

Film and National Culture in Namibia:

A study and analysis of how the films *100 Bucks* and *Try* have contributed to the creation of post-colonial identity and national culture in independent Namibia.

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Abstract

As Namibia traverses the tricky trajectory of postcolonial nation building, it faces the ever present question of how to construct a comprehensive relevant national culture that acknowledges the past but speaks to a better future (Katjavivi, 2015). Namibia gained independence from South African rule in 1990. Since then the country has witnessed twenty-five years of stable growth and peaceful rule under the leadership of SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation). Despite its success at avoiding the many upheavals and autocratic administering of other African countries, Namibia still boasts one of the highest income disparities in the world. The country also continues to hold very close ties with South Africa. The Namibian Dollar is linked to the South African Rand and the national economy is deeply dependent on South African trade and capital. It is not just the country's economy that remains in the shadow of its former colonial power but its culture and societal makeup too. The country's ethnic populations and their forced resettlements under Apartheid changed the dynamics of the cultural traditions. The forced migration under the contract labour system, the confiscating of the most productive farmlands; the setup of poor townships on the outskirts of the major towns and cities, constricted the country's ability to create or preserve a lasting national culture. Given that most of these conditions persist in independent Namibia the cultural expression of the majority is still heavily influenced by these inherited colonial constraints. Coupled with the inability to compete with the influence of South African and Western culture through the media, music and socio-political structures.

It is important to consider that the country therefore still exists in a Settler vs Native paradigm. The descendants of European settlers have constructed the societal structures that include the economy, media, cultural institutions etc, while the native has historically been used as the labour that maintains these institutions and the privileges endured by a small minority of the population. With political independence previously disadvantaged Namibians now hold political power but in the reality of post colonial settler states, the country remains divided between a black political base and a mostly white economic elite.

One place that defies the current dichotomous relationship between political and economic power is the realm of culture. It is here that Namibia has seen a great wealth of cross cultural collaborations in theatre, music and the arts. This is an area where there is an opportunity for voices to emerge that are not solely shaped by the old divisive paradigms illustrated above. One might consider how the national culture might find a way to articulate its presence outside of the old settler vs native narrative. This old narrative has historically not allowed the national culture to emerge organically. The national culture has to understand its place in the scheme of things. It has to consider the evolution of a common people shaped by outside and inward forces in relation to similar shared experiences across the African continent. From this point it is important to acknowledge the very different voices that political independence in Namibia has given life to. National identity as well as culture is in flux. In times of such obvious changeability it is common to cling to the past. It is always easier to cling to an ethnicity, a political base or an idea than it is to embrace the void that exists between then and now.

It is no surprise that Namibian Cinema is the last still emerging art-form that has yet to truly take shape. This could be seen for many different factors but most obviously because of the great financial cost of producing films and the specific expertise and knowledge needed to train local crews in the art of cinema. Also noted is the fact that Namibia had no real film industry of its own before independence. Soon after independence in 1990 the NBC (Namibian Broadcasting Corporation) produced TV shows such as the popular *Village Square* series and a multitude of clever and entertaining magazine shows. Namibia then became a frequent location of choice for several international and Hollywood productions, like the Jennifer Lopez film *The Cell* and Angelina Jolie's *Beyond Borders*. It was on the cusp of this growing interest in Namibia as a scenic backdrop for Hollywood exploits that the Namibian parliament passed the Film Act of 2000.

The 2000 Namibian Film Act was set up to:

“provide for the establishment of the Namibia Film Commission; to provide for the objects, powers, duties and functions of the Commission; to provide for the establishment of the Film and Video Development Fund; to regulate activities relating to film production, and the

development and promotion of a film industry in Namibia; and to provide for matters incidental thereto." (Government Gazette)

The Namibia Film Commission (NFC) facilitated many international productions including *Flight of the Phoenix* and *Mad Max: Fury Road*. They also fund locally produced shorts and feature films coinciding with the rise of local film production. Through the NFC as well as other independent funding resources, filmmakers have helped create content that has contributed towards new ways of exploring identity in independent Namibia, but have also at times further reinforced old tropes and stereotypes thereby impeding the creation of a post colonial national culture. I intend to explore to what extent would the creation of a new national culture in Namibia help the country see the world through a new lens.

I will argue in favor of changes to our film commission and funding systems. I wish to present a study of the different literature regarding national culture, African cinema and postcolonial identity and explore how it relates to local cinema in Namibia. How have Namibian films contributed to this debate? The films *100 Bucks* and *Try* contributed to the creation of postcolonial identity and national culture in independent Namibia. This dissertation will focus primarily on the aesthetics, themes and stories produced in Namibia since 2000 as well as how our storytelling and funding models can learn from other industries throughout the world. I will undertake an examination of past works and writings on the topic of national culture in post colonial African states, nationalism and African identity.

It remains a very hard task to define in absolute terms what a "Namibian" or an "African" film should be. It is perhaps unfair to critique an industry that has only been active for fifteen years and a country that has only had twenty-six years to reverse the damage done from a hundred years of colonial and Apartheid rule. Nonetheless it still remains valuable to dissect the journey thus far and by doing so to explore where Namibia has made strides and how films and the institutions that give life to them can be improved and remodeled. I intend to take a philosophical and visionary stance on the development of a national culture in Namibia through the use of film as a medium. I also

intend to offer concrete changes and suggestions to altering the way the current film commission contributes to the creation of Namibian content. I intend to argue for the need for revolutionary thought to be encouraged along side practical implementation of realistic socio-economically relevant cultural developments. This will spark new generations of Namibian filmmakers in the years to come. It will also encourage the creation of a cinema culture which is essential for filmmaking and film appreciation to flourish. Local films can play a massive role in shaping the minds of Namibians and uniting the country with a stronger sense of self.

“Struggles are preceded by an increase in expression of culture. The liberation movement is only successful if it is able to create a common “cultural personality” amongst the people. This “personality” then works to counter the imperial forces. This homogenous identity seeks to embrace the overall sense of oppression and pain that is generally felt amongst the Africans under colonialism.”

Amilcar Cabral (1970)

Culture and national identity are still largely shaped by the past. There are also inherent limitations that come with being an African country with a western economic and education system. It is a system that still favors a small minority of the population both culturally and economically. This problem can be countered by thinking outside the box and exploring various different film models around the world. What do they do differently? How might we learn from others and how might we create completely new ideas and institutions? The vast amount of cultural criticism that has taken place over the last half century will also be considered. This will help us better understand our predicament as being a result of something systemic rather than simply a uniquely Namibian problem.

Chapter 1: The Image of Africans Over Time

Introduction

Before we consider the current state of African cinema it is worth acknowledging the background from which cinema on the African continent emerged. Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembene has been widely heralded as the father of African cinema. His seminal film *Black Girl* (1966) was called 'the first sub-Saharan film to make a major impact in Europe and North America' by The Guardian's Jordan Hoffman. Sembene observed that "before we started to make films, Europeans had shot films about the African continent. Most of the Africans we saw in those films were unable to set one foot in front of another by themselves. African landscapes were used as settings. Those films were based on European stories" (Pfaff, 1984: 1). South African born art historian and curator, Tamar Garb, observes that "whole markets developed for the creation of photographic types that would then be sold around the world and people would place them in their albums and send them to their relatives. So photography made for the proliferation of these kinds of images of Africans and so it's powerfully important in terms of the construction of a modern view of Africa. Africa is one of the places where photography is reinvented and retooled within a very different context and was really fundamental in the circulation of a particular image of Africa in the West." (West, 2013)

While Africa might seem like a reality it is also a construct which is not limited to strict finite boundaries whether geographical or cultural. Africa continues to shift in its meaning and transform under the weight of contemporary globalization. In V. Y. Mudimbe's *The Invention of Africa* he explores the construction of Africa in Eurocentric categories and systems, from anthropology and to philosophy, taking into account the sociohistorical context of colonialism, which created the polarising dichotomies between Africa and Europe, and assuring marginalities in an unequal society. In *The Idea of Africa*, Mudimbe seeks to demonstrate that "conquering Western narratives, beginning with Greek stories about Africa, through the colonial library, to contemporary postmodernist discourses, have radically silenced or converted African discourses." African intellectuals, he argues, have been reacting to "This ethnocentric epistemological order, itself subject to the mutations of Western material, methodological, and moral grids, with varying

degrees of epistemic domestication and defiance, in the process of which Africa's identity and difference have been affirmed, denied, inverted, and reconstituted." (Mudimbe, 1994: 7) How then have filmic images of Africa challenged these old narratives? Taking contemporary Namibian cinema as a template, how has cinema contributed to the development of a new post colonial identity?

The recent #Oscarssowhite debate that travelled throughout Hollywood has further brought up the contentious issues surrounding not just the rewarding of blacks in Hollywood but the under representation of non white stories in general. As cinema emerged around the African continent in the 1960s the opportunity presented itself to counter the old limited narratives shared the world over regarding the African experience. Over half a century later this still remains a burning issue. Culture is power and with a diverse plethora of African films made and distributed widely a greater challenge is made to the dominant Western narrative. It makes it harder for the West to dictate the perception of affairs on the African continent. It means that African cinema would not be, what one Western critic referred to as, an un-intellectual, all singing, all dancing extravaganza (Daney, 1979: 51). While the actual identity and authenticity of what "African" cinema should be is still debatable what can be recognized is its thematic and aesthetic growth over the last fifty years. The question of whether a distinctively African style and aesthetic has emerged remains debatable. There, more so than ever before, exists great fluidity in the many voices making films in Africa as opposed to there being grounds for a fixed essentialist sense of identity. There is the satire and didactic approach evident in early Sembene films and then there is the experimental style of Djibril Diop Mambety's *Touki Bouki* (1973). Which then is quintessentially African? African cinema is both village and city; afrofuturist and afropolitan; AIDS and corruption as well as sexy and affluent. The use of native African languages is also vital as it tells us the commitment filmmakers have to a certain kind of authenticity and while it makes global distribution problematic it ensures local accessibility. This is in contrast to the continuing trend of many African filmmakers finding their films gain more critical acclaim outside of their home countries. Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, Abderahmane Sissako and others have become darlings of the European festival circuit, winning awards at the Cannes

Film Festival. Haroun's film *A Screaming Man* (2010) won the Jury prize at Cannes, whilst at the time in his home country Chad there wasn't a single working cinema to screen his work.

The African filmmaker also emerges from traditions of oral history and storytelling that brings with it a unique vantage point. Therefore they are not simply responsible for creating visual compositions but for carrying forth the wisdom of the ancestors. They are griots, and their role is pedagogical. As Guinean scholar Djibril Tamsir Niane (1965: 1) says, "we are vessels of speech, we are the repositories which harbor secrets many centuries old. The art of eloquence has no secret for us; without us the names of kings would vanish into oblivion, we are the memory of mankind; by the spoken word we bring to life the deeds and exploits of kings for younger generations." Tamales (1995: 31) notes that the African filmmaker is born out of a lineage of culture that resisted fragmentation and it is one that has tried to retain cosmological coherence through orality and contact with the spirit world. This in itself positions the African filmmaker as protector of the realm. Placing a heavy load on the shoulders of filmmakers as they try to assimilate the continents traditions into the global market and yet still ensuring that traditional forms of culture and communalism are not entirely disrupted. Paradox is unavoidable and the African filmmaker naturally deals with the dichotomous relationship between Africa and the West; and between rural modern domains. Regardless of what each individual filmmaker's disposition might be their films often exhibit characters dealing with the dichotomy of rural/modern domains.

David Murphy (2000: 239) observes that both African and Western critics have readily applied themselves to the task of defining the nature of a truly African cinema. At the forefront of these debates are questions of cultural identity and critical subjectivity. Murphy asks whether the African critic understands African films in a way that is simply closed off to the Western critic? Is it possible for a Western critic to give a 'true' reading of an African film? Murphy (2000: 241) further postulates that Africa and the West are not mutually exclusive worlds. They do not merely hold unmovable identities. They are in fact rather fluid hybrid realities that evolve and modify, both in isolation and under pressure from one another. However, he acknowledges that, the West remains the dominant force in this relationship. David Murphy (2000), in his paper "Africans filming

Africans: Questioning theories of an authentic African cinema" does great work by citing Ousmane Sembene's film *Xala* and Djibril Diop Mambety's *Touki Booki* as examples of films that challenge the idea of a fixed authentic vision of African cinema. He cites *Xala* as certainly having a socialist agenda but that it also reveals a telling of Senegalese society that shows it to be complex. The film engages Senegal's social, cultural, gender and political institutions with a primary focus on the new urban elite. Murphy (2000: 242) illustrates this by using the example of the use of costume throughout the film. The story's protagonist, El Hadji has a third wife, gNon, who is introduced to the spectator at the wedding reception, where she is wearing a Western-style wedding dress. Muprhy (2000) notes that the example illustrates how aspiring to Western middle class standards involves copying the Western marriage down to the last detail, despite the fact that this type of dress and the plastic bride and groom have no place in African or Islamic practices. Here there exists a conflict between Western and African culture that the film sets up in its use of costume. It must be acknowledged that Mambety's film is deeply inspired by European experimental films. As Murphy (2000: 243) notes he uses "a complex array of imagery to reflect this contradictory pull between France and Africa." His craft deliberately blurs the line between the West and Africa. We see this in the opening of the film where the horns of a cow and a young boy are juxtaposed with a man on a motorcycle riding through the urban streets of Dakar with cow horns tied to the front of his bike. It's an incredibly powerful image, one that tells us the entire story in an instance, illustrating the blurring together of the West and Africa.

Introducing Third Cinema

Theorists of "Third Cinema" sought to highlight the cinema of not just Africa but the entire Third World, as being revolutionary and fundamentally opposed to Western hegemony, both in terms of style and content, characterization that simply did not reflect reality (Murphy, 2000: 12). Therefore one is urged to use the shared post-colonial experience of the third world as a lens to explore cinema with. This shared experience is found across the globe irrespective of unique and specific relationships with former imperial powers. First it is worth redefining what it is exactly we mean by "post-colonial." It acknowledges the attempts by various academics and thinkers utilizing

Marxism, feminism, anthropology, etc to engage with the experience of colonization, these experiences and vantages shed light on the links shared by the different countries throughout the third world that has experienced colonialism. What each of these countries shares is an antagonist in the West. It is worth mentioning that while this might give us an important lens to view Namibia it is also potentially problematic to limit our study of Namibia or Africa to simply its relationship with its former colonial powers. This was masterfully pointed out by Aijaz Ahmad:

In periodizing our history in the triadic terms of precolonial, colonial and postcolonial, the conceptual apparatus of 'postcolonial criticism' privileges as primary the role of colonialism as the principle of structure in history, so that all that came before colonialism becomes its own prehistory and whatever comes after can only be lived as infinite aftermath. That may well be how it appears to those who look at that history from the outside to those, other words, who look at the former colonies in Asia and Africa from inside the advanced capitalist countries but not to those who live inside that history

(Ahmad, 1996: 280-81).

Ahmad demonstrates how Africa remains in this realm of constantly reacting to the actions of Western actions as opposed to being the driver of its own destiny. It does however allow us a structure for our discussion. We therefore make use of such a lens as it offers us to use resistance to colonialism as a common language found throughout countries of past imperial conquest. How does film and culture respond to this at both national and regional level? Bhabha (1994: 171) observes that postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order. This is perhaps reason enough to make use of this term and looking glass when we analyse African film and culture.

In the 1960s and the 1970s the Federation of African Filmmakers (FEPACI) was set up. They sought to nurture a cinema that was antithetically opposed to the old caricatures of their continent. It was to be a cinema driven by their view from their own perspective on the ground in Africa and one that was not commercial. However this was challenged by some as the question remains as to whether this is actually viable and whether it actually prevents multiple differing voices and visions

of the continent from emerging (Murphy, 2000: 240). Considering the above it is hard to imagine an agreed "authentic" African cinema code that all African films might be ruled by. The initial work engineered by FEPACI and a host of critics, most notably the Ethiopian critic Gabriel Teshome, gave us a model from which to look at African Cinema's evolvment as we further unpack "Third Cinema." To what extent does the evolution of cinema in Africa and particularly in this case - Namibia - reassert early ideas of authenticity? Here below is an example of the Resolutions of the Third World Filmmakers Meeting in Algiers in 1973:

RESOLUTIONS OF THE THIRD WORLD FILMMAKERS MEETING IN ALGIERS, 1973

The role of cinema in this process consists of manufacturing films reflecting the objective conditions in which the struggling peoples are developing, i.e., films which bring about disalienation of the colonized peoples at the same time as they contribute sound and objective information for the peoples of the entire world, including the oppressed classes of the colonizing countries, and place the struggle of their peoples back in the general context of the struggle of the countries and peoples of the Third World. This requires from the militant film-maker a dialectical analysis of the socio-historic phenomenon of colonization.

Reciprocally, cinema in the already liberated countries and in the progressive countries must accomplish, as their own national tasks, active solidarity with the peoples and film-makers of countries still under colonial and neo-colonial domination and which are struggling for their genuine national sovereignty. The countries enjoying political independence and struggling of varied development are aware of the fact that the struggle against imperialism on the political, economic and social levels is inseparable from its ideological content and that, consequently, action must be taken to seize from imperialism the means to influence ideologically, and forge new methods adapted in content and form to the interests of the struggle of their peoples. This implies control by the people's state of all cultural activities and, in respect to cinema, nationalization in the interest of the masses of people: production, distribution and commercialization. So as to make such a policy operative, it has been seen that the best path requires quantitative and

qualitative development of national production capable, with the acquisition of films from the Third World countries and the progressive countries, of swinging the balance of the power relationship in favor of using cinema in the interest of the masses. While influencing the general environment, conditions must be created for a greater awareness on the part of the masses, for the development of their critical senses and varied participation in the cultural life of their countries. [*The meeting was held in Algiers from December 5 to 14, 1973. The resolutions of the various committees were released in Algier*] (Teshome, 1982: 106).

Aside from this was the need to ensure that strategies are developed to stem the flow of foreign films into Africa or to at least find new ways to counter this with their own films. For the founders of FEPACI films were being made with a sense of social responsibility, meaning the duties of the Third World filmmaker would now additionally include other fields of action, as well as ensure that the interests of the masses are placed first in the fight against neo-colonialism. The Third World filmmaker is in search of ways to strengthen the relationship between film and this struggle. This part of the struggle for independence, both political and economic is deeply related to the struggle to make cinema. Third Cinema is thus driven by the need to protect the masses from neo-colonial forces. This does mean there is a commonality in terms of the styles and themes that emerge.

Third World filmmakers argue that regardless of how "innocent" the content of a film may seem, the same film must reflect a certain class point of view (Tacoma, 1982: 1-2). Therefore, they advocate a cinema which corresponds to the cultural tastes and political needs of the society it represents. The overriding concern of these filmmakers is not in aestheticizing theology but in "Politicizing cinema." Tacoma (1982) calls their cinema the de-colonization of culture. One way to look at Third World cinematic realities is to consider Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino who called for: (1) a rejection of the propositions and concepts of traditional cinema, namely, those Hollywood; (2) the need to use film to serve an ideological and revolutionary end: the models of production, distribution and exhibition continued to be controlled by Hollywood precisely because in ideology and politics, films had not yet become the vehicle for clearly drawn differentiation between bourgeois ideology and politics. The industries that have emerged in Africa are

constructed so as to copy that of Hollywood and the West. There is a concern regarding how this challenges the culture and values across the African continent. Therefore according to this classification films that seek to replicate Western tropes themes and genres are not considered to be "Third Cinema." It's all about consciousness in a sense and in standing in opposition to imperialism in all its manifestations. It is political cinema - whether consciously or not.

Third World Cinema seeks to:

Decolonize minds

Contribute to the development of a radical consciousness

Lead to a revolutionary transformation of society

Develop new film language with which to accomplish these tasks.

(Hernandez, 1974: 383)

Initially the term, Third World, was used to designate those states in Africa, Asia and Latin America that called themselves "non-aligned," i.e., committed neither to the Western (capitalist) nor the Eastern (communist) power blocks. The term implies a common economic and ideological purpose. Third World Ideology is "more socialist than the American model and more democratic than the Soviet one"; it is not a Western model of "social democracy" but one that is truly indigenous and places more emphasis on culture as a tool for ideological as well as economic independence. The term also bears a connotation of rural life, especially on agricultural economy and poverty. "Third World" refers to nations, that have some socialist policies and are part of the developing world (e.g.Cuba, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique) and some of which have chosen a capitalist mode of development (e.g., Nigeria, India, Brazil) (Nichols, 1976: 2).

Major Themes in Third Cinema

The contemporary realities of third world countries accounts for the thematic interest of Third Cinema, bravely engaging with oppression and struggle currently evident in African societies. Third Cinema looks to uplift and emancipate the working class. Gabriel Teshome breaks down the major themes of Third Cinema into the following four types:

Class

Third Cinema is dominated by issues of class welfare. The film *The Brickmakers* by Jorge Silva and Marta Rodriguez is indicative of this. The story is about the problems of a working class family living in dire conditions in Colombia. It clearly illustrates the realities of poverty and its striking differences when compared to richer lifestyles. It is a powerful tool to demonstrate so graphically the differences along class lines in the third world. The filmmakers are also clear on identifying who their enemy is. All Third World countries share a common enemy and antagonist: namely imperialism. The ruling classes of the imperialist countries are the ones who are identified as being the ones who oppress the Third World. Also there is a deep distrust for both liberal thought and the new emerging black bourgeoisie, which is assumed to be more interested in grasping onto its new found wealth rather than integrate itself into the national and anti-colonial movement. This line of classification does well to afford us a clear line of opposition that can be applied universally. In *Sambizanga*, an Angolan film by Sara Maldoror, a character comes to a revolutionary consciousness when he realises that "there are no whites, nor blacks, nor mulattoes but rich and poor." The issue of racism is viewed in the context of class antagonism. In the film a black revolutionary dies while protecting a white comrade as an example of this orientation. Third World films are also committed to showing cross cultural and interracial alliances against class oppressors. "Wherever imperialist culture penetrates, it attempts culture penetrates, it attempts to destroy national culture and substitute foreign culture; therefore, the struggle to preserve the cultural make-up of a society also constitutes a major area of concern for Third World filmmakers." (Teshome, 1982: 16).

Religion

The Last Supper, a Cuban film by Tomas Gutierrez Alea, makes use of biblical signifiers to tell its story. There are twelve Apostles that are compared to twelve slaves, whilst the depiction of Christ is of as an aristocratic man who owns land. There is a subsequent revolt by the slaves and their capture and punishment. By creating a scenario where Christ and his apostles are divided, the film explores the contradictions between the teachings of Christianity and its relationship with slavery, also postulating that Christianity, in this case, is the dominant thought the oppressed classes must transcend. "Rather than discard religion as the 'opium of the masses,' therefore, Third World filmmakers attempt to give religion or spirituality a special significance in their works. Sembene's tender treatment of the religious elders in *Emitai* recognizes their democratic procedures with admiration, yet shows them lacking the consciousness to understand their predicament. The filmmaker reveals the transformation of one of the elders by depicting his inner feelings through apparitions, visions and folk ritual' (Tacoma, 1982: 17).

Sexism

Third Cinema is also concerned with the struggle for the emancipation of women. It is often the case that women are portrayed as being an integral part of any struggle. Even post-colonial narratives will insist on inserting women into the forefront of the struggle. In films like *The Long Chain* (India), *Double Day* (Mexico), *Last Grave at Dimbaza* (South Africa), *Sambizanga* (Angola) *Ceddo* and *Emitai* (Senegal), *One Way or Another* (Cuba) and *Aziza* (Tunisia) the position of women in being integral to the bringing about social transformation is an essential and common theme throughout. So too can this be viewed more recently with the success of female-centred narratives such as *Ayanda* (South Africa), *Love the One you Love* (South Africa), *Mustang* (Turkey) and *Ixcanul* (Guatemala). Beyond sexism and racism is the cause of the freedom of all of humanity. It is not enough for women to be liberated but for men to be liberated from patriarchy too. An example this is in the Cuban film *Lucia*, which is in three parts. Teshome (1982: 18) notes that "The film illustrates the role of women during three periods in Cuban history. It speaks of the

changing nature of women's roles, depending upon their class background and the structure of the society in which they live. The

film's tripartite structure stresses the crucial transition periods as Cuba passes from feudalism to capitalism and finally to socialism. Lucia in all three roles represents Cuba's growing awareness of her problems and achievements. The first Lucia easily succumbs to the charms of the amoral Spaniard colonizer, Raphael. The second Lucia shakes off her romantic naivete and faces her problem directly (as witnessed in the final shot). The third Lucia realizes that even after the revolution masochism has not been totally solved. Her husband represents the malcontents who speak as if they accept Cuba's socialist revolution but do not accept it in their hearts." In *Last Grave at Dimbaza* we witness the destruction of the family. We witness the toil of both mental and physical strain on women. The way the women in the film survive is truly remarkable despite their lives being crushed by the South African government.

Armed Struggle

Many African as well as South American films feature an armed liberation struggle at the heart of their stories. The struggle is taken up against the colonial army but also sometimes against class interests as well. The films risk censorship or repression from strict governments when they go as far as showing armed combat. The case brought forward supporting armed combat varies from film to film. "It must be noted that the single theme that unites Third World films is that of oppression. In dealing with the issues of class, culture, religion and sexism, these films are making a call to action whether in the form of armed struggle or otherwise. Their concern is with social change and it is in this context that all the themes are taken up" (Teshome, 1982: 20).

In choosing to analyse both Joel Haikali's *Try* and Oshosheni Hiveluah's *100 Bucks* I will take Teshome's five signifying themes of Third Cinema and apply them accordingly. Using this as a way to open up a discussion on how each of the films lends itself to authenticity; to Teshome's classification; and in the ways they move us towards a new post-colonial Namibian national culture.

Chapter 2: Post-colonial cinema in Namibia

Introduction

In a situation where there is only a limited amount of literature in post-independence Namibia in existence, one can argue that Namibian scriptwriters and film directors have taken up the role of adding their voice to tell Namibian stories and commenting on Namibian society through the medium of film. Among the pioneering generation of Namibian filmmakers in the early 1990's were Bridget Pickering and Richard Pakleppa who would go on to later produce *Hotel Rwanda* and direct *Paths to Freedom* respectively. A younger generation of filmmakers, although already working in the industry for several years, have recently emerged and they are at the forefront of telling Namibian stories, to Namibians and to interested international audiences alike. Filmmakers such as Joel Haikali, Oshosheni Hiveluah and Tim Huebschle, have taken up the baton of the older generation and are forming part of a group of Namibians expressing themselves through the art of storytelling through film. Namibian films such as *Cries at Night* (2009), *Rider Without A Horse* (2008), *Try* (2012), *Tjiraa* (2012) among others, might be fiction, however they nevertheless can be understood as examining independent Namibia in a way which complements the limited amount of existing literature. They also function as commentators of a social fabric of a society and a young nation, which is struggling to find its feet among the global world of nations and struggling with the legacy of Apartheid. Other films have been produced more recently and can form part of detailed analysis in future research. This chapter does not touch on Namibian documentaries. Although they contribute to the portrayal of Namibian reality the focus here is rather on fiction stories, inspired by reality, and told in fiction films. Although there is an abundance of films shot in Namibia, these are not necessarily Namibian films. Many films, mostly foreign-made, use Namibia only as a background setting, and others are made under foreign creative control, and hence don't tell a "Namibian" story. Furthermore, they are not directed or produced by Namibian nationals and do not classify as Namibian films.

Hans-Christian Mahnke, a film curator from the Cameroonian NGO Africavenir, shares that “films, be they Namibian or not, from various directors, are distinguished in terms of differing responses to the same social, economic, and environmental conditions. Filmmaking, as part of culture, is not a static or even necessarily a coherent phenomenon. It is subject to change, fragmentation and reformation. As an art form, it is adaptive, offering ways of coping and making sense, and can be strategic, capable of mobilizing for political, economic and social causes” (Mahnke, 2017). From this one might then suggest that Namibian film can function as one of the modern cultural facilitators to express and understand Namibia’s history and society. In order to do that, Namibian filmmakers have to ask themselves – before making a film: What is this story about, and why is it worth telling it? Any story told via film or not must have meaning. In the end, ideally, a film stimulates a debate and henceforth brings society forward. In order to be meaningful, films need to engage with the zeitgeist.

Interpreting Namibian film can hopefully help us better understand Namibia as a country. Film in Namibia is deeply interrelated with economic issues. Namibian filmmakers make films that create a political aesthetic that uses Namibian languages, and that reflects the process of national integration and Namibia’s diverse cultures. No one denies that objectivity hardly exists. Namibian filmmakers are products of their socialisation. They can’t deny a European and Western influence on their work. Nevertheless, it is possible to engage the medium and hence fulfil local audience preferences, by using cinema, and indigenising this art form, by telling local stories. Here a fusion of local oral traditions and Western influence takes place. Namibian filmmakers are becoming the cultural intermediaries between both forms of expression and between what has come before and what is yet to come. Namibian filmmakers then function as griots. Their role is that of transmitting stories from one generation to the next. Hence the filmmaker’s role is crucial to Namibian society, as they bridge the gap between old and young, and fill the vacuum of an absent storyteller in urban areas of Namibia. Of course this is not a one-sided relationship. The audience brings with it specific frames of reference, histories, and experiences. Their interpretations help us better understand the world.

Joel Haikali's *Try* and the politics of poverty

"A slick, sexy and quirky visual offering" is how journalist Martha Mukaiwa (2012) saw Joel Haikali's 23 minute short film *Try*. In 2012 the film won Namibian Theatre and Film Awards for Best Director, Best Production Design, Best Screenplay, Best Cinematography and Best Film. Haikali said "I was aiming at challenging myself to make a dynamic, stylistic film, through which I could be critical in the most entertaining manner." "I wanted to prove, like we all did this time around, that Namibian filmmakers have matured to tell their stories beautifully and visually." The film features an ensemble cast and was written by Sophie Mukenge-Kabongo, Joel's wife, who has been collaborating with Haikali since 2010. The film boasts a smooth visually pleasing aesthetic which keeps its camera always slowly moving. Pushing in on its subjects as it follows the various seemingly disconnected characters around. Kabongo says "for me *Try* discusses important issues and struggles that different characters representing different fractions of society go through and the humanity that connects us all," "In terms of inspiration, I often have to diffuse ideas that are not really scripts yet but that need conversations or meeting people to become more concrete. I always hope that the characters manage to touch the audience in some way and as a result I hope of course they make you reflect..." (Mukaiwa, 2012).

Haikali himself plays the lead character Zox, a petty criminal hustling to pay for his little sister's gravely needed operation. He is part of a gang of three urban misfits. They rob and steal and Zox even finds time to let a bourgeois housewife make a gigolo of him. It explores the lives of ordinary people across the economic, social and political divide. The film opens with the cackling sound of radio frequencies. We hear different Namibian languages: Nama-Damara, Afrikaans etc. We see the hand of a rich black man, Paulus (Muhindua Kaura), reach in and turn the dial on the radio. Language is here foreshadowed as being a theme in the opening. We are alerted to the fact that this is not a homogeneous world - there are various different languages and cultures in this world and the opening alludes to this. The posh BMW and leather interior indicate Paulus's social standing. An ear piece is glued-to-his-ear as he navigates his way through urban Windhoek whilst talking over the phone. He seems like a business type, a corporate worker. Haikali doesn't wait a moment before establishing class structures in his film. He uses Paulus's drive down Independence Avenue

(formerly Kaiser Strasse) in central Windhoek as an opportune moment to set up a host of characters who further serve as social commentary. A white woman stands by the side of the road with a sign which reads "my father fought for this country too." It's the sort of thing which makes Paulus do a double take. The filmmaker is clearly illustrating that the issue in contemporary Namibia is about class divide rather than racial divide. However the fact remains that the class divide and unequal distribution of wealth in southern Africa is largely along racial lines. Images of wealthy whites and poor blacks are common depictions of Africa. The opening sequence turns this on its head with the reversal of roles. While it is a protest of sorts, the woman's sign can also be read as an example of the success of nationalism in Namibia. Her voice is an acknowledgement of her alignment with the sense of a struggle or revolutionary history. Therefore she identifies with the history of the colonised native and in the basic principles of Third Cinema: articulating the presence of a present or past oppressor. In the next scene featuring a group of young black men, sitting along the side of the road, oppression is present in the harsh economic realities of Namibia.

Namibia has one of the most unequal societies in the world. The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in Namibia (Schmidt, 2009: 7) noted that the country has a Gini coefficient of 0.60. Based on the newly introduced cost-of-basic-needs poverty line, the IPPR's research confirms previous findings that the incidence of poverty in Namibia has decreased since 1994. This is observed in both rural and urban areas, and all regions with the exception of Caprivi and Hardap. Subsistence farming continues to be the largest sector in the economy, with more than a third of the population depending on it (Schmidt, 2009: 7). However, the young men on the corner in Trymeek out an existence on the fringes of urban society. They sell newspapers to passing motorists. One of the papers provides the audience with more exposition: "Poverty in a sea of Riches" a headline reveals, waved across Paulus's windscreen. He buys a paper, and plays his part in the informal street economy. His voice trails off on the phone... something about oil discovery. Setting the tone for this film is this promise of affluence but only for the chosen few. It's a well-oiled start as the theme is clearly stated and we wait to see who will try to traverse the striking inequalities on display and who will succeed in doing so.

At the turn of independence in Namibia in 1990 the majority of non-whites held jobs as unskilled workers. There were however some coloured Namibians and a few black Namibians who were in positions of lower management levels in the service delivery economies. The elite class consisted of a white minority which operated in the mining, commercial and agriculture industries and were desperate to protect their interests with the threat of continued armed combat. These industries largely have their roots in South Africa and a minor few in Germany and elsewhere. This makes Namibia deeply dependent on South Africa and this has severely limited the development of an indigenous capitalist class, outside of the white minority. Some political leaders and black business men have, since independence, managed to develop significant interests in some parts of the economy including agriculture and fishing. They were able to situate themselves in advantageous positions to constitute an embryonic capitalist fringe. Mining, however remains predominately foreign-owned (Mbuende, 1986; Tapscott, 1995). In *Try* we see a cursing taxi driver played by theatre veteran Norman Job. It's setup for a scene later on but again it sets the stage for this mesh of different contradictory imagery the film opens with: a white sign-holding woman, a wealthy black businessman, poor newspaper sellers and a hustling taxi driver. It's an appropriate introduction to urban Namibia.

When we meet Zox (Haikali), his face is pained, serious and scarred. There's a quiet determination behind his eyes. Haikali exudes a confident bravado but at the same time plays Zox with just the right amount of vulnerability. He leads a rag-tag bunch of hoods who come across as rather strange and awkward as opposed to dangerous. Zox, book in hand, watches a dice game somewhere in a dusty backdrop outside the city limits. He reads... he's a book worm... a welcome flip on the gangster trope. We are asked to consider that he might not be your average black gangster. He is by design, the opposite of Paulus's slick BMW driver. Bot having taken very different routes as they try to make a better life for themselves. The action in the early stages of *Try* finds itself confined to a kind of magical enclave. A shift away from your classically stoic Third Cinema narratives that are chiefly concerned with message and content, Haikali takes as much time with style and feel. Parts of this film feel almost whimsical and in the rural gangster meet he

has constructed a unique somewhat unbelievable setting. What are these gangsters doing playing dice in the middle of nowhere we're made to ask?

There's a meat stand acting as another signifier of the informal Namibian economy. Many Namibians resort to selling meat, other foods or cheap goods on the street or working as taxi drivers to make ends meet. Namibia's high levels of inequality are perpetuated by an extremely skewed labour market that creates an ever-increasing wage gap between various categories of employees within the formal labour market and between formal sector workers and those in the informal economy. "The vast majority of Namibian workers fall into the category of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. With the exception of a few sectors where strong trade unions have managed to negotiate reasonable working conditions (e.g. mining, fishing, and the civil service), these workers usually earn below N\$ 1000 per month (US\$ 125) and enjoy very few benefits. The only benefits that are compulsory by law are social security payments" (Jauch et al, 2009: 223).

All is not well in a Namibian society that on the surface seems to be extremely stable and progressive when compared to its African counterparts. *Try* suggests that all is not well. There are the shady shifty characters at the dice game, the murmurs of hunger and un-healed trauma from the liberation war as we drive through the city with Paulus. Then there is Zox's scar across his face like an emblem he holds up as the brightness catches his face. There is pain here and there is much that is unsaid just as the origins of that mark are never explained. What does he read... I found myself wondering. What does a smart hoodlum read? It's a rhetorical question but it's useful to note that this is just how engaging Zox's exterior proves to be. "A botsotso (gangster) with a book, shouldn't you be at a university?" says one of the gangsters playing dice to a less than pleased Zox. He gives him a steely look and joins the game. He plays for minutes before he takes off with their loot. The gangsters give chase to no avail. Zox and his two accomplices make their way downtown where they sell a matchbox full of marijuana to a rich housewife, Leahandra, played by Tulimelila Shityuwete. When she doesn't have the right amount for the score Zox seems later to connive his way into her pants instead, making sure to take some more bills out from her handbag to serve as extra payment for his efforts. Leahandra, a rather flat character, nonetheless represents the burgeoning black elite saddled with new surprising privileges but not entirely sure what to do with

them. So while her husband, Paulus, is getting mugged on the other side of town she gets high and has casual sex with her dealer in public. It underlines a kind of pessimism regarding the growth of the middle class and suggests a kind of eradication of morals and ethics happening on the way up the ladder. Suffice it to say we never really understand what drives Leahandra. She appears bored and disinterested in life. She's rather in search of cheap thrills. All this struggle to liberate the continent and now that we're here she'd rather get stoned. In fact it is only once she hears that Paulus has been injured that we get a sense of urgency from her. Later on she stands by her man as he seeks treatment from a local hospital where she is quick to remind staff that they have insurance and therefore shouldn't have to wait in line like the rest of the poor people. She asserts herself as a concerned wife but also as a woman who has found her voice just when the need to preserve one's class privileges has risen.

Despite Zox and Leahandra's escapades Zox is still a likable hustler. He pays his sick teen niece a visit and she remarks "you're my favorite super hero." Zox is then confronted by the child's mother who decries his criminal activities and tells him off for bringing them his dirty loot. "I'm just trying to help," he says, and "do you really think going to church and political rallies will save her?" He is a man, like the protestor and newspaper salesman, who has lost faith in the system. With such a marginalized population unable to find a clear path of ascendancy into the economy, crime seems like a logical decision. *Try* shatters the old identity constructs of the past which saw Namibians strongly identifying with a tribe, church or political party. Zox makes none of these distinctions, he is rather a man apart, a drifter who has unplugged himself from any tight relation to those old signifiers. He does entirely embrace modernism either and is not then stuck in the polarizing space between modernity and returning to one's roots.

Life catches up to Zox and the gangsters from the dice game eventually corner him. One of the thugs smacks him the face with a big stick or knobkierie, which knocks him unconscious. It is an interesting choice of weapon, one that has turned this traditional walking stick into not just a stick any longer but an urban weapon, blending together both the traditional and the modern.

Both the injured Zox and the beaten up Paulus and his wife Leahandra queue at the local hospital for treatment. They are joined by Zox's niece who, with Zox's stolen money, is now ready for an operation she is in desperate need of. All the characters converge here with the hospital serving as the greatest of equalizers. Ill health knows no class. But the divisions continue as Leahandra still insists on preferential treatment. Zox, delirious, looks up at the doctor standing over him, a Cuban named Jesus. "I found Jesus," he says with a soft whimper and with a sense of irony which is not entirely lost on him. It's rather befitting ending to a good film. The past is ever present as the filmmakers Cuban analogy is a tribute to the work of not just Cuban doctors in Namibia but the Cuban army whose intervention in the South of Angola helped win Namibia independence from South Africa.

Locating the Postcolonial in Joel Haikali's *Try*

We are in what film professor Ella Shohat (2000: 123) calls "the 'post-Third Worldist' era where the conversation centres around ideology and aesthetics. In keeping with this terminology it offers us the opportunity to locate an African film within the wider context of emerging states formerly colonised by imperial powers." The term 'postcolonial' can imply both a movement beyond anti-colonial nationalist discourse and beyond a specific moment of colonial history, post-Third Worldism, conveys a more specific designation, that of a movement beyond a certain ideology - Third World nationalism. With Third Cinema the liberation and the struggle against colonialism drives everything about a film. But *Try* is something far more complicated, saddled with contradictions and the complexities of a flawed modernity. What we need is a modified structure for analysis that moves us beyond the binary notion of tradition versus modernity. With the collapse of Soviet Russia and communism being reduced to an abstract notion, it no longer holds the same power when considered in operation to its capitalist cousin. It was thought that with Third World theory and eventually Third World Cinema the people would assume "a sense of coherent national identity to be realized with the expulsion of the colonialists, post-Third Worldist films call attention to the fault lines of gender, class, ethnicity, region, partition, migration, diaspora, religion and spirituality" (Shohat, 2000: 123). What we are uncovering now in both film and reality is the limits of the nation. *Try* displays a kind of skepticism towards meta-narratives of

liberation, but does not exactly abandon the idea that liberation is worth fighting for. Rather than a unified, homogeneous entity, the film highlights the multiplicity of voices within the complex boundaries of the nation.

Film critic Robert Stam (2000: 125) in *Unthinking Eurocentrism* suggests that the "Third World in Eurocentric prose always seems to lag behind, not only economically and technologically, but also culturally, condemned to a perpetual game of catch-up in which it can only repeat on another register the history of the so-called 'advanced world.' When the 'First World' reaches the stage of late capitalism and postmodernism, the 'Third World' hobbles along towards modernism and the beginnings of capitalism. A more adequate formulation, would see time as palimpsestic in all the worlds, with the pre-modern, the modern, the postmodern and the para-modern co-existing at the same time zone within the global system of late capitalism." When considering the postmodern it is important to note that *Try* exists in this sphere because it rejects the tradition versus modernity paradigm. While a film like Haile Gerima's *Sankofa* looks to the past and suggests that spirituality and mythological symbolism form part of the journey for liberation and the transcending of a colonial (albeit slavery) past, *Try* is not interested in religion at all. Religion is instead part of a long list of failed promises along with state governance that, Zox, at least has not brought with them economic parity. "While the 'progressive realism' of anticolonial films offer an invaluable artistic and political strategy for combating the 'regressive realism' of the colonialist master narrative, a realist (or better, illusionistic) style can also repress contradictory social desires undergirding the formation of the nation. Many recent post-Third Worldist films transcend the realistic-illusionist mode by interweaving diverse avant-grade traditions with popular cultural resources, taking in a sense a postmodernist approach, in which contemporary representations meld multiple sensibilities and experiences of spiritual and collective life" (Shohat 2000: 126). *Try* does not end by clearly separating contemporary life from traditional or colonial life. Instead it creates a series of images that illustrate a complex, contradictory example of contemporary postcolonial Namibia, one where the gap between rich and poor is evident. Class struggle has surmounted racism and the liberation struggle as the defining characteristic in this Namibian society. Kabongo's screenplay finds creative ways via the use of exposition and wardrobe to suggest

beyond the narrative that all is not well in this African society. Film critic Katherina Hedren (2013) felt that:

“Joel Haikali offers a limited opportunity to get to know many of the characters other than through rough sketches of their current life situation, mainly informing us whether they are rich or poor. In addition inexplicable situations, like the policewoman who is called to the scene of a robbery and stops to scold a taxi driver for a minor transgression, add little to the unfolding action. There is nothing wrong with applying the styles of other filmmakers, or strictly following the rules of a genre. Likewise nothing stops a playful filmmaker from referencing inspiring heroes and role models. In the case of Haikali's *Try*, the chase scene could have been cut straight from a gangster B-movie filmed with a shaky handheld camera. Similarly the semi-erotic encounter between the bored wife and the head-hug takes us right back to the era of the classic film noir through a sudden change in the film's rhythm, a well thought out wardrobe and choice of music.”

One cannot simply impose a linear line of progress to both Africa and its cinema. What we rather tend to witness is a dipping into the past and a hint at the new, an amalgamation of new successes and past turmoil all interwoven into a story that has moved us away from the conversation around national liberation. Instead there is a subdued sense of optimism in Haikali's film, a sense of the unknown with regard to what comes next and how we solve the issue of poverty and inequality. Culture is consciousness and with *Try* there is the arrival of a confident assured approach to redefining the Namibian nation and challenging its sustainability.

Oshosheni Hiveluah's *100 Bucks* and Namibian Society in Transition

Namibian films mediate underlying racial, social, and gender roles and stereotypes, experienced by Namibians. Films like *100 Bucks* and *Try*, address matters of social relevance, poverty, violence, gender-based violence, the divide between rich and poor, inaccessibility of health care treatment and other issues. They also show Namibia in transition as the country struggles to overcome the legacies of Apartheid, manifesting itself in economic inequalities and poverty, the

problems created by rural urban migration, or the challenges faced in harmonising and aligning modernity with tradition.

100 Bucks is a 25 minute short film, written and directed by Oshosheni Hiveluah, based on a story by Onesmus Shimwafeni. Hiveluah (Mahnke, 2017) says about her film, that "100 Bucks is the one film for me that I wrote and directed that represents the Namibian society and how they relate to one another." The film follows the journey of a 100-dollar note that is passed through the hands of various Windhoek residents, highlighting the daily struggles of the protagonists. The film portrays social evils and the realities of urban poverty, unemployment, the divide between rich and poor and gender-based violence in Namibian society. At the centre of the 100-dollar note's journey is an abused young woman Tameka (Lynn Strydom). She works as a waitress in a nightclub where the most recent of tips was a pat on the arse from a businessman. She goes home at night to an abusive boyfriend and a small child to raise. In Namibia a striking reality is the structural nature of women's inequality, which only comes into focus when one considers the lack of opportunities that women have to create a better life for themselves. Despite the relatively low marriage rate, 43,1% of Namibia's economically inactive population are classified as "homemakers". In absolute numbers this amounts to a total of 186 644 people, which is in fact more than the number of unemployed persons in the country (185 258). Out of this 70% are women (National Planning Commission 2003). Given the absence of a social security net, this means that a large group of women are not employed on their own account, but depend on others for their livelihoods. Female labour market participation rates are lower than that of males, and women in formal employment often occupy positions at the bottom of the labour hierarchy in low-skill, low-income jobs. A study conducted by Edwards (2004) showed that amongst certain socio-economic groups, unemployment amongst women may be much higher than official statistics suggest. For example, 61,4% of women living in the informal settlements of Windhoek were unemployed. In addition, women are more likely to be in casual employment. This implies less job security, fewer benefits and often lower incomes (Jauch et al, 2009: 223).

Hiveluah clearly has all this in mind as she presents her film as a social commentary with relevance to these quite pertinent issues. Hiveluah stresses:

“it was important that this film highlighted the different social economic classes in Windhoek. I was careful in the creation of the characters to create characters that Namibian audiences could relate to, identify with and understand. I wanted to shoot at locations they could recognise and I wanted them to talk the way Namibian people talk. In as much as the story deals with difficult circumstances such as unemployment and domestic violence. People like recognising themselves and certain situations in films and it's so fulfilling to see the audience recognise themselves or the world around them on screen.”

(Mahnke, 2017)

In portraying the realities and social attitudes of average people around us, the filmmaker and writer manage to draw our attention to the prevailing social conditions. Nevertheless, this reflection of the daily struggles and living conditions can only slightly be considered as a social criticism. The underlying root causes of these conditions are hardly addressed in the film. The filmmaker suggests that this may be because she has the audience in mind: “I think it needs to be told in a way that is relevant to the film audience, creating situations and scenarios that people see in everyday life and in a way that affects them directly. I don't think people are interested in seeing corrupt government officials stealing, we need to be able to see how it affects the man on the ground.” Indeed there is certainly stealing in Hiveluah's film but more of the sly conniving kind. The 100 dollar bill makes its way from Tameka to her boyfriend Nolan who snatches it from her hands forcefully one night. The aggressive broke boyfriend wrestles poor Tameka to the wall and chokes her before taking her money. Nolan has big plans as he cautions Tameka. “All we need is a 100 bucks,” he solemnly declares. He is joined by two hustling friends who have a plan to buy and sell stolen goods. It's a plan that never quite materialises as Nolan's buddies are robbed by a crooked cop who then unwittingly loses the money to his seductive girlfriend.

Hiveluah's choice to stage her action entirely around this piece of paper is a noble effort. The choice by the writer is in itself a powerful political and social suggestion. The liberation struggle and the dichotomous relationship between Africa and the West makes way for this contemporary retelling. The critique of postcolonial Namibia is evident and *100 Bucks* labels it as a country that is centred around the scramble for resources. The emancipation of the masses has given way to a fight for the economic liberation of the populace. This remains a revolutionary act because it is not simply another film made by an African which treats themes and elements by relying on the concepts and propositions of conventional cinema, be it American or European. *100 Bucks* uniquely takes the powerful symbol, money, and allows it to dictate the style and narrative of the film. Cinema does not have to tell a story only one way. It does not have to perpetuate the status quo. Teshome (1982: 86) notes that "the meaningful road to African cinema lies in a cinema that draws from the wealth of its cultural and aesthetic traditions." *100 Bucks* rewrites this by ignoring the familiar cultural and geographical signifiers of African Cinema and zeroing in on the politics of hunger. Thereby Hiveluah establishes a new cinematic code. It is one that has the potential to challenge the way cinema will evolve and whether it will play by its own set of rules.

Women at the Centre of Class Struggle

"Third Cinema must, above all, be recognized as a cinema of subversion. It is a cinema that emerges from the peoples who have suffered under the spells of mystified cinema and who seek the demystification of representational practices as part of the process of liberation. Third Cinema aims at a destruction and construction at the same time; a destruction of the images of colonial or neo-colonial cinema, and a construction of another cinema that captures the revolutionary impulse of the peoples of the Third World. It is a progressive cinema founded on folk culture whose role it is to intervene on behalf of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America who must fight equally for political as well as cultural liberation" (Teshome, 1982: 95). In *100 Bucks* Tameka (Lynn Strydom) carries the spirit of the continuation of the liberation process. She works hard to redefine what is expected from a working class woman in contemporary Namibia. She does not accept abuse, and stands up for herself when repeatedly abused by boyfriend Nolan.

The issue of women in relation to culturally defined practices is also taken up in a number of films that deal with machismo within the context of revolutionary struggles. Such is the case, for example, with the third episode of *Lucia*, Sara Gomez's *One Way or Another* and Pastor Vega's *Portrait of Teresa*, or the third and fourth episodes of Antonio Equino's *Chicago*. On the other hand, the Mozambican films *A Luta Continua* (filmed during the armed struggle) and *O Povo Organizado* (a post-independence film) seem to suggest that struggle with culture is going to be harder for the women than was their political struggle against Portuguese colonialism (Teshome 1982: 96).

In *100 Bucks*, Tameka is the bread winner in her household, something that challenges the age-old male / female dichotomy. Her boyfriend is a dreamer and it is she who must sacrifice to ensure that their son is provided for. The film heralds a new age where women are presented as being the driving force within the family unit that holds things together. Independence might have brought with it political freedoms but not the kind of economic and social liberties it promised. By Tameka leaving her boyfriend Nolan and taking their son away from a toxic environment, the film suggests that the constraints of poor urban life in Namibia cannot be undone but instead must be transcended or avoided entirely. Here the filmmaker is interested in solutions to the extent that violence must be stopped or avoided at all costs. The larger economic questions are left open as the 100-dollar bill continues to make its way from person-to-person, suggesting an eternal cycle of hustle and toil in this post-colonial rat race.

The inferior social status of women in Africa is a permanent indictment of the lack of leadership and of the lack of vision that haunts Africa. Women have been excluded from playing an active role in the continent's social and political life. Worse still, Africa's crisis has had a disproportionate impact on the everyday life of women. More than any section of society, women have had to pay the price of the collapse of African leadership (Hedger, 1987: 103). This makes Tameka's turn in *100 Bucks* even more striking. But what it reveals about men is equally interesting. The fact that it is Tameka who single handedly keeps her house together shows us just how weak the men in the world of this film are. The men, cheat and steal and drop misogynist lines here and there but it is

the women who get things done. By the end of the film, Nolan, Tameka's boyfriend, is a broken man having lost his money, his woman and child, and he seems desperate. His only option is show up at his sister's restaurant begging for a job, begging for a second chance. Again, it is the women who seem to have things together; the men are a mess. It is a woman who offers this struggling man a way out and represents the head of the family rather than a father, brother or uncle. The film then operates as a sort of wake up call to Namibian men, from women who are tired of being strong for so long. While patriarchy operates as a system of male control over society it is still a socially constructed cultural system. "Originally referring to the rule of the patriarch (the male head of a family or group) who made decisions on behalf of a group, it has come to refer to 'the total social organisation of gender relations, institutions and social processes which produce and reproduce women as socially, politically and sexually subordinate to men'" (O'Sullivan et al, 1997: 219). Therefore, it can be challenged and changed. The roles of both Tameka and Nolan's sister in their respective worlds challenge this. As a social system, patriarchy has a historical, organized and well worked-out definition of maleness and femaleness and the narrative paradigms of the communities have repeated these values for years so that they feel natural. In patriarchal logic, relations between the genders are hierarchical and the gendered socialization emphasizes this binary oppositional relationship of the subordination of women and the superiority of men. These patterns are continuously reproduced and insisted upon as natural, eternal and unchangeable. Social institutions, both formal and informal, socialise their members to reinforce distinct gender roles and differentiate between women and men. (Diop, 2014: 78) What makes the counter narratives being explored by films like *100 Bucks* is that they allow us to explore these Namibian women with the fullness and complexity that define them as human beings, rather than with the limited portrayals of past years where women were relegated to being spouses or supporting characters. Instead Tameka is the character that comes out of the film with a strong sense of individuality.

Namibia has an extremely high rate of cases of gender based violence (GBV), which makes Tameka's defiance even more pertinent. The feminist NGO Sister Namibia states that GBV is a human rights issue of endemic proportions. One out of three women have experienced, or will experienced, it in Namibia. It is estimated that one in five Namibian women is in an abusive

relationship. According to a report by UNAIDS, there were approximately 1075 reported cases of rape nationwide for each year between 2009-2012 (Sister Namibia, 2016). However, the actual number of cases is likely to be much higher. The new meaning of masculinity is to have the courage to oppose cultural practices that may appear to favor males but denigrate the dignity of the woman. These young men are growing to realise that their humanity is linked to that of women and the radical challenge to patriarchy, an encompassing hegemonic culture, lies in the hands of young men like Nolan who are ready to announce the end of the era of tyrannical patriarchy. The hope of filmmakers like Hiveluah for a better community is embedded in the younger generation of men, who are hopefully more sensitive (Diop, 2014: 158).

Conclusion

What separates these films from what we might still classically call "Third World" cinema is that they were made in a stable war-free country with both religious and press freedoms. They were made with state funds channeled via the Namibia Film Commission (NFC), which has been in operation since 2000. This contrasts with the repressive conditions where "Third World" filmmakers are sometimes pressured into working under, and forced to operate, meaning that neither film has any sense of urgency. Teshome (1982: 95) notes that "the more urgent the need to educate, the more didactic the format becomes and the less important it is to achieve complete control of the production conditions." The opposite is true here where the filmmakers, armed with sizable resources, place a strong emphasis on the style and look of each film. For the emerging African filmmaker there is great pressure to emulate the sleek look of a film from Hollywood. Luckily both filmmakers demonstrate an ability to successfully construct an engaging narrative, achieve high production value and insert relevant and pertinent themes of class and social struggle in postcolonial Namibia. This makes both films a success.

Whilst considering the conditions these films were made in it is worth noting that most Cuban films, for example, were made under conditions that allowed them to develop and control a film vocabulary which could engage an audience in an entertaining way while addressing various political as well as ideological issues. Solas's *Lucia*, Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment* and *The*

Last Supper or *Vega's Portrait of Teresa*, all have a style of realism that allows for an empathetic entry into the world of fiction while at the same time raising questions of revolutionary tactics and ideological confrontations. This format also allows a filmmaker to deal with questions of culture directly. Because culture in its mass character moves unevenly in relation to the political and economic factors that shape history, an examination of the cultural fabric of society becomes crucial. Teshome (1982: 97) makes this point when explaining that it is the elaboration of cultural elements—both as a reference and as a topic—that gives each film in the Third Cinema its unique character despite the fact that they all address issues of political struggle which are relevant on an international level. These cultural elements constitute the empathetic point of entry that will allow the spectators to recognize themselves at the same time as the film tries to open up an identificatory mechanism in order to point out the agents and causes of historical development that have shaped that culture.

Regardless of the particular style that a film adopts, the ultimate goal of Third Cinema is to present their audiences with a rational interpretation of a historically defined reality so that a history of causation is made better discernible and can aid in trying to understand and change their condition. It is in this double movement of cultural identification and radical historicization that Third Cinema is a cinema of intervention in the service of revolutionary social change. Where *Try* and *100 Bucks* break from this mould is in that they have no interest in the past. The past is simply prologue here. Whereas the informed might remain conscious of the lasting impact of colonialism and Apartheid, both films choose not to engage directly with it. Instead the harsh economic repercussions are studied. The class consciousness each film is enamored with assures us that the filmmakers are, whether they're aware of it or not, working in the service of revolutionary social change.

Chapter 3: National Culture and the Limits of Nationalism

Background

Meredith McKittrick notes that during the years of South African colonialism, in Namibia, the relationship of Namibians to their state was largely defined through the lens of race and ethnicity (Akuupa, 2015: XII). In his book *National Culture in Post-Apartheid Namibia* Michael Uusiku Akuupa observes (2015: 156) that what had been a “colonial identity project” aimed at separate development became “the bedrock from which contemporary identities have sprung.” He explores the nuances and contradictions of post-colonial identity construction. Namibia’s party-in-power SWAPO (South West Africa People’s Organization) has in its constitution a clause that commits the party to “combat retrogressive tendencies” of tribalism, ethnicity, and regionalism (among other evils such as sexism and racism) - a stance based on the awareness that such categories had formed the basis of colonial divide and rule, as the ruling party sought to minimize the importance of ethnicity in particular. The SWAPO slogan “One Namibia, One Nation” - was an explicit counter-discourse to the ethnic politics of the Bantustan era. While the Apartheid state had created cultural festivals known as *sangfrees*, to reinforce ethnic identities, the SWAPO government discontinued them in favor of institutions that reinforced a sense of unitary nationhood. Linguistic categories replaced ethnic ones and the ethnically defined “homelands” were erased in favor of 13 administrative regions that, at least theoretically, cut across ethnic lines (Akuupa, 2015: XIII). When the Namibian government created an annual national cultural festival, five years after independence, it marked a rather stark departure from these earlier interventions in identity construction. Other policies, too, offered state endorsement of ethnic identity: in 2000, for example, ethnic groups and traditional authorities were granted legal recognition. The result, says Akuupa, is that by 2001 the national culture policy was “the total opposite of the political ideal at the time of independence”. Akuupa links this shift to the state’s reluctant admission that, for Namibia’s citizens, these ethno-cultural categories had meaning: people themselves embraced ethnic belonging over national belonging. The state sought to co-opt this, using ethnicity as the basis for a project of constructing a national identity. On the surface, however, this privileging of

ethnic identities and institutions resembled the world of the much-reviled 1962 Odendaal Commission, designed to implement Apartheid in the country.

Therefore culture is actually in opposition to modernity. Culture, Akuupa notes, is always someone's. This fact allows local people to claim authority, and to legitimate their actions on the basis of a perceived continuity with the past. In local discourse, the performance of dances and songs is also an act of recovering something that is in danger of being lost. It is simultaneously an Apartheid concept, a symbol of the new national ideal of "unity-in-diversity," and a local concept through which claims to belonging are mediated. At the end of the day, however, what might seem to be a "regressive" ethnic unit can only "make sense" within the framework of the nation itself (Akuupa, 2015: XVI). The preservation of customs included the creation of museums, construction of cultural villages and the initiation and identification of would-be heritage sites in an independent Namibia. Schools, community forums and regional governments are all involved in the process that has been going on for the past 15 years or so. One policy has been the creation, by government, of the "nationhood and national pride campaign" with the target of encouraging national belonging and the promotion of diversity. The campaign would spread its message of unity, namely, the importance of national symbols and ideals of nationhood through the media (The Namibian and New Era Newspapers, 6 May 2011). This letter [of invitation] implies that Namibia, like its neighbor and one-time colonial power South Africa, was a country that forged its culture in the 'hard mills of violent and relentless struggle, which is now promoting transformations of outlook and behavior' in which ideas of economic prosperity are deeply embedded (Barber, 2001: 177). This emphasis on tradition and culture at cultural festivals or, indeed at any other state gathering in postcolonial Namibia seems rather surprising. The format and content of these festivals appeared reminiscent of previous events where racial differences were transformed into ethnic differences throughout the introduction of homelands, thus realizing the colonial or Apartheid central ideology that each race and nation had a unique, divinely ordained destiny and culture. Historical sources show that Namibia is a country in which the legal recognition of cultural diversity and tradition "led to the shocking injustices of colonialism" (Du Pisani, 2000: 64).

At independence when SWAPO took over the government of the new nation, it abolished a range of activities that ostensibly, directly or indirectly, displayed or suggested ethnicity, which was understood as an expression of the colonial Apartheid era-politics of divide and rule and raised the following questions: Was the change of policy from the mid-1990s necessitated by the waning threat of Apartheid and the realized freedom of neighboring South Africa, as Becker (2004, 2007) tentatively suggests in her work on memory and commemoration in Namibia? Was the change due to the shifts in the sub-continental identity politics, which became rooted in cultural discourse? The official discourse of unity in diversity remains open to interpretation. Do the cultural representations of the public space signify the political, ideological, social and moral imagery of the Namibian postcolonial state? When the Namibian State emphasized "unity in diversity" was there imminent polarization among the different ethnic communities in postcolonial Namibia? How do the postcolonial cultural festivals in Namibia compare with the colonial practices from which they descended? (Akuupa, 2015: 4). Was the postcolonial government of the Republic of Namibia implementing many of the same methods and tools used by its predecessor, the Apartheid government, to divide the inhabitants in order to carry out its policy of segregation? Namibia's leadership may have realised there was a void left by the ending of the colonial culture and recommitted to the same format of celebration to address the issues of postcolonial nation building. Instead of simply emphasizing regional intra-ethnic cultural differences, the SWAPO government embarked on a national project of social and cultural "unification, which explicitly cited cultural unity in diversity" in the Presidential report of the commission on education and culture and training (Republic of Namibia, 1991: 3). The report presents the annual National Culture Festival (ANCF) as a ritual through which Namibian citizens could visualize themselves as a new nation. Becker (2003) has indicated the same idea particularly with reference to ownership and remembering public heroes and national monuments. In Namibian postcolonial nationalism, Becker (2011) demonstrates how ethnic affiliation played a role in defining and determining a sense of belonging to the state's growing ideas of what nationhood entails. Becker calls for the creation of an image that garners an increase in the need for a national belonging, which she conceptualized as the culturalisation of Namibian nationalism" (Becker, 2011: 21).

African leaders developed different approaches to the production of national culture. The postcolonial period has been marked by a great deal more than just a move to democracy. At independence, the idea of belonging was about nationhood based on "One Namibia, One Nation". Those in power spent much energy emphasizing the importance of belonging to the nation. At the independence of Namibia, their South African neighbors were striving towards the abolishment of Apartheid. In this context the idea of the Rainbow Nation championed by Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela as the first black president became the bedrock of South African nationalism. A celebration of the national diversity was soon preferred over the old "One Namibia, one Nation" mantra. The challenge of the state was to define Namibianess in the light of the waning of Apartheid and continental shifts in identity politics. The new policy, built on constitutional guarantee, presented a new political vision

- We envision ourselves as a united and flourishing nation, celebrating the diversity of our artistic and cultural expressions, and globally admired as is the skin of an African leopard.
- We envisage ourselves as a united and flourishing nation, achieving sincere reconciliation through mutual respect and understanding, solidarity, peace, equality, tolerance and inclusion.
- We envisage ourselves as a united and flourishing nation, treasuring and protecting our material and spiritual heritage and customs, developing creative talents throughout our lifetimes, and employing our skills and knowledge for economic development and common good. (Culture Policy, Government of the Republic of Namibia 2001.)

(Akuupa, 2015: 25-26)

This vision was totally opposed to the political ideal at the time of independence. It presents a new idea of enhanced diversity as expressed in the metaphor of an African leopard skin. It focused on the notion of tolerance among different cultures. The underlying goal of the policy was to promote widespread cultural and artistic expression through representations in cultural festival

and the arts (Culture Policy, 2001). As a result, officially recognized ethnic groups gather in order to present and perform what is believed to be their "exclusive culture" (Cohen, 1993: 6) under the banner of Namibian Culture. Implicitly the constitutional guarantee supports and encourages diversity. Exclusivity is of utmost importance where ethnicity is viewed by those in positions of social influence as a tool to be used for accessing various social fields (Bourdieu, 1998). As Dickson Eyoh (1998) explains with reference to social realist cinema and representations of power, the justly celebrated resurgence of popular movements for democracy in Africa retreated into ethnic and kinship networks as a sanctuary from the violence and intensity of competition over dwindling resources; this presented a major pattern of response to the erosion of the utopian dreams of independence.

Locating African Identity

In the South African context, the Comaroffs (2001) argue that global neoliberal capitalism constructed the modernist subject citizen characterized by the explosion of identity politics during the late 1990's. This led to shifting relations between the concepts of citizenship and national sovereignty under neo-liberal conditions in South Africa. In fact, xenophobic attacks on foreign immigrants in the later years of the 2000s could be understood in terms of the politics of identity, belonging and access to resources. In his seminal study on political ritual Handler (1988) argues that processes of cultural production are political insofar as they involve contestation over identity formation. In such processes identity formations are manifested and enforced, contested and manipulated in order to emphasize the required display. In the context of constructing nationhood, he sees nationalism as an "ideology about individuated being", because it is concerned with boundedness, continuity and homogeneity encompassing diversity (Handler, 1988: 6).

Filmmakers have stepped into the role of nation building whether they are conscious of it or not and play an important role in redefining African identity constructs. Celebrated Ethiopian filmmaker Haile Gerima (Giani, 2000: 127) insists that "African filmmakers, at this historical juncture, are one intellectual tribe struggling against neo-colonial governments, imperialist cultural domination, and all sorts of 'so-called' critics." He contests that Hollywood uses South

Africa to stage its cultural mission, to take over the rest of Africa. This is allowed because we live in a system that sets in motion a civilization that is based on exploitation and imperialism. Therefore the film industry is driven by an ideology that believes in imperialism as the best way to control the world. So what does 'decolonize the mind' mean for us? How can Namibian filmmakers counter this? Gerima (2000: 127) further argues that "these 100 years of cinema have been a most powerful weapon used against Third World people. Latin Americans call cinema the new hydrogen bomb. The new hydrogen bomb could be dropped in a village and in that village everyone will change their hairdo, their nose, their lips - and this is not only physical change, it results from a mental change. The mental change says that the aesthetics or the beauty of white people is the standard of the world, and we all have to fashion ourselves by cutting and pasting our birthmark to fit those universal aesthetic criteria." It becomes the perceived identity of those who both participate in the making of the film as well as those who are watching respectively. What is significant about the emergence of a new group of African filmmakers is that their films are now aggressively reconstructing and negotiating African identity and giving new meanings with the opportunity of forging new solidarity across the continent.

When considering post-Apartheid culture in southern Africa, Richard Wilson (2001) explained that "post-Apartheid nation building appealed to civic nationalism as a new basis for national integration." The key term here is "Ubuntu." Wilson (2001) contends that Ubuntu was an African concept used by leaders to address and justify amnesty during the truth and reconciliation commission. The usage of ubuntu, he argues, created an artificial polarity between Africanist and Western perspectives of reconciliation. He took the historical trajectories of race, culture and group rights in South Africa into consideration in his attempt to deconstruct the post-Apartheid politics of culture. He argues that, even if human rights became the paradigmatic discourse of compromise and constitutionalism, these rights had been subordinated due to the priority of nation-building. An example in that respect was the unity and community through the new "culture of rights" (Wilson, 2001: 210). Akuupa sighted Wilson's work as being important, in the framework of national culture, because of its focus on the "anthropological conception of culture as an analytical tool and its usage by the elite in the process of legitimizing their projects of bureaucratization and

nation building." Consider that culture, which had been considered in the early phases of the postcolonial state as a backward, tribalist and obstacle to modernization, now led the way in engaging a fast changing world. Its revival was not only about the wider economic processes, it was essentially political. This South African obstruction relates to global developments where ethnic and indigenous groups all over the world in recent years have revived their cultures in order to attract tourists and to assert authenticity for a range of reason. Films are still forced to operate in a similar way. The majority of films made in Namibia are backed by African based European donors who sponsor *infotainment* styled short films on issues such as AIDS and gender based violence. Outside of this filmmakers are forced to fetishize their cultures and play to the Western idea of Africa. Therefore even the state funder the Namibia Film Commission (NFC) has taken up its role in the promotion of 'culture' by funding a series of films about Namibia's various regions and their cultures. Naturally this encourages a rather ethnic specific orientation and a product that is characterized by a number of different types of dances, songs and tribal costumes. It therefore does little to negotiate the complex realities of Africans and the more fluid identity politics that are particularly found in urban areas.

To further illustrate in this writer's first feature length film, *The Unseen* (2016), I made use of archive footage which interpolated with the contemporary scenes. For example in a scene between a young man and woman talking about love and loss, the scene is intercut with images of the German genocide of the Herero ethnic group which is indigenous to Namibia. Anu (Mathew Ishitile) talks about an imagined magical mythical African past. However, his dreams are ravaged by the harsh archival footage aforementioned. It's a completely different way to introduce a conversation about the past and colonialism. It details how even in the most innocent of settings of contemporary life we are still haunted by the ghosts of the past. The young characters in *The Unseen* are not able to simply exist in a place that is entirely free from the past. Neither are they able to wholly engage with it either. They exist in this unseen space in between. The film tells the story of three young people as they navigate spaces, both emotionally and physically, in modern day post-colonial Namibia - spaces that are normally "unseen." It's a collection of philosophical musings on what it means to be alive in independent Namibia. The film blurs the line between

documentary and fiction, exploring issues of South African Apartheid, the legacy of German colonialism and cultural appropriation. OkayAfrica critic Abel Shifferaw (2016) wrote that "The Unseen is a movie that decidedly chooses to not engage or envelop its subject matter with the usual tropes of African films: poverty, war, child soldiers, HIV/AIDS, corrupt government officials." It's a side of African life that doesn't make the international news headlines, namely its young people, getting on with lives characterized by the kinds of things that vex twenty-somethings the world over - the stresses and pleasures of city-life, relationships, and struggling to accept and explore oneself. So far it appears that audiences far and wide are embracing this the non-generic African story.

Try and *100 Bucks* are films that speak from the point of view of the people, engaging with their voices, their lives, and realities in the name of democracy and creating a new Namibian narrative. For the first time in Namibia, these films are creating an alternative vision of what Namibian culture can look and sound like. These films come over two decades after the fall of Apartheid in Namibia heralding in an era of radical democracy. The vibrant and diverse characters on screen demonstrate how much Namibia has achieved in becoming a free and independent country. It achieved its central aspiration to become a nation. *Try* and *100 Bucks* demonstrate the expression of the achievement of that aspiration. It is here that issues of national liberation, cultural restitution, and nation building all collide. A valid post-colonial culture is shown in each film. However, it is important to acknowledge that most of the world's countries don't actually share a single common reality that can be considered "post-colonial." The classification over simplifies the complex differences across various African and post-colonial nations. In the same way it is dangerous to propose simply one national identity or culture, as well as a national cinema that is entirely one dimensional and homogenous. What creates authenticity is that the films being produced in independent Namibia share the voice of the people. Thereby the national cinema as with the national culture does not speak as one voice but as the voice of all the people and their differing cultures and identities.

Chapter 4: State funded Cinema

The Namibia Film Commission: Successes and Failures

Namibia's film industry is still in its infancy. Foreign companies have always used Namibia as a location for international films and commercials. The broadcasting services were initially launched by the then Apartheid government. They used television almost exclusively as a tool for propaganda. One of the early film companies to emerge after independence in 1990 was On Land Productions, headed by Richard Pakleppa and Bridget Pickering. An important catalyst to the industry was the Young Directors Choice short film series produced by Ted Scott at the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). The aim of the project as Scott (1999) puts it was to "collect and preserve the oral history of country and to create interest, dignity and pride among the youth of Namibia about their own cultural values" (Joffe et al, 2001). The initiative was a jointly produced with the NBC. This production created many training opportunities including acting, scriptwriting, camera operating, sound recording. However, the long term effects of such initiatives are questionable as filmmakers find it difficult to find employment. The NBC did initiate the hugely popular *Village Square* comedy series. A six-part series (26 minutes each), which was also screened at FESPACO. There were 28-30 actors used, all receiving \$50 a day with most people in the series first timers to the movie business. The Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) is state owned and viewed as a "commercialized parastatal". The Namibian population which is approximately 2 million is covered by NBC, One Africa, M-Net, Multichoice, and Deukom. In 2000 the Namibian parliament passed the Namibia Film Commission Act. The commission saw a big budget adaptation of the autobiography written by Namibia's first president Sam Nujoma. The film, *Namibia: the Struggle for Liberation* (2007), was directed by Charles Burnett (*Killer of Sheep*). It cost an estimated N\$100m or US\$7m. The Namibia Film Commission (NFC) then went on to help facilitate several international productions such as *The Cell* (2000), *Flight of the Phoenix* (2004), *Lord of War* (2005), *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) and others. The NFC (2016) also produced a series of short films over the course of 3-4 years, from 2010 till 2014. These included Byron Joseph's *The Puritan* (2011), Perivi Katjavivi's *Eembwiti* (2011), Tim Huebschle's *Looking for Iilonga* (2011), *Dead River* (2012), Oshosheni Hiveluah's *100 Bucks* (2012), Errol

Geingob's *All She Ever Wanted* (2012), Ernst Steinberg's *Reflection* (2012), Krischka Stoffels' *Tjiraa* (2012), and Joel Haikali's *Try* (2012). The NFC have also funded several documentaries and one feature film *Katutura* (2015). Despite the success of these productions the NFC continues to lack transparency and consistency in what it chooses to fund. Scandal broke out when the chairperson of the NFC, Obed Emvula, was awarded N\$3m or US\$210,000 to make his film *Katutura*. The grant was awarded without an official call out to other filmmakers and without the conflict of interest regarding Mr Emvula's position as chairperson of the funding institution being taken into consideration. It's not the first time allegations have been levied at the commission. During the productions of both *Namibia: The Struggle for Liberation* (2007) as well as the TV series *The Ties that Bind* (2009) questions were raised regarding the disappearance of vast sums of money.

The Filmmakers Association of Namibia (FAN) is the official recognized film industry body and main lobbyist to the both government and the establishment. In late 2015 FAN decided to bring to attention the state of affairs within the film fraternity and its position. They felt that because there is some discontent and divergent views in the industry, they wanted to encourage engagement to resolve matters. FAN (2015) challenged the legitimacy of the NFC board. They communicated to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology that a portion of the parliament Act was not being adhered to. According to the act two members of the NFC board have to be nominated by FAN as industry representatives to engage the rest of the board which is government appointed. The two current "industry representatives" were not elected by FAN therefore causing the current FAN membership to feel that the NFC, and therefore government, does not truly represent them. To unite the film industry it is imperative to ensure that legitimate representatives nominated by the industry are made part of the NFC board. Further concerns have been made vocal with regard to an auditor general's report which did not reflect a fair distribution of public funding to the local as well as international market place. The report also showed a massive amount of taxpayers money was going to cover S&T allowances for film commissioners on the NFC board when they travel to film festivals. Which turned out to be all the time. With the above

mentioned issues still in contention it creates a negative climate for the advancement of the Namibian film industry. It is difficult for a culture of art and creation to emerge when being constantly stifled by the culture of entitlement. Such a predicament is counter-productive to the creation and constructing of a new national identity in Namibia.

In the 1950's Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire insisted that there was no such thing as a general Black culture, in the sense of *Négritude*, but rather that there were only national cultures (Diawara, 2010: 196). It is valid to consider that at this time, in the 1950's, *Négritude* postulated that from the dawn of time until the present, Black people all over the world were united by an intrinsically shared cultural bond. Fanon's assertion that "The only culture that exists is a national culture," was meant to inspire Africans all over to join the struggle against colonization and "working from their country's situation, create their own progressive culture" (Diawara, 2010: 196). These two contrary cultural ideas have continued to exist simultaneously in the world. When Senghor became president of Senegal, he allotted a quarter of the state budget for culture - and that culture's ideology was *Négritude*. In the meantime, Guinea under Ahmed Sekou Toure adopted Fanon's ideas to kick-start their own cultural revolution. On the one hand, there was Senegalese *Négritude* with its humanist, modern message of a shared African heritage and consciousness and, on the other, the drive to a national cultural revolution, to "invent everything anew," within the old colonial state borders. African cinema has developed against this background (Diawara, 2010: 196). Namibia needs to take these debates in black consciousness to heart when developing the country's film policy. Film has the potential to help decolonization and help Africans overcome their self-alienation. This is why Sembene's cinema was deeply informed by socialist realism and radical social criticism (Diawara 2010: 196). Diawara (2010: 202) dreams of "a new African cinema, one that no longer views itself as part of the binary opposites of Africa and Europe. Instead, in as far as it participates in other countries' discourse, its narrative is freed from the old complexes and has a claim to universality while still adopting an African perspective. In general terms, what we are still lacking is an African cinematic language with its specific contradictions and restrictions - and its unique strengths as well. There are the first signs of that language forming. But in the West one does not admit that Africa could develop a cinematic language or aesthetic on

its own." It is imperative that these debates are considered by the Namibian government at policy level. All film and culture policy should ideally factor in what kind of cinematic language they want to encourage.

As filmmaker Bridget Pickering (2001) from Namibia so eloquently put it, "filmmaking provides an exceptional record of a country's history, heritage, culture and contemporary life. But the film and TV industry is also more than this. It is a sector of the economy that can employ people, earn foreign exchange and foster small and medium business." The role of government is to mainstream this sector in the national economy. If small businesses in the film industry were eligible for government support to the SME sector, to supply side measure developed for manufacturing and to export assistance. It is not only about funding films. People working the film and TV industry should be eligible for all the existing benefits, rights and conditions of employees in other industries. The creative industries generally need to be lifted out of its marginalized status in the economy. Internationally it is precisely these industries that have grown fastest in terms of employment and contribution to the GDP in the economies of North America, Canada and Europe. The SADC region has yet to experience this growth for the Film and TV industry. The governments in the region need to ensure that the environment is conducive to this growth and that the industry players are supported in their efforts to grow. On the other hand filmmaker Helena Spring (2001), when commenting on Anant Singh's success in South Africa, says "those that succeed in this industry are in many respects classical entrepreneurs. They don't make films, they force them into existence." A central question for future research therefore emerges... How do we develop more business minded filmmakers in the region? It is essential to create an environment where independent filmmakers can thrive without being entirely dependent on foreign donors and government funds.

The Limits of "National" Culture

Benedict Anderson (Anderson, 1983: 50) sights the definition of a "nation" as an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. Furthermore he

suggests that "it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. The convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation." As Africa traverses the tricky trajectory of postcolonial nation building, it faces the ever present question of how to construct a comprehensive relevant national culture that acknowledges the past but speaks to an idyllic future (Katjavivi, 2015). Both Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon spoke on the importance of building a national culture within the African state. Their ideas were slightly different but ultimately complimentary. When considering the legacy of colonialism and imperialism, the subjugation of people and the exploitation of resources are always mentioned. However, the appropriation and destruction of the African culture is rarely highlighted with nearly as much fanfare. Cabral saw this as being crucial to the success of the imperialist oppressor. The oppressor ensures that its domination includes negating the histories of that dominated group by means of violence (Cabral, 1970:41). This process includes obstructing the ability of the oppressed nationals to develop. Within this system it is very hard for the population to experience self determination. In this situation there is little chance for them to preserve their history and see themselves in a historical context.

Samir Amin goes to great lengths to further elucidate this harrowing process. Much like the re-categorizing of African territories that Amin expressed to have occurred during the colonial and Neo-colonial periods, one can clearly observe that Cabral's de-historicized Africans are comparable to Amin's notion of labor reserves created by the colonizer. Here Amin (1972: 114) explains the need for the colonizer to quickly create a subordinate proletariat. It does this by dispossessing the African rural communities by violence. Thus keeping them in inhospitable territories where they have no real means of being productive on their own. Cabral asserts that "culture is the product of this history just as the flower is the product of a plant." What he means here is that culture is primarily influenced by whatever productive forces it shares at the root of its foundation. Its roots emerge from out of the "organic nature of society" (Cabral, 1970: 42). The success of this is of course hampered by both internal and external factors. The external here would be the dominant

colonial legacy the African continent still experiences. It is worth noting that, as Amin (1972: 115) explains, we can “no longer speak of a traditional society in that region of the continent, since labor reserve society had a function which had nothing to do with “tradition”: that of supplying a migrant proletariat.” The historical and traditional foundations of the African society have given way to a culture of servitude. This is the new history that produces with it flowers of a different kind. The society then comes to embrace a sort of consciousness that is far from organic but rather is forced out of the oppressive circumstances. In such a scenario we cannot expect this pressurized existence to give birth to a positive experience. And thus the emergence of an empowered culture is impossible.

For Cabral (1970: 43) “struggles are preceded by an increase in expression of culture.” The liberation movement is only successful if it is able to create a common “cultural personality” amongst the people. This “personality” then works to counter the imperial forces. This homogenous identity seeks to embrace the overall sense of oppression and pain that is generally felt amongst the Africans under colonialism (Katjavivi, 2015). A fine example is that is the general discontent felt by South African miners in the 1970s and the widespread anger towards Bantu education amongst the youth of South Africa. This created with it a culture of resistance to this ill treatment. The spirit of this wave of resistance also encourages groups and tribes to dispel their differences in favor of the idea of a shared cultural experience. The commonalities in tradition and custom create the illusion of an essentialized African identity. One that is historically similar because of geography and more so the immediate struggle against colonialism and Apartheid. However, Cabral (1970: 47) warns of the dangers of individuals “using the sacrifices of the masses, to eliminate oppression of their own class and to re-establish in this way their complete political and cultural domination of the people.” Herein lies the opportunity for the black middle class to simply replace the white middle class after liberation is achieved. Historically there has always been a black middle class in South Africa. Initially created by the British as a buffer between them and the masses (Ndletyana, 2014: 5) This new black middle class fears the rising of the “plebeians” too as it knows that it has accumulated wealth disproportionately. Even the concept of ownership

of land is one that a large number of South Africans still reject to this day. The inevitability of this is largely due to the way that capitalism

itself is structured the world over. Making the struggle for political freedom largely inconsequential. While the sacrifices made throughout the world have been extraordinary in the struggle for human rights and self-determination, most liberation movements and their postcolonial governments were naive when it came to taking on the machine that is modern capitalism. Political freedom does not equal economic freedom. Africa's dependency is entrenched. For example, Samir Amin does not discuss independence. Colonialism hasn't stopped on his timeline due to the lack of changes to Africa's economic models and systems. With the new wave of colonialism/globalization in the 1990s Africa is becoming even more vulnerable.

Cabral (1970: 48) assumes that in order to develop a national framework for national culture and identity, the liberation struggle must be seen as a struggle both for the preservation and survival of the cultural values of the people. One of the problems with this is that we will soon start attaching ourselves to the garments we wear and songs we sing as signposts that point to an "African" culture, rather than any specific value system that unites us in the empowerment of our people. Much continues to be made of the culture of ubuntu and the recognizing of the common humanity we all share with one another. When Cabral speaks of values, is this what he adheres to? It's hard to tell as Cabral fails to explain what these "positive cultural values" are that he mentions in his work. While his work is inspirational it fails to offer any pragmatic solutions for the creation of postcolonial national culture. One additional credit to him though is his mentioning of the importance of identifying with our environmental reality and the "fundamental problems and aspirations of the people." This should be seen as a clear warning to us to be careful not to essentialize the African identity as we coalesce the various cultural values that make up this continent into a cohesive national framework.

Fanon offers a slightly different outlook than Cabral. Specifically, he goes into great depths to try and explain the psychology of the new postcolonial bourgeoisie. One of the problems with the native intellectual who has gone far beyond the domains of the Western culture and has gotten it

into his head to proclaim the existence of another culture is that he does so not in the name of national culture but with the notion that a fixed 'African' culture exists. This suggests that for the African intellectual, their bourgeoisie experience is one that will always have to create a romantic notion of Africa inside their heads to counter the oppression they witness trying fatally at assimilation into the Western culture that their middle class privileges now necessitate. Yet the African intellectual does so with the full awareness of the limits of what Fanon calls the second phase of postcolonial revival: assimilation. It remains hard to move beyond the revival and rediscovery of valuing African culture for the African. Perhaps this is due to the lack of alternatives not simply just to Western culture but to capitalism as a whole. The national culture that is so often present now in Africa is the kind that clings to outdated tribal customs under the pretext of them being "African." So for example in Namibia, the police have stopped girls in small towns on occasion and voiced anger through the newspapers at the wearing of short "Western" miniskirts. But the same voices can be heard on the radio fighting vehemently for the right for local villages to host outdated tribal customs where girls are initiated into womanhood through half naked dances in loin cloths as old men stand by gazing with approval, choosing perhaps which future young bride he might appropriate. In the Ovaherero community in Namibia, men have the highest cases of gout and high blood pressure but yet they refuse to alter their diet of almost strictly meat, under the guise of "it's my culture."

We must be careful exactly what it is that we hold onto and make use of when constructing national culture because there is a clear danger of only using what justifies short sighted simulations of control and illusory power. Fanon (1961: 125) paints a picture of "a new native bourgeoisie that once in power uses its class aggressiveness to corner the positions formerly kept for foreigners." He presents an image of the new black bourgeoisie as being intent on using their middle class privileges to replace the colonizers. This sense of entitlement allows the new black middle class to stake claim to the nations resources without necessarily having the incentive and/or the know how when it comes to innovation and manufacturing (Katjavivi, 2015). This leads to calls for nationalization, ones that are very similar to what has been taking place currently in South Africa. We find that after independence, throughout the continent, there is this cry out for

nationalization. The issue has reached fever pitch under the newly formed Economic Freedom Fighters party (EFF) in South Africa, as they have made it central to their campaign. Their decent success at the polls in SA's election of 7th May 2014 just goes to show how captivating the issue has become. This however reeks more of sloganism than of the real impetus to see whole scale changes to the structure of South African society. The EFF calls for nationalism but does not offer a practical guideline illustrating how a nationalized economy would operate and cope under the strain of the global free market system. As Fanon (1961: 122) states, "to them, nationalization quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period."

Whilst the new black middle class fights to replace the old white middle class, or at least join them, the working class starts a fight against non-national Africans. "These foreigners are called on to leave; their shops are burned, their street stalls are wrecked" (Fanon, 1961: 125). Frantz Fanon's words here reside in history as prophetic warnings unheeded by a continent destined to experience internal conflict. We have witnessed his fears manifested in the harrowing xenophobic attacks witnessed throughout South Africa just years ago. It's concerning just how much of what Fanon said has come to light. However, understanding the systemic roots of the problem allows us to divorce ourselves from the divisive partisan finger pointing that underlies much of contemporary politics today. This allows us to take a step back and acknowledge that this system was passed down to us.

It is a system that has seen the formation of a greater black middle class without 'sufficient material or intellectual resources so instead it becomes an intermediary. Unable to transform the nation it becomes the "transmission line between the nation and capitalism." (Fanon, 1961: 122). Fanon goes on to accuse this new middle class of lacking the skills of invention and pioneering that the early middle classes of Europe were abound with. Instead they are filled with the lazy indulgence that has come to characterise the culture of the settler bourgeoisie "from whom it has learnt its lessons."

Conclusion

Africa today is in a space that fiercely resists the idea of assimilating totally into the Western model of capitalism and neo-liberalism. However, it does so in vain, and without an understanding that its economy and peripheral identity have meant that it is fully entrenched at the bottom of the global power and economic structure. It has meant that there exists then two polarizing outlooks on the way forward in the formation of a national culture. There is the first vantage point that suggests we should all get on with the politics of assimilation and is quite happy so long as this group has access to wealth and unregulated consumption. Then there is the other group which insists on reverting back to something more "African." However, this imagined Africa is not a place of practical solutions and forward thinking pragmatism. Rather it is one that expresses its Africanism through the use of garments, ritual and sloganism, leaving us a void where concrete policy and vision for development should be. It strikes similar to what Chadian filmmaker Mahamat-Saleh Haroun (2011: 137) observed "if you are not like the rest of the community, like everyone else, people say you are white." He goes on to say that if our communities instead became "familiar with other universes, other philosophies, they wouldn't spend their time calling any individual who tries to be different white." This sort of binary thinking is not conducive to the development of a truly empowering national culture. The incentive does not rest with the white middle class either as their privileges have only doubled since the fall of colonialism/Apartheid in Africa. With this deadlock one can only hope that the next emerging generation is one that, irrespective of class and colour, paints a practical vision that drives the nation forward. Perhaps the early examples of this can be seen already in the arts. When a journalist asked South African musician Yannick Ilunga aka Petite Noir, what gives his edgy pop music its African aesthetic. He simply replied "Me." The young Capetownian, calls his music Noirwave, a "retrofuture sound" (City Press, 2013). Not entirely South African, Ilunga boasts Belgium and Angolan roots, as well as having had his father serve as Finance Minister in the Congolese government. What's interesting here is that Petite Noir's music is not South African, as he says, his music is worldwide. He represents a generation of young African artists whose music and politics refuse to be identified solely as African or Europe. Another example of this is Namibian Hip-hop outfit Black Vulcanite whose name borrows the 'vulcanite' coda from a race of aliens found in Star Trek. Their music

effortlessly fuses space aliens, hip-hop beats and disturbing speeches from the late Afrikaner nationalist Eugene Terreblanche. Perhaps this young transnational aesthetic is needed when considering the creation of a new national culture.

It will take more than simply just political action alone to create a new Africa. The current approach of culture and education is still extremely Eurocentric and lacking in its ability to re-imagine Africa. Film and the media can be used as a tool to re-educate the masses. Therefore film must be made inexpensive and simple. So as for everyone in the society to have access to cinema. The technology for film production continues to get cheaper and make it easier to purchase equipment.

There should be a community resource around which education, discussions and entertainment can be organized. At present, the media fragment and isolate those who consume them. The new African media should not be for private consumption but for collective enlightenment. To realize their potential, the media should not just be watched, read or listened to. They should be discussed through an organized framework of community education. Instead of passive acceptance, a two-way relationship should be established between the people and the media. In this way people's impressions, concerns and criticisms can constitute a steady source of inspiration for the media itself. Used in this way, the media can harness the energy of the people and provide the framework for the development of people and provide the framework for the development of popular culture. It would reverse the relation that exists between media and society. Instead of reflecting life at the top, it would synthesize the cultural strands of everyday life and recreate it in an idiom that is once universal and direct. The media would become communicators in the real sense of the term because now they would really have something to communicate. A popular African culture requires not only the decolonization of language, but the redirection of cultural work towards the masses. It is only through redirection of cultural work towards the spiritual and aesthetic concerns of everyday life that an audience can be created for popular culture. If writers and artists want to go beyond the confines of an elite audience they have to adopt a form that is accessible, direct and clear. Such an approach cannot rely simply on artistic skill; it demands a process of interaction with an evolving audience. Artists who are involved by

definition need to involve people in their work. Culture production becomes too exclusive if it simply depends on the creativity of intellectuals. It is the job of cultural workers to encourage the creativity of the masses - to help people enhance their power of expression and perception (Hadjor 1987: 92-3).

Chapter 5: Towards a new national culture and identity in Namibia

When considering the issues surrounding culture and nationalism, my research demonstrates that concepts of identity and being are challenged by Namibian filmmakers. This continues to be relevant as it assists the country in the continued dialogue surrounding the construction of the post-colonial state. While the government might be focused on the promotion of a national culture that is centred around attracting tourism, Namibian cinema is functioning in a way that counters this.

In order to achieve real action, you must be a living part of Africa and of her thought; you must be an element of that popular energy which is entirely called forth for the freeing, the progress and the happiness of Africa. There is no place outside that fight for the artist for the intellectual who is not himself concerned with and completely at one with the people in the great battle of Africa and of suffering humanity. - Sekou Toure (Hadjor, 1987)

Sociologist professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah (1997: 87) says that 'African advancement and the establishment of democratic practice requires the inclement of a literate mass society. This literate society cannot be developed on the basis of the borrowed colonial languages which serve the mimetic culture of the elite, and which dismiss by implication the violability of the history and culture of Africans. If mass society in Africa is to be empowered and creatively freed, this can only be achieved on the premise of African historic-cultural belongings, with selective bottoming and adaptations, which do not negate the cultural roots of people. But most of these cultures transcend existing colonially imposed borders, thus the argument lends directly to the end to slowly work against the impositions of these borders, and install institutions along Pan-Africanist lines which strengthen social intercourse amongst Africans.' Language is the axis of all cultures. It is in language that the total historical experience of all human groups are constructed and continuously transacted. The condition, structure and development of any given language reelected the historical record of the society or societies which use that language. Social and linguistic life, demographic

transformations, technological innovations, the trajectory of economic history and cultural relations, can all be appreciated from linguistic history. Linguistics in a way offers Africa, with its relatively poor written historical legacy a significant source and facility for information and data on Africa's heritage (Prah, 1997: 87-88).

Transparency is critical. Therefore, it would make sense for the NFC to fully disclose and explain the details of its funding and expenditure. This is reinforced by the call from the Minister of Public Enterprises for more transparency on boards while noting that the NFC is in transition (New Era, 2015). Another aspect of transparency, is the lack of coordination of effort. Currently, anyone is supposedly free to submit whatever proposal they desire and on "the behest of the Commissioners", funds are approved and allocated to that project or proposal should they deem it appropriate. What plans and strategies informs these type of decisions? Where is the strategic plan of the NFC and what are the objectives they are working towards? President of the Republic of Namibia Hage Geingob has called on all Namibians to fight poverty together (Geingob, 2015). We can make a contribution to this noble objective as well as other national priorities. We can however not achieve that with the current state of affairs at the NFC. Things must be fixed and corrected towards the good for all and not only a few. It is my hope that now that the Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Jekero Tweya, has been made aware of the situation he might urgently address these critical aspects and ensure that a passed law has been circumvented and deprives the people of adequate and proper representation.

There is an opportunity for voices to emerge that are not solely shaped by the old divisive paradigms illustrated above, national culture must find a way to articulate its presence outside of the old settler vs native narrative, and culture must emerge organically. It is always easier to cling to an ethnicity, a political base, class or idea than it is to embrace the void that exists between past and future. All human cultures have experienced a classicism, an age of dogmatic certitude, one that henceforth all must transcend together. There also exists promise and opportunity that these hybrid souls, born after independence, will lead Namibia towards escaping our historical selves and move us beyond our current concept of what it means to be human (Katjavivi, 2015). Since it is

memory that often governs our idea of identity, the principal idea that is of concern to this research is creating shared experiences and memories so as to foster a collective concept of this nation. Our national culture is a book still waiting to be written. It is something we engage with daily, something we incorporate new ideas into and detract what doesn't work or what we might have outgrown as we create our lives and legacies. Culture critic Gary Younge (2011) once said that "in the absence of any true control over their lives, people cling to identity as to a life raft - desperately, instinctively, driven by the impulse to save self, kith and kin rather than with regard or respect for the whole." He illustrates the fact that while life rafts are useful, particularly in emergencies, they will never be as good as a functioning boat.

The work of filmmakers and the growth of the Namibian film industry can only be successful in relation to the limits set around the debate surrounding national culture and government policy. I believe that both *Try* and *100 Bucks* are successful at re-defining what a "Namibian" or an "African" film should be. The portrayal of different ethnicities and stories all interwoven had not been attempted previously in a Namibian film. There is a particular scene about halfway into *100 Bucks* where there are four different characters all speaking at the same time in a Windhoek taxi. Each of the characters speaks their respective language either towards one another or into a mobile phone whilst chatting to someone else. There is English, Otjiherero, Afrikaans and Nama-Damara all heard over one another. The scene remains a high point for local audiences as they often go hysterical at this juncture. It does well to illustrate that the growing feeling amongst Namibians that they are aware of a sense of self that is individualistic in the tribal sense but comfortably part of a collective multicultural society. According to the ideas surrounding "Third Cinema," it's all about standing in opposition to imperialism in all its manifestations. It is political cinema - whether consciously or not. Both films are largely successful at contributing to the development and transformation of Namibian society. Whilst the films are not overtly politically or pedagogically inclined they still function as a simulacra of the current urban Namibian reality. They offer the essential opportunity of an authentic cultural identification and through the use of mostly comedy they effectively highlight current contemporary social issues. Thereby the dialogue such films engineer can be of service for revolutionary social change. What Namibian filmmakers

lack is the sense of urgency. In a society with a largely comfortable middle class from which most filmmakers seem to emerge. They lack the heightened environment and urgency we discussed found in Cuba; or the intensity of the revolutionary times that Sembene and other emerged from. Rather, the Namibian filmmaker has arrived at an incredibly static moment in time. When we are conscious of the stark inequalities endemic to Namibia we still have a cinema that addresses but does not provoke. A cinema that has not explored the true boundaries of Namibia's limitations. Filmmakers are almost entirely reliant on state sponsored funds erratically dispersed via the NFC. So while some of the films discussed suggest progress and offer us a dynamic lens to study national culture in Namibia we still are in effect not creating films that rock the establishment. What the films do is let you know that all is not well in a Namibian society that on the surface seems to be extremely stable and progressive when compared to its African counterparts. Again, like the scar across Zox's face illustrates, there is pain here and there is much that is unsaid and unexplained, just like the origins of that mark on his face. However we have yet to deeply explore all the issues that lie just below the surface.

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