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**FILM AND AFRICAN WOMEN'S RELIGIOUS
FUTURISM. AN AFRO-FEMINIST LENS
TO MARK 15:1-40 FROM THE CONTEXT
OF THE SONG OF SONGS 5:1-8**

INTRODUCTION

The visual effect of the artistic and dramatic performance of Christ's death has had such a richer impact on many African audiences than can be imagined. The main consumers of the Jesus film have been Africa and especially Kenya where the Bible is accepted literally as the word of God. Joseph D. Galgalo (2004, p. 10), for example, gives a detailed discussion on the impact of biblical narratives on Kenyan contexts. According to Marcia Ann Kupfer (2008, p. 129), *artistic and dramatic performance through film has the power to absorb and convert into interpretive structures in ways that directly interact with human experiences*. Thus, this conversational scholarly engagement will focus on an actor Brian Deacon for being „The Face of Jesus” (Pennock, 2005, p. 321). He is rated as one of the most recognized among actors who have played the role of Jesus. Deacon took on the role of the character of Jesus in the 1979 in „The Jesus Film” (Blum, Harvey, 2012, p. 257).

However, Deacon was believed to be Jesus even creating an impression among Kenyan audience that Christ is a white man. „The Jesus Film” was a particularly prominent film that was shown in many African countries (Eshleman, Phillips, 2016). The film was mostly used to evangelize, especially in the interior areas of the African countries, with the aim of reaching out to the lost souls. This approach was seen as an effective way that can appeal immensely to all believers and work out to convert newcomers. *The film brought to life the sandy dusty plains and hills of Israel enabling the audience to feel the smell of age and to believe in the truth of the plot as they follow the film scene by scene* (Denis888, 2006).

It is important to note how context informed the reception of visual effect of the artistic and dramatic performance of Christ’s death (Kupfer, 2008, p. 129). Annette Kuhn (2002, p. 27) argues that cultural production, the questions of context and reception are always paramount on film and narratives. Many African societies, and especially Kenya, are patriarchal contexts where men are socialized to wield power by dominating over others (Obiora, 2001, p. 13). In most cases, the power of men is displayed through male dominance over women especially through physical violence (Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2021, p. 63).

Women on the other hand have been socialized to be submissive, a matter that continues to contribute to gross inequality between men and women (Romano, 1990, p. 144). Unfortunately, physical violence has been Christianized and many women have interpreted physical, and particularly gender-based violence (GBV) as part of being submissive and as a requirement of the perseverance of a Christian life. According to Emily Onyango (2017), *patriarchy is highly reinforced by wrong interpretation of scripture in Christian settings where men are seen as direct spokespersons of God*. It has already been indicated in the abstract of this chapter that my father-in-law could not tolerate the pain that Christ went through as portrayed in „The Jesus Film”. However, many women in Kenya have transformed themselves into characters in the biblical story, taken on the role of Jesus and used the story of the suffering of Christ on the cross to tell their own stories. Unfortunately, women tell the story of the passion narrative of Jesus in ways that patriarchal societies have socialized them – believing that persevering in abusive relationships is part of being a follower of Jesus Christ and therefore a Christian. From the context of Mark 8:34, it seems that the way of Jesus, is the way of the cross in a literal meaning as the way of suffering. Evan M. Mwangi (2010, p. 247) has observed that, *African women are custodians of Africa’s oral texts and narratives*. Through oral narratives, African women have continued

to be the custodians and transmitters of values and ethics of particular families, clans, societies and nations. Storytelling is the earliest method for sharing narratives in the pre-colonial Africa (Finnegan, 2012). When Films on the passion narratives reached Africa, they were embraced because they were documented in the same storyline as the African oral narratives.

Arguably, biblical narratives have continued to be embraced by African women because African women are storytellers and biblical narratives come from a tradition of oral narratives. According to Eren Bolat *in most African societies, most of the things taught to children are carried through stories, and women are the most skillful ones in storytelling* (Bolat, 2022, p. 67). In fact, Janice P. De-Whyte (2018, p. 16) notes, *in African contexts, oral narratives are for entertainment and passing on history, values and identity from one generation to the other*. That is why „The Jesus Film” narrative is most impactful on women in ways that transform women into characters in the Bible story, allowing for women to tell their own stories of perseverance in the name of Christ.

Biblical narratives gain meaning especially when they are artistically dramatized, literary narrated and performed through film. Elizabeth Evans (2011, p. 19) points out that *narratives [are] shaped and constructed as much through the texts that appear around a film*. In the passion narrative of Mark 15:1–40 through „The Jesus Film”, one sees how the New and Old Testament biblical narratives and images are amplified to visually illustrate and spiritually inspire large audiences in an emotional way. In fact, it is the emotional aspect that impacted my father-in-law’s interpretation of the suffering of Jesus for him to react the way he did and to completely disassociate himself with the suffering part of Jesus life. „The Jesus Film” inspires many audiences in an emotional, rather than intellectual manner. An Afro-Feminist Lens to Mark 15:1–40 from the Context of the Song of Songs 5:1–8 aims at empowering African women with alternative literary biblical interpretation skills to reinterpret film biblical narratives with scenes of suffering in ways that are liberating. This way, it will be possible for women to question the theology of perseverance in the name of Christ in abusive relationships. This is done in ways that provoke women to intellectually analyse the passion narrative in ways that liberate African women from oppressive biblical interpretations that socialize them to be passive recipients of GBV. The development of civilization and technology has widened the scope of potential problems including the challenge of good governance (Krook, 2020). Yet, COVID-19 for example has shown that a crisis can be an opportunity to adjust and interpret a problem in ways that can create opportunities for life to

flourish. The passion narrative of Mark has been interpreted in ways that socialize African women to see GBV as part of a Christian suffering. In the Song of Songs 5:1–8, one encounters the voice of a woman who uses the power of her sexuality to triumph against patriarchal structures that dehumanize women. In Song 5:1–8, a woman passionately expresses her sexual feelings in a context where she has physically been assaulted and her veil taken off (Exum, 2005, p. 15). This is arguably a voice that can be used to deconstruct oppressive biblical interpretations and re-construct counter narratives that can allow for the lives of all to flourish.

AN AFRO-FEMINIST LENS TO MARK 15:1–40 IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SONG OF SONGS 5:1–8

In order to present an Afro-feminist lens to Mark 15:1–40 in the context of the Song of Songs 5:1–8, it is important to first problematize the concept of an Afro-feminist lens. An Afro-Feminist lens approaches biblical narratives with the conviction that race, gender, and class discrimination are all aspects of the same system of historically constructed systematic power and hierarchy (Lawson, 2016, p. 64) in an Afro-feminist lens to biblical narratives, make sense of how white supremacy, colonial ideologies and patriarchy interacted to inform ways in which women in post-colonial Africa interpret biblical narratives. This approach builds on how Musa W. Dube Shomanah and Musa Dube (2012), offers an alternative interpretation of biblical texts that attends to and respects needs of women showing how to read the Bible as decolonizing rather than imperialist literature. In an Afro-feminist lens, women are treated not primarily as females but as human beings who are created in the image and likeness of God as proposed in Genesis 1:27. An Afro-feminist lens; can, therefore, be defined as a liberation of a theological discourse that centres on the conviction that black women, regardless of space and time, are inherently valuable with the ability to use creative resistances as a hermeneutical tool for re-imagining radical counter narratives to re-construct oppressive contexts (Pande, 2014, p. 126).

Arguably, an Afro-feminist lens to biblical narratives has the power to deconstruct patriarchal settings that treat women as objects (Ruwanpura, 2006). According to Sarojini Nadar (2009, pp. 139), *the authority of the Bible in women's lives has become strongest in the past twenty years or so in many African patriarchal societies*. The words „the Bible says” are constantly used to silence women on matters GBV (see for example Chisale, 2021, p. 130). Thus, an Afro-

Feminist lens, as used in this conversational platform, is an approach that translates biblical discourses whether through film or ordinary bible study in ways that makes a difference in the world regardless of space, time and context. Nadar (2009, pp. 139) has observed that women biblical scholars face a double task of showing how gender is constructed socially and culturally and convincing the audience of feminist biblical studies (usually white men although not exclusively) – that women scholarship is legitimate and is needed in the African context. Religion, culture and sacred texts are used to stamp authority over women in the name of God. Thus, an Afro-Feminist lens to the Bible takes seriously the fact that harmful biblical interpretations across the world continue to endanger the lives of many women (Nadar, 2009, pp. 140).

It is from the above perspective that an Afro-Feminist lens to biblical texts interrogates and exposes religious and cultural contexts in order to transform biblical interpretations into the liberation of theological discourses. This is done using African Women Theologies, a theological aspect that takes seriously the vantage point of women's experiences and location as a major hermeneutical tool necessary for deconstructing harmful cultural practices and religious beliefs that continue to silence women on matters related to GBV (Oduyoye, 2001, p. 9). *African women's theologies belong to a wider family of feminist theologies* (Phiri, 2004, pp. 16). According to Phiri (2004, p. 16), *African Women Theologies is a liberation theology whose main strength is context, approach and location*. Since African Women Theologies takes seriously the context, and women's experiences, an Afro-Feminist lens to Mark 15:1–40 in the Context of the Song of Songs 5:1–8 is therefore used in order to criticize African culture as the main source of GBV, acknowledge that African culture is dynamic, but also to acknowledge African culture as the main source for doing Afrocentric theologies. The reaction of my father in-law to „The Jesus Film”, can well be understood when an Afro-Feminist lens to Mark 15:1–40 takes serious African women theologians on the endorsement of African culture as a source when doing biblical interpretations (Phiri, 2004, p. 16).

In order to understand the importance of Mark 15:1–40 in this discussion, it is important to start with the mention and Marks portrayal of women in 15:40–41. Arguably, Mark is keen to show how women faithfully follow and care for the needs of Jesus (vs. 40). It is written, that *some women were watching from a distance*. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. In fact, Mark is keen to note that there are many other women who were there (at the crucifixion of Jesus) who had fol-

lowed Jesus to Jerusalem (15:41). Some commentators of Mark's passion narrative have a negative understanding of the role of women in this particular passion narrative, arguing instead that women were minor characters (Iverson, 2007, p. 1320). However, it has been pointed out that *the limited narrative space accorded to women should not be confused with the role of women as disciples in the passion narrative* (Aernie, 2018, p. 2).

Typical of the Jewish society in the Old Testament, the Roman Empire was also highly patriarchal (Shahak, 1994, pp. 54–56). Thus, women are portrayed as keeping distance from the men but keen to follow Jesus the saviour of the world. While women are portrayed as faithful followers of Jesus in the passion narrative, men are presented as very cruel towards Jesus. Those in authority in particular are the ones who made the plans for the crucifixion of Jesus. In the plans to crucify Jesus, the cruelty is seen in the way Jesus is handled and also mocked. Readers are informed that very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate who asked Jesus sarcastically if Jesus was the king of the Jews (15:1–2). Jesus is portrayed as having found voice and replied: *you have said so*.

In some of the passion episodes, Jesus chose to be silent. When the chief priests accused him of many things, for example, again Pilate asked him *aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of*. But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed (15:3–5). Notably, *the accusations of the chief priests were false and that is why Jesus decided to keep quiet* (Dinger, 2014, p. 152). The silence of Jesus in the passion narrative is in most cases used by many women in abusive relationship to encourage each other that it is okay to be silent when you are being abused (Rakoczy, 2004). Thus, it has continued to be very difficult for many women to find voice and speak out on the matters of GBV. In fact, in the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) Chepias parish in Mt. Elgon, Kenya, where my father-in-law used to worship, there is a famous Swahili song sung by many women during the time of testimonies. Women, to encourage each other to persevere, sing the song in difficult times, mostly those struggling with GBV. The Song goes, „Alinyamaza-Kimya-Yesu-Alinyamaza-Kimya-Alinyamaza-Kimya-Yesu-Alinamaza-Kimya” – „Jesus-Kept-Quiet-Kept-Quite-Jesus-Kept-Quite-Kept-Quiet”. The silenced voice of Jesus is located within the context of exacerbated scenes of his suffering. After the words *now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested* (15:6), we are told that Pilate knew that the chief priest had handed over Jesus to him

out of self-interest and the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead of Jesus. Still within the silenced voice of Jesus, Pilate asked the crowd, that had been incited against Jesus, what he shall do with the one they have called the King of the Jews and the crowd said: „Crucify him”. Even though the passion narrative is located within a context of what can be interpreted as a court of law, it is clear from the passion narrative that justice was not granted to Jesus (Remmers, 2001).

The main question remains, is it that Jesus kept quiet or Jesus' voice was silenced by the violence and unjust judgment? What's more, should the silence of Jesus be interpreted as vulnerability and a passive acceptance of violence or a radical protest against the violence and underserved judgment? – When the crowd shouted: „Crucify him” – Pilate was keen to ask „Why? What crime has he committed?” The text indicates that Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd. Thus, Pilate had Jesus flogged, and he handed him over to be crucified (Mark 15:14-15) (see also Hauerwas, 2013, p. 59). When my father in-law exclaimed in Bukusu language: „Omundu yuno niye bhapa bhariiii – mwakhalinda-alikhukobola-kweliiii!-Nangamwakhalinda nemuloma muli-alikhuyukha-ne-musubila salikobhola ta!” – „This man they are torturing in this manner, even if you wait for his second coming, will he really come as you keep saying and believing?” It is not because the trial was unjust. It is because he could not stand the suffering that Jesus went through in „The Jesus Film”. Notably, many Kenyan women in Christian patriarchal settings share the plight of Jesus in the passion narrative. Just like the women in the passion narrative faithfully followed Jesus in the Passion Narrative; many Kenyan women have faithfully obeyed abusive men without questioning or getting out of abusive relationships. They do this in the name of being faithful followers of Jesus (Armstrong, 2019). Those who got the opportunity to watch the Jesus narrative have believed that it is possible to *vumilia* GBV just like Christ did, as you put your eyes on the crown – the resurrection.

Just like Jesus was judged unfairly, many women continue to suffer in the hands of abusive men and intimate partners based on rumours and the judgment of Men's courts of public opinion (e.g., Okech, 2020, p. 24). In the contemporary Kenyan society, men get the opportunity to socialize and even discuss about their marital relationships in bars and nightclubs (e.g. Lockard, 2020, p. 735). The discussions they do in most cases are done under the influence of alcohol (e.g. Meiu, 2017, p. 15). When they go back home, some husbands will punish their wives based on the discussions they had in the bars and night clubs

as they socialized. The male pastors will then encourage wives of such husbands to pray for them, blaming the devil for influencing the husbands to be abusive to their wives (Chitando, 2016, p. 180). When it comes to matters land and property rights, the elders are the ones who are consulted if there is a case that requires the hearing of the community, hence applying customary law (Benschop, 2005, p. 160).

Unfortunately, widows will always be accused of having bewitched the husband or for disrespecting the in-laws or memories of the husbands by being sexually immoral. This way she will then be evicted from the property of her husband (Benschop, 2002). Even with the pain of the struggles with GBV, many African Christian women have continued to be strong, triumphed against the odds to regain strength to face the future with faith. It is from this perspective that one arguably can see the strength and courage of the women of Mark's passion narrative in many African Christian women.

The courage of women in Mark 15:1–40 and African Christian women who are struggling with GBV are also in the voices of the women in the Song of Songs 5:1–8. In Song 5:7, one encounters the voice of a woman who is complaining about the watchmen who found her as they made their rounds in the city and assaulted her. According to Exum (2012, pp. 495–496), *the problem we face with v. 7 is that the text is ambiguous regarding the severity of the watchmen's attack since the Hebrew verb for beat can also mean strike*. Even so, it is important to note the violent encounter described by the voice of the woman in the text. GBV is GBV whether it is striking or beating. Notably, even with the attack by the watchmen, she continues to search for her beloved. She pleads with the daughters of Jerusalem not to stir love before it is time but also in case they find her beloved, that they should tell him that she is dying with love (Song 5:8). Her beloved had come into his garden, the garden of his sister and bride; gathered myrrh with the spice, eaten his honeycomb and honey; drunk his wine and milk and was bragging to his friends in the streets (Song 5:1).

He was encouraging them to also eat, drink and be filled with love. While the man was seeking the public opinion of fellow men, the female voice found solace in sharing her experience with fellow women in the streets who listened to her. In Song 5:9, we see them in dialogue with each other. For Jill M. Munro (1995, p. 136), *the woman sees the daughters of Jerusalem as her confidants*. In patriarchal societies, it is possible to also see women in strive against each other. In Song 1:5 for example one hears the voice of the woman asking the daughters of Jerusalem not to look down upon her because of her dark skin. The daugh-

ters of Jerusalem might have mocked her and made her feel that she is not like them. Yet in Song 1:8, the very daughters of Jerusalem refer to her as the most beautiful among women. In Song 5:8, she finds voice and strength to share her experience with fellow women who had already stood in solidarity with her earlier by directing her where she would find her beloved (Song 1:8) (also see Madsen, 2012, p. 79).

Thus, it is possible to see how the vulnerability of women unites them together enabling women to find strength in their struggles and voice in the whispers of their fears. Some scholars have celebrated the Song of Songs as a biblical text that portray equality between the sexes (Exum, 2005, p. 81). Even so, it is possible to experiences aspects of GBV and other forms of patriarchal ideologies that deny women the right to live with dignity in the Song of Songs (for a detailed discussion regarding matters gendered perspectives see Exum, 2005, pp. 81–85). What's more, the Song of Songs is located within the patriarchal context of the Old Testament society (Burton, 2012, p. 184). Yet, in this patriarchal society, a woman arguably says no to male control by finding voice to „shout” in the streets of Jerusalem where she has been assaulted (Burton, 2012, p. 184).

That is why elevating the strength of the women's voices in the Song of Songs within the context of the portrayal of women in Mark 15:1–40 creates a potential for dignity conversations and redemptive counter-narrative in regards to redemptive Christologies that are pro-life. Theologies that are pro-life are theologies that deconstruct *vumilia* theologies and GBV Christologies. This is done in ways that creates possibilities for speaking about the love of Christ that reconciles humanity to one another in the contemporary world of brokenness. Counter-narratives that are prolife are narratives that are geared towards empowering women and girls for shared prosperity (Chirongoma, 2022, p. 123). It means declaring GBV as an epidemic and sharply scaling up dignity narratives with men and boys (The World Bank Group, 2014). This way, it will be possible to pave the way for creating safe spaces within spaces of brokenness that can allow life to flourish again for posterity.

FILM, NARRATIVES AND AFRICAN WOMEN'S RELIGIOUS FUTURISM

In this chapter, Film, Narratives and African Women's Religious futurism is discussed from the context of women and storytelling as a theology of reconstruction. A Theology of reconstruction is a theology that offers a privileged

place from which Kenyan women can find Christ even in spaces of brokenness. Reconstruction allows for one to see that the characterization of women in the passion narrative has a rhetorical function since women embody the struggles of a community and the solution for the struggles (Rajkumar, 2016, p. 146). Arguably, a theology of reconstruction is ideal, especially in the contemporary African contexts that continue to be marked by GBV and the marginalization of women (Kirchner, 2021, p. 213).

African Women's Religious futurism takes serious reconstruction as a concept and theology. Building on African women theologies, and using an Afro-feminist perspective, one gets that opportunity to challenge the African Church to confront every issue that dehumanizes women with the Good News of Jesus and Christ love that reconciles the world and to promoting human dignity, above all (Uchem, 2001, p. 12). All human beings are generally experiencing diverse and dynamic challenges of the contemporary world. The contemporary world continues to be marked by great impacts of globalization and social transformations (Trask, 2009). There is an exacerbated hunger for power, manipulation, control, oppression and individualism in many African countries (Das, 2006, p. 103). Money, power and positions of leadership dictate the norms of intimate partner relationships. The ethics of leadership have been compromised and greed has taken over the ethics of leadership in many African countries (Ubani-Ebere, 2022). Leadership is predominantly male and those in power have denied the vulnerable, especially women, self-worth (Mwalimu, 2009, p. 516). The African traditional societal aspect of community solidarity has been threatened. Even pregnant women who were highly protected are also victims of GBV (UNICEF report of GBV, 2021).

Unfortunately, the western culture of individualism has taken the contemporary African society by storm. „The self takes care of itself” has become a social disease the symptoms of which are manifested through social isolation and disengagement. The Essays of Richard L. Sklar, for example, give detailed information on how major political and social developments of the imprint of colonialism are still affecting the African continent today (Sklar, 2002, p. 197). Africa is a patriarchal society and when some men cannot handle the challenges of life, they project their anger through violence against women (Lyimo, 2016). Some women on the other hand, try to explore ways of adjusting by finding solace in the biblical stories of suffering with the conviction that suffering through GBV is the way of the cross.

An African women's religious futurism, from an Afro-feminist gendered and literary approach is here used to interrogate biblical narratives, African oral texts, film, GBV Christologies in ways that open up opportunities for counter-redemptive narratives on the matters of GBV. The guiding question is; is it possible to steer dignity talks about transforming biblical storylines that counter structures and governance of patriarchy, for instance, and negotiate redemptive narratives that are pro-life? (Makhubu, 2016, pp. 299–312). While „The Jesus Film” was dominated by white male characters, Afro-futurism was largely represented by black men in the 1920s, since fictions were used at the time with the aim of liberating black people from racial discrimination (Kim, 2017). Notably, *It would take nine decades after the science of fiction as a genre was created and about 25 years after the subgenre Afro-futurism was coined before black women started finding their place and voices in the genre* (Kim, 2017). Even so, it is possible to see how women of African descent continued to find voice through Afro-futurism as a genre.

African Women's Religious futurism is a re-constructual approach and an embodiment of voices from the periphery. As applied to the interpretation of film biblical narratives, it means elevating voices of women as voices from the margins that matter to God. In this approach an Afro-feminist lens embodies African Women's Religious futurism to capitalize on the voices of African women in biblical interpretation. The voices of African women are compared to unheard voices of women in the Bible and also misrepresented biblical voices of women through the biblical film narratives. It has been pointed out, that *an African woman carries six mountains on her back namely; external oppression through colonialism, oppression through traditional structures, her backwardness, man, her color or race and herself* – the observation of Omolara Ogun-dipe-Leslie (Siwila, 2022, p. 13).

Thus, in this approach, African women readers of the Bible are afforded an opportunity to deconstruct discourses that are harmful to women. These include, but are not limited to, discourses that promote GBV, those that portray women as passive and silent recipients of injustices and patriarchal ideologies that disempower women. Healthy discourses that are inclusive, non-discriminate against women based on race or gender are reconstructed in ways that are affirming to the dignity of women as human dignity. In a re-constructual approach to biblical narratives for example, Mary Tororeiy (2018) calls for an alternative reading that focuses on birthing imagery and places Job's wife and the

feminine side of God at the centre of conversations. Seen this way, it is possible to apply it to biblical narratives in ways that opens up opportunities for African women to build on how women transform themselves into biblical characters to re-tell their own stories. This they do in order to re-tell stories of their limited past and name their complex present in ways that enables African women to see a future with hope.

It is from this perspective that one would arguably say that African Women's Religious futurism is a literary strand of hope and arguably, an Afro-feminist re-constructural approach that draws the voices of people who are on the periphery to the centre of the biblical discourses. We are living today in a world that is broken with shattered reality, where pain, sorrow, deceit and self-centeredness have overtaken care and support of Ubuntu – an African culture of human solidarity that the African traditional society enjoyed (Onyejiuwa, 2017). Thus, re-imagining African Women's Religious futurism as re-constructural approach using film and literary analysis as an Afro-feminist lens can help plot a pathway to recovery from GBV (Ogbunu, 2020).

GBV is a patriarchal tool that continues to render many African women vulnerable by silencing their voices. This way, many of them continue to be relegated to the periphery of the society both in the private and public sphere (Giri, 2021, p. 110). GBV is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. While GBV is preventable, religion continues to use sacred texts to socialize women to believe that GBV is a norm and part of the Christian life. It is interesting to note that men cannot endure the same pain that women endure in the name of Christ. It has been observed, that *during displacement and times of crisis, the threat of GBV significantly increases for women and girls* (UNHCR, 2001). Thus, it is important for contemporary African women Bible interpreters to go beyond the aspect of complaining about patriarchy, the marginalization of women and GBV. There is a need for creating theological reflections that confront the renewed challenges of the world such as GBV. This should be done in ways that offer opportunities to formulate counter narratives that are prolife and reconcile humanity to Christ and to one another.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Film and African Women's Religious Futurism has been presented as a tool for countering narratives that promote GBV. An Afro-Feminist Lens to Mark 15:1–40 from the Context of the Song of Songs 5:1–8 has been used to

show how the contemporary Church has not just failed to sufficiently address and mitigate GBV. Many contemporary African Christian settings are enabling and concealing it. Unfortunately, most of the Nigerian Nollywood films, for example, follow the patriarchal socialization that socializes women to believe that GBV is the way of the cross (Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013).

In most cases, most of the narratives follow the same storyline that encourages women to be submissive to abusive husbands and to continue to pray for them and „behave well” towards abusive husbands. Women are encouraged that through their good deeds they will be able to touch the evil hearts of the abusers who will in turn be saved (1 Cor. 7:16a). 1 Timothy 2:11–12 and Ephesians 5:22–23 are used to remind women to remain silent and to learn in silence with all submissiveness. Wives are instructed to submit to their own husbands, as to the Lord for the husband is the head of the wife and Christ is the head of the Church.

Thus, inequalities between the sexes continue to foster and cultivate environments where men seek to and continue to control and abuse women in the name of God. Women on the other hand are socialized to *vumilia* GBV believing that it is the way of the cross. In African Christian settings, there are no sermons on GBV yet male pastors encourage women to *vumilia* in violent marriages. It is from this perspective that Film and African Women's Religious Futurism has been presented as a redemptive counter-narrative that is pro-life. This has been done in order to argue for the need to one, provoke all followers of Christ to see the dignity of African women as human dignity and consider what it means to embody the love of Christ that reconciles humanity to one another and the broken world to Christ, and two, address all societal norms that condone violence against women and present the dignity of all as a fundamental human right.

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DORCAS CHEBET JUMA

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FUTURYZM RELIGIJNY KOBIET AFRYKAŃSKICH
I FILMOWYCH. AFRO-FEMINISTYCZNE SPOJRZENIE
NA EWANGELIĘ ŚW. MARKA 15:1-40
W KONTEKŚCIE PIEŚNI NAD PIEŚNIAMI 5:1-8

STRESZCZENIE

Afrykanie, a zwłaszcza kobiety przyjmują role postaci biblijnych i z narracji filmowych, aby opowiedzieć własne historie. Narracje biblijne nabrały znaczenia i stały się wydarzeniami na żywo dzięki filmowi. Tekst pokazuje patriarchalne konteksty, w których mężczyźni dominują w interpretacji biblijnej, a przemysł filmowy nadal socjalizuje kobiety do teologii *vumilia* – trzeba więc znosić przemoc ze względu na płeć (GBV), tak jak czynił to Chrystus aż do swojej śmierci na krzyżu. Perspektywa afro-feministyczna i analiza literacka Ewangelii św. Marka 15:1–40 w kontekście Pieśni na Pieśniami 5:1–8 sugeruje, że istnieje potrzeba alternatywnej, futurystycznej i performatywnej narracji, która uwolni afrykańskie kobiety od teologii *vumilia*. Konieczna jest dekonstrukcja chrystologii GBV, które socjalizują afrykańskie chrześcijanki do przyjęcia GBV w imię Chrystusa i wyznaczają nowe granice poznania w sprawach GBV, z naciskiem na rzeczywiste konsekwencje dla przebiegu przyszłych dociekań i dyskusji.

Słowa kluczowe: film, narracja, religijny futuroizm afrykańskich kobiet, afro-feminizm, kontekst biblijny