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Positioning Kiswahili Video-films as a Pedagogical Institution

by Vicensia Shule

Abstract

The Tanzanian video-film industry emerged as a result of technological advancement and the adoption of a free market economy policy as part of the neoliberal reforms of the late 1990s. These video-films, mostly produced for commercial consumption by self-taught film producers, do not necessarily conform to 'professional standards' in terms of the form or content compared to either 'African' or Euro-American cinema films. This paper is about the role of Kiswahili video-films in entertaining, educating, and discussing various issues in the communities in which they are produced. The main argument is that video-films are a product of a certain community addressing its socio-political and economic needs. Although produced for commercial purposes, these films play a significant pedagogical role. This paper argues that despite some technical shortcomings, video-films are a significant genre in their own right, produced by and for the 'lower class' communities that consume them, and which do not necessarily aspire to replicate either other African cinema films or Euro-American film standards.

Introduction

In Tanzania, video-films became a major source of popular entertainment in the 2000s. Global technological advancement and the adoption of a free market economy as part of neoliberal policy reform played a major role in the transformation and growth of the video-film industry in Tanzania (Mwakalinga 2013, 2010). To date, the industry has received substantial praise and success, but there is also overwhelming criticism from various stakeholders for a lack of professionalism compared to mainstream 'African films/cinema' or Euro-American and Asian films (Shule, 2011). Currently, there is a strong Kiswahili video-film production culture in Tanzania, a country of about 45 million people which has Kiswahili as the national language (United Republic of Tanzania, 2013). Approximately ten new video-films are produced every week and seven of them enter the market (Kamin, 2011), which means that every day a new video-film is released. This makes Tanzania, which produces about four hundred video-films a year, not so different from Nigeria, mostly represented by Nollywood (Lagos-based English video-film industry) and Kannywood (Kano-based Hausa video-film industry). It is estimated that Nigeria, with a population of more than 170 million people (Index Mundi, 2013), produces between one thousand (Haynes, 2006) and two thousands video-films a year (Palmberg, 2008).

This paper makes two main arguments: firstly, Kiswahili video-films are a product of Tanzanian society which are addressing socio-political and economic issues. This implies that regardless of arguments that these video-films sometimes paint a negative image of the community they originate from, as suggested by such repeated themes as superstition, negative stereotypes of women, violence and corruption (see Aje-Ori, 2010; Boehme, 2013) they still play a significant role in representing the culture of a certain community, a role which Giroux (in Hamilakis, 2004) identifies as an element of critical pedagogy. In spite of being produced for commercial consumption Kiswahili video-films have pedagogical value. This argument challenges the assertion raised by Kang'anga's study, 'A New Trend in Tanzanian Filmmaking: Challenges and Prospects' (2006) about the paradigm shift in the purpose of films versus video-films in Tanzania, that is, from pedagogic to commercial.

In this paper, the term 'video-film' refers to films produced using amateur level filming equipment which expose community members' lifestyles, issues and politics. These video-films are mostly commercial, packed in DVDs (formerly on video tapes and video CDs) and made mainly by amateurs. They are not aimed at satisfying elite tastes but are rather marketed towards 'ordinary people' (especially the lower class, famously known as '*watoto wa mbwa'* / 'the poorest of the poor'). These video-films (a term to distinguish them from African films/cinema) are distinct and reflect the heterogeneity of the cultural industries within the African continent. This is not to suggest video-films produced in Tanzania not necessarily share the same cultural values as those produced in Nigeria or South Africa. When the phrase 'African film/cinema' is used in this paper, it denotes films produced by professionals, mostly on celluloid, with high budgets, sometimes funded by foreign organisations and targeting upper class elites. These are films guided by a pan-African spirit 'struggling' to represent 'authentic' views of Africa to the world with the aim of 'decolonising' the minds of its audience (Ashbury, et al. 1998, pp. 72-118).

This paper is divided into four main sections starting with the conceptual debate on African films versus video-films. The second section provides a conceptual framework on the idea of radical pedagogy as discussed by Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux. The third section consists of the analysis of the major themes in selected video-films by 'popular' producers who are also actors and directors in their own video-films. The fourth section is a discussion of some of the shortcomings of Kiswahili video-films, and is followed by some concluding remarks.

Debates on the Concepts of 'African' Films/Cinema versus Video-films

In the 1990s there was a cross-African debate on whether to consider video-films as an 'authentic' African cultural manifestation or not. This debate focussed on the question of where video-films should be positioned in relation to African film/cinema (see Mistry and Ellapen, p47; Mwakalinga, 2010, p117; McCall, 2007, p96). This debate is a continuation of the discussion of what constitutes so-called African film/cinema which started way back in the 1960s (Mwakalinga, 2010; Ashbury et al. 1998). According to Algiers Charter of African Cinema of 1974, African films/cinema are considered to be 'a means of education, information, awareness and at the same time an incentive to creativity' (Armes, 2006, p67). The majority of proponents of 'authentic' African film are intellectuals and elite pan-Africanists who describe video-films as unprofessional, raw and unrefined (see Haynes, 2006; McCall, 2007). So-called African films are seen as the opposite of the video-films, and are shown mostly in festivals, especially in Europe and America, and in a few festivals in Africa. These might include the Pan African Ouagadougou Film Festival (FESPACO) where most of the African films shown are funded by foreign donors, especially from France (Ashbury et al. 1998, p. 50). Haynes (2011, pp69-70) shows how funding from France, for example, comes with 'serious' conditions which impedes the growth of the film industry in Africa. Such conditions include using a French technical crew, and showing such films for free in selected venues which cater to French interests. This means that the production of such films has not been able to 'build/enhance the capacity' of African filmmakers or African audiences. These are films which have 'never approached commercial viability', as Haynes (2011, p68) clearly argued. Apart from France, European countries such as Italy, Germany and Great Britain fund some African film co-productions (Ashbury et al. 1998, p. 54).

Apart from funding, African films are criticised for the language they use and the production process. These are films mostly made in English or French. According to McCall (2007, p94) a majority of African films are made on celluloid, which:

> …requires extensive funds and a large crew with years of technical training. Most Africans who pursue this elite art form are schooled abroad and remain dependent on the largesse of foreign funding agencies – particularly French ones devoted to promoting French aesthetic sensibilities in their former colonies.

Comparatively, video-films have little interest in impressing donors or winning festival awards as they focus more on local communities. Most video-filmmakers do not see festivals as an important venue to showcase their works. To them festivals like FESPACO are alien, far from their target viewers. Even

the language in African films is mostly 'foreign' – French for example, compared to local languages, including pidgins, which video-film audiences understand and/or feel comfortable for communicating with (Shule, 2013).

The use of video cameras as opposed to celluloid film cameras in the production and packaging of video-films on DVD for domestic consumption cannot be taken as a major reason to deny the value and/or question the authenticity of video-films. Furthering this argument, McCall (2007, p93) shows clearly how most African films on celluloid have not targeted Africans viewers but, rather, Europe and North America audiences, with content supposed to be 'politically sophisticated and aesthetically exquisite'. The value of video-films is seen in their effectiveness in communication. Video-films reach a much wider audience than African films, which mostly end up only in film festivals or in donors' and universities' libraries as reference materials in Europe and North America.

In defining what constitutes video-films, the word 'apolitical' is often used to differentiate these from films which fall under the African film/cinema category (see Mwakalinga, 2010). However, Haynes (2006) argues against video-films being termed apolitical. Haynes believes video-films are political because, 'I would insist that the concept of the political should encompass the level of the banal, everyday reproduction of authority, the personal level of gender relations, witchcraft discourses, and so on and so forth…' (Haynes, 2006, p518). Even though Haynes focuses on describing Nigerian films, his argument also applies to Kiswahili video-films in Tanzania, which have to some extent borrowed from the Nigerian film industry (Boehme, 2013, p328).

Radical Pedagogy in Relation to the Debate over What Constitutes African Film/Cinema

For Freire (1996, p12), there is a time when a community normalises situations of hardship and believes that this is how life must be. Sometimes this is due to the 'chronic' problems a community might have, which lead community members to believe there is nothing they can do to change the situation. In such situations people decide to keep quiet. This quietness is what Freire describes as a 'culture of silence' (Freire, n.d., p46; 1996, p12). Freire believes that the ruling classes always benefit from the culture of silence as their dominance is not threatened. In most cases the ruled, who live in fear of the ruling class, are afraid to break their silence as they cannot know whether any positive outcome can be achieved. To bring change to such a silenced community, there must be a mechanism to enable community members see the challenges and opportunities around them so that they can become actively involved in the process of resolving them.

A major concern for Friere is how to empower a 'silent community' (Freire, n.d., p49) and how an outsider can play a part in this process. How can an outsider get into another community to encourage community members to begin to discuss their problems? Freire uses the term 'conscientization' to describe this situation where people, rather, are empowered to perceive the problems that face them and act upon them. He insists that any attempt to impose solutions on a silenced community is 'cultural invasion' (Freire, n.d., p49). This invasion includes bringing in people with 'out of touch' ideas that have been developed outside the community, and then expecting the community members to accept and implement them. Instead of telling people what they should do, Freire argues, they should be conscientised to see issues from a wider perspective and decide for themselves what actions to pursue.

Hendry Giroux, as quoted by Yannis Hamikalis (2004, p288), describes further the issue of pedagogy. According to Giroux:

> pedagogy... is not defined as simply something that goes on in schools. On the contrary, it is posited as central to any political practice that takes up the question of how individuals learn, how knowledge is produced, and how subject positions are constructed. In this context, pedagogical refers to forms of cultural production that are inextricably historical and political. Pedagogy is, in part, a technology of power, language, and practice that produces and legitimates forms of moral and political regulation which construct and offer human beings particular views of themselves and the world.

This definition resonates with the production process of video-films. The language used in most cases reflects the community from which these video-films emerge. For example, most video-films produced in Tanzania are in Kiswahili, the language which the vast majority of Tanzanians speak. Kiswahili is also spoken in parts of many neighbouring countries including Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Comoro, Zambia and Mozambique. There is also a wider community of Kiswahili speakers in other parts of the world. These countries and others in the diaspora are consumers of Kiswahili video-films from Tanzania because they share some cultural values.

The video-film industry in Tanzania exists within the informal economy. Ngowi (2008, pp. 104-108) points out that lack of proper tax filing, lack of operating licences and failure to complete basic education among the majority of practitioners in the sector are characteristic of the informal economy in Tanzania. As with any other informal sector, as McCall (2012, p9) argues, it is not easy to access proper records. However, the growth from one commercial video-film made in 2002 to approximately four hundred in 2011 demonstrates the boom in the market for video-films. Perhaps the tax stamps established by

the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) will support the documentation of both locally produced and imported video-films[1].

Furthermore, the existence of more than 10,000 video parlours, or what Kamin (2011, p16) refers to as video *bandas*, in rural and urban centres in Tanzania, represents the cross-section of audience these video-films cater for in terms of class, age and gender. Video parlours are places where people can pay a small amount of money to rent a video-film (approximately 0.30 US$), or watch it on a TV screen (approximately 0.15 US$). On average, it is estimated that about 62 people attend a session or two to watch video-films in a day in a video parlour in Tanzania (Kamin, 2011, p16). This gives a total of about 620,000 people in a day and over 200 million visits a year. It should be noted that most of these video parlours are not registered and pay neither royalties nor taxes. According to the Copyright Law (1999), public screening and renting of video-films without a licence is illegal.

The process of choosing a story is different when comparing African and video-films. While African films depend on the scrutiny of the donor and/or the funding agency, video-films are mostly driven by market forces. Market forces here do not signify the 'negative' forces of the neoliberal 'free' market, but, rather, the accessibility of the video-films in remote areas due to the packaging on DVD (formerly in video cassettes) and the amount of money one can spend to purchase (approximately US$2), rent, or watch them in a video parlour. Producing video-films which do not necessarily conform to the professional standards of African films, on low budgets, using self-taught actors and directors, and indeed the very act of opening up film to be viewed by the lower classes can be seen as a kind of liberation. Freire (1996, pp36-36) argues that for the pedagogy of the oppressed to function, the oppressed (in this case the video-filmmakers) should participate in the process of change and not allow oppressors or outsiders to initiate the change process.

Historically, the pedagogical value of the films produced in Tanzania, especially those made on celluloid after independence in 1961, has been documented (Leveri, 1983; Mponguliana, 1982; Mwakalinga, 2010; Kang'anga, 2006). The documentation shows that, with ongoing technological advancement and changes in socio-political and economic policies which Tanzania has adopted, a new genre of film has evolved. Kang'anga (2006) argues that the trend of film making in Tanzania has departed from pedagogical in the 1970s-1990s to

[1] With the tax stamp regulations, all DVDs are affixed with unique tax stamps that identify the origin of the video-film. They can be used to trace the amount of sold/distributed copies. According to the Films and Music Products (Tax Stamps) Regulations GN. No. 244 of 2013 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2013), possession or selling of film DVDs not affixed with tax stamps is illegal and anybody involved is liable to conviction.

commercial films starting from the 2000s, as well as shifting from public to private production of the films.

In fact, there has been no shift, but rather the emergence of a 'new genre' which is not focussed on replicating 'African cinema'. Taking stock of the definition of what constitutes pedagogy, especially radical pedagogy, provided by Freire and Giroux, commercial video-films have pedagogical value. My contention is that these video-films, although produced by private individuals and companies, are affordable, plentiful, 'up to date', and more accessible to the public than celluloid films. They also focus on describing cultural narratives from both historical and political perspectives which are among the best ways for oppressed or marginalised communities to communicate, conscientise and empower themselves – in other words they are pedagogic.

Video-film Analysis

In discussing the pedagogical value of the video-films, works of 'famous' Tanzanian producers who are also actors and directors from 2011 to 2013 will be analysed. These include *Senior Bachelor* (2011) by Jacob Stephen (JB), *Ndoa Yangu/*My Marriage (2012) by Steven Kanumba (The Great), *Nakwenda kwa Mwanangu/* I'm Going to See My Child (2012) by Jacob Stephen (JB), *Woman of Principles* (2012) by Vincent Kigosi (Ray), *Dj Ben* (2012) by Jacob Stephen (JB), *Love & Power* (2013) by Steven Kanumba (The Great). These are video-films from leading Tanzanian producers and directors, which according to video-film vendors are said to have sold the largest number of copies. In the following analysis common themes that cut across a majority of the video-films will be used.

The analysis is based on the video-films stakeholders' views of the pedagogic value of the output. In total 67 people were interviewed for this article between January and September 2013, aged from 16 to 47, and picked randomly in Dar es Salaam (36 respondents; 19 female and 15 male), Arusha (22 respondents; 13 female and 9 male) and Zanzibar (11 respondents; 6 female and 5 male). These respondents include video-film buyers/audience, vendors and actors, directors, and producers. In Kiswahili 'pedagogical value' can be translated as *kufundisha/kuelimisha* (teaching). Most respondents agreed that video-films have some teachings – *zinafundisha*. For example, discussing the 'latest' Kanumba films such as *Ndoa Yangu* and *Love & Power*, a female respondent in Arusha, aged 25, cited Kanumba as one of the actors who provides solution to some love and relationship problems. "He [Kanumba] showed how a poor soul can save a rich soul", as Solomon (Kanumba) in *Love and Power* did for Christine (Irene Paul) by donating a kidney because he loved her. In *Ndoa Yangu* she further explained that Michael (Kanumba) "did all that he could" to rescue his marriage with Anita (Jackline Wolper). Michael decides to

masturbate rather than indulging in extramarital affairs when his wife Anita refuses to have sex with him, pretending to be tired.

Although these video-films they are made for commercial purposes they also discuss various issues concerning society. For example, various aspects of relationships, sex, and marriage appear as a major theme in all films. In *Senior Bachelor*, for example, we see Erick Ford (Jacob Steven) living a bachelor life, with multiple sexual partners. Coming to the city as a cattle trader, he spends his life in a hotel apartment. He has no permanent house or sexual partner. When he dies there is no one who knows where to bury him. A male respondent in Arusha, aged 32, relates Erick Ford to some gemstone traders. He said, "*[wanaume] wengine wakishapata hela ya mawe [tanzanite], wanahama nyumbani kwenda kwa wanawake wengine kuponda raha*". This means that when some men get money after selling tanzanite, they abandon their families and start spending with other women. This is similar to what Erick Ford did in *Senior Bachelor*. In *Woman of Principles* we see Clement (Vincent Kigosi) with his secondary education struggling to cope with his wife Pauline (Nargis Mohamed) who is a university graduate in law and a renowned magistrate. Clement is refused sex with his wife as she is busy and tired after work. Clement decides to have an affair with Lina (Elizabeth Michael). Lina is under 18 years old. At the end we see Pauline sentence Clement to thirty years in prison for the sexual offence for having sex with a child.

The story in *Woman of Principles* is coincident with what happened in the real life of Elizabeth Michael, made famous as Lulu in 2012. Lulu was arrested and convicted of 'manslaughter' after pushing to death her friend and renowned actor, director and producer in Tanzania, Steven Kanumba on April 7th 2012. Kanumba known as 'The Great' (b. 08.01.1982) died of brain injury after hitting his head on the wall. On that day, it is said that Lulu and Kanumba quarrelled over a phone call which Lulu was alleged to have received from another male friend. Lulu was released on bail on 29th January 2013. At the time when she was alleged to have committed the offence, Lulu was seventeen years old (b. 17.04.1995) and hence considered a child under Tanzanian law. In various discussions after Kanumba's death, it was argued that if Kanumba was alive he could have been charged with child abuse and rape under the Penal Code (Cap. 16). In the film, *Woman of Principles*, Clement is punished for having an affair with Lina (Elizabeth Michael 'Lulu'). In discussion with one of the video-film fans (female respondent, 28 Dar es Salaam), she says she believes what is acted in video-films is almost what happened in the real life. "Lulu in *Woman of Principles* acted as a child who was sexually abused and in a real sense she was abused by Kanumba".

In some cases these video-films provide direct messages like those given in public service announcements (PSA). For example in *Senior Bachelor*, after the

death of Erick Ford, in the last scene the audience is given a written message about HIV and AIDS that: "a lot of people who die of HIV hide their status as Erick Ford did. HIV kills, we should stop unprotected sex and we should use our money wisely". Though such messages are uncommon in Kiswahili video-films, they show the concern of the actor-director and producer of the video-film in advocating for safe sex.

Using Kiswahili video-films to present and discuss various issues (some being controversial) in the community is also effective due to the following factors. First, they are widely distributed. This means Kiswahili video-films can be played several times because they are mostly on DVD or VCDs. This is different from African films most of which are in a format that cannot be screened at domestic level. Second, they are widely accessed. The existence of video parlours also supports the effectiveness of video-film access. It is also important to note that the mushrooming of video parlours across the country is a sign that the audience is interested in watching these films. In these parlours people not only watch the video-films but also discuss the content during and after the screening (Shule, 2004). Third, video-films consumption cuts across gender and age barriers, though the majority of video-films are purchased by the working classes. Fourth, they use Kiswahili as their language of communication. Kiswahili has made video-films from Tanzania popular as a majority of the audience members can understand them.

Fifth, they have entertainment–education (e-e) value. Video-films are not made to educate but rather to entertain. Since the entertainment value is well integrated, the audience subtly absorbs social messages. This does not mean that all Kiswahili video-films are commercial; a few are made to address 'development issues' and funded by donors. Examples would be *Chumo/*Plucking (Riber 2011), and *Kijiji cha Tambua Haki/* Village of Justice (Kanumba 2011) which were mainly funded by USAID and the Policy Forum respectively. *Chumo* tells a story about malaria prevention and how important it is to go to the hospital when one observes any sign of malaria – fatigue, fever and headache. *Kijiji cha Tambua Haki* is a story about accountability. It shows how citizens can be part of social transformation by demanding accountability from their leaders.

Sixth, they use popular actors such as the late Steven Kanumba (The Great), Jacob Steven (JB), Issa Musa (Cloud 112), Vincent Kigosi (Ray), Single Mtambalike (Richie Rich), Wema Sepetu, Jackline Wolper, Jennifer Kyaka (Odama), Irene Uwoya, Aunt Ezekiel and Yvonne Cherrie (Monalisa) to mention but a few. It is argued that, these actors are better known in both rural and urban Tanzania than some top state officials. One of the authoritative weekly newspapers in Tanzania, *Raia Mwema* (Bugaywa, 2013), reported that pupils in primary five at Malya School in Mwanza region could mention names

of some of the above actors, but they did not know the name of the current Minister of Education. It should be noted that in Tanzania, politicians are argued to be among the 'most' popular group in Tanzania as compared to other groups such as business people, lawyers, doctors, bankers, and academics. This scenario shows how actors in these Kiswahili video-films are seen as 'role models'. According to Bandura's social learning theory, audience members tend to identify themselves with and imitate someone they like and admire. The identified 'role models' can influence behaviour change (Bandura, 1997).

There is a possible disadvantage to this identification in that some video-films can produce the 'Archie Bunker Effect'[2]. According to Sherry (1997), entertainment-education content accidentally results in negative impacts. This happens when some members of the audience identify with negative characters as their role models. For example Mzee Kamba in *Nakwenda kwa Mwanangu* is an irresponsible parent, swindler and womaniser. He is abusive, a liar and violent because he thinks that is how a real man should be. He repetitively refers to himself a '*kidume cha ukweli'* (a real man). Despite all these negative characteristics, the audience still loves Mzee Kamba, famously known as King Majuto. In addition, Erick Ford in *Senior Bachelor* (played by Jacob Steven-JB) is a womaniser, drunkard, violent, and abusive because he has money and he thinks 'money is everything' – he can even 'buy' as many women as he wants. Still some audience members identify him as a person they love. It should be noted that since the death of Steven Kanumba 'The Great' in 2012, Jacob Steven (JB) is said to be the 'most popular' male actor in Tanzania. Film sellers in Kariakoo, for example, argue that when the video-film cover has a picture of JB, they sell well. This is due to the fact that video-film buyers usually ask 'who is in the film', and once they know JB features in the film even if he has played a minor role, they will buy it. Even if JB plays a negative character, his fans will still love him.

Shortcomings of Kiswahili Video-films

It is important to address some issues that are seen as shortcomings and which the audience has pointed out as concerns in relation to these films. Most of the video-films have some technical problems which could be addressed if the directors were more careful or allowed professional inputs. For example, in *Dj Ben*, Ben (Jacob Steven) says his wife Nathalie (Wema Sepetu) is in Australia. He repeatedly mentions Australia. When we see Nathalie coming back she says

[2] The concept originated from the 1970s *All in the Family* and later *Archie Bunker's Place*, popular American sitcom character Archibald 'Archie' Bunker. In this television sitcom Archie Bunker was a negative character created to make audience hate his behaviour – bigotry and ignorance. Unfortunately, after a survey, it was noted that many audience members identified Archie Bunker as the character they liked most. It was concluded that the sitcom reinforced rather than reduced racial and ethnic prejudices (Vidmar and Rokeach, 1974).

she stayed in Austria. Neither the director nor the editor apparently realised the difference between those countries.

All of the video-films analysed have 'simple' storylines which mean in some cases one can easily predict the ending. For example, in *Dj Ben* it is obvious from the beginning of the film that Ben's wife from Australia/Austria will come home and become aware of the relationship between Ben and Samia. The same applies to *Ndoa Yangu* and *Love & Power* where all the stories end with Kanumba – Michael (in *Ndoa Yangu*) and Solomon (in *Love & Power*) regretting having a love affair with women who did not value his love. In *Senior Bachelor*, it was obvious Erick Ford would end up in a mess due to his sleeping with many different women without any protection. One of the challenges brought up by one of the film distributors was about the challenge they have in choosing a film to distribute. He argued: "we receive almost ten new films every day. Majority are crap, they have no stories at all. They are just about a poor person falling in love with a rich girl or the opposite. If they want to make business they should come up with better stories". This shows that there is a need for more complex stories which will satisfy distributors and audience and make artists more creative and competitive.

Some of these video-films' stories are repetitive and some have copied to varying extents other films' storylines. For example *Ndoa Yangu* and *Woman of Principles* have similar storylines. In *Ndoa Yangu,* Michael (Steven Kanumba) and Anita (Jackline Wolper) are married. Anita does not want to have sex with Michael. Michael ends up masturbating which leads him to have physical and psychological problems. Anita seems confused when the doctor calls her for discussion and Michael reveals that he has to masturbate rather than having affairs with other women. In *Woman of Principles*, Pauline (Nargis Mohamed) is busy as a magistrate and decides not to have sex with her husband Clement (Vincent Kigosi). Compared to other films from the USA, *Ndoa Yangu* shares a story with *I Think I Love My Wife* by Chris Rock (2007) while *Love & Power* has a story similar to *A Good Man is Hard to Find* by Leslie Small (2008).

There is a growing tendency to code mix and code switch with English in Kiswahili video-films. For example, Nathalie (Wema Sepetu) in *Dj Ben*, Pauline (Nargis Mohamed) in *Woman of Principles*, and Christine (Irene Paul) in *Love & Power* used English in most of their speech. Surprisingly, their counterparts reply in Kiswahili. One of the audience members, when watching *Dj Ben* questioned, "why is she [Nathalie] speaking in English? She could have done better if she speaks Kiswahili. The [language] mixing does not make sense". I have previously discussed (2011) the issue of class which faces many Kiswahili video-film makers. The Kiswahili video-film audience is mostly lower class. Middle and upper class Tanzanian viewers do not generally watch Kiswahili video-films which they refer to as plays/*maigizo*. When such audience members

refer to Kiswahili video-films as 'plays' they mean they are like stage plays, they lack the technical expertise that would qualify them as films. Since English is considered to be the language of the learned and the well-off, actors in the Kiswahili video-films have been struggling to represent themselves as upper class by chopping in some English code mixing and switching. The same attitude is the major reason why many of these films are given English titles.

Most video-films are in two parts and they have a lot of commercials at the beginning. Some commercials breaks take ten to fifteen minutes, as in *Ndoa Yangu* and *Love & Power*, and they are placed before the film starts. Since some are placed in the same file with the film, one has to see all commercials before watching the film. These commercials are not related to the film. For example, there are commercials about hotels, motorcycles, solar power, drinks, generators and tyres. The commercials (added by distributors during duplication) are used to lengthen the video-films to suit distributors' demands for having film in two parts (Shule, 2013).

Some audience members have questioned the growing tendency of showing 'sex' related scenes which are not necessary, such as masturbation in *Ndoa Yangu*, and French kisses in *Love & Power*, *Dj Ben*, *Senior Bachelor* and *Woman of Principles*. Some audience members see these scenes, including skimpy dresses by female actors like Wema Sepetu (in *Dj Ben*), Jackline Wolper (in *Ndoa Yangu* and *Dj Ben*) and Irene Uwoya (in *Senior Bachelor*) as explicit and perhaps not suited for 'children'. Most of the video-films are neither rated nor classified. The National Film Censorship Board (NFCB) has the mandate to classify and rate all films in Tanzania, but none of the films used for analysis were sent to NFMB for censorship and classification. Major reasons for not complying with censorship and classification rules and regulations include lack of law enforcement of the Film and Stage Play Act of 1976. Perhaps if these films were seen by the ruling classes, implementation of the law would have been made more effective.

These shortcomings are a result of multiple factors, a major one being the nature of the production of Kiswahili video-films. Key roles in the production process are carried out by one individual – story development, director-producer, lead actor. This does not give a chance to the same individual to look at the video-film critically in pre-production, production and even post- production. The other key factor is time constraint. Most of the video-films are produced in two weeks (Shule, 2011) and the director-producer has to meet distributors' targets of producing a certain number of films a year. For example director-producers like Jacob Steven (JB), and Single Mtambalike (Rich Richie) say they have to submit five to six films to the distributor in a year. The same condition applied to the late Steven Kanumba. The target is too high for a creative mind to

produce effectively, especially with one person involved in all key production steps.

Conclusion

This article has investigated the pedagogical value of Kiswahili video-films in Tanzania. Despite some shortcomings, such as predictable storylines and competence and time directed towards directing and editing, what is portrayed in video-films reflects the current reality in Tanzania. Infidelity, fraud, irresponsibility, corruption, sexual abuse, violence, witchcraft and other social injustices are reported on a regular basis in various media. When people watch video-films which address issues related to them it is possible for these video-films to become part of a process of conscientisation. Video-films can be part of the process of breaking the 'culture of silence' by representing familiar problems and enabling audience members to discuss or take action. This means that whilst video-films are made purely for commercial purposes, they can also be a positive force in providing information and promoting change.

This paper's analysis shows that the production of video-films is not necessarily focussed on representing Africanness as African films tend to. Rather, and especially considering their use of African languages, these video-films represent the heterogonous nature of Africa. Since they are not made for the consumption of Euro-American viewers there is no need to equate or evaluate them from a Euro-American point of view. There is however a need to search for new and alternative ways of appreciating the aesthetics of video-films which challenge the current practice of positioning them between African films and Euro-American films.

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