

## **The Role of Nollywood in a Dying African Traditional Religion and Culture: A Critique of Clash of Native Doctors**

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**Abstract:** Nollywood, also known as the Nigerian film industry, is presently one of the most prolific film industries in the world and the most popular in Africa. However, it appears that Nollywood filmmakers, actors and scriptwriters are neglecting their critical role in the creation, development and perpetuation of the religious, cultural and metaphysical identities of the Nigerian people. Instead, they seem to be portraying some false religious and cultural consciousness of the African people, thereby projecting false ontological and epistemic identities of the people. This paper is a philosophical critique of the contribution of Nollywood to the rapid decline of African Traditional Religions (ATRs) and African Traditional Cultures (ATCs), through a content study of Clash of Native Doctors. The paper shows that most Nollywood scriptwriters, filmmakers and actors/actresses contributed to the dying state of ATR and ATC. A specific analysis of the Nollywood film, Clash of Native Doctors shows that ATRs and ATCs are portrayed as blood-seeking or blood-sucking religions and cultures, while Christianity, whose foundation was laid on the crucifixion and blood sacrifice of a supposed innocent man, is portrayed as the perfect religion. This is logically evident in the film's transformation of Agada (Dibia or a native priest) who did everything to neutralize the negative spiritual machinations of other Dibias, such as Odenjinji, and Ogbaka, against the innocent people of Anioma community from a native priest to a pastor before he conquered and triumphed over the other Dibias. In fact, the paper argues that the true African Dibia is one who intercedes for his fellow citizens and ensures justice in society rather than someone who performs rituals to stop innocent citizens from making progress, as portrayed in the film.

**Keywords:** ATR, ATC, Nollywood, Culture, Religion, Dibia and Film.

### **Introduction**

The power of motion pictures, in general, and films, in particular, in the nurturing of children, shaping and developing individuals within a nation, and the overall maintenance of the cultural, religious, and metaphysical identities of a people cannot be taken for granted. Motion pictures have a way of capturing the attention of people, especially, children and women. They are equally a powerful tool in transmitting information and impacting knowledge. Apart from their epistemic functions, they also play the hospitable role of entertainment. Film which is a sub-unit of motion pictures appears to be one of the strongest instruments or approaches used in educating people. Women, children and most men are easily emotionally carried away when a film, be it comic, tragic or tragi-comic, is being played or viewed. This is why children can comfortable standing at the window to watch films as we can see in the plate below.



Picture of young Nigerians viewing a Nollywood film from the window

Film viewers pay avid attention to the lessons and often unconsciously imbibe character traits that they may not have imbibed should they not view a particular film. We recall the tension and fear in most children when Innocent Ohiri's *Hot Cash*, a television serial popularly called "Willy-Willy," was being aired on NTA television those days (Ayakoroma 2014: p.50). This perhaps is why Uchenna Unuzulike in "Nollywood: The Influence of the Nigerian Movie Industry on African Culture" cited in Orewere (1992) as arguing that film is a powerful "medium of entertainment and the transmission of cultural values" (Unuzulike, p. 233). Because of this subconscious manner of character molding, and the role of films in cultural transformation, revaluation, identity-making and maintenance, playwrights, film producers, directors and actors/actresses should be more circumspect in the cultural narratives and lessons their films and plays convey to their readers and viewers. Films can also be consciously used to misinform and deform people. That is, it can be used to create false narratives on the cultural, social and ontological identities of a people. This is the case with the Nollywood film, *Clash of Native Doctors*. The said film portrays a false narrative of African cultures and religion. It portrays the traditional African culture as blood-sucking, devilish and demonic, and projects the strange nonindigenous, Judeo-Christian religion as the true religion. It creates false narratives about indigenous African cultures and religion, and further emphasizes such false narratives while neglecting the negative aspects of the Judeo-Christian religion. The implication of this is that most African and foreign readers/viewers of this play/film unconsciously fall into the trap of believing the false narratives being portrayed about Africa by the film/play; thereby making most Africans to adopt a strange culture that is non-indigenous to them and showing so much hate for their own indigenous culture, tradition and religion.

This paper does not intend to argue that African cultures, tradition or religion are perfect, neither does it argue that Judeo-Christian religion is so devilish that it cannot be adopted by any African. Rather, it hopes to show first, that it is in the place of African playwrights and African movie industries such as Nollywood to present a true narrative of African ontologies, identities, cultures, religion and traditions. The paper philosophically critiques the Nollywood film, *Clash of Native Doctors*, for presenting a false narrative and distorted image of African cultures and religion. Ultimately, this paper encourages indigenous Africans to believe in their own culture and religion since their own being (ontologies), development and progress are grounded in this understanding. It, however, does not argue that ATR/ATC are perfect in themselves, but rather argues that there should be revaluation of this indigenous systems. This misdirected false narrative of African cultures and religion has contributed to the present dying or declining state of ATR/ATCs.

## **Brief History of Nollywood**

The history of Nollywood is somewhat still unestablished. This is why some time ago, the veteran Nollywood actor, Kanayo O. Kanayo, claimed that he is senior to another veteran Nollywood actor, Pete Edochie, in Nollywood. In that interview, Kanayo attempted to take the credit usually given to Pete Edochie as something of a pioneer in Nollywood. Though there is no established univocally accepted record of the history of Nollywood, there are different personal accounts of its origin. The word “Nollywood” was derived from “Hollywood,” the city in the State of California, which is the epicenter of the American movie industry. It is by the same token that the Indian movie industry is also called “Bollywood,” from Bombay (also called Mumbai) which is the capital of India’s film industry. The other competing name for the Nigerian film industry is “Naijawood” which has not gained sufficient acceptance and usage among the film audiences in Nigeria. Phillip Mpofu (2021) cited Haynes (2007) in Onuzulike (2007) as arguing that “Nollywood is a metaphorical construction in the mound of the seminal expression “Hollywood” representing the epic United States film industry that describes a distinct Nigerian film tradition which is a cultural and technological hybrid of African and Western cultures” (p. 2). Nigeria’s Anglophone neighbours often refer to it as the Nigeria national film industry (Fayomi: 2015, p. 35). According to Enna et al (2015) the history of film in Nigeria dates back to 1904 with the production of the earliest films in Nigeria such as “Palaver” (p.178). They also remind us of the existence of Newsreel, the propaganda machine of the British colonial administration. George Tasie (2013) lends a voice to this British colonial origin of Nollywood thus: “in the nearly one century or so of its existence it has metamorphosed from its colonial inheritance to witness the first generation of indigenous film makers who were products of the Accra Film Training School” (p. 23).

... The production of “Kongi Harvest” in film formation 1972, an adaptation of Wole Soyinka’s play, and also of Chinue Achebe’s bestseller “Things Fall Apart” in 1987, marked the entry of indigenous players in film production in Nigeria. Between that period and 1992 when the first Nollywood hit “Living in Bondage” by Kenneth Nnebue was released, films and theatrical pieces in Nigeria were shown only by government owned television stations and theatres respectively ... It was based on this local vacuum for Nigeria’s need for a film industry that Nollywood was born. The initial target for the industry was to produce for local consumption, but shrewd producers and marketers seized the opportunity to ship out the films beyond the shores of Nigeria (Enna et al. 2015: p. 178).

One thing that is very clear from the foregoing citation is the fact that Nollywood was introduced to project and provide Nigeria’s local audiences with cinematic entertainments. It was meant to project and protect Nigeria’s cultural, religious and ontological identities. However, most Nollywood stakeholders lost the essence of the industry in pursuit of financial gain. This pursuit of financial gain partly, if not wholly, accounts for why rather than projecting Nigeria’s cultural and religious identities, most films demonize Nigerian cultures and religion. Enna et al (2015) make this point thus: “it is important to note that economic interests have been the major driving force behind the industry’s growth and spread” (p. 178). Most film makers cash in on the population and market space available for evangelical films to demonize African cultures. Another point that authors seem to have agreed on is that Kenneth Nnebue’s trail blazer “Living in Bondage” was the first Nollywood film. Tasie (2013) argues that “since 1992, when Kenneth Nnebue’s trail blazer “Living in Bondage”, was released, the Nigerian video films have become very important vehicle in show-casing Nigerian rich cultural heritage and a looking glass, mirroring the various vices and decadence that are characteristic of Nigerian Society” (p. 24).

## **The False Narratives in the “Clash of Native Doctors”**

### **The Demonization of the African Dibia (Priest/Native Doctors)**

The Nollywood film “Clash of Native Doctors” seriously demonizes and misrepresents African cultures and religion by portraying African Dibias (Priest and native Doctors) as self-serving, power-drunk and occultic manipulators who are enemies of progress. This is not far from the concerns raised by Chijioke Azuawusiefe (2020). The article is titled “Nollywood and Penticostalism: Preaching Salvation, Propagating the Supernatural”. Azuawusiefe (2020), however, was concerned with how

Nollywood films recreated African cultures, traditions and religion as the practice of the occult and witchcraft.

The enduring images of occult that it reinforces incessantly make their way back into Christian prayers, rituals spaces and discourses as Christians devote unwholesome amount of time to discussing the occult, praying against (binding and casting) it, and invoking Gods destructive power over its witchcraft manifestations (Azuawusiefe, 2020, p. 207).

Azuawusiefe (2020) further adds that “the concerns for the prevalence of witchcrafts in Nollywood movies is shared by many Nollywood critics who lament its thematic obsession with the occult world” (p. 208). The film, *Clash of Native Doctors* which is geographically set in the South-Eastern Region of Nigeria and culturally set in the Igbo culture does not only harbour the themes of the occult and witchcraft, but over all, it contributes significantly to the declining state of African cultures and religion. Historically, it is set around the early nineteen-forties and nineteen sixties. The film seriously demonizes and misrepresents the Igbo culture in many ways, including the erroneous character trait portrayal of Dibias in the film. A Dibia who, in the ideal African-Igbo culture and religion, is a spiritual intercessor and mediator between God and his people, is depicted in the film as an evil machinate against his own people. Ideally, a Dibia in the trado-Igbo-culture is also a trado-medical doctor who applies herbal remedies to heal sick members of his community. But in the film, all the Dibias, with the lone exception of a character named Agada, were portrayed as blood-thirsty, self-serving and power-drunk people who take delight in the death and downfall of prosperous members of their own communities.

This negative narrative of African Dibias is so strong in the film that Odenjinji was accused of having a hand in the death of Akwambo, a fellow Dibia. Emeka, a young successful member of the community who just returned to his village to erect a building was killed after his father had gone to show him the site where he should erect the building. His death was mystically triggered by the evil machination of Dibias in his own community, Anioma. Ayaka, Odenjinji, Okwaka, were all portrayed as wicked Dibias. It was Ayaka who, from the village, spiritually monitored Udoye’s prosperous business in the city and spiritually destroyed it. Udoye who just returned from the village had met his entire store razed down by fire in a mysterious fashion and this frustration made him relocate to the village as a miserable young man. Through the evil machinations and antics of Ayaka, the great Dibia, Udoye’s father also became miserable. Ayaka also monitored the marriage ceremony of Udoye’s sister through his spiritual mirror and fouled it. Similarly, Ogbaka mysteriously inflicted the young daughter of Egonma with serious sickness. The young girl who had just returned from the National Youth Service Corps programme, after her graduation with a Law degree was received by her widowed mother with so much excitement, only for her widowed mother to witness her own daughter dying before her own very eyes. The irony of this story line is that this occultic manipulation was done with a business intent, as Ogbaka later sent his friend and conspirator to convince the said widow to bring her sick daughter to him for healing.

Of course, they also negotiated the sharing formula of 80% and 20% (in favour of Ogbaka) for the proceeds that may accrue from such conspiratorial effort. Ogbaka who was later invited as planned, openly told the poor widow in the presence of his conspirator that the sickness is spiritual and inflicted by her enemies who had vowed to bring her family to extinction. He ended by naming a huge amount of money as cost of healing material and charges. Realizing that the poor widow cannot afford such a huge amount, Agbaka’s conspirator had to consistently instil fear in the widow. According to him, “I will instill fear on the woman to the point that if she looks for the money in the physical world and does not find it, she will go to the spiritual world to look for it”. It was a ploy to instil the fear of death. Of course, this woman had not developed the will to power to overcome all decadent spirits, as Friedrich Nietzsche would put it. If Jean-Jacques Rousseau was to respond to the woman’s state of mind at the moment, I believe he would say, she is free but everywhere in chains. This scene creates the impression that African Dibias are fake healers and swindlers. But again, this is a wrong representation of the African native priest/doctor. The film had some characters as pastors, but did not consider them as fake pastors, rather, they were painted with the ornament of true messengers of God.



But the African-Igbo Dibia is painted as a fake Dibia and a swindler. However, it should be noted that it was Agada, another Dibia that healed the sick girl free of charge. Another incident in the film that derogates the name, place and office of the Dibia is the scene where Odenjinji met Oluocha on the road, a beautiful lady who was running a restaurant.

Oluocha had greeted Odenjinji with the smile of familiarity and eye of courage, but Odenjinji, possessing the ego of a god, was shocked that a woman had the temerity to greet him with such casualness. He wonders where such courage came from, especially because members of his own community usually greet him with fear and trembling, with their eyes averted to avoid any eye contact. He then vows to know the stuff the lady is made of. This threat he carries out by first visiting the restaurant and bar owned by the woman where, again, his eyes show forth his envy and evil machinations against the woman. In different scenes, he attempts to spiritually poison the woman's pot of soup and inflict spiritual illnesses on Oluocha's workers. He and his co-evil Dibia, Agada, also attempted to poison her customers' food so as to create confusion that will bring about her downfall, but the beautiful Oluocha thwarts all his plans and evil machinations. Our concern and question then is, does an African Dibia go about looking for the downfall of people in his own community? We understand that films also entertain, but must films entertain by creating wrong narratives about Africa? This narrative is not only untrue about the African-Igbo Dibia but it significantly contributes to the dying state of ATRs and ATCs, as no one will voluntarily practice, worship or observe a religious obligation where the intermediary between him/her and the supreme is perceived to be someone who does not want the progress of members of his society. Tasie (2013) decries this negative portrayal of African cultures and religion thus: "... the indigenous religion and all that is associated with it has been as negatively portrayed as devoid of any positive character" (p. 24).

### **Liberation of Anioma and Conversion of Agada to a Christian Pastor**

The fact that a pastor had to visit the Anioma community to preach the Christian message of salvation before the community is liberated from the shackles of oppression and spiritual deamination, is another sore point in this film's narrative. This is because it gives the impression that African cultures and traditions are not self-reflecting, self-examining and self-saving. It is not true that the African Dibia does not and cannot liberate his own people, that the only person that can liberate them is the Christian pastor. In fact, the only Dibia portrayed in the film as an ideal African-Igbo Dibia is Agada. He stood for justice and performed the spiritual functions of protecting and healing members of his community who were spiritually inflicted with different sicknesses by his fellow native doctors, Ayaka, Ogbaka, Odenjinji and others. He vehemently opposed his mentor, Odenjinji, who had nurtured and schooled him in the art, especially, when Odenjinji spiritually manipulated members of his community. Understandably, he acquired more spiritual powers through religious sacrifices. Agada also healed the daughter of Ogonma who returned from Youth Service and was inflicted with sickness. The poor woman had gone back to him to show gratitude with some tubers of yam and a live goat, but he rejected the items and gave an instruction to the woman and her daughter not to answer anyone that greets them on their way back. This act, in some regard, is akin to the Christian-Biblical parable of the ten lepers who were healed, but only one of them came back to show gratitude. It ideally ought to depict the African Dibia as someone who is not self-gratifying as we see presently with most Christian pastors. But rather than highlighting this point, it seems the intent of the filmmaker was to show the superiority of the Christian religion/faith.

Agada's role in the film may have convinced one to accept the film as a reflection of the different characters in the African-Igbo society, but for the fact that the filmmaker still found a way to convert him from a traditional Igbo Dibia to a Christian pastor, signaling the fact that any good deed done under the designation, guise and nomenclature of an African Dibia is bad or evil. Real good is that deed done in the name of Christ or Christianity. Nollywood in several productions have created the impression that nothing good can come from ATR and ATCs. That is why most Pentecostal films end with the conversion of strong African characters to Christianity.

Again, why must the Christian pastor defeat the Dibias (Native Doctors) in the spiritual battle? Indeed, this is part of what Azuawusiefe (2020) contends when he asserts:

occult and witchcrafts constitutes a key factor for plumbing Nollywood's construction of popular religion or the understanding of religion in public space, given how Nollywood films position occult as the force against which different religious traditions (Christianity vs. African Traditional Religion) and denominations (Pentecostalism vs. Catholicism) battle one another for supremacy (p. 206).

In *Clash of Native Doctors*, we see the same battle for supremacy between the first pastor that visited Anioma community with the native Doctors led by Ayaka and later, between the converted Agada and the other native doctors. The problem here is that the Christian pastors always win this battle for supremacy, impressing on Nollywood film viewers that African Gods are not powerful and supreme. That the native doctors do not worship the true God. But this is not true because Africans worship the Supreme Being the same way the Christians purport to do. Chukwuemeka O.Okeke et al (2017) reecho the fact that the Igbo worship a supreme deity thus: "the Igbo believe in a supreme Being, who is the controller of the world" (p. 2). They further show how the Igbo belief in the Supreme Being is closely connected to their belief in the referential theory of naming. According to them, "their firm belief in the Supreme Being is manifest in the names they give their children as Chukwuemeka (God Knows), Chukwuka (God is Greater), Chukwuma (God knows) and so forth" (p. 2). Although, they were wrong in their translation of Chukwuemaka, as "God knows," rather than "God does better things," their analysis is spot-on, as Africans believe and worship the Supreme Being. In a similar hermeneutical fashion, Innocent Eberé Uwah (2011) tells us that "the concept of God in African communalism is revealed by the names given to Him in African languages" (p. 88). According to him, "Humanity first is created by the supreme God who is called Chukwu or Chineke (...) the God that creates (*Yahweh Elohim*)" (p. 87). But most Nollywood films, particularly *Clash of Native Doctors*, impress on its viewers the idea that the African God is too small and less powerful that he cannot defend his people in times of war. The Christian God is considered a God of war and the spiritual man in battle compared to the African God. This impression is highly unacceptable and must be rejected by all, including Nollywood stakeholders.

### **The Perseverance and Magnanimity of Christians in Victory**

The film, *Clash of Native Doctors*, technically presents African religion as one whose followers do not persevere during trying moments. It also presents them as people who are not magnanimous in victory. The clash between Agada and his master, Odenjinji, is here called up. Agada had defeated his master, Odenjinji, in a cultic action initiated by Odenjinji who attempted to destroy Agada, but Agada lived up to the challenge. However, Agada, after securing several victories, still could not make out time to engage his master Odenjinji in a peaceful discussion. Odenjinji, for his part, did not find it necessary to call his former pupil, Agada, to any meaningful discussion geared towards resolving the issues and mending fences. It was war all through their engagements. However, after the conversion of Agada to Christianity and his subsequent defeat of all the Dibias (native doctors), he decided to show them mercy and forgive them all their sins. The question then is, why create the impression that forgiveness and perseverance are the exclusive preserve of Christians? How is the Agada that was a Dibia different from the Agada that was converted to Christianity, apart from the new character trait/value of forgiveness? All these narratives are geared towards de-marketing African cultures and religion.

### **Contributions of the Film to the Dying State of African Traditional Religion and Cultures**

The film has successfully injected a spirit of scorn and hate for African culture, tradition and religion in virtually every passionate viewer. Demonization of African cultures and religion by Nollywood films, especially, as has been demonstrated using the *Clash of Native Doctors*, has contributed significantly to the declining or dying state of ATR and ATCs. It is obvious from our analysis above that most people who watch these films do so with so much passion and, most times, strongly believe and adhere to the storylines and lessons conveyed by the films. For most viewers, especially children, all that happens within the film world are real-life experiences and so, they take it to heart. In our analysis of the *Clash of Native Doctors* above, we showed how Emeka, a prosperous young man who came back to his native land on a mission to erect a building for his father and members of his household, was killed mystically by African-Igbo Dibias. How, then, can a young man or a child who has watched that scene and wishes to prosper believe and trust in the protective powers of a Dibia? We

doubt that anyone could trust a system that kills the prosperous. Who can trust in a God who is interested in the blood of young and innocent citizens? Nollywood films have over-ritualized African religions and cultures to the extent that ritualism has been considered one of the central themes of African religion and culture. This is not to deny that there are no observance of ritual obligation involved in the practice of African religion. As a matter of fact, observance of ritual obligation is an essential part of every religion. In Christianity for instance, the event of the washing of feet, Abraham's sacrifice of his son, Isaac, which was alternated with the sacrifice of a lamb; and the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross are all examples of ritual practices. But Nollywood practitioners in most of their evangelical films do not consider blood sacrifices carried out in this manner as sacrilegious. But whenever it comes to the African traditional religion, it becomes a negative thing. According to Turner in Uwah (2011) cited by Sunday Olayinka Alawode and Stephen S. Fatonji (NY), "part of the purpose of rites and rituals is to impress young people with their duties to the community and recall to those assuming positions of chieftaincy that they should not use their power for their own interest but to serve the whole community" (p. 64). This means that such sacrifices often carried out within African religion are not entirely negative.

Because of these negative pictures painted of African cultures and religion many people now believe that Nigeria is just the way it has been depicted or represented in Nollywood films such as *Clash of Native Doctors*. Most of the video films have a supernatural and religious theme including "juju" and the clash of modern religion with African Traditional Religion (Onuzulike (NY,p. 237). It is exactly this clash that *Clash of Native Doctors* represents. A clash between the Christian God and an African God, between African religion and Christian religion.

### **The True Nature of ATC and ATR**

African cultures and Religions are far better than as portrayed in the *Clash of Native Doctors* Our position here does not in any way or manner imply an admittance of the ontological entity called "God" whether as an African linguistic deification of entities or as an African metaphysical causal being. It does not also veer off the realm of Afro-culturalism and Afro-religiouscism to import or implant any form of supreme entity or divinity outside the realm of humanism. African traditional systems, whether cultural, religious or judicial, are robust systems. Though having general and some peculiar challenges, they represent the African ontological identities. The African political system is social-communalism and its judicial system justiciable. African cultural systems are built on the metaphysical ontology or sociological ideology of *Ujamaa* which literally means brotherhood or familyhood. What this means is that the ideal African person lives in harmony with members of his community. According to Christopher C. Liundi (2012), Julius K. Nyerere, the proponent of *Ujamaa* argues:

By the use of the world (sic) 'Ujamaa', therefore, we state that for us, socialism involves building on the foundation of our past, and building also to our own design. We are not importing a foreign ideology into Tanzania and trying to smother our distinct social patterns with it (p. 19).

For Nyerere, "living in community gives man an enlarged opportunity to improve his well-being and develop himself to the full; only by cooperating with his fellows can man really live in maximum freedom" (Liundi, 2012: p.13). The African lives a life of society and community. And the African native doctor or dibia lives both in community and in the transcendental world. He/she stands in the gap between the people and God. He/she is not one who seeks the death or downfall of his community-men as portrayed in the film *Clash of Native Doctors*. It is in its Africanism that the word "communalism" finds its social expression and linguistic meaningfulness. The African person in pursuit of his/her essences and meaningfulness seeks the well-being of his community-men. It is because of this pursuit of communalism, rather than individualism, that age-grade meetings were established. But *Clash of Native Doctors* failed to recognize all these positives. The film fails also to emphasize the strengths of communalism and *Ujamaa* expressed in African cultures as opposed to individualism which some foreign cultures and Christianity tend to promote. This communal and social spirit is displayed during farming and harvesting seasons. Similarly, communities hold wrestling and yam festivals. These festivals further enhance unity and integration among members of the

community. There are other ceremonies such as marriage, child birth/naming etc. All these foster a spirit of camaraderie in the community. Rather than projecting and promoting Africa using these true African values, most Nollywood filmmakers, using evangelical films, prefer to give inaccurate narratives that demonize African religion and cultures and promote Christianity.

### **Questions of Representation, Truth, Responsibility and African Identity**

Nollywood filmmakers have the moral duty and epistemic responsibility of telling the truth about the ontological identities of Africans. They should consider themselves as philosophers in the Kantian sense of those who articulate the spirit of the age. By this, Nollywood filmmakers have the responsibility of articulating the true African spirits, of love for brotherhood, conviviality, selflessness and resourcefulness. They also have the responsibility of pragmatically representing the stories of Africa in a way and manner that “African cultures, religion and traditions will work. This is the main theme in most of Chimamanda Adichie’s novels. Her efforts at telling the true story of Africa/Africans in a pragmatic fashion is commendable and appreciated. As a matter of essence, Nollywood ought to be telling the story of Africa. Innocent Ebere Uwah (2011) believes that “Nollywood has significantly become involved in the process of Africa’s self-reflection and identity construction by means of its cultural representation” (p. 81), especially the way it also tells its stories. Unfortunately, it tells the negative story of neo-colonization. Yes, he may be correct to say that Nollywood is involved in the process of reconstructing African identity through film-making, however, Nollywood is mainly involved in this reconstruction in the negative direction. This is because most Nollywood films are such that create a scar on the image and identity of Africa. Olabanji Akinola (2013) was, therefore, correct when he argues that “the part that some Nigerians have played in the free-fall of the country has been amazingly devastating to the extent that even some British colonialist would be amazed at the extent of failures” (p. 17). This time around, it is not about economic corruption but cultural and religious corruption through films.

### **Conclusion**

Our analysis of the *Clash of Native Doctors* shows that Nollywood films, especially *Clash of Native Doctor* has contributed to the dying state of ATRs and ATCs through wrong and negative narratives created about African cultures, traditions, and religions. It has been stated unambiguously that African Dibias (Native Doctors) serve dual roles in the African society. They perform both spiritual roles as intermediaries between men and God. They also perform the physician’s role of healing and administering herbal drugs as medications to members of their communities. It is therefore wrong for the film, *Clash of Native Doctors* to portray them as self-serving, power-drunk and envy-driven Dibias.

The paper has also drawn the attention of all stake-holders in the Nollywood industry to the fact that they have a collective duty of preserving the cultural, religious, and ontological identities of Africa/African. Nollywood should not only be considered as a medium for entertainment and soul-lifting emotional satisfaction, but also an epistemic medium of truth preservation. It has further argued that African cultures, and religion though not foolproof, have some good things that should be preserved. The fact that they were painted as blood-seeking cultures and religions remains a misrepresentation of fact. How can we accept Christianity, a religion that was supposedly built on the blood of an innocent man (Jesus) and turn to reject African religion for its blood sacrifices? The excessive exhortation of the Christian pastor, deity and God over the African Dibia’s, deities and Gods is totally unacceptable to us. The impression that nothing good can come from Africa as exemplified in the conversion of Agada, the true African Dibia, to a pastor. This is, hereby, rejected.

Finally, it is important that Nollywood filmmakers consider the roles their films will play in the moral building, cultural preservation, as well as religious and ontological modifications of African cultures and belief systems before such films are produced. This paper recommends that the Nigeria Film and Video Censors Board, the body statutorily responsible for the regulation of such content as are created by Nollywood and the entire creative economy, should be resuscitated. The paper believes that if this



is done, the Board will be better positioned to regulate any content that may be inimical to Africa in its portrayal of African culture.

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