analysis of contemporary Nigeria—in a place where colossal amounts of oil money are stolen every day, why wouldn't car windows naturally be broken and stereos stolen?—is obviously superior to his father's pompous moralizing. But their situation, Nigeria's situation, is just a mess, a random colliding of low motives and strong personalities in which they must somehow live. Confusion na wa! Pain and sadness are in this world, but the film and its characters are so full of unfazed vivid life that the strongest experience is of deep, glorious comedy.

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Michael Matthews, director. *Sweetheart*. 2010. 27 minutes. English. South Africa. BePhat Motel. Price not reported.

Sweetheart, directed by Michael Matthews, is a postapartheid South African science fiction film. Like many other films that have recently been produced in South Africa, it is part of a new wave of African cinema, and alongside other films such as the Kenyan-directed short film *Pumzi* (dir. Wanuri Kahiu, 2010) and the feature-length South African film *District 9* (dir. Neill Blomkamp, 2009), it provides further evidence of changes in African cinema. These changes are not entirely new and are seen in, for example, the growth of the Nollywood film industry and the variety of feature-length and short films produced on the continent.

Sweetheart begins with the sound of a changing radio frequency interspersed with snippets of news about the Cold War. The mise-en-scène of the opening is the large kitchen of a farmhouse in which a woman prepares breakfast for a family. The relationships among the characters, where they are, and what we are hearing in the diegetic sounds of the radio are unclear and somewhat confusing. The use of black and white gives the film a dated texture. This feeling of the past is aided by the character of Inge Beckman, who plays the young woman named Sweetheart. She is a stereotypical housewife with a 1950s feel about her as she fusses over two boys and her husband at the breakfast table. As they set off for the day, she waves goodbye to them and shouts into the wind, "I love you." Nobody responds. The family never returns to the house, and for the first half of the film the camera follows Sweetheart around the property of the farm as she continues to do the everyday chores: collecting milk, making supper, doing housework, and eventually calling the police about her missing family.

Sweetheart is the first film made by BePhat Motel Productions, a group of five young South Africans who utilized their film production skills to create something that the screenwriter, Sean Drummond, says "would not take itself too seriously." A self-funded film, *Sweetheart* was shot on a shoestring budget of R80,000 (approximately U.S.$7,933). The film is about a

character who struggles with understanding herself as a mother and a wife, until she comes to the realization that she is neither. The director, Michael Matthews, emphasizes the fluidity of space and time and the meaning of being human, or being perceived as human, by juxtaposing the fragile woman with archetypal images of a mother, a priest, and a businessman, among other characters seen in the short duration of the film.

Because Sweetheart's family never returns home, she decides to venture out in search of them. But before she does, she befriends a little white mouse. The mouse, in its quiet existence, is used as a device to show the extent of Sweetheart's desperation to care for something, or perhaps, as becomes clearer toward the end of the film, to serve another creature. While the mouse highlights Sweetheart's solitary existence sans family, the other characters she meets along the way to the city highlight the desolation and desertion of the larger geographical region and landscape. These characters all seem to be stuck in a time warp. Their robotic actions and reactions to the young woman are emphasized by the drab and destroyed places in which they find themselves. Besides the lonely characters who seem as confused as Sweetheart (or even a little mad), another important clue is offered to the viewer when Sweetheart looks up into a pink sky and sees jellyfish-like globules fluttering upward in slow motion according to the direction of the strong winds. Sweetheart watches them in a bewildered trance, and both she and the viewer are unsure of what to make of these indicators of change and movement.

Once Sweetheart reaches the city, she is amazed that it, too, is deserted. The eerie feeling of a quiet, desolate, and unpopulated city is established by long shots of downtown Cape Town CBD streets. These unusually deserted streets take on new meaning and new energy when the short film reaches its climax. At this point we realize that Sweetheart is not a distressed mother but rather a programmed character. As the mystery is answered, we are left to wonder what this neocolonial and postapocalyptic Cape Town is like in reality.

It is through this combination of an imagined future and misconceptions of the past that *Sweetheart* transcends the traditional categories associated with African film. The inclusion, albeit subtle, of the Cold War narrative, speaks to a fear of change in another context, and although this could have come across more strongly, the inclusion broadens the scope of the film and perceptions of it. *Sweetheart* also evokes questions bearing on change through technology and the way humans, in all their arrogance, perceive and organize themselves; in other words, *Sweetheart* offers some suggestions about the way the future may present itself if humans continue to order the world as they do, abusing the environment and one another and creating technological developments that nobody can keep up with. The film succeeds through its multifaceted references to the past and the future, all brought together through a strong stoic performance of Sweetheart as she journeys along a mechanized path of the unknown.

Sweetheart is a film about a young woman's journey for answers, but it is also a film about a present, a past, and an imaginative future. The combination of these three elements is what is most compelling about the film and others like it. It situates an African future with both black and white characters in a genre that has been critiqued as "only white" in generic film and literary constructions of science fiction. The recent developments in African science fiction have made room for alternative realities to be viewed and realized in popular imaginations the world over. These films sketch African futures through what can be considered as a new directorial approach by younger generations who also have a different relationship to cinemas. Afro sci-fi directors such as Matthews or Jim Chuchu (*Homecoming*, 2014) fuse urban aesthetics with futuristic narratives that cinematically deconstruct the cities and the "humans" that occupy them. Cities like Cape Town and Nairobi look different and are transformed by the films. In this way the wave of films of this variety is an exciting development within African cinema because it uses conventional and unconventional elements to reimagine and reportray former colonized spaces by representing the future from a global South perspective.

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Abdellah Taïa, director. ***L'Armée du Salut*** **(Salvation Army).** 2013. 81 minutes. French and Moroccan Arabic (English subtitles). France/Morocco. Les film Pelléas, Rita Production, Ali n'Films. No price reported.

L'Armée du Salut, adapted from Moroccan Abdellah Taïa's (b. 1973) 2006 novel of the same title, is the author-filmmaker's first feature-length film. The film is also the first ever made in Morocco about homosexuality in the country. Debuting in February 2014, the film thus far has been widely shown in theaters across the country. It was shown in Rotterdam in January and in France in May 2014.

Taïa's film miraculously skirted censorship despite pressure from the PJD (Parti de la justice et du développement/Party for Justice and Development), the leading Islamic political party in Morocco. Although considered a somewhat moderate party, its officials were still outraged by what they deemed a film promoting values that are deemed un-Islamic. Taïa explains in an interview ("Le film de Abdellah Taïa sélectionné au festival de Tanger," www.tanger-experience.com) that even though the film was finally shown in theaters, it was not without controversy from the first moments he began shooting. In El-Jadida on the Atlantic coast, Islamist-leaning students organized demonstrations at the university against the filmmaker and his production staff. Despite this setback, *L'Armée du Salut* was ultimately made, and subsequently was one of the twenty-two films