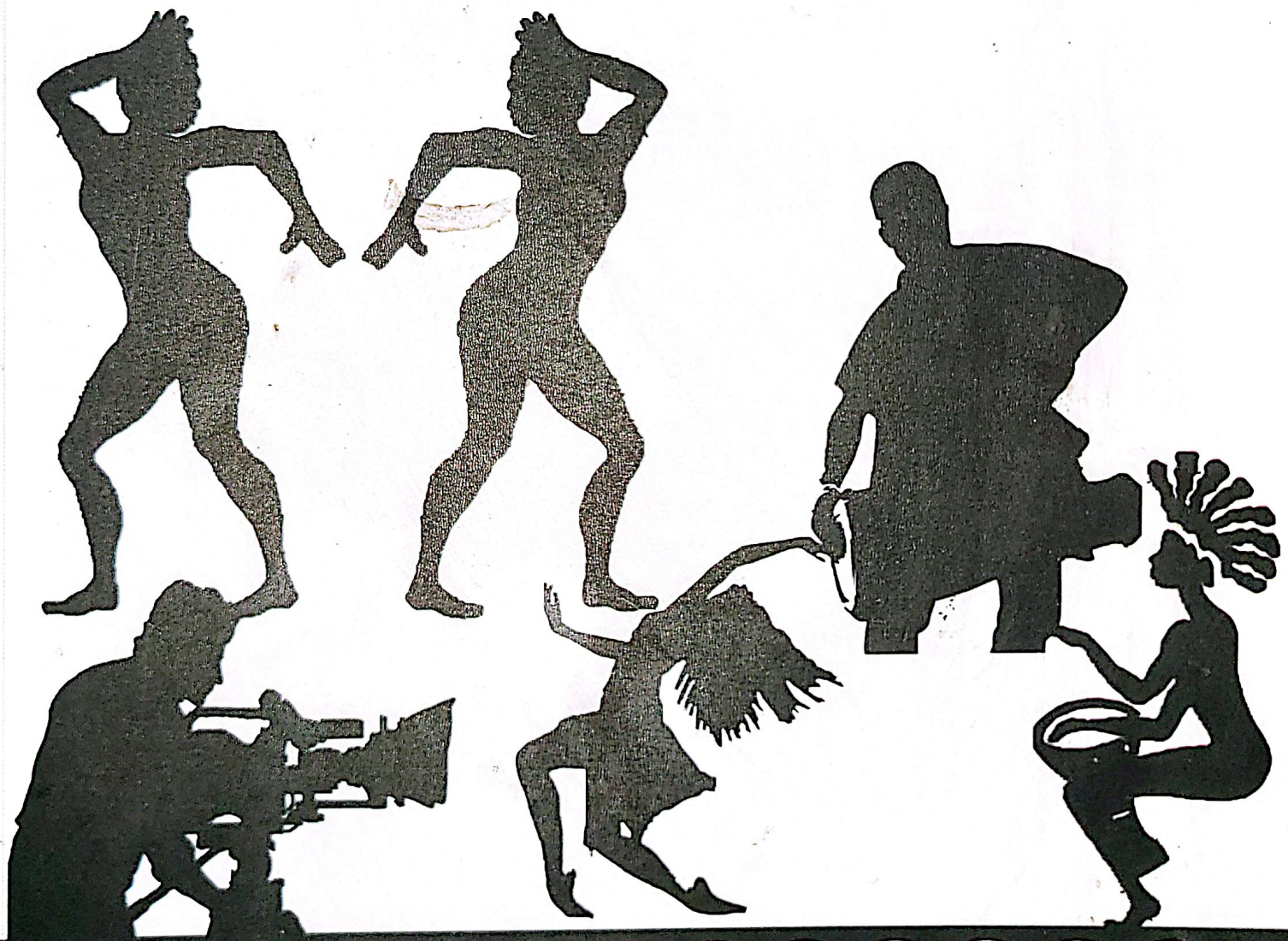


THE NIGERIAN CINEMA

Gender and Sexuality in Nigerian Motion Picture



Editor

Muhammed O. Bhadmus

Published by:
Department of Theatre and Performing Arts,
Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria.

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ISBN: 978-978-8203-67-4

Printed by:
Hallmark Publishing Nigeria LTD.
Kano, Ibadan, Lagos.
08035953651
Email: HallmarkPublishing@yahoo.com

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Women, Music and Dancing in Hausa Films: The Islamic Perspective

Ahmad Murtala

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Introduction

Mere emulation and copying from others, regardless of being good or otherwise built-in instinct in human beings. This is clear in the activity of the first mankind; when one of the two sons of Prophet Adam (pbuh) unjustly killed the other. But disposing of the body became a problematic task to the killer for his ignorance of the proper way of conducting a burial. Thereupon, "Allah sent a crow searching (scratching) in the ground to show him how to hide the disgrace of his brother. He said, 'O woe to me! Have I failed to be like this crow and hide the body of my brother?' And he became of the regretful" - (Ma'ida 5:31) This chapter, however, examines the controversy behind the permissibility or otherwise of film and filmmaking as well as investigate the related issues of women, music and dancing in the Hausa film industry. It has to be borne in mind that filmmakers are one group out of many like school teachers, university lecturers, students, civil servants and traders that constitute the Hausa society. All of the groups with no exception are bound to err and are also sources of societal good and evil. But the focus of this study is however on the Hausa film maker.

Filmmaking is a collaborative art, it is not theoretically or practically individualistic. Hence, it should adhere to the Islamic principle of mutual cooperation stipulated in the Qur'an. It says, "And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty" (Ma'ida 5:2). An excellent culture would, therefore, be the backbone of good filmmaking which will equally serve as a stabilizer of local culture and traditions. Being insensitive to the postulates of the host society of a film tradition can only lead to misrepresentations, rejections, or at most a mixed bag of mixed receptions for the film produced as in the case of the Hausa film Industry. Evidently, many modern Hausa filmmakers have neglected the cultural and religious imperative in their quest for commercial success. This research is based on the direct viewing and analysis of more than 350 modern films selected from the Hausa film industry. Equally, several interviews were conducted with male and female stakeholders and selected film viewers with the aim of balancing the sources for this study. In his study of Hausa film industry Adamu (2007, 2010)

examines its history, commercialization, transposition, modernization but with little interest or depth on its Islamic relevance or transgressions.

The Hausa Film Industry

The actual meaning of the word 'Kannywood' is not known, but it is named after Kano, the State that has the largest Hausa film market in Northern Nigeria. The name was first constructed by Sunusi Shehu Daneji of *Tauraruwa Magazine* in 1999 before one Norimitsu Onishi used the term in an article, "Step aside, Los Angeles and Bombay, for Nollywood" in the *New York Times* to refer to the Nigerian film industry¹. The industry is made up of screenplay writers, actors, actresses, producers, directors, editors, make-up artists, costumiers and a host of other artistes majority of who are Muslims (about 98%), but not necessarily full Hausa by origin². The well-to-do among them rent offices, which are situated, in the main, at various locations in Kano State, more especially along Zoo Road. The Industry however spreads out to the other Northern town like Jos, Kaduna, Bauchi, Gombe, Katsina, Sokoto, etc. It also spills over to neighbouring countries like the Niger Republic.

In 2016, the issue of establishing a huge world-class complex (Film Village) purposely for filmmaking in Kano State was raised. It was in the initial stage and almost to be started but the people of Kano State, more especially Muslim scholars, vehemently turned down the offer. They believed that the existence of such a village among the Muslim society may end up corrupting the culture and tradition of the host community. Some of the cleric referred to the immorality associated with Los Angeles, the home of Hollywood in the United States of America. If studios like those for Hollywood were to be built for the ancient Islamic city of Kano, Kano would sooner or later become like Los Angeles. It is even not common to hear about beautiful girls moving to Kano city looking for recruitment as it was in the early days of Los Angeles, leading to the Kano State Hisba Command apprehending some of these girls and returning some to their respective homes. If it had happened that the film village was established, some of the clerics argued, the numbers of girls flocking to Kano in search of film roles would have sky-rocketed and only Allah knows what would have become of Kano in terms of morality.

Film practitioners were not happy with the cancellation of the film village project for Kano. They expressed their anger over what they called 'the scholars' exaggerated negative impression against the project. They accused them of talking on an issue they had not understood at all. According to them, the village would open space, which a producer would

¹ - McCain, Carmen, *Kannywood: The Growth of a Nigerian Language Industry*, @ nigeriantalk.org. Access on 11/09/17

² - Ahmad Salih Alkanawy, the Secretary, MOPPAN, at his office, Zoo Road, on Friday 22/09/2017

hire to create an artificial outlook of the location by the concept prescribed in the script. The name 'Village' is figurative only, for it has no specific designated structure³. The money granted for the project by the Federal Government was said to be around Two billion Naira. The specification of the film village on 20- hectares was rumoured to be modelled after the Indian film city and a Chinese film centre. It was also estimated to create four thousand and five hundred (4,500) job opportunities. For it would be equipped with a cinematography centre, a 400-capacity auditorium for training, a hostel, a sound stage, an eatery block, a three-star hotel, a shopping mall, a stadium, a clinic, among others⁴. If it were true to contain the indefinite structures, it would have been scary to the scholars, hence their disapproval.

Though filmmaking has "come to stay in Northern Nigeria", as some actors put it⁵, doubt it is full of blunder and inaccuracy from different perspectives, notably being deficient in Islamic teaching and wanting in professionalism. Of course, the trial and error attempt that has gone through a span of more than thirty years has bestowed on some of them the realization of the damage being done to Hausa culture and values. It is still a learning process for some of the filmmakers, one can argue.

Criticism of the Hausa Film and Islam

Film critics have laid down certain criteria for its criticism that is aimed at bringing into focus the strength and weakness in the film. Our focus is not that conventional as it is based on the compliance of the film with the teachings of Islam as we have earlier stated that the Hausa film is predominantly produced by Hausa Muslims and largely for Hausa Muslim film audience. However, people who are not sensitive to religion and culture may not see the place of Islam in the Hausa film industry in a religious society like Kano, Bauchi, Sokoto etc. in this type of societies, it is hard to distinguish between the private and public pattern of life. This is because the common people of these areas submit all of their temporal affairs at the Hereafter to Allah, the creator, who is the real Owner of their lives. Thus, to assume that what an actress for instance, does in film is private, is not only wrong but not true as the film platform is a public sphere, making it equally untenable that a Muslim actress is simply acting, especially when acting roles that are either negative or doing things that are prohibited in Islam. For the society sees her as a Muslim first and foremost who should at times try to actualize the teachings and tenets of Islam even as she works in the film industry and not contradict them. This applies to all Muslims in all works of life, it does not only

³- Some of my interviewees like Jamilu Yakasai, Salisu, Shehu Kano, Alkanawy, Falalu A. Dorayi, Ado Gida Dabino are furious about scholars' expressions.

⁴- Mohammad Lere, *Kannywood: Nigeria to establish world-class film village in Kano*, Premium Times Nigerian Newspaper @ premiumtimesng.com. processed on 22/09/2017

⁵- Shehu Kano on 21/09/17

apply to women in the Hausa film industry. Being Hausa is also an added advantage that helps one to act according to the stipulated norms.

The film is not devoid of positive sides. It is, of course, full of merits that cannot be seen in other media. Hausa filmmakers, therefore, deserve to be praised, to a degree. Hausa film is unique, in the sense that it is used as a tool for awareness and enlightenment. Its practical use of art has, however, upset some critics like Dul Johnson who complains that:

With the Hausa film, the problem seems to be didacticism. The Hausa film revolves around the themes of culture and morality, which are often presented in a classroom manner...It appears that the producers are overzealous in their desire to preach Hausa culture and the religion of Islam rather than to present their audiences with works of art. This is the fundamental problem of the Hausa filmmaker-to come to terms with the fact that the film as a commercial venture in entertainment, period...Generally, the film audience wants to be entertained. The producer is a businessman, and the director is an artist, never a teacher....Film is not a medium for preaching religion⁶.

The position above has been echoed by Bernard Eze-Orji, "The Hausa religion does not provide a platform for any form of compromise in their thematic preoccupation. As a producer, one must comply with the don'ts associated with making a film for Hausa audience. Their culture and worldview which is heavily religious are preserved for posterity and the future generation"⁷.

These statements reflect the negligence of the full concept of film as an art and its obligation to especially educate as it entertains. John Bardi notes that, "the main function of film, or rather art, is to inform, educate and entertain. The function of education is present but neglected to a great degree in the Nigerian film industry". Chidiebere S. Ekweariri who quoted Bardi poses another fundamental question "Is film then merely entertainment? Certainly, not...beyond entertainment, film is a culture – that culture which informs and influences us". Then he concludes, "Entertainment should not be the focus of the Nollywood film"⁸. This does not only have the ring of the truth but it also conforms to the obligation

⁶- Dul Johnson, *Culture and Arts in Hausa Video Films*, in *Nigeria Video Films* edited by Jonathan Haynes, Ohio University Centre for International Studies: Research in International Studies, Africa Series No. 1, revised and expanded edition, 2000, pp.203-205

⁷- Bernard Eze-Orji, *Thematic Preoccupation of Igbo Film: New Dimension to the Image Bastardization in Nigeria Movie Industry*, in *Repositioning Nollywood for the Promotion of Nigeria's Cultural Diplomacy and National Security*, pp.306-307

⁸- Ekweariri, Chidiebere S., *Nollywood and the Quest for Relevant Education in Nigeria: A Critique*, in *Repositioning Nollywood for the Promotion of Nigeria's Cultural Diplomacy and National Security*, pp.2-288

film as an art. A proverb has it that, 'What is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh'. Christian filmmakers have almost Christianised Nollywood films. Why then the criticism against Hausa filmmakers' attention to Islam alone? What is the essence of the film if it fails to reflect the religion, morals and culture of the viewing society? Hence our underscoring of Hausa film by women on music and dance with Islam the dominant religion of the Hausa people. Therefore, for the positives in modern Hausa films, the following can be identified: Religious inclination, entertainment that are considered Islamic, reflection on life and patriotism to Hausa culture and values. After reviewing the selected film, this chapter identifies the following gaps in Hausa film, using the Islamic perspective.

Deficient Background in Islamic Knowledge: Majority of the directors, actors and other film-makers are not aware of the rules and regulations laid down by Islam to govern the dealings and conducts of Muslims in all works of life. In Islam, it is incumbent on one before embarking on anything to know the lawful and unlawful aspects related to it. 'Umar bin al-Khattab used to go around the market beating up traders who have not learnt the Islamic rules governing their trade. This is because, as he explained, "one could not be eligible to embark on trading in our markets except he becomes a knowledgeable person in dealings and transactions, otherwise he would take usury whether he knows or not"⁹. It is delightful, indeed, to see some films containing citations from the Qur'an or the prophetic hadith. This is very commendable. The only problem is the poor recitations (e.g. *Ayah, Mahaihiyata, GidanDadiDuniya, Khalid*) and sometime written wrongfully the edition of which deserves the rapt attention of learned scholars or must be copied directly from reliable sources and pasted in a desired place (e.g. *Mahaihiyata*). Sometimes, a very sensitive word not compatible with the Islamic teaching may come out from an actor in a disguised manner. Such negative words are not supposed to be uttered and even if used should be vehemently rejected there and then. Take an example of the saying every human being has his three to seven duplications existing somewhere in the world (e.g. *Nās, Guguwa*). This is not an Islamic view at all, but it is a belief of Hinduism which believes in the reincarnation. If this belief system must be used for a Hausa film audience, it is our argument that this must be unambiguously represented as Hinduism and not portrayed as part of Islam.

Dances considered to be un-Islamic: Dance by definition is a systematic movement of the body in a graceful way that matches the speed and rhythm of a piece of music¹⁰. It has been the most topical issue in modern Hausa motion pictures. Some filmmakers and audience are of the opinion that featuring dance in films is simply a sort of entertainment even if it involves lustful and suggestive movements. Hence, they see no problem with it at all. This view is quite wrong. Sheikh al-Sawi al-Maliki (d.1241H/1825C.E) reported that there are differing juristic views on dancing. Some scholars view it as detestable and others

⁹ - Qiwam al-Sunnah, *al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib*, No. 810

¹⁰ - Al-Nawawi, *Minhaj al-Talibin wa 'Umdat al-Mufteen*, Cairo: Mustapha al-Babi al-Halabi, 1920, vol. P.152

permissible. The last view is common with the *Sufis*, who exercising it during their 'unconscious' and 'transcendental state'. This position is not unanimously accepted. Imam Tartushi al-Maliki (d.520H/1126C.E.) refuted this *Sufi* view, saying that it was invented to openly contradict the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Therefore, it is merely innovation¹¹. Imam Izzu al-Deen Ibn Abdussalam (d.660H/1262C.E.) was also very furious about dancing regardless of the dancer; whether it is performed by a *Sufi* or by other people. He said, "As for dancing and handclapping on a light and frivolous manner resembling the frivolity of the female, none would do it except the light-headed or affected ignoramus. The proof of his ignorance is not that such a thing not mentioned in the text of the Shari'ah, the Qur'an and Sunnah; nor did any of the prophets or disciples do it. Rather, it is done by ignorant fools who have mistaken mere fancies for real truths. Scholars have prohibited clapping for a man due to the Prophet's saying, 'clapping is for women'. He also said, "Dancing is a bid'ah; none partakes of it except the foolish and it is but befitting except for women"¹². This is irrespective of whether the dance art is in film or in reality. Dance shall therefore be classified into four categories.

The first is that in which two single people of opposite sex dance together. This is, undoubtedly, not permissible, whether conducted in private or in public, for being contrary to Islamic teaching (e.g. *Babbar Riga*, *Katanga*). And it would extend to the situation where the sexes dance separately and the editor uses modern technology to display them dancing together in one place. The prohibition here is largely on eye-deception that makes people believe the duo is dancing together. (Though there is the issue of the dancing of a female in front of non-relatives, which will be explained later under Type Three). Second is that in which a husband dances with his wife in public. This is also unlawful regardless of the reasons. Be it a birthday, wedding feast, child-naming ceremony, etc. It may also happen in the case where someone dances with his wife privately and releases the scenes of the dancing. Surprisingly, some actors dance in film with their fiancés (e.g. *Nas*). All of these instances are totally prohibited in Islam. Though it has to be noted that such dancing of couples is permissible if they dance together or one of them does to the other in private. Third is where the dance occurs in private before a group or individual women alone. This is lawful provided they do not expose sensitive parts of their body to one another. It should be noted however that the idea of women exposing sensitive part of their body to one another is simply an Hausa cultural practice which is not lawful in Shari'a. These dance by women in privacy should not be publicly circulated in social media, videotapes, CDs and the like. Fo

¹¹. Ba'alawi, Abdurrahman bn Muhammad, *Bughyat al-Mustarshidin*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1: ed., 1998, p.349

¹². Izzu al-Deen Ibn Abdussalam, *Qawa'id al-Ahkam Fi Masalih al-Anam*, Egypt: Dar al-Bayan al-Arabi, 142 A.H/2002 C.E., vol. 2 p142-143.

widening the scope of viewing such dancing to include males would render its issuance and viewing *haram*. During such dance, it has to be ensured that no male-folk is allowed to watch or witness the event. This means that the place must be empty of even male drummers, DJs, cameral men, male makeup artist and directors etc. This equally means that even if the entire crew for a film is completely female, the release of such film for the public will be in violation of Islamic prohibition as the viewership is mixed and there is no guarantee that it is only female viewers who will watch such films.

The fourth is that in which the dancers are males, and the dance is accompanied with religious-based activities that would lead to strengthening the religious course, like Jihad cooperative work and the like. Some scholars opine permissibility of this type¹³ on the basis that it can be discerned from the hadith on the Abyssinians, who played with spears in the Prophet's Mosque. The Prophet (PBUH) watched them and asked 'Aisha, "Would you like to watch?" When her answer was in the positive, he stood there with her until she herself became tired and went away¹⁴. This hadith narrated by Anas bn Malik reported that, "The Abyssinians were dancing in front of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and they were saying 'Muhammad is a righteous servant'¹⁵. This justifies the dance category described above as the dance is not lustful and an admixture of the sexes. The word 'dancing' in the hadith is held according to Imam Nawawi (d.676H/1277C.E), along with the other related hadiths, to explain that their type of dancing was merely going round here and there playing with shields and spears¹⁶. This doesn't mean they engaged in pure dancing in its technical meaning. It is clear from the hadith that dancing like the one which the Abyssinians did is, indeed, permissible provided it is run and performed in a very natural atmosphere, in proper outfits and does not contain any of irregularities. 'Aisha (R.A), in that hadith, represented women in the permissibility of viewing. And allowing her to have a closer view of the event is a clear indication to the permissibility for women-folk to watch such activities on the said conditions.

At this juncture, it must be pointed out that musical accompaniment has not been introduced to the dances as this will compound the categories and, therefore, require a different Islamic ruling. This is because there is an intense juristic debate among Islamic scholars on the permissibility or otherwise of composing music and listening to it¹⁷. For the

¹³- Al-Haitami, *al-Fatawa al-Kubra*, vol.4 p.356; Al-Kattani, Abdulhayy, *al-Taratib al-Idariyyah*, Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, vol.4 p.121; Al-Ubbiy, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, vol.3 p.43

¹⁴- Bukhari, *Al-Jami' al-Sahih*, vol. 2 P. 440 No. 907- Fat'hu

¹⁵- Muslim, *Al-Jami' al-Sahih* vol. 6 p. 186-Nawawi and Musnad Ahmad vol. 3 p. 152 No12131

¹⁶- Nawawi, *al-Minhaj Sharh Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3 p.291; 'Abu 'Uбайд, *Gharib al-Hadith*, edited by Muhammad 'Abdulmu'id, India: Da'irat al-Maarif al'Uthmaniyyah, 1964, (4/331-332)

¹⁷- Sheikh Nasiruddeen Albani has written a good refutation asserting the illegality of listening to music or using musical instruments. The book is entitled *Tahrim Alat al-Tarb*. And Dr. Yusuf Qardawi opposed the view in his *Fiqh al-Gina Fi Daw' al-Qur'an Wa al-Sunnah*. He asserted its legality.

purpose of this chapter, singing is divided into four categories. The first is song chanted with no accompaniment of musical instruments. This was in practice during the time of the prophet who allowed women to sing during ceremonies¹⁸. The second is singing with heart-rending melodies other than mere chanting but without the accompaniment of instruments. This, after long disputes between the jurists from different Schools of Islamic Law, has generally been viewed as detestable for men to deeply engage in performing, but this type of singing is not frowned at when performed by women or children during ceremonies. The third is singing accompanied with musical instruments. The majority of the early Islamic jurists have labelled this category as prohibited and this extends to its use in film or reality. This position is based on a hadith narrated by Abu Malik Al-Ash'ari that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Among my ummah there will certainly be people who permit illegal sexual intercourse, the wearing of silk clothes, the drinking of alcoholic drinks and the use of musical instruments"¹⁹. The hadith is clear in the prohibition on the use of the phrase 'they permit' in the face of the prohibition of the Shari'a. In addition to that, the musical instruments are mentioned alongside things that are definitely known as *haram* in Islam. According to the Maliki School of Law, the *Madhab* being followed here by the majority of Nigerians, composing, singing or listening to music is prohibited. Imam Malik is reported to have said singing "is done by sinful people". The chief Imams of the *Madhab* like Qurtubi (671H/1273C.E) and many other Maliki jurists have confirmed the prohibition²⁰.

The fourth is the Sufi mode of singing with all kinds of musical instruments. The Sufis defend its permissibility²¹ while many scholars viewed it as *bid'ah* in religion because there is no act of *Ibadah*, which is required to be performed with music in Islam at all²². Under this category, there is what is known today as *Anashid al-Islamiyyah* (Islamic anthems), which are songs extolling the excellence of Islam. They also include prophetic elegies chanted sonorously. It is just like indigenous *Wakokin Yabon Annabi* (PBUH).

Ibn Majah, *Al-Sunan*, vol. 1 P. 612 No. 1900 and Musnad Ahmad, vol. 3 P. 391 No. 15246

Bukhari, *Al-Jami'a al-Sahih*, vol.10 p.52 No. 5590

Ibn Rushd, *Al-Bayan Wa al-Tahsil*, vol. p. 472-473 and *Al-Muqaddimat al-Mumahhidat*, vol. 3 P.462; Ibn Qurtubi, *Ahkam al-Qur'an*, vol.3 p.; Qurtubi, *Al Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, vol.14 pp. 51-56; Al-Qarafi, *Al-Furqan*, vol.8 p.280 and 289-290; Ibn Hajj, Muhammad bn al-'Abdari, *Al-Madkhal al-Shar'i al-Sharif 'Ala al-Mahabib al-'Arba'ah*, vol.3 pp.119-122; Mawwaq, *Al-Taj Wa al-Iklil*, vol5 pp.244-245, vol.7 pp.540-; 'Ilaish, *Al-Furqan al-Jalil*, vol. 7 p.488; Hattab, *Mawahib al-Jalil*, vol.4 pp.6-9; Al-'Adawi, *Kifayat al-Talib al-Rabbani Li al-Fiqh al-Qairawani*, vol.2 p.434 and *Hashiyat al-Adawi 'ala Sharh al-Kharshi Li Mukhtasar al-Khalil*, vol.3 p.302

Ibn Qustari, Sahal bn Abdullah, *Al-Tafsir*, Dar al-Kotub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1423H, pp.21-22; Hujwairi, *Kashf al-Mahjub*, Dar al-Turath al-Arabi, 484-506

Ibn Jauzi, *Talbis Iblis*, Bairut: Dar al-Fikr, 1st ed., 2001, pp.199-223; Murtala, A., *Fann al-Ugniyya al-Umamiyyah al-Sha'abiyyah: Min Manzur Islami*, Journal of African Languages (Harshe), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Vol. 1, No.4, (2010), pp.206-212

Contemporary Islamic jurists have divergent views on this category. Some attached them to the first and second categories. Therefore, it is conditionally allowed, that is to say, it is permitted provided there are no musical instruments. In this regard, one general decision cannot be taken for all the categories. Each should be considered on its merit within Islamic rulings. Using musical instruments, however, has been characteristic of some oral songs ever since in Hausaland²³. But historically, it is argued that in Hausaland, religious poetry were often not accompanied with musical instruments. For musical instruments is seen as the axis of the devil. However, Sheikh Usman bn Fodio had a different view reckoning allowance in specific places, such as the palaces of *Sarakuna* and for inspiring soldiers, but Sheikh Abdullahi bn Fodio forbade using any musical instruments. He did not agree with the Sufi view that formalises using musical instruments whatsoever²⁴.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the use of music and dance in Hausa film especially my women are often in transgression of Islamic rulings. Imam Isma'il bn Yahya known as al-Muzani (d.264H./878 C.E.), one of the great Shafi'i School of Law jurists, was asked about dancing on musical instruments like the guitar and tambourine. He replied, "This is not permissible in the religion". He was then asked that 'Imam Shafi'i, your master, was reported to have allowed it' He vehemently refuted this allegation²⁵.

Dancing alone and issues relating to it have no value in Islam. Jurists from different Schools of Law believe that dancing lowers one's integrity²⁶. Imam al-Haramain (d.468H/1085C.E.), from the Shafi'iyya School of Law, asserted that whatever pertains to movements of the body while dancing is *haram* and so engaging in it reduces one's uprightness²⁷. Hanafi scholars hold dancing as outright *haram*, and their ruling was very tough as they consider whoever accept it as permissible as infidel²⁸. The Maliki School of Law prohibited hiring a dancer as well as remunerating him²⁹. It is a common practice in the Hausa film industry to even employ elderly actors and actresses for dancing and chanting love songs (e.g. *Rai Dangin Goro*, *Madrid Ko Manchester*, *Muhawara*). This practice enjoys backing from the basis that dancing is part and parcel of Hausa culture. But it must be pointed out that this is largely a pre-Islamic position as the Shari'a permits the good customs of people and prohibits those that are in transgression of Islam. The confluence or otherwise

²³-Gusau, S.M., *Wakokin Baka A Kasar Hausa*, p.54

²⁴-On this issues see; Ibn Fodio, Usman bn Muhammad, *Najm al-Ikhwan*; Sheikh Abdullah bn Fodio in Diya' al-Sultan; Abdulqadir bn Mustapha, *Masa'il al-Khilaf*, folio 3-5; Abdullah, Shehu Umar, *On the Search for Viable Political Culture: Reflected on the Political Thought of Sheikh Abdullahi DanFodio*, Kaduna: NNN Commercial Printing Department, 1984, pp.47,71-72

²⁵- Illish, Fat'hu al-Aliyy al-Malik, vol.2 p.

²⁶- al-Sawi, *al-Hashiyah ala Sharh al-Sagir*, p. ;

²⁷- al-Nawawi, *Raudat al Talibeen Wa 'Umdat al Mufteen*, Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1405, vol.11 p.230

²⁸- Ibn 'Abidin, *Radd al-Muhtar 'ala Durr al-Mukhtar*, vol. 4 p.259

²⁹- al-Sawi, *al-Sagir*, vol.4 p.10

the spirit of Islam is the parameter of determining goodness and badness of a culture. Hence, culture cannot be used to justify the intermingling of sexes in dances for Hausa film. Historically, dancing was introduced into the Hausa film industry as a result of direct imitation of Hindi films. There are lots of evidence in this regard. During dancing in films, usually, all sorts of restraints are cast away to achieve the desired effects for the performance. This calls to attention the Prophet's saying (PBUH), "If you feel no shame, do as you wish"³⁰. It is observed that much of the frequent dancing that dominates the modern Hausa film is a signal to the decline in good behavioural standards.

With the exception of the recent progress in the Industry, it has been a common practice in almost every Hausa film to show two or more scenes depicting young pretty women in tight fitting clothes shaking sensitive part of their bodies (e.g. *A Hanyar Abuja*, *ai Ciki*, *Samu Da Rashi*, *Kugiya*, *Gida da Waje*, *Iya Shege*, *Katanga* and others). In these films, instead of consulting parents and seeking their consent after meeting the love ones, Hausa films insist on quickly moving to dancing together with prospective suitors in parks and beautiful places (e.g. *Zabari*, *Kansakali*). Some films present blood relatives of opposite sex dancing together (e.g. *Rayuwata*), this is un-Islamic and cannot be justify as Hausa culture. It is also common in Hausa film to have intermingling of sexes to produce what is considered to be amazing dance routines (e.g. *Kafar Dama*). Besides the prohibition of entertaining oneself by looking at the sinful act, it is an undeniable fact, indeed, that some audience may derive sexual pleasure from the suggestive dancing they view. The dance proponents see no problem whatsoever with such un-Islamic dances. This is because, according to their thinking, a woman's body is hers alone and she has all liberty to do with it whatever she wants. Dances like the described ones, are unconditionally done in contempt for Islamic principles and the established and for the permissible Hausa customs. The Qur'an is categorical about this issue. It states that believing men and women should lower their gaze and desist from fixing it permanently on the opposite sex. And particular instructions are directed to women that they should "not expose their adornment except that which necessarily appears thereof and to wrap a portion of their head covers over their chests and not expose their adornment (beauty) except to their husbands..." (Nur:30-31). Contrarily, in the Hausa film mentioned which are meant for massive distribution actresses use fashionable tight fitting dresses, showing off sensitive body shapes that ought to be shielded from public gaze under Islamic principles. The exposure of adornment by women dancing in Hausa films violate another central Islamic principle. Muslim women must not "stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment" (Q24:31). This is more dangerous further filmmakers have allowed pretty girls to exhibit electrifying dance steps in which adornments and dress accessories are deliberately deployed to enhance the commercial success of the

³⁰ - Bukhari, Al-Jami' al-Sahih, vol. 6 P. 523 No. 3296

films. While the Prophet (PBUH) had drawn the attention of women to be cautious when on an outing, for "a female is aurah (a thing that should be concealed) when she leaves her abode and the Devil raises eyebrows at her"³¹. It is in the same vein that Imam al-Maliki (d.197H) deduced from the abovementioned verses that it is equally forbidden for a strange person to look at a woman shaking her body even when it is covered up by clothes³². This by implication makes it wrong for a Muslim to watch a woman other than his wife dancing in reality as well as in film.

Un-Islamic Costume and Make-up: One other grey area in which most Hausa films fall short is in the conformity with the Islamic dress code. The Hausa modern film has been given heightened sexual appeal in a number of ways by influences from Bollywood and Hollywood films. The dresses used in films by filmmakers are considered to be sexual attractions that would boost sales. It is often as if actresses are encouraged if not out rightly directed to use their sexual innuendoes in dressing and make-up to achieve commercial success of films. While in Islam both men and women are instructed to observe a strict dress code to prevent temptations. The Hausa tradition is also compatible with the code. Most of the films mentioned in this chapter are in transgression of this Islamic dress-code. Sometimes actresses appear in tight clothes showing their cleavages in style referred to "Pop out" (e.g. *Halwa, Insaan, Tsumagiya, Uwa Da 'Yarta*). In *Matar Hamza*, part of Hamza's wife's right-side breast becomes visible when she pours juice for him. Likewise, in *Zaman Iddi*, on departing from the fortune-teller's place, a wide opening (cleavage from collarbone) showing the breasts of the actress is noticeable (likewise in *Ga Duhu Ga Haske, Abokin Mijina* etc.). Of course, if these were not deliberately shot they could have been edited and not left as part of the films. These are deliberate transgressions and therefore, unacceptable under Islamic principles and teachings. It is important to note that even in the Hollywood tradition there is legislation on the showing sensitive parts of the body in films and this was largely adhered to for a long time and there are still a lot of Hollywood film directors who are still very strict on what could be shown in films. It will therefore not be unusual for Muslims to legislate on films in their domain. A woman is pictured wearing sleeveless clothing in front of an emir in Hausaland (e.g. *Sarki Abdallah*). This is not possible in reality and does not conform to Hausa culture. To ascribe such an untrue picture to Hausa culture is an irony and, indeed, a misrepresentation of the culture. A representative Hausa married woman would not go out like that.

A typical Hausa woman is very conscious of her dress. As the Allah has enshrined in the Qu'ran and faithful Hausa women abide by this rule. Of course, beautiful dressing is very fundamental in the production of modern films. It is a simple way to attract the audience especially females, who await the emergence of new films to emulate marvellous sewing

³¹- Tirmizi, Al-Sunan, vol. 3 P. 476 No. 1173

³²- Mawwaq, *Al-Tajj wa al-Iklil*, vol.1 p.499

orn by the actresses. But still, our argument of prohibiting such un-Islamic dress (in the sense that the advertised styles are designed in contradictions to Islamic dressing, e.g. Nazari). For films are tools of making positive societal changes and teaching in the modern world. At this stage, one may recall what Abu Hurairah (R.A) narrated of the Prophet (PBUH) as saying, "Two are the types among the denizens of Hell, the one who whips like the tail of an ox and they flog people with their help. The second one is women who would be naked in spite of their being dressed, who are seduced (to the baths) and seduce others with their hair like humps. These women would not get into Paradise, and they would not perceive the odour of Paradise, although its fragrance can be smelled from such and such a distance (from great a distance)"³³. Ugwuishi has spoken the same in his saying, "Going by the trends in our society, one cannot discern when these actresses are highlighting social-ills and when they are putting on their normal daily dress (this is bad and should be checked)"³⁴

Close Body Contact between Opposite Sex: The Qur'anic teaching is clear about the prohibition of whatever that could make one go near sinful acts. It says, "Do not go near women, for it is a sin and an evil path" - (Isra':32). According to this verse, one has to keep him/herself from the unlawful sex. The use of couples who are not even married in films with close body contact is categorically prohibited in Islam. As a sign of civilization and modernism, they want the sexes exposed to one another. It seems that the film industry, in Nigeria, is guided by some poorly understood feminist principles and a misunderstanding of the concept of art. In early Hausa dramas, the precursor of the Hausa films, actors and actresses were acting and performing with the opposite sex but they maintained a considerable distance without close body contact of the opposite sexes in respect of Hausa culture and the principles of Islam, the mainstay of their society. For instance, a husband would be inside the room while his wife stays outside or vice versa. But nowadays, an actor is often shown wearing trousers alone while exposing all his chest, navel and limbs in front of a grown-up woman (e.g. *Gidan Haya*) or wearing a sleeveless singlet (e.g. *Zaman Tare*, *Sarkakiya*). An actor and actress both can be, sometimes, on bed (e.g. *Alhaki Kwaikwiyo*, *Addini ko Al'ada?*, *Da Zaman Tare*, *Da Kishiyar Gida*, *Mai Jego*, *Mahafiyata*, *Habib*) or even closer to each other, holding hands (e.g. *Tsumagiya*, *Sansani*, *Ragas*) or suggesting kissing (e.g. *Ragas*), to long at one another (e.g. *Juyayi*, *Hubbin So*); sometimes sitting closely shoulder to shoulder (e.g. *Zaman Idda*, *Babbar Riga*, *Mata Na Rako*, *Uwa Da 'Yarta*) or even holding each other (e.g. *Ki Yarda Dani*, *Daham*). Sometimes, the problem is not only of filming the opposite sexes meeting in private but it lies in the degree of intimacy and proximity in their

Muslim, Al-Jami' al-Sahih, vol. 14 P. 110-Nawawi

Ugwuishi, Theresa Chiemuezie, *Nollywood and Cultural Re-Orientations*, in *Repositioning Nollywood for the Advancement of Nigeria's Cultural Diplomacy and National Security*, p.765

close sitting arrangements during gossiping (e.g. *Mutum Da Mutum*) or catching one of the sexes clothes (e.g. *Ina Mafita*, *Hausa Bakwai*, *Rayuwa Ko Mutuwa*) or feeding one another (e.g. *Gobe Ma Rana Ce*) or even knocking a male down (e.g. *Mu ne Kannywood*). (see: *Gidan Kudi*, *Mutum da Mutum*, *Zawarawa*, *Wata Mace*, *Bikin Yar Gata*). It is clear that such things are all un-Islamic. The argument on separating film from reality is not theoretically grounded and is equally untenable in Islam. Art that serves no end, especially a progressive end which can only be determined by the people producing the art and consuming it as in the case of Hausa films and Muslims. This is because, as some filmmakers falsely deem it, Allah judges only according to the intention. But they fail to comprehend that Allah is the one who reiterates the regulation of illegal association between sexes in the Qur'an and warns believers against going near the opposite sex. On the argument that when an actor touches an actress or stare at her, that there may be no lustfulness as it is only acting. Such arguments are many in the industry and show the level of ignorance of its proponents. Islamic teaching is clear on the issue that the sexes should not intermingle unless they are spouses. The filmmakers assume that acting is a license to reflect the society in all its vices in all manners which may actual fact be a promotion of those very vices.

Vulgar Language: Though the Hausa community is like all other communities in terms of using certain vulgar language, the Hausa culture, influenced by Islamic teachings, does not approve of this. But modern Hausa films are promoting not only the use of vulgar languages but equally the use of abusive ones. The script writers are first responsible for selecting obscene utterances that are presented in the films. The habit of emulating popular film actors and actresses may however lead some fans to imitate these bad languages from the celebrities. It is culturally strange and Islamically offensive to use such languages but it is now common to see in films children slandering their parents openly or in a disguised manner (e.g. *Maja*, *Madrid Ko Manchester*) or wives addressing husbands with unbecoming aggressions and languages (e.g. *Bikin Yar Gata*, *Dan Tasi*, *Auren Gida*). Amorous titles rather than regular ones are given to film under the impression that the films will sell better. The early Hausa filmmakers were diligent in choosing appropriate titles taken mostly from proverbs and wise sayings. Unfortunately, films of today are given titles full of vulgarities (e.g. *Sai Na Auri Babana*).

The Indirect Endorsement of Bad Culture: Like any other culture, Hausa culture is old, rich, complex but vibrant and not stagnant. It would therefore not even be in good taste to promote for instance pre-Islamic practices that have been abrogated by Islam in modern day Hausa films as this will be an indirect way of endorsing what the Hausa muslim society now call bad culture. Films like *Sarkin Bori*, *Kicimilli*, and *Kawalliya Roman Jaba* are but few examples of films indirectly promoting *Bori* mediumship and transvestite/transgender activities in Hausa societies. The promoters of this kind of films often argue that they reflect what is happening in the society. This may be partly true, but they have ignored the rarity and infrequency of such practices in the society. Sometimes evil can be subconsciously promoted

The original intention was to present it as abominable. This is because, according to saying, "Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been pardoned. And ever is Allah Hearing and Knowing. If instead you show some good or pardon an offense-indeed, Allah is ever pardoning and competent" (Q4: 148-149). Muslim exegetes expounded upon the implied meaning of the verse to include "idle talk or non-mongering: it often leads to more evil by imitation, as where criminal deeds are shown in a cinema or talked about shamelessly in a novel or drama"³⁵. This is known later in the West as the Social Learning Theory³⁶. It was developed by Albert Bandura who maintains that mere observation can lead someone to imitate certain negative or positive behaviours from the repetitive pattern of mass media programmes. This is re-emphasized by 'Cultivation Theory' of G. Gerner³⁷. Take for example an actor or actress who is not really a smoker in real life but accepts the directive in a film to hold a cigarette and even smoke it (e.g. *Su Ma 'Ya'ya Ne, Kwana Arba'in, Hausa Bakwai, Rai Dai*). Some of his fans emulate. Another example can be seen in visiting fortune-tellers (*Bokaye*). The scenes show how some women visiting fortune-tellers, a practice outlaw in Islam, can encourage ill-mannered people to go on such visits and consultations regardless of the conclusion in the films.

Islamic Point of View on Film

Many things of merit and demerit came along with modernity from the 15th century onwards. Film, being a development of the 20th century and as one of the tools for disseminating modern ideas to the public, played an important role to this effect. A great number of Muslims from different strata, including some scholars, were culturally overwhelmed to the extent that they believed that the "old-fashioned" Muslim society could compete in the modern world. According to them, there is the earnest need to get involved in modernization processes. However, Islam is compatible with anything good in modernization as it has definite yardsticks for measuring what is prohibited or allowed for all Muslims. Filmmaking is among such arising issues that catches the attention of Muslim scholars well on its pros and cons since its inception³⁸. And they have issued appropriate rulings as follows:

Ali, Abdullahi Yusuf, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, USA: Amana Corporation, New Edition, 1989, p.232. See also: Rashid al-Rida, *Tafsir al-Manar*, Egypt: Al-Hai'ah al Misriyyah al-Umamah Li al-Kitab, 1990, vol.6 pp.3-7

Bandura, A., *Social Learning Theory*, New York: General Learning Press, 1977, p. 22

Hussain, M.Y., *The Munkar in Western Television Programs*, in *Islamic Communication*, International Islamic University Malaysia: IIUM Press, 1st ed., 2012, pp.83-91

For why the early Muslim Hausa scholars did not write plays and dramas see: Yerima, Ahmed, *Agnosticism, Sokoto Caliphate and the Slow Development of Drama*, in *The Sokoto Caliphate: History and Legacies*,

The Islamic Jurist on Filmmaking: Except for film images that contain un-Islamic scenes³⁹, the jurists have, at least, two divergent views on the production of simple and meaningful motion pictures. The first view is that which establishes its prohibition in strong terms. Thus, filmmaking and whatever is related to it is categorically *haram*, according to Sheikh Ahmad al-Ghumari (1950) and his brother, Sheikh Abdullahi al-Ghumari (d.1996), Sheikh Hamoud al-Tuwaijari, Sheikh Muhammad Nasir a-Deen al-Albani (1999), Sheikh Abdul'aziz bn Baz (1999/1420H), Sheikh Dr. Bakar Abu Zaid (1429H/2009) and a host of others⁴⁰. According to these distinguished scholars, filmmaking is based on lies that one is being portrayed as a cripple or deaf (e.g. *Dan Kurma*) while he is not in reality. An actor and actress may also be described as rich or poor while in the actuality he or she is not. Also, actors and actresses use other people's names and hide their actual names and those of their parents. All these are tantamount to lies in their opinions. This is supported by the hadith in which the Prophet (PBUH) has already been reported to have said, "No slave of Allah has complete faith until he leaves lying in jesting and leaves disputes even if he was truthful"⁴¹. They also viewed filming as a sort of backbiting in the sense that the actor's or actress' actions are a mere imitation of someone else's activities most probably without his/her consent. The prohibition of such acts is obvious in Islam. The Qur'an has said, "And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it" (Q49:12). It is also reported that the Prophet (PBUH) had prohibited such acting in a hadith narrated by A'isha (R.A) that, "I said to the Prophet (PBUH), 'It is enough for you in Safiyyah that she is such and such; meaning that she was short-statured!' The Prophet (PBUH) replied, 'You have said a word which would change the sea if it were mixed in it'. She said, 'I imitated a man before him out of disgrace!' He said, 'I do not like that I imitate anyone even if I should get such and such'"⁴². Hence, imitation according to the analysis adopted by this view, is conspicuously prohibited regardless of the purpose.

The second view is that which gives conditional acceptance to filmmaking. This view is supported by many scholars among whom were Sheikh Rashid Rida (d.1354H), Sheikh Muhammad bn Salah 'Usaimin (d.1999), Sheikh Ibn Jibrin, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi and

1804-2004, edited by H. Bobboyi and A.M. Yakubu, Kaduna: Arewa House Centre for Historical Documentation and Reserach-Ahmadu Bello University, 1st edition, 2006, vol. II pp.292-295

³⁹-Al-Dali, Muhammad bn Musa, *Ahkam Fanni al-Tamthil Fi al-Fiqh al-Islami*, Riyad: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1429 A.H./2008 C.E., pp.137-170

⁴⁰- al-Ghumari, Ahmad bn Saddiq, *Iqamat al-Dalil 'ala Hurmat al-Tamthil*, Egypt: Dar al-Mirjan li al-Tiba'ah, pp.4-5; al-Ghumarim 'Abdullah bn Siddiq, *Izalat al iltibas 'amma akhta' fih Kathir min al-Nas*, pp.39-40;

⁴¹- Ahmad, Al-Musnad, vol. 2 p. 352 No. 8615

⁴²- Abu Dawud, Al-Sunan, vol. 4 p.420 No. 4877

ny others⁴³. All are of the opinion that if filmmaking would be compatible with Islamic teaching and fulfil conditions such as a content free from sin and immorality, avoidance of close body contact between sexes, adherence to Islamic dresscode and avoiding watching of film that will lead to neglect of religious obligation, film can be acceptable. Sheikh Rashid Rida was however particular about the acting of a woman in film, should not lead her to scenes of exposing some parts of her body like hair, neck, fore-breasts, limb and upper arm. This position has equally been given legal backing in Islam. One of the finest among them is the argument that everything is originally permissible unless there is a clear and an authentic text that prohibits it. Hence, ordinary filmmaking, in truth, does not deserve to be denied; no clear-cut legal basis for its prohibition provided the content does not show contempt for any Islamic teaching. The second view which this study support is considerable moderate provided the conditions attached to it are respected. The institution of a functional censorship board build on Islamic principle will go a long way in making film and filmmaking an acceptable practice in Islam. The representations of Allah, the Prophets, his companions and angels in film are however forbidden and should not be attempted in whatever guises. Only Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida viewed the representation of the prophet's in film as permissible unconditionally and it is undoubtedly strange position. Film should be based on meaningful plots and excellent objectives that aim at building noble ideas, sound values and producing good citizens. A woman actress should observe the following; obtaining permission from husband, parents or guidance; adherence to Islamic dress code and observance of all these with the codes designed by national or state film stakeholders like Code of Ethics and Production for Filmmakers in Nigeria⁴⁴ and Code of Ethics for the Motion Picture Council of Nigeria (MOPICON), are imperative.

Teaching by Illustration is equally an argument that could be used for the acceptance of film in Islam. Support for this could be deduced from the following hadith. In this hadith, Angel Jibril came to the Prophet (pbuh) in the midst of his Companions and appeared before them as a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him and none of them knew him. He sat down close by the Prophet (pbuh) rested his knees against the knees of the Prophet (pbuh) and placed his palms over his thighs and said, "O Muhammad! Inform me about Islam". After answering this question, he said, "You have spoken the truth!" The Sahaba were astonished at his thus questioning him (pbuh) and then telling him that he was right! The man posed another question, "Inform me about Iman (faith)". The Prophet answered and the man said, "You have spoken the truth!" Then the man said, "Inform me about Ihsan". The Prophet (pbuh)

- Rashid Rida, *Fatawa Imam Muhammad Rashid Rida*, vol.3 p.1090; Dali, *Ahkam Fann al-Tamthil*, pp.137-70

- The Code is attached as Appendix in *Making the Transition from Video to Celluloid*, pp.297-320

answered. He then said, "Inform me about the Hour." He (the Prophet) said, "About that the one questioned knows no more than the questioner." So he said, "Well, inform me about its signs". The Prophet replied. After that the man went off. And after a while the Prophet said, "O `Umar, do you know who that questioner was?" `Umar replied "Allah and His Messenger know better." Thereupon the Prophet said, "That was Angel Jibril. He came to teach you your religion"⁴⁵. This Hadith indicates teaching by illustration which could be gotten from a film produced and managed under the stated Islamic conditions.

Conclusion

Filmmaking is no better than a cup or a microphone; both can be used negatively or positively. As such, filmmaking can be used to make faith building films or to depict abuses. As for considering filmmaking a lie, a cursory look at 'acting' would reveal that it is not, in fact, lying at all. For the actor, at his worst, assumes someone's character and performs the same way that person supposedly lives. The actor and the audience are, quite rightly, aware that what this particular actor is doing is merely imitating some one's performance and nothing else. The lie stands, as it is clear, on concealing the actuality and revealing otherwise. Acting for the sake of promoting religious tenets and good culture can be regarded, in this study's understanding, as part of reformation in awareness and enlightenment. If conducted in a compatible way with Islamic teachings, its ruling would analogously be deduced from the hadith of Umm Kulthum bnt `Uqbah. She reported the Prophet (pbuh) as saying, "Someone who makes peace between people by saying something good or relates something good is not a liar". She said, "I did not hear him make an allowance for any lie that people utilize except in three cases: making peace between people, a man speaking to his wife and a woman speaking to her husband"⁴⁶. As such, good acting would not be lies, for it can be entertainment that promotes peace and tranquillity among people. Imitation used positively in films adhering to Islamic teachings and practices are therefore prerequisite for sustainable Hausa film tradition.

⁴⁵ - Muslim, *Al-Jami' al-Sahih*, vol. 1 p.157-158-Nawawi

⁴⁶ - Bukhari, *a- adab-Al Mufrad*, p.139, No.385

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