Eleanor A. Dasi, "Entry on: The Wicked Son by Marie ", peer-reviewed by Divine Che Neba, Emmanuel Ambe Ndonwi, Elizabeth Hale and Karolina Anna Kulpa. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/913. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

Marie

The Wicked Son

Cameroon

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	The Wicked Son
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Yemba
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	July 25, 2019
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Bafou
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaoundé 1, wandasi5@yahoo.com
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Creators



Marie (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 32 (in 2019)

Social status: initiate

Profession: Farming

Language of narration: Yemba

The narrator decided not to reveal his name and only gave her first name.

Bio prepared by Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaoundé 1, wandasi5@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Cultural Background*: The Bafou people constitute part of the larger Yemba – speaking people in Dschang in the West Region of Cameroon. Their origin can be traced to the Bantu of Central Africa. They practice subsistence farming and are known in Cameroon for their passion in pig-rearing, both for local consumption and for economic purposes. Like many other African societies, the Dschang, despite the introduction of Christianity in the land, are glued to their traditional practices of worshipping the ancestors, whom they believe are closer to God and can therefore mediate between them and God. Dschang hosts a university with many different schools and faculties, and a museum which is a site from which one can get to know the cultural history of many Cameroonian tribes.

Occasion: Staged

* Source: *The Yemba of Cameroon*, joshuaproject.net (accessed: November 19, 2019).

Summary

In the beginning of this chiefdom (Bafou), the chief's son waged war against the entire community because of a misunderstanding he had with his father. He was bent on killing his father, and when the population heard of the abomination, they decided to go to their chief's rescue. In the encounter, half the population was killed since the son had extraordinary powers. The boy however never succeeded in killing his father, but seriously mutilated his face. As his punishment, the chief ordered that his son should be executed. This however did not completely wipe out the threats as the hovering spirit of the deceased son continued to create panic in the village and its environs. The spirit moved around killing innocent people. Being unable to eliminate his primary target (his father), the boy's spirit transformed to a buffalo, and continued the killings. The population abandoned their habitats and took refuge in nearby bushes. The Chief made an attempt to mobilize and bring back his subjects to the village but this led to the death of thousands more, and he was seriously wounded again. After a very long struggle with the buffalo, the people tried to negotiate with it. The animal said the only way to obtain peace

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was for him to become the next ruler of the village, a suggestion that the chief vehemently rejected. Confused, the chief sought help from his ancestors who asked him to carryout diverse rituals so as to subdue his son's spirit in the buffalo. When this was done, the evil spirit left the buffalo, knelt and asked for forgiveness from the chief. After forgiving him, the Chief carried out a series of sacrifices that brought back peace and tranquility in Bafou and the people lived happily after his death. Since then, they believe very much in the worship of ancestors.

Analysis

The myth of the wicked son highlights the consequences of greed, overzeal and father-son feuds. Most especially, it accentuates the African saying that children cannot win a fight against their parents because they are considered the ancestors' representatives on earth and are therefore under ancestral protection. That is why the Chief was able to escape the attempted patricide by seeking help from his ancestors, and why they came to his rescue. It is also why the son's spirit had to move out of the buffalo to apologize and ask for forgiveness.

African traditional lore gives precedence over the young to the old and forbids acts of uprising against the old. The general belief is that no mortal can reverse what the gods have established.

The above story emphasizes the importance of respecting the values transmitted by one's culture, especially when it comes to respect for the elders, the old and established order of the gods and/or ancestors.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions

Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture

Character traits Conflict Parents (and children) Transformation

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Further Reading	Scheub, Harold, *A Dictionary of African Mythology: The Mythmaker as Storyteller*, Oxford University Press, 2000.
Addenda	Method of data collection: Tape recording and note taking Researcher: Eleanor A. Dasi Assistant researcher: Temondong Raissa

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