

**ONLINE REPRESENTATIONS OF AFRICAN CANADIAN  
CINEMA (2000-2010): AN ETHNOGRAPHIC AND ARCHIVAL  
ANALYSIS**

by

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## ABSTRACT

Populations of African descent have been geographically present within the territory that constitutes Canada for over three centuries. While cinematic representation is a relatively recent phenomena that has only been a factor over the last few decades it may serve as an archive or library that preserves the memories of past, current and future generations of African Canadian populations. The focus of this Masters project is the cinematic representation of African Canadians and how this representation has been translated into the burgeoning online environment as characterized by the rise of the Internet and “Web 2.0” technologies. The project is comprised of a written component in the form of a project paper and a web technology component in the form of a research blog *African Canadian Cinema: A Guide to African Canadian & African Diaspora Cinema*.

**Keywords:** African Canadian; African Diaspora; Film; Digital Media; Internet; Identity; Representation; Memory; Archives

**Subject Terms:** African Canadian History; Cultural Studies; Film and Digital Media; Library and Archival Studies, Cultural Memory, Cultural Identity

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# CHAPTER 1: RATIONALE

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Populations of African descent have been geographically present within the territory that constitutes Canada for over three centuries (Mensah, 2002, p.45). While cinematic representation is a relatively recent phenomena that has only been a factor over the last few decades it may serve as an archive or library that preserves the memories of past, current and future generations of African Canadian populations. The focus of this Masters project is the cinematic representation of African Canadians and how this representation has been translated into the burgeoning online environment as characterized by the rise of the Internet and “Web 2.0” technologies.

The project is comprised of a written component in the form of a research project paper and a web technology component in the form of a research blog *African Canadian Cinema: A Guide to African Canadian & African Diaspora Cinema*. Both components are utilized to undertake an investigation of how online modes of representation may provide increased opportunities for exposure, education, collaboration and archiving of images and histories of African Canadians. The research blog established in 2007 serves as an experimental platform for information dissemination, collaboration and archiving that has received several inquiries from African Canadian filmmakers and over 13,000 site visits.

The research project paper examines the role of the cinematic focused blogs, websites and social media in the production of cultural identity among African Canadians as evidenced by the emergence over the past three years of websites such as the *CaribbeanTales Youth Film Festival* which features the *African Canadian Filmmaker's Ezine* and the *Canadian Black Film Festival (CBFF)* which features a Facebook social networking component. The emergence of these websites has coincided with the increasing adoption of high bandwidth Internet resources capable delivering visual media such as films through streaming video, both websites feature content hosted on web portals such as *youtube.com* and *veoh.com* which raises possibilities for distributing archived content.

The final aspect of the research project paper involves the utilization of archival preservation and information access practices to formulate proposals for archival and public access initiatives to ensure the preservation of African Canadian cinematic works and provide access to current and future generations. Through the investigation of digital archiving methods and case studies it may be possible to propose initiatives that not only archive these cinematic representations as forms of cultural memory but also disseminate these memories to current and future generations of African Canadian and Afro-Québécois populations through online modes of delivery. The analysis includes a survey of current African Canadian cinema collections at the York University Library and National Film Board of Canada and issues related to the public accessibility of these collections. The research paper also analyses comparative Diaspora cinema collections such as the Black Film Center Archive at the

University of Indiana and the Black British Film collection at the British Film Institute to demonstrate how these archives and library collections have contributed to scholarship.

## 1.2 Importance of Study

There are several important reasons to conduct this research. First, the increasing convergence in Canadian media raises legitimate questions surrounding the availability of future avenues and outlets for African Canadian and Afro-Québécois populations to gain representation. Second, a primary analysis of research surrounding the cinematic representation of African Canadian and Afro-Québécois populations has identified a lack of scholarly research, theses and academic articles published on this subject. This lack of scholarly research is highlighted by the small number of journal articles (Hezekiah, 1993; Gibson-Hudson, 1994; Walcott, 1995; Banning, 1989; McCullough, 1999 and Jackson-Lord, 2001) and book chapters (Bailey, 2002; Banning, 2002; Gettings, 2002; Walcott, 2003, 2004 and Petty, 2008) published on the subject of African diasporic cinematic representation within Canada. Among these works historical analysis of the cinematic representations are only partially mentioned, instead the analyses presented in these works consist primarily on the content level of a small number of selected films most notably Clemet Virgo's *Rude*, Stephen Williams *Soul Survivor* and Jennifer Hodge de Silva's *Home Feeling a Struggle for Identity*. Another deficiency within the literature is the lack of subject interviews with the directors of these films who



could have provided more insight into their motives behind the constructions of identity present within their films. Geography and language also impact the prior analysis of this topic as most published works have been focused on English-speaking African Canadian populations in Ontario and Nova Scotia with a lack of emphasis placed on cinematic representations emanating from Western Canada such as Hubert Davis's 2005 Academy Award nominated *Hardwood* and the multitude of important cinematic representations emanating from Quebec such as *Comment faire l'amour avec un Nègre sans se fatiguer* (*How to Make Love to a Negro Without Getting Tired*) based on a screen play by Dany Laferrière and Maryse Legagneur's *In the Name of Mother and Son*. If we are to consider the cinematic representations of the African diaspora in Canada as a whole and attempt to link these representations within the greater African diaspora, it is crucial to include cinematic representations emanating from Quebec and all regions of the country because as of 2008 such an examination has not been attempted.

Finally, with the advent of information and communication technologies such as the Internet and its progression into a high bandwidth "Web 2.0" resource capable delivering visual media such as films through streaming video as evidenced by the increasing relevance of web portals such as *youtube.com* and *veoh.com* possibilities for distributing archived content have risen exponentially. Through the investigation of digital archiving methods and case studies it may be possible to propose initiatives that not only archive these cinematic representations as forms of cultural memory but also disseminate

these memories to current and future generations of African Canadian and Afro-Québécois populations through online modes of delivery.

### **1.3 Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this research project is to expand the knowledge base of representations of the African diaspora experience within Canada. This study is of interest to me because as a person who identifies himself as an African Canadian and who has resided throughout the country, I have continually noticed the near absence of representation of my community within Canada's cultural, political and economic sectors. I have also noticed the lack of representation within Canadian mainstream media discourse and a virtual erasure of the historic black presence within Canada that were examined by George Elliott Clarke in his 1997 article *White Like Canada*:

Canadians take pride in the fact that their country was the last “stop” on the Underground Railroad. One standard history of the country noted that Canadians can “claim the proud distinction for their flag...that it has never floated over legalized slavery.” That claim is literally true, but only because Canada did not yet exist when the enslavement flourished on what is now Canadian soil. A 1995 poll conducted by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association found that 83 percent of Canadian adults did not know that slavery was practiced in pre-Confederation Canada until 1834, when the British abolished the institution throughout its empire. You would also find a similar ignorance regarding the existence, as recently as the 1950s, of school segregation in Ontario and Nova Scotia; the \$500 head tax the Canadian government once slapped on all Chinese immigrants; and the numerous “Black Codes” enacted by various levels of government to control where Chinese, Japanese and African citizens could work, live, be buried, and in some cases, even vote. (Clarke, 1997, p.103).

Through this project I hope to add my voice to the discourse and ongoing debates regarding the formation of identities within the African diaspora specifically within Canada. This project is of relevance first and foremost to the African Canadian and Afro-Québécois communities, academics within the areas of sociology, communication studies, cultural studies and finally public sector organizations and agencies such as the National Film Board, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

## CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL/CULTURAL CONTEXT

### 2.1 African Canadian Cultural Identities

Before embarking on an exploration of African Canadian cultural identity in cinema it is important to analyze the diversity of the African Canadian population and examples of cultural identity formation. However, when mentioning an African Canadian cultural identity we must examine the fluidity of term “cultural identity.” An illustration is provided by Stuart Hall (1992) who states “Cultural identities are the points of identification, unstable points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourse of history and culture” (p. 224).

Furthermore, this project will not attempt to provide a comprehensive or exhaustive analysis of cultural identity or an African Canadian cultural identity because the complexity of this topic cannot be fully considered here. Another issue I must address is the lack of scholarly research and academic articles published on the subject of African Canadian cinema. In his book chapter *Emerging Diaspora Consciousness among African-Canadians in Toronto*,

Rinaldo Walcott states:

While there has been little dialogue between African-Canadian cinema and African Canadian literature, each art form draws on similar tropes and metaphors to place the lives and the conditions of the lives of African-descended people within a much larger scope of analysis than the nation state. (Walcott, 2004, p.438).

Taking this into account I will first attempt to analyze this question of cultural identity through the perspective of African Canadian literature which has developed an extensive discourse on cultural identity within Canada and the African diaspora. African Canadian authors such as Austin Clark, Dionne Brand, George Elliot Clarke and Rinaldo Walcott are widely published and have received notable national and international recognition. In his article *The Complex Face of Black Canada* Clarke succinctly states:

To be black in Canada, then, is an existential experience. A constant interrogation of our belonging is inculcated within us. It is not just the “double consciousness” that the great African-American intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois (pronounced “Do Boyce” in the U.S.) posited for Black Americans, but a “poly-consciousness.” For as our blackness ranges from ivory to indigo hues, our heritages, ethnic allegiances, religions, and languages are also varied. In fact, African Canada, in its gorgeous, explicit diversity, is a microcosm of Canada. (Clarke, 1997).

This “poly-consciousness” as stated by Clarke has greatly impacted cultural identity formation among African Canadians. Cultural identity formation among the descendants of Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia, many of whom have resided in Canada for over five generations, may vary broadly from the large and primarily immigrant-based African Canadian population in Toronto or the descendants of African Americans who immigrated to Alberta and Saskatchewan in the early 1900s. However, several common factors may shape cultural identity formation among African Canadians.

First, is the minority status of African Canadians and their relative population distribution throughout Canada. According to the *2001 Census* Black Canadians comprise less than two percent of the Canadian population and are

heavily concentrated in the central and eastern Canadian cities of Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. Further compounding the population statistic is an issue of self identification, as stated by Clarke:

Then again, the counting of African Canadians is more an exercise in semantics than statistics: according to a 1997 McGill University study, almost half of the black people in Canada do not identify themselves on census forms, choosing instead “British” (the tendency of Jamaican Canadians) or “French” (the practice of Haitian Canadians). (Clarke, 1997).

Issues of self identification may arise from the heterogeneous nature of the African Canadian population and relative length of time members of this population have resided in Canada. Older populations such as the descendents of Black Loyalists, indentured servants and slaves in Nova Scotia and African American slaves in Southwestern Ontario appear more likely to identify themselves as Black or African Canadian and have successfully lobbied government for the creation of specific departments and cultural designations (such as the African Canadian Services Division of the Department of Education and the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs in Nova Scotia and the African Canadian Heritage Trail in Southwestern Ontario). However, issues associated with an African Canadian identity or a lack thereof may be interconnected with notions of Canadian identity. Clarke states:

Yet the vagueness of black identity in Canada does not merely reflect the relative paucity of souls. Rather, it is emblematic of a larger crisis of Canadian identity. It is difficult enough to figure out what it means to be Canadian, let alone African Canadian. (Clarke, 1997).

Similar questions of a Black Canadian identity are put forth by Rinaldo Walcott in his analysis of *Soul Survivor* the second dramatic feature film directed by an African Canadian:

How do we understand who the black Canadian is? What is black Canadian community(ies) and what constitutes black Canadian expressive cultures? Addressing these questions would go a long way in helping us to make sense of what would be required of a cinema that speaks the past, present and future of black Canadian identities. (Walcott, 2003, p.103).

These questions surrounding identity and self identification have led to a vigorous debate among scholars, especially Clarke and Walcott. In his article *Treason of the Black Intellectuals* Clarke (2002) challenges notions of self identification, specifically Walcott's preferred notion of a "black Canadian" identity versus African Canadian or Africadian by stating that this notion effectively marginalizes historic rural African Canadian populations that exist in Nova Scotia, and Southwestern Ontario in favour of the much larger urban Caribbean immigrant-based population centered in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Walcott answers these criticisms by stating:

...my strategy for writing blackness has been to pay attention to diaspora networks and connectedness as opposed to an explicit national address. In spite of a desire to belong to a particular or specific nation, I have been interested in a deterritorialized strategy that is consciously aware of the ground of the nation from which it speaks. (Walcott, 2003, p.15).

Walcott's arguments are highly influenced by the cultural studies works of Paul Gilroy. Gilroy's work contains an argument against nationalism through the development of a methodology to study the African diaspora, the idea of a "Black

Atlantic.” An outline for this methodology is stated by Gilroy in the introduction to his aptly titled book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*:

The specificity of the modern political and cultural formation I want to call the Black Atlantic can be defined, on one level, through [a] desire to transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity. These desires are relevant to understanding political organizing and cultural criticism. They have always sat uneasily alongside the strategic choices forced on black movements and individuals embedded in national and political cultures and nation-states in America, the Caribbean, and Europe. (Gilroy, 1993, p.19).

Walcott (2003) joins Gilroy in arguing against nationalism in the Black Atlantic diaspora by stating identity definitions such as African Canadian, African American, Black British and Afro-Caribbean are counterproductive for a people who share a common experience through the trans-Atlantic slave trade and whose cultural identities are “always in progress, always in a process of becoming” (p. 103). Both Clarke and Walcott raise valid points in their arguments concerning identity. It is critical to recognize historic populations within the nation as Clarke proposes and has chronicled in works such as *Saltwater Spirituals and Deeper Blues* and *Execution Poems: The Black Acadian Tragedy of George and Rue*. Clarke’s works have also helped to bridge a major gap within Canadian history. However, Walcott’s notion of an open-ended “black Canadian” identity is also valid because it recognizes the continuing evolution of the African Canadian population and the historic exchange of black intellectual thought throughout the diaspora. This includes W.E.B. Dubois’ work and the influence of his “double consciousness” theory on both sides of the Atlantic. An illustration of this influence is the use of a modified “double consciousness” by



Frantz Fanon in his book *Black Skin White Masks*. This exchange is also illustrated by Jamaican born Marcus Garvey's influence on black intellectual thought in Canada and the United States.

A second factor that may shape identity formation among African Canadians is their erasure from Canadian history. This is illustrated by the common Canadian assertion that slavery has never existed in Canada (Clarke, 1997). While this assertion is technically correct, it ignores Canada's pre-confederation history. When the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (comprising Upper & Lower Canada) reached agreement on confederation in 1867, slavery had been already been abolished in the British Empire (1834) and by the Emancipation Proclamation in the United States (Jan 1, 1863, which later became the Thirteenth Amendment following the end of the civil war in 1865). Absence from or lack of recognition in Canadian history is also examined by Walcott in the introduction to the second edition of his book *Black Like Who?*:

By and large, in both the city and the nation, black appeals for social justice remain unheard by those in authority, and this is largely due to the continuing ambivalent place of black peoples in the national imagination. Do we belong or do we not belong? And if we belong, when does the nation begin to acknowledge black arrivals? recently or going back to before Confederation? (Walcott, 2003, p.12).

Walcott also argues Canadian mass media discourse (ex. *Maclean's* & *Globe and Mail*) often associate blackness in Canada with immigration from the Caribbean and Africa while ignoring more than two hundred years of black presence. This is similar to Gilroy's criticism of the early British cultural studies

works by Edward Thompson, Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart for their obvious omissions regarding race and their primary focus on class within the national scope of Britain. These early works were contrasted by the later writings of Stewart Hall and Edward Said who drew upon the work of Antonio Gramsci, Frantz Fanon and C.L.R James. In his comparison, Gilroy (1996) stated the importance to British cultural studies of the Thompson, Williams and Hoggart works along with the valuable Marxist analyses and methodologies they provided for the study of British working class culture. However, by illuminating their obvious omissions of race evident in the growing black populations of industrial cities such as Leeds, Birmingham and Sheffield and their failure to recognize published works of the time such as Michael Banton's *The Coloured Quarter*, Gilroy (1996) illustrated major gaps in these early works and exposed their pervading sense of British nationalism. Gilroy's criticism can be applied to Canadian academic and popular discourse that often excludes pre-1867 history such as slavery in Lower Canada and celebrates the Canadian version of multiculturalism versus the American melting pot (Clarke, 1997). This discourse also has a tendency of not fully analyzing economic structures and the effect on visible minorities as Galabuzi mentions in his 2001 report *Canada's Creeping Economic Apartheid*:

While Canada embraces globalisation and romanticizes cultural diversity, there are persistent expressions of xenophobia and racial marginalisation that suggest a continuing political and cultural attachment to the concept of a white settler society. This unresolved tension is reflected not only in a racially segregated labour market and the subsequent unequal outcomes detailed in this report, but

also in the quality of citizenship to which racialised group members can aspire. (Galabuzi, 2001, p.3).

A third factor that may shape identity formation among African Canadians is a constant interrogation of belonging. This is a major theme that appears in many works of African Canadian music, literature, cinema and theatre. Questions of belonging also manifest themselves in a 2007 study released by the Montreal-based Institute for Research on Public Policy. The *Racial Inequality, Social Cohesion and Policy Issues in Canada* study found only 49.6 percent of second generation Black Canadians identified themselves as Canadian versus 78.9 percent of white Canadians. Furthermore, Black Canadians had the lowest rates of identification with Canada of all population groups surveyed (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). The results of the study are not surprising; for diaspora communities in the Caribbean or United States, culture can be reaffirmed by simply turning on a radio and listening to it directly reflected through music. As Gilroy (1993) states in the *Black Atlantic*, music is often utilized as a discourse from which conceptions of blackness can be assembled and can also function as a diasporic site that counters negative and stereotypical images of blackness produced by the dominant culture. However in the entire country of Canada only one self-identified as African Canadian radio station, Flow 93.5 in Toronto, currently exists. Furthermore, it took the African Canadian community in Toronto more than twenty years of lobbying and three failed attempts in front of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to obtain approval for a licence (Quill, 2001). Currently the Flow 93.5 ownership group, Milestone Radio Incorporated is the only media broadcaster in the country

with a majority African Canadian ownership stake (CRTC, 2000; Marowits, 2007). The lack of African Canadian media ownership in Canada is contrasted by the increasing power of African Americans. In the United States, media ownership groups led by Catherine L. Hughes, founder of Radio One (the seventh largest radio broadcasting company in the country) and Oprah Winfrey possessed the ability to endorse the African American presidential candidate Barack Obama. This power cannot be discounted, especially the endorsement of Oprah Winfrey whose influence through her media enterprise Harpo Productions, Inc with publishing, television and film production divisions has been coined by the mass media and academic scholars in the United States as the "Oprah Effect" (Baum & Jamison, 2006). With the help of African American media endorsements Barack Obama overcome large deficits in numerous polls to win the South Carolina primary and eventually the Democratic Party nomination. The situation is divergent in Canada where an African Canadian has never been in a position to win the leadership of a major political party (Liberal or Conservative) and have a credible chance to be elected Prime Minister. This is not stated without acknowledging the pioneering efforts of Rosemary Brown, who lost on the fourth ballot of the New Democratic Party (NDP) leadership convention in 1975 but achieved the distinction of being the first woman to run for the leadership of a federal political party, and Howard McCurdy, who dropped out after a fifth place result on the first ballot of the 1989 NDP leadership convention (Courtney, 1995). It is also important to note during the 1972 provincial election British Columbia elected two African Canadians Rosemary Brown, and Emery Barnes, to the

Legislative Assembly (Barman, 2007). As African Canadians have historically comprised less than one percent of British Columbia's population this marked the first and only time in Canadian history where African Canadians were equitably or over represented in political office. Despite these achievements, as of 2007 African Canadians are still struggling to gain political power and representation.

In light of the economic and political realities facing the African Canadian population it could prove beneficial to avoid the distraction of self identification debates such as African Canadian vs. Black Canadian as this debate has largely been rendered moot in the United States where the self identifying terms of Black and African American are used almost interchangeably. However, recent polls show "African American" emerging as the preferred term after being introduced into the American discourse by former presidential candidate and civil rights activist Jesse Jackson in 1989 (Swarns, 2004). In Canada methodologies such as Gilroy's "Solidarity" could be utilized to discover new avenues for cultural identity formation. In his book *British Cultural Studies and the Pitfalls of Identity* Gilroy (1996) states, "Where the relationship between identity and solidarity moves to centre-stage, another issue, that of the social constraints upon the agency of individuals and groups must be addressed"(p.237). The use of this methodology may offer African Canadians a basis for social action and the power to define themselves and the context in which they reside.

## 2.2 African Canadian Cinematic History

As reflections of state policy, institutions such as the NFB and the CBC have long been concerned with the nation's social wellbeing. Long before the capital-L Liberalism of Pearson and Trudeau, though certainly on the increase during that era, these two media institutions constructed their mandates to include the maintenance of national bonds. (Bailey, 1999, p.97-98).

As the preceding passage suggests, I will begin the second stage of my examination of African Canadian cinema and cultural identity within the context of Canadian cinema and nation. Canada's close proximity and economic integration with the United States has effectively marginalized the Canadian film industry (Acland, 2003). Over last three decades Canadian feature films have averaged less than four percent of the domestic box office in English Canada and less than twenty percent in French Canada (Acland, 2003). Due to the capital intensive nature of film production and lack of market share, Canadian cultural industries centered on literature and music have made much larger inroads domestically and internationally (SAGIT, 1999). Canadian cinema has largely been publicly funded by governmental agencies such as the National Film Board (NFB), Telefilm Canada and through a variety of tax shelters and credits. It is within this context that African Canadian cinema has existed and will continue to exist for the foreseeable future. This context may also inadvertently act as a filter and content control for perspective film projects. A thorough illustration of this control is provided by Cameron Bailey in his chapter analyzing the films of Jennifer Hodge de Silva, a pioneering African Canadian director with the NFB:

Take the typical case of a first-time black filmmaker seeking to make a film about some aspect of her community. She is much more likely to receive funding from the Film Board or the federal or provincial office overseeing multiculturalism or some other wing of state social engineering than from the “artist driven” funding of arts councils, which have historically considered documentary films not art, and all black films as more or less documentary. That funding in turn determines what the resulting film will look and sound like, and, to some degree, what it will say. It is this management of dissent, this ability to channel black voices of protest or affirmation through its corridors, that has been the real race-relations success of the National Film Board. (Bailey, 1999, p.97-98).

Bailey’s analysis provides a partial observation of the difficulties faced by African Canadian filmmakers and may explain the lack of radical films directly confronting the Canadian establishment. Films such as Clement Virgo’s *Rude* and Jennifer Hodge de Silva’s *Home Feeling: Struggle for a Community* are situated respectively within housing projects in the Regent Park and Jane & Finch neighbourhoods of Toronto but have an introspective community focus that does not directly challenge establishment forces such as the Toronto Police Service. Contrasted with African American films such as Melvin Van Peebles *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song* and Spike Lee’s *Do the Right Thing*, there are no scenes of riots, protests or social upheaval on a community level. However, in spite of these obstacles and constraints within the nation there is a significant history of an African Canadian presence in cinema.

The first documented African Canadian character to appear on screen was featured in the 1920 African American silent film *Within Our Gates* directed by Oscar Micheaux, who was familiar with Canada due to his homesteading in South Dakota. The film names Indian Head Saskatchewan as the birth place of

the protagonist hero Conrad Drebert (Clarke, 2002). *Within Our Gates* is also significant because it is the oldest surviving film directed by an African American filmmaker and at the time of its release served as a counterpoint to D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (Butters, 2000). These initial images were followed by a long void of black presence in Canadian film briefly broken in the 1950s by William Greaves, an African American who directed several acclaimed features for the NFB before returning to the United States (Banning, 2002; Jackson-Lord 2001).

The foundation of an African Canadian cinema essentially begins with National Film Board Studio D documentaries of the 1970s and 1980s that as a result of Canada's official multiculturalism policy provided the first real opportunities for visible minority filmmakers (Gittings, 2002). Films such as *Black Mother*, *Black Daughter*, co-directed by Claire Pierto and Sylvia Hamilton, *Fields of an Endless Day* directed by Terence Macartney-Filgate and the previously mentioned *Home Feeling: Struggle for a Community*, provided contemporary and historic accounts of an African Canadian presence and attempted to project an African Canadian cultural identity (Banning, 1989). Jennifer Hodge de Silva's *Home Feeling: Struggle for a Community* directed in the realist style, documents issues such as racism, economic disenfranchisement and police community relations that are still relevant and virtually unchanged since the time of its release in 1983. In his examination of de Silva's films, Bailey (2002) states the subjects "provide strong figures of identification for viewers who have experienced racism...*Home Feeling* contains understood but significant messages (the waitress's story) for those with the history to read them" (p.106).



*Black Mother, Black Daughter* also attempts to project an African Canadian identity; director Claire Pierto states in an interview with author Gabrielle Hezekiah (1993) her films are intended to help African Canadians (especially children) “understand our identity and continually changing place in the world” (p.71).

Another milestone in the development of an African Canadian cinema occurred in 1995 with the release of the first two dramatic feature length films *Rude* (Figure 2.) directed by Clement Virgo and *Soul Survivor* directed by Stephen Williams. Both feature films were centered on the African Canadian community in Toronto, specifically the Jamaican community and featured cultural elements such as reggae music and Rastafarian iconography. In her analysis of *Rude*, author Kass Banning illustrates projections of place and identity within the film:

*Rude* speaks more directly to a black urban Toronto specificity through its saturated digitally reproduced skyline, its Regent Park exterior location...While embedded in the local, expressions of black identity are reconfigured and overlaid by a sense of global centrelessness. (Banning, 2002, p. 91).

While the release of *Rude* and *Soul Survivor* marked a breakthrough for African Canadians, articles in the mainstream Canadian media dubbed both as “Jamaican Canadian” cinema drawing a sharp rebuke from scholars such as Rinaldo Walcott who stated:

The assertion by film critics that we now have a “Jamaican-Canadian,” as opposed to a black Canadian filmic identity, renders invisible the complex processes of how various moments and forms of blackness become and are becoming in Canada. To label these films “Jamaican-

Canadian" draws on multicultural narratives of heritage which are concerned with origin and tend to occlude the complex multicultural constitution of black Canadians. In Canada, black identities must be rooted elsewhere and that elsewhere is always outside Canada. (Walcott, 1997, p. 105).

Walcott's assertion provides a further illustration of the "erasure from Canadian history" and its effect on cultural identity formation as stated earlier in this essay. The effects on identity formation by Canadian media discourse that often labels African Canadians as the "other" through signifiers such as "Jamaican Canadian" or "Jamaican born" (most evident in the discourse surrounding the Ben Johnson controversy) is also examined by Steven Jackson (2004) in his article *Exorcizing the Ghost: Donovan Bailey, Ben Johnson and the Politics of Canadian Identity*. Despite these issues *Rude* received notable international recognition and has provided director Clement Virgo with opportunities to direct three more dramatic feature films. Furthermore, Clement Virgo is recognized internationally as the first African Canadian or Black Canadian to direct a feature film (Jackson-Lord, 2001). As the most prolific and recognized African Canadian director, he is in a sense our Spike Lee, Melvin Van Peebles, Charles Burnett and Gordon Parks combined.

The 2007 release of Clement Virgo's dramatic feature film *Poor Boy's Game* (Figure 3.) marked several more significant milestones in the development of an African Canadian cinema, first by situating the film in Halifax and examining issues of tribalism, race and racism from an African Canadian perspective, and second by having the largest budget in history (5.5 million) for a dramatic feature film directed by an African Canadian. *Poor Boy's Game* also exudes a growing

confidence to address issues of Canadian racism and the erasure of African Canadian history at the dramatic feature film level. This is plainly stated by director Clement Virgo in a post release interview:

I thought it was time to tackle the issue of racism here in Canada. I felt like the timing was right, you know what I mean? Just tell a story, camouflage it in a sports genre intelligently, and tell a story about racism. Because we here don't really think that it happens here. They think it will happen somewhere else - an American or European problem. But you know, we like to think of ourselves as above that in this country, and I feel that perhaps it's time to go there and talk about it. (D'Souza, 2007).

In a sense *Poor Boy's Game* bridges the gap between Walcott and Clarke's arguments over a "Black Canadian" or "African Canadian" identity by combining multiple elements from the African Canadian Diaspora with an overarching political message that challenges Canadian socio economic structures. Virgo utilizes African Canadian cultural iconography by setting the film in the historic North End of Halifax and including references to the African Canadian church and slavery in a powerful scene on the Halifax waterfront that evokes images of the middle passage. Toronto based actors such as Tonya Lee Williams (one of the first African Canadians to be featured in a Canadian dramatic television series) and Maestro, a Canadian hip-hop icon, are featured and play prominent roles in the film.

The last decade has also seen several documentary features released, most notably Hubert Davis's Academy Award nominated National Film Board documentary *Hardwood*. Hubert Davis's impressive and deeply personal documentary profiles his relationship with his father and provides a rarely seen

perspective of African Canadian cultural identity unique to British Columbia due to the relatively small and widely dispersed population. In the film, several of Davis's childhood friends express feelings about their adolescent years in Vancouver and the struggles associated with conceptualizing a black identity. Similar sentiments are echoed by author Wayde Compton in *bluesprint* the first anthology of Black British Columbian literature:

As a person of mixed black and white heritage who grew up in B.C., I, like many others, grew up knowing more about black culture from elsewhere than I did about the black cultural legacy of my own province. The powerful and widely disseminated black cultural products of the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa are imports that every Canadian is at least passingly familiar with, and black Canadians like myself often draw inspiration from these cultures, which are also sometimes the source cultures of our immigrant families. (Compton, 2001, p.14).

Compton's insights point to the difficulties associated with developing a Black or African Canadian cultural identity in British Columbia. However the success of *Hardwood*, *bluesprint* and the artistic works of Stan Douglas illustrate some of the possibilities stated in Walcott's (2003) notions of blackness being an open-ended discourse that is always progressing and changing.

## 2.3 Comparative Examples of African Diaspora Cinema Outside of Canada

In the Caribbean, African diaspora populations have a greater ability to forge their own cultural identities and constitute the majority of the population in countries such as Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad (Segal, 1995). An illustration of this powerful cultural identity is the probability that there are no African Canadian (or for that matter Canadian) equivalents to the musical forms of Ska, Reggae and Dancehall in terms of global recognition and influence. As author Jay Kaufman states:

The world-wide acceptance of Reggae . . . provides evidence that ... the power of music to influence political and social change is not limited to Jamaican society but is something more fundamental and universal. (Kaufman, 1987, p.9).

This cultural identity is also evidenced by the support for domestic cinema, especially in Jamaica, of historic films such as Perry Henzell's *The Harder they Come*, Trevor Rhone's *Smile Orange* and more recent films such as *Third World Cop* and *Dancehall Queen* (Bourne, 2005).

Among diaspora cinemas Black British cinema probably shares the most in common with African Canadian cinema as both predominantly emanate from state funded sources (Bourne, 2005). Canada and the United Kingdom also have minority African diaspora populations that originate primarily from the Caribbean and Africa along with similar settlement patterns where no individual cities have majority African diaspora populations as is the case in the United States (Bourne, 2005). However, Black British and African Canadian cinema diverge in the levels of government funding. This is illustrated by the support

provided by organizations such as the British Film Institute (Bourne, 2005).

However, the British film industry maintains a larger share of the domestic box office and is not affected by the dominant Hollywood film industry to the same degree as Canada (Bourne, 2005).

One of the most vibrant and prolific of all African diaspora cinemas exists in the United States. Although African Americans comprise a minority in the United States of roughly eleven percent overall, African Americans form the majority in several major cities such as Detroit, Cleveland, Atlanta, Washington D.C. and Philadelphia and comprise significant portions of the population in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Miami. This may lead to a more assertive majority mentality because Africans Americans are represented more visibly in the cultural, economic and political sectors (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). In part due to this historically large and concentrated population, African American cinema has existed for nearly one hundred years. Led in the formative years by directors such as Oscar Micheaux, African American cinema acted as a counter hegemonic force to the dominant Hollywood system from the 1920s into the early 1950s (Guerrero, 1993). In the 1960s and early 1970s directors such as Melvin Van Peebles (*Watermelon Man* & *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*) and Gordon Parks (*Shaft* & *Superfly*) were the forerunners of a second wave of African American cinema sometimes termed "Blaxploitation" (Guerrero, 1993). A third wave that began in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the works of directors such as Spike Lee (*She's Gotta Have It* & *Do the Right Thing*) and John Singleton (*Boyz in the Hood*) continues into the present day (Donaldson, 2003).

Cultural identification with cinema by the African American population has also proved advantageous in terms of funding films outside the dominant Hollywood system (Guerrero, 1993). Examples of this alternative financing are provided by directors such as Melvin Van Peebles, Spike Lee and Robert Townsend who funded the production of their respective films *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, *She's Gotta Have It* and *Hollywood Shuffle* almost exclusively through the African American community (Guerrero, 1993). African American audiences also have traditionally comprised a large overall box office percentage in the United States and tend to support representative films on opening day, providing increasing leverage to African American actors and directors (Guerrero, 1993). Some recent examples are the number one box office openings for Denzel Washington's *American Gangster*, Spike Lee's *Inside Man* and Tyler Perry's *Why Did I Get Married* (see: Stone, 2007; *Calgary Herald*, 2006 & *Edmonton Journal*, 2007).

While it is difficult to draw comparisons between African American and African Canadian cinematic productions due to the much larger scale of the American market, some examples do exist, foremost among them is the "Los Angeles School of Black Filmmakers" (centered around UCLA Film School) of the late 1970s and early 1980s exemplified by Charles Burnett's award winning and recently re-released *Killer of Sheep*, the films of Julie Dash (*Daughters of the Dust*) and Haile Gerima (*Sankofa*). The "Los Angeles School" films are similar to African Canadian cinema in the sense they were created in public sector institutions or agencies often utilizing grants. This public sector setting is further

examined by author David James in his article *Toward a Geo-Cinematic Hermeneutics: Representations of Los Angeles in Non-Industrial Cinema--Killer of Sheep and Water and Power*:

The determining effect of these specific community and institutional resources is apparent everywhere in *Killer of Sheep*. They produce its thematics, its liberal humanist appeal for sympathy and understanding--if not sheer pity--from the hegemony, rather than a historical analysis or a militant call to contestation directed to the community itself. (James, 1998, p. 25).

James's insights are reminiscent of my earlier analysis of *Rude and Home Feeling: Struggle for a Community* for the perceived lack of challenge to the Canadian establishment.

A further similarity between African Canadian cinema and "Los Angeles School" cinema is the shared concern with creating a self-determining cultural identity that is distinct from their respective dominant Hollywood and Canadian cinematic cultures. Both cinemas also utilize realist and neo-realist perspectives in their attempts to portray diaspora communities (Norton, 1997; Banning, 2002). This is especially evident in Charles Burnett's critically acclaimed dramatic feature film *Killer of Sheep* (Figure 5.) that was situated and shot on location in director Charles Burnett's Los Angeles neighbourhood of Watts using local residents and amateur actors (Norton, 1997).

Stuart Hall's notions of cultural identity as expressed in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* appear to be best suited to conclude this examination of cinematic history and identity because it is important to note that identity is a constantly evolving process, as Stuart Hall states:



Perhaps, instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished historical fact, which the new cinematic discourses then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a “production”, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside , representation. (Hall, 1990, p. 222).

However, we must consider Hall’s statement within the context of its origin, an analysis of Afro-Caribbean cinema. As previously stated, the minority status of the African Canadian population creates a unique set of issues that complicate any analysis of cultural identity. It should also be noted Paul Gilroy fails to mention Canada or African Canadians in his conceptualization of a “Black Atlantic”. In light of this fact it is critical to acknowledge a myriad of viewpoints when contemplating issues surrounding an African diaspora cultural identity within Canada. Both viewpoints proposed by Clarke and Walcott provide useful avenues for further analysis and should be utilized. African Canadian cinema has also provided a multitude of insights into cultural identity. This is bound to continue through the works of Clement Virgo, Hubert Davis, Sylvia Hamilton or some as yet undiscovered filmmaker.

## CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL AND ARCHIVAL ANALYSIS

### 3.1 Historical Analysis of Cinema

Viewing history through the cinematic lens is a pertinent tool for analysis that can be applied in a variety of contexts. An illustration of this application becomes readily apparent when viewing the 2003 Errol Morris documentary film *The Fog of War*. This documentary film can be analyzed not only as a historical account of the events leading up to the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War by one of its chief architects former Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, but also as an exercise in lessons not learned that can easily be applied to any analysis of the events and miscalculations that led to the current conflict in Iraq. This analysis illustrates the possibilities provided to scholars by film and moving image media to act as an archival source that can verify facts such as the impact of the Gulf of Tonkin incident or provide insight into changing social/cultural values of societies highlighted in the documentary by the anti war movement. However the notion of utilizing cinema as a vehicle for historical analysis is not an exclusively contemporary phenomenon. Historical analysis has been applied to various films and cinematic genres over the years by several scholars including Roland Barthes who in his 1954 essay *The Romans in Films* theorized cinematic imagery in the form of signs that were integrated with his cultural analysis of Hollywood mythologies and audience perceptions (Ross, 2004). It was not until the late 1980s that a basis for a historical research

methodology of film and cinematic genres would begin to emerge when historians such as Robert Rosenstone, Hayden White and John E. O' Connor began a discourse on the historical analysis of cinema through the publication of several seminal articles in *American Historical Review* and the subsequent book *Images as Artifact: the Historical Analysis of Film and Television*. By using the method of historical analysis to study film in connection with social and cultural history O'Connor states in the book:

There are many ways in which, with varying degrees of effectiveness, historical scholars make use of moving image media. It serves: in research, as an archival source to establish or verify historical facts or as an indicator of social/cultural values; in writing to strike a common chord of experience with the reader or to illustrate a complex point. (O'Connor, 1990, p.15).

O'Connor's conceptualization of historical analysis involves a two-stage approach. In the first stage general analysis, the moving-image document (film) is analyzed by the same criteria (information content, background context and historical influence) as any manuscript document. The second stage "...involves more specific questions based on the particular historical inquiry at hand..." such as specific film shots and editorial manipulation (O'Connor, 1988).

Historical analysis also provides us with many examples of instances where cinema has offered avenues for self expression that have allowed communities to produce their own discourses to resist dominant narratives. This method of analysis may provide insight into the production of identities and cultural memories that act as counter hegemonic narratives seeking to disrupt

dominant hegemonic discourse (Ben-Amos; Weissberg, 1999). Examples of these phenomena are illustrated by author Gloria J. Gibson-Hudson in her historical analysis of the cinematic works produced by African Canadian women specifically the film *Sisters in the Struggle* directed by Dionne Brand:

Black women filmmakers use cultural memory, a form of history, in dramatized flashbacks or as personal reminiscences to construct and empower their cinematic images. Because they are contextualized by historical constructs, the cinematic representations, whether in documentary or narrative film, yield images that resist marginality and encourage realistic survival strategies. (Gibson-Hudson, 1994, p.41).

Historical analysis of cinema can also be utilized in conjunction with literature to examine the lived experiences of African Canadians. Scholars such as Austin Clark, Dionne Brand, George Elliot Clarke and Rinaldo Walcott have developed an extensive discourse on cultural memory and identity within the African diaspora in Canada.

An important element in any historical analysis is the utilization of archival records to provide further insight. A prime example of this usage is illustrated when conducting a historical analysis on the African American community's response to D.W. Griffiths film *Birth of a Nation* that was released in 1915 to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the end of the American Civil War. The film contained numerous racist portrayals of African Americans and the history of reconstruction in the American South following the Civil War. *Birth of a Nation* also glorified the Ku Klux Klan and was released to great acclaim nearing the height of this group's power, as evidenced when taken in context with the social and cultural history of 1915 – 1925 (Cripps, 1974). This period included

the prevalence of lynching in the American South, an absence of civil rights and the American government's failure to enforce the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the American Constitution that would continue until the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. Historian Thomas Cripp's historical and archival study on the African American response to *Birth of a Nation* through the film *Birth of a Race* utilized archival resources from Tuskegee University, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Library of Congress to provide insight into the attempted creation of a black owned studio to produce cinema that countered the racist images and themes of *Birth of a Nation* and other films such as *Colored Villainy* released in 1915 (Cripps, 1974). Archival records such as production contracts and memoranda illuminated the involvement of historic figures such as W.E.B. Dubois the founder of the NAACP and Booker T. Washington in the initial stages of *Birth of a Race*. These records also detail the problems and revisions that surfaced during the two-year production process that ultimately affected final release version of *Birth of a Race* (Cripps, 1974).

### **3.2 Cultural Memory and Cinema**

Cultural memory is discursive, interpreted from the artifacts of society. Our shared symbolic past, preserved as social artifacts, links individual and communal memory: these artifacts influence what and how we think. A key question in studies of cultural memory is whose version of history is remembered? Whose is forgotten? (Sefcovic, 2002, p.331).

I will begin my examination of cultural memory and cinema within the context of two films *Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia* and *The Little Black Schoolhouse* directed by the pioneering African Nova Scotian artist, educator and filmmaker Sylvia Hamilton. A review of literature concerning cultural memory revealed its advent as methodological framework for study of memory in the works German historians Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann, who drew further upon Maurice Halbwachs's theory of collective memory. Halbwachs (1980) argued in his book *The Collective Memory* that individual memories were always "interpenetrated" by collective influences emanating from the society in which one resides (p.4). A further interpretation of this influence was provided by Steve Anderson (2001) who states "Like history, cultural memories are produced and must be understood in relation to an array of cultural and ideological forces" (p.21).

Another facet of cultural memory and cinema studies involves analyzing the intersection of these concepts through the audience reception perspective. A leading scholar investigating this intersection has been Annette Kuhn who has analyzed the role of memory, including post-traumatic memory on audience interpretations of cinema and media texts. In her seminal books *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* and *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema* Kuhn investigates the "cinema memory" developed by various populations including British movie audiences of the 1930s and 1940s. Although her works are not directly applicable to studying the development of cultural memory in African Nova Scotian communities (who have rarely if ever seen

images of themselves projected on screen), it is important consider her conceptual and methodological frameworks especially those centered on historical erasure. These frameworks may provide insight into the motivations of African Canadian directors as illustrated in this statement by Sylvia Hamilton:

I began making films about our experiences as African Canadians because these films were not being made at all, or rarely in a manner that satisfied me. Above all, I needed these images. I needed work that came from “inside” the experience. When I watched *Little Stevie* and *Sidney Poitier*, I had no idea that black people actually made films. To see people that looked like me on the screen was a revelation: to think that they might also be behind the camera making films was beyond my experience (Hamilton, 2007, p.216).

Historical analysis also provides us with many examples of instances where cinema has offered avenues for self expression that have allowed communities to produce their own discourses to resist dominant narratives. This method of analysis provides an insight into the production of collective and cultural memories that act as counter hegemonic narratives seeking to disrupt dominant hegemonic discourse (Ben-Amos; Weissberg, 1999). Examples of these phenomena are illustrated by author Gloria J. Gibson-Hudson in her historical analysis of the cinematic works produced by African Canadian women specifically the film *Sisters in the Struggle* (1991) directed by Dionne Brand:

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Sylvia Hamilton's *Black Mother, Black Daughter* also attempts to project an African Canadian identity; her co-director Claire Pierto states in an interview with author Gabrielle Hezekiah (1993) the film was intended to help African Canadians (especially children) "understand our identity and continually changing place in the world" (p.71).

### *Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia and The Little Black School House*

Both films chronicle the lives of African Canadians within the province of Nova Scotia and provide illustrations of cultural memory within cinema as stated by Sylvia Hamilton in a 2004 article *A Daughter's Journey: Black Mother Black Daughter, No More Secrets and Portia White: Think on Me* chronicling her earlier cinematic works and initial motivation to utilize film as a medium to document the collective memories of African Nova Scotians:

Working in film naturally evolved from my work in media and in writing, and from my growing interest in the creation of visual imagery. I had always felt a disconnect between what I experienced and saw in my communities, and in society, and the images and visual representations I and others were given back via the educational system, the multiple forms of mass communications (television, films, books and magazines), theatre and art shows. Creating images would become my way to forestall forgetfulness and to counter the erasure of stories from our individual and collective memories. (Hamilton, 2004, p.9).

Countering the systematic "erasure of stories" as stated by Hamilton has been central to her work as a filmmaker, artist, writer and educator. Her works act not only as "sites of memory" but also as counter-hegemonic narratives that disrupt dominant "national narratives" and discourse concerning racial inequalities in



Canada. Chief among these are narratives portraying the “colour blind” nature of Canadian society. This notion of Canadian exceptionalism is humorously stated by George Elliott Clarke in his seminal article *White Like Canada*:

The most significant difference between Canada and the U.S. is, finally, that America has a race problem. In Canada, the party line goes, there are no racists save those who watch too much American television. (Clarke, 1997 p.99).

A further illustration of this discourse and “erasure of stories” is the common assertion that slavery has never existed in Canada (Clarke, 1997). Absence from or lack of recognition in Canadian history was also examined by Rinaldo Walcott in the introduction to the second edition of his book *Black Like Who?* Walcott (2003) voices the constant interrogation of belonging felt by members of the African Canadian community when he states that “in both the city and the nation, black appeals for social justice remain unheard by those in authority, and this is largely due to the continuing ambivalent place of black peoples in the national imagination. Do we belong or do we not belong? And if we belong, when does the nation begin to acknowledge black arrivals? recently or going back to before Confederation?” (p.12). Walcott provides a powerful argument and analysis of Canadian mass media discourse (ex. *Macleans*’s & *Globe and Mail*) that often associate blackness in Canada with immigration from the Caribbean and Africa while ignoring more than three hundred years of black presence. Similar observations are provided by Sylvia Hamilton in her recent book chapter *Visualizing History and Memory in the African Nova Scotian Community*:

In the larger context, I struggle against the superficial knowledge most Canadians have about African descended people in Nova Scotia; they have segmented, strands

received via the media: *Race riot in Nova Scotia schools, racial flare-ups at Halifax bars*. These flash points about us come and go. Otherwise, we have little presence in the on-going Canadian imagination, in spite of centuries of deep roots. Our history as African people in Canada is multi-layered and did not begin with waves of Caribbean immigration in the 1950's (Hamilton, 2007, p.243).

The virtual erasure of the historic black presence within Canada is a major theme that appears in many works of African Canadian music, literature, cinema and theatre. Several instances of erasure mentioned by Clarke in his article *White Like Canada* such as "school segregation in Ontario and Nova Scotia" and "legalized slavery" on what is now considered Canadian territory are central themes of *Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia* and *The Little Black School House*. Both films feature narratives and testimonials of African Nova Scotians that challenge the dominant iconic images of Nova Scotia. An example of counter-hegemonic imagery is provided by Syliva Hamilton in her description of the framing of shot selections utilized in the introduction of *Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia*:

I position my narrator, Shingai Nyajeka, a young dreadlocked African Nova Scotian male, in a shot with Citadel Hill and the Halifax Town Clock as his backdrop. It is not the typical postcard image found in Nova Scotian tourist shops, or the classic representation of the provinces' most visited sites as promoted by government tourist advertisements. In another scene, Shingai sits at the edge of the wharf at the Halifax waterfront with Nova Scotia's legendary sailing ship, the Bluenose, in full sail, captured behind him... With these juxtapositions I locate *us*, people of African descent, in the Nova Scotian and Canadian landscapes. My work becomes one of the ways I talk back to previous works and interpretations of our lives in Canada (Hamilton, 2007, p.219).

The motivation behind the inclusion of counter-hegemonic imagery was explained further during a 2009 interview at the Simon Fraser University School of Communication with director Sylvia Hamilton. During the interview Sylvia provided an extensive account of her life history and how her conceptualization of cultural memory framed the production of both films. The production of *Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia* and *The Little Black School House* held personal resonance for her as a student whose first experience with the education system was at a segregated school in Nova Scotia where mother also taught for many years (Sylvia Hamilton, Interview, Feb 17, 2009). She added that *Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia* and *The Little Black School House* were linked in many ways and shared some of the same archival footage (Sylvia Hamilton, Interview, Feb 17, 2009). Although a fifteen year span separated the production of both films Sylvia stated that she saw the films as “siblings in that carry out an ongoing conversation with each other” (Sylvia Hamilton, Interview, Feb 17, 2009).

A further illustration of the cultural and collective memories contained within both films was highlighted during a question and answer session following a screening of *The Little Black School House* at the Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre campus. During the session several African Nova Scotians in attendance shared their childhood experiences of attending school in Nova Scotia. Many of their comments demonstrated an intense connection with and understanding of the memories of the subjects documented in the film. One audience member’s experience in particular was quite telling as it involved their

child hood memory of teachers instructing students to line-up at recess and enforcing the segregation of bathrooms for black and white students.

### **3.3 Archival Preservation and Access Analysis**

For this project I have compiled a list of resources and created an online finding aid *African Canadian Cinema: A Guide to African Canadian & African Diaspora Cinema* for myself and future researchers of this topic. This is related to a major goal for my project which was to utilize archival preservation and information access practices to formulate proposals for archival and public access initiatives that could aid in the preservation of African Canadian and Afro-Québécois cinematic works and assist in providing access to current and future generations. My analysis includes a survey of current African Canadian cinema collections at the York University Library and National Film Board of Canada and issues related to the public accessibility of these collections.

Before conducting archival research on a relatively undocumented topic such as African Canadian and Afro-Québécois cinematic representation it is important to acknowledge Canada's historic negligence with regards to the preservation Canadian produced film and media materials. This negligence was illustrated by the founding President and Vanier Professor Emeritus of Trent University Thomas H.B. Symons nearly three decades ago in his article analysing the archival access to research collections within the field of Canadian Studies:

The need to find and to preserve Canadian archival materials is not confined to written documents. There has been, until recently, an incredible neglect, abuse, and loss of film and media materials, including videotapes and audiotapes, despite the obvious and increasing importance of such materials for students of Canada. This situation reached its symbolic climax when, on 1 July 1967, the centenary of Confederation, more than half the existing early nitrate film in Canada was destroyed by fire. (Symons, 1982, p.60).

Archival preservation and access to Canadian produced film and media materials remains an ongoing challenge. As of 2010 the only coordinated archival effort within Canada to provide a comprehensive finding aid for Canadian produced film and media materials to provide was the 1993 *Film/Vidéo Canadiana* CD-ROM project. This finding aid was developed collaboratively by the National Film Board of Canada, National Library of Canada, National Archives of Canada, Cinémathèque Québécoise and Musée du Cinéma. The *Film/Vidéo Canadiana CD-ROM* contains a searchable database of film titles and credits of 26,000 films and videos produced or co produced in Canada from the 1980s to 1993.

The largest archival collections of Canadian produced film and media materials are held at a variety of locations such as: National Institutions, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Library and Archives Canada, National Arts Centre, National Film Board of Canada and National Gallery of Canada; Broadcasters, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; Libraries, Library and Archives Canada, The Film Reference Library and York University Library; Producers, the Winnipeg Film Group, Video Femmes and several Provincial and archives. Additional specialized film and media archival collections are also held at Cinémathèque Québécoise and Pacific Cinematheque Pacific.

Accessing archival records for research is also problematic as there is no online access to a centralized and archival collection of Canadian produced film and media materials such as the British Film Institute (BFI) National Archive. As noted earlier the *Film/Vidéo Canadienne* CD-ROM is a useful finding aid but no effort has been made to provide online access to this database. Although this CD-ROM is available at several large academic libraries throughout Canada including the Simon Fraser University Bennett Library the CD-ROM format is outdated and the archival film database from the CD-ROM could be housed online by Library and Archives Canada with minimal effort. The lack of vision, planning and coordination in the Canadian context was also noted by Symons:

A comparison between the condition, and the inaccessibility, of the CBC's archives for the arts and the completeness and accessibility of those of the BBC, for instance, makes only too clear how much more some of our public institutions could be doing to support and assist students of the performing arts in Canada. It is essential that steps be taken to rectify this and similar situations. (Symons, 1982, p.60).

The preceding quote also demonstrates some of the difficulties that I have encountered when undertaking research on African Canadian focused films and media materials, which are essentially a small sub-set of larger Canadian focused archival collections. First, the institutional policies of libraries and archives have limited access to materials, for example, interlibrary loan privileges are restricted for all of the African Canadian films and media materials contained in many library and archival collections; and research data are geographically scattered throughout Canada. Two of the largest collections of African Canadian cinema reside at the York University Library in Toronto and at the National Film

Board of Canada libraries in Toronto and Montreal; however, several other films are held at the provincial archives in Ontario and Nova Scotia. The second major difficulty is related to search terminology. Materials related to African Canadians and Afro-Québécois specifically African Canadians and Afro-Québécois cinematic history are recorded in libraries and archives under a variety of subject headings such as: Black Canadian, African Canadian, Afro-Québécois, Afro Canadian, Jamaican Canadian, Black, Negro and Coloured due to the diverse nature of the African Canadian and Afro-Québécois populations and the differing perspectives over the years of librarians, archivists and volunteer workers who catalogued the collections. An illustration of this issue of identification is also apparent in Statistics Canada census records as mentioned by George Elliott Clarke in his 1997 article *The Complex Face of Black Canada*.

The most comprehensive finding aids that exist for African Canadian focused films and media materials are *Black on Screen: Images of Black Canadians 1950s - 1990s* a descriptive print catalogue produced by the National Film Board in 1992. The York University Library also has an online finding aid *Films & Video Recordings on African-Canadians* describing the African Canadian focused films and media materials housed in the York University Sound & Moving Image Library. However the usefulness of this resource is limited as it not been updated since 2001.

A comparative analysis of archiving and access practices associated with African Canadian and Afro-Québécois, African American and Black British cinematic collections provides a further illustration of the glaring deficiencies

within the Canadian context. As opposed to African Canadian and Afro-Québécois cinematic works, African American and Black British cinematic works have been widely studied and offer a prospective researcher a multitude of finding aids, some examples are the extensive online African American Cinema resources housed at the University of California Berkeley Library, the Black Film Center Archive at the University of Indiana and the online Black British Film collection housed at the British Film Institute (BFI). A further illustration of these differences academic support and institutional funding is the recent introduction of *Black Camera: An International Film Journal* by the Black Film Center Archive at the University of Indiana. The *Black Camera* journal is focused on the study and documentation of the black cinematic experience and is the only scholarly film journal of its kind in the United States. Among diaspora cinemas Black British cinema probably shares the most in common with African Canadian cinema as both predominantly emanate from state funded sources. Canada and the United Kingdom also have minority African diaspora populations that originate primarily from the Caribbean and Africa along with similar settlement patterns where no individual cities have majority African diaspora populations as is the case in the United States. However, Black British and African Canadian cinema diverge in the levels of government funding as illustrated by the support provided to organizations such as the BFI. This funding has enabled the BFI to create an online portal for Black British Cinema that is fully searchable and contains information on films, actors and directors dating back to the 1940s.



### 3.4 Online Platforms for Representation

The emergence of the internet as a ubiquitous platform for information sharing and distribution may provide an excellent opportunity for under-represented populations to shape their own identities. This notion of online identity formation has been explored by several academic researchers including Lisa Nakamura who in her book *Digitizing Race* challenged early utopian assumptions regarding internet democratization along with discourse centred on the digital divide (Tourino, 2009, p.460). As an alternative to this universalizing discourse, she espoused a methodological framework for the study of racial formation on the internet by tracing the development of visual culture studies from the areas of art, photography and cinema into the initial text-based internet Web 1.0, and current graphical and interactive digital media such as the high bandwidth internet epitomized by the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies (Tourino, 2009). Within *Digitizing Race*, Nakamura offered a comprehensive historical analysis of the strengths and deficiencies of previous new media and internet scholarship emanating from a variety of disciplines within the social sciences and humanities. She aimed to remedy previous deficiencies by referring to her conceptualization of a framework for internet scholarship:

Visual culture studies, an interdisciplinary type of theoretical and critical practice with practitioners from all sorts of backgrounds who share a focus on the production of identity in visual forms, seemed particularly well suited to studying an equally hybrid form the internet. (Nakamura, 2008, p. 5).

In conjunction with visual culture studies, Nakamura drew on Omi and Winant's racial formation theory and reformulates it as "digital racial formation" in order to

reflect the influence of current “digital modes of cultural production and reception” on the racial formation process (Nakamura, 2008, p. 14).

The work of Nakamura clearly anticipated the adoption of Web 2.0 technologies by historically under-represented populations as illustrated by the emergence over the past three years of several prominent African Canadian cinematic focused blogs and websites such as the *CaribbeanTales Youth Film Festival* which features the *Afri-Canadian Filmmaker’s Ezine* and the *Canadian Black Film Festival (CBFF)* which features a Facebook social networking component. The emergence of these websites has coincided with the increasing adoption of high bandwidth Internet resources capable delivering visual media such as films through streaming video, both websites feature content hosted on web portals such as *youtube.com* and *veoh.com* which raises possibilities for distributing archived content. In conjunction with these websites my research blog *African Canadian Cinema: A Guide to African Canadian & African Diaspora Cinema* established in 2007 has received several inquiries from African Canadian filmmakers including Francis-Ann Solomon, the director of *A Winter Tale* and founder of founded CaribbeanTales, a Toronto-based not for profit multimedia production company that annually presents the CaribbeanTales Film Festival. Francis-Ann posted a message on the blog “Thanks for creating this wonderful blog – it’s a great idea... much needed. I will do my best to promote it. And thanks for writing about my film” and as of July 2010, the African Canadian Cinema blog has received 13,924 site visits. Another example of the blogs’ potential impact is its inclusion as a resource in the 2009 Halifax Public Library

African Heritage Month resource guide. The large number of site visits also demonstrates the potential advantages available to under-represented populations through the utilization of Web 2.0 technologies such as Blogs and Wikis in conjunction with social media websites such as Facebook and streaming video portals such as *youtube.com* to develop content that counters dominant narratives or information archiving and access sharing that can alleviate gaps such as the lack of a central repository of information on the topic of African Canadian cinematic history. Although written for a primarily academic audience an excellent technical illustration of Web 2.0 content development is provided by authors Bryan Alexander and Alan Levine in their article *Web 2.0 Storytelling:*

*Emergence of a New Genre:*

Creating Web 2.0 content requires only making a few selections from menus, choosing from a variety of well-designed templates, or adding a page name to another, already-established wiki page. One outcome of this authoring approach is a drastically lower bar for participation and publishing. Although some faculty members might hesitate to learn a website editor such as Dreamweaver, an arcane method of FTP, and local campus web directory structures they can now begin telling the world about Mideast politics or biological processes after spending only five minutes learning how to use Blogger or Wikispaces. The technology thus becomes more transparent; attention is focused on the content. As a result, the amount of rich web media and content has grown in quantity and diversity. And any student of history would not be surprised to observe that out of those manifold ways of writing and showing have emerged new practices for telling stories. (Alexander and Levine, 2008.).

Web 2.0 Technologies are currently being adopted by numerous archives and national institutions. During the course of developing this project the NFB launched a redesigned website in 2009 featuring several Web 2.0 components.

The “Screening Room” online component of the new website offers free open access streaming video to more than 600 of the 13,000 films that have been produced over the 70 year history of the NFB. Several major African Canadian directed and themed productions such as Jennifer Hodge de Silva’s *Home Feeling: Struggle for a Community* and Sylvia Hamilton’s *Speak It! From the Heart of Black Nova Scotia* were included in the digitization project. Both films along with several others have been linked to an open access cinema page on the *African Canadian Cinema* blog. The “Screening Room” component of the NFB website also offers viewers the opportunity to comment on the films and displays the number of online viewings for each film which is useful to researchers of the films and could provide basic viewership metrics for future studies. The NFB digitization project could provide a template and example for future Canadian cinematic archival access initiatives.

### **3.5 Concluding Thoughts**

Archivists are converting physical collections to digital formats and displaying surrogates of these primary sources on their websites. Simultaneously, the Web is moving toward a shared environment that embraces collective intelligence and participation, which is often called Web 2.0. (Samouelian, 2009, p42.).

The preceding commentary by Mary Samouelian is directly related a central objective of this project which was to demonstrate the potential of utilizing Web 2.0 technologies to foster collective memory production among African Canadian populations. The blog was created by a single person with no funding or

additional research assistance and could be considerably improved if a future African Canadian cinematic focused project were to receive only a fraction of the funding that is provided to African diaspora cinematic archival projects in the United Kingdom and the United States. However it is important to note during the course of this project a significant development did occur in the Canadian context with the debut of the online open access NFB “Screening Room”. It is also evident after demonstrating the *African Canadian Cinema* blog to educators and community groups at the Knowledge Production and the Black Experience in Canada workshop and attending several screenings of *The Little Black School House* and witnessing the positive reactions of audience members which included a substantial number of African Nova Scotians that African Canadian themed films hold great resonance with audiences and are prime examples of cultural memory production. My research into this project was also greatly enhanced by having an opportunity to meet and interview Sylvia Hamilton.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: Online African Canadian Cinema Resources

### AFRICAN CANADIAN CINEMA CORE WEBSITES & BLOGS

African Canadian Cinema: A Guide to African Canadian & African Diaspora Cinema

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://africanCanadianCinema.wordpress.com/>

Canadian Black Film Festival (CBFF)

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.cbff.ca/>

Canadian Black Film Festival (CBFF) Facebook Page

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=10362151119&v=wall>

Afri-Canadian Filmmakers' Ezine

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://ctyfilmfestival.com/>

ReelWorld Film Festival

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.reelworld.ca/>

African Canadian Online @ York University

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.yorku.ca/aonline/film.html>

### AFRICAN CANADIAN CINEMA HISTORY

Jennifer Hodge de Silva Biography.

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/women/002026-703-e.html>

Black Canadian Film: The Hidden Story: Black Filmmaker Magazine, London, UK, 2001. Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.griots.net/archives/focus/bcfilm.html>

Kass Banning, "Conjugating Three Moments in Black Canadian Cinema," in *North of Everything*, 84-99.

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://books.google.com/books?id=iLNhHWfarosC>

Sheila Petty, "Mapping New Boundaries: Discourses of Blackness in Rude" in *Contact Zones: Memory, Origin, and Discourses in Black diasporic Cinema*, 224 – 258.

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://books.google.com/books?id=i->

AShEc7OQIC&lpg=PP1&ots=8OhKuDX-  
Td&dq=Contact%20zones%3A%20memory%2C%20origin%2C%20and%20discourses%20in%2  
0Black%20diasporic%20cinema&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false

Christopher Gittings, "Multicultural Fields of Vision," in *Canadian National Cinema: Ideology, Difference and Representation*, 231-262.

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://books.google.com/books?id=uvVZgPMH1RUC>

## **AFRICAN CANADIAN CINEMA COLLECTIONS**

Films & Video Recordings on African Canadians @ York University Libraries

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from:

[http://www.library.yorku.ca/ccm/SMIL/subjectguides/Area\\_Studies/afri\\_ca.htm](http://www.library.yorku.ca/ccm/SMIL/subjectguides/Area_Studies/afri_ca.htm)

Bibliography for African Canadian Studies (film section) @ Seneca College

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://people.senecac.on.ca/patricia.clark/217film.htm>

National Film Board of Canada

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: [http://www.onf-](http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/collection/resultat.php?idsc=5625&nomsu=African%252520Origins&nom=&ids=56&type=liste-sous-categorie)

[nfb.gc.ca/eng/collection/resultat.php?idsc=5625&nomsu=African%252520Origins&nom=&ids=56&type=liste-sous-categorie](http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/collection/resultat.php?idsc=5625&nomsu=African%252520Origins&nom=&ids=56&type=liste-sous-categorie)

## **WEBSITES OF AFRICAN CANADIAN DIRECTORS**

Charles Officer

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from:

<http://www.cbc.ca/arts/tiff/story/2008/09/07/f-charles-officer-nurse-fighter-boy.html>

Cheryl Foggo

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: [http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/portraits/cheryl\\_foggo](http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/portraits/cheryl_foggo)

Clement Virgo

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from:

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0009970>

David "Sudz" Sutherland

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.topten.ca/2003/content/07.html>

Dionne Brand

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: [http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/portraits/dionne\\_brand](http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/portraits/dionne_brand)

Fil Fraser

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: [http://www.archivesalberta.org/vol22\\_4/paa.htm](http://www.archivesalberta.org/vol22_4/paa.htm)

**Frances-Anne Solomon**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from:

[http://awintertale.ca/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=30](http://awintertale.ca/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=30)

**Hubert Davis**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: [http://www.blogto.com/film/2009/02/behind\\_the\\_doc\\_hubert\\_davis/](http://www.blogto.com/film/2009/02/behind_the_doc_hubert_davis/)

**Hyacinthe Combar**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from:

<http://www.ql.umontreal.ca/volume12/numero11/culturev12n11a.html>

**Jennifer Hodge de Silva**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/women/002026-703-e.html>

**Little X**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.lilxonline.com/>

**Maryse Legagneur**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: [http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/portraits/maryse\\_legagneur](http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/portraits/maryse_legagneur)

**Nicole Brooks**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/A-Linc-In-Time/118059264307>

**Roger McTair**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol8/no18/justice.html>

**Sabrina Moella**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.myspace.com/sabrinamoella>

**Selwyn Jacob**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.geminiawards.ca/canadaaward/199812.cfm>

**Shani Carter**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: [http://citizenshift.org/node/409&dossier\\_nid=1107](http://citizenshift.org/node/409&dossier_nid=1107)

**Stephen Williams**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0931724/>

**Sylvia D. Hamilton**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.writers.ns.ca/Writers/shamilton.html>

**Sylvia Sweeney**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.whitepinepictures.com/seeds/iii/34/director.html>

**Tonya Lee Williams**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.tonyaleewilliams.com/>



## **FILM FESTIVALS**

### **Canadian Black Film Festival**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.cbff.ca/>

### **2010 Black History in Film Festival**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://blackdotcollective.org/film%20festival.html>

### **2010 CaribbeanTales Youth Film Festival**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from:

[http://www.caribbeantales.ca/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=77](http://www.caribbeantales.ca/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=77)

### **ReelWorld Film Festival**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.reelworld.ca/>

### **CaribbeanTales Annual Film Festival**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.caribbeantales.ca/filmfestival/>

### **2008 Festival International du Film Haïtien de Montréal**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.festivalfilmhaitien.com/>

### **Iced in Black Film Festival (2001-2003)**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from:

<http://www.montrealmirror.com/ARCHIVES/2002/021402/film3.html>

## **APPENDIX B: Online African Diaspora Cinema Resources**

### **AFRICAN AMERICAN CINEMA RESOURCES**

Black Film Center/Archive @ University of Indiana

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.indiana.edu/~bfca/index.shtml>

Black Camera: An International Film Journal

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://inscribe.iupress.org/loi/blc>

African Americans in the Movies: a Bibliography of Materials in the UC Berkeley Library Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/AfricanAmBib.html>

Gender, Race and Ethnicity in Media African Americans in Media Resource Guide @ University of Iowa

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from:

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~commstud/resources/GenderMedia/african.html>

Sisters in Cinema

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from:

[http://www.sistersincinema.com/joomla/index.php?option=com\\_frontpage&Itemid=1](http://www.sistersincinema.com/joomla/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1)

Images Journal: Black Independent Cinema and the Influence of Neo-Realism

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.imagesjournal.com/issue05/features/black.htm>

Killer of Sheep a Film by Charles Burnett

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.killerofsheep.com/>

NPR: A Conversation With Spike Lee

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5317036>

William Greaves Biography

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.williamgreaves.com/biography.htm>

### **BLACK BRITISH CINEMA RESOURCES**

Black British Film: British Film Institute (BFI)

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/1144245/index.html>

Black Pioneers: The early history of Black filmmaking in the UK: British Film Institute (BFI)

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/445627/index.html>

**Black Cinema: British Film Institute (BFI)**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/features/blackcinema/>

**Black British Film & Television Guide: British Film Institute (BFI)**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/filmtvinfo/publications/16+/pdf/blackbritish.pdf>

**British Vogue: Black by Popular Demand, Why a young black Britain sets onscreen style**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from:

<http://www.muchacreative.com/Journalism/Black%20by%20Popular%20Demand.html>

## **AFRICAN CINEMA RESOURCES**

**African Media Program @ Michigan State University**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.ngsw.org/~afrmedia/index.php>

**California News Reel Library of African Cinema**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.newsreel.org/nav/topics.asp?cat=4>

**University of Toronto Libraries: African Cinema Resources**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.utoronto.ca/innis/library/africanfilm.html>

**ALLAFRICANMOVIES.COM**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.allafricanmovies.com/>

**African Studies Quarterly: African Cinema in the Nineties**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v2/v2i1a4.htm>

## **FILM FESTIVALS**

**ReelWorld Film Festival**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.reelworld.ca/>

**2008 African Diaspora Film Festival**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.nyadff.org/>

**American Black Film Festival**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.abff.com/festival/>

**San Francisco Black Film Festival**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.sfbff.org/>

**BFM Festival**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.bfmmedia.com/>

**Africa in Motion (AiM) Film Festival**

Retrieved July 20, 2010, from: <http://www.africa-in-motion.org.uk/>

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- Gangster guns down Bee Movie at box office; 1970s Harlem heroin kingpin story top movie draw :[Final Edition]. (2007, November 5). *Edmonton Journal*, p. B4. Retrieved November 15, 2008, from Canadian Newsstand MajorDailies database.
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