

Documenting African Spiritualities Through Ethnographic Filmmaking

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Since the arrival of missionaries in Africa during the 15th century, indigenous spiritual practices have been systematically marginalized, often labeled as “heathen,” “pagan,” and “barbaric” (Biko, 101). These enduring colonial consequences have placed African traditional spiritualities at risk of erasure, and upheld colonial narratives of African spirituality (Adogame et al., p.184,). The aim of the project “*Documenting African Spiritualities through Ethnographic Filmmaking*” is to preserve African indigenous spiritual practices with a focus on Rwanda and the Maasai community in Kenya. Through ethnographic filmmaking, the project seeks to not only document but also reshape dialogues on African spiritualities. Through interviews with people from the Rwandan and Maasai communities who practice traditional spiritual traditions, observation and filming of some practices, the end result of this project will be a short documentary. In addition to filming and interviews, the project included a deep literature review on the socio-ethnography of the Maasai, Banyarwanda, ethics of documentary filmmaking, and African indigenous spiritualities. The film will also serve as the foundation for an independent study in African cinema and culminate in a public screening, ensuring the project’s impact extends beyond academia to broader audiences.



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References: Biko, Hlumelo. *The God in Us : How African Spirituality Ignited World Religion and Global Civilisation*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2024. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bowdoin-ebooks/detail.action?docID=31134122>.
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