

SEARCHLIGHT

A TRI-ANNUAL MAGAZINE OF THE MAJOR SEMINARY, BAMBUI

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Editorial

GOING TO THE MOVIES



“Going to the movies” is a common Western phrase used to describe how they gather on weekends or other times of the week to watch films either alone or in the company of friends and family. In Africa, what became common especially in the second half of the twentieth century and early 21st century was the “film hall,” or “cinema halls,” better referred to as movie theatre. The desire to watch people on the television came with several blessings and curses as these films projected, either brought out the beast or the beauty in us.

But what do we mean by *film*? Generally, it is motion pictures set on camera and made accessible for viewing through means such as the television, internet, or streaming platforms such as *Netflix* and *Showmax*, conveying a story. Inside the film industry, we distinguish between movies, series, and documentaries though mindful that the word *movie* is used synonymously to mean *film* in general. A movie handles a single story and currently they are gradually being replaced by the prevalence of series. A series, on its own, is a set of stories pieced together into several episodes which cumulatively centres on a common theme. An example could be the Nigerian series *Sista* and the Kenyan *Shuga*. Documentaries are well conducted interviews or investigative reports on different topical issues or personalities and most often take the form of *movies*, though different in presentation from them. Away from these, the film industry could be classified into the different genres of films they produce. A movie could be romantic and thus termed, *romance*; it could be on crime; it could be on horror; it could be action thriller; it could be drama such as majority of Nigerian, Cameroonian, Ghanaian and South African movies, just to name a few. All these different genres simply help inform us on the type of film we are about to watch and how to dispose ourselves on receiving the contents. This is important especially with parents and guardians who must regulate what their children consume on TV. One of the ways in which the film industry helps in this is by providing movie guidelines such as viewer’s age restriction such as 14, 16, 18 or 18+ (or Adult). Movies with 18+ on it or simply *Adult* indicates that they may contain pornographic contents or what is termed sexually explicit scenes. Seeing *PG* (Parental Guidance) with a number attached to it or not, warrants that parents or guardian watch out for their kids.

From the above background into what the film industry looks like and to what it dishes out to the public, *Searchlight* magazine has taken the pains in the June 2024 edition to trace out the relationship between the *African Movie Industries and the Christian Faith*. With this as our focus, we have underscored that there is more to what we watch as movies than what meets the eye. Beneath these movies, we have a portrayal of deeply cherished moral and religious values communicated and passed across. We

also get a glimpse into the different cultures in Africa as well as discover their beautiful heritage and cherished customs. This was a dominant characteristic of what we term *village films* in Nigeria, South Africa and Cameroon. Also, these movies carry the cries, the joys and the struggles of peoples, nations, and tribe (Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Letter to Artists* (4 April 1999), 4). Example of such movies include *Hotel Rwanda*, *Sarafina*, *The Fisherman Diary*, *Egg of Life*. Moreover, some narrated historical events such as *Issakaba*, *Ngannou*, *Sarafina*. Articles such as *Towards A Theology of African Movies*; *Violence in African Movies and the Sinful heart of Man*; *Beyond Acting: The Dilemma between the Actor and real – life*; *Man as Imago Dei: Pornographic African Movies and Human Dignity*; *The Concept of Family Life in African Movies amongst others in this edition buttress the above indications. A public sample of viewers’ opinions on the question: What is the impact of African Movies on the Christian Faith?* acts as a reality check on how these movies impact the practice and living of the Christian faith

William Shakespeare in, *As You Like It* (Act II, Scene VII, Line 139) remarked: “All the world is a stage; and all the men and women merely Players; they have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts.” In the same line of thought, Hans Urs von Balthasar sees the world as one big drama directed by God, and we all play our respective parts in the theo – drama. It is our wish that movie producers and directors in Africa see in their work, a participation in telling the divine story. Pope John Paul II rightly advised: “Mine is an invitation to rediscover the depth of the spiritual and religious dimension which has been typical of art in its noblest forms in every age. It is with this in mind that I appeal to you, artists of the written and spoken word, of the theatre and music, of the plastic arts and the most recent technologies in the field of communication. I appeal especially to you, Christian artists: I wish to remind each of you that, beyond functional considerations, the close alliance that has always existed between the Gospel and art means that you are invited to use your creative intuition to enter into the heart of the mystery of the Incarnate God and at the same time into the mystery of man.” (JOHN PAUL II, *Letter to Artists* (4 April 1999), n.14).

We are pleased to equally present our candidates for Diaconal Ordination, wishing them a happy ministry ahead. I wish you, our fervent readers, a fruitful reading experience, hoping that we see in movies, opportunities for living our faith in a hostile world consistently and convincingly. God bless you abundantly.

Eric N. AFONGANG
(Editor – in – Chief)

Seminary Affairs

Highlights of activities in the seminary for the third term of the 2023/2024 formation year

A SEMINAR ON TRAUMA HEALING

A seminar on Stress/Trauma healing took place from Thursday, 15th February to Saturday 17th February 2024 in the Seminary community. The Facilitators of this seminar were some Members of the Counselling Service of the Archdiocese of Bamenda headed by Fr. Peter Foleng.

The morning sessions ran from 8:30am.-12:50 pm while the afternoon sessions took place from 3 p.m.-5 p.m.

The Vice Rector, Fr. Gordian Baba, welcomed the team from the counselling service of the archdiocese of Bamenda headed by Fr. Peter Foleng on the first day of the seminar. The Vice Rector in his welcome address remarked that the Seminar was very important for our human formation and called on all to be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the resource persons. The members of the counselling service present for this seminar were: Fr. Martin Forgewe, Mrs Baye Prudencia, Sr. Mary Francis Fohba (TSSF) and Mrs Linda Ndimbeng.

The Purpose of the Seminar

- The seminar will help the participants identify causes of stress/trauma.
- The seminar will help us to be able manage stress/traumatic situations.
- The seminar will help us to be able to help those we will meet in traumatic situations.

The following topics were treated during the three days seminar: day one (belief systems and addictions); day two (Trauma awareness and Regular Sleep and Rest); and day three (Stress/Trauma Management).

In his closing remarks, the Rector- Fr. Charles Berinyuy thanked the resource persons of the counselling service of the Archdiocese of Bamenda headed by Fr. Peter Foleng. Again, the Rector remarked that the seminar was fruitful and enliven as the seminarians would make use of the knowledge acquired to help themselves and also help those they will meet in traumatic situations.

Celebration of the Send Forth Ceremony of Mr Joseph NGEH (A FORMER LAUNDRY MAN OF THE SEMINARY)

On Saturday, 25th May 2024, at 11:00 am, the Seminary community had a send forth Mass for Mr Joseph Ngeh who was an auxiliary worker in STAMS Bambui for 38 years (1985-2023). The main celebrant during the Eucharistic celebration was Fr. Edward Lukong and 43 Priests concelebrated. In his homily, Fr.

Edward Lukong remarked that today is a twin celebration. Firstly, we celebrate the Saturday Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the title "Mary, Mother of Unity". Secondly, we are thanking God for the life of Mr Joseph Ngeh for the selfless services he had rendered to the Seminary community for 38 years. With regard to the celebration of our Lady as Mother of unity, Fr. Lukong called on all present to emulate the life of our Blessed Mother. Mary is an outstanding sign of unity and we should follow her example by being instruments of unity wherever we find ourselves. Turning to the second point of the day's celebration, Fr. Lukong thanked Mr Joseph Ngeh for his selfless services offered to the seminary community for the past 38 years and added that he deserves a good rest.

After Mass, some photographs were taken in front of the Seminary Chapel, then procession to the seminarians' Refectory for the second part of the celebration. During his speech, the Rector, Fr. Charles Berinyuy, thanked God for the marvels He has done in this seminary. Also, the Rector thanked Mr Joseph Ngeh for his selfless services rendered to the seminary for 38 unbroken years. At the end of his speech, the Rector prayed that God should continue to shower his blessings upon Mr Joseph Ngeh and his family. After the word of welcome from the Rector, there was a presentation by the Special Choir. Then the Rector, on behalf of the Seminary community gave a special gift to Mr Joseph Ngeh. As a response to the gift Mr Joseph Ngeh expressed sentiments of profound gratitude. After this we had refreshment. In his closing remarks, Fr. Anthony Yilaka thanked Mr Joseph Ngeh for his selfless services rendered to the Seminary community for 38 years.

Visit

On Sunday 26 May 2024, the ex-students of the St Francis College, Fiango – Kumba, Bamenda Chapter, paid a visit to the seminary. Fr. Aaron Obi (one of the newly ordained priests) was the main celebrant at the Holy Mass. He exhorted all present to live lives following the perichoretic manner of the Blessed Trinity. A manner that insists on love, that is, love which is self-giving, sacrificial and relational. After Holy Mass, snapshots were taken in front of the seminary Chapel and we went to the seminarians' refectory for breakfast and interactions. There, the president of the St Francis ex-students delegation introduced her members and offered words of advice to the seminarians. Also, they gifted the seminarians some foodstuffs to assist in our feeding.

Seminary Affairs

NOTICE! NOTICE!! NOTICE!!!

Information for the attention of Exseminarians and Priests alumni of **Saint Thomas Aquinas' Major Seminary (STAMS Theologicum), Bambui.**

If you wish to collect documents from the secretariat of the Theologicum, kindly make your request via the email address provided below:
bambuiseminary@yahoo.co.uk

Indicate clearly what kind of documents you wish to be prepared for your collection and leave a contact phone number by which you can be conveniently reached when the documents are ready for collection. Your appointment to collect documents should be on working days, that is, from Monday to Friday, during working hours, that is, from 9:00AM until Midday.

Thank you for your understanding and collaboration.
Sister Secretary

We use this opportunity to thank you who have been sending Mass Intentions to our Seminary. We appeal for more intentions. Our Seminary has eleven resident Priests, and ten intentions could

be exonerated everyday. Mass Intentions to STAMS could be sent through any Bishop's House or through any member of the STAMS family-Priest or Seminarian. Once the Mass is celebrated, the Mass Offering is used for the upkeep of the Seminary as a whole. Thus, when you send these intentions, besides reaping the assured Spiritual Benefits, you contribute to the upkeep of the Seminary materially. May God continue to bless and reward you for all your kindness towards our House of Formation for future Priests.

Rev. Fr. Charles BERINYUY SENGKA
(Rector)

A PLEA FROM STAMS LIBRARY

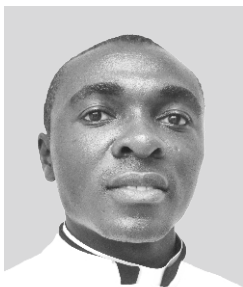
We plead with Priests and Christians to send copies of Sunday Newsletters, Wedding cards, Funeral booklets, Wedding booklets, Invitation cards, Thank You cards, Souvenirs of Religious Professions, Papers, Magazines and any other souvenir cards for preservation in the archive section of the Seminary library. We also use this opportunity to acknowledge, with profound gratitude, having received a good number of these items. However, we remain open to receive even more. You could hand any of these to any member of the STAMS family (priest or seminarian) or, if possible, bring them yourself to the Seminary.

Rev. Fr. Evans SHANG
(Father Librarian)

Dear Readers, we would like to inform you that Subscription Forms for the Searchlight Magazine are now available. To get the form, kindly get to any seminarian from STAMS Bambui and Subscribe for a year or more. Thanks.

NOTICE! NOTICE!!

Dear brothers and sisters, we would like to remind all those who visit the Seminary, that whenever they come, they should dress decently.



**Fr. Pierre
Marie Tafon**
Theology IV



**Br. Esope
Thaddeus OFM**
Theology IV

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF MOVIES: THE PURPOSE OF MOVIES

INTRODUCTION

The combined study of movies (films) and theology is exciting and challenging for a number of reasons: as a field of study, it is ever-changing and expanding, offering endless questions and insights not only because new films are released on daily basis, but also because technology constantly progresses. (Cf. STEFANIE KNAUSS, *Religion and film*, Villanova University U.S.A. 2002, P15). At the beginning of World War II, many colonial masters (administrators) adopted the medium of movies (films) as a means of education and promotion of the colonial projects (for example, the 1949 movie title "I was a male war bride," directed by Howard Hawks, which depicts Cary Grant plays Rochard (mercifully eschewing a French accent), whose romance with chauffeur Ann Sheridan somehow leads to him dressing as a woman and smuggling himself into the US). Subsequently, the British ministry of information acquired the rights to show films, supplied "free of charge to colonial governments" and many movies were distributed by the Information Service Department suitable to local colonial settings.

In the 1940's in the Gold Coast, this department made use of cinema vans to organize movie shows in Rural and Urban areas, where people were assembled, in open-air space "to show documentary movies and new reels, to explain the colonial governments policies" to people in towns and villages free of charge. Most of these movies were propaganda, produced by the Colonial Film Unit (C.F.U) in London. Commercial cinema owners were required to screen C.F.U movies in addition to their own programming (Cf. BIRGIT MEYER, *Sensational Movies*, University of California Press 2015, P19). In order for the film industries and their productions not to remain only at the level of a social and historical affair, it is imperative to view these productions in the light of theology.

1. A THEOLOGY OF MOVIES

Some movies depict aspects of the creation story. If properly coordinated, God will always be at the center of such movie production because creatures cannot

be without the Creator, God. What impact do movies have on our faith? Many will wonder how a Christian worthy of the name can give support to a movie industry, knowing fully well that it has some anti-Christian biases and moral relativisms. It is true that in the film industry, there is bad news. Still, there is a lot of good news contained in the film industry. If approached in the light of the Gospel, the film industries would serve as good media for evangelization. Since as Jodie Foster in his book *Creative Art*, says: "movie characters' ideals become our ideals, their thoughts become standards of our thinking and language, their style of dress and movements are seen in our streets" (Cf. JODIE FOSTER, *Creative Art*, Michigan Press, New York 2013, P. 30). Can all movies especially African ones make considerable contribution today in the life of the Christians? The response to this question will depend on the individual film or aspect of it, which does give room to a general attitude towards it. Many Western movies have had a long history of misrepresenting the people and cultures, especially of the African continents. Often, the show casing is limited in narratives that only focus on themes of war, suffering, and famine, to mention just a few. For more than a century across different cultures, movies have been the primary medium for storytelling, handing on of cultures, depicting and exploring the world, and in a way in shaping and engaging the human senses and emotions, memory and imagination (Cf. BIRGIT MEYER, *Sensational Movies*, P45). When God's central position in movies is maintained, movie production become purposeful.

2. AFRICAN MOVIES ARE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

Aghajanian posits that, most movies have greatly impacted lives, since they reflect what is most important to a society, but these movies go beyond institutional boundaries to visualize the transcendent in an enchanting, temporal way. (Cf. ARTHUR AGHAJANIAN, *Contemplative in Conversation*, Baker Books, 2022, P2). Aghajanian continues to tell us that,

when we watch a movie, we are momentarily drawn into an alternative world in which images of the common place can be made to speak beyond themselves (Cf. *Ibid.*). In a movie, the viewer's imagination is called to participate in what he or she is seeing, hearing, and feeling. It is a form of art that moves between realism and fantasy, which can draw one out of oneself to a larger reality beyond the events taking place on screen.

Movies open up a wide range of questions about aesthetics and structures, experience and emotions, reality and imagination, values and divine encounters, meaning and pleasure, words and images. They allow us to study new forms of religious experiences in a Post-secular society. African movies serve various purposes in society. Some of which include: Cultural preservation wherein African movies help preserve and showcase the diverse cultures, traditions, and languages of the continent; in education where awareness about social issues, historical events, and contemporary challenges facing African societies is raised; African movies provide a source of entertainment and escapism for audiences, offering a wide range of genres and storytelling styles; African movies can inspire and empower individuals by showcasing stories of resilience, triumph, and personal growth; they can showcase the beauty and diversity of African landscapes, promoting tourism and cultural exchange; African movies often serve as a platform for social and political commentary, addressing issues such as corruption, gender inequality, and human rights; the film industry contributes to the economy through job creation, tourism, and the export of African culture and creativity; African movies can bring communities together through shared experiences, discussions, and cultural events; they contribute to a better understanding of African societies and their complexities, fostering cross-cultural understanding and empathy.

3. CHRISTIAN GOD AND THE AFRICAN DEITIES

The African man believes in a Supreme God who according to Masumbuko Mununguri is known as the

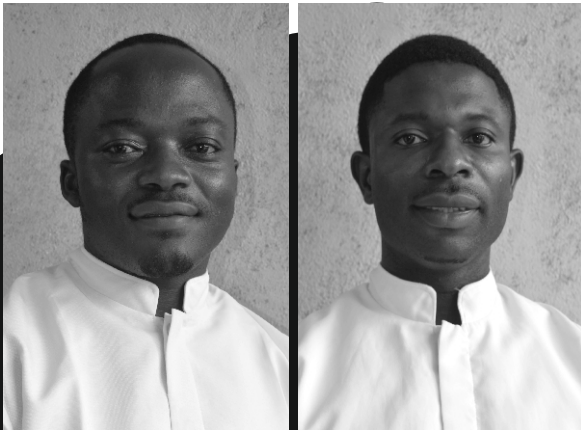
God of our Ancestors (MASUMBUKO MUNUNGURI, *The Closeness of the God of our Ancestors: An African Approach to the Incarnation*, Nairobi 1997, p.13). The Supreme God is referred to as the God of our Ancestors probably due to his closeness to the African man. For the Jews also referred to him as the God of our Ancestors to express His closeness to Israel (Cf. Acts. 22:14). The Christian God is Almighty. The African man knows that God is everywhere in the heavens and on earth and that He is an embodiment of every good thing. He is seen to relate with other men through the intercession of other deities. What prompted the belief in African Traditional Religion of other deities is the fact that evil and suffering exist in the world despite the fact that the God of our Ancestors does only good.

Traditionally, Africans believe in a supreme being who is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, and who is manifested in nature and natural phenomena. However, Africans also believe in deities whose power is subordinate to the Supreme. That is why in African movies, the portrayal of the forces of the deities and God is usually that of sharp contrast, of both possessing powers but different from each other. But God being God always triumphs for those who believe. For the evangelist John says: "these are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (Jn. 20:31).

CONCLUSION

Movie production is the work of human hands which ultimately lies in the hands of the God who created everything out of nothing. Any attempt at a movie production void of God is attempting to dethrone God and enthrone man. If the approach to the study of movies is done in the light of theology, the eyes of many will be opened to see the good news that is contained in the film industry. It is in this light that film industries can make their productions meaningful and purposeful for their consumers. Technology constantly progresses and the manner of acting films probably changes with time but the only certain reality that does not change with the changing nature of the film industry and the world at large is God.

African movies and the word of God



Gharwoh Nelson
Theology III

J Jarvis Essiye
Theology III

INTRODUCTION

Before the coming of the Missionaries, Africans were deeply religious people who believed in the different deities that existed following the traditions of the different ethnic groups. Like the Athenians to whom St. Paul preached to at the Areopagus about an unknown God (Cfr. Acts 17:16ff), Africans through the Gospel have come to a deeper understanding of the Supreme God. As time went on, Africans became propagators of the Gospel and developed different means of spreading the Gospel to other parts of Africa and beyond. One of the fastest and outstanding means through which this was and is still carried out is through the African movie industries. The question here is: Is the African movie compatible with the Gospel's values? Does it promote the spirit of evangelization? How have

the African movies help to propagate the fundamental Christians values? Are African movies a blessing or curses? This article is aimed at providing answers to the above questions. Let us begin by clarifying some key terms such as movie and word of God.

1. MOVIES

A Movie is a form of entertainment that enacts a story by sound and a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement. Synonyms of movie will include: film, flick, motion-picture, and movie- picture. Movies were introduced in some parts of Africa notably Nigeria in the 1900's by the British colonialists who used it for propaganda, while the Missionaries used it to spread the Gospel, for example, *Men of Two Worlds* (1946), directed by Thorold Dickinson and starring Phyllis Calvert, Eric Portman and Robert Adams. The screenplay concerns an African music student who returns home to battle a witch doctor for control over his tribe. The Colonial Administration and the Church saw the film not only as a medium of entertainment but as an effective medium of communication (Cf. ENEH CHINASA JACINTA, Doctoral Thesis *Influence of Nollywood Movies on the Social Behaviour of Students in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu North* (July 2018,1).

2. THE WORD OF GOD

The Word of God is the inspired word contained in the Bible that was written by men through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Cf. VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Word of God *Dei Verbum* n. 11). Inspired by God, his Word is aimed at teaching, reproving, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be completely equipped for every good work (Cfr. *Ibid.* n.12). When we engage in studying the Word of God in scripture, we encounter many stories, which is a demonstration of God telling us stories through the inspired writers. So, man's expression of story-telling in the form of movies is an exercise of God-given creative desire.

2. THE BENEFITS OF AFRICAN MOVIES VIS- À-VIS THE GOSPEL

The focus here is to examine how African Movies are a means of propagating the demands and values of the Gospel.

2.1. DRAMATIC VISUAL DISPLAY OF BIBLICAL STORIES IN AFRICAN MOVIES

Some African Movies are presented in the form of biblical stories acted, for example, the movie *Our Jesus Story*, directed by Tchidi Chikere (2020). Other movies express the African mentality before civilization reached that part of Africa, for example watching the movie *The gods must be crazy* (1980) directed by Jamie Uys, we encounter an African man depicted in a primitive condition. In the bible, we come to know God through the stages of revelation. Thus, integrating scriptural understanding to the movies we watch is very important to better grasp the message a particular movie conveys.

2.2. PORTRAYAL OF GOD'S SUPREMACY

One of the major difficulties of the Missionaries in their effort to implant the Word of God in Africa was the worship of many gods by the Africans. It was not a bed of roses for the Africans to abandon their gods in favour of the so called God of the white whom the Missionaries proclaimed to be supreme. Some of the African movies portray this supremacy of God over the African gods mostly through their ministers, thus strengthening the faith of those who believe in the Supreme God and showing the supremacy of the God over deities.

2.3. VIRTUES IN AFRICAN MOVIES

Some of the African movies are educative to Christians as they bring out some gospel values such as charity, generosity, peace, concern for the poor, just to name a few. Those who watch these films are moved to concrete actions, being charitable to the poor and needy, and practise the act of seeking peace and reconciliation when in tensions with their neighbors.

2.4. SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO CHRISTIAN LIFE

Some of the African movies are centred on Christian life and even in the lives of some African saints. In some of them, suffering is portrayed for those who choose to be followers of Christ, and when Christians watch such movies, they see in them the importance of perseverance, hope and patience in Christian living. In fact, some Christians actually get to the practice of such virtues and thus such movies become sources of encouragement in their own Christian life.

3. CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN MOVIES TO GOD'S WORD

African movie industries and their movies are a mixed blessing to their consumers. Inasmuch as they are beneficial in helping them to live out the demands of the Gospel, they are also sources of destruction to many

consumers as through them some of the Gospel values are corroded, compromised and the word of God oftentimes compromised.

3.1. CONCENTRATION OF AFRICAN FILM PRODUCER ON MONEY

Most African film industries are out for money making. As such, they focus so much on economic gains or profits, irrespective of the contents of the material they are sending out. In some of these films, indecency, immodesty, immoral ideas and semi pomographical scenes are propagated, things which are totally contrary to the Gospel message. However, the point here is not that African movie industries should not serve as an income generating system, but that while seeking for financial resources, they should not place it above the gospel teachings.

3.2. THE MANNERISM OF MOVIE MODELS

In as much as African movies portray to an extent a genuine religious spirit, they sometimes display what can be termed a parade of hypocrisy in the aspect of fashion and in the use of vulgar and ungodly language. This is not a true image of one who has been confirmed to bear witness to the Word of God in whatever occupation one is engaged in daily life. Also, these obscene movies will be in the internet for generations to come and may likely negatively influence the lives of the young and the youths.

3.3. THE EXPLOITATION OF ACTORS AND ACTRESSES BY SOME DIRECTORS

Some movie directors on account of the senseless pleasure-seeking minds do manifest sexual attempts to exploit some actors and actresses before they are given some outstanding parts to perform in a movie. An example shared on one of Cameroon's leading newspaper *The Guardian Post*, Miss Ekene Umenwa, one of Nigeria's fast rising actresses who refused the sexual advances from movie directors and movie industry owners who wanted to exploit her sexually before giving her a prominent role to play. She vowed never to break her vow to get a role in a movie through sleeping with men. (Cfr. *The Guardian Post* No 2909, Sunday 24, 2023, page 11).

CONCLUSION

African movies are indications of the majestic creativity that God has bestowed upon the African man. For African movies to have more meaning and worth they must be screened through the lenses of the Gospel, only then can they serve as unique blessings to Africans and beyond. Therefore, some of the movie scripts and scenes should be morally and ethically censored and directed primarily towards evangelization. Since, the African movies industries are gifts from God, the Africans must seek to develop it strictly in the light and spirit of the Word of God.

AFRICAN MOVIES AND THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY LIFE



Antoine Nsanyuy
Theology II



Cletus CHIA
Theology II

INTRODUCTION

The family is seen as the foundation of every society, and the relationships within it are given great importance. In African movies, the concept of family life is often portrayed through the lens of traditional values and customs. These films often showcase the strong bonds that exist between family members, the importance of respect for elders, and the value of community support. As Achebe, once said, A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to save them from starving. They all have food in their own homes. When we gather together in the moonlit village ground it is not because of the moon. Every man can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so. (Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Pearson Education Limited, London 2008, 133.) These films provide a nuanced portrayal of the joys and challenges of family life in Africa, highlighting the universal themes of love, unity, and resilience that resonate with audiences worldwide. Let us look at the ways in which these movies influence family life in relation to the Christian faith.

1. SOME POSITIVE VALUES OF AFRICAN MOVIES ON THE FAMILY

1.1. Family Unity and Forgiveness

The family which is the basic cell of every society is expected to be a place where people are united and are able to forgive one another when misunderstandings erupt. A family that is not united cannot pray together and consequently; forgiveness cannot be experienced in such a family. Many African films highlight the importance of family unity and the power of forgiveness and reconciliation, which are central tenets of Christian teachings. *The Mother of George* is a film that explores the themes of family unity and forgiveness through the lens of a Nigerian couple's experience in Brooklyn. In this movie we see how faced with the issue of child bearing a couple still tries as much as possible to live together (Cfr. *The Mother of George*, Movie, Andrew Dosunmu (Director), Nollywood 2013). Forgiveness becomes a central theme as the couple confronts the challenges in their marriage, highlighting the need for understanding and compassion to overcome adversity (Cfr *The Mother of George*).

We can still in the same light look at how families try to go through their challenges by finding reconciliation through faith-based values. There are many Christian values that can help the family towards reconciliation. Some of these values can be drawn from African movies. This can be seen for instance in the Ghanaian movie, *"The Burial of Kojo"* which portrays family unity and forgiveness. Set against the backdrop of Ghana's vibrant culture and landscapes, a young girl experiences a type of complex relationship that exists between her father and her uncle (*The Burial of Kojo*, Blitz Bazawule (director), Ghallywood 2018). In this movie, forgiveness is a pivotal theme as it explores the tensions and reconciliation between Kojo and Kwabena, who had a troubled past involving love and betrayal. The film suggests that forgiveness is essential for healing and moving on with life, and it is through Esi's innocence and determined eyes that the audience experience the unfolding of these themes (Cfr *The Burial of Kojo*)

1.2. Resilience and Perseverance in Hope

The theme of resilience in the face of adversity is common in African cinema, reflecting the Christian belief in hope and perseverance. Resilience and hope are very essential in the life of every human being. Sometimes there is the tendency to give up especially in the face of difficulties. This is not the case in the South African film, *"Tsotsi"* where the theme of "resilience and hope" is portrayed through the transformation of the main character; Tsotsi, a young gang leader living in the slums of Johannesburg (*Tsotsi*, Gavin HOOD (Director), Sallywood 2005). After a series of violent crimes, Tsotsi inadvertently kidnaps a baby during a carjacking, which becomes a catalyst for his redemption. As he cares for the child, Tsotsi confronts his own traumatic past and begins to rediscover his capacity for compassion and empathy.

When we are able to persevere in difficulties and hope in our Creator, it will help us not to despair. There is also the theme of resilience and hope portrayed in another Ghanaian movie titled *"Beasts of No Nation"* through the harrowing journey of Agu, a young boy forced to become a child soldier in an unnamed West African country (*Beasts of No Nation*, Movie, Cary JOJI FUKUNAGA, 2015). Despite the brutal and traumatic experiences Agu endured, his story is one of survival and the human spirit's capacity to endure and find strength even in the direst circumstances. Hope is one of the theological virtues and it guards the Christian against despair. Families that persevere in hope will always be happy even in moments of great tribulations. They always bear each other's burden in love while hoping for divine intervention. We must therefore give credit to the various African movies that teach their audience the necessity of persevering in hope.

2. SOME NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF AFRICAN MOVIES

2.1. Indecency and Lack of Prudence

Two obvious purposes of the movie industries in Africa are entertainment and education. In pursuing this goal, it is necessary that those at the head take into consideration the characters they want to portray, their role, and the manner in which these characters are set out, because some of the movies are too indecent. In this regard, the parents as well as guardians should be at the selecting bench as to what their children consume in the name of entertainment. Statistics show that "where there was frequent parental monitoring, fewer children deviated from traditional views unlike when monitoring was occasional, rare, or never" (WILFRED EMEH, *New Media and the Christian Family*, American Printing, Birmingham, 2016, 35). And the producers in their part should ensure that their ingenuity is outstandingly useful (Cf. VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL Pastoral Instruction On The Means Of Social Communication, *Communio et Progressio*, (29 January, 1971) n.147).

2.2. Influence from the West

It would seem that the African movie industry has allowed herself to be influenced by the West; and as such certain scenes feature in African movies that are neither originally African, nor identical to what the African man values and upholds as a way of life. This is so because of the erroneous mentality that whatever comes from the western world is superior and as such should be held in high esteem. Here we mean realities like homosexuality, which have a great deal of negative influence on our growing children and even adults and to the family at large. "though same sex unions are not legalized and are considered a taboo, children may nonetheless identify themselves as homosexuals possibly due to perceptions shaped by the Western media" (WILFRED EMEH, *New Media and the Christian Family*, 35.). Unfortunately, "Africans want to live in the Western style, forgetting that they have their own cultural identity and that Western realities are not the same with those of Africa" (*Ibid* 44). Therefore, African movies with these trends have become a great weapon against the essential properties of marriage such as unity and indissolubility and to redefine marriage from covenant between a man and a woman to a union between persons.

2.3. The High Level of Individualism

The advent of portable electronic gadgets, the increase in their use, and the pleasure derived through these devices have made many to love and cherish these things in such a manner that they dissociate themselves from others just to enjoy them. Previously, children watched TV shows and movies with their parents and siblings, but with the advent of smart phones, all of these shows and movies are made available with little or no cost. Since the traditional family values in Africa are largely upheld intact in terms of time spent together with family members (Cf. WILFRED EMEH, *New Media and the Christian Family*, 34), private entertainment becomes detrimental to the family. It weakens the family ties rather than strengthen them, since members prefer the comfort of their rooms at the expense of the family bond. Individualism has greatly affected spouses who spend more time on the internet or playing video games than with each other. Some families no longer pray together because everyone is "busy" on their gadget. It is unfortunate that some African movies seem to portray these lifestyles as indications of civilization.

CONCLUSION

The influence of African movies on the family is multifaceted as seen above. Given that everyone basically comes from a family and should belong to a family, this article is a wake-up call to everyone. It is also a challenge to parents to protect their families from these silent but dangerous influences. This article is also a source of encouragement those families that have been firm to rise above these influences, and who have been enriched by the positive aspects of African movies.

HOW CATHOLIC ARE THE “JESUS” FILMS AND MOVIE PROJECTS



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INTRODUCTION

The question “How Catholic are the ‘Jesus’ films” is a question which any film viewer must be able to answer for his or herself. Each person must also be able to decipher the aspects which are truly part of the historical Jesus from those that are mere aesthetic additions to that mystery, the Mystery of Christ. The goal of this article is to induce into those who watch “Jesus films” the ability to be critical about what is true and Catholic from what is not. To achieve this objective, this article first furnishes the reader with the criteria to be used to decipher that which is Catholic from that which is not. After enumeration, an exemplary analysis is done on two of the most prominent “Jesus Films.” From then on, the reader is allowed to continue such critical analysis on other “Jesus Film Projects.”

1. WHAT MAKES A THING “CATHOLIC”

Etymologically, the word catholic comes from two Greek words *kata* meaning “about” and *holos*, meaning “whole.” The word therefore means looking at things in the light of the whole. The first person to use this word was St. Ignatius of Antioch in his Letter to the *Smyrnaeans*. He used it to describe the universality and fullness of the Church founded by Christ on St Peter, the Catholic Church. Thus, for an idea to be catholic, it must be in consonance Sacred Scripture, with the Magisterium of the Church, and finally with the Tradition handed to the Apostles by Christ. Let us look at each of this carefully.

1.1. Tradition

From first glance, it would seem that Jesus was always against the Jewish Tradition which he met. Scriptural texts like “You have made God’s word null and void by means of your tradition” (Mt 15:6) seem to insinuate that Jesus Christ fought determinedly against the dogmatization of a casuistical tradition. But a more careful analysis of the situation would reveal that Jesus remained a Jew, that is, he linked his message to the tradition of believing Israel. He did not abandon the Old Testament, but lived it. (Cf. JOSEPH RATZINGER, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, Ignatius, San Francisco 1987, 95.) Jn. 20:30-31

attests that there are many things which Jesus taught the apostles, which are not recorded in Scripture. These make up the Tradition.

1.2. The Magisterium

Tradition always presumes a bearer, that is, a community that preserves and communicates it. In the case of Jesus, this bearer is the Church. (Cfr Ratzinger, *Formal Principles of Catholicism*, 100.) The Church is led by bishops, who form a teaching body called the *Magisterium*. The Magisterium is tasked with the responsibility of handing on the deposit of faith, the *fidei depositum*, intact and uncontaminated. (Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum*, 11 October 1992.)

1.3. Scripture

To hand on the deposit of faith, the magisterium can employ different means, as suited to the different situations of the people. It can hand it on orally or in writing. 2 Thess. 2:15 attests to this. It reads: “Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter from us.” Sacred Scripture is therefore just one aspect of the formal structure of Catholicism. And Scripture must be interpreted as a whole, not just as isolated extracts.

2. AN EXEMPLARY ANALYSIS OF A FEW "JESUS FILM" PROJECTS

From what we have seen it follows that for something to be orthodox, that is Catholic, it must be in consonance with the Church's Tradition, with the Magisterium, and with Sacred Scripture. Let us now analyze a few "Jesus Films" to see how Catholic they are.

2.1. Mel Gibsons *The Passion of Christ*, of 2004.

As beautiful as the movie is, it contains many scenes which are not Scripturally founded. These scenes were culled from Anne Catherine Emmerich's *The Dolorous Passion of Christ*. For example, the scene where Jesus is thrown over a bridge by massive chains after his arrest is a rendition of Anne's words: "I saw our Lord fall twice before he reached the bridge, and these falls were caused entirely by the barbarous manner in which the soldiers dragged him; but when they were half over the bridge they gave full vent to their brutal inclinations, and struck Jesus with such violence that they threw him off the bridge into the water." (Cf. ANNE CATHERINE EMMERICH, *The Dolorous Passion of our Lord*, Grand Rapids, London 1862, 131.) The scene where Mary and Mary Magdalene wipe Jesus' blood after he is scourged also come from there: "Then it was that the Mother of Jesus, accompanied by the holy women, approached the pillar and wiped up the blood with which it and the ground around were saturated." (Cf. *Ibid.*, 219)

There are also many scenes which are either contrary to Sacred Scripture, or cannot be clearly proven from there. For example, Satan is shown to be a woman, although she speaks with the voice of a man. Also, the movie depicts Mary Magdalene as the woman caught in adultery in Jn 7:53-8:11, but there is no clear biblical conclusion for that claim. In the Resurrection scene, Jesus is portrayed to be naked. We see his thighs and buttocks. This detail is not found in Scripture. Just like Adam and Eve before The Fall, Scripture makes no mention of whether Jesus was naked or the manner in which he was clothed.

There are also some scenes which raise eyebrows. Only John records Jesus saying "I am He" in the garden of Gethsemane. And when he says this, the soldiers "drew back and fell to the ground." (Jn. 8:6.) But in the movie, there is no falling to the ground. Also, Mary is also made to see the devil. This scene can be the cause of serious theological debate.

2.2. Dallas Jenkins *The Chosen*, of 2017

It is an American Christian historical drama television series created, directed, and co-written by Dallas Jenkins. It was first released on December 24, 2017. The series portrays Christ as divine, and the literal fulfillment of the Old Testament Prophecies. We see the New Testament is hidden in the Old, and how the New Testament fulfills the Old as the Church teaches. (Cf. VATICAN II ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution of Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, n. 16.) Jesus has clear knowledge of the Godhead. He has the power to expel demons and work real miracles. At the same time, he is genuinely human. He has real human emotions. He laughs and can make jokes. He has deep affection and a profound humility. Thus we see a core Catholic doctrine: Christ is both God and Man.

Strangely, the teaser to the Christmas Episode portrays Mary is being in pain at the birth of Christ. But drawing from Isaiah 66:7 ("Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.") amongst other sources, Catholic Tradition and the Magisterium teach that this birth was painless. This teaching is explicitly stated, for example, in Preface II of the Votive Mass of Mary. The preface reads: "She who had given him birth without the pains of childbirth was to endure the greatest of pains in bringing forth to new life the family of your Church." (Cf. CONGREGATION OF DIVINE WORSHIP, *Collection of Masses of the Virgin Mary*, 1992, Preface II: Mary at the Foot of the Cross)

CONCLUSION

So far, we have outlined the core aspects of what it means for something to be Catholic. We have also analyzed two movies and shown how Catholic they are and how they are not. The reader should now go on to watch other "Jesus Films," but this time, with a critical eye. Pasolini's *The Gospel of Matthew* may be a good film to begin with, because it would easily be noticed that the movie is Catholic because it has a very minimal filling out of the Gospel accounts. More sophisticated "Jesus Films" may be *Last Temptation of Christ*, directed by Martin Scorsese, *The Miracle Maker*, and *The Encounter*. Therefore, one must investigate the elements that are not from Scripture, that are not taught by the Magisterium, and that are not part of Catholic Tradition.



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LA VIOLENCE DANS LES FILMS AFRICAINS

INTRODUCTION

Conscient de ce que l'être humain est parfois animé par un sentiment sadique qui malgré lui attise sa curiosité et suscite en lui un désir de jouir de la souffrance de l'autre, certaines industries de films africains ne ménagent aucun effort pour mettre à la disposition de leurs clients des films peints de violence sous toutes les formes possibles. En effet, même s'il est vrai que le film n'est le plus souvent qu'une représentation imaginaire de la réalité, il n'en demeure pas moins vrai que certains faits sont parfois intentionnellement exagérés, et cela pour des fins diverses car il a inventé des crimes que le code pénal n'a pas prévus, et il a imaginé des tortures que l'Inquisition n'a pas devinées (D. A. F. SADE, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, Gallimard, Paris, 2007, 9).

1. DEFINITION ET GENESE DE LA VIOLENCE

La violence, dans un sens général, est l'usage de la force ou de la menace pour contraindre un groupe ou un individu à agir indépendamment de sa volonté. La violence n'est pas un phénomène nouveau propre au monde contemporain. Déjà présente dans de nombreux mythes et légendes, elle fait partie intégrante de toute l'histoire de

l'humanité, et reste omniprésente sur nos écrans et dans les médias, plus particulièrement dans les films africains, ainsi que plus proche de nous, dans nos relations humaines quotidiennes.

D'une part, l'homme a la conscience que la violence lui vient d'ailleurs. La violence produit de la nature sans la participation de l'homme. L'homme est impuissant face aux cataclysmes, aux calamités atroces, et maladies provenant de la nature. L'homme voit la violence ici comme un mauvais coup de la nature qui veut punir l'homme en permanence. Albert Einstein observe dans la conception de l'univers que "La nature ne pardonne pas, elle agit et punit, voilà pourquoi l'homme doit lutter contre cette violence." L'homme ne se sent pas en sécurité dans la nature.

De plus, la violence semble être consubstantielle, autrement dit, la violence est innée en l'individu. Pour Freud, le *Thanatos* est une impulsion de mort qui présiderait au comportement des hommes et conduirait à l'autodestruction. Bref, l'homme renferme les germes belligènes, cariogènes et d'agressivité que Hegel nomme Violence ontologique (B. BOURGEOIS, *Droit, violence et liberté selon Hegel*, Paris, PUF 1986,

198). Dans *Malaise dans la civilisation*, Freud dit "l'homme est un être qui porte au compte de ses données instinctives, une bonne dose d'agressivité" (S. FREUD, *Malaise dans la civilisation*, PUF, Paris 1970, 49). Dans le même sens, Thomas Hobbes affirme l'homme est un loup pour l'homme, (T. HOBBS, *Le Léviathan Traité de la matière, de la forme et du pouvoir de la république ecclésiastique et civile*, PUF, Paris, 2002, 267), pour traduire cette nature agressive des humains qui représentent un danger pour l'environnement par son goût à la destruction. Joseph de Maistre déclare "L'homme est un être dont la main destructrice n'épargne rien de ce qui vit, il tue pour se nourrir, il tue pour se vêtir, il tue pour se protéger, il tue pour attaquer, il tue pour se défendre" (J. DE MAISTRE, *Considération sur la France*, Paris, 1929, 150).

2. QUELQUES FORMES DE VIOLENCES

La violence peut prendre différentes formes dans son expression. Ainsi nous avons les violences psychologiques et physiques qui désignent tous les actes, les propos ou les négligences qui peuvent avoir un impact sur votre estime de soi ou votre moral. Si une personne vous critique régulièrement, vous ignore

ou vous délaisse volontairement : vous êtes victime de violences psychologiques. Des exemples : ne pas vous informer sur vos droits ; vous empêcher de faire vos propres choix ; vous faire subir une jalousie excessive ; vous manipuler ou vous faire endurer un chantage émotionnel ; vous isoler ; vous humilier ou vous dévaloriser ; vous priver de certaines aides (aide technique, aide humaine, etc.)

De plus, nous avons la violence verbale : les personnes utilisent des mots pour intimider, déstabiliser, menacer, blesser, faire peur à une autre personne. Il peut s'agir de moqueries, de critiques (en privé ou en public), d'insultes. Cette forme de violence peut être commise par une personne que vous connaissez ou par un inconnu.

En outre, nous avons les violences sexuelles qui recouvrent les situations dans lesquelles une personne impose à une autre, un ou des comportements, un ou des propos (oral ou écrit) à caractère sexuel. Il peut s'agir d'une agression sexuelle, d'un viol ou d'une tentative de viol. Cela peut être aussi un acte ou un commentaire commis avec violence, contrainte, menace ou surprise. En d'autres termes, ils sont subis et non désirés par la victime. Les violences sexuelles sont définies et punies par la loi à différents degrés.

3. MANIFESTATION DE LA VIOLENCE DANS LES FILMS AFRICAINS

Plusieurs facteurs décrivent amplement l'usage de la violence dans les films africains. Nous avons par exemple l'expression de la quête d'une vie facile. Cette attitude consiste à vouloir la fin sans passer par les moyens appropriés et adéquats. Illustrant avec le cas de la violence physique, nous voyons dans le film intitulé *Le Sang d'autrui* comment pour des fins matérielles, les êtres humains sont froidement assassinés et mutilés, servant ainsi de fumier aux cercles exotériques qui en retour promettent toujours de colossales sommes d'argent, quoique ce soit au prix de la vie des membres de ces sectes.

À côté de la quête d'une vie facile, nous avons également la colère et la révolte qui se traduisent dans les films d'origines africaines par la soif d'assouvir ses tensions par la vengeance vis-à-vis de l'opresseur. C'est ce que nous voyons dans le film *Les larmes d'Afrique* qui est une représentation d'un conflit passé ayant opposé le Cameroun au Nigéria. Nous voyons comment les barbares du Nigéria s'étaient révoltés contre leur propre Gouvernement à l'instar des Marquisards des années d'avant l'indépendance du Cameroun. Ceux du Nigéria pour exprimer cette colère semblable à celle d'un lion affamé et assoiffé allaient de village en village pour massacrer tous ceux qu'ils rencontraient sur leur route. C'est alors que, se servant d'armes à feu, des poignards, des flèches et des lances, ils décimaient à la fois les villageois et même les missionnaires qui s'étaient généreusement engagés pour le soutien de ces défavorisés.

4. CONSEQUENCES DE LA VIOLENCE DANS LES FILMS AFRICAINS SUR LES SOCIÉTÉS AFRICAINES

L'évidence derrière une telle réalité est qu'elle ne peut laisser les téléspectateurs indemnes, autrement dit, on est toujours influencé d'une manière ou d'une autre lorsqu'on regarde un film rempli de violence. Ainsi, à force de consommer des produits de cette catégorie-là, les jeunes surtout développent progressivement une certaine insensibilité face à la souffrance de l'autre, et ne voit parfois dans le prochain qu'un objet pouvant être vibré au rythme de toutes formes de sadismes possible tant que les objectifs escomptés sont atteints.

À côté de cela, nous avons la corruption des mentalités et des mœurs. Le normal cède silencieusement place à l'anormal, la crainte de violer la dignité du prochain cède place au faux courage et à la déshumanisation de l'autre, la forte criminalité prend de l'ampleur car à travers les films, les tactiques malsaines sont implicitement et efficacement transmises aux esprits faibles. Il va donc sans dire que la violence exposée et vendue dans nos films africains affecte énormément notre société qui de plus en plus ne devient que le produit de ses consommations.

CONCLUSION

La violence, quelle que soit la manière dont elle est dénoncée, reste une atteinte à la dignité de la personne humaine et une offense à son Créateur qui n'a qu'un agenda de paix et d'harmonie pour ses créatures. C'est pourquoi Gandhi conclut : La plus grande force dont dispose l'humanité est la non-violence. Elle est plus puissante que l'arme la plus destructive inventée par l'ingéniosité de l'homme. (M. K. GANDHI, *Ma non-violence*, Stock, Paris, 1973, 245). Nous sommes donc invités à regarder les films que nos industries cinématographiques nous proposent avec un regard critique et toujours à la lumière des préceptes moraux résumés dans la Règle d'OR : ce que tu n'aimes pas, ne le fais pas à autrui non plus, et à la lumière de la Parole de Dieu qui dit : Aime ton prochain comme toi-même, (Mc 12:31).

BANALIZATION OF SEXUALITY IN THE AFRICAN FILM INDUSTRY



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INTRODUCTION

Among the many difficulties parents encounter today, despite different social contexts, one certainly stands out: giving children an adequate preparation for adult life, particularly with regard to education in the true meaning of sexuality. In the past, even when the family did not provide specific sexual education, the general culture was permeated by respect for fundamental values and hence served to protect and maintain them. In the greater part of society, both in developed and developing countries, the decline of

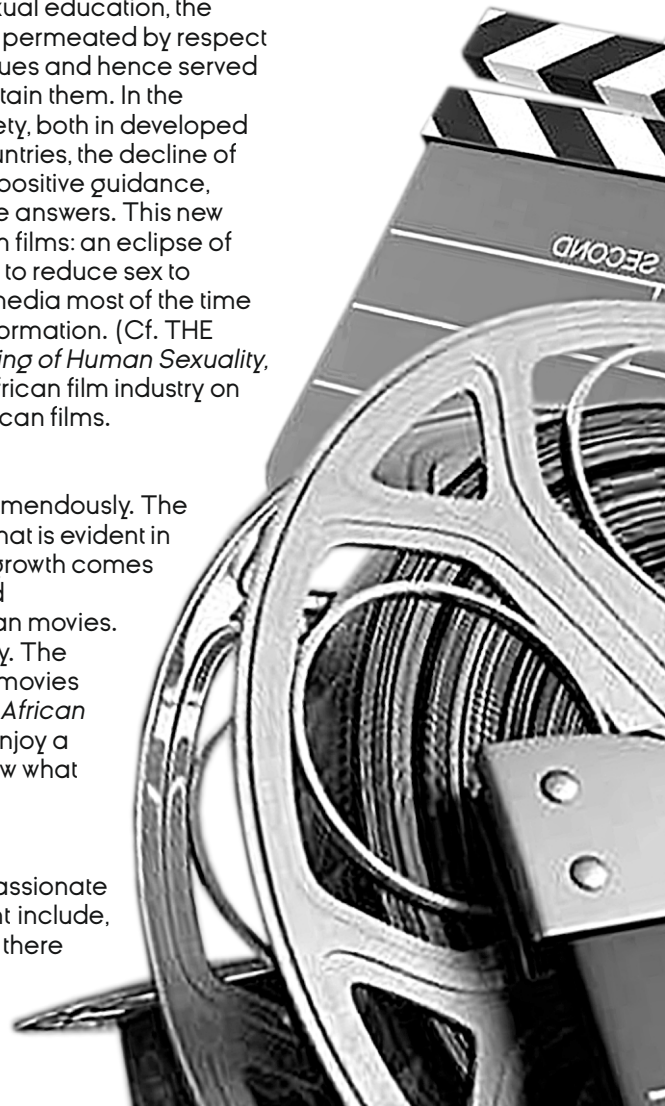
traditional models has left children deprived of consistent and positive guidance, while parents find themselves unprepared to provide adequate answers. This new context is made worse by what we observe especially in African films: an eclipse of the truth about man which, among other things, exerts pressure to reduce sex to something commonplace. In this area, society and the mass media most of the time provide depersonalized, recreational and often pessimistic information. (Cf. THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE FAMILY, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, (8 December, 1995) n.1). This article is aimed at analysing the African film industry on the aspect of the reduction of sexuality which are explicit in African films.

1.1. A Decline: from Sacredness to Obscenity

Over the past decade, the African movie industry has grown tremendously. The change in storyline, level of talent and standard of production that is evident in most African movies is beyond commendation. However, with growth comes change and that change is not always positive. Nudity, sex, and unexplained wealth have become the order of the day in African movies. African movies have drifted from the sacred culture of decency. The values, morals, tradition and standards that separated African movies from others are being torn down. (Cf. NIKE ADEBAYO, *Nudity in African Movies*, September, 2014) Gone are the days when one could enjoy a home video in the company of family members; you never know what shocking display of immorality will be displayed in the movie.

1.2. Sexual Content in Movies

Sexual content can be regarded as any sexual act, from passionate kissing all the way to intercourse. Synonyms for sexual content include, sexual images, and sexual material. Over the last two decades, there has been an overall increase in the number of portrayals and amount of sex features in African films. (Cf. UWOM OGUCHI



et al, *Audience perception of Sexual contents in Nigerian Movies*, December 2013.). It is no doubt that such contents expose viewers, especially adolescents who become stimulated and experiment what they watch in reality to get the experience. This has led to untold decline in morality and unprepared pregnancies, laying heavy burden on the society.

1.3. Homosexual Representation in the African Film Industry

Homosexual rights or acceptance of homosexuality is perhaps one of the most socially unwelcomed, touchy and politically thorny topics to broach in contemporary Africa. (Cf. FRIDA IMBOLO LYONGA, *Un-African? Representations of Homosexuality in Two Contemporary Nigerian Films*, in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol.4, n. 8, June 2014). Despite its invisibility in day-to-day social life in many African nations, homosexuality is made visible through representation in cinema as there is a gradual emergence of sub-Saharan Africans films that portray homosexuality. (Cf. *Ibid.*). For instance, in films like *Men in love* (2010, Nigeria) directed by Moses Ebere and *Emotional Crack* (2003, Nigeria) directed by Lancelot Oduwa, one could decipher the gradual introduction of homosexuality into the African Cinema and sooner it will no longer be a strange reality in Africa. Thus, the African film that portray homosexual acts are in a way promoting the homosexual agenda.

1.4. Causes of the Banalization of Sexuality in the African Film Industry

The causes of the trivialization of sexuality in the African film industry are multiple. Firstly, some African Directors want to step up the game in the name of modernization and globalization, to imitate and conform to western practices and mentalities. Because of their success, the practices and ideas of Europe and America cinematographic powers are taken as models by Africans who reduce modernization to the reproduction of what is done by the West and America. Secondly, it is possible that the trivialization of sexuality in the African film industry is due to the influence of certain groups who use their financial power to spread their ideas and dominate the world. Some of these groups could be those who are interested in homosexual ideologies. Thirdly, there is the capitalist tendency promoting the search for profit at all cost which has overtaken the African film industry. Because of the quest for profit, Africans today engage in practices that contradict their cultural identity. Because they receive heavy funding from abroad, film production companies produce content that trivialize sexuality and flouts human dignity. As a consequence, Africans lend their bodies for the production of pornographic content, since it is more

lucrative. Furthermore, we should not only cast shame on so-called foreign groups that finance the propagation of certain ideologies, but also recognize that Africans themselves are also the cause of this trivialization of sexuality. The real blame is on the ease and laxity with which Africans have abandoned their values.

1.5. The Consequences on African Society

The consequences of this progressive trivialization of sexuality in the African film industry greatly affects African youth. It is true that the elderly are not completely spared. Sex education which was the prerogative of parents and elders, is now found on screens. A new teacher which does not respect any taboo has appeared. Reproducing what they see on their screens, young people or Africans in general are losing more and more the sense of the sacredness of sex. A young person who does not talk about sex or does not practice it is the object of mockery from his or her peers. As a consequence, the practice of pre-marital sex is rife and promiscuity is seemingly normalized. As Mono Ndjana a Cameroonian philosopher once said, we have moved away from the norm and normalized the gap. New mentalities are taking over the streets: marriage which was previously characteristic of success, is now a superfluous and secondary alternative; prostitution, pornography, abortion and masturbation have almost been normalized. (Cf. MONO NDJANA, *Towards a Change in the mentality for a new conviviality*, 2009). Another consequence of the trivialization of sexuality which must be treated with special attention is linked to the propagation of ideologies attached to queer theory (all sorts of deviant sexualities that has sprung up from homosexuality). Their frequent exposure to the screen leads to the fact that even if Africans have not accepted these ways of thinking and acting, they gradually demonstrate a certain tolerance through their silence and indifference.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the trivialisation of sexuality is an ongoing process in the African film industry; and its consequences affect the African society especially the youths who are now sophisticated with gadgets that can enable them watch whatever they wish. As a proposal to overcome this, the government of each African country should strengthen the department that controls censorship of the type of films that are produced and the media available to the youths. Also, not all the ideas of the West are compatible with the African man. Thus, it is possible for African Movies Industries to produce decent movies without necessarily punctuating with obscene scenes. Finally, the fear of God and the bite of conscience should guide directors on the quality of their films.



SAINT *of the* ISSUE

Genesis Of Rome

The brutal persecution launched against Christians by emperor Diocletian in 303AD, took many lives. During this period the Emperor travelled to Rome to celebrate twenty years as an Emperor (Herbert B. Workman, *The Martyrs of the Early Church*, Charles H Kelly, London, 1913, 125). Genesis then, a pagan Comedian, knowing of the Emperor's hatred for Christianity, used it as an opportunity to write a comedy about Christianity. His plan was to mock the claim of Christian Baptism on stage, in front of Diocletian. He thought it might attract the attention of the Emperor, increase his fame, and make him some money in the process. In order to get concrete material for his comedy, Genesis approached the leaders of the Christian community in Rome and presented himself as a catechumen seeking Baptism. He was, then, invited into a period of instruction in the faith, in order to learn the beliefs of the Christians. He was particularly taken by the idea of Baptism. But at the time, he had no plans to convert to the faith – it was all just a part of his plan to research new material for his comedy (Herbert Anthony Musurillo, *The Act of the Martyrs vol II; The Acts of The Christian Martyrs*, Oxford University Press, 2000, 86).

However, a strange thing happened to Genesis as he began to work on his play. The opening night of the play was a great success, with Emperor Diocletian in attendance. As the actor playing the Christian priest poured water over the head of Genesis, the grace of God fell upon him. He encountered the Risen Jesus Christ and saw the truth of the Christian faith. Genesis then began to give testimony of Jesus Christ in front of all who were watching and affirmed the Christian faith. Thus, addressing the audience he said, "You fools, I wish to die a Christian." When the other actors asked him why, he said, "All my life I have been a fugitive, and only today have I found God." Everyone, especially Emperor Diocletian, laughed as Genesis spoke (Herbert Anthony Musurillo, *The Act of the Martyrs*

vol II; The Acts of The Christian Martyrs, Oxford University Press, 2000, 87). He began to preach to the audience. He told the crowd how he once hated Christians and enjoyed insulting them. He told the crowd how he deserted his own family as a child because they were Christians. From there, Genesis addressed Diocletian calling him to give his life to Jesus Christ. He stated that, he wrote the play to mock Christians, but had been converted on the spot during the course of the play, by the power of the Holy Spirit. "I now know that the Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, the Light, the Truth and the Mercy of all who have received His gift of Baptism." Genesis said to Diocletian, "O great Emperor, believe in these mysteries! I will teach you, and you will know the Lord Jesus Christ is the true God." Diocletian was furious and stopped the play, having the troupe arrested and beaten, while Genesis was condemned to torture so that he might denounce his faith, but he continued to confess that Jesus is God. When this failed to break his spirit, Diocletian ordered that Genesis to be beheaded. He was beheaded on 25th August 303 (Herbert B. Workman, *The Martyrs of the early Church*, London, 1913, 126). His final words were, "Our Lord Jesus Christ is God and we shall have life in His name."

Hearing of his testimony and death, the Christians realized that Genesis had been converted and was put to death for the faith. They managed to secure his body and buried him at the Cemetery of St Hippolytus on the Via Tiburtina with other Christian martyrs. When the persecution ended, and, following the Christianization of Rome, his remains were exhumed and later solemnly enshrined in the Church of San Giovanni della Pigna near the Pantheon in Rome.

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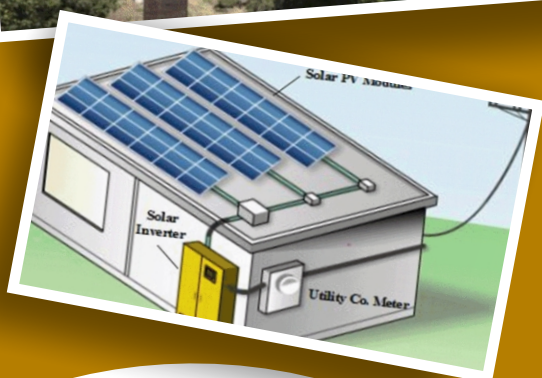
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PRINCIPLES FOR SELECTING SONGS FOR THE SUNDAY EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

INTRODUCTION

In the words of Vatican II, music expresses the "soul of the people" and is to be promoted especially in the singing of liturgical texts themselves. In this regard, Sacrosanctum Concilium, notes that in mission lands music is often quite developed and can be "adopted according to their native genius" (Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium, (4 December, 1963), n.119). Because liturgical music is sung prayer, the use of good texts is important. Ideally, hymns and songs should be in consonance with the Church's doctrinal texts. (Sacrosanctum Concilium, n.121), providing images and metaphors that call the community to an ever-deeper commitment to the Christian life. We therefore use God's own word to sing His praise.

In obedience to the n. 1191 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which stresses that song and music are to be closely connected with the liturgical action, we started discussing the "Principles for Selecting Songs for the Sunday Eucharistic Celebration" in the April 2024 edition of this magazine. To those principles already discussed, we add the following.

1. RITUAL DIALOGUES

Music is provided in the Roman Missal for the dialogues which take place between the presider and the assembly (e.g., the Sign of the Cross, greetings, the response to the presidential prayers, acclamations at the conclusion of the Scripture readings, Preface Dialogue, the doxology at the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, and final blessing and dismissal). Depending on the musical abilities of the presider and the solemnity of the celebration, these may be sung.

2. SUNG PRAYERS

Depending on the musical abilities of the presider, the presidential prayers (Collect, Prayer over the Offerings, Prayer after Communion) and the Eucharistic Prayer may be sung, together with the assembly's responses. Music for these prayers is found in the Roman Missal. Depending on the ability of the assembly, a familiar setting of the Lord's Prayer may also be sung. Frequently, the choice to sing these prayers will be determined by the solemnity of the celebration. (Cfr Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Ottawa, Guidelines for Liturgical Music, Revised Edition, Canada 2015, p. 18.) But the power of music carries the liturgical assembly beyond the text into a sense of the mystery of God. The chief form of music in the liturgy is the

song that arises from the voice of the entire assembly. Musicians and choir members use their talents and resources to lift up the hearts (sursum corda) of God's people, and to help them proclaim God's marvellous deeds. Music is a wonderful means for drawing the assembly into the full, conscious and active participation that is called for by the very nature of the liturgy (No. 14).

MUSICAL JUDGMENT

In musical judgment the following questions ought to be asked regarding a piece of music being proposed for use in the liturgical celebration:

Is there an identifiable musical structure and form? Do the melodies and harmony complement each other? Do the text and musical rhythm go together, or have they been forced? Are the phrases, intervals and harmonies suitable? Is the music pleasing and engaging? Does the music have the capacity to transcend the simply aural, indeed, to be symbolic, moving the listeners and singers beyond the concrete to the abstract? Is the music able to express the text or the occasion for which it was composed? It is also important to consider the style of music. Not all liturgical music is of one style. Some music may be described as classical, some as folk, some as contemporary. Musicians need to consider the style of music which is best suited to the liturgical celebration, the particular assembly, and the instruments available.

3. LITURGICAL JUDGMENT

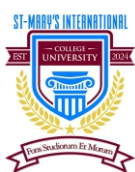
The liturgical judgment is a decision based on the suitability of a piece of music for a particular moment in the liturgical celebration. It presumes an awareness of the musical priorities mentioned above. The following questions will assist the musician in making a liturgical judgment regarding music for celebrations. First, will this piece of music enable the assembly to participate fully in praising God? Is the text theologically sound? Is the setting in accord with the text provided in the Roman Missal? Is the piece of music in keeping with the norms for liturgical music found in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal? Is the text consistent with the language of our contemporary liturgical books? For example, does the text use inclusive language in a manner consistent with our liturgical books? Is the music suited to the assembly, or to the choir only? (Cfr Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Guidelines for Liturgical Music (revised), Ottawa 2015, P.19).

4. PASTORAL JUDGMENT

The pastoral judgment is often best made in consultation with other music ministers and members of the pastoral staff. This judgment is about the appropriateness of the music for a particular community on a particular occasion. The music should be of a high quality. Song and music should encourage the participation of the liturgical assembly. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1192) The following questions will assist the musician in making a pastoral judgment regarding music for celebrations. First, Will this piece of music help this assembly to express its prayer? Are the music and text in accord with the mentality, tastes and cultural expressions of this assembly? Does the community know this piece of music? Will this piece be a valuable addition to the community's repertoire? Can this piece of music be used on more than one occasion during the Liturgical Year? Are the musicians and members of the community capable of rendering this piece of music?

5. COMMON REPERTOIRE

The establishment of a common repertoire of liturgical music within a parish community, and indeed, within a diocese is most desirable. Full, conscious and active participation of all the faithful in liturgical celebrations is fostered when all members of the assembly, including visitors and strangers, are able to sing familiar music. With the mobility of people in our society and their varied schedules, it is helpful to sing common settings of acclamations and familiar hymns. The development of common repertoire is not easy. It may take a considerable amount of time for a community to learn a set of acclamations or some familiar hymns for each Liturgical Season. At times, musicians may have to forego their desire to learn new music in order to help the assembly become familiar with some common pieces. (cf. Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Guidelines for Liturgical Music (revised edition) P.20) In communities which celebrate several Masses on Sunday, musicians who serve at different celebrations and who may prefer particular styles of music will have to work together to determine what common repertoire they develop. The benefits of developing common repertoire will become evident especially when the community gathers for liturgies when many visitors are present (e.g., celebrations of Baptism, Confirmation, First Holy Communion, Weddings and Funerals), and for common celebrations such as the liturgies of the Paschal Triduum. (To be continued)



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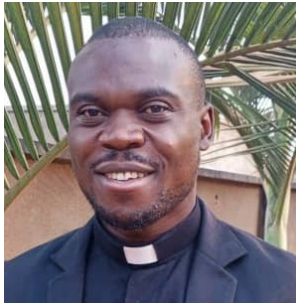
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VOX POP

How has African movie influenced the Christian faith?



It is commonly said that actions speak louder than words. I may serve as a preamble for my humble opinion. The film industry in Africa in recent times has been pragmatic on biblical themes. Themes of faith, hope, love and destiny among others, have been made more realistic by movie scripts and film shooting. The local stories portray the idea of unjust suffering and pain that are vindicated through prayer, patience and hope. This industry complements the Christian homilies, and are thus faith-building. I can therefore conclude by saying that the African Film industry has got a huge impact on Christianity.

Rev. Che Stephen Fon
Parish Pastor Teze-Ngie
Presbyterian Church in Cameroon



African Movies wield a substantial influence on African Christianity, serving as an evangelistic tool by portraying Christian themes and values, integrating cultural elements and promoting moral education. They strengthen faith through stories of perseverance and miracles, address social issues, critique traditional beliefs, and foster unity and fellowship among believers, shaping indigenous beliefs and practices.

Simon D. Mwalimo
Catholic Justice and Peace Department-Coordinator, Malindi Kenya.



African movies have significantly influenced the Christian faith, albeit often in a negative direction. In the past, African films were aimed at inspiring and bringing the best in viewers, especially children. However, some contemporary African films have diverged from this purpose. Many films today focus on materialism, love affairs, and witchcraft, rather than promoting positive values like upholding truth and basic mannerisms.

Moreover, when some Christian films are produced, they tend to emphasize negative elements. As the saying goes, 'Children copy and learn from what they see.' Consequently, when our children watch some of these movies, they may adopt and practice the negative behaviours depicted.

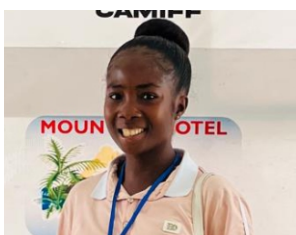
In addition, the prevalence of watching films has led to a decline in family prayer time. Some families now spend Sundays watching movies at home instead of attending Church services. As a result, the Christian faith is gradually fading, with less emphasis on passing it down through family prayers or discussions as was customary in the past.

Ntsidzenyuy Clovis, Nurse, Mfunte.



African movies, particularly faith-based films, have a significant impact on the Christian faith. In the 90s, Nigerian Mount Zion films, which were vehicles for messages on heaven, hell, and spirituality, fostered spirituality and intensified the fear of hell for many viewers. These films focused on consequences of sin and were influential in churches and homes. While there is potential for positive influence, the sector especially recently, also includes movies that promote immoral behaviour, posing challenges for the Christian faith. Overall, African cinema can bridge the gap between traditional beliefs and Christian teachings, but the impact varies based on the movie's content and audience.

Godric Mbunya
Master's Student in Innovation Management
Rome, Italy



The impact of African movies on Christian faith is multifaceted. Many African films explore themes of spirituality, morality, and the role of religion in society. Some movies depict the idea of Inculturation, expressing Christianity in typical African manner, like the use of traditional songs. These films provide insights into the diverse expressions of faith on the African continent and they shape the religious landscape. However, the portrayal of Christianity in African cinema varies widely, and the overall impact on faith likely depends on the specific context and the viewer's perspective.

Che Lum Kelly - Buea

VOX POP

How has African movie influenced the Christian faith?



Initially, African movies reflected our culture, blending faith and societal issues. However, the landscape has changed. Modern African films no longer authentically represent our heritage; instead, they mirror our society. Unfortunately, these movies often prioritize immorality, violence, and the promotion of recent gender propaganda.

As Christians, we must be discerning consumers. While some African movies still offer positive messages, many veer away from promoting Christian values. They may even depict fetishism as an alternative to spiritual worship, misleading those who are not firmly grounded in their faith.

I personally think that, while there are exceptions, most African movies cannot guide us toward a righteous Christian path

Nkwatoh Tanko Julien

Bamenda, Economist & Founder (CRIBS Segradi)



“Les films Africains ont un impact varié sur la foi chrétienne. Tout d’abord, il est important de noter que la plupart des films africains qui mettent en avant la culture africaine font souvent la promotion des Religions Traditionnelles Africaines (RTA). Bien que ces religions partagent quelques traits avec le christianisme et aient des bases sérieuses, il existe également de nombreuses déviations. Certaines pratiques présentées dans ces films ne sont pas christianisées et peuvent parfois entrer en conflit avec les enseignements chrétiens.

Onana Ebanga Adrien Genoël.

Théologie 2ème Année UCAC



An African movie is one whose major plot centres on the African existential reality or is born out of the African communitarian/religious world view. On a positive note, African movies have greatly promoted the on-going dialogue between African indigenous world-views and key Christian (Catholic) doctrine. It’s however regrettable that many African movies have failed to rise to the full truth and beauty of genuine Christian faith; what we see at times is an unchecked valorization of: (1) superstition, (2) unkempt prophetic practices and their agents and (3) the culture of noise which easily passes for prayers on high demand. A lot is yet to be done and I think the task is within our reach!

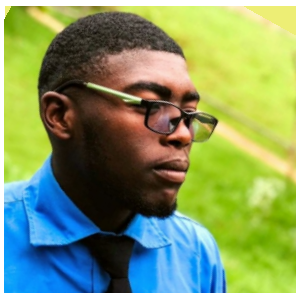
PAUL NFI, Miles Nkwen – Bamenda



African movies have a significant impact on Christian faith, which can be viewed from two strands. On one hand, they serve as a reflection of society and its way of life, even though they are works of fiction on stage. Unfortunately, some African movies have become platforms where young minds are exposed to extreme violence, horrific crime scenes, and uncensored sexual perversion. These depictions go against the norms of proper Christian faith and can foster juvenile delinquency.

On the other hand, there are positive aspects. Some African movies are overtly evangelical, promoting Christian ideals such as the power of prayer, kindness, love, and goodwill. These films can inspire viewers and reinforce their faith.

Numfor Glorita Student-Nurse Yaounde



African movies portray Christian virtues such as love, forgiveness, and sacrifice, reinforcing the existing seed of Christian faith. However, these films also present some unchristian ideas that can discourage weak Christians and society as a whole. Immoral lifestyles, which are becoming standard for many African youths, are depicted on our screens. As a result, the Christian faith and its ideals are sometimes trivialized, creating uncertainty and fear for the future. We encourage those in the film industry to hold onto African ideals that align with Christian value.

Birnsai Princewill

Student-Catholic school of Health Sciences Shisong.

MOVIES AND HUMAN PSYCHE:

A Christian look at horror in African movies



Collins Ankinimbom
Theology III



Noel Numfor
Theology II

INTRODUCTION

A movie according to a renowned film critic and theorist Andre Bazin is a highly artistic and technical medium of storytelling that combines visual, auditory and narrative elements to create a unique cinematic experience. There are different types of movies which include; Thrillers Comedy, Epics, Horror, Fantasy, Romance, Fictions, Documentary and Science fiction, etc. Movies in general have their positive and negative effects on human psychology. One prominent author who has explored the impacts of movies on human psychology is Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. According to Jung, movies can elicit strong emotional reactions in viewers, ranging from joy and laughter to sadness and fear. This article focuses on the effects of horror movies on the human psyche.

Manaar Kamil Sa'eed, and Haider Saad explain horror as an intended and painful trigger of fear, dread or dismay. It evokes and elicits such kind of emotions in the reader or viewer when rendered in televisions or cinemas (Manaar kamil sa'eed, and Haider Saad, *Communication and Linguistic* 2019). It is a literally genre, which is intended to terrify its readers by calling to mind the feelings of terror.

To this, movies such as the 2015 Nollywood film "Ghoul" where a female police officer investigates a series of murders connected to malevolent spirits and ends up being hunted to the point of death, the 2018 Ghanaian film "Shadowed", the 2017 Egyptian movie "the curse of the yellow snake" are perfect examples of classic African horror movies which elicit strong emotional reactions.

1. GENERAL EFFECTS OF HORROR MOVIES ON THE HUMAN PSYCHE

The human psyche is made of the *id*, which is the survival instinct humans have at birth; *ego* and *superego*. The *ego* and *superego* operate in three levels of awareness: the conscious, preconscious and unconscious. The human psyche as an extension to the above stated fact refers the conscious and unconscious parts of the human mind or spirit.

The psychological impact of horror movies on individuals can vary depending on cultural backgrounds and personal experiences. African horror movies have had different reactions from viewers and psychologist. Some have very positive remarks about horror movies and how important they reveal the reality of the African culture and a graphic exposure of African myths and religious beliefs and practices. The following are some positive and negative effects of African horror movies.

1.1. Positive Effects

1.1.1 Catharsis and Emotional Release

African psychologist and theater critics argue that African horror movies provide a cathartic experience for viewers, allowing them to release and confront repressed emotions and fears. An example of such movie "Last Burial," a 2000 Nigerian classic supernatural horror film directed by LANCELOT ODUWA IMASUEN. Also, the 2003, Nollywood film directed by ANDY AMENECHI and written by Kabat Esosa Egbon and Ojiofor Ezeanyaeche titled "Egg of Life" which unravels the healing of a prince at the verge of death. They hold that by engaging with their fears in a controlled environment, Africans experience a sense of relief and empowerment.

1.1.2. Exposure to Different Perspectives

Horror movies often explore themes related to human nature, societal issues, and personal struggles. By watching these films Africans might gain exposures to different perspectives and cultural contexts, fostering empathy and understanding for diverse experiences. It paints the

wounded nature of man his unquenchable desire to acquire power fame and authority. (Cf. ALUJA FABREGAT, *Personality and curiosity about TV and films violence in adolescents*. August 2000.). In line with these different perspectives, it presents some survivor skills when faced with terrifying situations as it showcases great courage and resilience in the face of adversity. Some people argue that horror movies also improve courage and one's ability to control one's emotions.

1.2. Negative Effects

1.2.1. Fear and Anxiety

Horror movies are designed to evoke fear and anxiety in viewers. Excessive exposure to frightening imagery and intense suspense can potentially lead to heightened levels of fear, anxiety and sleeplessness. For the most part horror movies tend to increase heartbeat, blood pressure and respiration. This causes general bodily breakdown and increases chances of stroke and neurotic breakdown. These effects can be particularly pronounced in individuals who are more susceptible to emotional arousal. This has also increased the misconception and high tendency of transference amongst Africans. For the most part Africans attribute or associate their every experience in life to something supernatural and belief so much in omens and signs. This has been seen as one of the spills over negative effects of horror movies on Africans.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental disorder that occurs after experiencing extremely stressful events (e.g. war, crime, abuse, traffic accidents, natural disasters.) and is characterized by strong feelings of fear, helplessness, and horror. Horror movies may act as a trigger to people with this disorder.

1.2.2. Effects on Children

Repeated exposure to graphic violence and disturbing context in horror movies may desensitize individuals to real life violence and suffering. This desensitization could potentially impact sensitivity towards real world issues and reduce empathy. Children can experience various emotional disturbances after watching horror movies which may affect the child's mental health, and can lead to problems such as insomnia, eating disorders, or behavior problems.

2. CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF HORROR MOVIES

The Routledge Companion to religion and film, explains that there are some general points on how

Christians understand horror movies which include the following.

2.1. Morality and content

African horror movies, particularly those that contain excessive violence, or explicit content, maybe incompatible with Christian values. This is because its content promotes or glorifies evil. It may thus be difficult for one exposed to such content to balance up with his Christian values.

2.2. Discernment and Influence

Another perspective is that Christians should exercise discernment when engaging with horror movies. They emphasize the need to critically evaluate the messages and themes portrayed in these films. They caution against being desensitized to violence or becoming overly fascinated with darkness and evil. Some Christian authors interpret horror movies as a reflection of the spiritual battle between good and evil. They suggest that these films can serve as cautionary tales, reminding viewers of the reality of evil and the importance of faith in God as a source of protection and redemption.

2.3. Redeeming Elements

Some Christian thinkers suggest that horror movies contain redemptive elements, such as triumph of good over evil or the exploration of moral choices and consequences. They contend that these elements can resonate with Christian themes of redemption, forgiveness and the struggle against sin. It is important to note that these viewpoints are not universally held among all Christians. The Christian understanding is generally subjected to personal interpretation.

CONCLUSION

Given the severity of the health challenge that may be caused by most horror movies and depending on the intensity of the horror and the susceptibility of the viewer, one will be safeguarding a higher good by avoiding horror movies and preventing children from watching them. Even if it is true that it serves the positive aspects mentioned above, it will be advisable for children, PTSD and cardiovascular patients to avoid such movies because the effect on them may be severe. One could still develop courage through other means, and cultivate sympathy and empathy through other methods, not necessarily through horror movies.



MAN AS IMAGO DEI:

PORNOGRAPHIC AFRICAN MOVIES AND HUMAN DIGNITY



Bertrand Nosimbang
Theology III



Kyrian Nnadi
Theology III

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary man as asserted by Pope John XXIII is becoming increasingly conscious of the dignity of the human person (Cf. JOHN XXIII, Encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*, 11 April 1963: AAS 55, 279). It is difficult, however, to exaggerate the importance of the doctrine of man (Cf. A. HOEKEMA, *Created in God's Image*, Cambridge University Press, London 1986, 1). One of the basic presuppositions of the Christian view of man is belief in God as the Creator, which leads to the view that the human person does not exist autonomously or independently, but as a creature of God. The most distinctive feature of the biblical understanding of man is the teaching that man is created in the image of God (Cf. Gen. 1:27). Hence, man possesses a unique place in the account of creation and with a dignity which is inalienable. Man as a free being enjoys certain privileges which sometimes either upholds his dignity or destroys it in his involvement in the affairs of the world. Such privilege is the exercise of art which is portrayed in African movies. More or less the images portrayed on the screen have a ripple effect on man, which can be very hazardous if not well checked or examined. The focus of this article is to take a look at the harm done by pornographic materials and contents portrayed in some African movies in the life of the human person in general.

1. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.1. Human Dignity

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that "the dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God. It is fulfilled in his vocation to the divine beatitude. It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfillment" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), 1700). To emphasize the importance of this unique gift of God to man, Cardinal Dolan in an article published in 2016 says that "the human person mirrors the eternal love of the Most Blessed Trinity; the human person is of such worth that God himself took on our nature at the incarnation; the human person has such dignity that God's Son died lest he/she perish in what we call the Redemption". (TIMOTHY CARDINAL DOLAN, *The Dignity of the Human Person: A Catholic Doctrine*, April 4th, 2016). Human dignity therefore involves reverence, respect and protection towards each person as a free being with a unique history. It is not relative to social status, nor to physical or intellectual performance. The Universal Charter on Human Rights also recognizes this principle by stating that everyone has rights just because of his or her own humanity. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* articulates this succinctly as follows;

"Being in the image of God, the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead" (CCC, 357).

1.2. Pornography

Etymologically, the term "pornography" derives from a combination of two Greek words "porne" which means a whore or prostitute and "graphein" which means "to write", draw or depict. Hence "pornography" could mean the description or portrayal of prostitutes and prostitution or simply obscene writing, painting and the like (Cf. THOMAS PAZHAYMPALLI, *Pastoral Guide*, Vol. II, Jyoti Publications, Bangalore 2021, 581). Pornography is that which exploits and dehumanizes sex, so that human beings are treated as things and women in particular as sex objects. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines pornography as the removing of real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. (CCC, 2354).

2. THE IMPACT OF PORNOGRAPHY ON THE HUMAN PERSON

Pornographic contents in African movies take various forms; intimate touching, explicit sexual intercourse, kissing, necking, talking about sex and nudity. These scenes regrettably have weighty negative consequences on the consumers, the vendors and the actors alike.

2.1. ATTACK ON HUMAN DIGNITY

Pornography constitutes a direct attack on human dignity. The subtle yet dangerous message passed across through pornographic materials, especially to the young, is that people exist for the sexual satisfaction. As Benedict XVI puts it, "sex", has become a commodity, a mere "thing" to be bought and sold, or rather, man himself becomes a commodity. (Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, Lebreria Editrice Vaticana 2005, 5). Catholic social doctrine cannot accept this, especially because it disregards fundamental truths about the human person which upholds human life to be sacred and has social value. Therefore, as a violation of human dignity and a debasement of the human person, pornography is equally an attack on God in whose image and likeness we are created. Films that were meant for entertainment therefore become the very weapon to destroy man.

2.2. Attack on Human Dignity

Continuous consumption of pornographic contents can lead to addiction. The addict gradually prefers to obtain sexual gratification through porn than through the mutual self-giving that should exist between

spouses. For those who still care about sex with their partner, they often see in their spouses an object of gratification. It undermines the very fabric of trust and intimacy within a family. This greatly affects the stability of the marriage and jeopardizes an essential element of marriage which is the mutual self-giving of the spouses. It also constitutes a great burden on the family when they have to deal with a son or daughter who is a porn addict.

2.3. Neurological Effect of Pornography

Neuro scientists point to three fundamental effects that addiction (including addiction to pornography) has on the brain. The first is Desensitization which is the numbing of the brain's ability to experience pleasure. The second is Sensitization which is an increased sensitivity to triggers and memories related to the addictive behavior. And the third is Hypo frontality which is the reduced activity of the frontal brain, decreasing impulse control and creating a negative mood. Commenting on this, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops say that "pornography therefore robs our joy and where there is little Joy, there is often never enough pleasure. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Life Matters: Pornography and Our Call to Love*, Washington DC 2012 in <https://www.usccb.org/prolife/life-matters-pornography-and-our-call-love> [accessed 9th May, 2024]).

CONCLUSION

The African film industry is doing an incredible job in the sphere of entertainment to Africans and the world at large. The efforts of the movie directors and the actors are worth commendable. However, if there is one thing African film directors and the movie industry at large must reconsider, it is the morality or the message passed across consciously or unconsciously. The focus of this article has been to expose the harm done to the human person as a result of pornography which is fast characterizing some African movies. This article cannot exhaust the harm, but one will not be wrong to think that the majority of crimes related to sex abuse could have been caused by the exposure to pure or partially pornographic materials. Parents, teachers, pastors and everyone charged with the responsibility of taking care of the young must take this as a serious task to help young people in this age of exposure. Victims must be treated with love and helped through professional counselling sessions.

Offsetting Social Ideals On Screen



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INTRODUCTION

In all human societies social ideals are part of man's existence. By ideals here, we mean virtues that can lead to the betterment of a person or a society as a whole. Among these ideals are honesty, respect, decency, justice, hospitality, modesty, good governance. The content of movies at times offsets these virtues or social ideals and destroys the formation of man's conscience and sense of morality, growth and development. Authentic development must take the whole person into account. (Cf. PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, 26 March 1967, n. 14). The church as moral guide cannot therefore be indifferent to movies.

1. OFFSETTING SOCIAL IDEALS ON SCREEN

Majority of African movies are educative and function as a perfect exposé of the African culture. Nonetheless, others tend to concentrate more on entertaining than educating or culturizing viewers. Sometimes, therefore, film industries produce movies which highlight the moral virtues that are worthy to be emulated, and discourage those that are vile. Sometimes however the opposite may occur. Social ideals are offset. The wrong thing is painted so beautifully that it seems right and is envied, while the right thing is shown as weak and shameful. The protagonist is dethroned and the antagonist enthroned. The following paragraphs focus on this offsetting of social ideals. We shall begin with the negatives, then move to good examples.

1.1. Negative Examples

Society sometimes hails criminals and condemn the just. The criminal is made the object of pity. The movie "Brotherhood" (Greoh Studios Production, Producer: Jade Isiberu, 2022) offers us a vivid example of the villain carrying the day. Akin, a criminal who is released from prison as the movie opens returns home and joins a gang (Ojuju Boys), and returns to his old ways of stealing and killing. They are hunted by the police, and even though most of the gang members died, he and his friend Adura

manage to escape justice with their lives and stolen money. It may seem adventurous and thrilling to the young who sometimes suffer from juvenile delinquency. Truly some have tried and have never lived to tell the story. Apart from this, it brings disorder into society, gives rise to bullies, to criminals and others who want to live above the law or in a lawless society. A similar scene is seen in the bible (John 18:40), when Barabas is chosen over Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, licentiousness is sometimes portrayed as something to emulate. For instance, in the trilogy "Merry Men" (Parts 1, 2 & 3), we come across three men of different skills and talents who set out to bring about justice but amidst that they live lives of debauchery, recklessness and promiscuity. They enjoy savouring all pleasures they lay hands on. As a result, they sometimes get involved in drugs, robbery, gang fights and sexual immorality. When these vices are skilfully portrayed and, in some cases, glorified, it does nothing but offset social ideals and set new ideals for their audience.

In some African movie industry production, we come in contact gross indecency and immodesty which is even seductive to its viewers, and makes decency something archaic and old fashion. Examining the 2024 edition of the reality show, "Big Brother Naija All Star" at the first pool party and the show as a whole, one can see a

clear instance of the glorification of indecent dressing, vulgar language, sexual promiscuity among others. Scriptures says "On the last days people will be self-centred and lovers of money, fraud, haughty, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unreligious, callous, implacable, slanderous, licentious, brutal, hating what is good, traitors, reckless, concerted, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God as they make pretence of religion but deny its power" (Cf. 2 Timothy 3:1-5). But children of God must not give into all these. They must remain firm in faith and stand opposed to the currents of the world and stay true to their God. They must be aware of the world's agenda and not fall prey to it.

In a typical African society, mothers use to teach their girl children never to sit with their legs open and each time they did, they were either corrected with a slap on their legs or with a firm scolding. Worst still when one dressed in an 'exposing or revealing' manner. With the presence of many films or music today portraying half naked and even stark naked boys and girls, the dreaded has become the desired. Many young people want to dress in a revealing and exposed way with the idea that they will be better appreciated and they will be more desired. Instead, this has led to an increase in crime rates especially rape and other forms of sexual abuse. We must on the contrary treat the body with respect because our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).

1.2. Examples Worth Emulating

If one were to be told that one would die in a week from now, different people would react differently depending on their beliefs. Taking a look at the movie "Tears in the Sky" (produced by Uchenna Mbunabo, 2024), we come across the protagonist Jidenna who takes it as a duty to be happy and to spread this happiness as far as possible, out of love. It is only towards the end of the movie that we come to see that he suffers from leukaemia. In spite of the pain, he was going through he decided to be happy and to make those around him happy too and with this he impacted the lives of all around him. When we die, life in changed not ended. Jidenna probably understood this and thus give us a good example of how we should prepare for death by making peace with everyone.

Taking another movie into consideration, in "Lion Heart" we see how a woman is being liberated

from the shackles of a culture which advocates for the marginalisation and relegation of women. In this movie we see the main actress given a chance to prove her worth as a problem is given to her to solve and after she does so, her father places in her care a company worth million. It is only in entrusting positions or functions to those worthy of them that there can be development. When this method is not the *modus operandi* of a given society, ills like bribery and corruption set in, which make far worse the political and economic situation of that society.

Domestic violence must be shunned and mutual love should be upheld not only because domestic violence is bad but it also has ripple effects. Introspecting on the Cameroonian production "Nganu" (Production of Kang Quintus Films, produced by Azuhni Elvis, 2023), a great psychological-movie, a masterpiece which plots a picture of unconscious handover of 'anger issues'. We come across a father (Nganu) who is so violent to everyone even his wife, which is an influence from his own father. He indulges into all sorts of 'dirty habits' like smoking marijuana, gambling, fighting, drinking excessively among others. Nganu has only one son (Kum) and unconsciously his son is psychologically affected by this. When young Kum grows up he turns out to be like his Father. This movie and many other African movies clearly show the danger of domestic violence, it is unfortunate that some African movies portray violence as a measure of the strength of a man, hence peaceful men tend to be regarded as weaklings and sissies.

CONCLUSION

Through African movies one can learn a lot about traditional African values, and Christian values. However, in a globalized world where old errors are given new labels, we see a lot of rebranding of vices to look like virtues. The African film industry is obviously affected by this paradigm shift. Film producers must not focus only on the economic value of films but also on the fundamental moral values. These postmodern paradigms are aimed at destabilizing the old values. As such there is a subtle shift from authority to autonomy and the rights of the individual, spouses to partner, happiness to quality of life, universal values to global ethics, etc. It is the task of the Church to speak out against any form of social ill that affects human beings.

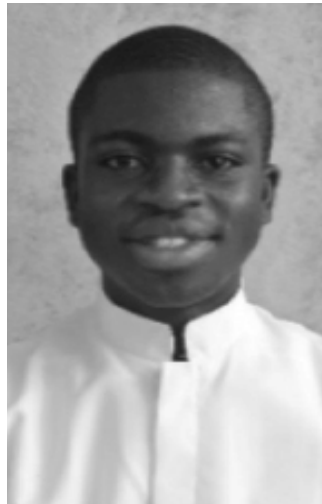
The Concept of *Sin and Salvation* in African Movies

INTRODUCTION

Those who are familiar with African Movies will agree that these movies portray many theological themes either directly or indirectly as they seek to entertain their viewers. Among these theological themes are sin and salvation which have featured in many films. In most of these movies, the concept of sin and salvation aligns with the Christian notion where sin is seen as an offense against God. Others go in line with African traditional beliefs, and in the latter, it is seldom referred to as sin; words such as abomination, taboos, desecration and transgression are employed. Still in some African movies, there is an amalgamation of both Christian and traditional beliefs of sin and salvation, and these are sometimes placed at loggerhead with each other. An example of such movie is "Hours of Salvation," a 2014 movie directed by UGEZU J. UGEZU. In the first place, let us look at the theological dimension of sin and salvation in Catholic doctrine and go further to examine how it is brought out in some productions of the African Movie Industry.



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1. ATHEOLOGICAL VIEW OF SIN

Sin is regarded as the deliberate and purposeful violation of the will of God and as such, it is also called moral evil. In the biblical perspective, sin refers to a rupture of a personal relationship with God. St Augustine has summarized the definition of sin as a word, action, or desire that is in opposition to the eternal law of God. (Cf. Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* XXII, 27). Sin drives the love of God from our heart. The Hebrew equivalent of sin in the Old Testament (hatta) can be literally translated as "missing the mark" rather than violation of the law of

God. In the gospel according to John, sin is seen as unbelief. In the Pauline letters, the primary effect of sin is death, and as Christ overcame death, so also did he overcome sin. (Cf. J. STRAVINSKAS (ed.) *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Encyclopedia*, Our Sunday Visitors Inc., Huntinton 1991, 892).

The effects of sin are moral and spiritual bondage, guilt, death and hell. St. James asserts: "Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death" (James 1:14-15).

2. THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

In Christianity, salvation refers to the action of Christ to save mankind. God the Son became man and saved mankind by his teaching and miracles, by the example of his life, death, resurrection and Ascension and by establishing the Church and sending to the Church His Holy Spirit. (Cf. W. G. TOPMOELLER, "Salvation" in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XII, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York 1967, 994). By His death, Christ vicariously satisfies for men's sins; by his life and death, he merits the salvation of all; by His sacrifice, he renders to the Father fallen humanity; and because all men are to be incorporated into Him, when Christ dies and rises, in Him as the New Adam all men die to sin and rise to new life of grace (Cf. *Ibid.*, 995). To be saved, each man has a choice to respond with faith (the reception of Baptism (Cf. Mk 16:16), with detachment (Cf. Mt 16:25), good works (Cf. Jas 2:14), and the practice of virtues (Cf. 1Thes 5:8)) or rejection.

3. SIN IN AFRICAN MOVIES

Just as the Christian belief, African movies depict sin as rebellion against the will of God and as action against the normal moral standards. In some African movies, sin is referred to as a taboo. Unlike the Christian belief, some films bring out the conception that even acts that are not deliberate are considered a grave sin as deliberate ones, especially when it comes to traditional beliefs. In different films, the various forms of sin are brought out. In some, we can figure out individual sins, where a person decides to do what is wrong of his own accord. Examples of this kind of sin includes: becoming a cultist and using others for sacrifice, stealing, drunkenness, using charms and witchcraft to bring evil on others. It is called individual sin because it is committed by one person. Individual sins can either be personal if they affect the person concerned or social if the effects extend to other people in the society. For example, in "Sins of the Past", a 1984 movie, directed by PETER HUNT, we find aspect of personal sin adequately expressed.

Also, we find the idea of collective sin exhibited in some productions as well. Themes like nepotism, tribalism and favouritism are common in many films. A good example is seen when an adopted child or a step-child is denied certain favours in the family and treated poorly from the other children because he/she is not a biological member of the family.

African movies usually portray a belief that there is penalty for any kind of sin committed. If those who sin do not turn away from their evil ways and reconcile with God or men, they will be punished with suffering. Those on the other hand who do what is right always live in peace and are often protected by God (or the 'gods').

4. SALVATION IN AFRICAN MOVIES

The word salvation has multiple views. Salvation in the African context differs from the Christian context. Thus, the movie industry in Africa in a bid has portrayed salvation mostly more in the African view. In the typical African worldview, it is believed that a person is created by God even though this belief is not often expressed in explicit theological jargon. It is also believed that life is the highest gift from God to the individual, that is, an African is born, and he or she grows to maturity so as to attain necessary values to grow to maturity. Life is communal in the African context. (Cf. MAIMELA, *Salvation in African Tradition Religions*, 1985).

Salvation is shown in African movies as deliverance from sin and from evil. Sinners receive salvation by renouncing their evil ways and atoning for the evil they have done. The idea of salvation is portrayed the following movies: "Just a little sin", 2018 directed by MIKE BAMILOYE; and "The man of God Versus the Evil Forces of Darkness", 2023, directed by HASSANSHERIFF.

From another angle, Christians believe that the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross freed us from sin and eternal damnation. In African films too, we see this belief in practice when they offer animals or other valuable goods to the 'gods' to appease them in order to free the community from a pending evil. When the needful is done, then peace returns to the individual or the community. The act of sacrifice for is expressed in the movie "Assurance of Salvation", 2016 directed by R.C SPROUL.

CONCLUSION

Although Africans do not have the concept of sin and salvation written on paper or scrolls as Christians do have the Bible, in one way or the other the notion of sin and salvation is present and fresh in their hearts. And so, we can figure out this reality in African movies.. Therefore, some African movies focus portray sin as having a communal effect on the society and affects relationship with God. One has to adhere to the rules and regulations of the society to avoid the wrath that may befall him. (Cf. CHRISTINE IMALI, *African Traditional Religion Concept of Sin and its impact on the Christian View*, 22 August, 2012, 1).

The African Movies and the Life After Death



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INTRODUCTION

The word death when mentioned triggers different reactions from different persons. The only thing men of every society know with certainty is that all will someday die. However, most people, and cultures believe that beyond death there is life. As such death is seen as a transition from one state of existence to another. To the Africans, death is a transition from physical existence and an opening into spiritual existence. This belief is an instrumental component of African culture and it has greatly influenced the disposition of the community and its people. The African movie portrays these components of life after death in most of her Films, and TV shows. This article discusses the beliefs and practices surrounding death and the afterlife in African movies. This article also touches the theological concepts of life after death and the two kinds of judgments after death.

1. THE CONCEPT OF DEATH IN AFRICAN MOVIES

Africans ordinarily do not encourage the contemplation of death or any discussion about their own or their loved one's death because of the belief that by doing so one invites death to himself. However, the belief in life after death is an essential element in their belief system. This is well illustrated in most

African Films, and TV shows which cut across many African countries; for instance, in Nigeria, we have films such as: *Philosophy of Death* directed by Uduak-Obong Patrick in 2023; *Return of the Ghost* directed by Emeka Obiakonwa in 2006 and in Kenya, we have films like: *Kati Kati* directed by Mbithi Masya in 2006, *Death in Mombasa* directed by Jörg Lühdorff in 2024. These African movies portray death as means of uniting with one's ancestor. Also becoming an ancestor after death is a desirable goal of every individual. Belief in the spirit world is an essential and indispensable part of African cultural belief systems. The spirit world and the human world are believed to be continually interacting. In fact, as soon as a person dies, he becomes a "living-dead," he is a spirit in the sense that he is no longer in the body, and he retains features which describe him in physical terms. Eyetsemitan states that the traditional African belief system is also referred to as ancestor worship. Based on this system of belief, in the African movie, those who are dead are alive in a different world and can reincarnate (return to this world) in new births (F. EYETSEMITAN, *Cultural Interpretation of Dying and Death in a non-western Society. The case of Nigeria. Online Readings in psychology and culture*, 2002). Death is considered as a passage for those who die at an acceptable (old) age. (Umoh D. *Death is not natural*. <http://www.moses.creighton.edu/jrs/toc/2012.html>. [Accessed on 02/04/2024.]. In the African culture every death has a cause which is usually attributed to spiritual elements such as; witchcraft, offending one's ancestors, or gods. This is evident in some African movies as we see people consulting sorcerers to find out the cause of death of a loved one.

2. AFRICAN MOVIE CONCEPT OF ANCESTOR

African movies also display the act of becoming an ancestor according to the African belief system. Wiredu in his book titled *"Death and the Afterlife in African Culture"* states that becoming an ancestor is a desirable goal of every individual and it is

believed that this cannot be achieved if an individual did not live a meaningful life (K. WIREDU, *Death and the afterlife in African Culture in: Wiredu K, Gyekye K, editors. Person and community: Ghanaian Philosophical studies I, Washington DC: Council for Research in values and philosophy 1992.*). In most African movies, actors or actresses would prefer a slow and lingering death that comes naturally, so they would not only be able to tidy up many issues such as making peace and saying farewell to relatives, but also gain admission into the spirit world (LANURE-ABASS B. *Cultural issues in Advance directive relating to end of -life decision making. Prajna Vihara J. Philos. 2008; 9:23-49.*). Death in any group apart from the very old is considered unnatural and premature. (Ibid., Umoh D).

The belief in the afterlife coupled with the possibility of becoming an ancestor after death, greatly influences the way the remains of the deceased are treated. As such the dead must be given a proper burial as failure to do this may result in the person becoming a wandering ghost as seen in some African films such as the Nigerian movie titled *"The Return of the Ghost"* (directed by Emeka Obiakonwa, 2006), *"Trumpet of Death"* (directed by Ugo Ugbor, 2007). These wandering ghosts become unable to live in peace after death. They then tend to be dangerous to the living.

Lending credence to the African Movie concept of death, Dancy and Davis assert that death indicates the physical separation of the individual from other humans. Funeral rites and ceremonies in most movies serve to draw attention to this permanent separation, and particular attention is paid to the funeral rites to avoid offending the dead (DANCY J & DAVIS WD. *Key topics to End - of - life care. Derived from the last miles of the way Home 2004 Nation Conference to improve End of life care for African Americans. In collaboration with the Duke institute of care at the End of life 2006.*).

3. THE THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF LIFE AFTER DEATH IN AFRICAN MOVIES.

While in most African movies, death is seen as a tragedy, the Church teaches that "the Christian who unites his own death to that of Jesus view it as a step toward him and an entrance into everlasting life (*Catechism of The Catholic Church 1020*). Christ will raise us up on the last day; but it is also true that in a certain way, we have already risen with Christ. For by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christian life is already now on earth a participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. To rise with Christ, we must die with Christ: we must be away from the body

and at home with the Lord. In that departure which is death, the soul is separated from the body. It will be reunited with the body on the day of the resurrection of the dead (CCC 1005). Unlike the African Traditional Religion, the Church teaches that there are two kinds of judgements which are: particular judgement and general judgement.

3.1. Particular Judgement

The New testament speaks of judgment primarily in its aspect of the final encounter with Christ in his second coming, but also repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31) shows this clearly. Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death. St John of the Cross rightly said that at the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love (ST JOHN OF THE CROSS, *Dichos, 64*).

3.2. The General Judgement

The general judgement is that act of judgment which accompanies the glorious return of Jesus Christ in His second coming (CCC 1038). This general judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life (CCC 1039). Only the father knows the day and the hour. Through his Son Jesus Christ, he will pronounce the final word on all history. The last judgement will reveal that God's justice triumphs over all the injustices committed by his creatures and that God's love is stronger than death.

CONCLUSION

The African concept of life after death which is expressed in Films and TV shows goes a long way to illustrate that life does not end with death, but continues in another realm. And when one lives a good life and dies at an old age, he or she is raised to the rank of an ancestor. The Church on the other hand agrees with the African perspective of life after death and however, differs in the place of final rest of the soul either in heaven or hell. In light of this topic, it is an undeniable fact that the African movies do not only present the beauty of their belief system in relation to this special gift called life but also teaches us how to live it with the consciousness that it goes far beyond this present existence. As Christians, we must be conscious of this when we are watching such movies. As such in a blend with the Christian belief and Catholic Church teaching that after death comes judgement, we are all challenge to live good lives such that we may have glorious afterlife.

FROM CINEMA HALLS TO YOUTUBE AND STREAMING PLATFORMS: *The Evolution Of The Movie Industry*



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INTRODUCTION

The movie industry has undergone a remarkable transformation over the years, evolving from the Grand Cinema halls of the early 20th century to the digital realm of streaming platforms today (Netflix, Amazon Prime Videos, Hulu, Disney+, HBO Max, Apple TV+, Peacock, Paramount+, Crunchyroll Mubi). This journey has been marked by technological advancements, changing consumer preferences, and new modes of storytelling. (Cf. JASON SQUIRE, *The Movie Business Book*, Routledge, United States 2018, 47).

1. THE EARLY DAYS OF MOVIES

Generally, the first movies were made in the late 1800s. They were very short and simple, and they were shown in small, makeshift theaters. These early movies were often silent, meaning that there was no sound. (Cf. JACK DRURY, *Lights, Camera, Action: The History of Hollywood*, Carlton Books, United Kingdom 2007, 54). It is in the early 1900s that the movie theaters began to expand.

1.1. The Birth of Cinema Halls

The birth of the movie industry can be traced back to the late 1800s. In 1889, Thomas Edison assigned his lab assistant, William Kennedy Dickson, to make a device that could produce visuals. Dickson created the Kinetoscope, a device which contained loops that could play about half a minute of motion picture entertainment. (Cf. COOK DAVID, *A History of Narrative Film*, 2nd Edition, Norton, New York 1990, 5-22.) In 1895, the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière, filmed a number of short scenes with their own device, the Cinématographe. They gave their first public screening on 28 December 1895. These early screenings were held in small, makeshift venues, often called nickelodeons due to their five-cent admission fee. The golden age of Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s saw the rise of iconic movie stars and the establishment of major film studios.

1.2. The rise of Television and Home Video

The advent of television in the mid-20th century posed a significant challenge to the movie industry. However, the industry adapted by embracing new technologies such as home video, allowing viewers to enjoy movies in the comfort of their own homes. The introduction of VHS and later DVD players made it possible for people to build their own movie collections and watch films at their leisure.

1.3. The Digital Revolution and Streaming Platforms

The digital revolution brought about a paradigm shift in the movie industry. The rise of the internet and streaming platforms such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime Video made it possible for viewers to access a vast library of movies and TV shows on demand. (M. HARRIS, *The Hollywood History of the World: From the Silent Era to the Streaming Wars*, Penguin Press, United State 2022, 76). This convenience and affordability led to a decline in traditional movie theater attendance.

2. THE FUTURE OF MOVIES

It is hard to say exactly what the future of movies holds. However, it is clear that the way we watch movies is constantly changing. With the rise of new technologies, we can expect to see even more innovative and exciting ways to experience movies in the years to come. For instance, changes that have taken place in the movie industry over the years: The rise of

streaming services, led to a decline in traditional movie theater attendance, the growth of independent filmmaking. This has led to a greater diversity of voices and stories in the movie industry, the use of new technologies, such as virtual reality and augmented reality, are being used to create more immersive and interactive movie experiences. (M. BALL, *The Netflix Effect: The Innovator That Changed the World of Entertainment*, Self-Published, United States 2020, 676).

2.1. African Movie Industries and the Christian Faith

The African movie industry has a long and rich history, dating back to the early days of cinema. In recent years, the industry has experienced a boom, with the rise of new technologies and the growing popularity of African films around the world.

One of the most significant factors in the growth of the African movie industry has been the increasing role of the Christian faith. Many African filmmakers are inspired by their faith, and they use their films to explore themes of spirituality, morality, and redemption. (B. MEYER, *African Cinema and the Christian Faith*, Lit Verlag Germany 2012, 33).

2.2. The Rise of Christian Film Festivals

The growing popularity of Christian films in Africa has led to the rise of Christian film festivals. These festivals provide a platform for Christian filmmakers to showcase their work and connect with audiences. Examples in Africa are: Abuja International Film Festival (founded in 2012); Nairobi Christian Film Festival (founded in 2015, the largest Christian film festival in East Africa); Cape Town Christian Film Festival (founded in 2017, and it is the largest Christian film festival in South Africa.)

2.3. The Future of Christian Cinema in Africa

The future of Christian cinema in Africa is bright. As the African movie industry continues to grow, we can expect to see more and more Christian films being produced (C. CURRAN - J. WALLS, *Media, Faith, and Development in Africa*, Indiana University Press, United States 2010, 203).

3. HOW DOES THIS GROWTH AFFECT CHRISTIANS

Christ promised his followers eternal life. As true as it is that eternal life begins now, (for Christ says "The Kingdom of God is among you." – Lk. 17:21) it is also true that Christians do not have it in perfection. The perfect enjoyment of eternal life shall only come with the beatific vision. And this is something eschatological; it is something that takes time. In the meantime, the Christian must train himself to persevere until that time. He must, so to say, develop the virtue of delaying the gratification of even his legitimate pleasures.

The proliferation of these streaming platforms make it terribly easy for the viewers, Christians included, to gratify themselves. This in a way weakens the ability to persevere in the viewers. This may spill over into, and affect their Christian lives. Christians may begin to question God and ask why He refuses to give their rewards now, but postpone them to the end of life, to the beatific vision. Consequently, they may lose hope and turn their eyes away from heaven and become so earthly centered that they earn for themselves condemnation.

CONCLUSION

Despite the growing availability of these platforms and the increasing ease of gaining access to them, Christians must learn to exercise caution and delay their gratification when the urges arise. The benefits of delaying gratification abound. The ability relates to other similar skills such as patience, self-control, impulse control, and willpower. (Cfr DOERR CELESTE, "Self-Regulatory Strength and Psychological Adjustment: Implications of the Limited Resource Model of Self-Regulation," in JAMES MADDUX-JUNE TANGNEY (eds.), *Social Psychological Foundations of Clinical Psychology*, Guilford Press, New York 2011, 71-83) These virtues enable a person to adapt himself to meet the demands of the environment.

The *Dramatic* Character of African Movies



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INTRODUCTION

In all the variety of productions from the various African movie industries, there are some elements that are uniquely African. The overall presentation of these movies and the drama in them bring out a special novelty altogether. The very storyline of African movies strive to promote the African identity. The cultural heritage of the Africans is depicted in their drama: for instance, the dressing, language and understanding of God. It was a common phenomenon while growing up to be moved to tears or anger or disappointment while watching African movies; because the realities depicted were very close to our immediate experiences. These movies are sometimes so engaging to the point that we identify with the actors playing the various roles and situate our own life stories and personal experiences in them. The relevance of the various aspects of African drama, and how they should affect viewers is our focus here. For us to better appreciate the dramatic character of these movies, it is important for us to first understand what African drama is in the context of our modern world.

1.1 Modern African Drama

Abiola Irele, in his essay: *"The Criticism of Modern African Literature"* considers modern African drama as that form of literature with a legitimate African signature that captures modern African culture detached from western influence except language. He sees modern African drama as that literature that exhibits authentic African experiences only, which must be composed by an African. Dasylva Ademola in his *Cross-cultural Influences and Correspondences in Contemporary Nigerian Drama*, confirms this as he defines Modern African Drama as any form of literature that reflects the contemporary issues in African society in diluted European languages usually by an ideal African. Since we cannot successfully deny the European influence in African Drama altogether, we could therefore define modern African drama as that new form of drama composed in the tradition of Europe but with African colouration in terms of plot development, theme, language, setting, authorship, culture, audience. (AYEBANOA TIMIBOFA, *Improvisation in Modern African Drama*, Department of English, University of Uyo, 7 July 2016).

1.2 SOME ELEMENTS OF TRADITIONAL AFRICAN DRAMA

Some elements of traditional African drama which have been adapted to literature and film include, songs and dances, mask and masquerades, proverbs, idioms and other aspects of language, history and myth, flashback, festivals and several others. We shall examine some of these elements.

1.2.1 Language

Language is very crucial and central in African movies. Many African film makers are finding traditional African languages increasingly

important in the conveyance of meaning and thematic construction. Language in traditional African drama is expressed in the traditional speech convention of proverbs and idioms, virtually every African community employs the use of proverbs and idioms in its narrative. Proverbs and idioms in language embellish the dramatic dialogue and convey deeper meanings and essence, most times with deep philosophical meaning. (Cf. ARMSTRONG IDACHABA, *Elements of Traditional African Drama in Contemporary Nigerian Video-Film*, March 2018). These elements in language spice up African movies. Some of the proverbial expressions which set us reflecting on our own personal lives are gotten from good African movies. Good moral and life guiding principles are sometimes passed across through proverbs and idioms in African movies.

1.2.2 Song, Music and Dance

Songs, music and dances also play very important roles in the construction and presentation of traditional African drama. Apart from the entertainment content they carry, they also are imbedded with profound meaning and convey messages. Like language, music is very key to the growth of the African video film. Sometimes meanings and messages are conveyed through music. And because of the universality of music, Nigerian music in the Nigerian video film has contributed immensely to the widespread acceptability and popularity of the Nigerian video-film. Praise and chants are important and crucial aspects of traditional African drama, they are reflected in the culture and traditions of all African societies. Importantly, they make philosophical statements and always express the norms and value of the society (Cf. ARMSTRONG IDACHABA, *Elements of Traditional African Drama in Contemporary Nigerian Video-Film*, March 2018).

1.2.3 Costumes and make-up

Costumes and make-up form an essential part in the African movie industry. Sometimes, just from a glance at a costume, one could immediately make-up exact predictions about the setting, plot and characterization of the particular movie. Costumes are a visual re-enactment of a people's history and a reminder of the cosmic traditions. The visual mode of communication consists of the use of colours and dressing, appearance and general comportment to communicate certain feelings or emotions and attitudes. Visual materials especially in costumes convey depths of meaning, and they tell mythical and historical stories. (Cf. ARMSTRONG IDACHABA, *Elements of Traditional African Drama in Contemporary Nigerian Video-Film*, March 2018). The influence of this is widespread. It is not uncommon to see people who purchase and wear certain clothes simply because they saw them in a movie and loved them.

1.2.4 Flashback

A flashback refers to that part of a film, movie or play that shows a scene that happened earlier in time than the main story. This important device is used in many African movies. Sometimes one watches a particular movie and only realises at the end that it was a flashback. These flashbacks are used in several ways. There are at least five ways in which flashbacks are used in African movies; firstly, one can use a flashback to bring to the lime light those good morals and standards which dominated the lives of those in the past, but which are corroding away; secondly, flashbacks could also be used as means of tracing the root cause of a particular present crisis; thirdly, Flashbacks can be used to admonish a particular individual and prevent him from committing some error which he did in the past; fourthly, flashbacks are used to create a feeling of nostalgia about the past which could help to shape the present and the future; fifthly, flashbacks are sometimes used to evoke sentiments and emotions of pain and revenge. An example of an African movie with flash back is *Hotel Rwanda*, directed by Terry George (2004).

1.2.5 Suspense

The earliest known use of the noun Suspense is in the Middle English period (1150-1500) in the writing of Thomas Hoccleve, a Poet. Suspense in African drama would be that state or feeling of anxiety or excitement; that uncertainty by which one knows not whether something may or may not happen. It is an experimental feature by which stability is not guaranteed. This aspect of suspense is highly used in the plot development of African movies. As Christians, this depict and enhance the virtue of patience and dependence on God. When we pray for instance, often there is a suspense and we are expected to stay prayerful no matter how long it takes and no matter the answer we receive, we must stay dependent on God. The Kenyan movie *Taharuki*, directed by Ekwa Msangi (2007/2008), set against the backdrop of the start of the devastating post-election crisis in Kenya clearly illustrates this African understanding of suspense and its import to impact the African people.

CONCLUSION

It is always important to look at movies from the point of view of these dramatic elements. There is a world of wealth in our African movies which can be explored. We all need to rise above just watching movies for the mere sake of entertainment. We need to watch African movies from an educative point of view. When we do this, we would be able to decipher those movies which are important for growth from those that pass across vices which eventually erode our core African values.

Beyond Acting:

THE DILEMMA BETWEEN
THE ACTOR AND REAL LIFE



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INTRODUCTION

The dilemma between the actor and real life arises from the confusion the audience find in making clear distinctions between those acting and their real life. Generally, "Movies ... can help us to better understand our own lives, the lives of those around us and even how our society and culture operate" (Cf. OJIAKOR OJINIME EBELECHUKWU in the *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Research* 2695-2203 Vol 5. No. 3, 2019, Pg. 37). Here, we shall attempt going 'beyond' the above-mentioned dilemma by bridging the gap between acting and real life of the actor with some facts and examples.

1.1. What it Takes to Be a Good Actor

The above journal also tackles "Perception of Nigerian Audience on Real-life of Nollywood Actors repeatedly Characterized as Villains." "Villains are usually wicked enough to excite audience aversion, strong enough to arouse fear in audience, human enough to awaken some transient gleam of sympathy." (Cf., *Ibid.* 38). It is given to one who can interpret the role in actions and words. He must be able to make it look real, only then will it be believable. This has led movie directors to give the villain role to specific actors over and over again because they interpret the role perfectly. Such may include; Pete Edochie, Kanayo O. Kanayo, Chiwetalu Agu etc. Due to the perfect interpretation of the role and repeated character casting, audience may build a perception in their minds concerning these artists which may be beyond the screen, and it may now affect reality (Cf.,



Ibid.). Most of these artists especially through interviews try to debunk these misconceptions. A Nigerian actor, Chiwetalu Agu, in an online interview with Showtime Celebrity (2015) had spoken regrettably on how the villainy has cost him a lot of good things (Cf., *Ibid.*, 38).

1.2. Models Acting as Villains

Chief Pete Edochie, one of Nigeria's most talented actors, is an icon to consider. In the above mentioned research article, we have a sub heading; 'Textual Analysis of Nollywood Villain Movies Used in the Study.' In analysing *Billionaire's Club*, directed by Afam Okereke (1999), Pete Edochie, Kanayo O. Kanayo, Tony Umez among others are starred in the film as cultists and money ritualists. These men sold their souls, killed loved ones and did all sorts of evil for ill-gotten wealth (Cf., *Ibid.*, 43). Contrarily to the screen, the legend Pete Edochie is a well-known and outstanding Catholic Christian and devotee of the Divine Mercy Apostolate, with an exemplary marital home. His faith can be further seen in his commitment in the canonization project of Blessed Michael Iwene Tansi. "...His attention is passionately focused on his current project of Tansi Canonisation Support Campaign ...a movement for the canonisation of Blessed Michael Iwene Tansi" ("Biography" Pete Edochie, Official Website. Archived from the original on 26 February 2012. Retrieved 6 September 2011).

1.3. Unimaginable Details

Another prominent veteran worthy to be mentioned is Late John Okafor (Mr. Ibu). He was most noted for playing funny and comic roles in movies. In short, he was most likely to be taken for a buffoon or one with an improper sense of direction. We see this in one of his famous movies *Mr Ibu and Pawpaw*, directed by Andy Chukwu (2004). Tired of confusing suggestions on how he should use his bicycle, he considers possessing a bicycle to be the source of the confusion. So, as a solution, he throws the bicycle away to solve and end the confusion by trekking. Though this man proved neither responsible nor even learned in films, he actually studied in the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu. Though he often appeared non-sportive, heavy, funny and lazy in movies, we are told that before his acting career, Okafor was a boxer, football coach, and karate practitioner (AUGOYE, JAYNE, — How I quit boxing after being badly 'pummeled' Mr Ibu. Premium Times. (24 March 2018)).

1.4. Shocking and Amazing Testimonies

Keeping the veterans aside, we take a look at a contemporary movie star Azubuike Michael Ekwu professionally known as Zubby Michael. On the 25th of November, 2019 he was appointed into a political position as the special adviser on media to the Anambra State governor Willie Obiano (Nseyen,

Nsikak Nollywood actor, Zubby Micheal gets political appointment, *Daily Post Nigeria*, (26 November 2019)). Just the term "adviser" might raise a lot of dust among his audience given its unrelatedness to the roles he often plays in movies. But in an interview, he was asked the kind of person he is 'beyond the big screen,' given that he has played the role of a priest, stubborn Prince and a gangster etc. He responded; "I will describe myself as a special actor... In fact, I always put myself into the character I play. However, I am a very simple person; I don't pretend but live a truthful life." He said further; "Fake life is boring! I call it living in bondage. Do you think I am stubborn? Tuface taught me how to be humble and respect people regardless of their status in life. So, my middle name is humility". (-Tuface taught me humility Zubby Michael, actor. *The Sun Nigeria*. 17 February 2017. Retrieved 5 May 2019). All these testify why he is described here as a versatile (able to adapt or be adapted to many different functions or activities) actor (Cf., *Ibid.*). We can see a man here with qualities suitable for the above political function. Thus, the Zubby behind the scenes is a different person in real life.

1.5. Insights from an Interview

Recently, I had an online interview with Mr. Aloysius Ndei, native of Oku in the North West Region of Cameroon. He is a local film actor (Nkafure Entertainments) and quite prominent. He said; "The role you play in films always have an influence in your life. Sometimes your real qualities in life are of great use to your acting" he said. That is, a doctor will obviously play the role of a doctor well according to him. In the same light, he says people sometimes take your acting role and relate to you in real life. Some people now call him *Mbeeeh*" (a title peculiar only to a Fon), and others *Nyam Eytaa* because of the film he produced titled *Nyam Eytaa* (Interview with Mr. Aloysius Ndei, replied on April 17th 2024).

CONCLUSION

From the above analysis we can say that there is a big gap between the role played by an actor and his real character. It is not also out of place to consider the possibility of assigning certain roles to certain actors because they possess some character traits that may facilitate their ability to play the said role. Whatever the case may be, it will be unwise to take the actors for what they do. There is actually more about their personal lives than what is seen on the screen. It takes a lot of flexibility to take up several roles in different movies without losing their personal identities. We should therefore watch movies with the intention of getting the message intended by the directors rather than tagging actors with the role they play.