Dan Muchina, director. *Monsoons over the Moon.* 2015. 8 minutes (part 1) and 10 minutes (part 2). English and Swahili (no subtitles). Kenya, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q72Mmwhza-k (Part 1). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMFRGv55ggQ (Part 2).

Monsoons Over the Moon, in English and Swahili and shot mostly in black and white, is a two-part dystopian short film created by the Kenyan visual artist, filmmaker, and director Dan Muchina, who calls himself "Abstract Omega." Set in Nairobi and echoing Muchina's own experience with oppression perpetrated by the Kenyan dictator Daniel Arap Moi, the film addresses surveillance, mass incarceration, the impact of capitalism—and, as I will explain, sexism. Muchina states that "my motivation for the script was based on my own experiences living in Nairobi city and witnessing the grim reality that is mostly kept out of the news and swept under the rug. I was compelled with the intention of shining light to this reality" (Kiri Rupiah, "Now Watching: 'Monsoons Over the Moon' The Sequel," 2015; http://afripopmag.com).

The film, which is told "from the perspective of those struggling the most within this dictatorial system" ("Monsoons over the Moon–Part 1," Our Africa Blog, www.ourafricablog.com) depicts a postapocalyptic science fictional Nairobi in which the government has shut down the internet and books have become exceedingly valuable. On the entertainment website Bottom Line Kenya, Will Press provides an insightful analysis of the film's social and political critique, as well as its attention to the negative impact of the internet:

> We don't really want to look into the roots of inequality of land ownership, politics fuelled by tribalism, the ever expanding wealth gap, corruption, domestic terrorism etc. . . . The film's internet-purged setting not only calls into question our general perception of the internet as the omnipresent portal of communication and repository of information that we will always have access to . . . but also the new digital era characterized by shoving all of our memories, ideas and random thoughts into "the cloud" . . . . *Monsoons* also questions how easily we entrust for-profit corporations with terabytes upon terabytes of our information and culture. ("Film Review," Nov. 15, 2015, www.bottomline.co.ke)

But Muchina focuses as intensively upon gender repression as governmental repression. The story is told from the perspective of Shiro (Anita Kavuu-Ng'ang'a), whose abusive boyfriend is being pursued by a street gang called The Monsoons, whose members insist that embracing the unreal can help to liberate people from the system. (Here Muchina is alluding to the Mwakenya Movement, an organization accused of disseminating antigovernment ideas during the 1980s.) Their strategy in this instance is to issue a death threat against Shiro: either she will turn over her boyfriend to them within three days, or she will be killed herself. Trapped in this situation created of, by, and for men, Shiro herself turns to magic. No mere *1984*

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moved to Kenya, *Monsoons* suggests that what we take to be reality is really a constructed fiction. "Is the world real or is it a dream?" asks the narrator. "There is no real or unreal," he says. "Everything you experience is simulated in your mind." In the end Shiro's dependence upon the unreal may or may not be effective, but this strategy celebrates the potential power of magical thinking, which provides cognitive estrangement from reality to generate thought experiments that can lead to social change. Like Samuel R. Delany, Muchina is a male author of science fiction devoted to feminist issues. *Monsoons* is also akin to the magic-centered and woman-centered African alternative realities created by Nnedi Okorafor.

This connection to feminist science fiction manifests itself most clearly in the soundless introduction to part 1. Shiro removes her headscarf and long robe, and by doing so she unveils her femininity in the form of her body and braided hair. As she throws away patriarchal cultural accoutrements, and also her former boyfriend's phallic gun, Shiro is enacting her female subjectivity. She receives a *mwakenya*, a text—written by a Monsoon gang member named The Chemist—which explains how prisoners can escape through dreams. In order to meet The Chemist, Shiro follows the text's directions about wearing a magic feather. The numerous close-ups of the feather indicate that magic might indeed be effective, although this is left unresolved. The ambiguous title of the *mwakenya*, "The End Is the Beginning," suggests that Shiro's ultimate fate is equally ambiguous. She clearly has never been found, and the possibility is left open that she has found a new beginning in a fantastic—and better—world.

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Sékou Traoré, director. *L'oeil du cyclone* (Eye of the Storm). 2015. 104 minutes. French. Burkina Faso. Les Films d'Avalon, Abissia Productions, Vynavy. No price reported.

Sékou Traoré's 2015 feature film debut, *L'oeil du cyclone* (Eye of the Storm), imagines the fate of a former child soldier named Blackshouam (Fargass Assandé), now an adult being tried for his crimes in an unnamed nation. It is a valuable film on several levels, among them the conversations it will likely spark about the aftermath of traumatized childhood, memory and identity, coercion and agency, innocence and responsibility. Part courtroom drama, the film brings the problem of representation to the fore. Initially, Blackshouam appears to be a crazed, dangerous killer. He does not speak. His lawyer, Emma Tou (Maimouna N'Diaye), manages to coax him into conversing, but tries to prevent him from speaking in court in order to defend him more effectively, complicating what we mean by the "unspeakability" of child soldiering and trauma. Her decisions