fact a signifier of injustice. The film thus provides a visualization of an African contingency that still suffers from the postcolonial tropes that evoke thoughts of the inferior colonized African versus the superior colonizer. Indeed the images of poor Africa riddled with lack of education, poor health, poor housing, inequality, squatter population among others are issues that African professional filmmakers seek to highlight in their films as Eulelia Namai attests in an interview for this study (See appendix 4 transcript XVI). These are images that have endured since the colonial moment to the present.

For *Malooned*, it is the turbulent forms of social formations which take center stage in the discourse of a rather questionable political emancipation and the aftermath which positions ethnicity at the forefront of national discourses. As Bhabha (1994, p. 139) further argues, in the “midst of these lonely gatherings of the scattered people, their myths and fantasies and experiences, there emerges a historical fact of singular importance”, that of trying to fill in the void in the form of ethnic conflict, what (Oyugi, 2000, p. 4) calls “the crisis of ethnic nationalism” in Kenya. Ethnic conflict in this case is the result of the feelings of superiority of a social section over the other communities. Based on their narrative form, both films, then, seem to grapple with the important question that has been at the center of Third World cinema, that of emancipation of the citizens of the postcolonial state from the continuing tentacles of imperial domination. They exist in a situation where sense and nonsense are contemporaneous.

In a chapter curiously titled *Articulating the Archaic: Cultural Difference and Colonial Nonsense*, Bhabha (1994, p. 125) suggests that the “articulation of nonsense is the recognition of an anxious contradictory place between the human and the not-human, between sense and non-sense”. Correspondingly, we are guided to see the discourse of trial in *Bamako*, or ethnic negotiation in *Malooned*, as an interrogation of the idea of Africanness. Sissako toys with the question of the voicelessness of the African who continue to be manipulated through foreign economic gimmicks. For Nyanja, it is the misuse of the African voice through vocalization of negative ethnicity.

Within Abderrahmane Sissako’s *Bamako*, the camera plays a big role in creating opposing narratives of the African subject. There are two cameras used in the diegetic narration; a formally accepted camera that, set behind the judge’s bench, focuses on the African audience (seen in Figure iii). This camera ‘looks’ at the courtyard from a foreign point of view. It does not wish to show the judges who are the intermediaries between the African citizens and the two accused international institutions, The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The other camera is ‘sneaked’ in by Falai, the freelance camera operator who bribes Le gardien (Jean Paul Boiré) to have his way into the courtyard. He is however cautioned not to film. When he tries to film, he is instantly ordered to stop (see Figure iv). His camera, incorporated within the African audience, signifies the African view, and hence the African voice within the narrative. Stopping him from filming the

proceeding is stopping the African perspective in the case, which remains undetermined to the end. In this sense, the use of the camera in this film frames two opposing models of what the study term as the contingencies of Africanness.



Figure iii: A long shot of the two cameramen in Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako*. Screenshot at time frame 00:10:42.

In this shot we see the two cameras, one being operated by the official recording of the trial proceedings is focused on the Malian audience; and the other handled by Falai, focuses on the judges. The shot is framed from the point of view of the audience who have attended the trial. However, the composition suggests that the important elements within the shot are not the human characters on the audience side, neither the judges on the trial bench who seem to have better prominence within the shot. Rather, when we look at the *mise-en-scène*, we see that it is the two cameras, representing two opposed views of the trial, which are the point of emphasis. The linear perspective within the shot demarcates the foreground from the background, so that we see the official camera operator as part of the official point of view, and Falai as the non-official, Malians' point of view. The shot thus alerts us to the existence of these two opposed points of view, which are not only signified by physical separation, but are also separated by unequal appropriation of privileges. Clearly then, the director's use of these elements is evocative of the existence of preferential narrative perspective, that of the western legal approach detached from the Malians, and not the emotive point of view emanating from the Malians themselves. It is within this scenario of inequality that the study wants to also bring in the idea of subversion through liminal diegetic discourses. This is one of the pillars of reading of the postcolonial reality within the films.

The emphasis in the preceding shot (see Figure iv) is on the Malian audience and Falai standing in their midst. It must be noted that Falai describes himself as a forensic professional, working with police to document crime evidence through photography and videos. During the sequence, he slowly moves back to the rear of the audience where he sits with Chaka and engages in talks about other issues of life which do not seem connected to the continuing trial. Denying him a chance to film the proceedings is like refusing a forensic audit of the process of trial. The role of this shot can be understood within the departures from First World, Second World and Third World cinemas characteristic of such directors as Abderrahmane Sissako, that is, directors whose “individual stories are linked to analyses of colonial and postcolonial national history” (Gabara, 2010, p. 324), which is one of unequal access to instruments of ideological and social conditioning. These include legal institutions like courts and information systems like media. Gabara’s argument then signposts Abderrahmane Sissako as a rebellious figure whose work must also be read in a rebellious way. By rebellious, here the study means the way Sissako moves away from this ‘fictional’ camera gaze, and socializes, so to say, with the common Malian who is entrenched in the daily realities of his own life.



Figure iv: A long shot of Falai after being ordered to stop filming in Abderrahmane Sissako’s *Bamako*. Screenshot at time frame 00:10:45.

Throughout the film, Sissako gets out of the trial courtyard and ‘finds’ the various characters who are not within the trial. He even finds common actions like washing clothes, cooking, playing draft game, and dyeing clothes. He goes away to the room where a sick character is lying without medication as the trial goes on, and to the spot where Chaka dies. He shows us a bride being dressed inside the courtyard as the trial goes on. There is even a

shot where he just focuses on a goat. By so doing, the director detaches himself from the mainstream narrative of the inculpableness of global imperial institutions such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund, choosing instead to capture the narratives of the Malian reified in the ordinary gaze. The legal and the ordinary processes set in the film's simultaneous narration of events are the fronts of the imperial power and the ordinary citizen.

Further, as in Figure iv, Falai is embedded within the audience and thus denied the legitimate voice as the 'eye' of the Malian public. The shot is framed from the point of view of the other camera, so that we see his integration with the passive audience where he sits with Chaka for most of the film (see Figure v below) as an achievement of total 'silencing' of the African perspective. Here, they talk about death, about dying, and about many other sad issues surrounding their lives. If Falai is a signifier of forensics, pairing him with Chaka does not stop his forensic duty, but simply focuses on where the trial refuses to focus, the individual narratives of Malians. He exposes, to the end when he films Chaka's funeral, a systematic journey of desperation that Malians undertake in everyday life.

Starting from this choice of contrasting camera voices, the argument is that *Bamako's* narrative of the realities of a postcolonial Africa is heightened by the "heterogeneity of its mediating elements", that is, "the use of truth and fiction in the depiction of circumstances, plot and dramatization, continuity and discontinuity of time, and the relationship between image and sound" (Ukadike, 1994, p. 24). The truth here is represented by the camera in the audience, which is then denied an opportunity to record.

I call this the truth because the film tells the African story of how western financial institutions are destroying postcolonial African nations, thus suggesting that the 'authentic' voice, so to say, is that of the Africans like Bamba, who are filled with passion to speak out their hearts but are otherwise refused the opportunity. Yet this voice is suppressed and omitted from the narrative of justice. In fact, we have some witnesses like Madou Keita being turned away, and thus literally silenced from witnessing. The implication therefore is that we are faced with a mono-perspectival narrative that hinges on legal jargon while impeding the African's socio-economic point of view, embodied by the audience. Whereas law creates a link between the Malian representatives and the global institutions, the trial is seen as meaningless as the ordinary Malians, the custodians of the actual, first hand

experiences of the disastrous economic policies, are refused an opportunity to talk. Besides, they do not seem to follow the proceedings well.



Figure v: A medium shot of Falai seated with Chaka in Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako*. Screenshot at time frame 00:12:28.

In the same breath, the fiction is represented by this 'formal' camera behind the judge's bench, so that the trial assumes a one-sided view. The judges would seem to have 'seen' the Malians and listened to them, yet the Malians would have no opportunity to 'see' the judges, the signifiers of justice in the trial, but just remain as subjects who are 'being seen'. Given that the rhetoric of nationhood in postcolonial Africa is mired with a desire to articulate self, if we conceptualize this reading in the framework suggested by Berger, Fox, Blomberg, Dibb, and Hollis (1972), we begin to this unequal gaze as a form of appropriating power to the systems of justice, and subjugating the victims. Excluding Falai's forensic gaze also makes the trial's truthfulness questionable.

Of course, such a creation of the subject is to be seen in the context suggested by Berger, Fox, Blomberg, Dibb, & Hollis (1972) who have argued for a connection between images, seeing and being seen, and creation of individualities. They argue that

Images were first made to conjure up the appearance of something that was absent. Gradually it became evident that an image could outlast what it represented; it then showed how something or somebody had once looked – and thus by implication how the subject had once been seen by other people. Later still the specific vision of the image-maker was also recognized as part of the record. An image became a

record of how X had seen Y. This was the result of an increasing consciousness of individuality (p. 10).

It is this interpretation which we can see in this shot where Chaka sits with the Falai (see Figure v). This shot consolidates viewership of the West's malfeasance with denial of alternative vision, one that emanates from the oppressed subjects, and by so doing, emphasizes the skewed "social contexts of reception" (Naficy, 2003, p. 183) of the entire narrative of justice. This is most evident when Falai finally gets a chance to show the Malian point of view of justice in the diegetic narrative (see Figures vi and vii) after Chaka's death.



Figure vi: A high angle wide shot of Falai filming Chaka's funeral in Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako*. Screenshot at time frame 01:47:03.

In Figure vi, the shot shows Chaka's funeral event taking place inside the abandoned courtyard. The mise-en-scène shows the people attending the funeral, who occupy about two thirds of the right side of the screen. Chaka's body is on the other third, lying on the ground. Beside his body are pieces of furniture piled on top of each other. Other props in the shot include the clothes lines with some few clothes. By placing the characters on one side of the screen, the director creates imbalance, and so produces a consciousness of tension within the shot. It could also suggest anxiety, given that the funeral comes at the end of the film. The pieces of clothes give the shot an ordinary, homelike feel, so that we read the shot within the consciousness of this imbalance as the normal idea within the shot.

What follows then, and it is also reflected in the following shot (see Figure vii), is that, by using a high angle camera angle, the director deminishes the significance of this death. The shot of Chaka's body in Figure vii is filmed from a high angle, and the diegetic

camera, the one being used by Falai, zooms to his lifeless body. The body is positioned at the center of the screen. Yet, this framing isolates the idea of death and shows it as an important signifier in the shot. Further, by using Falai's point of view, the shot is seen as representative of the truth that was denied earlier during the trial at the courtyard. There is also the perspective of the mourners implied in Figure vii as the shot shows some shoes, a prayer mat, and a visible foot. These two points of view converging on Chaka's dead body, the diegetic camera view and the diegetic character's view mark a meeting point of what Sissako sees as truth in the Malian society, that is, the realism of death and deathlike life.



Figure vii: A high angle shot of Chaka's body in Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako*. Screenshot at time frame 01:52:08.

Earlier on in the film, the same courtyard is framed as in Figure vii above, but without the characters. Why would Sissako use the same framing twice? A possible explanation is that when we first see this shot (Figure viii), and later see it as a scene of death (Figure vii), an indexical relationship is constructed which suggests that the courtyard, and the legal justice it promises, all serve as a graveyard for Malians' social expectations. The courtyard is thus dismissed as a sham.



Figure viii: A high angle wide shot of the empty courtyard, which is later used as a site for Chaka's funeral ceremony in Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako*. Screenshot at time frame 00:34:21.

By calling upon the viewer to notice these two shots, the director embeds the idea of spectatorship, long seen as an extra-diegetic event, within the film's diegesis. The shots can be read in the context suggested by Ukadike (1994) who notes that the "heterogenous nature of the cinematic signifier is tied to the multileveled process of narrative construction, the combination of diverse codes" (p. 24). By staging multiple perspectives, the most obvious being the legal and the ordinary, the director clearly establishes a dichotomy between the political and the social, between the First World and the Third World, and between the mainstream and the marginal. There are two readings to this.

One, if we focus on the selective use of witnesses in the case, especially how Bamba (see Figure i) is repeatedly denied the opportunity to testify, we see how the legal process proclaims the native citizens living in the courtyard and around it, but with no legal admission to voice their views in the trial, as a gathering of "exiles and *émigrés* and refugees; gathering on the edge of 'foreign' cultures; gathering at the frontiers... in the uncanny fluency of another's language...gathering the memories of underdevelopment ... gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 139). Madou Keita's witness story about the woes of migration, and the death of many youths in Sahara desert as they tried to reach Spain, is a metaphor of this sense of living a life of exile in one's own country. The testimony suggests that trying to bring legal justice while forbidding social evidence exalts only the process, but, as even the film attests, begets only death for the victims. This death, in some instances, takes the form of betrayal as we see when a Malian lawyer is defending the western institutions, which attracts the wrath of an unscheduled rebuke from Saramba.

Two, if we focus on the director's identification with the characters so excluded from the trial, we can discuss *Bamako* as a film that tries to articulate the legal and the political in social terms. By identifying with the ordinariness of the Malians, the film seems to "problematize the master narratives of cross-cultural cinematic discourses through self-narrativization" (Naficy, 2003, p. 183). In other words, such cinematography gives to the people their voice back which is initially denied through legal procedures that see lawyers, and not the ordinary citizens, arguing about poverty of the people.

In respect to the discourse of justice then, the status of the characters is seen as one of a scenery prop. The death of a central character like Chaka cannot be separated from his exclusion from processes of justice that dominates the film. He, like the many other Malians, embodies perpetual othering. What is being suggested here is a new way of seeing the image as a signifier of other cinematographic decisions which then build up the narrative of unattainable justice in the film.

What we see then in *Bamako* is a questioning of how African cinema is not just meant to address a social issue but seeks to “entertain as it reflects at society at its own phase in a mirror. It’s a mirror that is held up to ...[the African] and the world and it is reflecting back a certain aspect of humanity” (Kibinge in an Interview for this study in 2015. See Appendix 4 Transcript II). This is true not just of *Bamako*, but also of *Malooned* and *A Stab in the Back* as well. In *Malooned*, Bob Nyanja brings to the screen an important moral dialogue: how can the silences about ethnic animosity be discussed? In an interview with the director of *A Stab in the Back*, Veronica Martha Agowah Quarshie Nai, held on 11th January 2016, she says: “I believe film makers are basically social commentators. It has always been my wish to use the film medium along with all the dramatic elements to comment on relevant social issues in Ghana”, further adding that

Our main intention in developing the story was to address social issues devoid of elements that border on superstition like witchcraft and spiritual elements as the only way of solving problems. Hordes of the video movies at that time usually resolved issues by spiritual means. Second, we wanted to raise the image of women in the videos. Women are always portrayed as ‘weak vessels’ who needed others to stand up and fight their battles. (See appendix 4 Transcript IV)

She is suggesting the necessity of the African filmmaker to use the film medium along with all the dramatic elements to comment on prevailing social issues. These films cannot be divorced from the society that produces it, meaning there is an expectation to give the African perspective to African cinema narratives. The values, worldviews, viewpoints of the characters are consistent with the behavior, attitudes, and views of the

African reality. Bob Nyanja echoes this view in an interview held on 17th December 2015 when he notes that “the characters are truly stereotypes as individuals. They are consistently defined by their characters. This was done intentionally so that the audience could relate directly to the tribal groups of the Luo and the Kikuyu.” Again, to cite Wayne (2001, p. 117), *Bamako* and *Malooned* can correctly be read within the postcolonial reality which “has an undialectical approach to difference and particularity. It collapses theory into difference and particularity, it fetishizes them” (Wayne, 2001, p. 117). Wayne’s argument here is that if we are to look at postcolonial narratives such as *Bamako* or *Malooned*, we should also be aware of how they work as dialectical conversations of what is lacking in these societies.

Such a narrative does not “wallow in the particularity of the situation by taking sides” but, rather, makes “a statement about the ‘human condition’, a concept which obviously does not want to get too bogged down in the nitty-gritty particularities of colonialism, exploitation, resistance, historical contexts” (Wayne, 2001, p. 117). The place of the human condition here then becomes a platform for launching human social discussions. What then comes to the fore is that both Nyanja and Sissako use what seems to be a verisimilitude of ethnic and national realities respectively, not just to highlight injustices, but also to suggest corrections by way of enforcing an alternative voice. Nyanja enforces unity by confining the characters in an inescapable space to highlight the disunity existing between the Kikuyu and Luo ethnic communities in Kenya. Likewise, Sissako uses the realism of representation to underscore the misrepresentation of the interests of the Africans within their country, through corruption, and outside their country, through oppressive economic systems. He narrates the denial of alternative vision, one that emanates from the oppressed subjects, and by so doing, emphasizes the skewed social contexts of reception of the entire narrative of justice. From these positions where a character mirrors clusters of social experiences of ideological perspectives, and often remains outside such clusters to spectate, like the viewer, the circumstances within the diegesis, generates what the study refer to as contingencies of Africanness.

4.4 From Ethnic Occlusion to Social Pluralism

Majumdar (2010) notes that “one of the major challenges democratic countries face in our contemporary age if globalization is ... how to treat diverse cultures of different human groups on a plane of equality?” (p. ix). Her question anticipates what Ghai & Cottrell (2013) refers to as pluralism, that is, “a particular kind of policy advocated for adoption in multi-ethnic or multi-cultural states” (p. 1). The idea of pluralism is to bring together parties which seem initially opposed, so they can function together for the common good and progress of all. By the same rationale, social pluralism would refer to a coming together of opposed social ideals to a state where they can function to deliver equitable order. The reason the study starts with these definitions is because Yash Pal Ghai’s book is based on research about ethnicity in Kenya, and explicates the problems of ethnicity. Furthermore, in his role as the Katiba Institute Director and United Nations Special Rapporteur, he held a strategic position from which he could comment on the ethnic issues about Kenya, which have been articulated in policy as well as legal terms. Pluralism, the idea that diverse perspectives can be brought to bear on a common cause, is at the center of Bob Nyanja’s *Malooned*. To understand this film is therefore to attempt to situate social pluralism at the center of film criticism.

Gaines (2008) states that the “assumed link between cinema and social criticism begins with the fact that moving pictures, a nineteenth-century invention, exhibited such an amazing similarity to the social world, not as it was but as it appeared to its observers” (p. 361). Her words shift cinema’s task of social agency from the production to the consumption of the film, what Naficy (2003) calls spectatorship. On the basis of this reoriented social criticism of cinema, it is therefore imperative that we begin to look keenly into the role of camera as an instrument of mediating an “ethnic discourse” (Holmquist & wa Githinji, 2009, p. 109) of inclusion by way of “the broad distribution of the benefits of growth” (p. 114). The “political consequences” of this de-ethnicized nation “are likely to be sanguine by way of creating a greater degree of unity within the political class and fostering social and ethnic inclusion” (p. 114). This study starts the discussion of Bob Nyanja’s *Malooned* by positing that the film uses the narrative of ethnicity, using social symbols or intimacy and social bias to foster social inclusion.

During the 2007 Zanzibar International Film Festival, *Malooned* was among the winning entries. In the final congregation, the Festival Director, Dr. Martin Mhando,

summed up *Malooned* as “the new African film out to entertain, but most important to direct its attention at the local audience first before heaving itself at the international audiences”, further adding that this “funny, well-acted and admittedly one of the best picks of the festival, is a simple story that resonates well with audiences: it has universal qualities, very well made and it has potential to attract international audiences”. (Mhando, 2007, p. 23). He even goes ahead to refer to Nyanja as a “soft-spoken social critic” (Mhando, 2007, p. 24). By these words, Dr. Martin Mhando gives, or rather affirms the film’s commitment to social change. It is also a proclamation of how Nyanja, by using quasi-satirical approach to a rather thorny social and political issue, brings together two errant nodes that have persisted in Kenya’s post-colonial history.

Asked during an interview with the researcher to give an overview about his life as a film director and what motivated him to make *Malooned*, Bob Nyanja says:

Malooned was set at a time when there was an electioneering mood in 2007-2008. The film was shot during the then ongoing political campaigns for presidential elections. It depicted the differences in political opinion and the philosophy between the Luos and the Kikuyus in Kenya or the Kikuyus and “the rest”. I developed the story based on putting one character, a Kikuyu – the woman and the other character a Luo – the man together and used them in the film to address issues of social differences based on ethnicity/tribalism and class issues. The objective was to get across the idea that we are stuck in one country or “Loo” (restroom) called Kenya. The title of the film *Malooned* is a ‘corruption’ of the word marooned which means trapped. In this country, it’s not by our own design that we were here rather we are here without choice. People stuck together must simply work together. The characters are completely in one area without outside access. There is no trust among the trapped people, there is suspicion of each other as one suspects the other to be a rapist and the other suspects the other to be a money-seeker. Eventually they must work together to get out ending up getting closer and closer then becoming real friends and eventually

detaching themselves from old relationships (a marriage and a kid family) to become lovers. (See Appendix 4 Transcript III)

What we glean from this interview response is the director's wish to frame a political issue using social symbols, especially by exploiting the notion of vulnerability as a bait to coerce the characters to reflect on their social space as a starting point for social change. The study has made the discussions above as a starting point from which the narrative of postcolonial colonial-thinking in Bob Nyanja's film, *Malooned*, can be discussed. The point of convergence here is that this film presents itself as an inter-ethnic narrative, or what may be also termed as a tribal narrative. But it also shows clear focus on construction of a resistance narrative iconic of post-colonial cinema consciousness. When we look at the character arcs, we see a journey of how they become creative in trying to get out of their physical confinement. The filmmaker takes us through the physical and psychological issues that human beings pass through in the process of fighting the challenges of life. Both Luther and Di not only miss their weekend schedules; a flight and a wedding, respectively, they also miss their physical freedom. The film maker also takes time to make us understand that in the time of challenges: race, tribe, ethnicity, or our regional origin is not the most important thing, but our unity of purpose and a creative mind are the things which will propel humanity forward together. Resistance in this case implies the way the characters first refuse to cooperate with each other, and how such lack of cooperation suggests deeper ethnic mistrust. On another level, resistance can be discerned in the way the characters come together and overcome their ethnic hostilities, thus, symbolically, resisting their inner urge to continue their earlier misconceptions of each other.

In the same vein, *Malooned* revisits the issue of politics and highlights how the individual, and not the community, is the starting point for severing ethnic hatreds. This is because, although people feel that they belong to communities, they realize that they own problems as individuals and so, it is not up to Luo and Kikuyu to overcome their differences for their collective good, but, rather that this action relies heavily on the actions of Luther and Di. It is through this realization the film calls for pluralism in African communities in the form of putting aside tribal hostilities for bettering the African continent. This feeds into the country's political rhetoric such as we see even in the 2017 general elections where

the two tribes are still locked in hatreds. Yet, Nyanja uses composition to take a soft stance on this hostility as seen in Figure ix.



Figure ix: A shot of Di leaning on Luther in Bob Nyanja's *Malooned*.

In this close-up shot, we see Luther and Di at the foreground of the screen. While they refrain from looking at each other, their somatic language reveals their intense emotions. In the background, there is a mirror reflecting Luther's back. Di is not visible in that rear mirror. Throughout the film, Nyanja has grappled with the issue of present past, the postcolonial injustices that rose out of the country and inspired such literary works as the infamous Jaramogi Ajuma Oginga Odinga's 1968 autobiography titled *Not yet Uhuru*. Written just five years after Kenya attained independence in 1963, this book advances the argument for a fictional independence, partly inspired by the distasteful fallout between the author and Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first president. Although Oginga Odinga served as Kenya's first vice president, this book mainly decries the fallout between Kikuyu and Luo political cliques, and the social, political, and economic ramifications that come along with it. It is this fallout that led to the bloody 2007-2008 post-election violence instigated by political rivalry between Oginga Odinga's son, Raila Odinga, and Mwai Kibaki, a member of the Kikuyu ethnic community. Bob Nyanja imports the same narrative of political and social fallout into his film, *Malooned*, and tries to assuage through various cinematic techniques. The social consciousness that Nyanja aims for, then, invokes this history and recommends for transcendence of its limits.

The shot in Figure ix, when read within this political history, adopts a pluralistic ethnic perspective while reflecting on the historical journey involved in the ethnic conflicts

within the film. The mirror behind the characters represents the past. It is even interesting that only Luther's image is visible in that mirror, so that Di is excluded. This then could signify the historical improbability of ethnic unity where the Kikuyu and the Luo can come together, as is happening in the shot. Using this composition, Nyanja invokes ethnic separation while keeping the social presence of unity within the same shot.

The other thing that is noticeable is Luther's wet shirt. What would be the significance of this wetness, if we see it as a priori to the character's cohesiveness which was not there before? When we see that it is Luther who seems wet here, this would signify his purification as he has been cleansed of his past and identity as a Luo. Even more, when we recall their dialogue where Di points out that Luther is uncircumcised, and therefore immature and dirty, the wetness would allude to the cleansing of these attributes. The activity of Di leaning on Luther strengthens this argument further, so that she overcomes her prejudices and finds the 'new' Luther attractive. In the next shot (see Figure x), we see their increasing intimacy as they undress and embrace.



Figure x: An intimate nude shot of Luther and Di in Bob Nyanja's *Malooned*.

or, the signifier of the past, and focuses on the bodily contemplations of intimacy. There is a solid wall behind the characters, which connotes the solidity of their new resolve to embrace each other as one. Luther's transition from a 'lad' to an enticing man reveals how hyper masculinity and hyper femininity can be used to expound on the pent-up desire to coexist. In the shot, not only sexual emotions are being exchanged, but also tribal biases are being expunged. Their nakedness is suggestive of their inner disposition as they open to each other and supersedes their tribal cocoons. Exposing their bodies, an act of intimacy, connotes this self-exposure, of repentance, and of welcoming one another into each other's lives. In these shots, the

character's bodies are seen to be signifiers of the problems of attaining Kenyanness in contexts that call for unity, but which arise from a background of strong ethnocentric orientations.

If we take the idea of Kenyanness in the context proposed by Wafula (2010, p. 53), that is a “doctrine that ... inspires Kenyan people into the love for the country”, then the shots of intimacy assume a higher social connotation. They would stand for this deep love for unity, and therefore for Kenya in which these ethnic groupings exist. The most important action within this loo is when the characters are sprayed with water from the tap. This involuntary water bath can be read as an act of cleansing. From this point onwards, their past hostilities dwindle, which again brings along the connotations of baptism. The water evinces the act of cleansing of their tribal inclinations. The 2007-2008 post-election violence in Kenya, the vent that inspired *Malooned*, saw the greatest public display of ethnic polarities in Kenya, as suggested by Kwatamba (18 July 2008),

The crisis, however, also presented Kenyans with an invaluable opportunity to renew the country through institutional and constitutional reforms and it would be regrettable if the political elite squandered that opportunity and once more began playing politics with the grave issues facing the country. (p. 78)

The opportunity referred to here came in the form of coalition Government between President Mwai Kibaki and the opposition leader, Raila Odinga. While Kibaki became the president, Raila became the prime minister. This coalition then suggested, at least as a discourse of political rhetoric, the washing away of the ethnic differences as Luo and Kikuyu came together to work at the helm of the same government. At this point, it is appropriate to draw attention to the connection between Kenya's ethnic based political antagonisms. This political ceasefire took place against the background of secessionist political interests, one in which political representation and political parties always rode on ethnic maps (Elischer, 2008). It is perhaps such a scenario that is being envisaged in these shots, especially the mirror image, where the divisive past is not detached from the present. The social structures envisaged in this romantic liaison between Di and Luther is one of

openness and coalition, but perhaps not one of entirely forgetting ethnic diversity and the legal consequences of political and social inequality between the various ethnic groups (Makoloo, 2005).

When we examine the cinematography of these shots inside the loo (Figures ix, x, and xi), we must therefore see them beyond the ethnic and political boundaries they embody, and understand Luther and Di as social constructions of ethnicity. As argued by Holmquist & wa Githinji(2009, p. 102), “ethnicity is socially constructed and a moving target”, which links the question of ethnicity to political issues, and further to social issues within the country. These scholars then provide a framework in which we can read the above shots as a search for social inclusion. Luther is a signifier of an ethnic group that feels bereft of political inclusion, while Di is a signifier of the ruling ethnic group seen as the custodian of opportunities. By embracing each other, the characters are castigating the tendencies to alienate ethnic groups from social empowerment. This interpretation is further supported by the fact that Di must forego her wedding and Luther his flight, which are temporal markers of the urgency of ethnic cohesion in Kenya. Despite such important activities that wait the character, the director detaches them to give them a chance to attend to this rather urgent business of cohesion.

Finally, the study turns its attention to the cinematographic elements of the shot where the two characters sit down for a candle-lit dinner (see Figure xi). In this shot, the idea of ethnic intolerance is strongly weakened in the film as we see both characters carve out a mutual territory where they no longer quarrel, but cooperate. This shot is set inside the loo. It shows Luther and Di seated on a candle lit dinner table, deciding on how to order their meals. There are water sinks on the left side of the shot, behind Di. Just like the *mise-en-scène* showing the mirror behind Luther in Figure ix, *the mise-en-scène* showing water sink is also an important signifier of how the past has been washed away. The sink is a place where dirty water, having been used to clean, is let to flow away. Placing this water sink behind Di signifies, literally, that she has washed away her earlier prejudices against Luther. Although the mirror behind Luther in the earlier shot indicates that he is still immersed in his historical reservations about Kikuyus, this seems to lessen on the part of Di, fitting within the overall narrative of ethnic cohesion. In this respect, the shot can be

read in the context of unity alluded to in later scenes of the film as it is iconic of how Nyanja constructs his narrative of ethnic and social pluralism.



Figure xi: An aerial shot of Luther and Di during a candle-lit dinner in Bob Nyanja's *Malooned*.

Yet, it is curious in the shot is that it is framed from a high angle. This is so because such a framing has various ramifications on how we can interpret the narrative and the premises being made in the film about social cohesion. Starting from the high camera angle used in the shot, we can see that the director is trying to express skepticism with this newfound cohesion. The high camera angle mocks the pluralistic image idealized in the shot so that we are faced with an oxymoronic image that suggests ethnic cohesion while appearing to mock the characters who appear vulnerable, perhaps passive, or subjugated to a higher, unidentified force. The composition of the shot is also important in enhancing this oxymoronic view of ethnic and social pluralism in that, by using a candle light for the important occasion, the director juxtaposes a signifier of romance, or immense affection and perhaps intimacy with a dull lighting that suggests gloom. The characters are surrounded by gloom, which renders a pessimistic view of their cohesion.

Could it then be that the question that the director is not answering concerns the larger diegetic society, and how they treat the pair? Through the radio broadcast, the audience is informed of Di's wedding that has gone sour. Because she, the bride, has gone missing on the weekend of the wedding, we would expect some sorrow on the part of the families involved. However, through the same broadcast, the announcer suggests that the wedding will go on even without the bride to be. From the scene where Di realizes that her wedding is off and that she has been replaced, it becomes clear that she is very distraught.

This means that Di will not be married by the love of her life. Besides, the groom's family does not seem concerned about her fate, but only want their son to get married. The groom also displays similar traits to those of his family by accepting the new bride that has been presented to him for marriage without any resistance. This tells us the way women are treated in the society where the groom comes from. In her current situation, Di cannot do anything to salvage her marriage but to helplessly listen to the proceedings over the radio as she is described as a woman who has eloped with another man. This reproach then could signal her vulnerability, how her signification of cohesion here is treated with contempt. The dinner goes on alongside emotions of betrayal, of suicidal being rejected, of being excommunicated and misunderstood. Making her so easily dispensable confers upon her the qualities of a traitor and an easily replaceable signifier. In other words, she does not carry the support, or the larger vision of her family, which would signify her tribe. By these events, the film confronts the skepticism of political and ethnic pluralism with display of ruin.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the study has discussed three main issues: One, the aesthetics of third cinema as a platform for alternative social voices of diversity. Two, the throttling of the African voice through characterization and narrative overtures, including cinematography. Using *Bamako* as the reference, the study argues that the trial inside the courtyard signifies a triumph of injustice over justice, and acts to alienate the African even in moments when his voice is needed most to articulate his social narrative. Three, the study has pointed out another intrinsic dimension of African alienation, that of negative ethnicity. Referring to *Malooned*, the study has argued that the film narratives attempt to restage the need for ethnic pluralism within the postcolonial aesthetics in African. There is evidence of an endeavor to propose ethnic tolerance and diversity while at the same time downgrading the significance of ethnic animosity in Kenya, especially those between Luo and Kikuyu ethnic tribes, which have lingered since independence. The study suggests that the film should be read as a pro-pluralistic narrative about Kenya.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the study gives a summary of the arguments and a summary of the findings. The study also discusses the themes and emerging ideas within the study. Finally, the study gives recommendations.

5.1 Summary of the Arguments

There are similarities in the underlying reasons that resulted in the film revolution in many parts of Africa, including Kenya, Ghana, and Mali, where the films the study has analyzed were produced. As part of the wider so called Third World region, and comprising the so called Third World Cinema movement, Africa cinema narratives are born out of the frustrations, expectations, hopes and goals of the ordinary man – the masses. The films place a high premium on edutainment, that is, the ability to entertain the viewers while carrying advocacy through narrative and cinematic styles. Indeed in the interviews carried out by the research with filmmakers, critics and trainers, the question of advocacy comes out very strongly as one of the key expectations on the film genre (See appendix 4 for the interviews with Eston Munyi in transcript XI, with Charles Manyara in transcript XIII, Solomon Obida in transcript XIV as well as Eulelia Namai in transcript XVI). The excitement and enthusiasm that welcomes African films signals an inherent need by the people to advocate their issues by telling their own stories. These stories allow producers and their audiences alike to express their pains and sufferings, and present a picture of the current social conditions of ordinary people in society. Such are the images that we see in Gavin Hood's *Eye in The Sky* (2015) and Wanuri Kahiu's *From a Whisper* (2008), in Judy Kibinge's *Killer Necklace* (2009) and Kwaw Ansah's *Love Brewed in the African Pot* (1981), and in Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako* (2006) and Bob Nyanja's *Malooned* (2007). The study also make reference to Veronica Quarshie's *A Stab in the Dark* (1999).

These films are seen as reminders that society is aware of the plight of the ordinary people, and indeed creates this awareness at the same time. This is evidenced by the conscious narration of their 'poverties,' instabilities of everyday life, the struggle for economic emancipation and social injustice. These aspects are reflected in the

characterizations, conflicts, and ideologies, and they embody the economic, political, social conditions of African societies. In this sense then, the films record critical issues, concerns, and opinions prevalent in postcolonial Africa today. By so doing, the directors set an agenda for the debate of the changes of everyday life, offer a means of escape for the downtrodden and represent a psychological conditioning, even a model, for social justice.

They are also liberating in that they achieve several roles. One, they have given voice and visibility to the marginalized by western stereotypical cinema conventions that adopt a western view and thus occlude the native African reality. In this sense, the films work towards correcting the distorted image of Africa that has been perpetuated by Television newscast and Western cinemas. Two, as the directors seem to clearly explain social issues, their films teach, entertain, and open new realities to the viewer and challenge stereotyping and status quo (See the interviews in appendix 4 transcripts I, II and III). By use of verisimilitude, embedded in the characters' internal and external motivations of their actions, the directors turn human issues into social narratives. The characters' arcs are motifs of the realities of their lives. Generally, the study has made various arguments which progress from social ideology, social differentiation, and class hierarchies, and finally to voice and voicelessness and the possibility of pluralistic approaches to social intervention.

In chapter two, the study sought to show the way extremism can work as a flexible as well as an oxymoronic concept. By this, the study means that its moral purview associates both the perpetrators of terrorism, and those using similar or higher level of violence to fight terrorism. This matches to the first objective which is to examine the social-ideological connection in the films' narratives. The overall argument is focused on art and ideology. This study suggest that these films invert the discourse of terrorism using violence as a trope to raise moral questions on terrorism and counter-terrorism strategies. Further, the main argument here is forked into two approaches to this idea of art and ideology. On one hand, the study focusses on ideological aspects which are negotiable through artistic spaces and on the other hand, the study looks at artistic elements within film that make these negotiations possible, that is, the intricacies of symbolic representation of social and ideological issues within the artistic framework of the films. The study made the references from Gavin Hood's *Eye in The Sky* (2015) and Wanuri Kahiu's *From a Whisper* (2008). These films are set in Nairobi, and narrate about terrorism in this city.

Hood's story of how western military powers, led by a coalition drone strike force between American and United Kingdom military representatives, alerts us to the aerial shift in counter-insurgency operations. But more importantly, it questions the morality of western tactics of anti-terrorism operations, so that it shifts the ideology of moral culpability from the terrorists to the military operations. Kahiu, on her part, goes the other way and points a blaming finger to the terrorists whom she represents as dogmatic victims of Islamic religion. Her moral question about terrorism is equally a question of religious ideology.

The synthesis between the two films, which the study analyzed about how they handle the issue of religion and terrorism as two strands of a hardliner ideology, is that they question the morality of terrorism and counter-terrorism, which are extremely immoral counterpoints. Starting with the objective to explicate the way the content of the films provide context for analysis of ideological perspectives, the study made three main findings. One is that both films lend their language and stylistic conventions in the service of subtle ideological messages, often using subliminal cues. The second is that the idea of innocence is widely exploited in these films to articulate terrorism as an ideological discourse that has implications beyond the violence and technology of this violence, whether perpetrated by suicide bombers or anti-terrorist government agencies. This is seen from a humanistic or moralistic rendering of ideology. Third, that the central role of Islamic religion in propagating the discourse of violence within these films means that emphasis that radicalization of Muslims and the global effort to defeat this radicalization are both efforts which leave social scars in the form of trauma. By attaching a moral plea to their films, both Gavin and Kahiu emerge as ideological, even moralistic activists.

In chapter three, the study argues that the deconstruction of class struggles as simultaneously forms of struggles of class offers an incisive view of how class struggles ratify social problems. This chapter matches to the second objective, which explores the social-spatial connections in the narratives of the films. The key point here is to shift the focus from the discussions of ideology and morality involved in terrorism and counter-terrorism efforts in Nairobi. The study focusses on a different social issue, that of social and economic hierarchies, and the resulting class struggles that they beget in the city. The analysis starts with space and class struggles and shifts to show how these transform to struggles of class. The study based the analysis on Judy Kibinge's *Killer Necklace* (2009)

and Kwaw Ansah's *Love Brewed in the African Pot* (1981). Kibinge recounts low and high-class struggles, embodied by slum life and wealthy family, respectively and goes to show how these embody social and material space within physical space while Ansah approaches class struggles through social prestige and careers and spell out the agony that ensues when mental spaces conflict with physical and social spaces. The arguments in this chapter are that the connection between space and social struggles forms significant social conversation. The study further explained this in three ways. One, that the films use space and characterization to peel off the notion of social inequalities as simultaneously an issue of justifying socio-economic hierarchies. Two, that characters, especially those in lower spatial tiers, try to use their marginality to set up alternative hierarchies in which they can rise beyond their occlusion. Three, that even within the higher social tiers, characters also struggle with the ideals of their social standing, which the study term to as struggles of class. Both Kibinge and Ansah are architects of an important social conversation about social hierarchies.

Chapter four discusses how the selected films confront the lack of African authentic narrative even in matters of social justice, and skepticism of political and ethnic pluralism. This chapter is based on the third objective which discusses narrative voice and pluralism as intervention strategies in these films. In chapter four, the study moves further from Islamic religious ideology and terrorism which the study discuss in chapter two, and social struggles which the study discuss in chapter three. The study focusses on cinematic mimesis, in the form of neorealist approaches to cinema, and anchored the discussion on negative ethnicity. Here, the study seeks to show how African films are working to re-orient diegetic and peri-diegetic introspection towards the African subject who for a long time has remained marginal element, part of the props necessary to foster western ideology of the illiterate, animalistic, degenerative African. Of course, this is not just about racial, imperialist, or capitalist tendencies, but more about the social results of these practices on the Africans. In this chapter, the study analyzes Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako* (2006) and Bob Nyanja's *Malooned* (2007). The study also makes references to Veronica Quarshie's *A Stab in the Dark* (1999). The study makes two arguments. One is that Sissako highlights the role of voice and gaze in the global scheme of justice and injustices. He tries to frame Malians' economic crisis in social terms, rather than legal terms. Two, Nyanja's

film shows ethnic occlusion, a microcosm of global marginality, to be mitigated through pluralism. He confronts the skepticism of political and ethnic pluralism.

Lastly, the study has made arguments that can be classified into three; ideology, social change, and pluralism. On ideology, the study has argued that the idea of extremism also attracts social reading of religion and violence. It is therefore to terrorism and counterterrorism as matters that touch on morality. On social change, the study has used space as a conceptual tableau on which issues of class and hierarchies can be mapped. On third cinema and social pluralism, the study has discussed narrative voice and pluralism as concepts that help to discuss social issues arising from both global economic imperialism and negative ethnicity.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Here the study gives a summary of the key findings as gathered from the interaction with the directors, and briefly describes the emerging themes.

5.2.1 The Directors

As part of the data collection procedures, the study interviewed some of the directors of these films, film scholars, and focused group discussions. Many of them revealed that they have an interest and indeed that they feel understood when their films can be read or interpreted regarding actual social issues. This could only mean that they see themselves, at least partially, as social activists whose voices can add onto existing social conversations or spur new debates about social issues. To this end, several film makers and film scholars choose their line of profession because film offers them an ample tool to transform the society to be a better place.

For instance Oumar, a film maker and regional secretary of the Federation of Pan African Filmmakers (FEPACI) notes that “all the new generation and pioneer films indicate that we Africans can tell our own story indicating good loving, cooking, and dressing that gives an image of a true people, the black people.” (See appendix 4 transcript VIII). The same thread of thinking is also espoused by Zipporah Okoth, a film producer, a lecturer in production in film at Kenyatta University, an adjudicator, and a writer, who noted that “the impact in audience is such that we capture the stories that are current. Students, members

of the family, and common people are always depicted in the films” (See appendix 4 transcript XXI). She cites the archival role of film and how this could enhance African culture:

Society issues that can be used to create awareness to the society include corruption, nepotism, and good governance. Examples include the recent al-Shabaab story. It needs to show through film, how our soldiers have excelled as well as their failures. In brief, we are not showing our folktale to the world for example *Tigo*, *Nyamgotho*, *Wuod Obare*, *Simbi nyaima*, *Nabongo Mumia*. All these can compete with European or Western folk tales like *Redskihs*, *Oliver Twist*, *Cinderella*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Snow White* and others that we keep watching.

Okoth’s view resonated with Kwaw Ansah’s who had been interviewed earlier in 2015. He had also reiterated the need to Africanize the African story by advocating for a film that is socially committed to the African context as a communal context (See appendix 4 transcript VI). It is within the same paradigm that Matu Nguri, a film scholar at Moi University, noted of the important argument about film and social narration (See Appendix 4 transcript XII). When asked “what in your opinion would you consider to be a film with a social change message?” he responds elaborately thus:

There are three things I consider - first, one with a social advocacy point of view, secondly, every film whether documentary or dramatic is motivated to communicate something in the ecology of either the directors’ or the script writers’ community and nation. It is likely to have some position around the frontier of change (either to move forward or to photograph it for us to see). The third is the fantasy or the future film. In a country like Kenya and indeed the other African countries, one keeps hoping that there can be a rapid acceleration of transformation of both the rural and urban life in three ways – a social value bar that brings human warmth, laughter, and care. Thirdly, the economic artery is important, and change would include

transformation of what is produced and how it is produced and traded... but also in terms of reorganizations and mindsets (for example how far can family land be subdivided? How can a village co-own stuff such as the fertilizer shop, hardware wholesale? How can the universities be relevant to towards aggravation...? Lastly, the concept of renaissance.... has been mentioned here and there and perhaps an abstract on it would capture the burning need to make the African join the platform of humans who are naturally created as creators.

After further probing about the future of film making for social change, he adds that

In Africa, it has not quite started. It cannot birth on its own. It must be part of a rising realization that it is possible to have a different and new society and that citizens can bring this about. The outlets for film have multiplied, the training spaces have expanded greatly, indigenous scholarship is starting to germinate, and there is in the atmosphere an expectation and a frustration regarding governance and economic development. What is lacking perhaps is excitement in futuristic models of change, or new possible futures.

These statements capture the need for a growing interest in African narratives, or, to Africanize the African narrative. One therefore notes a conscious desire by African filmmakers and film critics alike to reorient their creative faculties towards an afrocentered film tradition. Indeed some pioneer African filmamkers had already set the pace for this kind of film tradition. An interview with Cheick Sissoko, sheds light on filmmaking and social life (see appendix 4 transcript VII). He describes his work and life in filmmaking as follows:

I chose cinema to make a contribution to life as an African and to show that Africans have a right to air their views. This would make the African change their life's and walk through the modern world. I have an experience for working in science world having done sciences in France. However, the Arts like film have a direct interaction with the people making them understand

problems and the society. All my films are based on social reality. The mission of Africa film maker should give the way of life and have fun, to suffer and construct what is African. But unfortunately, this is marginalized not only in Africa but very much in the rest of the world.

About messages of social change in films, he states that regarding audience and social community, people can take the destination of their social realities to change the societies. Sissoko further observes that film can be used to achieve an idea in mind which could be social, political, or cultural. According to Sissoko documentary film, the results of film can be spontaneous interest. He cites the documentary on Mozambique and South Africa. Through cinema, as a director, he can contribute to life as an African and to show that Africans have a right to air their views. Sissoko concludes that it would make the African change their lives and walk through the modern world. He correctly notes that Arts like film have a direct interaction with the people making them understand problems and the society.

He further argues that the mission of an African film maker should be to give the way of life and have fun, to suffer and construct what is African. In other words, the African filmmaker has the duty to transcend the stereotypes and limitations imposed by mainstream film hubs which dominate world cinema stage. Ultimately then, we can see such directors as individuals with the mission to offer, to risk a cliché, a native voice. This voice, Abbar suggests, “document our experiences for future generations” (see appendix 4 transcript VII). In this interview, Abbar suggests that messages on important subjects like imperial capitalist oppression, which is also a form of neocolonialism, and social issues including diseases like HIV, preservation of foods as well as culture can be best passed to the next generation only through film. Abbar advocates for use of technology devices like mobile phones marginalized communities like the Ovahimba people in Namibia, whom he compares to the Maasai of East Africa.

In an interview with another filmmaker Kibinge, the study noted that film can be used to influence audience for social change (see appendix 4 transcript II). It means people can reflect on the issues of the film, the characters, and the scenes to negotiate social change in our society. In a broader perspective, we should get messages that give positive issues

raised in our homes and institutions point towards similar themes across the films. The study agrees with Abbar who in the interview argues that “it is true that film on social change has an immediate impact if the story is well told to resonate with the audience.” Citing the example of *Sarafina* he suggests that the film was instrumental in ideological decolonization of South Africans, mobilizing them to reach self-rule.

5.3 Emerging ideas and Recommendations

There are various issues that emerge from the various films that the study has already discussed which, however can constitute a whole new study. While the study united all these issues under the umbrella of social change, it emerged there is a possibility that these social issues, on their own, can be deeply studied to unravel not just their relationship to social change but also their aesthetic rendition in the selected films or any other films in Africa.

These include religious fanaticism that is seen in *From a Whisper*. There is also the theme of adultery in *Killer Necklace*, *A Letter from Adam*, and *A Stab in the Dark* where characters indulge in extramarital affairs. Indeed as the director of *A Letter from Adam* informs this study in an interview, questions of adultery and multiple partnerships are central to social issues that committed film may address. In her film, she confirms that,

The social issues addressed include relationships and multiple partners, heartbreak or emotional stress in marriages, questions on why women don't break from their past and refuse to “move on”, depression and fear of becoming other people's victims, revenge after a break up, deception by both men and women, issues that people don't want to address, hopelessness, the issue of whether to have sex before or outside marriage, and living up to certain expectations in society. (See appendix 4 transcript V).

Love Brewed in the African Pot has dealt with the theme of tradition versus modernity. The film establishes the strong clash between modernity and tradition. The beachside wrestling match points at a community that cherishes its culture. Furthermore, such traditional practices are social events that bring communities together. And so is the central role of witchcraft, which reveals traditional powers as superior to modern medical

knowledge. But it is perhaps Aba and Joe's marriage that tests these two sets of values the furthest. That the wedding is traditional rather than the modern one envisaged by the father shows a triumph of tradition over modernity. The idea of class struggles that we see with Kibinge's *Killer Necklace* can also be a criticism of modernity and its material trappings. Compared to the traditional aura of camaraderie that we see in Ansah's film, Nairobi's fragmented society, and the social borders it enforces, highlight how the abandonment of cultural values in the city begets, so to say, a disintegrated society.

Closely related to the theme of adultery are other themes such as materialism and poverty. Along with social class which is at the center of Ansah's *Love Brewed in an African Pot* and Kibinge's *Killer Necklace*, the films are concerned with the idea of materialism. In Ansah's film, Aba loves Joe so much, that she can do anything for his love. She rejects a proposal for her hand in marriage to a son of a rich man, begetting her a lot of trouble as a magical spell is cast to lead to the separation between him and her. But she is treated and they re-unite as Joe comes back to her love. The triumph of love between Joe and Aba is also a triumph against materialism. Whereas initially Aba's parents seem to value material possessions of her suitors, they end up opening to the reality that it is love, and her happiness, that are at the core of her marriage. They therefore forego their greed and support her. Moving on to *Eye in the Sky* and *From a Whisper*, we see the theme of terrorism. This is accompanied by other themes such as trauma and religious extremism. Finally, there is also the theme of negative ethnicity that dominates *Malooned*. In this film, we see the film as an effort to promote ethnic cohesion. But this effort unfolds within the context of extreme ethnic animosities.

The study not only showed the above-mentioned themes, it also showed various concepts that could be useful in analyzing film and social change in Africa. These include class struggles, struggles with class, pluralism, and imperialism. These were instrumental in focusing the discussions at various stages of the study. However in the course of the discussions, there emerged possibilities that can be addressed at policy level in the quest of making socially committed and Afro-centred films. It is with this in mind that the study makes the recommendations that, due to the rich social messages within the films, the study suggests that governments should support films and consider them the same way books are considered as useful cultural tools. There is need to popularize film and film studies to a

level where it attains same, or comparable anthropological and intellectual status as other disciplines. Also of immediate importance is the need for government to make censorship laws that will free the artistes and film makers to produce and market their movies without the stringent laws currently in operation. There is also need to archive and disseminate cultures through film.

Secondly, by dwelling on the interface between ideology, space, post-colonial aesthetics and pluralism, the study has established that it is indeed possible to carry out a multidisciplinary study. It therefore further recommends that future research focus on other multidisciplinary studies of film that integrate cultural and anthropological studies. In the same breath, the study suggests that since it has emerged that there is need for afro-engaged film production and criticism (see interviews with African filmmakers in appendix 4), there is need for further research on how the films in Africa embrace the multiplicity of philosophies, histories and traditions. This will ensure more engaged reading of the films and documentation of the thoughts and views of the personalities at the forefront of this cultural enterprise.

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Appendix 1: Selected Photos of the Researcher with Filmmakers



Photo i: Researcher in an Interview Session with – Ghanaian Film Director of *A Letter from Adam* Sam Afua Kessie about *Film and Social Change*.



Photo ii: The researcher, her assistant researcher, and Ghanaian Film Director of *Love Brewed in the African Pot*, KwawAnsah.



Photo iii: The Researcher and her team interviewing Film Director of *From a Whisper*, Wanuri Kahiu.



Photo iv: Cheick Oumar Sissoko, the Secretary General of the Pan African Federation of Film Makers (FEPACI) and the Researcher.



Photo v: The researcher, Anne Mungai and Film Director Judy Kibinge



Photo vi: The researcher with Mr. Mulwa during the Interview on Film and Social Change



Photo vii: Film Producer Dr. Zipporah Okoth and researcher.

Appendix 2: Author at International Film Festival, Switzerland



Appendix 3: INTERVIEWS SCHEDULES

1. Abbar, A. (AA). (09.04. 2016). Film Producer based in Windhoek, Namibia
2. Ansah, K. (17.12.2015). Film Maker/Director
3. Kahiu, W. (19.01. 2016).Film Maker
4. Kessie, S. A. (17.12.2015). Film Maker and Artist
5. Kibinge, J. (17.12.2015). Film Director and Producer
6. Manyara, C. (14.03.2016) Film Professional andan instructor at the Film School of Kenya Institute of Mass communication.
7. Mulwa, D. (19.01. 2016). Senior lecturer in Drama, Theatre Arts and Performer (stage and screen).
8. Munyi, E. (27.01. 2016). Film professional
9. Namai, E. (14.03.2016). Film Professional
10. Nguri, M. (02.03.2016). Film Maker
11. Njooora, T. (27.01.2016). Dean - School of Visual and Performing Arts, Kenyatta University
12. Nyanja, B. (17.12.2015). Film Director and Producer
13. Okoth, Z. (09.02.2016). Film Producer, a lecturer in production in film at Kenyatta University, an adjudicator, writer and producer.
14. Oumar, M. S. (06.04. 2016). Film maker and Regional secretary FEPACI (Indian Ocean Islands region)
15. Quarshie, N. V. M. A. (11.1.2016). Writer and Film Director
16. Sissoko, C. (06.04. 2016). Secretary General of FEPACI
17. Yamma, O. S. (19.01. 2016). Film Maker, a PhD student at Kenyatta University and a full-time lecturer in Plateau State University, in Bokokos Nigeria.

Appendix 4: TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS

TRANSCRIPT I

An Excerpt of the Researcher's Interview with Wanuri Kahiu At Her Office In Karen- Nairobi.

Date: 19.01. 2016.

Researcher: Would you please start by introducing yourself?

My name is: **Wanuri Kahiu.**

Status/Position: Film Maker

What interested you in becoming a Film Maker?

Raphael Tuju, who was setting up Ace communications in Karen, got me interested in creating films. This was before he became Minister or anything, he was just doing films. Upon realisation that there were people who make films like the ones I watch on television and that it was possible to make a film, I got fascinated and interested in how I could make my own films. I also like to read and write and film involves both.

What was your target audience with your film From a Whisper?

The people who were affected by the bombing, and those who had firsthand knowledge of the bombing. There is also trauma that we go through as a nation that we do not process.

What specific social issues were addressed?

The story of Islam. That there are different versions of Muslims; fundamental Muslims and just Muslims. Also the issue of forgiveness and reconciliation, through the daughter in the film, who was trying to forgive her father. and the Coming together of Kenyans during a crisis.

It is also important for me to demonstrate through my films my version of heaven. I try to create people who believe that there is an understanding of God.

Specific values in From a Whisper?

Compassion... that two generations can help each other heal. The act of forgiveness..the ability to forgive someone who has truly hurt you...and that forgiveness is never ending. It is an active process as opposed to just being a word “ I forgive you”. It is in being able to see this person everyday and say hi and the next day and the next... and move on without bitterness

Did you carry out some research before the film?

Yes...yes I did...I did research on profiles of the soldiers taken in for training by the al-Qaeda. In fact some of the actors who came in for casting were actually some of those trained for al-Qaeda, yes.... but I am not going to name which characters they were.

How did you go about your research?

Through books, documentaries, researched articles and interviews:

What is the Summative evaluation on how the film did?

It's hard to tell what my target audience is until maybe I'm sitting in the audience.... they don't know I'm the creator of the film. And you can hear them laugh, comment. And you will know. You know Kenyans won't hide. I can't tell because I create what is within me, I do not create a film with a target audience in mind because if I do that I will cease to create stories that are genuine to me and start doing stories that I think will please other people... and I do not want that. During the first screening of my film at the University of Nairobi was the very first time that I was able to weigh the impact of my film... there was a woman who had lost her baby as a result of the bombing. There was also a Kenyan immigrant in Sweden who came up to me and told me that after watching the film, it was the first time that she had begun to process the whole thing. She had not thought about it since then. There were also screenings in West Africa...where they would go into the village and put up a screen for everyone to see.

How far has your film From a Whisper influenced the Social view?

Through role models...I think that sometimes all that someone wants to see is a role model. And know that if so and so did this then I can also do this. If so and so is able to forgive then I am also able to forgive.... 'Watatu' by Nick Redding is also a brilliant film that can influence social change. It is about the radicalisation of the youth in Mombasa:

What are your feedback mechanisms?

The audience themselves that is immediate feedback.

How do you ensure that the feedback is being recorded?

I am my first audience. I think I always say this in most interviews, "I am not unique" ... I believe that by first being genuine to myself, and then people will be able to react in the same way that I react to it. If something is able to make me cry...or laugh there's nothing so different about me that it will not be able to make another person react in the same way.

How do you plan on negotiating Social Change through your film, From a Whisper?

It should be more integrated in for example; schools, mosques etc. to address these issues hence influence social change:

What should the government and the private sector do to incorporate film and social change?

They should support films and consider them the same way books are considered for example via film literature. The university distribution mechanism as a possibility: students can study. The private sector should promote films within their missions... for example a communications company should incorporate a film that showcases communication. The press too should create celebrities from individuals who achieve, rather than politicians. They should create celebrities from individuals who live successful lives, who are credible.

TRANSCRIPT II

Date: 17.12.2015.

Name: Judy Kibinge

Status/Position: Film Director and Producer

What interested you in becoming a film Director?

Multinational advertising and commercial involvement with Kenya Breweries gave me interest in film making. Compressing of a story from very many facts, writing and then turn to making images, lots of screen-writing. The film *Killer Necklace* was motivated by being a resident of Nairobi with many people of various backgrounds.

What was the Target Audience for this film?

I think there are different schools of thought about why people make the films that they make...some make films because there is a question that they want to explore. A question in their mind that they want to probe in to.... I wasn't commissioned to make this film, I didn't make it for anybody, I didn't make it for any reason other than there was a thought in my mind that I was exploring. Some people make films for particular people. This particular film didn't target any particular group I didn't think of a particular NGO or Company. However, anyone interested in what it's like in what is to live in a city like Nairobi, anyone interested in drama, drama has that twists and turns, an audience that appreciates more lyrical than visual...it was made out of love for the craft.

What specific Social Issues and Values are addressed through this film?

The specific social issue is the gap between the rich and the poor, materialism and how obsessed the modern era in the African city is ... much more materialistic. The film addresses urban crime, love of different classes but with many scenes not fully included since it's a low budget film:

How did you arrive at the specific issues addressed by *Killer Necklace*?

I didn't make the film to address a social issue. I would look at it as film created to entertain as it reflects at society at its own phase in a mirror. It's a mirror that is held up to Kenya and the world and it's reflecting back a certain aspect of humanity.

Did you conduct any formative research prior to designing and directing Killer Necklace?

I did a lot of research. I chose every location very very carefully. Every road, every location. The outcome of that is that we were able to shoot that film in nine days. It was an easy and happy shoot. And I think that's the payback you get when you prepare really well...and I just love preparing.

Why or why not?

I think it is something inherited from all the years of advertising:

How did you go about carrying out a formative research on Killer Necklace? What did you find out?

I often would storyboard my films from beginning to end, adopted from the many years of experience in advertising and Killer Necklace was no different. I took a lot of photographs of different locations of different angles and different rooms and physically drew. I always do pre-production to have blues and greens or reds shooting to get the idea of the final production. This was yet another adaption for more research on other African productions – South Africa. I also researched from many people to mix scenes with imaginations. This means lots of work and attention was given to the actors and timings. I purposefully produced the film after researching in the scenes, actors and this made the whole shooting exercise very simple.

Have you carried out any summative evaluation of films you produce?

No, I haven't. Why... I mean, why would I? No, I haven't.

What was the outcome of summative evaluation of Killer Necklace?

Sorry, I do not know...

How did you come up with the storyline of Killer Necklace?

I came up with the story of mine because of a friend of mine, a young animator, called Alfred Muchilwa approached me when I did my very first film the aftermath. And he said ...hey I am a university student, I really want to be involved in your film somehow...and so he helped me storyboard the aftermath for free, for a few lunches and we became very good friends and since then he's done every single poster of every single film I have done. He came up with this really twisted story...Killer Necklace, he gave me the premise and the storyline...I took the premise and added lots of twist and turns and layers to the story.

How did you come up with the values and roles of the key characters of Killer Necklace?

I guess just by building and thinking about the characters:

How have you managed to maintain character consistency from one scene to the next one in Killer Necklace?

By writing very carefully, and also, I gave the screen play before I finished to a lot of friends. I tend to after I write, to send out the screenplays that I write to a number of people who I trust, and I take their criticism in, and I act on it. I think once you know what a character's arch is, then it's really trying to write to ensure that a character stays true to that arch and to who they are... I think it's just really plotting the arch and really thinking through the motivation before you start writing, so that you do not have a jumpy character that's changing their motivations on every other change.

What mechanisms have you put in place to receive audience feedback after the launch, screening and distribution of the film, Killer Necklace?

None. I'm the Director and writer, and I think that if directors had to write the film, shoot, board, pay the film, pay rent, and put mechanisms to receive audience feedback, it would be complicated. I don't think that is the role of the director, I think it is the director's role to tell the story as well as they can.

Who was the Producer and Executive producer of Killer Necklace?

Effie Matere was a producer of the film, in a way actually even though I don't give her credit for it. I was actually a producer as well because I own the production company as well... Seven productions... that produced the film. I also pitched for the film, you know pitched the story...brought in the money so really in many ways she functioned more as a line producer, and we worked I would say, more as co-producers because I think, once the film was shot, I really took it and finished it and did a lot of things that producers would do with that film. The Executive Producer was M-net.

Did the Producer and Executive Producer of Killer Necklace in any way influence the content of the film and its directing?

No. They gave me total freedom in shooting without any interference.

What social issues are involved in the film?

The film was out so much concerned with social issues. However, this is mostly answered in question 3

Can your film be used to address social issues in the society?

The film can be used to influence audience for social change. Other films like "Scarred" focuses on Wagalla massacre and concentrates on political and class forces as retold at TJRC (Truth, Justice and Reconciliation). Otherwise societies, social groups and families can be influenced by the film. It means people can reflect on the issues of the film, the characters, the scenes so as to negotiate social change in our society. So Killer Necklace asks the viewer to think about the characters, the scenes, the storyline and all combination of factors in the film to affect social change or class matters.

TRANSCRIPT III

Date: 17.12.2015.

Name: Bob Nyanja

Status/Position: Film Director and Producer

Give an overview in general about your life as a Film Director and what motivated you to do film, specifically with a focus on your film Malooned:

Malooned was set at a time when there was an electioneering mood in 2007-2008. The film was shot during the then ongoing political campaigns for presidential elections. It depicted the differences in political opinion and the philosophy between the *Luos* and the *Kikuyus* in Kenya or the *Kikuyus* and “the rest”. I developed the story based on putting one character, a *Kikuyu* – the woman and the other character a *Luo* – the man together and used them in the film to address issues of social differences based on ethnicity/tribalism and class issues. The objective was to get across the idea that we are stuck in one country or “Loo” (restroom) called Kenya. The title of the film *Malooned* is a ‘corruption’ of the word marooned which means trapped. In this country, it’s not by our own design that we were here rather we are here without choice. People stuck together must simply work together. The characters are completely in one area without outside access. There is no trust among the trapped people, there is suspicion of each other as one suspects the other to be a rapist and the other suspects the other to be a money-seeker. Eventually they must work together to get out ending up getting closer and closer then becoming real friends and eventually detaching themselves from old relationships (a marriage and a kid family) to become lovers.

What exactly motivated your interest in film directing?

It started from theatre at an early stage. I loved two-character theatre and an example is the Egoli Series. My childhood interest in movies grew from the estate; I loved watching Eastern Movies and American Cowboy films in the Eastleigh estate of Nairobi County. The exposure to the big screen at that teenage period 8-12 years, was very important. Initially, I loved football but changed completely in form 1 & 2 (first and second years of high school) on realisation that footballers didn’t do well in academics as opposed to drama boys who passed well in both their O levels as well as A levels. I got more encouraged to get

into theatre at Maseno Boys High School by Mr. Opiyo Muma. I studied literature at an undergraduate level at University of Nairobi. On getting a Masters scholarship at the University of Nairobi, I never defended my thesis due to too much involvement in business activities away from the university. In 1992/1993, I joined Bob John's University in the United States of America (U.S.A) on a Smith Caroline scholarship taking 1-year undergraduate film studies and 1.5years Masters programme. I attained an MFA –Master of Fine Arts in Film/Video production in 1993 and came back to Kenya in 1997 during the shooting of *Saikati* the *Enkaabani* (1997) by Mrs. Anne Mungai but could not get an acting role. I settled for TV-acting and have been doing commercials with media networks, and freelancing with business. I went back to the United States America (U.S.A.) in 1999, attended the AVID Film School and learned how to edit and direct feature films. I came back for a proposed show known as *Redykulass* which did very well. In the year 2000, I decided to work on a German Film feature as a location Manager. I watched keenly and fully how a feature film is produced. I also featured in *Survival Series* as a transport manager to get the opportunity and experience in management. In 2001, I was the transport manager controlling over 100 vehicles in the shooting at Sheba. This was the only way to get into the movie production. Later on I went into full business through my company Cinematics Productions. The company is now involved in commercials, documentaries, events management, and TV Shows in different vernacular languages e.g Visanga on MTV.

What was your target audience with your film “Malooned”?

There was no specific target audience for this movie, it served as an entertainment tool. Otherwise the target audience is any Kenyan especially the political class, who need to see that the differences we have as Kenyans are minor and can be ironed out. The other target audiences I can say include the middle class who are the propagators of ethical chauvinism, the *mwananchi* (common man) who is the fodder for political actors.

What is the characterisation of “Malooned” actors?

The characters are truly stereotypes as individuals. They are consistently defined by their characters. This was done intentionally so that the audience could relate directly to the tribal groups of the *Luo* and the *Kikuyu*.

What feedback mechanism have you used for this film and your other films in general?

Generally, there is no specific feedback mechanism for my films. The only feedback comes for people who have watched the film through e-mail and social media, also at film festivals for example the Zanzibar Film Festival (ZIFF) where *Malooned* was voted as the best film. The rest of the feedback is just from the roadside shows. Otherwise I normally get feedback through the sales print of the film for like pretty picture.

TRANSCRIPT IV

Date: 11.1.2016

Name: Veronica Martha Agowah Quarshie Nai

Status/Position: Writer and Film Director

What interested you in becoming a film Director?

I believe film makers are basically social commentators. It has always been my wish to use the film medium along with all the dramatic elements to comment on relevant social issues in Ghana. It was also my aim to help improve the content of the films being churned out at the beginning of the video revolution in Ghana. There were problems with content and execution of very many of the films at that time. This was due mainly to the fact that those who initiated the video industry were self-trained (Please check: Nai's 2015 Thesis, under Economic Themes in Chapter 3).

Specifically, what motivated you to write and direct A Stab in the Dark theme?

Our main intention in developing the story was to address social issues devoid of elements that border on superstition like witchcraft and spiritual elements as the only way of solving problems. Hordes of the video movies at that time usually resolved issues by spiritual

means. Secondly, we wanted to raise the image of women in the videos. Women are always portrayed as ‘weak vessels’ who needed others to stand up and fight their battles.

Who is your target Audience in A Stab in the Dark?

This is a family situation which focuses on how problems such as infidelity develops. However, the film deals with a number of other social issues (Check Nai, 2015, Chapter 3). The target audience is made up of married couples and young adults yet to get into marriage.

Still on the audience of A Stab in the Dark, Are you aware of their knowledge, attitude, and practices?

Yes. As a ‘participant observer’ in the theatre of life, one can deduce their attitudes, concerns, challenges, world views etc.

What specific social issues does A Stab in the Dark address?

Single parenthood, infidelity, teenage waywardness, but the major issue is marital crises.

How did you arrive at the specific issues addressed by A Stab in the Dark?

A close interaction with many, many people in the society at that time indicated that these were issues of serious concern to them. These issues appear to have seriously affected people in the community and films with those subjects told their story and thus addressed their concerns.

What specific values are consistently emphasized in A Stab in the Dark?

That the marital arrangement is sacred and in the event of its breakdown every effort should be made to prevent its collapse. This can be seen in the ‘extreme’ measures that the character Kate employed in her fight to restore the unity of her family.

How does A Stab in the Dark ensure that issues are dealt in a culturally relevant and appropriate manner?

There are cultural issues in the film which are implicit but not explicitly stated. An example of this is the fact that Kate never directly confronts her father in the rather intense conflict. In Ghana, as I believe in very many African societies, the culture forbids children from directly confronting their parents no matter how wrong the parents may be. By our traditions ‘children are to be seen not heard’. This makes the film culturally relevant.

Did you conduct any formative research prior to designing and directing A Stab in the Dark?

No formative research, our deductions were by seriously observing the video film audience and the society at large.

How did you go about carrying out a formative research on A Stab in the Dark? What did you find out?

Maybe not in a structured way, but a number of people have done this in a number of analytical articles and discussions which appeared in the media in those years. In academia a few people have studied the film in NAFTI, the University of Ghana, Legon and a University in Australia. Also, the reaction of the audience at that time was very positive. That it was one of the most commercially successful films at the time attests to this.

Have you conducted any summative evaluation of A Stab in the Dark? Why or why not?

Same answer as above

What was the outcome of summative evaluation of A Stab in the Dark?

Our main intention in developing the story was to address social issues devoid of elements that border on superstition like witchcraft and spiritual elements as the only way of solving problems. Hordes of the video movies at that time usually resolved issues by spiritual means. Secondly, we wanted to raise the image of women in the videos. Women are always portrayed as ‘weak vessels’ who needed others to stand up and fight their battles.

How did you come up with the storyline of *A Stab in the Dark*?

Our main intension in developing the story was to address social issues devoid of elements that border on superstition like witchcraft and spiritual elements as the only way of solving problems. Hordes of the video movies at that time usually resolved issues by spiritual means. Secondly, we wanted to raise the image of women in the videos. Women are always portrayed as ‘weak vessels’ who needed others to stand up and fight their battles.

Who else was involved in the development of A Stab in the Dark’s plot?

The story was done by myself and Samuel Nai who at that time was my Editor.

How did you come up with the values and roles of the key characters of A Stab in the Dark?

The society and culture always supplies the key ingredients in any piece of drama. Art is not divorced from the society that produces it. The values, worldviews, outlook etc. of the characters are consistent with the behaviour, attitudes and views of the culture.

How have you managed to maintain character consistency from one scene to the next one in A Stab in the Dark?

We tried to employ the dramatic concepts in the film. For instance, we established the character of Effe in the very first scene of the film. This was to show the audience that this was the kind of teenage girl who had no problem running around with elderly men. That character is ‘developed’ when she gets into the relationship with her friend’s father, Mr. Ansah. This is how we maintained character consistency with the other characters.

What mechanisms have you put in place to receive audience feedback after the launch, screening and distribution of the film, A Stab in the Dark?

Maybe not in a structured way, but a number of people have done this in a number of analytical articles and discussions which appeared in the media in those years. In academia a few people have studied the film in NAFTI, the University of Ghana, Legon and a University in Australia. Also, the reaction of the audience at that time was very positive. That it was one of the most commercially successful films at the time attests to this.

Who was the producer and executive producer of A Stab in the Dark?

Moro Yaro

Did the Producer and Executive Producer of A Stab in the Dark in any way influence the content of the film and its directing?

No absolutely not. Although in the beginning he had wanted some of the spiritual stuff as part of the ingredients in the story. This we flatly declined. He went along with the story as it is. He does not interfere in the technical aspects of filming.

What social issues are invoked in A Stab in the Dark?

Single parenthood, infidelity, teenage waywardness, but the major issue is marital crises. There are cultural issues in the film which are implicit but not explicitly stated. An example of this is the fact that Kate never directly confronts her father in the rather intense conflict. In Ghana, as I believe in very many African societies, the culture forbids children from directly confronting their parents no matter how wrong the parents may be. By our traditions ‘children are to be seen not heard’. This makes the film culturally relevant.

Why did A Stab in the Dark focus on these issues?

A close interaction with many, many people in the society at that time indicated that these were issues of serious concern to them. These issues appear to have seriously affected people in the community and films with those subjects told their story and thus addressed their concerns.

How has A Stab in the Dark advanced these social messages?

The primary purpose of the film was to supply the means by which collapsing families and marriages can be saved. The narrative made a number of “suggestions” in the resolutions in the 2nd instalment of the film. Some of these are interventions by respected family and society members, and serious effort on the part of all involved in the conflict to resolve the issues.

Is it possible to use A Stab in the Dark to influence your audiences towards a specific point of view?

Yes. Elements in the film must have been consistent with the views of the audience considering how it impacted them. I believe that many people saw themselves in the situations presented in the world of the movie.

How can A Stab in the Dark be used today to negotiate social change in Ghana?

Yes. I believe the issues raised in the film are still relevant today. The lessons the film teaches are still fresh. I believe that this kind of film will for many years be relevant because the issues are recurrent.

TRANSCRIPT V

Date: 17.12.2015.

Name: Sam A. Kessie

Status/Position: Film Maker and Artist

What interested you in becoming a film director?

Telling stories was the biggest motivator and the care for telling those stories. I didn't consider it a career in my life. I initially studied computer science and accounting then thought I would do a course in Psychology so as to understand why people did what they did and why things happened to people the way they happened. It is a study of the mind, and film is an art form that can deal with this. I figured that the best way to express, psychology was through film making. Accordingly, a letter from Adam was a female driven film with the main attraction for me being the thought of shooting the movie in Ghana.

What is the movie A letter from Adam about?

The theme of the film was a young woman, Enima who decides to go on journey seeking love by getting to meet her old-time boyfriend but who is already married. However, she ends up in confusion as she can't hold onto the man and becomes promiscuous. Enima doesn't marry the man she comes in contact with. Even her best friend who is very religious

and awaiting church wedding does not inspire her as she falls pregnant out of wedlock. Enima gets to her own identity when she meets a man who promises her to give up on her. However, the ex-wife of her friend turns up on the scene complicating the whole scenario and confusing Enima furthermore. Enima has a terrible phobia since her parents who were lawyers were shot dead by a deranged person. Enima is afraid of going back to college for the fear of becoming a lawyer and getting killed, just like her late parents. All these leave Enima in a real dilemma and she acts like a dishonest person.

Specifically, what motivated you to write and direct A Letter from Adam?

I made a choice to do what I wanted to do, not what people wanted me to. It was my choice accepting responsibility for my choices, taking chances and not being afraid to try again.

Who is your target Audience in A Letter from Adam?

Women, lovers, couples, lovers who have lost loved ones, men and women in double deals.

What specific social issues does A Letter from Adam address?

The social issues addressed include relationships and multiple partners, heartbreak or emotional stress in marriages, questions on why women don't break from their past and refuse to "move on", depression and fear of becoming other people's victims, revenge after a break up, deception by both men and women, issues that people don't want to address, hopelessness, the issue of whether to have sex before or outside marriage, and living up to certain expectations in society.

What specific values are addressed in the film?

The specific values addressed include, family values, individualism, life after breakup, dating, wallowing in mistakes without care, not allowing negativity to consume one's life, that there is a reason for every happening and people must be readier to move on.

Did you conduct any formative research prior to designing and directing A Letter from Adam?

Sometimes I would just walk away after filming to know if I was able to communicate – get story by audience’s feedback. Read online- mixed reactions, texture in film in terms of shadow my style in the film – didn’t work typical Ghanaian. Some appreciate. Some didn’t. The story had a twist – ambiguous (not happily ever after). I do not like happily ever after endings; hence the story ends in an ambiguous way. She comes to an enlightening. She is in a better place, not typical love ending. Looked for natural engagement scene to fit in and mix it with fiction.

Have you conducted any summative evaluation of A Letter from Adam? Why or why not?

I have conducted evaluation for many other films but not on this particular film. I receive feedback from the audiences who watch my films. However, in *A letter from Adam* some scenes do not have all parts. This is because as a low budget film, we deliberately cut out many scenes e.g. the wedding, college life. Other common mechanism of evaluation includes Facebook, Twitter, “Routine” Blog, “Samaritan” fan page on Facebook.

What mechanisms have you put in place to receive audience feedback after the launch, screening and distribution of the film, A Letter from Adam?

I have a website, Facebook links, a twitter account, and a Facebook fan page.

What other social issues does the film bring about?

The other social issues that can be found or explained in the movie are identity especially amongst young women, the need to be seen, over-consumption with social media (Facebook and selfies), and inculcation of the Western Culture to escape from the trap of wanting to be noticed.

Can film be used for social change?

Yes, it can. First, the artist explores the truth with which people can clearly identify with. When people see emotions that they identify with, they see an answer as well. The audience can readily get influenced and do something about their situations. When people want change, they go to a great length to get it. Film uses the entertainment blend to pass the

social message without being too harsh to the people thus pushing the message of change to a happy lot.

How have you managed to maintain character consistency from one scene to the next one in A Letter from Adam?

Character consistency was maintained. The stubborn character was maintained character dealing with inner emotions she goes up and down, one minute she is okay another she is down.

Who was the producer and executive producer of A Letter from Adam?

Lydia Forson, she was the chairman, the writer, producer and actress of the film.

Did the Producer and Executive Producer of A Letter from Adam in any way influence the content of the film and its directing?

It didn't interfere with the content of the film, as she deals with these issues. As an actress. As a producer she has to deal with a lot of logistic issues, she could not focus in acting. All in all, she did a good job. It is a collaborative effort, filming is therapy.

TRANSCRIPT VI

Date: 17.12.2015.

Name: Kwaw Ansah

Status/Position: Film Maker/Director

How does our work get recognized?

In Africa we have too many false criticisms we call PhD-Pull him down. Be careful not to be brought down by negative criticism even false positive criticism. In other words, use criticisms to build yourself and stay focused to have a future in film. One must remain creative and produce stories that are real. As one film makes said, you can not equate scholarships with creativity.

How can students submit films to the FESPACO Ougadongan festival? What are the challenges?

This can be done online by filling in a form. It is from there that you stand a chance of your film being selected as a witness. The emphasis is to avoid Hollywood like stories ensure you have typically African stories like the pioneer one by Mrs. Anne Mungai make true wonderful stories that tell Kenya and Africa as a wonderful, beautiful place with strong characters including handwriting mothers and family caring fathers. Not only can we make positive films and stories, it is possible also to produce documentaries that reveal to the world how rich the African continent is. Learn how to collaborate with authorities and the corporate world for your funding and operations without being arrested. The challenges in film making do not just stay with finances, ensure that you have a strong true story to tell and tell it very well truthfully. Africa is a polygamous society and whatever story you make in a family, try and cater for it so as not to confuse with Western world or even the Japanese/Chinese culture of one man - one wife. China even had a one man- one wife – one wife-one child policy. The challenge in aping is that you have no idea about people's real culture and hence it is not possible to relate correctly with their heroes and heroines. Kenyan, same with Ghanaians and so it is with American stories. When Americans tell their fantasies, we should not try to ape them in stories. We should not dress our character in American punky dresses or boots, neither should we use gums or machoism to depict our heroes and heroines.

TRANSCRIPT VII

Date: 6.04. 2016.

Name: Cheick Sissoko, Mali, West Africa.

Status/Position: Secretary General of FEPACI.

Describe your work and life briefly

I chose cinema to make a contribution to life as an African and to show that Africans have a right to air their views. This would make the African change their life's and walk through the modern world. I have an experience for working in science world having done sciences in France. However, the Arts like film have a direct interaction with the people making them understand problems and the society. All my films are based on social reality. The mission of Africa film maker should give the way of life and have fun, to suffer and construct what is African. But unfortunately, this is marginalised not only in Africa but very much in the rest of the world.

What messages of social change are in your films?

This all depends on the film makers. With regard to audience and social community, thus people can take the destination of our social realities in order to change the societies.

It's my choice to have these social change films.

What kind of films have you watched or most preferred?

Genesis, FILZA, and others which showed FGM and also indicating that women should be inherited. There is also YAMANTO, which is about "chokoras" the garbage boys who are unfortunate enough not to work or have enough cash for basic needs leave alone any luxuries. Other was BARTOU which was about beggars, a film chased away by politicians. Other films, include *Lanaire* de by Sembene Ousmane and '*Commandat*' about the black man and the way the ordinary man is taken advantage of in industries or any meeting place. Another one is FATIQUE over the suffering of working woman in which they are working responsibilities while taking care of the family. There is also exploitation by immigrant workers through poor pay and poor working conditions. The other film is about students uprising which brought about a real change after a meeting with the president. In Cote

d'Ivoire, PETAQUE shows theme of corruption while in Dechoisse, done in Burkina Fasso shows the exploitation of rural folks by the Government donor food and other donated items or aid. Most if not all of these films can be found at Alliance Francaise, Nairobi film library.

What can the government and corporate sector do to promote film in Africa?

The government can have an economy that creates a conducive environment that professionalises the film industry. Since it can play a very important role in the economy, the production infrastructure should be greatly improved. This means technical facilities like labs, studios and commercial structures like distribution companies, cinema villages, banking facilities etc to be enhanced to accommodate film making. The government should also be made to have clear policies that guide film operations without stifling creativity and entrepreneurship of the film maker.

TRANSCRIPT VIII

Date: 6.04. 2016.

Name: Mohammed Said Oumar

Status/Position: Film maker and Regional secretary FEPACI (Indian Ocean Islands region)

Would you start by introducing yourself?

My name is Mohammed Said Oumar. I started as a film assistant in the U.K and was also as a script writer. I have done a short fiction film and I am now working on a first feature film. I did not have formal film training. My work involves getting the island regions on film face.

What kind of films have you watched?

I grew up in France and moved to the UK with my parents. However, no TV from early childhood. Even though TV was not my preference, Malcolm X documentaries in transformation of blacks really moved me, as well as Sembene films from Senegal and Sarafina film have moved me. It was easy to identify with many others including Matebale,

mama Keita etc. All the new generation and pioneer films indicate that we Africans can tell our own story indicating good loving, cooking and dressing that gives an image of a true people, the black people. The black youth in Europe or the West do not perceive Africa positively; being shown the continent to be full of wars, corruption and hunger calling it as a dark continent yet in reality it is a rich cultural continent with peaceful people. The films help me construct my past using the film as a weapon in a battle of images: people both migrants and Africa in particular.

What in your opinion is a film on social change?

It depends on a film maker. The first person to experience change is the film maker if consciously aware. Similarly, film enthusiasts will watch a film with great analytical thinking with immediate thought change. The masses watching the film will react from the marketing blitz even before watching the films. All these are pre-conditioned people and hence, the film maker has to de-condition the audience. The film maker has to de-condition the audience. The film however as in present day form will not have impact since the audience at the moment have so many forms of watching many images thus not having any impact when a film is watched. In the pioneer world of films images were singularly seen on film scenes and hence the film had immediate impact. At the moment, audiences can watch film in many watching phases. So, to have a social change, the present film requires a package through social workers and other community films which help and guide audience to understand the film.

What Kenyan films have you watched with social impact?

Okay, many films from Kenya watched including Nairobi half-life, 1st Grader etc. However, the latest ones on short stories discussing homosexuality has made an impact.

What films have you watched that have impacted your social front?

The Mauritanian film on the young man on immigration to go out of Africa has had great impact on my social front. The packaging of the film resonated with me so well as I related how the boy was interested in education so much as to risk being smuggled several thousand kilometres away to another continent.

What is your responsibility in the film industry?

I feel the film pioneers have a great responsibility with a social consciousness of the Africa film. My responsibility is to portray a legacy of heritage and do what the pioneers have done. However, their dream of having a single platform for all of Africa was a mistake. The pioneers should have clearly decentralized in regions e.g. E. Africa, North, South and they should have diversified so that film is not just concentrated on Arts or the idea of keeping to borrow money from Europe and America. Our responsibility should be to have our funds in Kenya, Mauritius, Senegal, Uganda and stop borrowing £20K from UK or \$50k from US then getting dictated upon by the donors on the theme, scene as well as actors to use on the films. The Europeans and US film makers have their regional budgets for film both in country and regionally and they do not go to borrow for film making as we are now doing here in Africa.

What social issues do Africans face that can be addressed by film?

It is very difficult to get a right idea being filmed because the founders and supporters of the film are hard to convince when writing a story. However, do not do a “Hollywood” of your films. Again, do not imitate the Western. Africans should not stereotype. We are multi-dimensional and our stories should be very balanced without showing hunger, corruption and wars in our African society. For example, Lula of Djibouti has a film having 3 girls in school with very social story on marriage. However French sponsors thought the girls were not stereotype enough to be supported on the film, leading to re-setting of the film and receiving of less funds.

What social issues have been addressed in the films you have watched?

The major one I have seen is corruption with a documentary on Mozambique and South Africa. The other issue is immigration and troubles of the Africa person moving to Europe and the West. Here in Kenya I have seen in Nairobi half-life where people are moving from rural to towns and hence increasing social crimes like prostitution, robbery, and drug trafficking. Training should involve introducing film from primary school level so that film

becomes part of the education system not just found in special and professional institutions or universities.

What do you think the government and the corporate world can do to upgrade film making?

The trouble with politicians is that they have big responsibilities but they have relegated film to the periphery. American in their Marshal plan after the World War II ensured that film and TV was dominated by American productions. That has spread to Africa. However, the film industry if well supported by the Kenya and other African governments can generate so much employment. In 50 years' time if we don't embrace support, a new lifestyle must be embraced to help saving the society from negative images. The idea of consuming all images or having film from Western films is not right. It is not fair to sit with your children through immoral images that the Hollywood films produce. Even our own corporations should support production of stories as told by African, which indicate our heroes as well positive images of the African society.

FEW NOTES FROM THE FILM SHOW AT TRIBE HOTEL BY SISSOKO, FEPACI

Film can be used to achieve an idea in mind which could be social, political or cultural. According to Sissoko documentary film, the results of film can be spontaneous interest. The documentary indicates that we should produce film as a way of life. Accordingly watching Western films is a fantasy that does not connect with African life. The Hollywood films influenced Africans to think of whites as superior and they acted so in their presence. The pioneers of Africa film including Sembene from Senegal and Tahir Cherie had a dream of political and cultural ideology of one Africa. According to Sissoko (SG,Fepaci) the history of Africa film should be read by all film makers to see the stumbling blocks are still evident as we consistently see that African film is still a rarity on our screens. Very few film festivals have taken root in the continent including Carthage in Algiers, Tunisia and FESPACO in Ougadougou. Through the festivals we can see the main controls and distribution forces of film to be government and government related organs. This

directly means that the governments have been to a great extent a stumbling block to the industry. The African film pioneers like Sembene and Tahir changed the culture of portraying film to have whisky and smoking glorified into a culture where we can tell our African stories for example herding livestock and food preparation, preservation in the deserts. Film had immediate impact according to Sembene and Tahir with political ramifications as well instant audience identifying with film actors as well as the underlying film theme. Tahir Cherie says “Only culture can be the foundation of a nation. If you don’t know where you are coming from, you won’t know where you are going. Similarly, if you cut the roots of a tree, you kill it”

TRANSCRIPT IX

Date: 9.04. 2016.

Name:Abius Abbar (AA)

Status/Position: Film Producer based in Windhoek, Namibia

Would you please start by introducing yourself?

My name is Abius, I am the regional head/secretary of FEPACI, South Africa region. I am a film-maker with specific specialty in documentary films. Working on a feature film as at time of this interview on 9th April 2016.

Can you recall any films from the Southern Africa region that have dealt with social change?

South Africa in particular has Lena Kakane who has done a liberation film in which advocacy for liberation and independence were the main themes. It involved a show of the need for emancipation of the people. In Namibia, many films too were made on the same theme although most were never shown to the public at the correct time due to censorship. The films were shown across villages but secretly. After independence, the one film that has had an impact is *Sarafina*. The ideological change brought by such a film meant that blacks realized they were capable of self-management especially after the apartheid rule. The whites had instilled the mentality that a black man cannot self-rule.

What other films have you watched or come across with clear messages or ideologies of social change?

My own film, “Namibia – the struggle for liberation”, a feature film featuring Sam Nujoma the first president of Namibia has covered the journey to independence. However, as Africans, we are good at narration but fail to document our experiences for future generations. This therefore means that film is our best chance of taking care of our next generations. Messages on important subjects like the HIV epidemic and preservation of foods as well as culture can be best passed to the next generation only through film. My other film is on technology by the *Ovahimba* people in Namibia. These are pastoralists comparable to the famous *Maasai* of East Africa. They have very little education but from the film it was realized that they use technology through mobile phones. The impact was such that after the film, the University of science and technology in Windhoek was approached with students designing a system to improve their usage of mobile phones. The developed system could now enable them to access health, pension and commercial services while there in their pastures.

Any last words for film as a tool of social change?

It is thus true that film on social change has an immediate impact if the story is well told to resonate with the audience.

TRANSCRIPT X

Date: 27.01. 2016.

Name: Dr. Timothy Njooora

Status/Position: Dean - School of Visual and Performing Arts/Creative Arts, Kenyatta University

Would you please start by introducing yourself/what do you do?

My background in Training is Music - Composition, harmony and industry. My interest in film is through the music background for film as many films are defined by the music they use as theme music. The power of music is very great in films. It gives a message to the storyline and if well done it reinforces the story theme. The Americans through Hollywood have taken it a notch higher. On the Kenyan and African front we have taken music for granted thus using any kind of music for a movie, which is very wrong. You find a set song in fun movies and vice versa.

What movies have you watched both international and local that send out social issues?

As a music scholar, Dr Njooora is a keen and avid film fan. The Americans turn fantasy into a screen wonder. In Hollywood, everything is make believe through success sticks than explain sound issues, for example the film John Q, it gives a clear story on how a frustrated family person takes a while hospital hostage to pass the message of poor in finance, racism and discrimination. Similarly, the Star Wars, Jurassic park etc. have demonstrated how to think of the future. The items that we think can't happen are put exceptionally matching music, stunt men. The Americans have also developed what they call a studio for all equipment with villagers spread over kilometres with all predefined effects, sources etc. A good example is universal studios which has thousands of acres of land specifically for shooting movies. They have high quality composed music. The cartoon work has also been made to be super in which the Hollywood mastery make the star cartoon never disc. Examples include Disney and Arnhem studios which produce Tom and Jerry etc. All this is about animation in which the Americans have perfected the art. Here in Kenya we could do some animation with Aunt Mary stories for the Kenyan society e.g Lwanda Magere, Nabongo Mumia, Mumbi etc. all these are stories that can sell very well if we put in the

resources, instruments and professionalism we have to the fullest. Other films including let's say. *"license to kill"* shows clear social issues like rape, discrimination, court systems that do not care about others. we also have *TITANIC* films in which the social class comes out. Dicaprio who was a poor boy befriends a super-rich girl and the high-class people do not recognize the relationship and try to terminate it. This goes on and finally when the ship sinks, the rich people still refuse to join rescuer boats with the poor yet that is the only alternative available. A social change that really indicates that the way social change can occur or indicate fail to occur in a very short period. In Kenyan film we have a stereotype of producing movies that depict our people as low cadre whereby they are the cooks, watchmen and porters or guards. it is possible never to have our unique instruments that have excellent sound including animals or insects sounds to make a fusion of our film reality. KOh-Nimho with stringed instrument in Ghana has made sound a unique item in film. The Ghanaian is now a well - sought professional through West Africa. Locally we can do the same here in Africa and Kenya. The creativity we need in sound including can allow us to record insects and animals using a small tape/digital voice recorder. This can then be digitized and with proper property rights we can make the same high-profile productions. We need to be proactive in recording our own unique sounds and scenes so that we get quality products using good equipment in a timely fashion that can still exceptionally well. Social issues can also be addressed By Corporate World. The corporate world is very much concerned with how much return they get for their support of your film. That is why Nigerians are mining millions because they produce beautiful scenes, well dressed characters and quite articulated sequencing.

What role do you think the corporate world can play in the promotion of the film industry?

In movies the corporate world wishes to be depicted as big and powerful. This means if you use a good sound or music system in a film, the manufacturer of that system wants to see their name or label well displayed. Similarly, they wish to see their logos and emblem in areas where the movies are shot including the names of the products. Our local stories include success and like inheritance, free problems and rise from poor to riches. Others include building names, intertribal marriage, peace across various communities. This

means we don't have to concentrate on the content of your character and your sex, language, class or tribe. That means we can all be proud of being Kenyans to avoid looking in the traditional clannism, nepotism and favouritism. I have written music stories including "Missed opportunities". This explains how we have neglected many cadres of one's potential. We look down upon watchmen, the cleaner, the secretary or even a colleague. We can make big success stories for the subordinates or even at university/college level on how one rises from let's say drugs, pregnancy, fees and failure in academics.

What social issues come out clearly in the films you have watched?

In a broader perspective, we have to get messages that give positive issues raised in our homes and institutions point towards similar themes we see in the America and Ghanaian movies. Both the young and old have stories that can fully sell on the local as well as international market. Instead we try to imitate 1st of all American stint acts then 2nd the West African styles. Furthermore, we have a variety of cultures from which we can combine or single out social issues if all efforts are concentrated towards getting quality production with good sound music and set-ups. Those stories like "against all odds", orphans who are working, role of education both on female and male, students who don't work hard then go back to the world to realise that they can't progress without having worked hard.

The idea is to promote our Kenya image i.e. you are a Kenyan e.g. Luo Kenyan, Kikuyu Kenyan, Swahili -Kenyan. There might be the starting point of succeeding in film industry. In "misled opportunities" we mean, do not discuss people as, noisy, cold, warm etc., just utilise the best you can from every character. An Example is Bill Gates who didn't finish college but worked hard and went back to graduate once he had millions of cash. Obama also didn't start from nowhere. He broke so many customs and cultures to be where he is. Simply get away from wars or conflict stories because they don't sell well. Specifically, the corporate Western world does not want to see sad or violent films. They want to learn something positive about the country without showing fighting or depressing sad scenes of hunger, wife beating/submission, housewife lifestyle and dimness.

TRANSCRIPT XI

Date: 27.01. 2016.

Name: Mr. Eston Munyi

Status/Position: Film professional

Would you please start by introducing yourself and your work history?

My name is Eston Munyi, the former head of the Film Production Training Department (FPTD) at Kenya Institute of Mass Communication (KIMC). I have a passion for film making and I am currently a part-time lecturer in Creative Arts, at the Kenyatta University, Ruiru campus.

What social Change Messages can we spot in film?

Film cuts across political and cultural boundaries to mirror people's thinking. Different groups can be said to have clear issues of social change that address them. Examples include conflict resolution and agriculture. Film can also be passed in other countries across Africa and worldwide. Interaction with other film making trainers across Africa including Juba, S. Sudan, and West African trainers and all other encounters, has proven that there are many issues that have not been addressed both in Kenya and other African countries that can be explored through film. They include deviant cultures and acceptable cultures across Africa communities. Through film, we can share/trade ideas and also help different countries solve conflict issues.

What are some of the most well-established media schools?

In terms of well-established film schools, the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication (KIMC) was established in 1976 by Germans (up to 1990). The pioneer students of Film Training at KIMC are now the current leaders in majority of the Kenyan media houses. The scholars for KIMC included both Kenyans and citizens others from many African countries. KIMC in its early days, combined both training and development of film. The training of the initial group as well as the second group included students trained by German film experts with a few African trainers. They were about 22 students with 16 local students and 6 non-Kenyans students especially from West Africa. The pioneer students are now some of the lead media bosses. The second group involved such greats as Madam Anne

Mungai, who is the researcher of this study. She has won several local and international awards, including the Head of State Commendation Award (HSC); and who also later on started on the production of several films. Others in the second lot ended up at KBC and other media houses. Other first group members include Jane Munene, Martin Nyagah, Mohamed Ali (Tanzania), Benjamin Kitolo (UON, Journalism), Joe Mwangi (KICD). Among the second group we had Wacira, and late Sonko who passed on, in the South Sudan War, Musa Dampha from the Gambia, Dommie Yambo- odotte (Kenya).

What social issues are addressed by film or through films that you have seen?

The social issue of governance and the transfer of technology are very critical issues and film can be used to achieve this. Moreover, issues like immunisation of children in the community and wealth distribution can be addressed effectively through film. As witnessed around cities like Nairobi and Mombasa, film was and continues to be used to influence various groups that include sportsmen, farmers, businessmen and also in family planning.

What is the future of the Kenyan film industry?

The future of the Kenyan film industry is assured, but people must understand what intellectual property rights are and the methods used to produce quality and sustainable film productions. The future of film making is bright but there is a need for control in watching of films, since outside films from America and other parts of the world world have messages of those countries and not specifically the best for a Kenya audience. There should be control of such films in order to enable the local film makers come up with local content.

How can the corporate world and government support the development of the Kenya film industry?

Issues that can be addressed by corporate and government bodies include good communication and ready sponsorship. The mode of creating and sustaining policies in film should be mindful of the various cultures as well as the regional needs or requirements. The private sector should heartily invest in the film industry by putting in funds, supporting

film schools for the youth who will produce and influence the film industry productions. Examples of success where corporate world has supported film include Nigeria and other West African countries. The corporate world also promotes their own agenda through film promotion. Looking back at early development, NAFTI in Ghana was pioneered by Germans through the FREDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION. They focused on films for entertainment as opposed to Kenya where they focused on documentaries on factual points. This explains why the West Africa Cinema moved giant steps ahead of Kenya. Whereas Kenyan film concentrated on agricultural, education and information subjects, Ghana and later on Nigeria took the film industry by storm through the entertainment approach. They have maintained the same to date and their corporate world has supported them fully.

Film training is now fully undertaken by a number Kenya Universities and medium local colleges. However, KIMC still sets the trend since most of the new university film departments do not have adequate personnel and equipment to train and develop their large number of students. There is need for KIMC to go autonomous to attract more funds and have a stronger say in the development of Kenyan film. The notion that film is expensive has slowed down participation in film, otherwise, KIMC should be encouraged to keep up film development since the rest of the world including S. Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, India, Europe and America are still making and continue to make millions out of film. In general, the corporate world and the government should not be in conflict. The most important thing in mind and plans of both government and corporate world is that “if it cannot make money, don’t shoot it.” This therefore means there should be a collaborative approach to film making. Several issues that are clearly in the public domain for example; ethnicity and corruption have been very negative in the society with each passing year seeming to unearth more ethnic strife and new forms of corruption.

What comments can you make about film as a tool of social change?

So through film, we can use the various organizations like the church to help alleviate or reduce incidences of corruption. Film will be able to send out a message of “stop

corruption” “stop negative ethnicity” and make a positive social change. Yes, film is a strong game-changer in many towards constructive social change. Film is the only effective medium we can use to communicate to one another across all ethnicities and nationalities in Africa and across the world.

TRANSCRIPT XII

Date: 2.3.2016.

Name:Matu Nguri

Status/Position: Film Maker

Would you please start by introducing yourself?

I am a lecturer of broadcast and media studies at Moi University. I am also helping the university to start and shape its new national television channel Kenya Television Service (KTS) as a team leader. Part of this has included trying to encourage partnership with film making organizations and private television production outfits to provide outlet for their works although this has not born much fruit yet. I have occasionally taught the two of our programme’s film making units. Before coming to Moi University ten years ago, I was the principal of the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication in Nairobi which was the premier film training school in eastern and central Africa. My own education has been in journalism and mass media in which I have a post graduate diploma, a master’s degree and now I have passed over my doctoral thesis for examination. I have great interest in film making both as a consumer and also as a creative talent. Its space is excellent for exciting the inner wells of thoughts of conviction and exploration and of personal aesthetics to excite and flower.

Would you please describe your work? What do you do?

I lecture in units that teach television production, radio production, photojournalism, digital photography at undergraduate level and in broadcast production, electronic media and society units at the Master’s degree level programmes. As a current acting director of the

Kenya Television Service (KTS), I am mainly involved in trying to work with others to initiate sustainable structures particularly in terms of finances, productions, and Human Resources. I am also trying to share and develop, together with a team of young staff members a vision for the possibility of a new television station.

What kind of Films/TV programmes have you watched that have social Change messages?

I have watched a Zimbabwean produced drama titled *I need a Child*. It is about the rare incidence of infertility and how culturally, it is the woman who is blamed as being incapable of bringing forth children. *Sometimes in April* and *Hotel Rwanda* on the Rwandese genocide, the *Sound of Music* which a Robert Wise classic, *The Graduate*, *The Titanic*, *Saikati*, *Simbi Naliama*.

What in your opinion would you consider to be a film with a social change message?

There are three things I consider –first, one with a social advocacy point of view, secondly, every film whether documentary or dramatic is motivated to communicate something in the ecology of either the director’s or the script writers community and nation. It is likely to have some position around the frontier of change (either to move forward or to photograph it for us to see). The third is the fantasy or the future film. In a country like Kenya and indeed the other African countries, one keeps hoping that there can be a rapid acceleration of transformation of both the rural and urban life in three ways – a social value bar that brings human warmth, laughter, and care. Thirdly, the economic artery is important, and change would include transformation of what is produced and how it is produced and traded... but also in terms of reorganizations and mindsets (for example how far can family land be subdivided?. How can a village co-own stuff such as the fertilizer shop, hardware wholesale? How can the universities be relevant to towards aggrevation....? lastly, the concept of renaissance.... has been mentioned here and there and perhaps an abstract on it would capture the burning need to make the African join the platform of humans who are naturally created as creators.

What social change film has impacted on you most?

The *Sound of Music* film is well done. It has a social message told through a beautiful aesthetic and storyline. The Rwanda genocide films continue to linger – why is man capable of such cruelty?

What do you feel is your responsibility in the film industry?

I have not thought much about it. However, I want to tell my own stories now. Secondly, I urge students to move into creative and reality productions even without seeking for employment and remind them that, the African was always a great story teller and was always very community oriented. Thirdly, I have offered one or two film makers the KTS platform to run shows with other film makers discussing and raising issues which may help grow the industry but also let Kenyans to watch a bit of what has been locally produced but this has not yet born fruit.

What/Which Social issues in Kenya do you feel filmmakers, should address or have not addressed in their productions?

Issues of identity – who really are we and what values define and should define us? All issues around the change frontier would be important. Lastly, in the second decade of the twenty first century, insights from research especially the ethnographical ones should be a rich source of issues. One of Alfred Hitchcock’s method was to tap into the emergent or resurgent field of psychology to craft his characters and plot his storylines whether in “Psycho” or in “Stranger on the Train”...But also historically based works –Shakespeare’s extraordinary plays got their details and inspiration from perusing through historical records for instance of the lives of the kings. The Mau Mau, the very coming of the white man, the different resistances, the conspiracies in post independent Kenya, the heroic struggles of different scenarios and events... In Meru some three or so decades, secondary school boys crossed over the fence of their girls’ counterparts and raped and torched their dormitories killing two or so hundreds. A commission was set up there are multiple historical stories like this.

When was the first institution of film training in Kenya established? And what has been its role in developing cinema in the country?

That was the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication where the German's helped to establish a film school full with a new block of building, a processing lab, editing studios, camera facilities, and with courses of directing at a post graduate level and support courses of sound, editing, editing, camera, and lab work. It was an eastern and central African school sponsoring students from these countries.

What social issues do the African countries face that can be addressed through film?

Mindset issues, professionalisation issues at the farm, factory, and office and classroom, family and marriage issues, ethnic conflict issues, change for accelerated and transformational development issues.

Can you give examples of world social issues that film has addressed?

Core national values, tyranny, freedom and individualism, psychoanalytic issues, social movements, power of science and its destructive potential, spiritualism, society's attempts to be God in the Frankenstein film versions, the world wars, the decolonisation causes, the clash of the traditional and the modern, gender, class, identity issues.

What is the future of film making for social change?

In Africa, it has not quite started. It cannot birth on its own. It must be part of a rising realization that it is possible to have a different and new society and that citizens can bring this about. The outlets for film have multiplied, the training spaces have expanded greatly, indigenous scholarship is starting to germinate, and there is in the atmosphere an expectation and a frustration regarding governance and economic development. What is lacking perhaps is excitement in futuristic models of change, or new possible futures.

What do you think the government and corporate (private companies) should do to assist in promoting the growth of the film industry in the country?

Scrap the Kenya Film Commission and let the players particularly the film makers and training institutions as well as the relevant government arms start talks towards re-engineering, Let different government arms commission... specific film projects (I wish there was an effective lobby to make this a way of thinking in different arms of public life.

TRANSCRIPT XIII

Date: 14.3.2016.

Name: Charles Manyara

Status/Position: Film Professional

Would you please start by introducing yourself?

My name is Charles Manyara. I am a film maker and an instructor at the Film School of Kenya Institute of Mass communication. I have also served as a head of Film Training from 2008 to 2015. I am currently a Masters Student at Kenyatta University. At the Film School I Instruct film producing and directing, Screen writing, Sound techniques, Film history, Film Genres and Studio technical operations, film shows and critique them. Once every year I supervise 60 students' productions ranging from short films, photo stories, documentary films, studio based TV productions, and fiction films. I also do location sound work for movies once in a while.

Would you please describe your work? What do you do?

I lecture in units in television production, radio production, photojournalism, digital photography at undergraduate and in broadcast production unit and an electronic media and society unit in the masters degree programme. As current acting director of the Kenya television Service, one is mainly involved in trying to work with others to initiate sustainable structures particularly in terms of finances, productions, and HR. Also trying to share and develop with a team of young staff members some vision for a new possibility television.

What kind of Films/TV programmes have you watched that have social Change messages?

I have watched many films ranging from wish fulfilment to documentary films. But of all those I have previewed nature and wild life documentary films have, one documentary entitled "Into the Lion's Den". Also re-enactments of all sorts are portrayal of the social changes. One such example is the documentary on who were the real killers of Jesus Christ. The other is Angola Maximum Prison documentary on prisoners who nurse their own to death. I have watched Titanic severally and every time I see it I am overwhelmed emotionally. I would say the film is therapeutic. A Zimbabwewan produced drama titled "I

need a Child” It is on rare incidence of infertility and how culturally, it is the woman who is blamed as being incapable, “*Sometimes in April*” and *Hotel Rwanda*” on the Rwanda genocide, “Sound of Music” which a Robert Wise classic, “ *The Graduate*” “*The Titanic*” “*Saikati*”, “*Simbi Naliama.*”

What in your opinion would you consider to be a film with social change message?

Three types –first, one with a social advocacy point of view, secondly, every film whether documentary or dramatic is motivated to communicate something in the ecology of either the director’s or the script writer’s community and nation. It is likely to have some position around the frontier of change (either to move forward or to photograph it for us to see. The third is the fantasy or the future film. In a country like Kenya and indeed the African countries, one keeps hoping that there can be a rapid acceleration of transformation of both the rural and urban life in three ways – a social value bar that brings human warmth, laughter, and care. Second, the economic artery is important and change would include transformation of what is produced and how it is produced and traded... but also in terms of reorganisations and mindsets (e.g how far can family land be subdivided? How can a village co-own stuff such as the fertilizer shop, hardware wholesale? How can the universities be relevant to towards aggravation....? Lastly, the concept of renaissance.... has been mentioned here and there and perhaps an abstract on it would capture the burning need to make the African join the platform of humans who are naturally created as creators.

What Kenyan Movie/film have you watched with a social change message?

Saikati the Enkabani (A. Mungai, 1997), *Clean Hands* (C. Muigai, 2002), *Mine Only* (C. Mumbi, 2012), *Boomerang* (2008)

What social change film has impacted on you most?

“The Sound of Music” film is well done. It has a social message told through a beautiful aesthetic and storyline. Then “Some Time in April” films continue to linger – why is man capable of such cruelty? How fragile are the African states, is Kenya far removed from such a danger?

What do you feel is your responsibility in the film industry?

Training film professionals, mentoring the youth to take over from the older film makers, encouraging film makers to venture into new unexplored grounds and make a difference. A lot of our culture has not been documented. The traditional marriage ring for instance has not been featured. Transition from the African to the Western way of weddings was not smooth. Perhaps this is the reason why we are losing the values of marriage. I have on top of Training others written a lot of scripts waiting to be filmed. I have not thought much about it. However, I want to tell my own stories now. Secondly, I urge students to move into creative and reality productions even without seeking for employment and remind them that, the African was always a great story teller and was always very community oriented. Thirdly, have offered one or two film makers the KTS platform to run shows with other film makers discussing and raising issues which may help grow the industry but also let Kenyans to watch a bit of what has been locally produced but this has not yet born fruit.

What/Which Social issues in Kenya do you feel filmmakers, should address or have not addressed in their productions?

There are many issues, top in the list are the marriage and sexual orientations issues followed by violence directed to male dominated Kenyans. Issues of identity – who really are we and what values define and should define us? All issues around the change frontier would be important. Lastly, in the second decade of the twenty first century, insights from research especially the ethnographical ones should be a rich source of issues. One of Alfred Hitchcock’s method was to tap into the emergent or resurgent field of psychology to craft his characters and plot his storylines whether in “Psycho” or in “Stranger on the Train”...But also historically based works –Shakespeare’s extraordinary plays got their details and inspiration from perusing through historical records for instance of the lives of the kings. The Mau Mau, the very coming of the white man, the different resistances, the conspiracies in post independent Kenya, the heroic struggles of different scenarios and events... In Meru some three or so decades, secondary school boys crossed over the fence of their girls’ counterparts and raped and torched their dormitories killing two or so hundreds. A commission was set up there are multiple historical stories like this.

When was the first institution of film training in Kenya established? And what has been its role in developing cinema in the country?

That was the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication where the German's helped to establish a film school full with a new block of building, a processing lab, editing studios, camera facilities, and with courses of directing at a post graduate level and support courses of sound, editing, editing, camera, and lab work. It was an eastern and central African school sponsoring students from these countries.

What social issues do the African countries face that can be addressed through film?

Mindset issues, professionalisation issues at the farm, factory, and office and classroom, family and marriage issues, ethnic conflict issues, change for accelerated and transformational development issues.

Can you give examples of world social issues that film has addressed?

Core national values, tyranny, freedom and individualism, psychoanalytic issues, social movements, power of science and its destructive potential, spiritualism, society's attempts to be God in the Frankenstein film versions, the world wars, the decolonisation causes, the clash of the traditional and the modern, gender, class, identity issues.

What is the future of film making for social Change?

In Africa, it has not quite started. It cannot birth on its own. It must be part of a rising realisation that it is possible to have a different and new society and that citizens can bring this about. The outlets for film have multiplied, the training spaces have expanded greatly, indigenous scholarship is starting to germinate, and there is in the atmosphere an expectation and a frustration regarding governance and economic development. What is lacking perhaps is excitement in futuristic models of change, or new possible futures.

What do you think the government and corporate (private companies) should do to assist in promoting the growth of the film industry in the country?

Overhaul the management of all the Kenyan film bodies and let the players particularly the film makers and Film Training Institutions take charge... as well as the relevant government arms start talks towards re-engineering, Let different government arms commissions... specific film projects (I wish there was an effective lobby to make this a way of thinking in different arms of public life. The current film bodies and organisation have their priorities upside down with the management only interested in what goes into their pockets.

TRANSCRIPT XIV

Date: 19.01. 2016.

Name: Solomon Obida Yamma

Status/Position: Film Maker

Would you please start by introducing yourself?

My name is Solomon Obidah Yamma, a citizen of Nigeria and a PhD student at Kenyatta University, in Nairobi. I also teach as a part-time lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts and Film in Kenyatta University and a full-time lecturer in Plateau State University, in Bokkos Nigeria.

Would you please describe your work? What do you do?

I am a theatre artist and a lecturer at the university.

What kind of Films/TV programmes have you watched that have social Change messages?

I watch all kinds of TV programmes and films: drama, feature, historical, documentaries etc.

What movies have you watched recently and what made you watch them?

I have watched The Revenant (featuring Leonardo De Caprio), Chi-Rag (featuring Nick Canon), and Quantico. I watched them because they are important to me as a member of society. The first one deals with the issue of murder, the second one deals with the issue of crimes and gun proliferation, and the last deals with terrorism.

What in your opinion would you consider to be a film with a social change message?

A film with a social change message is one which is meant to impact the behavioural patterns in the society. A film can be produced to discourage rape or theft, or even the mistreatment of women in the society. Such a film will immediately redirect the behaviour of such perpetrators of such crimes.

What Kenyan Movie/film have you watched with a social change message?

I have watched *Saikati* which is about a young lady who is promised to be given in marriage against her wish to be educated. She goes to Nairobi and quickly returns home because of the filthiness of life in the city. Of course, the social issue is that of tradition as against free will and the pursuit of higher values in life as depicted in the movie.

What social change film has impacted on you most?

The Other End of the Line, is a movie that has the same tone and meaning as *Saikati*.

How do the social change films you have watched shaped your world view?

The social change films are usually informative and conscientising. They expose you to new light and new patterns of doing things other than the ones previously known or upheld. They taught me that it is not everything in tradition that is positive and progressive.

What do you feel is your responsibility in the film industry?

My responsibility in the film industry is to perform my duties squarely and boldly. Among my duties are: to be a mouthpiece of the oppressed ones in the society, to be the conscience of our society, to encourage the upholding of positive values and discard the negative ones, to be make sure that nothing dysfunctional and slovenly passes unreduced, to ensure quality and quantity of production of films. And also to support the mainstreaming of films we can truly call African with all their peculiarities.

What/Which Social issues in Kenya do you feel that Film makers, should address or have not addressed in their productions?

Issues of immodest dressing, upholding of positive values, crime rate, extortion of money by business men, revival of positive Kenyan heritage, the building of Kenyan identity, rape, tribalism etc should be addressed with concerted effort from film makers in Kenya.

When was the first institution of film training in Kenya established? And what has been its role in developing cinema in the country?

I don't know. I am only aware of film departments in Kenyan institutions like: Kenyatta University, Daystar University, Multimedia University, Massai Mara University etc. These institutions are doing well in building the film profession in Kenya.

What social issues do African countries face that can be addressed through film?

They are so many, consisting of inferiority complexes, corruption, exam malpractices, and primordial acquisition of wealth, poverty and its stigma, bleaching of skin, laziness, and disrespect of higher authorities, tribalism, deceit and many more.

Can you give examples of world social issues that film has addressed?

To a large extent, film has addressed the issues of slavery, colonialism, nefarious government systems, and inferiority complexes.

What is the future of film making for social Change?

Film makers have a lot to do to solve the problems rather than aggravate them. This is because a lot of recent films have worsened the issues rather than solved them. There are a lot of gaps to be filled up by such films.

What do you think the government and corporate (private companies) should do to assist in promoting the growth of the film industry in the country?

The government of Kenya must create an enabling ground and also support film makers with funds to make movies. The same goes to the private companies. But of immediate importance is the need for government to make laws that will free the artistes and film makers to produce and market their movies without the stringent laws currently in operation. The law has only helped the marketing of foreign movies and their cultural values rather Kenyan movies and values.

TRANSCRIPT XV

Date: 19.01. 2016.

Would you please start by introducing yourself?

My name is **David Mulwa**

Status/Position: Senior lecturer in Drama, Theatre Arts and Performer (stage and screen)

How many films have you acted in and what are the messages of these films?

Family Affairs, Saikati the Enkabani

What are the common issues in the country that filmmakers could derive themes of their films from?

The broadening gap between the haves and the have nots, the perpetual recurrence of corruption, despite our leaders' lip service against it, poverty, mismanagement of the environment in the grip of global warming, corruption, ethnicity and nepotism, inequalities (economically) between nations.

What kind of Films/TV programmes have you watched that have social Change messages?

Dr. Shivago and *Blood Diamond*. Their themes have enticed me to watch them, for example *Dr. Shivago* reveals the idiocies of communist Russia during the 1917 Revolution and the destruction it wreaks on citizens. The pitfalls of blind ideology in intelligent people, is a subject of great interest to me. *Blood Diamond* shows how the international greed for the diamond causes turmoil in Sierra Leone.

What in your opinion would you consider to be film with a social change message?

It would be a film that shows character(s) struggling to free themselves from whatever shackles holds them down to a “new world” of enlightenment better, happier life and a greater rapport between individuals.

What do you think is your responsibility in the film Industry?

To teach, entertain, open new realities to the viewer and to challenge them not to sit upon a status quo.

What is the future of acting in film in Kenya?

Very bright! Only films with social messages can transform a community.

What should the government and the private sector do to incorporate film and social change?

They should invest in film production and the training of talent.

TRANSCRIPT XVI

Date: 9.02.2016

Name:Dr. Zipporah Okoth

Status/Position: Film Producer

Would you please start by introducing yourself?

My name is Dr. Zipporah Okoth, a lecturer in production in film at Kenyatta University, an adjudicator, writer and producer. I have produced 10 films through students’ projects. I also direct messages in the films as a producer mostly on deception, relationships, marriages, and youth issues, student suicides, in both school and family set ups. The impact in audience is such that we capture the stories that are current. Students, members of the family, and common people are always depicted in the films.

What are some of the Kenyan Films with Social Change messages?

One such film is *All girls together* by Catejan. The film clearly shows family issues, such as marriage, cheats, and greed in both men and women. The film involves a husband who moves across the border and has a concubine who later meets the wife unknowingly.

What can the media and public do to improve the film industry in Kenya?

The laws of the country should be reviewed/a bit more lenient for example with the City Council through the central government should allow filming at locations without a lot of fuss like being cameras being snatched, and requiring of licences to carry any film equipment.

What society issues can be used to create awareness?

Society issues that can be used to create awareness to the society include corruption, nepotism and good governance. Examples include the recent al-*Shabab* story. It needs to show through film, how our soldiers have excelled as well as their failures. In brief, we are not showing our folktale to the world e.g. *Tigo*, *Nyamguoth*, *Wod Obare*, *Sirubi nyaima*, *Nabongo Mumia*. All these can compete with European or Western folk tales like *Redskihs*, *Oliver Twist*, *Cinderella*, *Robinson Couse*, *Snow White* etc. which we keep watching. Similarly, we have stories of creation e.g. that the *Kikuyu* came from 7 wives on *Mt. Kirinyaga*, the *Maasais* from the sky, and the *Luhyas* from *Were Khakaba*.

What do you think the corporate sector can do to improve the future of the film industry in Kenya?

As a producer, I think that we need to see several productions supported by the private sector. Support/sponsorship, in form of funds and equipment will go a long way. Apart from the open space that the law has given to film makers, the film board still needs to come up with an environment that allows making of films. People should also have their inventions highlighted through film since without doing so, the inventions are taken to America and the West. That is why we have Lupita Nyong'o, Ngugi wa Thiong'o running out. The present writers must highlight our heroes and heroines to get full support from government and Corporate Sector. Unless we make films on stories of our heroes and heroines, we shall not progress in film and the stories will be lost.

TRANSCRIPT XVI

Date: 14.3.2016.

Name: Eulelia Namai

Status/Position: Film Professional

Would you please start by introducing yourself?

My name is Mrs. Eulalia Catherine Namai. I am a trained TV Producer, I graduated from the University of Nairobi in Social Sciences in 1972 and I am married with four children.

Would you please describe your work? What do you do?

I am a retired Civil Servant from both the Government of Kenya and the United Nations (WHO). I worked with VOK/KBC for a total period of 26 years. Three of which (1990-1993), I was a Principal Lecturer in charge of the Film Production Department at the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication (KIMC).

What/Which Social issues in Kenya do you think filmmakers, should address or have not addressed in their productions?

Issues such as land inheritance amongst all in the family, female genital mutilation (FGM), mental health, unemployment and disability, domestic violence, and child abuse should be addressed.

What social issues do the African countries face that can be addressed through film?

Social issues such as poverty, lack of education, poor health, housing issues, inequality in society, increasing squatter populations, lack of sound leadership skills and governance.

Can you give examples of world social issues that film has addressed?

Human rights and human trafficking.

Appendix 5: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Venue: Kenyatta UNIVERSITY - Main Campus

Date: 11th January 2016.

Synopsis:

(A group of selected youth sharing their experiences after watching the selected films for the study. “Guess who’s Coming to Dinner”, “A letter From Adams” by Sam Kassie, “Malooned” by Bob Nyanja and “Love Brewed in an African Pot” by Kwaw Ansah., A Stab in the Dark by Veronica Quarshie. From A whisper by Wanuri Kahiu and Killer Necklace by Judy Kibinge)

FOCUS GROUP 1

This is a focus group of professional young film makers composed of both male and females. The participants were Veronica, James, Vigilance, Ken, Salome, Paul and Jones. The films watched for analysis were “Guess who’s Coming to Dinner” by Stanley Kramer, “A letter From Adam” by Sam Kassie, “Malooned” by Bob Nyanja and “Love Brewed in an African Pot” by Kwaw Ansah.

Question:

What do you think the films you have just watched are about? Is there a specific social issue you can point out within the film narratives?

Responses and discussions

James: The films are about love, religion and politics. Specifically, I noted marriage and ethnicity can be seen in “Love brewed..” as well as “Malooned”

Vigilance: I think the films look at poverty and youthful conflicts. Specifically I can say “Guess Who..” and “A letter..” specifically bring out the issues of finance, education and religion mixing it with society involvement.

Ken: I saw the films address race and societal prejudices namely the rich versus the poor on one hand and the learnt versus the uneducated. The issue of cheating is also clearly highlighted for example in “A letter..” as well as in “Love Brewed..”

Salome: The issue of sorcery or witchcraft is seen in the film “love brewed...” where the fiancées parents accept that witchcraft can disrupt their children’s planned union. In a scene at the park, while Abba and Joe are taking pictures of themselves; the two lovers Joe and Abba are disturbed by a witch woman who throws some magic spell at them with an intension of breaking their impending union. Specifically, I see class issues of the poor and rich versus the religious and traditionalists.

Jones: The main issues I saw in the films was lack of trust and difficulty in different classes mixing. For example in “Guess Who..”, there is race, education and religion. In “A letter..” there was education and lifestyle coming into conflict

Question:

How would you say the film addressed these social issues? Are they explicitly or implicitly expressed?

Responses and Discussions

James: Both explicitly and implicitly, we see that there are society mentors including church leaders for example in “Guess who..” the pastor mediates while in “A letter..” the society silently corrects the misbehaving Adams

Vigilance: In some of the films, we learn that issues of class are implicitly sorted out for example in “Malooned” conflict is solved through mutual understanding and tackling of the common enemy as opposed to fighting amongst the “Malooned” characters.

Ken: The films tend to be explicit in the way they show conflict resolution especially for social issues. In “Guess Who..” loyalty is a means of breaking barriers while hard work and resilience is the key in breaking poverty as seen in “Love Brewed..” and “A letter..”

Salome: There is no hiding the fact that love is explicitly shown to be the solution in breaching the class rift. This can be seen in both “Guess Who..” and “Love Brewed..” as well as “Malooned”. Through love, the societal conflicts were smoothed out leading to break of barriers. Indeed, some people resort to indulgence in antisocial behavior in order to solve social issues for example drinking and being violent. This is also shown in “Guess Who..” and “A letter..”.

Jones: Rivalry in the society is seen to be addressed through competition whether it is fair or not as seen in “Love Brewed..” and to some extent in “A letter..”. We see each of the characters trying to outdo each other to be prove to be the best. Even in “*Malooned*”, the characters bring out competition as a means of proving that they are on top of their game.

Question:

Compare and contrast the social issues in Kenyan and Ghanaian films?

Responses and Discussions

James: Clearly, the Ghanaian films have explored the issue of abuse of class and power. I could also say that there is crime and deception as witnessed in “Love Brewed..” and “A letter..” similar to “*Malooned*”.

Vigilance: From the very beginning of each film, I can see conflict in relationships leading to difficult marriages or unions. This is the case in “Love Brewed..” as well as in “A letter..”. Even in “*Malooned*” we realize that it is through a big relationship conflict that the two combatants come to some agreement to untie themselves from their position of hopelessness.

Ken: I saw that language in Ghanaian films is clearly in traditional culture unlike in the Kenyan one where there was much of urban English. There is also more humor in Ghanaian films than the Kenyan ones with Ghanaian films indicating well-tailored West African clothes as opposed to the Kenyan ones that have typical European dress mode.

Salome: The Ghanaian films do not disguise their accents and on many occasions, use many idioms or proverbs to explain their social issues whereas the Kenyan situation has a more direct expression of any issue at hand. Specifically, I noticed that the Kenyan film has some Kiswahili usage while the Ghanaian ones use English all through but with their local accent.

Jones: What is clearly distinguishable between the Kenyan and Ghanaian films is that in Ghanaian, we have very strong built characters seen to relate to tough issues like crime while the seemingly meek bodied characters are presented as well educated and shrewd. In Kenya, both sexes are presented as very calculating when approaching any issue of conflict giving the impression of more equality in Kenya than in Ghana.

Question:

Would you say that you will think differently of the issues addressed as a result of watching these films? If “Yes”, why; and if “No”, why?

Responses and Discussions

James: To some extent Yes, I would think differently. For example, after watching “Malooned” I now start thinking that society could live harmoniously if conflicts were solved through seeing the bigger picture to arrest the small problem that keeps us squabbling. I also noted that language is never a barrier for example in “Love Brewed..” the language could have been a barrier but instead love superseded everything.

Vigilance: I observed that once religion is put aside, the relationships between people can be easily smoothed out. This was evidenced in “Love Brewed..” as we notice that strict Christian beliefs could be put aside to get two people into a love situation. At the same time, traditional beliefs were also abandoned to get in touch with a party in love.

Ken: The issue of prostitution for me was very negative before I watched this films but after “A letter..”, I feel it is possible to be forced into prostitution to get revenge or simply make ends meet. It was also possible to have the two characters in “*Malooned*” become lovers while in their background, they were fully married people or people in relationships.

Salome: My answer is both Yes and No. Yes because in “Love Brewed..” I felt the society is exactly that way neglecting the wishes of people while imposing stereo types in which education and high grades supersedes all. However, I would not change my thinking on racial discrimination or ethnic differences because from “*Malooned*” I am not convinced that the two characters in there would go ahead and be friends. My thinking is that like typical Kenyans, people use and dump one another after achieving a mission.

Jones: Having watched the films I am fully convinced that religion if well-handled without extremism can guide a society and that our little or big differences can be fully solved if we are able to listen from one another without minding their backgrounds.

Paul: I am 50-50 too in changing or not changing my opinion after the films. “Yes” because you have to live with whom you are with and hence from the film “Love brewed..” I am convinced that anyone can fit anywhere regardless of the stereo typing that society make for example the main characters in “Love Brewed..” successfully overcame the cultural

differences to become man and wife. However, I have a strong NO in saying the films would not change me because contrary to what would normally happen, I found it strange that the characters in “*Malooned*” could not misbehave or that the watchman in that “*Malooned*” place kept on neglecting instincts to go rescue them.

Question:

How is the approach to socio-ideological settlements in Kenyan and Ghanaian films?

Responses and Discussions

James: I noted that the Ghanaian way of handling socio-ideological issues is through superstition and dreams whereas the Kenyan way is somehow through corruption and deception or even trying to use violence.

Vigilance: It was clear from the Ghanaian films that there is so much class in religion, education and normal life issues like marriage. This means that solving their socio-ideological differences require a larger group to consult as opposed to Kenyan approach in which everyone wants to be by themselves even in very hard places or situations like “*Malooned*”.

Ken: The Ghanaian films point towards elders solving the problems of people in the society, while in Kenyan ones, men seem to be the ones to be solving things without involving the larger society.

Salome: In Ghanaian films, there is gender parity to some extent in approaching social ideological issues. In Kenyan films there is clear male domination in the way people approach issues.

Jones: Truly speaking I see both similarities and differences in the approach by both films. In both, there is the element of being very suspicious to the person very next to you while hiding that you are in a problem. However, in Kenyan films, there is domination of people thinking they are the right ones to solve the problems afflicting them whereas in Ghanaian films, the approach is through groups of religious, elderly or scholarly people.

Paul: I see a similarity in the approaches from example people in Ghana are suspicious of the spiritual or superstitious while in Kenya, people suspect one another so much even if it is not so much to do with religion of superstition.

Question:

Compare the narrative premises for Kenyan and Ghanaian film and what impact they had on you as the viewer

Responses and Discussions

James: The Kenyan film used very few locations suggesting that perhaps Kenyans are a closed society or very mean while the large variety of premises used in Ghanaian films suggest an open friendly society.

Vigilance: The Ghanaian films appear to have a distinct rich and poor divide whereas the Kenyan ones show very little change so one is left to believe the Kenyan films bring out equality while the Ghanaian ones indicate lots of imbalance in their society.

Ken: I find the Ghanaian ones are very rich in the varieties while Kenyan premises depict so much of urban style of living thus relegating traditional values to the periphery.

Salome: There is a noticeable emphasis of traditional considerations in the Ghanaian films as opposed to the Kenyans ones in almost all scenes. However, we see that both films are very much inculcating the fear factor in all activities undertaken.

Jones: In Ghanaian films, we see so much of family closeness whereas in Kenya there is a tendency to do things on individual basis. What this has impacted on me is that our Kenyan people might be having too much meanness in their approach to socio-ideological issues. It also means that Kenyan people might be too modernized in their own sense leading to the aloofness shown towards one another as witnessed in "Malooned"

Paul: The Ghanaian narrative premises are so far more naturally appearing and appealing. In the Kenyan case, there is so much reluctance to use traditional premises. I see this manifesting in the way we treat our own Kenyan films or issues as compared to foreign ones. So, in "Malooned", we see a sophisticated loo, sophisticated laptop man and many more complicated operations but in the Ghanaian ones, all things are in simple form.

Question:

Do you think it is possible for a film to influence the way you think about social issues? If Yes, why? If Not, why not?

Responses and Discussions

James: My take is a positive yes since the storyline always resonates with some issue that I believe is true or for real.

Vigilance: For me, it is to a little extent meaning that I do not believe film can change my thinking about social issues. This arises from my acting background and from the very first film I watched on Kung Fu only to discover that none of the injuries in the karate films were real.

Ken: The likelihood of a film changing my social approach to issues depends on the film message. If it is exposing negatives while giving solutions, then I really go along with it, however when it is showing too much falsehood, I totally do not change. For example, I haven't changed my mind that our fellow Kenyans are very hard to change tribal thinking even if faced with a common enemy. I see "*Malooned*" but still do not see particular tribes changing their way of looking at their neighbors.

Salome: Depending on the message of the film, I can change perception but with reservations. For example, I somehow believe serious issues like marriage should be solved between two individuals and not the whole society as done in the Ghanaian films.

Jones: Me, I normally watch and participate in film making strongly believing that we are sending out a true message to the society. I thus strongly believe that film is a means of highlighting society issues for example, use of drugs, crime, deception, mismatches in society and beliefs that do not add any present value to our life.

Paul: First I believe and trust that films that are created to have a message if well acted can be used to change my thinking on social issues but those that are fiction cannot change me although they have meaning. For example, the "*Malooned*" film makes me think seriously about difficult situations and looking beyond surface values like gender, education and language. From the Ghanaian films, I realized and started thinking that perhaps we should not take religion to be the panacea of every other societal problem that we have

Question:

Can you tell us about some of the social and ideological lessons you have learned through watching Kenyan and Ghanaian films?

Responses and Discussions

James: The most important lesson from Ghanaian films is that bad company can corrupt your thinking and actions as indicated in “A Letter..”. The paradox of my observation was that what you might view as bad company if well nurtured or listened to can become good. This is clearly seen in “*Malooned*” which kicks off with two suspicious violent characters towards each other but in the end they are literally love birds

Vigilance: From the film “A letter..”, I can easily relate to the current negative trend of “sponsor” here in Kenya. However from the same films, I learned that religion can be some form of painkiller. It is also clear that one can be disciplined especially if cornered by circumstances like in “*Malooned*”. The lesson here is that survival for the fittest exists but that with the help of this person you view as unwanted stranger, even closed doors can be opened

Ken: I learned from the Ghanaian films that parenting is not all about parents caring for their children but also advising other people’s children on how to live. From “*Malooned*”, I learned that violence is not a solution to any conflict. No amount of banging on that closed door or abusive language towards one another could be of any help to the two *Malooned* characters.

Salome: My observation is that as witnessed in “A letter..”, education can also be a source of many problems as we see in Adams case. I also learned that humility pays but one should not be too humble or follow everything they are told without questioning. This includes both religious and elderly advice. Both cannot provide all the answers all the time

Jones: I learned that when in a conflict zone, better make friends than enemies. For example, “*Malooned*” characters never moved a thing while they were in total conflict until they started “behaving” themselves.

Paul: In both films, from Kenya and Ghana, I see lack of adequate parenting with children turning against their parents either directly or through circumstances. I also learned that technology can fail at the wrong time for example in “*Malooned*”, there was power failure in

the gadgets that could have helped in communication. Lack of trust was also a result of people not getting what they wanted immediately

Researcher: Thank you for the participation and your time in keenly watching the Kenyan and Ghanaian films.

FOCUS GROUP II: Comprising of youthful film actors, screen writers and producers

Venue: Kenyatta UNIVERSITY - Main Campus

Date: 12th January, 2016.

Comparisons of *Killer Necklace* by Judy Kibinge of Kenya, "*A Stab in the Dark*" by Veronica Quarshie of Ghana and "*From a Whisper*" by Wanuri Kahiu of Kenya

Participants:

Middle aged film makers and actors; Achola, Kelvin, Norman, Kalekye, Ochieng' and Joseph

Question:

What do you think the films you have just watched are about? Is there a specific social issue you can point out within the film narratives?

Participant Responses:

Achola: I spotted religion issues in both Kenyan and Ghanaian films.

Kelvin: I felt that religion can be misused as I watched scenes from "From a Whisper..." in which the actors with their Islamic backgrounds were acting in extremes that I could relate to al-Shabab actions and other radical groups of the religious world.

Norman: On my part, I see a strong presence of parental issue in both the Kenyan and Ghanaian films as well education failure to mold society role models for example in both "From A.." and "A Stab..".

Kalekye: I have watched both Kenyan and Ghana films and clearly seen that religion and traditional beliefs or witchcraft play out clearly in the lives of both young and old in the society.

Ochieng’: As for me, what both films are raising point towards society concern for perfection with the older generation struggling to balance between modern ways and traditions while the young generation is just too enthusiastic to finish what they start with immediate results leading to impatience and careless mistakes as seen in *Killer Necklace* and *A Stab in the Dark*.

Joseph: I have watched “A stab..” as well as “*Killer Necklace*” and the issue of state negligence of their youth and freedom of association or communication really came up.

Question:

How would you say the film addressed the social issues, explicitly or implicitly?

Participant Responses:

Achola: I saw that through religion, marriage issues can be solved in Ghanaian films while “*Killer Necklace*” showed that sometimes, problems of poverty are being solved using wrong means like robbery with violence and drug abuse. The Kenyan case was trying to implicitly solve poverty problem while the Ghanaian one was using religion explicitly to solve marriage issues

Kelvin: The problem of poor marriage was seen in “*Killer Necklace*” to be addressed through gifts and coaxing in “A stab..”, counseling was being used to solve infidelity and bad manners in the family

Norman: I observed that “from a whisper” had used religion as a way of solving disturbing social inequalities but this was being done implicitly and in the negative sense to hide the actual intentions of lets say the would be bomber. At the same time “A Stab...” uses mockery by both the classmates and office mates to get the message across that there is infidelity and betrayal by a friend.

Kalekye: The issue of violence is explicitly shown to be addressed through peer talk as well as religion in both the Kenyan and Ghanaian films. However, poverty in Kenyan film is

addressed through violence and the premises in place as opposed to Ghanaian film in which this is addressed through teaming up to help the less fortunate girl.

Ochieng’: Ok, I see there is an effort by Kenyan films to implicitly address the issue of inequality through friend’s help as seen in “*Killer Necklace*” while issue of infidelity in “A stab..” is implicitly addressed through peer groups.

Joseph: I noted explicit addressing of rich-poverty gaps in the Kenyan films where the poor only access the rich through some work offer in their homes. This can be said to be similar to the Ghana situation in which a friend can host friend or friend’s kin.

Question:

Compare and contrast the social issues in the Kenyan and Ghanaian films

Participant Responses:

Achola: There is an element of cultural deviation in which the Africa family is supposed to help one another in times of problems for example the girl for poor family being hostile by the rich family and hence it is a taboo to try to make love to her. The home husband is supposed to treat her as a daughter. Yet we see that the man is taking advantage of the girl.

Kelvin: Similarly, in *Killer Necklace*, we see the rich man’s home is hosting a poor girl. In the end, the man of the house has tried to rape that girl and she is only saved by the intrusion of the lover. In both Kenyan and Ghanaian films, there is a show of disrespect by the hosts of people with less blessings in the society

Norman: I see issues relating the West Cultures and Kenyan Cultures crimes to sharp forms since the traditional way of preaching or approaching religion, handling friends and relatives as well as the way an African man handles marriage. The African man is torn between Christianity values and African values in which the bible says one man one woman whereas the African man is for one man, many women and concubines, leading to “A stab..”

Kalekye: From the film “A stab...” we see a political theme and religions themes mixing with witchcraft through dreams and believers that control the way we behave and act both before our own families and visitors. This is also manifested in the film “From a Whisper” in which the would-be bomber believes that through religion, he will be able to make some revenge

Ochieng’: Superstitions are running through both films as we see “Killer Necklace” actors going to a witch to get the necklace and then in the streets, we see the preacher doing his duties. In Ghanaian films, people use dreams and point towards witchcrafts as well as evil spirits whenever things go wrong. It is also noticeable that Class and discrimination are also clear with the poor believing that hard work done is not the solution to getting rich. Similarly, the Ghanaian film indicate that time here does not exist since friends are shown to be deceptive to one another.

Joseph: There is an increasing sense of double dealing in Kenya films for example on the streets where the preacher is being listened to in one incident and in the next, he is suspected to be a thief and actually gets lynched through mob justice. Trust is a value that has been displayed in both films. We see both in Kenyan and Ghanaian films males and females showing good trust in one another even though eventually they get deceived. In general, I can say that the social issues in Ghanaian films are being handled in parallel fashion to the Kenyan film making.

Question:

Would you say that you will think differently of the issues addressed as a result of watching these films? Why or why not?

Participant Responses:

Achola: Although we see love in the both films, more complexities are involved in the Ghanaian film than the Kenyan one making me believe that Ghanaian way of love is slightly different from the Kenya style.

Kelvin: I am a bit convinced that that the Kenyan film makers show that a lover will take to stealing and doing all sorts of things including dangerous crime, prostitution and dumping of relatives in order to achieve the final objective of pleasing the lover. On the other hand, there is more coaxing in the Ghanaian films

Norman: Although I would not think differently on the issues in the films, I clearly see that the Kenyan lover is young and uses youthful means of pleasing another young person for example, use of a borrowed taxi, use of borrowed funds and doing odd jobs to achieve what

he wants e.g. washing clothes, polishing shoes and cleaning the friend's car. So the message in the films makes me retain my thinking, in other words, the film almost talked of the real truth.

Kalekye: Both Kenyan and Ghanaian films have strengthened my thinking towards issues raised in them. In Ghana, the parents and their friends are clearly involved in the children's affairs whereas in the Kenyan case, the children are left on their own to sort things out with estate friends "mtaa people". It appears that the Kenyan loves are using cheap means to make ends meet.

Ochieng': I have come to believe that we Kenyans are very different from Ghanaians. People are caring for each other differently. In Ghana, the friends go as far as hosting one another and luring campus space for them whereas in Kenya, the best we are seeing is use of a vehicle to express support for the friends plus money offer to solve some common problems like bus fare, healthcare and food.

Question:

How is the approach to socio-ideological settlements in Kenyan and Ghanaian films?

Participant Responses:

Achola: The two are similar in their settlement of social issues. For example, jealousy is running through the films. Again, we see that Ghanaians are trying to inform one another about what is happening in the family. We see the woman trying to tell the house owner what is happening to her daughter. She gives the other Ghanaian friend same message to pass to the housewife in the exact happening in the family on her daughter, the husband and the new girl being hosted. In Kenya, there is so much secrecy to the happenings in a household

Kelvin: There is a similar approach to settlement of some issues in which both films have been showing betrayal. At the rich home in Kenyan films, we see the workers colluding with outsiders to the detriment of the family. Anything happening to the family of the rich family could have gone unnoticed by the house owner whereas in Ghana, the house owner has been informed although they "buried their heads in the sand".

Norman: I have come to see that Ghanaian approach to issues of education is different from Kenya in which all Ghanaians look towards university education whereas Kenyans can do with any level as seen in Mbugua's case of "Killer Necklace"

Kalekye: I can see corruption in all levels in the Kenyan films as we witness Mbugua's access to many places in "Killer Necklace" as well as the filming of an embassy building in a street in "From a Whisper". In Ghanaian films, issues of witchcraft are seen to solve people's love issues.

Ochieng': The approach to love, money and religion is somehow similar in both the Kenyan and Ghanaian films. In case of deviation from the norm, we see that help is sought either from friends or elders. Again, both Kenyan and Ghanaian films seem to indicate that the law or authority should not be trusted in solving common problems.

Joseph: I have observed that the way of the poor is to work for the rich and that the only way the poor can help themselves is through hard work but in Kenyan films, it appears that the only way is through self-initiative even if it is negative.

Question:

What are the narrative premises and do they have a positive or negative influence on you the viewer?

Participant Responses:

Achola: In "A stab..." We see the beautiful sceneries of the beach and people having fun at the same time others doing their fishing, which makes them, feel good and proud.

However, in 'from a whisper...' there is a sense of sadness in most of the scenes. We see the orphaned girl, in artistic location which does not give her happiness as well as the elder brother of the bomber staying in a very affluent background yet they are not at peace at all.

Kelvin: Some of the places we are shown in "Killer Necklace" are very poor in terms of economic outlook giving an impression of poverty. The same film however has some very affluent premises. The same could be said of "A stab..."

Norman: I can say that "from a whisper" confined itself to high class neighborhoods that do not show friendliness according to my assessment while "A Stab..." mixed the scenes showing

both the very poor and the extreme rich. I notice that in both, it is only when a third party comes in that both lovers lose their minds”

Kalekye: I see much more variety in the Ghanaian premises as opposed to the Kenyan films and there is an effort to make the scenes very cultural in Ghanaian films as opposed to the Kenyan premises.

Ochieng’: So far, I have concluded that the Ghanaian film maker had in mind a mix of the modern family as both the office mates and their gossip style is done in a very modern premise.

Joseph: The most notable difference between the Kenyan and Ghanaian premises is that most Kenyan premises are very confined whereas the Ghanaian ones are always vast giving the impression of Kenyans being conservative or mean while the Ghanaians are generous.

Question:

Do you think it is possible for a film to influence the way you think about social issues? Why or Why Not?

Participant Responses:

Achola: Film can actually influence way of thinking. For example, the Kenyan lover is young and uses youthful means of pleasing another young person for example, use of a borrowed taxi, use of borrowed funds and doing odd jobs to achieve what he wants e.g. washing clothes, polishing shoes and cleaning the friend’s car.

Kelvin: Clearly, I feel that watching the films can really have an impact on the audience way of thinking. There is an element of rivalry and deceptive by the Ghanaian film whereas competition comes up in the Kenyan film where each friend tries to undo the other through the showing off in many scenes. Parental upbringing is different in Kenyan and Ghanaian films.

Norman: To me, I feel that people are caring for each other differently. My take is that the films can have both a negative and positive influence. In Ghana, just like in Kenya, the best we are seeing is express support for the friends plus money offer to solve some common problems like bus fare, healthcare and food as well as offering jobs

Kalekye: I am very convinced that the way people approach socio-ideological issues can change especially in the film “A stab...” and in “*Killer Necklace*”. Jealousy is running through the films. Again we see that both Ghanaians and Kenyans are trying to inform another about what is happening in the family. This I believe makes me try to understand why I should be suspicious of everyone including close friends.

Ochieng’: On the contrary, I do not think the films can change my way of thinking about social issues. For example, Kenyans in the film have been showing betrayal. But in real world of Kenyans, people really can keep secrets and simply look away when things happen.

Joseph: I specifically noted that if one is keenly watching the films, you can be influenced in many ways. At the rich home we see the workers colluding with outsiders to the detriment of the family. Anything happening to the family of the rich family could have gone unnoticed by the house owner whereas in Ghana, the house owner has been informed. It is implying that there is more openness in Ghana than the Kenyan people.

Question:

What are some of the social lessons you have raised through watching films today?

Participant Responses:

Achola: From the film “from a whisper” I have learned that crime is an issue that requires the whole society to be involved in curbing. In the film “love brewed...” I have learned that solving marital problems requires that no outside intervention occurs. I also learned that poverty can be a major hindrance in accomplishing natural acts like marriage. If Abba and her fiancée had enough funds for a good house, car and occupation, the chances of a rich outsider interfering would have been minimized.

Kelvin: What I learn from “from a whisper” is that religious extremism is for real and that parents or relatives must treat suspicion in the family seriously. If only the elder brother had checked on what the young “bomber” brother was doing the parents would have known and probably disrupted the evil designs of their young son.

Norman: Although “Love brewed...” themed on love, I see the issue of social class being very serious. It is also clear that education of a child should be well done to avoid a chain of poverty from off springs.

Kalekye: It was very interesting to watch how security in “from a whisper” is neglected in the society. A man is filming a location in town and nobody is bothered to find out who that man is. I know we just had CCTV facilities recently but when a man takes photos or videos of an embassy building, good security by the people should have identified him and stopped him.

Ochieng’: Issues acted both films include love, relationships and poverty. The Kenyan film indicates that during relationships we need to take care of the backgrounds if each person. Whereas the Ghanaian love explores the rush by people to get into relationships without telling each other the truth about themselves. Although we see love in the two films, more complexities are involved in the Ghanaian film the Kenyan one.

Joseph: The Kenyan film makers show that a lover will take to stealing and doing all sorts of things including dangerous crime, prostitution and dumping of relatives in order to achieve the final objective of pleasing the lover.

Researcher: Thank you for your full participation.

Appendix 6: SPEECH BY PIONEER FILM MAKER

Ghanaian Kwaw Ansah urges use of film to reverse negative African image

Friday, October 31, 2014 13:07



Ghana's great filmmaker Kwaw Ansah was back in Kenya an impassioned plea to the country's future filmmakers to tell their own stories and not try to imitate Hollywood. PHOTO | MARGARETTA WA GACHERU. Making an impassioned plea to Kenya's future filmmakers to tell their own stories and not try to imitate Hollywood, Ghana's great filmmaker Kwaw Ansah was back in the country this week after being away for almost 30 years.

The 73-year-old sage who's often called 'the Father of [Anglophone] African film' had been invited by Kenyatta University's chairman of its Theatre Arts and Film Technology Department, Dr John Mugubi to screen his most famous films and share insights with young KU students about the history of West African film. But Ansah also told the students that film was an extremely powerful tool which they needed to use to reverse the negative images of Africa perpetuated by Hollywood films and Western culture generally.

Africa's first award-winning filmmaker initially came in Kenya in 1986 to witness the phenomenal success of his film, *Love Brewed in the African Pot*. "I was invited by Kenya's Minister of Culture to come and show 'Love Brewed' here, but when I arrived, a man from the Kenya Film Board told me to go home because Kenyan audiences only like movies made in

Hollywood,” Ansah recalled. But the Ghanaian managed to convince the KFB man that he could at least show his movie on an experimental basis just to see if his assessment of Kenyans’ cinematic taste was accurate. Ansah said *Love Brewed* opened the same weekend as the latest James Bond flick, but there was no comparison between the lengthy lines that came to see his film and the cinema seats left empty for Bond. “There were full house crowds for three months,” said the man who not only scripted *Love Brewed* but also produced, directed and composed the sound track for the film. Speaking last Wednesday at KU’s spacious Student Business Centre, Ansah insisted students first see his film before he spoke so they’d have some point of reference and something to talk about. In fact, most of the youth that filled the KU auditorium hadn’t been born by the time Ansah’s film defied all the odds and proved to the international public that Africans could indeed make first-class films and tell their own stories at the same time.

Sharing some of the struggles he’d faced while helping establish Ghana’s fledgling film industry, Ansah described how he had been confronted with formidable odds, especially as he got no support from either the post-Nkrumah Ghanaian government or the private sector, including banks. Ultimately, it was his father-in-law who volunteered to give him a house and title deed, so he could obtain a bank loan and proceed to make the film that he said cost more than \$1 million (Sh89 million). Since then, he’s made two more feature films, ‘*Heritage Africa*’ and ‘*Praise the Lord Plus One*’ as well as several award-winning documentaries. He also founded his film production company, Film Africa Limited.

Appendix 7: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER, KU GRADUATE SCHOOL



**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL**

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke

Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: M88/10714/2008

DATE: 1st August, 2015

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology
& Innovation
P.O Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION ANNE G. MUNGAI- REG. NO.
M88/10714/2008**

I write to introduce Ms. Anne G. Mungai who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. She is registered for Ph.D degree programme in the Department of Film Technology and Theatre Arts.

Ms. Anne Mungai intends to conduct research for a Ph.D Proposal entitled, "Film and Social Change: A Comparative Study of Cinema Ideology in Selected Kenyan and Ghanaian Films".

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy N. Mbaabu'.

**MRS. LUCY N. MBAABU
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL**

cc:na

Appendix 8: NACOSTI RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

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When replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No.

Date:

11th September, 2015

NACOSTI/P/15/9620/7792

Anne Gaudencia Mungai
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Film and social change: A comparative study of cinema ideology in selected Kenyan and Ghanaian Films,*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Nairobi County for a period ending 9th September, 2016.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


DR. S.K. LANGAT, OGW
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NAIROBI COUNTY
P. O. Box 30124-00100, NBI
TEL: 341666

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.



National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation | ISO 9001:2008 Certified