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Notes on Contributors

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Nelson Obinna Omenugha is concluding his full time PhD studies in Media and Communication programme of School of Film and TV Arts, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China. He holds degrees in Mass Communication, Strategic Marketing Communication and International Marketing Communication Strategy from Universities in Nigeria, United Kingdom and France respectively. He also obtained a Leadership Certificate from Coady International Institute, Canada. Several of his refereed papers have appeared in journals and books. His research interests include new media, media management, business development, strategic marketing and media education.

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest issue of the *IAFOR Journal of Cultural Studies*. The volume at hand is once again filled with new research in the field of cultural studies. It will take you from the fertility groves of south-western Nigeria to the forests of Northern Argentina, back to Nigeria for an analysis of its film industry, onward to Kung Fu film cultures in Hong Kong and will end with an appraisal of the culture of erotic films shot on location in Thailand.

Bola Olusola Adeleke, and Kayode Ogunsusi's text, "An Assessment of Destination Image and Factors Responsible for Perceived Customer Value of Osun Osogbo Grove, World Heritage Site, Osun State, Nigeria" report on a research project analysing tourist satisfaction at the Osun Osogbo Grove in Nigeria. For a long time this world heritage site did not receive as many visitors as it should have, given the fact that it is dedicated to one of the most important goddesses in the Yoruba pantheon, Osun, goddess of fertility. Going with the times, Adeleke and Ogunsusi's project surveyed tourists coming to the site and through statistical analysis identified a number of variables responsible for predicting visitor satisfaction. Interestingly enough, spirituality was one which they were unable to properly account for on their charts.

It is exactly that kind of spirituality though that infuses Guadalupe Barúa's text, "Swaying Nature – Native and Poetic Conceptions of the Forest among the Wichí and in Robert Frost's Poems." She builds upon her work with the Wichí people in Northern Argentina to discuss their mythology and then sets it into relation to a number of Robert Frost's poems. Although set apart by time and place, their mythologies coalesce and cross in the metaphor of swaying nature, oscillating between its malevolent and benevolent aspects.

The next article, "Audience's Cognitive Attitude to Nollywood Films' Representation of the Pre-Colonial south-East of Nigeria", by Kate Azuka Omenugha, Nelson Obinna Omenugha and Henry Chigozie Duru discusses the rise of the Nigerian film industry and analyses how perceptions of cultural representations in Nigerian period dramas differ from those made in the west. 70% of their respondents had watched Nigerian films set in (pre-colonial) days and thought the portrayal of life then appropriate. This figure is much higher than the one for western films. It is clear that there is a great hunger for Nigerian films made by local film makers and this is something Nollywood is invited to address.

Staying with cultural film history, Jing Yang's "Historicizing Martial Arts Cinema in Postcolonial Hong Kong: The *Ip Man* Narratives" compares two recent films on the life of Cantonese martial arts hero Ip Man (1893-1972), *Ip Man* (Yip, 2008) and *The Grandmaster* (Wong, 2013) After a through cultural analysis, she concludes that both in their own and contradicting ways exemplify the effort to construct a post-colonial identity in negotiation with mainland China.

Finally, and once again staying within the filmic realm, Alexander J. Klemm discusses cultural orientalisng fantasies set into motion in western minds with the *Emmanuelle* film series. The original series was shot from 1974 onward, when the original *Emmanuelle* film was released to scandalous and revenue-enhancing reviews in the west. His chosen title, "Thailand in the European Cinematic Imagination: The Phenomenon and Legacy of *Emmanuelle* (Fr 1974)" already hints at the imagination evoked from the film – a far Asian east pliable and at the west's service. This was and continues to be a western mostly male phantasy. Klemm meticulously

lists and discusses film productions from France, Germany, Denmark, Italy and the USA, all of which espouse this phantasy without ever questioning the dire situation in Thailand forcing women to fulfil such desires. While purporting to give a cultural history of Thailand and supposedly lending credence to its condoning western male desires, these films in effect were misrepresenting any and all cultural manifestations they were pretending to display. It would take another two decades before cultural historians would begin analysing actual Thai society at the time and putting to rest western attempts at justifying the unjustifiable.

With this plethora of thought-provoking research, I wish you a safe and educative journey through the pages that follow.

Holger Briel
Editor-in-Chief
IAFOR Journal of Cultural Studies

An Assessment of Destination Image and Factors Responsible for Perceived Customer Value of Osun Osogbo Grove, World Heritage Site, Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Tourist travel decisions and behavior are influenced by destination image and value of experience to tourists. Perceived value is one of the important tools for securing a competitive edge in tourism destinations. This study investigates destination image competitiveness, factors enhancing the destination image and perceived value for tourists' experience for the Osun Oshogbo Grove, Nigeria. Two hundred and forty respondents were sampled with the use of a structured questionnaire. Five factors comprising of 63 variables were used to determine the destination image competitiveness using principal component analysis, while multiple regressions were used to evaluate the perceived value for tourists at the grove. Results revealed that 11 out of the 12 variables determining the destination image competitiveness were significant in attracting tourists to the grove. The regression analysis result showed that all factors predicting tourists' value of experience are strong ($R = 0.936$). The variance of destination common service, entertainment and event satisfaction, travel environment satisfaction, and spiritual satisfaction all contributed strongly to the tourists' value of experience (87.70%) with significance ($p < 0.05$). Factors of heritage resources, destination environment, entertainment, and culture, as well as price and value with high alpha value contributed greatly to adding value to enhancing destination and tourists' experience. Eleven variables positively and significantly predicted tourist value. The recommendation therefore is that managers of the Osun World Heritage Site should maintain these variables as well as event experience, entertainment, and environment cleanliness as they are critical to adding values to tourists' experience.

Keywords: competitiveness, destination image, Osun-Osogbo sacred grove, cultural heritage, perceived value, tourists

Introduction

The series of impressions or perceptions of a tourist destination by visitors can be referred to as its image (Wang *et al.*, 2016). Destination is said to be the product visited by tourists and could be recommended to others to visit (Yoon and Uysal, 2005, as cited in Wang and Leou, 2015), while perceived value is defined as the overall evaluation made by consumers through weighing their giving and gaining with regard to the product's image, and also an important indication for the encouragement to repeat visits (Zeithaml, 1988, as cited in Wang and Leou, 2015; Jang and Feng, 2007 as cited in Wang and Leou, 2015; Stylos *et al.*, 2016 as cited in Wang *et al.*, 2017; Wang *et al.*, 2017). Controllable attributes which influence the value customers achieved from a visit to a destination are said to be price, destination product, promotion and place, while the uncontrollable ones are destination characteristics (Govers *et al.*, 2007; Aliman *et al.*, 2016), hence value has a very strong and significant effect on destination competitiveness (Cronin *et al.*, 2000; Ulaga, 2001; McDougall and Leresque, 2000 as cited in Wang *et al.*, 2017).

Tourist travel decisions and behavior are influenced by a destination's image which in turn is influenced by tourist experience and value realized by a visit (Jenkins, 1999; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000; Naidoo *et al.*, 2010). Tourist satisfaction is a consequence of perceived value while perceived value influences the image of a destination (Milfener *et al.*, 2011; Woodruff, 1997). Destination image can be assessed in five dimensions which are quality of experience, touristic attractiveness, environment and infrastructure, entertainment/outdoor activities and cultural traditions (Qu *et al.*, 2011 as cited in Artuger *et al.*, 2013). Tapachai and Waryszak (2000)

outlined and conceptualized the use of image characteristics of a destination that subsequently influence tourists' decision to visit particular vacation destinations under five value dimensions – functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional – which are a part of consumption value theory.

Heritage sites have evolved to preserve culture and heritage, educate and entertain tourists (Donohoe, 2012). Their attributes have contributed immensely to global tourism as they attract a greater number of potential tourists, and here especially outsiders to meet their cultural desires and expectations (Akama, 2000; Patuelli *et al.*, 2013). Patuelli *et al.* (2013) posited that

culture represents a significant force of attraction for tourists (both domestic and international) as it allows destinations and regions to expand their customer base, diversify their offer, extend the stay of the tourist, and reduce seasonality.

In most African societies, cultural festivals such as the famous Osun festival in Osogbo are rooted in the early history of the communities that celebrate them. In particular, Osun goddess who was the founder, mother, protector, guard, and nurturer of Osogbo means everything to the Osogbo people. The Osun is also acclaimed as the goddess of fertility, prosperity and healing. The grove that houses the goddess also serves as a school for initiating and teaching priests and priestesses as well as devotees. On daily, weekly and monthly bases devotees come to the grove to pledge for fertility, for renewal, pledge redemption, or to consult the Osun goddess and other deities (Yusuf, 2016). The history of Osogbo, the Osun river and its goddess dated back to the 1670s.

A number of studies have already been conducted on the Osun Osogbo sacred grove (Plates 1, 2 and 3). Most of them have only centered on tourists' perception of the grove, the evaluation of the conservation status of the grove, maintenance of the grove, the evaluation of selected attractions in Osun state, and a micro analysis of tourists and other factors (Ogunfowokan et al., 2016; Olatunji, 2016; Yusuf, 2016). None of these have, however, addressed the issue of destination image of the Grove in relation to factors responsible for perceived customer value. This study therefore investigates the factors responsible for destination image competitiveness that attract tourists to the grove, assesses the factors enhancing the destination image of the grove and the perceived value realized by tourists from their experience there.



Plate 1: Entrance to Osun Sacred Grove, Osogbo



Plate 2: Inside Osun Sacred Grove



Plate 3: The statue of Iya Mapo in Osun Sacred Grove, Osogbo

Theoretical Framework

Tsai *et al* (2009) opined that a destination may be considered competitive if it can attract and satisfy potential tourists and also influence tourism-related businesses. That is also the case if, as in the view of Dwyer & Kim (2003), a destination is able to deliver goods and services that perform better than other destinations with regards to those aspects of experience considered as important by tourists. The model proposed by Ritchie & Crouch (2000, 2003) is the most well-known conceptual model of destination competitiveness in tourism literature. Their framework is based on the theoretical concepts of effective use of resources. Many researchers have used this model as the starting point for their own research on destination competitiveness. The model distinguishes 36 attributes of competitiveness classified into five key factors. Dwyer & Kim (2003) translated the model of Ritchie & Crouch (2000) into specific indicators which identified new key factors as demand condition (destination awareness; destination perception and; destination preferences) and situational conditions (competitive micro-environment; destination location; global micro-environment; price competitiveness; safety and security) that work together to determine destination competitiveness. Porter, (1990) and Enderwick (1990) considered a number of broad factors such as human resources, physical resources, knowledge resources, capital resources, infrastructure, and historical and cultural resources that all serve to determine destination competitiveness. They argued further that it is important to also understand the relationship and interplay between the factors that make determine competitiveness. However, none of these models deals directly with the issue of destination competitiveness in heritage tourism.

Many of the attributes used in measuring destination image such as attractions, accessibility, accommodation, amenities, local community, shopping options, natural landscapes, service equipment, recreational equipment, cultural attractions, natural environment, historical treasures, price or value, and variety of events and experiences and motivation have variously been exhausted by many researchers (Steinberg, 1996; Pearce 2005; Romera, 2005; Chen and

Tsai, 2007; Chi and Qu, 2008; Aziz, 2009; Prayag, 2009; Lee 2009; Majid et al. 2010; Eusebio and Vieira 2011; Prayag and Ryan 2011; Coban, 2012; Prayag and Ryan 2012; Vipat and Bharucha, 2014; Lo et al., 2014; Prada-Trigo et al., 2016; Salim and Mwaipopo 2016).

Variables that measured value of money spent by tourists at a heritage site also include their satisfaction with entertainment and events such as the experience of a new culture, romance with nature, escape, relaxation, relationship enhancement, self-actualization, festivals and cultural shows for entertainment, environment cleanliness, climate conduciveness, food and beverages, security and safety and spiritual attributes such as emotional healing and protection (Poria et al. 2004; Pearce 2005; Salim and Mwaipopo 2016; Chand 2013; Vipat and Bharucha 2014; Fisichelli et al., 2015; Cho et al., 2016; Alvarado-Sizzo et al., 2017). Destination image has a direct impact on satisfaction which consequently impacts on tourists' future behavior either to revisit the destination, speak positively about it or not (Lee 2009; Prayag 2009).

- This study extends the Ritchie and Crouch (2000) model, but, with different grouping of the determinants of destination competitiveness that are peculiar to heritage tourism. The model for this study identifies the following seven determinants of destination competitiveness as shown in Figure 1:
- Heritage core resources/attractions (traditional art, sculptures, Osun River, shrines, undisturbed forest canopy, rich and diverse flora and fauna)
- Destination common service (satisfaction with experiences such as - shopping experience, lodging, events, and tourism)
- Entertainment and event (satisfaction with experiences such as – new culture, nature, getting away from everyday life, relaxation and freedom, being together with nice people, being entertained)
- Travel Experience and (satisfaction with experiences such as - environment cleanliness, serenity of environment, climate conduciveness, friendly host community safe environment, food, and so on.)
- Spiritual Fulfillment (satisfaction with experiences such as – protection, water provision, fertility for women, blessing for adherents, healings for people, sources of life)

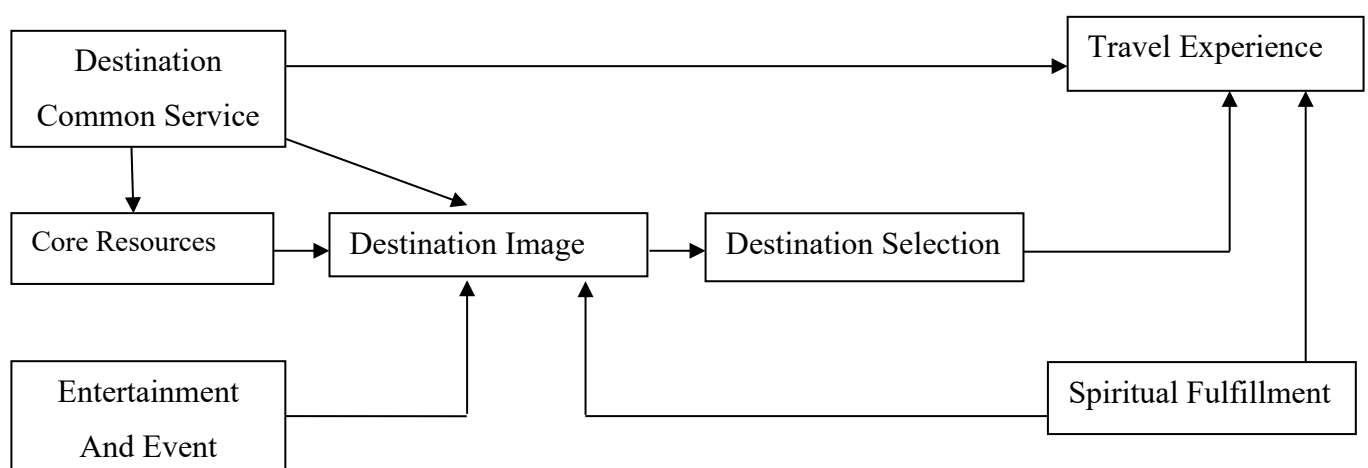


Figure 1: Model for evaluating destination competitiveness of Osun Osogbo Sacred grove

This theory assumes that apart from attractions already situated in the grove, satisfaction with destination common services and entertainment and events can all be used in creating a positive

image for attracting customers (destination selection) to visit the Osun Sacred Grove during and after annual celebrations. All these will impact positively on customers' travel experience of their spiritual fulfillment.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the important destination attributes considered for this study, the following research hypotheses were developed, whereby hypotheses are generally put in a null form:

H₁: Destination common services do not significantly add value to tourist experience

H₂: Entertainment and events do not significantly add value to tourist experience

H₃: Travel experience does not significantly add value to tourist experience

H₄: Spiritual fulfillment does not significantly add value to tourist experience

Methodology

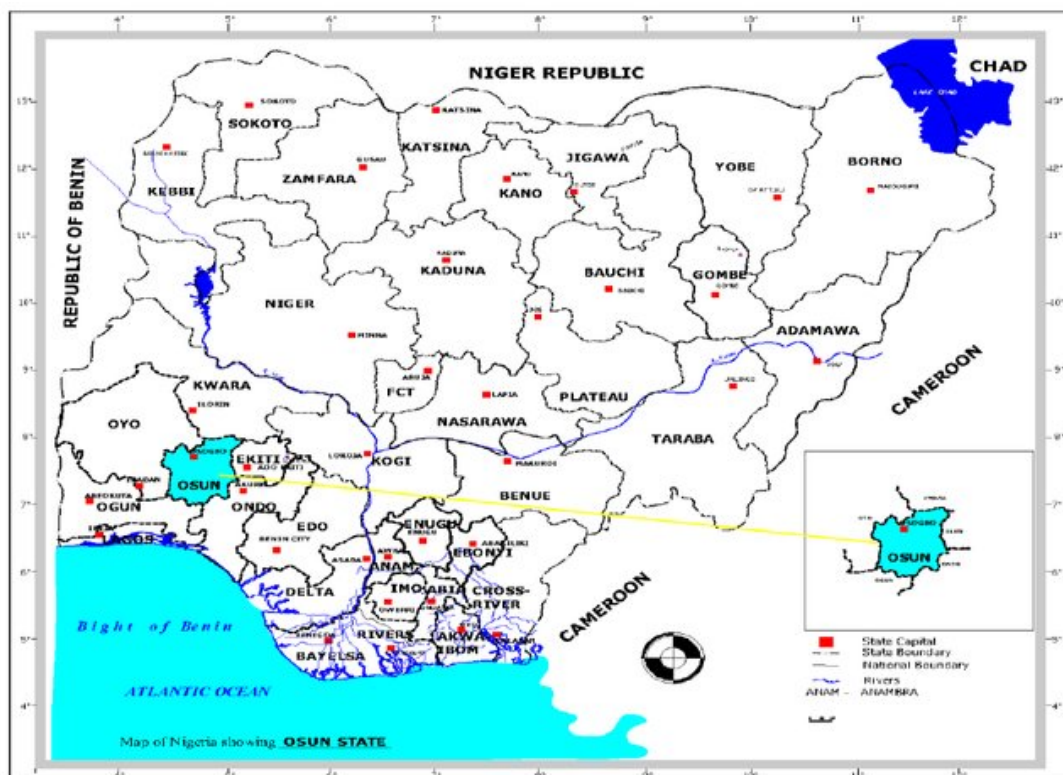


Figure 1.1: Map of Nigeria

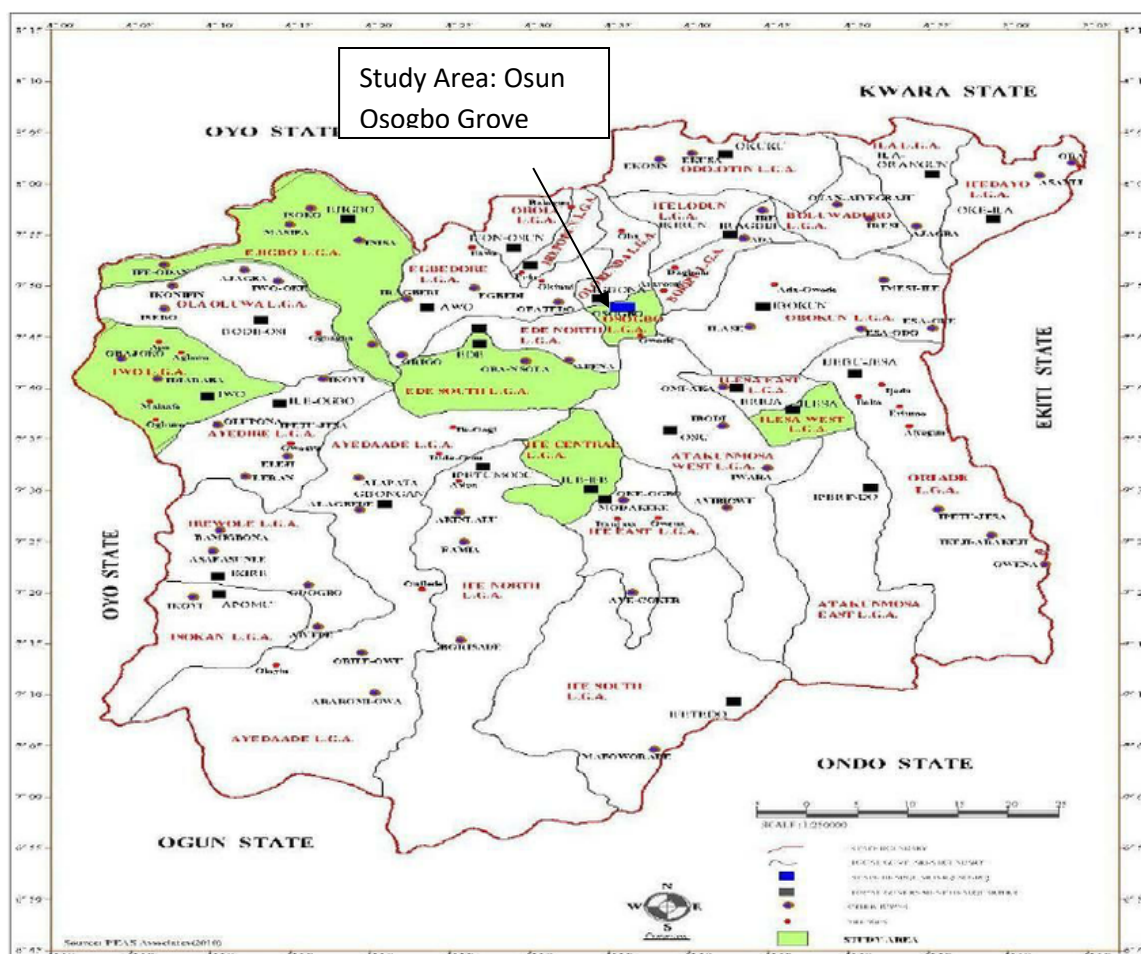


Figure 2: Map of Osun state

The sacred grove is located in Osogbo, the capital of Osun State, Nigeria (Fig 1.1 and 2). The dense forest of Osun Osogbo grove on the outskirts of the city of Osogbo is one of the last remnants of primary high forest in Southern Nigeria. It is regarded as the abode of the goddess of fertility called Osun, a member of the pantheon of Yoruba gods (Yusuf, 2016). The landscape of the grove and its meandering river is dotted with sanctuaries, shrines, sculptures and art works in honor of Osun and other deities. Osun Osogbo has tropical a climate with an annual average temperature and precipitation of 26.1°C and 1,241mm respectively (Yusuf, 2016).

A complete enumeration of tourists who visited the grove within the months of March and April, 2017 (six weeks) was done as there was no sample frame for the population. Out of 380 tourists who visited the grove within this period, 240 respondents returned the questionnaire, which gave a return rate of about 63%. A staff member of the grove was trained and employed as Research Assistant to administer the questionnaire to tourists. The questionnaire contained close-ended questions on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree and was used to elicit responses on the dependent and predictor variables. Data was collected on factors that attracted visitors to Osun Sacred Grove, factors that enhanced the destination image of the Grove, and the perceived value of respondents' experience in relation to their expectations at the grove. The study also gathered data on destination culture, and predictor variables of satisfaction with destination common service, entertainment and event satisfaction, travel experience satisfaction, and spiritual satisfaction, all of which were

attributes that influenced the value customers attributed to their visit to the grove. Based on the unique characteristics of Osun Osogbo grove, five factors comprising 63 variables were used for principal component analysis in which 25 of these were used as predictor variables.

Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) compatible with SPSS was used to explore the variables that enhanced the destination image, and also measured perceived value of respondents' experience in relation to their expectations at the grove. This was used so as to get variables with the highest factor loading to be used in selecting the factor that has contributed the most to each factor (Harman, 1976; Yong and Pearce, 2013). Tukey's test was employed to measure additivity of the variables, while the internal consistency of the variables was determined by Cronbach's alpha. Multiple regressions were used to test hypotheses so as to measure the perceived values of tourists' experience. This tool was chosen because of its appropriateness in predicting Osun Sacred Grove's culture (dependent variable) by the value of the four predictor variables.

Results and Discussion

Factors Enhancing Destination Image of the Grove

The result of four factors that enhanced the image of the grove with the following underlying variables is as presented in Table 1: (1) Unique traditional art works (2) Sculptures (3) Osun river (4) Shrines (5) Religious sites (6) Palaces (7) Sacred places (8) Undisturbed forest (9) Rich and diverse flora and fauna (10) Herbal pharmacy/remedy (11) Clean environment (12) Agreeable climate (13) Safe environment (14) Friendly community (15) Colorful nightlife (16) Entertainment activity (17) Traditional exhibition (18) Festival (19) Distinct architecture (20) History of grove with people (21) Local traditional myths (22) Religions (23) Convenient transportation to the destination (24) Variety of accommodation (25) Shopping selection in the community (26) Accessibility of tourism information about resources (27) Adaptation to local community (28) Massage and spa (29) Varieties of souvenirs (30) Varieties of local crafts (31) Local cuisines offered (32) Reasonable commercial price (33) Reasonable transportation fare (34) Reasonable accommodation price (35) High price/performance ratio (36) Reasonable entry fees.

The results of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) which identified the Eigenvalue are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The result shows that Tukey's test of additivity was statistically significant (56.077, $p=0.000$). The Table also presents the reliability and internal consistency of each factor. Cronbach's alpha was 0.956 which gives the study a high internal consistency and reliability. For all the variables considered, alpha values were as follows: F1 = Heritage Resources/Attractions ($\alpha =0.801$), F2 =Destination Image ($\alpha =0.912$), F3 = Destination Common Service ($\alpha =0.609$), F4 = Price and Value ($\alpha =0.860$), F5 = Perceived Customer Value ($\alpha =0.890$). All constructs with the exception of F3 have alpha scores of above 0.80, indicating that the items used in measuring the constructs were reliable and satisfactory (Aliman *et al.*, 2016).

Factor loading for all items was also shown in Tables 1 and 2. Out of 63 items, the PCA revealed the presence of 9 variables with Eigenvalues greater than or equal to one. This exceeds the 60% threshold stipulated and used in the social sciences (Hair *et al.*, 1998).

Factor 1 (Heritage Resources that attract/motivate Tourists) represented the resources within the grove that attracted tourists to the grove. This comprised ten variables, of which "Osun River", "undisturbed forest canopy", and "diverse flora and fauna" were selected as the most

contributing factors, because they each accounted for Eigenvalue of ≥ 1 . For factor 2 (Destination environment, entertainment and culture), out of the 12 variables considered, only “abundant history associating Osun Sacred Grove with Osogbo people” accounted for as much variance as a single variable. For factor 3 (Destination common service) with 11 variables, only “wide variety of accommodation” was kept because of its high Eigenvalue. Factor 4 (Price and value) had “reasonable commercial price” as the only variable that explained the maximum amount of variability in the data.

This implies that the variables contributed the most in adding value to destination image of the heritage site as they were the factors in term of resources, and destination characteristics which have influenced the value that tourists were expecting to achieve by their visits. Previous studies have revealed that the above attributes (tourism attractions) of the heritage site were some of the expected consumption values that influenced tourists’ decision to travel to heritage sites (Al-Ababneh, 2013; Coban, 2012; Eusebio and Vieira, 2011; Jenkins, 1999; Majid et al., 2010; Prayag and Ryan, 2011; Prayag and Ryan, 2012; Romera, 2005; Steinberg, 1996; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000). The qualities of all these tourism products play important roles in tourism by increasing the level of tourists’ satisfaction. Findings of many researchers have also revealed that other variables in any destination apart from those in its nucleus can be used in creating a positive image for that destination (Poria et al., 2004; Pearce 2005; Lee 2009; Prayag 2009; Chand 2013; Vipat and Bharucha 2014; Fisichelli et al., 2015; Cho et al., 2016; Salim and Mwaipopo 2016; Alvarado-Sizzo et al., 2017).

Table 1: Respondents' Perception of Destination Image Competitiveness of Osun Osogbo Grove

S/No	Total Variance Explained							
	Initial Eigenvalues					Extraction Sum of Square Loading		
	Initial	Factor Loading	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Factor 1: Heritage Resources that attracts/motivates Tourists ($\alpha = 0.801$)								
1	1.000	0.930	24.264	38.514	38.514	24.264	38.514	38.514
2	1.000	0.985	8.107	12.868	51.383	8.107	12.868	51.383
3	1.000	1.000	6.652	10.559	61.941	6.652	10.559	61.941
4	1.000	0.989	5.915	9.389	71.330	5.915	9.389	71.330
5	1.000	0.999	4.183	6.640	77.970	4.183	6.640	77.970
6	1.000	0.946	3.377	5.360	83.330	3.377	5.360	83.330
7	1.000	0.998	3.062	4.861	88.191	3.062	4.861	88.191
8	1.000	1.000	2.961	4.700	92.892	2.961	4.700	92.892
9	1.000	1.000	2.113	3.353	96.245	2.113	3.353	96.245
10	1.000	0.993	1.403	2.227	98.472	1.403	2.227	98.472
Factor 2: Destination environment, entertainment, and culture ($\alpha = 0.912$)								
11	1.000	0.989	0.962	1.528	100.000			
12	1.000	0.993	3.633E-15	5.767E-15	100.000			
13	1.000	0.965	2.983E-15	4.735E-15	100.000			
14	1.000	0.979	2.826E-15	4.486E-15	100.000			

15	1.000	0.995	2.347E-15	3.726E-15	100.000
16	1.000	0.965	2.244E-15	3.562E-15	100.000
17	1.000	0.999	1.871E-15	2.969E-15	100.000
18	1.000	0.998	1.660E-15	2.636E-15	100.000
19	1.000	0.991	1.431E-15	2.271E-15	100.000
20	1.000	1.000	1.297E-15	2.059E-15	100.000
21	1.000	0.989	1.132E-15	1.797E-15	100.000
22	1.000	0.977	9.830E-16	1.560E-15	100.000
Factor 3: Destination Common Service(α =0.609)					
23	1.000	0.967	9.479E-16	1.505E-15	100.000
24	1.000	1.000	7.946E-16	1.261E-15	100.000
25	1.000	0.971	7.211E-16	1.145E-15	100.000
26	1.000	1.000	5.753E-16	9.131E-16	100.000
27	1.000	0.996	5.444E-16	8.642E-16	100.000
28	1.000	0.999	5.018E-16	7.965E-16	100.000
29	1.000	0.992	3.636E-16	5.771E-16	100.000
30	1.000	0.977	2.897E-16	4.599E-16	100.000
31	1.000	0.998	2.148E-16	3.409E-16	100.000
Factor 4: Price and Value(α =0.860)					
32	1.000	1.000	1.414E-16	2.245E-16	100.000
33	1.000	0.984	1.050E-16	1.666E-16	100.000
34	1.000	0.981	7.117E-17	1.130E-16	100.000
35	1.000	0.982	3.084E-17	4.895E-17	100.000
36	1.000	0.997	6.344E-18	1.007E-17	100.000

Perceived Customer Value of Osun Oshogbo Grove

The perceived value of products and services that customer experienced at the grove under four factors with the following 27 variables is presented in Table 2: (37) Shopping experience (38) Lodging experience (39) Events experience (40) Tourism experience (41) Experience of new culture (42) Romance and new experience with nature (43) Getting away from everyday life (44) Relaxation and freedom (45) Being together with nice people (46) Meeting new people (47) Being entertained (48) Environment cleanliness and neatness (49) Serenity of environment (50) Climate conduciveness satisfaction (51) Friendly host community satisfaction (52) Safe environment satisfaction (53) Food experience satisfaction (54) Staff always put guests first (55) Staff are friendly towards tourist (56) Willingness to revisit destination (57) Protection of Osogbo people (58) Provision of water for surrounding community (59) Fertility for indigent women (60) Fertility for non-indigent women (61) Blessings for adherents and others (62) Healings for people (63) Sources of life.

The experiences of tourists at the heritage site were presented in Table 2. Results show that for Destination common service (factor 5), Entertainment and event satisfaction (factor 6), and Travel experience satisfaction (factor 7), events experience, being entertained, and environment cleanliness respectively, each with Eigenvalue of 1 were the variables that contributed the most to customer satisfaction. Nonetheless, the other variables too in each of the factors had higher loadings and by implication are also significant and representative for the factors. However, for spiritual satisfaction (factor 8) none of the variables explained the maximum variability, yet all the variables had higher loadings which were more than 0.5 and are so significant. This implies that the visitors to the Grove perceived the Grove as a cultural haven for the protection of the Osogbo people. The same cultural perception also goes for the provision of water, fertility for both indigent and non-indigent women, blessings for adherents, healings for people, and the Grove being a source of life for people. These variables are what the people hold in high esteem as cultural beliefs as a result of their interaction with the Grove. These variables with highest Eigenvalues are most representative of the factors in assessing customer satisfaction with the experiences sought in the grove. Thus, “being properly entertained and getting satisfied with the event in the grove”, “getting satisfied with their travel experience to the grove”, and “cleanliness of the environment in the grove” have all contributed to the overall experience of visitors to the grove. The experience of the visitors could therefore be said to be worthwhile as some of their expectations were met. Previous findings have indicated that the value of money spent by tourist was measured by their experiences that met with their expectations with destination visited (Alvarado-Sizzo et al., 2017; Chand, 2013; Chi and Qu, 2008; Cho et al., 2016; Fisichelli et al., 2015; Pearce, 2005; Poria et al., 2004; Salim and Mwaipopo, 2016; Vipat and Bharucha, 2014).

Table 2: Customer Value/Satisfaction of Experience

Factor 5: Perceived Customer Value (Experience)($\alpha = 0.890$)									
S/No	Initial	Factor	Total	%	of	Cumulative	Total	%	of
		Loading		Variance		e %		Variance	e %
Satisfaction with Destination Common Service (DCS)									
37	1.000	0.813	-6.970E-17	-1.106E-16		100.000			
38	1.000	0.999	-1.091E-16	-1.732E-16		100.000			

39	1.000	1.000	-1.569E-16	-2.490E-16	100.000
40	1.000	0.999	-2.672E-16	-4.241E-16	100.000
Entertainment and Event Satisfaction (EES)					
41	1.000	0.997	-2.761E-16	-4.383E-16	100.000
42	1.000	0.997	-3.321E-16	-5.272E-16	100.000
43	1.000	0.989	-3.530E-16	-5.603E-16	100.000
44	1.000	0.990	-3.980E-16	-6.317E-16	100.000
45	1.000	0.991	-5.496E-16	-8.724E-16	100.000
46	1.000	0.993	-5.762E-16	-9.146E-16	100.000
47	1.000	1.000	-6.956E-16	-1.104E-15	100.000
Travel Experience Satisfaction (TES)					
48	1.000	1.000	-8.078E-16	-1.282E-15	100.000
49	1.000	0.989	-9.540E-16	-1.514E-15	100.000
50	1.000	0.990	-1.100E-15	-1.747E-15	100.000
51	1.000	0.978	-1.171E-15	-1.858E-15	100.000
52	1.000	0.989	-1.171E-15	-1.978E-15	100.000
53	1.000	0.995	-1.246E-15	-2.193E-15	100.000
54	1.000	0.973	-1.405E-15	-2.231E-15	100.000
55	1.000	0.994	-1.546E-15	-2.454E-15	100.000
56	1.000	0.983	-1.649E-15	-2.617E-15	100.000
Spiritual Satisfaction (SS)					
57	1.000	0.988	-1.934E-15	-3.070E-15	100.000
58	1.000	0.999	-2.000E-15	-3.175E-15	100.000
59	1.000	0.998	-2.219E-15	-3.522E-15	100.000
60	1.000	0.992	-2.308E-15	-3.664E-15	100.000
61	1.000	0.997	-2.572E-15	-4.083E-15	100.000

62	1.000	0.911	-2.956E-15	-4.693E-15	100.000
63	1.000	0.972	-4.165E-15	-6.610E-15	100.000

Perceived Value of Respondents from Experience at the Grove

The results of multiple regressions used in testing hypotheses are presented in Table 3. When all 25 predictors of factors that added value to customer experience were regressed with the dependent variable which is destination culture (distinct architecture) at a tolerance limit of 0.000, the model was found to be fit (Table 3). The overall strength of the relationship was strong and acceptable ($R = 0.936$). The percentage variance of customer value was explained by 87.70% of the variance of destination common service, entertainment and event satisfaction, travel environment satisfaction and spiritual satisfaction (which is higher than 50%), with F-value being significant at 0.00, thus, making the model very fit. This implies that the F-test determines whether the proposed relationship between the response variable, i.e., culture and the set of predictors, is statistically reliable and can be useful in predicting factors that added value to customer experience.

Table 3 shows that 13 predictors have positive relationships with destination culture, while 12 have negative relationships. The negative sign indicated that the variables are inversely related. Since 23 results out of the 25 variables are less than the critical value of 0.05, then these 23 variables predicted and added value to customer experience, while 2 variables - shopping experience and fertility for non-indigent women - did not adequately predict customer value.

From the 13 predictors that have positive relationships with tourist' value, 11 of them predicted tourists' value significantly: romance and experience with nature, getting away from everyday life, relaxation and freedom, satisfaction with climate conduciveness, satisfaction with a friendly host community, food satisfaction, staff always putting guests first, willingness to revisit destination, fertility for indigent women, blessings for adherents, and healings for people.

In the same vein, from the 12 predictors that have negative relationships with tourist' value, 10 predicted tourists' value significantly: lodging experience, events experience, experience of a new culture, being together with nice people, being entertained, satisfaction with environment cleanliness and neatness, satisfaction with a safe environment, protection of Osogbo people, and provision of water for surrounding people, sources of life.

The model for this study fits the data well because the gaps between the observed value for prediction and each of the expected values for prediction are close. This implies that those 11 positive and 10 negative variables that were significant were good enough to predict tourists' value. The overall strength of the relationships in this study which was high is a good measure of the strength of relationships between the model of this study and the dependent variable. The very high value of R^2 in the regression model also indicates that the variables that were significant can predict the value of customer experience with high precision and validity. According to the findings of Ekinici and Hosany (2006), these variables provide evidence for the predictive validity of customer value by destination culture. These variables have proved their place in making the sacred grove a competitive place as they had contributed to making visitors comfortable during their visits, and by so doing significantly impacted on the overall destination image of the grove. They further contributed to the high level of customer satisfaction with the resources provided for the visitor experience there.

The 11 constructs that positively predicted tourists' value with significance and the 10 variables that negatively predicted tourists' value of experience with significance can thus be said to have significantly added value to the expectation and experience of tourists at the Osun Osogbo Grove. This implies that tourists perceived having gained value for their money spent while on visit to the grove. As a result, tourists may want to return to the grove again in the future. Furthermore, the variables used have been recognized by many researchers as measures of perceived value of service quality that appeared to be the best predictor of tourist satisfaction (Lee et al., 2007; Al-Ababneh, 2013; and Bajs, 2015). Willingness to revisit a destination was a measure of the level of tourists' satisfaction with a heritage site, and this is supported by the finding of Cho et al., (2016). Satisfaction can be measured by attributes such as efficiency, service quality, and perceived value (Gallarza and Saura, 2006).

Table 3: Perceived Value of Respondents Experience at the Grove

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.570	1.170		5.615	0.000
H₁ – Destination Common Service (DCS) did not significantly add value to tourists' experience					
Shopping experience satisfaction	0.058	0.224	0.047	0.259	0.796
Lodging experience satisfaction	-5.864	0.783	-4.845	-7.490	0.000
Events experience satisfaction	-0.596	0.162	-0.577	-3.684	0.000
Tourism experience satisfaction	-0.266	0.123	-0.264	-2.153	0.032
H₂ – Entertainment and Event Satisfaction (EES) did not significantly add value to tourists' experience					
Experience of new culture	-1.115	0.321	-0.904	-3.471	0.001
Romance and new experience with nature	6.884	1.200	5.438	5.737	0.000
Getting away from everyday life	3.503	0.276	3.479	12.708	0.000
Relaxation and freedom	9.051	1.015	7.041	8.919	0.000
Being together with nice people	-10.711	1.391	-7.735	-7.701	0.000
Being entertained	-9.221	1.442	-6.637	-6.394	0.000
H₃ – Travel Experience Satisfaction (TES) did not significantly add value to tourists' experience					
satisfaction with environment cleanliness and neatness	-0.801	0.256	-0.448	-3.126	0.002

Climate conduciveness satisfaction	6.114	0.896	4.830	6.822	0.000
Friendly host community satisfaction	5.430	0.770	3.802	7.052	0.000
Safe environment satisfaction	-8.258	1.014	-8.429	-8.142	0.000
Food experience satisfaction	3.373	0.731	2.389	4.615	0.000
Staff always put guest first	1.406	0.421	1.036	3.335	0.001
Staff are friendly towards tourist	-1.262	0.487	-1.255	-2.590	0.010
Willingness to revisit destination	4.866	0.604	3.722	8.055	0.000
H₄ – Spiritual Satisfaction (SS) did not significantly add value to tourists' experience					
Protection of Oshogbo people	-9.915	1.565	-6.640	-6.337	0.000
Provision of water for surrounding community	-9.145	0.803	-5.265	-11.387	0.000
Fertility for indigent women	8.820	0.949	5.800	9.295	0.000
Fertility for non-indigent women	0.559	0.288	.381	1.945	0.053
Blessings for adherents and others	5.532	0.908	2.992	6.092	0.000
Healings for people	1.089	0.101	.817	10.828	0.000
Sources of life	-0.557	0.070	-.517	-7.973	0.000
R = 0.936 R² 0.877, R² Adjusted = 0.863 Standard Error of the Estimate = 0.469 F-Value = 60.977 F-sig = 0.000					

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that cultural heritage resources that attracted tourists the most to Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove include the undisturbed forest canopy, and diverse flora and fauna. For the destination environment, entertainment and culture as a factor, abundant history associating Osun Sacred Grove with the Osogbo people was significant in enhancing the destination image. For factor 3 – Destination common service – a wide variety of accommodation was significant in enhancing destination image. While for factor 4 – Price and value – reasonable commercial prices were significant in enhancing destination image. The history of Osogbo in relation to the Sacred Grove and the culture of Osogbo people in protecting forest canopy surrounding the Grove with the diverse flora and fauna is an age-old tradition embedded in the culture of the Osogbo. The history and culture of protection has gone a long way in keeping the grove intact and safe from destruction, thus enhancing the destination image of the Grove. Complimentary tourism products such as a wide variety of available accommodation and services at reasonable commercial prices were significant in enhancing the destination image of the Grove.

Findings regarding customer satisfaction with their experience at Osun Sacred Grove have revealed that events experience, being entertained, and environment cleanliness were the variables that added the most value to the experience sought at the grove.

None of the variables on spiritual satisfaction had an Eigenvalue close to 1, but all of them had higher loadings and were significant as a pointer to the spiritual potency of the Grove. Visitors were satisfied with the Grove as being a cultural haven for protecting the Osogbo people, for the provision of water, for fertility especially for indigent women, blessings for adherents, healings for people, and the Grove being a source of life for people. The impact of the spiritual variables as cultural attributes on tourism can never be underestimated. These cultural variables can therefore be used to strengthen the attractiveness and competitiveness of the Osun Sacred Grove. This can be achieved if a cohesive relationship is established between tourism and culture (with emphasis on spirituality) in the Grove so as to make the place more attractive and also increase the Grove's competitiveness as a place to visit.

A high premium should be placed on the potentialities of the 21 variables that significantly predicted customer value as they could be harnessed to further enhance the competitiveness of Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove. While the two variables - shopping experience satisfaction and fertility promise for non-indigent women - that did not adequately predict customer value should be improved upon by relevant authorities and stakeholders. Fertility for non-indigent women is a variable being associated with the beliefs of non-indigene women regarding their infertility, i.e., the spiritual blessing of the womb. That the variable did not predict customer value is a pointer to the relative disbelief of the women about the Grove's ability to stimulate fertility. Government agencies as stakeholders can play a role of supporting cultural heritage and thereby strengthening a destination's tourism appeal. They might introduce policies especially in the areas of marketing and promotion that will be attractive to visitors and will also be beneficial for residents.

The findings of this study adds to the knowledge base of researchers on heritage tourism, particularly on the construction of variables that enhance destination image competitiveness and also serve as a good predictor of tourist value.

Managers of Osun World Heritage Site should therefore strive to maintain the factors which are critical in adding values to tourists' experience at the site. Also, managers of the heritage site should devise means of coordinating the activities of business people around the heritage site so as to improve the services they render in such a way that tourists to the site will gain value when shopping. Also, the spirituality of fertility should be highlighted and adequately extended to non-indigent women so as to further encourage women from outside Osogbo town and its environs to visit the grove for the supposed spiritual blessing of the womb.

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Swaying Nature – Native and Poetic Conceptions of the Forest among the Wichí and in Robert Frost's Poems

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Abstract

Usually, analogies about nature exist in the native and poetic conceptions that stem from a type of reasoning where sensitive perceptions and intuitions, linked with certain natural elements, give rise to world views which foster human empathy. This article will focus on the concept of “nature”, from the perspective of the Wichí *bazaneros* of Northwestern Argentina. They are traditional foragers, like their neighbours, the Qom, Chorote, Mocoví or Nivaculé of the Gran Chaco lowlands that live on the northern border of Argentina and the southern borders of Bolivia and Paraguay. Their thoughts will be put into correlation with poems by Robert Frost, concentrating mainly on the swaying tree metaphor. Trees, among the Wichí, are associated with longevity, vitality and fertility. Human and arboreal families are connected through trees and, as in Frost's poem *Birches*, this allows them to swing between the forest and the stars through reveries. However, in both nature is conceived as two-faced: her lovely face tends to change into a cruel one, which disappoints the poet as well as the Wichí people who cherish it so much. For this reason, in both the cases, its swaying character may suddenly lead to a change from a friendly nature to an ominous and suffocating presence predicating human decline and death. Fortunately, reverie and imagination sustain them during these temporary spaces of negativity and afford them periods of joy.

Keywords: Wichí, Robert Frost, swaying, faces of nature

Introduction

This article will focus on the humanization of nature in the indigenous Wichí society, and will analyse its counterpart in the poetics of Robert Frost. Many societies order reality by privileging affections, intuitions or vivid dreams according to their reasoning that there is no logical reason but only different kinds of prioritization to cope with the world. Stillness is the essence of inanimate beings, until an extraordinary event (a spell, the action of a shaman or a theophany) changes their shape or meaning. Hence, in native societies, in folklore and in poetry, metaphorically or not, this communication between species is enabled and may occur, albeit its grasp may be frequently uneasy.

Among the Wichí, certain groves replicate their own kinship ties, such as that of grandparents and grandchildren, as they conceive them as families of trees with masculine and feminine genders. Moreover, the relationships between husbands and wives are represented by couples of birds that mutually express their love by means of birdsongs. Indeed, some humans display certain skills which they attribute to their mythical ancestors. It is undeniable that these societies humanize the elements of nature that are close to them, and to whom they attribute their own intentions, feelings and human behaviours.

These concepts recall what trees mean to the poet Robert Frost who, in his poem “Birches” reminds us of the nostalgic memories of childhood, insofar as they gift the child swinging on the tree with a deep joy: “Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells / Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust— / Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away / You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.” (*Winter Interval*, 1916. Frost, 1979, p. 121–122).

This image compares well with the intense joy experienced by the Wichí people when they await the harvest, at the end of every year in November or December, when the carob pods hail down on the ground and nature deciding whether their shamans have propitiated the Pleiades successfully. Sometimes, their efforts are crowned by rich pickings that then results in collective happiness.

In both cases, the swaying metaphor strikes one as an always precarious balance because nature is Janus-faced: its amicable, peaceful and luminous side may suddenly become untamed, uncontrolled and unpredictable. It also consecrates the recurrent cycle of birth, growth, fullness, and decay, except for the trees in the Wichí case: they are the only natural living beings who are not doomed to death because they harbour the greenness associated with the vital strength (greenery: *watsan*) that hampers the completion of the process of decay. This agrees with the quality of “greenery” (the plant sap is homologous to blood) associated with the vital force that, except for mass destruction, such as a big fire or unlimited deforestation, slows down the natural death process. They believe that trees tend to live for a long time because “the greenery (life force) lives there” (*lewatsanchejaj*, (Barúa, 2001, p. 30). It seems that people who are spiritually close to trees tend to consider themselves as belonging to the earth but, somehow, separate from the earth as well. Also, as will be pointed out in the next section, this vital strength may also be transferred to humans. And although some people find a haven and a pathway to daydreaming in nature, in the case of Frost, she is indifferent to our hopes and fears.

The Wichí Groves

For the Wichí, trees are links to their mythological home. They are associated with vitality and longevity, as pointed out in a pioneering work by Miguel de los Ríos (1976) about the meaning of the arboreal world, especially in relation to Wichí shamanism. The groves (*kwat*) are conceived as families, which are analogous to the human ones, which can also communicate among themselves.

Their murmurs are usually translated into words by the Wichí grandparents who put a double pod carob (one male, the other female) under their heads so that their dream would reveal the name of their new-born grandchild (Barúa, 2001, p. 40). Thus, the arboreal grandparents and grandchildren relate to the important events in the lives of their human equivalents. Consequently, the Wichí language hosts numerous botanical toponyms (Palmer, 1995, p. 35–60).

Thus, the arboreal grandparents and grandchildren relate to the important events that happen to their human equivalents. The space where they live is marked by what happened to their family and relatives. The laughter, mocking, unexpected or unfortunate moments in the life of these forest walkers are reflected in their territory and its narratives. The footprints store the memory and emotions that each close kinsman has lived. They also point out, above all, the dangers and the changing nature of the landscape that they must negotiate on a daily basis and which conveys information to them and their relatives. The roads are made safe by treading them, observing flora, fauna and celestial phenomena to foresee threats until the roads become insecure again, because the territory and its paths are perceived as an indomitable, aggressive and often petty entity.

However, in their walks they step into the footprints of their ancestors, but they also imprint new paths on the landscape depending on what happened to the flora, fauna or themselves, for example, if the latter were scorched, violently killed, or hit by lightning, (Braunstein et al., 2017, p. 149-205). Palmer points out that, “their place-name classification system is their map where they read as in a navigation chart where all the hazards and all the relatively safe waters are marked” (Palmer, 1995, p. 10).

Trees make their mere existence possible and are, at the same time, a metaphor for life. In the Wichí belief system, their terrestrial figures communicate with the cup composed of the innumerable stars of the Pleiades, which is responsible for the flowering and fructification of the forest. This constellation is defined as a white bough whose stars spill down on top of the trees and cause a heavy rain of carob pods that spin in the air and settle on the ground (Barúa, 2001, p. 38).

Albeit the Pleiades (*Potsethlai*) are composed of a multitude of stars, only seven are visible to the naked eye. For the Wichí, they imply a celestial-human alliance which is oriented towards the economic and vital survival of individuals. Normally, in the latitude where the Wichi live (24°S 61°W), they are visible at the end of July. At this precise moment, the shamans may be able to reach them with their shamanic paraphernalia. After sniffing hallucinogenic *cebil* (in the Wichí language: *ha'tah*; lat. *Anandenanthera colubrina*), their auspicious journey to the stars enables the young seeds to achieve maturation. When they are older, they are ready to fall onto the ground. If the shamans were successful in their task, by November or December, the seeds of all the species mature, most prominently among them the paradigmatic carob tree, and the season of abundance (*Yatchep*) begins. (Barúa, 2001, p.37). Scarcity or abundance is linked

to the constellation of the Pleiades. It is seen as a family whose “children” detach themselves from the constellation when they mature and drop into the forests ripening the fruits. This also happens among other native Chaco groups that have been studied from an ethno-astronomical perspective, e.g. among the Mocoví (López, 2009). Additionally, the Pleiades are believed to be a gigantic white and bright bower from where the stars spill over the trees and cause a heavy rain of carob pods that rotate in the air and settle on the ground (ibid., p. 38), an inverted hair that overflows with stars and is aligned with the treetops. This allows for an exchange between the shamans, trees and stars.

The constellation is conceived of as a rectangle occupied by the celestial family: the father (Moon, *wela*), the mother (the star woman, *katés thlukwetaj*) and their older and younger children. This family has a life cycle analogous to a human's: when the older brothers mature, they slip down from the constellation into the woods, the younger brothers get bigger and brighter and, once they finish maturing, they too slide to the edge of the constellation and get ready to drop down (Barúa, 2001, p. 39).

The metaphorical description of the Pleiades by astronomers has striking analogies: “Seen from the outside, such clouds seem dark and gloomy. But inside, they are brilliantly illuminated by the hot new-born stars. Later, the stars wander out of their nursery to seek their fortunes in the Milky Way, stellar adolescents still surrounded by tufts of glowing nebulousity, residues still gravitationally attached of their amniotic gas. The Pleiades are a nearby example. As in the families of humans, the maturing stars’ journey far from home, and the siblings see little of each other.” (Sagan, 1980, p. 231).

On the other hand, the Pleiades’ influence on the maturation and harvest of fruits is not only a cultural belief of the Wichí but also a part of the empirical knowledge of foragers throughout the world who have observed the relations between the appearance and disappearance of stars in the celestial vault under which they live and the concurrent changes in the sylvan world. The first ethno-astronomical antecedent in the Chaco was the work of Lehmann-Nitsche, who from 1923 to 1929 studied various native groups, including the Wichí (known as the Mataco for many centuries). Presently, there is a much work done referring back these early texts and its celestial topics (Cordeu, 1977; Braunstein, 1989; Giménez Benítez, López & Granada, 2002 and 2006; López, 2009; Lopez & Giménez Benítez, 2007; Gómez, 2017).

Finally, decades ago, *Filiáhen*, the shaman who revealed his secrets to Dr. de los Ríos, (1976, p. 69) pointed to a cultural mechanism taught by the trickster *Tokwjaj* (one of the most powerful Wichí ancestors), to find a personal and unique name for the human new-borns obtained when hearing the call of the grandfather tree to his/her grandchild (the masculine or feminine pod) while dreaming (1976; 69). Even today, this process is known as *iwo thleya* (literally, “make his name”). This can refer to all kinds of living beings. Hence, the human, arboreal and star families have the genre assignation, mating and, above all, conception and progeny in common, as well as a secret name – known only to the closest kinsmen – which is the very essence of the Wichí as living people (after their death, their names are intended to be erased from the memories of their loved ones as soon as possible) (Barúa, 2001, p. 25).

Swaying between the Sky and Earth

In Amerindian mythologies, usually the separation between humans and animals is not clear. The mythical ancestors could have animal bodies and human souls. With the passage of myths to historical times, individuals acquired the human body, although they tend to subtly show, to

varying degrees and in specific situations, the traits of animals whose bodies and skills their mythical ancestors possessed. However, the conviction that a sort of backstage mythical world pushes them into a sort of terrestrial exile perseveres— they almost do not belong to the heavenly realm, that of their constellations where the *pahlalis* (mythical ancestors) continue to live, among the feminine Stars, Sun and Moon or the vengeful Rainbow Serpent. Unlike modern humans, these are characterized by glare, enchantment, excess, abundance and plenitude, the traits that the moderns sorely miss.

In particular, male ancestors possessed an animal morphology and human behaviour. However, “they engendered a morphological and cultural Wichí humanity” (Dasso, 1999, p. 50) through various avatars that have taken them away from their mythical space and have placed them in Wichí history. Based on the same idea, women were stars who came down to the earth to steal the food from male ancestors. The women that were captured by them were humanized by mating, the others escaped and still are stars.

For the Wichí, the everyday world may become “a pathless wood”. Even a slight oversight in their behaviour may alter the balance, resulting in an unfortunate event. This can be equated with the child's deeds while swinging on the tree: A part of one of the poem “Birches” unique stanza looks like a metaphorical guide for the Wichí's cautious behaviour: “He learned all there was / To learn about not launching out too soon / And so not carrying the tree away / Clear to the ground. / He always kept his poise / To the top branches, climbing carefully / With the same pains you use to fill a cup / Up to the brim, and even above the brim.” (Shand & Guirri, 1976, p. 16–17). In fact, children's games, especially the traditional ones, focus on maintaining balance. For example, Wichí girls would form a spiral with their legs until they create a compact group. They represent a growing tree. A boy axes the “tree” hitting the girls' legs. The group oscillates and, when “the tree” falls, the game ends. Or, a child stands in the centre of a circle formed by children lying on the ground and push the child to the centre with their feet from one side to the other without letting him fall (See Métraux, 1946).

Seamus Heaney has highlighted this feature in Frost's poem, which also proved to be vital in interpreting the delicate art of supporting each other that the Wichí have developed: a world of silent movements and careful words to avoid being overheard by malicious beings. Avoiding a noisy world, where the voices are confused, allows them to hear the murmur of the trees. Their forests speak in a primeval language that they have already lost and which can be rescued through day-dreaming (*haislek*) or by taking possession of bird songs. It is curious that in Wichí mythology, the fate of primeval forests was associated with their mythical ancestor, Ovenbird. It is evidenced in their narration of “The Great Fire” (Palmer 2005, p. 268-275):

A group of ancestors went to ask the Fire Owners for embers for their campsites. They warned giggly Ovenbird not to laugh at them. These beings had a human shape, but their bodies were made of fire. When Ovenbird noticed how they released fire while whistling or spitting, he could not help bursting into laughter. The Men of Fire took offense and burned the world.

Because of Ovenbird's action, the world had to be renewed and so it was; two little siblings survived in a cave. When they came out, not a single tree remained. Then, the boy sang a powerful chant (like the shamans in historical times), the world recovered its forests, and life was restored, albeit devitalized since each new arrangement implies a loss according to the Wichí (Cf. Barúa, 2016). Coincidentally, the Ovenbird also appears in Frost as the primeval bird that knows and expresses reality without words: “*The question that he frames in all but words*” *The Oven Bird* [Mountain Interval, 1916].

Among the Wichí, the sound of trees appears as a mark of pristine reality. In this sense, they resort in their ability to listen to the conversations of the arboreal families while they are dreaming; the tone of their words tries to echo natural and human activities. Furthermore, they grab the songs through the spirits of the birds in order to “see” from above with the bird’s eyes (Barúa, 2013, p. 225).

Frost, willing to push his imagination while setting limits to it, also tries to preserve musicality, but not through free verse or modernist experimentation. His verses deliberately follow the rhythm to guarantee an access, for “a while”, to the celestial world without the danger of getting lost in a world with no paths.

We are seeking to point out certain similarities between worldviews from the Wichí subtropical woods and those of the boreal forests of Robert Frost. This great poet has put his effort into creating very vivid, meticulous images, although his style seems “deceptively simple” for very sensitive and complex realities. This also happens in what is left of many indigenous cultures with foraging backgrounds, especially, among the Wichí communities whose way of life still depends on the woods, as is also the case with other *bazaneros*.

Frost wrote many of these particular poems while staying in Great Britain although he finished polishing them when he was back in New England. In the first edition of his Complete Poems (1964) he wrote a paragraph dedicated to his wife Elinore. He pointed out the places that were dear to them like Plymouth “where we walked in spring beyond the covered bridge”, their farm in New Hampshire as well as Derry or Hyle Brook. Not only is the book of poems titled *Mountain Interval* but also the word “interval” is present several times in the four lines of the dedication. According to his biographer, Jay Parini, an interval is a New England dialect term that would imply that Frost intended it as “a double meaning, suggesting a ‘pause’ on a trip, as well as a landscape immersion” (1999, p. 278).

Perhaps, the “pause in a trip” and the “immersion in the landscape” are the common notes of the poems that are closest to the feelings of “longing” and “enchantment”, described in colloquial language to show the deep emotions that Frost attributed to simple people (Lynen, 1960, p. 12). Of the thirty poems from “Mountain Interval”, we will concentrate on “Birches”, and “The Oven Bird”, “The Last Word of a Blue Bird”, “Out, Out!” and “The Sound of Trees”. We will also reference two other poems, “October” (*A Boy’s Will*, 1915) and “Dust of Snow” (*New Hampshire*, 1923). One can interpret his concern for death (personified in the winter trope) and where to find contentment in spite of it.

Some critics place him under the literary school of Imagism, which was founded in 1914 by Ezra Pound in his book *Des Imagistes: An Anthology*. The primary idea focuses on the image as a direct impression of the senses, through color, rhythm, and over formal elements. However, Frost seems to circumvent any classification by trying to revive not only visual images but also restoring sound, rhythmic and musical images arising from his deep meditation on an object of nature or related to it in each poem. The poems of “Mountain Interval” have been described as brief meditations on an object, person or event. These short pieces have a dramatic quality like monologues and dialogues. Borges et al., (1997) point out that “Birches” and “The Road Not Taken”, are examples where he resorts to an “understatement” that would be a fairly classic form of communication in New England (p. 32–33)

In the following, we are explicitly comparing some aspects of Wichí reverie by focusing on “Birches” (Frost, 1979, p. 121–122). First titled *Swaying Birches*, it emphasized the idea of

swinging between the earth and the sky by children riding birches. This was a common game during Frost's childhood in New England. It is a long poem composed of a single stanza in blank verse, with numerous metrical variations, where the iambic foot prevails as it better translates the natural cadence of speech. Frost produces a sound effect using alliteration where consecutive repetition of the same phoneme, or similar phonemes, suggest sensitive images such as the sound of water or a horse's gallop. "Birches" creates a powerful auditory image when he describes, for example, the ice cracking as it breaks against the branches, "Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells / Shattering and avalanching on the snow crust / Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away..." (Lines 10–12).

In order to evoke his particular musicality, he needs to push imagination and translate it strongly into the poetic word through rhythms. This cannot be achieved through free verse or modernist experimentation. This is akin to the Wichí, where behaviors are deliberately rhythmic which ensures fleeting access to the celestial world without the danger of being lost, "And life is too much as a pathless wood." (Line 44).

In "The Figure a Poem Makes", a prose text that appears in the first edition of his *Complete Poems*, Frost defines this experience as, "...begins in delight and ends in wisdom. The figure is the same as for love" (1964, p. vi). He points out that the poem "must be more felt than seen ahead like prophecy. It must be a revelation, or a series of revelations, as much for the poet as for the reader" (p. vii).

As discussed earlier, nature can be beneficial or harmful depending on the circumstances or carelessness with which people use the tools to do their daily chores, she can suddenly turn against them. The latter appears both in the Wichí and a number of Frost poems, such as the grim "Out! Out!..." (Frost, 1979, p. 136–137). An inanimate object, a saw, is presented as a conscious and evil being, who grunts and chatters aggressively while a boy does his job of cutting firewood with it when his sister calls him and his family to the table for supper. And, as if the saw knew what "supper" means, it jumps and eats the boy's hand. The sister wants to call the doctor, but he refuses to avoid amputation. The boy ends up bleeding to death. The poetic expression of this death is heart breaking, "To tell them 'Supper' / At the Word, the saw / As if to prove saws knew what supper meant / leaped out at the boy's hand, or he must have given the hand / [...] They listened at his heart. / Little — less — nothing! / and that ended it" (Lines 14–32).

The analogy is based on comparing the two routines of the everyday world and another world glimpsed through the treetops. Life is worth living only in the ecstasy felt when the two spheres concur, both in Frost's poetic inspiration and in the Wichí dreams or visions. Balancing, the child ascends the birch trunk until it approaches the sky. At the same time, the happy years for the Wichí *bazaneros* are those when their ancestors and shamans establish a connection between the white bower of the Pleiades and the treetops causing a profuse rain of carob pods that delights the inhabitants of the favoured communities.

Frost, evokes nostalgia as he feels as an "expatriate" of the modern world, away from his "home" in multiple ways. According to Lynen, nostalgia arises from sophistication and not from primitive roots. He states that it is usually a part of highly developed societies due to the impulse to look back, towards a purer life that is fading away (1960, p. 12). It does not appear spontaneously but arises from a deeply meditative attitude. The modernization of the early twentieth century is the context for British and American writers, like Frost, seeking refuge in London or Paris to experience new forms and new sensations. Frost wrote most of his poems

in London where he “painted” images, that were in his heart, of the forests and the daily tasks of the New England peasants from which his dreams and revelations emanate, knowing that nothing never will be the same. This is notably similar to the other case compared: the meditative Wichí tend to look back to their cherished mythic world (Cf. Barúa, 2013).

Sometimes, both beg for a delay before the fatal decline, as Frost describes in “October” when the days are already heading towards winter, “Begin the hours of this day slow. / Make the day seem to us less brief. / Hearts not averse to being beguiled, / Beguile us in the way you know / [...] Retard the sun with gentle mist; / Enchant the land with amethyst. / Slow, slow!” (Frost, 1979, p. 27–28)

The faces of Nature

Frost does not attribute these actions to supernatural beings, as Yeats had done earlier. Seán Hewitt states, “The fluid, Celtic view of nature, what Yeats would term “flux,” is recreated in the sacred space of both the poem and the woods [...] is thus embedded early in the poet’s oeuvre, and is specifically linked to a re-enchantment of the natural world, a revised understanding of the poet’s place within nature” (2018, p. 16–17).

The Wichí would exist somewhere in between: the spiritual world acts in nature as in Yeats, but they are analogous to humans. For instance, the arboreal “grandparents” (the largest trees, *thlukwuetaj*) are equivalent to human grandparents. While they talk to their grandchildren (the seeds, *halo’ thlos*), the human grandfather tries to capture what the old tree is muttering while he is dreaming (Barúa, 2001, p. 29). Likewise, the musicality associated with bird songs that combine rejoicing and lament is fundamental for the Wichí, who aim to reach comfort and joy by means of reverie (Barúa, 2013, p. 226).

In this regard, Seamus Heaney points out that the most conventional analogy of poetry has, like in Wichí nostalgia, “vestiges of times of Edenic happiness and freedom”. Thus, Frost tells us: “Never again would birds’ songs be the same. / And to do that to birds is why she came” (*A Witness Tree*, 1942. In: R. Frost, 1979, p. 338–339).

Nature can also be dreadful and inhuman. However, “Nature is not hostile to man, for hostility would imply in nature a consciousness of specific human concerns. But nature does not oppose man’s purposes; it simply enacts its own tendencies: it is not friendly to man” (Abel, 1981, p. 202). In fact, Frost does not consider himself a “nature poet”, as the Romantics did. Hewitt therefore distinguishes between physical devotion to “Nature” and when she merely inspires mystical vision, “a key tension in Romanticism between appreciation of the physical world (as in Wordsworth) and a disdain for it (as in Blake), suggesting that, in his early life at least, Yeats was more attracted to the idyll, the Romantic landscape, than to a Blakean world of symbolic “unnature”. (Hewitt, 2018, p.3). Nonetheless, some critics do not judge Frost as a Romantic poet but a modern one. “Obviously as a Romantic, Wordsworth uses “Nature” as the prominent theme focusing on the beauty of nature that can heal his pain and give him pleasure. On the other hand, as a Modern Poet, Frost’s vision is to present human being as the central theme, and nature comes as a background. Poetry, to Frost, was a record of personal experience” (Hewitt, 2018, p.7).

Frost defines the swaying experience as “the happiness of what was lost long time ago”, because charm is ephemeral – just a pause in a soulless world. The Wichí are great walkers and, at the same time, meticulous observers of the daily changes in nature. While they talk,

they are attentive to everything around them and when someone stumbles, is clumsy or commits some mischief, everyone laughs. Even those who hail from the forest usually share the funny or surprising events they have witnessed with others. They have said, in many instances, that the ground is being scarred by actual living beings whose feelings and experiences mark the Earth, as it happened with all the beings who preceded them. Something akin to this belief is also experienced in another one of the poems by Frost, *Dust of Snow* (“New Hampshire”, 1923):

“The way a crow/ Shook down on me/ The dust of snow/From a hemlock tree //Has given my heart/A change of mood/And saved some part/ Of a day I had rued” (Frost, 1979, p. 221).

Dahl related *Snow* to winter and death, but in this particular poem he highlights how comforted our poet felt: “‘Dust of Snow’ conducts a familiar human conflict. In this poem, the speaker has lost all hopes and is very sad. When he sits under a hemlock tree the poet has the dust of snow fallen on himself. Making his mood better he feels relaxed and thankful to the nature for saving his day from being wasted” (Dahl, 2016, p.105). Surely the Wichí would smile, like Frost, if a crow suddenly rained on them the dust of snow.

However, in *The Most of It* (“Mountain Interval”), Frost expressed the other face of nature – its unfriendliness. Standing alone at the shore of a lake, “he thought he kept the universe alone”. He could only hear a “mocking echo” and he asked whether nature really wanted to support humanity, implying that nature acts according to her own principles without regard for human purposes. She does not provide an answer to any kind of our tribulations. Frost concludes the poem with a gloomy: “And that was all” (Abel, 1981, p. 204).

For the Wichí, life is a battleground and the slightest negligence may bring about Evil. Their trickster, Tokwaj, is the prototype of a careless and cheating person. Like Sisyphus in Western mythology, he challenged the most important rules of conviviality. Crafty Sisyphus and naughty Tokwaj were punished for their deeds, but, along with them, humanity also was condemned to an existence of hopeless labor (Cf. Barúa, 2016).

Conclusion

As seen above, there exist important convergences between the Wichí mythology and their groves and “Birches” (and other poems) by Robert Frost. The trees communicate with the true home of the Wichí, that of their mythical ancestors whom they reach through remembrance and reverie. A pause of serenity and joy, that contrasts with the vicissitudes of their current life viewed as degraded and incomplete. Only complex rules of sociability allow them to overcome conflict and pain while enabling them for fleeting encounters with the contiguous world of their mythical ancestors. Full existence is rarely available in the everyday world primarily viewed as threatening and painful. However, what we read in Dahl about Frost can be true also for the Wichí: “Frost is by no means the dark naturalist that many suspect. Behind the mask of ‘grimness’ which many of his critics have fastened upon him, there is a continual elfin pucker; a whimsical smile, a half-disclosed raillery glints beneath his most sombre monologues. His most concrete facts are symbols of spiritual values.” (2016, p. 100)

Finally, in both cases compared here, the “real” world and that of the “imagination” appear as a craving for Nature that, through poetic and mythical remembrance, and is experienced by the

entanglement of poetry and reverie with an, at times, uncaring and unforgiving nature and an, at other times, benevolent and beautiful friend.

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The Audience's Cognitive Attitude to Nollywood Films' Representation of Pre-Colonial South-East Nigeria

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Abstract

The emergence of Nollywood in 1992 sparked enthusiasm among scholars and stakeholders who consider it as a unique opportunity for Nigeria to tell her story by herself as against what has been perceived as “biased” portrayal of the continent and her people by foreign media. Apart from the external goal of ensuring a good image for the continent, there is the internal objective of enhancing positive sharing of experience and memory among the local population. However, in pursuing this latter goal, the internal audience must be taken into consideration because their perception and attitude towards such “African story told by Africans” will be key to how much impact the story will have on individuals and society. Against this background, this paper investigates the cognitive disposition of the audience in the South-East of Nigeria towards the historical representation of that region of the country in Nollywood films. Situated within the framework of the theories of uses and gratifications and selective processes, the study is designed as triangulated research combining survey and focus group discussion. Among others, findings indicate that the viewers perceive film as capable of functioning effectively as a medium for preserving and transmitting history. It concludes that since Nigerian films are perceived as genuinely communicating their history, they equally have the transmitting power that builds and conserves memories among the people. The study thus recommends, among others, that the filmmakers should endeavour to select contents that are healthy and beneficial aimed at enriching shared experiences.

Keywords: history, Nigerian film, Nollywood, memory, pre-colonial, representation, South-East Nigeria.

Background Analysis

The advent of the Nigerian modern film industry popularly referred to as “Nollywood” in 1992 has been greeted with enthusiasm by scholars and stakeholders who see it as a monumental opportunity for Nigeria (and by extension Africa) to tell her story by herself as against the “biased” representation by foreign (largely Western) media and books (Okoye, 2008; Nwosu, 2008, Ekwonchi, 2018)). In fact, representation of Africa in mass media and books has been a subject of contestation over the years, as African intellectuals accuse the West of capitalising on their privileged grip on modern instruments of representation such as films, television, books, and so on, to distort her (African) culture and history to suit their racial superiority template (Orizu, 1992; Agba, 2002, Omenugha and Itieke-Idamieba, 2018).

However, at the turn of the 20th century, the emergence of the first generation of radical and nationalistic-minded African intellectuals heralded the era of critical scrutiny of the representation of Africa by Western writers, scholars and filmmakers (Orizu, 1992; Agba, 2002; Nbeta & Ikiroma-Owiye, 2014, Omenugha and Itieke-Idamieba, 2018). It was this new attitude that brought about the quest to “retell” the African story from an “African” perspective devoid of the perceived Western racial and ideological biases (Adeotu, 2010). Little wonder many scholars saw Nollywood – the world’s second most prolific film industry after the Indian Bollywood – as another veritable opportunity to re-tell the Nigerian (African) story as a way of boosting her external image and creating a new consciousness of racial pride and self-belief in her inhabitants (Mba, 2006; Nwosu, 2008; Okoye, 2008; Akpabio, Mustapha-Lambe, 2013). However, for this objective to be attained, the target audience of such “re-telling” should be able not only to understand the “re-telling” for what it is but also perceive it as credible. Stated differently, their perception of the message should be positive in order to induce belief.

Against this background, this paper investigates the cognitive disposition of the audience in the South-East of Nigeria towards the historical representation in Nollywood films of that region of the country – where Nollywood itself began in 1992. Put differently, it aimed at understanding the audience’s judgment and reaction to these films in the context of how they represent their shared historical experience. The study was limited to those films that are set in the pre-colonial (pre-western culture) era – an epoch believed to have been much subject to misrepresentation in the media and literature (Orizu, 1992; Nbeta & Ikiroma-Owiye, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

The character of film as an “unreal” or stage-managed form of communication makes it a primarily entertainment media form as against news, textbooks, documentaries, etc. that are viewed as embodiment of real-time information and education (Bittner, 1989). Hence, film as a medium for conserving and transmitting history naturally inherits the burden of inducing credibility in the audience who might view it as a mere make-belief entertainment source. Therefore, the problem might not lie only in whether films possess contents that fulfil the role of preserver of social memory but also in how the audience members perceive and react to these contents. Do they perceive it as telling their story genuinely? This question embodies a central problem that makes this study necessary.

Purpose/Object of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the cognitive disposition of the audience in the South-East of Nigeria towards the historical representation of that region of the country in local films. More specifically, the following objectives were pursued:

1. To discover the audience's extent of exposure to Nigerian films with pre-colonial representation of the South-East Nigeria;
2. To understand the extent to which the audience views this representation as true and accurate;
3. To find out how the audience assesses the representation of Africa by Nigerian films vis-a-vis its representation by Western films?
4. To assess how the audience generally perceives the role of film in preserving and telling history.

Research Questions

Towards achieving the above objectives, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. To what extent is the audience exposed to Nigerian films with pre-colonial representation of the South-East of Nigeria?
2. How genuine and accurate does the audience view this representation to be?
3. How does the audience compare the manner of representation of Africa by Nigerian and Western films?
4. What is the audience's general perception of film as a medium for preserving and telling history?

Definition of Terms

Audience: A person of body or person who consume a given media message.

Nigerian films: Cinematic films produced by Nigerians whether within or outside the shores of the country.

Nollywood: A nickname for the Nigerian film industry.

Representation: Portrayal of a person, group or thing in the media.

South-East Nigeria: One of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria which is the primary home of the Igbo-speaking people of the country. It comprises the five states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo.

Review

An Overview of the Nigerian Film Industry, Nollywood

The Nigeria cinema and film industry dates back to the late 1960s as filmmaking business evolved with increased investments in production and distribution networks. From a historical point of view, the Nigerian film industry can be partitioned into four eras: the Colonial period (1903–1960); the Independence period (1960–1972); the Indigenization Decree period (1972–1992) and the Nollywood period (1992–date). Hence, it was in 1992 that “Nollywood” emerged as name given to the Nigerian movie industry. It is uncertain how the name originated but according to Haynes (2000), the term was coined by a foreigner and first appeared in a 2002 article by Matt Steinglass in *The New York Times*. The name imitates Hollywood just like Bollywood, which was derived from joining Bombay and Hollywood, to describe the film industry of India. Hence, Nollywood has been linked and likened to Bollywood. For instance, inherent in both film industries is the experience of nationality in the diaspora. Scholars such as Haynes (2000) and Owens-Ibie, (2005) indicated that the emergence of Nollywood was triggered by various factors, including economic factors and the need to address social conscience as well as contribute to world culture. Nollywood has provided a platform for understanding and expressing Nigerian and African cultures. Owens-Ibie, (2005) contended that the film industry of any country should promote the well-being of humanity, which is a

critical issue given the way in which movies play an ever-greater and more important role in society. He further noted that films in Nigeria are produced on comparatively low budgets but are popular and have influence and impact on lifestyles, popular opinion and culture there.

The Nigerian film industry is adjudged the most prolific in the world and the second biggest employer in Nigeria after the government (Omenugha, 2018). PwC's *Global entertainment and media outlook 2017-2021* asserted that Nigeria produces around 2,500 films a year, a figure that makes it the second biggest production hub after India. Consequently, the rising popularity of Nollywood is increasing the level of scholarship and attracting research into its genres, production, distribution and challenges within the country, region and diaspora. For instance, Haynes (2000) contends that 'the study of Nigeria video film does not fit easily into the structures of African film criticism in still another way. Studies of African film have tended to be Pan-African, for marketing as well as ideological reasons. In addition, Pearson (2001) submits that Nigeria is one of only three countries, along with India and the United States, where domestically produced movies dominate local viewing. The industry has also been able to generate and increase revenue through extensive local and international distribution of films, including promoting overseas viewership and organizing film festivals which create awareness of new films and offer access to Nollywood films.

Literature

Literature on the content of Nigerian films have shown that these films tend to mirror the experiences of the people of the nation whether contemporary (Opeyemi, 2008; Uwah, 2009) or historical (Uwah, 2009). Aspects of indigenous life commonly represented in the films include religion (Ozele, 2012), norms and morals (Bures, 2006), and political life (Abiola, 2013), among others. All these would suggest that Nigerian films have emerged as a medium for preserving the experience of the people. In other words, Nigerian films serve as a means of storing and transmitting memory.

However, literature has inquired into the correctness of the memory being documented and transmitted by the indigenous films. There has been a tendency to query the factuality of the cultural representation embodied by some of the local films with the argument that the filmmakers are sometimes misrepresenting the people whose story they purport to be telling (Opeyemi, 2008; Asogwa, Ojukwu & Ezenandu, 2012; Onoja & Ojih, 2015). It is in this regard that the filmmakers have been accused of tending to focus unduly on the negative experiences of the people (in the form of social decay) as represented by robbery, fraud, violence, prostitution, promiscuity, and other social ills (Asogwa, Onoja & Ojih, 2015; Enna, Idakwo & Akpovye, 2015) – a trend which has been argued to negatively affect the self-image of the people and their external image, as well as potentially multiplying such ills in the society (Asogwa *et al.*, 2015). In this regard, feminist criticism of Nigerian films' role in reflecting the cultural experience of the people has accused the films of reinforcing and perpetuating the patriarchal structures traditional to the society (Okunna, 1996; Duru, 2008; Ukata, 2010a; and Ukata, 2010b; Prinsloo, 2011; Adewoye, Odesanya, Abubakar & Jimoh, 2014).

An aspect of this sentiment of misrepresentation is the discourse of cultural imperialism which has seen some critics such as Akpabio *et al.*, (2013) and Nbeta & Ikiroma-Owiye, (2014) contending that western ideology has so permeated the gatekeeping process in Nigerian film industry such that the content of the films now denigrates and threatens the cultural integrity of the indigenous people. In other words, the films, rather than becoming a medium for genuine self-awareness among the people, now serve as an instrument for cultural erosion that benefits foreign nations and undermines the local people.

Importantly, the potential of Nigerian films to serve as a valuable medium for preserving and transmitting history has been underscored by literature testifying the popularity of the local films amongst local audience (Onuzulike, 2007; Okoye, 2008; Shivers, 2013). Such popularity places these films in an advantageous position to serve as an informative and educative medium through which people's experiences could be preserved and shared (Abiola, 2013).

Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory presents an appropriate theoretical framework to examine questions of “how” and “why” individuals use media like film to satisfy particular needs and desires such as the desire to tell one's story by oneself. The theory originated from a functionalist perspective on media (Luo, 2002) and as argued by Ruggiero (2000) and Weiser (2001), might be characterized by an inductive approach for developing classifications of various motivation and functions of using media. The theory was first developed in research on the effectiveness of the radio in the 1940s, essentially focusing on explaining media audiences' motivations and the attendant actions. It defines why media audiences use a particular medium and what uses the medium serves for them. Kink & Hess (2008) attempted to expand the concept and society's understanding of the uses and gratifications theory by making a distinction between gratifications obtained and gratifications sought. The scholars noted that gratifications obtained denote gratifications that media audiences actually experience through the use of a particular medium; while by contrast, gratifications sought imply those gratifications that media audience are expected to obtain from a medium before they actually come into contact with it. Research by Palmgreen & Rayburn (1979) demonstrated that gratifications obtained are better predictors of media use than gratifications sought and that if the gratifications sought by an audience are met and exceeded by a medium, recurrent use will occur. The researchers contended that understanding the gap between these two types of gratifications is essential to analyzing how diverse media audience use various media, the expectations that they bring to their media habits and the gratifications they actually obtain from their exposure to diverse media products. Particularly, Eighmey & McCord (1998) noted that the uses and gratifications theory has been successful in understanding audiences' motivations and behaviours within the context of traditional media such as film. The uses and gratifications theory of mass communication underscores the fact that audience's needs and purposes for using the media are an important factor in measuring the impact the media could have on them (Ojobor, 2002; Daramola, 2003; Baran, 2010). Thus, for film to effectively serve as a medium through which people learn and share their corporate experience, their purpose of viewing film ought to conform to this objective. Luo (2002) argued that the media provide people with the platform to actively be involved and engaged in communication by building profile groupings of shared uses and gratification. In other words, gaining knowledge through engagement and learning should form part of their purpose (gratification) for viewing films.

The emergence of Nollywood, the Nigerian modern film industry, has brought about the significance of uses and gratifications as African media players are presented with the opportunity to frame and tell the African story. The framing and telling of Africa's story in the film by Western players have been adjudged to be distorting, “biased” and not reflecting the true position of the situation on the continent (Agba, 2002). Omenugha (2005), has described African news in the British media as “spiced”. This informed the argument by some African media intellectuals such as Okoye (2008), Nwosu (2008) and Nbeta & Ikiroma-Owiye (2014) that Africa has to actively use and engage the media to mobilize the audience, reshape their perception and re-tell the African story. Omenugha and Itieke-Idamieba (2018) suggested that

“the new media can provide platform for Africans to share ideas, experiences and collectively work together for more positive reports and representations of Africa’s concerns” (p. 97) The Nollywood film industry presents the chance to attain this objective for the continent as has been argued by Mba, (2006). Moreover, earlier studies like LaRose, Mastro & Eastin (2001), Leung, (2001) and Flanagan, (2005), have applied the uses and gratifications theoretical framework to new media which is providing a platform for media audiences to select and be in control of media contents they consume. Ruggiero (2000) observed that with technological advancement and adoption of the new media, such as virtual worlds, important new research from the uses and gratifications perspective is emerging. New media afford the opportunity for media users to engage and collaborate with one another; including being able to “tell” their stories in form of content creation. To generate, create and disseminate media content, new media empower users to intentionally select a certain medium and message source that best fits their personal needs based on certain reasons and motivation. Nollywood is very well able to use these new tools, given its fairly recent history.

Theory of Selection Processes

Similarly, the theory of selection processes – selective exposure (attention), selective retention (memory) and selective perception (evaluation) – equally helps to conceptualise the process through which films could serve in preserving and transmitting memory among a people. Although these processes had emerged from a political communication background, they are also of research value for processes in non-political contexts (Sears & Freedman, 1967).

Selective exposure helps to explain the idea that people’s interests and opinions influence the information or medium to which they attend. It argues that people are only open to messages or medium they want to receive, particularly because of the gratification they derive from the message or use of medium. Within political communication, selective exposure is sometimes used synonymously with selective attention. For the field of cognitive psychology, selective attention has a slight different meaning. It denotes the idea that people hear only what they want to hear. However, recent research like Holbrook, Berent, Krosnick, Visser & Boninger (2005) discusses the concept of opinion-motivated selective exposure which this study finds relevant in the discourse of audience cognitive attitude to the Nollywood films. Opinion-motivated selective exposure occurs under conditions as listed below:

1. Firstly, the audience must be committed to their view for this form of selective exposure to occur. It argues that the more confident a person is about his or her opinion, the less likely he or she is to exercise selective exposure. Hence, confidence has an opposite effect here.
2. Secondly, to the extent that a media audience engages in selective exposure, its effect is regulated by various environmental factors. For instance, environments in which people feel threatened or which place limits on their ability to access information produce stronger selective exposure effects.
3. Thirdly, there are certain conditions under which people will seek out opinion-challenging information. For instance, people who expect that they will have to defend their opinion often seek other viewpoints prior to debate.

Selective retention (memory) asserts that people are more likely to retain information the more personal importance they attach to it. This selective process contends that people exercise effort seeking out information or using a particular medium which they deem important and gratifying (Sears & Freedman, 1967). This effect is largely a result of interest-motivated selective exposure and not necessarily influenced by opinions. Hence, selective retention

(memory) helps to explain the idea that people would devote significant cognitive resources to achieve results on a matter of their interest.

Selective perception (evaluation) refers to the idea that people will perceive and interpret opinions or viewpoint the way they want to see them and in a manner which is consistent with their pre-existing beliefs. Sears & Freedman (1967) noted that this process occurs in two ways. Firstly, people fail to notice, or they misperceive, information that does not match their views. For instance, people tend to think that the views held by another mirror their own and will misinterpret contrary position rather than updating their views. Secondly, people frequently accept positions that support their opinions without hesitation but will scrutinize view that challenges their position carefully; including critiquing the approach, analysis as well as interrogating interpretations.

These selective processes provide means by which individuals' pre-existing values form their use of information within the society. For instance, in engaging the media for information, people tend to be more knowledgeable about personal significant topics than about topics that do not interest them, as well as inclined to know more of the evidence supporting their opinions than they know about other perspectives. The theory contends that there are two significant factors that motivate selective processing namely;

1. The complexity of the information environment. This view notes that people do not have the time or the cognitive ability to consider each and every side of an issue and, ultimately, must be selective in choosing information; however incomplete, that addresses the information need at hand.
2. The individual's experience. A negative emotional reaction denotes cognitive dissonance and could be in form of information that conflicts with existing opinions. Therefore, this point holds that people naturally seek to minimize dissonance by pursuing opinion reinforcement and finding fault with opinion-challenging information.

Against the foregoing, this theory underscores the role of the audience's cognitive disposition in shaping their manner of attentiveness, retentiveness and perception of messages. In other words, the human mind has a way of selecting what to pay attention to, what to retain, and how to perceive (interpret) such experience (Ojobor, 2002). Thus, for the audience of Nigerian films to benefit from the historical value of films, their cognitive disposition should be such that they "choose" to pay attention to historical content of films, retain such content and interpret it as a genuine representation of their corporate experience.

It is in this regard that there is a gap in literature related to the role of Nigerian films in preserving and transmitting memory. Existing studies as reviewed above have failed to holistically inquire into the cognitive disposition of the indigenous people of Nigeria vis-a-vis the historical content of films they view. Stated differently, inquiries did not focus on how the audiences perceive and react to this content – an important variable in the extent such content becomes of any value to individuals and the society as whole.

Methodology

The research is designed as a mixed method study of survey and focus group discussion (FGD). The area of study was the South-East Nigeria, one of the six geopolitical zones of the country, comprising five states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The study population was the residents of the South-East Nigeria numbering 16, 381, 721, according to official census

result (National Bureau of Statistics, 2007). A sample size of 400 was purposively selected applying the formula suggested by Taro Yamane (1967). The sample selection for the survey was done via multi-stage approach covering state level, senatorial zone level, local government level, town level and household level. For the FGD, the sampling procedure was non-probability (judgment sampling) to enable the researchers to determine the demographics of the respondents; hence, two discussion groups of six respondents each were selected. Each one comprised three males and three females, and three youths and three older people. The researchers equally ensured balance in the levels of education and kinds of profession in each of the discussion groups. A structured questionnaire and an FGD guide were respectively employed for data collection in the survey and FGD. Analysis was both quantitative and qualitative as necessitated by the triangulated nature of the study design.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Preliminary data. Out of the 400 questionnaire copies distributed in May 2017, 382 representing 95.5% were recovered while 18 representing 4.5% were not. Hence, the response rate stood at 95.5%. The high return rate of questionnaires was possible because the researchers had paid detailed attention in engaging the respondents on the purpose of the studies; assuring them of anonymity and patiently waited for them to read and answer the questionnaires before collecting back from them. Nevertheless, this approach was rigorous and time consuming as it took researchers longer days to administer and collect the research instrument. Also, the demographic analysis indicated that 59% of the respondents are male, while 41% are female. Thus, there was 18% difference between the number of males and the number of females. In addition, 5.1% of the respondents were between 18 and 29 years, 75.4% were between 30 and 39, 14.7% were between 40 and 49, while 4.8% were 50 and above. Hence, the age bracket 30 – 39 years accounted for the majority of the respondents. Further, 9.7% of the respondents had First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) as their highest educational qualification; 31.1% had Senior School Certificate (SSCE) or its equivalent; 10.7% had Ordinary National Diploma (OND) or Pre-degree diploma; 20.9% had university degrees or Higher National Diploma (HND), while 7.1% had postgraduate qualifications. Analysis also indicated that that 22.5% of the respondents were government workers; 6.6% were self-employed professionals; 11.7% were professionals in private firms; 9.7% were artisans/farmers; 8.7% were traders; 21.4% were students; while 19.4% belonged to other professions.

Exposure to Nigerian Films

Table 1: Respondents' Exposure to Nigerian Films

	Do you watch Nigerian films?		Have you watched Nigerian films set in the olden (pre-colonial) days of the South-East people?
Always	44.8% N = 171	Yes	69.9% N = 267
Sometimes	13.5% N = 52	No	30.1% N = 115
Rarely	13.4% N = 51		
Never	28.3% N = 108		
Total	100% N = 382	Total	100% N = 382

Table 1 shows that only 28.3% of the respondents do not watch Nigerian films, whereas 44.8% watch them always, 13.5% watch them sometimes, while 13.4% do this rarely. These figures clearly indicate the popularity of Nigerian films among local viewers – a fact that has been repeatedly emphasised in literature (Okoye, 2008; Duru, 2008; Uwah, 2013; Shivers, 2013). Furthermore, 69.9% have watched Nigerian films set in the olden (pre-colonial) days of the South-East people as against 30.1% that have not. This suggests that a good number of the viewers have had the opportunity of seeing films that purport to reflect their pre-colonial history.

Perception of Pre-Colonial Representation of the South-East Nigeria

Table 2: Respondents' Perception of Pre-Colonial Representation of the South-East Nigeria

	Do you think Nigerian films set in the olden (pre-colonial) days of the South-East people accurately represent their way of life in terms of norms, philosophy and ideals?	Do you think Nigerian films set in the olden (pre-colonial) days of the South-East people accurately represent their way of life in terms of social organisation?	Do you think Nigerian films set in the olden (pre-colonial) days of the South-East people accurately represent their way of life in terms of religious beliefs?	Do you think Nigerian films set in the olden (pre-colonial) days of the South-East people accurately represent their way of life in terms of arts (i.e. songs, dance, artefacts, etc)?
Always	14.7% N = 56	4.2% N = 16	44.2% N = 169	39% N = 149
Sometimes	26.1% N = 100	28.5% N = 109	16% N = 61	23% N = 88
Rarely	28.6% N = 109	38% N = 145	8.4% N = 32	9.7% N = 37
Don't Know	30.6% N = 117	29.3% N = 112	31.4% N = 120	28.3% N = 108
Total	100% N = 382	100% N = 382	100% N = 382	100% N = 382

Data in Table 2 indicate that majority of the respondents are of the view that Nigerian films set in the olden (pre-colonial) days of the South-East people accurately represent their way of life in terms of norms, philosophy and ideals, social organisation, religious beliefs, and arts (i.e. songs, dance, artefacts, etc). However, it is in regard to the last two – religious beliefs and arts – that majority felt this representation has occurred in the films either always or sometimes. For the first two – norms/philosophy/ideals and social organisation – less than majority credited Nigerian films as so frequently achieving accurate representation of the way of life of the South-East people; ultimately implying that a larger number adjudged them as doing this only rarely.

Comparison of Nigerian and Western Films' Representation of Africa

Table 3: Respondents' Comparison of Nigerian and Western Films' Representation of Africa

	Have you watched Western films portraying the way of life of (olden days) pre-colonial Africa?		Do you think such films are fair and accurate in their portrayal of the way of life of (olden days) pre-colonial Africa?	Do you think Nigerian films set in the olden (pre-colonial) days of the South-East people represent the African way of life more accurately and fairly than Western films do?
Yes	77.2% N = 295	Always	10.2% N = 39	47.1% N = 180
No	22.8% N = 88	Sometimes	25.7% N = 98	23.3% N = 89
		Rarely	30.9% N = 118	7.9% N = 30
		Don't Know	33.2% N = 127	21.7% N = 83
Total	100% N = 382	Total	100% N = 382	100% N = 382

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents think that Nigerian films are fair and accurate in their portrayal of the way of life of pre-colonial Africa, and that their level of fairness and accuracy surpasses that of western films. However, it would appear that the respondents were somewhat more cautious in ascribing fairness and accuracy to Nigerian films in themselves than they were when comparing them with western films; hence 10.2% think Nigerian films have always been fair and accurate in representing the way of life of pre-colonial Africa as against 47.1%, who adjudge the local films as always outperforming the western films in terms of fairness and accuracy.

Perception of Film as a Medium for Preserving and Telling History

Table 4: Respondents' Perception of Film as a Medium for Preserving and Telling History

	Do you think films can be a means of telling history?	Do you think one can rely on film to learn about historical events?	Do you think using films as a means of preserving and telling history would have any particular advantage?
Yes	86.6% N = 331	86.1% N = 329	82.2% N = 314
No	13.4% N = 51	13.9% N = 53	17.8% N = 68
Total	100% N = 382	100% N = 382	100% N = 382

Data in Table 4 indicate that most of the respondents concur that films have historical value. More precisely, the respondents agree that films can be a source of relaying history, that one

can rely on this source for learning historical facts, and that film as a means of telling history is particularly advantageous. The respondents' rate of agreement was significant – at over 80% in all the cases.

Focus Group Discussion Analysis

Two focus group discussion sessions were held – one at Onitsha, Anambra State and the other at Enugu, Enugu State, both in May 2017. The two towns were selected for their strategic importance as far as local films are concerned in the South-East of Nigeria – Onitsha in terms of marketing and Enugu in terms of actual production (Mba, 2006). The sessions were conducted in the English language, even though some answers were sometimes spiced with the local language, often for emphasis. The data generated in the discussion sessions were presented and analysed below under specific themes.

Perception of Films as Historical Medium

The discussants were positive about whether films can serve as a medium for preserving and telling history. They were in agreement that films can mirror the past and also tell it to future generations. To ensure the anonymity of the discussants, names were alphabetically coded in order of A, B, C, D, E etc., showing the views of different discussants. This alphabetical ordering runs from the first Focus Group Discussion to through the second. This the first focus group discussants are numbered A – F and the second G –L. Some of the responses were as follows:

Discussant A: I am totally convinced that films serve the same purpose as history books, this time with the added advantage of providing moving pictures and sounds.

Discussant B: History is about documenting and communicating the past. Any medium that can store facts and communicate them whenever required can actually be a medium for preserving history

Discussant C: I agree that film has historical value. However, the real challenge would be on how accurately the filmmaker has been able to capture the historical fact in question. In this respect, film can either inform or misinform.

Discussant D: Once the filmmaker has been able to get the important facts right, such film will be valuable in preserving history.

The foregoing indicates that the discussants have a positive judgment vis-a-vis the role film can play in preserving memory. This agrees with the data in Table 4 above which show that the respondents, by over 80%, concurred that films can be a way of relaying history and be a reliable and advantageous source for historical knowledge. However, this agreement is not unconditional, as some of the discussants raised the question of accuracy of information passed on through film – which could make or mar film's role as a medium for preserving and transmitting history.

Assessment of Films Portraying the Pre-Colonial South-East Nigeria

There were mixed reactions among the discussants regarding how much local films have represented the experiences of the pre-colonial South-East Nigeria. Generally, they were of the view that the local films set in this period (pre-colonial time) often contain some valid historical

facts about the people, but that they many a time contain some inaccuracies as well. Some of the responses underscore this cautious assessment:

Discussant B: In some of the films one can learn a lot about the religion and myths of our people; so I believe they are to this extent valuable as a source of knowing history.

Discussant E: Many of the films give good insight into the history of the South-East people. However, some of them come with some misrepresentations and exaggerations.

Discussant A: I remember I had repeatedly quarrelled with some of the things presented in these films as the native costume of our people... Some of these attires are borrowed from other cultures... I have also disagreed with the way kingship and royalty in general are presented. I don't think they accurately represent our history that we know.

Discussant F: I am impressed wherever I see Nigerian films celebrating our history and culture. I think this will ensure that the memories are preserved for generations coming in the future. But I must admit like my co-discussants that some of the images we see are not accurately representative of the people being portrayed.

Discussant G: Nigerian films have been educating in terms of the past lives and experiences of the people of the South-East. I concur that there are inaccuracies here and there, but on the whole, I think the film industry has done laudably.

The above submissions by discussants indicate that they believe Nigerian films have served as medium for preserving and transmitting the history of the people of the South-East of the country – though this role has not been without its flaws. This reflects the data in Table 2 which indicate that a significant number of the respondents were of the view that local films were not always accurate in their representation of the history of the people of the South-East Nigeria. What we find interesting is the consistent use of words such as “inaccuracies”, “misrepresentations”, “exaggerations”, etc, that have trolled the description of the representation of the Nigerian history and culture by the films. A couple of the discussants have used the expressions “disagreed”, “repeatedly quarrelled” – both vey emotive words that show strong displeasure. To us they equally show that probably agendas are set and the films provide impetus for further discussions and arguments among the people.

Comparison of Nigerian and Western Film in Representation of Africa

The discussants believed that Nigerian films are often more accurate and fair than their Western counterparts in their representation of the history of the South-Eastern people of Nigeria. This conviction appears to stem from their belief that the West appears to possess a biased and racist disposition towards Africa and that the local film producers would on the contrary be friendlier. Some of the responses went this way:

Discussant H: I am convinced Nigerian films would be more objective in portraying Africa than what we see in Hollywood, for instance. Western filmmakers are more likely to paint Africans as uncivilised, savage and the like.

Discussant B: The local films could also be biased in favour of Africa but I believe that, ultimately, the African story is best told by Africans. When told by outsiders, accuracy is more likely to suffer.

Discussant I: African filmmakers will tell the African story from the viewpoint of an insider; they will be in a better position to understand the contexts of the events and culture they are presenting. Contrarily, foreigners will fail to understand and rather impose their own meaning on local phenomena.

Discussant E: I have no doubt that Nigerian films would represent Africa better. [...] I mean in terms of telling the truth without being sensational or trying to portray the indigenous people in negative light.

The foregoing clearly indicates the discussants' bias for local films in terms of being the "better" teller of African history than Western films. The data in Table 3 further illuminate this position; the data show that the majority of the respondents were in agreement that Nigerian films – always or sometimes – tend to be more accurate and fairer in representing Africa than their Western counterparts. Interestingly, a closer scrutiny of the choice of tenses and words shows expectations rather than the reality on the ground. Words like "more likely" "will tell", "would represent", "could also", and so on, are not definitive. To the discussants that are in conversation with us, what is desirable is a fairer representation of the African culture by the films, more than the Western counterparts. Arguably, this may not really have happened.

Findings

The first research question sought to find out the extent the audience is exposed to Nigerian films with pre-colonial representation of the South-East Nigeria. Data in Table 1 indicate that almost 70% of the respondents have watched Nigerian films set in the olden (pre-colonial) days of the South-East people. Hence, it could be stated in answer to the first research question that a significant proportion of the audience are exposed to films with pre-colonial representation of the South-East of Nigeria.

The second research question sought to discover how genuine and accurate the audience views the representation of the pre-colonial South-East of Nigeria to be. Data in Table 2 show that although the majority of the respondents agree that Nigerian films accurately represent the way of life of the people of the South-East, they are divided on how often the films do so. In fact, a significant number think they have done this rarely. However, in terms of the people's religious beliefs and arts, the majority tend to agree that the representation has been always or sometimes accurate. Answers emerging from the FGD sessions (as presented in 4.2.2. above) equally reinforce this view of the role of Nigerian films vis-a-vis representing the pre-colonial way of life of the people. Based on this, it could be affirmed, in answer to the second research question, that the audience largely views the representation of the pre-colonial South-East of Nigeria in Nigerian films as accurate, though they are cautious as to how often this accuracy occurs.

The third research question sought to find out how the audience compares the manner of representation of Africa in Nigerian and Western films. The quantitative data in Table 3 as well as the FGD data (as presented in 4.2.3.) indicate that respondents/discussants believe that Nigerian films are largely more accurate and fairer in representing Africa than their Western counterparts. To this extent, it could be stated in answer to the third research question that the audience rates Nigerian films higher than Western films in terms of telling the African story

accurately and fairly. The choice of words of the discussants in doing this however presents a conflicting scenario. Thus, even though the Nigerian films are desirous of a fairer representation of Africa, they are arguably not doing a very good job of it.

The fourth research question sought to find out how the audience generally perceive film as a medium for preserving and telling history. The quantitative data in Table 4 indicate that the majority of the respondents are convinced that film can play an important and effective role in preserving and communicating history. This position is affirmed by the responses given by the discussants in the FGD (as presented in 4.2.1). Therefore, it could be affirmed in answer to the fourth research question that the audience perceives film as capable of functioning effectively as a medium for preserving and transmitting history. This answer is perhaps expected as it is not in doubt that the media are harbingers of values, culture and history. How one is presented in the media goes a long way to confer status on the person. It is not surprising that Africans have long clamoured for the telling of their own stories. Nollywood is poised to tell the stories. How these stories are told is of great interest to Nigerians and the world at large.

Conclusions

The media, in this case the Nigerian film, no doubt is a transmitter of values, culture and history. The discussants in conversation with us in the study have reinforced this long age belief. The clarion call of some scholars (such as Mba, 2006; Nwosu, 2008; Okoye, 2008; Akpabio, Mustapha-Lambe, 2013) for a people to shape their own history through telling their stories themselves is even stronger. Nollywood for Nigeria (and Africa) provides the platform for such shaping of history and shared experiences. This study has shown the wide exposure of a great number of people to Nollywood as viewers and active participants. Their active participation gives them the impetus to interrogate some of the representation of Nigeria/Africa by the Nigeria films. Even though the audience feel that Nigeria film presents a better representation of Africa than their Western counterpart, what comes out stronger is that there is an expectation that still remains unfulfilled. Nigerian films would need to aim for contents that are healthy and beneficial, aimed at enriching shared experiences. If this is not done, spiced stories about Africa by the West will arguably remain largely unchallenged.

Recommendations

Following the findings of this study, the recommendations below were made by the researchers:

- a. Given the influence of local films on the local audience, filmmakers in the country should rather than see themselves as mere entertainers, be conscious of the fact that whatever content they provide the public with could have some far-reaching impact on society. Therefore, they should endeavour to select content that would enrich common experience and enhance corporate memory in a healthy and beneficial manner.
- b. More support should be given to Nollywood with the view to strengthening her professionally towards playing a more robust role as a platform for sharing common experiences among the people. Thus, the support of the government is paramount towards arresting piracy (which is a major burden on the industry) and creating a policy framework within which the industry will grow bigger.

- c. A content analysis counterpart to this study should be undertaken; this time with the aim being to systematically analyse the historical content of Nigerian films with the view to understanding its dominant patterns i.e. its recurring characteristics. This will help complement the results of this study for a more holistic appreciation of the subject of interest.

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Historicizing Martial Arts Cinema in Postcolonial Hong Kong: The *Ip Man* Narratives

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Abstract:

The surge of Hong Kong martial arts films in the new millennium transformed the classic genre with a keen consciousness of history. Based loosely on the life experiences of the Cantonese master Ip Man (1893–1972), *Ip Man* (Yip, 2008) and *The Grandmaster* (Wong, 2013) utilize the genre to examine the dynamics between Hong Kong and mainland China by integrating the personal with the national. Against the shifting industrial and cultural orientations of Hong Kong cinema and society, the paper argues that the multifarious discourses in both films exemplify the effort to construct a post-colonial identity in negotiation with mainland China.

Keywords: Hong Kong martial arts cinema, history, national discourse, postcolonial identity

Introduction

The martial arts trainer of Bruce Lee, Ip Man (1893–1972), has become a recurrent subject matter of Hong Kong cinema more than a decade after China's resumption of sovereignty over the territory. In a string of Ip Man films released from 2008 to 2015 (*Ip Man* [Yip, 2010, 2015], *The Legend is Born: Ip Man* [Yau, 2010], *Ip Man: The Final Fight* [Yau, 2013] and a 50-episode TV drama *Ip Man* [Fan, 2013]), Wilson Yip's *Ip Man* (2008) and Wong Kar-wai's *The Grandmaster* (2013) recount the life experiences of the Cantonese master whose legacy is the global popularity of Wing Chun art. These endeavors to re-discover the historical figure bring new visions to martial arts cinema, a distinctive genre through which Hong Kong culture is communicated to the world. As cinema plays a pivotal role in the construction of cultural identities by evoking memories of a shared past, the extraordinary attention to Ip mirrors systematic transformations of the Hong Kong film industry and Hong Kong society at large. Given the geographical and political periphery of Hong Kong which was ceded to Britain after China's defeats in the Opium Wars in the mid-19th century, the Ip films reflect and shape local yearnings under the "One Country Two Systems" governing arrangement. Hong Kong's transfer from a global trade center under Western neoliberal tutelage to a highly autonomous region within China has generated mixed sentiments of anxiety, ambivalence and re-invention, as manifested by the diversified portrayals of Ip as a patriotic hero, a courteous family man as well as an open-minded gentleman in *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* respectively. Winning multiple awards at film festivals in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Boston and absorbing capital and talents from Mainland China, the two box-office hits are commended for broadening the emerging martial arts canon of postcolonial Hong Kong cinema as a contested and pluralistic sphere.

Ip Man and *The Grandmaster* re-configure the classic genre to locate the story of Hong Kong against the context of Chinese history. Distinguished from the ambiguous time and space in conventional Hong Kong martial arts cinema, both films set Ip's hometown Foshan as a popular hub for martial arts experts from all over the country. *Ip Man* casts kung fu star Donnie Yen as the title character and describes how the renowned local master cares for the family and exchanges skills with northern challengers in the early 1930s. During the nationwide devastation caused by the Japanese invasion in 1937, Ip toils in a labor camp and saves his scanty daily ration to keep his wife and young son from starvation. When fellow masters get killed in a martial arts contest designed to prove the superiority of Japanese Bushido, Ip stands out to beat down a haughty Japanese general and is forced into exile in Hong Kong. The assimilation of Ip's martial arts prowess into an anti-imperialist discourse is echoed in a more anomalous entry in the martial arts canon with *The Grandmaster*, which casts veteran actor Tony Leung whose scholar-like image is closer to the actual figure. Using Ip's voice-over narration to chronicle his migration to Hong Kong, the film situates the evolution of traditional martial arts against China's tumultuous modern history. While Ip's quiet defiance against Japanese occupation and his emotional involvement with Gong Er enrich the narrative, the film stretches beyond the biopic terrain to portray a pageant of masters from the snow-swept plains of Manchuria to the metropolitan Shanghai over a span of more than 60 years. The juxtaposition of these heterogeneous times and spaces reveals the veteran Hong Kong director's intention to re-discover local history against mainland China. Wong Kar-wai admits that, "Most of my films are about Hong Kong in the '60s, the immigrants, the Second Generation. And this film is a bit more...I wanted to know where they came from. ...[y]ou see that a lot of people end up in Hong Kong for different reasons. That's how Hong Kong has become [what it is] today" (Mulligan, 2013). The endeavor to trace the root of Hong Kong is summarized by Ip's remark that "northern and southern martial arts schools belong to one country" when resolving clan

conflicts. The reiterated statement seems to fit the reunification rhetoric and carries particular significance given the crisis of Hong Kong's society which has been grappling with identity (re)formation since its reversion to China.

At a time when martial arts cinema becomes increasingly a global genre of post-modern pastiche, the predominant concern for verisimilitude in *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* appeals to audiences in Hong Kong and mainland China simultaneously. In contrast to Hollywood's *The Matrix* (1999, 2003, 2003) and *Kung Fu Panda* series (2008, 2010, 2016) in which digital stunts and parodies border on the edge of postmodern playfulness, these two films chronicle biographical details, study accurate moves of different clans and trace the spread of martial arts schools. Compared to the manifest message of patriotism of *Ip Man*, the embrace of exilic reunion in Hong Kong in *The Grandmaster* proposes a more sophisticated meditation upon individual fate and national history. The focus on the Foshan-born Ip Man instead of the San Francisco-born Bruce Lee, who globalized martial arts films, suggests a paradigm shift in the collective imagination of local identities. If the claim of affiliation with an imaginary China in classic Hong Kong martial arts cinema soothed public anxiety of transient existence in "borrowed time and space" (Kei 2001), these two films engage in a form of historical rewriting to probe Hong Kong-China connections through the subjective prism of Ip. The yearning to re-examine the positioning of Hong Kong as an intermediate between Chinese tradition and global amalgamation testifies to Stuart Hall's argument that cultural identity is a fluid notion undergoing cinematic (re)productions in the flux of social and historical forces (2004, p. 386). By situating *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* against the shifting orientations of Hong Kong martial arts cinema and society, the following parts of this paper explore how the reconfiguration of the classic genre implicates the efforts to construct a post-colonial identity in negotiation with mainland China.

The Northern Expedition of Hong Kong Martial Arts Cinema

Hong Kong martial arts films have exerted substantial impact upon the trend of popular culture in mainland China since the late 1970s. As a trading port populated by successive generations of immigrants from China and other places seeking shelter and fortune, Hong Kong became the major center for the production of pop culture. The martial arts cinema, rooted in Chinese folklore and literature, developed in Shanghai in the 1920s but was then marginalized for its supposedly "corruptive" influence upon nation-building (Teo 2009), only to be resurrected and promoted to the world by Hong Kong filmmakers. Due to China's turbulence following the end of the Second World War and the Civil War, mainland film capital and talents migrated to Hong Kong. The Shaw Brothers Studio (1958-2011), the largest film company in Hong Kong where harried directors were often given less than a week to grind out a movie, produced hundreds of martial arts films and established a set of generic conventions. The motif of revenge, fight choreography, stock characters and period costume permeated in the sword-fighting films and the kung fu films (Teo, 1997, p. 98) to celebrate the charismatic warriors. Recurrent tales of martial arts warriors safeguarding Confucian ideologies in the stateless *Jianghu* underworld King Hu's *Come Drink with Me* (1966) and *A Touch of Zen* (1970) and Chang Cheh's *The One-Armed Swordsman* (1967) won international attention. The martial arts world added a tinge of nationalism when Bruce Lee announced that "We Chinese are not the sick men of Asia" after defeating a roomful of Japanese karatekas in *Fist of Fury* (Lo, 1972) set in the 1920s Shanghai (Chute, 2003, p. 2). Legends of warriors mesmerized mainland audiences when Hong Kong movies flowed to the adjacent Guangdong province and then spread to other regions through state-sanctioned or underground channels. According to Thomas Gold, pirated copies of Hong Kong martial arts films flourished in poorly-equipped video shops in the urban center or on

college campuses and in 1985 reached as far inland as Dali, Yunnan province (1993, p. 911). As the culturally rich and economically affluent Hong Kong provided a model of modern life-style for mainland Chinese to emulate, the proliferation of Hong Kong martial arts films had triggered fanciful imaginations of convention and modernity in the mainland.

The import of Hong Kong martial arts films filled the void of entertainment in post-Mao China in a timely fashion. While the majority of cultural products of the mainland was heavily ideological in the socialist realism tradition, the merging of individual quest and fast-paced Hollywood editing in Hong Kong films fed into public imagination of modernity. *The Shaolin Temple* (Chang, 1982), made by Hong Kong filmmakers in cooperation with the state-owned Zhongyuan Film Studio, kindled the kung fu craze in the mainland and paved the way for the Beijing-born martial arts champion, Jet Li, to become an international star. Chang Cheh, the premier auteur of Hong Kong martial arts cinema, conquered mainland audiences with his macho heroes in co-productions like *Great Shanghai 1937* (1986), *Slaughter in Xian* (1987) and *The River Dragon* (1988). Quite a number of young Mandarin-speaking audiences took pride in imitating some cool action moves and singing Cantonese theme songs of Hong Kong martial arts films. The folk hero of Cantonese master Wong Fei-hong, played by Kwan Tak-hing as the prototypical Confucian patriarch in over 70 Hong Kong films from 1949 to the 1980s, was re-invented in the *Once Upon a Time in China* series (Tusi, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994) layered with anti-colonial patriotism. Set in the declining Qing Dynasty, the martial arts saga described Wong Fei-hong's confrontation with Western colonists and exuded a mythical aura to retain a "cultural gravitas that efficiently embodies history and tradition" (Chan, 2009, p. 76). While these films reassured local audiences on the eve of Hong Kong's re-integration with China, the cast of Jet Li as the lead endeared the series to mainland viewers and signified a new stage in the northern expedition of Hong Kong cinema. Abiding by the mainland's import policies and subsidies, martial arts films flourished as a crossover vehicle for Hong Kong filmmakers to explore the mainland market and facilitated the commercial transformation of the Chinese film industry (Chu, 2010, pp. 131–145). More importantly, since Chinese consumers of Hong Kong films often gained a privileged sense of participating in a global activity (Bordwell, 2000, p. 9), martial arts films helped in shaping new conceptions of modernity in China by creating an uplifting utopia which had political ramifications – the righteous warriors could awaken the moral sentiments and solve social conflicts.

The revival of martial arts cinema as a prestigious cultural brand since the new millennium has been largely indebted to Hong Kong filmmakers. On the one hand, the (re)emergence of Beijing and Shanghai as major centers of film production challenged the status of Hong Kong. Once a central site of innovation and a focal point of Chinese language film, Hong Kong witnessed a rapid drop in film production from 131 films in 2000 to 41 films in 2003 (Peng, 2017, p. 5). On the other hand, the amount of co-productions rose from 26 in 2003 to 54 in 2016 since the signing of Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement protocol (Huang, 2017; T. Li, 2017). For more than a decade, the "new wave" martial arts cinema cast a plethora of actors from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China (with the mixture of Pinyin and Wade-Giles transliteration of Chinese names) and attempted to touch national memory and cultural emotions in Greater China. Whereas Tsui Hark's *Zu Warriors* (2001) hearkened back to the "martial arts magic-spirit" tradition of the 1920s Shanghai cinema, mainland auteur Zhang Yimou combined extravagant choreography with national allegory in *Hero* (2002). *Bodyguards and Assassins* (Chan, 2009) featured the martial artists' protection of revolutionist Sun Yat-Sen in Hong Kong in 1905, and Jackie Chan's tribal soldiers of Western China befriended Roman legions in *Dragon Blade* (Lee, 2015), not to mention Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-hsien's portrayal of a Tang Dynasty woman warrior in *The Assassin* (2015).

Compared to the often-stateless martial world of Hong Kong cinema in the 1960s and 1970s, the recent profusion of martial arts films promoted the image of China as a grand and ultimately unified civilization. The shift to historical dramas and ideological predilections in these co-produced projects, nonetheless, has led to criticism of losing the “authentic” local flavor of Hong Kong martial arts cinema (Lie, 2006; Z. Li, 2016). Against this complex matrix of social and historical circumstances, *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* utilize the martial arts genre in a trans-border context to negotiate between yearnings of displacement and belonging in Hong Kong society and the assertion of unification among mainland audiences.

Martial Arts Warrior as the Historical Subject

The strategic treatment of biographical materials in *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* merges personal accounts with the evolution of martial arts in modern history. To enhance the historical feel, both films use newsreel footage and title cards to evoke the collective memory of China’s humiliation at the dawn of 20th century. The declaration of Foshan as the foundation of southern martial arts at the beginning of *Ip Man*, and the discussion of the Jing Wu Athletic Association and Chinese Warrior Association in *The Grandmaster*, refer to the blossoming of martial arts schools during the demise of the feudal empire (Jing Wu Athletic Association was founded by Huo Yuanjia in Shanghai in 1910; Chinese Warrior Association was founded in Tianjin in 1912, and the Central Guoshu Academy was established by the Nationalist Government in Nanjing in 1927 to promote a systematic approach for training in martial arts). When China was preyed upon first by Western powers and then Japan, martial arts was taken as a means of empowerment, yet broadcast footage of real Japanese airplanes dropping bombs on China disrupted the popular fantasy. In *Ip Man*, the black and white shots of corpses on the street and flowing Japanese flags create an unscripted feel of the documentary; while the cross cut between Ip training on a wooden dummy and the Japanese army brandishing bayonets is accentuated by the title card “Japanese invaders burned down factories and shops since the fall of Foshan in October 1938, and the local population dropped from 300,000 to 70,000.” The visual evidence and statistical data lead audiences away from the familiar martial arts terrain of personal revenge to the collective forum of national trauma. This particular period is authenticated in *The Grandmaster* with a grainy montage of jumbled archival footages of Japan-occupied Manchuria. The usage of truncated historical touchstones is paralleled by the selection of Ip’s biographical details to foreground resistance against Japanese invasion and to obscure facts about civil disturbance. The historical figure used to be a police officer of the Nationalist Party and little was known about his life during the Japanese occupation. After the Communists won the Civil War in 1949, Ip left for Hong Kong for fear of prosecution and never saw his wife again after China sealed its border with Hong Kong in 1951. In *Ip Man*, the fictional ending of a business friend smuggling the injured Ip and his family to Hong Kong attributes the master’s forced exile to Japanese invasion (S. T. Zhang 2008) whereas a close-up shot of the teary-eyed wife in *The Grandmaster* shies away from the political subtext which leads to the separation of the family. Considering these maneuverings to fit into public imagination an “appropriate” patriotic hero in accordance with the mechanism of censorship, *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* become part of the national discourse that recreates the martial arts warrior as a pawn of history.

The positioning of Ip as a participant in and witness of history does not often cohere with the classic martial arts narrative. The conventional warrior uses his/her physical prowess to seek justice in the *Jianghu* underworld, yet such heroism is challenged with the presentation of a real-life figure intimately situated within the impact and formations of history. When Ip’s hometown is destroyed by the Japanese invasion, the usual conflict among stock characters is

transformed into familial *and* national crisis. Ip's simultaneous role as a war victim and a formidable warrior in *Ip Man* illustrates the secularization of the martial arts legends. When the invaders turn Ip's house into a military headquarter, the family relocates to a shanty and Ip is forced to eke out a living under Japanese surveillance. The primal concern of survival is superseded by resistance when his family and friends are endangered by the Japanese army. Reminiscent of Bruce Lee's standard scenario of vanquishing foreign challengers, Ip defeats a Japanese general in a martial arts tournament and this becomes a rallying cry for the oppressed Chinese. The resumption of the heroic role nonetheless results in Ip being injured by a Japanese bullet, and the low angle shot of his fall in slow motion is permeated by a tragic aura. The frontal confrontation never occurs in *The Grandmaster* since Ip functions more as a witness to Japanese atrocity. The sequence of Ip taking leftovers from the restaurant and making way for Japanese patrols on the street is followed by his chopping down the wooden dummy in dismay. The symbolic scene unveils the marginalization of martial arts in face of Japanese firearms, and images of Ip grieving over murdered friends and his young daughter enhance his helplessness. Ip's defiance is expressed in a subdued way via his voice-over soliloquy to a group of collaborators: "Help me get rich? ...Now everybody is impoverished at the national crisis. ... I am used to the Pearl River water; not the Japanese rice." The description of his confusion and abdication betrays an uncompromising martial arts heroism in crisis against the sudden and unexpected trajectory of history. While *Ip Man* constructs martial arts as a symbolic means of national unification that would eventually overcome local divisions and foreign invaders, *The Grandmaster* unveils how martial arts fails to contribute to the nationalist discourse. Compared to the genre routine of steadfast warriors defeating evils in a pre-modern milieu, Ip is emblematic of a troubled martial arts hero whose honor is endangered in the historical vortex. To a certain extent, Ip is more of a survivor in exile who cherishes the memory of a bygone era.

Ip Man and *The Grandmaster* delve into the golden age of martial arts to evoke a nostalgic reminiscence of the past. Having survived the Japanese invasion, the Civil War and all the ensuing hardships, Ip and his fellow masters drift to Hong Kong and cherish the memory of their homeland. Set in the southern city adjacent to Hong Kong in the early 1930s, images of the lion dance and the gold-lacquered wood carving and the presence of shrewd businessmen in suit and tie signify the merging of Chinese convention and Western modernity. In *Ip Man*, the local master meets the visiting challengers in his grand house decorated with ceramic vases, miniature landscapes, posh sofas and a gramophone. The cross-cultural fusion nurtures a benevolent Ip who hones his martial arts skills as a hobby and enjoys a peaceful domestic life. When a gun-toting policeman laughs at the "outdated" martial arts, Ip disarms him in a second and dismantles the gadget in front of an admiring crowd. The flourishing of martial arts schools and the founding of a cotton mill factory suggest a promising future which is nonetheless brought to a sudden end at the Japanese invasion. Two thirds of the narrative feature the humiliation of masters who work as coolies or get killed in martial arts contest organized by the Japanese army. The atmospheric lament is more manifest in *The Grandmaster* by inviting audiences to experience the grand events from the perspective of personal memory. Rather than following the generic convention of linear development and fighting climax, the film uses flashbacks and forwards extensively. While Ip's narration about his childhood highlights the montage sequence of a young Ip being initiated into martial arts by his teacher in 1900, a plethora of photos charts his life trajectory. The group photo of solemnly attired masters taken after a friendly competition commemorates the unification of northern and southern clans, whereas the family photo is smashed to pieces and replaced by a photo of triumphant Japanese troops in front of the Ip residence. The conversion of these colored images into black-and-white photographs turns the amber-tainted memory into frozen historical moments which are burnt

in the collective consciousness of Chinese audiences. The permeated sense of nostalgia, shared by the forlorn protagonists in Wong Kar-wai's previous art-house hit *Happy Together* (1997), whose storyline of two Hong Kongers living in self-exile in Buenos Aires around 1997 inspired the conception of *The Grandmaster* (Tusi 2013) and assists the film in re-integrating these hybrid fragments into a national discourse. Through the lens of the biopic and martial arts cinema, *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* capture significant moments of social transformation in China's modern history.

Martial Arts as Cultural Heritage

The pursuit of martial arts authenticity in *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* highlights local convention and cultural specificity. To distance themselves from digital spectacles like *The Matrix* which equips Keanu Reeves with expertise when his film character Neo downloads an array of martial arts skills from a computer program and conquers the virtual world, both films pay tribute to the classic Shaw Brothers cinema with "realistic" presentation of punches and kicks. Yip's invitation of Changquan gold medalist To Yu-hang as technical consultant, and Wong Kar-wai's 10-year-long research to imitate "how Bruce Lee approached his fight scenes" (Mottram 2014), manage to achieve a virtuosity which used to distinguish Hong Kong cinema from Hollywood's mere technological sophistication. Being a "body genre" or "genre of bodies" (Hunt, 2003, p. 2), the combination of actors' agile movements and fight choreography is essential to martial arts cinema, as is the use of trampolines in early Shanghai cinema and person-to-person combat with voluminous bloodshed in the Hong Kong cinema of 1970s. Since the display of physical prowess involves vigorous training like leg stretches and backward waist bending, film stars with combat techniques used to dominate the screen. Kwan Tak-hing, with actual knowledge of White Crane kung fu, played the iconic Wong Fei-hong for more than two decades; Bruce Lee demonstrated his Jeet Kune Do with his shuffle feet on screen; and Jackie Chan with martial training of stage performance uses outtakes of dangerous stunts as a trademark. In *Ip Man*, veteran kung fu star Donnie Yen restores the valuable convention with his crisp move of fists and kicks, and close-up shots of his swollen knuckles and bruised face create a realistic effect. Non-martial actor Tony Leung achieves the necessary physicality and fights convincingly after three years of martial arts training for his role in *The Grandmaster*. Acclaimed as one of the most "ethereal realizations of authentic martial arts onscreen" (M. Lee 2013), the film details the little twists and nudges with such technical exposition that the immaculate presentation of fighting styles of Wing Chun, Xingyi, Bagua and Hung Gar feels like a live action textbook. The reservation about applying technological mediation in the fight scenes displays a certain resistance against the computerized spectacle of fighting bodies which displaces local traditions into a globally palatable "digital imaginary" and erodes the notion of a singular national and historical cinematic tradition (V. Lee, 2007, p. 10). The adherence to authenticity in *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster*, therefore, foregrounds cultural and national Chinese identity by recreating the real-life martial arts fraternities of early 20th century China.

The diverse group of martial artists embodies the inheritor and preserver of Chinese cultural convention. Compared to the *Once Upon a Time in China* series set mainly in Guangdong Province and with which the bulk of Hong Kong residents are affiliated through ancestry and kinship, *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* create a grand narrative embedded in the vast geographical expanse of China and its social fabric. From the transformation of the virtuous family man into the formidable warrior to wreak vengeance upon the enemy, to the ceremonious exchanges between northern and southern clans, Ip and his fellow masters revere Confucian ideals and honor codes of the *Jianghu* underworld despite the vagaries of modern life. Thanks to the collaboration with the mainland filmmaker Xu Haofeng, who transplants

elaborate fighting theories from his own films *The Sword Identity* (2011) and *Judge Archer* (2012), *The Grandmaster* demonstrates masters' musings about martial arts and life. The frequent usage of aphorisms couched in martial terminology recalls the juxtaposition of physicality and philosophy in King Hu's masterpieces. In *Ip Man*, the initial interaction between Ip and Liao, a head instructor of a newly opened martial arts school, illustrates Confucian ideals of benevolence. In order to establish his status in the local community, Liao insists on challenging Ip to fight but fails, and Ip helps to conceal the result to protect the newcomer's reputation and livelihood. The sophisticated act of saving face is rooted in the social convention of harmony and moderation, which is nonetheless jeopardized by foreign invasion. Having witnessed Liao's murder by a vicious Japanese colonel over a small bag of rice, Ip avenges his death by mutilating 10 Japanese karatekas in a duel and brings the blood-tainted rice bag to Liao's starving family. The heroic mission of vengeance is accomplished by Gong Er in *The Grandmaster* who braves disparagement from her misogynist elders and makes a vow of celibacy to defend family honor. In the 15-minute-long sequence at a snow-covered train platform, the woman engages in a life-or-death fight against the traitor while a steam engine train goes roaring by. The visual motif of modernity foregrounds Gong's dedication to the ancient tradition despite the ravages of time and circumstances. The description of resilient masters and their numerous disciples whose vignettes traverse Chinese history celebrates the preservation of lineage in a world of strict decorum and demeanor. Distinguished from the classic martial arts cinema where conflicts are solved by fighting, these films are more concerned about the continuation of cultural legacy. *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* take martial arts as an inalienable constituent of Chinese convention and enlighten the younger generation about the "core value" of traditional culture during rapidly changing time (Patten 2013).

Both films treat Hong Kong as a key site to conserve and invigorate the martial arts convention. Due to its colonial status which creates a "translating space" of Chinese and Western cultures (Kam, 2010, p. 2), Hong Kong becomes a haven for Ip to pass on and globalize Wing Chun art for future generations after his forced departure from a tumultuous China. When *Ip Man* ends with a succession of historical pictures recording his achievement, the parade of images culminates in a photo of Ip and Bruce Lee smiling into the camera. The final statement announces that the master's disciples have "reached more than 2000,000 all over the world and among them is the famous kung fu star Bruce Lee." As an offshore base on the political and geographical periphery of China, Hong Kong provides a shelter for the martial arts convention which had irrevocably faded into obscurity during the mainland's successive turmoils. The affirmation of the region's modern capacity to host a rich variety of personalities underwrites the ending of *The Grandmaster*. While Ip rebuilds his life as a martial arts teacher, the resistance fighter fleeing Japanese soldiers settles down in Hong Kong and opens a barbershop staffed with his disciples, and Gong lets go the unique family practice after succumbing to opium addiction as a pain relief. The reunion of these masters, reminiscent of the motley crew of martial artists in Stephen Chow's *Kung Fu Hustle* (2004), promises the renaissance of martial arts in Hong Kong and nurtures a civil community in separation from the state. The co-presence of the yearning for unfulfilled promises, the adaptation to changing circumstances and the outward looking global vision renders Hong Kong a dynamic space. When the film concludes with the smartly dressed Ip posing for an identity card photo in a suit and tie, the master comes to accept Hong Kong as his new homeland. The symbolic ending, in contrast to the constant "feeling of foreboding and crisis" about the region's uncertain status in previous Hong Kong cinema, applauds Hong Kong's unique significance and nourishing power (Kei 2001). Ip's simultaneous role as Hong Kong resident and the carrier and propagator of Chinese convention is marked by a poignant resonance which rings through to the territory's travails today, when Hong Kong is still grappling with its identity more than 10 years after its de-colonization.

Conclusion

The incorporation of modern history and biopic ingredients in *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* rejuvenates the martial arts genre to exemplify the zeitgeist of post-colonial Hong Kong. The actual figure of Ip becomes a cultural icon who cherishes the Chinese convention and adapts to new demands in a changing and challenging world. The recognition of historical and cultural affinity to China signifies a large degree of affiliation with the motherland, whereas the emphasis of Hong Kong's peculiar status suggests flexibility and compromise which is not always compatible with today's cultural Sinocentrism. As value-laden products in a dispersed circuit of cinematic deal-making and creative endeavors that is increasingly driven by the exigencies of the mainland market, the two martial arts films demonstrate the ongoing negotiation of cultural identities for postcolonial Hong Kong. From Peter Chan's account of three Chinese college graduates building a successful English language school in *American Dreams in China* (2013) to Hark Tsui's homage to the revolutionary classic in *The Taking of Tiger Mountain* (2014); from Ann Hui's portrayal of literary celebrity Xiao Hong who migrated from Manchuria to Hong Kong in *The Golden Era* (2014) to the protection of revolutionary intellectuals in Japan-occupied Hong Kong in *Our Time Will Come* (2017); from Dante Lam's description of Chinese Narcotics Corps seeking justice in the Golden Triangle in *Operation Mekong* (2016) to Lau Wai-Keung's *The Founding of An Army* (2017) which commemorates the 90th anniversary of People's Liberation Army, the exploration of the complicated interplay between Hong Kong and the mainland becomes an important recent topic for the Hong Kong film industry. To reconfigure conventional terrains and topics involves a process of dialectic discourse and reflexive interaction through which ideas and meanings are negotiated and regenerated. The creative re-writing of the martial arts genre in *Ip Man* and *The Grandmaster* thus offers illuminating experiences in search of the ways towards realizing integrated regional and national identities.

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Thailand in the European Cinematic Imagination: The Phenomenon and Legacy of *Emmanuelle* (Fr 1974)

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Abstract

Movie markets in Europe and the United States saw a considerable increase in the number of erotic films in the first half of the 1970s, followed by a transition to predominantly X-rated films in the second half. The development and rapid proliferation of the soft- and hardcore film genres can be attributed to the Sexual Liberation Movement of the 1960s, changed viewer expectations, the liberalization of film exhibition laws, and the development of new film technologies. A substantial number of European erotic and pornographic films were made in Thailand. The film *Emmanuelle* (Fr 1974, dir. Just Jaeckin) marked the beginning and became an international box-office hit, followed by several French, Italian, Swiss, German, and Danish productions that sought to ride on the wave of *Emmanuelle*'s success. This article seeks to give a concise overview of *Emmanuelle*'s legacy, that is, European adult-oriented films made from 1974 to 1980 because they shaped western representations and popular perceptions of Thailand for many years. It seeks to explore the cinematic portrayals of Thailand in selected films to determine the extent to which the country plays a significant role as a setting, and it explores the relevance of western interracial desires as well as the films' appropriation of the enduring allure of the East felt by many Europeans.

Keywords: Bangkok, exploitation cinema, interracial, Orientalism, representation, Thailand

Introduction

The introduction of the birth control pill in 1960 was a major catalyst for the Sexual Liberation Movement that helped change Western European societies' perceptions of the body and self-determination. In great cultural upheavals, traditional codes of sexual behaviors were challenged, intimate relationships outside of traditional marriage and other forms of monogamous relationships became accepted, and the public's notions of taboos, shame and sin shifted decisively. In many countries, and over a fairly short period of time, legalization of abortion and broader acceptance of same-sex relationships followed.

Within this rapidly changing socio-cultural landscape, first softcore and later hardcore films flourished in western Europe. While "softcore" implies erotic and/or suggestive sexual imagery that does not display sexual organs or penetration, "hardcore" visual material is pornographic, aiming to stimulate feelings of arousal through the display of explicit images, including sexual organs and activity. In 1970s-Germany, for instance, the so-called Porno-Welle (tr.: "porno wave") was initiated by the popular films *Graf Porno und seine Mädchen* (WG 1969, tr.: "Count Porno and his girls") and *Schulmädchen-Report: Was Eltern nicht für möglich halten* (WG 1970, tr.: "Schoolgirl report, what parents do not believe possible"). (See Eitler [2015] for a review of the porno wave in Germany and its impact on the country's socio-cultural history.) The relaxation of pornography laws in the mid-1970s in many European countries allowed for the production and exhibition of increasingly explicit films and facilitated the formation of an industry that specialized in X-rated visual materials. Around the same time, from 1969 to 1984, the United States saw the "Golden Age of Porn". Commercially produced soft- and hardcore films were received positively by cinemagoers and film critics alike, and, regarding printed materials, Playboy magazine reached peak sales figures in the 1970s and contributed to the liberalization movement.

Thailand played an important role in this liberalization movement. Representations of Thailand in western fiction films, documentaries, literary and non-literary texts since the 1950s have been diverse and complex, with images and stories that have had a lasting effect on Westerners' perceptions of Thailand. The British novel *A Woman of Bangkok* (1956, Jack Reynolds, originally titled *A Sort of Beauty*) was the first fictional story with Thailand as a roaming-ground for a white man's explorations and conquests. It is about the tumultuous relationship between young Englishman Reginald Joyce and Bangkok's number one bargirl "White Leopard" at the Bolero night club. The novel was translated into German as *Versuchung in Bangkok* (1959, tr.: "Temptation in Bangkok") and is still in print today.

Since *A Woman of Bangkok*, the theme of "western-man-meets-Asian-seductress" has been explored in numerous erotic and crime stories situated in Bangkok's entertainment districts, but it had already been popularized, for instance, by the Japan-set French novel *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887, Pierre Loti), the American novel *Madame Butterfly* (1898, John Luther Long) and its Italian opera version (1904, Giacomo Puccini), by the American novel *Sayonara* (1954, James A. Michener) and its Hollywood screen adaptation (USA 1957) and many similar stories. The British Hong Kong-set novel *The World of Suzie Wong* (1957, Richard Mason), in which an Englishman becomes enamored with a Hong-Kong courtesan, became a major success and was made into a Hollywood film (USA 1960). (See Algie [2014] for a discussion of the novels *A Woman of Bangkok* and *The World of Suzie Wong*.)

Bangkok's entertainment zone Patpong opened several nightclubs in the late 1960s and expanded in the 1970s to cater to American GIs on their R&R stays. (See Backman [2005] for

an account of Patpong's history.) Western films produced in Thailand in the 1960s, particularly European action-adventure thrillers, Hollywood blockbusters, television documentaries, and Vietnam War reportages, perpetuated impressions of Bangkok, including its nightlife, and contributed to the whole country's reputation as a viable film and travel destination.

Emmanuelle (Fr 1974), French director Just Jaeckin's film debut, was released during abovementioned socio-cultural changes and rapid developments in the adult film industry. The story about the sexual awakening of a young Frenchwoman during her stay in Bangkok became an enormous international commercial success. (In 1975 Jaeckin made his second film, *The Story of O*, which he adapted from the 1954-French erotic novel of the same name, written by Anne Desclos as Pauline Réage, but this exploitation film with bondage themes resonated much less with European audiences.) *Emmanuelle* established the association of Thailand with sexual freedom. European film production companies tried to emulate *Emmanuelle*'s success, which from 1974 to 1980 resulted in a substantial number of adult-oriented films fully or partially set in Thailand. These films reflected European countries' social and cultural concerns and revealed a fascination with and desire for interracial erotic encounters. (See Williams [2004] for an analysis of the relations between X-rated films and interracial lust.) The study of *Emmanuelle* and its legacy gives thus valuable insights into western portrayals of Thailand as seen in these stigmatized genres.



Figure 1: Emmanuelle Entertainment Co.
on Ratchadaphisek Road, Bangkok.

The long-term effect of *Emmanuelle* is visible on Bangkok's Ratchadaphisek Road, where Emmanuelle Entertainment Co. has been a major amusement hub for many years (see Figure 1). Similarly, other entertainment districts feature bars whose names are based on fictional characters, such as "Suzie Wong Agogo" in Soi Cowboy and "Butterflies" in Nana Plaza, or inspire Orientalist fantasies, such as "Sheba" in Soi Cowboy and "Safari" in Nana Plaza.

Despite being considered lowbrow entertainment, many X-rated films are authentic documents of socio-cultural critique that address and sometimes transgress conventions and concerns about the politics of body, gender, and race. This article explores the legacy of the film *Emmanuelle*, which consists of over a dozen European X-rated films made in the second half of the 1970s that are partially or fully set in Thailand or in some way are connected to Thailand.

The article then focuses on the fabrication and manifestation of oriental desire and interracial encounters in order to scrutinize the films' representations of Thailand. Central questions are thus, whether the country plays an integral part to the stories or serves merely as an exotic background, and whether the cinematic staging of interracial relationships follows western tendencies to depict Asian countries and cultures as mysterious, exotic and erotic. An understanding of *Emmanuelle*'s legacy helps to recognize the West's prevalent perceptions and persistent misconceptions about Thailand, and it explains the benefits to some Thais, namely through business ventures catering to western patrons.

Precursors

From approximately 1958 to 1964, relaxation in censorship laws led to the production of some low-budget nudist films in Europe and the United States. Elements of the nudist film genre were picked up and developed by the sexploitation film, a subgenre of the exploitation film. On the surface, nudist films served to familiarize audiences with the nudist and naturist movements; however, their underlying intention was to exhibit female nudity. Two films with nudist content include a Thailand episode and are precursors to *Emmanuelle*.

Doris Wishman's *Behind the Nudist Curtain* (USA 1964) is partially set in Thailand. No print is in circulation, but it may still exist. Jarmick (2002) states that the story begins in a nudist camp where detective Sam is relaxing. He receives an assignment, which is to pursue a spy. The chase takes him to Las Vegas, Hong Kong, Thailand, Paris, Haiti, Mexico, Hawaii, Berlin and Tokyo. Everywhere the private eye goes, he gets to observe naked girls. The film surely included images of travel and treated Thailand as one of several destinations for nudists, but its relevance to the representations of Thailand cannot be determined.

The controversial Werner Kunz wrote, produced and directed a dozen naturist films from 1956 to 1973. He tested the limits of the law with ever more risqué productions. Uhlmann (2013) states that Kunz's films belong to the exploitation film genre and that he paved the way for a future generation of rebellious directors (p. 170). In *Die Oben Ohne Story - Flucht ins Paradies* (CH 1965, tr.: "The Topless Story – Escape to Paradise", a.k.a. *The Topless Story*), released in Switzerland, Germany and Finland, Kunz combines the genres of travelogue documentary and nudist film. Fashion designer Nathaniel Pierson travels to destinations around the world in search of inspiration. He is followed by reporter Jo and Pierson's secretary Maya. The journey takes them to New York City, the Aegean Sea of Greece, and beaches near Bangkok and Tokyo. Images of airplanes and aerial views of islands and coastlines emphasize the notion of travel. The shallow story serves as a vehicle to feature scenes of semi-nude women and men sunbathing at secluded beaches. Scenes at the so-called European Sunbathing Club supposedly take place at a Thai beach, but it looks suspiciously Mediterranean. The stock footage impressions of Bangkok show Wat Pho, Wat Phra Kaew, the Chao Phraya River, and the floating market. The fleeting glimpses of Bangkok are accompanied by instrumental music of Chinese rather than Thai origin and by Pierson's tongue-in-cheek voiceover commentaries, such as "My next port-of-call. Now, where is it? Can you guess? A thousand temples. Golden Buddhas", or "The Venice of the East – got it? It's not too cold either." Having observed many people sunbathing and swimming naked, Pierson concludes that he must design more revealing swimsuits.

These two films present Thailand as one of several international destinations that welcomes nudists. Neither film is meant to be erotic because the desire they express is for showcasing the naked human body in harmony with nature. Nevertheless, films with nudist images are

messengers of the Sexual Liberation Movement of the 1960s, and with their liberal attitudes they were precursors of the adult films of the 1970s.

The *Emmanuelle*-Phenomenon

Emmanuelle (Fr 1974) is based on Emmanuelle Arsan's erotic novel of the same name, published in French in 1967 and in English in 1971. Thai writer and actress Marayat Rollet-Andriane (né Bibidh), under the pen name of Emmanuelle Arsan, was long thought to be the author, but Wroblewski (online, n.d.) makes the case that her French diplomat husband Louis-Jacques Rollet-Andriane was actually the author. It is about a young French woman who moves to Bangkok together with her diplomat husband. She enters the circles of high-society expatriates and embarks on a journey of sexual experimentation during which she redefines her relationship with her husband, becomes more independent, and ultimately finds her own place in the world.

The film had an extensive international release and struck a chord with millions of viewers, but the critical reviews were generally not favorable. Roger Ebert (1975) wrote one of few positive reviews. In the United States, a minimalist poster (see Figure 2), featured a black background, the film title in white letters and with a positive upward direction, and in the lower right corner the contours of a woman's face with the words "X was never like this" seemingly escaping her red lips. The poster promised a new kind of erotic-cinematic experience and aroused viewers' curiosity. Not least because of it, *Emmanuelle* became a world-wide sensation and established Dutch actress Sylvia Kristel as an icon of erotic cinema. (See Chaffin-Quiray [2004] for an excellent account of the novel-to-screen-adaptation process of *Emmanuelle*, as well as the film's public reception and influence on French and U.S. American cinema culture.)

Shot in Paris, Bangkok, and Chiang Mai (the latter city standing in for the rural hinterland of Pattaya), *Emmanuelle* creates a specific portrait of Thailand. Interior scenes set in Bangkok take place in nightclubs and restaurants, exterior scenes in city streets and along canals. Scenes seemingly taking place in an opium den were shot in a Paris studio. Other parts of the film are set on a traditional estate in the idyllic countryside.

Emmanuelle features several intimate encounters. On separate occasions Emmanuelle gets close with the three French women, Marie-Ange, Ariane and Bee. She also has intercourse with her husband Jean and later with two Frenchmen on an airplane in midflight. There are scenes of erotic coupling between Thai house servants in the countryside estate and between two female dancers on the stage of a Bangkok nightclub. In Paris, Jean and a friend receive an erotic massage from two Asian women, and in Thailand he has intercourse with Ariane.

Controversial are the scenes in which Emmanuelle – after having fallen under the tutelage of the much older and deviously appreciative Mario – is apparently raped by a Thai man in an opium den (although this scene may be interpreted as her drug-induced hallucination) and later sodomized by a Muay Thai fighter who has "won" her in a bout. Kristel has stated that she was displeased having to shoot this humiliating rape-scene at Jaeckin's insistence and with two men who were not actors (Shipka 2011, p. 299; Brown 2012).

Also contentious and somewhat out of place is a scene in which a Thai nightclub dancer lights a cigarette lodged in her vagina. Shipka (2011) states that producer Rousset-Rouard added the scene for the final edit to add more "spice" to the film and did so without Jaeckin's knowledge (p. 299).



Figure 2: *Emmanuelle*. US film poster with the slogan “X was never like this.”



Figure 3: *Emmanuelle*. French film poster.

In the final scene, *Emmanuelle* is sitting in front of a mirror (see Figure 3). This echoes the opening scene and suggests that the entire story may have been her daydream. More importantly, it indicates that *Emmanuelle* has grown as a person. She is liberated from social conformity, taboos and male definitions of her body and personality. She has taken control of herself and her future.

Emmanuelle struck a chord with the 1970s sexual liberation movement because of its affirmation of the female body, women’s encouragement to take control of their sexuality, and the depiction of a variety of female characters, from the initially naïve to the later, mature *Emmanuelle*, from the aggressive seducer Ariana to the lolitaesque Marie-Ange and the passionate Bee. Not surprisingly, it is the unselfish Bee who becomes *Emmanuelle*’s true lover. Nevertheless, female audiences’ responses remained mixed due to the apparent sexual objectification of the protagonist. According to Shipka (2011), many Asian women

experienced *Emmanuelle* as a liberating film because they focused on her strength as a woman rather than her exploitation (p. 300). Kristel herself stated that “[i]n France, the feminists complained that Emmanuelle was a femme objet – an object of male fantasies. But the Japanese feminists were rather delighted with the film because they thought Emmanuelle was dominant, just because of this one scene where she climbs on top of her husband. That was the moment when all the Japanese women stood up and applauded” (Brown 2012).

According to Sylvie Blum-Reid (2003), *Emmanuelle* was influential in its shaping of the East-West literary and cinematic discourse. The film stirred up the French film industry and opened a discussion about censorship and cinematic portrayals of the naked human body (p. 23). Moreover, *Emmanuelle* was the first ambitious European X-rated film set in Thailand. With it, the social acceptance of buying a ticket for an erotic film grew, which paved the way for a more liberal view of adult-oriented films in the public domain. At the same time, its popularity gave western interest in Thailand a push, and the cultural environment was such that European erotic films could try to emulate *Emmanuelle*’s style and atmosphere. Thus, *Emmanuelle* immediately became the template for more than a dozen European films made between 1975 and 1980.

The Legacy of *Emmanuelle*

Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage (It 1976)

The most widely distributed film of *Emmanuelle*’s legacy is *Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage* (It 1976, a.k.a. *Emanuelle in Bangkok*), starring Indonesian-Dutch actress Laura Gemser. It was directed by Joe D’Amato and released across Europe. With her dark skin, lean body and Asian features Gemser embodied the ultimate version of the exotic seductress of western male erotic power-fantasies. Labelled as “Emanuelle nera”, that is, “black Emanuelle” (see Figure 4), Gemser was a contrast to the blonde, fair-skinned Emmanuelle character played by Sylvia Kristel. Gemser had made her debut in *Amore Libero – Free Love* (It 1974), followed by *Emanuelle nera* (It, Sp 1975, a.k.a. *Black Emanuelle*), and *Emmanuelle: L’antivierge* (Fr 1975, a.k.a. *Emmanuelle 2*). In the latter film Sylvia Kristel plays the main role. In one scene, the two Em(m)anuelles are paired up for a sensual body-to-body massage. *Emanuelle nera* had already exploited the success of *Emmanuelle*, but *Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage* was the first and only film of the Italian-produced series that was partially situated in Bangkok. In the titles of the Italian films, Emanuelle is written with one “m” to avoid legal repercussions. Thus, the film title *Emanuelle* itself is a nod to the exploitation film genre.

Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage borrowed shamelessly from the original *Emmanuelle* film. For instance, the marketing hook “X has never been hotter” (see Figure 5) titillates the viewer and tries to outdo the slogan on the *Emmanuelle* poster “X was never like this”. Both advertising hooks point to the symbolic power of the letter X and the seductive attraction viewers must have felt by attending a public screening of such a film and enjoying the excitement of breaking a taboo.

Emanuelle is a U.S. American newspaper journalist and travel photographer based in New York. In Venice she and her boyfriend Roberto, an archeologist, board a cruise ship set for Bangkok. Roberto will join an excavation site some hours’ drive north of Bangkok, while Emanuelle is invited by a character named Prince Sanit. (Sanit is played by Italian actor Ivan Rassimov who already took the lead role in the Thailand-set exploitation film *Il paese del sesso selvaggio* (It 1972, tr.: “The land of savage sex”, a.k.a. *Man from the Deep River*.) At their destination, Emanuelle and Roberto go separate ways. She lodges at the renowned Siam

Intercontinental Hotel and soon meets her Thai host Sanit who gives her a tour of Bangkok during which they are shadowed by a sinister-looking man. Sanit leads her to the Japanese masseuse Gee – whose name is a reference to the character Bee in *Emmanuelle* – whom Emanuelle befriends. Roberto returns briefly to Bangkok, accompanied by the American couple Jimmy and Frances, new friends he made on the way.

Emanuelle perceives Bangkok as other-worldly when she reveals to her Thai host: “Your city is fascinating. Sometimes I think that living here is like living in another dimension.” Her roaming through the city and its outskirts give her many impressions. Equipped with her camera and often in the role of a tourist who gazes in awe at the world around her, she explores China Town, random streets and a busy public market, gets fleeting glimpses of towering billboard signs advertising Thai movies, passes the Democracy Monument, Phra Sumen Fort, the Golden Mount, various temples on Rattanakosin Island, Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall, and Sanam Luang. Don Muang Airport, Siam Intercontinental Hotel and Wat Arun feature extensively. Idyllic and rural views are offered during boat rides on Bangkok canals and the Chao Phraya River, from where Emanuelle observes life along the shores. During a visit to what looks like Sam Phran garden resort in Nakhom Pathom province, she takes pictures of a traditional Thai dance performance, a sword fight, a Muay Thai fight, and rides on an elephant.

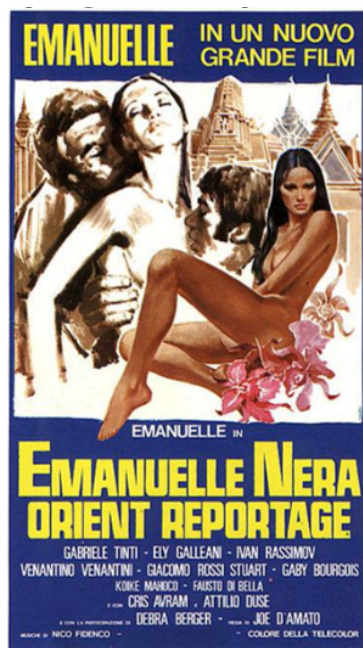


Figure 4: *Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage*. Italian film poster.

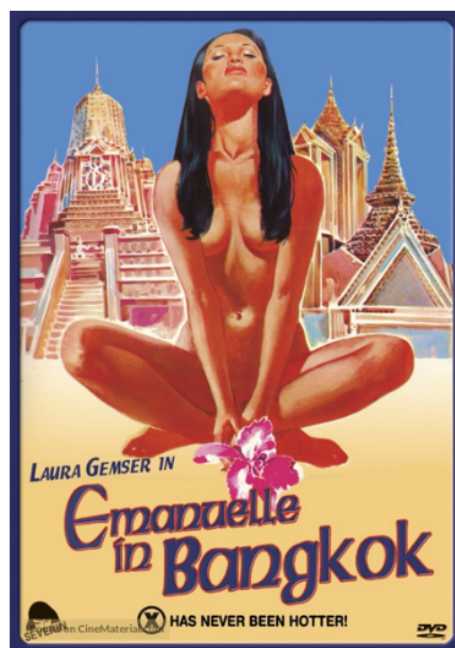


Figure 5: *Emanuelle in Bangkok*. U.S. DVD cover with the slogan “X has never been hotter!”

After her passport is stolen and the sinister thug and his gang have become a threat, she decides to leave. She flies to Casablanca to reconnect with Roberto who has left Thailand before her. In Casablanca her adventures continue as she befriends Roberto’s new fiancée Janet and the American ambassador’s daughter Debra. Emanuelle roams the streets and markets, attends social gatherings in the luxurious home of the American ambassador, and continues her journey to rocky hills and the desert. Although the portrayals of the Moroccan places, people and culture are steeped in European Orientalism and would be worthy of scrutiny by themselves, the focus of this article shall remain the Bangkok episode.

Scenes of sights and sounds in Thailand are alternated with scenes of erotic titillation. Emanuelle discovers the country not only with her camera but also with her body. In the opening scene, she and Roberto share a moment of intimacy and later they have intercourse in the cabin of the cruise ship. She appreciates Gee's body-on-body massage, and in her hotel room she dances with a Thai bellboy and lets him massage her. In a small club, she, Roberto and their friends are treated to lascivious go-go dance performances, where one dancer plays with a burning candle, dripping wax on her body. A scene of a go-go-dancer "playing" with ping-pong balls, and a quasi-gang-rape scene in which Emanuelle gives in to a group of Caucasian men have been cut from some DVD releases. This is also the case of scenes where Emanuelle takes pictures of a cockfight for gambling and a bloody struggle between a mongoose and a cobra. These scenes portray Thailand as a country of perversion and savage fights and place the film solidly in the Italian exploitation genre, yet their inclusion on a DVD would change the rating and raise the required minimum age of buyers.

A central scene takes place in a luxurious teak house where Emanuelle, Gee, Sanit, Roberto, Frances and Jimmy share an opium pipe. The opium is ceremoniously prepared and then smoked. Soon, the scene becomes an orgy where Sanit observes the guests losing their inhibitions and caressing one another. Male-to-male intimacy is avoided, so as not to threaten male viewers' heterosexual identity.

Sanit leads Emanuelle to a separate room. There, they caress each other, and he philosophizes in the voiceover:

You are not like them. You are different. You understand how to control your ecstasy. You are capable of letting the pleasures of the earth center all your senses. You live them with your entire body, not just with those few erotic zones westerners conceive to love-making. I can make you cry out with pleasure. But you must first give back that which you have been given. And you do know how. This is God's gift to you. You know how to suspend yourself in a tunnel where time no longer has meaning. And when the moment arrives, when your pleasure is on the verge of becoming glorious pain, then, only then you permit yourself that most sublime moment of all, which the French call "le petit mort", ["la petite mort" is correct] a little death, and we Orientals call "the great ecstasy".

The idea of a drug-induced erotic scene is of course taken from *Emmanuelle*, and Sanit's philosophical monolog is in the spirit of similar musings by the character Mario. Sanit's praise for Emanuelle's self-control and deep understanding of pleasure, pain and ecstasy is based on the Orientalist notion that assumes a fundamental difference between the Occident, which supposedly stands for knowledge based on logic and science, and the Orient, which derives its knowledge from spirituality and uninhibited sensuality.

Regarding the attitude of women, *Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage* tries to strike a similar chord as *Emmanuelle*. The female roles are self-confident and proactive in their choices of partners. Emanuelle is as independent as the men she meets, which is emphasized by her photojournalistic work. Gee is portrayed as the ultimate oriental lover because she sleeps with anyone she feels attracted to. The carefree American Frances separates from her husband Jimmy just as quickly as she married him and takes off to India in pursuit of pleasure and spiritual awakening. The British archeologist Janet ends her engagement with Roberto because she wants more experiences before settling down. And the American ambassador's young

daughter Debra, who grew up without a mother, is taken under Emanuelle's protective wing, just like Bee guides Emmanuelle in the French film. Emanuelle builds up her self-confidence and sense of independence. Thus, the women in *Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage* are proud to be free of social constraints. In fact, it is a man, Roberto, who is the only character who ever shows jealousy and regret over a breakup.

Nevertheless, in some instances women still appear to rely on men's approval. They like to celebrate and flaunt their body in front of them. For instance, in a tent in the Moroccan desert, Emanuelle and Janet join a dark-skinned North-African woman's dance performance in front of a group of Tuaregs. The two western women were symbolically abducted by the men, and the seductive Nubian woman reminds one of a popular subject of French Orientalist paintings, for example *A Slave Market* (1866), *Pool in a Harem* (1875) and *Phryne before the Areopagus* (1891) by Jean-Léon Gérôme. As in so many scenes, men remain dressed and watch, while women are (semi-)nude and perform to satisfy men's interracial desires. The Tuaregs form a circle around the three dancers, lift up their robes and cover them, that is, they take symbolic possession of them.

Emmanuelle attracted female audiences because the film follows the adventures of a female main character and presents many events from her perspective. While *Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage* also has a female protagonist, it is already a step away from the female-centered experience of Oriental desire. This film is more alluring to male viewers because Emanuelle's naked body is foregrounded to arouse male desire. The films that make up the main body of the *Emmanuelle* legacy move yet again further away from the female-centered erotic experience. They feature predominantly white men's adventures in Thailand where women are objectified by the male gaze.

***Naughty Girls* (UK 1975) and the E. C. Dietrich Trilogy**

The British film *Naughty Girls* (UK 1975), shot in Thailand, Malaysia, Sydney and on Bali was released one year before *Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage*. To this day it is one of only a handful of British films with an overt Thailand connection. A better-known British film set in Thailand is the James Bond spy adventure *The Man with the Golden Gun* (UK 1973). Although *Naughty Girls* is not in circulation anymore, synopses are available. Speed (1976) states that this is an X-rated "British sex film about four girls abroad and their adventures at work and play" (p. 177). Gifford (2001) summarizes: "Four girls describe their sex experiences to an investigator" (p. 857). Thus, *Naughty Girls* is about the journey of a whole group of women and thus appears to be a variation of the female-centered *Emmanuelle*-concept. It tried to benefit from *Emmanuelle*'s popularity by making female travelers from Europe the main characters and by including Thailand as one of several destinations where carefree women could explore their sexuality. Apart from *Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage*, it is the only *Emmanuelle* legacy film that focuses on the Thailand-adventure of women rather than men.

Swiss producer Erwin C. Dietrich sought to cash in with *Die Sex-Spelunke von Bangkok* (CH 1974), *Heisser Sex in Bangkok* (CH 1976), and *Nach Bangkok der Liebe wegen* (CH 1977). From the 1960s to the 1980s Dietrich was a prolific Swiss writer, director and producer who worked across many genres, including exploitation cinema. Not surprisingly, he jumped on the *Emmanuelle*-bandwagon. Eppenberger & Stapfer (2006) state that the output of Dietrich's company was so high that former employees could not recall some production details (p.118), and that *Heisser Sex in Bangkok* was released in 1973, followed by *Die Sex-Spelunke von Bangkok* in 1975 and *Nach Bangkok der Liebe wegen* in 1977 (p. 93), yet

admitting uncertainty about those years (p. 175). The order and years given in this article are the correct ones however.

The trailers and promotional posters for the softcore film *Die Sex-Spelunke von Bangkok* (CH 1974) are insightful regarding the portrayal of Bangkok and the intention to entice male viewers' oriental desires, to which end the depictions are based on interracial power dynamics. A dozen European men – a tourist group named “Je ferner, je lieber” (tr.: “The further away, the better”) – are sitting on board of an airplane ready to take off from Bangkok airport. They are daydreaming about their recent conquests which the film then tells in retrospect. Two evenings in a row they are gathered in the lobby of a Bangkok hotel to discuss their plans for the night. First, they venture to a massage parlor to meet Asian women. The following night is spent at the “Yellow Inn of Bangkok” where they watch the performances of female dancers and have intercourse with them in front of other patrons. A third sequence of intimate encounters is shown in slow-motion to indicate the men's dream-like reminiscing as the airplane has already departed. The blond tour-guide Sylvia has been frustrated because in Bangkok the men rejected her advances but stirred by their memories and in the absence of Asian women, a couple of them sleep with her. The dream of erotic adventures in Bangkok, the midflight scenes, and the tour-guide's name are references to *Emmanuelle* and Sylvia Kristel.

Die Sex-Spelunke von Bangkok begins with stock footage of Bangkok to establish it as the setting. The impressions are those of airport runways, landing and departing airplanes, life along the canals, patches of jungle, and cock fights for betting. The use of stock footage is seen not only in this but also in many other *Emmanuelle* legacy films. It was a convenient and inexpensive way to situate the story.



Figure 6: *Oriental Vixen*. US film poster.

A poster promoting the same film as *Oriental Vixen* (see Figure 6) has a titillating announcement: “Oriental Beauties... Bizarre Love Rituals... You’ve Never Seen as Much in Any Place! SUZIE CHINA is the ORIENTAL VIXEN ... She’s HOT!” (One of the actresses credited is Mai-Ling Chang, which is probably a pseudonym. Her name may be in reference to actress Mai Ling, who plays a stewardess in the James Bond film *Goldfinger* (UK 1964). In 1979 German satirist Gerhard Polt performed his sketch *Mai Ling* about a German man who is “very satisfied” with his Thai mail-order bride. Moreover, “ling” means “monkey” in Thai. (Are these just coincidences?) This shifts the focus away from Bangkok, toward the oriental woman imagined as an object of pleasure. Obviously, the name Suzie China is a reference to the main female character in the novel *The World of Suzie Wong*, and the description of her as a “vixen”, that is, a female fox, dehumanizes her and marks her as sexually promiscuous. The poster can also be construed as an attempt to establish the male spectators sitting in the chairs and at a distance as appreciative voyeurs – and with them the male viewers in the darkness of a movie theater – of the women who appear to derive their own pleasure from flaunting their bodies and receiving lustful looks. Moreover, the poster is meant to awaken the Orientalist erotic male-power fantasy of owning a harem.

A male voiceover in an official English language trailer makes these promises:

Learn the secret pleasures and vices of the Far East. Nothing is withheld in *Banging in Bangkok*. Featuring the most thrilling girls of all Thailand. [...] The venomous enchantment of the East will lure you to shocking depths of degradation. [...] The exotic perfume of the erotic Far East will go to your head and haunt you forever after you’ve seen *Banging in Bangkok*. (*Die Sex-Spelunke von Bangkok*, DVD extras)

The trailer promotes *Die Sex-Spelunke von Bangkok* as *Banging in Bangkok*, which is consistent with the English language soundtrack when one of the men says: “Let’s go banging in Bangkok.” (IMDb.com misleadingly states that *Banging in Bangkok* is an alternative U.K. video box title of *Heisser Sex in Bangkok*.)

The commentary marks Bangkok as a city of western male penetration and as a mysterious city of the “erotic Far East”. Positive associations (“pleasures ... thrilling girls”) are juxtaposed with warnings of danger (“vices ... shocking depths of degradation ... haunt”) and enticing ambiguity (“venomous ... enchantment ... lure”). Bangkok is imagined as a dangerous yet alluring city where the yearnings of hedonists will be satisfied. The reference to “exotic perfume” is to appeal to the viewer’s olfactory sense and hints not only at the smell of lotus flowers but also at the supposed pleasure of smoking opium.

Exchanges between a male and a female voiceover on the trailer define gender roles and construct power dynamics:

m.v.: “You’ll be tempted by the little ...”
f.v.: “... Thai girls. Those little Thai girls are for us.”
 [...]
 m.v.: “What is your secret, little Thai?”
f.v.: “You’ll find out.”
 [...]
 m.v.: “I’m taking you now, doll, just like this.”
f.v.: “I’m ready for you.”

[...]

f.v.: “My little lotus blossom. I’m going to deflower you.”

F.v.: “Take me!”

The dialogs define Thai women as petite (“little”), treat them as inanimate objects for play (“doll”), flowers (“lotus blossom”), and mysterious (“secret”), and portray them as eager conquests (“I’m ready for you”, “Take me!”). Female voice and male desire strangely merge when *she* says that the Thai girls are “for us”, meaning for western men.

The Asian women’s staged hyper-sexuality and the performed acts of interracial desire, which are all presented as based on mutual attraction, create the main spectacle. This is supported by the fact that the actresses are of various ethnic backgrounds and have light to dark skin. Furthermore, soft- and hardcore films often include lesbian scenes to double the male viewer’s pleasure. In *Die Sex-Spelunke von Bangkok* such scenes are absent, which may be attributed to the intention to focus on interracial heterosexual couplings and to avoid any threat to the male sexual identity. The film essentially serves to affirm Caucasian men’s masculinity, heterosexuality, and virility through mutually satisfying intimacy with Asian women. Furthermore, it constructs a two-class system between white and Asian women. The men’s repeated rejection of tour-guide Sylvia and their eventual agreement to sleep with her in the absence of Asian women stigmatizes all white women as unable to compete with Asian women and their ability to awaken and satisfy western men’s desires.

The other two Bangkok-set films by Dietrich also borrow from *Emmanuelle* and are variants of *Die Sex-Spelunke von Bangkok*.

The story of *Heisser Sex in Bangkok* (CH 1976, tr.: “Hot Sex in Bangkok”) is similar and some of the actors are the same. A group of bowling buddies heed the call of pleasurable adventures and travel to Bangkok. The package tour costs less than a thousand Swiss Francs, implying that a trip to Thailand is affordable. The men are portrayed as sleazy sex tourists who frequent massage parlors and bath houses. Their comments are sexist and racist. Every Thai woman is attractive to them, flirtatious, and readily available. No white man is ever rejected. Once their vacation has ended, the men leave reluctantly and daydream of a quick return. Adhering to exploitation film genre conventions, *Heisser Sex in Bangkok* features stock footage of Bangkok and tortured animals. The Thai actresses are credited with Hong-Kong Chinese pseudonyms, which not only protects their identity but also blurs the lines between Thai and Chinese nationalities. One of the names is Suzi (Eppenberger & Stapfer 2006, p. 93), a reference to *The World of Suzie Wong*.

The erotic film *Nach Bangkok der Liebe wegen* (CH 1977, tr.: “To Bangkok for Love”) was shot in Zurich and Bangkok. It features elements of parody because the comedy genre was flourishing in 1970s German-language cinema. A travel agent of Asian descent recommends a goofy Swiss bachelor to travel to Bangkok, enticing him with the possibilities of passionate encounters. The film then follows him to Bangkok where he has intercourse with Asian and Caucasian women. The alternative German title *Sexpuppen aus Fernost* (tr.: “Sex Dolls from the Far East”) points to the notion that Asian women are mindless pleasure-providers and that Thailand is a geographical part of the Far East. According to Berndt & Schweer (1991), Dietrich initiated this third and final Bangkok-film but at some point, Swiss film producer Edi Stöckli adopted it and made it his first hardcore release on VHS for German adult business pioneer Beate Uhse.

***Drei Bayern in Bangkok* (WG 1976)**

German company Lisa Film has produced many films in Thailand, one of which is *Drei Bayern in Bangkok* (WG 1976, tr.: “Three Bavarians in Bangkok”, a.k.a. *Bathtime in Bangkok*), shot in Bangkok and the Bavarian Alps. Under the pretense of promoting a Bavarian brand of beer abroad but actually hoping to bed Thai women, the mayor of a small town and his friend travel to Bangkok. They are tracked down by the village vicar. (The concept of the vicar-mayor-rivalry is based on the competition between the catholic priest Don Camillo and the communist mayor Peppone in a French-Italian comedy series of the 1950s and 1960s set in provincial Italy.) Sightseeing tours and slapstick chases around Bangkok follow, as well as a run-in with Thai thugs, a puzzling identity switch, and several semi-erotic scenes.

Bangkok is more than just an exotic background because the film includes a flurry of outdoor scenes, for instance impressions of Sanam Luang, the Grand Palace, Chinatown and Silom, food markets, canals, and a floating market. Following the *Emmanuelle* original there are scenes at airports, hotels and gardens, which present the city as a tourist destination. Curiously, scenes at a beach resort, possibly shot in Rayong, imply that Bangkok offers beautiful beaches. Superficial intercultural experiences are also had, for example when the mayor, craving Bavarian-style sausages, visits a food market whereby accident he eats freshly made Thai sausages instead.

Time and again strikingly blond German women and dark-skinned Thai women undress in the presence of men. In fact, all women in the film are uninhibited, always eager to get naked and to seek physical contact with the German men. For instance, having arrived at the hotel, the men are stunned by three Thai masseuses who hurriedly disrobe and chase after them. A key scene takes place inside a massage parlor, labelled a Turkish bath. Thai women sit behind a large window waiting to be selected by a patron. Having made his choice, the mayor pays cash for her at a counter. The whole scenario may appeal to a power-fantasy where a man is master over an entire harem; however, this is quite extraordinary because the scene blatantly condones the money-for-sex-transaction.

All in all, *Drei Bayern in Bangkok* is a holiday and travel film that follows the concept of softcore titillation and lowbrow humor films popularized by Lisa Film and other production companies in German-speaking countries in the 1970s. It is ironic that the “Bavarian sex film” was a prolific genre, since Bavaria was and still is Germany’s most catholic-conservative state. Older generations of Germans subscribed to traditional morality and were likely shocked by the homemade films that violated taboos and endorsed liberal dealings with male desire for Asian women.

French Productions

Emmanuelle was most often emulated in France because both the original novel and film came from there. Five films – some of them coproduced with Hong Kong and Italian companies – are relevant. They gradually reduced the time given to the characters’ explorations of Bangkok and increased the intensity of explicit interracial encounters, with Bangkok being diminished to the role of an “exotic background”.

Jambes en l’air à Bangkok (Fr 1975, tr.: “Legs in the air in Bangkok”) is a softcore film with elements of comedy, travel and adventure. The original length is 98 minutes but only shorter versions are available. Henri Sala directed this and other X-rated films, that is, *Emanuelle e Lolita* (1976). (See the European Girls Adult Film Database.) Ducas is a wealthy industrialist, Patrick a photojournalist and Ducas’ personal assistant. To provide his boss with information

about erotic extravaganzas, Patrick travels to Bangkok. Once there, he sleeps with a Thai masseuse and the French photographers Anna and Dorothée. There is an explicit group orgy with two western men and two Thai women, followed by Patrick's visit to a Patpong massage parlor where he selects a masseuse from a group of women waiting behind a window. This scene may have inspired the similar one in *Drei Bayern in Bangkok*. Bangkok is presented with impressions of city streets, markets, canals, temples, a Khon dance performance and a Muay Thai fight.

In *Jouir à Bangkok* (Fr 1977, tr.: "Enjoying Bangkok") two robbers steal Max's briefcase during a delivery. His companion Paulette sleeps with their manager to save his job. But Max has already secured a new position as an illustrator for posters of X-rated movies. Max then meets Soja who convinces him to visit Asia. Rather than featuring Asian actresses, the film constructs an opposite between two women: one blond and fair-skinned (Carole Piérac), the other dark-skinned and of North-African descent (Hare Krane). The contrast of skin color and the interracial sex scenes are the main spectacle. *Jouir à Bangkok* is the first European film that associates Bangkok with hardcore. However, it pretends to be partially set in Bangkok by using a collage of stock footage of a Bangkok street market and a staged sword fight, alternated with stock footage of Hong Kong streets, which reveals the producers' assumption that viewers would be oblivious to the setting. The word "Bangkok" in the title and a handful of authentic impressions are apparently enough to locate the story in the mind of the viewer.

In the softcore film *International Prostitution: Brigade Criminelle* (Fr, HK 1980), police officer Philippe Degato is on a mission to solve a murder mystery. He pursues an Italian pimp from Paris to Antwerp, Bangkok and Hong Kong. Through the Asian woman Tazzi (Laura Gemser), he is introduced to the world of prostitution. The film shows a school for prostitutes, massage parlors, prostitution on a train, and a casino-brothel where women are the prizes for the winners. The movie poster (see Figure 7) connects Gemser's face and fictional character with the word "prostitution", and the viewer is invited to extend this connection to Bangkok and all Asian women. Swiss producer Dietrich distributed the film on VHS in Germany as *Kriminalbrigade im Kampf gegen den schwarzen Markt der Liebe* (tr.: "Criminal brigade in the fight against the black market of love") ("Prostitution International").

Le journal érotique d'une Thaïlandaise (Fr, It, HK 1980) with adult film actresses Brigitte Lahaye and Sylvie Cointreis a hardcore film (also available in a softcore version) and stands out from the group. In a shallow story set in Paris and Bangkok, agent Paul Vernon, disguised as a fashion photographer, travels to Bangkok on a mission to find two vanished colleagues. He explores Bangkok's sites and nightlife together with the blonde models Yvonne and Claudine. His desires are fulfilled by the charming Thai woman Clito. She is hassled by a group of mobsters but refuses Vernon's help for his own protection. The Bangkok scenes feature authentic places, such as Don Muang Airport, Siam Intercontinental Hotel, Victory Monument, city streets, canals, and what appears to be Sam Phran garden resort. The touristic activities of sightseeing, elephant riding and touring the canals are alternated with the characters' erotic encounters. A standard scene occurs at a massage parlor, when a patron chooses one of dozens of waiting women, which again reflects a male-power fantasy, just like the whole film caters to the male gaze, emphasized by Vernon's temporary role as a photographer. The featured sites in and around Bangkok merely serve to create an ostensibly exotic tourist experience. The German alternative title *Emmanuelle – Im Teufelskreis der Leidenschaft* (tr.: "Emmanuelle – In the Vicious Circle of Passion") ties the film to the original *Emmanuelle*. The same is true for a promotional poster (see Figure 8), which centers on Lahaye.



Figure 7: *International Prostitution: Brigade Criminelle*. French film poster.



Figure 8: *Le journal érotique d'une Thaïlandaise*. French film poster.

The Spectacular Trading Company (Hong Kong) co-produced the film. The 1970s Hong Kong cinema boom brought forth films like the Thailand-set *The Big Boss* (HK 1971) with Bruce Lee and the Italian-Hong Kong coproduction *Crash! Che botte ... strippo strappo stroppio*. (HK, It 1973, tr.: “Crash! That banged ... I ripped my stomp”, a.k.a. *Superman against the Orient*). An obscure coproduction is *Massage Girls in B’Kok* (1979). It is a lowbrow mixture of sex and crime about two men on a trip to Bangkok where they get into trouble with gangsters (“Die Massagesalons von Bangkok”). “Against a background of paradisaical [sic] beaches and exotic animal farms, Thai girls survive in a capital of adult entertainment, as nude dancers, nude models, or nude masseuses. Some do not survive. Documentary-style drama” (“Massage Girl in B’Kok”). The German and English titles point to western involvement in the production and the common fascination with Bangkok’s red light districts.

The hardcore film *Body-Body à Bangkok* (Fr 1980, tr.: “Body-to-body in Bangkok”) follows the concept of using the word “Bangkok” in the title and combining random impressions of the city with scenes of interracial lust. It features footage from *Le journal érotique d'une Thaïlandaise* and is a confusing collage of a staged photoshoot in Paris, a group-sex orgy in a park, and explicit scenes in a hotel room. These are alternated with scenes in Bangkok, which include a photographer taking pictures of two blonde women on a canal boat – a reference to Emmanuelle and Bee’s boat ride in *Emmanuelle*. Later, the photographer and a Thai woman travel through Bangkok in a rickshaw, stroll through a busy market, and visit an elephant camp and a crocodile farm. Thai people are incidental to the plot and are relegated to the role of the exotic Asian other, for instance when Thai children are seen jumping into the murky canal water, a typical image found in many 1970s and 1980s western films and photographs produced in a Bangkok-context.

The Danish Color Climax Corporation

The Danish adult entertainment production company Color Climax Corporation (CCC), founded in 1967 and still in business today, took viewers' equations of Bangkok and Thailand with uninhibited interracial sex several steps further. Once the leader of Europe's adult entertainment industry, it produced many explicit films and magazines. In the 1970s, CCC used Super 8 mm film stock and later switched to video technology. From 1977 to 1983, it produced at least eighteen pornographic films with a Thailand connection. Some used the words "Bangkok" and "Thai" in the title, such as *Bangkok Bangers* (Dn 1979), *Lesbian Thai Maid* (Dn 1979), *Thai Tease* (Dn 1980), and the more explicit *Young Thai Whore* (Dn 1979). Many CCC films feature Thai adult actresses whose true identity is unknown. While some films were shot on location in Thailand, for instance *Oriental Ecstasy* (Dn 1980) in Phuket, most were shot in Denmark or elsewhere in Europe and predominantly indoors to keep production costs low. Thus, the CCC catalog includes works such as *Young Thai Tourist* (Dn 1983) with adventurous Thai women visiting Copenhagen. The titles were chosen to attract their target viewers with an indication of a low inhibition threshold and the promise of satisfying their Oriental desires. Their selling point was the inclusion of dark-skinned Thai performers and graphic scenes of interracial intercourse. Since all CCC films were widely distributed in western Europe, were dubbed into other languages – German in particular – and now circulate in the Internet as "vintage porn", they have contributed to the fantasy of Thailand as a utopia for sex.

Conclusion

This article has given an overview of the body of European films made between 1974 and 1980 that constitute the legacy of *Emmanuelle*. They are either (partially) set in Thailand or include other Thai connections, for instance through stock footage or a title referring to Bangkok.

Emmanuelle was preceded by two 1960s-nudist films, which portrayed Thailand as a welcoming destination for free-spirited westerners. Many films tried to benefit from the *Emmanuelle* phenomenon by emulating its structure and ideas. As the 1970s progressed, they gradually escalated from soft- to hardcore and deviated from the emancipatory theme of *Emmanuelle* and *Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage* to ever more explicit scenes of oriental desire and interracial intercourse that cater to male erotic power-fantasies. The complete absence of transgender and gay male erotic scenes in the films that emulated *Emmanuelle* can be attributed to the fact that their target audience were heterosexual white males.

Cold War fiction films and novels of the 1960s and 1970s treated Bangkok as a zone of dangerous conflicts between western and communist spies. While Vietnam War documentaries presented Thailand as a key ally in the West's mission to stop Communism, documentaries presented Thailand as a paradise for European travelers and tourists. Not surprisingly, more fictional tourists, spies, photojournalists and hedonists followed in the footsteps of the character *Emmanuelle*.

Regarding the portrayal of Thailand, the characters' occasional explorations of Bangkok suggest that the city is an integral part of the story, but famous sights and landmarks often come into view only in passing. In *Emmanuelle* and *Emanuelle nera – Orient reportage*, Thailand and Bangkok are central to the story, yet in the majority of films that followed, the country and city are just a fleeing and ostensibly exotic background. Several low-budget productions used stock footage of Bangkok to locate the story, building on and contributing to the city's reputation and treating it as a stage for western men's adventures – but ultimately this stage

remains elusive. Furthermore, none of the relevant films had been shot in Pattaya, which in the early 1970s was frequented by American GIs on R&R and was arguably one of the cradles of the Thai sex trade but had not yet transformed into a tourist hub.

After 1980 Thailand suddenly ceased to be a shooting location for European X-rated films. A major reason was the impact of the new VHS technology, which lowered the film production costs significantly. The video cassette moved the place of exhibition of adult-oriented films from the sleazy city cinemas to the television set in the viewer's living room. Another reason may have been a growing awareness of HIV/AIDS in the first half of the 1980s.

Even though *Emmanuelle* was successful in North America, U.S. film productions did not copy it because adult-oriented films were produced domestically. The only significant film is the X-rated *One Night in Bangkok* (USA 1985). It followed years later, borrowed its title from Murray Head's popular song of the same name (1984), and used Hong Kong as a stand-in for Bangkok.

The European films discussed in this article contributed to the notion that Bangkok is a western paradise for erotic adventures. The cinematic staging of oriental desires and interracial encounters adheres to the pre-globalization western imagination of Asia as alluring and to the portrayal of Asian countries and cultures as mysterious, sensual and awaiting western penetration. Many scenes cater to male power-fantasies, as when Thai women are eager to serve the visitors from the West. *Emmanuelle* and the Thailand-set adult films it spawned remain important documents in our understanding of western representations of Thailand.

How did the Thais in the 1970 receive foreign films made Thailand? They probably heard about the handful of large productions, such as *The Big Boss* (HK 1971), *The Man with the Golden Gun* (USA 1973) and *The Deer Hunter* (USA 1978), which brought Hong Kong cinema and Hollywood A-listers to their country. These films were reviewed in national newspapers and also screened in Bangkok cinemas. However, one needs to keep in mind that despite the existence of red light districts in Bangkok and Pattaya, Thailand was a conservative society throughout the 1970s and experienced much political turmoil with a bloody popular uprising and the fall of a military regime in 1973, followed by the return to military rule in 1976. Any kind of film production, distribution and exhibition – Thai and foreign – had to follow the laws. The homegrown cinema scene received an important push in 1977, when a heavy import tax on foreign movies led to a temporary Hollywood boycott. Thai filmmaking then focused mainly on low-budget local productions that adhered to action, drama and comedy genre conventions. The 1970s-films by director Chatrichalerm Yukol, a member of the Thai royal family, were notable exceptions. They delivered social messages, such as the drama *Theptida Rong Raem* (Th 1974, a.k.a. *Hotel Angel*), in which a young woman moves from the countryside to Bangkok with high hopes of a better life but is forced into prostitution by the Thai men around her. Thus, there was certainly some awareness among Thais that prostitution existed; however, they had little to no knowledge about the existence of *Emmanuelle* and the soft- and hardcore erotic films discussed in this article because they were not distributed or screened in Thailand.

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