

After this poignant moment the film again changes pace with *Duet*. Jeff (Mugambi Nthiga), while on a business trip in the U.K., fulfills his desire to have sex with a “white guy,” in this case a prostitute. Their transactional relationship becomes something more as the two men sit and talk, inches apart but not touching, on the bed. At first the awkwardness is palpable, but it gradually yields to an often humorous intimacy, and finally an erotic encounter. In a context in which homosexuality is pathologized and criminalized, filming sex with emotional resonance and beauty—achieved here through the use of close-ups and extreme close-ups of the two men’s faces and kisses instead of more graphic shots—is a powerful statement.

The film discusses the larger Kenyan sociopolitical landscape only in its final short, *Each Night I Dream*, which opens with newsreel footage of a politician denouncing “gayism.” The short then follows Liz (Rose Njenga) as she dreams about escape—first to a beautiful island with her partner, Achieng (Judy Gichohi), where they can be together and free, and second by enacting the Kikuyu myth in which a person who walks backwards seven times around the sacred Mugumo Tree can change his or her gender. This allows her to avoid persecution, but comes at the expense of fundamentally transforming her own body and identity. In the current political climate Liz and Achieng only have two options: to run or to hide.

Yet the film suggests a third option. Its closing words, spoken against the backdrop of a night sky, are “All of us are different. All seven billion of us on this planet are different, but all of us need love.” Essentially, this means recognizing the humanity in others through our common ability to love, be it romantically, sexually, or in the context of friendship.

Robin Steedman  
SOAS, University of London  
London, U.K.

doi:10.1017/asr.2016.22

534979@soas.ac.uk

**Hermon Hailay, director.** *Price of Love*. (YäFiqir Wagaw). 2015. 99 minutes. Amharic. Ethiopia. International distribution limited to film festivals.

*Price of Love* (2015), the third feature of the writer-director Hermon Hailay, augments her reputation as one of a growing number of prominent female filmmakers in Ethiopia (along with Kidest Yilma, Luna Kuma, Alemtsehay Bekele, Aida Ashenafi, Roman Befekadu, and others). Premiered in competition at FESPACO in March 2015 and subsequently touring the international film festival circuit, *Price of Love* is the second narrative feature to achieve global exposure from an Ethiopian filmmaker engaged within the local film industry (building on the success of Yidnekatchew Shumete’s *Nishan* in 2013). Setting high technical and aesthetic standards, these films exemplify recent filmmaking in Ethiopia which has been developed to satisfy the popular demand cultivated in cinemas across the nation.

*Price of Love* challenges the negative image of the stereotypical prostitute by focusing its perspective on the revelation of tenderness and affection in the face of socioeconomic desperation. An unflinching exposé of love's urban underbelly, it was filmed on location among Addis Ababa's sprawling streets and grand new designs, and made on a budget of only U.S.\$10,000; the lighting, sound, cinematography, and production set high standards for the rest of the industry in Ethiopia.

At its core, *Price of Love* is a drama about prostitution and the trafficking of Ethiopian women to the Middle East. The vulnerability of love in circumstances in which people are caught between the alternatives of prostitution and economic destitution provides a point of departure for the exploration of gender dynamics in a male-dominated world. The story follows the son of a prostitute, Tewodros (Teddy), who is an unassuming taxi driver struggling to make ends meet on the streets of Addis Ababa. Teddy's first love is his Lada taxi, provided by an Ethiopian Orthodox priest who acts as his guardian at the request of his late mother. Teddy's taxi is a symbol of his new life as a man consciously rejecting the numerous addictions of his past (alcohol, khat, and gambling) and determined to prove his worth to the priest and society in general. When the Lada is stolen after a night in which Teddy helps a prostitute (Fere) escape an aggressive ex-lover (Marcos) outside an upmarket bar, the source of Teddy's income and his hope for redemption disappear. Brought together by their misfortune and their attempts to recover the stolen taxi, Fere and Teddy find themselves in delicate love. However, as Marcos stands in the way of Teddy's reclaiming his Lada, offering it up only in exchange for Fere, Teddy is confronted with a set of dreadful dilemmas, causing the viewer to consider the "price of love."

Teddy's Lada taxi is not only central to *Price of Love*'s narrative, representing a symbolic third character, but it is also used to good cinematographic effect, providing a mobile platform for framing the urban streets of Addis. In the opening sequence low-angled tracking shots and shots looking out through the windscreen and windows offer a dynamic street-level perspective of the city, establishing the film's location as well as the fast pace of its narrative. The pace of the editing and effective sound design enhance the tonal changes within the film, with a myriad of shots and camera angles—panoramic long shots, close-ups, and tracking shots used to create a vibrant image of turbulent street-life—framing the fluctuating nature of a burgeoning Addis Ababa and its inhabitants. Images of the urban outdoors contrasting the modern ring-roads with cobbled side-streets and 4x4 Toyotas with Soviet era Ladas create a binary image of contemporary Addis life—of economic winners and losers and of growing inequalities. In a country of high youth unemployment in which neither Teddy nor Fere have family to fall back on, it is their love for each other and the moral guidance of the priest that provide a glimmer of hope.

Resonating throughout *Price of Love*, and common throughout Amharic-speaking Ethiopia, are the teachings of love, humility, and forgiveness as expounded by the ancient Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

The physical setting of the church in the film provides a space of calm, peace, and meditation. In sequences in which Teddy visits the church, the majesty of the building's domed exterior is framed in the background of establishing shots while the colorful murals and light of the interior offer respite and provide contrast and counterbalance to the urban street setting and nighttime action sequences that dominate the film. The biblical motif on the back of Teddy's Lada is particularly noticeable in the film's opening and closing sequences. It states simply, in Amharic, "hulu bā'irsu" (everything through Him). Indeed, the film's abrupt climax reflects such fatalistic sentiments commonplace in Amharic storytelling and Christian wisdom. The melodrama of the climactic sequence, however, breaks with the social-realist style of the film to produce an almost surreal ending. This surreal and self-reflexive dénouement, intercut with static flashbacks of earlier locations in which Fere and Teddy's expected presence is eerily absent, has the effect of taking the life out of the city, reflecting a drunken man's prophetic warning to Teddy and Fere halfway through the film that "yāt'āfachihun nāgār silāmatayut nāw mālsachihu iskitagāñut dirās": You will never know what you've lost now until you find it again later.

Michael W. Thomas  
SOAS, University of London  
London, U.K.  
252260@soas.ac.uk

doi:10.1017/asr.2016.23

## DOCUMENTARY

**Manthia Diawara, director. *Edouard Glissant: One World in Relation*. 2010.** 50 minutes. Third World Newsreel. French with English subtitles. No price reported. [www.twn.org/catalog/pages/cpage.aspx?rec=1299](http://www.twn.org/catalog/pages/cpage.aspx?rec=1299).

This short film chronicles a 2009 series of interviews between the scholar and filmmaker Manthia Diawara and the Martinican author, literary theorist, and philosopher Edouard Glissant. Diawara conducts their conversations on the Queen Mary II in a cross-Atlantic journey from Southampton (U.K.) to Brooklyn (New York) as well as on the island of Martinique. During the discussions, Glissant explores his theoretical and philosophical trajectories, particularly his "theory of relation" which produced the concept of "Tout-monde" and was the genesis of his later work. Up to his death in 2011 Edouard Glissant was one of the most important contemporary theorists of "la francophonie," and his seminal work, produced in the 1980s, contributed significantly to Francophone studies and cultural studies theories on creolization, ethnic diversity, and multiplicity. Many of the topics of conversations in this film are drawn from his *Le Discours Antillais* (1981), a study that greatly influenced cultural studies as rooted in multiculturalism and identity politics. Notably influenced by the French philosophers Gilles