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DEPARTMENT OF FILM AND THEATRE ARTS STUDIES

TITLE:

**REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF RESISTANCE AND FREEDOM IN SELECTED
FILMS: A CASE STUDY OF 12 YEARS A SLAVE (2013), SARAFINA (1992) AND
THREE IDIOTS (2009)**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS IN ACCORD WITH
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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certifies that he has read, supervised and recommends to the Film and Theatre Arts Department at Midlands State University for acceptance of the research project.

Regional Perspectives of Resistance and Freedom in selected films: A case study of 12 Years a Slave (2013), Sarafina (1992) and Three Idiots (2009). Submitted by **Pretty Gakache (R133821Z)** in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts in Film and Theatre Arts studies.

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DECLARATION

I, Pretty Gakache hereby declare that:

This dissertation is my original work and the information derived from published and unpublished work of others was duly acknowledged in the text and reference list.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my brothers Ferdinand, Forbes, sisters, mom and dad Mr and Mrs Gakache. You are the greatest blessing that I would ever cherish. I love you!

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First of all, I would like to thank the Lord for guiding and keeping me during the four years of my study at Midlands State University. *1 Samuel 7: 12* “...*Ebenezer, thus far the Lord has taken us*”.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to establish and interrogate the perspectives of resistance and freedom in films using *12 Years a Slave* (2013), a film directed by Steven McQueen, *Sarafina* (1992), a film directed by Roodt and *Three Idiots* (2009) directed by Rajkumar Hirani. The research reveals that films serve not only to entertain but to expose hegemonic powers in different societies and ideologies to fight against cruel domination. The films not only depicted freedom from slavery and colonialism but personal freedom. The study identifies and interrogates the similarities and differences in the conceptualization and portrayal of resistance and freedom in Africa, America and Asia. The research also, evaluates the effectiveness of filming techniques used in portraying resistance and freedom such as costume, camera angles, gestures, text, close up shots and music. Also, the investigation deployed thematic and semiotic analysis as a way of interpretation. Through these theories, different meanings have been conveyed that is films have ideological and hegemonic functions. Semiotic theory had the limitation of ignoring particular issues, institutional frameworks, social and political context. The study focused more on the issues of social, economic and political way of people. Therefore, semiotic theory was combined with insights of the Marxist theory which focuses on power struggles between those in power to analyze the films. Findings of the study showcased that films help in addressing the issues of justice and equality among the people regardless of color, race, sex, class and ethnicity. Nevertheless, in view of the loopholes revealed by this study, the researcher therefore proposed recommendations that people should fight for their freedom nonviolently for example praying and worshipping as well as economic empowerment rather than bloodshed. In addition, the study's use of the Qualitative approach and discourse analysis helps in depicting the perspectives of resistance and freedom in films.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Eagleton (1998:317) viewed films as the sites of historical struggles, repositories of political wisdom and domination. Films are also used as an instrument of liberation. Since time immemorial, the Europeans used films to seduce and induce the colonised into accepting colonialism as well as spreading imperialism. The whites used films as a bullet with force to conquer or at least leave a mark for the record. Film was and is used as an art form or an instrument of persuasion, protest, instruction, power and entertainment. The marginalized groups were the victims of power struggles and the ruling class exercised their hegemony through films. Ryan (1988) alludes that films transcend, translate representations, discourses and myths of everyday life into specifically cinematic terms therefore they interfere in the political struggle of the day. In other words, films are used as a mirror of the society or it is a weapon used to shape the world (Wollstein 1997). Films that were produced manipulate culture that is religion, language, education and politics as well as tradition of a certain society. This is supported by (Vhiriri 2004:350) for “cultural imperialism to succeed, the colonised were to be convinced of their inferiority and unquestionable superiority of the invaders through films”. Therefore, the black people s ought to resist the cruel domination of the whites and those in power. Films are now used by the black people to decolonise their minds. This study will identify and interrogate how resistance and freedom is portrayed through this medium.

This chapter encompasses the background of the study, statement of the problem, aim of the study, research questions / hypothesis and justification of study, research assumptions, research

methodology, theoretical framework and organization of the study, definition of key terms and conclusion.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1.1 The Struggle for Liberation by the Black People in America

Slavery is the evil system of imperialism and domination that ascended to succeed with the need of Negroes and trade in Negroes. Slave trade resulted in the death of millions and it led to the fundamentals of capitalist development in the United States of America. The genesis of slave trade in the United States of America was in the 19th Century. This was due to the discovery of gold and silver. Black people suffered from national oppression and racial segregation by the ruling class. Afro Americans were taken to work in the sugar cane and cotton plantations of the whites. Children were sold from mothers, husband from wives and slaves were forbidden to leave the plantation without passes. Blacks faced hush conditions during slavery. Blacks were prohibited from learning to read and write. During slavery in America blacks were caught, beaten, raped or murdered by paddy rollers. Most of them after being caught running away they were hanged to death as a punishment. Because of the oppression, the blacks face from their colonial masters, black slaves continually gambled risk their lives for freedom.

1.1.2 The History of Film in America

Film making began in the 1880s with the invention of motion pictures. From the 1890s, there had been experimentation by photographers and others in reproducing human motion. The first shot motion picture arrived in the 1890s. In these moving pictures, there was no sound usually no plot and no story. These films were short five to eight minutes and were produced by small

companies outside New York City. After some time, film makers began to use films to tell stories in different perspectives and as a tool for power as well as domination. White man was the ones who owned the means of production. Films were also essential in telling the history of slavery. Films were also used for entertainment but the major aim of films was to showcase the superiority of the whites. America spreads her supremacy through film. Christine (1929) asserts that if the rest of the world has not been colonized by the U.S.A in the 20th century, it has all, certainly, been coca-colonized. In order for Western countries to control its colonies they used films. Mintz and Roberts (2000) defined films as an essential element of American history and popular culture meaning that they open windows into American history and popular culture.

1.1.3 Struggle for Freedom in South Africa

South Africa was a Dutch colony. The discovery of minerals and colonial conquest by the White oppressors led to the South African colonialism. Cecil John Rhodes (1914) asserts that “we must find new lands from which we can easily obtain raw material and at the same time exploit the cheap slave labor that is available from the natives of the colonies. The colonies would also provide a dumping ground for the surplus goods produced in our factories”. The genesis of apartheid was in 1948 and it is closely linked to the evolution of South African capitalism, with its strong reliance on cheap black labor as advocated by Cecil John Rhodes. Apartheid was a result of racial prejudices and policies imposed by Dutch British settlers to the native South Africans. Apartheid was also linked to colonial conquest, economic impoverishment and land dispossession. This paved a way to the segregation period (1910-1948). Racism and segregation was the most essential thing that led many South Africans to risk their live for freedom. Scott (1985) defined political acts of resistance such as demonstration, terrorism and marches as “weapons of the weak”. In the apartheid era, native South Africans had their schools and

residential area with lower standards. Black people were not allowed to mix with Whites in everything. They were forced to learn Afrikaans and to believe that they are under colonial supremacy. Everything that was there was to justify the superiority of the invaders. Most families in the days of slavery were separated, taken to work in the mines and plantations of the white oppressors. The standard of education that was given to the native South Africans was lower because the “master race” has lost confidence in its superiority.

The South African freedom struggle was a long and difficult struggle against an injustice by the white oppressors. The freedom struggle in South Africa began soon after the arrival of Dutch settlers in 1652 and continued until 1994 when South Africa gets her independence. Growing resistance ended in the Sharpeville Massacre in March 1960 in which sixty-nine protesters were killed by police. There was also the 16 June 1976 Soweto Uprising which had the involvement of students protesting against apartheid and the implementation of Afrikaans. The youth staged protest against government on the changing of syllabus to Afrikaans at school. Many students’ youth were tortured and killed. The children of the soil were now taken as aliens due to the unique oppression in 1948 that is apartheid. With the eager to attain freedom those who were left joined the liberation struggle risking their lives.

1.1.4 History of Film in Africa

The origin of filmmaking in Africa was initiated by the whites or the colonisers. They have the colonial power over blacks in the 1890s to 1980s. The advent of filmmaking in Africa was the main agenda of the whites to initiate propaganda to the ‘sons of the soil’. England’s ruling Elite had great faith in the power of cinema as an instrument for persuasion when communicating with the masses, whether the working class of urban industrial England illiterates in Britain’s African

colonies (Smyth 1988:285). The British government established what they called The Colonial Film Unit in her colonies. The Unit then set up production units to control in East and West Africa. The white settlers also established the Central African Film Unit to cover Southern and Northern Rhodesia.

South African film history is profoundly bound up with colonialism, apartheid and racial segregation. South Africa silent cinema was owned by the whites, produced and directed by whites. It was a minority cinema. It was also a colonial cinema in terms of finance. Motion picture first came to Johannesburg in 1895. In 1909, South Africa's first cinema was opened in Durban. They were bioscopes and they spread rapidly throughout 1910 with the first cinema for "coloured people only". The black people started to use films as repositories or narrations of historical events. Karl Marx (1843) film is a reflection of class struggle, hegemony and political ideologies. South African filmmakers began to use films to address issues of justice and equality in the nation.

1.1.5 Struggle for Freedom in Asia

Asia was a British colony. These alien invaders that are the whites oppressed the Indians race. The whole colonial policy of British imperialism has been summed up by Sir William Joynson Hicks "we did not conquer India of the Indians. I know that it is said at missionary meetings that we have conquered India to raise the level of the Indians. That is can't. We conquered India by the sword, we shall hold it... we hold it as the finest outlet for British goods". The main interest of the British colonialist was raw materials and cheap labour from the black people. India was operated by a corporation called The East India Company and later it was taken over by the British government. Since Britain colonized India, it means the British government was

controlling the Indian economy and they saw Indians as “half citizens”. The Delhi’s intellectual elite motivated the native Indians to take up arms against the colonizers. In order for the whites to achieve their goal, they had to ‘to create a class of persons India in blood and color, but English in tastes, in morals, opinions and in intellect’. The colonizers established ‘educational institutions’ in the country with the sole agenda of wiping out the thought of freedom from the Indians. This was to convince the Indians the superiority of the invaders. The kind of education that was given to the Indians did not allow them to question but to train them to obey their ‘masters’. The Indians revolted against government in 1857 and the movement was called Sepoy (an Indian soldier in the British army). The Indians were gamblers and when nothing else left, both women and man surrender themselves to serve as slaves. Also, in case of famine the Indians even sold their children to get food. In the South, the term “slave” was used by the Indians referring to cats, dogs and domestic animals. The Virginia tribes controlled “people of a rank inferior to commons, a sort of servants... The Dutch East India Company (VOC) shipped Indian and Southeast Asia slaves to the Cape of Good Hope to work. During the Seventeenth century about tens of thousands of slaves from India Malabar and Coromandel worked in the factories. Indians worked in the Whites plantations. The harsh conditions and ruthless treatment which was faced by the Indians, led them to risk their lives in fighting for the eradication of oppression and cruel hegemonic rule.

1.1.6 History of Film in Asia

The history of Indian cinema goes back to the nineteenth century. The first motion picture in the Indian film industry was screened in Bombay on July 7, 1896 called “The Wrestlers”. This day became an important day in the social and cultural history of the Indian people. Cinema became a sensation across Europe in 1897 there was a film presentation by one professor Stevenson who

featured a stage show at Calcutta's Star Theatre. The fathers of Indian cinema were Dada Saheb Phalke. In 191, they made the first ever full length feature silent film. It was also a commercial success. The first sound film in India was screened in Bombay. In 1931 Ardeshir Irani made India's first talking film. The genesis of talking film made the Indian cinema vibrant. Films were produced in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil and Bengali. In the 1920s emerged the numerous new production companies. The films they produced were based on mythological and historical facts. Also, in 1931 about three hundred and twenty eight films were produced as compared to 108 in 1927. Due to the production of many films, it actually led to the construction of huge movie halls and they gained many audiences. The Indian film industry has made available the talented opportunities. Due to the launch of cable channels, it created job opportunities in terms of lighting, sound, editing, directing and camera. After independence the government came in to improve the film industry to make it a "better" cinema. In 1959 the Institute of India was established at Pune to develop technical skills for an industry that was seen to be lacking. In this era, the films that were produced were largely studio based and those films reflected a passionate concern of justice.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most studies on portrayals of freedom have been written by many scholars but focusing on one region. Comparative analysis is rare. There is need to fill the gap which is the main aim of this study to reinforce the body of knowledge in Zimbabwe and Africa in general.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

- To identify and interrogate the similarities and differences in the conceptualization and portrayal of freedom in Africa, America and Asia.

1.3.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the portrayals of freedom.
- To identify and interrogate the similarities and differences in portraying freedom.
- To identify the portrayals of resistance.
- To identify and interrogate the effectiveness of the forms of resistance.
- To identify the techniques used in portraying freedom.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of techniques used in portraying freedom.

1.3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How is freedom portrayed?
- What is the essence of freedom in selected films?
- What are the forms of resistance portrayed?
- How effective are the forms of resistance in portraying freedom?
- What are the similarities in the portrayal of freedom?
- What are the differences in the portrayal of freedom?
- What are the effects of filmic techniques used?

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Most studies focus on portrayals of freedom on one region. Comparative analysis is rare. This makes a study that identifies and interrogates the similarities and differences vital.

1.5 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

My assumptions as a researcher are that since films plays an essential role in portraying issues of power and freedom, people can get knowledge on how to solve issues like that. This study will help people to understand the techniques used in the films to convey freedom.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the method and procedure used in research process. In this study, the researcher will use a qualitative approach. Qualitative approach refers to the understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern their behavior (Hilema 2005). Also, Merriam (2009) defines qualitative research as the meanings constructed by people and how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. It also helps to locate the observer in the world of creation meanings. Qualitative studies provide depth and details of what you are researching on. Also, qualitative approach allows the researcher to evaluate findings through the focus groups and interviews, understanding of meaning of the language and techniques used in the films to convey freedom.

Strength of qualitative analysis

- It raises more issues through broad and open ended inquiry.
- It helps to understand behaviours of values, beliefs and assumptions.

- It allows the researcher to explore the views of homogenous as well as diverse group of people.
- It permits flexibility meaning that the researchers can modify their field research design.

Weakness of qualitative research

- It is not trustworthy because it is based on personal observation.
- It is a labour intensive approach in such a way that, the analysis process requires a well experienced researcher so as to get data from the group respondents.
- It lacks reliability because the participants have more power over the content of data collected therefore the researcher is not able to verify results.

Since this study is based on dominance and freedom, there is need for a qualitative approach. Also, there will be an analysis of film text hence qualitative approach is necessary. With the use of Qualitative approach it will produce a greater depth of information rather than just relying on the quantitative. This is because the qualitative research approach has strength and weaknesses that can only be covered by the strengths of the quantitative approach so as to get more and accurate information about the study. Qualitative approach is favorable to this study.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is built on a theatrical framework of Semiotic theory and Marxist theory so as to elicit the various meanings embedded in the languages and images of selected films. In his essay titled “Encoded/Decoded”, Stuart Hall’s (1973) theory of preferred reading he avers that audiences are given a media text invested with a critical autonomy to investigate and interrogate the validity or authenticity of that message. Semiotics, interpreted as the science of signification,

is often said to derive from two sources: F. de Saussure (Swiss-French, 1857-1913) and C.S. Peirce (Anglo-American, 1839-1914). Other scholars such as Noam Chomsky, Umberto, Barthes and Baudrillard also incorporate semiotics in their researches. All these scholars, agreed on same definition of semiotics that is, it is the production and interpretation of meaning. On Semiotic theory, Ferdinand De Saussure talks about the interpretation process between signifier and the signified. This even means that a written word is both a linguistics sign and a visual orthographic one and an image is interpreted both visually and usually also linguistically. In other words, semiotics is a way of how audiences make meanings out of film text.

More so, Saussure argued that word is a sign, what already written or spoken is signifier and what already thought is signified (Charter,2006:42). Joseph Boggs and Dennis Petrie (2000:2) stated that “ film is both an industry and an art of form”. Films construct words and expression that derives meanings. Color, text and sound convey a certain message in the film. Signs are there by design not by default. (Bryman, 2004:393) argues that “a semiotic approach is concerned to uncover the process of meaning production and how signs are designed to have an effect upon actual perspective consumers of those signs”. Semiotic asserts that all meaning is programmed in things that create meaning when it comes to analyzing. A semiotic approach highlights how freedom is dramatized through film’s use of signs and symbols. In Bryman’s assertion, semiotic analysis suits this study which sought to analyze the regional perspective of freedom in films 12 Years a slave, Sarafina and 3idiots.

Limitations of the Semiotic Theory

- The semiotic theory had the limitation of ignoring specific practices, institutional frameworks and the social and political context. Since the study is focusing more on the issues of economic, social and political way of people, there is need for other theories to

tackle political issues. Even Roland Barthes who argues that texts are codified to encourage a reading which favors the interests of dominant class confines his study with the social context of interpretation.

- Using the semiotic theory, limited this researcher in the semiotics send a message to the audience and it is up to the audience to interpret whichever way he or she feels deems right. The relationship between signifiers and their signified maybe of individual discretion but they are not socially discreet.

Marxist theory in this study reviews films as a reflection of class struggle. The theory was promulgated by Karl Marx. In Marxist theory, film is used as an instrument of liberation. Power is linked to class relations economics, politics and ideology. Eagleton (1998:317) see words in a film or literature as historical struggle, source of political wisdom and domination. The ruling class owns all the property of industry and commerce that is film industry, banks, telecommunications companies and factories. Marxists are also attentive in why dominated classes seem to accept their oppression; so, they address issues of resistance and strategies to bring about radical change when producing their films. The ruling class has the power to control the political and ideological meaning of film text. J.V Stalin (1913) believes that the ‘one who owns the gun inspires the most profound respect’ and it actually mean that those who are in power “ruling class” decide and control the society politically, economically and socially. Since the ruling class owns the film industry, they played a pivotal role in influencing the nature of film images.

Also, according to Goldman (1992) the Marxist perspective on film is centered on the ‘institutions’ responsible to stimulating desire, making the oppressed people inferior and finding

pleasure in their subordinate position which leads to the continuous domination of the system. These films showcase the protagonist as a hero and the ruling class made it default to demonstrate the supremacy of their class. The less privileged in most movies are shown striving to put food on the table so as to show the difference between the ruling class and the lower class. The issue of class struggle in films is actually seen the lower classes which are blacks resisting the white dominance. Blacks are fighting for their freedom. In the film *12 Years a Slave* whites are portrayed as superior than the blacks. In this study, the Marxist theory will address class inequalities and struggle as film becomes a weapon for power and freedom.

1.8 ORGANISATION STUDY

The research comprises of six chapters. The first chapter has Introduction which is made up of the background of study, statement of the research problem, aim of the research and objectives of the study. On the same chapter, there is also the research questions, methodology, justifications of the research study, definition of key terms and theoretical framework. Chapter two focuses on Literature review related to the problem under investigation. Chapter 3 focuses on the analysis of first film.

Chapter 4 will also focus on the analysis of second film. This chapter will have an introduction which defines the major sections to be included in the chapter. There is also chapter five which will focus on the third film. Last but not least, the research will have Chapter six which will involve the summary, conclusion, findings, recommendations and areas for future study. This chapter will provide a brief recap of the entire study.

1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- Regional perspectives: refers to the thinking and writing about specific topics from a narrow and geographical area.
- Freedom: is to express who you are through whatever you want to do without any forces stopping you.
- Resistance is defined by Giroux (1983) as an action that appears out of a dormant or overt ideological condemnation of the fundamental oppressive ideologies.
- Films: are also called movie, motion picture, theatrical film and these are series of still images which, when shown on screen, creates the illusion of moving images due to the phenomenon.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided the research problem, background of the study, research objectives and research questions. The next chapter will focus on literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an expose of former studies conducted by other scholars in regard to the subject of resistance and freedom through films. The researcher incorporated literature from other studies that have relevance with this study. For each objective of the study the researcher drew some literature of what other researcher found about the same phenomenon. Principal philosophies guiding this investigation will be debated to give more complexity on the subject matter.

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is an objective, critical summary of published research literature related to a topic under consideration for investigation. Its purpose is to form familiarity with current thinking and study on a specific topic, and may justify upcoming research into a previously overlooked or understudied area. Nordquist (2004) states literature review as an explanation of published material on a topic by researchers. This review will explore how freedom is portrayed in terms of culture, language, religion, race, class, age, sexuality, hopelessness, gender, love, education and wealth.

2.1.1 Scholarly view on Language and Culture

Ngugi (1994) alludes that, the 'language' of real life is the matrix of the social relations of power and powerlessness that discloses values contesting for ideological hegemony in society. Culture

and language go hand in hand and it defines one's identity. Ngugi (1994) sees the language of African literature in the context of social forces that is colonialism. He says that "...imperialism continues to control the economy, politics and culture of Africa." The manipulation of culture and language by the whites through films triggers black people to fight for their cultural freedom. This is supported by (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1986) "Struggle makes history. Struggle makes us. In struggle is our history, our language and being." It motivates the native blacks or 'sons of the soil' to fight for their liberation.

Therefore, this study seeks to unearth the regional perspectives of cultural and linguistic freedom which has created hegemony in selected films. The use of English language in the films under study brings out some perspectives that in as much as the themes of those films might be advocating for freedom little was done since the films neglected or underestimated the slavery brought by the language on its own. Therefore, what Ngugi avers in his book: Decolonizing The Mind (1986) is that freedom should start in the mind first, meaning that for films to be effective in the battle of freedom the use of colonial language should be desisted.

Also, Gikandi (2000) pertaining the issue of language, sought to contradict with Ngugi's perception. He pointed out that, Ngugi's perception of language as a tool of social change disregarded the class division's inherent society, so that language could be taken as a vehicle of unification of desperate social strata:

How could it (language) transcend historically engendered social divisions to become the signifier of a unified nation and its many voices? Indeed, how could the materiality of language be reconciled with Ngugi's romantic conception of literary language as a special dimension of a Sprachgeist? (GIKANDI 2000, p. 265)(grifro do autor)

This means that language can be used to unite people and the nation in general. Films act as the voice of the voiceless but how can the voices heard? Voices of the marginalized people can be heard usually when speaking native language because in language there is culture and national identity. Most English-speaking Africans write their films that are totally based on Britain culture or way of life. This simply means no one can write fully and honestly in the language of the oppressor. Films are used to shape the world or interpreting history of a certain society.

2.1.2 Class and Race

Marxist philosophy talks about class struggle, hegemony and political ideology. Thompson (1990) defined hegemony as the “relations of domination”. Also, hegemony refers to a loosely interrelated set of ruling ideas permeating a society but in such a way as to make the established order of power values appear natural, taken for granted and commonsensical (Browning 2002). Power is exercised not through force but through dominant worldview or ideology (Kemp, 2007). Through ideology, power is manifested. Film images establish part of the ideological depiction of race, sex and class embedded in power depicted in films. Films, therefore, can be read as sites of conventional domination rather than as just simple variations of the same dominant ideology. Resistance is a challenge of power relations. According to (PoppitZ, 1992), power is seen as ‘restricting freedom’, and as a reduction obviously similar to freedom. Racial oppression remains a defining feature of the modern capitalist world. It is manifest most spectacularly in violent attacks on immigrants and minorities by fascist gangs. Eric Williams a Caribbean scholar believed that slavery led to the genesis of racism, "Slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery". The Native Americans or black people in general were taken to work in the sugar and cotton plantations of the white people. Racism as a form of discrimination or oppression enabled high stages of mistreatment, and has therefore been

a vital factor in stipulating resistance by the blacks. That is, he emphasizes that every social relationship is a power relationship and resistance to power relationships is present at all stratification of power.

Therefore, the research seeks to unearth the regional perspectives of freedom in terms class and race in the films. These scholars were just supporting and narrating the issues pertaining class and race as well as power relations. Since power relations have often been depicted in films since the very genesis of film making. The study want to showcase how issues of power relations that is, ideologies and hegemonic powers are being portrayed through films. The power relations are influenced by those who own the means of production and those who are behind the scenes. In short, who cinemas and film institutions have the power to dictate the film images. Films are bound up with reflections of power relations linked to issues of class, gender and race.

2.1.3 Gender

Gender is defined as a social construction of reality and this organization is framed through language in a socialization act or process.

... broadly shared beliefs, values, and perspectives about gender familiar to the members of a societal culture and likely to endure in that culture over long periods of time, on which individuals and institutions draw in order to give meaning, sense, and normative direction to their thinking and action.... Schon and Rein (1994: 13)

Therefore, the above definition of frame that socialization frames does not only define gender, but they also suggest the roles and relations or identity in a particular setting. In short, a frame is a collection of stereotypes which individuals rely on to understand their gender identities. The study pursues to excavate the perspectives of gender freedom in selected films. The roles that are

given to both male and female characters matters most when it comes to gender imbalances. . . Film not only entertains and informs but produce images and impressions which instruct people to conduct their lives. In this modern world our ethics are increasingly taught by films that embed foreign cultures and traditions to encourage us to imitate the ideals of behavior which they represent. In short, the whole process has an impact in influencing individual's perception of the roles and relations in society.

2.1.4 Resistance and Freedom

More so, on the issue of freedom and resistance, Devereux, (2007) and Gauntlet (2008) defines freedom as a way to express who you are through whatever you want to do without any forces stopping you. The research seeks to address the issues concerning freedom and how it is portrayed in selected films. In Gauntlet's definition of freedom, one has to express whatever he wants without being stopped. In his views of freedom, what he seems to omit is how filmmakers addresses the issues of freedom through films. Films play a pivotal role in maintaining the status quo.

Giroux (1983) defines resistance as an action that appears out of a dormant or overt ideological condemnation of the fundamental oppressive ideologies. This led the oppressed groups to resist against the oppression. In films 'resistance has been expressed through symbols and behavior' (Willy 1997 and Hebdige 1979). Power is something that is possessed by the leading groups and exercised against the subordinate; the subordinate may fight and attempt to seize power. Giroux (1983) states that, agency and sign of resistance may therefore emerge through the experiences of the oppressed.

Therefore, this research intends to evaluate the applicability of Giroux's view of resistance through selected films. Since resistance is often been depicted in films, the investigation seek to excavate more on the manifestation of resistance in selected films. How we conceptualize resistance brings out our academic understanding of power and its bias. In films, thus, resistance like power is linked to interpretation. He also suggest that resistance must have an enlightening function that contains an analysis of domination and provide theoretical opportunities for self-reflection and struggle in the interest of social and self-emancipation. Film as a form of ideology seeks to demystify ideas and powers of the ruling class and once film construct words and expressions meanings are derived and resistance is manifested.

2.1.5 The effects of filming techniques

Douglas Kellner and Michael Ryan in their book Film, Politics and ideology alludes that Hollywood film from the 1960s to the present day was closely connected with political movements and struggles of the epoch. Most of the Hollywood films can be interpreted as a struggle of representation over how to construct a social world and everyday life. This is supported in their book Camera Politica: Politics and ideology in contemporary Hollywood film 1988.

Therefore, this study seeks to unearth the effects of filming techniques such as setting, plot, music, camera angels and color. Through the use of these techniques film makers expressed how freedom has been portrayed in selected films.

The television camera and microphones do not record reality, but encode it: the encoding produces a sense of reality that is ideological. What is re-presented, then is not reality but

ideology, and the affectivity of this ideology is enhanced by the iconicity of television by which the medium purports to situate its truth claim in the objectivity of the real, thus disguise the fact that any 'truth' that it produces is that of ideology, not reality (Curran and Gurevitch, 1991:56).

The above avers by Curran and Gurevitch entails that whatever is produced through visual images is not real, but ideological. Hence the portrayal of freedom in the films understudy will be inspired by this contention because the assertion emphasized on how productions are made. This means that perspectives are shaped by those encoded visuals which meant to forward a particular ideology. Therefore, from what Curran and Gurevitch contends it can be noted that their notion was more on the technical aspect of production, hence this research shall focus more on the regional perspectives of freedom as an end product of that produced content by those technicians. The ideology is technically created hence it is the one which shapes perspectives of audiences on how to interpret the representations shown in films.

2.2 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored significant literature in relation to the study, preexistent knowledge in the field of manifestation of power, resistance and freedom in films has been discussed. The next chapter will focus on the analysis of the first film understudy.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 CASE STUDY: *12 YEARS A SLAVE* (2013).

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters defined the area of study, significance of study, research aims and objectives, the methodology, literature review and expounded on the theories that act as the guidance to this research. The purpose of this chapter is to offer a case study on the regional perspectives of resistance and freedom in America. This study will analyse how signs, symbols, images, text, settings, camera angles in the selected films. Therefore, a critically analysis of regional perspectives of resistance and freedom through a semiotic interpretation and thematic analysis of selected films will be explored. How the selected film manifest resistance and freedom will be the pivotal point.

3.2 Brief Synopsis of the film *12 YEARS A SLAVE* (2013)

The film *12 Years a Slave* is a stimulating of historical story telling about slavery in the 1800s, and based on a book of 1863. It is a film directed by McQueen and written by John Ridley. Slavery and capitalism is the dominant feature in McQueen's *12 Years a Slave*. Slavery can be defined as a cash business whereby capitalist control the economy and profits at the expense of the marginalized groups. The film is based upon the experiences of Solomon Northup who is the protagonist. Northup was a black free man, lured from Saratoga, drugged, kidnapped and sold into slavery in 1841 and spent 12 Years in slavery. The film follows Northup as he works on sugar and cotton plantations, deals with cruelty and meets other enslaved blacks. Solomon's narration of his slavery life, there is the exhibition of resisting in attaining freedom. So at this

time the meaning of slavery is in its most literary form that is to be free is not being possessed by another human being. Freedom is not a subjective “feeling” or notion- it is an established concept of the state. In the memoir, the first era of bondage is so crippling for Northup due to him being born a free man with the same privileges as any other native in the Northern states. One cannot talk about slavery without stating the issues of power struggles and resistance. Domington (2014) alludes that *12 Years a Slave* seeks to address black freedom with black slavery. Film images are mirrors of the ‘real’ world where ideological domination is attained or resisted. Resistance is a challenge of power relations. All the structures of slavery look to persecute and diminish the oppressed.

The film portrays resistance and freedom through the use of symbols and signs. McQueen captures the spirit of freedom, so the study also reviews the yearning for freedom and escape. Due to the inhuman treatment, the enslaved sought to reject their bondage so as to gain freedom. Even though Northup was chained in the slave warehouse and robbed his rights or freedom, he went on to fight so as to get it back. This is evidenced when he says that, “*You have no right what so ever to detain me...*”. Giroux (1983) defines resistance as an action that appears out of a dormant or overt ideological condemnation of the fundamental oppressive ideologies. Solomon is fighting for his freedom since he was born free “*I was born a free man*”. The whites do not have that consent to detain him as well as depriving him from freedom. Although the whites enslaved him, he could not lose the spirit of freedom, “*...I promise you, I promise you upon my liberation I will have satisfaction for this wrong*”. The repetition of the words “I promise you” brings more emphasis and depicting anger. Northup guaranteed them that with regards to his freedom he will battle. The enslaved Solomon refused to be an object of manipulation.

However, Northup is chained and has nowhere to go at the same time the slave master is insisting that he is not a free man ‘*resolve this. Produce your papers*’. They drugged him and took his papers of being a free man. This means that the freedom he is anticipating, somehow it is difficult to attain. The fact that Northup keeps on fighting for freedom at the end he achieved it. Therefore, the perspectives of resistance and freedom are being manifested in the film *12 Years a Slave*.

Also, the perspectives of resistance and freedom are portrayed through a character that fights against a white master. Master Epps is a cruel, drunken and demanding man. Film images and text are mirrors of the ‘real’ world where ideological hegemony is attained or resisted. In the Film, resistance is seen when Northup punches Master Epps until Mr. Ford came to rescue him. The best way to get freedom from oppression is through verbal and physical resistance. Filmic manipulation converts what might have been a mere visual transfer of reality into discourse (Metz 1974). The enslaved takes the tyrannical agent of oppression by physical force in an offer to demonstrate their intense hurt of slavery and exploitation



Fig 1: Master Eppy groaning after a punch by Solomon -Screen shot from12 Years a Slave (2013)

Also, the perspectives of freedom are depicted through resistance against white masters in the selected films. Resistance is demonstrated as slaves discuss among themselves. One of the slaves says, ‘...*we can fight.*’ Even though these slaves could not physically challenge their slave masters, their words reflect a marginalized group that is eager to take up a stand and fight hegemonic powers so as to get their freedom. Reactionary resistance is therefore seen through the words articulated by Solomon’s conversations when he says, ‘...*three can go against the whole crew*’. Despite the fact that they are few and unarmed, these slaves are keen to fight for their freedom hence film text has meanings that should be interpreted by the audiences. The eager to attain freedom is depicted in the conversation when one of the slaves says, ‘...*I don’t want to survive, I want to live.*’ William (1960) states that, films propagate the capitalist system by ensuring its continuous survival therefore the slaves want to fight the survival of this tyrannical system and regime. By saying they don’t want to ‘survive’ can be interpreted as saying they are not enjoying the fruits of life. For Solomon Northup, mere survival cannot be adequate. Also, by comparing ‘surviving and living’, the two words signify two groups where the other one lives whereas the other one survives. The marginalized slaves survive, they suffer and hold on while the hegemonic groups are ‘living’ enjoying the privileges on the expense of the slaves hence Mac Queen portrays the perspectives of resistance and freedom through the film text.

More so, one cannot talk about freedom without mentioning resistance. Resistance is also portrayed when Northup is whipped by the slave master until the shirt is torn and figured out how to challenge the master. The slave master presented to him some clothes to change yet he didn't appreciate. “...*no gratitude?*” In an African culture or English culture appreciation is an essential thing. Failing to appreciate, it means rebellion or disliking the thing. Resistance is also

portrayed in symbols and signs as evidenced by Northup who was imprisoned and hungry in the slave house who is refusing to eat the food they brought him and kicked it with too much anger. Sivaramakrishan, (2005, p. 347) believe that, subordinated individuals are not passive subjects but rather possess a measure of agency to engage in resistance. During slavery time, slaves were prohibited from learning how to read and write *“if you want to survive do and say as little as possible, tell no one you can read and write unless you want to be a dead nigger”*. In the film, it is demonstrated how hard it was for a slave to write a letter without a regular pen. Instead Northup used sticks and mulberry juice to write letters. For freedom opportunity Solomon is willing to do extraordinary things.

Moreover, Giroux (1983) believed that resistance emerges through the experiences of the oppressed. Solomon is an educated, talented and intelligent man. This is seen when the slave masters were negotiating prices for him *“thousand pounds for Platt, this is a nigger of considerable talent”*. Since time immemorial, slavery entails the right of possession in another person, including the ability to buy and sell that individual as well as the authority to determine where and how the slave will live and work. In the film, Northup is a victim of slavery, fight for his identity and respect when Mr Epps calls him ‘boy’. By calling a grown-up man a ‘boy’ is a showcase of disrespect according to African culture. Ngugi (1994) defines culture as one’s identity. The manipulation of culture by the whites in the film triggers black people to fight for their cultural freedom. This is supported by Ngugi Wa Thiong’o (1986) who asserts that, *“Struggle makes history. Struggle makes us. In us struggle is our history, our language and being”*. Solomon fights for his recognition and respect. This is seen in his response after being called *“boy”*, he responds with an active voice, *‘...my name is Solomon...’* The word ‘boy’ indicates somebody who is under control of someone and immature. The word ‘boy’ becomes a

signifier in power discourse. Therefore, Northup endeavors to resist such a humiliation by keeping on insisting on his name. At some point the slave master refers to Solomon as Plat and Solomon stands on his identity by saying, ' *my name is Solomon not Plat*'. In order to gain freedom Northup had to stand up and fight back verbally and physically. McQueen portrays resistance by giving characters a character of bravery and principle. Solomon does not compromise his identity even if the slave master reminds him that '*... you are not a free man and you are not from Saratoga, ...you are not a free man, you are not but a ran away nigger from Georgia*'. The repetition by the white master telling Solomon not being a free man gives emphasis in rejecting Solomon's identity. Even though he is in chains, Northup feels regardless he has a place in the historical backdrop of humankind as he insists that '*he is a free man*'. Hence, he still has an identity different from what the slave master thought.

Wills (1997) asserts that 'resistance can be expressed through symbols and behavior'. This is portrayed in the film *12 Years a Slave*. Despite that Northup is chained and attacked by the slave masters, he was asked if he is a slave, his response is '*No*'. A film text should be read as the manifestation of a diversity of voices rather than as the enunciation of one ideological voice which is there to be specified and attacked (Ronald 1972). Slavery and its relation to freedom have long been problematic subjects for political system as well as political life. Enslaved people in America resisted but it differs on how that resistance is perceived depends on the audience. Resistance is therefore portrayed in verbal words and also in symbols and signs as evidenced by Solomon who does not want to participate in music as demanded by the slave masters.



Fig 2: Screenshot of Solomon Northup refuses to play a guitar as a way of resistance

Slaves faced all kinds of brutality in the whites' plantations and somehow tried to escape. Through this era African-Americans used songs to distinguish themselves from their masters and prayed to God in hope of escaping the horrible Caucasian race. McQueen uses the song *Roll Jordan Roll* in his film *12 Years a Slave* that emphasizes on not giving up. Hebdige (1979) defines resistance as an indirect negotiated challenge to hegemony at profoundly superficial level of appearance at the level of signs. In the film, the song *Roll, Jordan, Roll* is sung during a funeral and at the end of the movie:

Went down to the river Jordan,

Where John baptized three.

Well I woke the devil in hell,

Sayin' John ain't baptized me.

I say Roll, Jordan, roll Roll,

Jordan, roll My soul arise in heaven,

Lord For the year when Jordan roll..

Through a song such as this one, they generated an atmosphere free of oppression, detestation and hierarchy and instead connected with each other as slaves. Therefore, the song creates unity among the slaves or it mobilizes them. In order for them to fight for their liberation there was need for unity hence the song “*River Jordan*”. Slaves were using the river Jordan as a metaphor to point out that they saw the river as an escape route out of slavery, in hope of something better and thus prayed to the Lord that in the event that they didn't figure out how to get away, their soul would arise in heaven. Therefore, the film portrays the perspectives of resistance and freedom through the use of signs, metaphors, diction and symbols.

A slave is a source of cheap labour and satisfies the plea of a capitalist's society that thrives on profit making. Human rights violation is due to power structures where certain classes oppress exploit and regard other people as objects of manipulation. Schwartlander (1973) argues that power is nothing else than alleviated violence while Popitz (1972) asserts that power is almost exclusively understood as restricting freedom. Resistance should be a struggle in the liberation of marginalized people. Though sometimes resistance cannot be practically but seen through words for example when Solomon confronts Master Tibbeats and says, ‘*...if something wrong, is wrong with the instruction...you must know that I am not a slave, before I came to you I was a free man.*’ Resistance is a challenge of power relations, instructions and stereotypes therefore the slave cannot ignore slavery and its brutal repression. Solomon was a man of talent educationally and physically. Tibbeats became infuriated by Solomon's competence. The plea of getting liberation from the inhuman treatment and oppression drove Northup to fight back. Solomon's whipping of Tibbeats is an exciting and satisfying moment he has ever done in attaining his freedom.



Fig 3: Screenshot of Northrup whipping Master Tibcats

Resistance is also seen when Lupita Nyong'o who plays the role of Patsey verbally challenges master Epps when he calls her a liar by saying, *"The Lord knows that's all!"* When Epps says, *"You're a liar,"* Patsey replies, *"And you, blind with your own covetousness! I don't lie, Master. If you kill me, I'll stick to that"* (McQueen, 2013). In this scene, Patsey fights back for her freedom (Jones & Shorter Gooden, 2004, p. 65). Patsey is choosing to fight back with her words and challenge Epps's claim that she is a liar. McQueen used a close-up on Epps and Northrup so as to put the audience in the position to clearly witness Patsey's emotions and movements. Even though they are all present in one shot, the focus is on her. Bela Balazs on *The face of Man in Film Theory and Criticism* (1985) asserts that close ups give the impression of a mere naturalistic preoccupation with detail. Close ups release a kind human attitude in observation of hidden things. Therefore, the close up on the film scene is a sensational confession of what is truly occurring under the surface of appearance.



Fig 4: Screen shots left to right a woman Patsy verbally challenge, Patsy sexual abused by Master Eppy – 12 Years a Slave (2013)

Films about slavery, prominently and unapologetically showcases the enslaved people tried to escape other than showcasing how American whites enslaved their own their own children, grandchildren and relatives who were multiracial. Enslaved people in America resisted. How that resistance is perceived depends on who is viewing.

McQueen's film showcases the spiritual side of freedom, hard work and struggle, which are captured beautifully in the musical soundtrack of Negro spirituals, hymns and colonial work songs. There is no question that there is a new method in how the history of this American colonial era is captured in art. He also deploys religion as a weapon to control the slaves. Northup was sold by Master Ford to Edwin Epps, the oppressive owner of a cotton plantation. Northup is frustrated and says, '*you must know that I am not a slave, before I came to you I was a freeman*'. Solomon's validated claim is answered through a Slave master Epps who opens a scripture from [Luke 12:47](#) to his slaves: "*...And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*" The

slave master lashes him again and says', *that's the scripture*' a justification of his oppressive behavior to a black men. Master Epps and other slave masters are the agency of a powerful class and therefore religion justifies their acts of owing other human beings. Master Epps takes this verse literally and whips the slaves who pick the least amount of cotton each day. This is the depiction of how slavers in *12 Years a Slave* used the Bible to justify their "evil" actions and it really prompts the enthusiasm for freedom.

Mintz and Roberts (2000) defined films as an essential element of American history and popular culture meaning that they open windows into American history and popular culture. As indicated by Joseph Boggs and Dennis Petrie (2000), "film is both an industry and an art form". In other words, making movies can be a business venture or opportunity that allows for creative arts. McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* managed to portray the history of slavery and the manifestation of resistance in order to be free from bondage. Resistance is portrayed when Northup was shouting at Eliza who was crying to him. As to Eliza, crying is another way of resistance. She cried almost every day and it forced Master Ford to remove her from his plantation. Northup says with the anger voice "*...my back is thick with scars for protesting my freedom, do not accuse me*". Northup did his best to get his freedom even though it was hard for him. He shouts with anger "*I survive, I will not fall into despair...I will keep myself hard to freedom opportunity*". Northup did not believe in hopelessness. He will do whatever it takes to gain his freedom. Besides being physically and emotionally attacked or abused by the colonial masters, women slaves faced too many challenges in the film *12 Years a Slave*. They were also sexually abused by the White masters and sometimes impregnated the likes of Patsey. Patsey does not give up as such when she said "*I have no comfort in this life ... there is no God here*". She is eager to do whatever it takes to get rid of this kind of life.

3.3 ANALYSIS

To sum up the above analysis, it can be noted that the selected film portrays the history and issues of slavery in America and films conveys ideological and hegemonic power to audiences. Capitalism and slavery is also a dominant feature in the film. The film *12 Years a Slave* seeks to address black freedom with black slavery as noted by Doming (2014). All the structures of slavery sought to oppress and reduce the enslaved hence the marginalized resisted so as to gain their freedom. McQueen in his film *12 Years a Slave* uses filming techniques such as close up, wide and medium shots where it is necessary. He incorporated close up shots to show the objects and face of the artist. These shots portray emotions of the artist thereby making the audience understand the film text more. The regional perspectives of resistance and freedom are portrayed in the selected film through filmic techniques

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 CASE STUDY: *SARAFINA* (1992)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to offer a case study on the regional perspectives of resistance and freedom in Africa. This study will analyse how signs, symbols, images, text, settings, camera angles in the selected films. Therefore, a critically analysis of regional perspectives of freedom through a semiotic interpretation and thematic analysis of a selected film will be explored. How the film *Sarafina* manifest resistance and freedom will be the crucial point.

4.2 Brief Synopsis of the film *SARAFINA* (1992)

Sarafina is a South African film written by Mbongeni Ngema directed by Darrell James Roodt. The film is based on a true historical event well known as the Soweto Uprising 16 June 1976. Eagleton (1998 p 317) alludes that films are sites of historical struggles, repository of political wisdom or domination. *Sarafina* is a story of a group of black South African teenagers living through apartheid. The word apartheid is an Afrikaans term meaning apartness and it refers to the system of racial segregation by which the white minority in South Africa oppressed the black majority and other people of color. These students lived in a poor area of the country called Soweto. This group of young student is led by Sarafina who is the protagonist in the film. She is a politically conscious young woman and she has the passion for music and dreaming becoming a star. The film follows Sarafina and their group learning about themselves and their oppression. In the film, the students were opposing the implementation of Afrikaans as the language of instruction in schools. Their music teacher Mrs. Masambuka teaches students unauthorized

syllabus that is communism. She also goes into topics that concern revolution and it gives students the courage to fight for their freedom. The students all eventually turn against authority and commit criminal acts against the “white” enemy.

The film depicts resistance and freedom. Resistance is therefore filled in film text, signs and symbols and different groups seek to manifest resistance through films. Ryan and Keller (1988) believes that through ideology, appearance of power in movies can be attained by ideological domination while on the other hand, projects of ideological domination can be conceptualized in terms of reactionary resistance to common struggles against traditional conservative values. The film is about black people being tortured and killed by the Boers in South Africa. The film starts with student burning schools and text books during the night in a bid to protest for their freedom “*those text books are full of lies*” as mentioned by Sarafina. Ngugi (1986) postulates that, far from being a means of eliminating reality, education can be used as a means of masking reality to mystify the relations between men and men. This means that the whites did not want the blacks to know their rights and national identity freedom. Hence, they resisted and overcome the cruel domination and oppression of the whites. Scott (1985) defined political acts of resistance such as demonstration, terrorism and marches as “weapons of the weak”. They also burnt shops and cars for the Boers as a sign of resistance. All the signs in films are not there by default but by design. Hence film is an instrument of liberation. The native South African students were fighting for their identity and freedom through resistance.



Fig 1: Screenshot of school property burnt by students as a form of resistance in Sarafina

Also, the film portrays resistance and freedom through the students who are eager to fight back the white cruelty. The film depicts issues of class struggle where the marginalized group which is blacks is resisting the white dominance. Resistance is seen when the students discuss among themselves, one of them says “...the Boers want everything under control...we are not happy. We are not under control so somebody better tell the Boers”. Reading in between the lines or film text one can suggest that these students are eager to do whatever it takes to get rid of the ruthless white dominance. The keen of the blacks to get freedom is depicted through film text. Issues of class inequalities and struggle lead films to become weapons of power and freedom. The quality of education which was given to the native South Africans and Africans in general was poor and it serves to reinforce the idea that Africans were inherently inferior to ‘whites’ hence fit for servitude. This is depicted by one of the students in their discussion “You think they put us here for education? This isn’t education. This is somewhere to put us off the streets...let’s fight” Gauntlet (2008) defines freedom as a way to express who you are through whatever you want to do without any forces stopping you. However, Roodt in his film *Sarafina* makes use of text, close up shots and music to address certain themes and issues of resistance and freedom.

After watching the film text, it conveys meanings since they are not passive audience. The students are motivating each other and become united in order to fight against injustice. Therefore, resistance and freedom are depicted in the selected film.

More so, Roodt make use of symbols, gestures, facial expressions, signs and film text to showcase the perspectives of resistance and freedom in the film *Sarafina*. A gun is a symbol of superiority and power to fight against cruel domination and oppression. According to Karl Marx (1843) film is a reflection of class struggle, hegemony and political ideologies. Miss Masambuka had a gun in her house to fight against white repressive and hegemonic powers. This is supported by Ronald Barthes (1967) resistance is filled with symbols, signs and film text as different groups struggle for resistance in quest for power. The film *Sarafina* depicted issues of power relations and resistance of the marginalized blacks. The colonial masters used political ideologies to rule the country, while they were the foreigners. They did not allow democracy to the black native of the land. Umberto Eco (1976) in his semiotic theory argued that ‘films are spontaneous reproduction of reality’ where the marginalized groups demands equal treatment and opportunities in human race regardless of class, color and ethnicity. Mrs. Masambuka teaches communism which is an unauthorized syllabus. She is not afraid and says “...*I cannot stand aside and let others die for me. I will fight too*”. Despite the fact that it is hard, she is eager to stand up and fight for her freedom. During that time, a black South African to have a gun was prohibited and considered as a serious offence but in the film Mrs Masambuka is seen having one. She is rejecting to be an object of manipulation by the colonial masters.



Fig2: Screenshot for Mrs Masambuka and Sarafina with a gun to fight against injustice. Sarafina (1992)

Also, through the use of filming techniques in *Sarafina* such as long shots, medium shots and wide shots. Audiences make meanings out of a film text meaning to say all meanings are encoded in things that create meanings. These shots are essential in allowing characters to show body language when it comes to emphasising certain issues. In *Sarafina* film, Roodt incorporate close up shots to show emotions for example when a Boer policeman asking Mrs Masambuka to identify trouble makers. She did not refuse that she is teaching students communism “...*I want them to know where they come from. I want them to have a sense of pride*”. Films have been noted as Omali (2003) takes the film in relation to the present as he argues that ‘today most people of the world are in the struggle to take back their resources, sovereignty and history. During the apartheid era, blacks were not allowed to challenge the white’s rules but Mrs Masambuka stands up to fight for the freedom of the innocent native souls of South Africa. The close up shot of Mrs Masambuka is pregnant with meanings that are anger and frustration. She even says “...*maybe one day we won’t be afraid of each other*” meaning that she is not scared of the Boers and she is not going to stop until the blacks get their liberation. Long shots are used to

identify the location around the subject. Roodt make use of different shots in his film *Sarafina* to portray the oppression of the marginalized South African and resistance. In the film, the camera focuses on the students during their protests, and particularly on the protagonist, showing the determination in her face to win the battle of apartheid, which further creates her heroic courage to challenge the whites' rules.

Resistance is portrayed in the film through the protagonist Sarafina. Stam and Spence (1977) defined colonialism as the process by which the European powers reached position of economic, political, military and cultural domination in Africa, Asia and Latin America. From the definition, it is evident that the British were dominating everything in South Africa during that time. Roodt showcases the scene where Sarafina visits her mother in Park town. Her mother was working as a maid in a white man's house. In the film, this town was only meant for white people and the blacks live in shanties of Soweto which is characterized by poor houses and dust. The blacks were subjected to the deplorable side of life and the whites enjoyed life at the expense of the marginalized native South Africans. This was a clear depiction of white domination of the economy, where the blacks lived poor lives deprived of the basic needs while the white enjoyed abundance of everything they needed. By so doing the students reacted to this hash rule through demonstrations on the streets. The director uses nonverbal communication where he shows Sarafina's face full of anger. This helps the audience to interpret meanings in the film text. Also, in that scene, the protagonist Sarafina, showed hatred for the whites while she was in the white house and left the taps running out of resentment towards the white man. Despite the fact that she is powerless that not physically fit to challenge the cruel colonial hegemony, all she can do to show resistance is to act. Therefore, the perspectives of resistance and freedom are portrayed in the film through the use of filming techniques.

Resistance is seen when Sarafina is having an argument with her mother. The director makes use of gestures and voice projection which shows anger to convey meanings of resistance and freedom. With anger, she said *“I want to kill them”* meaning that she is frustrated with the cruel domination of the whites. Sarafina believes that, in order to get freedom one has to fight *“papa died fighting, he died for the struggle”*. She was having a conversation with her mother who was discouraging her to fight for her freedom. The life she is experiencing and the native South African is not pleasing her. Sarafina gets angry up to an extent of telling her mother that *“I would rather die like him than live like you”*. The director uses diction and simile as a technique to compare Sarafina and her father who died fighting. Sarafina wants to be a freedom fighter not to live in misery and exploitation. Stuart Hall’s (1973) theory of preferred reading he says that, “audiences are given a media text invested with a critical autonomy to investigate and interrogate the validity or authenticity of that message”. In the film, Mrs Masambuka is taken by the white police officers for interrogations on inspiring revolution movement. Despite that she is in bad hands of the whites, she did not keep quiet about her freedom *“...one day this is going to be alright. You know I love happy endings”*. She believes that if people fight against the oppression one day everything is will be okay. Blacks are going to have freedom. Hence the film portrays the perspectives of resistance and freedom.

The film *Sarafina* is a representation of resistance that was made by the students during the apartheid era. Music is an essential medium of political communication and instrument of political socialization, and musicians have often in the forefront of struggles for political freedom. The film also showcases high spirits of characters who are in misery through singing facing all hard condition to freedom opportunity. Braudy and Marshall (1981) states that music serves to fulfill the culture of the people. Freedom is represented in the film *Sarafina* through use

of music that was composed by the students with words such as Freedom is coming Tomorrow, which meant that they are seeking freedom from the white men who dominated their country. It serves to show the hopes in people of a better tomorrow. Cloonan (2006) argues that Africa gives “a rich patchwork of cases and stories which illuminate the power of how and why popular culture can help mobilize people towards political change and build social movements”. In the film these movements are anti- apartheid movement. Pratt (1990) believes that popular music helps listeners to define their identities, both as individuals and as part of a larger social group. Songs like *We Are Coming* is sung in Zulu in the film when students protest against white brutalities.

*you can wound us
but you can't stop us...
we are coming
sharpen your spears
the war is at your door...
we are coming*

The song means that even though the whites are wounding them, they cannot seize fire or give up in attaining their freedom.

Ngugi (1987:4) posits that, “The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to people’s definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment”. This means that, language on its own defines one’s identity. In the film *Sarafina*, the implementation of English and Afrikaans as a language of instruction in schools by the colonizers serves to reinforce the inferiority complex of Africans who tend to regard their languages as incapable of communicating their messages. Rapangauwa (2007:7) stated that “People should take their culture seriously and avoid following Western culture”. This also

serves to enrich foreign languages at the expense of native languages. Scholars, such as Fanon (1967) and Said (1991), have clarified how ‘western’ discourses have always constructed the identities of the marginalized in a negative way, by assigning negative and inferior qualities to them. Ngugi Wa Thiong’o (1987) views the enforcement of the colonialist language as a cultural colonization of Africans therefore the strong resistance by the South Africans is seen as a positive step towards decolonization of the mind and politico-economic freedom from the Europeans. Roodt in his film seeks to excavate the regional perspectives of cultural and linguistic freedom which has created hegemony in the film.

Also, Roodt in his film *Sarafina* managed to portray issues of freedom in gender. Gender refers to the different sets of social and cultural characteristics that are widely, but falsely, thought to be inherent to each sex as a result of natural or biological reproductive difference. Gender systems are established to both male and female in the society. These systems usually associate with who has access to, responsibilities, control over resources and decision making. Films not only serve to entertain and inform but, produce images and impressions which instruct people to conduct their lives. Schon and Rein (1994) states that, in this modern world our ethics are increasingly taught by films that embed foreign cultures and traditions to encourage us to imitate the ideals of behavior which they represent. In short, the whole process has an impact in influencing individual’s perception of the roles and relations in society. Ngema and Roodt wishes to radicalize the role of women in film by giving a political dimension to their traditional roles as mothers and providers. These women in the film did not give so quickly when it comes to freedom opportunity. Mrs Masambuka and Sarafina play the leading role in the struggle for liberation in the film. The film depicted freedom in gender through characteristic mind which celebrates the heroic role of women in their societies and especially in the liberation of their

societies. As a result, the film also goes to persuade a Pan-African mindset. Hence, the perspectives of resistance and freedom are depicted in the film.

Moreover, the film depicts freedom in culture and national identity. The students are portrayed celebrating Mandela's release at the end of apartheid by subverting their colonial school uniforms with Mandela T-shirts, drum beats and traditional clothes. This is to show cultural freedom. Culture is an essential factor in resisting foreign domination. Culture determines one's identity. Wichert (1997) views culture as the foundation of a knowledge based society, and without which, local identity would fade away. The colonial masters tried to destroy the identity of the black people. The director makes use of the national flag of South Africa as a way of representing their national identity. A flag is symbol superiority, identity and dominance. So with the inclusion of the South African flag in the film, it is a technique used to depict freedom from colonial masters. Also, drum beat is a symbol African culture which was and is used as a way of communication. This is why many African countries valued the drum beats. The former president of South Africa Thabo Mbeki edged Africans to take pride in their heritage, languages and cultures because that is the way to resist western colonial influences. Therefore, the film portrays the issues of resistance and freedom through signs and symbols as well as other filmic techniques.

4.3 ANALYSIS

Therefore, this chapter identifies and interrogates the perspectives of resistance and freedom in selected films. The film serves as a site or repositories of historical event. The chapter also explored the narration of apartheid in South Africa where the marginalized 'sons of the soil' became victims of racial segregation and oppression by the ruthless whites. With the interpretation of the critical discourse analysis, Marxism, language, text and symbols the issues

of justice and equality are depicted in the film. The directors of the films incorporated close up shots to show the objects and face of the artist. These shorts portray emotions of the characters thereby making the audiences understand the film text more. The regional perspectives of resistance and freedom in selected films are depicted through filmic techniques.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 CASE STUDY: 3 *IDIOTS* (2009)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a case study on the regional perspectives of freedom in Asia. This study will analyse how signs, symbols, images, text, settings, camera angles in the selected films. Therefore, a critically analysis of regional perspectives of freedom through a semiotic interpretation and thematic analysis of selected films will be explored. How the selected film manifest resistance and freedom will be the pivotal point.

5.2 Brief Synopsis of the film 3 *IDIOTS* (2009)

The film *Three Idiots* is an Indian film produced in 2009 and directed by Rajkumar Hirani. It is a film about three engineering students at the Imperial College of Engineering one of the best colleges in India who plays the role as Rancho, Raju Rastogi and Farhan. In the film, Raju and Farhan are average students from modest backgrounds and Rancho is from a rich family. Farhan joined engineering college to fulfill his father's will but he wants to be a wildlife photograph. His friend Raju on the other hand wants to uplift his family fortunes. Rancho is a rich intellect who studies for the sheer pleasure of it. However, Rancho's passion is for knowledge and practical engineering that is building machines rather than competing for exam ranks like other students did. There is the dean of the college, Professor Viru Sahastrabudhhe (Virus) who is a hard man and believes in success. Students strive to become successful in life and in the processes some of them make bad decisions such as committing suicide to get away of the shame. The film offers the regional perspectives of freedom in terms of poverty, age, race, class, education,

hopelessness and culture. Semiotic interpretation and theoretical analysis will assist to explore the manifestation of freedom in Rajkumar Hirani's *3 Idiots*.

The film portrays freedom in poverty through a character Raju Rastogi. He comes from an impoverished family with a paralyzed father who had been a postman and a mother who is a retired school teacher. The major problem with Raju is poverty. Basically, poverty is a rejection of choices and prospects, a violation of human dignity. According to the film, it means not having adequate to feed and clothe a family, clinic to go to or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. Stuart Hall's (1973) theory of preferred reading he says that, "audiences are given a media text invested with a critical autonomy to investigate and interrogate the validity or authenticity of that message". The filmmaker involves the use of signs, symbols and text to portray the issues of freedom in the film. Signs are not there by default but by design. Raju's house is portrayed in black and white resembling poverty. Marx (1843) asserts that, if one is in the upper class, life was one of leisure and abundance, while those in the lower class lived lives of hardship and poverty. Raju's family is so poor that they cannot afford the car that would be demanded as a dowry for his sister. The roof of their house is leaking water 24 hour. His mother says "*earn for the family, slave like a maid and take the vow of silence*" She is striving to eradicate poverty in the family by sending Raju to school. Despite of the poverty that Raju had undergone, he tried his best just to finish college so that he will free the family from poverty.

There is freedom from materialism which seems to be the core theme in the film as evidenced by Silencer and Pia's boyfriend. In the film, Silencer is portrayed having an expensive car, latest phone and an expensive fans house. He is showing Raju and Farhan that he is having a good living. The costume used by the characters at the wedding serves to evolve the context of the story. Carver (2009) asserts that costumes in films are made to fulfill the needs of the director so

as to convey a certain message to the audiences. The people who are at the wedding of Pia's sister are of higher class. This creates divisions among the people in the society. Karl Marx (1897) in his Marxist theory believes that divisions among the society due to materialism leads to class struggles. The director use sarcastic irony where people are valuing pizza business than human life. Raju's family lives in poor area where there are no hospital facilities near and the ambulance take ages to reach as indicated by Raju's mother "*in this country, pizza reaches in 30 minutes but an ambulance...*". The divisions in the society are mainly caused by the issues of materialism. Those living in poverty suffer extremely from hunger and starvation as well as diseases. Raju's father gets very sick and need ambulance instead they take a scooter. Pia's boyfriend is concerned with the price tag, wearing fans shoes and clothes. However, Rancho rebels against materialism to the extent of discouraging Pia from marrying a man who values material wealth more than love. After finishing the degree, Rancho is a successful scientist making millions of money, but spends most of his time teaching children and investing in building schools to encourage education than to compete for material wealth. Therefore, the film portrays the perspectives of freedom.

More so, the film portrays the issues of class struggles through Rancho's family. He is from the rich family and he is an intelligent with brilliant personal philosophy. He actually seems to be a poor orphan who grew up with no money to go to school. Rancho is not his real name. A rich man approached him and offered to pay for his education so that the certificates would be in his dull and lazy son's name. Paris (1998) argues that power is not anything which somebody 'owns' but something he or she exercises. The fact that his master is rich Rancho had no choice to resist the oppression. He had nowhere to go but all he wanted was knowledge. He studied in Imperial College of Engineering for the sake of learning and topped among all the students who studied

there. However, Rancho is like a free-spirit without any chains to stop him from doing anything. Despite that he is oppressed, he survived and became successful with the knowledge he get from school. He is a very positive person who believes in his motto "*All is well*". It means believe and trust in your abilities no matter what challenges you face. Rancho never gives up once he's put his mind into it. He thinks things thoroughly while joking around at the same time. He rallied against unjust systems of teaching. At the end of the film, he is shown to be now a famous scientist and entrepreneur. The marginalized Rancho survive, he suffer and hold on while the hegemonic master and his son are 'living' enjoying the privileges on the expense of the Rancho hence the film portrays the perspectives of resistance and freedom through the film text.

Furthermore, there is freedom in choosing one's dreams. Farhan's father wants him to be an engineer despite his lack of interest in the career. He wants to be wildlife photographer. A person should not always be dictated among the things he wanted to do. In the film Farhan, is more likely to capture wildlife photos rather than making drawings of buildings. He never liked to be an engineer. Farhan gathers the courage to take a stand and convince his dad that he do not really like to be an engineer. His character addresses a lesson of not to live for the approval of others as seen in his conversation with his father "*The world will laugh...*". It is very inappropriate to continue a life that a person does not want like what happened in Farhan's life. This is evidenced in Farhan's life, Farhan altogether with Raju, always fail and always remain at the end of the grade list in school work. Suddenly, he realizes his rights and freedom by following his dreams and passion "*I don't want to be an engineer, dad*" He confronted his father "*life as an engineer will bring only frustration. Then I will curse you*". Barthes (1967) says that language is a constitution and collection of words that relate meaning. Farhan follows his dreams of becoming

a wildlife photographer. Hence the film understudy is interrogating the perspectives of freedom in India.

Also, there is the portrayal of freedom in love through a couple Pia and her boyfriend. Pia wants to marry him to suit the status quo not real love. Her father who is the director of the College plays a role as Virus want her to marry the successful man who studied many degrees in America to suit the status quo. In many societies, people marry according status and class. Pia has feelings for Rancho but because of the status quo she could not marry him. People have a tendency of thinking that if one becomes successful in life he or she has to have new fashionable things. Pia has a watch which is associated with memories for her late mother. She could wear it no matter she is wearing new expensive things. Her husband is depriving her from wearing that old and cheap watch "*an ancient piece of junk*" Pia's boyfriend could not consider the special memories which is in the watch. She was given the watch by her late mother. Pia is deprived her freedom to love. At the end of the movie Pia fights for her freedom and leave her boyfriend in the middle of the wedding. The portrayal of resistance and freedom is in comedy. According to Henkle (1979, 13), comedy works characteristically to expose pomposity and smug self-deception, and undermine dull and inhuman mores. She goes to Rancho who is the love of her heart.

However, sometimes comedy is used just to evoke humour to the audience for example sitting on buttocks shaped chairs and such analysis is supported by the preferred reading theory which states that audiences are not passive recipients of what they watch, read and listen to from the media, they have power to make meaning from what there are given and these meaning are not restricted. So from this case the meaning may differ depending from what the audience perceive to be correct meaning. Hence the film portrays the issues of freedom through characters.

More so, in the film there is the depiction of freedom to pursue one's own standard and life. This is evidenced by Virus' perception of having a distinction in education to get a job. This kills creativity among the students. He swears that Raju and Farhan they are not going to have a job because of their average marks in school. Virus believes in competition and perfection of excellence in engineering. He gives an example of a Koel birds saying that '*life is a race either compete or die*'. Due to competition advocated by Virus, students end up committing suicide. Even today the rate of suicide in India is very high especially during school exams. Rancho believes in creating something new and unique than to just repeat what other scholars and engineers have done in the past. He tells the director that '*here they don't discuss new ideas and inventions. They discuss grades, jobs, settling in the USA.*' This means that all they care about is making money. Bryman (2004:393) argues that "a semiotic approach is concerned to uncover the process of meaning production and how signs are designed to have an effect upon actual perspective consumers of those signs". Hence the film text used by the director conveys meanings on the issues freedom. However, the fact that someone should have distinction to get a job does not actually apply in the real world. In the film, Raju gets a job by being honest during interview. Therefore, the signs and symbols that were used by the director of the film helped in depicting issues of freedom.

Moreover, there is the portrayal of freedom to pursue knowledge and passion which is evidenced by Rancho. Rancho is intelligent and a passion in engineering. Even though Rancho is a poor orphan who grew up with no money to go to school, he would still pursue knowledge knowing that he would never get a certificate. He didn't care about certificate but knowledge. He strives to apply whatever he learns into practical. Rancho invented inverter which was used at the end of the movie as a source of electricity when Pia's sister was delivering birth. Rancho believes

everyone should follow the career that fulfills them, their passion “...*excellence comes from enjoying what you are writing. Excellence will become effortless without pressure*”. This simply means that, passion is the mother of excellence. Rancho valued being a master or expert at what you do more than making money with what you do. It doesn't matter whether the job is prestigious or earns you a high salary. What matters is enjoying it. He encourages his engineering friends Raju and Farhan to leave engineering and follow their passion. Therefore, the film showcases the perspectives of freedom through signs, symbols and text.

Also, freedom in choosing one's standard is depicted through Raju who is practicing engineering which is not his concern but the parents will. It is affecting his studies because that's not his passion. Raju Rastog even attempted suicide by jumping out of the window of Virus' office after being given life lectures. Films are used as an art form. Metz (1974) believes that 'while the viewer wishes to understand the film, the semiologist wishes to know in addition how the film is understood. Films convey different meanings. However, most students are forced by the parents not to follow their dreams but they need positive encouragement to achieve that. In this case there is no positive reinforcement given to Joy Lobo. Instead there is negative support from the Principal Virus in the form of discouragement. This can be justified by the conversation they had in regard to Lobo's project. Lobo will not have committed suicide if he had got enough support and encouragement from Virus. Also, to Raju's issue, he may have surrendered but Rancho was always there for him that is why despite of being in a state of exhausted, he managed to survive. Hence, the film showcases the perspectives of freedom in hopelessness.

Freedom in family relationship is depicted in the film through Virus who had no time with family concentrating on academic work. His child died and the following day he came to work. Rancho called it murder not suicide. Raju is so poor but he is not ashamed of his family

background. Devereux, (2007) and Gauntlet (2008) defines freedom as a way to express who you are through whatever you want to do without any forces stopping you. Raju is free. However, instead of taking part in his family, Virus plays politics at one point of the story that is when it is the time for final exams he decided to complicate and trouble Raju's life just because of the personal grudge Virus had towards Raju. This can be clarified using the advantage of 'Cohesive Power' which is a formal power. He also brings up the police in using his 'Legitimate Power' to get the 3 idiots arrested. But finally, he gets to know his mistake.

5.3 ANALYSIS

Therefore, it can be primarily noted that Rajkumar Hirani in his *3 Idiots* has effectively roped in different themes for instance Marriage, poverty, materialism, family relationship, passion, love, and choice. The director has also makes use of the techniques to emphasize on some issues, for instance the cinematographer was using close up shots to show the face of the artist and such shots were meant to show the emotions of the artist. The use of humour, setting to explore the place where Raju lives, use of black and white colour to portray issues of poverty.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study sought to assess and explore the regional perspectives of resistance and freedom in films *12 Years a Slave* (2013) directed by Steve McQueen and written by John Ridley, *Sarafina* (1992) directed by Roodt and written by Mbongeni Ngema and *Three Idiots* (2009) directed by Rajkumar Hirani which were used as a case study in this research. The discussion deployed thematic and semiotic analysis as a way of interpretation. Through these theories that is Marxist and semiotic theory, films produce different meanings. Thus, semiotic theory was combined with insights from the Marxist theory which focuses on power struggles between those in power and outside influences to analyze the films. The research showcases that films serve not only to entertain but to expose hegemonic powers in different societies as well as ideologies to fight against the cruel domination. The directors of the selected films used techniques such as settings, camera angles, plot, signs, symbols, diction, and facial expressions to portray issues of resistance and freedom in films.

The study established that the film that is *12 Years a Slave* serves as a historical narration of slavery in the United State of America by her former colonizer Britain. Many black or Native American were sexually and physically abused, tortured, killed whilst working in the sugar cane and cotton plantations of the whites. *Sarafina* explored the historical narration of apartheid in South Africa where the marginalized South Africans became victims of racial segregation and oppression by the whites. The last film *Three Idiots* is a narration of engineering students at the college with different backgrounds as well as materialism as a core theme. The films understudy

addresses the issues of power relations and ideologies in portraying the perspectives of resistance and freedom even though the narration of the films differs from each other.

The study endeavored to show the economic, cultural, social, and political relationship between the marginalized groups of the world and the dominant states. The study tried to explore issues of justice and equality across the world regardless of gender, class, sex, age, race and ethnicity. The regional perspectives of resistance and freedom have been portrayed through films understudy. The study establishes the difference and similarities on how freedom is portrayed in Africa, America and Asia through films.

6.1 SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES

In an attempt to study the regional perspectives of resistance and freedom in the selected films which are in America, Africa and Asia five questions were asked and below are the findings on each and every question asked.

How is freedom portrayed?

Freedom is portrayed through resistance either verbally or physically. In the film *12 Years a Slave* and *Sarafina* freedom is portrayed both verbally and physically. Characters are depicted resisting the colonial rule and hegemonic powers through fighting back that is protesting violently as well as direct verbal attack. In *Three Idiots*, the perspectives of resistance and freedom are portrayed verbally not physically. Freedom is depicted through the use of protest songs in vernacular language. With the use of violence to struggle against dominance freedom is portrayed. The incorporation of humour by characters or artist in the films made the audiences to convey meanings of freedom in the film text.

What is the importance of freedom in selected films?

The importance of freedom in selected films helps in readdressing the issues of justice and equality among the people regardless of color, race, sex, ethnicity and class. This is seen in the film *12 Years a Slave*, *Sarafina* and *Three Idiots*. Also, the films *Sarafina* and *12 Years a Slave* helps people to trace their origins and historical backgrounds through the narration of true historical events in them.

What are the effects of filmic techniques used?

This study has also found the effects of filmic techniques used by the artists to achieve the desired goals of addressing power relations, ideological hegemonies, economic, social and cultural issues. With the use of signs, symbols, camera angles, setting, costume, makeup, lighting, music and film text by the directors of the selected films, the perspectives of freedom can be considered successfully explored through these filmic techniques used. The incorporation of close up shots of characters and objects in the film *12 Years a Slave and Sarafina* helps to portray resistance and freedom. The inclusion of humour as a filming technique by the director of the film *3 Idiots* helps to showcase freedom.

How effective are the techniques used in the selected films to portray freedom?

The techniques used were effective in the sense that they make the audience to relate with the situations underlined in each film and these techniques also make the conveyed message look real and original since they are narrations of true historical event. This is evidenced in the films *12 Years a Slave* and *Sarafina* which are narrations of true historical events. People easily relate their stories and situations they face or faced. In the film *Sarafina* popular music and protest songs is used to convey theme of resistance. Characters in the film *12 Years a Slave* are

portrayed with costumes that represent time and geographical location. The costumes are of colonial period and it played a pivotal role in conveying themes of resistance and freedom.

What are the forms of resistance portrayed?

The films portrayed forms of resistance such as nonviolent especially in the film *Three Idiots*. Physical resistance, run away and praying are portrayed in the film *12 Years a Slave*. The slaves tried to escape the enslavement, praying and worshiping through Biblical songs hoping to escape. Also, slaves resisted the ruthless domination of the whites through physical resistance fighting back violently. In the film *Sarafina*, the marginalized South Africans used cultural forms such as using native language and violence as a way of resisting the colonial rule. In the film *Three Idiots*, characters like Farhan and Raju were forced to follow their parents' dreams of being engineers whilst they wanted to follow their passion. However, Farhan and Raju resisted against that and at the end they followed their dreams.

How effective are the forms of resistance?

Some of the forms of resistance that were used in the study were not that effective in the sense that in as much as the marginalized blacks or slaves in the film *12 Years a Slave* tried to escape the enslavement they get caught in the process. They were called runaways and after being caught, the slaves faced retribution in the form of public hangings as a punishment. The dominant white masters monopolised military power and prohibiting black people access to weapons so resisting someone with a gun is difficult. However, some of the forms of resistance were effective in attaining freedom especially non-violent in the film *3 Idiots* and in *12 Years a Slave*. Solomon Northup in *12 Years a Slave* realised that, violent is causing troubles to him for example hanged and all that, and he used non-violent way of writing a letter to seek help from outsiders and finally freed.

What are the similarities in the portrayal of freedom?

Both films interrogated are showing resistance and freedom, although the films *Sarafina* shows resistance of the blacks from white domination and *12 Years a Slave* share the same thematic genre. However, *3 Idiots* show resistance and freedom on materialism and competition in its thematic criteria. Hence both films do share a lot in common in as far as the portrayal of freedom is concerned.

What are the differences in the portrayal of freedom?

The films under study differs in their portrayal of freedom since the films falls under different geographical regions which do not share a lot in common in as far as their backgrounds are oriented. *12 Years a Slave* depict freedom from a slavery point of view in America and *Sarafina* portrayed freedom from colonialism and apartheid in African region whilst *Three Idiots* is basing on personal freedom in Asian region. More so, the fact that the three films were directed by different directors also entails that variation in the way resistance and freedom would be portrayed. The films under study which is *12 Years a Slave*, *Sarafina* and *Three Idiots* were directed by Steve McQueen, Darrell Roodt and Rajkumar Hirani respectively. The directors of the films *12 Years a Slave* and *Sarafina* showcase the perspectives of freedom through true historical events. The marginalized blacks are the victims of power struggles and hegemonic dominance. In *3 Idiots*, freedom is depicted in a comedy basing especially on the economic and social issues in India.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is built on a theatrical framework of Semiotic theory and Marxist theory so as to elicit the various meanings embedded in the languages and images of selected films. Semiotic analysis helps to analyze the signs and understanding the meanings brought by these symbols in

three selected films in their embedding of perspectives of resistance and freedom. Andre Bazin (1954) defines cinema as a language and that language which is employed in the film is viewed by Ferdinand Saussure as ‘cinematographic language’. The basic figures of the semiotics of the cinema- montage, camera movements, scale of the shots, relationships between the image and speech and sequences are all embedding film meaning. The semiotic analysis was therefore used to interpret messages and understand various meanings in color, images, sounds, verbal and text by the viewers and also how this semiotics are used by film directors to encode messages that will be decoded by audiences. This is evidenced in the film *12 Years a Slave and Sarafina* where these techniques mostly used to convey meaning of resistance and freedom through characters. A character in *Sarafina* is portrayed holding a gun as a symbol of power and resisting colonial and cruel domination of the whites to get freedom. Film has a language of its own and hence this research treated it as such in order to get different interpretations of the film with regards to the perceptions of resistance and freedom. The relevance of this theory has been seen in the selected films with the use of signs, symbols, and text, plot, diction and camera angles to portray issues of freedom. The manifestation of resistance and the embedding of humour in the film *3 Idiots* make the semiotic approach vital in analysing this research.

Limitations of semiotic theory

- The semiotic theory had the limitation of ignoring specific practices, institutional frameworks and the social and political context. Since the study focused more on the issues of power relations and hegemony among people, there is need for other theories to tackle political issues and addressing justice. This is supported by Roland Barthes who argues that texts are classified to encourage a reading which favors the interests of dominant class confines his study with the social context of interpretation.

- Using the semiotic theory, limited the researcher in which the semiotics conveys a message to the audience and the audiences came up with different meanings since they are not passive audience. The relationship between signifiers and their signified maybe of individual pleasure but they are not socially discreet.

Also, Marxist analysis helps to analyse the issues of hegemony, power relations and class struggle in the selected films. This theory has been used as a tool of liberation. Marxists are also attentive in why dominated classes seem to accept their oppression; so they address issues of resistance and strategies to bring about radical change when producing their films. This is depicted in the film *12 Years a Slave* when a character called Solomon Northup is verbally and physically attacking the slave masters in order to get his freedom. The ruling class has the power to control the political and ideological meaning of film text. Therefore, this theory became relevant in analyzing the depiction of resistance and freedom in selected films. In the selected films, the ruling class or Europeans are the ones who own the means of production and having good living at the expense of the marginalized blacks. Also, the issue of believing in material wealth as a way of living is causing divisions among people or classes. Hence, Marxist theory is worthy for the study. Due to some weaknesses of the semiotic theory which were faced during the research, the issues of power relations and hegemony need to be tackled using Marxist theory. Therefore, semiotic theory was combined with the insights from the Marxist theory to analyse the selected films.

Limitations of Marxist theory

- In this research, the Marxist theory alone limited the study because in as much as the researcher wanted to investigate the perspectives of resistance and freedom in selected films, the incorporation of semeiotics theory is needed. Studying of signs and symbols

and the interpretation of film text was greatly achieved after using the semeiotic and Marxist theory.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The research focused much on the themes of resistance and freedom. Black people are fighting for their freedom from the white domination. As a result many people died and families separated because of war. In light of this, I recommend future studies to spread their studies on how to fight for freedom more effectively without bloodshed for example military war, economic empowerment as well as non-violent struggle.

- Without bloodshed people can get freedom through prayer and worship.
- People can get freedom by economic empowerment first then boost the economy of the country. There after look for measures to implement economic empowerment to freedom opportunity.

6.4 AREAS OF FURTHER STUDY

The study dwelt much on issues of resistance and freedom from oppression. It was more specific on politics and social life. The fact that this study specified more on the issues of freedom and resistance from hegemonic powers, other themes are likely to be embedded in these three selected films that need to be tackled. In light of this, future studies should spread their research beyond politics and resistance for freedom and attempt to address other issues to reinforce the body of knowledge in Zimbabwe and Africa in general.

Also, the research relied on critical discourse analysis and archival research well known as desktop research as a way of gathering data. The study lacks the directors of the selected films'

comments. Even though, the research interpreted and depicts themes but the study lack the views of the directors themselves who have the testimonies which is beyond their film production. As a result, the future research or studies should include the voices of the directors to get more data that is getting it from the horse's mouth.

Lastly, the research has observed that audiences have been undermining the logic behind films by just considering them as entertainment platform. Films are also sites or repositories of historical events. The study's use of Qualitative approach and discourse analysis makes the audiences to have the notion that films are powerful tools in portraying the perspectives of resistance and freedom. Nevertheless, the research tackled the issues of resistance and freedom different regions; there is room for further study on other themes in the selected films focusing on both regions. Other researchers can also further study on the same topic but using other methodologies different from the one used within this research. Further studies can also interrogate the time frames in which the films were produced in relation to the issues of resistance and freedom.

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