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KINNA-UGANDA:
A REVIEW OF UGANDA'S NATIONAL CINEMA

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of TV, Radio, Film, Theatre Arts

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Kristin Alexandra Rasmussen

December 2010

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The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled

KINNA-UGANDA:
A REVIEW OF UGANDA'S NATIONAL CINEMA

by

Kristin Alexandra Rasmussen

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TV, RADIO, FILM, THEATRE ARTS

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERISTY

December 2010

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ABSTRACT

KINNA-UGANDA: A REVIEW OF UGANDA'S NATIONAL CINEMA

by Kristin Alexandra Rasmussen

Kinna-Uganda (K-U) is a form of cinema that has emerged in Uganda following decades of the totalitarian political regime of Idi Amin, which in turn followed almost a century of colonial rule. The concept of national cinema is evaluated in this thesis as a tool for analysis of K-U. The national cinema concept is compared with four other models -- regional, continental, Pan-African, and transnational -- that can also be used to analyze and deconstruct films and the academic space within which they reside. This study examines Uganda's pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial times and their impact on the production of K-U and on Uganda's film industry. This research also presents the dissemination of Africa's cinema in the context of the African Diaspora and provides a guide to K-U and the Ugandan film industry from its inception until early 2010.

In analyzing these findings of this study, it has been determined that the concept of national cinema is useful when dissecting K-U. The strength and utility of national cinema as a concept lies in four different factors: it aids in identifying K-U; it helps to explain the origins and characteristics of the local Ugandan film industry; it identifies the common constraints to expansion of the Ugandan film industry and, lastly, it helps in offering a prediction for the future of the Ugandan film industry. However, adhering to a strict definition of national cinema is shown to be less useful than previously in evaluating K-U, as it has propagated through Africa and increasingly involves co-productions between Ugandan and non-Ugandan entities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank the faculty of the San José State University School of TRFT, particularly Dr. David Kahn and Dr. Alison McKee for their invaluable assistance in making my drafts come to life. Dr. Alison McKee deserves extra recognition for her exceptional assistance and unwavering support of this project and me since its inception (the blue highlighter worked miracles). And a special thanks to Dr. María Ochoa for her assistance with final touches and for all of her support and encouragement since I arrived at San José State. To my Mom, you are my rock – there is not enough room to acknowledge all that you have done for this project and me. To my Dad, for our weekly salons, endless editing sessions, and my journey to Exeter Grove to hash out the last portion of the thesis. To my sister, thank you for being there for me when I needed you. To Grandma Lala, for her endless supply of sustenance throughout graduate school and our weekly Sunday dinners. To Sara, for being my best friend and sticking by my side, even when times got rough. To Natalie and Dianna for having my back in Uganda; an extra shout goes out to Natalie for being my hostess while in country – without your support this project would have never come to fruition. Thank you to Maisha Film Lab for their generosity of time and resources. To all of the Ugandan filmmakers who have overcome major obstacles guided by their passion for the medium of film, this thesis is for you. Finally, a very warm thank you to my Nana, without whom graduate school would have never been something to strive for—I know you are watching down on me and must be a bit shocked – but mostly proud. This thesis is dedicated to all of the filmmakers around the world who shoot in the name of peace and justice.

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Chapter One:

Painting Uganda

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a formal description of the current state of the Ugandan film industry by examining the emerging category of national cinema produced by Uganda (financially supported by a Ugandan person or business entity) and directed by a Ugandan: Kinna-Uganda (Uganda's national cinema). Moreover, this thesis asserts the concept of national cinema is a useful tool in formulating a description of the substance and operation of the nascent Kinna-Uganda.

The term Kinna-Uganda was coined within Uganda and is frequently used throughout this thesis to define films produced solely by Uganda. Kinna-Uganda is articulated by Ugandans (but sometimes spelled differently) as "a home-grown, grassroots phenomenon, springing from an established tradition of theatre and stage-acting" ("Gulu"). While there are only a handful of films that have been produced so far, Kinna-Uganda serves as the first category of film that represents Uganda by Ugandan filmmakers. Thus, Kinna-Uganda bears the potential to serve as an outlet of expression for the people of Uganda.

It is my central assertion that Kinna-Uganda comprises Uganda's national cinema thus the term Kinna-Uganda is frequently used throughout this thesis. Furthermore, I propose that in order to fit into the category of Uganda's national cinema films must be directed by a Ugandan and produced by Uganda. Thus, the first Kinna-Uganda was born in 2005 with the release of *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005). Directed and written by Hajji Ashraf Ssemwogerere, *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005) is a

seed of sorts, as it is the very first Kinna-Uganda. In contrast, although the film *The Last King of Scotland* (Macdonald 2006) was filmed in Uganda, it is not considered to be a Kinna-Uganda as it was produced by a British company and directed by a Westerner. For the purpose of this thesis, a Westerner is someone who is from the Americas and the parts of Europe not under Communist rule. The concept of national cinema is useful in: examining the category of Kinna-Uganda as it aids in identifying Kinna-Uganda films, helping to explain the origins of the local Ugandan film industry, identifying the constraints to expansion of the Ugandan film industry, and lastly, helping to offer a prediction for the future of the Ugandan industry.

This thesis discusses the role of cinema as a socio-cultural tool that can be used both for entertainment purposes and acculturation. In Africa, cinema was first used as a didactic tool by Westerners for acculturation during colonization. In a sense, cinema in Africa exists as a result of colonization, introduced by foreign agents for purposes explained in this thesis. Much later, with the advent of the independence of African nation-states, cinema began to serve the indigenous African population:

> It was only in the 1960s, when Third World people themselves started participating in cinematic exploration, that they film medium began to be used as a serious vehicle to give voice to that mass of humanity – the peoples of form in a positive way. For the first time, the 'nameless' began to receive significant recognition. Contemporary cinema is definitively marked by the emergence of a cinema of decolonization, a response to a new historic situation that demands of Third World filmmakers in particular, and of progressive cineasts at large, a new revolutionary attitude towards film practice. (Gabriel 1)

In Uganda, the act of film being utilized by locals without colonial influences took place much later than the 1960s due to political circumstances. It wasn't until 2005 that Kinna-Uganda began to be used as a vehicle for the people in Uganda to spread their

own culture instead of utilizing cinema to spread Western narratives that had for so long dominated the film culture. In this way, Kinna-Uganda can be seen as a cinema of decolonization.

Additionally, this thesis compares the concept of national cinema to four other models, which can be utilized when analyzing and deconstructing films and the academic space within which they reside. The four models are: regional, continental, Pan-African, and transnational. Comparing these different models a enables rigorous examination of the concept of national cinema in order to determine its usefulness in providing an overview and critical reconnaissance of the category of Kinna-Uganda. A regional model groups all films produced in one geographically specific area as one type of category. East Africa is an example of a regional model. A continental model incorporates all films produced on one continent. Africa is an example of a continental model. A pan-African model incorporates all films produced by someone of African decent, regardless of nationality or physical residence. A transnational model is the antithesis of the national model, as it takes the concept of globalization and the exchange of cultures into consideration. Therefore, a transnational film will cite several, or many different countries involved in the production of a film. Utilizing these four models is helpful in understanding Kinna-Uganda in a larger global context. A history of Uganda as it relates to the Ugandan film industry and Kinna-Uganda will also be discussed in order to further test the efficacy of the concept of national cinema.

Although the topics of Uganda's former times, current economic situation, condition of infrastructure, and contemporary social-political atmosphere are not intended

to be the main focus of this thesis, it is important to understand the influence of these factors and the indelible repercussions they present not only for the country of Uganda, but on Kinna-Uganda and Uganda's film industry. Because cinema reflects the development of a country and its society, the study of Kinna-Uganda and Uganda's film industry has been guided by and serves as a "lens" into the history of Uganda. That Kinna-Uganda is a new industry and bereft of any academic information, makes its study more interesting and revealing as a country only recently released from the influences of colonialism and post-colonialism dictatorial rule and oppression. Furthermore, the particular socio-political circumstances of the country: its poverty, multi tribal origin of Ugandan peoples, and its multi-decade long sequestration from modernity makes the study of Kinna-Uganda unique in the world. That is, it provides a measure of influence of cinema as an emerging nation and how national cinema is shaped by the character of a nation.

During the Berlin Conference from 1884-1885, European leaders met in order to formally clarify the rules of colonization as well as divide up African territory. An informal method of colonization was well under way however, the meeting was to put into place a European internationally recognized form of rules and regulations to the carving up of Africa:

> In 1884 at the request of Portugal, German chancellor Otto von Bismark called together the major Western powers of the world to negotiate questions and end confusion over the control of Africa. Bismark appreciated the opportunity to expand Germany's sphere of influence over Africa and desired to force Germany's rivals to struggle with one another for territory.
>
> At the time of the conference, 80% of Africa remained under traditional and local control. What ultimately resulted was a hodgepodge of geometric boundaries that

> divided Africa into fifty irregular countries. This new map of the continent was superimposed over the one thousand indigenous cultures and regions of Africa. The new countries lacked rhyme or reason and divided coherent groups of people and merged together disparate groups who really did not get along. (Rosenberg par. 2-3)

During the late 19th century the British formally colonized territory in East Africa establishing it as a protectorate. The British renamed the territory Uganda. The disparate peoples who were to be included in the new nation-state of Uganda had no influence over the British imposed empire. As Ugandan expert Ian Legget elaborates:

> The announcement of its creation and of its status as a British protectorate was published in the London Gazette in 1894. Unfortunately, most of the people who lived in the territory that was described to the world as being Uganda had never heard of the London Gazette, nor did a country called Uganda mean anything to them. Not surprisingly they felt no allegiance to an imperial creation whose borders cut across existing economic, political, and social relationships. (1)

As a result of the British taking on Uganda as a protectorate without the participation of the people of Uganda there was no loyalty existing towards the new nation-state or its government. This lack of unity in supporting the new nation-state also impeded the development of a single national identity much less a national cinema for Uganda.

The British purportedly invaded East Africa in order to rid Africans of the Arab slave labor practices that had existed along the African coast for centuries (Cutter 14). However, although the British acquired Uganda under the guise of heroic justifications, undertaking the role as savior, just as many other invasions throughout the world have ensued, the subsequent British occupation led to racist practices and social inequalities (Cutter 14). The British created Uganda's first legislative council in 1921. Even so, native Ugandans, or any person of African decent, were not permitted to participate in the

legislative process until 1945, when the first African legislative council member was admitted ("Timeline: Uganda" par. 15). Thus, for a period of 24 years, Ugandans were disenfranchised from the legislative council that the British created. As a result, Ugandans were politically disempowered and representationally silenced during this period of time. Not only did racist laws disenfranchise Ugandans from the governmental and legal sector, but they also deprived them from participating in the film sector as well as other businesses.

The creation of Uganda as a nation-state was founded by furtive and thereby precarious means. To further elaborate:

> The formation of Uganda was not the result of a gradual process of national integration. On the contrary, both its existence and its borders were determined almost entirely by competition between the imperial powers – Great Britain, Germany, and France – for control of territory and Africa and, specifically, for control of the head-waters of the River Nile. (Leggett 1)

The ruthless, economically motivated, hasty, and insensitive nature of Uganda's formation would prove to hold disastrous repercussions for the future of the country as well as its people. Moreover, the negligent political nature in which the nation-state was formed and culturally integrated negatively impacted the development of a national film industry and a national cinema such as Kinna-Uganda.

The presence of over two centuries of Western-promulgated war and civil strife has undercut trust in the social institutions of Uganda. Even after independence, the trauma of Uganda's history of coups and civil war is deeply embedded in the new nation state of Uganda. As a result of the lack of social stability, a local film industry was not

able to develop. These conditions catastrophes include: political, a lack of financial support due to poverty, and a volatile political atmosphere. As Leggett explains:

> Within four years of achieving independence in 1962, Uganda experienced the first of a series of political catastrophes that would make it one of the poorest nations of Africa, and a byword for economic mismanagement, incapable leadership, and the abuse of human rights. (18)

The detrimental conditions of a volatile political atmosphere, lack of financial wherewithal due to the extreme poverty of the country, and human right abuses have made it difficult for Uganda to develop a healthy body of films.

Even after Ugandan independence in 1962, freedom of speech and filmmaking were both repressed. Uganda remained a protectorate of Britain for a total of 68 years until Uganda finally gained its full independence on October 9, 1962, with what is known as the Ugandan Independence Act. However, the early Ugandan post-colonial period proved to be a continually suppressive time for the people of Uganda. Even with its newly gained political independence from Britain, "…Uganda went without any national elections for 18 years" (Ogwang 3). In 1962, President Milton Obote became the appointed Prime Minister of Uganda and supported the Baganda, which allowed the tribe to hold a considerable amount of autonomy until 1966 ("Timeline: Uganda" par. 17, 19):

> Buganda is located in the south-central region of the country known today as Uganda…The people of Buganda are referred to as *Baganda* (the singular form is *Muganda*), their language is referred to as Luganda, and they refer to their customs as Kiganda customs…Buganda is home to the nation's political and commercial capital, Kampala; as well as the country's main international airport, Entebbe. ("Introduction" par. 1)

In 1966, there was a power struggle between the Obote-led government and King Mutesa of the Buganda and ultimately, as a result, the constitution was changed and both the

ceremonial president and vice president were removed from power. However, the next year Obote was again declared president. During this time, even though Ugandans were finally free from the reign of the British and had a Ugandan head of state, the new government they faced paralleled, and in some ways perhaps even surpassed the oppression that they had weathered under the British. As one informant revealed, "Obote's government did not allow any speaking…If Obote wanted to remove someone from parliament, it was simply done" (Karlstrom 216). Although there is no evidence that filmmakers were subject to overt sanction or reprisals during this time, the lack of cinema output reflects an environment that was both oppressive and discouraged filmmaking.

Furthermore, Leggett believes that a lack of a stable economy is the result of colonialism. Logically then, the film industry did not have the luxury of being able to develop in a stable economy during that period of time, which in turn most likely hindered and colored its progress post-colonialism. As Legget notes, Idi Amin, Milton Obote, and colonialism have all tremendously shaped Uganda's economy:

> Colonialism had a profound effect on Uganda's economy and on the livelihoods of its people. Uganda was integrated into a trading system that was shaped to meet the interests of an elite in Britain…Colonialism built upon differences in economic development apparent in pre-colonial times in such a way as to produce a strongly unbalanced economy. (54-55)

What's more, even though the early post-colonial period seemed to be analogous to, and in some ways exceed the brutalities imposed on the people of Uganda by the British, it is important to note that historians such as Metts have proposed that at the root of Uganda's post-colonial destruction, lies colonialism itself:

> …the brutal behavior of Uganda's post-independence governments and the unequal distribution of Uganda's economic opportunities since independence are natural consequences of Uganda's colonial experience. (299)

A brief recital of Ugandan history during this period bears out this perspective. During Obote's period in office, Uganda's state of affairs took a turn for the worse. In a 1971 coup Obote was overthrown by Idi Amin, a ruthless dictator, who would remain in power for eight years. During Amin's rule, from 1971 through 1979, virtually Uganda's entire infrastructure was uprooted and destroyed. Additionally, Amin ordered over 60,000 Asian residents of Uganda who were not citizens to leave the country ("Timeline: Uganda" par. 22). It was not until 1979, the year that Amin fled Uganda in fear of his life, that Uganda was finally rid of his merciless regime. As a result of Amin's regime, 500,000 people had either disappeared, or been killed ("Timeline: Uganda" par. 20; "Idi Amin: 'Butcher of Uganda'" par. 14). Needless to say, this type of oppressive atmosphere did not allow the people to develop a national cinema.

Amin's stay in office as President impacted the development of an indigenous Ugandan film industry on multiple levels. For example, Ugandan theaters that played foreign films were eradicated as Amin eliminated private ownership of various media enterprises ("Uganda in a Nutshell" par. 9). This led to the replacement of cinema houses with traditional theatre productions, which soon became the primary form of entertainment for Ugandans ("Uganda in a Nutshell" par. 9). Today, stage theatre productions still serve as the primary source of entertainment for Ugandans (AfricaFilmTV.com par. 9). During Amin's totalitarian rule Ugandans altogether avoided making films for fear of being killed, which only further extinguished any hope for the

revival of the film industry by independent filmmakers (Nuwagaba , "Rosy Future" par. 2).

In 1980, Obote became the president of Uganda once again. However, by 1982 Obote was overthrown in a military coup and replaced by Tito Okello. Uganda's current President, Yoweri Museveni, came to power in 1986 and is presently serving his third term ("Background Note: Uganda" par. 18). The National Resistance Army (NRA) placed Museveni in power on January 29, 1986, after the NRA took Kampala by storm, toppling the Tito Okello regime ("Timeline: Uganda" par. 30). Even so, the first fair and free elections in Uganda were not held until 1996 of which Museveni won. Museveni remains in power to this very day.

Since 1986, Uganda has been a republic, consisting of executive, legislative, and judicial branches ("Background Note: Uganda" par. 19). Each presidential term consists of five years, and as a result of a contentious amendment that passed in 2004, presidential term limits no longer exist ("Background Note: Uganda" par. 18). The next presidential election will be held in 2011, and if Museveni wins he will be the first Ugandan President to surpass the newly instated term limits. Regardless of Museveni's purported involvement in and possible personal gains from advocating the lengthening of term limits the United States government has given him praise, citing that he has implemented progress and positive reforms in Uganda:

> Since assuming power, Museveni and his government have largely put an end to the human rights abuses of earlier governments, initiated substantial economic liberalization and general press freedom, and instituted economic reforms in accord with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and donor governments. ("Background Note: Uganda" par. 22)

However, Museveni has been accused of violating human rights by various international human rights of organizations. For example, it is the opinion of such independent organizations, such as Shared Humanity, that:

> In the Museveni era gross human rights violations have been centred in the Acholi land region in the north (Gulu, Pader, and Kitgum districts). Groups such as the Uganda People's Democratic Army, the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces, and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have been fighting the government. The roots of the LRA and other rebel groups in Acholiland lie in the ethnic politics in Uganda whereby the overthrown Okello regime was associated with the Acholis while the Museveni regime found most of its support in the south and south-west of the country. ("Dictionary of Gross Human Rights Violations: Uganda, Gross Human Rights Violations in" par. 5)

This oppressive atmosphere serves as yet another obstacle to the film industry to thrive.

Direct evidence of the impact of the current government's chilling effect on artistic freedom came in 2005, when the Media Council, a part of the national government, banned the screening of a documentary surrounding the play "Vagina Monologues":

> In 2005 the Media Council, followed by the government, banned the screening of a documentary about the play Vagina Monologues – a clear restriction of freedom in a cultural context. Other forms of cultural censorship are said to take place on a regular basis. ("Uganda" par. 25)

The banning of the documentary illustrates the type of creative restrictive environment Ugandan filmmakers continue to endure.

Recently, Uganda's social-political climate flared up and was eerily reminiscent of the repressive, Orwellian atmosphere of the past. During the second week of September 2009 the Ugandan government:

> …proceeded to ban several talk shows and live radio call-in programmes (Ebimeeza) based on the claim that the stations are unable to control their content.

> As well, individual journalists and commentators have been banned from appearing on any broadcasting medium. ("Thirty-one" par. 6)

The media bans that took place were in response to riots in which, "At least 640 people were arrested and 14 killed in fighting in Uganda's capital between government forces and loyalists of a traditional kingdom" ("Hundreds arrested" par. 1). Filmmaker Kalundi Serumaga, an outspoken opponent of Museveni, was purportedly unlawfully arrested:

> The unlawful arrest of Ugandan writer, broadcaster and filmmaker, Mr. Kalundi Serumaga by irregular security operatives on Friday September 11, 2009 is a sad development in the fast deteriorating human rights situation in Uganda. ("East African Writers Unite to Free Journalist" par.1)

These bans on the media and the harsh treatment of filmmakers as stated above present a reminder of the challenges that the film industry has had to endure.

In addition to Uganda's tumultuous past and recent political unrest, poverty and lack of infrastructure are two more hindrances to the development of Uganda's film industry. Access to the power grid is tenuous in Uganda and this lack of electricity is a major hurdle for filmmakers who wish to produce Kinna-Uganda. Unfortunately, it is extremely rare for Ugandans to have access to the public power grid, as only between 6 percent and 7 percent of the population have electricity (Mæstad 22).

Furthermore, the amount of capital needed in order to fund a Kinna-Uganda is problematic. In 2005, Uganda's gross national income was just $300 U.S. dollars per year ("Statistics"). While 85 percent of Ugandans live on incomes falling below 1 U.S. dollar a day[1] ("Statistics"). This clearly illustrates just how difficult it is for would-be independent filmmakers to have access to personal funds in order to produce films, as a typical Kinna-Uganda costs between 5,000-10,000 US dollars to produce.

Uganda's population is roughly 22 million people and "Over 80 percent of Ugandan people live in villages and small trading centres" (Leggett 7). The capital and only city in Uganda is Kampala (Leggett 7). However, even within the small nation of Uganda, there are, "… nearly 20 indigenous languages…" and individuals, "…identify with one of about 18 different ethnic groups and learn corresponding ethnic varieties as first language or mother tongue" (Mpuga 2). Due to the makeshift nation-state that the British created and imposed on the people of Uganda, the territory lacks cohesiveness and shared, unified culture. As Leggett purposes:

> One of the most persistent and complex issues to shape Ugandan politics over the years has been the tension between tribal and national identity. For many Ugandans, a sense of pride and belonging is derived from tribal identity. On the other hand, long-term stability and peace will only be achieved when that such identities are widely perceived to be of little significance in the enjoyment of the civil, political, social, and economic rights derived from being a citizen of the state of Uganda. (75)

Leggett's proposition suggests the importance of Kinna-Uganda as a revolutionary concept, as it serves the first category of non-colonial film widely accepted by Ugandans as a national representation of Ugandan culture onscreen, regardless of the tribal association or language being spoken in the film. Thus, Kinna-Uganda has the potential to reflect on and unite the fragmented nation-state through storytelling as the category of Kinna-Uganda depends upon the citizens identifying Kinna-Uganda as a category that represents their nation.

After being subjected to colonialism, brutal dictatorships, poverty, and the HIV pandemic, there is fear about the mental health of the entire nation, "Uganda has passed through political and bloody civil strife stretching over 40 years…Since 1987 the

HIV/AIDS pandemic has compounded the problems of the country" (Ovuga par. 1). Even so, "There are 21 psychiatrists in Uganda for a population of 26.8 million (4), a psychiatrist to population ratio of 1:1.3 million." (Ovuga par. 9) This ratio is disturbingly low, particularly for a nation that has been through such political upheaval and trauma. For example, Frantz Fanon supports the idea that mental illnesses coincide with colonization:

> When colonization remains unchallenged by armed resistance, when the sum of harmful stimulants exceeds a certain threshold, the colonized defenses collapse, and many of them end up in psychiatric institutions. In the calm of this period of triumphant colonization, a constant and considerable stream of mental symptoms are direct sequels of this oppression. (182)

If Ugandans both retain their respective tribal identities and yet unite as a country, it is likely that the collective trauma placed upon Ugandans due to colonization will first need to be addressed. It is my central assertion that Kinna-Uganda is the first example of a non-colonial category of films in Uganda as, by definition, they are not funded by foreigners, namely Westerners.

Even though the collective Ugandan population has accepted Kinna-Uganda as their own national cinema as evident in news articles, the films have not had the opportunity to be circulated outside of Uganda ("Uganda: Frenzy" par. 1). For example, an excerpt from a news article states, "Whether 'Kinna-Uganda' (films made in Uganda) means theatre plays adopted to the screen or real films, Ugandans are crazy for it. The obsession for local movies is spreading like a wild bush fire." ("Uganda: Frenzy" par. 1). While Westerners have produced films in Uganda, such as *The Last King of Scotland* (Macdonald 2006), that have attracted a global audience, Ugandans themselves have not.

It must be remembered that the point of view from which the world has seen Uganda is from stories told by people who are not of Ugandan nationality. As a result, Kinna-Uganda has the potential, if it finds a broader distribution within and outside of Uganda, to change the way in which Uganda is both portrayed and perceived through cinema.

Since 2005, Kinna-Uganda has been aided by two main factors: a relatively calm political climate, as well as recent technological developments in the video production field. Paralleling relative improvements in Uganda's political environment, new affordable, portable technology of the 21st century has enabled independent filmmakers who produce Kinna-Uganda films to create their own films for the first time in history, and as a result, simultaneously launched the indigenous Ugandan film industry. The Ugandan film industry is currently in its infancy beginning with the first Kinna-Uganda titled, *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005), Ugandans could finally claim a film as one of their own. *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005) is considered the first Kinna-Uganda as it is the first film to be directed by a Ugandan and filmed in Uganda. The film *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005) is a seed of sorts as it led to the recognition and overall acceptance by both journalists and the people of Uganda of a single, Ugandan national identity portrayed on-screen for the first time in history (Ssejjengo par. 1). Additionally, *Feelings Struggle* (Ssimwogerere 2005) is the first film that fits into the category of Ugandan national cinema because prior to *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005) films produced in Africa were done so by Western entities. To clarify, even though there are different concepts of national cinema, for the purpose of this thesis,

Ugandan national cinema, or Kinna-Uganda, is a film directed by a Ugandan and produced by Uganda.

Consequently, *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005) is not only an important milestone pointing to the beginning of the Ugandan film industry, it also holds larger socio-political ramifications. The fact that a single Ugandan identity has been successfully recognized suggests a potential for a larger, continental movement, one that supports a single African identity. The argument proceeds from the point that if Ugandans can get past their tribal, ethnic, and linguistic divisions and agree on one particular encompassing identification, then perhaps Africans with a similar or less daunting history can do the same. Many African scholars argue that as long as a single African identity, or Pan-Africanism, fails to exist, so to will peace, economic prosperity, and democratic free and fair elections be unrealized. As Robert Chrisman explains:

> the Pan African vision has as its basic premise that we the people of African descent throughout the globe constitute a common cultural and political community by virtue of our origin in Africa and our common racial, social and economic oppression. It further maintains that political, economic, and cultural unity is essential among all Africans, to bring about effective action for the liberation and progress of the African peoples and nations. (Nantambu 1)

Since the emergence of the category of Kinna-Uganda in 2005, there has been a slow, yet constant, stream of films released. Thus far, the filmmakers who have produced the Kinna-Ugandas have done so independently by using their own resources and overcoming the previously noted constraints, with no support from the Ugandan government or private film production companies. Without a continuing source of financial support the Ugandan film industry cannot be identified as a cohesive,

economically viable, internationally, or even continentally recognized entity (Jacum, Esther. Phone Interview. 22 March. 2009).

Additionally, even if Kinna-Uganda films are produced and released, there are no efficient, large-scale outlets for distribution. As a result, filmmakers must rely on recouping their production investments by employing one, or a combination of the following inefficient methods: airing the films locally on a select movie night at a local bar, airing the films at local makeshift video hall, or selling DVDs by way of street vendors (Marshfield & van Oosterhout 13).

Ultimately, the fragmentation of the Ugandan film industry can be seen as a consequence of the fragmentation of Uganda's society, tracing back, as discussed above, to the way in which the nation-state was formed. Uganda's contemporary state of societal fragmentation is a consequence of indirect rule colonialism forced upon the Ugandan population during the British colonial era. As Leggett details:

> The chosen strategy for the administration of Uganda was 'indirect rule' – a euphemism for the creation of a class of collaborators who would be responsible on a day to day basis for the implementation of British rule and who, in return, would enjoy preferential treatment. (16)

As a result, this fragmentation perhaps delayed the people of Uganda in identifying, creating, and agreeing upon one national cinema, Kinna-Uganda. It was not until the dissemination of European rule and culture that the once separate, yet solidly functioning African tribes, were consolidated into the one nation-state of Uganda.

> In 1888 Britain assigned political and economic power over the region to the British East Africa Company by royal charter. The Company's control over the area was consolidated in 1891 when a treaty was signed with the Buganda, then the area's principal kingdom. In 1894 the British government assumed power, declaring Baganda a protectorate. This

> protectorate was expanded in 1896 to include areas of the Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole and Bugosa. ("Uganda Page" par. 3)

Thus, colonialism in African territory created the nation-state of Uganda, which allowed the national cinema of Uganda to develop.

Paradoxically, film came to Africa precisely as a result of colonialism. As Nwachukwu Ukadike explains:

> Cinema came to Africa as a potent organ of colonialism. Because film is a powerful visual medium with an extraordinary ability to inordinately influence the thinking and behavior of its audience (as the missionaries proved) films proved to be a powerful tool for indoctrinating Africans into foreign cultures, including their ideals and aesthetics. ("Black African Cinema" 31)

As a result, the first films in Africa, and more specifically Uganda, were colonial films, produced for and by colonial supported interests. Interestingly, where film was first utilized as a colonial tool utilized for indoctrinating the native population, it would later become by and for the people of Uganda as a method to portray their own lives to the world. The concept of the ability to create a Ugandan film culture becomes an increasingly complex notion as film itself came to Uganda as a result of colonialism, and is originally a Western tool and innovation.

Because the Ugandan film industry is so new and underdeveloped, there is a limited body of Kinna-Ugandas to draw upon, and very little material has been published regarding the Ugandan film industry or Kinna-Uganda in general. Specifically, there hasn't been any scholarly research conducted regarding either Kinna-Ugandas or the Ugandan film industry. Information that does exist on either topic can be found on informal, online Ugandan news website articles and in two memos released by UNESCO published in the 1960s. Additionally, there is one government report that exists that

discusses a related topic, the nature of Uganda's video halls, which was published in 2006.

This thesis contributes data to a discipline where there is currently no academic knowledge concerning either the emerging film industry within Uganda and its product, Kinna-Uganda. Specifically, the thesis illuminates the current state of the Ugandan film industry and describes the limited number of films being produced that fall under the category of Kinna-Uganda. In doing so, the thesis rigorously evaluates the extent to which the concept of national cinema is a useful tool in helping one comprehend and assess the nascent Kinna-Uganda. While there is a limited amount of data on Kinna-Uganda, a wide body of work on national cinema exists outside of Uganda. Furthermore, there is a wide body of data on how cinema developed in other African countries, which will be included. This thesis may also provide scholars with a research approach that could prove useful in conducting further research on other emerging film industries of small nations and the cinemas that exist within that modality, both in Africa as well as other developing countries.

The research for the thesis was conducted at a propitious time, as Kinna-Ugandas have just begun to emerge during the 21st century. This emergence has been aided by two important factors as stated earlier: a relatively calm socio-political climate, with the exception of the 2009 riots, as well as recent technical developments in the video production field. Uganda, a country plagued by a violent, turbulent past, which includes a history of British colonialism and other disastrous regimes, has had a relatively stable government in place for the past 15 years.

While in Uganda from July 21 2008 through August 21 2008, I conducted several interviews with Musarait Kashmiri, Program Director of Maisha Film Lab, and Esther Jacum, actress, filmmaker, and founder of the Cine Club, both of whom possess inside knowledge of the Ugandan film industry. After I arrived back in the states, I conducted phone interviews with up and coming filmmakers, Mark Kaigwa and Daphne Umpire, who were both accepted into Maisha Film Lab's training course in the summer of 2009. I also conducted a follow-up interview with Esther Jacum. Their input and personal perspectives have provided invaluable insight and immensely contributed to the project.

While there has been a substantial amount of scholarly literature published regarding African cinema from researchers such as Frank Ukadike and Olivier Bartlett, there has not been any scholarly literature yet published which focuses specifically on Kinna-Uganda. The data I have obtained regarding Kinna-Uganda has been done so by utilizing news and internet accounts on Kinna-Uganda, a personal visit to Uganda and fieldwork, and finally follow up interviews. The online sources utilized include three major English-language newspapers distributed in Uganda: *The New Vision* and *The Sunday Vision*, *The Daily Monitor*, and *The Observer*. The *New Vision* and the *Sunday Vision* are both essentially the same government owned publication (*The Sunday Vision* is simply an expanded, weekly version of *The New Vision* publication), while *The Daily Monitor* and *The Observer* are privately owned publications. All of the aforementioned sources, while casually written, still provided comprehensive and useful information on Kinna-Uganda and the Ugandan film industry, enabling me to piece together its inception

and history. This literature will be discussed and aid in placing Kinna-Uganda into context within African cinema as a whole.

Chapter Two:

The Dissemination of African Cinema

In this chapter I will include and discuss the roots of cinema in Africa. I will also discuss Francophone film (French speaking) film as it relates to the roots of African cinema. However, I will concentrate on the key highlights of African Anglophone (English speaking) cinema in detail, as it more directly relates to the Ugandan film industry and Kinna-Uganda. Additionally, I will discuss the African media as it relates to Uganda and its film industry. Lastly, I will discuss the effects that colonial rule and the unequal distribution of political power had on the film industry.

The roots of film in Africa can be traced back to oral traditions, "which have been instrumental to the development and understanding of black Africa's cinema and its forms of entertainment and information media" (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 2). Griots, popular theatre, drumming, village criers, songs, dance, folklore, drawing, sculpture, rites, and ceremonies are all known as other major components of African indigenous media and entertainment (Mushengyezi 1). With the exception of griots, all of the aforementioned listed components are all known as Ugandan indigenous media. The preceding list of indigenous media and forms of entertainment satisfied all information, education, and entertainment needs (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 22).

Two films from West Africa that exemplify the importance of the oral tradition in Africa include *Angano….Angano…* (César Paes 1989) and *Keita: Le Héritage du Griot* (Kouyaté 1995) (Russel 8). According to Sharon Russell, these films both document and demonstrate the work of griots and their important function in society, "especially in a

modern world where the only history children learn in that of their European colonizers" (Russell 8). However, the term griot is used solely in western Africa and is thus not appropriate to use in Uganda or even East Africa. As Josef Gugler elaborates:

> The griot may be seen as the Western African counterpart of Europe's bard in pre-literate days. He is historian, advisor, the voice of the high and mighty, mediator, master of ceremonies, and praise singer; and he propels men into action. (36)

As with the rest of the media, the medium of film came to Africa as a result of colonization (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 31). From its inception, cinema was an inherently colonial form of communication and entertainment in both Francophone and Anglophone Africa, concepts that will be discussed in more detail below.

The roots of the foundation for the concept to utilize colonial film can be traced back to the "Scramble of Africa":

> In 1884, the European countries met in Berlin for the 'Scramble of Africa.' To justify themselves morally, they argued that they had a duty to civilize Africans. Most of the pioneers who introduced film production to Africa used the same argument. They believed that distributing commercial films, such as those by Charlie Chaplin, would harmfully introduce Africans to film's powerful means of persuasion. Such films were held to be technically too sophisticated for African minds and also damaging because they depicted the negative aspects of European and North American lives. (Diawara 1)

Thus, the colonial film was born with these racist, paternalistic ideologies as the motivation and basis for film production in Africa.

Although scholars are unclear as to the precise year cinema came to Africa, French filmmaker Jean Rouch, who lived in Africa for over 60 years, surmises that:

> 'the cinema made its debut in Africa in the very first years after its invention,' citing 1896 as the year that a vaudeville magician stole a 'theatregraph' projector from the Alhambra Palace Theater in London and used it to 'introduce motion pictures into South Africa.' (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 31)

According to Rouch, film appeared in West Africa not to long after making its debut in South Africa. In 1905, "mobile cinemas started showing animated cartoons in Dakar, Senegal, and its suburbs" (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 31). The same year, in 1905, the Lumiére brothers' films *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de Ciotat* (Lumiére 1895) and *L'arroseur arosé* (Lumiére 1895) were exhibited in Dakar. In the interim, George Méliés produced several short films in Dakar titled *La marche de Dakar* and *Le cake-walk des negres du nouveau*.

From the birth of the cinema, Africa was a location of interest to shoot and showcase films. Even so, the films that were made pre-independence were all from a foreign point of view. As Bartlett describes:

> Colonial cinema fed the European image from this point of view. Colonial cinema fed the European audience's appetite for fantasy, escape and exoticism with picturesque, sensational material. An exotic approach is inevitably superior and reductive. Africa is merely a backdrop and the African is an animal. (5)

Sometimes African filmmakers were hired to work on the colonial films (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 31). For example, in 1905, Algerian Felix Mesguich worked as a camera operator for on of the Lumiere brothers (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 31). However, Mesguichs' presence was not enough to counteract the influence of a racist perspective. For example, the French filmmaker Mélies produced films in Africa such as *The Comic Moslem*, *Ali Barbouyou*, and *Ali Bouf in Oil*. As Ukadike points out, racism was blatantly obvious in the films' titles:

> Although copies of the Mélies's films are no longer available, 'it is not hard to guess from their titles alone, that they marked the beginning of the subsequent questionable treatment of the subject'. ("Black African Cinema" 31)

In Francophone Africa, as early as 1897, the French director Lumiere portrayed Africans as exotic (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 2). Additionally, these stereotypes portrayed Africans as ingenuous, outlandish, and mysterious, as well as dependent upon and indebted to the European saviors who were there to "guide and protect them" (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 3).

The concepts of Francophone and Anglophone Africa can be understood in relationship to colonial rule. While Francophone Africa is known as the territory that was colonized by the French, Anglophone Africa is known as the territory colonized by the British. In Francophone Africa French is the main language spoke and in Anglophone Africa English is the main language spoken.

The French created cultural institutions in order to impose their culture onto their colonies. This was known as direct rule colonialism:

> The French introduced 'the assimilation policy' with the goal of transforming French people. Africans and African culture were considered primitive, and although race seemed not to matter, in reality "Frenchness" in the African colonial experience was racist, supremacist, and paternalistic because it negated 'Africanness'. Colonial rule was administered through *direct rule*, which took political power away from indigenous rulers and put every aspect of polity under the control of the French government. (Shillington 456)

Thus, "France's colonial policy of direct rule and assimilation perpetuated the idea that France and the colonies were a family, bound by the French language and culture" (Cham 113).

Scholars disagree on when the first "authentic black African" film emerged in the Francophone regions of Africa. Furthermore, scholars disagree as to what an authentic black African film is, and some even question whether or not there is really even such a

thing as authentic black African cinema. For the purposes of this thesis, an authentic black African film is considered to be a film directed by a black African. According to Mbye Cham, the first authentic African film produced is titled *Mouramani* (Touré 1955), directed by Guinean filmmaker Mamadou Touré in 1955 (Cham 1). M*ouramani* (Touré 1955), "is an adaptation of a oral narrative from Guinea" (Cham 1). Ukadike and Gugler on the other hand, both state that the first authentic film produced was *Afrique sur Seine* in 1955 (Vieyra 1955) (Gugler 3; Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 68).

Afrique sur Seine (Vieyra 1955) was produced by Senegal's Paulin Soumanou Vieyra aided by several students, along with Mamadou Saar, Robert Cristan, and Jacques Melo Kane. Set in Paris, the film is considered to be an authentic African film as it deals with the topics of "emigration, alienation, and racial discrimination" of African foreign students (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 68). Regardless of which film was produced first, both films set new precedents for black African cinema by being produced at such an early date (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 69).

It is no coincidence that the release of these films coincided with the dates that African states started to gain their independence. In fact, it was the condition of independence itself that allowed the indigenous filmmakers to start producing their own films. African filmmaking is the offspring of African political independence:

> It was born in the era of heady nationalism and nationalist anticolonial and anti-neocolonial struggle, and it has been undergoing a process of painful growth and development in a post-colonial context of general socioeconomic decay and decline, devaluation (that is, 'devalisation') and political repression and instability on the continent. One is therefore talking here about a very young, if not the youngest, creative practice in Africa. (Cham 1)

Even so, there were a handful of Francophone films made by Europeans at different points that were critically aware of the colonial process. For example, Marc Allegret's *Voyage au Congo* (Allegret 1927) was a, "cinematic record of André Gide's travels in the Congo" (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 48). V*oyage au Congo*, "is regarded as the first French anticolonial film" (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 48). The attempt to portray Africa in a realistic light did not go unnoticed by the colonial administrations, which not only frowned upon these filmmakers but used their position of authority in order to stifle the filmmakers' efforts. For example, during the filming of *Afrique 50* (Vautier 1950), a film that told the story about political uprisings in Côte d'Ivoire and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), a student who attended Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris, René Vauthier, was told to discontinue filming because he had not obtained the proper permit (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 48). However, this was not the real reason for the request to discontinue filming. It was as a result of, "the film's virulent attack on colonial rule by the colonial administrators, who saw it as a threat to the survival of their regime" (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 48). Consequently, *Afrique 50* (Vautier 1950) was not allowed to be aired in Africa or France (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 48). Additionally, there were other colonial critical documentaries directed by Chris Marker and Alain Resnais that were banned as well. Both of the banned films were commissioned in 1952 by Presénce Africaine. However, one of the films, *Les statues meurant aussi* (Marker, Resnais 1953), was prohibited from being shown for ten years rather than being banned

indefinitely. Even so, when the prohibition was lifted, it was only to be shown in truncated form (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 49).

Unlike Francophone Africa, Anglophone Africa was subjected to a form of indirect rule colonialism. Film in Anglophone Africa, which is the category of colonial region in which Kinna-Uganda resides, took on a different pattern of development than Francophone Africa due to the differences between indirect and direct rule colonialism (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 109). The British did not wish to implement a direct rule colonialism, as their interests were solely economic:

> The British administered colonialism through *indirect rule*, in which the colonial administration identified the local power structure, especially chiefs and elders, and incorporated them into the colonial hierarchy. The chiefs were at the bottom of the hierarchy and passed down to the citizenry demands of taxes and forced conscription into the colonial army or for labor. (Shillington 456)

Thus, the British used different colonial tactics than the French, resulting in a difference in cultural institutions. While the French used their own cultural institutions to dominate their colonies, the British used African chiefs and elders to aid them with colonization. As a result of indirect rule colonialism, there were no cultural institutions established by the British through the aid of colonial administrators in order to promote the film industries of their colonies, unlike there were in France's colonies. Hence, while the British held political and economic power over their colonies, they wielded a reduced level of cultural influence in comparison to the French. The British did not set up a Ministry of Culture and did not fund any feature films (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 78). Instead, they encouraged their colonies to produce Anglophone documentaries in the British tradition:

> Different patterns of film production within francophone and anglophone regions derive from contrasting ideological pursuits of the colonial French and British governments. For example, while the French pursued a so-called assimilation policy, British involvement with its colonies was pragmatic business. Similarly, observers point out that while the French "gave" feature film to its colonies, the British "gave" theirs documentary. France seemed to adopt a cultural policy that encouraged production in the francophone region, whereas the anglophone region (where film production did not pass the economic priority test) resolved to cling to the British tradition of documentary filmmaking. (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 2)

For this reason, Anglophone countries had no established financial aid structures set up by their previous colonizers to assist filmmakers with funding, which generally made the Anglophone filmmakers' task of securing funds for their films exponentially more laborious than their Francophone counterparts. Consequently, Anglophone African filmmakers have been able to survive only by means of engaging in aggressive, independent, and largely external fund-raising efforts. As Ukadike points out:

> In the anglophone region, the struggle for survival has a long history of expediency and entrepreneurial maneuverability which makes film production activities quite different in purpose — politically or economically — from those of the francophone region. ("Black African Cinema" 108)

Even so, not all scholars viewed the disproportionate amount of financing available to Francophone filmmakers as an inherent disadvantage for Anglophone filmmakers. Rather, it was also seen as an ideological advantage for Anglophone filmmakers over their Francophone counterparts, because with financial support also came control over film content. Even though there is not a wide body of Anglophone films, some feel that the films that do exist deal with African development from a so-called African point of view (Ukadike, "Questioning African" 6). As Ghanaian filmmaker Kwaw Ansah comments, "I must say that we in the anglophone countries must

be blessed for not having received such 'gracious' support from our colonial master! This makes us original thinkers – independent film thinkers" (Ukadike, "Questioning African" 6). The films from Anglophone Africa, few as they might be, have had the freedom to reject colonialism, as they are not weighed down by political restraints from the British governors. Therefore, even though the Anglophone region's film industry is considerably less developed, the films that do exist can be seen as part of a post-colonial independence movement (Ukadike, "Questioning African" 6). As a result of direct rule colonialism, "Francophone African countries have a longer production history than the rest of black Africa" (Ukadike 69). This is because direct rule colonialism supported cultural institutions that funded films produced by Africans. Although the cultural institutions provided funding, the funding also came with restrictions and conditions regarding the content of the films that were to be produced.

Unlike Francophone Africa, Anglophone Africa developed national film industries, "out of concern for what they regard as the undesirable sociocultural and psychologist impact of foreign films" (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 105). This is because the foreign films that were shown did not resonate African culture. Prior to independence, foreigners maintained control of the film distribution and exhibition process in Africa. The films that were and are primarily still imported into Africa are from the United States, Britain, China, Hong Kong, and India. As a result, the films that were imported, "identified ideologically and aesthetically with the sociocultural values of the produced nation – in all ramifications they are different from those of the African continent" (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 105).

For example, American Tarzan movies and Western cowboy films were shown. These types of films had certain psychological ramifications for the people of Africa. For instance, "The most devastating cultural damage these films did to Africa was to instill in the minds of most of the viewers the 'dominating image' of the white man over the African" (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 105). In Uganda, Western films still dominate the film industry. According to my field research, there is only one movie theatre in the country, and this Kampala-based theatre plays only Western films, with the exception of the film *Imani* (Kamya 2010), which recently aired in May 2010. Furthermore, *Imani* (Kamya 2010) was co-produced by Uganda and Sweden and thus cannot fully be considered a form of indigenous cinema, or Kinna-Uganda.

The British implemented cinema in Africa in 1935 with the creation of the Bantu Educational Cinema Experiment (Diawara 3). The Bantu Educational Cinema Experiment (BECE) was sponsored by the Colonial Office of the British and financed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Roan Antelope Copper Mines, the Rhokana Corporation, and the Mufulira Copper Mines Ltd. (Diawara 3). The program had several different goals in mind. It attempted to educate Africans by utilizing films in order to attempt to allow the to adapt to new condition, reinforce ordinary classroom methods, conserve the best African traditions, and provide recreation and entertainment (Diawara 2).

One of the first film projects in Anglophone Africa was born between 1935 and 1937, when the British Colonial Office conducted an experiment titled Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment (BEKE) (Diawara 1):

> L.A. Notcutt, founder of the Bantu Educational Cinema Experiment, argued the following: With backward peopled unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood, it is surely in our wisdom, if not our own obvious duty to prevent as far as possible the dissemination of wrong ideas. Should we stand by and see a distorted presentation of the white race's life accepted by millions of Africans when we have it in our power to show them the truth? (Diawara 1)

BEKE was financially supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Roan Antelope Copper Mines, the Rholkana Corporation, and the Mufulira Copper Mined, Ltd. (Diawara 1). The aim of BEKE was to produce and tour didactic films, focusing on health, to Africans (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 33). Moreover,

> The program sought through film to educate adult Africans to understand and adapt to new conditions, to reinforce ordinary classroom methods, to conserve the best of African traditions, and to provide recreation and entertainment. (Diawara 1-2)

BEKE was the first, "full-scale contact with cinema" that the East and Central Africans' had (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 33). However, the primary goal of BEKE as well as the colonial films themselves were usually controversial. Critics of BEKE claim that the films portray Africans in a condescending light by demeaning African culture and placing the European way of life on a pedestal. These films were in fact teaching Africans that their cultural traditions were menial in comparison to the European way of life (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 33). Thus, the films made through BEKE were not so that Africans could learn how to produce films themselves rather, these films can be viewed as a form of imperialism because of the fact that they undermined African culture (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 33). Although Africans were not allowed to control the subject matter of the films produced by BEKE, Norcutt realized that he could utilize locals in order to assist in producing the films:

> Africans participated in the Bantu Cinema Experiment's productions. Norcutt realized he could considerably reduce the film's cost by efficiently utilizing local personnel. He wrote, 'Intelligent young Africans can be trained to do much of the routine work of the darkroom and the sound studios and even some of the semiskilled work'. (Diawara 2)

Between 1935 and 1936, there were approximately 35 short films produced by BEKE. Some of the films produced under BEKE were titled *Post Office Savings Bank, Tax, Progress, Coffee Under Banana shade, High Yields from Selected Plants, Coffee Marketing, Anaethesia, Infant Malaria,* and *Hookworm* (Diawara 2). It is evident from the titles that these films were didactic in nature.

Then, in 1939, the British set up the Colonial Film Unit, with branches in East Africa, namely in Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda:

> At first, the Colonial Film Unit distributed propaganda films in Africa. For this purpose films made in Europe and America were re-edited and commented on in order to achieve the desired effect with Africans. In 1945, after World War II, this distribution policy changed to one of production. Films such as *Mister English at Home* and *An African in London* were made to demonstrate British etiquette. Films were also produced in Africa and at the Central Bureau in London to show the advantages of Western medicine over the African ways of healing (*Leprosy*). (Diawara 3)

BEKE and the Colonial Film Unit are both similar to a film project named EPTA developed in Uganda led by UNESCO in 1958. EPTA is discussed in detail in Chapter four describing the Ugandan film industry.

As a result of the differences in available funding, most of the indigenous African films to be produced in Anglophone Africa came much later than those produced in Francophone Africa. Prior to independence, the films that were produced were didactic documentaries, and a form of colonial cinema. Therefore, it was not until after independence that national films started to be produced in Anglophone Africa. After

independence the only two countries in Anglophone Africa that integrated film into their cultural policy were Ghana and Nigeria (Diawara 5). For example, Ghana became the first sub-Saharan country to attain independence in 1957. That very same year, the Ghana Film Industry Corporation (GFIC) was born. As Ukadike details:

> Ghana has a national film production center, the Ghana Film Industry Corporation (GFIC). This corporation is the offspring of the old Gold Coast Film Unit (deriving its name from Ghana's colonial one), formed in 1948 by the British as an extension of the Colonial Information Service. The major difference in the two groups' structures was that the Gold Coast Film Unit was not a viable self-sustaining production unit upon which a national film industry could be built during postcolonial restructuring. Ghana's quest to integrate film into its national culture led to its having an enviable modern amenity and a sophisticated production center. ("Black African Cinema" 111)

This established GFIC as the first non-colonial film institute in Ghana. Under Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's then president, film distribution and production were nationalized. As a result, the national film industry began to grow. For example, from the years 1957 to 1966 many film production facilities were established. However, Nkrumah's ouster in February 1966 led to the GFIC's deterioration (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 111). The new government accused Nkrumah of creating propaganda films. Shortly after, a new director for GFIC was chosen by the new government. The new director, filmmaker Sam Aryetey, was chosen to head the activities of the GFIC in 1969 (Diawara 6). The GFIC produced newsreels between 1968 and 1972 as well as some culturally significant feature films. This includes Ghana's first feature film *No Tears For Ananse* (Aryetey 1968) based on a traditional Ananse folktale (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 111). In comparison, the first Ugandan film, *Feelings Struggle*

(Ssemwogerere 2005), was produced in 2005. It is apparent that the Ugandan industry lags behind the Ghanaian industry by 42 years.

Kenya also supported a film production unit from 1964 named "The Voice of Kenya". As was common practice, production was funded by state-sponsored agencies. The Voice of Kenya Film Production Unit produced a number of documentary films for the Voice of Kenya and other government agencies (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 113). Additionally, the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication (KIMC) was born with the aid of Federal Republic of Germany. It offered training and facilities for production including facilities for 16mm production, sound transfer, editing, dubbing, and laboratory (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 113). Again, both of these entities primarily produced didactic documentaries. However, Sao Gamba, who made several documentaries at KIMC, produced a narrative film *Kolormask* (Gamba 1985). Producing *Kolormask* (Gamba 1985) was, "a bold attempt considering fiction films have never been a priority in Kenya" (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 113):

> Its story concerns the personal dichotomies of a Kenyan student returning home with his European wife to find their marriage threatened by Kenyan-British cultural differences. Shown at the 1987 Pan-African Film Festival in Ouagadougou, *Kolormask* was 'criticized for being too exotic in its emphasis on documenting African cultures'. (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 114)

As a consequence of its history, it has been much more difficult to produce films in Anglophone Africa, as there are no cultural institutions set up by previous colonizers or the government to provide funding. Funding film production in the different regions has correspondingly been very strategically different, politically and economically (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 108). The continual need for expediency in the

Anglophone countries is due to a lack of funding opportunities from the government in order to produce narrative films. The funding that was available only supported documentaries that perpetuated the colonial ideology. Some examples of the films that were supported under this system include didactic films produced in Uganda by UNESCO.

As a result of this uneven pattern of Africa's overall development, scholars contend that a neocolonial and limiting component exists that hinders the development of an authentic African national cinema. As Jonathan Haynes explains:

> Among cultural productions, filmmaking has been particularly vulnerable to the crisis of economy and state. Because of its capital-intensive character, it unparalleled propaganda and cultural value, and the laws of neocolonial economics that make it impossible for national cinema to exist anywhere in the Third World without state support (and, in Africa, without regional if not continental consortia), the arguments for the creation and support of African cinema have always been closely linked with nation building, cultural nationalism, and Pan-Africanism. (Harrow, ed. 22-23)

This neocolonial component within the media's infrastructure has been used as a tool to support the consolidation of political power. As Ukadike proposes:

> In most of Africa, the electronic media has become an instrument for the consolidation of power. Instead of being utilized as an integral arm of the sociopolitical and economic infrastructure, serving useful developmental purposes, its function has been that of an ordinary bureaucratic propaganda machine, helping to perpetuate the leadership of powerful oligarchs. This type of situation and attitude is a contributing factor to the lack of real cinematic development in black Africa, except in the case of some independent filmmakers' work. ("Black African Cinema" 1)

Because film is one the newest creative practices in Africa, African cinema is still heavily influenced by colonial cinema. This new, embryonic wave of African film is fighting neocolonial tendencies that exist on the continent.

While under British colonization, African Anglophone filmmakers were not able to make uncensored films from the British until the mid-1950's and mid-1960's, until individual states started to become politically independent. It was during this timeframe that filmmakers began utilizing the medium of film as a voice for the people (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 2). In order to attempt to reverse the identity crisis caused by colonial films, Africans began to film stories about what they knew, namely, their own personal lives.

Some scholars, such as Ukadike, believe although African states have won their political independence and they have attempted to reverse colonialism's effects on society, the remnants of colonization still affect Africa's contemporary film industry. As Ukadike explains.

> Since political independence in black Africa has not been followed by economic and cultural independence, film production, even when under the control of Africans in independent countries, has mimicked the general uneven pattern of Africa's overall development. ("Black African Cinema" 1)

According to Ukadike, ever since authentic African cinema was born in the 'mid-50's and mid-60's, its creators have been attempting to work against Western stereotypes created about Africa by the dominant mode of American cinema as a result of colonialism:

> From the beginning, the major concern of African filmmakers has been to provide a more realistic image of Africa as opposed to the distorted artistic and ideological expressions of the dominant film medium (to borrow from Erik Barnouw's terminology) 'the attitudes that made up the colonial rationale.' ("Black African Cinema" 3)

Colonization and the unequal distribution of political power led to hegemony, which as a result, has heavily influenced the films content and portrayed an unauthentic

and degraded portrait of African culture. According to Mbye Cham and Anne Mungai, the strongest:

> …force in cinema in Africa is the hegemonic, foreign, particularly Hollywood, film, which enjoys a virtual monopoly of African theatres, especially those in the sub-Saharan region. This continued hegemony has many implications. They include the perpetuation and/or the revision and refinement of traditional stereotypes and distortions of Africa and Africans, and the invention of new, more insidious ones. (3)

An example of the impact of hegemony is the limited film outlets within Uganda. Only a single movie theater complex, recently opened, operates in Kampala, effectively limiting the number and breadth of film offerings in the country. Their film offerings are mostly limited to Western, Hollywood produced movies. The single movie theater was, as learned in my field research, a project of the current president's wife as a form of cultural advancement. Historically, as discussed above, colonial powers deliberately limited the distribution of films in order to control propaganda messaging to Ugandans. Relying on Western produced movies ensures that both Africans and worldwide audiences diet of information and characterization of African life are tightly controlled and restrictive. For example, the *Last King Of Scotland* (Macdonald 2006) played worldwide to critical and popular acclaim for its treatment of Uganda. Ugandan audiences, as evidenced by their reaction on message boards and personal discussion, have been critical of the film as being distorted and unrealistic of life in Uganda ("The Last King").

Television, radio, and print, have yet to fully be adopted by all of Africa. As Francis Nyamnjoh explains as recently as 2005:

> While the rest of the world is significantly more advanced, and in certain cases (e.g. North Africa and Western Europe) there is already talk of new media taking over from old media, in Africa the so-called old media are yet to take over from the indigenous forms of communication. Africa is still infrastructurally very weak compared to the television, radio, and print media already commonplace elsewhere. Silent majorities in villages and urban ghettoes are still groping in the dark, seeking footpaths and footholes in the era of satellite television, digital revolutions and the information superhighway. (4)

As learned in my field research, although the people of Uganda primarily utilize cell phones, access to the internet is very rare and slow. The people of Uganda do not have the internet in their house, they have to go to internet shops and pay money and wait in lines for slow service. Additionally, satellite television is a rarity in Uganda. The weak media infrastructure as described above does not create a climate that is conducive for a thriving film industry.

As a result of hegemony, Western films have and still dominate local screens while African films suffered from a lack of wide exposure. According to Cham the reason why the foreign films in Africa are so successful and prevalent is due to a lack of indigenous African film industry. This is due to the fact that the native African films are not widely distributed and shown in only their own countries. This makes recouping production costs of the African films difficult, as well as making their, "effectiveness in combating the negative film image of Africa and development process in Africa become severely occupied." (Cham 3).

Therefore, due to the distorted way Africa has been portrayed by Western filmmakers, the first black African filmmakers felt obligated to portray Africa from their point of view, thus attempting to "decolonize" the medium. In order to decolonize the

screen it became necessary to show an authentic portrait of African life. As Bartlett explains in more detail:

> In order to decolonize the screen, the African audience had to be offered a new vision of its own space. André Gardies has shown to what extent the early film cultures of Black Africa attempted to recast the African space in the image of the new sovereignties. Colonialism had been a dispossession of space, a deprivation of identity. The aim was to reclaim the territory so that the audience could identify with it. By showing them pictures of home, the cinema helped them to recover their cultural identity. (39)

A relevant example of Bartlett's argument that advances the portrayal of black Africa in films is *The Black Girl* (Sembene 1966) directed by Ousmane Sembene. Sembene is known as the father of African cinema, as his films were the first to call international attention to sub-Saharan African films (Gadjigo par. 1). *The Black Girl* (Sembene 1966) describes the journey of a black African girl who moves to France to seek economic opportunities. Working for a French couple, she became isolated and ultimately commits suicide. This film serving as a metaphor for the interaction of African and Western cultures, illustrates Bartlett's argument that early African films showed the danger of turning away from an African cultural identity:

> In his pioneering 1966 film, *Black Girl*, the great Senegalese author and director, Ousmane Sembene, explores the complex dynamics of the immediate post-colonial period through the simple, devastating story of a Senegalese servant, Diouana (Mbissine Thérèse Diop), and her relationship to the unnamed French couple (Anne Marie Jelinek and Robert Fontaine) who employ her. Sembene reverses the Eurocentric convention where the French characters are those who are individualized and the colonized represent their group. (Hamid par. 1)

Although the film was directed by African director Sembene and produced by Senegal and France, it was shot primarily in France and is in French. Still, *The Black Girl*

(Sembene 1966) is known as a pioneering African film as it is the first widely recognized feature film put forth by an African filmmaker.

Another example put forward by Bartlett is the film *Fad'jal* (Faye 1979). As Bartlett explains, in one scene:

> Long panning shots of the African bush, the camera comes to rest, in the end, on human labour. Africa is now no longer a backdrop, but the site of human activity. At a break in the harvest, the children run off to their grandfather: 'Grandfather, tell us our history now' 'You're right. You ought to know it'. (39)

This portrayal combines elements of African landscape, people and social interaction in an arguably authentic representation of black Africa. I believe this to be a good example of "decolonizing" by the vanguard of early African filmmakers. Some examples of Ugandan filmmakers who are currently producing films in order to express an African voice and decolonize the cinema of Uganda include Donald Mugisha, Mariam Ndagire, and Matt Bish. These filmmakers mostly have control of the content of their own films and can portray African life as they see it. The freedom of having the luxury to control the content of film is a departure from earlier times when colonial administrators had complete control over what was being produced. This exemplifies the trend that Africans have begun to utilize the medium of film in the opposite way that it originated. Instead of a didactic, colonial form, it has begun to be used as a vehicle as a voice by and for the people of Africa.

There is a well-developed pattern of filmmakers who, after independence, used film as a means of resetting expectations and cultural values of emerging, new nations. African filmmakers, such as Sembene from Senegal, started to use film as a tool which enabled them to confront previous political inequities during colonization such as the film

Black Girl (Sembene 1966), "Numerous filmmakers thus use their work to address a whole range of social and political issues." (Thackway 55). As a result filmmaking itself inherently became a political act in itself as, "filmmakers are inevitably forced to confront the hegemony of Western representations and paradigms" (Thackway 55).

The current generation of African filmmakers are particularly concerned with the way in which new films can redraw and reimagine the boundaries these stereotypes have created. Black African filmmakers are united by their art and their commitment to changing the way Africans have been portrayed in films by Westerners. As Ukadike explains:

> Black African filmmakers contend that traditional ways of filmic representation – old ideas and attitudes – must give way to new ones, especially in portraying African cultures…Toward this goal, the majority of black African filmmakers are united by their art and ideology. ("Black African Cinema" 3)

Additionally, according to Ukadike, most African governments have not yet realized the film industry as a potentially viable industry, however, they have recognized its didactic potential for teaching and the promotion of traditional culture ("Black African Cinema" 3). As a result, the African filmmaker is met with many challenges when one wants to produce a narrative film. Because of a lack of funding, many films don't get completed in a timely manner (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 3). For example:

> Med Hondo, the exiled Mauritanian filmmakers, took seven years to complete his epic thriller West Indies (1979); ´Désiré Ecaré devoted twelve years to making an exuberant raucous comedy, *Visages de femmes* (*Faces of women*, 1985); and Moyo Ogundipe, a Nigerian newcomer, has completed *The Song Bird* four years after production began. (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 3)

As exemplified above, colonialism and economic and political challenges have all adversely affected Africa's body of films, particularly in Anglophone Africa, by making

it harder for filmmakers to produce films, especially narrative films, within a reasonable timeframe.

African cinema confronts Western hegemony. This is because of Africa's original relationship to film as a colonial tool was used to indoctrinate Africans. It is important to understand that African cinema and American cinema have evolved within different environments, as their roots have separate beginnings. One reason they differ in development is as a result of the process of colonization. As Manthia Diawara states, "Colonial governments, missionaries and anthropologists thus tried to give Africans a different cinematic heritage than the mainstream films of Europe and the United States" (Diawara 3). With the colonization of Africa by Europeans came a change brought about in African culture, thus altering its variation of media. Furthermore, as previously discussed, there were different forms of colonization, namely indirect rule and direct rule colonialism. The different types of colonization led to different film industries in Africa. For instance, Uganda's film industry is considerably less developed than that of Burkino Faso's. As we've seen, because of the investment in cultural institutions, Francophone Africa in general had a more developed film industry versus Anglophone Africa. But it's not solely the different type of colonization that affects the film industries. For instance, Nigeria, a country also colonized by the British, has a film industry that is considered to be one of the most developed industries in Africa. Thus, there are other factors at play.

Important national cinemas associated with Anglophone Africa include Nigeria and Ghana. I will briefly review the film industries of these countries to identify the factors that contribute to their current high level of activity. I believe the success of the

Ghanaian and Nigerian film industries follow from their nationalization and receipt of government aid:

> After independence, the Anglophone countries, except for Ghana and Nigeria, did not attempt to integrate film into their cultural policy, either as an essential element of development or as entertainment. Most of them stopped film production with the closing of the British Colonial Film Unit. (Diawara 5)

Thus, while all of the other Anglophone countries discontinued developing a film industry with the end of colonization and the closing of the British Colonial Unit, the Ghanaian and Nigerian film industries continued to develop their film industries. This gave Ghanaian and Nigerian filmmakers an advantage:

> Ghana's film unit saw its purpose as making educational and entertainment films to distribute in and outside the country. Rejecting the aesthetic of the Colonial Film Unit, it embraced current narrative styles about acculturation (*Jaguar High Life*); city life (*The Boy Kumasenu*); and independence movements (*Freedom for Ghana*). (Diawara 5)

Immediately after independence, Ghana saw the benefits of utilizing film as a tool for themselves. This is what makes Ghana different from most of the other African Anglophone nations.

Nigeria is the other example of a country that recognized the benefits of developing a healthy film industry. Nigeria was aided by the Colonial Film Unit, as they left behind equipment after independence:

> The other significant producer of film in Anglophone Africa is Nigeria, the biggest country in Africa, with more than 100 million people and more than 100 movie theaters. The Colonial Film Unit, which had three offices in Nigeria, left behind 16mm cameras, studios, and laboratories. (Diawara 7)

In addition, a film producer named Francis Oladele, who was purportedly the first genuinely independent film producer in Africa, emerged during the early seventies (Diawara 7):

> Oladele dreamed of making Nigeria an African Hollywood. He founded his production company, Calpenny Limited, with the financial support of North Americans from California, Pennsylvania, and New York – hence the name Cal-Pen-NY. He wanted to produce films that would be successful in both Africa and the West, and thus he though he needed international film directors, actors, and coproducers. (Diawara 7)

Oladele may have gotten his wish of creating an African Hollywood. In 2006, Nigeria produced 872 films in comparison to 485 films produced by the United States ("Information Sheet" 2-3). Today, the Nigerian film industry is often affectionately referred to as Nollywood.

Since independence from their colonizers in the late fifties and early sixties, African filmmakers in different countries have begun to change their relationship to the medium and utilize it instead as a form of African expression. As Melissa Thackway states:

> The majority of filmmakers adhere to the vision of their works as a means of expressing an African voice, rather than simply being a form of entertainment: the predominance of the questions of representation and identity and their influence on filmmaking agendas can clearly be recognized in the specific ways in which filmmakers articulate their cultural identities: they adapt local cultural forms of film, address questions of memory and history, and challenge the misrepresentation and visual absence of specific African groups, such as women and African immigrants in Europe. (48)

It is a critical point of difference that while African film was born under the stronghold and constraints of colonization, Western cinema was born in an environment free to experiment and develop in any way filmmakers saw fit and could find an audience. It is

also important to note that America too has a colonial history. The film industry in America was formed well after American independence, in the context of an economy and society that was stable and mature. Filmmaking came to Africans, however, on the heels of countries gaining independence. The contrast in context of the development of cinema between the West and Africa couldn't be more stark. In the case of Africa, basic economic and political governance systems were in their infancy following independence and during the important formative process of cinema traditions on the continent.

The next chapter focuses on different theoretical concepts characterizing cinema traditions in Africa and examines their effectiveness a analytical tools in and their uses as labeling and dissecting different kinds of films. Furthermore, the various theories of defining cinema characteristics can be related to the arc of cinema development discussed above. African cinema, due to the political and cultural history of the continent, has not and probably could never have been expected to gain immediate stature in the Western world. Based upon theory established in the next chapter, I will examine the concept that a necessary progression of film development is occurring with the emergence of Kinna-Uganda in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three:

Defining National Cinema

This chapter evaluates concepts and theories surrounding cinema within the context of a continent, nation, culture, economy, and international artistic movement. More specifically, this chapter evaluates separate models that categorize films in order to better comprehend their provenance and mode of communication. Namely, these models are national, regional, continental, pan-African, and transnational.

National cinema is a model of an analytical category that conceptually includes Kinna-Uganda. The term national cinema is used to identify films affiliated with a particular country. With the release of *Feelings Struggle* in 2005 (Ssemwogerere 2005), Kinna-Uganda has been chosen as the category of cinema to represent Uganda as a nation (Ssejjengo par. 1). I present the argument here that the concept of national cinema is the prime concept with which to discuss and dissect the Kinna-Uganda. However, the meaning of the term "national cinema" itself has been debated by film scholars. It is also necessary to evaluate the different models that scholars have advanced to describe the characteristics of "authentic African cinema."

Regional and continental models are territorial in nature, separating films and distinguishing them strictly based upon the regional location of production. They are also the simplest and most definitionally clear-cut models. The regional model, categorizes a film as belonging to whatever geographical region of the continent in which it is produced. For example, a film produced in Uganda would be considered part of East Africa's body of films. The second model, the continental model, groups together all

films produced on one continent. A film produced in Uganda would be considered part of the continent of Africa's body of films.

The third model of categorizing films is the pan-African model. Pan-Africanism is a doctrine that adopts an ideology that rejects the national boundaries drawn by colonial powers and in its place substitutes a commonality of heritage. As Powers explains:

> Pan means 'all,' so pan-Africa means 'all Africa.' The ideology of pan-Africanism promoted racial pride and claimed Africa for the Africans; it spoke for all Africans, rather than focusing on a particular ethnic group or nation. (par. 2)

The Pan-African model attempts to work across national, linguistic, ethnic, and tribal divisions in order to unite all Africans under one inclusive umbrella. Under this theory, any film produced by someone who is of African decent, regardless of nationality, would be considered part of the pan-African model.

The last model is transnationalism, the antithesis of the concept of national cinema. While the concept of national cinema is limited to an individual nation-state, the transnational model demands that one must take the global exchange of cultures into consideration. As Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden explain:

> Key to transnationalism is the recognition of the decline of national sovereignty as a regulatory force in global coexistence. The impossibility of assigning a fixed national identity to much cinema reflects the dissolution of any stable connection between a film's place of production and/or setting and the nationality of its makers and performers. This is not in itself a new phenomenon; what is new are the conditions of financing, production, distribution and reception of cinema today. The global circulation of commodities, information, and human beings is giving rise to films whose aesthetic and narrative dynamics, and even the modes of emotional identification they elicit, reflect the impact of advanced capitalism. (1).

Thus, the theory of transnationalism asserts that nationalism is an outdated theory due to globalism and the circulation of cultures. Furthermore, transnationalism asserts that due to advanced capitalism boundaries put in place by nation states are becoming less and less important when it comes to people being able to dissect and understand a film and its aesthetics.

The concept of national cinema itself lies at the center of an ongoing scholarly debate, as the term itself reflects the different ideologies of different scholars. There are differences of opinion about the elements that determine a film's national identity. Generally, though, the starting point in establishing a work's country of origin is based upon the country that funded the film. As Jimmy Choi elaborates:

> For the industry, national cinema is determined by the place that provides the capital irrespective of where the films are made or the nationalities of the directors…For instance, a film in the Leeds International Film Festival 2002, *Cry Women* [*sic*], has investments from Canada, China, France and South Korea. Although the film is about a Chinese woman and was shot in China by [a] Chinese director, it does not matter much for each of the four countries to claim the film part of their national cinema because, for the industry, the film is just a number on the balance sheet. (par.3)

According to this interpretation, the film *The Last King of Scotland* (Macdonald 2006) would not be considered as authentic Ugandan national cinema, even though it was filmed in Uganda and the storyline surrounds genocide in Uganda, as it was produced by the United Kingdom and directed by a Westerner. Again, according to this theory's calculus, a film can only be Ugandan and part of its body of national cinema if it was produced by the nation-state of Uganda and directed by a Ugandan. Therefore, again, under this theory, *The Last King of Scotland* (Macdonald 2006) cannot be considered a Kinna-Uganda.

In the late 19th century, when the medium of film was born, companies that produced films were not necessarily located within the particular country to which they were marketed. However, very quickly the category of national cinema was born out of economic motivations as a way to circumscribe and limit the reach of competitors in the marketplace. As Valentina Vitali explains:

> Richard Abel has shown that, in important ways, 'Frenchness', or rather, 'foreign-ness' was foisted upon those films by competitors as the latter sought to monopolise a market by defining it as a 'national' one. Along with various other measures, some fair but most of them foul, xenophobia was mobolised against certain competitors to drive them out of a geographically bounded market. (1)

Thus, the creation of a stigma regarding the viewing of French films materialized out of a tactical move in order to control the market.

Nevertheless, despite its ideologically market driven origin, the traditional concept of national cinema has typically been thought to translate into the idea of the portrayal and representation of a specific national culture on-screen. However, "until recently the analysis of national cinema as entailing an internally coherent and meaningful effect of theoretical proposition had been ignored by all but a handful of writers" (Walsh 1). Or rather, such a proposition had been taken for granted. More recent scholarship on what had been termed national cinema in the past has begun to examine and interrogate earlier assumptions of neat, internal coherence. As Petek explains, the interrogation has revealed changing concepts of nation:

> A significant body of work has emerged, which reflects the opinion that the nation-state – once the undisputed primary unit of economic, political and cultural and differentiation in the world system – is being eroded by the process of mobilization, and that, as a result, national cinema, too, is becoming an increasingly problematic category. (1)

A second much less tangible concept to identify and grasp than market control argues that it is the historic territory and common mass culture that dictates the national identity of a film. As Choi elaborates:

> However elusive, the notion of national cinema seems to be closely linked to the notion of territory. Many of the above elements such as language, dress, people, are related to the locale which I liken to what Anthony Smith calls 'homeland or historic territory' in the five fundamental features of National Identity. By 'homeland', Smith goes beyond just the physical boundary. It is a 'repository of historic memories and associations'…Apart from the tangible audio and visual elements which filmmaking excels in presenting, there are other less tangible elements presented through story and narrative. They are history, the myth, the norms, and common beliefs of a nation that constitute the themes or the cultural context for the film stories. (1)

A major challenge to the concept and implementation of the national model has been advanced by scholars such as Okhai, suggesting that it is a simultaneous combination of the creator, content, and essence of the reflection of the film that determines whether it is genuinely "African" and not singular factors such as the country of production:

> … African cinema is that cinema by Africans for Africans, which cuts across the socio-cultural boundaries of the continent, defining all artificial geographical and political barriers capturing the essence of the African tales by moonlight themes which know no colour, language, or nationality but which themselves are a reflection in the mind of the individual but his own experiences and environment. (1)

This theory makes it difficult to identify whether a film is part of a particular national body of cinema because the definition is based inherently on a subjective assessment. In the alternative, utilizing the location of financing serves as a more concrete, objective method in determining to what country a film belongs. This simplicity makes the single factor approach alluring though not totally compelling. The single factor approach,

however, is itself complicated, as discussed below in the context of Anglophone and Francophone support of national cinema during colonial times.

Moreover, more recently, scholars such as Thackway and David Murphy argue that there is no such thing as a category of genuine African cinema for separate reasons. Ouedrago has, "…argued that the term is often used to stigmatize works from the continent, encouraging Western viewers and critics to see them as a homogeneous entity", while Murphy maintains, "in my view, there is no 'authentic' Africa, nor is there an 'authentic' West" (Thackway 2; Murphy 240). According to Murphy the lack of authenticity is a result of the global exchange of cultures that influence each other:

> Cultural influence is not simply a one-way street with the West influencing the rest. Africa and the West are not mutually exclusive worlds that possess their own authentic and unchanging identities: they are hybrid entities that influence and modify each other, and this process of exchange applies to cinema (although in the current world order, the West remains a dominant force in this process of hybridization). (241)

It is not appropriate to compare and lump together Kinna-Uganda with other African film genres, as Kinna-Uganda refers to a specific genre of film within Uganda which contains specific characteristics. However, scholars, such as Tomaselli and Petty, have written about African cinema as if it is one inclusive category. Yet, filmmaker Kaborè, "denies that the term necessarily negates plurality and diversity" (Thackway 2). As Kaborè states, '"African cinema' is not a term that aims to standardise. It evokes the context in which this cinema is evolving, in which a continent is trying to reappropriate its image" (Thackway 2). However, Mhando argues, that by utilizing the term "African cinema" scholars, "…continue to parade Africa as a homogeneous group, which it is not" (2). That is, it is misleading and reductive to suggest that African cinema is only one

category of continental film, lumping together all of the films from one continent, without taking into account their respective pasts and unique cultural identities. For example, the term "griot" which means storyteller, is often used while discussing cinema from West Africa, yet is not appropriate when discussing artists from Uganda or anywhere East Africa, as it is a regional-specific term.

As Douglas Mpuga points out, even within the small nation of Uganda, there are, "…nearly twenty indigenous languages…", and individuals, "…identify with one of about eighteen different ethnic groups and learn corresponding ethnic varieties as first language or mother tongue" (Mpuga 2). This is why Kinna-Uganda is revolutionary, in the sense that all cultural, tribal, and linguistic differences have been put aside as it has been widely recognized by critics and the people of Uganda as the cinema for the nation of Uganda as a whole ("Uganda: Frenzy").

Additionally, critics of theoretical approaches that disregard African cultural variations stress that, "cultural homogeneity…is often false or at least so porous as to leave the fabric of its reflection in unwieldy," arguing for a, "…need to make an attempt at looking at the ambiguities that are inscribed in the language of cinema as it relates to Africa…even when someone calls a film 'an African film' that itself should raise our critical antennas" (Mhando 1, 14).

Because the borders of all nations in Africa have been etched by colonialism, the concept of national cinema becomes even more complex when applying it within an African context. Out of the colonization of Africa, two dominant modes of support for filmmaking emerged: French-based support (Francophone) and British-based support

(Anglophone). Francophone films were supported by French colonial overseers in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and Senegal. These colonial powers ruled by so-called direct rule means – establishing organs (Ministry of Film in Senegal for example) of the state to directly influence the indigenous populations. Thus, filmmaking in these countries was much more active and served to maintain the cultural imperative of the French overlords (Cham 113).

On the other hand, British ruled, Anglophone nations utilized methods of indirect rule – maintaining direct control of governmental and financial institutions, while continuing a laissez faire approach to film and other cultural institutions (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 78).

As a result of the influence of colonial powers, Eva Jorholt argues that utilizing the concepts of regionalism and pan-Africanism are decidedly more useful than adopting a national one:

> As complex as it may be in general, the concept of national cinema is even more complicated when applied to film-producing countries in Africa. Most theories of nationhood and nationalism need rethinking in relation to the African continent, where territorial borders and the very concept of nation-states were inherited from colonial powers. What is more, theories of national cinema, need some re-adjustment if applied to film production on a continent where pan-African and international ties tend to be as important as strictly national ones, and sometimes even more important. (Hjort 198)

Correspondingly, this theory rules out many African Francophone films from being acknowledged as authentic African cinema, even though they were directed by an African, because they were funded by France. As Thackway explains:

> Whilst the modalities of the diverse subsidies available to Francophone African filmmakers have continually evolved over the years, the basic funding structures still exist today and France remains one of the main financiers of African film.

> Although this undeniably helps filmmakers work in countries where local state and private backing remains virtually non-existent, such technical and financial aid has nonetheless frequently been attacked for perpetuating neo-colonial dependence on France and films that conform to French expectations of what should constitute an African film. (8)

In fact, even African filmmaker Sembene, the father of African cinema, received funding from France for his films. Sembene was still able to critique colonialism and neocolonialism in his films, however, he has been criticized on this point by younger African filmmakers (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 258-259). As Gerima explains, it is difficult to produce anti-colonial films if one receives funding from France, as France will punish the filmmakers:

> The French can only tolerate one or maybe two anticolonial films from an African filmmaker; if you go against this policy, you have to be punished by being made nonexistent. They transform all the young filmmakers into mercenaries to attack every aspect of your work. In doing so, they try to make the pioneer filmmakers nonexistent in the consciousness of the society. This is a technique of sophisticated colonialism. (Ukadike, "Black African Cinema" 259)

Using the power of storytelling through film is one method the French utilized to culturally shape their subjects. Because, unlike the British, the French ruled their colonies under a form of direct rule colonialism the source of funding is an important and material influence. As Ansah elaborates:

> The French made their colonies more a part of them than the British did. Also I think that the French, being very cultural, were more interested in molding their subjects, so to speak, to follow a certain pattern, a pattern which might not have reawakened people's consciousness. (Ukadike, "Questioning African" 6)

That is, under direct rule colonialism, France desired to not only economically control their colonial states, but also wished to spread and ensure that their culture dominated the culture of their subject colonies in Africa. Consistent with the approach of direct rule, the

French set up a Ministry of Culture to ensure that their culture was spread throughout their colonies and allocated funds for African filmmakers (Ukadike, "Questioning African" 78).

"Kinna-Uganda", a term coined within Uganda, is used to define films that Uganda produces ("Uganda: Frenzy"). As mentioned previously, Uganda is itself a diverse country with approximately 20 different ethnic groups and 18 different languages groups, not to mention the various tribal loyalties that exist (Mpuga 2). The extent to which Kinna-Uganda can be clearly and unambiguously described in terms of a national cinema will be examined in the following chapter.

Chapter Four:

Tracing Kinna-Uganda

In this chapter I chronologically trace both the history of film in Uganda as well as films that fit under the category of Kinna-Uganda. For the purposes of this thesis, I define a Kinna-Uganda as a film directed by a Ugandan and produced by Uganda (financially supported by a Ugandan person or business entity). However, I do include several films that don't fit in the category of a Kinna-Uganda in order to illustrate examples of the: transnational (co-production), regional, continental, and Pan-African models of cinema. Additionally, I include information regarding Maisha Film Lab, a non-profit organization, headquartered in Kampala, which is attempting to develop and promote the film industry in East Africa. Maisha Film Lab was founded and is managed by filmmaker Mira Nair. Nair started the organization in 2004 after shooting a portion of her film *Mississippi Masala* (Nair 1991) in Uganda in the early nineties.

Uganda's present-day film industry has been radically shaped by its past. This is due to a politically, economically, and socially oppressive colonial Uganda which was then followed by 17 years of a violent, suppressive post-colonial Uganda in which Ugandans were forced to live under an Orwellian type of rule. As described by one informant, "…during the Amin and Obote regimes you could simply be killed by the soldiers of the special forces [for speaking]" (Karlstrom 217).

It is important to understand Uganda's tumultuous past, and the indelible repercussions that remain embedded in Uganda's social fabric, including but not limited to, its film industry. Formal colonialism under British rule existed from 1894 to 1962,

until Uganda finally gained its independence on October 9, 1962 (Cutter 245). The British initially became interested in invading East Africa in the early eighteen hundreds. Their purported reason to invade was to rid Africans of the Arab slave labor practices that had existed along the African coast for centuries (Cutter 14). According to Charles Cutter, although the British acquisitioned Uganda under the guise of heroic justifications, the subsequent British occupation led to racist practices and social inequalities (Cutter 14). For a very long period of time Ugandans were disenfranchised from the central government that was created and thus politically silenced. While Uganda gained its first legislative council in 1921 under British rule, native Ugandans, or any African in general, were not permitted to participate in the legislative process until 1945, when the first African legislative council member was admitted ("Timeline: Uganda" par. 15).

While the developed world was exposed to film beginning in 1895, as a result of colonialism and 24 years of subsequent catastrophic regimes, Ugandans never had the chance to experiment freely this medium until the late 1950's. Alexander Shaw, a UNESCO representative who traveled to Uganda in 1960 in order to restore the film unit, also documented the beginning of Uganda's Film Unit. In his report, Shaw states that until approximately 1958 there was a small film unit, however, the expatriate that was managing it left and his counterpart was killed in an auto accident shortly afterwards. As a result, the film unit closed and there was no means of renewing it. Finally, with Shaw's assistance, in 1961, the Ugandan Film Unit was revamped and the EPTA program began (Shaw 1).

Shaw was told by the then head of the Department of Information that the country needed film in order to educate the population and additionally for public information work (Shaw 1). This type of didactic documentary film production is typical in countries that have experienced a form of indirect rule colonialism. As discussed in preceding chapters, the French imposed a direct rule form of colonialism in countries such as Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire and set up cultural institutions while the British, active in Nigeria and Uganda set up an indirect rule form of colonialism. Thus, as with other Anglophone countries in Africa, the type of films that first came to Uganda served as a didactic, colonial form of cinema.

In 1961, Shaw arrived in Uganda determined to catalyze a solid foundation upon which the Ugandan film industry could grow. The EPTA project started in September, its office located in the Censor Board's viewing theatre. There was a very small amount of funds allocated for the project. Additionally, there was no public relations conception for the trainees or staff. Furthermore, it was not the ideal time to start a long-term project as independence was near and everyone was anticipating the transition (Shaw 1).

However, by the next year, in 1962, Shaw had secured a budget, new offices, and equipment. There was now a sufficient budget and they were located in a new office in another building. Additionally, $14,000 worth of equipment was donated by UNESCO. Shaw converted an old building into stations for editing, projection, and studio space. The budget now allowed salaries for trainees. In March J-C Bois, an UNESCO expert, arrived. Initially Bois was only to stay for six months, however, the project was six months behind when he arrived and it was clear that he would have to stay for a longer

period of time (Shaw 2). During this same period, in 1962, in the midst of impending independence, there were three film offices opened in the Ministry by UNESCO (Shaw 3). Additionally, there were four cutting rooms, and one sound cutting room and a projection theatre (Shaw 3). On staff there was an acting executive assistant/film officer, one secretary shared with other sections, five film technicians, two technical assistants, one mobile cinema projectionist, one driver, and the usual messenger staff (Shaw 4). There was also a variety of equipment, including, two 16mm Arriflex, four Paillard Bolex, an Acmiola editing machine, Colortran lights, a Kudelski Nagra tape recorder, a magnetic film recorder synchronized with the Arriflex plus the usual editing equipment (Shaw 4). The government also invested in a 35mm camera, a Nagra III, and editing tables in order to make newsreels and films for abroad. However, the processing and dubbing for the newsreels and films both had to be completed in the U.K. (Shaw 4).

In February 1963, the full training program started. The training sessions included lessons editing, camera work, and sound recording. The trainees were sent out to make films in sets of two. There was a quota of 45 education films that were required to be produced and to be widely distributed. However, the whole year was spent guiding the trainees. The trainees managed to produce 14 films that were about 25 minutes each. They shot films in both black and white and in color. The films were not aesthetically sophisticated but they were useful as teaching devices. Then, during the beginning of 1964, the trainees started writing and then recording commentaries, and then editing them to fit the films they produced (Shaw 2).

The program relied upon fellowships that had been granted. UNESCO alone granted four fellowships. These allowed the most prominent trainee to attend the National Film Board in Canada in order to polish their films. Sending the trainee to Canada could be viewed as a way of ensuring that the Canadian culture was imported via the student back to Uganda. Additionally, another trainee was able to study Government filmmaking in India, Malaysia, Pakistan, and the Sudan (Shaw 2). Once completed by the trainees, the films were shown to the relevant Ministry. There were discussions of creating an UNESCO newsreel unit and expanding the distribution of the films however, the film unit would have to be revamped before that could take place. The film unit had quickly become a key part of the Government's services (Shaw 3).

As far as distribution, there was only one mobile theater, donated by U.S.A.I.D (Shaw 4). The mobile theater was said to be in non-stop use once it was received and a huge success (Shaw 4). The audience figures were staggering and the demand was incessant (Shaw 4). The shows were of high importance for the colonial government for two separate reasons, to unite the country and to educate the masses:

> One, they show nationally important films and thus make the country people feel like they are part of one country and they also take the capital to the country. Two, they gather very large audiences from their scattered homes and thus give an opportunity for mass education films to be shown and for the extension workers of all of the Ministries to make use of the opportunity (Shaw 4-5).

The Ugandan Film Unit can be viewed as a form of colonialism, as Westerners attempted to place their culture and beliefs onto the population within the colonized state of Uganda.

In his report's conclusion, Shaw stated:

> I am sanguine about the future. My experience of Uganda and its people has convinced me that there is a basic solidarity and a hard core of good sense that will ensure its prosperous future. (5)

Uganda won its independence from Britain on October 9, 1962 and Milton Obote took power. Shaw left Uganda in 1964, and by 1966 a consultant named Basil Wright traveled to Uganda in order to review the state of the Ugandan film industry. Wright found the Ugandan Film Unit to be in poor shape, "The situation of the Ugandan Film Unit is one of stagnation and demoralization" (Wright 7). Additionally, Wright stated in his report that, "As a result of this stagnation it appears that some Ministries have started to set up their own film-making facilities, or are planning to do so. In view of the current situation they can hardly be blamed; but it should be emphasized that that way chaos lies" (Wright 8). The short-lived efforts of the Ministries likely reflected the growing discord within the Ugandan government. It should be remembered that the Ministries at this time, created by the Independence Constitution of Uganda of 1962, were appointed by the President Mutesa, not the powerful Prime Minister, Obote ("Extracts from"). By 1966, political coalitions of feudal and national political leaders were fraying, leading to a collapse of the Independence Constitution and the formation of a new Republican constitution in 1967. Wright left Uganda in 1966, five years prior to the ascendance of Amin's dictatorship and one year before adoption of the aforementioned Republican constitution (Wright 1).

It is evident that the early Ugandan post-colonial period, from 1962 to 1986, proved to be continually oppressive for the people of Uganda. President Milton Obote was Uganda's first president after the country gained its independence, and although

Ugandans were free from the reign of the British, they faced another government that paralleled, and in some ways perhaps even surpassed the oppression that they had faced under the British. As one informant revealed, "Obote's government did not allow any speaking…If Obote wanted to remove someone from parliament, it was simply done" (Karlstrom 216). Historians have proposed that at the root of Uganda's post-colonial chaos, lies colonialism:

> …the brutal behavior of Uganda's post-independence governments and the unequal distribution of Uganda's economic opportunities since independence are natural consequences of Uganda's colonial experience. (Metts 299)

In 1971, Amin dissolved the Parliament of Uganda and assumed the role of President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces, assuring his position as a military dictator ("In History" par. 1). Due in large part to the tyrannical rule of Amin, there is no other documented information in the subsequent four decades surrounding the Ugandan film industry until the first Kinna-Uganda, *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005), was produced in 2005.

As in Uganda's past, poverty remains another key factor hindering the lack of development of Uganda's film industry in the present. As already established, as a comparative measure, Uganda's gross national income in 2005 was just $300 U.S. dollars per year ("Statistics"). In that same year, a typical DVD purchased on the street would cost in the neighborhood of $5 U.S. dollars. Further illustrating the scope of the poverty that exists and lack of public infrastructure in Uganda, only six to seven percent of Ugandans have access to the public electrical grid (Mæstad 22). In that the vast majority of Ugandans are struggling just to meet their daily basic needs, the lack of disposable

income is one of the many reasons that the film industry remains substantially underdeveloped.

The challenges of developing a film industry in a country that has been afflicted with such great chaos and that still lacks a solid infrastructure has proven to be difficult, yet not entirely impossible. Even in current times Uganda's film industry and filmmakers have been presented with major hurdles: shooting with a sub-par electricity grid, roads in disrepair, and limited funding opportunities among others.

Because African nation-states were created by foreign, colonial powers, and based upon European exigencies and socio-economic and political considerations, scholars such as Hutchinson et al. assert there are two components, the ethnic and the civic, impacting national identification that exists in post-colonial states such as Uganda:

> The ethnic dimension is portrayed as a commitment to 'primordial' loyalties which endow individuals with a distinctive identity; the civic as a desire for citizenship in a modern state. Since state and ethnic boundaries often clash, the result is endemic conflict. (15)

The conflict among these two divisive dimensions – ethnic and civic – and a state-propagated ideology in support of nationalism are all too apparent when reviewing the nation-state of Uganda, their divisions bleeding out onto the nation's film and media scene.

Most recently, in September 2009, the members of the ancient multiethnic empire, the Buganda Kingdom, the most powerful tribe in Uganda with over four million members, and President Museveni had disagreements over land and political power and riots ensued:

> RIOTS rocked Kampala in support of the king of the Baganda, the country's largest ethnic group. Shops in the capital were looted, cars burned. Uganda's president, Yoweri Museveni, who hails from the much smaller Ankole group, ordered police and soldiers onto the streets. At least 24 people were killed in and around the city; most were shot. ("In Whose Interest" par. 1)

Newly found oil fields may have prompted the Baganda to riot in order to claim land that was previously part of their territory:

> Mr. Museveni is especially weary of persistent Bagandan demands for a return of a swathe of claimed ancestral lands that were long ago distributed to pastoralists or pilfered by officials—and are most unlikely ever to be given back. Besides, generosity to Buganda would aggravate the other kingdoms, particularly neighbouring Bunyoro, whose land includes Uganda's new-found oilfields. ("In Whose Interest" par. 4)

The government shut down radio stations and at least 640 people were arrested and fourteen were killed as a result of voicing dissenting opinions against Museveni, including one prominent journalist/filmmaker named Kalundi Serumaga ("Hundreds Arrested" par. 1):

> International PEN's Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) has received disturbing news of the arrest of journalist, filmmaker and talk show host, Kalundi Serumaga, on 11 September 2009. It is reported that he has suffered severe beatings, requiring hospital treatment. PEN urgently calls for the release of Kalundi Serumaga, who appears to be detained solely for having spoken on recent clashes in Kampala and nearby Kayunga. ("Uganda: Journalist Arrested" par. 1, 2)

The citizens of Uganda who voiced their opinions against Museveni in support of the Buganda Kingdom are in support of the monarchy, advocating "federalism –self– governing states working with the central government" (Thompkins par. 7):

> Most of the freedom fighters under Museveni's guerilla movement were actually Buganda. It's widely believed here that Museveni and the kabaka had a gentleman's agreement. Alume says in exchange for Uganda's support. Museveni may have agreed to make Buganda a federal state. (Thompkins par. 21)

An example of the use of this new form of media as an instrument of power by the President of Uganda was evident during the September 2009 riots. Four radio stations were shut down for speaking out against President Museveni as their opinions dissented from the President's narrative of events taking place. As the International Press Institute published:

> Four radio stations were closed on 10-11 September, local sources told IPI. Two Central Broadcasting Service stations, owned by the Kingdom of Buganda, went off the air on Thursday afternoon. The next day, radio stations Akaboozi Ku Bbiri (Radio Two), Radio Sapienta and Ssuubi FM were raided by soldiers and closed down, local news outlets reported. Information Minister Kabakumba Matsiko announced in a statement on Friday that the stations had 'systematically incited the listeners to cause chaos and destruction wherever they could.' ("Radio One" par. 14)

Thus, the purported reason behind Museveni's closing down of the radio stations was that the deejays had incited chaos and violence. The turbulent atmosphere in Uganda has since receded, however, "Museveni is now blaming Buganda's radio station for inciting last year's violence, a charge that the kingdom calls ironical" (Thompkins par. 24).

The development of Kinna-Uganda has had many other obstacles other than political strife, namely a lack of infrastructure, production budget, distribution, and education. For example, the roads are not paved which makes traveling for shoots dangerous and slow. Furthermore, there are no production companies, so individual filmmakers have to fund their own films. Distribution outlets are limited and the films that do get produced usually end up getting bootlegged and sold very cheaply. Lastly, there are no film production degrees offered at local universities.

Uganda's film industry would have to wait until the late 1980s in order to begin to develop. There would be several more regime changes after Amin, and in 1986 Yoweri

Museveni came into power, providing Uganda with its first relatively stable government of the 20th century. Ugandans began experimenting with film during the late 1980s. However, during that time, producing films simply meant recording staged theatrical productions. Staged theatrical productions were, and still are, the dominant form of entertainment in Uganda. They have remained popular no doubt due to their prevalence during Amin's rule, thus serving as a lingering remnant of his regime (Nuwagaba , "Rosy Future" par. 5). Although Ugandans were introduced to this new medium of film, they did not use it in order to produce cinematic narratives, but rather, as mentioned above, simply to record theatrical productions.

Importantly, when the AIDS epidemic began to climax in the late 1980s, it spurred Ugandans to realize that film could not only be utilized as a form of documentation, it could also be employed as a forceful communication tool (Nuwagaba, "Rosy Future" par. 5). This realization came to light due to the dire need for a, "…mass medium to sensitise people about the disease…" (Nuwagaba, "Rosy Future" par. 8). Film was recognized as a solution to this problem, but, "…there were no established filmmakers…" (Nuwagaba, "Rosy Future" par. 8). Critically, it was this recognition that gave birth to film's acceptance as a narrative, versus a documentative medium because of the way in which the films were captured and whom they were filmed by. For the first time Ugandans themselves were filming plays they acted in. This was the first time film was seen as a creative potential rather than the didactic colonial films. However, films were still shot utilizing an instructive presentation. Instead of creating the equivalent of a public service announcement (PSA), theatre organizations were instead funded by NGOs

who supported the filming of plays that dealt HIV and/or AIDS themes (Nuwagaba, "Rosy Future" par. 8). As a result, film's creative cinematic potential was ignored in favor of presenting long-form live storytelling formulations, consistent with populist, tribal historical roots of the society. Some acknowledge that "AIDS helped in the rise of Uganda's film industry", as it was then that the seeds for Uganda's future film industry were planted (Nuwagaba, "Rosy Future" par. 8).

Shortly after Ugandans began to widely film stage plays they also became involved with feature film projects. Although not a Kinna-Uganda, Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (Nair 1991) was shot partially in Uganda:

> One of the first major movies to be shot in Uganda was Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* that featured Denzel Washington in 1991. It was simply a moment of excitement for the Ugandans who took part in the movie, but they didn't use their exposure to carry on. (Nuwagaba , "Rosy Future" par. 7)

Mississippi Masala (Nair 1991) gave Ugandans their first taste of the feature film industry, even thought their own industry was still lacking any momentum whatsoever. In 2001, Ugandan actor Abby Mukiibi became involved in a feature film project filmed outside of Uganda titled, *Sometimes in April* (Peck 2005). Mukiibi played a supporting role in the film as Colonel Bagosora. *Sometimes in April* (Peck 2005) chronicles the era of Rwandan genocide that took place in 1994, in a historical fiction narrative. Directed by Raoul Peck, the film was shot in Kenya. This allowed Ugandan talent to gain the experience of working on a large budget Western film, however, Ugandans themselves still had no films they could call their own.

It wasn't until four years later, in 2005, that Uganda's first feature film, or the first Kinna-Uganda, made its debut with the film, *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005).

Feelings Struggle (Ssemwogerere 2005) was written and directed by Ugandan Ashraf Ssemwogerere under his own film company titled Pearl Afric Pictures. Ssemwogerere is a dentist by profession but feels like an artist by birth (Amakula.com par. 2). Ssemwogerere returned to college in order to study drama (Amakula.com par. 2). Ssemwogerere then funded the film using his salary as a dentist. Ugandan actors Sheila Nvannungi, Patricko Mujuuka, and Mariam Gitta starred in the film. Director and writer Ssemwogerere, explains how the film's concept was based a true story:

> *Feelings Struggle* is based on a related true story that occurred in his village of Namulonge in Bombo sometime back. 'It was in my auntie's family. A schoolgirl dumped her newborn daughter at my auntie's place but the girl grew up and became a lawyer.' ("Pioneering Movie Industry in Uganda" par. 2)

The film's plot, a mixture of both nonfiction and narrative tradition, revolves around a Ugandan family whose daughter is kidnapped to be used as a sacrifice. Then, it is discovered that since the girl's ears are pierced, it precludes her from being an appropriate sacrifice, as she would have needed to have never shed a drop of blood in order to be fit for this role. As a result, shortly after the girl's abduction, the kidnappers leave the girl in the forest where a farmer discovers her. The farmer decides to adopt the girl, raising her as his own. The girl grows up to become a successful lawyer. Then, in a twist of events, the girl's biological parents discover her. The film details the hardships that both parties face in light of the events that take place. *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005) was not considered to be a great success according to other Uganda filmmakers such as Cindy Magara, as she complained about the film's quality and lack of professionalism. Even so, Ssemwogerere has been recognized for his

groundbreaking film. Magara did make a comment saying that Ssemwogerere is a, "gifted storyteller" ("The Ugandan film Industry" par. 6).

Feelings Struggle (Ssemwogerere 2005) was considered "a flop" according to one article written in the *Daily Monitor* (Nuwagaba, "Rosy Future" par. 10). Ssemwogerere is nevertheless still highly regarded in the film industry and praised for his pioneering work in creating what is known as the first Kinna-Uganda, "While Senegalese Ousmane Sembene is referred to as the father of African cinema with his 1962 production *Borom Sarret,* there is no doubt Semwogere is Ousmane's Ugandan contemporary" ("Pioneering Movie Industry in Uganda" par. 6). Ssemwogerere categorizes *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005) as an 'Ekina-Uganda', meaning a movie of Ugandan origin. This undertaking is similar to the Nigerian movies that are usually referred to as Eki-Nigeria. Ssemwogerere is currently in the process of copyrighting the name Ekina-Uganda as a catchphrase for his future films ("Pioneering Movie Industry in Uganda" par. 1-2).

Ssemwogerere released his next film the next year in 2006. His second film was titled, *Murder In The City* (Ssemwogerere 2006). Like *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005), *Murder In The City* (Ssemwogerere 2006) was also self-funded by Ssemwogerere. This film was shot shortly after a distinguished female lawyer named Robinah Kiyingi, wife of Dr. Aggrey Kiyingi, an Australian cardiologist, was murdered (Nuwagaba, "Rosy Future" par. 10). Though Ssemwogerere has denied that *Murder In The City* (Ssemwogerere 2006) was based upon, or related to any of the real life events, it became evident to many people that the murder influenced the plot of this production. A Ugandan court called Ssemwogerere to trial and demanded to see the script he was

planning on filming. Ultimately, the court allowed Ssemwogerere to go ahead with the filming. The film was nominated for a Ugandan film award and Ssemwogerere took home an Ssali Annual Award (SSA) for best actor as he also starred in the film. Ssali is a prominent filmmaker and journalist who reviews local films.

That same year, in 2006, a film titled *Roses in the Rain* (Onuoha and Folder 2006), was produced by Nigerian directors Emmanuel Onuoha and Dare Folder but filmed in Uganda using Ugandan actors. Although the film was not authentically a Kinna-Uganda as I have defined, it marks the first co-production between Ugandan actors and Nigerian directors (Nuwagaba, "Rosy Future" par. 11). Its plot revolves around a highly respected, well-to-do family that once a pillar in the community but becomes tainted in the eyes of many residents and looked down upon, after being affected with AIDS (Kameo par. 3). Although not based on true stories as the two Ssemwogerere films were, with a reported 6.7 percent of Ugandans infected with HIV, the plot is something that many people in Uganda can relate to (Kameo par. 3). However, this film was deemed "another flop" by reviewers (Nuwagaba, "Rosy Future" par. 11). It was also noted that while the story was good, it lacked a level of professional film quality.

Later that year, in 2006, Cindy Magara, a student at Makerere University, directed her first film titled *Fate* (Magara 2006). *Fate* (Magara 2006) was the first Kinna-Uganda directed by a woman. With the help of Cine Club, a monthly film forum that meets in Kampala, Magara was able to gain the knowledge and tools to produce her first film.

Magaras's *Fate* (Magara 2006), focuses on a character named Kate, played by Justine Nantogo. Kate is a single, corporate executive in her mid-thirties. She is

overwhelmed with social pressures to get married, and meets Ken, played by (Mutaka Ali). Ken is of good social standing, employed as an intelligence officer. However, he has a secret past that soon comes to light. But by the time Kate discovers the truth about Ken, she is already infected with HIV, and a single mother. Regardless, Kate does not give up hope, and is determined not to let AIDS dictate the rest of her life (Otali par. 20). Again, we see the similar theme of AIDS as in the film *Roses in the Rain* (Onuoha and Folder 2006).

Fate (Magara 2006) premiered at the Hotel Africana on July 30, 2006. Though *Fate* (Magara 2006) was shown again at the National Theatre, Plaza Cinema, the film has since dropped in to obscurity. I was not able to find any reviews for her film. Although Maraga herself is hopeful about the future of the indigenous film industry, she cautions that, "…people must produce; it is better to produce a lot, like music… pump in a lot so people start making choices" (Otali par. 10-11). To produce her own film, Maraga herself had to endure a great deal. She traveled to Nairobi in order to find professional help for the film, as there are few film professionals in Uganda. Kenya's film industry is much more advanced than Uganda's. In Kenya, Maraga organized professional workshops for the cast and crew in order to develop their skills.

In April 2007, two more Kinna-Uganda were released: Don Mugisha's *Divizionz* (Mugisha 2007) and Matt Bish's *Battle of the Souls* (Bish 2007). *Divizionz* (Mugisha 2007) is centered around four young people from four different four regions of Uganda. They all travel to Kampala, the country's capital, in order to look for work and seek a better life. They learn when they arrive what it is really like to live in the city: rough.

With a shortage of amenities, and the prevalent violence and drug use that surrounds them, the men are forced to cope in this new, rocky environment, if they are to pursue their dreams. *Divizionz* (Mugisha 2007) discusses the divisions between the city life and village from a native Ugandan point of view. Similar to Magara's experience with filming *Fate* (Magara 2006), Mugisha lists many obstacles while filming *Divizionz* (Mugisha 2007). Mugisha refers to his production method as "guerilla" because the film was made on a very limited budget, and as a result, relies heavily on many improvisations and creative ideas for solving production issues (Tendo par. 8). Mugisha elaborates on the filming of *Divizionz* (Mugisha 2007):

> I don't want to look at these obstacles as problems. 'Challenges' is a better word. For instance, there is this dangerous place down in the ghetto in Kamwokya, (a suburban area North of Kampala) called 'The Beach'. We couldn't shoot there after 7pm. In fact we had an incident where there was a misunderstanding with the leaders at the 'Beach' over money issues. We paid the wrong people and almost got stabbed for that. (Tendo par. 22)

Divizionz (Mugisha 2007) premiered at the Berlin film festival. While it was noted in one review that while the editing of this film was poor, *Divizionz* (Mugisha 2007) won a prize for editing and a special jury award at the Africa Movie Academy. Furthermore, it won two awards at the Africa Movie Academy and won best score and best African film at the Kuala Lumpur International film festival.

The next Kinna-Uganda, released in 2007, is titled *Battle of the Souls* (Bish 2007) directed by Matt Bish. Bish studied film in Amsterdam and returned to Uganda in 2005. Shortly after his return to Uganda, Bish began to prepare for directing his first feature-length film. *Battle of the Souls* (Bish 2007) was shot without a professional crew or cast. Like Ssemwogerere's two films *Battle of the Souls* (Bish 2007) is based on a true story.

The film is based upon Bish's younger brother, a Kampala-based KFM radio personality Roger Mugisha. Again, as Mugisha does, Bish describes his filming tactics as "guerilla" (Tendo par. 9). Bish would not let the cast know where the camera was as to avoid them looking into it.

The film chronicles Roger's dramatic religious conversion and reveals his experiences as part of an underworld society that sacrifice human lives in exchange for wealth and beauty. Again, Bish experienced difficulties similar to other Ugandans directors in the making of his film:

> People would promise to give us free premises but when we went for shooting, they asked for money…I appeal to the Ugandan government to start helping filmmakers. It is the only sure way to improve our tourism industry. ("The Battle")

Divizionz (Mugisha 2007) premiered at Didi's World auditorium. The film collected nine nominations at the Africa Movie Academy.

In December 2007, another female-directed Kinna-Uganda, *Down This Road I Walk* (Ndagire 2007), was released by Mariam Ndagire. Ndagire also wrote the script. The movie deals with young girls who are forced out of school by their parents who instead offer them to men as brides, to the highest bidder. One article stated, "The topic seems so common but the blend of humour and seriousness in the film makes it a different thing from what you are used to" (Tatya par. 11). Ndagire speaks about her motivation for making the film:

> When *The Last King Of Scotland* was being shot here last year, I happened to come across the movie script, I started reading books about screen plays and of course with my skills as a playwright, I thought I could write a movie and that is how, last year in march I began penning my movie. ("Mariam Launches" 10)

While the film is not based on a true story it is inspired from events that take place in Uganda as *Roses In the Rain* (Onuoha and Folder 2006), *Fate* (Magara 2006), and *Divizionz* (Mugisha 2007) were. The film premiered at the theatre La Bonita and was nominated for a Ugandan film award. This film was very well received, and even dubbed by some as the best Ugandan film of the year (Tatya par. 7).

In March 2008, *Kiwani: the movie* (*Kiwani*) (Ssali 2008), directed by Henry Ssali was released. The story revolves around two Kampalan con artists who prey on party-girl female university students at the local Makerere University. Director Ssali writes, "With its twists and turns of several shady deals, greed, backstabbing, lies and romance, it basically mirrors life of Kampala people in a hilarious way" (Ssali 26). Like Mugisha and Bish, Ssali also explains that he underwent many challenges during the production of *Kiwani* (Ssali 2008). Ssali describes these hurdles in an online article he wrote for the *Daily Monitor*, a Ugandan news website. The articles lists obstacles such as: fans interfering during shooting at a public location, an unexpected downpour of rain preventing them from shooting outside, a band at a restaurant that demanded a bribe in order to stop playing their music, Makerere University staff granting permission to shoot for free but then demanding money once they saw the crew's equipment, a power outage that cost eight hours of shooting, children interfering while they were shooting at a country club swimming pool, necessary costumes being stolen that could not be replaced, and a car they were to use in a scene that crashed the day before shooting. However, these hurdles did not stop Ssali from finishing his film, a feat that was not easily accomplished. The film cost 16 million Ugandan shillings, which is equivalent to just

over seven thousand US dollars to produce. The film premiered at the Commonwealth Resort Hotel in Munyonyo.

The film titled *Imani* (Kamya 2010), directed by Ugandan filmmaker Caroline Kamya, made its debut in 2010. *Imani* (Kamya 2010) premiered outside of Uganda at the Forum of Berlinale located in Berlin in February of 2010. *Imani* (Kamya 2010), "is the first of its kind, a trilogy depicting life in contemporary Uganda" ("Berlinale Forum" par. 6) To elaborate, *Imani's* (Kamya 2010) main theme is faith:

> IMANI which means 'faith' is so called because all title characters survive and rely on faith. The film is also a testament to the belief I have in our creativity as Ugandans. We can tell our own stories in a powerful and unique way, in our own voices. ("Berlinale Forum" par. 12)

The storyline surrounds around three separate main characters and is the first film trilogy from Uganda. Olweny, a 12 year-old former child soldier, is going back to his rural home for the first time in four years after finishing post-war rehabilitation. Mary is a 25 year-old maid originally from a village, who works in Kampala for a wealthy family. Armstrong is an 18-year-old break dancer, "with a turbulent background" (Berlinale Forum" par. 5).

Additionally, music is a very important element of the film. A blend of contemporary acoustic and hip-hop flavors along with traditional African beats it utilized and, "skillfully woven together to form the tapestry of both rural and urban life in Uganda today" ("Berlinale Forum" par. 6). Kamya was trained in filmmaking when she participated in the fifth Berlinale Talent Campus, which was held in 2007 ("African talent" par. 1). Additionally, Kamya is a Maisha Film Lab alumni (Emslie par. 3). Kamya's anthropologist sister, Dr. Agnes Kamya, wrote the script. The film was, "shot

in Uganda, but all post production, except for the editing, is made in Sweden" ("Uganda goes Norrbotten" par. 5). Most of the financing came from Kamya's production company IVAD ("Uganda goes Norrbotten" par. 11). The film is promoted by a website, located at – www.imanimovie.com. *Imani* (Kamya 2010) was well received winning the prize for best feature film, the Silver Dhow, at the Zanzibar International film festival, best director and actress at the Tarifa African festival, and best film and actress at the African Movie Academy Awards. According to Africavenir, a non-governmental non-profit website based out of Cameroon, *Imani* (Kamya 2010) has been called, "a visual feast of stunning worlds revealing the little known city of Kampala and the formerly war torn region of Gulu providing a unique perspective from this region of Africa" ("Berlinale Forum" par. 6). This is the first film regarding child soldiers to be directed by a Ugandan filmmaker. While there have been other films that discuss this topic, such as *War/Dance* (Fine and Nix 2007), they were directed by Westerners. W*ar/Dance*, directed by married couple Sean Fine and Andrea Nix, was released in 2007 and surrounds the story of three war orphans competing in the country's dance and music competition.

The most recent film is a short titled, *Dawa* (Kaigwa 2010), and was directed by Mark Kaigwa. While the final version of the film is not yet released on DVD, a trailer for the film is available at the film's website – http://dawathefilm.co.ke. Produced by Maisha Film Lab, Kaigwa traveled from his native Kenya to Uganda in order to produce this film at Maisha Film Lab, where he was accepted into their summer film workshop. Like *Roses in the Rain* (Onuoha and Folder 2006) and *Imani* (Kamya 2010), *Dawa*

(Kaigwa 2010) is a co-production and not technically a Kinna-Uganda. However, I include all three of the aforementioned films as they contain one of the criteria of a Kinna-Uganda; either directed by a Ugandan or produced in Uganda. *Dawa* (Kaigwa 2010) is a useful sample to analyze as it demonstrates the usefulness of Maisha's Film Lab. Maisha's Film Lab produced the film in three weeks. The first week was spent working intensively on the script that Kaigwa developed with his assigned mentor, producer and director Patricia Riggen from Mexico. Kaigwa drafted eight different versions of the script during that first week. That same week Kaigwa also completed a pitching workshop in order to be selected as one of the scripts that went into production:

> It was great practice for me…the mentor who was conducting the pitching session told us that the writer was not automatically the director. During the pitching workshop I volunteered and it taught me so much. I enjoyed it because I sort of enjoy criticism a bit…I really got to know my film in a way that really gave me a different perspective. When my script was selected I was really overwhelmed. (Kaigwa, Mark. Telephone Interview. 1 Sept. 2009)

Then, during the second week of training, all of the screenwriters had to complete a pitch for a chance in order to serve as the director of their own screenplay. The acting, directing, and production mentors, along with the program director of Maisha Film Lab, Musarait Kashmiri, were the judges. Kaigwa pitched and was chosen to direct his script. The film was shot over the third week (Kaigwa, Mark. Telephone Interview. 1 Sept. 2009).

Kaigwa is one of the youngest African directors at only 22 years old, and was born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya. He works as a copywriter at an ad agency. His film, *Dawa* (Kaigwa 2010), means medicine in Swahili. *Dawa* (Kaigwa 2010) tells the story of:

> A pair of conmen, a grandfather and a grandson, and they're both pulling small time cons in the big city. And the con that they're pulling, it sounds terrible, but it actually happens, the grandfather pretends to be blind and walks around with his helpless 'kid'. They walk though traffic trying to get money from people. So that's the con that they're pulling in the big city.
> (Kaigwa, Mark. Telephone Interview. 1 Sept. 2009)

Dawa (Kaigwa 2010) premiered at the Durban International film festival in South Africa in August of 2010.

Maisha Film Lab also trained the emerging Ugandan filmmaker Daphne Ampire during the summer of 2009. Ampire, 21 years of age, has been acting in the theatre since she was a child and became intrigued with the medium of film. Ampire wrote a script titled, *God's Fool*, at Maisha's Film Lab in summer of 2009. The script is a comedy about an African man who takes an HIV test and is tricked into believing he has the disease (Ampire, Daphne. Telephone Interview. 5 Oct. 2009). While Ampire's script, *God's Fool*, was not selected to be produced, Ampire worked on two other films at Maisha; *The Pardon* and *On Time*. *The Pardon* is about the Rwandan genocide and forgiveness. The film uncovers the painful healing process that the people of Rwanda go through. *On Time* tells the story of a young girl trying to feed her sick mother. She crosses paths with an aid worker who tries to help them, but is too late to save her mother. The filming conditions were so harsh and intense that Ampire had to be taken to the hospital during the filmmaking process because of her glucose level (Ampire, Daphne. Telephone Interview. 5 Oct. 2009).

The aforementioned films that Ampire worked on were not directed by a Ugandan, thus they cannot be considered to be truly Kinna-Uganda films, even though they were produced in Uganda. Rather, these films would fit into the transnational

category as they are co-productions. In a world where national boundaries become less and less important due to globalization and the exchange of cultures and currencies, the transnational model of categorization will become more and more popular and useful. This phenomenon suggests that a pure form of national cinema is but a step in a country's filmmaking experience, necessary to establish the credibility of indigenous writers and producers, ultimately leading to their participation in and acceptance by a broader, trans-national cinema community. In other words, a national cinema is essentially an incubator for local filmmakers to gain experience, acceptance, and credibility. Once the filmmaker reaches a level of maturity, it is natural that they reach out to wider audiences and wider production partners, thus assimilating into a broader film community.

Similarly, the films *Roses in the Rain* (Onuoha and Folder 2006), *Imani* (Kamya 2010), and *Dawa* (Kaigwa 2010) also fit into the transnational models of film as they were not either directed by a Ugandan or not produced solely by Uganda. This is because, as previously stated, they only possess one of the two criteria of being a Kinna-Uganda; either directed by a Ugandan or produced by Uganda, but not both.

Although Kinna-Uganda is beginning to flourish there is no dominant mode of production at this time. As a result, filmmakers still look outside Uganda to find professional production staff and crew. The lack of an organized film industry has hindered the development of an indigenous film industry in Uganda. However, in May 2008, independent filmmakers united under an umbrella organization to support each other in their film making endeavors. Ndagire, the director of *Down This Road I Walk* (Ndagire 2007) states:

> 'Our main purpose of coming together is to improve the quality of films in Uganda'…The association brings together all stakeholders in the film industry including directors, actors, producers, screen writers, editors, cinematographers, sound and lighting technicians, casting directors, distributors and others who have interest in film. ("Filmmakers Unite" par. 1, 3)

This new collaboration gives hope for the advancement and strengthening of Uganda's film industry. Furthermore, Nair's Maisha Film Lab, which was founded in 2004, is an asset to Ugandan independent filmmakers, with the likes of Sofia Coppola, Spike Lee, and Raoul Peck serving as advisors. It is unclear how active these advisors are, however, the mentors that have been sent to work with Maisha have had a strong background in the film industry (see Fig. 1). Although most mentors sent to volunteer at Maisha are from the West, the goal of the mentor is not to control content but to simply aid emerging filmmakers with the production of their own scripts.

Program Director, Musarait Kashmiri, discusses her role at Maisha. She is responsible for running the organization on a day-to-day basis, as well as conducting outreach. As Kashmiri states:

> As the program director at Maisha I'm responsible for all aspects of the organization. Whether it's fundraising, whether it's insuring that our accounts get done, but most importantly it's to network and interlink with organizations on the continent, specifically East Africa, in order to find out what is happening in the film world because in Uganda we are at infancy. Film here is not a huge medium. But Kenya has a stronger film industry. Tanzania as well, and Rwanda is really coming up as well. So it's important for us to understand what's happening in our region. So I attend a lot of festivals, workshops, conferences in order to link up with other organizations and people who are working in the film industry here in East Africa. (Personal Interview. 23 Aug. 2008)

Kashmiri discusses the founding statement of Maisha Film Lab as well as the industry in East Africa. As Kashmiri puts it:

> Really, we are about "If we don't tell our own stories no one else will". Maisha is about telling our own stories with our own voices. The visual medium, especially with the leap of technology, can easily allow us into this medium. Africa has found its own voice with the Nollywood model, the Nigerian model. For us it's very important that we have quality. And Maisha is about training and the craft of filmmaking. Whether it is the craft of screenwriting, directing, we train with sound, with camera, with editing. We train actors as well as producers and production values as well. So we look at the entire business of filmmaking to ensure that as the industry grows we have people who are able understand the industry and take it to the next level from a quality perspective.
> (Personal Interview. 23 Aug. 2008)

Another Ugandan institution supporting indigenous film in Uganda is the Cine Club, which meets weekly on Tuesdays in the National Theatre in Kampala. Run by actress and filmmaker Esther Jacum, the foundation's goal is to both train actors and supply filmmakers with the necessary skills needed in order to produce films. Additionally, experienced industry experts will volunteer their time in order to teach up and coming filmmakers invaluable skills that will aid them with making independent films (Jacum, Esther. Personal Interview. 27 Aug. 2008). The Cine Club's monthly forum is part of a larger organization, the Uganda International Film Foundation, founded in December of 2004 by Esther Jacum. Jacum, originally from Nigeria, attributes her motivation behind founding the organization to her, "…love for the arts, not money" (Ondego 11). Jacum also established her own production company titled Ringrose Pictures. The following is a flyer that announces the types of training that is offered through the Cine Club:

FILM CLUB
in partnership with
NATIONAL THEATRE
&
MAISHA FILM LAB
presents
"FILM CHAT"

LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH at the Center for Innovative Cultural Practice, 1st Floor National Theatre.

PROGRAMME:

Date:	Workshop	Time
March 25, 08	Discussion on original documentary ideas	2.00 p.m. -6.30pm
Presenter:	Carol Kamya	
Film	"300"	7.00 p.m - 9.30 pm
April 29, 08	Acting Workshop	2.00 p.m. -6.30pm
Presenter:	DONALD MUGISHA.	
Film :	"Divizionz"	7.00 p.m - 9.30 pm
May 27, 08:	Screen writing workshop	2.00 p.m. -6.30pm
Presenter:	DILMAN DILA	
Film	"Tsotsi"	7.00 p.m - 9.30 pm
June 24, 08:	Editing Workshop	2.00 p.m. -6.30pm
Presenter:	ZIPPY KIMUNDU	
Film :	"Chinatown"	7.00 p.m - 9.30 pm
July 29, 08:	Directing Workshop	2.00 p.m. -6.30pm
Presenter:	PETNA NDALIKO	
Film :	"LUMUMBA"	7.00 p.m - 9.30 pm
August 26, 08:	Sound Workshop	2.00 p.m. -6.30pm
Presenter:	HOSEA JEMBA	
Film:	"25th hour"	7.00 pm - 9.30pm.

FREE ENTRANCE !!!

To be part of these workshops register with or call.
Film Club - 0714 692770
Maisha film lab - 0712 639904
Website: maishafilmlab@infocom.co.ug

MAISHA
National Theatre
FILM Club

Figure 1. A flyer collected during a trip to Uganda in August 2008.

Purportedly, the biggest production company in Uganda is Carol Kamya's company named IVAD Productions. Kamya completed her secondary and tertiary education in the UK. She then founded what is viewed as the leading production house in Uganda (IVAD Productions) ("African film-maker" par. 4). IVAD has its own website and has produced documentaries, short films, TV shows, TV advertisements, and promotional videos. However, *Imani* (Kamya 2010) was the first feature length film IVAD has produced to date.

Currently, there are four distribution companies that distribute Kinna-Ugandas in Uganda: HK Movie Industry, Video World Entertainment Centre, Twinex Videos, and Hills Photography. They are all located in downtown Kampala in an area known as Ugawood ("Uganda: Local Film" par. 5).

Notably, it is extremely difficult to distribute films through local "mom and pop" shops without piracy taking place. In fact, the primary means of distribution of Kinna-Ugandas on DVD are through purchasing in mom and pop shops. It is possible to buy non-pirated DVDs at the shops in Garden City mall, including at the country's only full service a grocery store, where authorized copies are sold, albeit at higher prices.

Furthermore, there are only three main ways for films to be screened publicly in Uganda: the theatre, bars, and video halls. Only a single major movie theatre exists in Uganda, located in Kampala in the Garden City shopping mall complex. The Cineplex maintains a five-times daily schedule during week days, and six times daily during weekends Western films are primarily screened in this four-screen facility. Films are widely screened in local bars however, these films are primarily imported Western films. Video halls comprise the third means of screening in Uganda. According to a US government study there is a network of over 2000 video halls located in Uganda. These video halls are known as "Bibandas." The word Bibanda is Lugandan, which is one of the official and the primary business languages spoken in Uganda. The Bibandas, "function as local cinemas and general audiovisual entertainment venues for grassroot communities" (Marshfield and van Oosterhout 1). However, Kinna-Ugandas are only infrequently screened at the local video halls as local African productions are rare. Thus according to a study on Bibandas, "They are not only hard to get but the operators and owners are concerned about copyright issues" (Marshfield and van Oosterhout 10). However, in a survey, "most of the interviewees expressed their willingness to pay more money to see local productions" (Musinguzi par. 3). This finding by the study clearly

establishes that the demand for Uganda and East African productions is from Uganda and points to a potential distribution market for the filmmakers:

> The high demand for Ugandan (or East African) productions, which became evident through the research, clearly indicates a potentially big distribution market for Ugandan filmmakers. The release of the first Nigerian/Ugandan film co-production *Roses in the Rain* which premiered in Kampala at the end of April 2006, seems to be just the beginning of a whole range of Ugandan movies to be introduced onto the local market. (Marshfield and van Oosterhout 10)

Film award ceremonies and film festivals are another way films are introduced and shown to the Ugandan community. For example, there is now an annual film awards ceremony at Bonita theatre presented by the Ugandan Federation of Movie Industry. The Uganda Federation Of Movie (UFMI) was established in 2006 in order, "to fight for and protect the rights of those involved in the film industry in Uganda" ("History" par. 1).

There are two larger scale film festivals located in Kampala, Uganda. The first festival is named Amakula Kampala:

> The first Amakula Kampala International Film Festival was inaugurated on May 21, 2004. The success of the first festival has secured it a place as an annual event In Kampala. The festival will continue to showcase world cinema both classic and contemporary, with a special focus on African cinema, while bringing international and regional filmmakers together to help create an inspiring and conducive environment for cinema culture. ("About Amakula" par. 1)

Each year the festival hands out a Golden Impala Award, which goes to the best film in the East African sub-Saharan region. The most recently founded festival is put on by Maisha Film Lab and started in just August of 2010:

> The Maisha Film Lab will this month hold its maiden African Film festival that will run from Friday to Sunday at the National theatre. The festival will be free to the public and will mainly provide a platform for people to see African films. We will have two and half days of African films. (Batte par. 1)

The Panafrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO), is the largest African film festival, and is located in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Although when FESPACO first started in 1969, "only five African and two European countries participated…By 1985, it had become the biggest cultural event in Africa, with thirty-three countries competing for the now prestigious 'Yennenga award and several other prizes…" (Diawara 128). It accepts films from Africans from any country, regardless of nation they live in, as long as the directors are of African decent:

> FESPACO was founded in 1969 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, thanks to efforts of a few serious African film enthusiasts. Due to the admiration and hope that it inspired amongst the general populace and filmmakers alike, the festival became an institution by governmental decree on January 7, 1972. It is a biennial festival starting the last Saturday in February every odd year. FESPACO's objectives are to facilitate the screening of all African films; enable contacts and exchanges among film and audiovisual professionals; and contribute to the expansion and development of African cinema, as a means of expression, education and raising awareness. ("African Film" par. 30)

Additionally, Uganda's government has launched a relatively new film centre on October 8th 2009. The project is known as the "Ugabrain Film Centre" and it is located at the Uganda National Cultural Centre. The Minister of Labor and Culture in the Ugandan Government organized the launch. The goal of this project is to help develop the film industry in Uganda by attempting to boost children and young adult's interest in films. It will also aid in helping, "artists involved in films for children and young people strengthen their economic base as well as improve the presentation of their culture and customs of Ugandan communities" ("Ugabrain Film" par. 2).

Despite the projects and festivals described above the Ugandan government has been criticized for not being more actively involved in the film industry. Most recently

Indian filmmaker Anjum Rajabali has stated that the only way the film industry can flourish is if the government becomes more involved. As Rajabali states:

> 'It is important for government to allocate resources to young film makers. They [government] usually say that if a film makes an international mark, then we will support [you]. But how can it make an international mark without support?'
>
> 'At the moment, you have a very unequal field. You don't have a cinema viewing culture, which is wide spread. You don't have theatres, exhibitions,' he noted, before adding: 'For that to start, it is important that government works out a five-year plan – of subsidy.' (Musasizi par. 3, 6)

Tellingly, the only major University in Kampala, Makerere University, lacks a film program. The Ugandan government has begun to promote the local movie industry through the Minister of Culture and Tourism. However, recent political and civil strife has severely limited to effectiveness and credibility of the Ugandan government. Without more aid from the government or academic spheres the level of professional industry workers will be limited. Moreover, the lack of trained and experienced professionals will ensure that local productions will have to rely upon foreign crew and filmmakers. This is why Nair's Maisha Film Lab may be an invaluable resource to Uganda's emerging film industry.

Uganda gained its independence almost 50 years ago in 1962. Since then, Uganda's film industry has moved from a didactic form of colonial film brought to the country by UNESCO, to Kinna-Uganda, the country's very own national cinema, as well as a healthy body of transnational films produced solely or partially by Uganda. There was a large gap, from to 1958 through 2005, where nothing was produced, or nothing that was produced was documented, due to Amin's rule. As previously mentioned, during Amin's time in power freedom of speech was non-existent due to the fact that dissent and

criticism was punishable by death. The effect of Amin's rule on Uganda's film industry, I believe, was to cause it to stagnate for four decades. With *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005) the nation's first Kinna-Uganda was born, and ever since the industry has been slowly, but steadily growing. Post-independence film production in Uganda currently produces both national films, or Kinna-Uganda, as well as transnational films, co-productions between people from different countries. Furthermore, national cinema developed first in Uganda's indigenous film community and, as an example of national cinema, is a useful way to think of indigenous film production. For example, with experience and credibility, some filmmakers start to turn to wider audiences and production partners to collaborate with. This leads to a schism, some films being Kinna-Uganda, with an "authentic" expression of local and national values and outlook, while others seek and achieve wider participation and recognition through working on co-productions.

Chapter Five:

The Future of Kinna-Uganda

There is an African proverb that states, "Until the lion has his or her own storyteller, the hunter will always have the best part of the story" (African Proverb of the Month par. 1). One can interpret this allegory as symbolizing that until the voices of the oppressed are heard, the oppressor's point of view will continue to be the only side of the story we come to know. For the people of Uganda, this allegory is especially pertinent. Their voices have been stifled as a result of decades of colonialism imposed by the British, followed by devastating post-colonial political regimes and poverty, which have resulted in an underdeveloped and censored media and film infrastructure. Throughout this thesis I have discussed the specific ways in which Uganda's film industry has been stunted. Although faced with many challenges, the filmmakers find ways to jump over the hurdles that they are presented with and continue to produce Kinna-Uganda.

Colonialism hindered the development of Kinna-Uganda as it stunted the Ugandan economy, preventing it from becoming a vibrant, stable economy. Additionally, colonialism drew new political boundaries and created nations with no concern for tribal boundaries that already existed in the territory. Furthermore, colonialism led to disastrous post-colonial political regimes of Amin and Obote.

As a result of colonialism, even the early post-colonial period in Uganda had political regimes set in place that severely violated human rights and further wreaked havoc on the economy. For example, under Amin half a million Ugandans either disappeared or were killed. Furthermore, during both the regimes of Obote and Amin

there was no freedom of speech and many examples were documented of persons being killed. I believe that today's lack of a film industry has been largely shaped by Amin's rule. For example, data indicates that Ugandan cinemas were destroyed and shut down during Amin's rule ("Uganda in a Nutshell" par. 9). I found no evidence to indicate that the films being shown at those cinemas were native to Uganda. This suggests that movies shown in cinemas during this period of time were films imported from other Western countries or colonial films. While there is some anecdotal evidence that underground films have been produced in Uganda, this topic warrants further research, requiring primary research such as personal interviews and reviews of newspaper and magazine archives. Nevertheless, my extensive research produced no evidence that any Ugandan national films, or Kinna-Uganda, existed until the year 2005, the first being *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005).

Poverty still exists to this day as a result of colonialism and the past regime of Amin that destroyed nearly all of Uganda's infrastructure and with it the economy. With 85 percent of Ugandans making less than a dollar a day, it becomes a difficult task for filmmakers to find both investors for their film and buyers once their film is finished ("Statistics"). Emerging technologies will bring solutions to these problems. First, I believe affordable camera and editing equipment will allow films to be produced more efficiently and cheaply. Second, several ventures are proposing upgraded cellular networks which will allow film to be distributed via broadband on cell phones, which is what most Ugandans currently use as a tool for communication.

This thesis also discussed different theories that could possibly aid in better comprehending the phenomenon of Kinna-Uganda, such as national, regional, continental, transnational, and pan-African cinemas. For the purposes of this thesis, I maintain that a film qualifies as a work of Ugandan national cinema – and that it is useful to think of it as such – if it is both directed by a Ugandan and produced by Uganda. When utilizing a regional theory, one would group together films from a specific region. For example, Uganda's films would be considered as a part of East Africa's body of films. When utilizing a continental theory, one would group together all films from one continent. Thus, under this theory Uganda's films would be considered to belong to Africa's body of films. When utilizing a transnational theory, one takes into account the flow of global currency and cultures. Co-productions between nations are considered to be transnational films. Lastly, pan-African is a concept where anyone of black African decent who directs a film is lumped together into one category. The biggest African film festival, Panafrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO), accepts films made by anyone of black African decent and is thus a pan-African film festival.

I argue that utilizing national cinema as a critical tool is currently the most useful in regards to assessing the nascent Kinna-Uganda. It is clear that the Kinna-Ugandas are a source of national pride and create a new national identity for Ugandans. However, while utilizing the concept of "national cinema" aids in determining what a Kinna-Uganda is and what it is not, that concept fails to include many films produced by Uganda. The films listed that do not fit into the national category, or Kinna-Uganda, fit into the regional, continental, transnational, or pan-African models of analysis, which I

discussed earlier. As the Ugandan film industry continues to grow and nation state boundaries begin to seemingly deteriorate due to globalization, utilizing regional, continental, transnational, or even pan-African models will become more useful than the national model.

The strength of the utility of national cinema as a concept lies in four different factors. First, it aids in identifying Kinna-Uganda films. While Kinna-Uganda is based upon a simple, almost axiomatic form of definition – a film directed by a Ugandan and produced in Uganda – it is useful and illuminating to group like films together. Second, it helps to explain the origins and characteristics of the local Ugandan film industry. When the body of Kinna-Uganda is viewed as whole, several common themes emerge: content, production obstacles, and film budgets. Third, it identifies the common constraints to expansion of the Ugandan film industry (for example, limited distribution, limited funding, and limited production facilities). And lastly, it helps in offering a prediction for the future of the Ugandan industry. This last advantage will be discussed in closing arguments below.

The concept of national cinema aids in all of the aforementioned factors by acting as a filter, allowing one to explain what Kinna-Uganda is, thus enabling one to see patterns and trends within Kinna-Uganda. These patterns and trends, discussed at length in the preceding chapters, would be diffused and confused if the Ugandan films were examined in the context of continental or even regional cinema.

Utilizing national cinema as a category of analysis can be problematic, however. For instance, Maisha Film Lab in responsible for producing many short films in Uganda.

However, Maisha Film Lab employs the help of African filmmakers throughout the African Diaspora. As a result, these co-productions are eliminated from the category of national cinema. Thus, the national model omits from consideration a number of important films contributed by non-Ugandan writers, producers, and directors, as they do not qualify as Kinna-Uganda.

Nevertheless, the use of national cinema in conjunction with pan-African and transnational cinema can be used to categorize and describe the evolution of indigenous filmmaking within a country. It allows a view and perspective on how, as the national film category matures, the focus and nature of the films produced will likewise broaden. I argue that in a country where the film industry is just emerging, it is logical that the majority of the first films start off as independent, indigenously produced features, which can be categorized as a form of national cinema. I believe that based on the information I reviewed it is probable that as the industry grows and then pollinates with different countries more and more co-productions will start to develop.

I have also demonstrated that the idea that Kinna-Uganda is the first form of non-colonial cinema in Uganda. The very first films that were shot and screened in Uganda in 1958 were done so through a UNESCO project. Whatever good intentions UNESCO had, the films produced were strictly didactic in nature and furthermore produced by outsiders. UNESCO produced a form of indoctrinating, colonial cinema. As previously stated, after Wright's survey on the Ugandan Film Unit there was no other documented movement regarding the Ugandan film industry until *Feelings Struggle* (Ssemwogerere 2005) was released and reviewed in 2005.

As previously stated, the films UNESCO produced are considered to be didactic, colonial forms of cinema. Though, it is important to understand that UNESCO films are not considered to be Kinna-Uganda because of their content. Rather, it's the origin of the person who directs the film as well as the country who produces a film that one should take into consideration when deciding if a film is a Kinna-Uganda. For a recent example, we can review *The Last King of Scotland* (Macdonald 2006). *The Last King of Scotland* (Macdonald 2006), even though the storyline is about Uganda and it is shot in Uganda, it is still not considered to be a Kinna-Uganda. *The Last King of Scotland* (Macdonald 2006) is directed by a Western (Macdonald) and produced by a country other than Uganda (United Kingdom) and that it why it is not considered a Kinna-Uganda. This is where nationalistic loyalties come into play and become important in determining the critical and financial success of a film. It is clear from reading online message boards that many Ugandans showed much discontent regarding how *The Last King of Scotland* (Macdonald 2006) portrayed Ugandans and Uganda. I put forth the idea that perhaps if the film was directed by a Ugandan the film would have been well received by Ugandans, as the Ugandan director might have better reflected local values. Thus, as Bartlett explained, as with other African films, such as Sembene's, Kinna-Uganda too is decolonizing the medium of film in Uganda.

As previously mentioned, a Kinna-Uganda is directed by a Ugandan and produced in Uganda. The importance of a film being directed by a Ugandan lies in the presumption that a Ugandan director will comprehend the social norms and values of the Ugandan audience, and in turn reflect these in their film. The importance of a film being

produced and funded by a Ugandan entity results from the allegiance or belonging created within the Ugandan audience and public. The size and stature of a country's body of national films, it is argued, reinforces the somewhat chauvinistic notion of a country's greatness. This in turn attracts a greater audience to film screenings.

However useful, strictly adhering to the national model is limiting. After all, the boundaries of Uganda were put in place by colonial administrators with no regard for the diverse indigenous population. Furthermore, if a Ugandan director cannot obtain funding from within his or country of origin, then co-production is a necessity to getting the film produced. I believe co-productions can also be important to the developing medium and can still reflect local values, depending on who directs the film. In this way, I believe, the director's influence over the perspective of the film and its content trumps the source of funding. Essentially, I am rejecting the role of chauvinistic allegiance of the audience based upon financial support of the cinema.

For example, even Sembene's pioneering film *Black Girl* (Sembene 1966) was a co-production between the countries of France and Senegal, but the film's protagonist was an African woman. For a Ugandan example, the film *Imani* (Kamya 2010) is a co-production between Uganda and Sweden and has a Ugandan director. Nevertheless, the film been embraced by Ugandan locals as one of their own. As journalist Rowan Emslie notes, "The scenes are familiar to a Ugandan audience but actually seeing them onscreen, executed in such a professional manner, is wholly unfamiliar" (Emslie par. 3). This is because Ugandans are used to dealing with imported cultures for their entertainment:

> For years, Uganda has tended to import most of its culture: the hip hop, RnB and reggae that populates the charts is based on Western music; the films that

> dominate Cineplex and get quickly copied and sold in Wandegeya or Kisemento are normally from the USA or India. (Emslie par. 4)

This rings all too true. When I was in Uganda I remember viewing MTV Africa and seeing all Western videos. One video that was extremely popular and kept playing was Kanye West's "American Boy". With lyrics like "Take me on a trip, I'd like to go some day/Take me to New York, I'd love to see LA/I really want to come kick it with you/ You'll be my American Boy" it is evident that the West is glorified to Africans through music. Additionally, when I visited the only Cineplex in the country it was as if I were back home in the states, as there were no local films to choose from.

Through Kinna-Uganda there is an opportunity for both Ugandan culture and African culture to finally be exported to the world:

> 'It's time Africa exported its culture to the rest of the world,' he (Kimanje Mark, the Marketing Manager for iMANi) reasons. 'Kids in Gulu speak with American accents, using American slang…that comes from watching films and television exported from the US.'…Even the fact that iMANi, a relatively low-budget film made by several young Ugandan filmmakers, was shown at the Cineplex, up against enormous power and finances of Hollywood films shows that Ugandan film deserves a platform. (Emslie par. 6)

However, *Imani* (Kamya 2010) is the first and only co-production with Uganda to be shown at the Cineplex in Kampala. No Kinna-Uganda or other co-production with Uganda has been shown at the Cineplex in their home country, yet alone play to an international market.

Even though Kinna-Uganda is a form of indigenous cinema, it is generally evident from reading the local Ugandan news articles that filmmakers still want to compete with and be recognized on a par with Hollywood cinema. Even though the budgets of Kinna-Uganda films are tiny in comparison to Hollywood productions, the

filming is done using guerilla tactics, and the plots are longer than traditional Western films, the desire to compete with the West is still there.

However, many challenges lie before the Ugandan filmmakers. A prime example faced by filmmakers when filming in Uganda is Uganda's infrastructure; namely its electricity grid and roads. With inconsistent access to electricity and roads that are sub-par filmmakers have a difficult time organizing and executing a film shoot. Other factors besides the infrastructure that come into play when filming, namely corruption, hooliganism and petty crime. An example is given by the experience of shooting *Divizionz* (Mugisha 2007), as Mugisha noted having to pay money bribes to the gang leaders of a beach location in order to gain permission to shoot. They ended up paying the wrong people and almost got stabbed. Thus, there is no organized structure or film commission to pay in order to obtain permits to shoot film. Instead, one pays the gang or mafia that has control over the certain area.

In addition to production woes, distribution and creating an audience remain two challenges for the filmmakers. The following are interview excerpts from Kashmiri, Maisha Film Lab's director, in regards to the film industry and what she thinks it needs in order to prosper. Although Kashmiri notes production challenges, she sees distribution and the ability to create an audience out of the masses as the two largest hurdles if the film industry is to thrive:

> What we need to do here in Uganda is to showcase quality films and create an audience. There has to be an audience that wants to pay for movies to be seen. So the marketing and distribution is one of our biggest challenges, and getting financing to make films is obviously very difficult. So those are the things that we need to address. Infrastructure and so forth, well, the visual medium has to be creative with how they make film. You know, using natural light is a way of

> bypassing issues of having a generator or lights on set. So you have to be creative in this environment, which is a good thing I think. (Kashmiri, Musarait. Personal Interview. 23 Aug. 2008)

Kashmiri continues:

> Like anything else it's audience development. Once you create a market something will come. You know, if you look at it Nollywood has created an audience for African films. Because in reality we all want to see our experiences on film. We all want to say 'Yeah that's my life', good or bad. If you look at DSTV the South African satellite, they actually have Movie Magic, or is it Africa Magic, it's Africa Magic I'm sorry, where they have a station dedicated to African films, and they're making money off of it. So you know there is an audience who is paying for these types of movies. Now the reality is to just take it from the upper and middle class to the masses. I think there is a strong market there, it's an issue of how do you distribute it? How do the filmmakers make money when they take it into the video hall? Do they go the Nigerian model of distribution? Or do they try to get it organized in a different structure? That I think is the challenge right now. (Kashmiri, Musarait. Personal Interview. 23 Aug. 2008)

As articulated by Kashmiri, creating a market, distributing, and financing films remain three of the biggest challenges in developing the Ugandan film industry.

The factors identified above makes it difficult to complete a Kinna-Uganda. One strategy to counteract these roadblocks is to establish a film commission. A film commission can serve to advocate for a consistent processes when filming, facilitate the arrangement of financing for Kinna-Uganda, assist in distribution of film within the country, and develop support resources for film production units.

Kinna-Uganda's strength lies in being an important outlet or voice for the people of Uganda, something that has been missing from the country ever since colonialism was instituted. Kinna-Uganda also has the capability to unite a country that has been divided by colonialism, tribalism, and corrupt governments. That said, the content of the Kinna-Ugandas that I analyzed are telling, as it is evident that no filmmaker dares to work in the

political sphere. Even working in the social sphere, as Ssemwogerere learned with *Murder In the City* (Ssemwogerere 2006), can lead to the Court calling filmmakers in to defend their script. Ssemwogerere was allowed to shoot the film after the Court's approval, but in a country where filmmakers are subject to judicial review and potential sanction over the content of film, it becomes apparent what little creative freedom they have, producing an overall chilling effect on film projects. Additionally, as seen with the news media in September of 2009, saying the "wrong thing" can get one jailed or even killed in current day Uganda. This socio-political environment is not conducive to a thriving film industry. If Kinna-Uganda is to flourish, then these creative restrictions must be lifted in order to allow the artists full control of their own industry.

Looking ahead in order to surmise what the future of Kinna-Uganda holds in the next ten years, it would be wise to consider several variables, namely the government, the economy, infrastructure, technology, education, and training. The government is a force for conservatism, restrains freedom of expression, and is not likely to change in the near future. Museveni, exemplifying the repressive forces in the country, has recently revised the constitution to make unlimited term limits legal, allowing him to run again for the presidency in 2011. I propose that this will continue to limit filmmakers in their content, and that they will work only in the social sphere.

According to Uganda's Finance Minister, the Ugandan economy will be growing 6.4 percent from 2010 to 2011 (Ojambo par. 1). However, it is apparent this growth is still not enough to substantially improve the country's infrastructure. As a result, I believe that the country's government limits the effectiveness of the film industry by

restricting access to necessary production support, such as the finance, distribution, and consumption of entertainment projects.

However, technology will be changing very rapidly, allowing filmmakers to produce higher quality films less expensively and supporting more distribution options, such as promoting broadband cell phone based receivers, which may aid in boosting the film industry.

Additionally, education and training through Maisha Film Lab is another necessary advancement required to support a thriving cinema. The non-profit continues to train new filmmakers and branch out to other training sites throughout Africa. Although the film industry still has financial and governmental challenges, with new innovations in technology and continuous education and support from Maisha Film Lab, I believe that it is possible for Kinna-Uganda to grow and prosper within the next ten years. It is evident that Kinna-Uganda has the potential to serve as a repository for the voices of the people of Uganda and with its success serve as a means of broadcasting their voices to Africa and the world.

Notes

1. "Percentage based upon 1995-2005. Percentage of population living on less than $1.08 a day at 1993 international prices (equivalent to $1 a day in 1985 prices, adjusted for purchasing power parity)," see "Statistics."

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