

**An examination of the role of film genre in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa: An analytical study of *Sarafina***

By

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## DECLARATION

I declare that **An examination of the role of film genre in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa: An analytical study of *Sarafina*** dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master's in Media Studies has not previously been submitted by me for any degree at any university. That it is my work in design and in execution, and all the material contained has been duly acknowledged by means of complete references.



.....  
Student Signature

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.....14 May 2021.....

Date

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigates the popular South African feature film entitled *Sarafina* (1992) and its depiction of young South Africans' resistance against the apartheid system during the 1970s through the 1980s. It analyses how *Sarafina* portrays the socio-cultural and political environment that characterised the apartheid *modus operandi*; explores the film's ideological frames of societal dissent during apartheid and examines *Sarafina's cinema verité* and application of symbolism in portraying the historical context and narrative of the South African struggle for freedom. The study refers to extensive literature about film as an artistic medium, dynamics in film genre, its role in representing societal dissent, application of filmic elements in technical production and relevance of symbolism in film criticism. The theoretical framework entails two theories, namely Framing and Ideological Film Criticism. The study adopted the qualitative descriptive case study design cognisant of its ability to provide a complex visual and audio-textual description of the events represented during the period under study. It used purposive sampling to select the film *Sarafina* to elucidate the contours and experiences of the apartheid system in pre-democratic South Africa. Methodological techniques used in the study involved audio-visual content analysis during the data collection process and thematic analysis from which discursive themes were generated and findings were derived. The findings of the study demonstrate the representational etiquette of *Sarafina* to bring out significant political and cultural memories of the struggle for freedom with potential to create conducive spaces for positive social, cultural and political benefits for the contemporary South African society. The study concludes by recommending the usage of *Sarafina* and other forms of film genre, not only as artefacts for preserving historical experiences, but also to promote active citizenship, good democratic governance, and effective service delivery in post-apartheid South Africa.

**Key Concept:** Film genre, political-cultural memory, Apartheid, *Sarafina*, South Africa

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## CHAPTER 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

As one of the most prominent and effective tools employed to preserve historic political and cultural data, film has yielded differential effects in shaping perceptions, policies, and socio-cultural dynamics in modern society (Watson & Hill, 2015). As such, the preservation of political and cultural heritage remains one of the most crucial and yet contentious dynamics in educational, socio-cultural, and political spheres (Pollak, 2008). This has raised questions revolving around whether the preservation has negative or positive effects on the contemporary society. In as much as precedent epochs such as the slave trade, Holocaust and the two world wars have significant and enduring lessons to the contemporary society, the history about the colonial struggles of the African people deserves attention.

Film has always been a part of most African countries' political discourses. It is a political mode of communication amongst many other protests against political domination (Watson & Hill, 2015). From the period of 1948 - 1994, a time during which South Africa was governed according to the principles of apartheid, the socio, economic and political conditions for black South Africans grew increasingly difficult. Hence, film evolved as one branch of the arts that popularly became the career of ordinary people's life story, fiction, and biography in the form of entertainment. Each film genre raises different questions as to its societal significance, technical construction, and ideological underpinning, and thus calls different tools of analysis.

In this study an attempt is made to investigate the significance of the film *Sarafina* in examining the role of film genre in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. The focus is particularly with regard to its premises about the historical changes that emerged resulting from an oppressive past of the South African people. During the said years, segregation was institutionalised, pass Acts were implemented, while the struggle for freedom from oppression intensified. This period was characterised by several incidents of unrest and violence, and noticeably were those

taking place on the 21 March 1960 (Sharpeville massacre) and 16 June 1976 (Soweto uprising). As these incidents continued to influence the socio-political landscape (Evans, 2009). The black South African theatre developed into a weapon of protest to articulate to the outside world the heinous oppression happening in South Africa at the time. As a result of the above stated developments, South Africa's political transition has been the object of extended scholarly investigations as well as popular scrutiny with intense global fascination. To a large extent, this is also true of South African film as a complex milieu of the arts service industry involving both local and international filmmakers.

During the apartheid era, film represented ordinary people by way taking on the oppressive government and the exploitative capitalist industry. People were shown at work and in their communities organising strikes, protesting against repression, and being subjected to violence (Haupt, 2015). Film served as a tool to educate viewers; document violence and inequality; and to mobilise support against the apartheid regime. As such, two decades after the end of apartheid, a similar set of resistance films has begun to emerge, with the difference that these films are holding the democratically elected government accountable (Reid, 2012). Contrary to the apartheid context, most contemporary films give voice to the disenfranchised masses (for whom the multiracial democracy has not brought substantial change) something, and that makes *Sarafina* to remain relevant today in that regard.

The film features *Sarafina* as a bright young student who is inspired by her teacher (Whoopi Goldberg) to dream of a better tomorrow by fighting for freedom against apartheid. While she has remained relatively silent in her opposition of the racist government in her country, the decision to make Afrikaans the official language in her school leads her to protest in the streets with her fellow students (Lubbe, 2016). The teacher makes statements in her classroom that sound like common sense to the audience. Her anti-government views become even more intense when *Sarafina's* favourite teacher (Whoopi Goldberg) is arrested for protesting against racist educational policies. The film opens with a sequence of school children burning down part of their own school. They stage protests that lead to armed intervention, detention and torture of possible witnesses, and the death of a black policeman. *Sarafina's* mother works as a

domestic worker for white people in Johannesburg. After *Sarafina* is released from jail, she goes to visit her mother. It is against this background that the study examines the role of film genre in the preservation of the political and cultural memory relating to the struggle for freedom.

As one of the most popular films that documented the historic events that represent apartheid prejudices, the study examines *Sarafina* with the intent to interrogate how the film preserve the political and cultural memories of the South African struggle for freedom. Furthermore, this study explores ideological frames employed in the film to portray societal dissent during apartheid in South Africa. Likewise, it interrogates *Sarafina's* application of symbolism in portraying the historical context and narrative of the South African struggle for democracy.

## **1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The study focuses on the popular South African musical-political film *Sarafina*, which depicts how young South Africans fought the apartheid system in the 1970s. As a film that archives the political and cultural heritage of the events that transpired towards the demise of the apartheid era, the film has received minimum academic scrutiny in terms of its representation of the historic context and the narrative of the South African struggle for freedom. Literature review on the subject under study shows that the film *Sarafina*, has not been subjected to scholarly investigation with respect to the nature and effect of the preservation of political and cultural memory with a focus on the political aspects rather than the aesthetic and semiotic view. The visuals and sound are examined to depict the political system which was implemented during the apartheid regime.

Beyond its portrayal of the youth's view of apartheid at the time, the film may serve as a purveyor of the pre-democratic South African political discourse, that captures historical moments with potential to shape the country's current and future political and socio-cultural landscape. This is in recognition of the view that, the post-colonial era has been characterised by the youth's failure to expressively engage power in response to the myriad ideological remnants still harboured within the new democratic order (Muswede, 2017). In the context of the current transformation discourse in South Africa, the need to explore the prospects for mass mobilisation and reconfiguration of political consciousness

among the contemporary youth, as inspired by political films, should be subject to investigation. Ideally, films such as *Sarafina* are cut out to document and preserve cultural and political memory in a manner that helps newer generations, researchers, and historians to assimilate past events (Lubbe, 2016).

This study should be understood in the context that; numerous African countries have seen a sharp decline in living standards in the recent past due to political strife or civil wars. While the South African political context may have been unique due to the apartheid system, there are numerous lessons that South Africa and other countries could learn through film regarding approaches towards transformation dynamics. While *Sarafina* does not necessarily present an authentic historical or political narrative in a documentary format, it does reflect the theatrical form of political resistance against apartheid.

### **1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.3.1 Aim of the Study**

To examine the role of film genre in the preservation of the political and cultural memory of the South African struggle for freedom.

#### **1.3.2 Objectives of the Study**

- To analyse how the film *Sarafina* depicts the socio-cultural and political environment that characterised the apartheid modus operandi.
- To explore *Sarafina*'s ideological frames in its portrayal of societal dissent during apartheid South Africa.
- To examine the relevance of *Sarafina*'s *cinema verite* in archiving the political and cultural memory of the South African struggle narrative.
- To Interrogate *Sarafina*'s application of symbolism in portraying the historical context and narrative of the South African struggle for freedom.

### **1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The study is driven by the significance of apartheid history in areas that have been divisive in South Africa and how film genre fits in as a source of cultural and political data. Today

racial bitterness seems to be central to most clashes between South Africans especially politically. Such flares which are motivated by the history of the country justify the need for film genres to represent historical events which inform the status quo. Evidently films such as *Sarafina* and *Long Walk to Freedom* need close scrutiny to check their potential or real time effect in preserving political and cultural memory in South Africa. The film *Sarafina* articulates human experience during the socio-political struggle, sadness, loss of hope and undying search for freedom. One can point at the use of song, visuals and dance which were used in these films in present day marches and altercations as evidence of how film plays an overly critical role in today's political environment. The film under study represents salient experiences of the South African struggle for freedom, as such, the researcher saw the need to study the film and locate its roles in preserving cultural and political memory. Literature review on the subject under study shows that *Sarafina* has not been subjected to scholarly investigation with respect to the role and effect on collective political and cultural memory.

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of the study is two-fold. Theoretically, the study aims to add onto the existing body of knowledge in examining the role of film genre in the preservation of political and cultural memory; educating society about moral values which help in making complete human beings not just individuals; the importance of honesty, hard work, respect for others cooperation and forgiveness. Education offered through films strengthen the ethical and moral values of the youth and society at large by inculcating the values of tolerance and reverence; thus making it possible to raise awareness about political and cultural dynamics, and especially to the youth.

To future researchers, practitioners, activists and the government, findings in this research may serve as a point of reference. Moreover, tourists and entrepreneurs will have a deeper assimilation of South African political and cultural dynamics. Across the country, new and rehabilitated museums, monuments, and leisure accommodation have transformed the townships around Soweto into cultural destinations. Attractions like the Hector Pieterse Memorial and museum in the Orlando West township (Soweto), Mahatma Gandhi's printing press and home in the Inanda township (Durban), and the

Red Location Museum in New Brighton township (Port Elizabeth) appeal to both South African and foreign tourists (Connell, 2012). Township tours, restaurants and homestays are also big business due to links to the Soweto uprising. It is difficult to assess the value of all this commercial activity, but one clear benefit is increased employment in a country, where the unemployment rate among blacks is nearly 30.1 percent (Connell, 2012).

The government has also used infrastructure projects to correct the apartheid legacy of inadequate transportation, housing, and services of society in the townships. Since 1994, infrastructure has been developed through initiatives like the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), a national blueprint for improving government services and basic living conditions for the poor citizens, who number at least 17 million (Healey, 2010).

The researcher observed that the feature film has received less scholarly attention, and therefore realised the need to conduct a study in order to advance knowledge about the role of feature films such as *Sarafina* on the preservation of political and cultural heritage for youths and future generations. The findings of this study will contribute greatly to the benefit of society considering that film plays an important role in society. For the researchers, the study will assist to uncover critical areas that need to be examined in the film industry that were overlooked by many researchers, thus new theories of film may be arrived at.

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

There are several South African films that depict the socio-cultural and political environment that characterised the apartheid *modus operandi*. However, this study is limited to one film, *Sarafina* exploring how it depicts the socio-cultural and political environment that characterised the apartheid *modus operandi*. This, therefore, implies that the data collected cannot necessarily be generalised to the wider population.

The film *Sarafina* mainly focuses on the crime and political drama genres, how they are used to explain the political system of the apartheid regime and how these genres preserve memory. The importance of film in the preservation of political and cultural memory is also reviewed. The study analyses some filmic technical elements employed

in bringing out the political struggle for freedom issues during the apartheid era. The study looked at other filmic elements apart from visuals, sound, and audio, that help in preserving the political memory of the struggle for freedom. *Sarafina*, the film does not only explain the criminal and political issues of the apartheid era, but also explains how the conflicts were resolved during the era.

## **1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section gives relevant theories to the study, also demonstrates their relevance to the study and how they guided the study. Without theoretical knowledge one can be methodologically expedient at getting data, but will not be able to use it to answer the questions at hand and relate findings to the questions of the field, thus theory makes it easier for one to interpret findings. This research therefore was guided by the Ideological Film Criticism Theory and the Framing Theory.

### **1.7.1 Framing**

Framing is commonly used in communication literature, but rarely structurally defined as an approach to the understanding of the effects of the media. Framing describes the influence (on the public) of the news angles used by journalists, the interpretative and ideological frameworks from which journalists report an issue and the contextualisation of news reports within a specific ideological framework. It generally supports the idea that the media deal with certain issues in different frames and perspectives (Kamalipour, 2010).

Media framing can have an effect in the way audiences end up interpreting an issue or event. The Western film makers who are also financially powerful often use their own ideologies to promote their own interest among the third world countries. The filmmakers also use frames to maintain the Western domination without the need to use power to subordinate less powerful people. Kress (2012) asserts that ideological framing focuses on the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination. Framing is important because media portrayals are there to guide the audience's interpretation and to influence the formation of new opinions.



Millions of citizens turn to the news media daily for reference, meanwhile 'the media' also remain as cornerstone institutions in strengthening democracies. One influential way that the media may shape public opinion is by framing events and issues in particular ways. Framing involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue for the public (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). The notion of framing has gained momentum in the communication disciplines, giving guidance to both investigations of media content and to studies of the relationship between the media and public opinion (Cissel, 2012).

Any communicative text, either informative or persuasive, requires narrative structures to organise its discourse. In the case of the media, news stories appear to be systematised, based on narrative conventions that offer an explanation about who is doing what, and for what purpose. Rashid (2019) describes media content as a window whose frame limits the perception of reality, by limiting the perception of different realities and focusing on a specific piece of it. As a result of these processes, some aspects of the reality perceived through the media content including news will be more prominent than others.

Media messages, therefore, are textual and visual structures built around a central axis of thought, from a certain perspective, and by information professionals (but not only by them), who will provide an interpretive framework for the audiences exposed to the messages (Elias & Feagin, 2020). Framing is a process in which some aspects of reality are selected, and given greater emphasis or importance, so that the problem is defined, its causes are diagnosed, moral judgments are suggested and appropriate solutions and actions are proposed (Kamalipour, 2010).

Thus, framing is an invitation and an incentive to read a story in a certain way. This invitation is often overlooked, because framing is part of culture, so the construction process is hidden. This does not mean that there is only one way to explain things. On the contrary, there are in any given culture more frames than those selected to represent reality in the narrated story (Kamalipour, 2010). Following this, the theory is relevant to the study as it examines how the producers of *Sarafina* use particular frames of film production to represent the socio-cultural and political narratives within the South African struggle for freedom in the 1970s. The framing theory is relevant to this study because

media frames have an important influence in shaping people's perceptions thus creating awareness and acceptance of particular meanings.

### **1.7.2 Ideological Film Criticism Theory**

The South African film industry was for decades dominated by apartheid themes and the ideology underlying the practices of apartheid. According to Lemon (1991), film is a construction against the background of the culture, experience, and knowledge of both the communicator and the subject, placed within the realm of ideology and ideological context. Our culture, experience and knowledge underlie our view of life; and reality and humanity cannot be separated from the existential and political beliefs or orientations of society.

Thus, each film can be viewed as an ideological construct. For instance, in South Africa several studies were done to show how apartheid influenced South African film and how apartheid as an ideology determined the content and form of films. The ideological analysis of film sets itself the goal of analysing the relationship between a given film, its society and the ideology of that society in order to determine the specific ways that the film either supports or attacks the dominant ideology of the society that produced it (Stromgren & Norden, 1984). The main criticism against film theory is that it tends to be biased and subjective. The very nature of film criticism downplays or ignores the artistic and technical aspect of film.

To break down ideology in film, we must first discover the definition of ideology. Ideology is usually defined as a body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture (Lemon, 1991). The term is generally associated with politics and party platforms, but it can also mean a given set of values that are implicit in any human enterprise including filmmaking (Hefner, 2012). In other words, pointing more towards film, ideology can be understood mainly as assumptions imagined, or as a way of looking at things or simply, as a "comprehensive vision." Ideology pushes against already existing conformity by presenting a possible transformation in society. This is done during a regulatory process of abstract thoughts to persuasively impose the ideas of the dominant group (Lu, 2020).

Ideology is usually not something that is foreign to the target audience, rather it is the flair in a film with a strange power to impose itself on different minds. Ideology is what we and the film share, what allows for the transfer of specific meanings between film and audiences (a transfer which is not one way). Ideological viewpoints and principles detach from our own personal self-image. They are usually discovered at an unconscious altitude and therefore, are not frequently observed (Stromgren & Norden, 1984). Although it is sometimes complex to understand how the personal riddle of ideological-ness works, it is valuable to understand how the individual reacts and perceives something at an unconscious thinking level. It is also valuable to explore ideological ideas and attitude of others, in the context of *Sarafina's* representation of the South African struggle for freedom, particularly by the youth.

Society occasionally practices ideological film criticism when encountered with the ideological issues raised by viewing films. Films have moral and ideological significance, and they are not merely consumed, discarded and forgotten. They have a psychological and cultural effect whether it be concerned with violence, racism, or the promotion of shallow emotional lives. Therefore, ideological criticism appraises the moral and ideological impart of experience offered by film (Maedza, 2019).

Ideology is more than just some sociology of ideas, more particularly, it claims to show how ideas are related to real material conditions by masking or dissembling them, displacing them into other terms, speciously resolving their conflict and contradicting, converting these situations into apparently natural, immutable, universal ones. Ideas in short are granted on active political force, rather than being grasped as mere reflections of their world (Dalton, 2010).

The ideological criticism of spectator emotions must consider not simply individual occurrences of spectator emotion but the trajectory of responses a film elicits. A film may elicit sentimentality (envy, jealousy, and greed) for the purpose of illustrating conflict in society. Thus, while ideological criticism may begin with considerations of individual spectator emotions, it must then appraise those emotions in narrative context (Solomon, 2018). The ideological film criticism theory is very relevant to the study since it provides

critical tools with which to understand the history and political aspects of society and the way they perceive or approach their struggles.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

With most of the concepts used here being common in everyday formal and informal conversations and unbridled discourses, they are prone to misinterpretation. Therefore, this study found it important to contextualise their meaning as they are used in this study.

### **1.8.1 Film**

Film is a term that encompasses individual motion pictures, the field of film as an art form, and the motion picture industry produced by recording images from the world with cameras, or by creating images using animation techniques or special effects (Skvirsky, 2020).

### **1.8.2 Film genre**

Genre is a style of film in which the viewer can come to expect certain elements consistent with that genre. Genres do not consist only of films they represent equally, they comprise specific systems of expectation and hypothesis that spectators bring with them to the cinema that interact with films themselves during the course of the viewing process (Curry, 2017).

Genre is a concept used in film studies and in film theory to describe similarities between groups of film based on aesthetics or broader social, institutional, cultural, and psychological aspects. A film genre is thus based on a set of conventions that influence both the production of individual work within that genre and audience expectation and experience (Martin, 2017). Genres are used in the production and marketing of film, by film analyst and critics in historic analysis of film and as framework for audiences in the selection and experience of films (Solomon-Godeau, 2017).

The concept of genre has been important since the beginning of the history of film as a category for the industry and thus for the production, marketing and distribution of film for film critics and the academic, aesthetic historical and theoretical analysis of film and for audiences as a framework for the selection and experience of films (Skvirsky, 2020).

Genre can be constructed based on many criteria, for example on content and dominant type of narrative action, on specific stylistic features, on basis of the expected audiences and also on the basis of emotional response.

Popular cinema is organised almost entirely according to genre categories or entirely according to genre categories, for example science, fiction, horror, romantic, comedy and so forth (Labarre, 2020). Genre helps viewers to see the unique properties of individual works by permitting comparison of them with others that have similar qualities as well (Suggs, 2020). Films like all works of art can only be judged in relation to other works. The repetition of certain visual patterns in films allows the audience to know immediately what to expect of them by their physical attributes, costume, and related artefacts. Therefore, genre is a useful tool for analysing films such as *Sarafina*, which is the preoccupation of this study.

### **1.8.3 Feature film**

A feature film is based on the creative imagination to represent human experience. A feature film, feature-length film, or theatrical film is a film with a running time long enough to be considered the principal or sole film to fill a program (Lemon, 1991). The term feature film originally referred to the main, full-length film in a cinema program that also included a short film and often a newsreel.

### **1.8.4 Thrillers and suspense film**

This type is really a mixed genre. It is often an emotionally charged detective story or murder mystery with a good number of action sequences. Suspense plays a particularly important role in this genre, and it is this ingredient which makes the film to be a thriller or not. Thriller and suspense films are virtually synonymous and interchangeable categorisations, with similar characteristics and features. According to Skvirsky (2020), a genuine thriller is a film that relentlessly pursue a single minded goal to provide thrills and keep the audience cliff hanging at the edge of their seats as the plot builds towards the climax. The tension usually arises when the main character is placed in a menacing situation or mystery, or an escape or dangerous mission from which escape seems impossible.

Life itself is unknowingly involved in a dangerous or potentially deadly situation in a thriller. Plots of thrillers involve characters who come into conflict with each other or with outside forces. Thrillers are often hybrids involving suspense thrillers, action thrillers, action or adventure thrillers and sci-fi thrillers (*Alien*), western thrillers and even romantic comedy thrillers. Suspense thrillers come in all shapes and forms, there are murder mysteries, private eye tales, chase thrillers, women in danger films, courtroom and illegal thrillers, erotic thrillers and atmospheric, and plot twisting psychodramas. Thrillers keep the emphasis away from the gangsters, crime, or the detective in the crime related plot, and focusing more on the suspense and danger that is generated. Characteristics in thrillers include convicts, criminals, stalkers, assassins, innocent victims, and prison inmates, menaced women characterised by the dark past, terrorists, drifter's duplicated individuals and many more. The themes of thrillers frequently include terrorism, political conspiracy, pursuit, or romantic triangles leading to murder (Curry, 2017). *Sarafina* thus induces strong feelings of anxiety, suspense, fear and bring strongest emotional response to its viewers.

### **1.8.5 Sarafina**

The film *Sarafina* includes events which resonate with the actual events that took place in the June Soweto uprising in 1976. The uprisings were because of the introduction of the language policy in schools which saw the introduction Afrikaans in schools. The uprisings were led by a 19-year-old Tsietshi Mashinini, who was the elected president of the Soweto Student Representative Council. Likewise, in the film *Sarafina*, Sarafina leads the Soweto uprisings. The firing of live ammunition on students by the state security is also shown in the film when students are shot. Hundreds of students fell victim, some died.

### **1.8.6 Culture**

Culture is a set of values and beliefs encompassing language, religion, social habits, music, and arts. It is a cluster of learned behaviours that people share with others in a particular society which gives a sense of belongingness and identity.

### **1.8.7 Political and cultural memory**

Political and cultural memory is the fundamental mechanism of social identity. It is a form of collective memory shared by a group of people which gives a political and cultural understanding of the past. It is also the central organising concept of historical study and a position once occupied by the notions of class, race, and gender (Kellner, 2015).

## **1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

**Chapter One** provides an overview of what the study is all about which includes the introduction and background to the study, research problem, aim of the study, and objectives of the study, rationale of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, highlights the theoretical framework and definition of terms, chapter outline and summary of the chapter.

**Chapter Two** gives an account of the literature reviewed and how this literature lives a gap which makes the study necessary. Chapter two is a review of the literature used to support this research. It gives an overview of the information gathered from existing literature in order to understand the main concepts and aspects of this study. It also gives a detailed review of literature on the description of film genre and the representation of societal dissent, overview of socio-political challenges during apartheid and film as a symbol of resistance in the South African struggle. The existing body of literature gives the researcher an overview of how film has been used as an instrument of advocacy or education as well as resistance by society and film makers. It reviews the previous related literature that is pertinent to this study.

**Chapter Three** focuses on the research methodology; this chapter explains the research method employed, techniques and approach in this study. The research design, sampling techniques and data collection tools are also discussed in this chapter. It explains the researchers understanding of which methods to use in the process of collecting and analysing data. This includes the researcher understanding of what a research design is, what qualitative research is, what a research paradigm is and which paradigm was used to conduct this study. It also explains the researchers understanding of literature overview, how to analyse text, how to apply crystallisation and ensure trustworthiness.

This chapter also states the criteria of trustworthiness used in this study to ensure the credibility of this research.

**Chapter Four** presents the results of the study and discussion of the key findings of the study. This chapter thematically presents the findings of this study that answer the research aim and objectives as alluded to in Chapter 1.

**Chapter Five** presents the summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations for further study. This chapter presents the findings of this study based on the accumulation of information evolving from the background, context, literature, data collection and analysis as well as discussion of study findings in Chapter 4. It provides a reflective discussion to justify the attainment of the study objectives before making suggestions for further study.

#### **1.10 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

This chapter has provided a roadmap of the overall research. It comprises the introduction which consists of the background to the study, research problem, aim and objectives of the study, rationale of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, theoretical framework (which included giving justification for the choice of theories in relation to the examination of the role of film genre in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa), definition of key terms, chapter outline and summary of the chapter.



## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews existing literature in order to understand the nature of film and the way it can be used to preserve the political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. The following aspects are discussed; film as an artistic medium, description of film genre and the role of film, selected genre categories, relevance of film as a political memory, film genre and the representation of societal dissent, overview of social-political and cultural challenges during apartheid South Africa, symbolism and its application in film, and lastly a summary of the chapter is presented. As an important part, film has been recorded as the most advanced form of art created by man with the highest form so far developed for visual expression. Hence, the analysis of its utility as a powerful means through which salient messages may be conveyed to target audiences, therefore, making it an important subject of inquiry.

The importance of literature review is that it serves many important purposes, including establishing the need for the research (O'Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2005). *Sarafina* as a film archives the political and cultural heritage on the events that transpired towards the demise of the apartheid era. The film has not received much academic scrutiny in terms of its representation of the historic context and the narrative of the South African struggle for freedom. Literature review plays a pivotal role in research for broadening the horizons of the researcher and preventing the researcher from conducting research that already exists. Fourie (2009) supports the view that a literature review allows the researcher to establish what has been done in terms of the problem being investigated and to ensure that duplication does not recur. In the context of the current transformation discourse in South Africa, the need to examine the role of film genre in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa should be subject to investigation.

## **2.2 FILM AS AN ARTISTIC MEDIUM**

### **2.2.1 The social and cultural history of film**

Film includes individual motion pictures, art, and motion picture produced by recording images from the world with cameras. The imperativeness of accurately documenting events through different means including film has been emphasised by a wide range of authors like Sherman (2015) and Pollak (2008), for a number of reasons including but not limited to propaganda, rejuvenation of conflict and general distortion of past realities (Khan, 2017). Whilst films such as *Hotel Rwanda* (George, 2004) that record the Rwandan genocide of 1994 have posed threats and opened fresh wounds from the earlier events, film has gone a long way in explicating nuances which correct stereotypical thinking and enhance inter-tribe social cohesion (Pollak, 2008). The volatility of political and cultural heritage preservation is inherently infused in films as they seek to balance between representational facts of past events and the core business of entertainment. In Uganda, films such as *The Last King of Scotland* which depicts the Idi Amin regime in Uganda have engendered varying reactions locally and internationally (Sherman, 2015). Locally, the film seems to have achieved effects identical to Rwanda, with inter-tribal tension in contemporary Uganda continuing to be negatively triggered by the documentation of the atrocities and tribal conflicts. The post-apartheid South African government regards the film industry as one of the priority sectors that can play an important role in the promotion of economic development, social cohesion, and nation building (Khan, 2017).

### **2.2.2 Film as a mirror of human experience**

Film also encompasses the creation of images using animation techniques or special effects (Fourie, 2009). Films are derived from human experiences from specific cultures, which mirror out different ways of life. The main functions of films are to be an important art form, a source of popular entertainment and a comprehensive method for educating or indoctrinating audiences (Guerrero, 2012). The visual elements of cinema give motion pictures a universal power of communication. Khan (2017) points out that some voices have become popular worldwide attractions, by using dubbing or subtitles that translate the dialogue.

Traditional films are a combination of images which some scholars call frames. More so, film combines three powerful elements, namely image, story, and sound to give context and meaning to the story being told. Films tell viewers and audience stories about themes of everyday experiences such as love, hope, death, good, evil, violence, and peace. When these images are shown rapidly in succession, a viewer has the illusion that motion is occurring. Fourie (2009) argues that these films are packaged in different ways using a particular approach to present different issues. Such a work of art should have been being inspired, imaginative, expressive, formally significant, creative, though it may be defective, technically, morally, and socially (Guerrero, 2012).

### **2.2.3 Elements of film**

Film is produced and put together through a combination of elements. Other elements include plot, suspense, conflict, characterisation, themes, and language, just like any other literary genre. Furthermore, filmmakers use cinematographic techniques to bring out certain thematic issues and express meaning-making messages to the audiences. These tools involve composition, lighting, and camera movement (Mdege, 2018). The researcher identified the film elements and tools used together in the film *Sarafina*, and explored how they have been used to depict the socio-cultural and political environment that characterised the apartheid *modus operandi*. However, unlike other types of literary culture, film presents eidetic images, permits adequate and optimal utilisation of appropriate scenes, and exhibits robust aspects of culture (Sabharwal, 2020).

### **2.2.4 The art and science of film**

Film is one of the most accessible forms of art. Through watching a movie, the mind and senses are occupied more than in any other form of art, particularly when viewers experience it at local cinemas (Mdege, 2018). It is at this point that viewers realise that film has the power to shape perceptions of moviegoers on several issues from love and marriage to the works of government. With the prevalence and accessibility of film today, film greatly shapes the audience's perceptions of government. Films that have a more exclusive characterisation of characters and institutions foster a greater influence on viewers (Guerrero, 2012). Given the specifics of the medium, the narrative form, the timeframe, and economic considerations, films tend to simplify stories and reduce plots

and characters to more one-dimensional depictions. As a result, moviegoers often find themselves engrossed in stories that are constructed to work on the silver screen and observe allotted time limits as well as appeal to audiences. These stories frequently depict obvious protagonists and antagonists, both in terms of individual characters and institutions. However, stories conducive to this medium often have definitive good and evil portrayals of society.

### **2.2.5 The role of film in society**

Film plays a pivotal role in contributing to the political socialisation of citizens. Most films portray governments negatively, just as public opinion reflects, but the reality might be a bit more complicated. Just like the relationship most societies have with governments, which could be explained as a love-hate relationship, this complexity extends to film. Mdege (2018) suggests that film has radically changed the way government institutions operate, political leaders communicate, elections are contested, and how citizen engagement unfolds. Khan (2017) maintains that film facilitates the dissemination and exchange of political content on platforms and within networks that accommodate interaction and collaboration. Film is one of the most powerful tools accepted in democratic systems for representing voices of the citizenry in the absence and addition to the existing informal and formal legislative provisions.

Film holds a strong realistic potential to promote the voices of the poor majority for good democratic governance in service delivery. Khan (2017) therefore emphasises that generally accepted assumption that film has served as a watchdog for democratic principles and ensuring that ruling parties deliver on their electioneering promises. Film thus has a greater potential to broaden the understanding of the past experiences. For example, the symbolic representation of *Sarafina* helps to bring significant memories and meaningful ideas in societies thus creating a space where change might just be possible.

In films such as *Hotel Rwanda* (Rwafa, 2010), *12 Years of Slavery* (Davis, 2000) and *The Last King of Scotland* (Max, 2010), scholars have noted that the films have enabled misconceptions to be rectified and knowledge gaps filled in a manner that addresses cultural and political stereotypes (Mdege, 2018). In films such as *12 Years of Slavery*, *Kunta Kinte* and *Roots*, which capture the inhuman treatment of Africans by Westerners

during the slave trade, there is representation of dissent by the victims to different dynamics of the day. However, the conditions and power relations prevalent during that time squashed any form of resistance using very harsh, decisive, and ruthless *modus operandi* (Khan, 2017)

Film was also an important tool of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa through its efforts to protest against racism. Before the 1990s, the apartheid government had a strict censorship policy with regards to the South African film industry. Several films were produced during the apartheid period which espoused the apartheid ideology and the government's policies of separate development for South Africans of different races. The apartheid government's attempts to achieve total control over all aspects of South African society and the anti-apartheid movement's determination to overthrow the apartheid regime is evident in most of these films (Sherman, 2015).

## **2.3 DESCRIPTION OF GENRE**

### **2.3.1 Genre**

Genre is a style of film in which the viewer can come to expect certain elements consistent with that genre. "Genres do not consist only of the film they represent, equally, they comprise specific systems of expectation and hypothesis that spectators bring with them to the cinema and that interact with films themselves during the course of the viewing process. "These systems provide spectators with a means of recognition and understanding" (Watson & Hill, 2012:11). A detailed description of film genre is articulated in section 1.8.2 in Chapter one.

### **2.3.2 Audience classification of genre**

It is important to note that genre is recognised by its common set of distinguishing features. These features associated with a genre style and content may be a particular setting, character types, or technical codes (lighting or music). Audiences recognise these features and therefore expect certain representations. However, a genre is not static as it changes all the time resulting in hybrid (or sub-) genres and changing codes and conventions. There is also a relationship between genres and the societies in which they

are created (Pollak, 2008). Genre is then a reinforcement of the expectations and desire of the audience to entice the audience to keep coming back for more action.

### **2.3.3 Genre conventions and audiences**

Despite its numerous sub-genres, the purpose of the film is to serve as a commentary on the changing nature of society as mirrored through the political, economic, and socio-cultural activities of its citizens. Tarancon (2010) proposes that this is achievable by analysing the production context and consumption dynamics of the film itself rather than its technical or filmic expressions that usually focus on its semiotic composition. Film has the greatest potential to be the most effective mass media instrument. Besides providing cheap entertainment for masses, it can easily become a means of mass instruction and mass education. As such, film has proved to be one of the best mediums of mass communication (Pollak, 2008).

Film genre also serves the purpose of giving the viewer a point of reference of what kind of film they either want to see or are seeing. By containing elements and texts that confirm a particular genre, a viewer and a filmmaker can rely upon the stylistic nature of the genre to communicate its message. Furthermore, genre serves the purpose to comment on the changing nature of society and culture (Tarancon, 2010). By having predictable elements such as iconography and narrative within a certain genre, this explains that societal culture is demanding more from the cinema and asking filmmakers to provide a more believable and up to date reflection of particular genre, its elements and how these relate to the audiences.

### **2.3.4 Purpose of film genre**

The purpose of film genre however, is not to be used as a mere definition or tool to categorise a film in terms of whether it is different or the same as another, but to provide an expectation with the viewer. Individual genres might be difficult to define in themselves, as the elements that make up that genre are important in defining a film for the audience. Hockley (2016) says despite the difficulty in defining genres, it is a potent concept because both audiences and institutions use genre to define texts, and producers use genre to generate and articulate meaning. Genre has now been an element to serve the

purpose of bringing people to the movies by appealing to the need for formulaic plots and narrative construction (Hill, 2008). It is very important to keep in mind that genres are not stagnant as they change with time. However, an ideological approach to genre suggest that genres are a set of generalised and identifiable structures through which filmmakers manipulate audience to their own business and political interest. Ideological messages expressed through the film are those belonging to the filmmaker and the film making industry (Hockley, 2016).

### **2.3.5 Film genre in the changing society**

Film genres are various forms or identifiable types, categories, classifications, or groups of films that are recurring and have similar, familiar or instantly recognisable patterns, syntax, filmic techniques or conventions (Hill, 2008). Genres help prospective audiences choose movies and help indicate for whom a certain film was made, and what they should expect to see. Each genre had its own elements that make it stand out from others such as story line, setting, characterisation, style, star actors, and creative devices such as stunts or action sequences. Film genre enables directors to use symbols and settings from past movies within the same genre to appeal to human emotions (Pollak, 2008).

Genre has also provided a medium for people to view the changing nature of culture as the genre changes. Whilst some genres will still reclaim the tradition of certain elements, they can develop and change over time as culture changes thus creating a reflection on certain elements of the changing nature of our society. Although most genres retain their basic conventions, over time certain conventions tend to give way to others (Hill, 2008). Each genre carries with it certain characteristics in terms of the narrative style. Settings, events, and roles for instance in the comedy, yields a situation where the convention is that nobody gets hurt. As Hyvärinen (2015) says, the audience must feel that no matter how the characters bounce off walls, no matter how they scream and writhe under whips of life, it does not really hurt.

### 2.3.6 Common denominators between genres

- **Setting**

Setting is the time and place (or when and where) of the story. It is a literary element of literature used in films and usually introduced during the expository beginning of the story, along with the characters. According to Pollak (2008), the setting may also include the environment of the story, which can be made up of the physical location, climate, weather, or social and cultural surroundings. There are various ways that time and place can indicate setting. Lacey (2005) emphasises that time can cover many areas, such as the character's time of life, the time of day, time of year, time period such as the past, present, or future. Place also covers a lot of areas, such as a certain building, room in a building, country, city, beach, mode of transport such as a car, bus, boat or indoors. The setting of a story can change throughout the plot. The environment includes geographical location such as beach or mountains, the climate and weather, and the social or cultural aspects such as a school, theatre, meeting or club.

Setting gives context to the characters' actions in a story line. It can also create the mood (how the reader or viewer feels). It is easier to understand why the characters in the story are doing what they are doing when we know where they are. The time of day, time of year, and ages of the characters will also affect how they act and what they say Lacey (2005). All forms of literature will have some form of setting; even backdrop settings have an age range of the characters, which is part of time, and a location either indoors or out, for example. Without a setting, readers and viewers cannot follow a story plot.

Setting is an important literary device that is often taken for granted or easily misunderstood. Creating clear depictions of time and place in a story creates mood and moves the story along. Without setting, the plot line would be confusing and boring (Pollak, 2008). For this study, the setting plays a crucial role to capture both the atrocities of apartheid and the resistance to it. The effects of apartheid are clearly highlighted through the setting of *Sarafina* which clearly depicts the gulf between black and white existence during apartheid.



- **Themes**

A theme in film is a central unifying concept because it evokes a universal human experience. The theme may never be stated explicitly but it is exemplified by the film's plot, dialogue, cinematography, and music. For the audience, the theme provides a universal way to engage with the film's specific subject matter. Strong themes are also what makes a film stick with audiences long after the initial viewing (Mbokazi, 2016). For filmmakers, the theme is the main idea and a guide during the creative process. For the audience, the theme provides a universal way to engage with the film's specific subject matter. Strong themes are also what makes a film stick with audiences long after the initial viewing. Lacey (2005) suggests that for filmmakers, the theme is the main idea and a guide during the creative process. For this study, the selection of good themes in the film under study is very relevant in understanding how film has historically played an important role in preserving the political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. Good themes speak to profound and shared elements of the human experience, making it natural that certain common themes reappear in many films (Mbokazi, 2016).

- **The nature of the protagonist and antagonist**

The main character and the character's goal are the primary focus of the story in any film genre. While the main character in the Western is heroic and tends to be romanticised and the main character in the horror film is a victim, the main characters in war films tend to be far more realistic (Fusini, 2020). In the musical, main characters tend to be presented energetically, while in film noir they are typically constricted and desperate. The qualities of the main character within a particular genre tend to be consistent, which makes the shorthand dimensions of that character readily available to the writer.

The importance of the antagonist is constant throughout genres, but the nature of the antagonist depends on the level of realism associated within particular genres. Where the presentation of the main character exclusive of realism is heroic (the Adventure film of the Western), the antagonist becomes more evil, more powerful, and sometimes more than human. When the genre is nightmarish the antagonist is equally extreme (Forrest & Johnson, 2020). Only in the realistic genres (war films, melodrama, gangster films) does the antagonist take on more human rather than superhuman qualities. In these genres,

the goal of the main character is more understandable, more realistic; consequently, the antagonist, although still important, takes on a more human dimension. The use of the protagonist and antagonist in this study played a significant role to highlight the battle which existed between the white minority regime and the oppressed black majority. The protagonist and the antagonist facilitated in exposing apartheid crimes committed during apartheid and raising complex and difficult issues in the film under study.

- **The tone**

Tone is basically the mood or atmosphere of a scene or film. It can be dramatic, scary, funny, or romantic. Therefore, it is so important to know how to achieve the right tone, because it plays such a vital role in telling the audience how to feel. Tone can range from the fantastic affair in the adventure film and the musical, to the realistic one in the war film and the melodrama. Buckland (2009) suggests that one also ranges from the ironic in the screwball comedy and the satire, to the engrossing in the thriller and the horror film. An interesting example of content and tone in Roodt's work is *Sarafina* (1992), an adaptation of the musical by Mbongeni Ngema, which drew its content from the events of the 1976 Soweto uprising, but its treatment and the song and dance routines choreographed by Michael Peters, an American choreographer who had famously choreographed Michael Jackson's dances, created a tone which was often up-beat despite the significant socio-political content of the film (Buckland, 2009).

Some casting, such as that of Whoopi Goldberg in the role of the teacher, added to the tonal lightness of the film, perhaps because of her association with comedy. Tone, as a concept, is difficult to describe, but is intricately connected to mood. Buckland (2009) therefore emphasises that it is the feeling that the audience gets about a film, both as a whole and moment by moment, and is conveyed in adjectives they might use to describe it, such as 'weird', 'heavy', 'odd', 'strange', 'funny', 'lovely', 'optimistic', 'crazy' and so on. Tone is related to genre, for example, the term screwball is used to describe both a genre and tone, but tone is more than a genre and is impacted by multiple factors including:

- Storyline, where tone can be changed when events divert from a predictable course. The type entails the combination and order of events that make up the plot which also impact tone.

- Characters, where unlikely characters are put together, or where a character is at odds with his environment. The depth or superficiality of characters and the exploration, or not, of the character's inner world contribute to tone.
- Delivery of dialogue/performance, where performances are not concurrent with meaning in the text, for example straight delivery of funny or shocking lines.
- Dialogue itself, where words are used to layer meaning, or to create irony or amusement.
- Art direction factors, such as wardrobe and set, which might be surreal, exaggerated or suggest a world with inconsistent rules.
- Subtext which suggests to the audience that there are several, sometimes conflicting layers of meaning below the surface.
- Pace, which is impacted variously by the writing, the performances, the camera treatment, the editing, and the soundtrack (Corrigan & Corrigan, 2014).
- Narrative Style: Every genre has a particular narrative style that the audience expects and enjoys. Westerns, for example, tend to be punctuated by gunfights, deployment of weaponry, expertise in horsemanship, and survival skills in what is essentially a rural, primitive wilderness. Violence and violent resolution to conflict characterises the genre. This is not the case in the melodrama, where relationships, their evolution and their outcome are central, although there may be a tragic outcome in melodrama, the violence is emotional rather than physical (Corrigan & Corrigan, 2014).

## **2.4 GENRE CATEGORIES**

Genres consist of four elements which comprise character, story, plot and setting. Film genres are categories that classify films based on their narrative elements. Genre categories are the different styles of art, music, or literature. Genres are incredibly significant because they fulfil the viewer's expectations. Genre categories basically give the audience blueprints for different types of films. However, each genre is unique and varies from other types largely due to the story it tells. These aspects help to define their conventions which are important to screenwriters and film producers because they

establish a tonal expectation among audiences. Some basic film genres include action, adventure, comedy, drama, fantasy, horror, musical, mystery, romance, science fiction, sports, and thrillers. However, this study highlights the value of historical films, musicals and dance films, war films, political films and crime films because of their relevance to the film *Sarafina*. Below are several genre categories relevant to the study.

#### **2.4.1 Historical films**

The Historical film is a genre that most often speaks to an audience about 'specific events drawn from national histories, dramatising or questioning myths of 'national identity, monarchy, empire, personal heroism, and consensus (Corrigan & Corrigan, 2014). It is a fiction film showing past events or set within a historical period. This extensive genre shares territory with the biopic, costume drama, heritage film, and epic film. History is an inexhaustible source of story material. It polishes the past into a mirror of the present, making clear the painful problems of racism in *Glory*, religious strife in *Michael Collins*, or violence of all kinds, especially against women, in *Unforgiven*. Stubbs (2013) therefore emphasises that as a genre, it has maintained a high degree of cultural prominence for nearly a century, and it has established itself as a major form in nearly every nation that produces films. But it has also consistently provoked controversy and widespread public debate about the meaning of the past, about the limits of dramatic interpretation, and about the power of film to influence popular understanding and to promote particular national myths.

The historical film has often served as a vehicle of studio prestige and artistic ambition, and many distinguished directors have made major contributions to the genre. Darrel Roodt (*Cry The beloved Country*, 1995), Gavin Hood (*Tsotsi*, 2005), Richard Attenborough, (*Cry Freedom*, 1987) have made important and powerful historical films that have reawakened interest in aspects of the past that were not previously well-represented or understood. For many societies, the historical film now serves as the dominant source of popular knowledge about the historical past, a fact that has made some professional historians anxious. Other historians, however, see these films as valuable for the discussions and debate they generate. Films such as *Sarafina* and *Cry*

*Freedom* for example, have fostered a widespread and substantial public discussion that has contributed to historical appreciation and understanding (Stubbs, 2013).

Historical genre is composed of dramatic feature films in which the primary plot is based on actual historical events, or in which an imagined plot unfolds in such a way that actual historical events are central and intrinsic to the story. However, there are still large variations in the types of films that can be considered historical films. Because the genre overlaps with other well-established genres, it is useful to consider the historical film in terms of several subtypes. These include the epic, the war film, the biographical film, the period or topical film, and what might be called the metahistorical film that present the past from multiple, conflicting viewpoints in an attempt to illustrate the complexity of representing the historical past (Corrigan & Corrigan, 2014).

#### **2.4.2 Musical-Dance Films**

Musical dance films are cinematic forms that emphasise full scale scores or song and dance routines in a significant way usually with a musical or dance performance integrated as part of the film narrative or they are films that are centred on combination of music, dance, song or choreography. Donnelly (2005) suggests that music however is normally used in the opening and closure of documentary programmes and films. The music is usually selected to reflect the tone of the film, for example sober, dramatic, and revolutionary music that depict the mood and is used as a commentary to accompany events.

However, like the modern-day press, film infused with song and dance remains part of the resistance dimension that captured the weird events of prejudice traceable back to the historic moments of pre-democratic South Africa. Musical film genre plays an important role in the soundscape of films. Muller (2010) suggests that the get way for success in film is how the director and composer know exactly when and where to use music. Musical genre can be one of the most powerful emotional tools at a director's disposal.

Musical film is thus a distinct genre which can guide the emotion queues of the audience in a fictional film, so too can it guide the emotions of a non-fiction audience. The important

part is how to pick the right music for the narrative. Cooke (2008) in his studies has linked human emotions to music. Because of this, it is crucial for a filmmaker to utilise music in order to help carry the emotional tone that they may not get from the visuals alone (Donnelly, 2005). The beauty in this genre is that dance can be found in the fluidity and ambiguity of the art form. It can be a form of self-expression, a vessel to send a message, a way of retelling and reliving history, a ritual for worship, a form of celebration, and anything else that it wants to be or be interpreted as. Black dance can take the shape of many meanings and intentions, but the social, cultural, economic, and political environment of its context cannot be ignored (Muller, 2010).

### **2.4.3 War films**

In the world of cinema, there is perhaps no other genre that is quite as effective at simultaneously addressing socio-political issues and assessing elements pertaining to human nature as the war film genre. These films are about power and misuse of it. Initially, war films primarily existed as propagandist newsreels or reconstructed documentaries. Pollard (2015) suggests that sometimes they focus on the individual's ability to survive through it (whether citizen or soldier), and sometimes the audiences are invited to consider the ethical justness of war itself. Kellner (2015) therefore emphasises that in war film, though there is a climax battle, success is normally attributed to the central character's skills in battle.

Rocha (2019) emphasises the point that because war threatens societies, it is an important genre and its characteristics are that war films acknowledge the horror and the heartbreak of war, letting the actual combat fighting (against nations, or humankind) or land, sea or in the air provide the primary plot or background for the action of the film. This may include tales, stories of military operations and training, where violence plays a central role in determining the attitude towards war (Heberle, 2020).

The war film is one of the great modes of cinematic expression. Thus, a focus on filmic aesthetics or expressionism has a challenge of producing compromised documentation and preservation of both the political and cultural experiences of society. Many war films have been lauded for their realism and their focus on the cruelties of war, as well as for their portraits of heroism (Kellner, 2015). As Max (2010:54) notes, film often tries to "marry

facts and fiction as well as authenticity and narrative thrill” in the typical filmic service to highlight societal struggles against injustice. Thus, the war film genre is relevant to this study because *Sarafina* clearly highlights excessive use of state power and its outrageous consequences to the oppressed communities in a society.

#### **2.4.4 Political films**

A political drama is a film that, does not have the supernatural element in it. Furthermore, it is based on some real-life social event, mostly regarding modern history, international politics, or political implications of other social issues and events. It is a loose umbrella term for related types of films, the most important of them being political thrillers. According to Pollak (2008), a socio-political thriller requires much more months for the extra research, expert opinions, and sorting out of historical inconsistencies. Beyond that, filmmakers also must make sure that the existing political landscape does not get upset or finds the script a bit too thorny to gulp down.

Political films are basically made to convey messages about the realities experienced by a particular people where the messages control the portrayal of the reality in question (Punnett, 2018). Political films have the potential to encourage critical thinking about the world view. They can also unfold historic political events in an interesting manner where lived experiences and facts are tailored to generate interest in a subject that the population may have forgotten about (Punnett, 2018).

Students of history and political studies for example, can learn easily and more effectively about world conflicts and how they were resolved through watching political films. This is owed to the fact that a visually recorded film is invincible evidence and therefore has a greater influence to move minds more than the written or the spoken word. Furthermore, political films can educate and inspire people into taking certain steps which would not have been possible otherwise, by bringing marginal and invisible social identities to the fore front (Pollak, 2008). This has the subsequent effect of changing lives as viewers may derive inspirational courage and determination to change the course of history by supporting a national cause. More significantly, this description gives the political film an ideological edge over other film genres due to its unique ability to represent politics and how the message is presented to target audiences (Nicholas & Price, 1998). Political films

played a significant role in presenting apartheid as a natural way of life during the pre-democratic era in South Africa.

#### **2.4.5 Crime films**

Crime films are developed around the sinister actions of criminals or mobsters, particularly bank robbers, underworld figures or ruthless hoodlums who operate outside the law, stealing and murdering their way through life. The crime film is an abiding genre as it represents modern life so oppositely. Gangster films are psychodramas, the equivalent of modernised tales of gladiators and Christians. Stories in this genre are crude and chummy and there is little scope for male-female relationships (Punnett, 2018). Crime is usually distinguished from mainstream fiction and other genres such as science fiction or historical fiction, but boundaries can be, and indeed are, blurred.

The genre's flexibility is perhaps one reason for its wide and enduring appeal and means different things to different people at different times. Crime films are capable of challenging ideologies or belief systems but can sometimes support them as well. For this study, the crime genre is significant. *Sarafina* played a fundamental role in exposing many of the crimes committed during apartheid, and this helped to heal some of the country's wounds. While it is impossible to deny that racial segregation characterised the social fabric of the South African society, most films like *Tsotsi*, by Gavin Hood and *Gangster's Paradise: Jerusalem*, by Ralph Ziman revealed high crime rate since the black nationality wallowed in abject poverty. These films have successfully drawn attention to these issues by taking advantage of the topical interest of the subject (Punnett, 2018).

#### **2.5 RELEVANCE OF FILM AS A POLITICAL MEMORY**

Film as a medium has been used to document repression, persecution and the struggle for justice in many instances globally. However, among other visual arts, film has been used to create a sense of common identity. Film has framed cultural memory for productive purposes as a medium against the homogenisation of national identities. Thus, it is a potent medium by which cultural memory continues to change as nations acknowledge the legacies of their diverse struggles.



### **2.5.1 Memory and film**

Film has become central to the mediation of memory in modern cultural life. The past has been figured in variations of the history film, the costume drama, and the heritage picture from early cinema to the present, with rituals of remembrance coming to surround the culture of film (Cooke, 2008). Film shapes ideas about the past with projections of the future. Vambe (2004) highlights that the narratives we construct to give meaning to the past and among the most important of these are, the use of film to depict the past. Hence, film can be understood as a means of commenting on the discourse of history for example, on historiographical debates or the nature of historical knowledge, agent of history through its propagandistic or ideological qualities and source for studying the past. The historical value of a film may lie in its assumptions or reception rather than its narrative elements (Cooke, 2008).

Films do not represent reality but an interpretation of reality, and they very often reflect a hidden or not-so-hidden propagandistic dimension, whether intentional or unintentional (Cooke, 2008). However, memory is a fundamental mechanism of social identity (Kellner, 2015). It is also the central organising concept of historical study, a position once occupied by the notions of class, race, and gender. According to Pollard (2015), film can create, transmit and maintain counter-memory, a set of narratives that challenge the transmission of oppressive history. Films do not represent reality but an interpretation of reality, and they very often reflect a hidden propagandistic dimension, whether intentional or unintentional (Cooke, 2008). Vambe (2004) states that the politics of memory and remembering implicates acts of writing narrative as arbitrary because memory is always in flux to the extent that there is not only one memory but some multiple memories, constantly battling for attention within the cultural space of a film.

The popular history of nations emerges from a collective understanding of the past, both on what is remembered in the historical record and what is forgotten. Film, whether fiction, documentary, or actuality, is a site for the collective remembering or forgetting of past events (Pollard, 2015). Film can provide an effective vehicle for tracing the construction of memory, and the extent to which such memories are shaped by ever-changing ideological and political contexts. Film in South Africa continues to display the

dichotomous clashes between black and white authorities and black and white civilians, where race is at the epicentre of public disjuncture. Furthermore, cultural products in the form of song, dance and poetry documented in films such as *Roots* have been used to explicate today's culture. This has given expression to the socio-economic struggle narratives of black communities in the modern day. Therefore, Vambe (2004) says it can be argued that filmic excerpts which capture dissent among oppressed groups in history resonate with modern day protests.

### **2.5.2 Collective memory, cultural diversity, and social cohesion**

The other role of film and television, which is also connected to education, is the promotion of cultural diversity and social cohesion. Understanding the “truth behind heritage, and that behind all the diverse culture” is necessary for all nations irrespective of their cultural, racial or ethnic affiliation to relate to each other, find a common ground, and overcome divisions (Assmann, 2013).

A film, according to Gray (2004), is a powerful tool in the preservation and promotion of shared ideas, values, and beliefs because it can stand the test of time. Films are powerful because they can arouse emotions, deliver suspense, and produce fun-true escapism and adventure to an audience made up of different people, exposing them to the same experience for a few hours. In this way, it allows people to view the same visual memories after decades and even centuries. This is crucial in the process of passing culture down to future generations. Thus, the power of film also stems from its collaborative dimension, therefore making *Sarafina* worthy to be examined as an artefact that can be used in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom of South Africa.

## **2.6 FILM GENRE AND REPRESENTATION OF SOCIETAL DISSENT**

The second building block of this study is the need to explore the effects of film on society especially in terms of its potential or ability to avoid, provoke or inspire societal dissent against prejudices that confront it. This basically is closely related to the role of films as political and cultural heritage. As such, this section covers film and the depiction of societal dissent extending to coverage of representation of ideology.

### **2.6.1 Film and depiction of societal dissent**

The apartheid era became subjected to less hedonistic ways of expression. According to Soudien (2012), film can speak to the dissatisfaction of black people about racial elitism that continues to drive systematic socioeconomic exclusion from health and educational services. This study is not about whether or not the excerpts in film misconstrue political and cultural heritage or distort past realities as some scholars have argued. As Berger (1991) notes, film often tries to marry facts and fiction as well as authenticity and narrative thrill in the typical filmic services and to highlight societal struggles against injustice. Thus, a focus on filmic aesthetics or expressionism has a challenge of producing compromised documentation and preservation of both the political and cultural experiences of society.

Globally film continues to display the dichotomous clashes between young black and white authorities and black and white civilians, where race is at the epicentre of public disjuncture (Soudien, 2012). Furthermore, cultural products in form of song, dance and poetry documented in films such as *Roots* can be used to explicate today's culture in America which expresses the socio-economic struggle narratives of black communities in modern day America. Therefore, it can be argued that filmic excerpts which capture dissent among oppressed groups in history resonate with modern day rebellions and protests.

### **2.6.2 Representation of ideology in film**

The term ideology is used in this research because ideological frames take on a particular shape in response to a political context. They are not simply inherited or de-contextualised belief systems, but rather are frameworks that have been developed in response to socio-political circumstances in order to make sense and justify that system of meaning (Devereux, 2014). Ideological frameworks serve a political purpose in that they attempt to influence the conflict transformation agenda in a manner that serves particular interests or needs. Each ideological frame embodies certain abstract characteristics that are not necessarily present in this form in any one individual's understanding of reconciliation in South Africa. According to Lemon (1991), these frames are rather systems of meaning that arise from a particular school of thought or system of beliefs.

Modes of production have shaped political and economic ideologies since the beginning of time with the most popular modes being centred on Capitalism, Communism and Socialism. Regardless of these major modes of production, politicians and governments' behaviour and manner in which they exercise their institutional or personal power makes one system either democratic or otherwise. The colonial era was marked by a combination of these systems, but democracy was not one of them as imperialists had zero regard for the cultural or political rights of the natives. In South Africa, the Apartheid System was tailor-made to suppress non-whites and to serve the minority. These dynamics are well documented, and film remains one of the most relied-upon data sources thereto (Devereux, 2014).

People construct their world of meaning by borrowing from what they find around them. They piece it together in a way that gives them a sense of control or meaning, and they present it in a way that appeals to the audience and elicits a sympathetic response. Some of the ideas that are used to build these ideological frames are part of the international legal, religious, or political discourses (Stromgren & Norden, 1984). Ideological frames are thus not mutually exclusive. Their constituent components overlap with one another, and individuals can believe in two or more of them at the same time, albeit through maintaining some level of internal dissonance (Stromgren & Norden, 1984). Ultimately, the ideological frameworks in Sarafina were anchored on addressing political inequalities which were based on race, today, this cultural heritage as documented in the film lives on, alas in a different political context.

### **2.6.3 Ideological frames within films**

This study is centred on an examination of how the political order of the day influenced and controlled decisions as well as distributing power. It has already been discussed extensively how the political elites based on race thrived on policies which only served these elitist biases and deliberately and systematically suppressed the masses. An ideology refers to systems that help to justify the action of those in power by distorting and misrepresenting the reality experienced by those in subordinate positions (Devereux, 2014). For political purposes, ideological framing often presents facts in such a way that presents a problem that needs an urgent solution. Hence, politicians usually attempt to

frame issues in a manner that makes the solution to favour their own political ideology as the most appropriate course of action for the situation at hand (Kamalipour, 2010).

In South Africa, film production was for many years dominated by the apartheid system wherein its racist ideas served as underlying themes to sustain the white minority government (Lemon, 1991). A frame defines the packaging of an element of rhetoric in such a way that it encourages certain interpretations and discourages others. These dimensions are well documented and challenged by films such as *Sarafina* which set out to particularly resist and overturn these prejudices towards a more equal society. Films by their nature have principle resonance to either political, social and in many instances a combination of various aspects. Below, the socio-political ideologies and the impact films have in societal resistance of unjust systems are briefly discussed. The study uses famous films and literature to provide an ideological framing of the role of film and its contribution, or lack thereof, to confrontations that ensued grave injustices demonstrated by technical production aspects, scripts, formats and symbolism applied in *Sarafina* among others.

#### **2.6.4 Socio-political ideologies in film**

The power of ideas comes into reality when they are communicated well and drive people to make action. Ideology has close connection to the mass media. According to Fourie (2009), ideology can be defined as a general system of beliefs held by members of a particular social or cultural group, such as the beliefs of a Christian or Muslim religious group. It may also describe the political ideals held by members of a political party. Ideology produces people with attitudes and beliefs that enables them to take their given social positions (Lemon, 1991). If a government uses the police force and the army to intimidate its citizens, it might be a serious indication that the citizens may be afraid to express their dissatisfaction. The use of violence is not the best way to control people. A more effective method is to communicate to them ideas and images or an ideology to make them accept their positions, respect their government, and maintain the social order. Most governments consider the mass media as important means for manipulating the ideas and opinions of the people (Kamalipour, 2010).

Films produced in Hollywood in the 1960s were intricately connected to the political movements and struggles. According to Dalton (2010), film is a struggle of representation on how to construct a social world and everyday life. Ideology is a set of ideas that promote the class economic interests. Most films display masculinism which falls at the bottom of conservative socialisation ideology (Devereux, 2014). Most films initiate a masculist image of men which defines masculinity with features of strength, power, effective use of force and military heroism. As the highest expression of life, most females in the films are portrayed as prostitutes, servants of men's exploit who function primarily as seductive and destructive forces (Kamalipour, 2010).

Film ideology is presented through images, scenes, generic codes, and the narrative as a whole. The purpose of camera positioning and lighting is to frame characters as mythic and heroes. Frequent close ups magnify characters and images of men as larger than life human beings where the camera focuses on shiny biceps, the sculptured refined body and powerful physique presenting most men as sexual icons, figures of virility, which promote female adoration for males' strength and also erotic fascination with other male characters (Devereux, 2014).

Viewing films politically can provide insight not only into the ways that film reproduces existing social struggles within societies but also provides insight into social and political dynamics. Rambo, an American media franchise centred on a series of action films points to the social conflicts and to forces that threaten conservative hegemony such as liberal anti-war, anti-military position which Rambo violently opposes (Devereux, 2014). Therefore, ideology should be analysed within the context of social struggles and political debates.

Film can be interpreted as responses to actual threats including conservative hegemony and as testimonies to actual social conflicts and contradictions. Analysing film diagnostically allows people to detect what ideological solutions to various problems are being offered and to anticipate certain trends to gain insights into social problems and conflicts to appraise the dominant ideologies and emergent oppositional forces therein (Devereux, 2014).

## **2.7 TECHNICAL ASPECTS AND DEPICTION OF DISSENT IN FILMS**

Films string together shots with different compositions and camera angles in order to tell a story. Below are some of the technical aspects discussed in relation to film composition.

### **2.7.1 Colour**

Colour plays an important role in films. Cinematographers use colour to affect the viewers' mood whether consciously or unconsciously. The use of colour within films has evolved through artistic vision and technical innovation. Colour has always been an intriguing aspect of cinematography. Misek (2010) highlights that filmmakers are now able to depict a story with even more exposure and detail, manipulating audience's moods and emotions quite simply through orchestrating colour. Today the use of colour in cinematography is considered a vital part of creating a film. Basten (1980) suggests that, colour is not an element that could distract the spectator's attention but rather attract it. He argues:

The eye, accustomed to the shadings of black and white, has less difficulty meeting the demands of the new element; the colour is not a distraction but an attraction - as valuable and little more obtrusive than the musical score. Colour can communicate time and place, define character, and establish emotion, mood, atmosphere, and psychological sensibility. The importance and brilliance of colour in film cannot be stressed enough. Directors and cinematographers are consciously including or avoiding specific colours to deepen narratives while simultaneously enhancing a picture's overall quality and beauty. These coloured worlds reel in audiences and can shape a filmmaker's body of work, strengthening their overall oeuvre by acting as a trademark.

Colour thus has the amazing ability to grab the audience's attention, foreshadow information and control or influence emotion consciously or subliminally. The use of colour in cinema involves explanations and associations at different levels (Cowan, 2015). The physical aspect involves the way a specific colour can affect the viewer giving a pleasing feeling. However, Misek (2010) clearly highlights that colour has the potential to directly affect people's emotional state.

### **2.7.2 Visual effects**

Visual effects are used to describe any imagery created, altered, or enhanced for a film or other moving media that cannot be accomplished during live-action shooting. In other

words, much of the art of visual effects takes place in post-production, after primary image capture is complete. Visual effects can be added to live-action, captured through techniques such as matte painting; rear- and front-screen projection; miniature or forced perspective sets; computer graphic objects, characters, and environments; and compositing of images recorded in any number of ways (Misek, 2010).

The recent explosion in digital tools that make flawless compositing, digital sets, and fully computer-generated characters possible and accessible to moving image makers at all levels has made visual effects a standard part of every moving image maker's tool kit. It is the process through which imagery is altered, created, or enhanced for live-action media that could not be captured during live-action filming due to it being costly, dangerous, impractical, or impossible to shoot (Evans, 2019). The visual approach techniques in *Sarafina* have been used as a creative tool in film to portray characters and the fight for freedom.

However, questions have surfaced over the significance of these films in this day and age especially in terms of their aptitude to objectively serve as sources and documentation of political and cultural heritage or (re)open wounds which had otherwise virtually closed. However, that falls not too central to the pith of this study as the focus is on the extent to which the technical production of these films depicted dissent in affected societies. Literature in South Africa and beyond seemingly affirms this, as the character of youths who led the resistance and uprisings against the order of the day are well documented and glorified both in literature and other films (Misek, 2010). Perhaps it is crucial to analyse other facets of film compositions such as visual scripting, so as to reach a more informed conclusion on the dimension.

### **2.7.3 Visual scripting**

Perez (2019) defines visual scripting as the coordination of words with pictures in sequence. The scripting features of advocacy films are deliberately designed to address the grievances being advocated against (Evans, 2019). The design and execution of scripts determines and is aligned explicitly to the genre or intention of the feature film. It is against this background that the production and scripting of films which were aimed at challenging colonialism and segregation required specifically scripted features which



targeted education or *uneducating*, indoctrinating and motivating certain groups in confronting the injustices of the day (Misek, 2010).

Specifics of verbal and non-verbal scripting features such as language, tone, drama, music, confrontations, vulnerability, boldness, and resistance among other nuances were common in films such as *Kunta Kinte*, *Come Back to Africa* and *Witness of Apartheid* among others. This is not only consistent with their primary objective to advocate, inform and revolt but also with documentation of these events as political and cultural heritage of the day. The film under study was a compilation of realities, exposure of apartheid malpractices as well as a demonstration of the power of individual and community heroism in challenging the most pressing circumstances of the epoch in South Africa (Misek, 2010).

#### **2.7.4 Voice over**

The use of voice over narration has been used in film to help convey greater depth and meaning to the audience. Voice over narration can be inserted as an active agent that help provide greater impact and understanding to the audience in a way that a complex actor's performance or scenery cannot. Film often uses a voice over to provide the viewer with relevant information through the film's soundtrack. Often this is paired with important visual aids. Voice overs provide film makers with a range of abilities in story telling that they otherwise would not have. According to Nicholas and Price (1998), the real power of a voice over is its ability to communicate directly with the audience and this is usually the voice of an actor, who plays the invisible controlling role of narrator or storyteller rather than participating in it. In so doing, the voiceover has the role of uncovering or solving the mystery. Voice over is not restricted to one form, it can also include participants or eyewitnesses, in the narrative. In documentaries the voice over often has the role of uncovering or solving a mystery (Pérez, 2019). Voice over is also often used in the detective fiction film noir genre to record the thoughts of the hero or to recount the story in a flashback.

### **2.7.5 Meaning and technique in film**

Film is a marriage of technique and meaning. Not all meanings in a movie are deliberate, some meanings come from the culture a filmmaker inhabits and unknowingly meaning enter the film without the film maker realising it (Dancyger, 2014). People live in a culture that shape how they think and what they think and believe. Such influence determines what kind of movies they make, and an exceptionally good example is that of someone who grows up in a racist culture, may make racist movies even though it was not their intention. Meanings are shaped by thematic or aesthetic necessity and seem neither entirely unconscious nor entirely deliberate. All movies contain meaning that is either historical, political, cultural, psychological, social, or economic. Film makers use technique to make meaning. Dancyger (2014), consequently emphasises the point that each technique such as close-up, the long shot and low-key lighting can be used to create several different meanings. No technique has the same meaning in all different instances in which it occurs. A close shot can suggest emotional intimacy, or can be used to create fear and alarm, or it can open a window on character psychology.

With the production of film with elements of dissent prohibited in South Africa during the Apartheid era, the main source of films which depicted dissent was anywhere else outside South Africa (Cowan, 2015). With the US Hollywood leading the production of virtually all genres and types of films, it is no surprise that films such as *Kunta Kinte*, *Witness of Apartheid* and *Come Back to Africa* among others were produced to technically provoke and engender dissent and uprising.

With the *Arab Springs* and the *Balkans Springs* already demonstrating the path to freedom and emancipation, the scripting of these mentioned films and many more was deliberately and technically aimed at providing relevance and resonance with South Africans.

## **2.8 OVERVIEW OF THE CHALLENGES DURING APARTHEID**

Pre-democratic South Africa was fraught with a wide range of socio-political and cultural challenges which were either caused, intensified or correlated to racial segregation,

inequality and generic separatist educational challenges, spatial dynamics, cultural challenges, political environment, and resistance to a system as discussed below.

### **2.8.1 Racist government policies**

Apartheid was one of the most inhuman and most widely condemned forms of institutionalised racism. During this period, South Africa witnessed the manifestation of a dual oppressive system which certainly triggers emotive responses in the minds of those who lived through the dark days of apartheid (Petersen, 2002). In her analysis of the racial tendencies orchestrated by the white minority against black people, Dlamini (2016) laments how racism in post-apartheid South Africa affirms what was silenced then, due to colonial domination.

In South Africa, film production was for decades dominated by the apartheid system, wherein its racist prejudices served as underlying themes to sustain the white minority government. Therefore, film was used as a social and political construction against the background of a cultural minority whose experiences and interests were the pre-occupation of both the communicator and the sponsor of the films. This tendency placed the film packaging process within the realm of colonial subjugation as the culture and experiences of those portrayed in the films mirrored the critical imbalance of a racial society. Furthermore, the cultural practices that formed part and parcel of the social fabric of native South Africans were also suppressed in a manner that compromised self-expression and inner inherent routines (Assmann, 2013).

Political activists and nationalist leaders endured the trying period when the government of the day classified protest artefacts such as poetry, music, and fine art as unnecessary and a transgression of the apartheid laws (Muswede, 2017). For example, street theatre or evening gatherings by youths around bon-fires could be easily interpreted as conspiracies to overthrow the government. Thus, efforts to preserve the history of the struggle against apartheid cruelty as part of the national cultural heritage through orature in particular, to newer generations have had its challenges.

- **Social-economic environment**

Socio-political policies and dynamics are the pillars which supported and maintained the racial, humanitarian, political and socio-economic realities of the day during colonial epochs especially in the global south (Peterson, 2002). Factors ranging from social security, voting rights and many other freedoms were suppressed in a manner that disadvantaged and limited chances of social mobility of the colonised or oppressed.

The socio-political environment in South Africa was characterised by some harsh Acts which segregated non-whites to certain geographical spaces. Dlamini (2016) says buffer zones were created, marking no-go-areas, and limiting especially Africans to Bantustans with no social and economic infrastructure. These conditions were designed to keep non-whites in a vicious cycle of poverty. Similarities can be drawn from the Zimbabwean realities of the day which limited Africans in that country to “Makomboni” where only those offering their labour made up the peasantry and virtually lived their entire life in these poor socio-political conditions (Peterson, 2002). These systems and the ensuing realities were identical across many countries and are well documented in documentary and feature films. Films such as *21 Years of Slavery* and *Sarafina* among others remain banks of cultural and political heritage from which inspiration, advocacy and uprising gained impetus and from which newer generations can be educated.

- **Segregation**

The Apartheid system of racial segregation was initiated in South Africa in 1948, when the country was officially divided into four racial groups, White, Black, Indian and Coloureds (or people of mixed race, or non-Whites who did not fit into the other non-White categories (Nesterova & Young, 2020). Homelands were created for Blacks, and non-Whites could not vote and had separate schools and hospitals, and even beaches where they could swim or park benches, they could sit on.

Basically, the South African population was split by the colonising powers into different categories which are African, Asian, and Indian, Coloured and White. Apartheid rule included the intricate division of people for the sake of manipulation and control. This system required, therefore a naming system that would make clear the different division

and their slot in the social hierarchy (Nesterova & Young, 2020). However, with the advent of democracy, many policies have been promulgated to transform racial subjugation, inequality and other prejudices associated with the apartheid regime. Life in the Black areas was also full of controls and regulations. For example, the creation of "Native Administration Departments" through the Promotion of Bantu Self-government Act (1959) worked as central agencies to manage townships including surveillance systems, internal laws about residence certificates, reports of visitors to the Township superintendent, restriction of leisure activities beyond those planned by the administration, liquor selling and drinking restrictions.

Furthermore, since the movement of black labourers was limited, transport services were also a tool to control access. Commuter flows carried people over long distances in the morning and took them back home in the evening. Still, public transportation, pedestrian mobility, and non-motorised transport were not enforced since the government rather spent on road infrastructure for private vehicles, promoting the beginning of the mini-bus taxi industry.

## **2.8.2 Educational challenges during apartheid South Africa**

The apartheid system created separatist states that kept the black majority divided based on language or ethnicity which included educational inequalities. This saw most blacks receiving inferior education that would limit their economic potential, thereby making them to remain within the spheres of the working class (Muswede, 2017). The apartheid system generated educational inequalities through obvious racist policies. As Hunter (2010) puts it that blacks received education that would limit educational potential to keep them in the working class. However, Chisholm (2004) postulates that several policies have changed within the education system to try and amend educational inequalities.

- **The colonial government educational system**

The intention of the colonisers was to shape young Africans to be compliant labourers. Hunter (2010) argues that the Dutch that colonised South Africa basically viewed the natives as intellectually and morally inferior, thus exploited the labour of the local populations. Colonial governments introduced public education systems, in which their

main objective was to prepare young Africans to be submissive labourers. In South Africa, the education system was segregated and unequal. White schooling was free, compulsory, and expanding, black education was sorely neglected. Underfunding and an urban influx led to gravely insufficient schooling facilities, teachers, and educational materials as well as student absenteeism or non-enrolment (Botha & Coetzee, 2020).

Black South African majority were not satisfied with the unequal relations that existed in the education system. Hunter (2010) posits that in June 1976, high school students in Soweto, a black township on the southwest side of Johannesburg, organised a mass protest against unequal education. Thousands of students marched through the streets on their way to a rally at a stadium. The march was scattered by the South African police using dogs, batons, tear gas and, ultimately, gunfire. The police action and ensuing confrontations with the police left hundreds of students dead and more than a thousand injured. This event sparked a nationwide uprising, made Soweto an emblem of the anti-apartheid movement, put the apartheid education system in the spotlight, and cemented the role of students in the nation's political struggle (Chisholm, 2004).

- **Apartheid schooling curriculum**

The South African education during the period of apartheid was controlled tightly from the centre (Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2012). Each separate department had its own curriculum development and protocols. In reality, curriculum formation in South Africa was dominated by committees attached to the White House of Assembly (Hunter, 2010). The system was so prescriptive, abetted on the one hand by a network of inspectors and subject advisors and on the other by several generations of poorly qualified teachers, where authoritarianism, rote learning, and corporal punishment were the rule. Chisholm (2004) believes that these conditions were exacerbated in the impoverished environments of schools for children of colour. Examination criteria and procedures were instrumental in promoting the political perspectives of those in power and allowed teachers extraordinarily little latitude to determine standards or to interpret the work of their students.

## **Bantu Education Act 1953**

The South African segregation law which legalised several aspects of the apartheid system came through the Bantu Education Act, 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953; later renamed the Black Education Act, 1953 (Taylor, 2007). Its major goal was enforcing racially separated educational facilities. The introduction of Bantu Education led to a substantial increase of government funding to the learning institutions of black Africans, but it did not keep up with population increase. Hunter (2010) conveys the painful situation during apartheid that the schools reserved for the country's white children were of Western standards. 30% of the black schools did not have electricity, 25% had no running water and less than half had plumbing (Taylor, 2007).

The education for Blacks, Indians and Coloureds was substantially cheaper but not free. Hunter (2010) justified the subjugation of apartheid schools and spatially segregated people along gender lines. Boys and girls were separated in assemblies, classrooms, and sporting fields. Girls were regarded as inferior, marginalised and were domesticated (Allen, 2005). Apartheid schooling was patriarchal, whilst it was racist. Regarding female experiences in apartheid schools, their first-generation rights of access to schooling was met but these were impacted upon by their experiences of marginalisation, inferiorisation and subordination in schools (Chisholm, 2004). In this light, female experiences of apartheid schooling violated their second generation social and political rights, and economic rights in the case of female teachers, and their first-generation rights regarding security and safety. The violations of these rights of females, were consistent across the racial barriers of apartheid schools (Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2012).

The Bantu Education Act stipulated that all black schools would have to be registered with the government, and that registration would be at the discretion of the minister. This measure enabled the government to close any educational programmes which did not support its aims (Allen, 2005). The Bantu Education Act gave wide powers to the minister of education, including control over teachers, syllabuses, and any other matter relating to the establishment, maintenance, management and control over government Bantu schools. The Act made provision for community participation in the running of schools

through school boards and committees, but clearly power and control were to be firmly in state hands (Allen, 2005).

### **Bantu education interests**

Bantu education served the interests of white supremacy. It denied black people access to the same educational opportunities and resources enjoyed by white South Africans. Bantu education denigrated black people's history, culture, and identity. It promoted myths and racial stereotypes in its curricula and textbooks (Chisholm, 2018). Some of these ideas found expression in the notion of the existence of a separate Bantu society and Bantu economy which were taught to African students in government-run schools. This so-called "Bantu culture" was presented in crude and essentialised fashion (Moore, 2005). African people and communities were portrayed as traditional, rural, and unchanging. Bantu education treated blacks as perpetual children in need of parental supervision by whites, which greatly limited the student's vision of "her place" in the broader South African society (Chisholm, 2018).

This policy of control extended to universities as well. The 1959 Extension of Universities Act effectively closed white universities to black students and began the establishment of separate tertiary institutions for blacks. One reason for this was undoubtedly to extend state control: those blacks who proceeded to tertiary institutions, thus forming a black elite, were to be trained in institutions in which the state could control both administrative structures and curricula (Ndlovu, 2006). This extension of state measures to bring education under its direction was part of a wider system of extending state control, which included strengthening and increasing repressive mechanisms such as labour bureaux, pass laws, and restrictions on urbanisation (Ndlovu, 2006).

### **Bantu education's main ideology**

Ideologically, Bantu Education clearly envisaged the separation of whites and blacks in political and economic structures and promoted this ideology through schooling. In terms of curriculum, higher-primary schools were designed to continue the work of lower-primary schools, increasing the subjects to be studied which were gardening and agriculture, and extending proficiency in English or Afrikaans (Muswede, 2017). Higher-



primary schools provided both academic and vocational courses, the academic group spending two-thirds of this time on academic subjects and one-third on vocational, with the ratios being reversed for the vocational group. Students who succeeded in higher-primary schools could move to post-primary schools (Kamalipour, 2010). The purpose of these schools was functionally stated mainly to provide the types of educated Bantu necessary for the development of Bantu society. For academic schools, the curriculum was similar to, but not identical with, white secondary schools. Apartheid was the mask and Bantu Education was their best means for reproducing labour in the form they desired (Pieterse & Owens, 2018).

For those blacks who did attend schools, the overtly ideological dimensions of schooling were aimed specifically at the reproduction of the sort of workers demanded by the capitalist system. As regards skills, schooling was geared to instruction in basic communication, literacy, and numeracy. Familiarity with one of the official languages, English, or Afrikaans the languages of the employers was an important part of the curriculum. As well as this, schooling for blacks was based overtly on religious and moral training, with values such as cleanliness, punctuality, honesty, respect, and courtesy being explicitly articulated as aims of the system (Wolhuter, 2018).

### **2.8.3 Spatial dynamics in South Africa**

Racial segregation was quite common in many countries during the colonial and post-colonial eras, and the apartheid system strongly reinforced it (Petersen, 2002). As Hunter (2010) puts it, race played a key structural role in the socio-spatial organisation of the South African society. Social inequalities remained extremely strong in South Africa, reflecting the scars of a society not only divided by the racial criteria but by incomes. The apartheid era limited mobility for certain races through buffers. Non-white workers were forced to live outside cities in residential areas known as townships. The systematic segregation dates back to the colonial era in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the British colonial government resettled racial groups under the pretence of responding to disease epidemics in overcrowded neighbourhoods (Nesterova & Young, 2020).

Soweto was settled by blacks and other non-whites who were relocated after an outbreak of bubonic plague in central Johannesburg. Separation was formalised and reinforced by

colonial laws such as the Natives Land Act of 1913, which allocated nearly 90 percent of the land in South Africa to a tiny minority white population. As Pieterse (2009) puts it, during the apartheid era from 1948 to 1994 the ruling Nationalist Party dominated by white Afrikaners introduced laws that enforced racial segregation and restriction on movement. Cities were meant for whites only thus leading to the accelerated growth of separate townships across the country (Petersen, 2002). Leisure activities were also regulated and schools were poorly maintained with barrack-like structures with barred windows and second-hand desks.

### **Bantustans**

South Africa has a history that has been dominated by colonialism, racism, Apartheid, and repressive labour practices. Moreover, the 1952 Native Laws Amendment Act divided the African population into racially allocated reserves and furthermore controlled the size of permanent populations. The racially repressive results of laws such as this paved the way for problems such as poverty and degradation for the groups that were deemed as second class. These 'inferior' groups were left to exist side by side with the established middle-class suburbs, which were 'better' classed and therefore were provided with well-developed infrastructure (Dlamini, 2016).

The Bantustans were a major administrative device for the exclusion of blacks from the South African political system under the policy of apartheid, or racial segregation. Bantustans were organised based on ethnic and linguistic groupings defined by white ethnographers (Ndlovu, 2006). The Bantustans were rural, impoverished, under industrialised, and reliant on subsidies from the South African government. The original hope of the designers of the Bantustan system was that industries would be established along the Bantustan borders to utilise the cheap labour available nearby, but for the most part these hopes went unrealised (Dlamini, 2016). The economy of South Africa during the Apartheid era functioned on systematically enforced racial divisions that included social and political disparity. Furthermore, Mjamekwana (2017) emphasises the idea that rural areas were divided into underdeveloped Bantustans, while urban residential areas with well-developed infrastructures and amenities were generally reserved for whites.

Swartz (2017) noted that poverty remained acute in the Bantustans, and child mortality rates were extremely high.

Bantustan lands were over settled, overgrazed, and hence afflicted with serious soil erosion. According to Ndlovu (2006), land itself has always been a source from which Africans and particularly the rural inhabitants have derived their livelihood. The sustainability of rural livelihoods therefore largely relies on the availability of productive land. Swartz (2017) therefore emphasises that as a result, the inability to access land has always been a great challenge to Africans. The relocation of black South Africans to townships in the rural Bantustans was one of the defining and most brutal aspects of apartheid. These townships, and others like them, have often been represented as the 'dumping grounds' of apartheid.

#### **2.8.4 Cultural challenges during apartheid South Africa**

The cultural practices that formed part and parcel of the social fabric of native South Africans were also suppressed in a manner that compromised self-expression and inner inherent routines (Clan, 2015). Song and dance remain dimensions that trace back to stone age in virtually all African communities and had endured into the period when the government of the day classified it as unnecessary and transgression to suppressive laws of the day such as curfews (Song, 2014). Evening gatherings historically form part of the cultural heritage that allowed elderly members of a given community to transfer skills, knowledge, and stories important to newer generations. During the apartheid regime, these evening gatherings around bon-fires could be easily interpreted as 'conspiracies to overthrow the government.' Furthermore, the socio-economic status quo of the day meant that families needed to make a choice on how to spend their limited resources on investments such as education in a manner that would compromise the girl child, hence the creation of patriarchs which, in certain households, endure to date. The apartheid era was segregated by race, class, and language (Johnson, 2007). The literature above gives an understanding on what the period understudy looked like. These are the issues that guide the researcher as she analyses the film in Chapter 4.

- **Socio-cultural environment**

The Apartheid system was particularly oppressive which that meant socio-cultural values of non-whites were systematically undermined (Ndlovu, 2006). For example, rituals had been an ancient socio-cultural lifestyle heritage that had been passed on to newer generations. Perhaps, because black communities' entertainment options were limited to social interaction and beating drums and dancing around balefires such that their socio-economic predicaments denied them capacity to enjoy technological entertainment such as television and the radio. Moreover, the system refused them the right to gather 'after curfews' which only increased their frustration with the order of the day. It is in these gatherings that the elders would pass down information and historical accounts of their suffrage and discontent with the government. In some cases, films would be projected in common halls and black communities would have an opportunity to watch 'Apartheid and Colonialism' film and pictures (Okigbo, 2016).

The Apartheid Government had no regard for socio-cultural rights and fought to disrupt these gatherings as they presented a threat to their rule. Early films produced in the mid and late 20th Century such as *Cry Freedom*, *Witness to Apartheid* and *Mandela and De Klerk* are rich socio-cultural heritage which played a huge impact in conscientising South Africans and the world about the brutality of the system. As South African history moved forward in the apartheid years, "Black dance" became increasingly integral to protesting the apartheid government. For instance, the Gumboots dance, performed by South African migrant mine workers when prohibited from drumming or speaking to one another, was created as "a testament of the struggle these men faced on a daily basis under the apartheid policy" (Snipe, 2000: 9). These types of dances including Toyi-Toyi were ways of directly incorporating dance, which was part of the lifeblood in traditional South African life into the anti-apartheid movement.

"A Toyi-toyi is a dance that expresses defiance and protest, it is also important to note that it is usually a non-violent expression of protest. It could begin as the stomping of feet and spontaneous chanting during protest that could include political slogans or songs, either improvised or previously created" (Watson & Hill, 2015).

During urbanisation, the racial legislation maintained that it was illegal for Black residents to live in the cities, and thus the music and dance produced by this urban Black population was also often a form of political resistance to a hostile system. Ndlovu (2006) therefore highlights that members of *Amandla* and other performers understood the importance of using dance as a force to inform the world of the oppression in South Africa.

In the mining community which mostly employed male workers, the movements of gumboots dance, which evolved from the mines, were influenced by these demographics and social elements in townships. Traditional South African dances had defined roles for different members in society and for gender and age categories, and they also had certain meanings in different socio-cultural contexts and events (Okigbo, 2016).

### **2.8.5 Political challenges during apartheid South Africa**

Political systems shape and reshape socio-economic policies and status quo and, to a certain extent vice versa. Incoherencies between hegemonic regimes and the relations of production during colonial times were central to frequent conflicts and clashes between the Bourgeoisie and the proletariat (Mdege, 2018). With these dynamics also visible in non-colonial political economic systems, the suppression of the proletariat in colonial systems made the situation worse off. As is always the case in a capitalist mode of production, class conflict ensues and in some cases is a solution (Maedza, 2019). Massive protests against some of these political *raison d'état* policies which only sought to satisfy the minority and privileged were the order of the day.

The film *Long Walk to Freedom* documents vividly these political interplays as a framework under which non-whites were subjected to poor working conditions, humanitarian predicaments, and poverty and mass exclusions. Botha (2014) brings in the racial dimension that argues that the divides evinced themselves in huge gaps between the rich and the poor which incrementally widened until the late 1980s. Mdege (2018) therefore emphasises that it is also crucial to note the role played by film outside South African borders. Freedom and democracy had been realised and free production of film on their past and South Africa's then present allowed South Africans and the international community to have a better understanding of the unfortunate realities South Africans

endured (Lubbe, 2016). As such the role of film in understanding the political environment had internal and transnational effects and remains political heritage today.

From the above literature the researcher draws that there is an array of literature that has been written on the socio-economic and political environment of the apartheid operand. However, literature on how film, specifically *Sarafina* recapture the memory of the period remain sparse, hence the study seeks to examine the role of film genre in the preservation of the political and cultural memory of the South African struggle for freedom and analyse how the movie *Sarafina* (Darrell Roodt, 1992) depicts the socio-cultural and political environment that characterised the apartheid *modus operandi*.

- **Political movements and their banning**

The struggle between the apartheid regime of South Africa and those that resisted it clearly illustrated its complexity. White South African monopolised control over the state and the economy. As resistance increased, restrictive legislation was passed, non-whites were removed from their homes and relocated to infertile lands. The apartheid government banned more than 1600 men and women between 1948 and 1991. Banned persons suffered and endured severe restriction on their movements, political activities and associations intended to silence their opposition to the apartheid government and stop their political activity (Maedza, 2019).

Banning affected people's lifestyle and political lives because it stopped them from leaving their towns or city of residence. Banned men and women were required to report to the local police station once a week and the security police monitored their movements (Botha, 2014). This study provides an overview of what transpired during apartheid and how film can broaden our understanding of South African history and be used as guide for addressing some of the challenges that face South Africa today.

### **Powers of the executives**

Apartheid relegated any South African who was not white to a life of degradation, poverty, and oppression. The apartheid era came with its own ideologies and policies of separate development for South Africans of different races. Black, and especially African, people were largely denied opportunities to get a good education, were excluded from access to

better-paid occupations, were not permitted to vote, were excluded from middle-class neighbourhoods, and were paid discriminatory welfare benefits (Posel, 2017). Not only were black people rarely able to accumulate sufficient capital to open a business, but even if they had such capital, they were often prevented from competing with 'white' businesses. The apartheid state allowed complicit black individuals to establish businesses, both in the 'Bantustans' and urban townships, and often with credit as well as opportunities provided by the state. The ownership and control of capital was highly concentrated in corporate as well as social terms (Abel, 2015). South African capitalism was personified by a small number of individuals. The colour bar restricted the employment of black people in more skilled occupations, restrictions on training and education reduced the supply of skilled workers, and institutions for wage determination served to raise the wages paid to mostly skilled (white) workers in many sectors (Posel, 2017).

### **2.8.6 Structured resistance to the apartheid system**

Cultural practices that formed part and parcel of the social fabric of native South Africans were suppressed in a manner that compromised self-expression and inner inherent routines (Botha, 2014). Nelson Mandela was a prominent African Nationalist Congress (ANC) leader, and highly aware of the general unrest and wave of radicalism sweeping the country. The apartheid system served underlying themes to sustain the white minority government (Maedza, 2019). In response to the banning which prohibited black people from entering urban areas, opposing parties were forced to set up underground structures and networks to continue with their political activities. Pass books were burnt in countless bonfires. For example, street theatres or evening gatherings by youths around bone-fires could be easily interpreted as 'conspiracies to overthrow the government'. Thus, efforts to preserve the history of the struggle against apartheid cruelty as part of the national cultural heritage through orature in particular to newer generations has had its challenges. Political activists and nationalist leaders endured the trying period when the government of the day classified protest artefacts such as poetry, music, and fine art as unnecessary and a transgression of the apartheid laws (Botha, 2014).

## **2.9 SYMBOLISM AND ITS APPLICATION IN FILMS**

This section is discussed in relation to literature that is relevant to objectives of the study where symbolism is interrogated to reveal the extent to which it enhanced preservation of cultural and political memory of the struggle in *Sarafina*. It discusses symbolism in film, meaning and place in the context of film genre and how it depicts political prejudice during apartheid South Africa.

### **2.9.1 Symbolism in film**

Symbolism has been generally understood as the production of meaning through the use of symbols. Symbolism is the art of hiding meaning behind something apparently non-related. It is quite common to see freedom represented through a flying bird (Shultziner, 2010). Often individuals come across certain symbols and these symbols have certain meanings that have been constructed through previous sociological interactions. Firstly, it is argued that individuals interact with objects according to the meaning those objects have for them. Freedom is something that can only be applied to humans, but as birds are not "bound" to the ground, they are a symbol of freedom. Symbols that have a shared meaning within a society are referred to as significant symbols (Cowan, 2015). Hence, the need to explore symbolism arises from its usefulness in explaining aspirations which could have been difficult to portray overtly in any particular film context.

### **2.9.2 Meaning of symbolism in film**

For a symbol to be meaningful in a film, the content must be related to the movie and be relevant in it (Misek, 2010). A symbol must be something not too obscure that viewers or audiences do not get the relation, and it should not be too obvious that it does not leave anything to viewers. A symbol with meaningful content can make the movie's theme or message more powerful, even if it is ugly (Cowan, 2015). If a symbol is executed with mastery in the exact moment, for the exact reasons it can add value to the whole movie, even if the symbol does not mean anything. Symbolism reinforces the theme of what is human. Sound can also be a symbol, mainly through the association effect. The moment viewers hear a sound/song in a film, most audiences will remember the film (Misek, 2010).



Symbols in the film under study have played a huge role in the preservation of political and cultural heritage of South African difficult past.

### **2.9.3 Where to place symbols in a film**

Symbols can be used to develop the plot, theme, and character in deeper ways visually. This is important to help filmmakers to create a unique metaphorical language to their story. As Lubbe (2016) puts it, cinema is a form of art and thus is a way of expressing our ideas, and putting them into audio-visual media and so, the way these ideas are expressed is also particularly important. According to Maedza (2018), symbolism is the art of hiding meaning behind something apparently non-related and this is also relevant to the theme of freedom as something that can expressively be applied to humans.

Most schools are symbolic in films that were produced during the apartheid era. They are sites for anti-apartheid resistance as well as pro-apartheid indoctrination (Shultziner, 2010). Fictional films which mainly focus on the experiences of girls who participate in African political conflicts are often caught up in the politics and dominant ideologies of their times. In films about wars that are widely perceived as just, such as the anticolonial wars, girls who participate in the conflicts are often represented as brave and heroic. But in films about African postcolonial wars, girls are largely represented as innocent and sometimes helpless victims of these “unjust wars.” The film *Sarafina* uses “the girl” symbolically to express the nation building values of the early 1990s and therefore makes the analysis of symbolism interesting to the study.

### **2.9.4 Elements of success in using a symbol**

For a symbol to be meaningful, the content must be related to the film and be relevant in it. Because people look for meaning in everything around them, anything can become a symbol if people interpret it to mean something other than its literal definition. Some symbols, however, have become so ingrained within the cultural sphere that these symbols carry an almost universal meaning (Lubbe, 2016). The bird symbol would be way more meaningful in a movie about slavery. Symbols that have a shared meaning within a society are referred to as significant symbols. Through sociological interactions with friends, family, work, colleagues and the media, symbols with certain meanings have

been constructed. These meanings thus affect the way in which individuals interact with the symbols. Beliefs surrounding the symbol change according to different societies and because of the constructed meaning of the symbol, the applied symbol will be deemed as either acceptable or unacceptable (Maedza, 2019). Symbols have played a big part in *Sarafina* over the years, many of which are still recognisable to almost everyone around South Africa, whether they have watched the film *Sarafina* or not. However, changes in ideologies and values over time will also affect the symbol and what it is implying (Shultziner, 2010). Therefore, visual storytellers can use symbol to represent any of the following: death, transition to the afterlife, the lack of a clear vision, the evils and mysteries of the night and the darkness of the human soul. The right symbol can reinforce beliefs, offer strength during difficult times, or remind viewers to seek calm and peace (Misek, 2010).

## **2.10 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

The above discussion has provided a literature review which comprises of the introduction, film as an artistic medium, description of film genre, genre categories, relevance of film as a political memory, film genre and the representation of societal dissent, representation of ideology on films, technical aspect in film, overview of the challenges during apartheid, symbolism and its application in film and summary of the chapter. It was also highlighted that the study is not about whether the excerpts in film misconstrue political and cultural heritage or distort past realities as some scholars have argued. The chapter's primary objective was to establish a literature review of dynamics around the extent to which films such as *Sarafina* play a role in the preservation of political and cultural heritage. Inevitably, the chapter provided a foundation on which the discourse on films' contributions towards societal dissent or cohesion can be contextualised and expounded on in the next chapters.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed account of how the research process was carried out in the study. It demonstrates the practical steps taken by the researcher in view of what the study purported to do based on the aim and objectives stated in section 1.3 in Chapter 1. Specifically, this section of the study outlines the research methodology by outlining the research approach; design; sampling procedures, data collection methods, as well as methods of data analysis. The researcher further explains how these methods were deemed suitable in examining the role of *Sarafina* in the preservation of the political and cultural memory of the South African struggle narrative in the context of the apartheid system. Furthermore, the section presents the quality criteria; ethical considerations; limitations of the study and a summary of the chapter.

#### 3.2 Research approach

This study employed the qualitative research approach. Creswell (2013) states that qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials such as cultural texts and productions, visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Films are media texts that communicate messages to the audiences who come up with different meanings and interpretations and therefore can be classified under materials that can be examined through qualitative methods.

The researcher perceived the qualitative research approach as relevant to this study as film is described by Babbie (2010) as a cultural and visual text. More so, this study does not only analyse the film *Sarafina* but rather examines how it depicts the socio-cultural and political environment that characterised the apartheid *modus operandi* in the times when such artefacts were generally outlawed. This required the researcher to employ the qualitative research approach as Du Plooy (2009) describes the approach as inductive in nature and flexible enough for a researcher to examine meanings and insights. Since the film under study (*Sarafina*) attempts to reflect on African ideas about African experiences,

some scholars suggest that the explanatory potential of qualitative methods have the potential to bring in new dimensions and nuances to the problem that any society or individual might conceive (Babbie, 2010).

Furthermore, Babbie (2010) posits that qualitative data are gathered primarily in the form of spoken or written language rather than in the form of numbers. Spoken or written language assists researchers to gain better knowledge and understanding of the social context of the world they live in through in-depth analysis of how language, imagery and sound are used. Similarly, Corbin and Strauss's assertion regarding qualitative research helped the researcher to explore ideological frames employed in the film *Sarafina* in its portrayal of societal dissent during apartheid South Africa (Chisholm, 2018). The film under study also takes an in-depth analysis of the symbols of political oppression inherent in it and examines the artistic expressions such as music, dance and poetry and how they reveal the political environment of the period portrayed in the film.

The researcher used the qualitative research approach in this study because of its ability to provide a complex visual and audio-textual description of the film under study. To ensure research integrity, qualitative researchers make use of volumes of detailed notes and descriptions of evidence, all of which is well documented for referencing purposes. This ensures that the presentation of data is done in such a way that shows the interlocking details of the evidence, so as to place the reader within the context of the research (Dominick & Wimmer, 2013). Together the volumes of notes, the presentation of interlocking details, as well as the researcher's personal insight, makes the research to be full of detailed descriptive evidence.

### **3.3 Research design**

A research design is a roadmap of that which happens during the research study. According to Babbie (2010), all the aspects of the research are brought together to produce a method for data collection and analysis. The research objectives and questions determine the type of research design to be adopted. Du Plooy (2002:49) notes that descriptive research requires that the results of the study include a description of the "characteristics of a phenomena, or relations between a number of variables, as accurately as possible". This study employed the descriptive case study research design.

This type of research design is adopted when the “how” and “why” questions are to be explored in a particular study (Baxter & Jacks, 2008).

It is from this point that the researcher found it appropriate to adopt the descriptive design as it facilitated the examination of the role of *Sarafina* in preserving the political memory and culture of the South African struggle. This was based on questioning how the film script unfolds and why certain filmic features were used to portray the dynamics of the struggle against apartheid particularly by the youth of 1976. The design was deemed appropriate in describing the struggle narrative in a context where the researcher has no control over the phenomenon under investigation, as the study sought to examine how the film depicts the socio-cultural and political environment that characterised the apartheid modus operandi.

A descriptive case study offers a richness and depth of information not usually offered by other methods (Babbie, 2010) and is therefore adopted when the researcher seeks to explain an entity that forms a unit, such as people in an organisation or provinces in a country or a film in the case of this study. In the context of the above view, the researcher saw the need to use a descriptive case study because it offers the study ample time with which to delve deeper into exploring the ideological frames employed in the film to understand its portrayal of dissent during apartheid South Africa.

The descriptive case study design assisted the researcher to describe the socio-political challenges experienced during the apartheid era and to explore the ideological frames used in films’ portrayal of youth dissent in apartheid South Africa. When dealing with case studies the overall aim is to understand complex processes as they naturally occur (Watson & Hill, 2015). The case study in the form of *Sarafina* was critical due to its qualities that enables the researcher to understand the political and cultural memory of the South African struggle for freedom.

Furthermore, the design made it possible for the researcher to highlight the in-depth description of the symbolic socio-cultural and political themes of *Sarafina*, and to emphasise how the narrative informs the contemporary democratic dialogue. This is evident in the successive sections 3.5.2 and 3.6.1, where a critical analysis of visual, content and thematic content analysis of the film demonstrates how the study

systematically applies the descriptive design to articulate the untenable human experiences during the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

This research design was relevant for this study because this study focused on media text and how it portrayed human experiences and their response to the apartheid system of governance. The research design thus was motivated by the need to describe the significance of apartheid history, political discourse, and its potential to inform the unfolding events in contemporary South Africa.

### **3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

#### **3.4.1 Population**

A research population can be defined as a collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics (Du Plooy, 2007). However, due to the large sizes of population researchers cannot sample every object or individual in the population because it will turn out to be expensive and time consuming. Watson and Hill (2015) suggests that objects within a certain population usually have a common, binding characteristic or trait, hence the need to select a representative sample when one conducts a scientific study. The population “gives” the sample, and then it takes conclusions from the results obtained from the sample (Du Plooy, 2009).

The population for this study comprises all film genres that are relevant to the study of the historical, political, and socio-cultural heritage of the pre-democratic South African society. The content of the films is premised around the portrayal of the socio-cultural and political milieu of the 1960s to the early 1990s as the period that captures the heightened events of resistance against the oppression of the black majority South Africans. This is subsequently because the study focuses on the historical developments associated with the struggle for freedom against the apartheid government by blacks (including Coloureds and Indians). Such films include *Long Walk to Freedom* (Justin Chadwick, 2013), *Nothing but the Truth* (John Kani, 2009), *Cry the Beloved Country* (Darrell Roodt, 1995), *Egoli* (Franz Marx, 1992), *Sarafina* (Darrell Roodt, 1992), and *Sizwe Banzi is dead* (Athol Fugard, John Kanji and Winston, 1972). In order to minimise problems with drawing a sample from such a large population and to ensure that the chosen sample is accessible

to the researcher, the population was reduced to an accessible sample. Du Plooy (2002) suggests the use of an accessible population to ensure ease of access to the population, as well as to minimise cost, time, and personnel. Therefore, the population has been reduced to select one of the films after searching through several genres that include documentaries and drama. Films need close scrutiny to check their potential or real time effect in preserving political and cultural memory in South Africa. This study samples the feature film *Sarafina* whose *cinema vérité* and composition poignantly elucidate the contours and experiences of the apartheid system, particularly among the youth of Soweto in the 1970s.

### **3.4.2 Sampling**

Sampling is defined as a systematic method of selection of entities or subjects to be included in a study. The main function of the sample is to allow the researchers to conduct the study on individuals or objects from the population so that the results of their study can be used to derive conclusions that will apply to the entire population (Watson & Hill, 2015). In a qualitative research, only a subset of the population is selected for purposes of representing the target population under study. There are two main sampling strategies in research. Quantitative research methodology uses probability sampling techniques and qualitative research methodology uses non-probability sampling techniques. By using the non-probability sampling approach, the researcher selects the sample according to personal perception and preferences (Neuman, 2007). The sample composition impacts the generalisability of the results to the study population, whereas the composition of the study population impacts further generalisation to the target population. The biases that might be introduced in the selection of the sample impact the confidence in the conclusion that can be drawn from a research study (Du Plooy, 2009). In this study, the researcher used nonprobability sampling taking into cognisance the historical narrative inherent in the film and how the storyline captures the events that unfolded during the period of resistance.

## Purposive sampling

Given the number of films produced on the historical, political and cultural heritage of pre-democratic South Africa as stated in section 3.4.1, the researcher purposively selected *Sarafina* (Darrell Roodt, 1992) as the case on which the study is based.

Purposive sampling is a sampling technique in which the researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing entities or subjects of the population to participate in the study. Essentially, in purposive sampling, personal judgment needs to be used to choose cases that help to answer the research questions set for the study or to achieve the specific research objectives. Du Plooy (2002) suggests that non-probability based purposive sampling allows for the sampling of rich pertinent texts that can be comprehensively studied allowing in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalisations. Purposive sampling targets those sources or units of study that are information rich and provide the greatest insights to research questions which makes it relevant for this study.

The main advantage of purposive sampling is that since the researcher deliberately selects the film that is likely to provide rich information, which is appropriate and relevant to the study, this increases the credibility of the study findings. The purposive sampling method allows the researcher to decisively select those texts from the population that fit the parameters required for the study (Du Plooy, 2002). The choice of the film genre and sub-genre are both purposive owing to the attendant artefacts in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the South African struggle for freedom in the film *Sarafina*.

Essentially, what made the film *Sarafina* significant and to be purposively sampled, was rather the way in which it foreshadowed both the preceding and successive film genre in representing the prejudice of the apartheid system. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate for this study as the researcher had the detailed prior knowledge of the feature film in relation to its representation of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. In addition, there are no familiar films in South Africa which have captured the political and cultural narrative of the role of the youth in the struggle against the apartheid system with far reaching effects than *Sarafina*. Based on the knowledge and experiences represented in



the content of the film, the researcher used personal judgement in terms of the ability of the film to answer the research aim and objectives of the study (Watson & Hill, 2015).

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION**

#### **3.5.1 Qualitative content analysis**

The method adopted to conduct the analysis for any study needs to fit with the theoretical and substantive interests of the researcher and the objectives of the study. Qualitative content analysis is a “method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278). It is for this reason that qualitative content analysis is used in this study. Content analysis is indigenous to communication research and is potentially one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences (Fourie, 2009). It seeks to analyse data within a specific context in view of the meaning, someone, a group, or a culture attribute to them. Content analysis relies on the symbolic qualities to trace the antecedents or consequences of communication thus rendering the unobserved context of data analysable.

The intent of qualitative content analysis is to examine a text and provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon or subject being studied within that text, thus providing an in depth reading of the text. The content analysis method has a long history of usage within media and communications research, as it is content-sensitive and well-suited to analysing films (Fourie, 2009). Although terminology differs depending on the exact variety of content analysis, the defining feature of the method is that it condenses or distils information through categorisation. Researchers draw inferences and assign categories at the level of texts, words, phrases, or other units of communication, with the desired outcome of describing a phenomenon. The qualitative content analysis method was developed to account for the limitations of its quantitative counterpart, while maintaining a foundation of systematic categorisation to describe and interpret empirical data (Du Plooy, 2009).

This method was chosen because it was suitable for the study of a film which comprises images based on camera work and words derived from the film script. Therefore, the

method used to conduct the analysis for the study was linked with the theoretical and substantive interests of the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2007:110). To make this practical and realistic, the researcher segmented the film into scenes to compose a table of analysis and extracted key frames of sequences within the film in question. Qualitative methods of analysis were conducted here in hermeneutic circles where textual components such as words, phrases, and actions were interpreted together with contextual materials. These components also added to the understanding of contextual texts.

The researcher had to go through the scenes consistently and thoroughly analyse them in fine detail in order to come out with the evidence of racial injustices displayed in the film. The method of analysis was critical in depicting how apartheid served to perpetuate racism as a social construct within the colonial domain. This provided an analysis that revealed the racialisation of certain groups that were culturally, socially, and historically constituted by the system. This was accompanied by references to movie ratings, replays and slow motions, and same-genre film analogies which allow for qualitative content analysis (Fourie, 2009). Qualitative content analysis is suitable for the study of films which comprise images, audio/speech, music, and poetic renditions such as *Sarafina*. In the film *Sarafina* it is important to know the dominant messages in the text and the point of view presented. Qualitative content analysis was used to derive specific cinematic elements with which to generate discursive themes.

### **3.5.2 Audio visual content analysis**

Visual textual analysis deals with audio-visual codes of content and form in terms of the conceptual aspect of production, with the primary focus on meaning construction based on an artefact under study. In the case of this study, the researcher ensured that pictorial codes in both static film shots and photographs as well as the “feature” aspects of the film were analysed according to how Behura and Tilak (2020) recommends. These aspects were used to examine the relevance of *Sarafina*'s *cinema verité* in archiving the political and cultural memory of the South African struggle. Visual textual analysis was conducted in order to interrogate *Sarafina*'s application of symbolism in portraying the historical context and narrative of the South African struggle. Educated judgments were made and

most likely interpretations were based on the codes identified from different symbols used within the visual text. It was from these codes that the researcher identified how the producers portrayed the historical context within which political insurgencies, bigotry and resistance interfaced during the South African struggle for freedom. This strategy is supported by Fourie (2009), who argues that visual text analysis is a more practical nature of data collection, a view that made the researcher to focus on the visual codes presented in the filmic scenes and accompanying contexts in *Sarafina*.

The visual and cinematographical procedures were used as a creative tool in *Sarafina* to show the different characters and the political struggle by South African youth in the struggle for freedom. Out of the scenes and sequences of the film, relevant symbolically important sequences were carefully chosen for analysis. The visual treatment given to those sequences have been analysed according to cinematographic codes, composition, camera movement, lighting, tonality, and depth of field which is the range of acceptable focus on a shot or photograph. Depth of field is an important concept for cinematographers and camera operators to master because it is used to manipulate focus to achieve a desired effect.

Inferences and critical observations considered to correlate the symbolic features denoting the struggle narrative framed within the cinematographic codes were made. This was employed in conjunction with cinematic codes as visual aspects that are used to film a single shot such as lightning, sound objects, movement, shadow, and colour.

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is a process of resolving data into its constructive components, to reveal its characteristics, elements, and structure (Thorne, 2008). Unlike other qualitative research approaches, data analysis within descriptive research does not use a pre-existing set of rules that have been generated from the philosophical or epistemological stance of the discipline that created the specific qualitative research approach. Rather, qualitative descriptive research is purely data-derived in that codes are generated from the data during the study. This study employed thematic analysis and ideological film criticism in the analysis of how content in *Sarafina* as an artefact, serves as preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

### 3.6.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a search for and identification of themes emerging in the description of a phenomenon. Themes contain codes that have a common point of reference and have a high degree of generality that unifies ideas regarding the subject of inquiry. It is considered as a thread of underlying meaning implicitly discovered at the interpretative level and elements of subjective understanding of participants. It provides the opportunity to code and categorise data into themes (Alhojailan, 2012).

- **Step 1: Familiarising with the data**

Once data collection was completed as articulated in section 3.5, the researcher started the thematic analysis by viewing the whole film several times. The researcher began the process of analysing the data through familiarising with the data. The researcher had to re-listen to the recordings and items that were potentially related to the research topic which could provide information regarding the role of film genre in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. Thematic analysis was used to derive specific elements with which to generate discursive themes. Data were displayed and classified according to its similarities and differences (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This made the researcher to come up with a comprehensive understanding of the content and familiarised with all aspects of data thus providing a foundation for the thematic analysis.

- **Step 2: Generating initial codes**

Upon familiarisation with the film *Sarafina* initial coding was conducted. Codes were used as building blocks of analysis. The researcher identified and codified political, educational, cultural, societal, musical, poetic, and related data from the film content linked to the research objectives (See Addendum-B). The researcher closely followed the plot of the film and analysed the key issues that the producers chose to package. The analysis further delved into how the codes depicted the socio-cultural and political environment that characterised the apartheid modus operandi. Visuals and audio excerpts, for example, which are concomitant with other actions and behaviours by either *Sarafina* and

her community or the government and its enforcement agents formed the focus of the study.

- **Step 3: Search for themes**

The researcher marked again with a highlighter all descriptions that were relevant to the topic of inquiry. From the highlighted area each distinct unit of meaning was marked. Similar units were put together in a pile. Each pile was labelled in categories (themes) using key words or phrases copied from highlighted text. Categories that were missing were identified. Similar and dissimilar units were grouped, re-grouped and different categories were re-labelled in the process. All meaning units per category were read through and redistributed units as appropriate. Categories were collapsed and subdivided as suitable (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This process generated recognisable themes based on the significant scenes selected based on areas of interest noted during the process of analysis (See Addendum-B).

- **Step 4: Reviewing potential themes**

After a few days, the researcher reviewed themes in relation to the coded data and the whole data set was assessed for the purpose of quality checking. The text was reread without looking at the units or categories. The researcher returned to meaning units and categories made on the first pass and each unit and categories were reconsidered. Units were redistributed as appropriate considering carefully whether the units were too small or too large. Categories were re-labelled as appropriate/collapsed and subdivided as appropriate considering carefully whether the categories were too small or too large. In this phase some themes were combined or divided in more specific themes, while other themes were discarded or generated. Categories were looked over considering whether they were too many or less to render meaning to the highlighted text given (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Categories were collapsed and subdivided as appropriate and re-labelled as appropriate. After a few days, the researcher re-read the total categories as a whole and considered whether they were too many or too few categories to make overall sense of the given study.

- **Step 5: Defining themes**

This is the final process of removing unwanted elements of the themes and it involves refining and defining the themes and potential sub themes. The researcher had to redo the above procedure until she was satisfied that the categories reflect the study as a whole and addressed the research objectives. To define the theme, the researcher asked what was unique and distinct about each theme. The researcher came up with a criterion to develop good themes. The major goal was to check the importance and significant of each theme. The researcher provided theme names and clear working definitions that capture the essence of each theme in a concise and punchy manner. At this point, a unified story of the data emerged from the themes. Thematic analysis played a pivotal role in this study because it was effective and flexible, making it easy for the researcher to come up with some of the most crucial findings about the film.

### **3.6.2 Ideological analysis**

Ideological analysis was used to analyse how specific cinematic elements have been infused to give meaning to the political actions of the actors in the film. One of the main goals of ideological analysis is to learn to recognise and be able to identify the various ideologies that cultural artefacts convey (Maynard, 2013). Film and television texts can and do convey ideologies in complex and multiple ways. Ideologies are expressed in the ways that stories are told (narrative design), how sets are constructed and lit, how roles are embodied by actors, and how lighting, sound, music, and camera work are deployed.

Ideological analysis argues that the media and other forms of communication are used in capitalist nations, dominated by bourgeois ruling class to generate false consciousness in the masses. The ideological analysis of a film therefore often begins with its formal properties, even as it might also encompass a consideration of its means of production taking into consideration who made it, for what reasons, and within what socio-historical and industrial contexts (Maynard, 2013). Although the film *Sarafina* contains some racial stereotypes and some exaggeration in some aspects, it remains a powerful tale of freedom and unjust ruling of apartheid. This justifies examining the role of ideological analysis in film in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

The researcher had to deconstruct the film text to locate the ideology present within the frame. This analysis was weighed against the rationale for locating *Sarafina* within the realm of preservation of the political and cultural memory of the South Africa struggle, particularly from the perspective of the youth of 1976. The ideological analysis of film helped the researcher in analysing the relationship between the film *Sarafina*, its target audience and the ideology of apartheid in order to determine the specific ways that the film either supports or attacks the dominant ideology of the society that produced it (Martill, 2017). This is as a result of the highly contrived nature of the film which was defined more by the ideologies of its makers (Maynard, 2013).

The final element of the analysis considered *Sarafina* as a film that tells us about the brutality of the apartheid era. *Sarafina* offers its audience an authentic black South African viewpoint of the oppressive nature of apartheid. Ideological analysis of the film *Sarafina* involved analysing political bigotry, racist language and indices of superiority, inferences, and other forms of prejudice synonymous with apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, this critique of *Sarafina* involved ideological analysis of images, symbols, myths, and narratives associated with systems of beliefs and racial superiority as purveyed in the film.

### **3.7 QUALITY CRITERIA/TRUSTWORTHNESS**

To ensure credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability the researcher used the qualitative research method to collect and analyse data. The study referred to documented current literature on film production and analysis. The study targeted to reach universally acceptable, systematically proven, contextually, and theoretical accurate and credibly consolidated results and findings in scholarly works. Bearing this in mind, the researcher sought to adhere to credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability aspects of scientific studies. These are discussed below.

#### **3.7.1 Credibility/authenticity**

Credibility is useful in establishing that the results of the research are believable whilst authenticity allows for certain deductions and relationships to be formulated based on a credible foundation of the research results (McQuail, 2005). Credibility thus linked the

study's findings with the scientific frameworks and parameters which should be employed in pursuit of credible scientific solutions to research problems. All scientific steps of the research were followed earnestly and objectively. Methods used in the research process used thick descriptions to carefully consider and account for contexts, processes and making justified connections and relationships between facts and concepts. An analytical comparison referred not only to the film script about *Sarafina* and the scenes therein, but also deeper and implicit plots of producers and script writers. These were juxtaposed with filmic theories in the literature review.

References and citations were provided in the list to allow the reader to locate the use in the study. Methods used in research process are plausible, credible, and trustworthy following all the steps of the research procedure. Various literature sources will be reviewed with the intention of assimilating various narratives since historical studies such as this study need to avert distortion and misrepresentation of events.

### **3.7.2 Dependability**

The study maintained a clear audit trail where desk research notes and other research documents were properly acknowledged, especially on literature relevant to the target film, *Sarafina*. A file on how data were collected, analysed, and interpreted was compiled showing that the film content has not been tampered with. The research findings referred to existing literature on *Sarafina* and other film analogies under the same film genre. References and citations were provided in the list to allow the reader to locate them and how they are used in the study, research findings (Priest, 2010).

### **3.7.3 Transferability**

Transferability in qualitative research can be defined as the degree to which the results of a research can apply or be transferred beyond the bounds of the project, implying that the results of the research can be applicable to similar situations or individuals (Dominick & Wimmer, 2006). Data collection techniques were explained in detail in terms of how and why they are the most suitable tools for the study, as well as the period which the data was accumulated. In this case, the number of replays including digital slow motions and non-interference with the original film composition will help the study to generate



transferable outcomes. The overarching theoretical footprints about *Sarafina* and other films in the population sampling frame will be tracked to align reproducibility and transferability of common and universal principle and truths confirmed or challenged.

### **3.7.4 Conformability**

Conformability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. It also addresses the issue of neutrality as it seeks to interpret the degree to which the research is free from subjectivity and bias (Priest, 2010). The researcher will follow the research procedures by checking and re-checking the data throughout the study and keeping a paper trail. The researcher developed an analysis grid onto which scenes and excerpts of the film under study were noted without any form of tempering with the storyline or script. The tools of analysis as well as the accompanying literature and theoretical framework were moderated by the supervisor before the data collection process began. All research documents were properly acknowledged, listed, and documented according to the Harvard style of academic in-text citation and referencing.

## **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This study conformed to a wide range of ethics under which researchers should approach or conduct their academic work. Ethics plays an important role in a study especially if the study involves human beings. The researcher ensured that the study is independent and impartial by considering information without bias and correct interpretation as prescribed by Du Plooy (2009). With the subject at hand involving a history of racism, the researcher avoided provoking the sensitive race dynamics in a way that interrupts healing and reconciliation in contemporary South Africa. Therefore, the following procedures were followed:

### **3.8.1 Permission to conduct the study**

A clearance certificate from the University of Limpopo Research Ethics Committee (TREC) was acquired by the researcher before commencing with the data collection process.

### **3.8.2 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Anonymity and confidentiality are not relevant to this study since it is a desktop study that does not involve human subjects per se, however, plagiarism or theft of intellectual property was avoided. The researcher ensured that all the ethical factors were complied with and that data collection and analysis were objectively handled.

### **3.8.3 Honesty**

The study strove for honesty in all scientific communications and data was not fabricated, falsified, or misrepresented. Intellectual property was respected by referencing and quoting earlier researchers and research works, avoiding plagiarism in the process. During the research process, the researcher ensured that each chapter is subjected to the plagiarism detector or Turnitin software to determine where ethical or professional practices were flouted. After receiving the report, the researcher revisited the sections that needed attention until the minimum percentage points were achieved in each chapter of the dissertation.

## **3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study relied on a purposive sample in the selection of the case study *Sarafina*. One of the limitations of purposive sampling is that another expert is likely to come up with a different sample when identifying important characteristics to determine the typical elements to achieve the same study objectives (Cresswell, 2016). Given the subjectivity of the selection mechanism, purposive sampling is generally most appropriate for the selection of small samples often from a limited geographic area or from a restricted population definition, where inference to the population is not the highest priority. Since the knowledge and experience of the expert making the selection is a key aspect of success of the resulting sample in this type of sampling, the choice of the case being studied leans on subjectivity and inherent bias. The subjectivity and non-probability-based nature of unit selection in purposive sampling means that it can be difficult to defend the representativeness of the sample. In other words, it can be difficult to convince the reader that the judgement to select units for the study was appropriate. For this reason, it is

therefore important to note that the researcher finds it difficult to state in definite terms that the findings of the research based on purposive sampling can be generalised.

### **3.10 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

This chapter has dealt with research methodologies used in this study to achieve the objective of the study. The chapter focused on introduction, research approach, research design, population and sampling procedures, data collection, data analysis, quality criteria, ethical consideration, and limitation of the study. The researcher justified the use of the methodologies and how they assist to get adequate information. To examine the role of film genre in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa, the study employed the qualitative research approach. To ensure that the resultant analysis is trustworthy and comprehensive, a descriptive case study design and methodology was used to describe the socio- political challenges experienced during the apartheid era and to explore the ideological frames used in films portrayal of youth dissent in apartheid South Africa. The chapter has provided an extensive description of how data were solicited and analysed in a manner that stand the best chance of reaching scientifically sound findings about film and the preservation of historical culture and heritage. The next chapter provides an analysis and interpretation of data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected for the investigation as well as the analysis which yielded the findings of the study. This entails the analysis and interpretation of data regarding examination of the role of *Sarafina* in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. This chapter sought to answer the research aim and objectives as alluded to in Chapter 1 section 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 respectively. The researcher critically looked at the following aspects: synopsis of *Sarafina*, Soweto as the film site, brief description of characters in the film *Sarafina*, socio-cultural and political context in *Sarafina*, film as a symbol of resistance in the South African struggle for freedom, ideological frames and political dissent during apartheid and the relevance of the film as political memory.

Themes emerging from the description of the phenomenon were identified first, following which the researcher familiarised herself with the data and progressed to generate initial codes. This was followed by the process of searching for themes and the themes were reviewed in relation to the coded data. Unwanted elements of themes were removed thus refining and defining the themes and potential sub themes as explained in detail in section 3.6.1.

#### 4.2 A synopsis of *Sarafina*

*Sarafina* is a film epitomised by a Black South African schoolgirl who is central to the struggle for freedom during the apartheid era in the mid-1970s. While she has remained relatively silent in her opposition of the racist government in her country, the decision to make the Afrikaans language the official language in her school leads her to protest in the streets with her fellow students who are entirely of the Black race. As tensions of resistance to apartheid spread across South Africa, many students express their displeasure and revolt by throwing stones and picketing in unauthorised demonstrations. Repressive tendencies by the school authorities further spark riots among the youth in the townships who then resolve to undertake defiant means to achieve freedom in a

proverbial “tomorrow” as reflected in one of their popular political songs. Sarafina’s anti-government views become even more intense when her favourite teacher (Whoopi Goldberg) is arrested for protesting against an oppressive system. Since Sarafina’s mother works as a housekeeper for white people in Johannesburg, she then takes care of her three siblings everyday while her mother is at work. Due to the protracted struggle for freedom, the apartheid police soldiers responded to the protest march with unrestrained brutal violence, firing live rounds of ammunition at the unarmed school children. The students are arrested, tortured, some killed, injured, and released by white Afrikaner soldiers. Sarafina reunites with her family and classmates after coming from prison where she has been tortured physically and emotionally.

#### **4.3. Soweto as context and setting of Sarafina**

Soweto, representing the South West Townships of Johannesburg, had an estimation of 1.3 million residents who mostly lived in identical matchbox houses. The director of the film gives the audience an aerial view of how the town looks like to show the squalor conditions which the residents live in. The material used to build the houses is cheap quality. When Sarafina visited her mother at her work, she ran around the beautiful mansion of her mother’s white employers. The director purposely made use of this scene to clearly show the contrast that existed between Soweto and Parktown. As she opens the tap and running water comes out, this highlights to the viewers the clear contrast with where she came from. Thousands of Africans struggled to survive in ramshackle huts and vast squatter-camps (shanties), primarily because of apartheid education and its economic, socio-political and cultural prejudice which were initiated during the middle of the 17th century (1652) through to the end of the 20th century. Sarafina’s siblings sleep together in a small room on the floor. The images clearly indicate highest levels of poverty and suffering. Shanties and matchbox homes were constructed for millions of other non-whites, living in South Africa during apartheid.

Soweto was created on the site of a sewage farm to be a “super-ghetto” for the black labourers or subordinates, evicted from the city, who were employed as maids, servants, unskilled workers and employees in the manufacturing, service industries and ‘pits’ of the gold and diamond mines. Houses did not have electricity, water, or ablution facilities.

Pollution and smoke from coal fires, and smouldering garbage swirled along dirty roads; dust in winter, mud in summer is clearly depicted through pictorial images used in the film. Consequently, workers commuted to cities and industrial townships to work in the industry and commerce, in trains and buses, which were so crowded that many commuters clung to the roofs of trains and buses. When the film starts, the director gives a good visual of a train and its sound. This suggests that during this era of apartheid trains played a significant role as a means of transport for blacks. Blacks were unable to participate in the workforce as skilled workers, as most of them were illiterate and innumerate. Most blacks like Sarafina's uncle hung around at home shouting, drinking beer and looking miserable (Narrative time 00:04:09).

Soweto is commonly seen as being symbolic of those who experienced the outbreak of the youth rebellion in 1976. For those of this generation, the outbreak of the youth rebellion gave rise to a differentiation in their politicisation and political pathways, and began to shape the diverse landscapes of informal and formal politics that one finds in South Africa today. The Soweto uprising broke out in the township of Soweto on June 16, 1976, when police opened fire on approximately 10,000 students protesting the use of the Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction in public schools. Introduced in 1974, the regulation forced all schools in the former Black African neighbourhoods to use Afrikaans and English as the languages of class instruction, while local languages such as isiXhosa were only to be used in religious education, music, and physical education. During the era of apartheid, both the young and old people were mobilised in political organisations, forming resistance movements and developing political courage in the fight for freedom. The opposition, which formed in the townships was progressively outlawed by the apartheid state (Maedza, 2018).

#### **4.4 Brief description of main characters in the film *Sarafina***

The director created different characters to represent different struggle ideologies in the film *Sarafina*. Therefore, it is important to analyse the role of different characters portrayed in the film to facilitate an understanding of the socio-political experiences of the black South African youth during the mid-1970s.

- **Sarafina**

Sarafina is a Soweto young girl who plays the lead role as student protagonist in the film. She is central to the struggle for freedom during the apartheid era in the mid-1970s with great hope and big ambitions despite her family's poverty and her mother's career as a maid, a situation which compels Sarafina to take care of her younger siblings at a tender age. Sarafina's consciousness seems to be an attempt to shift from the barriers and beliefs that dominated the South African Apartheid System.

- **Mary Masembuko**

Mary Masembuko's strength of being a black teacher and a role model for her learners played a significant role in boosting the learners' confidence. Police perceive Mary Masembuko's passion as an act of being a traitor. She features throughout the play, while disappearing halfway through the film. In the film Mary Masembuko is arrested for her assumed anarchism and disappears while in police custody. Later in the film, when Sarafina is arrested, a police officer tells Sarafina that Masembuko committed suicide while in prison.

- **Nelson Mandela (in portrait)**

In the film, Sarafina lit her candle and the audience see a picture of Nelson Mandela, the struggle icon, and African National Congress (ANC) leader on the wall. The role of Nelson Mandela plays a significant role in the struggle presented in the film. In as much as he is not visually seen, he symbolises freedom and a great icon of the freedom against oppression. Sarafina reveres the man Nelson Mandela, both as a person and source of inspiration. The choice of Nelson Mandela as Sarafina's main role model may be well justified by his popularity and his immeasurable contribution to South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle. The film highlights how some individuals such as Nelson Mandela immensely contributed to freedom and the creation of the new democratic South Africa.

- **Sabela**

A black South African cop that decides to work with the Afrikaner policemen is burnt alive by the students when they found out that he was part of the cops that beat Guitar, a

student in Sarafina's class. Sabela signifies the black individuals who were used as puppets to perpetuate the apartheid ideologies. Sabela was rendered a coward by his fellow black South African brothers. Characters such as Sabela were labelled as sell outs and spies that dragged the process of the attainment of freedom. He represents some of the individuals that had normalised the political injustice that existed during the apartheid period.

- **Angelina**

Angelina was Sarafina's mother and a loyal black South African household servant in a white household in apartheid South Africa. She represents the millions of unknown women who had no visible celebrated role in the struggle who have not been recognised as true heroines. Angelina's employer was accommodative to Sarafina which is clearly highlighted by the smile she puts on her face when Sarafina visited them in Parktown.

- **Crocodile**

Crocodile was one of the student activists and Sarafina's boyfriend who was attacked by constable Sabela and later killed in cold blood by the apartheid police. His character and demeanour represents the students who believed in violent resistance against the white Afrikaners education system and by extension, the apartheid system. In the present day South Africa, there exists a Soweto Hector Peterson Museum in Johannesburg built in recognition of the students who sacrificed their youthful lives in the fight against apartheid during the struggle for freedom.

## **4.5 SOCIO- CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT IN SARAFINA**

### **4.5.1 Use of Afrikaans in public schools**

The Apartheid education in South Africa was informed centrally by the policies of systematic racism and discriminatory policies. As much as the education system in apartheid South Africa has been critiqued negatively, it has been observed that basically such critiques are more about schooling rather than education per se (Maedza, 2019). This study acknowledges that, contrary to the apartheid philosophy, education is invaluable in itself and is linked to the development of human potential, the liberation of



the mind and the pursuit of truth in the overall development of the human condition at large (Lubbe, 2016).

Choice of language is central to people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment. This means that language on its own defines a people's identity. In the film *Sarafina*, the adoption of English and Afrikaans as languages of instruction in public schools as enforced by the National Party government served to reinforce the inferiority complex of the African people. As the indigenous and majority population in South Africa, this scenario tended to disregard the African people's languages for what they are, therefore rendering them as incapable of communicating their academic or scientific knowledge. The decision to declare the Afrikaans language as the official medium of instruction led to a public outcry with massive buy-in from different sectors of society, particularly the students who then took out to protest in the streets of Soweto in 1976. In as much as the students revolted against the imposition of Afrikaans as the official language in public schools, it can also be argued that numerous altercations between the apartheid forces and political formations as represented by nationalist fighters had been experienced since the 1960s, including the Sharpeville Massacre which left dozens of protesters dead (Lubbe, 2016). Therefore, attributing the Soweto uprising to mere linguistic issues trivialises the broader challenges that the South African society experienced at the time. Suffice to say, the student protest (as it was popularly known) served as a catalyst to expedite the long-awaited revolt against the injustices of apartheid (Maedza, 2019). Hence, the storyline that unfolds through Sarafina's expressive distaste of the Afrikaans language serves to demonstrate the extent to which linguistic matters were intricately infused into the cultural fabric and identity formation antics of the apartheid state.

#### **4.5.2 Portrayal of racial prejudice**

In the context of the film under study, race is used to portray domination and justification of disproportionate access to privileges by a particular section of society including unfettered political, social, and economic benefits. In apartheid South Africa, race was formally used to justify the exclusion of some people, specifically the Black majority from political and economic power based on a racial hierarchy (Soudien, 2012). The racial

hierarchy was entrenched in legislation and government programmes which denied a majority of the black population access to land; restricted higher-paying professions to whites; and ensured that White employees were paid more than other people for the same kind of work (Soudien, 2012).

*Sarafina* expressively presents a series of racial injustices that existed in South Africa during the Apartheid period. The director constantly uses his calculated camera shots and images to emphasise these injustices in a dichotomous predisposition that juxtaposes Whiteness against Blackness within an apartheid context. First and foremost, the portrayal of an unbalanced educational system during that era presents an evidently inferior, under-resourced, and dilapidated township school setting that captures the unequal treatment between Black and White students. Not only were the extremely overcrowded buildings cut off from infrastructure and urban utilities and services such as water and electricity, a testimony of the imbalances, but also the way the students were being treated during the course of the lessons were testimony to colonial bigotry.

The Native Land Act (1913) established an all-white form of governance that unfairly segregated against blacks and other ethnic groups relegating them to lower levels of life standards. Over the years more and more legislation widened the gap between the White minority and the Black South African majority. The repressive political system of apartheid mandated this racist system into a situation where Black South Africans could not move freely in their country or participate in the national politics (Soudien, 2012).

#### **4.5.3 Authoritarian political administration**

The political administration in *Sarafina* is designed in a way that places the Black South Africans as inferior people. Most of the important decisions were made by the Afrikaners whereas the black people were portrayed as passive citizens who were always waiting for the instructions from the Afrikaner masters. The statement below clearly indicated that the Afrikaners were in control.

*Interrogator: "I don't give a shit how young you are. You throw a bomb at me; I am going to kill you. You try to burn down my house, I am going to kill you. You make war on my country; I am going to kill you. You think you have got the whole of black Africa just waiting to roll on over us, eh? You try it. Just try it. We're ready for you."*

The film makes the audience to realise that the political administration had harsh restrictions against the blacks in terms of the area of residence (Narrative time 0:29:29), any form of resistance, together with the mode of transport used to go to work during the apartheid period (Narrative time 0:22:33). Black South Africans were given passive roles such as policemen in the film with constable Sabela symbolising cowards that existed during the apartheid period. Such individuals were used by the political administration as spies who would reveal the names of individuals who were fighting against the Afrikaner rule. The political administration had control over every means of production, the education sector, being one of the areas that emphasised subordination in the film. The presence of soldiers and the police at schools performing spy routines through classroom windows and during break time was a clear indication of an oppressive and ruthless system of governance against ordinary citizens.

#### **4.5.4 Humour as form of resistance**

Humour can be used as a non-violent form of resistance to oppression. More so, in the film *Sarafina*, humour was used as a form of resistance against authority. Due to the lack of absolute privilege over the media as opposed to the elite class of the time, the oppressed often resorted to unofficial means of communication which were vulgar and grotesque (Berg, 2014). The youth in the film also resorted to the use of humour to resist the Afrikaners domination and rule. It became a funny and humorous matter that the Afrikaners were unfairly treating black people. This is exemplified by the phrase “Killer disease comes to South Africa but only the Boers get it” (Narrative time 00:22:56). However, the manner the students expressed themselves was ambiguous, reflecting how the political situation was almost going to end in a short period of time. The way the students all laughed after one of them stated that blacks are the ones who woke up at 4am and go to work and come back at 6pm travelling by train reflects how they mocked the injustices they received. There are two images in *Sarafina*, playful dancers enacting Sarafina’s Hollywood fantasy of stardom and another of demonstrators advancing on a line of soldiers confronting them not with weapons but with songs and wildly vivid dance, art, hopeful community against guns, separation and fear. These images clearly

highlighted the dissatisfaction of Black South Africans about racial elitism that continued to drive systematic socioeconomic exclusion and the uncertainty of apartheid.

#### **4.5.5 State violence during apartheid**

The film *Sarafina* opens with a sequence of school children burning down part of their own school, they stage protests that lead to armed intervention, the detention and torture of possible witnesses, and the burning to death of the black policeman. The film highlights that in as much as violence was not desirable and recommended, it was also necessary for the attainment of freedom against apartheid oppression. Film usually depict freedom in the form of culture and national identity. The students were 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 act was to show cultural freedom. More so, the film's use of constant bloody dead images clearly emphasised how brutal the apartheid regime was. During the era of apartheid, both the young and old people were mobilised into political organisations, civic movements and collectively developed practices believed to be useful in the fight for freedom.

The so-called oppressors in *Sarafina* had unleashed epistemic violence on the bothered majority South Africans. Soudien (2012) argues that the oppressed are routinely silenced and subjected to epistemic violence in the whole world. No wonder why Abel (2015) asks the major question as shown in *Sarafina*, "*Can the Subaltern speak?*" The students were speaking against the implementation of Afrikaans in South African schools. The film shows how the students resisted oppression and suppression through music, humour, and violence. The violence in the film is shown as a steadily accelerating chain of terror which leaves both Sarafina and the audience drained. The persistence of gunshots, smoke and fire are a clear indication of instability and terror. Being a youth during apartheid meant being forced into the underground world, imprisonment, rape, experiencing the criminalisation of activism, and being on the run (Soudien, 2012). The statement below clearly highlighted the disgruntlement *Sarafina* had towards the education system.

*Sarafina: "They call it teaching us a lesson...like school. They taught us their lesson and then, one-by one, they let us go. And what was their*

*lesson? To be like them? To torture and kill? To hate them more than they hate us. I do not want to be like them [...] I want to be free now Nelson, free from the hating and the killing. I want to live my life with the people I love”.*

Sarafina finally realised the importance of her mother after she was released from jail. Sarafina’s mother had chosen peace over fighting. It seemed like she knew the prize of fighting the system as this is demonstrated below.

*First boy: “They took me to a prison, and they beat me. When I cried, they put a baby dummy in my mouth so that I would not cry. Then they covered my head with a wet sack and gave me the electricity. I cried like a little baby holding the dummy in my mouth.”*

*First girl: “He took me to a room full of dead bodies. He said he will leave me with them. I began to cry. He took my face and turn it to the light, and he laughed, and he said look your eyes are pissing.”*

*Second boy: “He shouted my name he pointed at me: “come to me boy.” I was so afraid I could not speak. I walked slowly towards him. When I was close, he hit me hard, here. It hurt so much I screamed and fell to the ground. He pointed at me again: “come to me boy.” I was still crying I knew he will hit me again. I put my hands here so it would not hurt so bad, but he hit me again. It hurt so bad. I could not cry anymore.”*

*Second girl: “There were many of us, all from my school. They took us to a big room. They told us to take of our clothes, all our clothes. They told us to lie down on the floor. Then many police came in. They whipped us with sjamboks until we bled. When they were tired more police came in. They whipped us again and we bled more.”*

*Third Boy: “This time is called The State of Emergency, 1986. Eighty thousand children in the prisons. They hurt us to make us fear them. We fear them, but we do not forget. We are still children, we are young and full of fear, but every day we grow older, every day we grow stronger. We do not forget.”*

The youth league formed in the townships by the likes of Nelson Mandela and others in the ANC was progressively outlawed by the apartheid state. Accordingly, opponents shifted their focus and advocated for a revolution rather than reform, since the system did not accommodate any allowance for change or oppositional activism. Protest actions were criminalised and politics became polarised, turning the struggle to its peak in the 1980s from a multi-sided one into a two-sided battle: “for or against” the apartheid state, as the opposition came to be known in the liberation circles.

The police were the face of apartheid representing force against most of the South African population. Their actions in the film has the potential to remind South Africans about the brutal killings and beatings endured during the apartheid years. Students lost their lives and went through painful experiences. Apartheid was brutal and many people lost their lives. Black South Africans were separated from each other to enable the government to claim that there was no black majority and reduced the possibilities for black South African to unify into one nationalist organisation. There was no unity among the black South Africans, and this was tactfully planned. A lot of innocent black women and men were imprisoned, tortured and subjected to oppression.

- **Catharsis violence**

The film *Sarafina* shows that violence during apartheid was the order of the day. This violence was derived from the rationalised views that the oppressor had about the oppressed. In this case, the South African natives were being oppressed by the Afrikaners with overt tendency of lack of empathy and sympathy from the Afrikaners which was shown by the way the South African natives were treated bearing in mind what happened to both teachers and students. The statement below indicated that Mary Masembuko lived a life of fear and had no option but rather to fight back the oppressors.

Ms Mary Masembuko: *"I meant what I said. I hate the killing. I hate the violence. But I cannot stand aside and let others die for me. I will fight too. I cannot kill. Do not ask me to kill."*

The director of the film, Darrell Roodt constantly made use of images of students being brutally beaten by the soldiers to emphasise how the political environment was brutal and how it did not tolerate political hostility against the Afrikaners rule. The oppressed had no option but rather to violently fight against the oppressors, as they believed that it was the only way towards attaining freedom. In the image below, the youth responded with violence arguing that the black South Africans were treated as subjects. Hence, they resorted to catharsis violence (redemptive or liberated violence) as a form of releasing their anger and frustration.

## Frame 1



*Youths beating up a police officer*

Maynard (2013) on the concept of citizen and subjects argues that from the inception of colonial rule the colonial state was bifurcated between citizens and subjects. He further argues that a citizen should enjoy all generations of rights. However, the blacks in South Africa were not enjoying these rights.

## Frame 2



*Soldiers throwing teargas and shooting at protesting students.*

The frame above shows the oppressors using violence to maintain their rule and the struggle of the black South Africans against the oppressor.

Soldiers and police officers unleashed terror on the protesting students. The director also made use of the top down camera shot depicting the Afrikaner soldiers authority over the black students.

### **4.5.6 A new wave of political consciousness**

As the main preoccupation of the film highlights, black students took to the streets of Soweto, in Johannesburg in protest against the mandatory use of the Afrikaans language. Despite the assumed political naivety of the students at the time, the harsh realities meted against society by the system prompted a new wave of political consciousness. The camera illustratively demonstrates their full determination to reject the Afrikaner supremacy forced upon them, both as a people and generation of freedom fighters. As protagonist and pacesetter, Sarafina led her friends in defiance against police warnings to disperse and avoid an altercation. In retaliation to the police's anti-protest tactics including tear gas, the collective response by the students of throwing stones and burning



shops caused serious destruction and loss of life during the riots. Despite the imminent risk to their lives, the students displayed a tenacious sense of purpose as they courageously forged forward with their violent protest actions. An analysis of their physical posture shows that they were determined to send a collective message that the South African political landscape and resistance dynamics had changed in the face of racist and discriminative education policies of the white regime.

Despite the harsh learning and living environment, the students were inspired by their collective dance and existential spirit of togetherness. In the film (Narrative time 00:50:34), Sarafina and her fellow students confronted one of the students named Guitar, who confessed that Sabela had promised to take the young boy's crippled father out into the bush to die if he did not help the police to spy on the learners. Although Sarafina was filled with anger, in this incident she showed compassion towards a fellow student's struggle as an indication that the struggle prevailed with solidarity among the protesters.

As they sang the song below "Our father" (Narrative time 00:11:29), at the assembly gathering, unity and happiness was clearly recognisable through their jovial faces and body language.

Female soloist: *"Hallowed be Thy name"*

Male soloist: *"Our Father which art, which art in, which art in heaven Give us this day our daily bread"*

Ensemble: *"Thy will be done as it is done in Heaven"*

Female soloist: *"Hallowed be Thy name"*

Masembuko: *"Our Father"*

Ensemble: *"Our Father which art in Heaven Hallowed be Thy name Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"*

Instrumental interlude

Ensemble: *"Our Father which art in Heaven Hallowed be Thy name Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory Forever and ever, Amen! For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory Forever"...*

Masembuko: *"Our father must be happy wherever He is...you kids are just beautiful! (children cheer) Jesus, just come down and listen to these voices"*

Ensemble: “and”...

Masembuko: “Did you hear that?”

Ensemble: “ever”...

Masembuko: “Shit!”

Ensemble: “Amen!”

Teachers among themselves represented one another during the times of trouble as a way of showing unity. When teachers depend on one another for support, they develop relationships based on trust and empathy. These regular interactions and assemblies were important in forming lasting professional and mentorship relationships. During this difficult era of apartheid teachers needed to be guided, motivated, and even helped to give their maximum output and encourage one another to follow the syllabus. When teachers felt supported, they extended that same support to their students just the way Mary Masembuko, one of the teachers was motivated to teach her students about their identity.

Vividly irate students uniformly marched with placards showing their resentments and dissatisfaction regarding the unpleasant and harsh attacks that were taking place at school and in the township. Protesting students burnt constable Sabela’s house and brutally killed him in an act of mob justice devoid of any remorsefulness. Despite being black, officers like Sabela were an integral part of the apartheid police brutality. In their subsequent incarceration following the act, the students sang the song *black nation is dying* in a sombre mood reflective of a non-apologetic, victimised patriotic youth fighting for a just cause called freedom.

In the prison where the students were interrogated the film narrative demonstrates the state of fear that had gripped the country as characterised by one of the young boys’ remarks below.

Young boy: “*This time is called the state of emergency, 1986. 80,000 children in the prisons. They hurt us to make us fear them. We fear them, but we do not forget. We are still children; we are young and full of fear. But every day we grow older. Every day we grow stronger. We do not forget.*” (Narrative time 1:22:56).

The statement above was uttered out of anger, hate and pain caused by police brutality and is representative of the antagonistic nature of the agony harboured in the young people's hearts resulting from colonial bigotry and apartheid policies at the time.

#### **4.5.7 The racist curriculum**

*Sarafina* opens with students burning schools and textbooks during the night in a bid to protest for their freedom (Narrative time 0:02:44) arguing that "*those textbooks are full of lies*". Soudien (2012) 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 apartheid system did not want the blacks to know their rights and national identity, which is a person's identity or sense of belonging to one state or to one nation. Hence, the education system during the apartheid era could be viewed as an ideological weapon which was used to mastermind and shape the minds of the learners into a state of inferiority.

The black South African people's education curriculum was imposed on them because the education systems' main objective was to prepare young Africans to be submissive labourers within the predominantly white economic system. The larger society did not have a choice on negotiating what they wished their children to learn. Any form of resistance to reform the education system was regarded as a punishable offence which led to Sarafina's teacher, Mary Masembuko being arrested and later the interrogator claiming that she committed suicide by jumping from the tenth floor of a building. The producer constantly edited some of the scenes where students were brutally beaten and shot in slow motion so as to emphasise the feeling of hatred, pain and how brutally the students were killed in cold blood due to their resistance against the white Afrikaners education system (Narrative time 0:58:23).

Furthermore, the producer chose to constantly use cold blooded lifeless images of protesters to emphasise how oppressive and wicked the apartheid forces were. The quality of education which was offered to the native South Africans and other Africans in general was poor, as it served to reinforce the idea that Africans were inherently inferior to Afrikaners and therefore were fit for servitude. This is captured by one of the students during their discussions who retorted "*You think they put us here for education? This is*

*not education. This is somewhere to put us off the streets...let us fight"* (Narrative time 00:26:57).

Despite the strict and oppressive punishment meted against the rebellious and resistant youth who were fighting for freedom, teachers played an important part in the struggle for freedom. As a result of the history lessons, Sarafina's class received support from their schoolteacher, Mary Masembuko. Sarafina went through a process of political awakening during her own personal experiences. Mary Masembuko's lessons taught the students that they could make a difference by giving room for critical thinking and understanding the debate, and that led students into protesting and being leaders of social movements. Her lessons were informed by resistance and transformation. Mary Masembuko tried to teach her students political resistance through the history lessons which were about the voices of the most marginalised with the intention to encourage them to be better people in the society through knowledge of their origins and history. Mary Masembuko taught them the unauthorised syllabus inclined towards communism, delving into topics that concern the nationalist revolution and prompting the students to fight for their freedom. The protesting students eventually turned against authority and committed criminal acts such as murder, theft, vandalism, destruction of property such as schools, shops, and equipment to spite the oppressive system.

- **Revolutionary education**

The South African Government regarded Bantu Education as a vital "instrument for sustaining the political, economic and social system. Apartheid was an inhuman exercise of the mind endeavouring to formulate a moral justification, the cry from the heart, affirming rightness of what the Nationalists were doing. For a long time, the blacks felt uncomfortable with the content of the curriculum. The Bantu education system was characterised by inequality in terms of access, provision, and outcomes. In as much as education was used by the Afrikaners to inject a spirit of loyalty to their rule, education in schools have been presented as a way of resistance in the film *Sarafina*. Miss Mary Masembuko taught children communism even though it was not allowed, and this reflects on how resistant she was and how she wanted to spread the same resistant attitude to the children she was teaching. It is the same teachings that empowered and gave hope

to the students when she mentioned that if Napoleon's army could be defeated as big as it was, it was also possible for them to gain their freedom against the white domination and rule.

- **The school**

The school played an important role in the film, even though the learners failed to understand the educational system, specifically the syllabus. The school however did not play the role of educating learners only but unified the learners in a subculture. Their mutual understanding was basically shaped by the socio-cultural and political background and circumstances of apartheid. The school was their place of refuge and most of them shared their dreams and wishes with their fellow mates. They felt safe and had a sense of belonging when they were at school, during break times, lunch or on their way home where they shared sentimental ideological values.

- **Teachers**

The way the teachers and students are portrayed in most apartheid films serves as a powerful activity in providing an opportunity to reflect on a myriad of socio-cultural issues relating to education (Athanasidou, 2010). Teachers and students in *Sarafina* served as a powerful teaching strategy in the education system. Mary Masembuko educated the students to give them a sense of black pride. She portrays a history teacher whose revisionist stance allows the students to acknowledge the relationship between the authorised version of history and the validation of apartheid practice. In the statement below Mary Masembuko clearly explains to her students that history teaches them where they come from and thus giving them a true identity.

*Mary Masembuko: "History is a beautiful thing because history teaches you where you come from. I want you to know this. I want you to be proud of what we got right and tell the truth about what we got wrong...and learn from it. Otherwise, what is the use of tomorrow? If you do not learn, all you have got is today and today and today. And you are much better than those people. Believe me...believe me."*

Whoopi Goldberg (Mary Masembuko) accepted the role to be a teacher featuring in the film *Sarafina* to help the filmmakers gain a big audience. Whoopi Goldberg is an award-winning American actress. In the film *Sarafina*, she is an inspirational activist who teaches

the students from a black South African people's perspective. She asked the learners what colour Adam was (the first man in the Bible), as they responded 'white' she corrected them in a manner that clearly indicates that the learners should not always think that the colour of Adam and God was white. Her aim was to broaden the minds of the students into believing in themselves as one of the primary imperatives of education in humanity (Athanasίου, 2010).

#### **4.5.8 Racial discrimination**

As depicted in the film, during the apartheid era, access to opportunities such as land, human rights, occupations, freedom of expression and education was based on race, giving rise to racial privilege. Therefore, an individual's position in the hierarchy of the apartheid structure determined what privileges he or she enjoyed or was denied.

As Sarafina looked herself in the mirror she imagined the support of Mandela, who was her inspiration. She visualised herself as a famous young Soweto girl who dreams of becoming a Hollywood star but ends up being a political revolutionary. Sarafina's earlier statement "*what does a star do? Nothing...Stars do not do. Stars just be*" depicted her in photographic style featuring 'photographers' and 'camera men' being her fellow learners. In between shooting the images of Sarafina, they film a movie where Sarafina features herself – dancing on cars, on the hilltop of Soweto and through the streets. She smiles, waves, and hands out autographs to the crowds. Sarafina receives an award made from wire at a small ceremony with the shacks of Soweto, an urban settlement township' in South Africa, southwest of Johannesburg, in the background. The discrepancy between the Hollywood glamour of an Oscar ceremony and the squalor of the township is not the only one of its kind in *Sarafina*.

Sarafina depicts the life of teenagers during a despicable apartheid era in South Africa, imaginarily hooking her hopes on the then imprisoned nationalist and freedom fighter, Nelson Mandela. This is summarised in her charlatan expression, "*Come on, Nelson. Why can't I be a star? What does a star do? Nothing. Look at the camera, flash! Smile at the camera, flash! Look at everybody, big eyes! Say nothing. Stars don't do, stars just be.*" Many teenagers like Sarafina were hopeful that one day their dreams will come

true. The unpredictability of apartheid made most black South Africans to live in fear of the unknown.

The centrality of race and discriminatory laws as well as political and social programmes gave rise to racial stereotypes, and the consequent racism that most people of colour experienced during the apartheid era. The black South Africans in the film *Sarafina* are represented as a race that could only occupy low rankings and would perpetuate white domination (Soudien, 2012). More than this, apartheid was a social system which severely disadvantaged most of the population, simply because they did not share the skin colour of the rulers. As revealed in the film, apartheid cruelly and forcibly separated people, and had a fearsome state apparatus to punish students, teachers and black South Africans who disagreed with the system.

The women in the film like Sarafina's mother and grandmother also occupied nannies' positions, so that they would be able to provide for their families. Nowhere in the film *Sarafina* are audiences shown the black characters occupying a high-ranking position such as being owners of production companies. Black South Africans were prohibited from owning or renting land outside designated reserves and the presence of Africans in urban areas was regulated. Black people swept in the streets and used trains to go to work (Narrative time 00:30:27). As Sarafina decides to visit her mom, the director makes use of a long shot of the streets of Parkland in Johannesburg in order to show the audience a clear contrast of the ghetto life where Sarafina came from and white people's residences. The white mansion, expensive plates, spacious rooms, beautiful portraits, and running water from the tap are a clear contrast to the way blacks lived in the townships during the apartheid era. This is illustrated by the images presented below.

**Frame 3**



**Frame 4**



*A pictorial contrast of Black townships and White suburbs in apartheid South Africa*

The film highlights how non-white workers were forced to live outside the cities in residential areas known as townships illuminating the poor living conditions in which black Africans were subjected to during the apartheid era. In the film, the city was only meant for white people while blacks lived in the shanties of Soweto characterised by poor houses and dusty surroundings. The film cinematographer's emphasis clearly highlights through multiple angle shots the dilapidated conditions of the Black South Africans' houses. This was strategically done through a series of aerial shots of gloomy shacks black people lived in. Black South Africans were subjected to the deplorable side of life, whereas the white South Africans enjoyed life at the expense of the marginalised native South Africans. This was a clear depiction of white domination of the economy, whereas the blacks lived poor lives deprived of the basic needs while the Afrikaners enjoyed abundance of privileges like high paying jobs, owners of production (mines) and occupied high fertile lands. The director makes use of movements and high voice projection which shows Sarafina's anger, to convey meanings of resistance and the need for freedom. When Sarafina says, *"I want to kill them"*, the statement is an embodiment of the accumulative frustration and anger associated with the cruel domination of the black race by the apartheid government over the years (Narrative time 00:33:40.)



## 4.6 SARAFINA AS A SYMBOL OF POLITICAL RESISTANCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN STRUGGLE

A symbol arises when an image is surrounded by a complexity of conscious and unconscious associations. Symbolism played a significant role in representing the historical context of the Apartheid era. The director of *Sarafina* made use of symbols in the form of music, dance, colour, characters, images, and specific scenes in order to bring crucial aspects of the film. It should be noted that interpretation of symbols differs from society to society, and hence there was a need for the director to make use of symbols that were universal.

### 4.6.1 Darkness and light

#### Frame 5



*Mob of youth running away during the early hours of the morning*

The film *Sarafina* begins with a scene showing a mob of youth running fast during early hours of morning. The scene is shot in a dark setting and the colour is dark and gloomy.

Darkness is a symbol of evil, mystery or fear (Narrative time 0:03:04). The scene is symbolic and relevant to the introduction of what the audience ought to be expecting in the rest of the movie. The scene symbolises resistance by the youths and fire signifies a progressive sign of resistance against a brutal system. The dark environment represents the evil that existed during the Apartheid era. Darkness also evokes the anger against the ruthless Afrikaner rule. Light and darkness are thus first and foremost phenomena that provide film viewers with information about what happened in front of the camera. Darrell's lighting plan contributes to the spectator's awareness of the spatial dimensions of a scene, and of actions simultaneously occurring in different planes within the film frame. He often uses lighting to focus on a character or object or enhance the composition of elements in a scene. Lighting thus contributes to emotional involvement of the spectator, to characterisation, and to atmosphere.

In (day) light we have much better opportunities to avoid dangers, or at least prepare to survive them, and we can better monitor what we do all with more chances of success in light than in darkness. The moment Sarafina comes out of jail, Darrell Roodt, the director of the film, makes use of a bright day light which symbolises rays of hope. As compared to the gloomy environment in prison, full of dead bodies, pain and misery. Light signifies a new chapter with new beginnings in Sarafina's life. Sarafina begins to appreciate her mother and realises that she is the pillar of her strength to carry on surviving in such a hostile environment of apartheid. The director makes use of a bright day light when Sarafina reunites with her family indicating that she is at peace "*Sarafina is home*". Whereas joy prevailed in the air and happiness was felt probably even extending to the viewers, this except demonstrates how the juxtaposed use of light and darkness have been employed in the film to represent the alternating worlds of joy and gloom that characterised the apartheid years.

#### **4.6.2 Freedom songs**

The film *Sarafina* also makes use of a series of struggle songs, described by Gray (1999) as freedom songs, which inspired the people who resisted apartheid and fought for freedom. The purpose of music during the struggle was to generate and strengthen group identity and group solidarity among the African people. The film *Sarafina* resonates with

song and music like any other musical film found in the repertoire of Hollywood entertainment (Gray, 1999). The lamenting songs they sang in the prison were a clear indication that the black nation was crying as each person narrated his/her experience in prison. This also further highlighted the intensity of the oppression that existed among the black South Africans, which was administered by the Afrikaners.

One can interpret *Sabela* as a song of the struggle, articulating the learners' struggle and oppression as they sang together about their suffering as oppressed children. For the moment, their suffering overwhelms them, and they pray for strength. Even though they were overcome by grief, the deaths of their friends did not discourage them from resisting their oppressors. In fact, after these events they protested further and protractedly took the fight to their oppressors with violence. The song *Sechaba*, which means the masses articulates a strong sense of loss as learners mourned not only their personal defeat, but also that of the perishing black nation. *Sechaba* articulates both the struggle of the black South Africans and the pain of Africa at large (Banham, 2004). The learners express the state of the black nation due to their oppression. A great deal of their social and cultural environment is disrupted by the political situation in South Africa. Native South Africans had lost all of their rights and in the process lost any form of wealth or financial stability which was the biggest cause of black poverty and social disempowerment of black South Africans, as represented by the Sowetan families. In this song, the horrendous way black South Africans were oppressed is clearly highlighted and exposed.

Songs of the struggle in *Sarafina* contribute to the construction of these multi-layered contexts in which socio-political and personal human experiences are articulated. Each song has its own unique focus, but ultimately contributes to our understanding of how the youth was affected within these contexts. Music has always been a part of South African political discourse (Gray, 1999). Ndlovu (2014) argues that the music of black South Africans was a modification of styles which were influenced by their socio-political conditions. Hence, the producer/director also made use of music in the film for the audience to understand the conditions in which the blacks were living and also to emphasise their hope for the *freedom that was coming tomorrow* as one of the songs states (Lubbe, 2016).

Music was used as a tool of speaking back to power. The film also showcases high spirits of characters who are in misery, and through singing they could face all hard conditions and embrace the opportunity for freedom. Furthermore, in the film *Sarafina*, music was used to get back at the ruling white minority, who were oppressive and resisted the black South African power. Chants such as '*Heita*' were used to mock and ridicule the authorities. Similarly, the dance like movement of the learner's bodies along with song is representative of a form of protest, where dance is used as a means of being immersed in a moment and one is able to break free and express oneself without consequence. In this way, the protest acts as space where the young girls and boys are free to celebrate their African identities with a sense of assurance that this will not be received in bad faith.

#### **Frame 6**



*Youths singing the song “freedom is coming tomorrow” after several students were shot dead by the soldiers.*

#### **4.6.3 The gun as a symbol of power and superiority**

#### **Frame 7**



*Apartheid soldiers standing at the funeral controlling the gathering*

A gun is a symbol of superiority and power to fight against cruel domination and oppression (Gray, 1999). Images of soldiers holding guns symbolise the harsh political environment that existed during the Apartheid period. The soldiers were seen everywhere in the film including in schools and in townships. This depicts how the white rulers oppressed the blacks, depriving them of their freedom. Any form of resistance against the white rule resulted in severe punishment, where the soldiers either beat or killed the black protesters.

One can further argue that not only did guns symbolise the harsh political arena but was also a sign that the period was characterised by demonstrations, hence there were always soldiers to fight against anyone who was demonstrating. Symbols in film appear to be thought impregnated images or details that give rise to a complexity of associations. A more concrete element is bloody and dead bodies which serve as a symbol of the brutal and ruthless acts of the white regime. Violence has been transacted in the context so frequently that it symbolised inhumanity and ruthlessness. Students were brutally killed for demonstrating and revolting against the white rule. The director evokes a feeling of anger and hate in the audiences. Sharp sounds of students weeping over the loss of their

loved ones and intense gun shots used by the soldiers to fight students who had no ammunition clearly indicates inequality and unfair structural barriers.

Mary Masembuko had a gun in her house to fight against white repressive and hegemonic powers. During that time, it was prohibited for a black South African to have a gun, as this was considered a serious offence. The presence of a gun in her house clearly symbolised a life of fear and terror. Mary Masembuko told Sarafina that she wanted the war to be over, hate to be over and wanted to come home to kindness. The director made use of an extreme close up to clearly show fear and emphasis on the importance of what Mary was saying. The extreme close-up shot is traditionally used by the cinematographers to allow the viewers to enter the character's intimate space, revealing certain characteristics and emotions that would otherwise go unnoticed from afar. Mary Masembuko was shown rejecting to be an object of manipulation by the colonial masters. Mary Masembuko's disregard for the soldiers depicts an equal lack of fear or intimidation. She is the image of steadfastness and strength. The military was mostly composed of Afrikaners.

#### **4.6.4 Sarafina the actor**

Since a character can be a symbol, thus making *Sarafina* is a symbol of African triumph and hope for the world. Although the whole story can be a symbol, *Sarafina* is one of this country's most iconic symbols of the struggle for social and political freedom and justice. Negative portrayal of blacks as servants like Sarafina's mother working as a maid in the film is a visual symbol of the deep-seated apartheid beliefs and mentality. Characters in a film sometimes become virtual symbols themselves. Sarafina symbolised women who were brave enough in the struggle to fight for their freedom. Essentially, Sarafina represents and celebrates woman as Mbongeni Ngema (writer) points to the role and contribution of black women to the political struggle. In this way, the protest acts as space where young girls are free to celebrate their African identities with a sense of assurance that this will not be received in bad faith by the viewers. This demystifies the stereotypical views that women were not active participants in the revolutionary struggle against the white rule. It is because of the character of Sarafina that the role played by women during the Apartheid could not be overlooked. However, one can argue that the fact that Sarafina was inspired by her role model, Nelson Mandela is enough evidence that women derive

boldness from their male counterparts. In the film, Sarafina was presented as the queen of Soweto. She stood firm and represented black South African youths resisting white supremacy. Hope was represented by her true beauty. She remained clear in her mission and symbolised the hope of South Africans. Sarafina was the powerful voice of the country's grief for its dead youth and she denoted the youth's anger and retaliation. *"Mum you are my hero....."*, she said as she represented all the younger generation which looked up to the seniors for political inspiration. Sarafina finally learned from her mother's calmness and patience that these are the virtues that are the best approach to solving the country's problem. Through using a young black energetic girl protagonist, Sarafina portrays a spirited and courageous beautiful young lady who fights against apartheid in the Soweto uprising. Film thus continues to serve as a reliable means to evoke the memories and emotions of the apartheid era which might otherwise have been forgotten. *Sarafina* encouraged critical thinking about the world and seeing characters like Sarafina can eliminate many myths and superstitions about political struggle issues. Preserving memory opens up new history epochs in a remarkably interesting manner as visually recorded fact is invincible evidence with greater emotive power than the written or spoken word. Many ordinary lives are likely to be changed when people watch brave role models like Sarafina standing in the face of oppression.

#### **4.6.5 The preacher**

The preacher gave hope to the student in the film. He preached with dedication and empathy which clearly indicated that he was also a victim of apartheid abuse and was greatly affected by the intense situation. He ensured his congregation that one day their prayers will be answered, and their struggle was not going to go in vain. He was the focal point for addressing the ills of society, motivating and comforting those who had lost their loved ones in the struggle for freedom.

*Preacher: "They fear you because you are young. They fear you because you are the future. How fearful they must be that they shoot you children. How powerful you must be that they fear you so much. You are powerful because you are the generation that will be free. The violence, the beatings, the torture, the killings. All this is the back pain of our free nation. Please God, may I live to see it. But if I do not, I see it now in your faces. Like the*

*light of the rising sun. And it has lit in me as if I am young again. And I know, yes, I know freedom is coming tomorrow. Amandla!"*

He emphasises that freedom is coming tomorrow. He gave hope to the younger generation and was as a source of comfort. He encouraged the younger generation by using powerful and encouraging words.

#### **4.6.6 Students' uniform**

The uniform was arguably a representative of embodying the Afrikaners image and adopting Afrikaners culture that added to the imprisonment of black South African identities. The uniform played a significant role during the peak of student activism and resistance against the segregationist Bantu Education policy that was espoused by the Nationalist government as part of its apartheid-based practices. The school uniform, in the film also taught learners how to live communally as it bound them to each other and encouraged feelings of sisterhood and brotherhood and a spirit of comradeship. The white and black colours symbolised unity and togetherness. School uniforms promoted learning, nourished a sense of equality, promoted a feeling of community, and helped prevent divisive problems while promoting self-discipline. Older people continue to celebrate June 16 to date by wearing school uniforms as part of celebrating the struggle for freedom (Ndlovu, 2014).

#### **4.6.7 Women**

Women in the film signify national resistance against apartheid. *Sarafina* shows active participation by women in resisting the white minority rule. Sarafina who becomes the leader of the youth resistance shows that women were not weak but active participants in the quest for freedom through resistance. Sarafina is given a huge responsibility by her mother of taking care of her siblings, a role that clearly shows that women can take important tasks no matter their circumstances and age.

The film does not only celebrate Sarafina but also suggests that millions of unknown women like Sarafina's mother and Ms Masembuko who have no visible celebrated role in the struggle should nevertheless be recognised as heroines of the struggle in their own right. The role of Ms Masembuko, the female history and music teacher cannot be



overlooked as she inspired and encouraged the students to resist the Afrikaners domination. Her boldness of speech and absence of fear is shown through her speech: *"...I cannot stand aside and let others die for me. I will fight too"*. Ms Mary Masembuko boosted confidence in her learners and the youth felt inspired by the different ideologies she expressed in her history lessons. She believed in herself and insisted that the learners should know their history. She had an incredibly significant role in the quest for freedom. Mary becomes the voice that expresses the absurdities of white domination of a black country.

Sarafina's mother worked hard for her family, she remained loyal to her employer, no matter what her daughter said, she reprimanded her and continued working, her resistance towards the system clearly showed that she was a strong woman. Her main goal was to take care of the family, since she was the only bread winner in her family. Sarafina's mother believed that the white people were good because they had given her a job. She chose peace over fighting. Sarafina finally apologises for being radical and honoured her mother for the patience and courage it took to be a domestic worker.

#### **4.6.8 Categories of camera shots used in the film**

- **Wide shot**

The researcher found out that most of the shots used in the film complimented the language that was used by the director to emphasise certain issues. This was clearly highlighted in a scene where five learners explained their horrific experience in prison, and the events that led them to go to prison. The narratives of the individual learners strongly articulate the suffering of the South African youth at the hands of the police. Furthermore, there was a sense of increasing decline from suffering to impending death.

*"I cried like a baby"* (Narrative time 01:20:08). The director made sure viewers sympathised with him as he narrated his traumatising experience in jail. The other young man narrated his horrific story that he was taken into a room full of corpses. *"They took me to a room full of dead bodies he said he will live me there"* A wide shot is used in the prison to show the audience the terrifying conditions. This type of shot clearly depicted

where the scene was set and when the scene took place. This however gave the director a lot of space to work on.

- **Extreme close up**

The director made use of extreme close ups on one of the prisoners as he echoed out his fears of the Afrikaners and police brutality saying, “*we fear them but we do not forget*”. An extreme close-up shot is when the surface area of the frame is filled by a subject’s face. In other words, the subject is tightly framed, or shown in a relatively large scale, causing their face to be cropped within the frame. When the police electrocuted some of the prisoners, an extreme close shot was used to show the amount of unbearable physical pain they went through, deliberately bringing emotions of anger and resentment to the viewers. This was a powerful way used by the director to convey the emotions and how deeply hurt the imprisoned youth were feeling without saying much verbally. As a viewer, the extent of cruelty and use of such gruesome shots shows some sense of gratification by the agents of the apartheid system.

- **Close up**

Furthermore, fearless, courageous and distraught facial shots are captured in close-up shots to emphasise the emotions attached to the language used by the character in the film. A good example the director used in the film is that of Sarafina visiting her mother. A close up shot of her angry face is displayed on screen after she told her mother that she would rather die like her father than live like her mother. Her mother gave up everything to work for a white family in order to take care of her children, which Sarafina interpreted as slavery. It can be argued that the use of a close up shot compliments the relationship between images and the language used to emphasise the oppression that the blacks faced during apartheid years.

## **Frame 8**



*A close up shot of Sarafina talking to her mother*

#### **4.6.9 Nelson Mandela the struggle icon**

Sarafina's only hope to be successful was through Mandela as the symbol of black resistance to apartheid. The twenty-seven years of imprisonment and the removal from the hurly burly of politics enhanced his stature to emerge as a compassionate idealist, astute thinker, made wise by the suffering of prison life, eventually becoming a constitutional democratic socialite (Walshe, 1987). Nelson Mandela symbolises the dialectic of resistance and transformation. His own life mirrored the way in which a social movement shapes individual. Mandela's political courage, integrity and symbolic vision sustained his focus for the establishment of democracy in South Africa. As the living symbol of African resistance against apartheid, he was willing to take political risks by rising above the constraints of virulent racist tendencies of the apartheid regime and the intense bitterness of his people (Berg, 2014). Through watching *Sarafina*, South Africans are reminded that Nelson Mandela was a true revolutionary symbol of sacrifice, bravery, and determination.

#### **4.7 IDEOLOGICAL FRAMES AND POLITICAL DISSENT DURING APARTHEID**

One of the aspects the researcher looked at when examining the film was the ideological perspectives inherent in the film content. The works of art in the film *Sarafina* are enormously complex, rich and often susceptible to many modes of analysis and

interpretation. The film delves into an ideological systematic and all-inclusive socio-political exploration of what went on during apartheid South Africa.

#### **4.7.1 Apartheid ideology**

*Sarafina* depicts resistance from the black South African students against the white Afrikaner minority rule, whereas the Afrikaners resisted any form of violence and challenge to power by the black South African youths such as Sarafina. The film shows how the black South African majority resisted the Afrikaners rule using the same apartheid ideological state instruments such as schools. According to the film, the school had become a site of both physical and epistemic resistance. Educational hegemony in the public system is built on an ideology that is largely constructed for the purpose of maintaining a power structure, using the vehicle of standardised tests (Lemon,1991). In coherence to this argument, we see the white rule using education to push the agenda of their rule and dominance. *Sarafina* is thus a gripping film depicting the apartheid ideology through subsequent student riots in Soweto.

Education is often used as a political tool, employed to control, and subjugate less privileged populations on the basis of identity or socio-cultural background (Assmann, 2013). *Sarafina* provides the ideological frameworks for an education that aided in the construction of oppressive political structures of the time. The film indicates that the education system during the apartheid era was not open and free as it was designed in a manner that narrowed down to achieving the ideal of the apartheid ideology. As a demonstration that the political atmosphere was tense; the school principal warns Mary, the history teacher that they ought to listen and follow the prescribed syllabus to avoid persecution. The school principal asks Mary if she was still following the prescribed syllabus as a way of showing allegiance to the system. He emphasised the importance of following the syllabus in the school as a clear indication of fear and manipulation in the education system. The apartheid curriculum was used effectively as a tool not only to reproduce and promote the values, cultural norms, and beliefs of the apartheid regime but also as an instrument to maintain and legitimise unequal social, economic and political power relations. By controlling and maintaining dominant beliefs, values and oppressive

practices, the curriculum shaped the mind-set of the population to sustain the apartheid system (Lemon, 1991).

- **Communist ideology in the curriculum**

In the film under study, Ms Masembuko teaches her history students the unauthorised syllabus that is informed by communism. This shows how the film is philosophical in nature demonstrating Neo Marxian ideas of the revolution against the capitalist ideas. The ideology assumes that, this would lead to socialism which in turn would transform into communism as the highest stage of human development where there is equality in all aspects. Banham (2004) argues that the history of mankind is the history of class struggles.

Mary Masembuko also goes into topics that concern the revolution and gives students the courage to fight for their freedom. She also teaches music which is used as a tool of resistance by the students against the white minority rule. Political acts of resistance such as burning of shops and schools, demonstrations, acts of terrorism and marches have been described as weapons of the weak by Assmann (2013). The students discussed amongst themselves that “...*the Boers want everything under control...we are not happy. We are not under control, so somebody better tell the Boers*”. This statement shows how the marginalised students were displeased with white dominance and hence forth felt the need to fight back.

In the film there was a strong police presence at school ever since the school was burnt down by some of the students. The police also realised that Masembuko was not teaching the authorised syllabus, hence she became the main suspect among those who encouraged disruptive behaviour amongst learners in the school and was later arrested. The students wanted to know where she was, so they began to demand her whereabouts. When they were introduced to the new history teacher the students protested shouting “burn, burn, burn” hitting the tables. The learners stormed out of the classroom and attacked any form of white authority, but were met by the police who opened fire into the crowd of learners, killing some of them in the process.

### **4.7.2 Christianity**

Religious principles, personal experiences, and knowledge of the world made the black South Africans to agree with the apartheid systems without fighting it openly. During Apartheid, Christianity played an influential role in the ideological formation and justification of the Apartheid political system, while simultaneously serving as a primary source of strength for those involved in the struggle (Banham, 2004). The history of Christianity in South Africa cannot not be separated from the history of Apartheid, since Christianity became a powerful influence in uniting large numbers of people in common faith. Several Christian churches actively promoted racial division through the political philosophy of apartheid. Sarafina took the responsibility of taking her brothers and sisters to church. Several people are shown as the service ends walking religiously in a neat line (Narrative time 00:47:40). The director makes use of a long shot when church ends, this is done in order to highlight and remind South Africans that Christianity played an influential role in the ideological formation and justification of the Apartheid political system. Meanwhile this simultaneously served as a primary source of strength for those involved in the struggle against those who maintained order within an ideologically planned system. Despite the difficult living conditions for most blacks, the apartheid government used the church as a vehicle to maintain peace and order. One might argue that the church might have been used as a powerful weapon of controlling the aggressive society's minds and thoughts.

### **4.8 SARAFINA AS POLITICAL AND CULTURAL MEMORY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM**

As a socio-cultural and political artefact, film is an important way of recording past events and the lived experiences of people all over the world. From time immemorial, memory has been used by the dominant or privileged groups to construct values from which societal meaning is derived.

#### 4.8.1 Re-enacting collective memories of the struggle

Collective memories evoked through film are a powerful vehicle for emotions and memory which perhaps explains why *Sarafina*'s portrayal of apartheid events has such an affective and long-lasting impact on society. This makes the influential power of film and its ability to bolster memory central to its significant role among audiences and researchers (Assmann, 2013). For this reason, *Sarafina* frequently serves as a powerful trigger for the arousal of individual emotions and collective memories associated with the pain, torture and incarcerations encountered during the apartheid years.

While the film-*Sarafina* does not thrive on the realistic mode of expression, its aesthetics and artistic *cinema verité* compels contemporary South Africans to reflect on their collective reminiscences that a united people can achieve collective goals. This is evident in the producers' ability to demonstrate how rolling mass strikes and student demonstrations overcame the colonial injustices associated with racial discrimination and brutal suppression of the majority of blacks in apartheid South Africa. Despite the sad memories this may invoke, it is necessary for the nation to be reminded of the racial injustice that transpired during apartheid as a clarion call for the country to never allow apparatuses of the state to be used as instruments of oppression.

This relates to memories of how the school curriculum was used for clandestine and narrow political reasons to continue subjugating the majority of black South Africans. It was these governance flaws that caused students to retaliate by burning down schools and targeting the businesses of their oppressors. In the context of the current democratic dispensation, it remains disgusting that the Afrikaner community referred to South Africa as "my country" implying that they exclusively owned and controlled the means of production in the country. This yielded a situation where blacks Africans became labourers who sustained the Afrikaner community's livelihood while they remained at the bottom strata of society. Therefore, *Sarafina* carries the monumental currency within the political function of the media to draw audiences towards partaking in a collective political consciousness.

*Sarafina* gives its viewers a sense of collective identity that captures the moment of the days during the apartheid years. Black South Africans lived in fear of the unknown and

looked for defensive mechanisms to protect themselves and their loved ones against a brutal system. From the onset the film storyline tactically introduces viewers to a group of students running fast, burning down schools and causing mass destruction (Narrative time 00:01:39). Since such encounters were the order of the day among black South Africans, the narrative in *Sarafina* is deliberately reconfigured to portray the context and conflict featuring black students resisting apartheid policies in a style that constantly suit the democratic era.

#### **4.8.2 Colonial suffrage, reconciliation, and progressive activism**

For most of the Black South Africans who suffered socio-cultural and political prejudice under apartheid, the battle to deal with the erstwhile memories is difficult to lay to rest. The study acknowledges the esteemed efforts that came with the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) post 1994 which lulled some of the pain, suffering and abuse under apartheid police brutality. The suffrage is evident in *Sarafina* where viewers are introduced to soldiers wielding guns and posing heavy ammunition in the face of vulnerable and defenceless civil protesters. The film overtly chooses to depict the horrendous massacre of hundreds of people with thousands arrested and tortured for mere demonstrating against an inhuman system of political administration.

Artefacts such as *Sarafina* serve to remind society not only to forget the heinous past, but also to reminisce as well as heal their brokenness, so that they can reclaim their sense of collective dignity and respect as the foundation of their newly found freedom in South Africa. Whereas, the portrayal of students weeping in the agony from deep gun wounds brings painful memories to both the victims and others, it can be argued that today's student activism is a continuation of the political struggle against apartheid emanating from enactment of education policies based on socio-cultural and political prejudice (Muswede, 2017).

#### **4.8.3 Communalism and national consciousness**

Communalism in the African setting promotes unity, togetherness, brotherhood and cooperation among citizens. In traditional Africa for instance, this meant that a person is known and identified in, by and through his or her community. In the context of the



struggle for freedom, communality was understood in terms of the awareness which identifies an individual not as an isolated ego, but as an entity whose being, and survival is consequent upon its union with other human beings. In the film *Sarafina*, the unfolding political events of the time kindled a form of national political consciousness among the different cultural groups in the country to come together to face colonial subjugation. After 1994, an analysis of *Sarafina* arouses memories of the communal nature of how Africans lived before they were segregated into spatial groups called Bantustans in South Africa.

Although this is not overtly portrayed in the film understudy, the narrative implies that black South Africans shared most of their life in common before colonialism with a sense of communality. In the film, this is showcased in the everyday acts where living together was espoused as the basis of the extended family system rooted in the principles of togetherness to form the back bone of the African society. In *Sarafina*, this experience of communal living is highlighted when the producer introduces Sarafina's family to the viewers (Narrative time 00:03:59). The presence of children and extended family members under one roof is a clear indication of communal living. This aspect is critical in this study because values of solidarity, cooperation and unity in a society are significant to determine the how a nation responds to challenges of life. In most African films, the extended family system remains at the centre of resolving people's problems owing when they assume responsibilities over family member's needs. In *Sarafina*, there is a strong and deep respect for authority and the elders among the young actors, something that indirectly helped in the maintenance of law and order as protesters like Sarafina got counsel from their parents.

#### **4.8.4 Political memory and creation of national identity**

In South Africa, the idea of remembrance of the victims of apartheid has been embraced to foster the national identity narrative or rainbowism premised on the historical trajectory of political resistance, segregation, and annually commemorated heroism. From the perspective of those who emerged victorious after 1994, this comes in the form of revolutionary celebrations through which national healing, reconciliation and identity are packaged. Thus, political memory has become a fundamental part of national identity narrative making within Assmann's (2013) view that "...*If one controls people's memories,*

*one controls their dynamism*". *Sarafina* succeeds in doing this through a compelling script that seeks to control its audience's past colonial experiences and knowledge of the previous wars of dispossession. In this case memory is seen as a political force that reminds viewers that the current South African wealth and infrastructure was built on the back of labour from "enslaved" Black people from all over Africa (Allen, 2005).

Film as a medium has been used to document repression, persecution, and the struggle for justice over many years (Banham, 2004). Film has been used as a tool for documenting phenomenon. In *Sarafina*, the use of the pronoun "we" features numerous times to clearly indicate that the resistance was a popular struggle directed against one common enemy represented by the apartheid security forces. This is epitomized by Sarafina's gesture when constable Sabela, a black police officer, assaulted her boyfriend. Deeply hurt by this deed, she cleans his wounds and comforts him by reiterating that "we are not under control" and further retorts that their hope of gaining freedom for the people of South Africa would be achieved. Suffice to say, the film *Sarafina* reminds black South Africans the pain, suffering and missteps that transpired on both sides that saw many people dying in the struggle for political dominance during apartheid years. Nonetheless, its ideological insinuations and reconstruction of political engagement projects how divisive policies can cause war.

#### **4.8.5 Freedom songs and dance as cultural heritage in South Africa**

Film is a potent medium by which cultural memory continues to change as society acknowledges the legacies of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. The historical context of the South African struggle for freedom and the quest for justice during apartheid is reflected through songs and dance in *Sarafina*.

- **Struggle or liberation songs**

Songs embodied in the film *Sarafina* imply that the identity of liberation struggle tunes which currently resonate with older and newer generations have played a huge role in the preservation of political and cultural heritage of South Africa. Mbongeni Ngema (the writer) believes that the Soweto uprising shaped the political landscape of the struggle for freedom in South Africa (Cooke, 2008). He maintains that the uprising did so by

popularising what originally may have been traditional ethnic inclined songs into unifying artefacts of national appeal (Ibid). Political commentators and analysis do concur that the message in the story embodied in *Sarafina* is important to create a socio-cultural bridge between the younger generation who did not experience apartheid and the older generation who encountered it. An analysis of the songs that characterised protests and marches of defiance during the apartheid era may also serve to help the younger generation to understand what the current democratisation process entails for South Africans.

An analysis of *Sarafina* purveys social gatherings such as funerals, where the youth sang struggle songs that articulated freedom, the nature of their oppression, their suffering and aspiration of their nationalist heroes. The lyrics of the struggle songs in *Sarafina* were tailored to politically influence the target audience in a bid to mobilise them against apartheid forces and build unity among members of various civic or political formations (Maedza, 2018). As these prominent revolutionary songs of the struggle such as *Sechaba* and *Nkonyane kaNdaba* reverberate from the politically charged crowds, they provoke fervent recollections and memories that put viewers into a particular frame of political nostalgia. These are memories of shared experiences and ideological understanding that compel a majority of the black people to reflect on the current transformational challenges including inequality, racism, poverty and other remnants of apartheid policies. Moreover, songs that feature more prominently in the film under study such as *Freedom is coming tomorrow* and *Safa saphel' isizwe* possess powerful ideological nuances and insightful insinuations that trigger memories of horrific and fatal events which resulted from both violent confrontation and incarceration by security agents. Therefore, *Sarafina's* use of struggle songs is synonymous with employing melo-dramatic techniques in order to augment the visual and textual aspects inherent in film genre such as the political feature film.

### **Dance as expression of political defiance**

Despite its complex nature, dance may be described simply as ordered bodily movements, usually performed to music (Cooke, 2008). Dance can speak to the dissatisfaction of black people about racial prejudice that drive systematic socioeconomic

exclusion from basic services (Soudien, 2012). Memories are invoked through dance, *Sarafina* invokes memories through various forms of dance associated with the struggle for freedom. This was performed in tune with struggle songs as a gesture that galvanised the youth to stand together, united against the oppressive forces of apartheid. As students danced to the song *Freedom is coming tomorrow*, through its choreography and costumes, this had the potential to foster all oppressed South Africans under a stronger sense of collective identity. The foregoing scenario concurs with one scholar who observed that “when independence came, Africans revitalised some traditional dances and formed dance companies...whose members could be used to increase national identity while serving as ambassadors” (Snipe, 2007: 71). Apart from its physical aspect, the rhythmic movements, steps, and gestures of dance often express a sentiment or mood or illustrate a specific event or daily act. To most of the black people during apartheid South Africa, dance was their way of expression of freedom because, unlike political sloganeering and picketing which were disallowed, dancing was seen as a socio-cultural activity. Hence, as a camouflage, the protesters identified the political strength of African “black dance” and used it as a non-violent tool against political oppression. The inclusive nature of African dance allowed protesters of all oppressive races to move into a single rhythm resembling freedom and equality (Saks, 2010). Thus, apart from being a performance art practiced over many years, dance is used in *Sarafina* as a social expression depicting political defiance and yet it has continued as part of the intangible cultural heritage of South Africans to date.

#### **4.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

Chapter 4 has presented the interpretation and analysis of data from which study findings were derived. These were thematically presented. The socio-cultural and political context highlighting how the film depicts racial injustices and the artistic expressions and symbols of apartheid are discussed. The chapter has also provided an account of the ideological frames inherent in the film and explored the relevance of the film *Sarafina* as a political and cultural memory. The following chapter will provide the summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented a detailed qualitative interpretive analysis of the film *Sarafina*. Following the analysis, the summary of findings is hereby discussed with specific reference to the aim and objectives of the study. The study was conducted to examine the role of film genre in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. The summary of findings is presented in terms of the depiction of the socio-cultural environment during apartheid; portrayal of ideological frames and political dissent; *Sarafina* as political and cultural memory of the struggle and analysis of symbols of political resistance during the struggle for freedom. The chapter also presents the conclusion which is derived from the study findings followed by the recommendations and directions for future research.

#### 5.2 RE- STATEMENT OF THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

##### 5.2.1 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to examine the role of film genre in the preservation of the political and cultural memory of the South African struggle for freedom. This was achieved through intense analysis of the film *Sarafina*, which proved beyond doubt that film can assemble footage that can record historic narratives of a specific socio-political order. By repeating and circulating 'images of images', films have the potential to turn audio-visual heritage into a pattern of narratives in the form of stock of usable imagery, to create powerful memories of a people's history.

##### 5.2.2 Objectives of the study

- To analyse how *Sarafina* depicts the socio-cultural and political environment that characterised the apartheid *modus operandi*.
- To explore *Sarafina*'s ideological frames in its portrayal of societal dissent during apartheid South Africa.

- To examine the relevance of *Sarafina's cinema verité* in archiving the political and cultural memory of the South African' struggle narrative.
- To interrogate *Sarafina's* application of symbolism in portraying the historical context and narrative of the South African Struggle for freedom.

### **5.3 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT DURING APARTHEID**

This section of the chapter presents the socio-cultural environment during the apartheid era with respect to racial discrimination and the plight of the oppressed; racist curriculum and revolutionary education; authoritarian role and state violence; and youth resistance and catharsis violence as portrayed in the film understudy.

#### **5.3.1 Racial discrimination and the plight of black people**

*Sarafina* depicts how Black South Africans struggled against various social and political structures during the apartheid era. This is evident through its depiction of how non-white workers were forced to live outside the cities in spatially structured townships, thereby illuminating the poor living conditions in which black Africans were subjected to during the apartheid era. In the film, the city was only meant for the white people while the blacks lived in the shanties of Soweto, which are characterised by poor houses and dusty surroundings. *Sarafina* is used as a powerful medium to define a historic moment and to express a unique form of political resistance against apartheid in South Africa. The producers used themes of segregation and discrimination to depict the challenges of the South African society during Apartheid. The onslaught against non-white people was meted through skewed discriminatory policies imposed in the distribution of housing, employment, education and public services. These were enforced within a cruel framework of oppressive laws characterised by intimidation, torture, and murder by law enforcement agents.

In apartheid South Africa, race was formally used to justify the exclusion of some people, specifically the black majority from political and economic power based on a racial hierarchy (Soudien, 2012). The racial hierarchy was entrenched in legislation and government programmes which denied a majority of the black population access to land; restricted higher-paying professions to whites; and ensured that white employees were

paid more than other people for the same kind of work (Soudien, 2012). *Sarafina* presents the socio-political milieu of the apartheid era with a strong realistic potential to promote the voices of the marginalised majority, who were yearning for freedom from colonial subjugation. Despite its use of reconstruction and docu-drama aesthetics, the film demonstrates the degree of fear that had gripped the country at the time, reflective of an outright war situation where young protesters resorted to violent means of resistance. The film script has been carefully tailored to demonstrate the youth's dissatisfaction with the socio-political circumstances of the time. Thus, *Sarafina* contributes to our understanding of their urge to protest against the unjust practices enforced by their oppressors towards attainment of freedom in their lifetime. This projection reaffirms the view that despite the nature of the political struggle characterised by violent protests and carnage, the youth of the 1970s resolved to achieve freedom even if it meant losing their lives in the process.

### **5.3.2 The racist curriculum and revolutionary education**

The context presented in *Sarafina* demonstrates that black people's education curriculum was imposed on them as a system whose main objective was to prepare young Africans to be submissive labourers within the predominantly white economic system. Teachers such as Mary Masembuko played a significant role during apartheid giving students a sense of black pride and fighting the injustice associated with the poor quality of education offered to black students. The narrative predominantly features disgruntled students protesting against the oppression of the black people, especially the racially-inclined education system. This is noted when the students scream in protest against the new teacher who attempts to follow the correct syllabus expressing extreme feelings of negativity towards an inferior curriculum in the black schools. This was further informed by the perception that Bantu education deprived students from receiving proper education in terms of access, support and standard outcomes including knowledge of their own social and political contexts. Thus, it can be argued that Apartheid was both an inhuman exercise and ideological tool aimed to control the black people's minds in an endeavour to formulate a moral justification for maintaining racial prejudice.

Inspiration towards revolutionary education were associated with the decision to declare the Afrikaans language as the official medium of instruction in the public schools.

Subsequently, this led to a public outcry with massive buy-in from different sectors of society, particularly the students who then took out to protest in the streets of Soweto in 1976. In as much as the students revolted against the imposition of Afrikaans in the public schools, it can also be argued that numerous altercations between the apartheid forces and revolutionary movements led by nationalist fighters had occurred in the 1960s, including the Sharpeville Massacre where dozens of protesters were killed (Lubbe, 2016). Any form of resistance to reform the education system was regarded as a punishable offence which led to Sarafina's teacher, Mary Masembuko being arrested and later the interrogator claiming that she committed suicide by jumping from the tenth floor of a building. Thus, *Sarafina* presents apartheid education in South Africa as a system that was centrally informed by the policies of systematic racism and discrimination which some scholars have critiqued for focusing on schooling rather than education per se (Maedza, 2018).

### **5.3.3 Authoritarian rule and state violence**

*Sarafina's* composition is specifically a dichotomous clash between a violent authoritarian regime and proletariat mobilisation against apartheid where Soweto turned from a township into a prison. Hence, the film predominantly features apartheid police responding to the protest march by students with unrestrained brutal violence and application of lethal force including firing live rounds of ammunition at the unarmed school children (Maedza, 2018).

In order to keep a grip on the society, the political administration had control over the major means of development, with the education sector being one of the areas that fostered subordination to power and authority. The presence of soldiers and the police at schools performing spy routines through classroom windows during break time is a clear indication of the hostile environment within which educational institutions operated during apartheid. Most of the important administrative decisions at the time were made by the apartheid officials, whereas the black people were seen as passive citizens who always waited for instructions from the Afrikaner masters. The political administration had harsh restrictions against the black people in terms of spatial settlements and socio-economic



participation during the apartheid period resulting in poor standards of living among the majority of citizens.

Both students and the teachers were not safe in their own homes because they were subjected to police raids linked to their political convictions. The producer of the film under study artistically tailored Soweto into a place of poverty, oppression, and state control reinforced by the use of police dogs to intimidate as well as attack students who dared to oppose the apartheid government. Therefore, *Sarafina's* script has succeeded in articulating how the repressive political system of apartheid created an untenable political administrative conundrum where Black South Africans could not participate in their national politics (Soudien, 2012). This political scenario necessitated further mobilisation from the diverse political formations at the time, meanwhile inviting more reinforcement of lethal responses from the authorities as depicted in the film.

#### **5.3.4 Youth resistance and catharsis violence**

Youth violence portrayed in *Sarafina* provides a microscopic view of how the majority of black South Africans resisted the Afrikaner rule during the apartheid era. The storyline carefully selects to demonstrate use of the same apartheid ideological state instruments such as schools as settings or loci for both physical and epistemic political resistance. Visuals of students setting symbols of apartheid on fire, violent riots and destruction of other forms of property carry both implicit and explicit messages about the nature and context of the struggle for freedom at the time. Such scenes are consistent with the history of the National Party's effort to impose the apartheid system against the black majority in South Africa. As an aesthetic comic technique, the producer also uses humour to portray how the youth used jokes and mockery to scoff the Afrikaner domination and authoritarian rule. This is exemplified by the phrase "*Killer disease comes to South Africa, but only the Boers get it*" (Narrative time 00:22:56). The film shows how the students resisted oppression and suppression through a triad of music, humour, and violence. The violence in the film is shown as a steadily accelerating chain of terror which leaves both Sarafina the protagonist and the audience drained. The persistence of gunshots, smoke and fire clearly indicate a state of political instability and anarchy within the country. This confirms that during the apartheid era, youth activism meant being forced into the underground

world, imprisonment, experiencing the criminalisation of activism, and being on the run (Soudien, 2012). Hence, the oppressed found themselves with no option but rather to violently fight back against their oppressors, as demonstrated by the student protesters when they burnt a police officer to death as a form of catharsis violence.

#### **5.4 PORTRAYAL OF IDEOLOGICAL FRAMES AND POLITICAL DISSENT**

The section discusses the summary of findings based on apartheid and Christian ideologies; communism and the rise of new political consciousness. This includes communalism, nationalism and democracy as ideological frames associated with political resistance as portrayed in the film, *Sarafina*.

##### **5.4.1 Apartheid and Christian ideologies**

The film context presumes a situation where the ultimate purpose of apartheid was to transform South Africa into a nation in which all blacks would exist in the country only as labourers. Apartheid policies relegated non-white South Africans to a state of despondency, poverty, and oppression by marginalising them to the peripheries of society. In the film not all the cast was fighting the system as was the case with the elderly black South Africans such as Sarafina's mother, who had been mentally persuaded by the apartheid system to succumb to its ideology in exchange for peace. This excerpt fits into the ideological view which state that, most films produced during the apartheid years were constructs that supported the status quo (Soudien, 2012). Conversely, the anti-apartheid film movement served as a purview in the fight against the oppressive regime, with film makers politically and ideologically united against racism.

Christianity played an influential role during apartheid in the ideological formation and justification of the apartheid political system. This follows the idea that, apartheid was preceded by missionarisation of the populace and Jesuit work which established churches and schools across the country to prepare black South Africans for colonial subjugation (Allen, 2005). As a reflection of reality and mirror of societal issues, the film serves as a construction of the socio-cultural background, experience, and history of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. This is owed to the fact that, a people's culture, experience and knowledge underlie our view of life, reality and humanity and cannot be

separated from the existential political beliefs and orientations of society. The study has established that the main political ideas inherent in the film suggest that the film *Sarafina* can be viewed as an ideological construct. This shows how apartheid influenced the South African film industry as an ideology that determined the content and form of films at the time. The study has established that the resistance against the principles of apartheid in South Africa is one of the dominant messages in the text or storyline of *Sarafina*.

#### **5.4.2 Communism and the new political consciousness**

*Sarafina* depicts the ideological context in which the socio-cultural and political resistance of the youth during the apartheid era unfolded. The narrative articulates a complex battle embodied in the life of a young black girl who fearlessly represents the socio-cultural and political struggles of her people. Her views as a student, summarised in the statement, “*This is not education they want to make us out of the streets*” (Narrative time 00:26:57), demonst]rates a shift from what her contemporary society normally upheld as education. After the students had been taught lessons about communism and its benefits to society, they expressed displeasure towards the authorised syllabus in preference for communism. This is revealed through Mary Masembuko’s teachings which made sure her students knew their history and true identity as a new wave of political consciousness. The film under study is philosophical in nature demonstrating Neo Marxian ideas of the revolution against the capitalist ideas, which were the bedrock of the apartheid system. The ideology assumed that, this would lead to socialism which in turn would transform into communism as the highest stage of human development where there is equality among all the people in all aspects of life (Banham, 2004). After realising that Masembuko was teaching an unauthorised syllabus, she became the main target among those who were suspected of encouraging disruptive behaviour among learners in the school. Subsequently, she was arrested for attempting to instil an ideology that is discordant with the status quo that sustained apartheid in South Africa.

Despite the assumed political naivety of the students at the time, the harsh realities meted against society by the apartheid system prompted a new wave of political consciousness, particularly in the mid-1970s. In retaliation to the police’s anti-protest tactics, there was a

fresh collective response by the students who fought back by throwing stones and burning shops causing serious destruction and loss of life on both sides. Whereas these actions posed an imminent risk to their lives, the communist ideology of self-sacrifice bolstered the students' confidence to courageously forge ahead with their protest actions. Ultimately, the film producer shows vividly irate students marching in unison holding placards showing their resentments, defiance, and total dissatisfaction with the unjust minority government of apartheid South Africa.

#### **5.4.3 Communalism, nationalism and democracy**

In the context of the struggle for freedom, communalism was understood in terms of the awareness which identifies an individual not as an isolated ego, but as an entity whose being, and survival is consequent upon its union with other human beings. The film synopsis envisages the view that Black South Africans would be better off if they shared most of their life in common just like they did before colonialism. This is showcased in the film, *Sarafina* where the everyday acts of living together are espoused as the basis of the extended family system rooted in the principles of ubuntu. This is also embraced in most African films, where the extended family system remains at the centre of resolving people's problems owing to the responsibilities assumed by others over a family member's needs. In *Sarafina*, there is a strong and deep respect for traditional authority and the elders among the young actors, something that indirectly helped in the maintenance of law and order as protesters like Sarafina got counsel from their parents.

In South Africa, the idea of remembrance of the victims of apartheid has been embraced to foster the national identity narrative or *rainbowism* premised on the historical trajectory of political resistance, segregation, and heroism. Political memory has become a fundamental part of the national identity narrative, thereby fitting within Assmann's (2013) view that "...*if one controls people's memories, one controls their dynamism*". *Sarafina* succeeds in doing this through a compelling script that seeks to control its audience's past colonial experiences and knowledge of the previous wars of dispossession. *Sarafina* reminds black South Africans about the pain, suffering and missteps that transpired on both sides that saw many people dying in the struggle against political dominance during the apartheid years. While its ideological insinuations and reconstruction of political

engagement projects how divisive racial policies can cause conflicts in society, the film also demonstrates how the spirit of nationalism and unity of purpose can yield a democratic dispensation like south Africa in 1994.

## **5.5 SARAFINA AS POLITICAL AND CULTURAL MEMORY OF THE STRUGGLE**

The third objective of the study examined the relevance of *Sarafina's cinema verité* in archiving the political and cultural memory of the South African struggle narrative. A recourse to pre-colonial and post-colonial history can partially help in reconstructing some elements of these unsaid 'memories' in the film *Sarafina* and may provide one with alternative ways of interrogating the nature of the challenges of black South Africans to date.

### **5.5.1 Re-enactment of collective struggle memories**

In as far as collective memories are concerned, *Sarafina's* narrative frames are not an end in themselves. Rather they continue to present a state of battles against off-screen memories of the audiences regarding some of the unsaid alternative readings of the film particularly by those who took part in the Soweto uprisings of 1976. Thus, film can provide an effective vehicle for tracing the construction of memory, and the extent to which such memories are shaped by ever-changing ideological and political contexts. In the context of *Sarafina*, it continues to display the dichotomous clashes between black and white authorities and black and white civilians where race was at the epicentre of public disjuncture. Essentially, *Sarafina* interrogates how the memory of the 1976 student protest was shaped, preserved, remembered, and transmitted over space and time through film and performance. The film articulates the internal struggle a black South African family had due to their socio-political circumstances. The film under study is a reminder to a majority of black South Africans who had no source of income or sustainable livelihood during apartheid years, which led them to end up suffering from depression like Sarafina's uncle. It depicts the economic gap that existed (which arguably continue to exist) between the wealthy and the poor masses larger than any other country in the world, meanwhile the latter bore the burden to create the same wealthy (Banham, 2004). *Sarafina* offers an authentic black viewpoint and celebrates this black perspective as an eye opener, promoting substantial self-reflection and the development of critical post-

colonial perspectives. This therefore affirms that film genre such as *Sarafina* remains imperative in the preservation of cultural and political memory of the numerous experiences of society including historic narratives.

### **5.5.2 Freedom songs and dance as cultural heritage**

*Sarafina* is an emotionally and politically impassioned story that registers the anti-apartheid movement's anger and hope in an infectious musical context. Despite its initial exploits of cathartic violence by student protesters, in the end it refutes revenge, violence, and murder as a solution to the problems of society. Songs in the film *Sarafina* articulate mostly contexts depicting, social, political circumstances, or personal experiences. Each song has its own unique focus, but significantly contributes to the audience's understanding of how the youth was affected by the racist context during apartheid. Memories are also invoked through dance, where *Sarafina* invokes memoirs through various forms of dance associated with the struggle for freedom. Student protests were largely performed in tune with struggle songs as a gesture that galvanised the youth to stand together, united against the oppressive forces of apartheid. To most of the Black people who lived during apartheid South Africa, dance was their way of expression of freedom because, unlike political sloganeering and picketing which were disallowed, dance was seen as a socio-cultural activity. Hence, as a camouflage, the protesters identified the political strength of African "Black dance" and used it as a non-violent tool against political oppression.

*Sarafina* demonstrates that film can serve as a powerful tool in the preservation and promotion of shared ideas, values, and beliefs because it can stand the test of time. It also demonstrates the power of film which stems from its collaborative dimension making *Sarafina* worthy to be examined as a powerful weapon that can be used in the preservation of political and cultural memory beyond people's struggles against colonialism. Furthermore, *Sarafina* is theoretically premised within human experiences of specific cultures, which mirror out different political and cultural perspectives of population groups in South Africa. Therefore, the film facilitates the dissemination, and exchange of political content on platforms and within networks that accommodate interaction with a greater potential to broaden the understanding of the past experiences. The analysis has

also proved that film can create, transmit and maintain counter-memory, in the form of narratives that may be used to challenge the transmission of oppressive history or records. This confirms Banham's (2004) notion that the narratives we construct to give meaning to the past can be articulated through, and film can be utilised as a means of commenting on the discourse of history such as apartheid. This relates to historiographical debates where film can serve as an agent of history through its socio-cultural qualities.

### **5.5.3 Colonial suffrage, reconciliation and national identity formation**

*Sarafina* reveals how the apartheid system used harsh policies to oppress the black majority of South Africa. It further shows that apartheid itself was a policy of strict racial separation imposed upon South Africa's black and non-white citizens by the government to maintain white supremacy. The film producer overtly chooses to depict the horrendous massacre of hundreds of people with thousands arrested and tortured for mere demonstrating against an inhuman system of political administration. It shows how during the apartheid era passbooks were not only used to control or maintain geographical segregation but also to control the agency of black migrant labourers. The portrayal of such events makes many South Africans to reminisce their vivid memories of the ruthless apartheid system (Lubbe, 2016). As such, artefacts such as *Sarafina* serve to remind society not only to remember the heinous past, but also to reminisce as well as heal their brokenness, so that they can reclaim their sense of collective dignity and respect as the foundation of their newly found freedom in democratic South Africa. Whereas the portrayal of students weeping in the agony from deep gun wounds brings painful memories to both the victims and society, it can be argued that today's student activism is a continuation of the political struggle against apartheid emanating from enactment of education policies based on political prejudice (Muswede, 2017). Thus, *film* should be seen as a powerful medium to develop and engender national reconciliation within a multi-faceted society such as South Africa where it can contribute towards an appreciation of national diversity and national identity.

## **5.6 SARAFINA AND SYMBOLS OF POLITICAL RESISTANCE**

The fourth objective interrogated *Sarafina's* application of symbolism in portraying the historical context and narrative of the South African struggle. The study reaffirms that symbolism has been applied to express the character and nature of the South African struggle narrative for freedom as an artistic way to help reconstruct some of the elements that augment realism in film production.

### **5.6.1 Light and Darkness as cinematographic elements**

The findings from this study allude to the fact that the film *Sarafina* articulates human experiences during a socio-political struggle characterised by sadness, loss, hope and an undying search for freedom. The film represents black South Africans struggling in an environment where various social structures were being destroyed in adverse socio-political circumstances by the settler oppressors. For this reason, it can be argued that the film *Sarafina* contributes to the construction of multi-layered contexts in which socio-political and personal human experiences are aesthetically articulated. The producer's lighting plan contributes to the spectators' awareness of the spatial dimensions of the film scenes, and actions which simultaneously occur in different stages of the film frame. The application of a dark environment represents the evil practices that existed during the Apartheid era, and evokes anger among the viewers in a bid to mobilise them against the ruthless oppressors. Light and darkness are used first and foremost as phenomena that provide *Sarafina's* viewers with perceptions about what happened in front of the camera at the time. For example, the moment Sarafina comes out of jail, Darrell Roodt, the director of the film, makes use of a bright day light which symbolises rays of hope. This shows how the film exploits the contrast between light and darkness to symbolically depict the dark days of apartheid against the hope of achieving a democratic South Africa.

### **5.6.2 The Mandela portrait, camera shots and angles**

The South African struggle icon, Nelson Mandela plays a significant role in the narrative presented in the film under study. In as much as he is not physically available, he is visually seen in portrait form, where he symbolises freedom as a great icon of the freedom against apartheid. The producer uses Mandela's political courage, integrity and symbolic



vision to inspire the youth by making reference to his sustained focus on the establishment of democracy in South Africa. As the symbol of South African resistance against apartheid, he is presented as a leader who is willing to take political risks by rising above the constraints of virulent racist tendencies of the apartheid regime and the intense bitterness of his people (Berg, 2014). Through watching *Sarafina*, South Africans are reminded that Nelson Mandela was a true revolutionary symbol of sacrifice, bravery, and determination to create an equal society.

Like many films of the anti-apartheid film movement, *Sarafina* employs a direct *verité* style; the intention of the filmmaker being to record the harsh realities experienced by the majority of black South Africans apartheid. *Sarafina* has been produced in Africa with a voice, content, and aesthetic, which is rich, in historical, and politically responsive perspectives to African social reality. Often, the producer uses a wide shot particularly in the prison settings to show the audience the terrifying conditions where anti-apartheid activists were locked up. The narratives of the individuals in prison strongly articulate the suffering of the South African youth at the hands of the apartheid police. When the police electrocuted some of the prisoners, an extreme close shot is used to show the amount of unbearable physical pain they went through, deliberately bringing emotions of anger and resentment to the viewers. This is a powerful technique used by the director to convey the emotions and how deeply hurt the imprisoned youth were feeling without having to say much verbally. Despite not being professional film readers, the viewers of *Sarafina*, can visualise the extent of cruelty through the use of the gruesome shots which show a sense of gratification by the agents of the apartheid system as they tortured the victims.

### **5.6.3 Sarafina, women and the school uniform**

The film under study is credited for portraying Sarafina's political courage, integrity, and symbolic vision which sustained her focus towards the establishment of democracy in South Africa. She stands as a symbol representing the women who were brave during the struggle to fight for their freedom. The film depicts the context in which the political resistance of the youth is articulated through the internal battle of a young black girl whose demeanour embodies back painful memories. The portrayal of *Sarafina* helps to bring out significant memories and meaningful projections in which a society can create a space

for possible change. Thus, the film has been used to express black South Africans' socio-political oppression, suffering under colonial authorities, juxtaposed with hope for freedom and racial equality. Furthermore, it encourages critical thinking about the world's structural order through characters such as Sarafina, who aspired to redress political myths and superstitions relating to race issues.

Essentially, *Sarafina* represents and celebrates woman as Mbongeni Ngema (the creative author) points to the role and contribution of black women to the political struggle in South Africa. In this way, the student protest acts as a socio-cultural space where young girls in school uniform could freely celebrate their freedoms with a sense of assurance that this will not be received in bad faith by the viewers. Arguably, it is because of Sarafina's character and role in the film that women's contribution during the apartheid era have not been totally overlooked in contemporary South Africa. The school uniform helped the students to live communally as it bound them to each other and encouraged feelings of sisterhood and brotherhood coupled with comradeship. In essence, school uniforms promoted learning, nourished a sense of equality, promoted a feeling of community, and helped prevent divisive antics while promoting self-discipline among the students. Fundamentally, the film does not only celebrate Sarafina, but also suggests that millions of unknown women like Sarafina's mother and Masembuko who have no visible celebrated role in the struggle should nevertheless be recognised as heroines of the struggle in their own right.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

The study of *Sarafina* has interrogated how the student protests of the 1970s were shaped, are preserved, may be remembered, or transmitted over space and time through film and performance. The film plays a significant role in highlighting black South Africans' socio-cultural and political oppression, suffering under white authority, meanwhile expressing hope for freedom towards a racially equal society. *Sarafina* provides the ideological frameworks for the understanding of an oppressive system that aided in the construction of oppressive political structures of the apartheid times. The findings of this study demonstrate that film is an appropriate artistic repository or form of cultural memory that serves an important role in recording past experiences. Undoubtedly, it can be used

to reconstruct the socio-cultural and political experiences and values of society as nearly true and unassailable artefacts with which to preserve historic narratives such as the “uncomfortable” memories of the apartheid era. *Sarafina* succeeds in doing this through a compelling script that seeks to control its audience’s past colonial experiences and influence their thought processes to appreciate the nature and aftermaths of the South African struggle for freedom. It reminds black South Africans about the pain, suffering and missteps that occurred on both sides of the struggle that saw many people dying in the struggle against political subjugation. While its ideological insinuations and reconstruction of political engagement projects how divisive racial policies can cause conflicts in society, the film also demonstrates how the spirit of nationalism and unity of purpose can yield a democratic dispensation. The study has proved that film can create, transmit and maintain counter-memory, a set of narratives that challenge the transmission of oppressive history.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Owing to the nature and specific objectives of this particular study, often an investigation of this type may not necessarily yield specific solutions to a specific research problem because the study examined text and its relevance to society, rather than a field-based issue. Hence, the following recommendations are carefully drawn from the study based on this context.

Following the content analysis of the film under study, it is important that film be used as a vehicle in which cultural history is transmitted from generation to generation as a momentary form of art that contributes to shaping the history of society. This is exemplified by the South African struggle narrative which serves as a benchmark to the broader international community. There are numerous lessons that the people of South Africa and other countries could learn through understanding how film as a recorded art can be used in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the diverse experiences of people globally. Therefore, film should be used to contribute to the construction and reconstruction of the multi-layered contexts in which the socio-cultural and political experiences of society unfold towards peace, reconciliation, democracy, and development. This is possible, as lessons from *Sarafina* have shown, that film has the

potential to not only denounce bad governance, but can promote the voices of the poor majority to inspire accountable leadership of society.

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**ADDENDA**

**Addendum A (Film analysis instrument)**

**Title: An examination of the role of film genre in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa: An analytical study of Sarafina.**

**FILM ANALYSIS INSTRUMENT**

**Socio- Cultural and Political Environment**

1. How does the film project language/medium of instruction in schools in the context of apartheid?

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2. What are the racial injustices displayed in the film under study?

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3. What are the symbols of political oppression inherent in the film under study?

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4. What do artistic expressions such as music or poetry reveal about the political environment portrayed in the film?

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5. What roles do the educators play in fighting the injustice associated with the quality of education of that period?

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6. What are the systems of political administration associated with apartheid governance which are represented in the film?

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7. What relationships are there between the verbal language and the images in the film under study?

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**Ideological frames and political dissent**

1. What are the main political ideas inherent in the film under study?

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2. How does the film portray the resistance of the South African society against the principles of apartheid?

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3. What major tenets of the apartheid system are used to oppress the black majority of South Africa as revealed in the film?

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4. What forms of resistance are applied by the producers to depict the challenges of the South African society during Apartheid?

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5. What struggle philosophies are advanced by different character roles featured in the film?

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6. What is the dominant message in the text and the point of view presented in the storyline of Sarafina?

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**Relevance of the film as political memory**

1. What are the technical means of production used in Sarafina to depict the realities of apartheid?

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2. What are the scripting features used in narrating the apartheid resistance movement in the Mid-1970s?

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3. What are the events captured in the film which resonate with the actual events that transpired in the June Soweto uprising in 1976?

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4. What are the specific treatment formats applicable to Sarafina?

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5. How have the producers/directors of Sarafina used the various treatments to document the political and cultural aspects of apartheid?

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6. What type of symbolism is used in Sarafina to portray the historical context of the apartheid era?

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7. How is the symbolism been applied to express the character and nature of the struggle narrative?

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## CHECK LIST

No	ITEM TO BE CHECKED	TICK
1	Relevant Literature Review on Film genre and Analysis	
2	Audio Visual Content (music poetic renditions)	
3	Feature Ratings	
4	Replays	
5	Slow motions	
6	Similar films on the national and international scenes	

## **Addendum B (Table of content analysis)**

Time (Hrs:Min:Secs)	Name of character/ Symbol	Extract from the film	Codes	Theme deduced	Political memory
0:01:01 0:22:33 0:29:29	Train	Image and sound of a train moving "Four O' clock in the morning the train took men from their loved ones and came back at six"  Sarafina: "I want to tell you something Nelson when I visit my mother, I feel like I am visiting another world, I belong somewhere else"	Mode of transport  Labourers  Discrimination	Harsh political environment Racial segregation  Racial discrimination	Railroads were used to separate and control nobilities. Train reminds everyone that South African wealth and infrastructure was built on the back of labour from all over Africa. Black South Africans lived in shanty towns where the air was contaminated, dirty roads, no water and electricity
0:01:39	Footsteps	Sound of intense running	Unrest	violence	Demonstrations and protest during apartheid.
0:02:44	School	Burning of school books, desk, fire	Mass destruction	violence	Protest
0:03:04 0:04:09	Shanty houses Sarafina's uncle	Image of gloomy and dark environment Uncle always shouting and depressed because he is not working	Poverty and suffering	Poverty	The images remind black South Africans the suffering and painful experience they went through during apartheid
0:03:59 0:04:43	Children	"Sarafina" the sugar is finished". "Sarafina I need a new exercise book".	Responsibility	Poverty	Children were given tough responsibilities of taking care of other children whilst parent where at work. Black South Africans where less privileged and labourers
0:05:07 0:24:31	Nelson Mandela	Picture of Mandela on the wall  Sarafina wants to take the role of Nelson Mandela in their School show	Hope Freedom  Role model	Hope Freedom	Nelson Mandela Is considered as the father of South Africa. He stood as an inspiration to South Africans and the rest of the world and he remains a role model

0:05:56 1:10:40	Songs of freedom	<i>Sarafina</i> composed by Hugh Masekela <i>Sechaba</i> : composed by Hugh Masekela  <i>The Lord's prayer</i> arranged by Mbongeni Ngema  <i>Freedom is coming tomorrow</i> by Mbongeni Ngema	Hope/unity Fear Frustration/ weeping/lamenting Uncertainty  Freedom	Hope Unity  unity	The songs in the film reminds the younger generation about the struggle for freedom and how some Christian ideologies were used to maintain order in the society.
0:05:56	Soweto	Bold letters of the name <b>Soweto</b>	racial injustice, inequality, Segregation	racial injustice, inequality, Segregation	Unequal treatment between Black and White students. Extremely overcrowded buildings cut off from infrastructure and urban utilities and services such as water and electricity,
0:08:19 0:10:09	Heavy ammunition , guns, sjambok	Image of military vehicles, guns, and soldiers.	superiority, power to fight, cruel domination system and oppression	Violence	Harsh political environment that existed during the Apartheid period reminds the black south Africans how the Afrikaners oppressed the blacks, depriving them of their freedom
0:18:00		Soldiers standing at school assembly holding guns.			
0:25:23	soldiers	Soldiers listened through the window if teachers were following the syllabus.	Fear	Fear	
0:41:52		Sarafina: "they have guns I have seen them there is two of them".	Fear	fear	
			Cruelty	Racial injustice	The nation is reminded of the racial injustice

0:30:11		Mary Masembuko: “what if they come for you”			that transpired during apartheid.
0:39:57		Black South African Protestors are beaten with a sjambok	Uncertainty Deprivation of freedom	Fear	Black South Africans lived with fear of the unknown and looked for defensive mechanism to protect themselves and their loved ones against a brutal system
0:08:34	Young girls Sarafina	Long shot taken by the director showing Sabela in a car talking to Sarafina.	Bravery Resistance	resistance	The film reminds us of the powerful roles women and young girls played in the struggle for freedom during apartheid
0:18:57	Male students	Young boys discussed to burn the Afrikaners business “Mama goes to church, papa to shebeen, kids play in the streets”			Owners of production were the Afrikaners. Blacks were labourers and promoted the Afrikaners businesses and this made Black south Africans poor
0:26:08		“We are not happy they want everything under control”			
0:09:28	School Principle	School principle addressed the students in uniforms and reprimanded them to stop burning the schools.	Puppets Resistance Uncertainty	Deprivation of freedom Resistance	The principle reminds Black South Africans of their fellow brothers and sisters who were used as puppets to perpetuate the Afrikaners ideologies.
0:16:49	Students in uniforms	Principle moves around the school with police.	Harsh political environment.		Uniforms reminded the viewers about the



			Deprivation of freedom		imprisonment of black South African identities.
0:10:27  0:19:35	Teachers  Meetings	Teachers standing religiously at school assembly. Mary Masembuko: "what colour is God" "What is the name of the first black man in South Africa"  Police, soldiers, School Principal and teachers had a meeting with an agenda of finding the troublemakers	Fear Resistance	Harsh political environment	Some teachers during apartheid played significant roles in fighting for freedom despite the harsh political environment and made students aware of their identity and have pride in it.  Police and soldiers were part of the education system depriving teachers from doing their work. Teacher were working under an authoritarian political administration.
0:22:26  0:23:04  0:23:13  0:23:18	Classroom	"Killer disease comes to South Africa but only the Boers get it"  "We strike gold in Soweto"  "Jesus comes back"  "Mandela comes back"	Uncertainty Deprivation of resources Hope Faith	Racial discrimination Racial injustice Deprivation of freedom Harsh political environment	Black South Africans had no access to resources. The environment was harsh and tense for them to operate and were discriminated in lots of areas
0:26:00  0:36:48	Sunset  Light	An image of sunset  Students hold burning sticks	Hope	Hope	Black South Africans were hopeful that a new beginning was going to come, and all the suffering was going to come to an end.
0:26:57  0:36:48	curriculum	Student: "this is not education they want to make us out of the streets"	Resistance  Resistance	Racist curriculum	Reminds South Africans of the seven hundred people killed and over ten thousand arrested and many more tortured.

0:57:53		Student: "You can wound us, but you can't stop us"	Resistance	Racist curriculum	Some Black South Africans were ready for war.
0:57:52		Student refused to be taught the syllabus with the new teacher.  Students: "Burn, burn burn"	Resistance	resistance	South Africans and the world at large are reminded that students played a significant role in fighting the oppressive system of apartheid.  Students refused to be taught with puppet teacher who were ideologically colonised and had no pride in their nation
0:28:55  0:29:20	Elderly women	Some women in the film where mentally colonised. They rebuked the young men from burning the Afrikaners businesses  Young Boy "my daddy is doing nothing like you that's why nothing changes mama"	Mental colonialism	Apartheid ideology	Not every black South African was against the apartheid system. Some had accepted it and wanted peace only. Such group of people are blamed for slowing down the process of gaining freedom.
0:30:18	Sound	Director of the film <i>Sarafina Darrell Roodt</i> made use of intense sounds	Uncertainty	Harsh political environment	South Africans are reminded of the intensity of apartheid. The terror and trauma Black South Africans went through.
0:30:27  0:32:08  0:32:53	Park town	A long shot is used by the director to show the clean street and women sweeping the streets.	Affluent area	Racial inequality	Two worlds existed during apartheid. The white people stayed in suburbs whilst the black South Africans stayed in townships

0:33:18	Beautiful spacious house is a clear contrast of Soweto.	Unhappiness	Racial inequality	Poverty and suffering of the black South African nation.
0:33:40	Sarafina twirls around the house and climbs upstairs			
0:33:55	Close up shot is used to show Sarafina's facial expression of hate and discontentment.	Harsh political environment	Harsh political environment	Two worlds existed during apartheid, the poor and the rich, the discontent and the content.
0:34:23	Sarafina: "I want to kill them" Safina's mother: "They are good people".	Bitterness	resistance	A lot of people died in the struggle and many women became widows. They were left bitter and all responsibilities were left on them.
0:35:43	"Papa died for the struggle"  "I would rather die like him than live like you"  Crocodile Sarafina's boyfriend ran to Sarafina's house after being attacked by the dogs. A long shot is used to show the dirty roads, and shanty houses of Soweto	Poverty		Two worlds existed
0:34:40	Guitar is tortured by his fellow black brothers, the white policeman laughed whilst folding their hands at a distance	Division strategy	Ruthless system	Black South Africans were treated like animals with no sense of dignity.
0:35:14	Dogs are used to attack	Ruthless system	Violence	

0:36:13		Image of Crocodile's wound	Pain	Harsh political environment	This image brings back painful memories and reminds South Africans of a ruthless system that once existed.
0:41:21	Mary Masembuko	Mary told Sarafina that she wanted the war to be over, she wanted peace and kindness, quiet days, and loving night.	Freedom	Freedom	Most Black South Africans wanted the war to be over. People all over the world are reminded in the film that apartheid was so traumatising to most people. Black South Africans also wanted to live peacefully.
0:45:17		Mary Masembuko's house shows that her income was not much and could afford basic lifestyle. The director made sure he showed the viewers the small house with ordinary furniture	Low income	Oppressive system	The film reminds us of how the teaching profession has not always been prioritised by most African governments especially during apartheid in South Africa.
0:53:52		"I want them to know where they come from" "I want them to have a sense of pride in themselves" "History teaches you where you come from"  "People can defeat the armies" Mary Masembuko is taken from the class by the policeman.	black South African heritage  Identity  Racist curriculum	Black pride	South Africans are reminded to know their origins and to believe in themselves and have a sense of black pride.  Memories of how the curriculum was imposed on the black South Africans is clearly highlighted in the film. South Africans are reminded that if they are united and work together, they can fight an oppressive system

0:43:43	Shanty houses	An image of children sleeping on the floor.	Suffering	Poverty	Memories of the extreme poverty Black South Africans went through brings back painful memories.
0:44:06		Their houses are invaded, and young boy and girls are attacked in an uncivilised manner. Echoes of children crying are heard	Agony	Violence	South Africans are reminded of a painful past.
0:47:40		Image of a church	Christianity	Christian ideologies	Christianity played an influential role in the ideological formation and justification of the Apartheid political system, while simultaneously serving as a primary source of strength for those involved in the struggle
0:48:58	sell-outs	Image of Guitar standing with Sabela	Informers	Harsh political environment	Brings back painful memories to those that lost their loved ones during apartheid because of sell-outs. At the same time sympathising with the sell-outs bearing in mind that there was a reason why they were in that position.
0:49:12	Policeman	Sabela: "Everybody needs policeman"	Authoritarian political administration	Harsh political system	Instead of protecting citizens, upholding order, and solving crime police harassed people. The police were the face of apartheid

					representing force against most of the South African population. They remind South Africans of the brutal killings and beatings.
0:53:52	dead bodies	Image of a student shot and his fellow classmate on the ground.	Uncertainty	Harsh political environment Violence	The film brought back painful memories.
0:59:42		Image of crocodile dead on the ground.	Fear	Harsh political environment	The film reminds its viewers how some students lost their lives and the painful experience they went through.
0:59:56		Students and the youth marched with coffins on their shoulders. Background music is played	Sorrowful	Racial injustice	Apartheid was brutal and many people lost their lives.
1:00:26	Preacher	“They fear your because you are young”	Encouragement	Harsh political environment	The younger generation was vulnerable during apartheid. Many students lost their lives in the struggle for freedom
1:01:07	The cross	On top of each coffin there was a cross	Christianity	Christian ideologies	Christianity played an influential role in the ideological formation and justification of the apartheid political system while serving as a primary source of strength for those involved in the struggle
1:04:18	students	The director <i>Darrell Roodt</i> use a contrast of guns and stones	Harsh political environment	Harsh political environment	The war was never easy. Those that fought the system should be regarded as heroes and heroines and should be given positions in the parliament
1:05:14		Students ran for their lives as the police threw tear gas, used helicopters and shot young	Violence		

		vibrant youth randomly with guns  In retaliation the youth threw stones and caused mass destruction and vandalism	Destruction		
1:07:10	Sabela's house	Image of Sabela's house	Low income earners	Racial inequalities Racial segregation	Memories of the huge earning gap found between black and white South Africans
1:08:11	Sabela's death	Sabela was burnt alive	Bitterness	violence	Black South Africans were separated from each other to enable the government to claim there was no black majority and reduced the possibilities that blacks would unify into one nationalist organisation. There was no unity among the black South Africans, and this was ideologically planned.
1:11:27	Prison	Young protesters are lined up like animals	Harsh political environment	Harsh political environment	A lot of innocent black women and men were imprisoned tortured and were subjects to oppression. Prisons were overpopulated. Prisons bring painful memories because black South Africans were tortured, killed, and abused in prisons.
1:11:49		Sarafina is searched whether she is in possession of anything. The policemen physical abuse her in the process of doing so.	Abuse	Physical abuse	
1:12:24		Image of darkness in the prison.	Terror	Racial segregation	
1:13:03		Sarafina is interrogated in the prison	Racial injustice	violence	

1:16:10	Interrogator	Image of the interrogator's well-furnished office.	Good working environment	Racial segregation	White people worked in offices whilst black South Africans were house maids and labourers.
1:15:40		Sarafina is told the bad news that Mrs Masembuko killed herself. A close up is used to show Sarafina's traumatised sad face.	Ruthless system	Racial injustice	The film reminds us that a lot of black South Africans lost their brothers, sister, friends, and colleagues mysteriously. They still have hope that they are going to come
1:20:08 1:20:31 1:22:29 1:21:42 1:23:26	Narrators	"I cried like a little baby" "he took me to a room full of dead bodies" "they whipped us with a syjambok" "I screamed and fell on the ground"  "we fear them, but we do not forget"	Violence	Racial injustice	South Africans are reminded of the pain and agony black people went through during apartheid.
1:33:47	Sarafina	Sarafina rehearsed taking the role of Nelson Mandela	Hope	hope	Nelson Mandela guided South Africa from the dark days of apartheid.



## Addendum C (FHDC approval letter)



**University of Limpopo**  
Faculty of Humanities  
Executive Dean

Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 4895, Fax: (015) 268 3425, Email: Satsope.maoto@ul.ac.za

DATE: 12 July 2019

**NAME OF STUDENT:** MASVOPO. DT  
**DEPARTMENT:** MA – Media Studies  
**SCHOOL:** LANGCOM

Dear Student

### **FACULTY APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL (PROPOSAL NO. FHDC2019/5/2)**

I have pleasure in informing you that your MA proposal served at the Faculty Higher Degrees Meeting on 29 May 2019 and your title was approved as follows:

**TITLE: AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF FILM GENRE IN THE PRESERVATION OF POLITICAL AND CULTURAL MEMORY OF THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN SOUTH AFRICA: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF SARAFINA**

Note the following:

<b>Ethical Clearance</b>	<b>Tick One</b>
In principle the study requires no ethical clearance, but will need a TREC permission letter before proceeding with the study	
Requires ethical clearance (Human) (TREC) (apply online) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	✓
Requires ethical clearance (Animal) (AREC) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	

Yours faithfully

**Prof RS Maoto,**  
**Executive Dean: Faculty of Humanities**

Director: Dr JR Rammala  
Supervisor: Dr T Muswede

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## Addendum D (TREC permission letter)



**University of Limpopo**  
Department of Research Administration and Development  
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: Anastasia.Ngobe@ul.ac.za

**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
**PERMISSION LETTER**

**Date:** 05 November 2019

**PROJECT NO:** TREC/15/2019 [NEI]

**Project title:**

**Title:** An examination of the role of film genre in the preservation of political and cultural memory of the struggle for freedom in South Africa: An analytical study of Sarafina

**Researcher:** DT Masvopo

This serves to confirm that the abovementioned study involves secondary use of data and has no ethical implication. After review of the study protocol, the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) hereby grants the researcher permission to proceed with their research.

  
PROF P MASOKO

**CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

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