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*THE FRAMING OF THE FOREIGN BLACK FEMALE IN  
SOUTH AFRICAN CINEMA*

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

“The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.”

— **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

In Chimamanda Adichie’s TED Talk, ‘The danger of a single story’, the speaker presents and challenges the tendency by the Western world to present African characters in fiction in a one-dimensional, singular manner (Adichie, 2009). She challenges storytellers to recognise the dangers of telling a single story that breeds stereotypes. She argues that these stereotypes do not present a fuller picture of ‘reality’ (Adichie, 2009). It is from this thought process that I draw inspiration to further challenge existing stereotypes and the singular narrative about the foreign black female body.

My vision as a writer and director is to challenge the stereotypical representation of the African foreign body as a demonic force that aims to disrupt order, as seen in the 2009 science fiction action film *District 9* (2009). When these stereotypes are progressively challenged however, as seen in the film *Man on Ground*(2011), the stories are told/portrayed from a male protagonist’s perspective.

I cannot deny the importance of challenging the destructive representation of the African male (foreigner)/Immigrant, a challenge that is seldom seen in South African Cinema. However, this research aims to interrogate the foregrounding of the African male immigrant’s story as reflecting all African immigrants’ experiences within South Africa. The African female foreigner/immigrant’s story, for instance, is assumed to be encompassed in the framing/representation of the African Male Immigrant’s story portrayed in some South African films. This assumption undermines and shadows her presence, leaving her ‘voiceless’ and/or absent in South African Cinema. The patriarchal sexual economy rests on and requires a key

assumption: ‘that of there being a hierarchical relation between sexes in which “male counts more” (Bowden and Mummery, 2009: 26).

The failure of some films/media in South African cinema to re-imagine the foreign African body outside its dehumanizing stereotypes perpetuates the complex social, political and xenophobic struggles prevalent in South Africa. This research dissects and problematises how some films/media exacerbate xenophobic ideology through their mere reflection of demonizing mythology surrounding the foreign black (female) body. These films/media arguably present African immigrants as a primitive people; ‘attempting to graduate from naked savagery; as people who are believed to be the darkest of the dark-skinned and the less enlightened’, perpetuating violence and discrimination on the African Immigrant. (Moyo, 2017: 48).

The main purpose of this research is to challenge problematic stereotypes around the foreign black female body, through an autobiographical short experimental film I created called *Screaming Silence*. The limitations of some South African films in representing the ‘one-sided story’ of the foreign black female inspired the concept, which is based on my experiences and life story, as a foreign black female residing in South Africa.

The protagonist Afrik, a foreign black female, finds strength and power in the midst of turmoil. She defies death and fights the dominant male perpetrator responsible for her death. My choice to use an experimental approach of filmmaking is aimed at developing a new and engaging cinematic vocabulary, as well as to display techniques that will assist in re-presenting the framing of the foreign black female in a South African context.

The film also aims to highlight the intersecting/overlapping layers of discrimination experienced by a foreign black female residing in post-apartheid South Africa, through an experimental form of filmmaking. Using an Intersectional feminist approach, *‘Screaming Silence’* problematises the reproduction of representational practices utilised in framing African foreigners as the ‘threatening other’ by presenting an alternative narrative for the foreign black female. Collins &

Bilge (2016:1) define intersectionality as ‘a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and inhuman experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor’. Intersectionality suggests that there are multiple factors shaping, influencing and informing political and social conditions (Collins & Bilge, 2016:1).

Intersectionality is therefore used as an analytical tool to examine how multiple axes work together and influence each other to understand how social divisions and the organisation of power contribute to social & political inequality (Collins & Bilge, 2016:1). For example, social divisions can be created or informed by intersecting/overlapping race, gender, class discrimination and other social and political factors (Collins & Bilge, 2016:1).

I will thus use intersectional theory to further investigate how multiple layers of discrimination (xenophobia, sexism, racism, class) intersect when studying the foreign black female immigrants’ experience within a South African context. It is important to understand the role film plays in perpetuating these discriminatory ideologies by its repeated framing of the black foreign female as a ‘prostitute’ or ‘drug pusher’. It is equally important to investigate why there is an absence of the Foreign black female body in South African cinema.

In conjunction with the theoretical framework, my objective was to create an experimental fiction film that will challenge the stereotypical representation of the foreign black female body as seen in South African Cinema. The film I created does two things; first, it presents the stereotypes used to frame the foreign female in some South African films. Secondly, it later dismantles these xenophobic and patriarchal ideologies by re-imagining the foreign black female body as a victor, an active agent; intent on fighting for her freedom and life in a world which violates, demonizes and oppresses her.

## ***HISTORICAL BACKGROUND***

With its rich history, the South African film industry has not always been inclusive. Before South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, the film industry was mostly inaccessible for non-whites (SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY ONLINE, 2011). It was largely dominated and controlled by the white population of the country due to apartheid's discriminatory laws; which restricted all other races from having access to various resources. Films made during apartheid propagated apartheid ideology; placing the Afrikaner in the position of power and black people in subservient positions (Bisschoff, 2009: 62). The voices of marginalized groups 'remained almost entirely absent from audio-visual representation during the oppressive regimes that constituted South Africa's official history before the end of apartheid' (Bisschoff, 2009: 62).

After the 1994 democratic elections, the film industry became more inclusive, giving access and opportunities to all races and people of different backgrounds (SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY ONLINE, 2011). In 1994, South Africa opened its borders to the rest of the world (Moyo, 201:13). This led to an increase of foreigners from different parts of the world, and from different parts of the continent within South Africa. (Moyo, 2017:13) The increase of foreigners/immigrants within a historically segregated South Africa was unwelcome by many nationals given the country's 'history of divisive policies, which had not been addressed' (Moyo, 2017: 14). The increase of foreign nationals within the country thus served 'to exacerbate existing xenophobic tensions and the demonizing stereotypes concerning foreigners' (Moyo, 2017: 14).

Post the 1994 democratic elections, many South African nationals perceived and still view African immigrants, unlike foreigners from outside the continent, as a barbaric and backward group of criminals determined to threaten an idealized South African renaissance, as well as disrupting prospects for national building (Moyo, 2017: 16). This distorted version of reality is often reiterated in the presentation and representation of the African foreigner/immigrant by South African media.

The South African media plays a significant role in reinforcing xenophobic ideology and violence by representing the African Immigrant as a group of people responsible for ‘crime, disease, and unemployment’ (Kariithi et al, 2017: 10). Scapegoating and blaming the foreign immigrant serves as a basis for perpetrators of violence on African immigrants, thus justifying hate crimes against African Foreign Nationals (Moyo, 2017:19).

In 1996, ‘residents protested at the Department of Home Affairs in an effort to disrupt the issuing of identity documents to immigrants, amid claims that foreigners ‘steal’ local jobs’ (Landau, 2011: 33). The intolerance of African immigrants within South Africa has persisted, and in the informal settlement of Alexandra; Mozambicans were assaulted and had their possessions burnt by a vigilante group in the year 2000 (Landau, 2011: 33).

Moyo (2017:21) argues that although the African immigrant is often a victim of violence during xenophobic attacks, popular press fails to be objective in their representation of the African immigrant. He challenges South African media for consistently publishing ‘dramatic and sensational stories’ portraying the African immigrant in a negative light (Moyo, 2017:21). One such example is an article extracted from the Daily Sun newspaper (2008:11) titled, ‘*They wait for darkness before they attack! Aliens use muthi to steal Cattle*’.

According to Moyo, it is not wrong to suggest that media frames popular perceptions about the African immigrant prevalent in a xenophobic South African society (Moyo, 2017:18). The media copy-pastes popular xenophobic notions as ‘it’s impossible to address the question of why are South Africans xenophobic’ without confronting the role media plays in exacerbating xenophobic ideology (Moyo, 2017:18). Moyo (2017:21) argues that by constantly presenting the African Immigrant as ‘burdensome’ and by ignoring the positive contributions done by African immigrants, South African media has a tendency towards presenting African immigrants in a negative light.

A Southern African Migration Project study undertaken in 2006 found that South Africa is a highly intolerant and hostile country to foreign nationals, more so than any other country in the world (Moyo, 2017: 14). ‘2008 and 2015 saw widespread xenophobic violence in South Africa, which resulted in the looting of shops/businesses owned by foreign nationals and the murder of foreign nationals. Many foreigners were displaced from their homes as a result of increased hostility’ (News 24, 2015).

The Black Foreign female is seldom included in South African cinema but when she is presented, she is portrayed in a very negative light. *Jerusalema* (2008) for example, presents the foreign female in the context of drug pushing and prostitution, while *District 9* (2009) depicts the foreigner as an extraterrestrial being responsible for South African crime and unemployment. Foreigners are blamed and killed for issues of unemployment within the country. These films allude to and reflect the unresolved struggle for freedom and equality prevalent in contemporary South Africa, and although ‘informative’, reinforce xenophobic ideology through their depiction of the foreigner as a plague.

It is therefore important to note that although the film industry has become accessible to a wider and more diverse population; issues surrounding the representation and/or misrepresentation of the African foreign immigrant persist in post-apartheid South Africa. The stories told within the South African film context tend to perpetuate and echo the often ‘generalized’, dehumanizing stereotypical view of the African foreigner.

Furthermore, the film and media industry continues to undermine/limit the role played by the foreign female African, presenting her as either a drug pusher, a hustler or a prostitute. In other words, the representation of the foreign female is arguably never re-imagined and hardly challenges xenophobic stereotyping. In other instances, there is an absence of her presence both in media and in Film. The history in media documents xenophobic issues related to the African Male Immigrant, foregrounding violence experienced by the African foreign male figure; yet ignoring or undermining the violence the African female immigrant experiences.

## ***Personal History and Inspiration For This Project***

In 2015, while residing in Jeppestown, there was an outbreak of violent xenophobic attacks in the area. I remember looking through my apartment window and seeing an angry mob of men violently waving around weapons and singing freedom songs. These men seemed quite determined to remove all the African foreigners from the area. I was told by fellow South African acquaintances that I needed to know the Zulu word for an ‘elbow’ to ensure my safety if I was confronted by the angry mob. The idea of being killed, tortured or raped by an angry mob for not being a fluent Zulu speaker terrified me. I started questioning the basis for employing language as both a tool for discrimination and a justification for violence on ‘foreign bodies’.

Some South African Nationals have expressed how my Botswana nationality makes me less of a foreigner than “other” African Nationals, as Botswana and South Africa are considered ‘technically the same place’. I have also been told that I do not qualify to be called a ‘Makwerekwere’, a derogatory term used to describe Foreign Nationals from different parts of the African continent based on my looks, my country of origin and my ‘polished’ articulation of the English language (Moyo, 2017:18). The term ‘Makwerekwere’ ‘depicts the phonic sound of foreign African languages and is used to ridicule. The term is used to refer to African immigrants who do not speak the language of the people’ (Moyo, 2017:18).

I have also often been told that I do not ‘look’ foreign based on my fair-skinned complexion as a black African woman. African immigrants are often portrayed as these barbaric backward aliens who are ‘believed to be the darkest of the dark-skinned and the less enlightened’ (Moyo, 2017:19). This has brought me to question how and why external factors such as ‘looks and language’ play a role in the construction of ‘foreignness’ in South Africa.

Despite my supposed ‘South African’ physical traits (which I question), and the fact that I speak one of the South African National languages, I have without a doubt experienced discrimination

by virtue of being a non-South African. I am deemed to be 'South African' when it's convenient but 'Foreign' when my presence supposedly threatens national progress by contributing to the crime and unemployment rate within the country. One such example was when I was asked by a makeup artist on a set I was working on, why I did not return to my home country. She went on to explain that I contributed to a bigger national problem, that of unemployment, and a South African National should/could occupy the job I was occupying at the time.

As a foreign black female, my efforts to be an activist through my art and to progress empowering conversations are overshadowed by my supposed alien-ness. This is arguably reinforced in the misrepresentation of the foreign female in South African Cinema.

In the media following the 2015 xenophobic attacks, many of the stories brought to the forefront were about African male immigrants who were affected by the attacks in various ways. As a foreign female, I questioned why there wasn't enough noise about the traumas incurred by the African female immigrant compared to her male counterpart. Why were these women's voices unheard or silenced in the media?

I truly feel that my voice is oppressed as a foreign female, and after watching films that do not depict dynamic foreign females, it was important to question the misrepresentation/lack of the foreign female representation in South African Cinema. The question that remains unanswered is; why the creative industry never wants to reimagine and re-present the being of the African Immigrant, more specifically the African female.

I am interested in finding a voice for the voiceless and fighting for equality through my art. I think it's important to foreground the violence experienced by the foreign African female body. It is important to create alternative narratives which can portray the different experiences and contributions of the foreign immigrant.

The argument here is that some South African films exacerbate the violence incurred by the foreign black female body by merely reflecting misinformed perceptions meant to represent/reflect the ‘alien’ African Immigrant. I, therefore, intend on interrogating why some South African films fail to effectively represent an alternative narrative to dismantle the dehumanizing mythology.

It is impossible to answer the question, ‘why are South Africans xenophobic’ without addressing the issue of culpability of the media’ (Moyo, 2017: 17). ‘For this reason, that the media are simply responding to events but actively shaping South African popular opinion on migration is incontrovertible’ (Moyo, 2017:17).

It is thus important to consider what role media and film play in perpetuating ‘stereotypical’ beliefs. This raises concerns about how and why some of the media reiterates sentiments and never reimagines/questions the bases of these myths and xenophobic/sexist representations (Moyo, 2017: 16).

### ***REPRESENTATION OF FOREIGN BLACK NATIONALS IN SA MEDIA***

The film I created as the creative submission of my masters, *Screaming Silence*, expresses stereotypes; sexualising and objectifying the foreign female body through the lens of a police officer who is the antagonist within the film.

The black foreign female body is portrayed as a ‘tool’ used to understand ‘the biggest serial killer case the country has seen’. The corpse of the protagonist, Afrik Badimuri ‘a law student from Malawi’, lies on a forensic table, and is being observed and ‘handled’ by male forensic officers after being killed by a xenophobic serial killer who falsely thinks she has come to destroy South Africa. The antagonist embodies stereotypical beliefs, Afrik and his other foreign black female victims have moved to South Africa to ‘contaminate’ the nation, steal jobs and ‘kill’ nationals through criminal activity.

The name Afrik plays on two words 'African' and 'Freak' (African-Freak), which is a stereotypical way some view African Immigrants in a South African context. This freak of nature mentality is expressed in how some South African media stereotypically other African foreigners and views African Immigrants as aliens for example, '*Blood and flames! Aliens killed and injured as new attacks stoke flames of hatred*' (Daily Sun 19 May 2008:3).

'Stereotypes are false or misleading generalizations about groups held in a manner that renders them largely, though not entirely, immune to counterevidence. In doing so, stereotypes powerfully shape the stereotypes' perception of stereotyped groups, seeing the stereotypical characteristics when they are not present, failing to see the contrary of those characteristics when they are, and generally homogenizing the group. Stereotype generally has a negative valence' (Blum, 2004: 251).

*Screaming Silence* attempts to unpack some stereotypes surrounding the foreign female body through the story of a dead girl (Afrik Badimuri) gaining consciousness during a forensic investigation of her murder, but no one notices. She fights to gain full consciousness in order to avenge her own death. My aim was not to reinforce these stereotypes but to highlight them and challenge them.

In the film *District 9* (2009) the African immigrant is portrayed in a stereotypical, barbaric manner; the Nigerian gangers are cannibals, who enjoy indulging in foreign/alien species to gain 'powers'. The Nigerians within the film, set in a South African context are dealers, who have illegal weapons they use to commit crimes. These same sentiments are expressed in the film *Jerusalema* (2008), where the Nigerian antagonist, Tony Ngu, promotes prostitution, drugs and high-jacks buildings in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. Tony Ngu is represented in a one dimensional stereotypical way, as a ruthless criminal who has no moral compass versus the protagonist, Lucky Kunene, whose introspective and layered nature humanizes him despite the fact that he is a gangster committing similar crimes. This imagery arguably instils the very notion that African

immigrants are dangerous criminals without a conscience, whose sole intention is to destroy the nation of South Africa.

Hall stresses the tendency of stereotypes in contexts where there are immense inequalities of power (1997: 258). He further explains that those in positions of power have control to represent something or someone in a way to maintain that power (1997:259). Meaning created through stereotypes is usually born of myth.

Myth is 'a type of speech, language, signification, a form,' embedded in a given discourse specific to its historical context (Barthes, 1972:109). The significance of myth can be read in different modes and means of representation particular to a specific context (Barthes, 1972:110). Myth is a second language form that informs itself as fact, knowledge, ideas, and decisions even in the absence of its historical context (Barthes, 1972:117).

The concept of myth 'reconstitutes a chain of causes and effects, motives and intentions' (Barthes, 1972:130). It can, therefore, be argued that the concept is driven by its functions despite the formless nature of its roots (Barthes, 1972:119). This implies that the recycling notion of its nature is dependent on who occupies the position of 'oppressors and oppressed' (Hall; 1997,49).

This unfortunate reality of how myth operates to sustain power is reflected in the demonizing framing of the foreign body found in some South African Cinema. For example, the foreign black females in *Jerusalema* (2008) are framed in a stereotypical manner as prostitutes contributing to the bigger problem of crime in Johannesburg. The foreign black female has no agency and is used by the male (Tony Ngu) as a means to gain power and control.

Instead of questioning these demonizing mythologies, some South African Cinema, in its mere reflection of the African Foreign body in a stereotypical manner solidifies xenophobic attitudes and justifies xenophobic violence.

Stuart Hall (1997) suggests that media and popular culture establish cultural meanings through stereotypes. Although he highlights how ethnic differences and the racially oppressed experience of the African American operates, he also states that discriminatory stereotypes can be ‘applied in many dimensions such as gender, sexuality, class, and disability’. (1997:225)

It is important to challenge patriarchal sexual assumptions maintained through violence within an arguably xenophobic South African context. *District 9 (2009)* directed by Neill Blomkamp for example, is merely reflecting the African foreign immigrant as a creature intent on disrupting order within South Africa. Even on the occasion when the African foreign immigrant is presented in a progressive or different light, as seen on *Man On Ground (2011)*, the story is told from a male perspective.

Given South Africa’s political and social history, its alarming that a country which has suffered many years of discrimination would want to build boundaries to separate African immigrants. ‘Men do not have with myth a relationship of truth but on use; they depoliticize according to their needs’ (Barthes;1972,144).

In studying ‘foreign’ identities, it is important to look at the relationship between knowledge and power in discursive practices by understanding the apparatus which is responsible for supporting its claims (i.e. the government). This ‘xenophobic knowledge’ is repeatedly represented in the South African Cinema.

According to the Oxford dictionary, xenophobia is the ‘dislike or prejudice against people from other countries’ and patriarchy is ‘A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it’ (Mclean & McMillian, 2009).

The local press tends to present certain nationalities only in terms of stereotypes – ‘such as the portrayal of all Nigerians as drug dealers. Just one example of the tragic treatment of migration issues by the local media was an article printed in a leading Johannesburg daily in which the headline read "Nigerians arrested in a drug raid on city hotel" (Claassen, 2017). Ironically, it is

migrants who are in fact more likely to be the victims of violent crime – not only because of xenophobic attitudes but because African foreigners are unable to seek protection from officials” (Claassen, 2017). Regardless of their legal status, by approaching police officials, they risk being arrested themselves, leaving them without state protection and vulnerable to criminal victimization. This ‘knowledge’ of the ‘foreign other’ depicted in media and film aggravates oppressive and violent behaviour on foreign African immigrants.

Some newspapers for instance often reflect popular xenophobic sentiments instead of challenging them and presenting alternative representations of the African Immigrant. Here are some examples of headlines in the South African media on migration; ‘*They wait for darkness before they attack! Aliens use muthi to steal our cattle*’ (Daily sun 9 May 2008:11), ‘*Blood end of alien lover*’- suggesting promiscuity (Daily sun May 2008:2). ‘*Foreigners do not benefit South Africa*’ (The Sowetan 2 May 2012), ‘*Control the borders*’ (The Sowetan 2 June 2010:3)

‘The media makes up the numbers of African migrants in South Africa for alarmist effect, this alarmist effect may be targeted at reaching the general South African populace’ (Moyo, 2017: 18). Therefore, the media ‘has sensationalized and overdramatized the invasion of South Africa by immigrants, especially from African countries’(Moyo,2017:18).

According to News 24 in 2008, many houses were burnt, 342 shops looted and 213 burnt down, during the violent xenophobic attacks on African Immigrants. Hundreds of people were injured, thousands chased away and the death toll after the attacks stood at 62 (News 24, 2015).

According to News 24, since then, xenophobic aggression has erupted repeatedly, with two million African immigrants, 300 000 refugees, and asylum seekers and many illegal aliens. The fact that media outlets such as News24 would refer to the African Immigrant as ‘aliens’ trivializes the depth and tragedy of xenophobic violence. (News 24, 2015).

## ***INTERSECTIONALITY AND PRAXIS***

Collins & Bilge (2016:1) define intersectionality as ‘a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and inhuman experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor’.

Intersectionality suggests that there are multiple factors shaping, influencing and informing political and social conditions (Collins & Bilge, 2016:1).

According to Kimberle Crenshaw, issues concerning being black and female cannot be deliberated as separate entities, instead, they coexist and ‘frequently reinforce each other’ (Sister Outreach, 2016). Crenshaw expands on distinguishing two forms of male violence on the female body; domestic violence and rape (Sister Outreach, 2016). Studying these forms of violence on the female body, Crenshaw argues that black women’s experiences are layered with a ‘combination or intersection of both sexism and racism’ (Sister Outreach, 2016).

The world of the film *Screaming Silence* is set in a nightmarish, dark and cold world in which the protagonist, Afrik Badimuri has been brutally killed for being a foreign black female residing in South Africa. In a world which does not accept her for being foreign, female and black, she fights for her voice to be heard even in death. The film attempts to portray the multi-layers of discrimination that lead to her brutal murder.

The film (script) starts off in an ice-cold marble bathroom, where Afrik’s corpse lays dead and cold on the floor. Everything is cold, white or dull in the first act of the film, during this part of the film the audience is meant to experience the melancholy/agonny experienced by the protagonist in this cold bathroom. This reinforces the alienation she feels and her experiences in a world which has othered her for being a female, black, and an immigrant.

The film script follows how Afrik’s non-South African Nationality is used as a reason for her murder by a xenophobic Police officer whose sole desire is to ‘clean the city of Johannesburg’

from foreigners he perceives to be ‘contaminating’ the city. This officer justifies his actions to himself by perceiving the foreign female as a prostitute or drug pusher whose sole intention is to destroy South Africa. He murders these women as a means for ‘justice/cleansing the city’ and ridding it of ‘foreign entities’ contaminating the South African nation.

This last girl he kills (Afrik Badimori), as many of the other ‘foreign’ nationals (from African nations outside of South Africa), is not a prostitute or a drug pusher. Contrary to his belief, Afrik is an aspiring lawyer, who actively contributes positively to the community she lives in with her social work. After her death, she gains consciousness and fights through the spirit world to avenge her own death. In death, she continues to try to fight dominant patriarchal and xenophobic ideologies which box and categorise her as a ‘foreign’ entity intent on bringing destruction to the city of Johannesburg.

Kimberle Crenshaw's ‘Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex’ challenges how ‘dominant conceptions of discrimination condition us to think about subordination as disadvantage occurring along a single categorical axis’ (Crenshaw, 1989:140). She argues that the analysing of marginalised groups within a singular categorical framework established by privileged groups ignores the multiple dimensionalities contributing to race discrimination experienced by black women. (Crenshaw, 1989:140).

The focal point of Crenshaw’s (1989:140) analyses claims that singularly categorizing the discrimination experienced by black women ‘erases black women in the conceptualisation, identification, remediation of race and sex discrimination by limiting inquiry to the otherwise privileged groups’. She elaborates the limitations of defining the black women’s experience as either race/sex/class. She argues that black women experience a combination of race, sex and class discriminations. Crenshaw criticizes the flaws in ‘feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse to embrace the experience of the black woman’ as either a woman’s experience or the black experience (Crenshaw, 1989:140).

The conflict within the first act of the script *Screaming Silence* is the fact that the protagonist's 'spirit language' doesn't clearly communicate in human language. She does everything in her power to redirect the male forensic investigators to the perpetrator who is part of the investigation team. The first act seemingly repeats the singular narrative and dehumanising stereotype of the foreign black female as an alien intent on causing disruption within a South African context.

Crenshaw (1989) instigates that the 'single-issue framework for discrimination' by white women and black men sidelines and marginalizes black women. Feminist theory and antiracist policy also make 'the elusive goal of ending racism and patriarchy more difficult to attain' (Crenshaw, 1989:152).

She further elaborates that when studying struggles encountered by black women, one should address the (double) oppressive systems of racism and sexism they experience (Sister Outreach, 2016). This stance of 'double discrimination' allows for my research to expand on the multilayered forms of discrimination grounded on 'myth', experienced by the foreign black female within the South African context (Sister Outreach, 2016). These myths, created within a patriarchal violent economy are reflected in the depiction of the African female who is often perceived to be a prostitute or drug pusher, needing to be punished. 'Black women are caught between ideological and political currents that combine first to create them and bury them'. (Crenshaw, 1989:160)

Afrik's biography, story and experiences explore these multilayers of discrimination. She is a Malawian law student at Wits University, ambitious and driven. She has confidence and self-awareness, which is intimidating to some of her male counterparts. She is an activist at the university and has dreams of affecting positive change onto the social and political landscape in her country. Unfortunately, the world she resides in oppresses and stifles her voice because she is 'foreign, black, lower class and female'.

Anna Carastathis analysis of Crenshaw's 'Demarginalizing the Intersections of Race and Sex' supports the metaphor Crenshaw uses to debunk intersectionality as an intersection where various discriminatory factors meet or intersect when studying the experience of the black women (Carastathis, 2014:305). 'Intersectionality theorists argue that oppression is produced through the intersection of multiple, decentred and co-constitutive axes (Carastathis,2014: 308) i.e 'intersectionality is a synonym for oppression' (Carastathis,2014: 307.)

In the second act of the script, we enter the perpetrator or antagonist's dark world. In this world, we observe the perpetrator watching footage of all the girls he has murdered. Each time the image of a girl comes on we see his body language and facial expressions become sexual. The guard feels 'powerful and invincible' for getting away with his atrocious crimes. He exerts his 'power' by killing these women, silencing them and disposing of them as if they are trash.

According to Collins & Bilge, intersectionality can be used as an analytic tool to understand how 'power relations are intertwined and mutually constructed' (Collins & Bilge, 2016: 6). This analytic framework can, therefore, be a useful tool to decipher power relations within different social categories such as race, gender, class, exploitation and others (Collins & Bilge, 2016: 6). Collins & Bilge (2016) breaks down intersectionality as an analytic tool into four domains; Interpersonal, Disciplinary, Cultural and Structural.

Interpersonal as an analytic tool entails focus on people's relations to others, analysing power dynamics, 'who is advantaged and disadvantaged within social interactions' (Collins & Bilge, 2016:6). The power struggles are applicable to 'gender categories'; for example, higher opportunity provisions for males, which are 'denied to women' (Collins & Bilge, 2016:6). Intersectionality as an analytic tool emphasises the multidimensional nature of individual identities 'and how various combinations of class, gender, race, sexuality and citizenship can contribute to disadvantaging or discriminations 'differently positioning the individual' (Collins & Bilge, 2016:7)

The disciplinary analytic tool explores how power operates and is applicable to the difference in the treatment of people from different backgrounds and ‘which rules apply to them and how those rules will be implemented’ (Collins & Bilge, 2016:8). In other words, power controls determine outcomes which shape circumstances by giving some people access to some resource which is unavailable to others (Collins & Bilge, 2016:8).

The film presents an alternative narrative, changing power dynamics by giving the foreign black female body agency despite the fact that the protagonist, who is a corpse, has been victimized through violent murder. The antagonist who initially comes off as more human than the ‘demonic foreign immigrant’ turns out to be her murderer and the bearer of the ‘true’ evil. This choice was meant to make the audience question and dismantle the ‘truth’ of the very stereotypes the antagonist used to justify murdering his victims.

The team of forensic officers are men who fail to hear and fully understand Afrik’s communication with them. The men are unaware of the fact that the girl’s ‘dead’ body is half-conscious. Her spirit starts to ‘speak’ through different channels; one of the men is led to seeing flashbacks of the events which took place leading to Afrik’s death. Through spiritual forces, the protagonist regains her power and fights any force of darkness.

The structural domain of power ‘questions the intersections of power’ (Collins & Bilge, 2016: 11). Inequality is not applicable to everyone so it is important for understanding social divisions; by seeing people as individuals and ‘not homogenous challenges undifferentiated mass. For example, gender, race, age, citizenship, among many others.

Intersectionality as an analytic tool dissects ‘inequality, rationality, power, social context, complexity, and social justice’ (Collins & Bilge, 2016: 24). These constitute interlocking, mutually constructing or intersecting systems of power (Collins & Bilge, 2016: 24). Structural, disciplinary, interpersonal and cultural analytic domains can be analysed through intersections which can be unearthed from these various domains’ (Collins & Bilge, 2016: 24).

## Conclusion

Using an experimental/avant-garde approach of filming, my intentions were to challenge social hetero-patriarchal economies by denouncing patriarchy, placing focus on the female protagonist's desire, and inverting the 'male gaze'. This was meant to enable the film to question why biological sex differences define sexuality, and why sexual desires have come to be understood from a patriarchal point of view.

Afrik Badimuri was meant to fight for her power even in death. She has an undying spirit to conquer, find her voice and live her truth. The scenes were meant to re-imagine/re-define the male body as viewed in fragments. These fragments were meant to consist of close up shots of the male figures' hand, as well as other body parts.

Stylistically, the edit plan for the film was to have a montage of normal speed footage with differing degrees of slow motion. The graphically violent death sequence comprised of a plethora of shots was meant to last between one to two minutes as per the edit plan.

The editing plan had graphic imagery with over a hundred shots to depict the barbaric side of human nature and challenge the idea of war against women. The use of unconventional camera techniques, such as the use of shock editing in my film was meant to reinforce the inhuman act of violence. Thus stylistically, *Screaming Silence* was supposed to re-define filmic structures found within Horror/thriller genres. My intention was to represent dehumanizing stereotypes about the foreign female body through an experimental film which is a hybrid of the genre (Horror, Crime, Thriller).

Although I attempted to represent and re-present the black foreign body all in one film, *Screaming Silence* was only able to do the former. My aim was to show the multifaceted nature of the protagonist, which was challenging due to a number of logistical reasons such as limited availability of resources, space and time. These limitations restricted my ability to develop the

initial script I wrote into the short film I had envisioned. I ended up having to improvise and use the resources available to me, which meant shooting some scenes and leaving out others. The film thus ended up doing the very thing it challenged; perpetuating stereotypes and representing the foreign black female body as a victim with very little agency.

The process of making *Screaming Silence* was a very challenging one. It is normal for a film script to undergo many drafts, but a big part of the challenge in writing this script was trying to find the marriage between theory and practice. The academic nature of my findings and trying to project academic theory through the film *Screaming Silence* was quite crippling to my creative journey.

Due to the challenges mentioned, the film ended up placing too much focus on the antagonist, whose actions go unpunished. The decision not to add Afrik's narrating voice betrayed my intention to tell a compelling and empowering story from a foreign black female's perspective within a South African context. Choosing to only shoot the scenes after her death also silenced her, making her a victim without agency, without a voice.

In order to dismantle or challenge dehumanising stereotypes about the foreign black female, some South African films and media need to document diverse stories about the foreign black female. An intersectional feminist approach should be considered as a starting point to explore the multilayered discriminations experienced by the foreign black female body in South Africa. This approach arguably forces the media to reckon with the overlapping points of discrimination experienced by the foreign black female body within a South African context; shifting perceptions and redefining the foreign black female.

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