

ABSTRACT

Negotiations: Narrative Strategies and the Construction of Selfhood in Late Twentieth Century African Literature and Film.

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Using the critical tools afforded by narratology, this dissertation undertakes a close analysis of selected late twentieth century African literary and filmic texts in their representation of identities and subjectivities. The main focus of this study is on 'Third Generation' African literature in conjunction with the cinema of the 1990s and beyond, and the ways that they construct new African subjectivities, giving definitions of the African selves that emerge there from. I choose literature and film in this regard, because they are well placed because of their interaction with self and community (culture) to tell stories, produce accounts of the past, invent traditions and create myths of the present condition; in short, the construction of narratives as part of the large task of negotiating identities.

Narratology's critical tools are well suited to explore and unpack the structural moments, characteristics and specifics of the various texts under study here.

Hence I employ narratology to analyse the relationships between authorships and readerships and to negotiate the textual and contextual worlds of narratives. In

addition, writing from my dislocated space, here in the Caribbean, I use my peculiar insights to bring a 'negotiating' approach to my 'reading' of the texts chosen for this study. I seek not to exceptionalise, but rather to show that African literatures and film make a powerful and significant contribution to global literary/filmic trends by reforming, re-articulating and re-accentuating the structures, moments and voices of prose fiction and the feature film.

The women and men, whose 'texts' represent the literature and film chosen for explication/examination/theorisation here, some at the 'centre' of the market, others within 'dislocated' market spaces, bring to the literature and film unique perspectives that speak to the varied and multi-form nature of African narratives.

They also "negotiate the parameters of the hybrid spaces in the 'popular imagination'" along with the issues of marketability and reception (new marketing strategies for literature and film). This study is concerned with exploring this aspect of their work and how it contributes to what may be called an African imaginary.

Keywords: African literature; African film; narratology; selfhood; narratives; subjectivity; identity; interdisciplinarity; negotiation.