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The Representation of Africa: *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) vs. *Black Panther* (2018)

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for an M.A. Degree in English Literature and Civilization.

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Abstract

This research examines the representation of Africa in the films *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) and *Black Panther* (2018). It relies on postcolonial concepts namely, Orientalism developed by Edward Said, and the Subaltern as presented by Gayatri Spivak, in addition to Stuart Hall's theory of representation and stereotype, and also the concept of Afrofuturism. The analysis of the narrative structure, characters, mise-en-scene and the cinematic techniques used in both films reveals that, in one hand, *The Last King of Scotland*, directed by the Scottish director Kevin McDonald, is told from a Western perspective reinforcing negative stereotypes about Africa as a violent and a dangerous place. On the other hand, *Black Panther*, despite being produced by Hollywood, it provides a positive image of Africa by presenting an African nation advanced yet uncolonized. The study shows that cinema can be used as a tool to either reinforce or challenge stereotypical portrayals of Africa.

Key Words:

The Last King of Scotland, *Black Panther*, representation, orientalism, stereotypes, the subalterns, afrofuturism.

Dedication

We dedicate this dissertation to our families, friends and loved ones. Thank you for the immense support and love.

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Above all, we would like to thank GOD for all HIS countless blessings upon us. We would like to express our gratitude for our kind and understanding supervisor Dr. Nouara TOUCHE-KHAROUNI whom we really respect and admire a lot. Thank you for the immense support, encouragement and guidance which helped us to accomplish this work. We would also like to thank the members of the jury Dr. Houria HALIL- OUALI and Mr. Mehdi YOUSFI for accepting to examine and evaluate our work. Finally, we want to thank all the teachers that were part of our academic journey.

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Chapter 1: General Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

This dissertation aims to compare two contrasting depictions of Africa as portrayed in two different films, *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) and *Black Panther* (2018). The first film portrays Africa through the colonial gaze, while the second reimagines it through Afrofuturism. The portrayal of Africa, Africans and Black people has been prominent in Western cinema, generally through Eurocentric narratives.

Examining cinematic representations of Africa is important because of the pervasive influence of cinema on historical understanding, culture and society. Cinema is considered as one of the most effective and popular means of media in cultural learning by public, it plays an important role in shaping and affecting people's understanding of the world around us especially communities, cultures and identities (Rosenstone). Films through their visual storytelling either represent negatively, perpetuating stereotypes or challenge them by providing other perspectives that show stories from different angles. Therefore, representation in films is crucial especially when it comes to the portrayal of African nations and the marginalized groups as it determines how they are perceived by audiences globally.

Cinematic representations of Africa have historically been embedded within a colonial discourse, which developed over centuries (Murphy). Colonial discourse refers to the representations and the narratives of colonial powers on the colonized people to justify their colonialism. It includes literary works, historical books, documentaries and films made by Europeans with constructed ideologies and stereotypical portrayals of non-Westerns. Ashcroft defines it as a set of declarations that can be made about colonized people and countries, about the colonizers and about their relationship (42).

During the colonial period, Westerners in their films portrayed themselves as advanced and civilized people, while the Africans as savages who need the Western help. They promoted the idea of the White superiority and Black inferiority and they framed colonialism as a civilizing mission in which they bring education, religion and modernity to the uncivilized Africans.

After decolonization, Western films continued the promotion of stereotypical ideas about Africans. They depict Africa as a place of savagery and danger and African leaders as dictators suffering from different crises, like Idi Amin's economic problems in Uganda, but ignoring any significant attempt of these leaders to develop their countries and continent, like Nkrumah in Ghana and Kadhafi in Libya. Dunn asserts that, these portrayals were a continuation of colonialist literature which shows Africa and Africans in a way which would justify European colonialism (169). Kidd adds that Hollywood films in particular have a long history of stereotyping African characters and perpetuating negative images of the continent (Qtd. in Gichuki 1). An instance of this can be seen in the film *Out of Africa* (1985) that portrays Africa as a land of savagery and reinforces the idea of a "White Savior" and a land that must be civilized by the Europeans (Gichuki, 6). The Western films did not give a voice to African figures and created a bad image of the continent. Consequently, as Dunn argues, these images led to different perceptions from the audiences towards Africa and Africans, and reinforced the racist and colonial way of thinking (149). For Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the old representation of Africa in films from one point of view was dangerous, and made people see Africa as a beautiful place with its nature and primitive people who need to be saved from diseases and war (Qtd. in Mngomezulu 35). In the same vein, Bohannon argues that Africa has, for many generations now, been viewed through a web of myth so glib that understanding

it becomes a twofold task: The task of clarifying the myth and the separate task of examining whatever reality has been hidden behind it (Qtd. in Emelobe 212).

Many western films shed lights on the political problems of African nations like military coups and the Apartheid with a Eurocentric point of view. In their films, directors promoted the problems of African nations, but they always showed the White characters as heroes and saviors. This can be seen in the film *Cry Freedom* (1987) which is based on a true story about the Anti-Apartheid activist Steven Biko, and the White journalist Donald Woods, who tried to reveal the truth about the death of Biko and how he challenged the White South African government. The story centers on the White journalist and the danger he was facing to reveal the truth, which makes him a hero. Instead of focusing on the Black characters and how they fought against Apartheid, the film promotes for the idea of the “White Savior” (Qtd. in Gichuki 7).

Films with the White savior trope show White characters, as active and the ones who make decisions, saving Black characters, who are portrayed as helpless, and have no voice to express their opinions. In addition, the White characters stories are developed throughout the narrative, while neglecting the stories of Black characters (Sium 6). Films that were released during the early 21st century continued with this idea, *Blood Diamond* (2006), for example, despite dealing with African issues such as the Civil War in Sierra Leone, diamonds conflict and child soldiers, it centers more on the white protagonist’s heroism and sacrifice to help the Black character.

It can also be observed that Western cinema made an important turning point in the representation of Africa from post-colonial stereotypes to a better image of Africa, even with a Eurocentric view. According to Mngomezulu, this change in the representation of Africa led

many people to change their view of Africa, because for many years, audiences saw different images about underdeveloped African people living like animals in the jungles (35).

Additionally, with the rise of African filmmakers, the representation of Africa in Western cinema experienced a shift marked by a celebration of African cultures. The second decade of the 21st century filmmaking witnessed the emergence of Afrofuturism in Western cinema such as the film *Black Panther*, which presents an untouchable nation by colonialism. Afrofuturist films challenge traditional African stereotypes and present a new Africa to the audience. In African media, journalists and filmmakers have reshaped the image of Africa and have introduced a new image to the world of this continent and Africans in general. A case in point is the Documentary *In Search of Voodoo: Roots to Heaven* which started in 2018, in which the director Djimon Hounsou explores African spiritual traditions and the vibrant tales of Voodoo in West Africa to introduce it to the world (*imbd*). Another example is the documentary *Africa Rising* (2022), which challenges Western stereotypes by showing African innovators in technology.

1.2. Significance of the Study

The significance of this research relies in the fact that both films *The Last King of Scotland* and *Black Panther* have been studied separately, yet they have not already been compared within a single study. Moreover, this work contributes to research about the representation of Africa in cinema in general and in the films under study in particular. It contributes to the understanding of how the narrative and cinematic techniques are used by film directors to influence audiences and the way they see Africa, its people and cultures.

1.3.Aim of the Study

This study aims to examine cinematic representations of Africa and Africans in Western cinema through the comparative study of the films: *The Last King of Scotland* portraying Africa as an exotic land ruled by a dictator and in need of Western intervention and *Black Panther* presenting Africa as an untouched land by colonialism and technologically developed. The aim is to show how both films show African leaders, women and African cultures, and how the first film portrays Africa through a colonial gaze, with the “White Savior” trope, and how the second film shows Africa through an Afrofuturistic view.

1.4.Thesis Statement

This study examines cinematic representation of Africa in *The Last King of Scotland*, and *Black Panther* drawing on Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism, Gayatri Spivak idea of the Subaltern, Stewart Hall’s theory of representation and stereotype and the concept of Afrofuturism.

1.5.Research Questions: This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1- How do the two films, *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) and *Black Panther* (2018), portray Africa?
- 2- How does *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) reinforces stereotypical ideas about Africa?
- 3- How does *Black Panther* (2018) challenges any racist ideas about Africa and reinforces an authentic representation of the continent?

1.6. Research Methods and Materials

The primary sources for our study are *The Last King of Scotland* directed by Kevin McDonald and *Black Panther* directed by Ryan Coogler. The secondary sources include academic journal articles, dissertations about representation of Africa in cinema, African identity and articles about the two films analyzed from different perspectives.

The study draws on the postcolonial concepts of Said's Orientalism and Spivak's the Subaltern to explore how *Black Panther* contradict with *The Last King of Scotland* to give a positive image of Africa. Additionally, Stuart Hall's theory of representation and stereotype will be used to shed light on how *The Last King of Scotland* and *Black panther* present African identity, leadership and women and how both represent Africa differently.

The analysis of the films will be carried out through watching and rewatching; pausing and interpreting them, with a focus on the narrative structure, characters' portrayal, and the messages delivered through the films.

1.7. Chapter Divisions

The research work is divided into four chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of the study, the significance of the study, the aim of the study, the thesis statement, the research questions, and the methods and materials of this dissertation.

The second chapter reviews existing literature on the representation of Africa in cinema. It also reviews published research about *The Last King of Scotland* and *Black Panther*.

The third chapter presents the theoretical framework of this study; it includes relevant concepts from postcolonial theory, namely, Edward Said's Orientalism, Gayatri Spivak's the Subaltern. Additionally, it introduces Stuart Hall's theories of Representation and Stereotype

and the concept of Afrofuturism that will be used to analyze the characters and the cultural representation in the two films.

Chapter four moves on to the analysis of the films, *The Last King of Scotland* and *Black Panther*, and their comparison. The analysis explores how Africa is framed in the two films. The analysis also deals with the visual representation of the characters. Finally, the general conclusion summarizes the findings of the study and suggests ideas for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2. 1. Introduction

The study of Africa's representation in cinema has gained considerable attention from scholars and researchers who have examined the role of film industry in perpetuating or challenging stereotypes about Africa and its people. This chapter synthesizes previous and recent research on this topic. It also reviews existing research on the films *The Last King of Scotland* and the *Black Panther*. The aim is providing a comprehensive understanding of this topic and establishing the foundation for the current study. This chapter is divided into four thematically organized sections.

2. 2. Research on Africa in Western Cinema

Previous research examined how Africa has been represented in Western cinema. A noteworthy contribution in this field is Okaka Opio Dokotum's book *Hollywood and Africa: Recycling the 'Dark Continent' Myth, 1908–2020* (2020). The author reviews over a century (112 years) of stereotypical Hollywood film production about Africa. He argues that the myth of the Dark Continent has shaped the western representations of Africa, and this biased view appears in the way history is written, in films, literature and in the way news are reported, creating lasting stereotypes that effect Africa's image and authority. Dokotum traces the origin of the myth of the Dark Continent back to the 19th century, the age of European exploration, colonialism and slave trade. He analyses the role of European and American literature in reinforcing the myth helping to set the stage for Hollywood negative representations. The book provides an overview of how Africa has been presented across different historical periods, examining classical, neo-colonial, New Wave Hollywood-Africa films with examples of how these films recycle colonial stereotypes.

Using a post-colonial approach, Dokotum examines several films to find how they frame Africa, focusing on themes such as the perpetuation of the Dark Continent myth, the colonial nostalgia, historical distortion, the White savior trope, and the glorification of the West while marginalizing African voices.

Dokotum also points out some positive changes and the shifts that occurred in Hollywood industry regarding the representation of Africa. He praises films such as *Queen of Katwe* (2016), *Black Panther* (2018) for centring on African stories that celebrate Africa's identity and culture. He concludes his book by arguing that the change from the stereotypical and negative portrayals of Africa cannot depend on Hollywood only, therefore he urges African filmmakers to make counter narratives that challenge the stereotypes and depict Africa as a place with its own agency portraying it in a more powerful and real way.

Another important study to mention is "Western film images of Africa: Genealogy of an Ideological Formation" (1990) by Frank Ukadike. The author discusses the development of the portrayal of Africa in western cinema. Drawing on Ngugi Wa Thiongo, the author argues that colonialism aimed to mentally control colonized people using cultural tools like literature, religion and films to impose the western ideologies. He writes: "The real aim of colonialism," Ngugi writes, "was to control . . . the entire realm of the language of real life . . . But its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world" (Qtd. in Ukadike 30).

According to Ukadike, these cultural narratives were manipulated in order to justify imperialism and exploitation, portraying Africa as a black continent filled with savages. He explains how movies such as *Tarzan*, *King Solomon's Mines* (1937) contribute to the stereotypes surrounding the continent, framing it as uncivilized with the need of western

intervention and how these fabricated images of Africa influence the global perception of Africa and even Africans' self-view (31). Ukadike believes that the colonialist representation started before the invention of motion pictures, and the misrepresentation of Africa existed in many literary works of European writers like Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), in which the author glorifies colonialism, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), which depicts Africa as a land waiting for colonialism (31).

The author mentions the "Instructional films" made by the British to educate Africans, and show the British way of life to make them believe that the progress will be achieved only through colonialism. Other films show how British medicine is superior to the traditional medicine of Africa, and ridicule African witchdoctors (36). The critic analyzed early ethnographic and documentary films like *Congorilla* (1932), *La Croiserie Noire* (1926) and *Nanook of the North* (1922) and the problematic way in which they portray African people and their cultures, and he calls for more authentic representation of the cultures being depicted (38). Frank Ukadike also provides an overview of black African cinema and its emergence as a response to misinterpretations of Africa which is driven by the need of reclaiming identity and reshaping the narratives (38-39).

Another study worth mentioning is Kevin Dunn's article "Lights...Camera...Africa: Images of Africa and Africans in Western Popular Films of the 1930s" (1996). The author studies the portrayal of Africa and Africans in the following movies produced in 1930s: *Trader Horn* (1931), *Tarzan the Ape Man* (1932), *Sanders of the River* (1935), *Tarzan and his Mate* (1934), *King Solomon's Mines* (1937), *Tarzan Escapes* (1936), *Tarzan Finds a Son!* (1939), *Four Feathers* (1939) and *Stanley and Livingstone* (1939). The analysis reveals that these films favoured colonial narrative and white dominance portraying white characters as

strong and courageous, while depicting African characters as primitive, untrustworthy and savage needing of colonization and intervention in order to civilize them.

Dunn gives the image that was shown to the audience about Africa in each film. For instance, an untamed wilderness or an “open zoo” was the image of Africa in the film *Trader Horn* (1931) (153). In the Tarzan films, the image of Africa that is seen is that Africans are not hospitable to the Whites, and a land which time forgot (156). In the film *King Solomon's Mines* (1937) Africans were depicted as savages and barbaric (163). The author concludes that these stereotypical images in film industries that were built for centuries on Africa and Africans contributed to the racist view of the audience and the misperception of Africa and Africans (169).

2. 3. Research on Africa in African Cinema

Other researchers have sought to explore African directors' contribution to challenge the stereotypes established by Western narratives. In his article “The Politics of Representation and Audience Reception: Alternative Visions of Africa” (2013), Florence Ayisi and Catalin Bryella explores how African women are represented in documentaries. The analysis focuses on *Zanzibar Soccer Queens* (2007) and *Art of This Place: Women Artists in Cameroon* (2011) to explore this stereotypical representation of women and the African cultures. The two authors explore how the two documentaries reject this traditional representation of women and represent them with their own aspirations and struggles and express their own stories with their own languages. They show the passion of women in sports and also their autonomy. To quote the authors: “ZSQ and WA not only offer visible evidence of African women, but also give these women the opportunity to establish their own identities through performance.” (Ayisi, Bryella 133). The two documentaries have attempted to correct the image of African women and to give them a voice to express themselves.

Tia C. M Tyree and Liezelle J. Jacobs in their article “Can You Save Me? Black Male Superheroes in Hollywood Film” (2014) analyse the representation of Black male superheroes in several superheroes films, in which the main figure is a Black male, as a case study. Tyree, Jacobs American argue that media has always portrayed Black people as criminals and dealing with drugs (3) while the White men superheroes, for decades, were the standard for power (1-2). Through the analysis, the authors have explored the appearance, the actions and missions, and the power and identity of Black male superheroes. They found that in most of the films, the superhero is cool, strong and aggressive (17), and they all received appreciation from the public and the members of their family (18), but at the same time, they often faced problems with the White enemies (17). What is more, they save only their town or city and not the whole world like White superheroes because they were not supposed to be crime fighters, “They are told they will never be the iconic Batman, Superman, or Spider-Man. Yet, many of them decide to do something selfless and become exactly what they are not supposed to be—a superhero.” (17).

2. 4. Previous Research on *The Last King of Scotland*

Recent films like *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) contributed to the perpetuation of negative narratives of Africa. Researchers have studied this film through different critical lenses. In his article “Mythic Appetites: The last King of Scotland's Heart of Darkness in the Jubilee Year of African Independence “(2012), Ricardo Guthrie examines *The Last king of Scotland* (2006) which tells the story of Ugandan dictator Idi Amin and its violence through Western lens.

Guthrie argues that the film reinforces western myths about Africa being land of savagery and egotism. For him, while the film claims to offer a nice perspective, it instead perpetuates stereotypes about Africa and glorifies western sensibilities (1). The author

questions why westerners always in their films focus more on the colonial perspective highlighting how they try to show the need of civilizing African people in order to justify their interventions and exploitations (2).

The author questions the fact that the film *The last King of Scotland* was released during the 50th independence anniversary of Uganda, and how this helps to promote the idea that Africa needs the Western; he states that: “African nations, despite some fifty years of independence, are depicted as frontiers of the “wild-wild West” still in need of discipline and military intervention by Western authorities” (3). The researcher believes that the story of the film is an update to Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, in which Marlow, the British man, goes to Africa in search for Kurtz who left civilization and went to Africa. Likewise, *The Last King of Scotland* is based on Garrigan, the Scottish man, who goes to Africa and meet Amin (4-5). Guthrie believes that the film is not based on true events because of the changes in the storyline like the death of one of Amin’s wives (7). He affirms that many films created myths about Africa particularly in 2006 and 2007; the year that marks the 50th anniversary of Ghana’s independence; he stresses that:

Major film studios released several movies set on the African continent, exploring themes ranging from civil war and blood diamonds, gun-running and Western mercenaries, exploring the thug world of a South African “tsotsi,” and bringing to life one of Africa’s most notorious figures: Idi Amin (9).

In this article, the scholar questions the reason behind not showing the stories of African liberation and historical leadership like Nkrumah in Ghana (27). He calls for an authentic representation far away from recycling cliches and perpetuating outdated stereotypes about this continent and its people (29).

Another pertinent study is the article “Rinse. Wash. Repeat. The Last King of Scotland: A film Interrogation” (2017) by Alvin Okoreeh. The author criticizes the film *The Last King of Scotland*, drawing from Curtis Keim’s theories of stereotypes portrayals, and how they centered the story on Dr. Nicholas Garrigan, who is a White man, and not Idi Amin, the Black man (Okoreeh 1). According to the author, the film becomes a journey about Garrigan and not about the history of Uganda under the rule of Idi Amin portraying harmful stereotypes about Africa. Alvin explores how the director of the film depicts Africa as a dark continent and a place of violence and political instability and shows the continent as a place of danger, ignoring the diversity of its cultures (1). The author suggests that even with the claims that the film is based on real events, it falls in the stereotypical depiction of Uganda, favouring and glorifying the West. Instead of representing the continent’s struggle, the director shows the adventure of Dr. Garrigan. The author concludes his article by addressing the director failure to provide an adequate historical and cultural context, herby reinforcing Eurocentric stereotypes instead of challenging them.

Frank Jacob in an article entitled “The Last King of Scotland and The Depiction of African Despotism in Cinema” analyses the film and the dictatorship of Idi Amin in Uganda. Jacob first talked about Idi Amin and how violent he was during his reign in Uganda; “Amin not only had a violent personality, but he was paranoid and thus insane to a degree, usually expressing his mental state in extreme forms of violence” (Jacob 1). The author deals with the historical events in Uganda during the reign of Amin. He starts first with the military career of Amin and the rebellion against the Ugandan president to take his place (3). The country and its people welcomed Amin and expected a better future with him (3). Amin wanted to end the dependency on the Westerns and to end any foreign control on his land (4). The dictatorship of Idi Amin led the American Congress to sanction an embargo against Uganda, which led to

the beginning of the economic problems in this African nation (5). Idi Amin ruled for years, saying he wants the best for the future of Africa while slaughtering his people (7).

Then, the author explores the life of Uganda and Idi Amin through the film *The Last King of Scotland* (2006). He discusses some important scenes placing emphasis on the first scenes which “showcase the young Scotsman’s life as a bachelor traveling to Africa in the early 1970s.” (8). He argues that the director mixes between fact and fiction as long as the film is based on a fiction book (11). For the director, the main purpose of the film is to show the relation between a Scottish man and Uganda and not to depict Amin life: “the film’s only real “authenticity is that of Forest Whitaker,” whose acting seemed to bring Amin back to life” (12). The author concludes that *The Last King of Scotland* may not be the best film that portrays the dictatorship of Idi Amin, but it shows the best characterization of his personality in cinema, which makes it an important representation of African dictatorship and Ugandan leaders (13).

2. 5. Previous Research on *Black Panther*

As already mentioned, the stereotypical discourse on Africa in Western narratives including cinema has been critically challenged by literary and cinematic works that aim to deconstruct these stereotypes and promote positive representations of Africa. The film *Black Panther* is a case in point; it offers a positive approach to the representation of Africa. Renee T. White in her article “I dream a World: Black Panther and The Re-making of Blackness” (2018) explains how this film rejects the theme of “White Savior” and presents an independent African society. She states that “Black Panther challenges these old tropes about superheroes and actively rejects the hegemony of whiteness.” (White 1), that “*Black Panther* contradicts with films that shows white savior, who single-handedly improves the life of the black characters” (2).

Black Panther is considered as an Afrofuturist film that tackles the past, the present and the future of Africa by including the culture and the traditions of Africa with technology. The author defines Afrofuturists as those who “create science fiction that disrupts our understanding of blackness by rethinking the past, present, and futures of the African Diaspora; they merge culture, tradition, time, space, and technology to present alternative interpretations of blackness.” (2)

For T. White, the film criticizes colonialism and gives a voice to Africans and Blacks depicting Africa (Wakanda) as an independent nation rejecting the Whites. She shows how the film rejects the Western interference through the characters of Ross and Klaue that could be a mirror of the colonial exploitation. These two characters remind people (Africans) that it is impossible to have contact with the Westerners without consequences (5). For White, the film gives an identity to the Blacks and the final scenes give hope for a new beginning of Africa (7).

Additionally, Muneerah Rezak in her article “Of Decolonial Imagining in Black Panther” (2019) examines how the film *Black Panther* criticizes colonialism and portrays an Afrofuturist African nation named Wakanda. Throughout the study, she shows that “Wakanda presents to us a glimpse of where Africa could be without the histories of violence” (Rezak 3). As matter of fact, she sees through Wakanda a total representation of Africa with its cultures through the customs, social systems, infrastructures...etc (3).

The author believes that Wakanda’s problem is the silence against the exploitation of Black people around the world (4). This article tackles the ideological conflict between “T-Challa” and “Killmonger”, and how Killmonger has different intensions from T-Challa to help the Black community around the world, as he lived a life of poverty outside Wakanda

and experienced oppression, contrary to T-challa who was born behind the walls of Wakanda and lived a life of luxury (4).

The film also shows the role of women in society and how they have power, and shows a kind of equality as she states: “As characters that have not been colonised, Wakandan women exude a confidence where they do not have to conform to any beauty standard to be recognised as beautiful” (5). Yet, according to the author, *Black Panther* (2018) does not show a fully decolonized nation because of its relation with Hollywood and the Marvel Universe. She emphasizes that “the most obvious fact should not be overlooked: the Black Panther is part of the MCU, a multi-billion-dollar franchise, as well as, appearing within the broader tradition of Hollywood” (5). She views that calling the CIA agent Everett Ross a colonizer in the film, and then portrayed him as an ally of Wakanda contradicts with the idea of decolonization (6). The author concludes that despite these limitations, the film is a step towards decolonized and a better future of Africa (7).

A notable work to mention in this context is Salim Washington’s article “You Act Like a Th’owed Away Child Black Panther, Killmonger, and Pan-Africanist African American Identity” (2019), in which he studies the film *Black Panther* using the reception theory and Pan-Africanist African American identity. The author criticizes the portrayal of African feudalism and kingship. In this article, the author uses Stuart Hall theory of coding and decoding to analyze the reception of Black audiences and how they adopted a negotiated reading; on the one hand, they celebrated the African heritage shown in the film, and on the other hand, they criticize the portrayal of CIA agent as an ally, and Killmonger’s portrayal as a villain. (Washington 6). Washington believes that the film is part of the African American narrative as it has a connection with the slave narrative, Pan Africanism and Afrofuturism, and thinks that these themes that gave this power to the film (5).

The last article “(Re) Imagining Africa in Ryan Coogler’s *Black Panther* (2018)” (2023) by Okwudiri Anasiudu explains how *Black Panther* (2018) reimagines Africa with postcolonial lens to challenge the negative stereotypes portrayed in Western media. The author explores the three strategies used by Ryan Coogler to show this positive representation of Africa. He firstly, shows Wakanda as a technological advanced nation to challenge the depiction of the “Dark Continent” (Anasiudu 360). Secondly, he portrays Wakanda as a powerful nation with superior healthcare, artificial intelligence and a powerful resource like Vibranium and contradicts the usual representation of the West to Africa as an underdeveloped continent that depends on the West (360-361). Thirdly, he depicts women as leaders and intelligent and how they are active agents in the development of their nation, and contradicts with how the West portray women as passive and oppressed (358). Rezak asserts that *Black Panther* changed the representation of Africa (362).

2. 6. Conclusion

The surveyed literature highlights the historical negative representation of Africa through the lens of Western cinema. It also shows African directors’ contribution to challenge these negative stereotypes. Existing scholarship shows that *The Last King of Scotland* upholds and perpetuates the colonial narrative of Africa as a land defined by dictatorship and violence, and depending on White intervention. On the other hand, *Black Panther* (2018) subverts this colonial narrative by celebrating African identity and cultures and by presenting Africa as technologically advanced and sovereign nation. The review of literature also indicates that no previous study compared these films in a single study; this is the focus of our research work.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framework of the study. It introduces key concepts required for analyzing the films *The Last King of Scotland* and *Black Panther*, from a post-colonial perspective in order to understand how Africa and its people are portrayed and constructed in these films. This chapter begins with a brief review of postcolonialism, followed by an introduction to Edward Said's Orientalism and the concept of colonial gaze, then it moves to explore Gayatri Spivak's concept of subalternity in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (2009). Additionally, this chapter deals with representation and stereotype theory by Stuart Hall, and the concept of Afrofuturism.

3.2. Post colonialism

Postcolonialism is a term originally used by historians after the Second World War to present the post-independence period. Postcolonialism deals with the impact of colonialism on societies and cultures. From the late 1970s, the term has been used by literary critics to discuss various cultural effects of colonization (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 186). Postcolonial theorists and writers such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha examined the political, ideological, and cultural legacies of colonialism, focusing on how dominant powers continue to shape perceptions about former colonies by constructing knowledge about it and how these representations are present in the contemporary cultural forms. It also challenges these discourses and the global inequalities by giving subalterns voices and calling for reclamation of identity and heritage by providing a better and an authentic representation. One of the influential concepts of this theory is Orientalism, which explores how the West constructs the East in a distorted way.

3.3. Orientalism

Orientalism is a term popularized by the Palestinian- American theorist Edward Said in his Fundamental work *Orientalism* (1978) in which he explores the ways in which European thought has constructed and continues to construct the idea of the Orient (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 167). Drawing from the classical definition of Michel Foucault of discourse, Said asserts in his book *Orientalism* (1978) that : "...Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the orient, dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it ..." (3) .This means that Orientalism is a collective, organized system that produces knowledge about the east (through scholarships, literature, media , art...) claiming to represent the orient but these representations are not neutral and often oversimplified and biased . These representations can be understood through the term colonial gaze, which is the way westerners or the colonial powers historically perceived and portrayed the colonized as inferior, exotic, or dangerous, and in need of control. It is crucial to understand that this gaze encompasses more than just seeing; it also involves framing, manipulating, and using representation to legitimize dominance. The basis of the colonial gaze is the us/them dichotomies (civilized/savage). Said argues that this construction is not just an academic theory but a system that helps the West maintain power by portraying the East as its opposite. He writes: "...The Orient was not and is not a free subject of thought or action (3), this means the Orient is not a subject with its own voice and it is not presented as an active, autonomous entity with its own agency, but as a passive object that the Western scholars, writers, and rulers claim authority to define what is it in ways that justify their domination and serve their interests.

Orientalism is not just a body of knowledge about the East, it is a western way of dominating, restructuring and having control over the Orient (3). The production of knowledge and the Western portrayals come from a position of power and are not neutral, objective or innocent rather they are driven by imperial interests, as Said states: "the relationship between the Occident and the Orient is relationship of power domination of varying degrees of complex hegemony "(5). Therefore, presenting the Orient /Other as irrational, barbaric represents a tool to rationalize the colonial dominance, maintaining the cultural hegemony and keeping the East at its place (subordinate and inferior).

The Western construction of the "Other" is a process through which the West defines itself by positioning the non-western societies as inferior. the “Other” works as a mirror in which the west recognizes its own superiority, as Said writes that "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, re-markable experiences" (1). Said argues that the "Orient" was romanticized in Western literature, art, and travel writing as a land of fantasy, sensuality. The western travelers, colonists, and scholars often presented their encounters with the East as adventures into an irrational, mysterious and uncivilized world. The construction of difference which was based on the binary system of showing one opposite to another plays an important role in the functioning of orientalism positioning the west as rational, superior, and civilized world meanwhile the "Other" as irrational, inferior and barbaric in a need for colonial intervention.

Despite the fact that Said's Primary focus is on the middle east, the idea and the logic of Orientalism can be applied to Africa. Said in his book *Culture and Imperialism* expanded the scope of Orientalism to include Africa and other colonized areas. He asserts that: “imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its

worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or Black, or Western, or Oriental” (363). In the same book, he analyzed some cultural text such as Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park* and Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* to criticize how Western writers produce knowledge in order to suit their imperialistic ideologies. He writes: “The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism” (12). For him, colonial powers did not sustain their colonies and empires only with armies but also with what he calls the cultural authority of the imperial ideology, and this is another form of colonial gaze in which colonial powers silence the natives and give a voice only to the Europeans. Another form of Orientalism emerged to defend the Black community and Africans.

Black Orientalism is coined by Achille Mbembe to extend Edward Said’s orientalism to Africa analyzing how African colonizers racialized Africa with the myth of the Dark Continent reducing Africa to violence, ignorance and exotism. He holds that: “The African is the other of the European in the same way the Oriental was for Said—a screen for projections of desire and fear” (6).

Said framework offers an insight to explore how the West shape perceptions and views of Africa using stereotypes to describe the continent and its people. The Othering process in Africa served to justify slavery, colonialism and the imposition of European rule in the name of civilization. This construction and idea spread by western had long lasting effects in the way the continent is perceived globally.

3.4. Gayatri Spivak: Subalternity

Gayatri Spivak is an Indian scholar, literary theorist, and feminist critic. She is a University Professor at Columbia University and a founding member of the establishment's Institute for Comparative Literature and Society. Fundamental to Spivak's theory is the concept of Subaltern. The 'Subaltern' is a military term that means 'of lower rank', the term is adopted by Antonio's Gramsci to refer to those groups who are subjected to the hegemony of the ruling classes (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 215).

In her essay "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" Spivak questions the power structures that silence the voices of colonized people, especially women. She criticizes western intellectuals particularly Michael Foucault and Gilles Deleuze as they claimed to care about the oppressed people, assuming that these people can freely speak if they get the chance but they ignore the fact that the dominant power shapes what can be said and understood by these groups. Spivak argues that even the radical and anti-colonial thinkers are a part of the system that silences the subalterns and they are not able to recognize their position of power, therefore they can't truly understand or represent the Subalterns. In the essay she brings the concept of epistemic violence which means the violence done through the way we reproduce knowledge. She traces its roots to when colonial powers forced their languages, and ideas on the colonized people; they destroyed the essence of natives' thinking, and now when scholars describe Subalterns unknowingly, they may repeat this violence. Therefore, speaking for subalterns even with good intentions still erases their real voices.

Spivak illustrates the problem of epistemic violence through the colonial discourse around Sati a Hindu practice where the widows burned themselves on the husbands' funeral pyres. The British colonizers claimed that banning sati was to save Indian women; an act of white men saving brown women from brown men, justifying their dominance in the name of

saving, while ignoring the voices and the choices of Indian women. On the other hand, the Indian nationalists defended the ritual saying that it was a part of their culture and they failed to listen to the women's perspectives. Women were trapped between the British rule and the dominant society not being able to speak for their selves as Spivak states: "between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object formation the figure of the woman disappears... " (102).

Spivak shared the real story of Bhuvanswari Bhadmi who killed herself in 1926. Her death was misunderstood by her family who thought that she committed suicide because of a failed love affair, but the actual reason was that she was involved in a political movement. Her death was erased by ideas and assumptions that fit the dominant power gender and culture.

This tragic misunderstanding illustrates how dominant social structures rewrite the intentions of the marginalized. Building on this, Gayatri Spivak concludes her essay by stating that "The subaltern cannot speak"(104) not to say that they are not able to speak or resist but with the meaning that the systems of power, politics and social environment prevent them from being truly heard or understood.

3.5. Stereotype Theory:

Stereotype theory is a key element of Representation theory that explores how meaning is created and communicated through language, images and other signs. Stereotyping is important as it shows how the cultural and racial differences are represented in society, it is a practice that reduces, simplifies separates and controls certain groups of individuals. In order to understand stereotype theory, it is crucial to understand first the representation theory as it forms the basis of understanding how stereotypes work.

Stuart Hall is a Jamaican British intellectual, a Marxist sociologist and one of the founders of cultural studies. In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall asserts that: "representation means using language to say something meaningful about or to present the world meaningfully to others" (15) and it is regarded as a key element in the process of producing and exchanging meaning within a culture (15). Hall outlines two systems at the heart of representation. The first is what called the conceptual system; it exists in our minds and allows forming mental images and concepts of people, objects, events or even abstract ideas. These concepts are organized into complex systems and groups. Everyone's conceptual map is different but people belonging to the same culture usually share the same mental map, which makes communication easy for them.

However, having this system is not enough as we need a way to express them. This lead us the second system which is language. Language broadly speaking here does not refer only to just spoken or written language but also visual images, sounds, gestures, facial expressions... etc. Therefore, any system of signs that carries and express meaning can be considered as language. This whole process of linking signs to our mental concepts is what is called representation and it is how we make meaning in culture (18-19).

Hall explains that there are three theories of representation: first, the reflective or memetic approach, this approach suggests that meaning already exists in the world, and language simply reflect reality like a mirror. Hall points the shortcomings of this approach as so many words describe imaginary things, fictional worlds, proving that language is not always related to real objects. Also, if we do not share the same cultural codes and language rules, it will be hard to understand each other, words do not mean anything on their own, and we learn their meaning through shared system of signs and conventions (24-25).

The second approach is the intentional approach, this approach argues that meaning comes from the author, and words means what the individual intends them to mean, at first this quite makes sense as language can be used to express personal thoughts and perspectives, however, this approach is flawed as well, as language cannot be purely private. If everyone invents their own meaning for words, communication cannot happen. Therefore, meaning must be negotiated socially, and our ideas have to align with the meaning already existing (25).

The third approach is constructive approach, it is based on the idea that meaning is not inherited nor fixed by objects themselves or by individual speakers but instead meaning constructed through systems of representation like concepts and signs, therefore we don't get meaning directly from the real word but we use words, images, symbols...etc. in order to represent (25-26).

In this framework Stuart Hall explores stereotype theory especially in his essay *The Spectacle of The Other* where he claims that stereotyping as a signifying practice is a central to the representation of racial difference. He identifies three main ideas to explain how stereotyping works. First, stereotype reduces individuals to mere simple traits, that are exaggerated, simplified and fixed as natural, so when someone is stereotyped, we know only one version of him/her not the full complex one. Second, stereotyping works by dividing people/things or what we call exclusion, by creating boundaries between us and them, reinforcing who belongs and who do not, and pushing away anything that doesn't fit or conform. Third, Stereotyping often happens in situations where there's imbalance in powers, therefore the powerful is the one who uses stereotypes to control, how less powerful groups are seen and treated and it is considered as a way to dominate (258). Within the colonial context, Hall highlights how stereotypes rely on oppositions to justify power hierarchies.

Stewart Hall expands the concept of the colonial gaze to contemporary media analyzing how colonial-era stereotypes persist in modern film, TV, and news. Hall stresses how these stereotypes function through binary oppositions (lazy natives, noble savages) that justify domination in the postcolonial period.

3.6. Afrofuturism

Afrofuturism is a cultural and intellectual movement that emerged in 1994 by Mark Dery to describe science fiction that explores African American themes (Sinha 475). It reimagines the past, the present and the future of the Blacks and African Americans through literature, music, art and cinema...etc. In Afrofuturism, the Black community is seen as the center of the world, and showcasing them as an advanced nation, technologically developed and celebrating their cultures. This movement challenges the previous stereotypical narratives of the Whites on the Blacks and reimagines Africans with power and unshaped by colonialism.

Afrofuturism works as both a way of expressing culture and a form of political resistance. It offers a critique of Western hegemony and the colonial erasure of African identities. It also gives Black artists and intellectuals the freedom and the chance to create imagined futures that rewrite history, resisting the legacy of slavery, colonialism and racism. Instead of depicting Africa and Blackness through the eyes of trauma and marginalization, Afrofuturism offers a new empowering perspective that emphasizes self-definition, agency and innovation. Afrofuturism as defined by Ytasha Womack is "an intersection of imagination, technology, the future, and liberation"(9), meaning that Afrofuturism not only serves as a way to tell creative and imaginary stories but also creates space where traditional Western narratives are deconstructed and new meanings of Black identity are formed. Afrofuturism is strongly rooted in African myths, cosmology and ancestral knowledge. It

creates a connection between the past and future by using traditional African beliefs and history to imagine an innovative and culturally rich future. As McDougall explains, Afrofuturism works to reframe dystopian ideas about Africa and Black peoples and instead shifts the focus on the vitality of Blackness in the past, present, and especially the future (1). McDougall also notes that Afrofuturism can distort categories of racialization which means it challenges the limited and often negative ways that Western narratives have defined Black identity (1). This blending of spirituality and futuristic thinking helps reclaim and honor African Black cultural memory and heritage that were distorted and erased by colonial narratives.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter has provided the fundamental theories and concepts used in the analysis of Africa's portrayal in western cinema. These include Post-colonialism, Orientalism, Subalternity, Stuart Hall's theories of representation and stereotyping and the concept of Afrofuturism. All these together represent tools that help examining the way cinema can reinforce colonial narratives about Africa or challenge them.

Postcolonialism reveals how the colonial discourse and the colonial ideologies are still present in the contemporary representations of Africa, depicting it as underdeveloped and dependent. Edward Said's Orientalism explores how the west continues to construct knowledge about Africa as the Other defining it as a place of inferiority, violence and primitiveness. Gayatri Spivak concept of Subalternity questions whether the African characters are given voice and agency in the film or they are marginalized and presented by western perspective. Stuart Hall representation theory analyses how representation is not a reflection of reality but rather a system constructed through language, signs and symbol. Hall's theory of stereotype shows how African identities in cinema are often oversimplified

and fixed to reinforce the colonial views and the western dominance. Finally, Afrofuturism offers counter narratives by reimagining the future of the Black community and centering their stories. These frameworks are crucial in order to examine how Africa is portrayed in Cinema and whether these portrayals perpetuate colonial discourses and narratives or subvert them.

Chapter 4: Analysis of *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) and *Black Panther* (2018)

4.1.Introduction

In this chapter we analyse the two films, *The Last King of Scotland* and *Black Panther*, highlighting their contrastive representations of Africa. We will, first, explore the narrative structure of *The Last King of Scotland* through the lens of colonial gaze, focusing on the depiction of Ugandan people, leaders (Idi Amin) and women (Kay Amin). Second, we will examine *Black Panther* through the lens of Afrofuturism, and how it reimagines Africa through its depiction of Wakandan people, leaders (King T-Challa) and women. We will also analyse the mise en scene, focusing on the lighting, costumes and the position of the camera. Before starting with the comparative analysis, we will give the context of *The Last King of Scotland*, in which we offer the historical background of the British colonial rule in Uganda and the regime of Amin after the independence. Then, we will present the plot of both films and the biographies of the two directors, Kevin McDonald and Ryan Coogler.

4.2.Kevin McDonald's *The Last King of Scotland*

The Last King of Scotland was released for the first time in September 2006. It is a historical film about the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin and his regime, seen through the lens of the Scottish Doctor Nickolas Garrigan, featuring Forest Whitaker and James McAvoy as protagonists. It is originally adapted from a novel written by the English author Giles Foden in 1998. The film is directed by Kevin McDonald from screenplay by Peter Morgan and Jeremy Brock.

4.2.1. Context of *The Last King of Scotland*: Uganda Under British Rule and Idi Amin's Regime

The British rule in Uganda started in the 19th century. Initially through the British East Africa Company which was granted administrative political control after the Buganda kingdom signs a treaty in 1891. Uganda was declared as a British protectorate in 1894. The British later expanded to include areas of the Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole and Bugosa. The British Commissioner of Uganda in 1900 Sir, Harry Jonson, established an indirect rule by co-opting Uganda chiefs, offering them land and administrative power. The later became principal tax collectors collaborating with the British powers. The British signed much less generous treaties with other kingdoms in the region (Tore 1900 and Ankole in 1901) and smaller chiefs were rejected. Baganda administrators insisted to spread their language; Luganda, culture and economy across other regions (Britannica).

The people of Bunyoro, who had fought both Baganda and the British, represented resistance against the dominance. They led the rebellion called Nyangire or “refusing” which led to the withdrawal of Baganda agents. Meanwhile in the 1901 the completion of Buganda Railroad from the coast at Mombasa to the lake of Victoria Port spurred cash crop production, especially cotton, making Buganda prosperous. In addition, Christian missions promoted literacy and education leading to the growth of African elite. Despite that Uganda's economy benefited during the WW1 from agriculture exports, African farmers were exploited by colonial trade and Asian monopoly on cotton. In 1949 Baganda rioted, burning down houses of pro-Government chiefs demanding trade control, Asian dominance in cotton ginning and political representation (Uganda-History).

In 1947 early nationalist movements emerged, like Uganda African Farmers Union and later Uganda National congress. In 1952 an energetic reformist governor Sid Andrew

took over Uganda administration and he set about preparing Uganda for economic and political independence. He promoted African involvement in politics and economics lifting restrictions in cotton ginning, creating cooperatives. He also reorganized Uganda's legislative council to include African representatives elected from districts throughout Uganda. The prospect of elections caused proliferation of political parties: the Democratic Party (DP) Uganda People's Congress (UPC), Kabaka (KY). Buganda leaders initially boycotted elections but later allied with UPC. The election in 1961 resulted in DP victory, followed by UPC-KY Coalition, which led Uganda into independence in October 1962, with Milton Obote as a minister and Kabaka at head of state (Uganda-History).

Idi Amin was born in 1924/25 in Koboko, Uganda. He served the British army from 1946-1962 post-independence and he kept rising in ranks until he became in 1970 the Commander of the Armed Forces, making him the most powerful figure in Uganda's military. On January 25, 1971 while the president Milton Obote was away in Singapore, major General Idi Amin staged a military coup and seized power. At the beginning, he presented himself as a pro-western, favoring Israel and Britain, but quickly his rule became brutal, starting with eliminating the supporters of ex-president Obote, especially within the military (Britannica).

After a failed attempt of invading Uganda by Obote's supporters in September 1972, Amin expanded his reign of terror becoming more brutal, targeting large number of civilians, prominent citizens such as Chief justice Benedicto Kiwanuka, the vice Chancellor of Makerere University and the governor of the bank of Uganda disappeared in mysterious way (probably killed). By 1973 the death toll increased to reach +300000 according to Amnesty International. In 1972 relations between Uganda and western powers started worsening; Amin expelled Israeli nationals becoming a pro-Palestinian, and then expelled Asians, creating allies

with the Soviet and Arab states for military and financial support. The US banned their trade with Uganda over human rights abuses (Uganda-History).

In October 1978 Idi Amin forces invaded Tanzania occupying the Karega Region, Tanzania led by Julius Nyerere allied with Ugandan exiles; and together they formed Ugandan National liberation Front in March (1979). UNFL and Tanzania invaded Uganda and Amin fled which marked the end of his dictatorship. He later lived in Libya then Saudi Arabia until he died in 16th August 2003 (Britannica).

4.2.2. Kevin McDonald's Biography

Kevin MacDonald is a Scottish director and documentary filmmaker known for many works exploring political, historical and human narratives. He was born on 28 October 1967 in Glasgow Scotland. He was brought up in Gartocharn, Dunbartonshire and attended the local primary School for the first five years of his education. He attended boarding school at Glenalmond College and St Anne College, Oxford. He is the grandson of the Hungarian born filmmaker Emeric Pressburger. He began his career by adapting his grandfather's biography into the television documentary *The Making of Englishman* (1995).

Continuing in the field of documentary filmmaking, MacDonald created several biographical works; *Chaplin's Goliath* (1996), *The Moving World of George Rickey* (1997), Donald Cammell: *The Ultimate Performance* (1998), and *A Brief History of Errol Morris* (2000). He gained international acclaim with *One Day in September* (1999), which explored the 1972 Munich Olympics Israeli athletes hostages of the Palestinians. The film featured a rare interview with Jamal Al- Gashey, the only survivor of the Munich terrorists, who joined the film under strict conditions to protect his identity. The documentary won the Oscar for best documentary.

Kevin MacDonald is interested in the life of individuals and their experiences and stories, rather than societies and their struggles. His first feature film *The Last King of Scotland* (2006), which is based on the real-life events of the dictator Idi Amin during his rule in 1970s. The film was widely acclaimed earning Forest Whitaker so many awards including an Oscar for the best actor for his role as Idi Amin. After this film, MacDonald released other documentary films: *My Enemy's Enemy* (2007), *Life in a Day* (2011) and *Marley* (2012) based on the life and legacy of the icon Bob Marley.

4.2.3. *The Last King of Scotland* Narrative Structure

The film's narrative structure is centered on a western outsider's perception. The story develops through the eyes of fictional character, the Scottish Doctor Nickolas Garrigan.

The story takes place in 1970 when a young Scottish doctor Nicholas Garrigan (James McAvoy) travels to Uganda to work at a missionary Clinic run by Dr David Merritt's (Adam Coates) and his wife Sarah Jillian (Anderson wild). Around the same time, General Idi Amin (Forest Whitaker) overthrows the current president Milton Obote in a military coup. Garrigan sees Amin for the first time, delivering a speech in the village he works in. He is impressed with Amin's vision of the nation believing that he will help the country. Sarah tells him that the last time people got excited about the president, he ended up being a corrupted one. Garrigan meets Amin personally after treating his injured hand in a car accident. Amin offers him to be his personal physician and he promises him to take charge of modernizing the Country Healthcare System. At the beginning Garrigan enjoys the privileged status believing in his promises of change. However, when he becomes close to Amin he witnesses his paranoid, inhumanity and mass killings. As Garrigan's position grows, the British foreign office gets in touch with him to persuade him to work for them hinting to Garrigan that Amin was installed by British government, but now they do not share a good relationship.

Garrigan begins a secret relationship with Kay (Kerry Washington) the youngest wife of Amin after treating her son. They end up sleeping together. Kay warns him to leave Uganda before it's too late. After Garrigan saves Amin from an assassination attempt, Amin begins to trust him more than his longtime advisor, Health Minister Waspa. When Garrigan sees Waspa speaking suspiciously with a white man at a bar, he reports it to Amin. Soon after, Stone informs Garrigan that Waspa and several high-ranking officials have disappeared, suspected of treason. When Garrigan asks Amin about Waspa and requests permission to return to Scotland, Amin refuses.

Garrigan starts to lose faith in Amin as he sees his paranoia deepening. He expels Uganda's South Asian population and brutally eliminates his traitors. Amin replaces Garrigan's British passport with Ugandan Passport to prevent him from escaping, Garrigan seeks help from Stone (the local British Foreign Office representative), but asks him to assassinate Amin and he refuses. Kay informs Garrigan that she is pregnant with his child and she begs him for a secret abortion before Amin finds about it. Delayed by a conference Garrigan fails to meet her, Kay gets caught and murdered. Confronting the inhumanity of Amin pushes Garrigan to consider assassinating him.

When Palestinian Hijackers land a plane in Entebbe, Amin intervenes taking Garrigan with him who tries to poison him but he gets caught and tortured, Amin reveals his knowledge of Garrigan's affair with Kay. Dr Junju (David Oyelowo) rescues Garrigan and urges him to expose Amin asserting that because he is white, people will believe him. Garrigan succeeds in escaping while Dr. Junju gets executed for helping him. The film ends with real footage of Amin regime acknowledging the 300000 Ugandans Killed Under his rule and his exile to Saudi Arabia and death in 2003.

4.3. Representation of Africa in *The Last King of Scotland* (2006)

In the film *The Last King of Scotland* (2006), which takes place in the East African country Uganda, Africa is depicted in many scenes as a primitive and exotic land. The film reinforces the stereotypical idea of Africa as “the Dark Continent”, the film shows, through many scenes, acts of violence and how Uganda or Africa as a whole is a place of danger. The film ignores the Ugandan cultures and emphasizes only on the political instability and the brutality of Idi Amin.

The film is told through the Western lens and through the perspective of the White protagonist Dr. Nicolas Garrigan. The Scottish doctor is a fictional character, his role in the original novel by Giles Foden was passive, however Kevin McDonald the director of the film made sure to make it an active character to attract audience and catch their interest. Therefore, the character shaped the whole narrative and all the events revolve around him, even the regime of Amin which is supposed to be the main story of the film. Through his journey in Uganda, the audience is able to see a postcolonial nation living in misery, in a savage land to reinforce the idea of “The White Savior” and that truly the West came to Africa to develop the continent and save their people, emphasizing on the fact that even in the post-independence era, they still live in poverty, violence and corruption.

4.3.1 The Colonial Gaze in *The Last King of Scotland*

Western cinema has constructed this image of the “Other” as inferior to the Whites, who are there to guide them into civilization, through narrative structure and cinematic techniques like framing, camera angles, lighting and editing.

The opening scenes of *The Last King of Scotland* provide immediately an obvious visual and ideological contrast between the West and Africa. Scotland is represented through

smooth camera movement, bright natural lighting. The scene where Nickolas Garrigan and his family are shown having dinner carries so much symbols of modernity, starting from how the table is set, the etiquette of sitting, and the fancy clothes they are wearing. The scene also reveals that Nickolas's father is a doctor who means that he belongs to a wealthy and an educated family (01:18 - 02:24). In contrast, the first scenes in Uganda (03:12- 03:50) depict dusty rural village, framed in desaturated colors framing it as an exotic and chaotic place. Through the scene we see also how the bus is full of people, providing close-ups of Ugandans facial features, and clothes they are wearing which catch the attention of audience and construct the idea that they are poor and live in misery. The visual codes used in the scenes construct the juxtaposition of civilized West and the primitive “Other”.

Figure1: Scotland



Figure2 : Uganda



Figure3: Garrigan's Family Having Dinner



Figure4: Ugandans in the Bus



This binary opposition sets the stage for the insertion of the white protagonist Dr. Nickolas Garrigan, as a Savior figure, his arc can be associated with the white savior trope, a figure used in western films set in the post-colonial contexts where a white protagonist tries to save people of color from their struggles (Hughey3). The narrative of the story and the film's

mise en scene position Garrigan as a central figure favoring his role over the main story of the film which is supposed to be about Idi Amin and his regime in Uganda.

A pivotal moment that reinforces this framing occurs when Garrigan first enters the missionary clinic (07:23- 08:27), the mise en scène is important as the viewer can notice that the lighting is dim, patients are waiting to be treated, we get a close ups to their wounded hands and their condition, Garrigan looks around visually shocked by the lack of medical materials and hygiene, Doctor Merit appear in the scene and as they walk through the ariel of the clinic, he talks about its condition, the lack and simplicity of materials. Dr. Merit inform Dr. Garrigan that they are the only two doctors there, the absence of native medical staff in the scene showcases that the white doctors are the only ones to rescue and help Ugandans. Dr. Merit mockingly stating that Ugandans choose to go to witch doctors instead of them implicitly encodes the superiority of the whites, and how they truly believe that their knowledge is superior.

Figure5: The Missionary Clinic



Figure6: Garrigan Shocked Face



Figure7: Ugandan Patients



Figure8: Dr. Merit Talking to Dr. Garrigan



Throughout the narrative of the film, Garrigan is repeatedly portrayed as the center and hero figure. The scene when Garrigan saves Idi Amin and meet him for the first time is a dramatized act presented to elevate his role, and it was structured to position him as a hero. We see through the scene how Amin is amazed by what Garrigan did despite that it was just a simple act (treating his sprained wrist). Garrigan is portrayed as charismatic, daring and medically competent. The scene sets the stage for the beginning of Garrigan and Amin's friendship. As the narrative flows, we see that Garrigan screen space increase with him being around Idi Amin as his (physician and advisor). We see through many scenes how Garrigan saves Amin, when he thought that someone poisoned him, then when someone tried to assassinate him.

Figure9: Amin is Amazed by Garrigan



Figure10: Saving Amin from Assassination



Figure11: Garrigan Saving Amin



As the story unfolds, Garrigan gets aware of Amin paranoid, madness and brutality. After discovering that Amin killed his wife Kay, Garrigan attempts to kill Amin by poisoning him, which positions him again as a hero. Despite his failed attempt, the narrative still shows Garrigan as the only one who tries to stop and challenge Amin. When Amin gets to know the truth about Garrigan and Kay affair we see the brutality of Amin and how cruelly he punishes Garrigan. The visuals of the scene and the atmosphere created, evokes a sense of empathy toward Garrigan and his suffering.

Figure12: The Poison in Amin's Hands



Figure13: Amin Torturing Garrigan



The final scenes of the film when Dr Junju helps Garrigan to escape the country are marked by one powerful line (01:50:53-01:51:25) Dr Junju acknowledges Garrigan ability to save them by saying: "This country is drowning, we deserve better. Go home, tell the world the truth about Amin, they will believe you, you are a white man", through this line we can understand the power that white men hold and how they are the ones to be believed by the world, implying also that the African people need westerners to speak for them and intervene in order to save them.

Figure14: Dr. Junju Helping Garrigan



Nicholas Garrigan's narrative in *The Last King of Scotland* parallels the narrative structure that Achebe criticized in his essay: "An image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness". He condemns Conrad for dehumanizing the African continent and reducing it to a symbol for European psychological exploration, presenting Africans as a background, voiceless and savage creatures. Similarly, in the film, Uganda is mainly shown through the perspective of Garrigan. The story focus on his personal growth, experiences, mistakes,

meanwhile it ignores the Ugandans and sideline them. Like Conrad's Marlow and the use of Congo and its people as a background, *The Last King of Scotland* uses Africa (Uganda) as a space to define Garrigan. This kind of storytelling has been criticized as it pushes aside African realities, portraying it as a place for white characters journeys rather than a land with its own people, perspectives, struggles and own dignity.

To put it in a nutshell, the film, presents Dr. Nicholas Garrigan as the rational, moral Westerner while Idi Amin and Ugandans as the irrational, violent Other. The idea that the West "brings order" to "savage" lands is reminiscent of colonial narratives and even Idi Amin's charm at the beginning of the film transforms to "primitive unpredictability", a colonial stereotype which Stewart Hall criticises in his book *Representation* (1997).

4.3.2 The Portrayal of Women

The representation of African women in *The Last King of Scotland* perpetuates negative stereotypes rooted in colonial ideologies. From the film's early scenes, African female characters are denied narrative agency and instead serve as tools to satisfy the white protagonist's (Garrigan) emotional and sexual desire. This is evident with Garrigan first encounter with a Ugandan woman in the bus once he reaches Uganda (04:11-05:45). Their interaction was short but we see the transition from them talking together to them ending up sleeping together. The scene is short but highly significant as it reinforces and draws the image of African women as being sexually available. We do not get to know the name of the character or her back story but we just see her directly being involved in an intimate moment with a White man she got to know just in few moments ago.

Kay Amin, one of Idi Amin's wives, character in the film is symbolic, although she is given more screen time and dialogues than other female characters, Kay is largely defined by

her beauty, sexuality, vulnerability and tragic fate. Rather than having her own story, she was defined by her relationships, first with Amin as she is a victim of his harshness and ignorant behavior towards her, she is sidelined by him developing a sense of self insecurity, making her appear as a helpless victim. Then her arc shifts to be related to Dr. Garrigan as they both get involved in a secret affair. Kay's death scene, is presented from Garrigan perspective, she died without having any last words or point of view, she died not as a subject with her own voice and narrative, but as a consequence of Garrigan moral failure in order to push his journey forward.

Figure15: The Death of Kay Amin



Another scene that constructs a negative image about African women is the scene in the hotel when Amin takes Garrigan to a party full of women and go-go dancers (1:09:43-1:11:38) The camera uses close-ups to show women's bodies (legs, hips, backs) capturing their half-naked bodies while dancing. The camera focuses on their body movements, sexualizing them reinforcing the idea of African women's bodies being available for visual consumption. The repeated, negative portrayal of women through the film, and the stereotyping reduce them into simplified individuals, defining them just from a fixed perspective which is being, vulnerable, silent and sexually available.

Figure16: Garrigan Surrounded by Black Women in the Party



Figure17: Garrigan Surrounded by Women in the Bar



Figure18: Go-Go Dancers



Figure19: Amin Offering a Women to Garrigan



In this film, women are marginalized and given no voice to speak and express themselves, which reinforces the idea of Spivak “The Subaltern cannot speak”. The female characters exist in the film just to advance the protagonist’s narrative. Their suffering is shown, but their voices are silenced, which illustrates the idea of Spivak that people speak for the Subaltern women rather than allowing them to speak for themselves.

4.3.3 The Portrayal of Ugandan people

Ugandans in *The Last King of Scotland* are passive, exotic and primitive people. They are often portrayed as the backdrop to the story of Garrigan. They lack agency, and their screen space and time revolve around being in crowds, soldiers, patients and victims. Throughout the narrative we don't get to know the name of any of the Ugandans. We do not see their experiences, sufferings or get any perspective from their side regarding the situation in the country. This Portrayal aligns with Gayatri Spivak's concept of Subalternity in which she

explains how the colonised and marginalized people do not get the chance to speak for their selves and rather presented from others perspective.

One of the scenes that illustrate how Ugandans are portrayed through the film is the scene when Amin visits the village (12:10-15:10), Ugandans are shown in wide shots, gathering in crowds with no dialogues. They are not shown like individuals with critical awareness or complex characters but as a mass of bodies shouting, clapping, and cheering. They are all dancing and wearing traditional clothes, but the colours, the music and the movement instead of showing real culture, present them in a way that feels loud, exaggerated and chaotic. The Ugandans here are presented as background performers in a show created to entertain and impress the viewers.

Figure20: Ugandans Gathering in Crowds



Figure21: Ugandans Gathering for the Speech of Amin



One other scene in this context, is the scene when Dr Garrigan is seen looking at a kind of spiritual healing practice performed by a man to heal a woman (09:34-9:50). The man is seen shirtless, chanting over her body, with a mixture of dust and the smoke around them. Garrigan does not interfere, and as viewers, we do not get any explanation, the scene makes the viewer feel the same cultural dissonance Garrigan feels. It reinforces the orientalist view of the other (Africa) being a mysterious place, inhabited by irrational people who lack knowledge about modern medicine.

Figure22: The Spiritual Healing

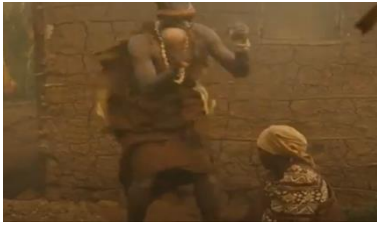


Figure23: Garrigan Observing



4.3.4 Leadership and Power

The Last King of Scotland despite being praised for the interesting narrative, its depiction of Idi Amin regime's brutality, and the outstanding performance of Forest Whitaker, it subtly perpetuates colonial legacies through the visuals and the narrative strategies. Idi Amin was a brutal dictator and nothing can justify the crimes he was responsible of. However, in the *Last King of Scotland*, Amin is not represented as a complex character and political figure shaped by colonial history as the historical context of his rise in the film is minimized. The focus in the film was on exaggerating his traits portraying him as a figure of violence and African barbarism, a figure of fear and fascination built and constructed for the western audience.

Amin's first scene (12:56-15:10), is his grand entry to deliver a speech in one of the villages. Amin arrives wearing military uniform; his uniform constructs a broader idea about Africa being a continent ruled by military forces with no democracy or people being involved in the decision of selecting their president. In the same scene we get long shots of Amin showing how powerful he is, we get also close ups to Amin's face while shouting, along with the sound of crowds cheering and the sound of drums. All these together draw an idea about Africa being a chaotic and a dangerous place.

Figure24: Amin wearing a Military Uniform



Through the narrative, we see how Amin's violence and regime are portrayed, reflecting and representing an idea about Africa being a place of danger and horror. One of the scenes that illustrate this is when Amin tortures Obote's men (54:08-56:08). The scene takes a place in a dark place that looks like a dungeon or slaughterhouse. Amin is again dressed in full military uniform, shot in low angle emphasizing his power and dominance. The close ups and the framing of Amin's face sweating, wide eyed, and furious, along with the dialogue delivery of Forest Whitaker evokes sense of fear showing his paranoia and madness. The victims are bound on the ground shirtless and bleeding emphasizing their vulnerability. They are often shown in high shots, looking as a small and powerless figures surrounded by Amin's armed forces. The camera also provides access to Garrigan's reaction showing his discomfort, shock and fear, his reaction represents the binary opposition of the west morality, sensibility contrasting with Africa's irrationality and violence.

Figure25: Amin Torturing

Obote's Men



Figure26: Amin's Face

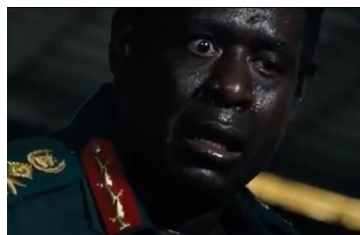


Figure27: Garrigan's Reaction



Amin and Garrigan's relationship in the film construct the idea that the African leaders need the white's validation and they are not able to govern without their help. From their first interaction we see Amin's fascination with Garrigan, later on, he assigns him as his personal physician then he starts working in his hospital. The importance of Garrigan in Amin's life grows as he becomes his advisor. We see Amin through the narrative taking advice from Garrigan, favouring his opinions and choices over his other black advisor. We even see Garrigan attending one of the conferences instead of Amin. These instants presented throughout the narrative of the film reinforces the idea of how the western intervention is needed in Africa and how the African leaders are incompetent and unable to govern or take decisions without the whites validation.

Figure28: Garrigan in the Conference



Figure29: Amin Taking Advice from Garrigan



To conclude *The Last King of Scotland* presents leadership in Africa as chaotic and dependent on Western intervention. Idi Amin is depicted more as an irrational and violent figure than a politically complex leader. In contrast, the Western character Garrigan is shown as rational and sensible, suggesting that effective leadership in Africa depends on white guidance and approval.

4.4 Ryan Coogler's *Black Panther*

Black Panther was produced by Marvel Studios and Walt Disney Pictures and written by Ryan Coogler and Joe Robert Cole. It was the first mega-budget film to be directed by an African American, written by black writers and featuring a dominant Black cast (Smith 2018).

4.4.1 Context of *Black Panther*

During the Barack Obama presidency (2009-2016), Hollywood produced many films that centred on Black experiences, history and culture. Among the films produced in this period we can mention *12 Years a Slave* (2013), *Fruitvale Station* (2013), *Dear White People* (2014), *Moonlight* (2016) and *Queen of Katwe* (2016). *Black Panther* was announced in 2014 during Barack Obama era. However, no one knew that it would be released during Donald Trump presidency, a time when racial discrimination and racism presented big issues in the United States. Trump made controversial statements comparing anti-racist protestors to violent neo- Nazis and insulting African communities. The film, against this backdrop, stood as a celebration of African culture, power and excellence (Smith 2018). *Black Panther*, presenting developed, advanced and a rich image of Africa, was directly encountered with Trump disrespectful remarks about Africa. Therefore, watching the film in this context made its message more significant and powerful. It is also worth mentioning as well that the film was released in February which represents the African history month, a month that honours all black people in USA.

In addition, *Black Panther* is considered as a powerful symbol of Pan-Africanism, a movement that advocates for the unity and the liberation of all people of African origin. Wakanda as an advanced nation represents a future Pan-African country, and the main conflict between the two protagonists on how to use Wakandan resources to help all Black

people around the world stand as a powerful message of self-Black determination. Furthermore, the film explores the relationship between the Africans of the continent and those of the diaspora and a possible union in the future (*historifans*).

Black Panther shows the importance of Pan-Africanism through engaging with the past and exploring the future of all Africans, even in a fictional nation. Yet, the focus of our analysis is the representation of Africa and Africans.

4.4.2 Ryan Coogler's Biography

Ryan Coogler was born on 23rd May 1986. He is an African American filmmaker, producer and director. He grew up in Richmond, California in the East Bay area north of Oakland. He attended nearby Saint Mary's College on a football scholarship, and then transferred to Sacramento State College. Later he was a graduate student in the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts, where he directed four short films: *Locks* (2009), *Fig* (2011), *The Sculptor* (2011), and *Gap* (2011).

Coogler's first real debut as a director was *Fruitvale Station* (2013), the film that marked him as a prominent and raising African-American director. The influence of being raised in Oakland, the origin place of the Black Panther movement, is evident in his films. *Station Fruitvale* (2013) is a biographical film that narrates the last 24 hours of Oscar Grant's life an African American young man who was killed by police in Bay Area. The film was considered as a critique to the police brutality and racism against African Americans in America (Britannica).

Coogler's next hit was *Creed* (2015) which again challenged American dominant stories by making a sequel of *Rocky* series of the 1970s by Sylvester Stallone; the sequel featured an African American protagonist portraying his struggles. In 2018 Ryan Coogler

becomes the first ever African American filmmaker to direct a film with the first African superhero on silver screen, *Black Panther*.

4.4.3 *Black Panther* (2018) Plot Summary

Centuries ago, five African tribes fought over a meteorite containing Vibranium. One warrior ingested a heart shaped herb affected by the metal gaining superhuman abilities and becoming the first Black Panther. He united all the tribes, except the Jabari tribe, forming the technologically advanced nation called Wakanda. The Jabari choose to live in the mountains while the rest of Wakanda hide their true power by posing as a Third World country.

In 1992 King T-Chaka (Atwanda) king of Wakanda and the first Black Panther, visits his brother Njobu (Sterling K Brown) a working undercover in Oakland, California, suspecting that he helps Ulysses Klaue (Andy Serkis) a South African involved in Black-market activities, to steal Vibranium. Njobu gets exposed by Zuri (Forest Whitaker) who is another undercover Wakandan, T-Chaka kills his brother to protect Wakanda's secret leaving behind Njobu's youngest son Erik Killmonger (Micheal B Jordan).

Following T-Chaka's death, his son T-Challa (Chadwick Boseman) returns to Wakanda to claim the throne, joined by his mother Ramonda (Angela Basset), his sister Shuri (Letitia Wright), his ex-lover Nakia (Lupita Nyong O) and Okeye (Danai Gurira) leader of the elite Dora Milaje warriors, all female special forces in Wakanda. During T-Challa coronation, Mbaku (Winston Duke) leader of the Jabari tribe challenges him for the throne; T-Challa defeats him and spares his life. That night T-Challa is given a mix made up of the heart shaped herbs to give him the power of the Black Panther, connecting him with his father spirit in the ancestral plane. Meanwhile Klaue and Erik Killmonger (Micheal B Jordan); Njobu's son and US black-ops soldier steal a Wakandan artifact from London Museum.

Learning that Klaue plans to sell it to the CIA agent Ross (Martin Freeman) in South Korea, T-Challa, Okoye and Nakia travel to an underground casino in South Korea where Klaue plans to sell the artifact. After an intense chase they capture Klaue, Killmonger frees him and later kills him taking his body to Wakanda to prove his strength. Killmonger reveals his royal lineage, declaring his right over the throne. He challenges T-Challa in a ritual fight and defeats him throwing him off a waterfall. Killmonger takes over the throne, after ingesting the heart shaped herb he orders to burn the rest but Nakia saves one secretly.

Killmonger with the help of W'kabi and his forces begins preparing to send Wakanda's weapons worldwide to aid oppressed people in rebellion. Nakia, Shuri, Ramonda and Ross flee to the Jabari tribe seeking help. They find out that T-Challa was rescued by the Jabari, with the herb that Nakia saved T-Challa comes back to his senses. He returns to challenge Killmonger and reclaim the throne in climactic battle. T-Challa defeateds Killmonger who refuses to be healed choosing death over captivity. Rejecting the past of isolationist Wakanda, T-Challa establishes an outreach center in Oakland and later announces Wakanda true nature at the United Nations.

4.5 The Depiction of Africa in *Black Panther*

The film *Black Panther* takes place in a fictional nation in Africa with the name of Wakanda. Throughout the film, the depiction of Africa is positive, the country, the people and even the African cultures. The film changes the negative view of Africa and shows how an uncolonized African nation looks like. It celebrates African cultures and portrays a technologically advanced nation in many scenes.

Black Panther centers on the new crowned king T-Challa and his journey to protect Wakanda from Western exploitation through their isolation strategy. Wakanda is portrayed as

an advanced nation in Africa, with its technology and source of power Vibranium. The story of the film revolves around Africa and its people, without Western intervention. Throughout the film, the audience realizes that Wakanda represents Africa without hundreds of years of European exploitation.

4.5.2 Afrofuturism in *Black Panther*

In cinema, many films portrayed a better Africa and Africans and challenged the old narratives on the continent. They showcased Africa as an advanced continent and Africans holding power, through the narrative structure and cinematic techniques.

Black Panther is an Afrofuturistic film in which the audience can see an uncolonized nation in Africa, technologically developed with a combination of the rich African traditions to show the power, the pride and an independent African country. Through the visual and the narrative structure, Wakanda presents a new Africa and a modern nation without Western intervention.

The first scene that illustrates this idea is the first view of Wakanda, when King T'Challa enters the shield with his ship (13:07-13:42). The camera shows the full city of Wakanda with the beautiful buildings that were made according to the African design, the flying trains and the round buildings that illustrate the African style of building and the bright green nature. The people and their clothes and customs are shown with a colorful image that represents African cultures. Wakanda looks beautiful, peaceful and full of life due to the golden and natural lighting. The camera movements are slow and smooth to show that Wakanda is a place of peace and not a place of violence, or a place that needs help, but the opposite.

Figure30: First View of Wakanda



Figure31: Wakanda



Another scene takes place in the laboratory of Shuri, king T-Challa's sister (37:50-40:57) in which the camera shows all the advanced technology and materials, in addition to the African symbols that are placed in the walls. Shuri's clothes are modern but reflect African culture. The lighting is blue and purple to show how advanced the lab is. The camera also focuses on Shuri while she is explaining to her brother all her inventions, to show how confident and intelligent she is.

Figure32: Shuri's Laboratory



The ceremony at Warrior Falls, when Wakanda crowns T-Challa as the new king (20:20-28:31) is a key scene in which the camera shows the rushing water and all the people with different colorful clothes of all the Wakandan tribes that reflects the diversity of African cultures. The camera uses long shots to show the gathering, which celebrates the unity of Africans, and close shots to focus on the main characters like T-Challa, which reflects that he is the center of the story. The natural sunlight on the water makes the scene looks peaceful and comfortable to the audience.

Figure33: The Ceremony at Warrior Falls



Figure34: Crowning T-Challa as the New King



Another key scene, is when king T-Challa brought the CIA agent Ross to Shuri's lab to help him after he got shot (01:00:12 – 01:01:18). This scene contradicts with the “White Savior” trope, in which this time the Black people are the ones who help the White man and not the other way around. Shuri is shot with a low camera angle to show her power and authority, while Ross is shot with an eye level angle. Agent Ross, the White character, is framed in a supportive role, taking orders from Shuri, the Black character, and survived from death thanks to the Wakandan technology. This demonstrates that there are no Whites saviors in Wakanda or White leaders, but Black saviors and leaders.

Figure35: Saving Agent Ross from Death



4.5.3 The Portrayal of Women

In *Black Panther*, women are not shown weak or secondary characters, they are shown powerful, warriors, queens and leaders. The film offers a positive representation of women through showing their importance in the Wakandan society.

The leader of the royal guard, Dora Milaje, Okoye is shown powerful with her red armor and with golden details as a reflection for the African warrior's design. Her shaved head means that she does not need the traditional beauty standard to be respected, but she is respected due to her loyalty and power to the kingdom of Wakanda. In many scenes inside the throne room, when all the Wakandan tribes' leaders gather, Okoye is always shown near the king, which means she is trustworthy, and standing tall, which reflects her personality as a strong and confident woman. When Okoye is shown, the camera is often placed down and framed with a low angle, especially during battles, to show her strength. The lighting reveals also her power and confidence as it reflects on her armor to show her shining.

Figure36: Dora Milaje



Figure37 : Okoye



King T-Challa's sister, Shuri, also is shown as a strong character and an important one. She is a scientist and genius, and the camera always shows her inventions, like her brother's new suit. Shuri is shown strong and brave in many scenes, like when she wanted to challenge her brother for the throne. The lighting in her lab is a mixture of blue and purple to show how technologically her lab is advanced, and attracts the audience toward her inventions and show how relevant they are. The camera often centers on her when she explains her inventions to show her confidence and intelligence and how expert she is, even with foreigners. Shuri is a young lady but her strength and intelligence make her gain the respect of others.

Figure38: Shuri Explaining to her brother her Inventions **Figure39: Shuri is Shown Confident While Talking to Ross**



Ramonda, the queen and T-Challa's and Shuri's mother, is shown with her tall white headpieces and flowing robes to make her look wise and a woman of responsibility. In the coronation scene at Warrior Falls (20:20-28:31), the camera shows her reaction and her emotions that represent her dignity and her relation to Wakanda. The camera shows how strong she is, as she does not speak too much, but her presence demands attention.

Figure40: Queen Ramonda



Figure41: Ramonda's Emotions at Warrior Falls



Another key figure is Nakia, king T-Challa's ex-girlfriend, who is shown strong and brave in many scenes, like the first time the audience sees her, when she starts fighting with T-Challa the men in the forest. The camera also, during the last battle near the end, showed her fighting in front lines in open spaces and leading troops to fight. The lightning is natural making the audience enjoy her presence and fighting skills. She is framed as a supportive and an important figure especially for T-Challa's life.

Figure42: Nakia



Figure43: Nakia Fighting Killmonger



Women in *Black Panther* are shown supportive, intelligent and powerful, making their presence in the Wakandan society very important. They are given a voice to express their ideas, and important positions in the society to be as helpful as possible to make Wakanda rise.

4.5.4 The Portrayal of Wakandan people

The people of Wakanda are shown united, proud and connected to their traditions. Wakandans are powerful and self-sufficient living a life of luxury. In the coronation scene at Warrior Falls (20:20-28:31) the camera shows the entire Wakandans gathering together to crown the new king; the scene is full of color and movement which reflects their happiness. All the five tribes were there, which demonstrates how united the people are, with their different traditional clothes, which represent the diversity of Wakandan and African cultures. The camera uses long and wide shots to capture all the people to make Wakanda full of life. The lightning is natural, with the sun reflects on the water and gives a beautiful and comfortable view.

Figure44: Wakandans at

Warrior Falls



Figure45: Zuri Wakanda's shaman



Figure46: The River Tribe



Figure47: The Boarder Tribe



Figure48: The Marchant Tribe



Figure49: The Mining Tribe



Another scene where people are shown is in the marketplace, with king T-Challa and Nakia walking together (33:15-34:37). The camera shows people working and selling goods with children playing around in a modern city. The people customs are mixture of tradition and modernity. The camera moves smoothly and shows T-Challa within the people and not above them, which means he is a fair and a humble person. The lighting is bright and mixed with gold which shows a kind of peace and warm, giving life to the city.

Figure50: T-Challa and Nakia in the Marketplace



Figure51: People in the Marketplace



Another key scene is the last battle on the plains, in which all people from all the different tribes came to fight for Wakanda, which represent their loyalty (01:42:43-01:55:46). The weapons used in the fight made according to the African design, which reflects how the film keeps the African identity alive even during a high-tech battle. The camera switches between long shots to show the fight and close-up shots to show specific fighters like Nakia, T-Challa and Shuri...etc. The lighting is natural which makes the scene feels real.

Figure52: The Fight between Wakandans



Figure53: The Wakandan Civil War



Figure54: The Wakandan Weapons



All In all, Wakandans are portrayed in a positive way, focusing on their unity and strength. The camera framed them at the center of the story. Wakanda is shown as place of opportunity and not a place of violence. Wakanda represent a nation that is stick to their traditions and built by its own people without foreign intervention. The story gives a new image of Africa far away from the traditional stereotypes.

4.5.5 Leadership and Power

When it comes to leadership in *Black Panther*, it is not something held by one person, but a shared responsibility among people of wisdom. The film has shown different leaders among the kingdom of Wakanda; T-Challa as the king of Wakanda, Ramonda as the queen mother and Okoye as the military leader.

In the throne room scenes (35:57-37:06) the place is large, full of African symbols and the throne sits high. The lighting is natural coming from the above. T-Challa is framed in the center with close-up shots and a natural lighting, indicating that he is a respected ruler. The elders are framed surrounded, with long shots to show their gathering and the responsibility they share, and with close-up shots to show how they all have a voice and they can all suggest their opinions to the king; even his mother Ramonda and Okoye, showing that T-Challa listens to women around him.

Figure55: The Throne Room



Figure56: Ramonda in the Throne Room



Another important scene is the one when T-Challa visits his father in the Ancestral Plane(30:16- 32:54)where the scene looks like a dream with purple lighting and the stars in the sky, making the scene looks spiritual and comfortable. The camera moves slowly and smoothly showing T-Challa kneeling to his father with respect and asking:” Am I doing the right thing?” (Coogler, Black Panther 2018) showing that leadership in Wakanda is not just about power, but about listening to the elders and taking advices and guidance from other people.

Figure57: The Ancestral Plane



Figure58: T-Challa with his father



Furthermore, Okoye the leader of the Dore Milaje, is always shown and framed in the center with a low camera angle to show her power, always with her red and golden armor and spear in hand. Okoye is loyal to the kingdom more than the king; and that is shown when T-Challa lost the ritual combat to Killmonger and she refuses to turn on the new king because she knows that he won the throne legally, and she continued her job for the kingdom, this shows that in Wakanda the most important thing is the nation and not the king, and the nation comes first than anything else.

Figure59: Okoye with Killmonger the New King



4.6 Representation of Africa in *The Last King of Scotland* and *Black Panther*

The Last King of Scotland adopts an orientalist perspective, as defined by Edward Said, by portraying Uganda through western lens. The narrative is told through the viewpoint of Nickolas Gariggan and it centers on the white protagonist journey in Uganda under Idi Amin's dictatorship. The film reinforces stereotypes on Africa by depicting Uganda as a place

of chaos, horror, violence and mystery; a place marked by political instability where there is no resistance and its people cannot stand for their selves and needs white intervention to be saved and rescued. *Black Panther* on the other side centres on Africa and its people, it positions African people as having their own agency over their own lives, and it rejects the white saviour trope, by portraying Wakanda as a self-sufficient and self-determined country, *Black Panther* provides an Afrofuturist view of Africa as a place hidden from the world with no colonialism, a place marked by blending traditions and technological advancement.

The Last King of Scotland, silences the subaltern by prioritizing the white protagonist, Garrigan over African agency. Ugandans are represented as a marginalized, voiceless and passive participants. They appear on screen just as victims, crowds, or soldiers. Their suffering, even though is central to the political context, is viewed from the protagonist lens. Their experiences are not highlighted as a part of the narrative and there is no focus on the individuals' stories, their reactions and resistance. In this film African culture is shown through exotic images and brief scenes of local costumes. The traditional fits, music, dances are not given the meaningful cultural depth and the cultural practices are not contextualized or explained. Overall, Ugandan society is not represented as a full complex entity, but rather presented as a part of the mysterious African backdrop.

In contrast, *Black Panther* challenges the orientalist tendency of portraying the Other as exotic, primitive and mysterious by offering a more complex portrayal of African culture and giving a positive image of the its people. The Wakandan people are active participants in the society. They are present in the meetings, spiritual ceremonies, market scenes and in battles. The population is not just a background they are shown as empowered, educated, citizens with roles, responsibilities and agency. *Black Panther* offers a rich portrayal of African culture, representing the cultural diversity of the continent, mixing African tradition

with modern technology. Despite that Wakanda is fictional it uses real traditional aspects inspired from different tribes across the continent. The white hat worn by Queen Ramonda is called Isicolo hat and it is inspired by Zulu tribe and is worn originally by married African women. The neck and arm rings worn by the Dora Milaje are inspired by the traditional jewellery of South African Ndebele tribe. The bead work is inspired by Turkana tribe and there's the use of leather which is inspired by Himba tribe. In addition to the clothes design, the film includes the use of a real African language which is Xhosa. We can say that *Black Panther* challenges subaltern's silencing by reclaiming African identity and giving voice and cultural identity to its people.

The Last King of Scotland also reproduces colonial stereotypes and silences women, reducing them into instruments within a white protagonist moral narrative. They are neglected to the margin and their existence in the film do not have importance or relevance. Characters such as Kay Amin are defined primarily by their relation to men. Her portrayal reflects both hypersexualizing and silencing, she is reduced to just being a victim and a lover, lacking full complexity and subjectivity. Other female characters in the film are presented also in the same way as passive characters which are only present for satisfying sexual desire.

However, *Black Panther* through its narrative positions African women as central to both the narrative and the nation. Characters like Queen Ramonda, Shuri, Okoye and Nakia are portrayed as strong, intelligent, voiced and powerful; they are not only visible but also active characters and their presence make difference. Their empowerment and the way the film present them deconstruct patriarchal and colonial powers that traditionally marginalize African women.

Our analysis reveals that *The Last King of Scotland* and *Black Panther* offer two different models of leadership. *The Last King of Scotland* builds a binary opposition between

the two main characters to reflect colonial ideas about leadership. Initially, Idi Amin is shown as a charismatic leader with positive intentions to lead Uganda into a better future. He took the power through military coup and claims that he loves his country and his people. He is shown laughing and joking with Garrigan and his advisors, which makes him look like a friendly person. However, later in the film, Amin shows another face and he becomes brutal and violent. He starts to eliminate and torture anyone associated with the former president Milton Obote. Amin through the narrative is shown alone or with his advisors, but not with ordinary people outside in the streets, except while delivering his first speech as a president. Idi Amin is a dictator who takes selfish decisions, and does not accept any advice from his ministers, except from Garrigan. Overall Idi Amin is portrayed as the violent, unpredictable and irrational African leader. On the other side Garrigan, the young Scottish doctor represents the voice of reason and the western ideal; he is smart, educated, rational and morally guided. He enters Uganda as an outsider, but quickly becomes a central and a saviour figure. The opposition of these two characters reinforces the colonial binary of the savage versus the civilized, suggesting that African leaders are not capable of managing power or governing rationally without the guidance and intervention of the west.

In contrast *Black Panther*, reclaims African leadership as powerful, complex and self-defined. King T-Challa is shown as a humble king with positive intentions toward his people and his country. T-Challa became the king through a ritual combat, a traditional fight to determine the next leader, and not through a military coup. He is shown from the moment he became a king taking advice from his father, the elders and the leaders of the different tribes before taking any decision. T-Challa is a friendly person shown walking in the streets around people without fear, and even the people love him and were present during his coronation as a king.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter uses Edward Said's Orientalism, Hall's stereotyping and Spivak's the Subaltern theories to examine colonial representations of Africa in *The Last King of Scotland*. It also relies on Afrofuturism to shed light on decolonial resistance in *Black Panther*. The first film portrays Africa as dangerous and uncivilized, meanwhile the second film presents an uncolonized nation in Africa and a rich country. Our analysis highlights how McDonald's film does not center its narrative on Africans and their cultures, contrary to Coogler's film which centres on Africans providing a rich cultural background. *Last King of Scotland* present women as silent and passive, and African leaders (Idi Amin) as dictators and violent presidents, while *Black Panther* presents women as leaders and warriors, and African leaders (T-Challa) as humble and respectful rulers. Through the use of postcolonial theory, we found that *The Last King of Scotland* silences the Subaltern and produces stereotypes, while *Black Panther* gives a voice to the Subaltern to speak. Furthermore, the first film reinforces the Orientalist ideas of the other as dangerous and backward, in contrast to the second film, which shows the other as powerful. Through the lens of Stuart Hall's stereotyping theory, *Last King of Scotland* perpetuates negative stereotypes about Africans through its narrative structure, but *Black Panther* challenges these stereotypes and offers a new, developed Africa. Overall, this chapter shows how Africa is presented in a negative and a positive way in the two films.

Chapter 5: General Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This research has examined the contrasting representation of Africa in *The Last King of Scotland* and *Black Panther* through postcolonial lens specifically using Edward Said's Orientalism, Gayatri Spivak's the Subaltern and Stuart Hall's stereotyping theory. In addition to Afrofuturism which is used to explore resistance to colonial discourse in *Black Panther*.

For this purpose, we divided our work into four chapters. The first chapter is the general introduction which sets the context of the study. It explains how colonial discourse constructs negative representation of colonized people to legitimize colonization and how this discourse persists in the postcolonial period through different cultural forms like cinema. The chapter explores the representation of Africa in Western cinema, highlighting the persistence of colonial stereotypes. After that, we presented the significance, the aim of this study, the thesis statement and the research questions. Finally, the methods and materials with the chapters division have been explained.

The second chapter reviews the literature about the representation of Africa particularly in cinema. It reviews works published on *The Last King of Scotland* and *Black Panther*. The third chapter presents the theoretical framework and introduces the key concepts which are necessary for the understanding and analyzing the films. The fourth chapter tackled the films analysis and compared their representation of Africa.

5.2. Summary of the Findings

Both films give a certain representation of Africa that reinforces or resists negative stereotypes. The first film, *The Last King of Scotland*, was directed by Kevin McDonald who is known for making documentaries and biographies of historical figures. In this film he is

interested in Idi Amin, through which he wants to attract a White audience with a White hero, and with the image of Africa as savage, backward and uncivilized. Like Joseph Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*, McDonald wanted to criticize the abuse of power and dictatorship through stereotyping Africa and Africans. This aligns with Stewart Hall argument that dominant cinema recycles stereotypes even when claiming to criticize them.

In the Second film, *Black Panther*, Ryan Coogler wanted to present a Pan African nation, technologically developed and self-sufficient. *Black Panther* offers an example of an uncolonized nation in Africa inhabited only by Black people, which can be a symbol of Pan Africanism, in which all Black people live in one place together. The film can be considered as a positive depiction of Africa and a challenge to the negative stereotypes.

The Last king of Scotland and *Black Panther* offer two opposing depictions of Africa, the former view Uganda through a white protagonist lens reflecting a Western colonial gaze that portrays Africa as chaotic, irrational and primitive in binary opposition to the West, and aligning with Edward Said idea about the African as the “Other”. Meanwhile *Black Panther* reimagines a different version of Africa being an uncolonized place, portraying it as developed, self-governed and culturally rich. Additionally, the analysis shows that in *The Last King of Scotland*, Africans are denied narrative agency as the story does not centre on them and they are background figures in a story that centres on a white protagonist and represented through him. On the other hand, *Black Panther* challenges the notion of Subalternity by placing the African characters as the centre allowing them to speak and define their own selves and lead their own narratives.

The analysis uncovers that *The Last King of Scotland* presents African women as silent, passive and hyper sexualized, and African leaders, mainly Idi Amin, as dictators and violent. However, *Black Panther* celebrates women by presenting them as leaders and

warriors challenging colonial and patriarchal representations, and leaders as humble and respectful.

Through his Eurocentric narrative and stereotypical depictions, Kevin McDonald contributes the continuity of the colonial discourse, reproducing colonial dynamics where the western narratives dominate the way the “Other” is perceived. Ryan Coogler’s *Black Panther* on the other side despite emerging from the same western industry offers a powerful counter narrative that reclaims African identity through a decolonial lens presenting a new vision that places black perspectives, histories, experiences and future potential at the heart of the story. *Black Panther* also can be considered as a form of redemption and an implicit apology for the long history of reductive and stereotypical portrayals of Africa and its people.

5.3. Implications of the Study

This research shows the importance of examining contrasting representations of Africa in the two films under study within the field of cultural studies. The analysis reveals how the two films present different images of Africa and highlights the importance of these two films in exploring the way Africa is portrayed in Western cinema.

5.4. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Our research is relevant in the field of cultural studies, but like any other work, it has its own limitations. This study highlighted Africa’s representation in cinema; however, only two films were compared; a broader selection of films would be preferable to cover the historical and cultural background of Africa, such as *Beasts of no Nation (2015)* which tackles the theme of child soldiers, and *Hotel Rwanda (2004)* which depicts the Rwandan genocide. Future research could also include exploring African culture and identity in African-directed films without including any Western films, like *Yeelen (1987)* which is about African

traditions and magic. *Timbuktu* (2014) which centers on the life of ordinary citizens in Mauritania struggling under the rule of Islamists militants. Or a comparative study of films from different postcolonial regions, such as *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) which centers on the struggle of Algeria for independence. *Lagaan* (2011) which is about the resistance of Indians against the British rule.

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Résumé

Cette recherche examine la représentation de l'Afrique dans les films *Le Dernier Roi d'Écosse* (2006) et *Black Panther* (2018), en s'appuyant sur des concepts postcoloniaux, à savoir l'Orientalisme développé par Edward Said, et le Subalterne comme présenté par Gayatri Spivak, en plus des théories de la représentation et du stéréotype de Stuart Hall, ainsi que de la notion d'Afrofuturisme. L'analyse de la structure narrative, des personnages, de la mise en scène et des techniques cinématographiques utilisées dans les deux films révèle que *Le Dernier Roi d'Écosse*, réalisé par un réalisateur écossais, est raconté d'un point de vue occidental renforçant des stéréotypes négatifs sur l'Afrique comme étant violente et dangereuse. D'autre part, *Black Panther*, malgré son origine hollywoodienne, offre une image positive de l'Afrique en présentant une nation africaine avancée mais non colonisée. L'étude montre que le cinéma peut être utilisé comme un outil pour renforcer ou contester les représentations stéréotypées de l'Afrique.

Mots clés

Le Dernier Roi d'Écosse, Black Panther, Représentation, Orientalisme, Stéréotypes, Subalterne, Afrofuturisme.