UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

NOLLYWOOD: CINEMA, SOCIAL IDENTITY AND SELF-REPRESENTATION

An Inaugural Lecture

By

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ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

2.45P.M. GUESTS ARE SEATED

3.00P.M. ACADEMIC PROCESSION BEGINS

The procession shall enter the Auditorium, CBN Centre of Excellence, University Park, and the Congregation shall stand as the procession enters the hall in the following order:

ACADEMIC OFFICER
PROFESSORS
DEANS OF FACULTIES/SCHOOL
DEAN, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
PROVOST, COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
LECTURER
REGISTRAR
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR [ACADEMIC]
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR [ADMINISTRATION]
VICE CHANCELLOR

After the Vice-Chancellor has ascended the dais, the congregation shall remain standing for the University of Port Harcourt Anthem.
The congregation shall thereafter resume their seats.

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S OPENING REMARKS.

The Registrar shall rise, cap, invite the Vice-Chancellor to make his opening remarks and introduce the Lecturer.
The Lecturer shall remain standing during the Introduction.

THE INAUGURAL LECTURE

The Lecturer shall step on the rostrum, cap and deliver his Inaugural Lecture. After the lecture, he shall step towards the Vice-Chancellor, cap and deliver a copy of the Inaugural Lecture to the Vice-Chancellor and resume his seat. The Vice-Chancellor shall present the document to the Registrar.

CLOSING

The Registrar shall rise, cap and invite the Vice-Chancellor to make his Closing Remarks.

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S CLOSING REMARKS.

The Vice-Chancellor shall then rise, cap and make his Closing Remarks. The Congregation shall rise for the University of Port Harcourt Anthem and remain standing as the Academic [Honour] Procession retreats in the following order:

VICE CHANCELLOR
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR [ADMINISTRATION]
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR [ACADEMIC]
REGISTRAR
LECTURER
PROVOST, COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
DEAN, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
PROFESSORS
ACADEMIC OFFICER

DEDICATION

To God Almighty the Creator of the Universe and Man; for His grace and mercy that made possible the presentation of my inaugural lecture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge with fond memories, my late father, Chief Bethel Shaka Omoshue, who served my community, Arhavwarien Kingdom, in Urhoboland for seven years as the Prime Minister. He was always a source of inspiration in giving selfless leadership. I also thank my mother, Mrs. Agatha Shaka Omoshue, who is fortunate enough to be alive to watch my presentation. Next, I wish to thank my lovely wife, Dr. Mrs. Esther Uchenna Shaka, who mounted a family warfare regarding the delay in the presentation of my inaugural lecture. With this presentation, today, I have bought my peace at home. I thank my children Brian Oghenekaro Shaka, Emmanuel Oghenetega Shaka and Catherine Ejiroghene Shaka.

I would like to pay tribute to the teachers and lecturers who taught me over the years. Here, I pay particular attention to late Dr. Atiboroko Uyovbukerhi, Professor Femi Osofisan, Professor Pat Idoye, Professor Muyiwa Awodiya, and Professor Austin Asagba, the University of Benin set of lecturers. At the premiere University of Ibadan, the first man on the list is the late Professor Dapo Adelugba, Professor Femi Osofisan, Professor Bode Sowande, etc. At the University of Warwick where I cut my teeth as a film scholar, I wish to acknowledge my doctoral degree supervisor, Professor Richard Dyer, and my lecturers, Professors Ginette Vicendeau, Charlotte Brunsdon, Allison Butler, Victor Perkins, Benita Parry and David Dabydeen.

Very importantly, I would like to acknowledge the twenty-two doctorate degree students that I have supervised

for this University, out of which the followings are now full Professors: Professor Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma [Acting Vice Chancellor, University of Africa, Toru-Orua], Professor Austin Amanze Akpuda, Professor Friday Nwafor, Professor Olatunji Kojusototo Idowu, Professor Onyeka Henry Uwakwe and the Associate Professors, Emily God'spresence and Ovunda Ihunwo.

At my current Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, beginning with my Department, I would like to acknowledge the warm relationship between my colleagues and me: Professor (Rev. Fr) Innocent Uwah, Dr. Chioma Ekhaeyemhe, Dr. Nkechi Bature-Uzor, and Dr. Grace John-Ogbonnaya. At the Faculty level, I would like to acknowledge my Dean, Professor (Rev. Fr) Walter Ihiejerika, Professor Godwin Okon, Professor Christie Omego, Professor Christopher Ochonogor, Professor Aniete Udoudo, Dr. Ntiense Usua, Dr. Ben-Collins Ndinojuo, Dr. Moses Asak, Dr. Pauline Oby Ohiagu, Dr. Titilago Osuagwu, etc.

I would also like to acknowledge my colleagues in the old Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Professor Henry Bell-Gam, late Dr. Stanley Obuh, Professor Julie Okoh, Professor Emmanuel Calvin Emasealu, Professor Julie Umukoro, Professor Innocent Ohiri, Professor John Yeseibo, Professor Clive Krama, Professor Faith Ken-Aminikpo, Professor Benjamin Ejiofor, late Dr. Anthony Gyapong, Dr. Patrick Agha, Dr. Eziwho Emenike Azunwo, Dr. Edward Imo, Dr. Sunday Edum, Dr. Somieari Ikiroma-Owiye, Dr. Samuel Achibi Dede, Dr. Boyle Adikiba, Dr. Remijus Anyanwu, Dr. Emeka Ofora, Dr. Nkem Chidi-Ukagu, Dr. George Chizenum Ohia, Columbus Irisoanga, and Alani Nasiru.

Finally, at the Faculty of Humanities level, I wish to acknowledge the robust scholarly exchanges with Emeritus Professor Ebiegberi Alagoa, Professor Ozo-Mecuri Ndimele (former VC, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, the Godfather), Professor Kingsley Owete (DVC Academic), Professor Phil Ejele, Professor Ben Naanen, Professor John Enemugwuem, Professor Onyeamachi Udumukwu, Professor Denis Ekpo, Professor John Agberia, Professor Lucky Akaruese, Professor Frank Ugiomoh, Professor Chinedu Chukueggu, Professor Bridget Nwanze, Professor Pamela Cyril-Egware, Professor Francis Minimah, Professor Stanley Okoroafor, Professor Onyee Nwankpa, Professor Edward Ezedike, Professor Offiong Inyang Etiido, Professor Chinelu Ojukwu, Professor Psalms Chinaka, Professor Nics Ubogu, Professor Dele Adegboku, Professor Kalu Wosu, Professor Virginia Onumajuru, Professor Baridisi Isaac, Dr. Emeka Onumajuru, Dr. Obari Gomba and Dr. Mazi Eze.

PROTOCOLS

- The Vice-Chancellor
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- Esteemed Administrative Staff
- Captains of Industries
- Cherished Friends and Guests
- Unique Students of UNIPORT
- Members of the Press
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

PREAMBLE

Mr Vice Chancellor Sir, as a child growing up in the Niger Delta of the 1960s, the cinema was a great source of fascination and entertainment. It was the age of cultural nationalism when many African countries had just gained independence and Africans were proud to be independent again, having just succeeded in driving away the colonial masters. Kwame Nkrumah had charged Africans to seek first the political kingdom and everything else would follow. Subsequently, Africans in droves voted for Nkrumah's political kingdom and got independence from their colonial masters. It was the age of: "Say it loud, I'm black and proud!" But the age of cultural nationalism was full of several ambivalences. First, the political kingdom did not come with economic liberation, and so ethnic rivalries arising from the sharing of the national economic cake triggered civil wars across Africa. The Katanga crisis in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was soon followed by the Nigerian Civil War that claimed millions of lives. These inter-ethnic civil wars have since been followed by others in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, South Sudan, etc. In the midst of the raging ethnic-inspired crises and civil wars, the cinema continued to provide entertainment for youths in urban centres across Africa. The primary instrument which the cinema used to capture the heart and mind of Nigerian youths in those days was the Hollywood star system. The cinema with its arrays of masculine stars provided role models of toughness and ruggedness in masculinity. They included rugged men like John Wayne, Gary Cooper, Clint Eastwood, etc. This was the

age of the cow boys, horse riding devils with pistols holstered on their hips. The pictures of these tough men were used to sell various brands of chewing gums. When you buy a packet of chewing gum from the Mobile Cinema merchants, you got a gift of the picture of one of these leading men of cinematic toughness. The pictures of these tough men were gummed on our walls as treasured images of our favourite movie stars. I'm sure today's youths do the same with the favourite pictures of their football stars.

Mr Vice Chancellor Sir, growing up in urban centres of post-independence Nigeria in the 1960s was like growing up in a frontier territory of the old wild wild-west in America. The urban centres were infested with crime and criminality but there were also flickering neon lights of a beckoning prosperous future. Soon enough, crude oil was discovered in Oloibiri in the Niger Delta, and a crop of bourgeoisie began to emerge. The emergent bourgeoisie, who were equally addicted to American limousines, could be seen speeding through the few asphalted streets in urban centres. The notable avenues of entertainment were Rex and Olympia Cinemas and the few clubs springing up here and there in urban centres across Nigeria. Complementing these centres of entertainment was the popular free cinema provided by the Mobile Film Units of the Federal Ministry of Information which showed educational or instructional films. Itinerant Igbo traders soon joined the business of free cinema by using the medium to advertise and sell their goods while showing us free cow-boy films. These cow-boy films, classified as Westerns in cinematic classification, were a bait to make Nigerian youths buy western merchandise. This childhood experience of being

exposed to the cinema at a very early age made me to become addicted to the cinema. I became what you refer to as a cinephile. Every day, I dreamt of becoming a movie star. In secondary school, we joined the Dramatic Society because we felt it was the route to becoming a movie star one day. When it came to seeking admission, I found out that the discipline that taught anything close to the cinema was Theatre Arts because it taught courses in acting and directing. If I had to be tough like the John Wayne persona of the silver screen, the best programme option available to me was Theatre Arts. In my youthful blind adoration of John Wayne, it never occurred to me that the natives that he was plucking down with his pistols while I hailed him as a hero, were colonial subjects of the American Wild west, and that the status of the native American was similar to mine in a former British colony like Nigeria. After studying Theatre Arts at the Universities of Benin and Ibadan, respectively, I was providentially given an opportunity to crown my education with a PhD in Film Studies at the famous University of Warwick, in Coventry, England, as a Commonwealth scholar.

THE TRAJECTORY OF MY ACADEMIC RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

As a youth in the Niger Delta, I had been a movie addict, a cinephile. My addiction to the movies even determined my choice of a future career. But when I got to the UK for my graduate studies, for the first time, I had the privilege of studying in a Department of Film and Television Studies. For the first time, I encountered the cinematic institution as a mature discipline with complex fields of study, historical contexts and antecedents. In Film History classes, for instance, I encountered how the medium has been used to demonize and stereotype Africans and people of African descent. Like Chinua Achebe's encounter with Joseph Conrad's novel, *Heart of Darkness*, my encounter with the Cinema of Empire, totally changed my impression of the cinema. I felt that if the cinematic institution can be used by Europeans and Americans to undermine, through representation, the humanity of Africans, then Africans need to master how to use the medium to tell their own stories. Like Achebe who was determined to refute the images of Africa which he encountered in his English Literature classes where he read the works of Joseph Conrad and Joyce Cary, especially Cary's controversial novel, *Mister Johnson*, set in colonial Nigeria, I was determined to build a career in the film industry in order to contribute my little quota in helping to build a virile movie industry that will tell our own stories. Thus far, in my research in the discipline of Film Studies, I have found out that genre-related stories were one of the instruments used by the European and

American cinemas to stereotype and demonize Africans and people of African descent.

What is Film, and What is Cinema?

The place to begin this task is to define the concept of film. Conceptually speaking, film can be defined as motion pictures recorded on a piece of celluloid for purposes of projection for the public viewing. While this definition is factual, it is a bit limiting because it tends to view film exclusively as a text, a ready-made product for consumption. To widen the definition of film, it is advisable to treat film as a product of the cinematic institution that includes several professional and industrial activities. In this respect, the cinema as an institution is part of a large creative industry that provides platforms for practitioners such as Screenwriters, Producers, Financial Institutions, Directors, Actors, Editors, Studios Managers, Technical Designers [Set Designers, Light Designers, Costume Designers and Tailors, etc.], Cinematographers, Photographers, Special Effects Designers and Producers, Film Marketers, Advertisers and Distributors, Film History, Theory and Criticism. The cinematic institution also includes electronic industries involved in the production of movie cameras, editing equipment and software, movie projectors and sound recording equipment, etc.

Indeed, the cinema as an institution covers all aspects of human endeavours. Apart from the feature film which is its

major commercial product, and which is viewed in movie theatre worldwide, the cinematic institution owns the documentary products which covers social documentation, biographical documentary, scientific and nature documentaries, avant-grarde documentaries, instructional cinema, all of which use film as a tool for instruction, which is available for usage by every human discipline. Typical examples are online lectures which are pre-recorded for students to use for revision or live zoom lectures which encourage interactions between lecturers and students. Indeed, the cinema as an institution is there for every scholar to exploit for the promotion of his or her research findings in terms of visual pieces of evidence of such researches on social media

Today, when we talk of film, people tend to limit it to just the commercial feature film which we pay to watch with our families at movie theatres. This film, powerful as it is, is part of an institutional practice broadly referred to as the cinematic institution. This institution houses several professional practices which I have already listed. The work of Sir David Attenborough has brought the richness of the cinema to cover scientific films, nature productions, and of recent, ground breaking documentaries on global warming. Next time when you hear of film, both as a discipline that studies the history, production technologies, production studios, historical context of productions, film texts, theories of film criticism, etc., know that film is wider than the text which we pay to view in the movie theatres. Film is a product of the cinematic institution which is part of the creative industries. The creative industries encompass the Cinema, the Music Industry, Theatre Practice, Fine Arts and Design, Environmental Design,

Architecture, Fashion Design, Standup Comedy, Body Tattooing, Social Media Blogging, etc.

Nollywood: The Birth of a Brand Name and Film Culture

Worldwide, Nollywood is the brand name for the Nigerian film industry. The date of birth of the brand name is situated in 2002, specifically in the pages of *New York Times*. The name itself is problematic in the sense that it attempts to essentialize and obliterate the different subcultures of film practices that are collectively referred to as Nollywood. There is also the question of who invented the brand name. For a while, Jonathan Haynes had thought it was Matt Steinglass in an article he wrote for the *New York Times* in 2002 (Haynes, 2007, p.106). But we now know that the inventor of the brand name is actually a Japanese American going by the name Norimitsu Onishi, in an article he wrote for the *New York Times* in 2002, entitled "Step Aside, Los Angeles, Bombay for Nollywood," culled and published in *The Guardian* (Nigeria) on Thursday, October 3, 2002. In that article, Onishi states:

> Since the late 1990s, Nigerian movies have found a place next to offerings from Hollywood and Bollywood, *Bombay's* equivalent, in the cities, towns and villages across English-speaking Africa. Though made on the cheap, with budgets of about only $15,000, Nigerian movies have become huge hits, with stories, themes and faces familiar to other Africans. It is now, according to conservative estimates, a $45 million a year industry (Onishi, 2002, p.53).

On the issue of the person who invented the brand name, Matt Steinglass himself seems to deny the fact that he was the first person to employ the brand name when he submits:

> Having written one of those NY Times stories, I'd like to respond. First, to coin the term "Nollywood" (which I did not use; that was the other story) does not imply that the production and distribution system in Nigeria is the same as that of Hollywood; Bollywood, after all, also has a different production and distribution system from Hollywood, and in any case the Hollywood system is itself in a state of flux, and scarcely resembles the classic studio system of the 40s (Steinglass, 2002, p.53).

The debate on who coined the brand name, Nollywood, has been further complicated by Olushola Oladele Adenugba who has maintained that "Nick Moran, a BBC reporter, who was in Nigeria to do a documentary on the 'get-rich-quick-video' came up with it" (Adenugba, 2007, p.2). In the light of this claim, it would seem that the originator of the brand name could be traced to either Nomiritsu Onishi or Nick Moran of the BBC, depending on who first used the term. This is an issue that needs to be further researched to lay to rest the question of who invented the brand name. However, in an exchange between us, Haynes and I have agreed that Matt Steinglass did not coin the term, "Nollywood" but that it was the Japanese American, Nomiritsu Onishi who did. Aside from the controversies on who coined the name, commentaries on its emergence have been full of ambivalences. Some art critics

like Olushola Oladele Adenugba, have come to accept the term because it covers the diversity of Nigerian films, whether they are "celluloid, video, short film, documentaries, film literatures, training projects, equipment and capacity building of the industry and its highly secretive professionals." According to Adenugba, the term covers the diversity of Nigerian film production in the same way that Bollywood covers the production of Indian films in Tamil, Bengali, Telegu and other languages besides Hindi, in other parts of that huge country: "Nollywood covers Nigerian films in Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa and English, although it is speculated that the Hausa filmmakers are trying to separate themselves by adopting the terms 'Kaniwood' and 'Kallywood'" (Adenugba, 2007, p.1).

The Emmy Awards nominated American Director of Photography, Marc Wishengrad, who was one of the resource persons invited for the annual Nigerian Film Corporation's Cinematography Workshop, tagged "SHOOT 2005," was downrightly paternalistic in his objections to the brand name "Nollywood," possibly because the term seemed to bring the Nigerian film industry to the same ranking with its American counterpart, Hollywood. This is my personal interpretation to his paternalistic outburst against the term. His argument is that the name Hollywood stems from a town in the United States of America known for film production. In this respect, he opines that:

> It would be stupid against this background to refer to your local film industry as Nollywood. It would be more understanding if it is called Lagos, because I understand that is the nerve

> centre of film production in Nigeria, but not Nollywood. New York, where I come from, has its own film industry, it is not referred to as Hollywood (as cited in Akpovi-Esade, 2005, p.66).

Marc Wishengrad was equally unsparing with respect to his assessment of the reputed claims to popularity of the Nigeria video film industry. According to him, "an average American does not give a damn about Nigerian movies. They don't watch you movies and that is the truth." He was however not charitable enough to qualify whether by "average American" he was referring to an average Caucasian American or whether he was speaking for *all* Americans. He was however definitive on why only the African community in the United States of America watch Nigerian films: "because of the heavily accented English of Nigerians, no American will understand what actors are saying, and nobody enjoys any movie when he has to strain his ears to hear what the actors are saying" (as cited in Akpovi-Esade, p.66).

Marc Wishengrad's remarks, as earlier noted, smacks of paternalism and ignorance because the fact that Hollywood derived its name from a town on the outskirts of Los Angeles where the major film production studios are located does not mean that all brand names used in describing film cultures must similarly be derived, like that of the United States of America, from the name of a town. Also, the fact that he claimed he was informed that Lagos is the nerve centre of Nollywood tells us how ignorant he was about the industry. Let me hasten to state categorically that I'm one of those who

would readily approve of critical comments on the Nigerian film industry from scholars and practitioners from anywhere in the world so long as such critical commentaries are made from a position of a well-informed knowledge of the industry, and that they are not tainted by derogatory paternalism.

From the nationalistic perspective, Olushola Oladele Adenugba has provided the following reasons why some Nigerians object to the term, Nollywood:

> One of such reactions states that the term implies that Nollywood is an imitation of Hollywood and Bollywood rather than something in itself, something original and uniquely African. Many are opposed to the appellation because, according to them, it is a form of neo-colonialization, another Western propaganda. They wonder why the only film culture that has built itself by itself must be labeled after Hollywood (Adenugba, p.1).

The first film scholar to intervene in the controversies surrounding the name "Nollywood" was Jonathan Haynes, in his article entitled, "Hollywood": What's in a Name?" Haynes, in my opinion, gives us enough reasons why people need not split hairs over the issue of the brand name, Nollywood: "I'm an American, and my continent is named after Amerigo Vespucci, a fifteenth-century Italian of no particular importance. He bumped into Brazil and then probably lied about it when he did it" (Haynes, 2005, p.1). If we worry so much about the name, Nollywood, we may just as well dump

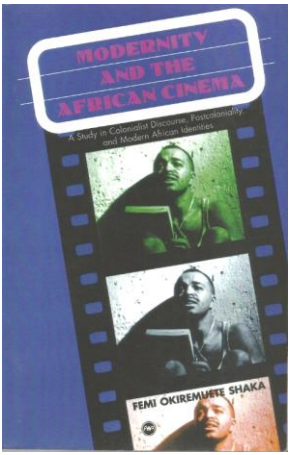
the name "Nigeria," which Haynes reminds us was coined by Lord Lugard's mistress. In this regard, I have used the term "Nollywood" throughout this work to represent the totality of film productions which are thematically and linguistically rooted in Nigeria's belief systems and socio-cultural ambience, in which the stories may roam about from Nigeria to elsewhere in the world, back and forth, representing and showcasing the stoic and proud Nigerian national character and psyche, in all its hybrid forms, and whether such works were produced solely by Nigerian filmmakers or through co-productions. This definition is very much in tandem with the conception of Adenugba who uses the term to cover the diversity of Nigerian film production, whether they are in the video format or in the celluloid format. The term is certainly a handy one in referring to the popular film culture which has emerged in Nigeria since 1992.

This brand name which was coined ten years after the tradition of commercial cinema was kick-started in Nigeria by the blockbuster movie, *Living in Bondage* (Chris Obi-Rapu, 1992), has stuck as a brand name that keeps Nollywood at the very top of cinematic brand names alongside Hollywood and Bollywood. Brand names are vehicles or platforms used worldwide for the sale of commercial products. Brand names are produced by international marketing agencies and they cost a lot of money. Though critics who criticize the brand name, Nollywood, may have their own reasons, the fact that it is helping to market Nigerian movies worldwide is a great selling point for its acceptance. After all, we didn't pay for it, so that could be why some critics don't value it. We mustn't forget

that the brand name Nigeria was also given to us by the mistress of Lord Luggard, Flora Shaw, in the late 19th century.

The Historical Background of Colonialist African Cinema

The first major research which I carried out as a lecturer in the University of Port Harcourt took place in the US during the 2001/2002 academic session, when I won a Fulbright Senior African Scholarship to conduct research at the Africana Studies Programme of New York University. The Fulbright grant afforded me an opportunity to carry out research on the issue of cinema and social identity, with special emphasis on the images of Africans in the cinema. The images of Africans that I came across in colonial cinema was appalling. Africans were represented as savages, sexual perverts, despots, idlers, barbarous, cannibalistic, primitive, and temperamental people. The images were shocking. I wanted to search for the origin of these racial slurs and stereotypical representations which I encountered in film history. Many of the early leads I found explained the phenomenon as racial fantasies arising from European ethnocentric behaviour traceable to the slave trade, colonial conquest and empire building. These were the images I encountered in films such as *Tarzan the Ape Man* (W.S. Van Dyke, 1932), *Sanders of the River* (Zoltan Korda, 1935), *King Solomon's Mines* (Robert Stevenson, 1937), *The African Queen* (John Hurston, 1951), *Simba* (Brian Desmond



Hurst, 1955), *Chocolat* (Claire Denis, 1988), and *Mr Johnson* (Bruce Beresford, 1990). The findings of my research helped me to update my knowledge in the field of Colonial Cinema, an area that I worked on during my days of postgraduate studies in the UK. The result of that research was later published in a book in the US entitled, *Modernity and the African Cinema*. I found out during my research that most of the screenplays used for the productions in the Cinema of Empire were adaptations of colonialist literary texts or personal memoirs. This pattern is, however, not peculiar to Africa because Robert Stam and Louise Spence note that:

> colonialist representation did not begin with the cinema; it is rooted in a vast colonial intertext, a widely disseminated set of discursive practices. Long before the first racist images appeared on film screens of Europe and North America, the process of colonialist image-making, and resistance to that process, resonated through Western literature. Colonialist historians, speaking for the `winners' of history, exalted the colonial enterprise, at bottom little more than a gigantic act of pillage whereby whole continents were bled of their human and material resources, as a philanthropic `civilizing mission' motivated by a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease and tyranny. (Stam and Spence, 1983, p. 5)

In an earlier collection of essays on colonialist African cinema, edited by Richard A. Maynard, entitled, *Africa on Film: Myth and Reality*, most of the contributors had equally traced the roots of the cinematic practice to colonialist African literature (Maynard, 1974), as has Jeffrey Richards, in his study of what he refers to as the "Cinema of Empire," which includes many of the films I had been screening in the film archives. Richards also states that Hollywood's involvement in the practice was driven by two factors: "the desire for exotic and romantic escapism" and" the commercial factor" (Richards, 1973, p. 3). This perhaps explains the investments in the Tarzan series of films, the majority of which were set in Africa. Writing on the ideology of the "Cinema of Empire, "Richards observes that

> What becomes immediately obvious when viewing these films is that, although they are made in the last decades of the Empire's existence, they do not reflect contemporary ideas about the Empire? The ideas they reflect are those of late nineteenth century... The constitutional developments in the Empire in the inter-war years find no place in the cinema of Empire. In films, the Empire is unchanged and unchanging. (Richards, 1973, p. 7)

Shaka (2004) has noted that the dominant ideas propagated in the nineteenth century as they relate to Africa are racial theories aimed at proving the racial inferiority of Africans. The fallacy of such theories has been the subject matter of many scholarly works, such as those by Mudimbe (1988), Stephan (1990), Banton (1987), etc. But the fact that the cream of Euro-

American scholarship propagated these racial theories for more than three centuries has left its mark. These same theories informed and continue to inform colonialist African films. In colonialist African cinema, people who are different, not only in culture but also in skin colour and physical outlook, are denied their difference and are measured by European concepts of social organization, cultural practices and notions of aesthetics. Categories of cultural experience and physical outlook which mark out Africans as different from Europeans are cinematically highlighted not so much to acknowledge them as such but specifically to disavow such differences or use them as representative paradigms of the perversions of European ideals. In essence, colonialist African discourse or its cinematic practice is an arrested form of knowledge and perception. It is a partial blindness that arises from the inability to see beyond oneself or one's cultural boundaries or the extension of one's cultural boundaries over others by means of physical force and discursive self-aggrandizement. Paul Bohannan has argued that "Africa was the 'Dark Continent,' but the darkness had much more to do with the European and American visitors to it, and workers in it, than it had to do with Africans" (Bohannan, 1974, p. 2). This fact is often overlooked in the representation of Africans in colonialist African films.

In this regard, Shaka (2004) has argued that the discursive practice of colonialist of African cinema was instituted with documentaries such as *Tuaregs in Their Country* (1909), *Big Game Hunting in Africa* (1909), *Missionaries in Darkest Africa* (1912), *The Military Drill of the Kikuyu Tribes and Other Ceremonies* (1914), and films such as *How a British Bull-dog Saved the Union Jack* (1906), which deals with the British-Zulu war of 1906-1907, and D.W. Griffith's *The Zulu Heart* (1908), in which a Zulu turns on his fellows in order to aid whites. However, most film historians now cite Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), as the film that codified the stereotypical images of blacks in the cinematic medium (Pines, 1975, pp 7-32; Leab, 1975, pp. 23-57; Cripps, 1977, p. 15; Nesteby, 1982, pp. 27-57). Though *The Birth of a Nation* exploits white fears and anxieties about the black presence in America and, in this respect, can be considered as dealing specifically with the African-American experience in colonialist filmic representation, in the opening sequence, the film traces the problem of the black presence to

Africa and the slave trade. Through this association, metaphors of African savagery and bestiality are transposed to African-Americans and vice versa. With respect to Africa itself, the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs and the Tarzan series of films based upon them helped to canonize these metaphors of African savagery and bestiality. Brian Street (1985) draws similar conclusions with respect to his analysis of the novels of empire when he states that

> Edgar Rice Burroughs, the inventor of Tarzan, for instance, helps to fix the notion for future generations of young readers that people like their ancestors may still be found in some forgotten jungles, dancing ape-like rituals in ways that European society has left behind. His florid jungle prose transforms the scientific theory of his day into vivid and memorable images (Street, p. 98).

Not only do colonialist films deny Africans their individual identities and social values, as in almost every other aspect of the unequal Afro-European relationship, Africans are made victims of European psychic projections and fantasies. Africans are cinematically represented as sexual perverts, cannibals, sadists, despots, idlers, indolent, gutless, timid, superstitious and barbarous. Just about any social practice, which European and Hollywood film producers and directors consider uncivil, is projected upon Africans. When they are not being portrayed as childish and harmless, they are depicted at the other extreme as heartless despots and sadistic murderers; when they are not gutless, they are portrayed as irrational and

bloodthirsty warriors. Broadly speaking, most colonialist African films can be categorized as melodramas. Theoreticians such as Rahill (1967), Smith (1973), Brooks (1976), and Gledhill (1987), have given varied definitions to melodrama. However, one thing that unites these definitions is the centrality of opposing complex moral orders and social values. Rahill defines melodrama as

> A form of dramatic composition in prose partaking of the nature of tragedy, comedy, pantomime, and spectacle, intended for a popular audience. Primarily concerned with situation and plot...more or less fixed complement of stock characters, the most important of which are a suffering heroine or hero, a persecuting villain, and a benevolent comic. It is conventionally moral and humanitarian in point of view and sentimental and optimistic in temper, concluding its fable happily with virtue rewarded after many trials and vice punished. Characteristically it offers elaborate scenic accessories and miscellaneous divertissements and introduces music freely, typically to underscore dramatic effects. (Rahill, 1967, p. xiv)

He also states that from its roots in late eighteenth century popular theatre, melodrama as a popular form was taken up by the popular novel and subsequently by film and television. As its audience grew in sophistication in the nineteenth century, especially with the rise of the bourgeoisie, it adopted a much

more subtle approach to characterization. Furthermore, the use of music was curtailed and the extravagant embellishments in scenography were discarded. Heroes and heroines, who were not blameless, especially in love, began to emerge. So too were villains who were more to be pitied than censured. The unhappy ending also became common. He also states that melodrama with its structure of villain-heroine conflict, and a plot in which the heroine is persecuted, with events resulting in a happy ending; offer an almost perfect instrument for propaganda. He notes that during the nineteenth century, this instrument was pressed into the service of innumerable crusades, including national patriotism, anticlericalism, abolition of slavery, prohibition, and even tax and prison reforms (Rahill, pp. xv-xvi).

With respect to film, Gledhill has offered one of the most comprehensive historical and theoretical studies of melodrama. In Gledhill's words, the "term denotes a fictional or theatrical kind, a specific cinematic genre or a pervasive mode across popular culture ...melodrama both overlaps and competes with realism and tragedy, maintaining complex historical relations with them" (Gledhill, 1987, p. 1). She further states that

> Melodramatic desire crosses moral boundaries, producing villains who, even as the drama sides with the “good,” articulate opposing principles, with equal, if not greater, power. In so doing it accesses the underside of official rationales for reigning moral orders -- that which social convention, psychic repression, political dogma cannot articulate. Thus whether melodrama

> takes its categories from Victorian morality or modern psychology, its enactment of the continuing struggle of good and evil forces running through social, political and psychic life draws into a public arena desires, fears, values and identities which lie beneath the surface of publicly acknowledged world. (Gledhill, p. 33)

She argues that in film, the form has grown from its preoccupation with the "realism" associated with the masculine sphere of actions and violence to the woman film, with its emphasis on talk rather than action. This generic shift has subsequently led to the empowerment of women within this genre (Gledhill, p. 35). With respect to colonialist African cinema, Shaka (2004) has argued that melodrama takes the form of the opposition, through comparative schema, between European and African subjects, culture and moral values, belief systems, and other institutional practices. The genre does not empower Africans. It represents them, like American Indians in the Western, as degenerate and barbaric people. Villainy is identified with Africans just as virtue and moral uprightness is identified with Europeans. The only exceptions are the "good" African who collaborates with the European colonial authority or the degenerate working class European who fraternizes with Africans. African counter-discourses emerge in these films mostly through the representations of violent confrontations between Europeans and Africans. Though these violent confrontations are represented as misguided and unwarranted savage attacks, since most of the films do not explain the rationale for the attacks, this silence

can be interpreted as an admission of Africans' objection to European colonial authority.

From the above definitions, one can deduce the fact that melodrama is a complex generic form with various sub-genres and categories. However, within this broad category, colonialist African films constitute a genre by themselves since they employ recognizably colonialist tropes of representation in their narrative structure, characterization and spatio-temporal articulations. What makes these films colonialist is that they are constrained by colonialist thought. Thomas Sobchack has dwelt upon the various manners in which genre films become constrained by the conventions and thoughts underlying such forms. He observes that the film genre:

> Is a classical mode in which imitation not of life but of conventions is of paramount importance...Though there may be some charm in the particular arrangement of formula variables in the most current example of a genre, the audience seeks the solid and familiar referents of that genre, expecting and usually receiving a large measure of the known as opposed to the novel. Elevated and removed from everyday life, freed from the straight-jacket of mere representationalism, genre films are pure emotional articulation, fictional constructs of the imagination, growing essentially out of group interests and values. (Sobchack, 1977, p. 52)

Though most colonialist African films belong to one genre because they subscribe to colonialist thought, they do reflect additional sub-generic narrative and thematic contingencies that require distinction. While some like *Tarzan the Ape Man* (W.S.Van Dyke, 1932), *King Solomon's Mines* (Robert Stevenson, 1937), *The African Queen* (John Huston, 1951) or *Greystoke* (Hugh Hudson, 1984) can be grouped under colonialist adventure films, others like *Sanders of the River* (Zoltan Korda, 1935), *Men of Two Worlds* (Thorold Dickson, 1946), *Simba* (Brian Desmond Hurst, 1955), *The Kitchen Toto* (Harry Hook, 1987), *Chocolat* (Claire Denis, 1988) or *Mister Johnson* (Bruce Beresford, 1990) can be categorized as colonial burden films because of the predominance of the theme of burden of colonial administration in them. *Simba* and *Kitchen Toto* can additionally be classified as decolonization conflict films or liberation struggle films, even though their British producers intended them to be some kind adventure thrillers exploiting the violent milieu of the "Mau Mau" for dramatic effects. Other sub-genres include colonialist safari films, of which a most typical example is *Mogambo* (John Ford, 1953), and colonialist autobiographical films.

The following are some of the general conventional manners in which Africans and African culture are represented in colonialist African cinema. Within the practice, the application of various metaphors of savagery and barbarism to Africans is carried out without discrimination, with respect to class, ethnicity or gender. As earlier noted, the only exception in this regard is the "good" African, and the good African is one who collaborates with British colonial authority:

(i) Prolonged emblematic panoramic shots of the African landscape. The preferred shot is that which I shall call the “safari shot.” This is a shot that captures the landscape against the background of a broad spectrum of animals roaming the landscape. Its origin lies deep in European travel literature and explorers' memoirs, which described African as a hunter's haven. A classic example of these shots can be found in *Sanders of the River*, where there is prolonged gratuitous footage of animals being sadistically pursued by an aircraft in a games park possibly in Kenya. These types of safari footage are used in many of the films. The safari shots have both land and water varieties. The water variety displays the danger posed to explorers and adventurers by crocodiles and hippopotami. Such footage is extensively used in films like *Tarzan the Ape Man*, *Sanders of the River*, *The African Queen* and *Mogambo*. Even though they are supposed to provide visual pleasures for Western spectators, the application of such footage appears to be

driven by geographic and ethnographic interests rather than the dictates of plot. The safari footage is therefore utilized purely for the sake of exploiting the geographic otherness and difference of the African landscape for the visual pleasure of sedentary spectators in Europe who do not have the financial wherewithal to engage in adventures and travels and have the benefit of physically beholding the scenes that are packaged for them in form of safari film footage. Through the safari footage, they are invited to partake in the wild pleasures of adventures.

(ii) The representation of Africans as cannibals. Examples of this kind of representation can be found in *Sanders of the River*, especially in the sequence dedicated to the killing of Fergusson by king Mofalaba. It is encapsulated in the Pidgin English exchange between Mofalaba and his subjects: "Who chop Fergusson?" meaning, "Who ate Fergusson?" to which they all answer defensively, "the white man chop Fergusson."

(iii) The portrayal of Africa as a symbolic Garden of Eden -- albeit one infested with dangerous diseases -- through the use of surrealistic lighting. This type of cinematic framing of the African landscape is utilized in the opening sequence of *Men of Two Worlds*, a film that deals with the theme of the clash of cultures. In this film, through the use of special lens filters, static

camera pans, and expressionistic lighting, an atmosphere of ironic calm and serenity is created, even though the film has much to do with the deception of outward appearances. As the film unfolds, we begin to realize that the initial symbolic framing of the landscape as a "Garden of Eden" is intended as an ironic comment upon the fact that the area is infested with the deadly Lassa fever carrier, the tsetse fly. Much of the film has to do with the cultural and metaphysical confrontations that arise when a London educated son of the village is imported to try and persuade his people of the need for resettlement elsewhere.

(iv) The organization of a cinematic scheme of binarisms that uses European criteria in judging traditional African institutional practices. The intention is to portray how radically inferior African cultural practices are in comparison to those of Europe. This is the organizational mentality behind colonialist film culture. The regime of this cinematic practice operates through comparative alternation of shots that display the outward appearances of Europeans and Africans, the interior decors and furnishing of their dwellings, environments, social atmospheres and moods, or through narrative comments on African social practices. The whole reasoning proceeds from the use of European norms and values in the assessment of African cultural practices.

(v) The representation of Africans as a sexually perverse people eternally preoccupied with procreation because of their different marital practices. Typical examples of these tropes of representation abound in most of the films but they are much more explicitly portrayed in the sequences that follow the proposal and marriage between Lilongo and Bosambo in *Sanders of the River*, and also in the sequence that proceeds the departure for the "gorilla country" by the hunters in *Mogambo*, where the wives of one of the guides are paraded as an instance of the sexual perversion of Africans. I should like to add at this point that polygamy is an authentic ancient African cultural practice, one that is widely practised even today. The portrayal of this practice as an index of sexual permissiveness is another instance of Europeans projecting their values upon Africans.

(vi) The portrayal of African kings as despots and their subjects as oppressed people in need of European political redemption. While it is true that there is historical evidence of reigns of tyrannical kings in Africa -- as there is in every other part of the world -- the traditional mode of government had its own way of ridding itself of such bad elements. They were either given poison to drink publicly by the kingmakers as evidence of the society's dissatisfaction with their

governance or compulsorily exiled from the kingdom (Crowder, 1962, pp. 53-65). African kings or community leaders are portrayed as despots in *Tarzan the Ape Man*, *Sanders of the River*, *King Solomon's Mines*, *Men of Two Worlds*, and *Simba*.

(vii) The representation of the African environment, metaphorically, as a personal antagonist that must be overcome or defeated through symbolic heroic acts. Tropes of this representation are much more prevalent in adventure films like *Tarzan the Ape Man*, *King Solomon's Mines* and *The African Queen*, but they can also be seen in colonial burden films like *Sanders of the River* and *Men of Two Worlds*, where the struggle to conquer the environment is symbolically portrayed as the triumph of a dogged work ethic over debilitating sickness, Lassa fever or malaria fever, unleashed by the environment.

(viii) The cinematic constitution of two types of colonized African archetypes: the cooperative and therefore civilized African, and the rebellious and barbaric ones. Subjective camera positions are granted more to the former than the latter.

(ix) The organization of a cinematic narrative structure and subjective camera positioning around a European male protagonist whose "heroic" acts of physical and symbolic militarism

are applauded as necessary appurtenances of the burden of "civilizing" the natives. All films with armed confrontations between Europeans and Africans are filmed this way.

(x) The representation of Africans and African cultural practices as objects of visual pleasures. This practice is most prevalent in those films that incorporate African dances into their narrative structures. Anybody well informed in traditional African performance practices will be amused by the incongruity of the transplantation. Often, they appear to have been grafted into the narrative for the purely visual pleasures of Western spectators since the dances do not further the progress of the narrative in any way.

(xi) The emblematic representation of pre-colonial African soldiers as spear and shield carrying or bow and arrow wielding warriors attired exotically with white-plumed headgears.

Shaka (2004) discovered that all of the above do not occur in one single film. Historical periods and the thematic preoccupations in each sub-genre determine the choice of representation.

Nigerian Cinema before the Video Film Era

Like other modern media of mass communication and entertainment in Nigeria, I argued that film is essentially a colonial inheritance. Its advent in the country took two forms: independent commercial exhibitions and government

sponsored productions. The activities of independent film exhibitors started as early as 1903 when Spanish and English merchants began to exhibit films regularly to fee-paying audiences at the Old Captain Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos. The colonial government involvement in film production started in 1929 in an attempt to contain an outbreak of a plague within its Lagos Protectorate. The initiative to use film as a medium for public enlightenment/instruction on the vectors of the plague was the brainchild of William Sellers, the Chief Health Officer, Federal Department of Health. Sellers employed film to illustrate to the people of the Lagos Protectorate the ways in which rats carry the disease, and also enlisted their cooperation in eliminating the plague-bearing rats. This public enlightenment programme was timely in curtailing the spread of the false rumour and superstition on the causes of the epidemic in the Protectorate. The success of this experimentation led the colonial administration to adopt film as a medium of instruction in what was then a largely pre-literate society (Shaka, 1994, p. 230).

Thereafter, in 1931, specially designed Mobile Cinema Vans were built in Nigeria to take instructional films to every nook and corner of the country. This exercise led to the creation of Mobile Film Units (MFUs). The success of instructional cinema in colonial Nigeria, and of its accessory units like the MFUs, led to the introduction of similar programmes in British colonies in the Caribbean and Asia. At the beginning of the Second World War, the British colonial government in London established a Colonial Film Unit (CFU), as part of its war propaganda strategies, and affiliated CFUs were set up in its colonies, including Nigeria. Initially,

these units showed essentially war propaganda films to aid British war efforts. However, at the end of the war, emphasis shifted to the production and exhibition of instructional films. The local CFU branch was also renamed Federal Film Unit (FFU) in 1946. This consolidation signalled the foundation of what was hoped would one day grow to become a full-fledged film industry (Shaka, 1994, pp. 230-233).

To train indigenous manpower for this sector of the economy, the colonial government in Nigeria sent Adamu Halilu, A. A. Fajemisin, J. A. Otigba and Malam Yakubu Aina for training at the Film Training School in Accra, Ghana. When this first generation of filmmakers returned from their training in Accra, they worked under the supervision of N. F. Spurr who was then the Chief Film Officer of the FFU. Some of the documentaries produced by the FFU in its days include *Empire Day Celebrations in Nigeria* (1948), *Small Pox* (1950), *Leprosy* (1950) *Port Harcourt Municipal Council Elections* (1950), and *Queen Elizabeth II's Visit to Nigeria* (1956) (Shaka, pp. 232-233).The first generation filmmakers who were students of the Accra Film Training School were trained essentially as documentarists by the protégés of the John Grierson School of Documentary of the Old Empire Marketing Board's Film Unit, which subsequently metamorphosed at the outset of the Second World War to the Colonial Film Unit. Adamu Halilu, the only filmmaker of note to emerge from the Accra Film School, started making feature films only as from the mid-1970s.

Post-colonial features film production in Nigeria started in the mid-1970s when filmmakers such as Ola Balogun, Eddy Ugbomah, Francis Oladele, Sanya Dosumu,

Jab Adu, etc; had returned from Europe and North America where most of them studied film production. Hence in Nigerian film history, the year 1975 is significant because it was in that year that truly indigenous full-length feature films began to emerge. Two films were released in that year. They were *Amadi* (Ola Balogun, 1975), the first film to be shot in an indigenous language, Igbo, in Nigeria, and *Dinner with the Devil* (Sanya Dosumu, 1975). It is also worth noting that both films were produced by indigenous film production companies. *Amadi* was produced by Ola Balogun's production company, Afrocult Films, while *Dinner with the Devil* was produced by Starline Films. Before 1975, films with Nigerian themes and actors, directed by foreign directors had attracted negative reviews because Nigerian critics felt their narrative techniques had been influenced by the aesthetic preferences of the directors' societies. Such negative criticisms greeted *Kongi's Harvest* (1970) directed by the African-American, Ossie Davis, and *Bullfrog in the Sun* (1971), directed by Hans Jurgen Pohland, a German director. Similar fate befell Lebanese sponsored productions such as *Son of Africa* (1971) and *Golden Women* (1971).

After the epoch-making efforts of 1975, indigenous movies produced and directed by Nigerians began to be regular products on Nigerian screens. The bumper harvest years spanned between 1975 and 1985. Within a space of ten years, Nigerian filmmakers produced over fifty films, an average of four films per year, and most of them were well received by Nigerian audiences who were fed up with Hollywood Westerns/Action movies, Indian Melodramas and Chinese Kung Fu films. A central figure in this decade-long upsurge in

film production was Ola Balogun, trained at the famous French Film Training School, Institut de Hautes Etudes Cinèmatographiques, Paris. His personal films, apart from documentaries, include, *Alpha* (1974), *Amadi* (1975), *Ajani Ogun* (1976), *Musik Man* (1977), *Black Goddess* (1978), *Cry Freedom* (1981) and *Money Power* (1982).His other major contribution was that he was instrumental in facilitating the smooth transition from stage to film production by members of the Yoruba Traveling Theatre Companies, especially at a time when the influence of television and film was beginning to undermine their source of livelihood. Films which he directed for the crossover companies of the Yoruba Traveling Theatre include *Jaiyesimi* (1979), *Aiye* (1979), *Aropin N'tenia* (1982), and *Ayanmo*, all of which were productions of Hubert Ogunde's stage classics, and films such as*Ija Ominira* (1982) and *Kadara*/Destiny (1982) directed by Ola Balogun for Adeyemi Folayan (Ade Love Films), and *Orun Mooru* and *Mosebolatan* (1984/85) directed for Moses Olaiya Adejumo's production company, Alawada Films. Other notable directors of the historical period under consideration, i.e., 1975-1985, include the prolific and popular filmmaker, Eddy Ugbomah, whose production company, Edifosa Films, released *The Rise and Fall of Dr Oyenusi* (1979), *The Boy is Good* (1979), *The Mask* (1979), *Oil Doom* (1980), *Bolus '80* (1982), *Vengeance of the Cult* (1982), and *Death of a Black President* (1983) (Shaka, 1994, pp. 242-249).

Within the same period, a pioneer filmmaker, Adamu Halilu, brought out films such as *Shehu Umar* (1976), *Kanta of Kebbi* (1977), and *Moment of Truth* (1978). Also, from the stable of Cineventure came *Bisi, Daughter of the River* (Jab

Adu, 1977), which helped launch the acting career of Patricia Ebigwei, known internationally as Patti Boulaye. It is instructive to note that apart from the works of Adamu Halilu, most of the films were basically independent productions with little state or international film sponsorship. To sponsor their films, most of the filmmakers had to either fall back on their personal savings, borrow money from the banks, or their relatives or friends, or mortgage family/personal properties. This explains why the economic downturn which started in 1985 with the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) by the President Ibrahim Babangida effectively squeezed out of the film production scene the independent filmmakers. Since Nigeria is not an industrialized country, the independent filmmaker had to contend with the problem of purchasing foreign currencies with which to buy raw stock, film production equipment, hire essential technical crews, and process and edit their films. The devaluation of the Naira which followed the introduction of SAP made this impossible. Hence since 1985 till date, film production in Nigeria has been a sporadic and occasional phenomenon. It is within this framework that we can better appreciate the redeeming entrance of video films into the Nigerian entertainment scene.

Film as a Cultural Commodity and Medium of Social Identity

In a key research carried out by Shaka (2022), and published as a chapter entitled, "Genres and Recycling as Templates for the Screen/Film Story," published in the book entitled, *Film: A Production Resource Book*," edited by Hyginus Ekwuazi,

Augustine-Ufua Enahoro and Umar Faruk Jibril, he defines film as a cultural commodity; and here, he was deliberately placing emphasis on the word "commodity" as a reference to something which is sold because it has value for us. It is something that we value that we pay for. But in the case of film, we are dealing with a different kind of commodity, quite unlike fashion, cars, houses, food stuff, books, shoes, household electronics or drinks. Film is a cultural commodity, which means that what it sells is the culture and value system of the people. Now, these are quite intangible things. They are not things that you can buy and hold in your hands. Yet, they are the things that matter most in every society. At least we know that every society values its culture because it is what defines them as a people. The culture of the people reflects their customs, moral values, belief systems, their level of scientific and technological attainments, their vision of who they are, what they love to eat, drink, wear, or articles of governance that they subscribe to. Culture is what defines a people in terms of their world outlook. But what is it that we value in culture since it is an intangible commodity? What culture sells are our dreams, heart desires, aspirations, or our self-image. Of course, self-image is related to issues of self-identity. Following this simple logic, we can deduce that what culture sells is the identity of the people. Who are we as a people? What do we value as a society? What are our dreams and aspirations? Which kind of society are we aspiring to build? If you don't desire something badly, you will not be prepared to make some sacrifice to get it. If films sell culture as a commodity, through what vehicle(s) is this culture sold to us? Or put differently, when we go to the cinema theatres,

what fascinates us most? Is it the stories of the films we watch or the people used to anchor the stories? I am sure that this is a good topic for debate, but more often than not, when we go to the movies, we go to watch our favourite movies stars. They are the bearers of our dreams and heart desires. They give the kiss of life we would have loved to give on our first date with the lady or gentleman of our heart desire. They give that perfect uppercut which flattens the villain who is trying to molest that innocent lady on a lonely alleyway. They fly those jet bombers that set ablaze the camp of the terrorists who kill and maim innocent women and children. They are the greatest mariners and sailors we dream to be. The greatest farmers we would love to be or even the greatest boxers that make us shout with a mouthful of popcorn, “giam belle". We would want to be like Mohammed Ali, one of the greatest black sportsmen of our all time. The movie star is that great vehicle which the film industry uses to sell our culture. Richard Dyer, who is one of the world’s major authorities on stars and stardom, has this to say about the role of stars in the film industry:

> Stars are made for profit. In terms of the market, stars are part of the way films are sold. The star’s presence in a film is a promise of a certain kind of thing that you would see if you went to see the film. Equally, stars sell newspapers and magazines, and are used to sell toiletries, fashion, cars, and almost anything else ... the market function of stars is only one aspect of their economic importance. They are also a property on the strength of

> whose name money can be raised for a film, they are an asset to the person (the star him/herself), studio and agent who controls them; they are a major part of the cost of a film. Above all, they are part of the labour that produces film as a commodity that can be sold for profit in the marketplace (Dyer, 2000, pp. 606-607).

If you want to understand why most Nigerian men who can afford them want to marry movie stars such as Rita Dominic, Hilda Dokubo, Monalisa Chinda, Genevieve Nnaji, Stephanie Okereke, Ini Edo, Kate Henshaw-Nuttal, Dakore Egbuson, Liz Benson, Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde, etc, it is because they represent in their psyche, the ideal image of their dream woman. And because they represent the woman of their dream, when they marry them, they soon discover to their utter disappointment that the person they married is a woman after all, with the usual tantrums, not the dream woman of the screen, which is a screen persona, a glamorized image which helps to sell the dream of the ideal woman. But they are highly valuable possessions being part of the cultural commodity called film.

Apart from the stars who attract and motivate us to go to the cinema, the next major source of interest in a film is the narrative - the ability to tell a good story. With respect to the narrative film, Nigerian filmmakers are adjudged great storytellers. If they were not good storytellers, they would not have captured the African film market and the market for African immigrants in Europe and North America, including

the African diaspora film market. Nigerian filmmakers are great storytellers. But what are the sources of their stories? What inspires our screenwriters? Femi Shaka (2021), in an article entitled, "Nollywood: Reconstructing the Historical and Socio-Cultural Contexts of the Nigerian Video Film Industry," traces the sources of inspiration for Nigerian filmmakers, especially at the juncture where we switched production format from celluloid to the video format. He argues that as "an art form, the film medium, like our literature, have historically documented the social mentality, fears and desires of the Nigerian society through the works of our major film makers"(Shaka, 2011, p. 241). The 1990s was a decade of social upheaval. The military President, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, started a political experimentation which resulted in the establishment of two Federal Government funded political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). The experiment resulted in the election of M.K.O. Abiola as President, in an election acclaimed to be the freest and fairest in Nigeria's political history. But Abiola was denied ascension to power. His insistence on the realization of his presidential mandate produced social upheavals which led to his detention and subsequent death in detention. The crisis led to President Ibrahim Babangida stepping aside. An interim government headed by Ernest Shonekan, to placate the people of the South West, was quickly toppled by another military regime headed by Sani Abacha, who then instituted a reign of terror in the country which led to the killing of several journalists, thereby driving a portion of the Nigerian press underground. It equally led to the formation of the National Democratic Coalition

(NEDECO), led by the late veteran politician, Anthony Enahoro. In the midst of this political upheaval, the story of ritual killings of people referred to as "Otokoto" broke out in Owerri. This was the social context that inspired the release of ritual related stories like *Living in Bondage I & II, Circle of Doom I & II, Glamour Girls I & II, Taboo I & II, Jezebel I & II, Evil Passion I & II, Nneka: the Pretty Serpent I & II, Rattle Snake I & II, etc*, which form the category of films classified as ritual genre.

The traumatic social upheavals which marked the annulment of MKO Abiola's Presidential Election resulted in political instability in the country. The governance of the country suffered. Political institutions became moribund. Most politicians either went into hiding or went into exile. The effect was social insecurity and mass poverty which made many Nigerians to resort to bizarre means of earning a living. While many took to ritual killings, as evidenced by the Otokoto killings in Owerri, many young women, especially those from Edo State, fled to Italy for prostitution. The video films, Glamour Girls and Italian Connection reflected this tendency. Nigerian social anthropologists are yet to properly rationally explain why people indulge in ritual killings as a means of amassing wealth, but the phenomenon is widespread in Nigeria. In retrospect, I would like to say that why the filmmakers of the period did not continue with the old practice of using the film medium as a corrective measure or as the "voice of the people", to quote Frank Ukadike (2013), is quite perplexing. Ukadike had noted that:

> In broader ideological terms, in African cinema, there has been a deliberate attempt to

> use the film medium as a "voice of the people"... politically and aesthetically, there has been relentless experimentation with film form aimed at achieving an indigenous film culture distinct from the dominant foreign commercial cinemas (Ukadike, 2013, pp. 149-150).

He had further observed that "In Africa, specifically in the francophone areas, the audacity with which African identities, politics and social life have been shown on film reflects the rhetoric of different permeating ideological discourses, and the sociopolitical dynamics impacting upon cultural production" (Ukadike, p.150). At a time when the more matured film cultures represented by the practice in the Francophone African countries were using film for ideological pedagogy in the search for social identity in postcolonial Africa, why did our filmmakers break with tradition? Why did Nigerian filmmakers shun the tradition of using film to interrogate corruption and political brigandage? Why did Nigerian filmmakers opt for commercial cinema instead of the cinema of political engagement as the radical Latin American filmmakers did in the 1960s through the framework of Third Cinema? Shaka (2021) was equally baffled by this development:

> In view of the social upheavals and economic depression experienced by the populace, one would have expected that the emergent video films would reflect the turbulent social history that the country was going through. Ironically,

> this was not the case. The bad leadership and corruption which had brought mass poverty in the society and which had been well accounted for in Nigerian prose fiction, drama and film production in the celluloid format were absent in the new video film culture. The question to pose at this point is this: were the filmmakers in the video format blinded to the mass poverty and suffering in the land? (pp. 242-243).

Though in 2011, Shaka had explained this apathy towards political engagement to be a product of desperation for economic survival by any means necessary, to paraphrase Malcom X, in retrospect, it seems to me that besides this desperation for survival, this social apathy can also be explained by the choice of popular culture as source of material for creativity in the video film industry. In his article entitled, "The Popular Economy," Fiske (2006) has emphasized the need to distinguish between two types of economies in every society: "the financial economy" and "the cultural economy." Writing on the concept of "cultural commodities," Fiske has noted that though cultural goods do not have defined use-values, they form the primary creative materials for the construction of social identities. Fiske argues that cultural products cannot be adequately explained in financial terms because in this type of economy, what is exchanged and circulated through the cultural economy is not "wealth but meanings, pleasures and social identities" (Fiske, 2006, as cited in Shaka, 2017, pp. 364-365).

The kind of social hysteria expressed in respect of popular literature was initially extended to the practice of video filmmakers. One of the leading lights in African literature, Femi Osofisan, has expressed concern at the aesthetic preferences of Nollywood films with respect to the vexatious issue of films of the ritual genre:

> I will not, as you know, be the first to make this complaint. Even our friends outside have voiced the same unease about the ambiguity of Nollywood. The common question that people ask, as you know is - why this unceasing preoccupation with juju, this relentless celebration of dark rituals and diabolic cults? Practically every Nollywood director seems to have been caught in the spell - mix a diet of grotesque murders and cacophonous chants and bizarre incantations, and smile all the way to the bank! (Osofisan, 2016, p. 30)

Without doubt, Osofisan is one of the most acclaimed Nigerian second generation playwrights after the class of Wole Soyinka, J.P. Clark, Ola Rotimi and Zulu Sofola. In fact, the anxiety which Osofisan expressed above in respect of Nollywood is not too different from those of Mathew Arnold who felt that popular culture has a depraving influence on members of the working class. However, Osofisan is not alone in expressing this line of reasoning. At one time or the other, people like Ola Balogun, Eddie Ugbomah, and one time Minister of Information, Dora Akunyili, had accused practitioners of the Nigerian video film industry of contributing to the nation's

poor international image. She made that accusation at a training and community film production workshop organized by members of the Nigerian National Volunteer Service and Del York International in Abuja in 2009. She expressed concern about "the penchant of Nollywood to focus on voodoo, crime and advance fee fraud (419) in their plot to the exclusion of positive attributes of Nigerians in a bid to market their films" (Onyekakeyah, 2009, as cited in Shaka, 2011, p. 253). These negative views directed at Nollywood productions often fail to distinguish between fiction and fact. Films are essentially fictional representations of society. They should not be mistaken for social reality. They are products of the popular imagination. Besides, Nollywood, like its older counterpart, Hollywood, is marketed by two principal forces: genre-driven productions and the star system. Having touched a little bit on the role of the star system in the marketing and sales of video films as cultural commodities, what remains to be examined is the role of genre related productions in the sale of films.

The growth and development of Nollywood has been tied to genre related productions. As far back as 2003, in an article entitled, "History, Genre and Nigeria's Emergent Video Film Industry," Shaka (2003) had examined how genres helped to grow Nollywood as an industry and stated that the cycle of genre productions started with ritual films, followed by the highly controversial Christian video films. Some early Christian video films which attracted the censorship of the Federal film regulatory body, the Film and Video Censorship Board (FVCB), includes *Rapture I & II* by Helen Akpabio's Liberty Films. They were followed by epics, the comic genre, armed robbery and gangsterism genre *(Issakaba),* campus

stories, etc. Genre-related productions, especially films of the ritual genre, has brought a lot of opprobrium to Nollywood as can be seen from the views expressed by Femi Osofisan and Dora Akunyili.

Historically speaking, the criticism which has trailed the production of the ritual related genre is a replay of what obtained in Hollywood in the great depression years of the 1930s in the United States of America, where mass poverty and urban crime in metropolitan centres across America gave birth to what Richard Griffith refers to as the "gangster film cycle" (Griffith, 1976, p.111). According to Griffith, the films which helped to define the cycle, were *The Racket* (1928), *The Big House* (1930), *Little Caesar* (1930), *The Secret Six* (1931), *Quick Millions* (1931), *Smart Money* (1931), *The Public Enemy* (1931), all of which dealt with the theme of the gangster as a popular hero. As Griffith puts it, the "last big gangster films of this cycle made explicit the emergent fact that the gangster had become a popular hero because only an outlaw could achieve success in the economic chaos of depression in America" (p.112). However, the highly popular Hollywood gangster genre of the 1930s, like the ritual genre of Nollywood in 1990s, were greatly hated by members of the American upper middle class which considered such films as washing America's dirty linen in the open before the whole world. What happened then is what is happening now in the sense that even though the American upper middle class of the 1930s was not the greatest patrons of Hollywood movies, by virtue of their education and position in society, they were able to mount pressure on Hollywood to stop the production of the

gangster cycle of films. Giving reasons why the gangster film had to be dropped by Hollywood, Giffith submits as follows:

> Its disappearance marked the first instance of a paradox which has plagued the Motion Picture Industry, ever since. A story theme becomes popular enough with general audiences to warrant a cycle of films to be built around it. But the 'theme' itself is repugnant to the upper middle class who, though they form only a small percentage of total motion picture patronage, are organized and articulate. Then, although the cycle's box-office warrants its continuance, it is abandoned in difference to the pressure groups... the gangster as stencil disappeared, but his influences remained. The crime films brought the habit of a naturalistic approach to the screen. Their best known contribution was a new swiftness of continuity which lifted the movies out of the dialogue doldrums of the photographed play (Giffith, p. 113).

Cycles of genres have a way of making a positive impact on film form. In the case of Nollywood, the ritual cycle of films have had a positive impact on Nigerian film form. For instance, prior to the release of *Living in Bondage*, most Nigerians films had been dialogue-driven at the expense of cinematic narration. However, the popularity of *Living in Bondage* rests in the fact that even though the first editions were released in Igbo language before English subtitled

editions came out, non-Igbo-speaking spectators were able to follow and enjoy the story because the narrative was visually-driven rather than being dialogue-driven. Anyone who has taken time to carry out a detailed screening of films within the cycle would find out that most of them adopted visual narration whereby emphasis is on the camera telling the story rather using dialogue to drive it. This is actually the root cause of the popularity of this cycle of films among the populace. The ritual genre may be hated by the Nigerian elite but the film form adopted in the genre taught Nigerians how to tell cinematic stories. The popularity and financial success which witnessed this cycle of film inspired the video filmmakers to fan out into new story themes which led to the birth of other cycles of films. In this manner, the industry was born.

The Representation of Women in Nollywood: The Feminist Study

The issue of the representation of women in Nollywood is a key issue of cinema and social identity which my student, Ola Nnennaya Uchendu and I studied during her days of postgraduate studies here at the University of Port Harcourt. I had taught a course in cinema and gender studies and that inspired her to specialize in this field. In a very detailed study which we carried out and was published as an article entitled, "Gender Representations in Nollywood Video Film Culture," published as a lead article in *The Crab: Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*, issue number 7, June, 2012, we found out that feminism, the movement for gender equality, goes as far back as Ancient Greece, when the Greek playwright wrote a play on this issue entitled, *Lysistrata*. This play was a critique of the

Greek Peloponnesian war which was pursued by the men with a single mindedness that saw many young women growing up without suitors for marriage because all the men were fighting in the war front. In the play, the women carry out an anti-war revolt in order to bring the war to a speedy end. We sited this issue in Classical drama in our research to prove that the women's struggle for gender equality did not begin with the great Women's Movement in Europe and North America which climaxed in the 1960s. What our citation implied was that the struggle for gender equality is a long standing struggle which women are not prepared to give up.

For much of history throughout the world, social and legal traditions have tolerated or even promoted the physical assault of women by men. In ancient Rome, for instance, a husband could legally divorce, physically punish, or even kill his wife for behaviours that were permitted by men. In medieval Europe, punishment of wives was called chastisement, a term that emphasized the corrective purpose of the action while minimizing the violent nature of the behaviour. Under medieval English common law, a husband could not be prosecuted for raping his wife because the law provided that a wife could not refuse to consent for sex to her husband. I don't know what the law says concerning this in modern Nigeria, but in traditional Nigerian society, what obtains will be close to what was generally accepted in English common law. The widespread belief that women are intellectually inferior to men, led most societies to limit women's education to learning only domestic skills. These kinds of abhorrent traditional social practices inspired the struggle for gender equality. With respect to the social identity

of women's representation in Nollywood, the practice doesn't seem different. The video film that helped to launch Nollywood as a commercial cinema was a production of Kenneth Nnebue's blockbuster, *Living in Bondage* (1992). In this video film, the docile, faithful and submissive wife (Merit) is used for money making rituals by her husband, Andy (Kenneth Okonkwo), when his attempt to use a prostitute for the ritual was rejected by his secret cult. In the film, women are represented as dispensable objects of ritual sacrifices. After Living in Bondage came *Circle of Doom* (Okechukwu Ogunjiofor, 1993) which portrays an evil woman in rivalry with a docile honest wife over the affection and attention of their husband. The next major film was *Glamour Girls* (Christian Onu, 1994), also produced by Kenneth Nnebue. This movie ushered in the era of video films in English language. The movie portrayed women as promiscuous and dishonest. Other pioneer movies of the period which portrayed women as diabolical and demonic include *Jezebel 1& 2* (Francis Agu, 1994), *Evil Passion* (Zeb Ejiro, 1994) and *Nneka: The Pretty Serpent* (Zeb Ejiro, 1994). From our study, we drew the conclusion that the commercial boom in ritual film genre that demonized women encouraged more entrants to film production, and the more bizarre and diabolical, the better the commercial success. One cannot totally blame the filmmakers of the era because the industry was a post-Structural Adjustment Programme creative endeavour undertaken under the harsh economic depression in Nigeria, induced by the Bretton Wood financial institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The industry was thus driven by the craze for money occasioned by mass

unemployment in society. Evidently, the emergent video film industry provided a means for survival. In our conclusion in this study, we noted that film is a very powerful tool for the construction of social identity and the engendering of a particular ideology, in this regard, the ideology of patriarchy. We equally noted that the cinema can also be used to enslave or liberate women through self-representation. We felt that the more women used the medium to tell their own stories, the more we would encounter stories with women heroines which will serve as role models for young women in our society.

The Representation of Women in Nollywood: The Psychoanalytic Study

This joint research between me and my student Chisimdi Ihentuge developed out of a course I taught, entitled, "Psychoanalysis and the Cinema." The inspiration to undertake the research was obtained from the objections of a reputable African Film Scholar, Teshome Gabriel, to the use of Cine-Structuralism and Psychoanalytic critical models, for the analysis of Third World Films. Since Nigeria is a Third World country we carried out the study to explore the possibility of applying Freudian Psychoanalysis to the study of Nollywood Films. The first thing we did was to define the field of Freudian Psychoanalysis which was an outgrowth of the clinical methods of Sigmund Freud in the management of certain mental disorders. The method investigated the part played by the conscious and unconscious elements of the mind, and how their interactions affect our state of mind and our personality. The Freudian method was based on clinical observations rather than laboratory experimentations. The

concept of psychoanalysis was propounded by the Austrian Physician, Sigmund Freud and further advanced by Jacques Lacan, a French Physician. Our study was based on Freudian psychoanalysis which investigated the conscious and unconscious forces governing human behaviour rather than the Lacanian Psychoanalytic theory that investigated the role language and speech as clinical tools for investigating mental disorders. Lacan's famous slogan was that the unconscious is structured liked language. We, however, preferred the Freudian variant because of its emphasis on providing platforms for the study and understanding of the human personality.

Personality in Freudian psychoanalysis consists of three major systems. The *id*, the *ego*, and the *superego*. The *id* is the most primitive and less accessible part of the human psyche. It is entirely unconscious and includes sexual urges and repressed motives seeking immediate satisfaction. Dreams and other impulses and instinct that seem strange to the individual stem from the *id*. The *super ego* represents conscience and encompasses moral and ethical principles that the individual acquires early in life. The *ego* represents reason and consciousness, and it is there to always reconcile the constant scuffles between the *id* and the *superego*. Also worthy of note is Freud's ideas of sexuality, primary among which are the ideas of infantile sexuality that begins at infancy, not a puberty, especially the male child's relationship with his mother. Tied to this concept is the *Oedipus complex*, the child's conceived desire to eliminate the parent of the same sex (the father figure), and to be the sexual partner of the mother. This principle seems to be psychological basis of the bond between the mother and her first son and between the father

and his first daughter. The *libido* as explained by Freud has three stages: the *oral* and the *anal* and the *phallic*. The concept of *defence mechanism* and *dream-work*. The individual adopts *defence mechanism* to aid repression of certain unwanted and unattainable desire by adopting psychic processes such as *transference*, *projection* and *screen memory*. In transference, the psychopath redirects recalled emotions away from a parental figure towards the psychoanalyst, the physician. Two Nollywood films were selected for the study *Enslaved* (Lanslot Odua Imasuen, 2015) and *Lights Out* (Nonso Ekene Okonkwo, 1915). In *Enslaved*, at the tender age of 8, Monica, (Stephanie Okereke) loses her parents and her only brother in an auto crash, leaving her at the mercy of her uncle, Dr. Sam Umeh (Justus Esiri), who looks after her, in *loco parentis*. At the age of 13, Monica is sexually abused, raped and defiled by her uncle, Dr. Umeh, who also keeps her under the hypnotic fear that she will die, if she reveals her experiences to anyone. As a result of these two tragic events (the death of her parents and the sexual abuse of her uncle), Monica becomes schizophrenic. She later meets and falls in love with Donald Ejike (Obi Emelife), who is ready to marry her despite her mental state, until he discovers the clandestine sexual relationship between Monica and her uncle. Because of this discovery, he ends the relationship with Monica. However, on the day of Donald's wedding to another lady, Amanda (Joyce Ukoh), Monica shoots and kills Donald and his bride. She is consequently charged to court for premeditated murder. Dr. Sam Umeh hires the services of Barrister Andrew (Desmond Elliot) who does his best and succeeds in getting Monica discharged and acquitted in court. In the process, Andrew and Monica fall in

love and even go as far as getting married at the Court Registry. But trouble ensues when Andrew catches Monica and Dr. Sam Umeh almost in the act of love making and walks out again on Monica. In her state of frenzy, she stabs Andrew and herself. She is rescued by her uncle Dr. Sam Umeh, while Andrew bleeds to death. His spirit begins to torment Monica, telling her to openly confess her illicit sexual relationship with her uncle if she expects to be cured of her schizophrenia. Meanwhile, Dr Sam Umeh's wife, Magdalene (Ngozi Ezeonu) consults a man of God over their childlessness and it is revealed to her that her husband must confess his affairs with his niece for the couple to start having children.

When confronted by his wife, Dr. Umeh denies the affair, but Monica confesses to her uncle's wife and her confession purges her subconscious memory, thereby making her regain her mental health, while Dr. Umeh became insane may be as a result of the injury to his ego. The film clearly depicts the fact that the two painful childhood experiences of Monica played a major role in inducing psychopathic tendencies such as social isolation and depression. Dr. Sam Umeh's later confession that he had to sexually exploit his niece because his wife was denying him sex is an abhorrent excuse. Monica's mental sickness of schizophrenia (multiple split personality) resulted from the suppression of the pain of parental death and loss of her elder brother.

The symptoms of schizophrenia as made manifest by Monica includes stress, anxiety, violence, hallucination, self-injury, all of these psychoses play important role in the film under discourse. In the film, Monica is represented as hearing voices instructing her to carry out violent actions. These voices

instructed her to kill Donald and his bride. It is the hallucination about Andrew's death, and his ghost constantly appearing and speaking to Monica that encourages her to confess the affair to her uncle's wife Magdalene. In *Enslaved*, the psychic process of projection is also employed by Monica who denies the fact that she is sick but rather projects her sickness upon her uncle, who she says is sick, not herself. Even through, lack of space will not allow me to analyse the second film in the study, Chisimdi Ihentuge and I had proven that Freudian psychoanalytic critical model can be applied in the criticism of Nollywood films.

Film Marketing Processes and Self-Representation in Nollywood.

The issue of film marketing is very important to wealth creation and the sustainability of self-representation in any movie industry. When my student Chisimdi Ihentuge, decided to carry out his doctorate degree research in the field of film marketing, knowing fully well that I am not a specialist in the discipline of Marketing, I had to appeal to the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee to allow me invite an expert in Marketing to help jointly supervise the candidate. Once that approval was granted, I invited Professor Sylva Ezema Kalu of the Department of Marketing, to help co-supervise Chisimdi Ihentuge. The experience was highly rewarding. As the supervision advanced, we were able to jointly carry out research on the marketing processes of Nollywood. The research resulted in an article entitled, "Marketing Processes in Nollywood: Re-assessing Prominent Considerations in the Marketing of Nollywood Films," published as a lead article in

The Crab: Journal of Theatre and Media Arts, volume 11, June 2018. In the article, we argued that marketing is a very critical part of any business because of its overbearing effects or influence on such a business. We argued that film could be said to be a social product which satisfies social needs; that films could be bought as tangible physical objects recorded on tapes or discs, or as services rendered through content delivery platforms such as Netflix, Iroko TV, DSTV, etc. We argued that radical strategies are needed to remain in business because marketing has been the sustaining power of Nollywood since the inception of the industry. We noted that though the industry has not been offering the best quality of films to consumers, the filmmakers have religiously applied two key strategies in the marketing of their movies. Some of the marketing strategies which we discovered that sustain Nollywood is the employment of familiar storylines and narrative techniques. The storylines are exploited along the lines of genre-related storylines. For instance, the movie industry started with ritual stories, but when the ritual stories were subjected to constant criticisms by the Nigerian elites and members of the middle classes, the filmmakers switched to human trafficking stories dealing with the trafficking of mostly Edo State girls to Italy in movies such as *Glamour Girls 1* (Chika Onukwufor, 1994), which was the first video film shot and marketed in English language. Its sequence, *Glamour Girls 2: The Italian Connection* (Chika Onukwufor, 1996), both directed by Chika Christian Onu, a Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) staff who had to use the artistic pseudonym, Chika Onukwufor, because civil service policies forbade civil servants to engage in professional private practice. This policy

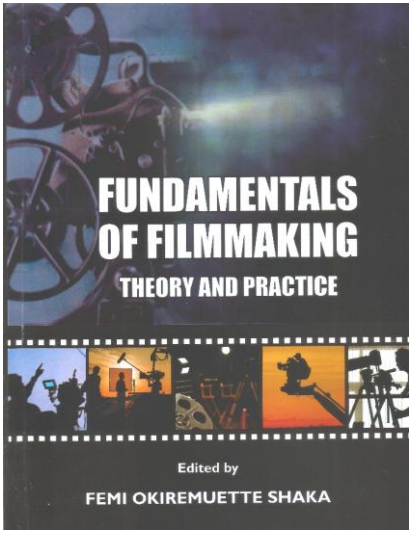
was also what made Chris Obi Rapu to change his name to the pseudonym, Vic Mordi, when he directed the legendary blockbuster, *Living in Bondage 1* (1992). The switch from ritual stories also triggered the birth of epic stories and Christian evangelical stories. The epic stories included movies such as *Battle of Musanga* (Bolaji Dawodu, 1996), *Ikuku* (Emeka Ani, 1996), *Out of Cage* (Ndubuisi Okoh, 1999), *King Jaja* (Harry Agina, 1999), *Red Machete* (Zeb Ejiro, 2000), *Iva* (Izu Ojukwu, 2000), *Gazulla* (Jude Okoye, 2000), *Agbogidi* (Darlington Nwaobosi, 2000), *Ngene* (Ndubuisi Okoh, 2000), etc. The Christian evangelical films included works such as *Blood of Darkness* (Andy Amenechi, 1996), *Power to Bind* (Teco Benson, 1998), *Father Moses* (Adim Williams, 1999), *Above Death* (Simisola Opeolu, 1999), *Fast Money* (Teco Benson, 2000), *Mark of the Beast* (Andy Amenechi, 2000), *Testimony* (Simisola Opeolu, 2000), *Grace to Grass* (Teco Benson, 2000), *The Price* (Teco Benson, 2000), *End of the Wicked* (Teco Benson, 2000), etc.

We also noted the filmmakers' employment of the English language as marketing tool for reaching a larger national audience. This marketing strategy which began with the video film, *Glamour Girls* 1(Chika Onukwufor, 1995), was subsequently adopted as the main medium of dialogue in Nollywood movies, even though some productions catering to the Yoruba audiences in the South-West and the Hausa speaking audiences in the North, continued to use those regional languages as media of film production. Our research also found out that the star system was equally deployed as a platform for the marketing of Nollywood movies. Our research revealed that most moviegoers had their favourite movies stars

whose films were considered must watch irrespective of the genres where such stars were working. We equally noted the marketing strategy of celebrity appearance by musicians such as Onyeka Onwenu and Laz Ekwueme, and the employment of transnational movie stars, especially those from Ghana, such as Juliet Ibrahim, Majid Michel, Van Vicker, Jackie Appiah, Nadia Buari, etc. In conclusion, we noted that there is need to incorporate online platforms and social media as additional marketing strategies in the Nollywood movie industry.

Self-Representation in Nollywood: The Imperative for the Development of Screenwriting, Directing, and Acting Manuals

Of recent, with the establishment of the Department of Film and Multimedia, which places emphasis on hands-on training in film production, I have had to rally my colleagues to move with the trends by developing instructional materials in film production. Since I have been teaching some courses in film production prior to the current dispensation, I was able to cover the core areas in film production such as Screenwriting, Film Directing and Acting. These key areas are covered in an anthology released by the Department this year,



2024, entitled, *Fundamentals of Filmmaking: Theory and Practice,* edited by the inaugural lecturer and published by the University of Port Harcourt Press. As the only Department of Film and Multimedia in Nigeria currently having three Professors and an Associate Professor in the discipline, we felt eminently positioned historically to do this kind of work in order to assist other lesser endowed Departments of Film and Multimedia or related disciplines across the country. The book is therefore a groundbreaking contribution intended to fill the gap in instructional materials for the teaching of courses in film production. Since Nollywood is reputed to be the largest employer of Nigerian youths, the importance of a book such as this cannot be overemphasized, especially since issues of self-representation and social identities are tied to competences in film production. The book is made up of 11 chapters, covering the various departments in film production such as Film History, Film Production, Screenwriting, Film Directing, Film Acting, Film Production Management, Production Design, Costume Design, Gender and the Cinema, Internet and Social Media. For purposes of this lecture, I focus on the four key chapters which I contributed: the chapter on Film History, Screenwriting, Film Directing and Film Acting. Since the work is intended for undergraduate instruction, it was agreed that I should provide the historical background to the film industry in Nigeria in addition to the core areas allocated to me. With respect to Nigerian film history, I had to document the fact that the Nigerian cinema is a product of colonial heritage, that before the advent of colonialism, Nigerians had a rich heritage of oral narrative performances in the form folktales, moonlight tales, epic narrative traditions handled by court historians

popularly referred as griots across West Africa. I had to document the fact that it was this flourishing oral performance tradition that had to be transferred to the new medium of the cinema. I argued that the cinema as an institution was an outgrowth of the industrial revolution, and that the hardware for its production, comprising the film camera, film projector, editing equipment and photochemical processes, were all products of industrialization. I also noted that it was because we were late comers to industrialization that the medium was used for several years in denigrative and stereotypical representation of Africans.

Screenwriting for Nollywood

Screenwriting is like the blueprint for film production. It is the foundation upon which a successful film is based. Taking my analogy from Civil Engineering, the screenplay is like an architectural drawing which guides the civil, structural and electrical engineers. In the case of film production, the screenplay is what guides the producer, director, the production designer, director of photography, actors, musicians and other production crews on the type of film they have embarked upon to produce. The production budget itself is tied to the type of screenplay, just as the size of the building is determined by the scope of architectural design. Everything about screenwriting cannot be taught in a single class like the one we are having now. What I will attempt to do in this lecture is to lay the building blocks for the writing of a successful screenplay. Film is an artistic commodity. What does it sell? It sells one of the most important commodity of the human race: the culture and social identity of the people.

The culture of a people represent the sum total of their belief systems, their moral and social values, their institutions of governance, scientific achievements, levels of infrastructural development, artistic achievements, etc. It is for this reason that the culture of a people provide them their social identity, their image of self-worth and identity. In this chapter, I provide a blueprint for the writing of a captivating screenplay.

The cinema is the magical tool for the sale and propagation of culture. The screenplay is therefore the blueprint or vehicle for propagation of the culture of a people. The screenplay is a product of creativity. The question to ask is where does creativity come from? The simple answer is that it comes from you. It is the product of your imagination. The depth of your creativity depends upon the fertility of your imagination. Nobody can teach you imagination. What we teach are exercises for stimulating your God-given imagination. Exercises that help to suppress your naturally God-given critical faculty. Rachel Ballon (2005) who has taught Screenwriting for many years at the School of Cinema and Television, University of Southern California, and who has taught thousands of screenplay writers has explained in detail the sources of creativity:

> Creativity is where all poetry, art, drama, music and ideas come from that touch people on a deep emotional level. Creativity is made up of two parts. First there is Primary Creativity which comes from your unconscious and the right hemisphere of your brain, the source of all new ideas and insights. It's where your inspiration comes from and makes up only 10%

> of the creative process. Then, there is Secondary Creativity, which comes from the left hemisphere and is 90% that involves editing, discipline, logic, structure, rewriting and order (p. 2).

In childhood, the fusion of primary and secondary creativity is wired in us but as we grow up into adulthood, we learn to suppress the primary source of creativity as we acquire and wear the social masks which we think will make us to be accepted in society. These social masks are products of the social identity of our society. To be truly creative is to return to our childhood innocence; to rebel against the mask of social identity. This probably explains why many creative geniuses are socially deviant. The more you return to the unconscious of your selfhood, the more you tap into the deep reservoir of new ideas that are rare, new characterizations that are bound to whip up deep emotional values for humanity, the more your creative genus will receive wide acclaim. Great writers tend not to be social conformists. This is because they are continually returning to the socially unconscious which is made up of eruptions of chaotic unique childhood experiences that are personal, truly imaginative, and are the building blocks of stories that are genuinely captivating, imaginative and emotionally arresting. The key points I stressed in the chapter on screenwriting include the following:

1. That the screenplay is the blueprint for film production. Every film production is developed from a screenplay. That is why in the opening credits of every movie, the screenwriter is properly acknowledged.

2. The need for young screenwriters to learn how to harvest creative ideas. Creative ideas lie buried in the subconscious. For this reason, the screenwriter must learn how to harvest his/her childhood stories because they are rich sources of original storylines for movies.

3. The importance of keeping a writer's diary. The writer's diary is a record notebook where you record ideas when you have a wave of information related to the story you are working on. If such ideas are not recorded when you experience such wave of ideas, you lose them.

4. The need to tell one's personal stories. Personal stories are original to the writer hence screenwriters are encouraged to tell their personal stories.

5. The need to emphasize the development of characters instead of actions because characters form the basis for storytelling. When characters develop, the actions of movies also develop.

6. The need to pay attention to the role of the protagonist and antagonist in storytelling. In a film like, *A Tribe Called Judah* (Funke Akindele, 2023), the main protagonist and lead character is Jedidiah Judah, the single mother, played by Funke Akindele. The antagonist is the Nigerian capitalist system which doesn't have welfare platforms for poor working class

families, especially those headed by single mothers like Jedidiah Judah. Invariably, children from such homes end up as criminals who prey on the society that refused to take care of them.

7. The importance of creating a subject matter driven movie. Some movies are subject matter driven while other are character driven. A typical example is the blockbuster, *Living in Bondage 1 &11* (Chris Obi Rapu [1992] & Chika Onu [1993]). The subject matter which drives this movie is moneymaking rituals. A typical example of a character driven movie is *A Tribe Called Judah* (Funke Akindele, 2023).

8. The importance of providing a narrative structure for one's story. Every movie story is required to have a beginning, a middle and an end.

9. The importance of developing a goal for one's characters. In the film, *A Tribe Called Judah*, the motivating goal of Jedidiah Judah/Funke Akindele, is to provide for her boys in the absence of a father figure in their lives.

10. The need to create a theme for one's screenplay. Every film must have a theme, a subject matter and moral anchor of the story. In the movie, *Living in Bondage*, the theme of the film is the reprehensible practice of ritual killing for moneymaking. This movie was a blockbuster when it was released in 1992. After 32 ears

of the release of this movie, these moneymaking rituals are still prevalent in Nigerian society.

11. The need to create a climax for one's story. The climax in the story of *A Tribe Called Judah*, is the robbery of the furniture company by Emeka and his brothers, in order to collect the money kept in the office and use it to sponsor the treatment of their mother, Jedidiah Judah, who is hospitalized. While they were trying to rob the furniture company, they are double-crossed by the female Manager of the company, who has also arranged for her gang to rob the company. In the shoot-out within the premises of the furniture company, Emeka, the boy with the greatest prospect to further his education, and liberate the family from poverty, is shot and killed.

12. Ending one's story properly. The ending of every story is called the *denouement*. In *A Tribe Called Judah*, the denouement is when Jedidiah and the remnant of her family, escapes in a boat towards the end of the film, to what appears to be the direction of Republic of Benin, where one supposes Jedidiah will continue with her treatment since the family still had a chunk of the stolen money.

Fundamentals of Film Directing

I emphasized in this chapter on film directing that the art of film directing is both a creative and administrative process. It is a creative process because it involves projecting and dreaming about how to transform a screenplay into an enchanting movie. It is also an administrative work because it will test the administrative and diplomatic capacities of the director. The production team to be administered by the director is usually made up of creative hotheads with large egos, therefore, it is the duty of the director, using his power of creative dream concerning the script, to entrap and mesmerize members of the production team to the point of forgetting or lowering their guards regarding their large egos. If the director can drive members of the production team made up of the Producer, Actors, Assistant Director (AD), Script Supervisor, Casting Director, Director of Cinematography (DP) (with his team of camera men, electricians, gaffer, best boy/babe), the Art Director (with his team of Production Designer/ Builders/Carpenters, Costume Designer/Wardrobe Mistress/Tailors, Make Up Artists), Sound Mixers/Staff, Music Composer/Conductor, Production Manager, Location Manager, Unit Production Manager, Line Producer, to buy into his/her dream for the script, you will succeed in deflating their egos. But you will be tested. Make no mistake about it. Somewhere along the production line, a rebel in the production team will break loose, and this is where your administrative and diplomatic abilities will be required to pull off the production. Remember that like every Managing Director (MD), even though your role is that of a Creative MD, the buck stops at your table. If the production is successful, the

Producer and you will take the glory, but if the production fails, you alone will carry the blame.

Responsibilities of the Film Director

While it is the duty of the Producer to raise funds and administer it for the successful production of the film, it is the duty of the Director to oversee the creative aspects of the film. I wish to state that the responsibilities of the Director which I have tabulated here are derived from the best directorial practices of the advanced film cultures of the West where I got my training. In many instances where I felt that the directorial terms may be different to what obtains in Nollywood, I have provided corresponding nomenclatures for easier understanding by the students. We need to emphasize that it is the creative work of the Director that will produce the movie for the enjoyment of the audience. It is therefore the duties of the Director to oversee the following aspects of the film production process:

1. Acquire the Rights to a Script
2. Read the Script
3. Interpret the Script
4. Break down the Script for his personal use
5. Share your vision of the Script with the Producer and Heads of the Production Departments (Cinematography, Sound, Production Design, Costume Design, Music Conductor, Production Manager, etc).
6. Share the Script to the Producer and Heads of Departments.
7. Produce a Checklist of the Creative and Technical Requirements for the production of the Script.

8. Agree on a Budget with the Producer or Production Manager, especially if the Director is an independent filmmaker.
9. Finalize and agree on a Production Schedule with the Producer and the Heads of Departments.
10. Audition for Actors
11. Go on Recce with Location Manager to secure and approve locations.
12. Conduct and Monitor Rehearsals
13. Direct Actors for performance during film production
14. Direct and Stage the Actions for Shooting
15. Direct the Crew during filming
16. Adhere strictly to the Budget and Shooting Schedule.
17. Work with the Film Editor and post-production team for a Final Cut.
18. Work with the Music Conductor to approve music for the film
19. Work with VFX team to get film ready
20. Work with Advertising and Distribution team.

The Screenplay as the Primary Working Tool of the Film Director

According to Renee Harmon (1993), every screenplay (script) has a beginning, a middle, and an end. This usually translates to Act I, Act II, and Act III as is customary in a stage play, but in a screenplay, the action is not evenly distributed as in a stage play. The screenplay offers the followings:

1. A Short Beginning (Act I) (approximately 20 pages)
2. A Lengthy Middle (Act II) (approximately 65 pages)
3. A Short Ending (Act III) (approximately 15 pages)

Harmon recommends that your script should contain no fewer than 100 pages and no more than 110 page (1993, p.9). The rule of thumb is usually that a page of script equals one minute of on-screen time. Sadiqq Tafawa Balewa (2022) advises the director in training to also pay attention to the following aspects of the Script:

1. The action
2. The characters
3. The theme
4. The plot and structure
5. The conflict or conflicts
6. The dialogue
7. The believability of the story and characters
8. Point of view or point of views (p.141),

Harmon (1993) wants the Director to ask the following questions:

1. Does the screenplay as written show and anticipate the story's mood and atmosphere?
2. Have the *Who* and *Where* been established clearly?
3. Does the script contain any twists, and are those placed correctly?
4. Do *What* and *Why* grow out of the relationship between the main characters, or have they been imposed on the relationship for the purpose of creating an exciting plot?
5. Has the main question been asked correctly, or does it give rise to a split-goal?
6. Is the subplot strong enough?
7. Does Act II keep on developing, or does it lag?

8. Have you built a strong ending, and answered the main question? (1993, p.9).

Training to Become an Actor in Nollywood

Acting is basic to the human experience of acquisition of language, knowledge and wisdom. Infants growing up within their culture learn to speak their language and acquire knowledge of that culture through imitation. Imitation is therefore central to the human process of acculturation. All that we currently know as human beings is acquired through imitation. When we grow up, we do not drop this basic infant tradition of knowledge acquisition through imitation. Rather, it is reinforced. In our everyday activities, we indulge in both conscious and unconscious acting. Even when we are living under harsh economic conditions that are getting us depressed, when people ask us: "How're you?" The usual answer: "Fine, thank you." When we answer this way, we're usually acting even though we're not aware that's what we're doing. In this chapter, I paid attention to professional acting which entails the rigorous training given to beginning actors in order to make them acquire the knowledge of professional acting.

Difference between Stage and Film Acting.

Jeremiah Comeh (2002) has told an interesting story in his book, *The Art of Film Acting: A Guide for Actors and Directors*, of his friend who was transiting from theatre acting to film acting. Since he was a great actor in school, he worked very hard by studying his script, analyzing his character and planning his performance, which he swore under his breath would be a knock-out performance. As is usually the case in

professional circles where you're expected to be an industry spec, the director didn't bother to give him any orientation on screen acting during shooting sessions. When the film was released, in most of the scenes where he appeared, he looked especially bad in the scenes he rehearsed most diligently. Since he wasn't a bad actor, he decided to view the movie several times in order to see what he got wrong. He had planned ahead of time how he was going to deliver his lines and he thought he gave a good delivery of those lines by giving an exact replica in each take. He had also rehearsed very well how he was going to react to the other actor's lines. Surprisingly, as he viewed the film again and again, he saw that his lines looked stilted. He had also projected his voice and actions. He thought how he delivered his lines was more important than what he felt. The result was that he communicated the wrong information. In film, dialogue is less important than what a character feels and think. He had decided ahead of time what emotions he should feel, but he had no idea that the camera was picking up his real feelings, which were nervousness and fear. Of course, the emotion of fear made him look stiff and uncomfortable in front of the camera. What he didn't know was that a character in a movie is the actor's own self! His friend spent the entire movie trying to be the characterization of a policeman rather than accepting himself as the policeman.

Preparing for a Role on Stage and on Screen.

When we are preparing for a role in a stage drama, we spend a lot of days rehearsing with the director who blocks our movements and actions on stage to make sure that actors do not bump into each other, and that we take down our blockings

and stick to them during every rehearsal, and most importantly, during the period the play will run. As you took your blockings, the stage manager also took his, to ensure that both you and the director remembered the blockings. You also rehearsed your performance, entrances and exits, timing and stage businesses. You equally prepared for the reality that during the period of the play's run, you will be required to repeat your entire performance every night. In film production, things are radically different. According to Comey, the movie star, Tom Hanks, in a television interview, described how he used to spend the whole night before acting in a film by analyzing the scene, marking the key points, identifying the beats, making his choices, planning how he would deliver each line, determining how he should feel and move, only to get on set the next morning and the director made him throw out everything he planned, and asked him to perform by relating to the other actors on set. The great actor, Frank Sinatra, always refused to rehearse performance before getting on set. The movie star, Lawrence Olivier, said that in making the movie, *Wuthering Heights*, the director of the film, William Wyler, told him to relate instead of acting. Meryl Streep said she usually reads the script once or twice and then performs by relating to and dealing with the other actors. Comey also narrates the views of the celebrity director, Steven Spielberg regarding "acting" in movies. Spielberg said in an Actor's Studio interview that he never rehearses his actors because he doesn't want his actors to "act." What all of this tell us is that actors are expected to be themselves when performing in a movie. You're expected to be yourself while relating with other characters in the scene where you're performing. I'm

sure we have seen the hilarious pranks in the social media skits dealing with love scenes with the director shouting, “make it real!” only for the female actor to start shouting that his partner is making it “real!” One of the first lessons you must learn is that in film, your best performance comes from living in the moment of the scene, which may or may not be what you or your director had planned or expected. Usually, scenes are shot with several takes and only the director can tell which of the several takes best captured that magical moment of the mood and atmosphere of the scene. In film, not rehearsing does not mean not preparing or understanding the story. When a film director says he never rehearses, he is referring to dialogue and emotional relationships. Both you and your director rehearse blockings and camera movements, but the real performance comes when dialogue, emotions and reactions are fresh and unrehearsed, and the actors face each other with the camera running. Your main acting is tested when reacting emotionally to your fellow actor’s dialogue, in a genuine atmosphere and mood, which is captured by the camera for the audience. In film, we must be aware that we are acting for the camera and microphones whose purposes are to record everything you do and say with utmost intimacy. The film actor’s audience is the camera that is very near to him. It is for this reason that we are called recording and performing artists. Our performances must be recorded for the real audience to experience the magical mood and atmosphere which we captured for them. As Comey appropriately puts it: “In a film scene, the camera and microphone are as close as the lover you are whispering to, so you don’t need to project your voice and actions. To avoid looking amateurish, talk naturally and don’t project” (2002, p.

14). In this respect, the chapter has treated in details, the difference between character acting and personality acting. Also treated in details are the golden nuggets of film acting: the five arts of film acting: (1) the art of concentrating; (2) the art of not knowing; (3) the art of accepting; (4) the art of giving and receiving; (5) the art of relating.

Conclusion

The cinema is a cultural commodity employed by people who have mastered the medium in projecting their cultural identities. What the cinema specializes in selling is the cultural identities of the country that owns a competitive commercial cinema like Nollywood. The European and American inventors of the medium have used it as a tool to project their power and authority over their former colonies and indigenous populations. Since the early years of the medium, Europeans and American film industries have used the medium to stereotype Africans and people of African descent as savages, sexual perverts, despots, idlers, superstitious, barbarous, cannibalistic, primitive, and temperamental people. This (mis)representation is a factor of storytelling. It is also a challenge to all Africans and people of African descent to take up the challenge and tell their own stories. In America, the African Americans who were the first set of people of African descent to confront movies of the cinema of empire, took up the challenge of racist representations in the cinema, hence pioneer African American filmmakers such as Oscar Micheaux, Noble and George P. Johnson, Fredrick Douglas, Richard Maurice, James and Eloyce Gist, and Zora Neale Hurston, took it upon themselves to start producing films that

tell the stories of black Americans. These filmmakers entered the trade in order to correct the images of people of African descent project through D. W. Griiffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), "the film that, as it is often said, stirred black Americans to produce their own stories in motion picture form" (Bowser, Gains, & Musser, (2001). Though Nigerian filmmakers such as Ola Balogun, Eddy Ugbomah, Francis Oladele, Sanya Dosunmu, Jab Adu, etc., started telling stories based on Nigeria themes and socio-cultural values as from the early 1970s, these films made very little impact because the filmmakers were independent producers without a functional movie industry to project their works and Nigeria's social identities to the rest of the world. It was only in the early 1990s, with the production of Kenneth Nnebue's blockbuster, *Living in Bondage* (1992), that the video film industry took off. In its age of maturity, it was rebranded Nollywood. It is in its current form as a full-fledged movie industry, with a vibrant star system, generic storytelling tradition, and the establishment of trade guilds, that Nollywood is now able to project Nigerian social identities across Africa and the rest of the world.

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, it is when a people cannot speak for themselves that other people speak for them. With the writing of a film production book by the Department, the people of the Niger Delta, indeed the people of Nigeria, now have a material to teach them how to make their own films, and how to reinvent their social identity by telling their own stories. From now on, our people have been given a voice in the modern media of film and multimedia to embark on self-

representation by projecting the vibrant Nigerian culture around the world.

Recommendations

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, I wish to recommend to the governors of the Niger Delta region to embrace the promotion of the discipline of Film and Multimedia because the movie industry is one of the largest employers of Nigerian youths. They should establish Departments of Film and Multimedia in their Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in order to give their youths professional training in film production. If they do this, they can be rest assured that many of the youths will be taken off the streets and provided hands-on training that will make them gainfully employed in the movie industry. These youths will in the long run master the Film and Multimedia industries that will enable them to construct and project regional and national social identities through self-representation in Nollywood.

For a movie industry such as Nollywood to succeed in the commercialisation of its stories, through the platform of self-representation and social identity, its story formats must be anchored in genre-related stories. My research in the discipline of the cinema has shown that self-representation and social identity are best processed and anchored through genre-related stories. Whenever genre-related stories are selling, if a movie producer is stupid enough to produce a movie outside the selling story, his investments will go down the drain.

It is also extremely important that those who wish to build a career in acting are subjected to rigorous professional training, bearing in mind the key roles that actors who have

attained stardom play in wealth creation, especially in countries where commercial cinema is the predominant film culture like Nigeria. It is the star system within a commercial film industry that is used a platform for storytelling, self-representation and social identity. The stars are the people who attract moviegoers to buy tickets to see movies starring their favourite movie stars. Most moviegoers care very little about the themes of the films they watch; they are however addicted to seeing whatever new movie their favourite stars are appearing in. The trick, which every film producer knows, is to anchor stories with movie stars. It is for this reason that the budgets for film productions, are determined by the number of stars that will appear in those productions. Having said this, movie stars should obey all contractual agreements signed during film production so that production schedules are not held hostage by movie stars asking for various types of privileges that were not initially built into production contracts. This is important because some movie stars have held movie productions hostage because of their egocentric behaviours.

(i) Actors should be regularly subjected to training and retraining in order to instill professional discipline in them because the success of cultural self-projection depends upon the movie star.

(ii) Screenwriters should also subject themselves to regular training because issues of self-representation and social identity are anchored through the screenplay. It is for this reason that the Screenwriters' Guild should also develop manuals for the training of screenwriters as obtains in an advanced film culture like Hollywood.

(iii) Film directors in Nollywood should supervise the postproduction activities related to the aesthetic quality of the finished product because the key issues of self-representation and social identity take place at the point of film editing. Among the various "takes" which he called during the process of shooting the movie, only he/she knows the "take" which satisfies the psychological mood of the various scenes and sequences that made up the film. The practice of dumping the film with an editor, and moving on to another production does not portray professionalism.

(iv) Film producers should properly advertise and syndicate their works to all the existing platforms for film marketing, both online and traditional marketing platforms because issues of self-representation and social identity can only be projected through our genre-related stories if such stories are properly advertised and marketed. Therefore, film advertisement, marketing and distribution, are essential to the commercial success of any movie.

(v) Fashion designers, scenic designers, make-up artists, lights crew, and music composers, should regularly attend international training programmes to update their professional knowledge in film production. This is because the movie industry is subjected to rapid technological innovations. The role of fashion designers, scenic designers, make-up artists, music composition, and virtual technologies in self-representation and social

identity cannot be overemphasised in movie productions, hence the need for regular upgrade in knowledge, innovations and experimentations in these aspects of film production. Any professional who does not regularly attend Electronic Trading Expos will soon find out that he/she has been left behind. In an internationally competitive movie industry, no country can afford to be left behind hence Nollywood professionals should undertake regular professional training.

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CITATION ON

PROFESSOR FEMI OKIREMUETTE SHAKA

BA (Benin), MA (Ibadan), PhD (Warwick, UK)

Professor Femi Okiremuette Shaka was born on 11th May, 1957, to the family of late Chief Bethel Shaka Omoshue of Arhavwarien Kingdom, in Ughelli South LGA, Delta State, Nigeria. He attended Saint Ambrose College, Usiefrun, and after that proceeded to the University of Benin, Benin City, where he earned a BA degree in Theatre Arts (Second Class Honours, Upper Division) in 1984. That year, he was the Best Graduating Student in his Department, at the then Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Benin. In 1986, he joined the teaching staff of the Department of Creative Arts, University of Port Harcourt, based on the recommendations from the Head, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Benin. Professor Ola Rotimi recommended him for employment in Uniport because the University of Benin, which had a tradition of employing its Faculty Best Graduating Students, refused to employ Femi Okiremuette Shaka because he was considered a

very close student associate of Dr Festus Iyayi and Dr Tunde Fatunde, ASUU Branch Chairman and Secretary, respectively, at the University of Benin. When Professor Ola Rotimi, who was External Examiner to UniBen was told why the Department could not employ its Best Graduating Student, he told the Head of Department, Dr Atiboroko Uyovbukerhi, to send Femi Shaka to him in Uniport. The rest they say is history. Having taught in Uniport under Professor Ola Rotimi, between 1986-1990, he was recommended by his boss for his MA programme at the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan. After his MA degree, he won the prestigious Commonwealth Scholarship for his doctoral degree in Film Studies at the University of Warwick, Coventry, England. After his studies in the U.K., he returned to the University of Port Harcourt in November, 1995, where he helped to pioneer the Film & TV Studies programme of the Department of Theatre Arts, later renamed Department of Theatre and Film Studies, as a result of the curriculum changes introduced by Professor Shaka. In 2001, he won the prestigious Fullbright Senior African Fellowship which enabled him to teach and conduct research at the Africana Studies Programme, New York University. The fruit of that one year residency was the publication of his book, *Modernity and the African Cinema: A Study in Colonialist Discourse, Post-Coloniality and Modern African Identities* (2004), Lawrenceville, N.J: African World Press. He is also the co-editor [with M.A. Omibiyi-Obidike] (2012) of the book, *Music and Theatre Arts in Africa,* Ojo: Centre for Information, Press and Public Relations, Lagos State University. Professor Femi Okiremuette Shaka was instrumental in helping to upgrade the programme of Nigerian

Film Institute, which was a Diploma awarding Institute, to a degree awarding institution. After he helped to design the film production curriculum before the Institute, it was then affiliated to the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Jos. He also participated in drawing up the NUC CCMAS for the BA/BSc Degree in Film Production, together with Professor Hyginus Ekwuazi, Professor Umar Faruk Jibril and Professor Abdalla Uba Adamu. He equally featured on the NUC accreditation team, with Professor Umar Faruk Jibril, to the MSc Film Programme at the Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos.

Prof. Shaka is a widely-travelled and widely-read scholar whose articles have been published in reputable international and local scholarly journals, and a well-known strong advocate of the cinema as a tool for national development. In this respect, he has regularly mounted campaigns for the establishment of Departments of Film Production & TV Studies across the six geopolitical zones of the country to help professionalise the teaching and practice of both sectors of the creative industries. He has served twice as Head, Department of Theatre & Film Studies; Dean, Student Affairs; a two tenured Dean, Faculty of Humanities; as well as two tenured Member, Governing Council of the University of Port Harcourt.

As a strong advocate of the cinema as a tool for national development, he has dedicated the better part of his career to training manpower for the Nigerian movie industry. In this regard, he has supervised 22 PhD degree holders and 28 Master degree holders in his discipline of Film & TV Studies/Production. Among the PhDs which he supervised, 5 are already full Professors, of which one, Professor Barclays

Foubiri Ayakoroma, was one time, the Acting Vice Chancellor of the University of Africa, at Toru-Orua, Bayelsa State. Two of the PhDs are Associate Professors on their way to becoming full Professors. The choice to stay in Nigeria and train manpower for the movie industry has been a challenging one full of personal professional and financial sacrifices. But two incidences helped to mitigate the regret of this choice. The first was when he was appointed Nigeria's first Professor of Film Studies in October 2009, and the second occurred in 2019, when his former students gathered together and published a Festschrift in his honour, appropriately titled, *Nollywood Nation: On the Industry, Practice and Scholarship of Cinema in Nigeria*, edited by the world renowned Nigerian film scholar, Onookome Okome, and Professor Shaka's colleagues, Innocent Uwah and Friday Nwafor. Professor Nwafor, his former student became the pioneer Head, Department of Film and Multimedia, University of Port Harcourt, a thing of great pride to Professor Shaka. In 2023, Professor Shaka was appointed Chairman of Jury, Zuma International Film Festival, FCT, Abuja. Zuma International Film Festival is the official Film Festival of the Federal Government of Nigeria hosted by the Nigerian Film Corporation.

Professor Shaka is happily married to his lovely heartthrob, Dr. Esther Uchenna Shaka, a specialist in Corporate Accounting, and the marriage is blessed with three kids, two young men and a young lady.

Professor Owunari A. Georgewill,
Vice- Chancellor