

Decoloniality: African Vernacular Idioms and Visual Language in post-apartheid Television

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Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters by Research.*

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation/thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of the Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Lucky Malebogo Mqoboli

15th November 2022

Abstract

The combination between verbal indigenous languages and domestic visual languages is vital to redefine the postcolonial African experiences and this combination must be responsible for championing the struggle of Africans during this rapid speed of globalization, thus an alternative space should be created to articulate modern world views of Africans.

The aim of this study is to investigate the deployment of indigenous verbal languages and the visual language in Rolie Nikiwe's oeuvre such as *Tsha Tsha* (2004), *InterSexions* (2010) and (2013) and *Matatiele* (2015). In this investigation, the study seeks to explore and investigate how Rolie Nikiwe constructs visual aesthetics and verbal indigenous African languages in the manner that brings a different perspective as compared to previous visual grammars. Thus one has cast Nikiwe as an Afrofuturistic image creator who privileges African mode of thought students.

This dissertation seeks to engage existing scholarship in the South African film and television industry and existing film and television practices such as drama series. This dissertation will pursue the study of Rolie Nikiwe's work using the sociological definition of what language is.

It is of paramount importance to mention that by visual language, one is referring to a superordinate terminology for photography, fine arts, films, documentary films and television drama series. As such, it should be stated clearly that, it is in the best interest of this dissertation to pay detailed attention only on films and television dramas under this umbrella term, and that is the visual language. The argument is that one of the reasons why the Western conquest upon the African continent was a success was because of the political and cultural use of indigenous and visual languages that were used by colonizers and apartheid officials to create different social identities.

Dedication

To the Memory of my late Father

Phillip Paulos Mqoboli

Ndiyabulela kakhulu,Dlamini. Enkosi.

Uyidlozi manje.

Acknowledgements

I would like to say thank you very much to my supervisor for always guiding me in my pursuit of intellectual life. Intellectual life is not easy. It took me long to write this. My consultations with you inspired me in so many ways. *Professor nthute ke tshwane le wena. Ke go tshwere two my hands*, Prof Mhlambi. *Wa bona wena ke tletse propfol, Prof.*

I mean Prof, I am thankful that I am contributing *Tsha Tsha* (2004) chapter in Volume 2 of the book, titled *Liberation Struggle: from Colonialism to post-Apartheid South Africa* by Dr. Lance Nawa, with a focus on the theme of the on-going politics of casting in South Africa. I am grateful that I was selected to present a chapter on *Matatiele* (2015) at the 6th Es'kia Colloquium at the African Literature Department, WITS University. I am more than happy that I will also be contributing a chapter in the edited Volume, titled *Social Mediated Gender Performances and Representations: Popular Culture, Politics and Everyday Citizenship in Africa* by Dr. Kealeboga Aiseng from Rhodes University. I am also happy that I am going to present a paper at the 5th edition of the Kano Indigenous Language of African Film Market and Festival (KILAF) in Kano, Nigeria.

Rolie Nikiwe, thank you very much for always allowing me into your house. Thank you for the conversations we have had in your house. The advices you gave me about the South African film and television industry will remain monumental. *O lenyora, bro.*

Ke leboga Mme o ntsetseng Kedilatile Florence Mqoboli le Rre wa me o hulereng Mr Phillip Mqoboli. Eish ke a go gopola Timer! Go siere blind! But I hope ke tla ba sharpo one day. To my siblings, Tshireletso Mqoboli, Godfrey Thobile Mqoboli and Themba Mqoboli *ke re bonang a re tieng mo moweng. Lerato la me le baya for lona.*

E re ke stope ha pele ke hetsa pene enke. Badimo ba le robalele ditlhokwa

Nelwang ke Pula!

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Chapter 1: Before Decoloniality

Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the deployment of indigenous verbal languages and the visual language in Rolie Nikiwe's *Tsha Tsha* (2004), *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) and *Matatiele* (2015). In this investigation, the research seeks to explore and investigate how Rolie Nikiwe constructs new visual language regarding the treatment of the HIV and AIDS pandemic and how he deploys Afrofuturism techniques and values to construct a new visual language for his television dramas. This dissertation also explores Nikiwe's attempts to revamp existing image creation of cannibalism visual products as far as myth and history are concern in *Matatiele* (2015).

Visual media such as films and television dramas/series are related in the sense that they both produce social and political meanings through visualities and they all produce knowledge about the world and about us. Further, they both reflect contentious values and morals of the society while entertaining audiences. Additionally, both films and television drama series have been responsible for shaping discourse and for creating different social identities across the world. The functions of the visual media are not limited to the ones that I have mentioned above. Visual media refers to communication platforms that use visuals and the communicative act of these, is referred to as visual language.

Visual language covers broadly a superordinate terminology for films and television drama series. It refers to the construction of visualities accompanying the storyline of films or television drama series. As such, this dissertation will not pay attention to blurry lines between films and television dramas under this term, but will consider visual language to be an umbrella term covering the narrative techniques of filmic media generally. One of the reasons is that, it is a norm in the context of South African filmic scholarship to discuss films and television dramas separately, yet it is visual language that lay foundation for the problematic constructions of race, class, gender and numerous other social variables that have been contested ever since film was introduced at the close of the eighteenth century.

The processes of television dramas and films in conceiving an idea/concept during pre-production, production and post-production share many similarities than differences. This view indicates that they both require technical structures such as synopsis, genre, tagline, logline, controlling idea, premise, dramatic question, visual treatment of the story and

marketing strategy for viewership rates. “Television dramas, like film have a text and performance (script and action), and the script is designed into a storyboard (Gibbs, 2012 in Mthethwa 2014: 20). Both film and television operate at an ideological level and they are both audio-visual products that tell a story in an entertaining way.

Language in its broad sense (both linguistically and as a visual discourse) is inherently powerful and these two discourses have the absolute power to shape social identities, to rethink and reimagine the views of a particular society and how people use language to rule and conquer (Ngugi wa Thiong’o 1986). There are a plethora of definitions of what language is and there is no straightforward theory that gives a clear explanation of the genesis of language; notwithstanding, there are various proposed theories that have attempted to explain the etymology of language and what language is. Fromkin and Rodman have vehemently argued that “a language consists of all the sounds, words, and possible sentences. And when you know a language you know the sounds, the words, and the rules for their combination” (Fromkin and Rodman, 1978:6). This is a linguistic definition of what language is.

Grammar is the blueprint or engine of all languages and the relationship between sounds and meanings of words of languages are based on random choices (linguistic signs are arbitrary); therefore, it is a linguistic fact that all languages have their own grammar rules that are shared amongst the speakers of a language (Fromkin and Rodman 1978). We have learned verbal languages tacitly in a natural or a family setting. This means that the acquisition of grammar rules is an unconscious process. Conversely, most visual makers learnt the grammar rules of the visual language through artistic practice or formal training. We only go to school premises to learn the technical grammar rules of the languages we speak.

It is worth mentioning that language is a thinking instrument that is used to organize our world. As a result, this study is interested in the social function of both verbal language and visual language. A sociological point of view regarding the definition of language is that, “language is a system of communication, a medium for thought, a vehicle for literary expression, a social institution, a matter for political controversy, catalyst for nation building” (O’Grady, et al. 1997:1). In attempting to pursue the sociological definitions of language, it was Fairclough who has indicated that language is a main tool or medium of communication, therefore, ideology operates through language. Language is a principal means for the operation of power. Power, through ideology is omnipresent (Fairclough, 1989:2). To embellish this

point, Gramsci (1971) in *Linguistic Hegemony* substantiates that language is intimately involved in the manufacture of ideological consent.

With regards to the etymology of visual language, there is, at least, an existing scholarship that traces the historical development and trajectory of visual language since the early films of Lumière brothers, Thomas Edison and the praxiscopes designed by Eadweard Muybridge. Noting this, the development of television came as a result of collective efforts for many years of trial and error. According to Bevan (2008:27) “The credit for television’s invention cannot be given to one person, nor can it be linked to one particular event. Instead, it came about after centuries of experiments with ways to communicate further, faster and more effectively.” Filmic language as used in cinema presents an example of these experiments and as such television as an offshoot of cinema has been and continues to be influenced by the big screen. One should be reminded that I treat both films and television dramas as visual languages that interact at a particular point in history. Braudy and Cohen (2009:1) note that, “Those who consider film to be a language often rely on the analogy between the word and the shot”.

It is difficult to dismiss this point because the marriage between verbal and visual languages is motivational and intentional; therefore, the intended meanings (the ideologies) of those who are in power are carefully constructed and expressed using discursive tools of visual language. According to Braudy and Cohen (2009:1) this is because:

films embody, communicate, enforce, and suggest meanings, film theorists often suggested that film constitutes a language, a ‘visual *esperanto*’. They have spoken of film’s grammar, its vocabulary, and even of its jargon, film as a kind of hieroglyphic language.

The above contention can be stretched further to understand how Western conquest on the African continent was a success. This was because of the political, social, and cultural use of indigenous and visual languages that were used by colonizers and apartheid officials. According to Ives “Nixon (1994) and Krabill (2002) have shown, the apartheid government explicitly employed ideas of ‘culture’ and the medium of television to reify and normalize racial distinctions.” (Ives 2007:159). As such, this dissertation intends to show how an intense interest in the marriage between indigenous languages and the visual language contributed to the normalization and the institutionalization of this power. Both indigenous verbal and visual languages were employed to colonize African peoples; the language of visual representations

was used to embellish the malicious intentions of colonial and apartheid administrators by creating stereotypic images of Africa and her peoples.

Historical Background

It is befitting to locate Rolie Nikiwe's *Tsha Tsha* (2004), *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) and *Matatiele* (2015) within South African broadcasting context because there are factors that led to the formation and shape of the above case studies. As such, the South African broadcasting television services were introduced late as a result of the previous intense political climate. Through legislation and a need to regulate television broadcasting in South Africa, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) was formed in 1976. According to Ngubane (2006:44) "the SABC was established through Broadcasting Act 73 of 1976 and it also defined its powers and objectives". Between 1976 and 1980s, the apartheid regime made provision for black broadcasting services that too had its defined powers and objectives. It is worth mentioning that it was only during the late 90s that the free-to-air channel e.tv was formed. "New broadcasting legislation also provided for the creation of a free, independent broadcaster. In 1998 the channel was launched as e.tv" (Bevan, 2008:178).

When it comes to viewership SABC is the largest public broadcaster that attracts the audience and e.tv is the second largest, therefore "e.tv is South Africa's only commercial free-to-air television licensee and attracts, on the e.tv channel, the second largest audience with a marked share of over 20% (Commissioning Protocol for Independently Produced South African Programming Document, 2010:2). Broadcasters (public or commercial) have a huge amount of responsibility to air programmes that accommodate and represent all South African peoples as well as official languages in South Africa, according to Ngubane "commercial broadcasters are expected to provide a diverse range of programming catering for a wide section of the public. As a whole they must also provide programming in all South African official languages" (Ngubane, 2006:67-8).

It is vital to note that the structural make-up of the SABC was largely affected by the then apartheid broadcasting policies and this had an impact on the SABC that is part of South Africa's liberal and constitutional democracy. Thus the expression for artistic liberation still continues. Ngubane (2006:46) points out that "the historical landscape of the broadcasting industry in the country is a minute glimpse into the effects of apartheid, the struggle for freedom and ultimately the attainment of what many refer to as democracy."

Towards the late 70s, a majority of white people were recipients of SABC television signals and motion pictures than black people. Only a few number of black people, especially in urban areas received SABC television services. “By 1979, the broadcasts covered more than 80% of white population and 42% of the black population” (Bevan, 2008:167). In the early 80s the SABC went through new structural formations when TV2 that catered for Nguni speakers (Zulu and Xhosa) and TV3 that catered for Sotho speakers (Sotho, North Sotho and Tswana) were formed. Bevan (2008:167) points out that “it was only at the end of 1981, on the 31st December, that the separate black television service consisted of two services: TV2 for Nguni languages (Zulu and Xhosa) and TV3 for Sotho languages (Sotho, North Sotho and Tswana)”.

The SABC television does not operate independently because there are several numbers of institutions that regulate content and give different SABC structures powers and functions for it to provide services. As such, the SABC’s Editorial Policies document stipulates clearly that:

The SABC’s powers and functions, as well as its rights and obligations, are derived from a number of sources: legislation, the Charter, the license conditions of each SABC station and channel, and regulations issued by ICASA from time to time, including the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters set by the BCCSA. (SABC n.d.: 2).

The same is applicable to e.tv, as it is also under the regulation and control of Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) and Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA). “e.tv is a signatory to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa Code of Conduct to which it must adhere. Producers should be mindful of the content and requirements of the Code” (Ngubane, 2006:63). The merge between Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (STRA) led to the formation of Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) as a result of negotiations that occurred during the transition period (Ngubane, 2006:63). It is with no doubt that politicians of the ruling party would temper with the SABC and interfere with the SABC’s daily programming. With television now being perceived as an agenda setter for political debate and as having influence on the public profile of political parties, it is unlikely that politicians will be particularly willing to abstain from interfering, whether directly or indirectly, with the daily running of public broadcasters in South Africa (Mpofu 1996 in Ngubane, 2006:76).

The rhetoric that the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is independent remains questionable. The SABC has created various approaches in relation to the procurement of local content and one of these approaches is to fully fund the programme that is going to be created for the corporate, thus “within this policy framework, the SABC will procure the best possible content in an affordable and cost efficient manner and improve the control environment governing the procurement process” (SABC Policy and Procedures for the Procurement of Local Television Programmes, 8).

The SABC’s internal Business Planning Process is solely responsible for determining funding for a particular programme or slot. Therefore, the SABC’s Business Planning Process has powers to regulate slots and programmes for commercial purposes. “The SABC has three distinct approaches i.e. commissioning, Joint Ventures and Acquisition to procure local content, all of which are governed by set criteria” (SABC Policy and Procedures for the Procurement of Local Television Programmes, 9).

With regards to SABC’s television programming and the production of local content, there is an unfair representation and unfair coverage of indigenous African languages. This is because English language enjoys its hegemony and continues to bully indigenous African languages. Afrikaans is well represented. Dibetso and Smith (2012:12) have observed that “More than 76 per cent of programmes (based on broadcast time) are primarily broadcast in English. The second and third most predominant languages are Afrikaans (6 percent) and IsiZulu (5 percent)”.

One does acknowledge that the SABC is faced with a difficult mandate that has to be implemented, especially regarding the equitable treatment of South African official languages; however, failure to represent and cover official indigenous African languages in programming marginalises languages such as siSwati, XiTsonga, TshiVenda and isiNdebele. The SABC has acknowledged that there is a need to address this marginalization, thus: “The realization that certain languages are recognized as being more marginalized than others (XiTsonga, TshiVenda, SiSwati, and isiNdebele) and the additional responsibility this places on institutions such as the SABC to address this marginalization” (SABC n.d.: 30).

The point that English is still the dominant broadcasting language in South Africa is a worrying and alarming situation because the majority of South Africans are not linguistically competent in English and their level of linguistic performance in English is not satisfactory. It

is difficult to comprehend this alarming situation because the percentage of first English speakers sits below ten percent “The number of people who speak English as a first language in South Africa stands at eight per cent” (Percentage of speakers per language in South Africa 1996 and 2001 <http://salanguages.com/stats.htm>. in Dibetso and Smith 2012:12). This kind of approach within South African broadcasting is an enemy of cultural diversity and multilingualism, therefore “if the goal of the SABC’s broadcasts is to reach as many people as possible, the over-representation of English is not a good finding, since many South African people do not speak English, or speak English with very limited fluency” (Dibetso and Smith 2012: 12).

Generally, there is enough local content that is produced in SABC’s television services and this refers to news, sport, drama, soap opera and documentaries, Dibetso and Smith (2012:9) note that “in terms of content, if we include news and sport, the majority of programmes that are broadcast on SABC’s television stations are locally produced. In fact, 70 percent of all listed programmes are produced in South Africa”. The genre that is privileged is soap operas, educational programmes come second, and drama follows current affairs, whereas news broadcasts are the least privileged. One must note that these genres don’t receive equal amount of hours per week. According to the findings by Dibetso and Smith (2012:10) “the genre that is broadcast most is soap operas, at 16 percent of all broadcasting time. Second is educational programming (12 percent), followed by current affairs (10 percent) and drama (9 percent). News broadcasts follow at little over seven percent”.

SABC 1 is the only channel that is leading when it comes to educational programmes; this is not surprising because *Tsha Tsha* (2004), *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) are educational in nature regarding the HIV/AIDS discourse. The South African Broadcasting Corporation formed a harmonious partnership with John’s Hopkins Health and Education in South Africa to create *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013). SABC 3 caters for people in cosmopolitan areas and it is regarded as commercial public channel, as such it is mostly entertainment and its content is of American import. SABC 2 is also educational in nature and its programming is family oriented.

Prime time is a very important slot that is highly competitive across different South African broadcasting television services, simply because it is the time when majority of people in different households are back from work and most television sets are switched on. As such,

“since prime time (18:00-22:00) is relatively short, the SABC is committed to considering and implementing innovative strategies for providing programmes equitably in all the official languages” (SABC n.d.: 29). Every Fridays at 20:30 *Tsha Tsha* (2004) was aired on SABC 1 with estimated two million viewers and *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) was aired every Tuesdays at 20h30 on SABC 1 and *Matatiele* (2015) was aired every Tuesdays at 21:05 on e.tv with estimated 790 000 viewers and this made it part of the top 5 according to Prime Time Viewing Figures by TVSA Team survey of 13-19 April 2015.

In conclusion, Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) regulates and gives e.tv and SABC the powers to broadcast. And Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) is responsible for monitoring content and programming of the former and the latter. It is notable that that broadcasting television services were used as a tool to promote apartheid ideology and indigenous languages were used to entrench apartheid mentality; indigenous languages were not developed for cinematic purposes. Similarly, television broadcasting in South Africa today remains a highly contestant ideological space. There is an over-representation of English language across television services. IsiSwati, TshiVenda, XiTsonga and IsiNdebele remain marginalized. Generally, the SABC produces more local television content in the country. Lastly, the SABC television is still faced with a difficult mandate to perform regarding the coverage of indigenous languages.

Rationale

I resist the temptation to treat Nikiwe as an *auteur* filmmaker especially regarding the case studies that I have selected. I do, however, present the view that; he attempts to borrow from *auteur* filmmakers within the context of television broadcasting in South Africa. An *auteur* filmmaker is:

A film director whose personal influence and artistic control over his or her films are so great that he or she may be regarded as their author and, whose films may be regarded collectively as a body of work sharing common themes and techniques and expressing an individual style or vision (Ethrington-Wright and Ruth Doughty, 2011:3)

Notably, directors of any audiovisual product are the most trusted practitioners who are capable of implementing the vision of the producers/ channel and at the same time insert their own unique voice. Thus Shohat and Stam (1994:214) note that:

“It is not the purpose merely to reverse existing hierarchies, to replace demagoguery of the visual with a new demagoguery of the auditory, but to suggest that voice and sound and image be considered together, dialectically and diacritically”.

Shohat and Stam (1994:214) further substantiate that:

“a more nuanced discussion of race and ethnicity in the cinema would emphasize less a one-to-one mimetic adequacy to sociological or historical truth than the interplay of voices, discourses, perspectives, including those operative within the image itself.”

The direct relationship between verbal and visual languages has not received enough academic attention it deserves. The combination between visuals and verbal languages can be done strategically by using local talent in the country and various mechanisms can be manufactured and be put in place to address the language struggle in South African visual languages so that we can be able to take control of our own decolonisation narratives. Brandy and Cohen (2009:876) caution us that “Therefore, we need to carefully reexamine whether, by engaging ourselves in cinema studies, we are mechanically reproducing, instead of analyzing, the ideological; picture of a postcolonial world situation constructed by Western postindustrial nations”.

There is a global (political and cultural) interest in South Africa and there is an opportunity in the global marketplace for our visual and indigenous languages to compete globally and set trends for other cinemas, broadcasting corporations and online streaming services in the world. To extend this point, one has made an acute observation that, internationally Kung Fu films have been successful in exporting Chinese cultural traditions. Similarly, Bollywood which is the Indian film industry and the second largest selling cinema in the world has been able to infiltrate the international market scene by acknowledging the existence of Indian culture in its visual language. “Korean television dramas have become the most profitable Korean pop culture exports, enthralling all types of audiences including young and old, men and women, and rich and poor (Park, 2004 in Kim et.al, 2008:4).

The same example can be expressed in relation to the Nigerian visual language; the Nigerian cinema in its visual language uses English, Yoruba and Hausa languages to articulate the Nigerian cosmology in an African context. Thus, this has become part of the common knowledge that the aforementioned visual languages have contributed to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of their countries. In our local cinema, according to Lynch “The entire South

African entertainment industry is worth approximately R7, 4 billion out of a media industry that is worth about R15 billion” (Lynch, 1997:77). The popularity of Japan’s television drama called *Winter Sonata* contributed in the local Japanese consumer market. Kim et al., (2008:4) pointed out that “Such high popularity of *Winter Sonata* was directly reflected in the Japanese consumer market. Japanese manufacturers produced the same style of clothes and accessories that the actors and actresses of *Winter Sonata* wore, and consumer demands for the goods were often greater than the supply.”

Early German filmmakers after the World War One 1914-1918 generated a unique visual language known as Expressionist films that responded directly to the consequences of the atrocities of the war. “Big firms, as well as small companies invested in Expressionist films because these films could compete with those of America. Indeed, by the mid-1920s, the most prominent German films were widely regarded as among the best in the world” (Shohat and Stam, 1994:214). Another example that can be mentioned is the efforts that were taken by early Soviet filmmakers to create their unique editing style called montage.

The aforementioned examples about these visual languages bring attention to the point that; it is possible for visual and indigenous languages to compete in the global marketplace and make an impact. And this, of course, will require collective conscious efforts and political will to introduce projects and campaigns that will help change the mentality regarding the deployment of indigenous languages and the colonised visual language. Fromkim and Rodman have evidenced that “according to linguists no language or variety of a language (called dialect) is superior to any other in a linguistic sense” (Fromkim and Rodman, 1978:11). Chomsky (2000, 1972, and 1957) has vehemently argued that all languages are the same but politically they are not.

According to Rolie Nikiwe “stories are universal but the local accent of any story is the heart and soul of a narrative. My point is that television and film are a platform to tell your story. So tell your story; don’t mimic others” (Rolie Nikiwe in online *Destiny Man* Interview, 24th April 2013). As such, an approach to verbal and visual discourses must at least negate earlier verbal and visual practices. Notwithstanding this, Braudy and Cohen (2009:876) caution that “we must question whether, in the name of critical opposition to Hollywood, we are, on the contrary, contributing to the hegemony of and accumulation of cultural capital by the United States”. Thus, a rigorous and vigorous artistic and intellectual disobedience is needed.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015:485) notes that “this is because the domains of culture, the psyche, mind, language, aesthetics, religion, and many others have remained colonized”.

Furthermore, Mhlambi (2016: 68) notes that “understanding cultural production and its political economy is knowledge that is usually hoarded by international cultural gatekeepers and kept away from local publics”. The visual languages must be strategically utilized and be responsible for carrying the cultural values and perspectives that are shared across Afrofuturism, Afrocentricity, Decoloniality and Pan- African cultural boundaries.

Decoloniality, Negritude, Afrocentricity and Afrofuturism are theories that exclusively cater for African ideologies, experiences, values, perspectives and beliefs. These theories have a common argument, and that common argument is; the African expression, thought and traditions should be given a centre stage and be free from a Western cultural thinking (Asante, 2003, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015 and Ngugi 1986). What one is attempting to express is that, if we call for a valorized African identity, a genuine African renaissance and a decolonise Africa that is free from the European psyche, we therefore need to interrogate and investigate how we can construct both the verbal and visual languages. Shohat and Stam (1994:194) attest that “the use of linguistic self-representation does not simply entail a return to authentic language but rather the orchestration of languages for emancipatory purposes”.

Language is a carrier of culture and it therefore accumulates concepts and ideological assumptions that the language’s history inscribes on its users (Banning 1989, Ngugi, 1986; Ngara 1985). An observation has been expressed that it is feasible and possible to use the power of visual language and verbal indigenous languages to export South African culture and it is of paramount importance to find a way to use the visual language of films and television to export South African culture and not merely receive Anglo-Saxon cultural traditions (codes and connotations) from Western cinematic texts. For instance, the noun *mosimane*, ‘boy’ in Tswana and in English are not embedded with the same cultural connotations, thus a boy in Tswana does not only refer to a young male child it connotes a male adult who did not go to initiation school. Ironically, the connotations attached can even refer to the same person who went to initiation school but whose behavior demonstrates lack of maturity.

Conversely, in English the cultural meaning of the noun is limited to a young male (toddler) or an adult male in white domestic employment. To embellish this point let us take a

Japanese example, Braudy and Cohen (2009:783) point that:

In Ozu's films, stillness, and emptiness play a crucial role in the production of meaning. On the surface, if seen through Western eyes, nothing happens. But a deeper level of emotional and cultural apprehension is going on that connects with traditional Japanese aesthetics.

A similar approach regarding the utilisation of verbal and visual discourses needs to be employed using the example of the television drama called *Winter Sonata* that transcended the Japanese identity. "Transcending geography, culture, and nationhood, one of the trendsetters of this Korean pop culture wave was the Korean television drama, *Winter Sonata*, which earned tremendous ratings in every Asian country where it was broadcasted." (Kim et al., 2008:4).

The way black Africans understand advanced technological devices of modernity and imported North American visual culture and European arts is different to how the rest of the world understands them. The Comaroffs (1997) for example, have argued that Sotho- Tswana speaking peoples and other African ethnic groups have interpreted European modernity differently. Basotho speaking people have interpreted a blanket differently from their white counterparts and they have appropriated this blanket as a dress in their cultural discourse. Visual language should be used as a platform to display these kinds of interpretations.

Research Questions

The research questions attempt to investigate the manner in which linguistic discourse and the visual language on the screen are deployed in post-1994 South Africa. The questions below will be taken into cognisance:

- In which way does Nikiwe's visual construction present a different perspective that challenges social stigma regarding HIV/AIDS discourse in *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013)?
- In what ways does Nikiwe address cultural inferiority complex and social cohesion in *Matatiele* (2015)?
- How are the themes, imagery, space, costume and language employed in *Tsha Tsha* (2004), *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) and *Matatiele* (2015) to present a new visual language?
- Does the use of verbal languages in post-Apartheid South African motion pictures (television and film) mean that the decolonisation project is on the right track?
- And how does Nikiwe use the combination of indigenous verbal languages and visual

languages to reimagine and rethink the future of indigenous verbal languages?

Presenting the Problem

The Apartheid government did not sufficiently develop indigenous verbal languages and *Bantu* cinema to exhibit genuine social issues affecting black peoples under Apartheid regime. The employment of indigenous verbal languages and visual language were a blatant political exercise. Therefore, Black visual constructors were not trusted with the camera and as a result of this; the majority of them were technical crew. The Apartheid regime was adamant that Black visual constructors must first receive Eurocentric training before they generate their own visual vocabulary. In post-Apartheid South Africa we have witnessed several attempts by the democratic government to include more indigenous verbal languages in the visuals through the formation of National Film and Video Foundation. The central focus of this study is to explore and investigate how the combination of the verbal and visual languages is employed in post-1994 South African visual languages. The latest developments in the industry present us with new challenges and problems regarding the social status of indigenous verbal languages, content and themes

Despite the latest developments and attempts by the democratic government, it should be noted that contemporary visual makers produce visual that are in conversation with Colonial and Apartheid visuals without them knowing. Therefore, decolonisation project does not exclusively refer to the use of indigenous verbal languages in the films and television dramas; it also refers to how indigenous verbal languages, visual languages and other resources are used. We can use the same indigenous language but still differ ideologically. It has to do with the overall ideological make-up of a particular visual symbolic form.

Literature Review

This part of literature review helps one to draw the similarities between television dramas and films as visual languages that exist between blurred lines. I show how the two are related in terms of their social, cultural and political functions. This research is important because it shows and identifies similarities between television dramas and films as visual languages especially at an ideological level. The first part of my literature review deals with historical developments of television and how television dramas relate to the dramatic narratives that exist in films.

Television

First and foremost, the majority of academic studies in social sciences, media, communications and film and television focus on the behavioural and psychological effects of films and television dramas and how these two visual languages have an influence to relay healthy messages. There is also enough scholarship on the representation of race and gender in films and television dramas. According to Mthethwa (2014:6) “Many studies conducted on *Yizo Yizo* analysed the impact the drama has on its audience.” Therefore, as film and television share roots, there is a gap to study the relationship between visual language and verbal indigenous languages. “Television drama studies have mixed origins and are yet to emerge as a domain on their own right that complements film studies” (Nelson, 1997 in Mthethwa 2014: 14). This study is an attempt to contribute to the film and television scholarship from this particular point of view.

Kim and Long (2012) investigate the critical issue of genre between film and television soap operas regarding tourism and how this has impacted the audience on identification, empathy and emotional connection. Kim and Long (2012:173) pointed out that “We argue in the context of film tourism, that viewing soap operas may promote identification, empathy, emotional connection and parasocial interactions, and that these may motivate some audience members to visit soap opera locations...” Kim and Long’s (2012) investigation is useful in this research because, they have outlined the major similarities and differences between film tourism and television soap operas regarding their impact on tourism. In my approach to my case studies, I use their position to understand the relationship between films and television genres. “Understanding the nature and characteristics of TV soap operas and their potential influence on film tourism experiences, however, remains relatively under-researched given that there is dearth in cross disciplinary working between tourism and media studies (Beeton, 2010 and Kim, 2012 cited in Kim and Long 2012:175).

Tomaselli (2007: 122) in Treffry-Goatley (2010:112) highlights the relationship between film and television, in particular, with regards to the context of South African broadcasting. As such, “In South Africa, one finds that unlike the relationship between film and television in other African countries, these two industries are quite closely linked with M-Net, SABC and ETV all investing directly in feature films” (Tomaselli 2007: 122). My case studies are created within the context of SABC television and free to air commercial broadcasting called e.tv.

Their close relationship is of paramount importance in this research.

It is important to make a note that broadcasting contributes to the development and growth of local film content especially within the South African image creation context. One of the reasons is that the majority of South African people have access to television sets unlike access to film exhibitors (cinema). “For example, television is a particularly important mechanism with an estimated 85 percent of households in South Africa owning television sets” Finscope (2008: 13 cited in Treffry-Goatley 2010:112). Consequently, television then becomes a platform which reflects the diverse plural views of local film content. “Thus, this platform currently represents the most “democratic” means of exhibiting local content.” Treffry-Goatley (2010:11).

An important line that connects film and television dramas as visual languages, and that this research is interested in, is cinematography:

Cinematography is the art of photography and visual storytelling in a motion picture or television show. Cinematography comprises all on-screen visual elements, including lighting, framing, composition, camera motion, camera angles, film selection, lens choices, depth of field, zoom, focus, color, exposure, and filtration. (Master Classes 2021).

It is through visual storytelling that these two visual languages are able to express certain social and political ideologies and therefore, participate beyond philosophical discourses of culture and language. One is going to read the *mise-en-scène* of my selected case studies and how their cinematographic systems present the newness.

As I have mentioned above, one is aware that televisual texts are produced within the rules and regulations of a public broadcaster and also the process of creation is a collaborative effort. Similarly important, film work depends on collective efforts to shoot the story. This is inclusive of producers, directors, cast, crew and post-production team. “Film and other television texts employ a collective and collaborative production from writers; producers; directors; actors; camera operators; marketers and distributors; and many more” (Gibbs, 2012 in Mthethwa 2014: 20). It is important to highlight that I have placed Rolie Nikiwe under this view of collaborative visual construction.

The invention and development of television as a medium went through many stages over many years. This historical development is parallel to the history of motion picture across the

world. “From the early experiments with electricity and instant communication devices to colour broadcast, television grasped the imagination of audiences all over the world.” (Bevan, 2008:27). During experiments with electric current the word television was not collectively agreed upon. The word television was officially introduced in 1900. “It was only in 1900, at the International Electricity Congress in Paris that the term television was coined.” (Bevan, 2008:28). The initial concept of television was to transmit moving images/pictures at a distance for communication purposes. Therefore, the word *tele* denotes seeing images/pictures at a particular distance. The act of viewing motion pictures of films shares this distance.

OraMedia/Indigenous Communication Systems

The nature of human beings is characterised by communication and the dissemination of information and knowledge. This simply means that human beings are by nature communicative. An example is the manner in which television and film were invented as a result of electric current experiments in a war. As a matter of fact, television and film rely heavily on the crafted moving image/picture and sound that relay a particular message. According to Sithole (2019:23) “The media is a predominant form of communication that uses representations through a variety of texts or mediums to convey particular ideas related to race, culture and identity in society.”

A system of communication that is worthy of investigation in this research is called oramedia (indigenous communication system). Ugboajah (1985) has been credited with the conceptualisation of the term oramedia. His contribution does not necessarily mean that he himself created oramedia communication systems and forms. There are different scholars who have also theorised lengthily about the various definitions for indigenous communication systems such as Ushe (2010), Ansu-Kyevevemer (2005) and Wang and Dissanayeke (1984). According to Nigussie (2017:418):

Several terms have been used to designate indigenous communication. The commonly used ones are ‘Oramedia’ (Ugboajah, 1985), ‘indigenous communication systems’ (Wang & Dissanayake, 1984), ‘folk media’ (Panford, Nyaney, Amoah, & Aidoo, 2001) and ‘traditional communication’ (Ushe, 2010), among others.

As far as indigenous communication is concerned, one is going to investigate how verbal linguistic and visual languages are used in telling the story. One employs the storytelling perspective. As such the notion oramedia/indigenous communication system has been applied

herein the research as a broad concept that entails drama, poetry and storytelling and this will allow one to have a textual analysis that is informed, in particular from a visual language's point of view. One's observation is that Nikiwe's *Tsha Tsha* (2004), *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) and *Matatiele* (2015) use the cultural importance of oramedia.

Let it be established that societies across the world have their own means of communication. On this note, the African indigenous forms of communication remain unique because of their effective way of spreading information. According to Osho (2011:2):

The uniqueness of the African means of communication is embedded in their originality, creativity, tradition and culture of the people. These essentially make them highly effective and enduring in the dissemination of information personally, inter-personally and through group communications.

Wilson (1987) has proposed four characteristics of traditional communication system, the first one is that it is used as a tool to organise and mobilise the people regarding social development and national consciousness. Wilson (1987) has attributed the failures of government programmes to the limited use of traditional communication system in the society. Thus, "Much of the failure that attends government mass-oriented programmes is traceable to the fact that policy-makers at the national level fail to utilize this powerful and credible system" (Wilson, 1987:100). An important characteristic formulated by Wilson (1987) is the cultural, political, social, health and political use of traditional communication system. Wilson (1987) writes that "Secondly, it is a source of cultural, political, health and other educational and enlightenment programmes for the masses leading them towards self-actualization and national development" (Wilson, 1987:100).

It should be noted that one is refraining from endorsing negative connotations attached to the concept indigenous forms of communication. "It must be noted that the expression indigenous communication in this context is not a substitute for archaic, barbaric or rudimentary communication systems; rather it represents traditional and ancient communication systems" (Adesoji and Ongunjimi, 2015:406).

The African continent is regarded as the cradle of humankind; I am at liberty to express that Africa is the cradle of human communication. Osho (2010:147) notes that "all the means of communication originated from the earliest Africans in the old Egypt. The civilization later spread to China, India, Greece and Rome" (Osho (2010:147) cited in Osho, 2011:2). In

traditional communication system it is vital to note that, there is a direct connection between the structure of the society and communication. This means that communications reflects the social organisation that it is part of. To substantiate this: “The content of communication at any given time reflects the value pattern of society. The patterns of communications networks, which determine where information flows and who shares it with whom reflect the homogeneity of culture and geography within a society” (Schram, 1963: 34 cited in Dike, 2013:123).

Semiotics

The reading of Rolie Nikwe’s visual language is guided by constructs of semiotics. Human beings are forever attaching meaning on words, art, clothes and cultural symbols and they have created various language systems to try and interrogate their existence in the world. “The human species is consumed by a need to unravel the reason for its existence on this planet. This has led it to create ‘signs’ and ‘sign systems’, such as languages, myths, art forms, sciences” (Marcel Danesi, 2004: xv). A system or a theoretical model that is used by scholars and critics in media, communications, art, and linguistics is called semiotics. Semiotics was originally conceptualised by Hippocrates (460-377BC) who was the founder of Western Medical Sciences. *Semeiotics* was the original spelling and not *semiotics*. It referred to a physical ‘mark’ or ‘sign’ (Marcel Danesi, 2004). A Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure is one of the founding Fathers of Semiotics. As a theory, during the second half of the 20th Century semiotics achieved a considerable amount of growth in various academic disciplines.

Since the middle part of the twentieth century, semiotics has grown into a truly enormous field of study, encompassing, among other endeavours, the study of body language, art forms, rhetorical discourse, visual communication, media myths, narrative, language, artefacts, gesture, eye contact, clothing, advertising... anything that is used, invented or adopted by human beings to produce meanings (Marcel Danesi, 2004: 4).

Semiotics as a study is concerned primarily with the meaning that is produced by particular media texts, human behaviour and languages. This means that the production, exchange and the distribution of meaning/s in films, novels, theatre plays, language of poetry, music, photography and languages are of paramount importance regarding human communication. Semiotics studies how signs are organised to produce meaning. In semiotics, meaning can be

produced in symbolism, analogy and metaphors. “Semiotics is the science that attempts to answer the following question: What does X mean? The X can be anything from a single word or gesture, to an entire musical composition or film?” (Marcel Danesi, 2004: 3). Semiotics forms an integral part of this study because it will help one to understand the organisation of a sign from denotative and connotative positions. This indicates that one will understand the manner in which meaning is produced as a result of reading the *mise-en-scène* of my selected case studies.

Over the years semiotics approach did not stick to the same method of inquiring the representation of meaning (Marcel Danesi, 2004: 5). This point is vital because it makes us aware that semiotics has numerous branches and subfields such as biosemiotics, semiotic anthropology, cognitive semiotics, computational semiotics and urban semiotics. The branch and subfields of semiotics that will be considered in this dissertation will be cultural and literary semiotics, film semiotics and visual semiotics. The semiotic model that is used to examine the meaning does not exclude the sender, message and receiver and it is very important to take context into consideration. At the heart of semiotics lies the signifier and the signified, denotation and connotation of a sign.

One cannot discuss semiotics without mentioning a sign and the organization of signs guides semioticians to study the meaning of a particular art work. “A sign is anything, a colour, a gesture, a wink, an object, a mathematical equation, etc. that stands for something other than itself” (Marcel Danesi, 2004: 4). On this note, a thing that is referred to by a sign is known as a referent.

It should be highlighted that there are two types of referents that have been proposed in the field of semiotics i.e. the physical and the concrete referent. The fact that the narratives and themes of *Tsha Tsha* (2004) and *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) are premised around HIV/AIDS can qualify as a concrete referent. This is because the number of people who get infected with HIV/AIDS through sexual activities in South Africa is a real life event. The second referent is called the abstract referent; it only exists in the mind (Marcel Danesi, 2004: 5). Signs permit us access to things that are tangible and things that cannot be present before our sense (Marcel Danesi, 2004: 4). As such, the quest to find the cure for HIV/AIDS can be regarded as an abstract referent.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation has identified Afrofuturism theory that will be applied in investigating Nikiwe's body of work. Afrofuturism is befitting in this dissertation because it locates and links artistic visual languages in the future. Afrofuturism theory teaches Africans and Afro-Americans that they should not always be stuck in time and in one space (i.e. the past). As such, Afrofuturism theory will enable this dissertation to provide insight into the future and its possibilities.

Afrofuturism

The on-going discrimination of verbal indigenous languages in films and television practices and the lack of sophisticated cultural and political ideology as well as intellectual nuances is the product of racism. In linguistics, this discrimination is called linguisticism.

Similar to science fiction, Afrofuturism has been developed during the course of two centuries (Yaszek, 2010) and it is a theoretical fact that one cannot separate the two. According to Yaszek (2010:43) "the history of Afrofuturist storytelling both parallels, and intersects that of science fiction". Afrofuturism theory privileges Black people's future in Africa and in the diaspora, and thus Yaszek (2010:47-48) comments that "as its name, implies Afrofuturism is not just about reclaiming the future of the past, but about reclaiming the history of the future as well". In other words, Afrofuturism is a creative and cultural resistance against the system that continues to police Black people and creative imagination structurally and systematically.

Dery (1993) has been credited for introducing the term Afrofuturism in his *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberlucture*, an edited collection in 1994 (Yaszek, 2010:41-42). Yaszek (2010:41) has stated that "over the past three decades both science fiction and Afrodiasporic scholars have been increasingly interested in what Sheree R. Thomas (2000) calls "speculative fiction" from the African diaspora. However, in the 1970s and 1980s there was less interest regarding science fiction and black cultural production such as unique themes and techniques (Yaszek, 2010:41). It should be noted that Afrofuturism is not limited to science fiction only; Dery (1993) argues in the second half of his definition that:

Afrofuturism is not only a subgenre of science fiction. Instead, it is a larger aesthetic mode that encompasses a diverse range of artists working in different genre and media who are united by their shared interest in projecting black futures derived from Afrodiasporic

experiences (Yaszek, 2010:42).

Although Nikiwe does not have Afrodiasporic experience, Black people across the world have a similar colonial and postcolonial experience, therefore one can propose that, to some extent, Nikiwe has used ideological values and themes that constitute Afrofuturism, such as the future of Black people being free from the HIV/AIDS discourse in *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) or the future of HIV/AIDS in black communities, HIV/AIDS as a threat to the population of Black people. As such, HIV/AIDS theme forces us to think about the survival of the Black Race in the future. It is the survival of Africans against biological warfare.

Nikiwe, carefully manipulates space and time in *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) narratives in the manner that is not conventional in local drama series. Nikiwe visually shows that the virus travels between the rural and urban areas. The virus lives in spaces that human beings never thought it existed. This is because Afrofuturism artists, according to Yaszek (2010:48), “disrupt, challenge, and otherwise transform those futures with fantastic stories”. The *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) narrative constitutes Afrofuturism overtones (fantastic stories) in relation to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Time and space are very important in the context of stories. Thus, Ruth Meyer (2000) notes that:

“these stories move seamlessly back and forth through time and space, between cultural tradition and geographic time zones, and thus between blackness as a dystopic relic of the past and as a harbinger of new and more promising alien future” (Ruth Meyer 2000:556 quoted in Yaszek, 2010:48).

Yaszek (2010:47) has highlighted that over the years and centuries Afrofuturism has experienced change in its aesthetic nature; it became a political tool and there was a clear theoretical coherence in relation to its aesthetics and political mission. As proposed above, Nikiwe can be regarded as an Afrofuturist visual creator because of his subtle political use or mission of Afrofuturism particularly in *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) and *Matatiele* (2015). And that is, the futuristic imagination of tribalism in *Matatiele* (2015). A subliminal message expressed in *Matatiele* (2015) is that for the collective Black Race to prosper in the near distant future, tribalism should not be the main focus, tribalism has created a regressive movement of the collective Black Race particularly on the African continent.

The African reality is overwhelmed by an enormous amount of pressing social issues as a

result of external forces, this reality is not determined by an African in his/her immediate environment. “African reality is overdetermined by individual global scenarios, doomsday economic projections, weather predictions, medical reports on AIDS, and life-expectancy forecasts, all of which predict decades of immiserization” (Eshun 2003:291f cited in Yaszek 2010:48). According to Yaszek (2010:43), the future and existence of Black people was a primary concern for early Afrofuturists. However, contemporary Afrofuturists have maintained that race will be a dominant narrative in the whole civilisation and it will definitely affect people in the future.

Decoloniality

This dissertation will further draw from Decoloniality Theory. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) begins his essay by stating detailed long-term impact of Colonialism on the African continent and dismisses the claims that considered Colonialism as a mere episode in the African history. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015), decoloniality is not the same as anti-colonialism. “Anti-colonialism was largely an elite-driven project in which elites mobilized peasants and workers as foot soldiers in a struggle to replace direct colonial administrators” (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2015: 488). Decoloniality refers to the total destruction of colonial structures that continue to maintain power. By decoloniality it is meant here the “dismantling of relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world” (Maldonado- Torrez in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 488).

Decoloniality was born at the moment Slave Trade, Imperialism, and Colonialism were practiced, therefore, decoloniality developed in a form of resistance, thought and action. Additionally, decolonial movements inherited forms and terms such as Ethiopianism, Garveyism, Negritude, Pan-Africanism, African Socialism, African Humanism, Black Consciousness Movement, and African Renaissance (Maldonado-Torrez in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 488).

Decoloniality was originally conceptualised in ex-colonised epistemic sites such as Latin America, Caribbean, Asia, Middle East, and Africa. As such:

“To make sense of the position of ex-colonized peoples within the Euro-America-centric,

Christian-centric, patriarchal, capitalist, hetero-normative, racially hierarchized, and modern world system that came into being in the 15th century” (Mignolo quoted in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 489).

Decoloniality, we note that, is not theorised within the borders of Europe and North America. It operates outside Western boundaries. It is important to mention Coloniality when discussing Decoloniality because Coloniality survives Colonialism. Therefore, according to Maldonado-Torrez “coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that defines culture, labour, inter-subjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrators” (Maldonado-Torrez in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 487). Various social institutions and other social actors are responsible for reproducing this invisible power. Maldonado-Torrez in Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015: 487) substantiated that it is the power “that is maintained in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of people, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience”. This theoretical concept is of paramount importance because it provides an insightful history of how visual creators in the Caribbean, Russia, India, Brazil and other countries in Africa formulated new visual grammars that were reflective of their culture. In working with SABC 1 and e.tv, this dissertation shall investigate how Nikiwe presented a new visual language.

Power and Identity

The dissertation further drew from the scholarship that discusses stereotypes for social transformation. Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez (2015) propose that stereotypes can be used to transform and change the society. Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez (2015) vehemently argued that stereotypes have not been considered in social psychological research to challenge and combat social systems. Therefore, Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez (2015) have maintained that “stereotypes can play a crucial role in mobilising in-group members in support of collective projects aimed at transforming social systems” (Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez, 2015:71). According to Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez “stereotypes are traditionally considered as mental representations of the psychological traits possessed by members of social groups” (Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez, 2015:72). Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez (2015) have substantiated that stereotypes can also be used as ideological tools.

According to the first perspective “stereotypes derive from social structure because they

describe actual psychological differences that emerge between groups due to their social position” (Jussin in 2012 in Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez, 2015:72). An example from Jussin (2012) is that the distribution of social roles between men and women leads each gender group to adopt behaviours that are required to perform these roles. Thus, this perspective denies us an opportunity to comprehend the real characteristics, say for an example women are perceived to be less assertive than men because their social roles require them to be so (Jussin in 2012 in Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez, 2015:72).

It is important to highlight that contemporary visual creators in post-Apartheid South Africa have received stereotypical visual grammars from their predecessors; as such this portion of literature review is important because it helps this study to observe how stereotypical images were used in various arts disciplines, politics and sports across the world to achieve social transformation. Therefore, the deployment of typology or stereotypes in Nikiwe’s visual language will be investigated. The dissertation is interested in how Nikiwe uses stereotypes in *Tsha Tsha* (2004), *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) and *Matatiele* (2015) in a manner that brings a different perspective regarding the previous visual stereotypes. In another perspective, stereotypes are there to explain the social position of groups. For instance, Hoffman and Hurst (1990 in in Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez, 2015:72) allude to the point that:

Stereotypes could emerge in the absence of actual psychological differences between the groups because they account for existing divisions of labour (e.g. socio-structural difference) between the groups involved (e.g., women are at home because they are more capable of taking care of children).

The third perspective is that, stereotypes do not only explain but legitimise the positions of social groups e.g. Black people don’t read or Black people are lazy. “This function may play out not only for the members of privileged groups, who find solace in the belief that those who are below them deserve their social position, but also among members of disadvantaged groups” (Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez, 2015:72). Furthermore, Jost and Banaji 1994 cited in Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez (2015:73) have commented that “this idea is at the core of system justification theory, which argues that people have an inherent motive to preserve the social system and view it as fair, even if they are objectively disadvantage groups”.

The above perspectives have been explained using Marxian terminology. Tajfel and Turner

(1986) in Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez (2015:73) have demonstrated that Marx has heavily influenced social identity theory. “Paternalism, which involves both an ideology and specific forms of relationship, emanates from the division of labour between coloniser and colonised or between master and slave. In this view, the group that controls productive forces controls ideas as well” (Sidanius and Pratto 2001 in Sindic, Barreto and Costa-Lopez, 2015:73).

Research Methodology

Film Criticism Theory

The next category of scholarship consulted for this study is Film Criticism Theory that is a building block of this study and locates it in a broader sense. Brandy and Cohen (2009) offer a detailed history of film theories and new approaches that emerged during the advent of film. Brandy and Cohen (2009) roughly divided the history of film theory into three overlapping phases i.e. 1920s-1930s, 1960s-1970s and the 1990s into the 21st century. During the foetal stage of film, it was very difficult for film to be considered art (one of the narratives that drove the debates). “A hitherto unknown language was forced upon a public not yet capable of reading it, and the more proficient the public became the more refined could develop in the language” (Brandy and Cohen, 2009: 554).

Film was compared to other arts, its qualities and aesthetics were interrogated. Brandy and Cohen asked the following question that puzzled later generations “is filmed world realistic or artificial? Is film a language? Is its world best expressed in silence? In sound?” (Brandy and Cohen, 2009: xv). These questions are important in this study because of the academic debates that surfaced regarding the advent of film. There were debates that rejected film as a language and debates that argued that film was a new language in the arts. As such these contentions will be highlighted in an actual research.

Early film theorists and critics developed different approaches to analyse formal structures of films and one of those approaches is semiology (the study of meaning-making), Roland Barthes (1957) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1959) contested ideas regarding semiology in contemporary culture. Later this approach was extended to Semiotics (the science of signs). “Drawing upon the work of C.S Pierce, Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, Louis Hjelmslev, and Naom Chomsky, film theorists and critics explored the structures of meaning

that allow communication of all kinds to exist” (Brandy and Cohen, 2009: xvi). The semiotic approach is vitally important in this study because it will shape the angle on how one will engage the signs of Nikiwe’s visuals and the manner in which he constructs his meaning using the language of visuals in relation to the narrative of decolonisation task and the meaning-making of HIV/AIDS in *Tsha Tsha* (2004) and *Intersexions* (2010).

For one to do textual analysis, it is important to understand and decipher the language of the visuals from a semiotics’ point of view. “The close-ups of the film are the creative instrument of this mighty anthropomorphism” (Brandy and Cohen, 2009: 275). The manner in which languages are used and how characters are cast in Nikiwe’s visuals signals various meanings to the viewer and these meanings are not fixated. When applying this semiotic approach, one will investigate how the visuals of Nikiwe are used to educate and conscientise the audience about HIV/AIDS in the mainstream. How does Nikiwe build signs such as camera, space and characters to signal meaning about HIV/AIDS. Brandy and Cohen (2009: 260) note that “the commercial producers can both educate and pervert the general public, and can allow the general public or rather his idea of the general public both to educate and pervert himself”.

Semiotics and semiology does not ignore the use of subtitles in understanding the visual languages because every sign that is part of the structure of the visuals has a meaning. “The producers employ means of clarification similar to those we find in medieval art. One of these were printed titles or letters, striking equivalents of medieval titles and scrolls” (Brandy and Cohen, 2009: 254). Subtitles or letters on the screen play a big role in how we understand the visual language and in how we receive the messages and intentions of the image creator. This comprehension can be forced without the audience realising it. “Hollywood believes that it must produce what the public want while the public would take whatever Hollywood produces” (Brandy and Cohen, 2009: 260).

From this point, we learn that it is not always true that the audience dictates encoding side of the visual languages and it has been assumed that the audience does not know what they want, and thus, this can come with sad consequences. Brandy and Cohen (2009: 783) point out that “it is clear that Eurocentrism paradigms are not universal and can hamper a deeper understanding and appreciation of cinema in the non-Western world”. This literature review is vital in this study because it provides a clear knowledge on how film structures were analysed by Western scholars and also how Semiotics was used as a model for interpreting

and suggesting meanings of the film in the West and other parts of the world.

Textual Analysis

An academic method that this study will employ is textual analysis. Textual analysis is imperative in this study because it investigates themes, hidden messages, the use of verbal and visual languages and as well as the organised presentation of signs. The majority of scholars and researchers in media and cultural studies employ tools of textual analysis to read visual symbolic forms of various kinds. According to McKee (2003) cited in Mthethwa (2014:12), “Researchers study texts (films, television programmes, magazines, etc.) in order to try and obtain a sense of the way in which people make sense of the world they inhabit.” My case studies contain meaningful events that are linguistically and visually worthy of being investigated. According to Sithole (2019:33) “Fundamentally, a text refers to a communication unit that people can engage with; that which produces meaning and from which people are able to make meaning about themselves and their society.”

Artistic symbolic forms are produced within a particular context and received in a particular context to create meaning. As such, Burton (2019:9) cited in Sithole (2019:33) elaborates further that:

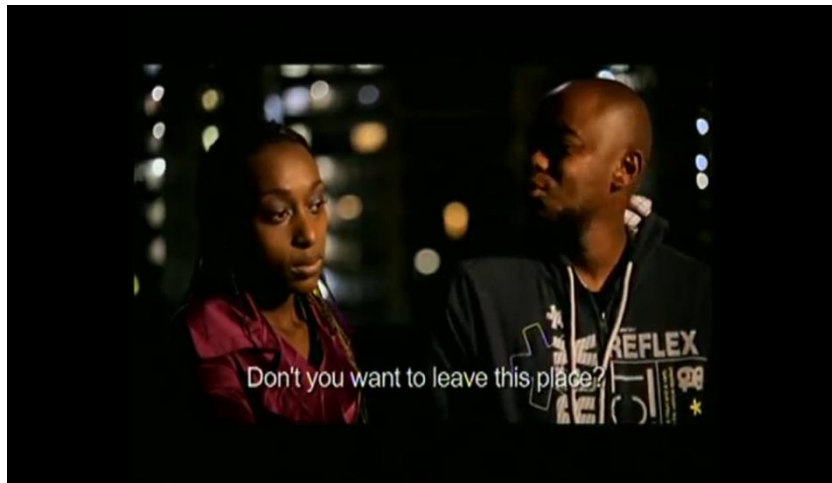
The text is everything. This may be seen partly as a need, for example, to look at the conditions of production that make the text, or at the nature of the audience in relation to what is made of a text. But even as commodities, texts exist in contexts, as do the readers who produce meanings from the text and who may be influenced by it. This sense of context and its influence is complex and far reaching

Texts vary in their own form and content. Textual analysis, in other words, denotes a process that collects data through reading the formal structures and the content of a meaning text. The main function of textual analysis is to direct the trained eye of the researcher to the content, structures and hidden messages that are part of a text (Frey, Botan and Kreps, 1991:1 paraphrased in Sithole, 2019:34).

Accordingly, it is important to note that textual analysis is a general broad term that is used in media studies. Therefore, *linguistic analysis*, *content analysis*, *ideological analysis*, *narrative analysis* and *discourse analysis* are different and specific methodologies of textual analysis. These kinds of methods are used differently and are dependent on which type of a text is being

investigated. My focus is centered on linguistic analysis and discourse analysis and I also pay attention on ideological analysis of my selected case studies.

The provided clip below briefly indicates how it will be analysed using these categories.



InterSexions (2010): Dalitso and Tshepo Scene.

Discourse analysis: Tshepo and Dalitso are romantic partners living in Hillbrow and they are experiencing harsh socio-economic realities of this place. Dalitso is a Zimbabwean national who is now a prostitute. Tshepo is jobless. Therefore, this is the discourse of being a survivor in the city.

Linguistic analysis: The two characters communicate in English language to express their hunger to be free from a place like Hillbrow.

Ideological analysis: Present in this scene is the ideology of Afrofuturism where Tshepo encourages Dalitso to move out of Hillbrow and to go find freedom with him outside Hillbrow. This move captures the tenets of Afrofuturism that Black people must claim the future and must not be stuck in the past. The past is Hillbrow in this context.

Viewing and Transcribing

Viewing the case studies commenced my data collection process. This is the process that is most helpful and it enabled me to watch, stop, pause, and rewind and fast-forward the selected episodes that I have watched. I devised a viewing schedule to watch the episodes daily, weekly and monthly. This viewing schedule helped me to be attentive and consistent in investigating the episodes. I have watched each and every episode more than 5 times in a day. Mute and unmuted. This process helped me to rewrite and reproduce monologues and

dialogues by the actors so that I can read it carefully without being biased. I was in a position to note and observe visual and verbal signs that were of interest.

This refers to lighting design, camera shots and angles and how the characters used language to talk to one another. Edwards (2014: 3) cited in Sithole (2019:39) observes that “transcription “plays an important role in research on spoken discourse, distilling and freezing in time the complex events and aspects of interaction in categories of interest to the researcher.” The deployment of transcription offers documentation regarding certain moments of the episodes that were viewed in gathering data. “The use of transcription provides a documentation of the moments in the programme that relate to the primary concerns and themes of this research.” (Sithole, 2019:39).

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2: African Psychology in *Tsha Tsha* (2004)

This chapter offers a brief historical background of Rolie Nikiwe. In this background Nikiwe’s visual storytelling was influenced by orality through the storytelling of folktales. This chapter provides a synopsis for each and every selected episode. This chapter focuses on how Nikiwe reveals the on-going politics, problems and challenges of creating in mother tongue. I examine the manner in which *Tsha Tsha* (2004) is the first visual language in post-Apartheid South Africa to offer the audience an opportunity to reside in the consciousness and unconsciousness of the characters’ minds and this stylistic choice is reflective of the post-1994 neoliberal national consciousness regarding the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Significantly, *Tsha Tsha* (2004) in 2004 created a visual culture of casting influential public figures outside the acting profession and this presented a new visual language.

Chapter 3: The Flow of Complex Communication: Looking at African Futurity through *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013)

In this chapter I offer plot summaries of the selected episodes. This chapter probes how *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) deploys the African indigenous forms of communication known as oramedia to circulate and distribute information about the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In doing this I present an argument that *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) uses the ideals and values of Afrofuturism. The chapter provides the historical context in which *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) was produced. I use Afrofuturism and African communication systems as

part of my theoretical framework. I provide technology and media ecology for my literature review.

Chapter 4: *Matatiele* (2015) is Stranger than Fiction

The chapter discusses how in the context of *Matatiele* (2015) myth, cannibalism and history intersect through African Bantu spirituality. This chapter is of the view that *Matatiele* (2015) revamps the visual grammars of cannibalism and myth as far as history is concerned. The plot summary of *Matatiele* (2015) is provided in this chapter. My theoretical framework is inclusive of history and memory. I have employed myth and cannibalism to form part of my literature review.

Briefly, one of the findings in this research is that characters in television dramas rely on linguistic code-switching especially when they use verbal African languages. No character speaks what is regarded as a pure language. Another finding is that, the policies that govern television broadcasting in South Africa tend to create friction between the voice of the visual story creator and what the channel wants to achieve (mandate) as a result of external political interference. Therefore, the question of artistic freedom remains a political problem. Collaborative process within South African television broadcasting gives honour and privilege to the director and the production house's executive producers. While Nikiwe presents a new visual language, visual creation in South Africa borrows from motion pictures of classical Hollywood cinema.

Chapter 2

African Indigenous Psychology in *Tsha Tsha* (2004)

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have intentionally blurred the lines that define the academic concept of visual language to refer to film, television and cinema. This is because:

Over the last two decades the lines between television and film have blurred, both structurally and aesthetically. No longer is film the only arena for spectacle, neither is television the home for close-ups. In fact, film screens have been shrinking and the TV screen dominates a home's entertainment room (Engebretse et. al, 2009: 67).

Nikiwe employed tools of visual language in a television drama series, which are usually used in mainstream visual discourse such as classical Hollywood cinema, to represent the interiority (interiorisation/psychology) of a character and as a result this visual technique appealed to the unconscious and unconscious mind of the audience through the characters' and director's psychologies. Therefore, this utilisation of cinematic stylistics embellishes one's alternative definition of the term visual language to refer to cinema, film, and television discourses simply because:

The film frame has changed its proportions since 1950 and is now available in small, medium, and supersized rectangles (television, cinemascope, imax, for example); cinema's symbiotic relation to television, video, and other digital practices has been ongoing for nearly half a century (Gunning, 2007:36).

As a key visual language; *Tsha Tsha* (2004), the first drama series in post-apartheid television dramas offers audience an opportunity to reside in the conscious and unconscious minds of the characters that are infected and which in turn are reflective of the post-apartheid neoliberal national consciousness. The following citation suffices to describe *Tsha Tsha* (2004), "The first TV programs self-reflexively crossed the line of consciousness to find themselves on the other side." (Rickels, 1990:50).

One makes an observation that in classical Hollywood cinematography, such interplays between the conscious and the unconscious have been reserved for mainstream- aligned characters; as such Nikiwe is using them for characters that have classically occupied the

bottom rung in a racialised and hierarchal cinema. On this note, one argues that, Nikiwe's artistic expression points to the structural symmetries between film and the African indigenous psychology. Parallel to this, is also the structural symmetries between thought and language. "They instead associate the film with the imaginary, conceived as autonomous, a true incarnation of surrealism on screen." (Moine and Taminiaux, 2006:113).

The representations of HIV/AIDS pandemic set forth the ideological shifts and aesthetics in reading *Tsha Tsha* (2004). Therefore, employing indigenous psychoanalysis theory from the view-points of Filipino indigenous psychology (1971), cross-indigenous perspective, the African (Black) psychology and Fanon (1952)'s psychoanalysis of racism, will be key in bringing freshness in debates about HIV/AIDS while at the same time introducing doubt to Freud's psychoanalysis theory.

One asserts that there has never been a visual text that uses these visual mechanisms and tools such as *Tsha Tsha* (2004). This production offers the indigenous audience an alternative way of seeing and hearing in post-apartheid South African visual literature. As such, these new ways of seeing echo Barlet's (1996:38) view that, "In order to decolonize the screen, the African audience had to be offered a new vision of its own space".

Of significance for this, is how Nikiwe as early as 2004, began a trope of casting in this drama series influential public figures outside the profession of acting and film industry, which in itself presented a new visual language. Therefore, Nikiwe through *Tsha Tsha* (2008) predicted the current visual trend that relies on casting popular public figures to increase viewership for commercial purposes. This prediction of the current visual normality problematises the concept of time; the lines between the present tense and the past tense remain blurred. Additionally, the manner in which the audience feels as if they are characters is an indication that this production skillfully blurs the line between a character and an audience. Therefore, blurry lines haunted the logical formation of the visual narratology of *Tsha Tsha* (2004).

I argue that Nikiwe's aesthetic in representing cinematography and verbal languages reveal the on-going challenges and incomplete process of creating progressive visual texts in the mother tongue. One of the reasons is that "Creating in an African language poses a number of challenges to the African writer today, and no serious African writer can ignore them" (Kunene and Smith, 2002:9). *Tsha Tsha* (2004) through its formal aesthetics does not ignore

these challenges, thus it is defying and upturning existing filmic practices and bringing new ways of seeing in post-1994 visual grammars by privileging the African indigenous psychology.

By indigenous psychology, it is meant here that, it is the radical shift of the image creator's thought process that is not in accordance with dominant iconography, secondly it is a new way of speaking, writing, seeing, hearing, imagining and creating from one's cultural perspective in an attempt to counter distorted images of one's culture, and thirdly this revolutionary consciousness points towards the future and it is culturally-orientated. "From this emancipated thought, a rebirth occurs, a new African with new thinking, self-consciousness and self-knowledge comes into being" (Percy More, 2002:76).

A filmmaker who watched the word through storytelling: The word in my eyes and the image in my mouth

A brief historical and intellectual context of Rolisizwe Nikiwe is important in this chapter because it paves a way in understanding his earlier influences and also how he navigates the cultural gatekeeping to bring about novelty and newness in his visual corpus. Rolisizwe Nikiwe was born on the 31st of January 1978 in King Williams Town in the Eastern Cape and grew up in White City, Soweto. Nikiwe often visited his grandmother in the Eastern Cape. It is vital to mention that Nikiwe's father was an anti-apartheid activist and his father's activism shaped his character. It is not clear what role did Nikiwe's mother play in him becoming a visual storyteller that he is today.

The expression of orality through folktales, unlike television and films, was in abundance during Nikiwe's childhood days. One should note that Nikiwe's grandmother's storytelling influenced him to become a prominent visual storyteller that he is today. Television and film did not have a significance contribution in his unique artistry. "So, prior to being in the industry, film played very little influence in my life but storytelling was my daily bread". Additionally, Nikiwe remarks that, "The truth is, when I found television, it was love at first sight. And the funny thing is, it didn't feel new to me at all because I grew up with storytelling around me" (Nikiwe in Online *Destiny Man* Magazine Interview, 2013). It is no doubt that Nikiwe was heavily influenced by the contents (wisdom and preservation) of orality such as folktales and this influence is reflected in *Tsha Tsha* (2004). In one of the stories that dominated the streets of Soweto that sparked eternal inspiration in Rolie Nikiwe is

Motsamai's story. "Another story we used to tell in White City, Soweto, is of an invincible thug in the late 1980s. Hated by the police and adored by the community, he went by the name of Motsamai, a Robin Hood and Houdini of the township rolled into one. He stole from the rich and gave to the poor" (Nikiwe in Online *Destiny Man* Magazine Interview, 2013).

Nikiwe attempted to study film at a tertiary institution called Big Fish in Johannesburg and later became a drop out after he studied for one year. Nikiwe's entrance in the industry was through the making of a hip-hop music video of a popular troupe called Skwatta Kamp. He also became a script coordinator after he dropped out of Big Fish in Johannesburg. Harriet Gavshon and David Jammy at Quizzical Pictures played a critical role in Nikiwe's artistic life. The former and the latter mentored Nikiwe when he first set foot on the shores of the domestic visual creation industry. Rolisizwe Nikiwe began to work with his mentors in *Soul City* production as a script coordinator and as part of a writing team for the first season of *Tsha Tsha*. Nikiwe continued to work with his mentors in drama series such as *The Lab* (2006) and *Hard Copy* (2005) at Quizzical Pictures. Nikiwe continued to work with his mentors in drama series such as *The Lab* (2006) and *Hard Copy* (2005) at Quizzical Pictures. He continued to create productions with his mentors such as *Inside Story* (2011) and others.

Nikiwe directed *Inside Story* (2011) as his first feature film and *Nothing for Mahala* (2013) became his second feature film. Nikiwe has expressed that filmmakers were greatly shocked that he has not watched a celebrated film called *The Godfather* (1972) "When I got into the industry, filmmakers were flabbergasted that I'd never seen *The Godfather* (1972). How can you be a filmmaker if you have never seen this film? They asked" (Nikiwe in Online *Destiny Man* Magazine Interview, 2013). Normally in filmmaking practices it is considered a taboo if an emerging filmmaker does not watch films that have been canonized and worshipped by many established visual makers and critics alike. Nikiwe, therefore broke these cultural rules of watching great films and watched the word through storytelling. Nikiwe is a co-founder of e.tv's *Rhythm City* that used to air Monday to Friday at 19h00m. To conclude, Nikiwe's artistic prominence was not because he was rooted in classical films but he had a passion that was cultivated and nurtured by his grandmother to become the visual maker that he is today.

Political Anxieties: Thabo Mbeki's Era/Error? SABC's Mandate and the New Political Economy: Tsha Tsha (2004) Background

Tsha Tsha (2004) was produced against the backdrop of Thabo Mbeki's political era. Prior to

the shooting of the production, the majority of South African social commentators such as academics, artists, politicians and other health practitioners had expressed that the government was made aware about the danger of the pandemic, despite the awareness, it did not devise a detailed plan on how it will approach the pandemic (Sparks 2003: 284 paraphrased in Treffry Goatley, 2010:181). South Africa has the highest number of people living with HIV; higher than any other country in the world (Juli, 2012:14).

The commissioning and procurement of *Tsha Tsha* (2004) as part of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) television's local content came as a result of a joint venture between the SABC television, Quizzical Pictures and National Department of Health. This partnership is made up of co-production, co-financing and pre-sale agreement. A joint venture is when "the SABC enters into a co-financing agreement, or co-production with either co-investors or a co-producer of a programme, or enters into a pre-sale agreement for a programme that is yet to be produced" (SABC Policy Document, 10). The SABC as a public broadcaster has a mandate to deliver, especially in relation to nation building and social cohesion. As such, collaborations and partnerships have been there since the early 1980s and beyond. One of the reasons is that South Africa was going through a transition stage. It was imperative for visual media to promote social cohesion.

In order to build a nation, education and health were among the most important factors to intervene in constructively, and of course, young people were considered important because they represented the future of the South African society.

The SABC television saw an opportunity to utilise isiXhosa language to articulate post-1994 political economy and the political agenda such as neo-liberalism, nation building, healing and reconciliation. This political approach was delivered by the post-Apartheid ANC government to offer the SABC television a task to embody its political agenda. For instance, one of the objectives of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is captured in the scene between Andile and Hennie. In this scene, Andile finally learns about Hennie's past (an old White man character) who symbolically and politically represents the White minority guilt. The scene is figuratively made up of the "negotiation spirit and the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) atmosphere" that took place between 1990 and 1994 in South Africa. The history of TRC is linked to the evolution of South Africa's negotiated settlement. An important aspect of this was that South Africa's transformation from

authoritarianism and racism to a constitutional democracy happened through dialogue and not by revolution or force arms (Jardine, 2008:6).

In another related matter, Thabo Mbeki questioned the causes of AIDS when he argued that the leading cause of AIDS was not the virus itself but poverty was the root cause of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa. Former President Thabo Mbeki, argued that “A virus cannot cause a syndrome” (Mbeki quoted by Natress, 2007:18 in Le Roux, 2013:10). Similarly, Juli (2012:16) notes that “overall it can be said that poverty generally increased the risk of HIV infection, which can account for why the majority of South Africans infected are Black Africans living in townships”. One of the reasons is that poor South Africans are often forced to migrate between rural and urban areas in order to make a living. As a consequence, there has been an increase in multiple current sexual partnerships amongst those migrating and those staying at home over the last years (Juli, 2012:16).

Tsha Tsha (2004) through Nikiwe’s lenses reflects Mbeki’s observation about poverty; for instance, *Tsha Tsha* (2004) is set in a rural town where the characters are not part of the black middle class. The majority of people who reside in Lubusi are poor working class. To a certain extent, Thabo Mbeki’s observation is almost correct because the South African visual literature, through its representation of HIV positive individuals occur mainly in poverty-stricken places. In addition, when one zooms into Thabo Mbeki’s line of thought, *Yesterday* (2004) film is also set in a poor rural area and it depicts the life of an infected poor working class black woman.

Former President Thabo Mbeki, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang and HIV/AIDS social movement organizations such as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) were the major players in the discourse of HIV/AIDS in the South African context. The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) was established on the 1st of December in 1999 to raise awareness regarding the spread of HIV/AIDS. The success of HIV/AIDS narrative is linked to the mounting pressure from TAC and other civil society movements on state organs. For example, the Treatment Action Campaign took the government to court for not providing an effective treatment to HIV positive individuals.

The media plays an important big role and has a strong influence in the lives of young people across the country. *Tsha Tsha* (2004) text was aware that the majority of young people who reside in the rural areas have more trust in fictional characters, radio DJs and talk show hosts.

“Young South Africans living in rural areas and in urban informal areas are more likely than those in urban formal areas to place a lot of trust in radio DJs or talk show hosts, fictional TV and radio characters, than political leaders” (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2007:10).

The inclusion of the DJs/radio host links up to the representation of this theme in the visual language, in the sense that *Take 5* show is a visual text that is used (embedded text) on *Tsha Tsha* (2004) to represent the views of young people regarding the pandemic as well as economic empowerment. This trust is linked to the character of DJ played by Siphile Mtshali who was a Jam Alley presenter on SABC 1 at the time. *Tsha Tsha* (2004) was produced at a time when South Africa celebrated 10 years of democracy. As such, it was extremely challenging to create educational television content about HIV/AIDS for Africans due to the limited creative visual historiography during Apartheid regime.

The year 2004 marked the end of Mbeki’s AIDS Denialism after he received strong criticism from the media and during his dissident speeches in the previous years. *Tsha Tsha* (2004) production was created at the time when the ANC-led government did not provide HIV infected people with enough antiretroviral treatment (ART). However, it should be noted that the government’s rollout of ARVs only began in 2004, after it was only accessible to a small number of people in the previous years.

In 2004, during the year in which *Tsha Tsha* (2004) was produced, the country bade farewell to popular DJ Khabazela in Orlando stadium, Soweto. DJ Khabazela was the first South African male Black celebrity to disclose his positive HIV status publicly. The high number of deaths created a situation where most people in the public strata carried a stigma against people who were infected and affected by HIV.

Plot Summary of selected Episodes

Tsha Tsha (2004) is a drama series that depicts the world that is infected and affected by HIV/AIDS pandemic. It was commissioned by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and was produced by Quizzical Pictures (previously called Curious Pictures) and the Centre for Aids Development, Research and Evaluation (CADRE). The main characters of our visual language narrative are Andile, Boniswa, DJ and Viwe. I do not have enough space to analyse all the archival footage of *Tsha Tsha* (2004). One has selected only four episodes of season three of *Tsha Tsha* (2004) that will be part of the textual analysis of this chapter

and these episodes number are 27, 29, 50 and 51. These four episodes were selected because they were granted by Quizzical Pictures with no price attached. One did not have access to all other episodes of *Tsha Tsha* (2004). Nikiwe asked me to contact someone that he communicated with so that they can give me these episodes.

The fictional world is set in the rural community of Lubusi in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. While HIV/AIDS is an overarching theme in the visual narrative; themes such as poverty, fatherlessness, joblessness, entrepreneurship and others are depicted in this visual language.

The audience gets introduced to chief characters through their voice over (their internal speech). This means that the characters' thoughts are audible on the screen and they contribute to the development of the events in the narrative.

We are on DJ as he misses his friend, Wheels. Through DJ's internal speech, as the audience we are informed that his friend Wheels is in Cape Town with his romantic partner. Nonetheless, DJ tells us that he is happy being left alone. We establish that DJ's goal is to renovate a tavern called Satisfaction where he lives with his uncle, Mike. We are now on Viwe in a salon scene, we see her through a medium shot. Viwe is thinking a lot about her boyfriend, Andile. This visualisation is achieved through a zoom in shot that immediately translates Viwe's thoughts into actual moving images of Andile in Johannesburg. Viwe is HIV positive and her rich father publicly discloses her HIV status when he gets interviewed by television presenter on SABC's *Take 5* show.

We now see Lazola who uses the structure of *izithakazelo* (clan names) in his business adventure (driving school) to recruit his new customers. Lazola's performativity of *izithakazelo* carries bad intentions towards his gullible customers. Let us now go back to DJ, who is talking to his mother on the phone; the audience only hears the voice of the mother. As we are listening to their conversation, there is an occurrence of DJ's dissolve style in this scene. Immediately after this scene is, an image of the full moon appears on the screen. In one African language called seTswana this metaphorically means that, *moleta ngwedi ke moleta lefifi* the gloss will be, 'one who is in search of the Holy Grail'. The argument is that DJ was searching for his personal truth that was very difficult to find. However, in the end DJ found the light about his father's death and finds closure.

While DJ looks at Joy, our scene transitions into his memory, flashbacks of when he was still

a young boy. DJ is reminded of his mother and father dancing together in slow motion. This scene is poetically expressed through the use of the cinema's advanced mechanism. This simply means that the audience is exposed to the unique internal thoughts of the film itself.

Our character Lazola tries to fix the computer, when he switches on the computer, the television screens becomes our computer monitor. Lazola directly looks at the computer screen which is our television screen. The following scene focusses on Lazola as he attempts to fix the computer. Lazola says that he doesn't understand the computer manual. He was unaware that he was reading the Spanish section of the manual. The English manual also surpasses Lazola's general understanding of a computer system. This is a hilarious scene in the salon. We laugh. What makes it hilarious is when he asks about the mouse in the salon while the customers try to run around and when he says that the computer system has bugs, every customer in the salon runs out. The subtext that is expressed in this scene is about the role of education and its quality in the African mind today and how it was used to control the very same mind. Carter Godwin Woodson (1933:4) in *The Mis-Education of a Negro* states, "When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions."

Andile finally learns about Hennie's past (an old White man character) who, symbolically represents the white minority rule in the past. Similarly, Hennie's Mixed Race daughter Jessica is a representation of the notion of rainbow nation and the new political dispensation term known as *born free*. In episode 50, a television crew visits Lubusi and some members of the community are happy to participate on the television show and the others are very shy to speak in front of the camera. In the last episode 51 to be analyzed, Loyiso Bala comes to Lubusi and not everyone is excited in the community. The purpose of Loyiso Bala's visit is to shoot a music video for his new single. The audience is aware that DJ has already approached Loyiso Bala and he told him about Chuma's talent of singing.

Rationale

Historically, in the South African visual grammars (i.e. audiovisual industry) the academic analysis of the psychology in particular from indigenous points of view has not been a priority. The previous and the current existing tools of reading visual languages in partnership with the critical role of indigenous languages in the mainstream of academia have not been explored enough. Cinema, films and television dramas have been treated and discussed in isolation and not as visual languages that have a direct relationship. This chapter

contributes to scholarship from this vantage point. Makwabeni and Salawu (2018) investigate *Tsha Tsha* (2014) using the entertainment-education (E-E) strategy in development communication. I must emphasise that the majority of scholarship that I have consulted with examines *Tsha Tsha* (2014) from the viewpoint of entertainment-education (E-E) in development communication.

Earlier existing visual languages such as *Soul City* did not represent a historical account of the pandemic and its relationship with the indigenous psychology and the verbal language. *Soul City* was concerned about the behaviour and not the specific psychology that informs the societal issue that was investigated. *Soul City* is mentioned here because, it was one of the first drama series that laid the foundation in post-Apartheid visual representations of the pandemic. The making of *Tsha Tsha* (2004) was addressing the missed opportunity in the visual mainstream to address the complexities of the indigenous psychology. The psychology of why do people behave the way they did regarding the pandemic was not reflected on *Soul City* series nor investigated. Say for an example, “people who watched one component of *Soul City* were more likely to say that they had asked their partner to use a condom during in the period that *Soul City* was on air.”¹

In addition to this, “qualitative data shows that *Soul City*’s impact is linked to the way it models people who behave in a positive way.”² The making of *Tsha Tsha* (2004) was not concerned about the use of condoms; it was concerned about the indigenous psychology that uses the condom. Which to some degree, I argue, *Tsha Tsha* (2004) sought to become a new contraceptive that interacts with the indigenous psychology.

One observes that the reason why Rolie Nikiwe was able to challenge these existing visual practices was that he started working on the production of *Soul City* as a script coordinator and identified an important loophole regarding the relationship between the pandemic, indigenous psychology and the verbal indigenous language. The manner in which Nikiwe navigates the cultural gatekeeping to bring about novelty and newness in his work was greatly influenced by the codes and conventions of orality through storytelling. This was a result of exposure to the rules of visual creation while he was a writer in the production of *Soul City* and later he exploited these explicit and implicit rules when he became a writer of local visual languages.

¹ (www.soulcity.org.za).

² (www.soulcity.org.za).

Nikiwe's *Tsha Tsha* (2004) saw a need to focus on the indigenous psychology especially in the rural areas. The making of *Tsha Tsha* (2004) did not accord to normal visualisation of the representation of township space, which greatly enjoyed a privilege in earlier visual texts. For an example, *Soul City*'s fictional world, on the other hand, was set in the urban space (i.e. the township). It was the responsibility of *Tsha Tsha* (2004) to visit and to reimagine the rural space.

My discussion of the visual language will be guided by the following questions and the questions raised by this new filmic cinematography and verbal language process allude to: what indigenous psychology and visual cultural practices evident in *Tsha Tsha* (2004) have to do with the post-1994 South African visual plurality and the heterogeneous society? To what an extent does Nikiwe construct characters and represent their inner speech through isiXhosa? In what way is Nikiwe presenting a different visual language through the deployment of isiXhosa in comparison to existing visual grammars? How is isiXhosa employed to articulate the post-1994 political economy? Does it mean that the visual representation of the indigenous psychology in *Tsha Tsha* (2004) express the unconscious mind of the colonised African visual grammars and what is the meaning of decolonisation in this filmic practice? What is indigenous psychology in *Tsha Tsha* (2014)? In what ways do we see the pandemic visualised differently? Why do the politics of casting famous people outside the profession of acting add to the new language of *Tsha Tsha* (2014)?

New Ways of Imagining and Visions of the Indigenous Psychology in post-1994 Visuals: A Journey of Decolonising the Lens

First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge Freud's contribution in the development of psychoanalyses theories and in general his meaningful impact in academia in particular in western psychology. According to Freud in Margolis (1998), the id is the uniformed, inborn structural part of personality that is responsible for reducing tensions relating to hunger, sex, aggression, and other primitive impulses. According to Freud, the ego is solely responsible for bringing peace between the id and the super-ego (social morals of the individual). The ego's primary function is to make rational decisions; therefore, it is the individual's intelligent side. The ego, Freud argues, relies on the higher mental processes that helps satisfy the urges of the id. The individual's reasoning capacity and problem-solving skills stem from the ego. One should note that the ego is the central portion of the personality. Freud's

proposition is that, individual's feelings, thoughts, and behaviour are the end product of the relationship between the id, the super-ego, and the ego. The three parts are constantly in conflict with one another. As such, this conflict manufactures anxiety, this means that if the ego is unable to deal with this anxiety satisfactorily an individual would not continue with everyday tasks.

While Freud studied the human mind, he was unable to study the mind of the people who were part of his environment and the majority of psychiatrists in Europe have declared the death of psychiatry that was fundamentally based on Freud's notions of the mind. Freud was not aware that European colonialism, Atlantic slave trade and the Arab slave trade had interrupted the normal functioning of these three parts of the African indigenous mind that he theorised. Conversely, Fanon and the scholarship of the African (Black) Psychology intellectuals in Africa and in diaspora such as Amos Wilson (1993), Dubois (1903), Joseph Baldwin (1986), Henrik Clarke (1991) and France Welsing (1991) are integral part in this chapter because of their nuanced developed theory of the African Black mind that honours the African culture and heritage.

These prominent Black intellectuals call for a return to the source and this means that it is an indigenous mind that is centred on the African culture and philosophy. The literature in this portion will also draw from the Filipino indigenous psychology. The African (Black) Psychology has been a highly contested theory among prominent Black intellectuals who are in Africa and in diaspora. It is not rendered by a single definition. "African (Black) Psychology from this perspective derives naturally from the 'worldview' or philosophical premise underlying African culture itself, as does Western Psychology relative, to the worldview of European culture" (Baldwin, 1986:237). In addition to this, Nobles (1980:31) paraphrased in Baldwin (1986:238) points out that the African (Black) Psychology is deeply rooted in African cultural traditions and it is connected to indigenous philosophical assumptions.

Henrik Clarke (1991:321), makes an important point that there has not been enough academic attention regarding the rise of Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries on the psychology of non-Europeans. According to Henrik Clarke (1991: Ibid), "The greatest achievement was the conquest of the minds of most of the people of the world".

In the Introduction of *Falsification of the African Consciousness*, Wilson (1993:1) states that

“The psychology, consciousness, and behavioural tendencies of individuals and societies are to a very significant extent the product of their personal and collective histories”. One’s psychology is made up of the combination between these two histories. However, Freud did not theorise about this. Additionally, the epistemological problem of the Western psychology is that the individual is accountable for his/her mental problems. The ideology of individualism has been manufactured by the West. This individualism does not recognise the social and the political structures that the individual is part of. Conversely, the African indigenous psychology consciously recognises the critical role of these two discourses. Amos Wilson (1993:65) makes an important point that:

A major departure of Black psychology from Eurocentric psychology or White psychology is the fact that Black psychology is openly and consciously political, and recognises that the very basis for what we might call mental problems or other kind of problems in the Black community, is the political structure, the Eurocentric structure that is present.

Wilson further states that, “Mental maladaptiveness among our people is a political, social necessity, and therefore is instigated by political, social forces; and a Black psychology must begin with this very fact” (Wilson, 1993:66). On this note, it is important to point out that the psychology of Slavery, Colonialism and Imperialism was/is Eurocentric in nature. As such, “the psychology of the rulers of this world, the psychology eurocentrically oriented people is not in the psychology books, but in history books; and one merely needs then to read their history to get to their psychology” (Wilson, 1993:72). Frantz Fanon’s treatment of psychoanalysis of racism explores the relationship between politics and psychology. Frantz Fanon (1952) has investigated the unconscious of the colonised mind on the African continent, the actions and personality of the colonial subject.

Notably, the production of *Tsha Tsha* (2004) relies on the clever use of voice-over visual devise and this speaks to the notion of internal speech or voice of characters where the thought becomes audible in the visual language and thus through this construction it is recognisable that:

Consciousness is not something emanating from the self, as bourgeois ideology would have it. Rather, consciousness is a social event on a small scale, an inner word embryo of expression turned on the outside world, a dialogue in the making, set toward fully actualized outward expression, and not just an inner act on the part of the individual (Volosinov,

1973:90 in Holborow, 1999:31).

The audience experiences a privilege of entering the unconscious and conscious mind of chief characters in the narrative. This technique offers a three dimensional representation of characters and forces the audience members to view characters from a humane (cultural) point of view and not from two-faced point of view. This viewing experience is similar to Ozu's films and that is the viewing experience of the Japanese psychological symbolic visuals where "The viewer, irrespective of his culture of extraction, has to relate to Ozu's films the way a Japanese would. Language sums up the whole cultural horizon."

In relation to the representation of language, there is still an on-going debate amongst writers and academics. For example, Mloma noted the debates regarding African writers who produced elitist art works that do not appeal to the ordinary African people. "It has been argued that many Africans are writing for the elite rather than for the common man and woman who form the majority of the African population" (Mloma cited Smith and Kunene, 2002:10). One notes that, Nikiwe defies this argument in the sense that *Tsha Tsha* (2004) was accessible to the ordinary South Africans who continue to face nervous conditions, to borrow from the title, i.e. Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel *Nervous Conditions* (1988) - of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. Mloma has presented various obstacles that confront writers who produce in mother tongue. Mloma has vehemently argued that it is not true that indigenous African languages are not linguistically developed and cannot express complex scientific, technological and mathematical concepts. Furthermore, Mloma reminds us that it was African languages that were used to translate Hebrew folktales of the Bible in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Others have argued that, due to brief or non-existent histories, many African indigenous languages are linguistically underdeveloped and, therefore, ill-equipped to express the scientific developments; that it can exhaust the expressive possibilities of languages. A reminder is also sounded that the same African languages regarded as inadequate have come from one generation to another, the great African civilization, including their masterful literary creations such as epics, poetry, and songs (Chu and Skinner cited by Mloma in Smith and Kunene, 2002:10). In addition to this, "the same languages remain the communication media for the majority of Africans today. In the use of these African languages, Africans are describing, analyzing, and interpreting the contemporary African society, whatever its

complexities may be” (Mlama cited in Smith and Kunene, 2002:10)

I do acknowledge that language remains a complex institution of texts and references of everyday reality. In the process of text formation, the writer’s knowledge about language and other texts will help shape the structure of his/her text. In meaning making events, formulated texts are interpreted differently by readers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, texts are never neutral in their representation, texts are emotionally and politically charged and the creator offers a particular stance through his/her expression. It was Kristeva (1960 and 1980) who argued that reading of text is an aggressive participation. Horace in Still and Worton (1990) has claimed that the poet must enter into the emotions he presents if he wishes to move his audience to experience the same emotions. Plagiarism, use of italics, quotation marks, translation, paraphrasing, and imitation are examples of intertextuality.

Imitation, according to Still and Worton (1990:6) “is thus not repetition, but the completion of an act of interpretation, and a mode of interpretation”. Furthermore, Weinsheimer has argued that “an imitation is not independent or autonomous in essence, it is neither a copy nor an original” (Weinsheimer cited in Still and Worton, 1990:7).

Intertextuality, using Kristeva’s terminology in *Tsha Tsha* (2004) was achieved through the use of careful strategy such as casting influential public figures in the power of visual language (using the mechanisms of TV, TV crew represented SABC). The moment where the audience in *Tsha Tsha* (2004) watches television on television in episode 50 is an example of intertextuality. It’s a simulacra phenomenon. Public figures such as Zolani Mahola who was part of the famous music band (called Freshly Ground) that was at the peak of the South African popular culture, as well as Loyiso Bala’s appearance in episode 51 are representative of intertextuality. I am now turning to the textual analysis of the visual language.

IsiXhosa and the visual language in representing the unconscious and the conscious indigenous psychology

The use of isiXhosa and the deployment of the visual language achieves the African indigenous psychology in the sense that African intellectuals in Africa and in the diaspora have made a very important academic announcement in both the 20th and the 21st centuries that Africans in Africa and throughout the world must return to the source and be rooted in the African culture. The characters of Andile and DJ are a symbolic representation of this

monumental announcement by these African intellectuals. One's connotative reading is that the isiXhosa worldview is underscored through this construction of characters that go back to their traditional characters (the source) so that they can be wholly grounded in themselves. In the opening images of episode 29, Andile through a voice-over informs the audience that he has been back in Lubusi for a week and he is happy.

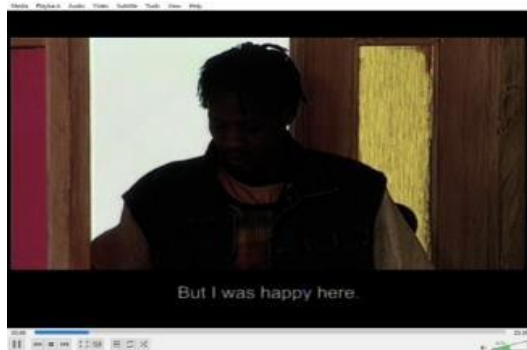


Figure 1: DJ is happy to be back at Lubusi in episode 27



Figure 2: Andile is back at Lubusi in episode 29

Contextually in the episodes of *Tsha Tsha* (2004), both Andile's and DJ's return to rural Lubusi is read as a return to the African indigenous mind. He is back to his normal state of the mind. These images highlight the new visual language of being back in the rural areas in the sense that, the rural area is used as a place to reform a character (personal growth) and not used as a place that is backwards but a place that is necessary for personal healing and restoration. What is distinct about being back in Lubusi gives us a moment to critically understand that character healing and restoration is as important as nation building. Another example that the rural area is used as a place to reform a person's character, is when Andile tells the audience (through a voice-over) that he is ashamed to tell his friends and everyone about what really happened in the city. Andile's mind depicts what Dubois termed double consciousness.

Through this representation, the isiXhosa proverb *usana olungakhaliyo lufeli embelekweni* is reflected. The dynamic translations of this means that ‘the child who does not seek help when having problems will drown in their own problems’. In addition, this visuality was able to present the indigenous psychology in the sense that the SeTswana proverb which says *maropeng go a boelwa* which loosely means that, ‘one cannot abandoned home, irrespective of their level of successes’ This visual strategy was not employed in visual grammars such as *Soul City* (1995) drama series in Season 1 to capture the psychology of African proverbs and idioms through the bodies of characters in previously distorted images of the rural areas. The cinematographic representation of the rural landscape by Nikiwe offers a new visual language as compared to previous visual grammars such as the film called *Yesterday* (2004).

The shot where Andile returns from Johannesburg and he is seated alone on the edge of the water reservoir is an equivalent of this proverb. It is poetry in motion. A proverb in motion. The clear message in this motion is that, one should not blame themselves for their own psychological problems in a society where Western value systems are prevalent.

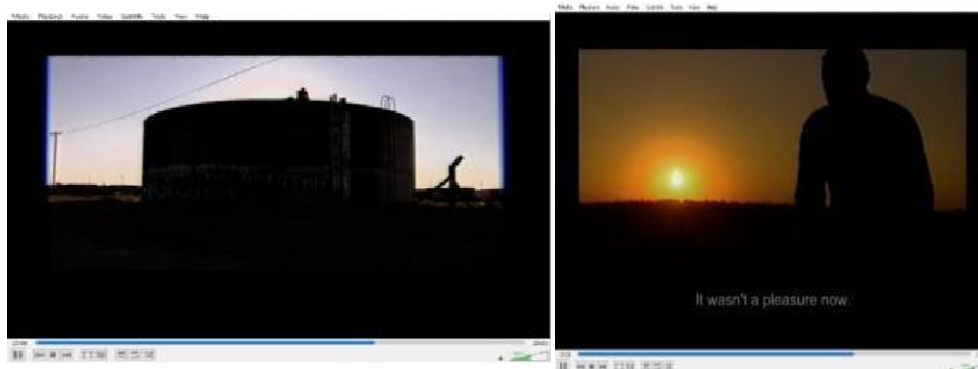


Figure 3: Andile seated alone on the water reservoir episode 29

The reservoir is a metaphorical representation of an abundance of help that exists in Lubusi community. Therefore, Andile cries alone while there is plenty of help next to him. The verbal and the visual articulate the newness in a sense that, the visual is made up of the symbolic forms and these are the reservoir, the sunset that creates silhouette lighting and a mid-shot to express this isiXhosa linguistic proverb.



Figure 4: Lazola tries to fix the computer but don't understand the language manual

Another example of 'the return to the source' is illustrated in the computer scene. Lazola's attempts to fix the computer, is read as a self- introspection of the indigenous mind. In this scene, the screen of the television changes into the computer screen and Lazola looks at the audience and the audience looks at him. The indigenous mind self-introspects itself regarding the use of Eurocentric education in the digital revolution. Nikiwe's obsession with education is that, it should reflect the indigenous psychology. This scene wakes us up to the sad socio-linguistic reality that African languages such as isiXhosa and many others have not been developed sufficiently to compete with colonial languages such as English and Spanish in computer sciences and in devising new terms for diseases. In this self-introspection, one is reminded that isiXhosa is as capable as English and Spanish languages to describe the phenomena of the pandemic. Therefore, imagination/mind behind idioms and proverbs should be applied in building computer software and machines that will advance the interests of the indigenous mind. There is a need to draw from indigenous knowledge system. Nikiwe changes the misconceptions about this. The idea that after 25 years of democracy Black Africans in South Africa still do not have their own teaching method is a serious crisis. Nikiwe illustrates that African languages have been marginalised and have limited use in imparting knowledge.

An infection of the glitz and the glamour in the rural areas: These are the politics of casting

It has been normalised in post-Apartheid visual idioms that the urban space is the centre of artistic attention. For many years, the urban space has been constructed as a progressive space for the existence of Blackness. In a sense that, it is a place that was built by White people for Black people only. "The black subject travels between and through the rural, urban and township spaces, assuming different identities at different times" (Ellapen, 2006: 6). Say for instance, Andile travelled from the rural Lubusi in the hope that "he will achieve his goals of being a renowned dancer in the big city of Johannesburg" (Episode 50). The mythologised narrative behind this construction is that if one wants to be successful in life, migration to the city/urban space is a necessity. Conversely, Nikiwe's *Tsha Tsha* (2014) defies this construction of the city space where success and successful people are not in the city but in

the rural Lubusi. Nikiwe through *Tsha Tsha* (2004) predicted the current visual trend that relies on casting popular public figures from social media networks such as Twitter, Instagram and Tik Tok to increase viewership for commercial purposes.

In episode 51, Loyiso Bala visits Lubusi community and everyone is excited. Loyiso Bala is a multi-award winning South African gospel and R&B singer. The purpose of his visit is to shoot a music video and make it a success for his new single. Usually, another function of a music video is to sell/advertise a place for tourism purposes. In this particular representation, the rural is seen differently, as a place not of country bumpkins but as a place for the glitz and glamour too, where well-known super stars come for different reason. Essentially, it is a critique on Andile's character. These superstars bring one's attention on the alternative indigenous psychology that exists in rural areas. The psychology is that one can become a successful dancer or a musician in the rural areas of this country. Implicit to this is argument is that, you do not need to visit Johannesburg in order to become an artist. The importance of the image below is to provide supporting evidence of Loyiso Bala's visit to Lubusi community.



Figure 5: Loyiso Bala visits Lubusi and talks to Chuma about her music episode 51

At this level, they are the heroes and role models to the children, youth and community. Therefore, his character is relatable to people and children who are situated in rural areas of the Eastern Cape. It is therefore important to look at the impact of these images among children. At a practical level, musicians such as Loyiso Bala are the heroes and role models to the children, youth and rural communities of the Eastern Cape. For instance, in episode 51 DJ is trying to convince Chuma to come and sing with Loyiso at Satisfaction. We hear Chuma thinking to herself that "No other artist had had a bigger impact on me as a song writer than

Loyiso” (Episode 50). It is evident that Chuma looks up to Loyiso. Loyiso Bala’s casting and visual representation is a subtle emphasis on his isiXhosa cultural identity where people who have dreams and ambitions see themselves through him. Therefore, his character is relatable to people who are situated in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape.

We must look at the impact on the child, where every hero he sees looks like somebody else, and where a lot of heroes don’t even look like heroes at all; when he must look at Christopher Columbus as a hero, if the person understood what and who Columbus was. The child is deceived. (Clarke, 1991:340).

It is important for Africans to look up to the superstars and the heroes who represent them and their political interests at heart. What is important to note is that, these superstars and heroes reflect the unique stories of the people they come from. Clarke (1991:342) further states that “We need, also, to look at the heroes in our mass media. We need to look at our heroes in fiction. We need to look at our heroes in society”. Another observation of this representation is that, corporate South Africa has taken advantage of the fact that the superstars appeal to the majority of people’s indigenous psychologies. Therefore, these superstars become brands and ambassadors through the endorsement deals of the corporate South African psychology. Of course, one takes into consideration that they too, are purveyors of the neoliberal consumerist culture of South Africa.

Part of the use of long shots in this visual text defies early visual practices that used long shots to symbolise African land as a huge land mass that has wild animals roaming around. *Tsha Tsha* (2004), aesthetically, presents the rural landscape as characterized by important human activities. An important social activity in Lubusi, are the dance classes of the *cha-cha* dance. Members of the community use this kind of dance to learn about themselves. This is visually achieved through the rhythm of editing. Editing style in the transitioning between scenes is not long and slow. In fact, it borrows from the *cha-cha* dance rhythm.

The reliance on the visual presence of Loyiso Bala in Lubusi, by Nikiwe signifies an abundance of talent that is found in the rural areas of South Africa. Chuma’s character is an example of young people who are talented in rural areas and got recognition from their role models. In episode 51, the audience witnesses that Loyiso Bala is impressed about Chuma’s musical level of talent, thus spectators get to see Loyiso Bala requesting Chuma’s CD from DJ. The latter requested the former to listen to the CD. One has observed that in recent times

there is a new imagery (visual) trend that has been developed to cast popular public figures in domestic visual language entertainment industry. Also, individuals who are not famous and have a huge following on social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are recruited to be part of the commercial South African domestic visual language.

The New Image Virus: *Tsha Tsha* (2004) went viral

The fact that Zolani Mahola and DJ reside in the rural areas, further exemplifies one's argument that through this deployment Nikiwe brings a different perspective in the post-Apartheid visual grammars. Its use alters the audiences' indigenous mind regarding the visual representation of rural areas in post-apartheid South Africa. "In order to decolonize the screen, the African audience had to be offered a new vision of its own space... colonialism had been a dispossession of space, a deprivation of identity" (Bartlett, 2000:39).

The visual presence of local influential public figures such as Loyiso Bala, Zolani Mahola and Simphiwe Mtshali was later employed by visual makers of current soap operas such as *Generations* (2010) (before it was called *Generations the Legacy*) when the former Health Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and famous North American R&B singer Chris Brown both made an appearance on *Generations* (2008) and also popular award-winning Hollywood actor Samuel L. Jackson was featured. In *Rhythm City* (2017) e.tv, Boity one of the famous television presenters (the South African public uses a colloquial expression to refer to her as the '*it girl*') was featured earlier, and also, the famous Afro-soul singer Kelly Khumalo was part of the story line on *Rhythm City* (2007, 2012). The meaning of an 'it girl' within the South African popular culture refers to a black female celebrity who is considered very beautiful, has money and she is always getting jobs of presenting, singing, and acting. She is naturally favored by luck and blessings.

Recent television drama series on M-NET's Mzansi Magic channel 161 called *iNumber Number* directed by Rolie Nikiwe himself is made up of an all- star cast such as Presley Chweneyagae the lead actor in the award-winning film called *Tsotsi* (2006), Sdumo Mtshali and another celebrated theatre actor Mncedisi Shabangu who recently passed away.

The visual presence of Simphiwe Mtshali who portrays the character of DJ in *Tsha Tsha* (2004) and who was also a former *Yo TV* presenter on SABC 1 and *Jam Alley* presenter at the time is notable. Thus this casting technique contributed in the process to exhibit the SABC's

role to create awareness regarding the HIV/AIDS discourse. “Television is, in fact, an extraordinary instrument for developing consciousness when it opens up to the social field” (Barlet, 1996:285). One gets to realize that Nikiwe addresses the stigma about HIV/AIDS, and the stigma is expressed through Xhosa language in rural areas. For example, Viwe’s father calls it, *into* meaning ‘this thing’ (Phumzile interview, 2016) when he participated in an interview for a television show that visited the community.

By casting celebrities in a rural setting he is opening up the space that can be filled up by many of these young people. The observation is that the industry still grapples with having a loyal audience in the heightened era of social media and streaming services in South Africa. The desire to have high ratings is in itself a compromise to the craft of visual storytelling as there are executive decisions that need to fulfil the interest of capitalism logic.

Notably, Nikiwe predicted this trend, although current visual trends aim at increasing viewership for commercial purposes. Conversely, *Tsha Tsha* (2004) was elevating health messages. Thus, Nikiwe’s visual language was futuristic in nature.

The depiction of interiorisation of characters: Speech on the screen

One witnesses the difference between the inside language of a character and how the character expresses his/her thoughts (language) externally. These internal and external representations present an ongoing internal conflict of a character. However, Du Bois reminds us that “culture is an important element in reversing the effects of double consciousness” (Du Bois (1903) cited in Cook, 2013: 2).

This stylistic device draws our attention on the inside and outside language (the difference between the two) of a character’s physical exercise of the isiXhosa language. The audience is constantly being reminded that it is experiencing the story through a particular point of view. “Cinema takes viewers through an experience that evolves over time, grabbing their attention and triggering a sequence of perceptual, cognitive, and emotional processes” (Hasson et al., 2008). It is through this stylistic choice that one gets to understand the interiority of one of the main players, DJ’s linguistic background and idiolect (his verbal repertoire) in episode 27 and most importantly his personal history.

When an indigenous eye engages the idiomatic visual expressions of *Tsha Tsha* (2004), it becomes evident that Nikiwe exploits cultural techniques of isiXhosa orality that have not

been exploited in the local South African visual literature. A case in point is when Lazola's character employs the rhythmic structure of *izithakazelo* to market his new business adventure (i.e. driving school) where he deceives the local customers who are vulnerable to con-artists and scammers because they are gullible. This aesthetic echoes the *Jackal and the Monkey* folktale that Nikiwe's grandmother used to narrate during the night. According to Nikiwe "My grandmother told folktales every night. I'm reminded of *the Jackal and the Monkey* story, wherein the jackal out-witted the monkey leaving him holding up the cliff for all of eternity while the jackal escaped. Moral of the story, don't be gullible" (Nikiwe in Online *Destiny Man* Magazine Interview, 2013). Nikiwe in this context borrows from the structural wisdom of orality to send this message.

Similarly to Nikiwe's artistic practice, Nigerian visual makers have glorified the presence of orality in their visual language. Mbakwe (2013:104) in investigating Nigerian video films regarding the presence of oral culture states, "Nigerian home videos re-enact diverse principles of primary orality. These principles represent a vital part of oral-aural cultures in order to store knowledge."

Conclusion

Nikiwe curates an introspection of the indigenous psychology where he draws the audience's attention on the relationship between the development of African languages and education system. The observation is that Africans should draw from the complexities and sophistication of proverbs and idioms to create technological inventions. In decolonizing the rural space, Nikiwe worked with artists who are outside the profession of acting such as Zolani Mahola, Simphiwe Mtshali and Loyiso Bala and thus this has never been the case in the visual grammars that were conceived to represent the pandemic. What is critical to understand is that the audience doesn't view these artists as celebrities or 'famous' people but view them as characters that show commitment to tell the story that is familiar with them. This means that the presence of Zolani Mahola, Simphiwe Mtshali and Loyiso Bala don't affect negatively the execution of the narrative because they are 'celebrities'. Therefore, it was *Tsha Tsha* (2004) that pioneered the present visual grammars of collaborating with famous South African artists.

The influences of orality are evident in the manner in which Nikiwe uses the stylistic device of the voice-over. This stylistic device allows the audience an opportunity to listen to their

narration regarding the events of the story in *Tsha Tsha* (2004). The audience relates with the characters' dreams, desires (their id) and delusions as they are part of the Xhosa world. Nikiwe's obsession with the rural space of Lubusi is an indication that it is the space for character reform and personal development.

Chapter 3

Afrofuturism: Crafting the Future and Localising Afrofuturism Through the African Communicative Ecologies in *Intersexions* (2010) and (2012)

Afrofuturism is as an artistic, cultural and a theoretical movement that contests the legacies of Slavery and Colonialism which still form part of Africans' political and economic dystopian realities today. It is unfortunate that. Slavery and Colonialism destroyed the natural progression of African society. It is therefore important for Africans to use complex forms of communication that are found in different forms of text such as:

Textbooks, the television shows, the clothing lines, the radio stations, the fairy tales, the census data, the police reports, the singular vocabulary, the hair products, the factory jobs, the emojis, the smog, the credit scores, all the manufactured images that experiences that corrupt their sense of who they are (Deirdre Hollman cited in Jennings and Anderson, 2018:188).

Undoubtedly, the visual footprint of *Intersexions* in many ways, points towards this, and walks the present African audience towards the realisation of these trappings. This happens through the visual representation of the pandemic and how its flow is imaged through the use of the indigenous forms of communication in the fictional world of *Intersexions*.

The epicentre of HIV/AIDS representation in post-1994 South African motion visualities has been largely characterised by European communicative model. Therefore, this chapter articulates an argument stating that, there has not been enough Human Immune Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) visual representations that employed the African indigenous communication model, that effectively circulate and disseminate this scientific information such as *Intersexions*. The methodologies and strategies such as radio broadcasting employed by HIV/AIDS Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) was highly effective because radio has the ability to reach millions of people at the same time in different places. Many of these people rely heavily on the current affairs news get information from the radio. The majority of the rural populace between the ages of 18 and 35 is dependent on the radio for information. It is public knowledge that radio is easily accessible than any other media and most people can afford it.

Profoundly, *Intersexions* enthralls the consciousness of Afrofuturistic audience on the old relationship between race and the virus in order to maintain superiority and human survival. The performance of HIV/AIDS in both the rural and urban spaces marked *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) as a revolutionary visual composition. Its performance does not only discriminate against African people who are part of the subclass. This has been a missing link in the visual literature of post-1994 South Africa. Notably, this visual text depicts an image that the black middle class are also infected and affected. It is this kind of performance that qualifies *Intersexions* as the *neo-unconventional mise-en-scène* in post-1994 South African discursive visuals. One of the important tasks of this chapter is to demonstrate that Nikiwe through *Intersexions* visualises the abstract scientific organised data of how the pandemic is spread at an exponential rate, in a country that has high levels of illiteracy.

At the level of pure metaphoric thought, this close-up shot of the pandemic carries striking effect in that Nikiwe has composed a rendition of a historical HIV/AIDS song that he has translated into a redefinition of the HIV/AIDS historical visual representation. What is notable is that, the HIV/AIDS *song* that has been sung on the European world stage embodies the African rhythmic structures. This means that this song was composed in the ‘jungle’ Africa by racist colonialists. By song, I mean the negative speeches, depressing media reports and biased narrative regarding the presence of HIV in Africa stemming from the Western countries. As a consequence, one becomes conscious of the fact that Nikiwe has aligned the composed rendition and visual redefinition with Afrofuturism values through the production of *Intersexions*. The surveillance of this complex representation is the notification that Nikiwe through *Intersexions* takes charge of the history of HIV/AIDS future representation. This chapter is going to rather illustrate the arguments using the following themes which will form part of *Intersexions* inquiry and investigation: self-determination (i.e. future freedom), simplified pandemic information, use of public space and pandemic communication.

Viva Fever: State policies, Rape Case, Sex Work and the Soccer World Cup: *Intersexions* Background

Following a year after his inauguration, Former President Jacob Zuma publicly disclosed his HIV status. The Former President revealed that he tested negative. This was during the launch of government programme of counselling and testing. The reason behind this disclosure was to promote openness and alleviate the stigma that is associated with being

positive. “We have to make all South Africans understand that people living with HIV have not committed any crime” (Jacob Zuma cited in BBC News Article, 25 April 2010). Official opposition parties criticised Former President Zuma for diluting the importance of the HIV testing programme by disclosing his HIV status. Beyond 2010 the government aimed at testing 15 million people and distributing drugs to 80% of those who are going to need them. According to the research report, titled *Three Decades of the HIV Epidemic in South Africa* by Richter and Delva through the Human Sciences Research Council 2010, the Anti-retroviral (ARV) roll out plan in South Africa stretched from 58.3 % to 75.2 in 2011. South African government has the largest ARV programme in the world.

Prior to the production of *Intersexions*, former Deputy President Jacob Zuma was facing a Rape Court Trial. Zuma was charged with rape on 6th December 2006 for raping a family friend of 31-year old woman called Khwezi (Skeen, 2007:21). Khwezi is not her real name. As such, “The woman declined to publicly expose her identity, and she assumed the pseudonym Khwezi in press coverage and documents released from the trial” (Skeen, 2007:3). Khwezi was HIV-positive and was an AIDS activist. The Zuma Rape Trial has brought some contradictions within which the pandemic was understood. It was understood that the virus is sexually transmitted; however Zuma was reported that he went to take a shower after having sex with HIV-positive Khwezi. Therefore, he did not get infected with the virus. This is visualised in *Intersexions* that the virus is mainly transmitted sexually and having different partners.

When South Africa was offered an opportunity to host the 2010 Soccer World Cup, there were manufactured fears around security and most importantly the wide spread of HIV infection. Therefore, “In response to this media frenzy and public fears, a number of national and international organisations were involved in the distribution of condoms, general HIV/AIDS information campaigns” (Mark Bryan Schreiner cited in Richter and Delva, 2011: 11). There was increased documented condom use during the Soccer World Cup. In South Africa and across the continent, sex workers remain vulnerable to violence and crime. Their basic human rights continue to be violated by those who have a different moral compass and they are often blamed for spreading HIV in the community.

This is because; by law in South Africa sex work has been criminalised. We see this through Dalitso’s character. According to the research compiled by Richter and Delva (2010) there

were sex workers who reflected positively to the changes made by the biggest sporting event on the African soil. There were, however, sex workers who did not experience any significant change during the Soccer World Cup. The government admitted that it remains unclear how many people get infected due to the commercial sex work in the country. In anticipating the events of the world cup, programmes such as Sex Work Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) targeted sex workers. This information is necessary because *Intersexions* was first broadcast during 2010 after its pre-production phase.

Intersexions came as a result of collaborative process between the SABC and JHHESA. “The SABC’s partnership with JHHESA was, in turn, a clear contribution to the national response to HIV by the public broadcaster” (Collinge et al., no date: 5). Intensive creative, social, cultural and intellectual research was done by CADRE during its preproduction stage. According to Collinge et al., the development stage of *Intersexions* was in two parts, and that is, “The central idea and some initial storylines were prepared as part of the response to the tender brief” (Collinge et al, no date). Before the SABC distributed the commissioning brief Uzanenkosi Mahlangu had conceived the idea and the structure of sexual relations. “Mahlangu began to write an outline and a script for a relay series about HIV that would be structured on the degrees of sexual separation” (Collinge et al, no date). Nikiwe knew about Mahlangu’s script and its idea behind the script. “Uzanenkosi had told me the story and it was a powerful idea that stayed with me, the idea that HIV was using the infrastructure of the six degree of separation” (Nikiwe cited in Collinge et al., no date:7). Uzanenkosi agreed to pitch the idea (through Ants Multimedia) to the SABC in partnership with Quizzical Pictures and became one of the executive producers.

The SABC mandated that the *Intersexions*’ stories should reflect the diverse South African linguistic groups. As such, it was important for the SABC to use *Intersexions* as a visual text that promotes cultural diversity. “Apart from the SABC’s specific goals for this drama series, it has broad corporate objectives which include the promotion of cultural diversity and support for the development of indigenous South African languages” (Collinge et al., no date: 3). The country was experiencing moral regeneration at the time and the reality of social cohesion envisioned by the ANC-led government was slowly becoming unstable. Therefore, the SABC as a public broadcaster needed to fulfill its mandate of shaping the discourse around HIV pandemic and other social values:

Values are in a state of flux and there are differing and often conflicting views on the social roles of men and women, young and old. The public broadcaster takes the view that it has a role to play in promoting public discourse that will help redefine social values and build social cohesion (Collinge et al., no date:3).

The success of this visual drama was a result of the multimedia approach that was used. This means that after the airing of *Intersexions* there were radio talk shows on SABC radio stations to lead the discussions based on what happened on the episode that was aired that week and this strategy generated social media conversations. “Therefore, *Intersexions* as a national television drama accompanied by interactive indigenous language radio shows and, even more interactive social media platforms had an impact at societal and (virtual) community level” (Collinge et al., no date:5).

It is a fact that the inherent nature of visual languages’ creative process requires collaborative efforts. Every team member plays their role that is expected of them. For example, *Intersexions* had “A team of writers, selected and guided by head writer, Brent Quinn, created set of scripts” (Collinge et al., no date: 9). Nikiwe molded the directing style of this visual language when he directed first few episodes. Executive producers don’t take the credit. This is one of the reasons why we have visual languages awards across the world recognizes directors. The fact is if you have two directors interpreting the very same scripts you are going to get two different outcomes. “Although Nikiwe set the overall style by directing the first few episode, the relay format created some leeway for each director to express his or her individuality” (Collinge et al., no date: 9). These are the young upcoming directors that were learning and mentored by Nikiwe when he was creative director of *Intersexions*. He came up with a creative visual language vision that interpreted the script.

Selected Episodes of *Intersexions* Synopsis

The first season of *Intersexions* was about love sex, relationships and sexual network while the second season focused on secrets and how these hidden secrets in personal and sexual relationships put people at high risks to contract HIV.

In episode 1 of *Intersexions* season 1, we meet one of our main characters Mandisa and her friend Cherise. It is Mandisa’s wedding day. To her shock she finds out that DJ Mo Freak has full-blown AIDS. Mandisa is connected to one of our main characters DJ Mo Freak as an ex-

partner. We hear that DJ Mo is making an announcement on the national radio station; Ukhozi FM. DJ Mo gives an advice to his male audience that they should take care of themselves. We can see that he is full of regrets. The advice from DJ Mo is that we should not disregard the importance of taking ARVs. We are able to see that DJ Mo's masculinity has been represented as the reckless famous radio presenter when it comes to women. Still on episode 1, we are back to Cherise who asks Mandisa that she must tell Kabelo Motaung, the husband, about this. Mandisa previously worked for Ukhozi FM where she was responsible for growing DJ Mo's brand as an artist. Cherise says to Mandisa that: "*it is all over, it is all over the newspapers. It is on TV and radio and someone will tell Kabelo.*" In this scene Cherise is aware of the communication network/model that is reflective of her social organisation.

There are two readings to this scene; the first reading surfaces the slogan that people who are infected should disclose their HIV status to their partners and their previous partners (openness). The second reading is that of Afrofuturistic value, in the sense that Cherise encourages Mandisa to save individuals such as Kabelo Motaung who are part of the Black nation from the pandemic. The knowledge of who has the pandemic in the society is very important to the collective Black survival.

In episode 1, Mandisa visits DJ Mo Freak. DJ Mo has visible full-blown AIDS he is lying on the bed helplessly. We feel sorry for him. He tells Mandisa that he stopped taking ARVs after one week because they made him feel sick. Mandisa says to him that he should have continued taking them because at first one gets worse before they get better. In this scene, as the audience we observe that the information and education on how ARVs work is subtly being simplified through this dialogue. We are being made knowledgeable about ARVs.

In another different scene, Kabelo asks his colleague Lindi "*what's Mo like?*" and Lindi says "*you know the type, colourful*". Now back to Mandisa, who takes a decision to go get tested for HIV and she defensively tells the counsellor that she doesn't sleep around and the men she has slept with can be counted in one hand. The counsellor explains to her that: "*it is not only about who she has slept with but what is important is if she knows who her previous lovers have slept with?*" The audience now understands that our main characters are connected through sexual relations; this is why they become main characters in different episodes. The question from the counsellor draws attention on the complexities of the social

structure and the network of the African communication model as far as sexual relationships are concerned.

We are now in episode 25, we hear the hospital ambience. Kabelo receives the news that he has tested positive for HIV but his wife is not HIV positive. He does not take the news very well. The counsellor tells Kabelo that it only takes 20 minutes to get the results. Kabelo expresses his inability to understand this to the doctor and asks the doctor if this is possible. The doctor explains to Kabelo that it is possible in a relationship for one partner to be HIV positive and the other partner to be HIV negative. In this scene, Kabelo wants to know if it is possible to have a family while being HIV positive. The doctor assures him that it is possible to have a child who is HIV negative while he is HIV positive. Kabelo Motaung is a progressive lawyer in the narrative. The twist in the narrative is that Kabelo was infected by her colleague Lindi.

Let us now go back to episode 5, another one of our main characters, Tshepo, moves into a new room in Hillbrow. Tshepo has offered Dalitso to rent for free after he moved in a while ago. Dalitso is also our main character who comes from Zimbabwe and is a common sex worker at the same time she is Tshepo's girlfriend. It is at night when we see the two outside on the roof top of the flat; this is after Dalitso returned from her sex work business. While she was at work, Dalitso was instructed by the person who owns prostitutes that his German friend is coming and he is looking forward to having an *"African experience"*. Therefore, Dalitso must provide this experience to the German client.

In the other scene of episode 5, Tshepo says to Dalitso that: *"I guess we are selling our souls sometimes. For what? A Meal for the day"* Dalitso remains quiet. She is internalising this powerful expression. Tshepo asks Dalitso if she does not want to leave this place (i.e. Hillbrow). Tshepo asks Dalitso if she does not find Hillbrow suffocating. Dalitso looks at him and says: *"one day"*. Tshepo says to her that they need more than one day to leave the place. As the audience we interpret that, Tshepo's question cries for Africa who doesn't feed herself. Therefore, the question to Tshepo's question is, what will Africa eat for lunch in the next 6 years? Is Africa going to feed herself or the rest of the world will feed her?

Tshepo's suggestion is that they should have a 6 months deadline to save up money. This is a suggestion that Black people such as Tshepo need to set up a deadline (collective vision) to change the living conditions of those generation that will inherit the earth and that Black

people need to work hard towards this vision. This vision should be cultural, political and economical. It should also be acknowledged that there will be characters such as Dalitso in Black people's lives who will at first be pessimistic about the future.

Let us now go back to our characters, Mr Schimdt a tourist from Germany is not satisfied with his sexual experience with Dalitso and he wants his money back. He shouts! He shouts.

There are juxtaposed scenes where we see Tshepo fixing computers and television sets and Dalitso is doing her business of prostitution to her clients. We are now confronted with Dalitso's Indian clients. Who offers her an alternative material reality. The client tells Dalitso that he will give her an escape, freedom, money, clothes and travelling. Dalitso says to him that she will be his slave with everything. Dalitso rejects this offer.

It is now during the day when we see Dalitso meeting up with Tshepo on the roof top (a roof top is their symbolic place of meeting). In this moment Tshepo reminds Dalitso that the deadline has finally arrived. Dalitso is not ready to leave Hillbrow and tells Tshepo that they will leave soon. Tshepo says to Dalitso that they have enough money and that they should get married and start a new life somewhere. It is in this scene that Tshepo tells Dalitso that she likes being trapped in Hillbrow and does not want to be free. The two get into a verbal conflict. The episode ends when Tshepo and Dalitso are finally together in a new place. Tshepo gives Dalitso a cell phone so that she can call her mother in Zimbabwe.

Let me emphasise again that the characters' lives in the world of *InterSexions* are intersected and criss-crossed. Therefore, some characters do not live with other characters in the same world of the narrative. However, they are sexually connected.

Rationale

Visual languages such as drama series have always had a long lasting impact on their targeted audience. On *Intersexions* "Audiences loved the "what next?" factor and appreciated being confronted with reality that participation in a sexual network is almost unavoidable and the extent to this network is often unknowable" (Collinge et al., no date: 1). This impact surfaces through the entertainment and educational values of that particular visual language. "The more the popular entertainment, the greater the potential it has to raise awareness, impart knowledge, stimulate debate, influence attitudes and social norms, and bring about social change and behaviour change" (Goldstein ,2019:114). As such, studies on *Intersexions* have

always focused on the behavioral impact that this visual language has had and how messages are received by the audience in different social contexts. “The series sparked a considerable degree of meaningful self-reported behavior change as a result of participants’ engagement with *Intersexions*” (Myers et al., 2014:10).

Mthethwa (2014) studies *Intersexions*’ narrative structure and how this structure of a visual language was able to have an impact on its audience. Mthethwa (2014) does this by comparing the narrative structure of *Yizo Yizo* and *Intersexions*’ narrative structure. Mthethwa (2014:3) asserts that, “In South Africa, there are very few, if any, narrative analysis research studies conducted on South African television programmes. None were identified during the literature search for this study”. Therefore, my rationale is that there is no existing scholarship on visual languages that deal with the visual treatment of HIV/AIDS from the viewpoints of Afrofuturism and African Communication Ecology. These Afrofuturism values include freedom in the future, controlling the history of the future, self-determination and the use of public space. This study on *Intersexions* is important because scholarship that investigates progressive Black visual creators who employ values of Afrofuturism in the South African context regarding the visual treatment of HIV/AIDS is a rarity. Therefore, my rationale contributes to the debates around HIV/AIDS in the sense that Africa needs to approach this pandemic from Africa’s futuristic point of view. This means that, Africans need to create visual languages (television dramas and films) that will make Africans to understand how other general pandemics and the HIV/AIDS in particular operate.

This chapter is filling this gap. This means that I am not interested in how *Intersexions* was able to have an impact on the audience through its narrative structure. I am interested in the manner in which this visual language uses Afrofuturism values and the African Communication model to make us think seriously about the future of Black people and the future pandemics as I have mentioned above. This employment for me, registers *Intersexions* as a new visual language in particular at the level of pure thought and, of course, at the level of production.

The following discussion will be guided by questions such as:

What are the main aspirations and values of Afrofuturism that *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) is expressing and grappling with? In what ways are the critical concepts such as African indigenous media and Afrofuturism applied to highlight a new visual language in

Intersexions (2010) and (2013)? How has Nikiwe represented the pandemic in the standard photography of *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013)? How does *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) differ from any other visual idioms, historically and present? How did the Afrofuturistic elements of *Intersexions* (2010) and (2013) engage tensions of race, tensions of science and medicine in a country that inherited the legacies of apartheid and colonialism?

The African future is new, has been re(new-ed): Tomorrow and forever

Afrofuturism was theoretically developed in North America. Its historical development is closely linked to the historical development of science fiction. Therefore, it is an anomaly to discuss Afrofuturism without mentioning science fiction. According to Yaszek (2006:43):

Science fiction scholars generally agree that science fiction developed from the scientifically and technologically inspired stories of classic 19th-century authors including Mary Shelley and H.G. Wells in Great Britain, Jules Verne in France, and Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne in the United States.

These literary science fiction authors reworked traditional ways of storytelling such as gothic, the fantastic journey and the utopian fiction to reference modern scientific theories and the new technological developments.

The creation of Afrofuturism was a triggered political movement that was against the racist speculative fiction in the science community of North America. It is the cultural movement that resonates with some African visual makers because of its resistance to oppression in the future of Black people. Through *Intersexions* Nikiwe reaches out to his fellow visual creators in the new lands. This extension was triggered by the political representation of the pandemic in post-1994 South African images. These images were only used to show that the HI virus was not a collective responsibility of the Black society. An individual within Black communities was the only one responsible for the virus. Afrofuturism draws our attention on the collective experiences of the Black society. And how this collective experience can guide the Black society in moving forward. “As Alondra Nelson explains the science fictional elements of Afrofuturism provide both apt metaphors for black life and history and inspiration for technical and creative innovations of artists working in a variety of traditional and new media” (Nelson cited in Yaszek, 2006:47). This is an important citation in the context of this chapter because of Nikiwe’s political and cultural location. This means that he

uses these apt metaphors for black life in the context of South African television broadcasting.

There was a deficiency in the discussion of this fictional genre during the 1970s and the 1980s. The storytelling practices of Afrofuturism became part of a popular art form known as jazz music through musical texts of Sun Ra and Lee Scratch Perry.

Eventually, Afrofuturist storytelling became a regular aspect of black popular music, informing the work of funk musicians such as George Clinton in the 1970s, rap artists such as Public Enemy in the 1980s, and techno DJs such as Spooky: That Subliminal Kid in the 1990s and 2000s (Yaszek, 2006:46).

The primary purpose of Afrofuturism is not only to reclaim the history of the past but to also reclaim the history of the future. In *Intersexions*, Nikiwe claims the history of space representation post-Hillbrow through the use of Tshepo's and Dalitso's characters when they move into a new place. This move from Hillbrow into a new place is perhaps reminiscent of the ideology behind Sun Ra in *Space is the Place* (1974). In *Space is the Place* (1974), Sun Ra uses spaceship to visit planet earth, he time travels between Chicago 1942 and Oakland in California 1972 and addresses local African-Americans. In his address, Sun Ra attempts to persuade them to leave with him for a space colony.

Generally, it is a fact that the representation of Hillbrow space and Johannesburg in local visual drama series that dealt with the HIV narratives has not been updated. Nikiwe claims the future of the history in South Africa and in Africa. In his representation of the space, Hillbrow does not become the death bed of African cultural values. I argue that, Nikiwe uses the city to demonstrate the impact of the city not just on the morals but human psyche. This is exemplified by Dalitso's character when she comes from Zimbabwe as a good woman and she doesn't find work opportunities in Johannesburg and she then becomes a prostitute.

In relation to the mainstream understanding of science and technology and image representation, Kodwo Eshun (2003) conceptualised what he called "futures industry". According to Yaszek (2006:4):

These sources include big science, which generates data about the past and the present in order to predict the future; big business, which funds scientific research and acts upon its

results; and the global media, which synthesizes scientific and corporate activity into a relatively coherent narrative and then disseminates this narrative throughout the world.

Intersexions' visuals on the other hand, engage with the intimidating global events with specific reference to medical data. This happens through resilient characters such as Mandisa, Cherise, Tshepo and Dalitso who are agents of their own change.

Afrofuturists have proposed two related options to fight these dystopic futures. According to Yaszek (2006:48):

First, they use the vocabulary of science fiction to demonstrate how black alienation - what W.E.B. Du Bois called - double consciousness is exacerbated rather than alleviated by those visions of tomorrow that are disseminated by the futures industry and second, they disrupt, challenge, and otherwise transform those futures with fantastic stories that, as Ruth Mayer puts it, move seamlessly back and forth through time and space, between cultural traditions and geographic time zones and thus between blackness as a dystopic relic of the past and as a harbinger of a new and more promising alien future (Ruth Meyer, 2000: 556 cited in Yaszek, 2006:48).

As such, one would like to believe that if Africans do not take actions to deal with the flow of the pandemic, future children will inherit an alienated African future.

One of the ways in which the pandemic should be best understood, in how it flows especially in the future is media ecology. McLuhan made a significant contribution in the theorisation of Media Ecology. He investigated the “soft” influence of media in ordinary people’s lives. McLuhan’s theory put communications at the centre stage. As such, at the heart of all media lies communication. For an example, “Lewis Mumford’s beat was technology; George Herbert Mead’s was expression of the self upon the world; Susanne Langer’s was aesthetics. Most of course were related, fundamentally, to communication” (Levinson, 2000:17).

This brings one to the notion of ecology of communication, thus this discourse states that it is public knowledge among social theorists that the message is reflective of the process it is constituted. For beginners, life in the social strata embodies experiences and is an on-going exchange of meaning. “All communication involves some form of technology, even oral traditions that do not rely on any mechanical devices external to the people engaged in a conversation” (Altheide, 1994: 668).

The developments in communication media have led to new social activities and participation. Therefore, social processes are not purely autonomous, thus these processes co-exist with new emerging technologies in a given physical environment. “The notion that new media and technology can influence communication, can be contextualized by examining the impact of information technology in symbolic environments” (McLuhan 1962 cited in Altheide, 1994: 665). A sensitising concept has been proposed by various academics regarding ecology of communication, information technology and social activities. According to Altheide (1994:667), the ecology of communication is the communication process that is contextualised and it is characterised by three dimensions. The first one refers to an information technology (IT), the second refers to a communication format and the third one refers to social activity. In this particular context, IT refers to the external apparatus that are used to help organize, make, broadcast, find and extract information. Format involves the arrangement, coordination and administration of this experience and information. A journalist has observed that:

The coming together of personal computers, TV sets, phones, and big databases into all-purpose units lies at the heart of ‘multimedia’ and the new information highway. It’s clear that technology is driving mass media, telecommunications, and computer hardware and software into one cohesive activity (Glass. 1994: 49 cited in Altheide (1994:670).

On this note, the African indigenous forms of communication remain unique because of their effective way of spreading information. According to Osho (2011:2):

The uniqueness of the African means of communication is embedded in their originality, creativity, tradition and culture of the people. These essentially make them highly effective and enduring in the dissemination of information personally, inter-personally and through group communications.

Wilson (1987) has proposed four characteristics of traditional communication system, the first one is that it is used as a tool to organise and mobilise the people regarding social development and national consciousness. *Intersexions* was successful in mobilising the national consciousness of the South African audience to think seriously about the ways in which they are connected to the HIV pandemic. Wilson (1987) has attributed the failures of government programmes to the limited use of traditional communication system in the society. Thus, “Much of the failure that attends government mass-oriented programmes is

traceable to the fact that policy makers at the national level fail to utilize this powerful and credible system” (Wilson, 1987:100). An important characteristic formulated by Wilson (1987) is the cultural, political, social, health and political use of traditional communication system. Wilson (1987) writes that “Secondly, it is a source of cultural, political, health and other educational and enlightenment programmes for the masses leading them towards self-actualization and national development” (Wilson, 1987:100). The manner in which *Intersexions* relied on the health use of the traditional communication greatly assisted the ANC-led government to make awareness about the impact of the HIV pandemic.

It should be noted that one is refraining from endorsing negative connotations attached to the concept indigenous forms of communication. Therefore:

“It must be noted that the expression indigenous communication in this context is not a substitute for archaic, barbaric or rudimentary communication systems; rather it represents traditional and ancient communication systems” (Adesoji and Ongunjimi , 2015:406).

The African continent has been regarded as the cradle of humankind, I am at liberty to also express that, Africa is the cradle of human communication. As Osho (2010:147) notes that “all the means of communication originated from the earliest Africans in the old Egypt. The civilization later spread to China, India, Greece and Rome” (Osho (2010:147) cited in Osho, 2011:2). In traditional communication system it is vital to note that, there is a direct connection between the structure of the society and communication. This means that communications reflects the social organisation that it is part of. To substantiate this:

“The content of communication at any given time reflects the value pattern of society. The patterns of communications networks, which determine where information flows and who shares it with whom reflect the homogeneity of culture and geography within a society” (Schram, 1963: p. 34 cited in Dike, 2013:123).

The relevance of this is that, communication forms an important part of Afrofuturism. It is important to communicate the futures that Black people want to build. And also their perception of the concept of freedom in these futures needs to be communicated across all spheres of the society.

This is to say that the content of communication in television dramas and in films has always been about the reflection of the society by visual makers. The postcolonial project of

liberation and self-determination continues to dominate the creative imagination of African image creators. It remains an incomplete political, cultural, and economic narrative. “One need look no further than some definitions of science fiction to understand why the building blocks of this genre might prove attractive to African artists pondering the unfinished project of postcolonial liberation” (Moradewun Adejunmobi, 2016:265). With regards to science fiction definition, Suvin (1979) has conceived science fiction as “a strange newness”. Suvin (1979) defines science fiction as a literary genre “whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment” (Moradewun Adejunmobi, 2016:267).

It was Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr who has expanded the meaning of this term to refer to the “gap that lies between the conceivability of future transformations and the possibility of their actualization” (Moradewun Adejunmobi, 2016:267). Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr further states that it is “a complex hesitation about the relationship between imaginary conceptions and historical reality unfolding into the future” (Moradewun Adejunmobi, 2016:267). It is important to note that it was the former who is often cited as expressing that science fiction is the literature of cognitive estrangement (Lavender, 2011:28 and Adejunmobi, 2016:267).

At the heart of science fiction visual representation, lies race and racism sensibilities and imperatives. As such, to understand the historical and contemporary creative tasks, it is mandatory that one recognises the cultural politics that are at play in the making of racialised science fiction’s standard photography. The misleading ideology of science of race has been constructed by white European scholars to claim racial superiority. This is because they have utilised the known scientific concept (i.e. Darwinism) to translate it into social Darwinism to perpetuate racist thinking. Lavender (2011:7-8) has pointed out that “science fiction often talks about race by not talking about race, makes, real aliens, has hidden race dialogues”.

The African continent has historically been alienated as a pandemic continent by the rest of the world. In the context of *Intersexions*, DJ Mo becomes an alien in his own society. The society alienates him because he has full-blown AIDS. This kind of subtle discrimination is expressed from privileged generic White space. Lavender (2011:7-8) notes that “if science fiction is about social change, let us talk about how this change comes about from any other space, a black space”.

While this literary genre is science that is fictional, HIV/AIDS is not a fictitious reality nor was Slavery a phenomenon that was fictitious. “It is however, a peculiar institution that can be made even more peculiar when imagined in terms of technological forms of bondage or captivity” (Lavender, 2011:54). The familiar narratives in both science fiction and Afrofuturism depict interaction with the aliens, speculation, technologies, utopia and dystopia. It is therefore, necessary to be conscious of the fact that, science fiction constitutes Black Atlantic Slave Trade and its painful consequences.

This serves as a signal that one is turning to the analysis of the themes to demonstrate one’s argument.

Making Time to Achieve Freedom in the Future

The foundation of Tshepo and Dalitso scene/s in episode 5, is made up of the important theme that has always been a key characteristic of the constitution of Afrofuturism. Anderson and Jennings (2018:200) share a similar expression to the one Davis used in Anderson and Jennings (2018:200) when he pointed out that “Afrofuturism is Afro-Freedom”. Tshepo's character is a representation of this theme. The two are living in Hillbrow, where there is lack of personal freedom and are presented with dystopian reality of Hillbrow. “Man is free only if he/she knows he/she is free. Freedom is dependence on nothing outside (externality). Freedom is reliance on the self: self-accountability” (Gabriel Letswalo, 2016:42).

The importance of creating one’s future and the pursuit of freedom reigns supreme in the territory of Afrofuturism. Thus, the emphasis on the signification practice of this Afrofuturism theme is that, Africans should be in total control of the future and that Africans should reject predetermined futures constructed by the structures of global White Supremacy through the use of new technologies in arts, economics, politics, science and health. According to Gabriel Letswalo (2016:43):

In Negro spirituals, the soul of the black folk, you will recall, longs for an indeterminate freedom. The soul of the black folk is the critique of White American freedom itself. Lembede thinks an Africa finally free in the youth’s life time, thus questioning/correcting the Hegelian notion of freedom itself: that freedom, for the black, is not knowledge of his freedom. Rather, freedom for the black is possible through necessity (sublation of the master {the present}).

The soul of the black folk, Dalitso in this case, interrupts and rejects notions of freedom through this questioning of Hegelian view when she encounters an Indian client. The rejection is exemplified when her Indian client offers her an alternative material universal reality to her empirical universal reality. The dialogue between the two is as follow:

Indian Client: What if I got you an apartment in Sandton?

Dalitso: Why? What's in it for you?

Indian Client: Nothing. I'll give you an escape. Money, clothes, travel, everything.

Dalisto: I'd be your slave but with everything and you'd be my pimp.

Indian Client: No, you're too literal. Just think about how great this will be. I'll have access to you at all times and you'll have freedom and money. Just consider it.

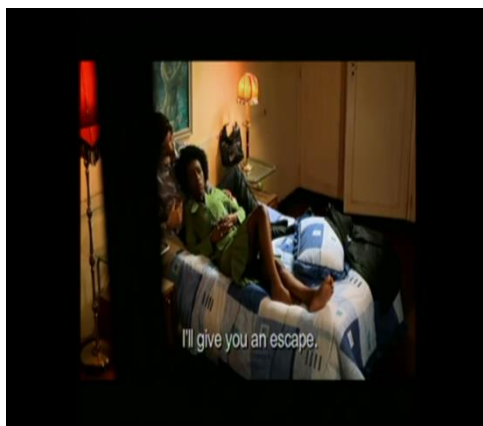




Figure 1: Dalitso rejects client's offer

Dalitso's rejection is an understanding that the notion of freedom and the experience of it is not necessarily defined by money and materialism. She's able to see this convenient myth and her rejection elaborates on the values of Afrofuturism to be independent towards building one's future without relying on other racial groups. Dalitso's reference to the discourse of slave indicates to one that she's able to understand the current economic structure of capitalism and how it is able to exploit those who work for it. It is the economic system of capitalism that promises individual African people that if they work hard they will become rich and travel the world. However, Dalitso is able to work hard as a prostitute but she is still subjected to poverty. Nonetheless, she still believes in crafting her own freedom in the future using her own terms and conditions.

Anderson and Jennings (2018:199) cites Damos Davis who avers that "Afrofuturism is imagining what the future looks like with you in it, in the way that you want it, and manifesting it through any and all means at your disposal". Similarly important, it is therefore notable that, Tshepo does not only imagine how his new future will look like with Dalitso. He firstly projects himself into the future and he takes it upon himself and performs important actions that will craft and shape his future. Tshepo's self-determination does not only demonstrate that "one man's refusal to play the role that has been socially scripted for him,

but also shows how, in refusing this role, one man can change the future” (Lisa Yaszek, 2006: 50). Through the visual *re-presentation* of Dalitso, it is evident that Hillbrow is a symbolic expression of dislocation, a homeless-ness space for the majority of Black people who come from many different parts of the African continent. Metaphorically speaking, Nikiwe reveals to us that Africans are located within a Hillbrow space that constitutes seductiveness of the notions of suicide. This view is also echoed in an earlier artistic rendition by Mpe. Gabriel Letswalo (2016:84) in reading Phaswane Mpe’s *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* contends that:

Hillbrow-the-name-and-place is a concrete metaphor for the possibility/the reality of the seductiveness of black suicide, I contend, a reality through which Mpe signals a writely challenge: how can a black write on suicide when he (himself/herself) lives through the shadow of the valley of death? How can he write other than through the dialectics of fiction and nonfiction?

Tshepo’s fictional character is the dialectics of Hillbrow’s non-fictional experience embodied by the non-fictional souls of the black folks in post-apartheid Hillbrow space. Underneath the visual surface, Tshepo seems to understand the plight of Black people who are residing in Hillbrow, hence his desire to move out. It is clear that Tshepo is not seduced by the seductiveness of the collective Black suicide that Hillbrow presents. It is discovered that Tshepo is time conscious regarding the conscience of the Black future.

The imagined future, which expresses itself through historical time, reveals itself within traditional Bantu time-consciousness, although not within traditional religion. To deny the imagined future is to deny the basis of hope, and to assert that Bantu consciousness is hopeless (Gillies, 1980:22).

One takes into consideration that Hillbrow during the Apartheid era was a white residential area with upmarket restaurants. However, in post-Apartheid South Africa, Hillbrow is an inner city residential area of Johannesburg that is characterised with joblessness, crime, destitution and prostitution. It is a space that asserts hopelessness in the souls of black folk as Du bois (1989) contended.

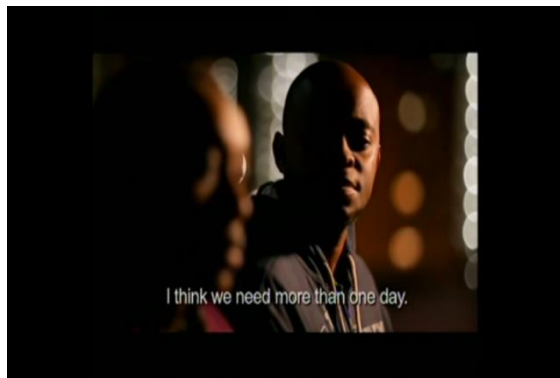


Figure 2: Tshepo's 6 months deadline episode 5

Tshepo's suggestion to Dalitso that they need more than a day; and that is 6 months deadline to move out of Hillbrow is indicative of his time consciousness. Time is of great importance regarding the ontology of Africans and how they conceptualise their world. According to Rasheedah Phillips in Anderson and Jennings (2018:157), "The ways in which we are situated in time is reflected in how we talk about, think about, and conceptualise the world around us". Tshepo sees the importance of situating himself in time as he seeks freedom. It is vital to take into consideration that time forms an integral part of Afrofuturism values. In the quest to find freedom and to create the future, Tshepo's logical thought realised that it is necessary that time should be created and *re-created*. In theorising about time, Rasheedah Phillips in Anderson and Jennings (2018:158) has pointed out that time in African cultural and spiritual contexts is created, it is not dependent on events and therefore it should be experienced for it to be real.

The structure of the episodes of *Intersexions* is also cognisant of the movement of time. This is illustrated in episode 2, where it is in the present tense of Mandisa's life. In episode 2, the events of Mandisa's life with DJ Mo Freak are five years earlier. The audience sees this through the intertitles on the blank screen of the text below:

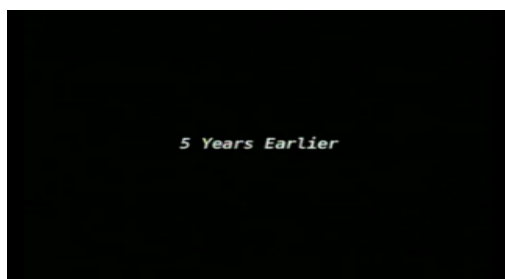


Figure 3: *Intersexions* (2010) episode 2

The intertitles of episode 3 indicate that it is one week later. The indication of time in *Intersexions* that moves backwards and forwards is an index of the traditional *Bantu* psychology of time.

There are two concepts of time within traditional Bantu thought. The present time (the Swahili *sasa*) or the now period encompasses the present, the immediate future and my own experiential past. The *sasa* period extending backwards beyond my own experience is absorbed within the *zamani* period (Swahili), which stretches backwards infinitely (Gillies, 1980:22).

Additionally:

A linear, Western time consciousness in direct opposition, stresses fixed events along forward moving timeline, while events are seen as irreversible. The linear timeline is embedded with cyclical time, in that hours, minutes, and seconds in their abstract numerical form, repeat. Events themselves, however, will never repeat on a progressive, linear timescale (Rasheedah Phillips in Anderson and Jennings, 2018:158).

The *re-creation* and *irreversibility* of time occurs when Tshepo tells Dalitso the truth about his recent past event. At this moment Dalitso experiences the time and the event Tshepo went through. This was the time when Tshepo was raped in jail. He expresses that his masculinity was shaken to the core. Evidently so, Dalitso provides emotional support to empathise and sympathise with Tshepo.

By extension, Tshepo becomes what Afrofuturism terms, astro-Black body that is resilient and breaks the conventions of historical typology. For Anderson and Jennings (2018:22), “An Astro-Body is a subjective, nuanced and flexible one. It denies the fixity of the stereotypes chains put upon it by others and itself. It’s about not only searching the possibility, but also about becoming the possibility.” This possibility is depicted at the end of episode 5 when Tshepo and Dalitso are in a new place together. And they are both happy. In this scene, Tshepo gives Dalitso a new cell phone so that she can call her mother in Zimbabwe. Prior to their arrival in a new geographical and political location, Dalitso’s uneasiness when Tshepo tells her that the deadline has arrived is a literal interpretation that there will be those individuals amongst Africans who will be unready to heed the call of moving out of their dystopian reality.

What is interesting about the presentation of the new place that Tshepo and Dalitso are part of is that it does not have a specific name. The interrogation of this new anonymous place is that, perhaps Black people should not disclose the General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) of their new place in order to avoid being followed by the explorers and travellers of the neo-colonial order. Tracking Black people will get them lost. “It is within the experience of slavery and exploitation, taking place within chronological time, that the imagination creates an alternative future” (Gillies, 1980:22).

Simplifying the Virus through the Visuals

The other way through which Nikiwe’s Afrifuturistic aesthetics can be appraised in how he engages conventional thinking regarding the home of HIV/AIDS pandemic, it is to be cognisant of the fact that Africa has been regarded as the home of AIDS by non-objective racist scientist in the West. “The Western world is now largely convinced that the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, or AIDS, originated in Africa, and that Africa is responsible for infecting the world” (Chirimuuta and Chirimuuta, 1989:3). In simplifying the abstract scientific organised data of the epidemic through the domestic visuals, Nikiwe subtly locates one’s consciousness at the heart of the debates, controversies and conspiracies of AIDS that spanned decades.

One acknowledges that, whether AIDS is a conspiracy or not, the reality is that people are dying from it. It is important to note that Nikiwe’s simplification of the virus draws one’s attention on the symbolism of fear that is in turn reflective of racist Whiteness towards Black people, the controversy surrounding the origin of the pandemic and how science was used to perpetuate racist Western ideas. In the introductory phase of this chapter, reference was made to the use of a song by Western scientists, politicians and visual makers to propagate racist notions about HIV/AIDS in Africa. I have stated what I meant by a song.

In noting the point above, *Intersexions* lyrics are a rendition of this song. This is because it has always been the personality and psychology of Western Europeans, for instance “When another sexually transmitted disease, syphilis, first appeared in Europe in the Middle Ages the English said it was a French disease. That was of course before NATO, and the English and the French were then inveterate enemies” (Chirimuuta and Chirimuuta, 1989:128). One should re-examine the history of AIDS in Africa to understand *Intersexions* visuals.

The manner in which Nikiwe cinematographically presented the epidemic is simple and easy to understand in one's cerebrum. This is the kind of visual art that African children can understand regarding the spread of HIV/AIDS. In most cases it becomes difficult for a non-expert person to understand and grasp the information and knowledge of HIV when two experts (scientists) are having opposing views regarding its behaviour. What I mean is that, it is easy for a lay man in the street to understand the opposing views of scientist when the body is shown by the scientist. The clip below relates to this in the sense that it is the visual representation of a person who has AIDS in their body system.



Figure 4: Alienated DJ Mo Freak in the hospital in episode 1

In episode 1 above, the audience encounters DJ Mo Freak who is lying in hospital bed and has full-blown AIDS and seems to be full of regrets. It is through this encounter that DJ Mo tells Mandisa that he has given up on taking ARVs. The reading of this scene is that AIDS has been visualised through the use of the make-up on the actor's face and also through the ability of the actor's performance. The audience is able to understand (visually) how the virus manifests itself in the somatic nervous system. The make-up in this particular context, for an example is used to change DJ Mo Freak's skin tone and complexion to put emphasis on his loss of weight. His mouth is dry. While the actor uses a slow rhythm pattern of speaking to Mandisa, at the same time his breath is also heavy. The audience can actually hear how he struggles to inhale and exhale oxygen.

The scene's visuals of DJ Mo draw our attention on the politics of the body itself. This means that, Nikiwe echoes Phala's (2012) investigation on how the body carries the impact of HIV/AIDS. The body experiences fear and tension as a result of the devastating effects of the pandemic. The fear of HIV/AIDS is absorbed by Mandisa's body too, sympathetically. It is the body that is an archive of our memorable experiences. According to Phala (2012:9) "My experience of fear and tension points out that my body has somewhat embodied these effects.

So if my body could unconsciously embody such an impact of HIV and AIDS so could bodies of many others living in the era of HIV and AIDS”. Mandisa’s understanding of HIV/AIDS meaning stems from her memorable experiences that are archived in her body. Through the exploration of the politics of character’s bodies, the fear that human beings embody in their interaction with aliens and robots in Afrofuturism and science fiction films is parallel to the fear of contracting the virus in *Intersexions*.

DJ Mo’s symptoms and signs have been expressed by medical scientists regarding how the virus attacks the immune system in the absence of ARVs. However, research has been neglected on how the body embodies the impact of HIV/AIDS, in particular in post-apartheid television dramas. Phala (2012:10) points out that:

Research on the lived experience and how this translates into how we construct the meaning of HIV and AIDS particularly within the South African context has to an extent been ignored and neglected. Those studies that have given insight to the lived experience of HIV and AIDS have mostly used conventional research modes. Although these studies have contributed positively to the HIV and AIDS response, much ground has not shifted from the cognitive ways of knowing that have dominated HIV and AIDS responses. Therefore, the body as a knowing entity in HIV and AIDS remains on the side-line.

Emotionally in the scene above, the audience is invited to participate. This participation is triggered by the fact that DJ Mo Freak has been alienated by the pandemic. He is quarantined in the hospital. And he is no longer surrounded by his fans and promiscuous friends. The performance entertainment shows are outside of his space. At this point one should be reminded that the concept of alienation has been explored and exploited in dominant tropes of science fiction films. This is also applicable to Afrofuturism dramatic visuals. “Science fiction produces alien and divergent neighbourhoods, with strange and dissimilar signs, shifting identities, and distorted realities of existence” (Lavender, 2011:21). The usefulness of this citation is that, it makes one realise how DJ Mo Freak’s life has become strange and how his identity as a public figure has changed as he experiences alienation.

Historical depiction of visual grammars was only representing ordinary people experiencing alienation after being infected with the HI virus. The public perception on famous people or ‘celebrities’ was that they are immune to HIV/AIDS. In showing that DJ Mo too was infected with HIV/AIDS and finally died from it, is representational ideation that was to alter public

psychology that everyone and anyone can get infected and affected by the pandemic. It is aurally and visually clear in the signified structure of *Intersexions* that everyone in the public domain is knowledgeable about DJ Mo's HIV status. This clarity is offered in the business meeting scene between Kabelo Motaung, Mandisa, Cherise, and a one reputable businessman from Nigeria and the other businessman from South Africa. In this business meeting, Kabelo is shocked to find out that Mandisa has worked with DJ Mo, indirectly this surfaces Kabelo's preconceived ideas and attitude towards DJ Mo. Therefore, Kabelo's body as a knowing entity resonates with what Phala (2012:11) has indicated:

This is more so because bodily practices remain unconscious to us, nonetheless it is evident that once we have learnt something through our body it continues to play an important role in how we situate ourselves in the world and how we perceive others and this is no different in the situation of HIV and AIDS.

Mandisa's body memory, to account for the earlier events is that, she worked with DJ Mo before she met Kabelo. She was responsible for marketing and branding DJ Mo. What is important to observe is that, the newness in *Intersexions* is inserted in this pandemic depiction through the application of the African indigenous communication system that the South African media uses (i.e. word of mouth) while bringing the politics of the body to the fore. One begins to look at the centrality of the body. The HIV/AIDS story of the body, via the visuals, is in itself important to listen to. This is to assert that there has been a shift in the consciousness of *Intersexions'* visuals regarding the historical representation of the pandemic.

The HIV/AIDS story of the body is represented in the scene where Kabelo Motaung tests positive for HIV in episode 25 and fails to comprehend the results. An observation is that, Nikiwe demonstrates poignantly the dissemination of information through the simplified dialogue between Kabelo and the Doctor at the hospital. Kabelo represents many South Africans, irrespective of their level of education and social class (Kabelo is part of the black middle class), who do not understand the flow of the pandemic in different bodies. In his scenario, the wife Mandisa is not HIV positive. When the doctor enlightens Kabelo in the hospital about this complex scientific scenario the audience also gets informed.

Doctor: Mr. Motaung, I need a decision on something. I want to know if you and Mrs. Motaung will be wanting to bury the fetus. Some families insist on this.

Kabelo Motaung; Yeah

Doctor: Please talk to her and let me know.

Kabelo Motaung: Doctor, There's something I need to understand. I've just tested positive for HIV but my wife Mandisa is negative.

Doctor: Well it does happen in a relationship that one partner is negative and the other positive.



Figure 5: Kabelo's hospital scene with the Doctor in episode 25

Another worth mentioning example is when Kabelo asks the Doctor if he will be able to have a family and the doctor assures him that he will be able to have a family. I have recreated their dialogue below.

Doctor: Look, I'm needed in theatre so I have to run. Okay.

Kabelo Motaung: I'll never be able... We'll never be able to have family right?

Doctor: No, it's possible. It's possible to have a child who is HIV negative. Look I'm in a bit of a rush right now. Why don't you come past my office and we can talk about it

Kabelo Motaung: So we can have a family?

Doctor: Yeah

These two medical facts were visualised because the general and stigmatised view of the pandemic in this country at the time was that one cannot have a family if they tested positive. Also, if one has tested positive it automatically means that the partner is also HIV positive. Kabelo's obsession with family relates to Afrofuturism value of the future in the sense that it is the family that is responsible for the continuation of Black people as far as the future is

concerned. As such, a virus must not stop the continuation of Black lives. One begins to see how *Intersexions* differs from any other visual idioms of the pandemic, historically and present.

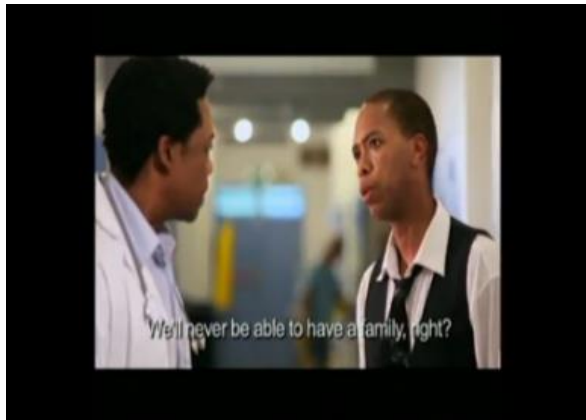


Figure 6: The Doctor tells Kabelo that it's possible to have Family in Episode 2

Connecting Space and Place: A reference to Sun Ra's *Space is the Place* (1974)

In most cases the majority of people get into contact with viruses in public spaces. This is to say that families meet strangers in public spaces before they get involved in sexual activities with them in their private spaces. *Intersexions'* visuals paid attention on the importance of space in mobilising the people on the ground level. This happens through the awareness of the pandemic using radio (Ukhozi FM), university campus, church, clinic and the word of mouth. The usefulness of indigenous communication is mainly depicted in *Intersexions* society through the mass media communication such as radio. This is visualised before Mandisa's big day of the wedding when the radio (Ukhozi FM) becomes a folk media that is used by DJ Mo in episode 1. In this scene DJ Mo announces that he is HIV positive. After listening to this on the radio Mandisa and her friend express their fear and anxiety while preparing for the wedding that is about to happen. Ukhozi FM is used to occupy different public spaces. This is because it is the only radio station that enjoys high ratings of listenership in the whole of South Africa. As a result of this, it is assumed that the majority of South Africans are connected through radio. This human connection is a significant structure of *Intersexions* story and plot amongst characters.

Therefore, the structure of how characters are connected in all the episodes of *Intersexions* underpins the notion that communication in African indigenous societies has always been

interwoven. “The content of communication at any given time reflects the value pattern of society. The patterns of communications networks, which determine where information flows and who shares it with whom reflect the homogeneity of culture and geography within a society.”(Schram, 1963:3 in Dike, 2013:123).The African indigenous communication system is used here when characters inform each other of how HIV/AIDS spreads. This representation is also echoed by Ugboajah who points out that “The Synod recognised that the media of communication of these independent churches were more often suitable and rooted in the African mentality and culture than the media the Catholics use in their churches and homes” (Frank Ugboajah, 1982: 214-215).

Another way to view the emphasis of this connection is the opening title sequences of *Intersexions* season 1 and 2 that have the pictures of different characters in the narrative. In every episode the audience follows the journey of a particular character after seeing their picture in the opening title sequence of each episode. This is to establish that these different characters are sexually connected. This connection focuses one’s attention on the movement of HIV/AIDS in both public and private spaces. This is justified by the voice-over in the opening sequence that says: “*Our lives intersect in a vast network which connects us all. In sex there are no strangers*”. This voice-over directly speaks to the notion of African indigenous communication system that is central to the world of *Intersexions* as I have mentioned above. This visual text recognises that the social organisation is in a network kind of fashion. The opening sequence of season 2 of *Intersexions* also has a voice-over that says: “*Our lives intersect in mysterious ways bound together by the secrets we keep. Open to the harm that secrets bring*”.

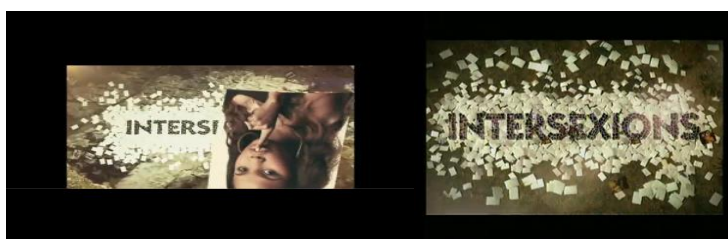


Figure 7: Opening Title Sequences of *Intersexions* Season 2(left) and 1 (right)

DJ Mo’s funeral secrets are revealed between Mandisa and Motaung and the other lady to reinforce the practical experiences of how bodies are connected in different spaces. And at the same time use the importance of a public space such as a church. It is not only used to preach theology but also used to reveal secrets between bodies.

Conclusion

The success of *Intersexions* visuals to create fear, anxiety and tension amongst the South African audience was achieved through the use of African indigenous communication model. The observation is that, the majority of South Africans relied on radio to learn about the behaviour of the pandemic (i.e. HIV education). Therefore, it was through *Intersexions* that this education needed to be visualised. What is important to note is that, HIV education employed western modes of communication on how the pandemic behaves. One of the key characteristics of indigenous communication system is its powerful use to organise and mobilise people with regards to the development of social and cultural awareness. Wilson (1987) indicated that the lack of using traditional communication system leads to failed government programmes.

In *Space is the Place* (1974) Sun Ra implies that music can be used to take Black people from planet earth to another planet/space, music can be used to transport them into different states of being, parallel to this, and Nikiwe uses the images/visuals to transport Africans to the state of fear and anxiety.

The application of Afrofuturism on the South African vernacular visual expression was justified because Africans on the African soil and in diaspora are still faced with one denominator of oppression. The understanding of Afrofuturism should not only be limited to big flying machines, talking robots, driverless cars and strange costume design. It was through these themes that allowed one to understand how Africans can be able to connect Afrofuturism and future pandemics. Therefore, Afrofuturism allows Africans to create solutions for the future in terms of technological advancement and the organising of science data.

Chapter 4

Matatiele (2015) is Stranger than Fiction

The representation of myth through Nikiwe's visual practice offers an alternative cultural, political and spiritual platform to understand the past events. The alternative in *Matatiele (2015)* is in how historical events are located within the African indigenous spirituality (i.e. the supernatural). Masilela (2003) in Tomaselli (2006:125) highlights that, the South African national cinema is incomplete without the awareness of these historical events. Anthropophagy (i.e. cannibalism as a myth) discussions have always occupied the anthropological imagination and its artistic representation. Nikiwe's interpretation of history is expressed through African Bantu spirituality. *Matatiele (2015)*'s artistic representation of this spirituality legitimises the fact that the tales of African mythologies and cannibalism have always been accompanied by the spiritual realm. In having an understanding of the portrait of historical events, myth representation, cannibalism and the role of spirituality, one should be in a position to have knowledge of the politics of image creation regarding myths that were spread across the globe. Historically, in Europe and in the Americas, there has been various cinematic treatments of myths, history, popular memory and cannibalism. These cannibalistic historic visuals spread across the world in other cinemas.

In terms of preposition, a readily available visual landmark in the South African context is *De Voortrekkers/ Winning a Continent (1916)*. According to Tomaselli (2006:127) "This historical epic dramatically illustrated the dominant British imperialist ideology through an interlock of fiction, history and myth". The dilemma of what is true or fiction, what is history or a myth has spanned for centuries. This dilemma inevitably continues to dominate academic discussion in Africa today. Thus, European science methodologies, cinematographic representation and its moot history are indebted to this problematic dilemma. Many scholars will agree with the popular cliché that, history has been fictionalised and fiction has been historicised. However, there is one prominent scholar in the West intellectual tradition who has argued that history has not ended. "In the course of thinking through the many critiques that had been put forward, it seemed to me that the only one that was not possible to refute was the argument that there could be no end of history unless there was an end of science" (Fukuyama, 2002: xii). This simply means that history continues to be part of fiction.

Here in the chapter, I would like to contest that it is impossible to deny the close relationship between myth, cannibalism and history. This is because “Myth and history are close kin inasmuch as both explain how things got to be the way they are by telling some sort of story” (McNeill, 1986:1). The cinematographic imagination of *Matatiele* (2015) rests upon this relationship. Hence, the symbolic logic of *Matatiele* (2015) trespasses the general accepted notion of what is perceived to be true or false. The main issue of contention regarding this relationship is the notion of truth.

“Accordingly, a historian who rejects someone else’s conclusions calls them mythical, while claiming that his own views are true. But what seems true to one historian will seem false to another, so one historian’s truth becomes another’s myth, even at the moment of utterance” (McNeill, 1986:1). In the context of *Matatiele* (2015) myth, cannibalism and the tale of history intersect through African Bantu spirituality. This means that, when characters such as Lefa and Nontle want to comprehend their own cultural myth, cannibalism and history they should be aligned with their native spirituality.

In dealing with the conundrum of historical myth representations and cannibalism through the semiotics of *Matatiele* (2015), this chapter contends that Nikiwe does present a new visual language in post-Apartheid South African visual projects. The chapter propounds the view that *Matatiele* (2015) revamps the visual grammars of cannibalism and myth as far as history is concerned. The newness is inserted in the manner in which the supernatural (African Bantu spirituality) is largely responsible for social events. For example, this is manifested in episode 26 when Lefa receives a vision in his sleep from Zanezulu (the Great Xhosa ancestor) when he instructs him to go to MaNgconde if he wants to know all the answers about the past.

Thus, this complex unfamiliar creative visual product empowers the audience to map the intricacies of history and how myth was created to represent cannibalism. The fact that Nikiwe participates in the relationship between history, spirituality, myth and cannibalism is in itself inventive. The inventiveness of this performance will be explored in this chapter. It is important to note that this chapter is not concerned about whether *Matatiele* (2015) is faithful to the reconstruction of the past or not. These subsequent themes will form part of the textual analysis: cannibalism, social awareness of characters’ practical politics and spiritual belief system. In the quest to investigate the visuals of *Matatiele* (2015) the following questions are

an integral part of this chapter: How is the representation of myth in *Matatiele* (2015) constructed differently from any other earlier representation of myth? What is cannibalism in *Matatiele*'s (2015) visual logic? In what way does *Matatiele* (2015) blur the relationship/line between history (fact), spirituality (belief) and fiction (myth)? And does the cinematography of cannibalism in *Matatiele* (2015) equate to newness?

The Political Economy of *Matatiele* (2015): Background

Matatiele was produced at the time when South Africa experienced significant social and political events in 2015. The polyglot South African society went through an intense discourse of xenophobic attacks. On the African continent one should note that the discourse of xenophobia is not only unique to South Africa. As such, one of the countries that is part of Southern African Development Community (SADC) such as Botswana was investigated by Gray (1998) and Nyamnjoh (2017) regarding the cultural presence of xenophobic attacks. Non-Botswana nationals and non-Gabon nationals were isolated based on their country of origin. Additionally:

The official rhetoric in most African countries is that the discrimination of non-nationals or xenophobia is distasteful and regressive, yet evidence from Botswana, Cameroon, Gabon, Kenya, Ivory Coast and South Africa show that hidden behind the rhetoric are contestations over belonging (Geschiere, 2009 quoted in Mangezvo, 2015:52).

The subtext of the tension that exists between the Sothos and Xhosas stems from the sense of belonging in the village of Matatiele. For an example, Mbijana tells Lekunutu that Matatiele land was fought for by his great ancestors. Mbijana, therefore, refers to Matatiele as the Holy Land. He argues that they constitutionally own the land of Matatiele village. This claim is linked to how the myth is constructed. Myth in *Matatiele* (2015) revolves around the cannibalisation of Zanezulu and the historical results thereafter. Zanezulu is depicted walking alone in the green beautiful forest of Matatiele village when four Sotho men who are carrying spears attacked him from behind and ate his heart.

This is because they believed that they too will have the power that he possessed. The cannibalistic activity of Zanezulu creates mythical views that Xhosa people have always had about the Sothos. On the other hand, the Sothos through Lekunutu's visual representation viewed themselves as the greatest Sotho victors. The sense of greatness originates from the

fact that they were able to defeat the great Xhosa warrior.

It was produced at the time when Black students at the University of Cape Town, Rhodes University and University of the Witwatersrand called for free, decolonised and quality education higher institutions of learning.

Matatiele (2015) synopsis

The story is set in the village called Matatiele that is between Kwa-Zulu Natal and Eastern Cape border, South Africa. The story draws symbolic inspiration from the purported cultural and political events that happened during and after Mfecane War. Mfecane was a period in which indigenous peoples were involved in widespread warfare in Southern Africa between 1815 and 1840. The Monahengs (the Sotho family) and the Sangqus (the Xhosa family) hate each other because of these historical events. The drama in this narrative is when Lefa Monaheng and Nontle Sangqu fall in love with each other. The two are protagonists in the narrative. Nontle's pregnancy escalates the dramatic narrative to the highest level.

In the very first images of episode 1 of *Matatiele (2015)*, the audience encounters the tension (conflict of the scene) between the two families (the Monahengs and the Sangqus) during the start of the church service. Lekunutu Monaheng (a grandfather who represents a cultural custodian of Sesotho history) rushes members of the church after he sees Mbijana Sangqu and his family (also a grandfather who is an embodiment of IsiXhosa cultural custodian). Lekunutu quickly closes the church doors to prevent the Sangqus from entering. After they have entered, the seating arrangement of the church gets divided.

While in church, Mbijana Sangqu contributes R5 to the church and Lekunutu asks him if he knows the saying "*you will reap what you sow?*" Lekunutu tells him this in front of the church congregation. Mbijana then asks Lekunutu, "*Who do you think you are?*" This question is asked because there is the perception that he has forgotten that they have accumulated wealth through stealing their livestock. This escalates into a physical fight between the two families. The church is in chaos.

In the next scene, the Pastor tells one of the prominent community members about what happened in the church the previous day. Towards the end of this scene the Pastor says: "*why don't we try to unite the youth instead? The young minds are fresh and innocent and untainted.*" He acknowledges the fact that the elders are not going to get over their historical

hatred. Immediately after this scene, the audience sees Lefa and Bhonyongo (Nontle's brother) where they are competing against each other during the traditional horse racing. Lefa wins the race.

In a scene of episode 3, Lefa confronts Lekunutu(his grandfather) about the historical events. Lefa asks him about the origin of the tension between the Xhosas and the Sothos. In his confrontation, Lefa wants to confirm if it is true or not that the Sothos cannibalised Zanezulu (Xhosa ancestor). While Lekunutu narrates the historical story, Lefa leaves him alone. Still on episode 3, the physical fight between Lefa and Bhonyongo happens near the kraal. Lefa is at the kraal to check up on his family's livestock. Before this fight, Bhonyongo insults Lefa by saying that he must be a man. Also, in episode 3 there is a verbal conflict between Lekunutu and Mbijana. The two recite their clan names to prove that they both belong to great nations.

When Nontle announces the shocking news to her family that she is pregnant, she receives harsh criticism for falling in love with her ancestors' enemy. The scene ends when Mbijana collapses after hearing this news. Similarly, in episode 4 Lefa informs his family that he has impregnated Nontle. Lefa's mother (Beauty) is terribly angry at him. While she is angry and shouting, the Sangqus arrived at the gate to report the damage.

In the scene between Bhonyongo and Mbijana, the grandfather refers to the Lekunutus as cannibals. Mbijana is worried about what people will say. People are already gossiping. Most importantly he is worried about what the ancestors will do. He feels defeated and yearns for death. He ask God to take him. In another scene, the audience encounters a witch-doctor who instructs a man from the village that he should go with other men to kill Lefa and Nontle's child. After killing the child they should bring back the heart. The witch-doctor tells him that if they do not bring the heart, this child will be the most powerful leader to rule the village. Bhonyongo is the one who organised the witch-doctor. Nontle's brother was actively involved in stealing Nontle's child. What is important to note about the traditional healer's representation is that, Nikiwe is questioning and dismissing the myth about cannibalism that has always been centred on practitioners of African Bantu spirituality. The mythologised truth is that they use human internal body parts to strengthen themselves. Nikiwe, denied the witch-doctor an access to have the heart of Lefa and Nontle's son.

The gist of episode 26 is to show how interconnected the experiences are. The opening image

is Lefa's vision in a dream of Zanezulu. In this vision, Zanezulu tells him that he should go visit MaNgconde to find the answers. The events of episode 26 are in flashback. Therefore, MaNgconde tells Lefa that life experiences are not always a coincidence. I would like to believe that MaNgconde's words, "*Ayikho into evela yenzeke nje*" (*things don't just happen*) is a reference to the Supreme Being. These words imply that people are not in control of their own destiny; not only their destiny but also their history. This is because Africans were not in control of the past (history) political events of oppression. MaNgconde asks Lefa about his purpose in life. Lefa says that he does not know. The twist of the events in episode 26 is that, Lefa learns that his son is Zanezulu. This means that, his son possesses the power that Zanezulu had. Therefore, Lefa carries the dreams, ambitions and legacy of his people. MaNgconde tells him that they were meant to be together. The season of *Matatiele* (2015) ends when Nontle goes mad. She got mad after the child was stolen from her. This happens when Lefa goes to fetch her and tell her that the situation will revert to normal. The phrase "*Ntho di tlo loka*" (*things will be alright*) leads to the rolling credits of the production.

Rationale

Generally, creative visual languages have been enthusiastic regarding the representation of history, myth, cannibalism and cultural memory. The mainstream of South African visual system is not characterised by moving images that address cannibalism in the context of historical myth representation, in particular the role of spirituality. Therefore, the investigation of *Matatiele* (2015) visuals is important in this chapter because there has not been enough study on South Africa's visual languages that address the relationship between cannibalism, spirituality, myth and indigenous history, that is a direct simulation of Mfecane War.

There have been existing creative dramatic products that relocated cannibalism to European context. According to King (2008:118) "Shakespeares *Othello* uses and centralises culture, body and distance to make sense of the world through the distinction of the known and unknown, the familiar and the alien". This does not only refer to European literature. The major themes in *Othello* are racial prejudice (racism), manipulation and jealousy. In *Matatiele* (2015) the tension between the two families is cultural prejudice to manipulate their love life. Othello is a Shakespearean Black male character in one of the tragedies (*Othello*) and Desdemona is a White female. Characters in the narrative use racist language to

describe Othello's phenotype such as "thick lips." Myth in *Othello* is in how characters describe Othello as hypersexualised. This has been an old rigid belief created by Europeans that Black men have uncontrollable strong sexual libido and they are animalistic in nature.

Iago deceives Othello in their communication. Iago invents lies and creates a false reality that convinces Othello that Desdemona is cheating on him. There is a link in *Matatiele* (2015) where cultural prejudice is expressed towards Lefa and Nontle. Therefore, their parents and grandparents use distorted information about the past to manipulate their love life reality. It is important to make the reader aware that *Matatiele* (2015) uses the classic structure of Shakespearean *Romeo and Juliet* narrative. The latter is a tragic love story of Romeo and Juliet, because of historical feud between the two families.

The origin of cannibalism is traced to Christopher Columbus' controversial discovery of the native inhabitants of Haiti and Cuba who allegedly referred to themselves as *canibales*. However, "Whether or not the Caribs were actually cannibals is disputed" (Arens in *Man-Eating Myth* 1919:595 in Scott and McMurry, 1977:213). Columbus was the one who spread myths about non-Western people that he was in contact with. The etymology of the term was only applied by zoologists to mean animals that eat each other and not referring to human beings. The practice of cannibalism has been common amongst gorillas and chimpanzees. This was known as intraspecific relation (Scott and McMurry, 1977:213). Factors that led to cannibalistic behaviour amongst animals included famine, population stress, species survival and elimination of competitors.

A caution of note in this chapter is that cannibalism does not only allude to the physical manifestation. "We cannibalise those we love, just as we do those we hate, and not always literally, as a study of white labour and black slave labour in the makings of American capitalism would suggest" (Fitzhugh 1988 [1960] cited in Nyamnjoh, 2018:5). A point that needs to be highlighted is that the central operation of cannibalism is that it was the division of social life. "As a consequence, cannibalism, real and imagined, is best understood as a weapon" (King, 2000:109).

Palpably, Lefa Monaheng and Nontle Sangqu are cannibalised by their parents and grandparents as a result of the historical relationship that materialised between the Sothos and Xhosas. King (2000:110) points out that "This critical understanding of others as cannibals have justified colonial projects, sanctioned the recreation of indigenous peoples after

westerners, and protected the fabrication of the imagined communities.” In this particular line of thinking, one recognises that acts of cannibalism are occupied by a belief. Therefore, this is closely related to the notion of myth and it is impossible to separate the two.

The expression of creative visual languages mark a particular moment in history. And therefore, the manners in which their semiological structures and systems are constructed inform the audience about this particular period. A point to note is that, the expression can be false or truthful to the events. This expression is regulated by dominant political ideas of the film’s specific context. Films (or visual languages) continue to perform an active role in crafting the modern society’s notion of historical events. For example:

The films championed by Bazin, for an example, the neo-realist films of Rossellini, Visconti and De Sica, have had a deep and lasting effect on our understanding of the effects of World War Two, as have more recent films such as *Schindler’s List* and other films dealing with the Holocaust (Burgoyne, 2003:221).

As a result of Mfecane War, *Matatiele* (2015) deals with the powerful effect of cultural tensions (tribalism) and connects the audience to the histories of these nations. This is not to imply that films are not problematic cultural sites. *Matatiele*’s (2015) details of cannibalism violence raises the controversial historical events of Mfecane War.

The study on historical films have shown significant efforts and proved that visual languages that dealt directly with historical narratives have a symbolic social impact. According to Burgoyne (2003:221):

Historical films have real-world reverberations: recent films such as *JFK*, *Bravement*, *Glory*, *The Hurricane* and *Dances with Wolves* have served as a catalyst for the re-evaluation of the historical past; they have provoked government and led to the opening of secret files; they have inspired national consciousness.

JFK and *First Guap* are films that interpreted historical events in a manner that blurs the line between actuality and fiction.

There is relatively enough scholarship on the notion of history, myth and cannibalism in the South African intellectual and academic circles. However, studies on the direct relation between history and African Bantu spirituality is lacking. Mamatu (2006) discusses the idea of myth in Shuster’s *Mr Bones* (2001) and how this myth is indicative of white laughter.

Therefore, my chapter fills this academic gap. Myth and historical cannibalism in *Matatiele* (2015) text are indicative of African Bantu spirituality. The myth that Africa is a Dark Continent and white laughter cannot be treated separately. Mamatu (2006:15) avows that “The idea of the Dark Continent and white laughter are inseparable, and when harmonized affirms the repository that whiteness celebrates about Africa”.

Tomaselli (2006)’s studies in *Popular Memory and Historical Film: Capital and Culture* tackled visual grammars that have been produced between 1916 and 1922. These films employed oppressive visual representations that constituted Black people as Savage Other or Faithful Servant iconography and represented Europeans as Imperial Man. This construction denied African Bantu people their vital spiritual identity. However, in *Matatiele* (2015) we witness that Black Africans are spiritual and exist in diverse faith groups.

Tomaselli (2006:127) asserts that, “fiction was interwoven with actuality and social, racial and historical contradictions were smoothed over in the interests of capital and ideology.” The study on the imagery of *De Voortreker/Winning a Continent* (1916) concluded that the images were powerful enough that they influenced the visuals of American film called *The Covered Wagon* (1923) and these images were considered to be equivalent of South African *Birth of Nation* (1915).

The popular North American story that has been associated with acts of cannibals is the *Donner Party* for over 150 years. “While the *Donner Party* exemplifies the strength, spirit, character, and perseverance of early pioneers, it is most often associated with its darkest feature, cannibalism” (Scott and McMurry, 1977:211). Additionally important, “Despite its synonymy with cannibalism, the *Donner Party* is but a single instance of anthropophagy in the historic and prehistoric records” (Ibid).

It was Arens in *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy*, who disputed the claims made by early European missionaries, historians, explorers and anthropologists about cultural cannibalistic practices of other non-Western societies. To support this, Arens in Scott and McMurry (1977: 216) points out that “I have been unable to uncover adequate documentation of cannibalism as a custom in any form for any society”. Arens’ major argument is that anthropologists passively accepted and reported cannibalism, “Moreover, the acceptance of such tales is driven more by cultural tradition and xenophobia than grounded in reality” (Scott and McMurry, 1977:216).

Tsai (2016), investigated cannibalism history from Western perspectives and historical tropes of cannibalism in the Chinese identity through contemporary literature and film of the Chinese. Tsai (2016) mentions Chong in his investigation of cannibalism in China and how he categorised the practices of cannibalism. “The Chinese have understood cannibalism of this type in terms of love and loyalty toward family and political superiors. These non-religious, secular ideas, intertwine with medicinal and culinary discourses, shaped Chinese thinking and behaviour” (Tsai, 2016:3). Tsai’s remarks that Lu Xun’s *Dairy of a Madman* (1918) and *Medicine* (1919) were critique of traditional Chinese culture, and thus called for a new Chinese culture. “Lu Xun’s cannibalistic allegories of *Diary of a Madman* and *Medicine* establish enlightenment subjects who recognise classical and feudal ethics as cannibalistic and therefore call for the need to reform” (Tsai, 2016:4).

The discussion of the textual analyses will be guided by these following questions: In what way is the depiction of myth historical? What is the root cause of cannibalism, as far as *Matatiele* (2015) visual language is concerned? How is the access to historiography imaged through the unconsciousness? And does the African Bantu spiritual realm present an ultimatum to the reading of important historical events?

The history of his-story: Here is the story of the relationship between myth, cannibalism and history

What was not clearly articulated in the discourse of cannibalism is that all wars are barbaric. The basic tenet of these cannibalistic wars is material gain. In the observation of the historical timeline the popular phrase “history is written by the victor” has been proved to be correct. This is because indigenous people’s histories through the medium of visual languages have not received enough academic attention. Stoddard et al. (2014) article is an exploration of film *about* and made *for* or *by* indigenous people’s histories. In this exploration Stoddard et al. (2014) introduce and engage the students on the potential and possibilities of film to study indigenous history and perspectives in secondary classroom. Stoddard et al. (2014) examine the extent to which films meet the burden of historical representation. Similarly, Stoddard et al. (2014) examine the importance of films in representing indigenous history with secondary students to pose critical questions regarding the mainstream historical tropes that are presented in schools. And in turn, suppress perspectives of the marginalised in the school curriculum.

The South African school curriculum for indigenous war histories such as Mfecane War has been mythologised as truth. The theory of Mfecane War, has been advanced by the victors. This means that, Mfecane War was not Shaka Zulu's invention. What existed were internal conflicts amongst African indigenous peoples in southern Africa, as a result of the pressures of slave trade and colonialism. Julian Cobbing (1988:517) vehemently argues that "The arrival of the 1820 settlers in the eastern Cape had regional ramifications, and was considerably more decisive than the accession of Shaka." Literature and scholarship on Mfecane War need an intensive revision and re-examination of what truly happened. What is clear from these teleological theories of history is that they have been fictionalised and presented as mythologised truths. Nikiwe in *Matatiele* (2015) uses the camera to highlight this historical fact:

More work is still needed to decipher these intricate sequences, but the outline is clear. The disturbances in the northern Cape, south-western Transvaal, Orange Free State and western Lesotho were rooted in the Cape Colony's demand for labour and cattle, not in Zulu expansionism. Allegations that the Orange Free State was depopulated by the Zulu or the Ndebele are without any foundation Julian Cobbing (1988:517).

Stoddard et al. (2014) have highlighted the disagreement about what is considered an indigenous film. As a result of this, Stoddard et al, (2014) have classified indigenous films in two categories. For instance, films such as *Nanook of the North* (1922) and *Dances with Wolves* (1990) are about indigenous peoples and histories. While a film such as *Smoke Signals* (1988) is *for* or *by* the indigenous peoples. One views *Matatiele* (2015) as a cultural product *for* and *by* indigenous South African people. Nonetheless, it is not wise to accept the limitations of this category.

In *Passionate Histories*, Little et al. (2010) outline the problematic relationship and tension that historians have with the medium of film. Lel cited in Little et al. (2010:78) argues that "While archival, documented history can be accurate, it cannot always be true in the way that fiction can." Therefore, the general emotional commitment amongst historians is that "Historians often think that filmmakers are inclined to trivialize the past (Little et al. 2010).

Little et al. (2010) speak about the *Unsettling Histories* project that used numerous strategies of the Aboriginal historical projects beyond the boundaries of written text. Indigenous storytelling and open-mindedness was a vital element that was part of this project. Little et al.

(2010) confesses that she is an Aboriginal who has always been interested in the collection of oral histories and has shown these visually and aurally. Therefore, she considers film to be a powerful historical medium. What is important to take into consideration is that film provided a platform for Aboriginal history to be re-examined.

In defining what myth is, Little et al. (2010:81) propose, “Some myths are more truthful than others based on the lived experiences and knowledge of Aboriginal people.” One of the racist myths known about Africans is that they did not have history prior to Atlantic Slave Trade. Therefore, their history began during the arrival of Europeans. The views about Africans and Africa came as a result of myths by European explorers and travelers. However, many postcolonial African scholars and artists have challenged this racist myth to argue that history existed. This was before the European interacted with the continent. Schipani (2005:1) notes that “Ancient Greek knowledge of Africa was based on most hearsay and indirect sources and as a result, the Greek image was rife with fantastic stories of monsters and strange people that were nothing like the Greeks themselves”. The gaps in the historical tropes of European travelers and missionaries created perfect conditions for the birth of myth. This is parallel to the myths that were spread about Aboriginals. “One of the most devastating and enduring myths about indigenous people is that they are lazy, indolent, slothful, erratic and roving and simply don’t want to work” (Bloome, 1994:216 cited in Little et al, 2010:99).

Schipani (2005) links the African myths to Ancient Greece and the historical documents between Africans and European contact. It is not true that Herodotus and his cohorts travelled to Ethiopia. These Greek writers relied on misleading Egyptian sources. According to Meek (1960) cited in Schipani (2005:2) “Greek writers like Strabo, Diedirus, Posidomious, Agatharuchides, Artemidorus, Herodotus, Hower and Pling relied heavily on each other and copied each other”.

Schipani (2005) points that the placement of cannibalism has been always used beyond the boundaries of western civilization. This myth continues to exist in the present African tense. “Cannibalism is another myth of Africa, one that persists even until modern times, with roots in Ancient times. One of the earliest mentions of cannibalism comes from Herodotus, who claims that Scythian people, the Androphegi, ate human flesh” (Schipani, 2005:2005:4). An observation that has been formulated is that, the Androphagi were neither black nor Africans.

In the *History of Daholy (1793)* in Schipani (2005) Dalzel perpetuated the myth of African cannibalism and justified slave trade as saying “Whatever the evils the slave trade may be attended with, it is mercy, to the poor retches, who would otherwise suffer from the butcher’s knife”. Furthermore, “The usual myths of savagery and cannibalism were used to invoke the fear that if left on their own, Africans would simply revert back to some customs such as cannibalism, human sacrifice, and infanticide” (Hammond and Jablow cited in Schipani, 2005:14).

The challenge that African continent has always faced has been the role of mass media such as films, television, radio and newspapers. During the advent of films in the 1920s and 1930s the audience was presented with content that embraced myths. *Tarzan series* and *Stanley and Livingstone* are an illustration of this. Conversely, in *Matatiele (2015)* context, representation of mythology is to understand the super natural world and the reality of the metaphysics. The visualisation of African myth in American films served as an escape especially during the Great Depression (1929-1939) period.

I am now going to demonstrate my textual analysis in the next subsections.

Cannibalisation of Love and History through the Tongue

The literal images of cannibalism in *Matatiele (2015)* are inserted within a historical oral/aural account. The visual reader should take into consideration the time and space of cannibalistic occurrence. Normally in visual languages, cannibalistic visuals occur in present tense present Cannibalism in the selected visual language is in the past tense. The past tense in (i.e. flashback) *Matatiele (2015)* is marked through costume design of Zanezulu and the four Sotho men. It is notable that the only linguistic cannibalism occurs in the present tense of the visual language.

Their costume is not the same as the present world of the Monahengs and the Sangqus. Mbijana offers an oral/aural narrative account of how the great Xhosa warrior Zanezulu was killed in the forest of Matatiele village by the Sothos. As he narrates the events cannibalistic visuals are overlaid. This stylistic choice represents the chapters of the narratives in his mind structures.



Figure 1: Sotho men eating Zanezulu's heart episode 1

In observing Figure 1 above, the shot size of the cannibalism visual is not an extreme close up of the Sothos eating Zanezulu's heart. Nonetheless, there is a scene before this which offers an extreme close up shot that has been used to depict characters that exercise cannibalism. Nikiwe does revamp this representation through a medium shot. MaNgconde unpacks this myth in the final episode 26 with Lefa. MaNgconde goes further to say that Zanezulu was a peaceful being who loved his people. And just before he accepts the calling to lead his nation he succumbed to death.



Figure 2: Zanezulu in the forest episode 1

Perhaps one could state that, factors that led to cannibalism such as famine, population stress and territoriality amongst animals are parallel to factors that led to xenophobic attacks in the country, and these factors are competition for job opportunities, poverty and housing. In defining xenophobia, it is not enough to resort to dictionary definition. This is because the definition will limit one's understanding of the factors that influenced this cultural phenomenon. The socio-economic conditions of Africans should be taken into consideration.



Figure 3: Mbijana narration episode 1

The audience gets a sense that Zanezulu was attacked by the Sotho men from the back using a spear. In the colonial visual construction of cannibalism, the number of characters that perform cannibalism is huge. In *De Voortrekker/ Winning a Continent* (1916) for example, there were about 6000 Zulu characters who performed cannibalism against Europeans. In *Matatiele* (2015) the number of Sotho warriors is 4. I do take into cognisance the budget constraints of the production.



Figure 4: Sotho men attack Zanezulu episode 1

Nikiwe's adoption of cannibalism concept is also linguistic. The manner in which these two groups attack each other is evident in the abusive language that they use. The representation of cannibalism has always been largely physical in early visual languages. Nikiwe, however, in this production offers an audience an alternative reading of this concept.

Linguistic cannibalism is practiced when the Sangqus arrive at the Monaheng family to report the damage. Lekunutu calls them *baloi ba Matatiele* (Matatiele witches). A witch in an African context is a person who feeds on other people's energy through evil practices. To some an extent, I propose, *moloji* (witch) is an equivalent of a cannibal.

Lekunutu: *Hey lona, baloi ba Matatiele. Keng ka lona? Kapa le setswe?* (Hey, you witches of Matatiele. What is wrong with you? Has my booby trap worked that I see you at this hour in my yard?)

Dabawo: *Kha uvuli legate.* (Open the gate)

Lekunutu: *Hey bona mona wena, mosadi towe. O mang o tlile hontella haka ka nako e? Ebile o nhlapaola tje. Gate! Gate! O mang wena?* (Hey, you woman. Who do you think you are to come and disrespect me in my house at this time? You come and insult me to open the gate. Who do you think you are?)

Dabawo: *Uthetha kakhulu. Vula legate. Uyabona namhlanje nizayi beka apha ingqawe kayise kaVelile.* (You talk too much just open the gate. Today is the day)



Figure 4: Lekunutu calls the Sangqus the witches of Matatiele at the gate episode 4

A scene that will further exemplify this point is when Mbijana says that the Monahengs eat people.

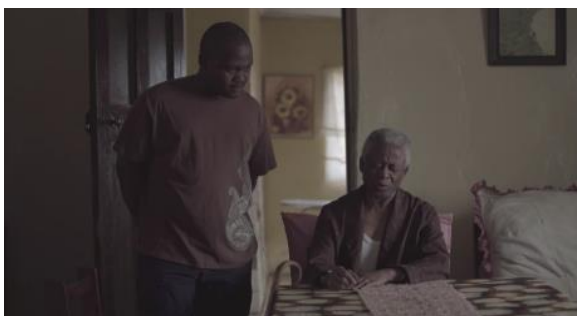


Figure 5: Mbijana says the Monahengs are cannibals episode 4

Mbijana: *Masithi nyana mhlambe lomntwana uyagula nabantu baphazame ukuthi umithi.*
(Son, what if this child is sick and people think that she's pregnant?)

Bhonyongo: *Ndiyakuwa wena, TaMkhulu. Kodwa, mani aniqondi be ngaphazama ngento enjalo.* (I hear you, TaMkhulu but I don't think they are wrong about that)

Mbijana: *Kodwa aze athethe ngoLekunutu. Ebefuna ntoni koMonaheng? Abantu abatya abantu.* (But why mention Lekunutu, what was she doing at the Monahengs? People who eat people).

In episode 3 when Lefa comes back from the fight between him and Bhonyongo, he misdirects his anger to Nontle and blames her family. The two have set an appointment to meet in an open space far from their families' houses. Lefa says that *ke lelapa la haho. Batho ba le ba hlanya. Ha ba nke hantle. Lona, ma Xhosa* ('it's your family. Your Xhosa people are mad and are not stable'). At this point Nontle interjects. The highest form of cannibalism in this production is when Nontle was poisoned by his brother because of jealousy. This results in tension between the two families.

It is hard to imagine African indigenous history from outside the context of colonial documents and myths; as such the only way to overcome the shadows of history is through the artistic imagination of canons of the African visual languages. The mystery in history is how it was manipulated to control an image of the oppressed. It is a fact that the history of indigenous societies across the world is told through legendary fantasy stories and orality has been considered nonsensical by the West. According to Bongani Madondo "Baba Credo Mutwa in the Postscript to a chapter titled *The Great Journey Beginning*: We have reached the end of a long story and tedious story, a strange mixture of historical fact and legendary fantasy, a strange mixture of truth and nonsense" (Bongani Madondo in *Mail and Guardian* Article, 29 July 2016).

The newness in *Matatiele* (2015) visuals is in how history is accessed through the unconscious mind of characters such as Mbijana, Lefa and Nontle. The observation is history is presented through the supernatural. Therefore, the supernatural possess the historical. For example, Nontle's brother poisoned her coffee while she is pregnant and she was admitted at the hospital after drinking it. While lying in a hospital bed, Nontle in her state of mind (the unconscious) is saved by Zanezulu. Zanezulu pulls the rope that is tied to Nontle when she

drowns in the river. Zanezulu is giving Nontle his back and does not speak to her. Everyone who is surrounding Nontle at the hospital is giving up on her life. Later on in episode 7, Nontle tells the whole family that she saw a strange man who was holding a rope that pulled her from the river. Mbijana is happy to tell Nontle that it was the Great warrior Zanezulu who saved her life. The grandparents such as Mbijana presented a myth that the ancestors will punish Nontle for falling in love with their ancestors' enemy. However, it was Zanezulu, the representative of the very same ancestors who rejected this myth.

The reader should take into consideration that while Nontle was at the hospital, there was a scene where Mbijana burns an incense to ask the gods to protect and guide her. Mbijana connects deeply with the ancestors so that they can give him the spiritual signs. He receives a sign after Lefa and Nontle were sexually intimate. For example, the audience sees Mbijana through the representation of his unconsciousness, at the forest when he is looking at a small flower that has changed its shape and size. He quickly wakes up from the unconscious mind and expresses a sad face. It should be noted that he is not sleeping but is sitting on a seat.

In history books, Black people have been classified by colonial administrators according to their cultural membership group. The visual language of *Matatiele* (2015) challenges this artificial categorization of peoples according to their cultural membership. The fact that Lefa's son embodies the spirit of Zanezulu and has the same birth mark that he had, is an indication that the hegemonic cultural ideas of identity are unfounded. When interacting with MaNgconde, Lefa is perplexed that his identity is Sotho but has a child that carries the great spirit of a Xhosa warrior. To him this is a mystery. Nikiwe makes a valid statement that black Africans have the same ancestry. They carry the same DNA. Furthermore, they marry each other and remain interconnected through inter- marriages, historical past and cultural memory. The observation is, it is not a cultural fact to say one is a pure blooded Sotho or pure blooded Xhosa. The idea of purity amongst Africans does not exist. Nontle and Lefa's child connects the events of history and cultural memory from this view.

The mystery in the creation of African cultural identities made it possible for European settlers to colonise Africans. Colonisation and domination by imperialist western countries, resulted in the complex identity narrative which has been characteristic of most African

societies. As far as Mfecane War was concerned, Shaka Zulu never called himself of a Zulu ethnicity. In fact he would be shocked and surprised to find out that there are a group of individuals in southern Africa that call themselves Zulus. Nikiwe exposes, through Sothos (Monahengs) and Xhosas (Sangqus) the hostility that unity amongst Africans will remain a myth, for as long as there is tribalism that cannibalizes their greatest potential power to lead the rest of the world.

In pure metaphors, the child of Nontle and Lefa represents the possibilities of a flourishing African society that is free from European myths and artificial cultural constructions. When Zanezulu instructs Lefa to go to MaNgconde, perhaps, Nikiwe is suggesting that Africans should go to someone in order to fully understand their historical footprint.

Beyond the Flesh

When stories of past events are told to a particular generation they are received as the truth simply because that generation was not present in the period the events happened. The manner in which myth is represented in *Matatiele* (2015) is through Mbijana, Lekunutu, Beauty, and Bhonyongo. The familiar representation regarding myth is that black people live in little huts. And they walk around naked. This representation in Matatiele village is not supportive of this imagery. This myth further asserts that there is no peace in the environment that they occupy. It is of course, inevitable that when two groups live together tension will arise. This is a universal expectation that does not apply to Africans only. The Europeans fought each other in the absence of Africans.

Nikiwe, however, defies this myth that Black people need to be rescued by white people as found in the representation of *Yesterday* (2004) visuals through the casting of a young White female doctor who speaks isiZulu. Another representation of this trope is “*Sweet and Short* (1991) which plays on the template of blackness as being a burden of whiteness”. In challenging this trope, Nikiwe represents the community of Matatiele as responsible for resolving their conflict without the presence of a White person. In fact, the conflict is resolved through the supernatural.

The scene where Nontle is interrogated about who the father of a child is, Nikiwe confronts the popularised ideas of language myth in the African context. During this scene Nontle murmurs her response. The murmur relocates the audience reading to Herodotus“

perspective. Herodotus wrongly theorised that African people do not have a language. Therefore, they speak a peculiar language. This myth was sadly accepted by European scholars who had never been to the African continent. The myth came as a result of European travelers and writers who were unable to understand speech phones of African languages. Thus, Nontles murmur is a remembrance of this myth. Notwithstanding, what Herodotus forgot was that, Nontle's language in this scene, is tied to African spirituality to undo the mythification of African histories and ethnic divisions.

The representational pictures of myth about Black people have always placed them outside the discourse of spiritual belief system. In fact, they are depicted as a people who do not have a divine connection with a supreme being. And they are a people who need the teachings of Christian doctrine. In Matatiele village, the church exists. The Sangqu family, especially Mbijane as an elder, is in touch with his African Bantu spiritual belief system. The Monahengs on the hand are a modern Christian family. One should take into consideration that the two families participate in these spiritual belief systems. In this way, Nikiwe through *Matatile* (2015) production brings a paradigm shift in post-Apartheid South African visuals. A case in point being the construction of Sobuza's spirituality in *De Voortrekker/ Winning a Continent* (1916) represents a Noble Savage who was saved by Europeans. There is no representation of Noble Savage in Matatiele village. In this way, Nikiwe, rejects the claims that Christianity is the solution to natives' barbaric activities.

In the context of the fight between Lekunutu and Mbijana at the church, Nikiwe is exploring the divisions among people of the same faith i.e. Christianity, but most importantly relates differently to African Bantu spirituality. It is therefore, recognisable that African Bantu spirituality is projected as superior through the divine presence of Zanezulu in the visuals. Nikiwe is eloquent about the values of African Bantu spirituality that go beyond hatred and cultural prejudice stemming from a history and myth making practices of the imperial nature as these collided with those of the local people. This is evident in the scene between MaNgconde and Lefa when she said that Zanezulu was a man of peace. MaNgconde says the following:

MaNgconde: *uZanezulu wayesewuthathile umhlaba omnintsi, kungekho umtu ozomqanda, uthe wafika eMatatiele kwabakho ushintyo. Kwase kusele ukuba banqitezwe abeSuthu, uZanezulu wajika wayingqanda yena imfazwe. Wabona ubizo lakhe, wazibona enguMdali*

woxolo. (When Zanezulu took the land of Matatiele there was the greatest change. When they were about to finish the Sothos he asked his warriors to stop the war. He deeply felt that his calling was greater and he regarded himself as a peaceful god).

In the historical construction of myths in relation to Black characters, the socio-political conditions (political governance) have not been attended to by these visuals. For example, in episode 3, Lekunutu is well aware of his practical political structure. It is early in the morning when he goes to release his urine by the tree and complains to himself that the government does not take them seriously because they have been waiting for toilets. While Lekunutu delivers his monologues, he expresses that he will not take part in the next coming elections. The freshness in *Matatiele* (2015) visuals is that, characters are aware of the hegemonic political ideas in the society. This has not been the reality of myth representational syntax about Blackness. Therefore, this kind of representation suggested that the social and traditional structures of Black people are not a political government.

Lekunutu: *Haesale re kopa ho mmuso ono re kopa mantlwane. Mme re duletse ho sokola bosiu le motshehare ho fihlela lekajeno. Doh! Ha ho letho. Nna nkeke ka vouta kgetlho le tlang. Ke tla ba jwetsa ke re ditoilet pele. Ke masawana kaofela ya hore motho o be a tsamaya a thulana le sefate. Hawu!* (We have been asking for services of toilets and yet we are still suffering day and night. There's nothing. I will never vote in the next coming elections. I will tell them to deliver the toilets first. It is inhumane that we always pee by the tree).

Succinctly put, the characterisation of Lekunutu identifies the challenges that exist in small rural municipalities such as Matatiele. An extension of this identification is that, these municipalities are still struggling with infrastructure maintenance. Lekunutus speech comments on the poor service delivery under the ANC-led government epitomised by the appalling bucket sanitation system in South Africa. The representation engages the continuous failure of the implementation of *Batho Pele* Principles by the local municipalities.

Conclusion

The visual language of *Matatiele* (2015) pages through history books to allow critical spectators an opportunity to read about the link between myth and cannibalism. It is through *Matatiele* (2015) that the spectators learn how African spirituality carries the events of

historical myths of cannibalism and at the same time provides the solution. In revealing cultural tensions that arose as a result of myth and cannibalism, the separation between members of the same religion is explored; however the African Bantu spirituality is treated differently. The presence of Zanezulu is an emphasis on the superiority of African Bantu spirituality. Therefore, Nikiwe's persuasive values of African Bantu spirituality go beyond the preconceived ideas that are between the Sothos and the Xhosas. As such, tribalism as a result of myths in the land of Matatiele village is depicted as a regressive discourse. Myth is represented through symbolic characters such as Mbijana, Lekunutu, Beauty and Bhonyongo.

The historical representation of black Africans in South Africa has always established them as people who are not knowledgeable about practical politics. Conversely, in *Matatiele* (2015) black African characters are knowledgeable about their practical politics in the community. The notion that Africans don't have a language perpetuated by European travelers such as Herodotus is proven to be a myth in Matatiele village. The centrality of language is connected to African spirituality.

Chapter 5: Beyond Decoloniality

The first chapter was an attempt to offer a coherent and compelling examination of cinematic and televisual content as complex linguistic articulations and locates them within broader discursive frameworks. I have attempted to offer an understanding of key theoretical positions regarding the evolution of South African televisual and cinematic texts. Both the introduction and historical background attempt to offer a concise articulation and demonstrates a competent surveying of scholarship on language. I have carefully considered contestations around definitions, representations and the ideological workings of language in cinematic and televisual texts. I am aware of the fault lines in the discourse of cinematic representation. I have attempted to spend more time on locating *Tsha Tsha* (2004), *Intersexions* (2010 and 2013) and *Matatiele* (2015) within the South African broadcasting framework. The investigation included how elements such as television commissioning processes, scheduling of slots, the genre codes and conventions of drama series and editorial policies of broadcasters might have a bearing in how these case studies are constructed.

This research is not interested in the linguistic definition of what language is but the sociological definition of language. In chapter 1, I have also discussed theories of language and the attempts to investigate the origin of human languages. I have attempted to prove through text the similarities of the two discourses. Therefore, the relationship between visual language and verbal language is that they are both responsible for the production of meaning. They produce the knowledge about the world and about us. It is the social responsibility of the two discourses to always reflect the values and morals of the society. On an argument made on visual language, specific attention was focused on films and television dramas, which observed the history of the South African cinema. Nikiwe portrays the stereotype of the urban and rural images that were used by image creators prior to 1994. The stereotype was that the city life is not for African people.

In chapter 2, I have attempted to demonstrate how Nikiwe's lens presents a new visual language in post-apartheid South African creative visual texts regarding the representation of the pandemic, indigenous African psychology and the influences

of orality through the use of African languages such as isiXhosa. The newness is depicted in how Nikiwe challenges the historical representation of the pandemic. In *Tsha Tsha* (2004), Nikiwe privileges the African indigenous psychology. In this study, the African indigenous psychology refers to the manner in which Nikiwe deviates from the normalised depiction of the countrys standardised representation of the pandemic. It is the radicalisation of the present visuals on the screen via the progressive thinking of the image creator. It is the process of seeing, hearing, imagining, writing and creating anew from one's cultural point of view that offers counter distorted images of one's culture. This radicalisation of creating these visual texts points towards the future.

Tsha Tsha (2004) is the first televisual text that grants post-1994 audience an opportunity to reside in characters' internal thoughts so that the audience can understand the world of those who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, joblessness and poverty. Therefore, this character construction helped to achieve the three-dimensional aspect that the narrative intended. In reading the ideological shifts and aesthetics, *Tsha Tsha* (2004) exposes the policies that were carefully crafted by the new political dispensation. It is therefore recognisable that the SABC through *Tsha Tsha* (2004) was tasked to implement this post- 1994 political agenda. It is also notable that Rolie Nikiwe struggles with how he reconfigures black characters and the designed execution of the narrative in his aesthetics as a result of the expression of post-1994 political economy. The silver screen becomes a contestation between politics and the politics of representation. Therefore, it is with no doubt that his vision regarding the treatment of the story was tempered with at the SABC television and e.tv. This is one of the challenges that African image creators have been facing.

Generally, the representation of the pandemic regarding black creative visuals in post- 1994 South Africa has not satisfactorily investigated the infected and affected African indigenous psychology. It is through this cinematographic imagination that one begins to understand the narrative of HIV/AIDS from a humane point of view. Africa and Africans' attempt to understand the pandemic should not be interrupted by western scientific views only. This is directly linked to the usefulness of orality. Part of one's findings is that, the psychology of the

South African image visual about the pandemic has always been dominated by the scientific medical terminology to explain its complexities.

It is acknowledged herein that, the use of the concept indigenous has its own problematic connotations. However, one's counter argument to this view is that, the term Black embodies more negative connotations than the concept indigenous. The signification practice/process in *Tsha Tsha* (2004) privileges the African indigenous psychology that tries to understand the existence of the pandemic in the world that is politically controlled. One has attempted to comprehend the infected and affected psychology from the viewpoints of Filipino indigenous psychology, cross-indigenous perspectives, the African (Black) psychology and Fanon's psychoanalysis of racism. Thus, one has debunked from Freud's conceptualisation of psychoanalysis theory.

In chapter 3, I have attempted to demonstrate that *Intersexions* (2010 and 2013) deploys the values of Afrofuturism within a third world cinematic context. It is notable that Nikiwe uses the structure of African indigenous forms of communication to circulate and disseminate information about the pandemic. Therefore, *Intersexions* (2010 and 2013) visualises a future where Black people are going to be in control regarding the spread of the pandemic and perhaps other novel viruses. The African social organisation is reflective of this structure. *Intersexions* (2010 and 2013) through the viewpoints of Afrofuturism draws one's attention to the old unresolved relationship between race and the virus. Therefore, one is compelled to think about race as a particular technology. This means that, Blackness is a form of technology. The performance of HIV/AIDS demarcated *InterSexions* (2010 and 2013) as a revolutionary televisual discourse. It was discovered that the fear that is visualised in Afrofuturism and science fiction motion pictures bears a resemblance to the one in *Intersexions* (2010 and 2013) regarding the existence of the virus.

Through the use of Afrofuturism values one begins to be aware that different racial groups project themselves first (in particular through Tshepo's character) before they could use technological inventions to predict and project their futures. Nikiwe seems to glorify ideas of freedom as was described by Afrofuturism symbolic texts. These notions that he strives to articulate are in *Intersexions* (2010

and 2013) production.

I attempted to give light on the importance of traditional *Bantu* psychology of time with regards to the African future that will be in control of the spread of the pandemic. In order to change the future, it is important to understand the concept of time and its movement. The vital question is that; what are Africans going to eat for lunch in the next two decades? Part of the answer is the possibility that starving Africa will eat what the rest of the world is going to feed her. A person who is on medication for HIV needs to eat the right food during breakfast, lunch and dinner. The process of healing begins with eating the right food for the body. Perhaps it is possible that Africans should invite the spirit of Zanezulu not in figurative terms but Zanezulu in the literal sense that Africans would understand who Zanezulu is, especially when Africans are in pursuit for technological inventions that will draw from the richness of their cultures.

In chapter 4, I established that *Matatiele's* (2015) semiotic system presents an intersection of myth, cannibalism and history through the central role of African Bantu spirituality. The etymology of myth in this visual structure is through the cannibalisation of Zanezulu. One should note that history is fiction and fiction is history. Nikiwe uses existing mythic trope to revamp images of cannibalism in post-1994 South Africa. Nikiwe's newness of the visuals interrogates history, myth and cannibalism through using the structures of the African indigenous psychology. Nikiwe uses artistic imagination to access the historical consciousness. Images that originate from the West have been responsible for creating myth about Africans, including myths about their languages. As a response to this myth, Nikiwe represents the two lovers Lefa and Nontle and their use English to communicate their love. This happens through cellphone messages in a village. One would imagine that Nikiwe would use Xhosa when Nontle texts and Sotho when Lefa sends a message.

Perhaps, the narrative that HIV/AIDS does not have cure is a myth. Presently the cure for the pandemic remains a fiction. The creative imagination of Nikiwe deploys historical lessons about the manner in which HIV/AIDS has cannibalised Black bodies. Through this, Nikiwe uses the native communication system to take control of the spread of virus in the future. Therefore, he takes charge of the

history of the future. Myth is a foundation of history. And history is madness. In the context of this study history is madness because millions of lives were lost as a result of the political leadership of the country. History is madness because racial myths were created in order to control the indigenous psychologies of the African people. It is one's hope that the future will be mad-less regarding the cultural status of African languages and the representation of HIV/AIDS visual grammars.

Rolie Nikiwe's visual grammars such as *Tsha Tsha* (2004), *Intersexions* (2010 and 2013) and *Matatiele* (2015) were located within the context of South African broadcasting as a result of the factors that led to their visual formation/shape. This is because there is legislation that regulates television broadcasting in South Africa. Legislature stipulates that South African television programming is largely responsible for accommodating and representing all South Africans and their official languages. The South African visual practitioners who advance the interests of their immediate surroundings always find a creative way of using their voice while working under oppressive and restrictive conditions of the broadcaster. This is what Nikiwe reciprocated in his visuals while working under the instructive infrastructure of the two broadcasters. He was caught up between the producers' and audience's demands. This is similar to artists during apartheid that mobilised the oppressed through their artistic forms.

ANC-led government, civil society movements, media, artists, traditional healers and religious institutions challenged the presence of the pandemic from different perspectives so that millions of lives can be saved. The dismantling of the stigma towards the pandemic did not automatically bring about political, cultural and economic changes for the majority of black people who were infected and affected. To date, many South Africans both living in the rural and urban spaces still struggle to accept the presence of the pandemic.

One of the research findings is that, Nikiwe's visual idioms teach us that a visual text may be both fictional and factual. A case in point is DJ Mo's story that is linked to the popular South African DJ Khabzela (factual). He too was cannibalised by the failure of the Mbeki-led ANC administration. This entails that cannibalisation of Zanezulu as a fictional story has greater ramifications for South

Africa's reality which attest to ongoing internal fractures and divisions between Africans. This critical understanding begins with how we situate ourselves in time and how we view ourselves as a people. What was observed in Nikiwe's work is that, even though he uses different themes, his artistic corpus continues to be dominated by African cultural forms such as orality, and indigenous communication. Nikiwe produces images of blackness that are favourable to those who are infected.

In this study, I was limited by the fact that I was unable to analyse all episodes of Rolie Nikiwe's body of work that dealt with history, cannibalism, myth, HIV pandemic and indigenous psychology. Further research presents an urgent need to study the visual vocabulary of African visual creators who are concerned with representation of the indigenous psychology, history, myth, cannibalism and native spirituality.

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