

## **AN ANALYSIS OF SELECT NOLLYWOOD FILM AS A PURVEYOR OF NIGERIA'S IMAGE AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8234810>

**Abstract:** This study sought to establish the significance of Nollywood films as a purveyor of Nigeria's cultural development. The study was anchored on the Bullet theory of Harold Lasswell. The study adopted empirical qualitative research methodology in form of ethnographic investigation. The primary sources of data for this study include the use of selected Nollywood video films such as: '*Lionheart*' directed by Genevieve Nnaji 2018. Secondary data include existing scholarly literatures such as books, journals, theses, newspapers, magazines, internet sources, and other relevant materials that centre on Nollywood films and culture. Data were collected from these sources and analyzed in relation to the questions and objectives of the study. Descriptive analysis used was to describe the basic features of the data in the study and the phenomenon of culture in filmic texts. Findings from the study showed that Nollywood serves as a veritable medium for the promotion of indigenous cultural development of Nigeria better than any other medium. It was concluded that Nollywood serves as a veritable medium for the promotion of indigenous cultural development of Nigeria better than any other medium. No one can tell our stories better than ourselves and the study recommended that Nollywood films should be painstakingly researched before they are produced or released film to ensure that every sequence in the films promotes Nigeria's cultural heritage, realities and values, positively.

**Keywords:** Nollywood films, promoter, Nigeria's cultural development, Nigerian indigenous culture

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the Study**

Films is referred to as motion pictures, involves projecting a series of images into the screen to create an illusion of motion. It is one of the most popular forms of entertainment, enabling people to immerse in an imaginary world for a short period (Olaleye, 2007). In recent times, subtitles that translate different languages have increased appeal of films, especially those from local and foreign cultures. Subtitles give the audience the opportunity to watch films that were not produced in their primary language. This innovation therefore has created room for rapid spread of films from their country of origin to other countries, in which Nigeria is not an exception. Today in Nigeria, films made in United States of America, France, India, China, etc. are always in high demand.

The Nigerian film entertainment industry popularly known as Nollywood is a very powerful communication platform. The industry evolved on the platform of Nigeria's rich cultural heritage in the arts. The talents from traditional street theatres, traditional story telling performances and early attempts at indigenous television

programming also made enormous contributions to this evolution. In building on the antecedents of indigenous cultural values, Esan, (2008:1) is of the opinion that “Nollywood evolved around a dominant language structure which also reflects the original geopolitical structure of Nigeria.

Film is popular culture and as expected, it must exhibit, play upon, mirror, recreate or retell the stories of the societies in which it exists (Campbell, 2005:32) and Nollywood is not an exception; it has been able to portray the image of the diversities in Nigerian society. The capitalization of Nigerian film makers on digital technology has turned Nigeria into a bastion and a force to reckon with in global filmmaking, a scenario that has improved the image of the nation by creating an opportunity for Nollywood to tell her stories without fear, favour or prejudice. For a very longtime films were made in Africa but not by Africans, but Nigeria’s motion plate has reversed this situation by bringing good acclaim and favourable cultural industry in Nigeria (Nwachukwu, 2003). Nollywood draws on many cultural influences, both domestic and foreign, but it remains fundamentally distinctive according to (Haynes, 2005).

The common Nigerian films genres include –comedy, romance, melodrama, and historical epic and many Nollywood films have themes that deal with the moral dilemmas facing modern Africans – corruption, unemployment, political instability, family issues, women’s rights, and other topics of concern to ordinary Africans through the genres (Akpabio, 2007:91.)

Nigerian films have been described by Larkin (2005) as a mixture of “horror, magic and melodrama”. There is nothing wrong with a film dealing with any of these themes, but critics frown at the fact that they reoccur, film after film. Producers may argue that video films address the social problems plaguing a society, yet many people are disturbed by their treatment of ethical and moral issues. Although it is believed that ethical re-engineering in the larger society may be a prelude to sanitizing the video industry, it is observed that the situation does not avert the need to urgently re-examine the ethical foundations of the video industry itself. Many of the ethnic groups in Nigeria still hold firm to their cultural ties and norms. The Nollywood films have come to assume an authority over the values of people’s lives, such that what people see in them comes to be taken not just as fictional projection of imaginative consciousness, but as the true, authentic mirror of what the society is.

Another negative portrayal of negative image of the Nigerian society is the way women are treated and depicted in many Nollywood films. Okome (2007), a respected film academic and promoter of the Nigerian video film, has at different occasions spoken on aspects of the representation and “objectification” of women in Nigerian films. It is only in few Nigerian films that women have been relatively portrayed positive. The impression is that women are negatively portrayed in order to appeal to the male-dominated audience. In some films, women are portrayed as prostitutes, wily lovers, and witches and all manner of imaginable criminality. Adding to this, some films are gender insensitive and many still abide by the traditional and conservative attitudes toward women. This image of women as portrayed in many Nollywood films cuts across the country from North to South, though with differing intensity.

It is expected therefore of the Nollywood (film maker) to also consciously promote the continent’s rich local cultures while localizing positive foreign cultures. The film can be used to rescue contemporary Nigerian society from the erosion of its value systems caused by colonialism, negligence and corruption.

It is against this background that this study explores the possibility of deploying Nollywood as a potent tool for promoting the image of our dear country abroad as well as showcasing our value systems. Furthermore, a category films were selected for the purpose of this study. These films include- ‘*Lionheart*’ directed by Genevieve Nnaji

2018, *‘Wedding Party 1’* directed by Kemi Adetiba in 2016. *‘October 1’* directed by Kunle Afolayan in 2014; *‘Iyore’* (The Return) directed by Frank Rajah Arase in 2014; *‘Inale’*—directed by Jeta Amata in 2010. The selected films are chosen because they form a unique part of Nollywood’s production and have narratives that characteristically reflect the understanding of the Nigerian culture. The films, like several African films, employ tales from Nigeria’s oral traditional heritage, history, political, social and cultural issues. These films are purposefully selected because they reflect some of the different major culture in Nigeria-(Igbo, Yoruba, Benin, Hausa and colonial language-English) Thus, the selection of the movies helped to evaluate whether the features embedded in such Nollywood films have contents that reflect our indigenous culture.

### Statement of the Problem

There is no doubt that Nollywood film industry since its inception in 1992 has made giant strides in projecting and propagating Africa’s cultural heritage within and outside its continent. The world has undoubtedly come to know and appreciate the cultural identity and image of Nigeria through the characters (dressing, lifestyle, language etc.), setting (environment and sceneries), storylines and themes as well as their prominence.

However, there seems to be some lapses and permissiveness of undesired contents in many Nollywood films which tend to imprint negative socio-cultural images of the country in the mind of viewers especially non Nigerians. These negative themes or images may include occultism, dubious act (419), fetishism, violence, poisoning and uncontrollable tendency for sexual display. More so, some of these negative themes are blown out of proportion and as a result, the industry has in several occasions been subjected to criticism.

It is expected therefore of the Nigerian Nollywood (film maker) to also consciously globalize the nations and the continent’s rich local cultures while localizing positive foreign cultures. This no doubt would have a positive effect on the way Nigerians would be viewed elsewhere in the world as it will give a non-native a glimpse into what is obtainable in Nigeria and Africa as a whole instead of relying on the distorted and bias angle foreign media and film industries. This is based on the fact that any nation that folds its hand and refuses to do anything positive to project its cultural heritage to the outside world would have to put up with battered image and cultural imbalance in relation to those who would take calculated steps at portraying whatever they deem fit that the world should know about them.

It is in view of the above that this study takes cursory view of Nollywood projection of Nigerian cultural values to the film viewers across the globe (using selected films), believing that whatever is projected about Nigeria by the Nigerian film industry as a window to the world, and could be helpful in correcting some of the misconceptions about Nigeria (ns)/Africa (ns) and their rich cultural values.

This, study evaluates how Nollywood films which is of the most accessible forms of exhibiting Nigeria’s cultural heritage, is promoting and projecting the indigenous cultural values of Nigeria to the outside world.

### Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to establish the significance of Nollywood films as a purveyor of Nigeria’s cultural development. The specific objectives of this study are to achieve the following:

1. to explore the potency of Nollywood films in projecting Nigerian indigenous culture.
2. to examine how relevant the themes of the selected Nollywood movies are within the context of indigenous cultural development.
3. to highlight possible ways of strengthening the Nollywood industry as an agent of image projection and cultural development

## Research Questions

1. What is the potency of Nollywood films in projecting Nigerian indigenous culture?
2. How relevant are the themes used in the selected Nollywood movies to the context of indigenous cultural development?
3. What are the possible ways of strengthening the Nollywood industry as an agent of image projection and cultural development?

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Nollywood Films as a Cultural Ambassador

Akeh (2008) posits that the era of foreign films domination in Nigerian homes has gone, and now is the time that Nigerian situations as presented by Nigerian actors and actresses are seen not only in Nigerian homes but all over Africa and the rest of the world. He goes further to celebrate the fact that indigenous Nigerian film makers have evolved the video film culture as an affordable means of (re) presenting the Nigerian nation to the silver screen(Akeh, 2008).

Based on this, Haynes (2005:135) puts succinctly that:

Nigerian video film is watch on television in Namibia, and on sale on the streets of Kenya. In Congo, they are broadcast ... In New York, Chinese people are buying them. In Holland, Nollywood stars are recognized on the street by people from surname and in London, they are hailed by Jamaicans.

Thus Ekwuazi (2006:2) asserts that a film industry that aspires to be in the vanguard of cultural development must do the following -:

- Raise the level of consciousness through liberating the spirits and strengthening the minds of its people;
- Be political, that is - must deal in a positive manner with the existing conditions of oppression;
- Educate, that is - educate to bring out that which is already within, and 'give knowledge and truth;
- Clarify issues, by enlightening participants as to why so many negative conditions and images exist in their community in order to eliminate the negative condition and strengthen the positive condition
- Lastly, it must entertain.

Today, Africans tell their own stories, filling the silver screen with their personal stories and not looking to emulate the Hollywood style but to look at how stories have been told within one's culture. On his part, Adenugba(2007;3) says that "culture is an essential aspect of aesthetics, particularly because film subsists in culture and also because it is made for an audience that has a culture, whether their audience is culturally inclined or not". Hence, film tends to reflect the culture or nuances of the philosophy of the society that produces it. Some Films from China promote the culture of their nation and its people. Films from India reflect the music, dance, dressing and beliefs of the Eastern nations; movies from the United States of America highlight the values and patterns of daily life of western countries.

### Films as a Tool for Cultural Promotion.

According to Uwah (2011:87), film was introduced to the country by the colonial imperialists with the agenda of propagating British ethos, values and norms. Early films in Nigeria were mostly based on documentaries and newsreel which impacted tremendous influence on the target audience. They included scenes of coronation of the

king of England, King Edward VIII at West Minister Abbey, scenes of a steamer moving through water, the conjugal dispute of steeple chase. A brief glimpse of Alake of Abeokuta was shown in 1904 during his visit to England. The films shown by the colonial masters and the missionaries were the means of propagating their government and religion (Opubor, Nwuneli and Oreh, 1979:6).

During the Second World War, films were used widely by the British government for propaganda effort to make people in the colonies to understand why they should fight in the wars. Mobile cinemas were used all over Nigeria to communicate the news of the successes of allies and defeat of the Germans. Uwah: 2011:88 further identifies the objectives of all the films (and all were documentaries) produced by the Colonial Film Unit (CFU) as: -

(a) to show/convince the colonies and the English had a common enemy in the German; to this end, about one quarter of all the films made by the CFU was war related.

(b) to encourage communal development in the colonies and show the outside world the excellent work being done in heathen parts under the guide of the Union Jack. (Daybreak in Udi, (1949) is a good example).

c) to show the military might of the British Empire and of Britain in particular; and encourage Nigerians to contribute morally and materially to the war efforts;

d) to stimulate interest in food and cash crops (agriculture); and to direct peoples' mind to London, the imperial center; and to stimulate interest in the Empire.

e) to depict government activities and to show development in education.

### **Conceptualizing Culture**

Culture is the language of the people, their life style and existence. Therefore no culture should be termed inferior or superior as claimed by (Lul, 2000) because it is "the totality of knowledge and behaviour, ideas and objects that constitute the common heritage of a people". Culture is not primitive or barbaric.

Nigeria possesses a culture which reflects the people's way of life just as any other culture. It includes the process of birth, growing up, carving niches for oneself, passing through and fulfilling obligations in the different phases of existence and of pursuing attitudes and attributes that will make one an acceptable member of the society or put one at war with his neighbors depending on the interaction factors. Culture of an individual is dependent on the culture of the society, and or the society to which that individual belongs. What this assertion means according to (Ekeanyanwu, 2009:67) is that; the cultural ethics theory is based in society and the culture of a nation as opposed to nature...an individual is shaped by his or her culture...and finds that being parts of the culture club provides an ethical security". Culture influences individuals in the society, it directs their pattern of thinking and behaviours to what it wants them to do. Culture is not limited to music, attire, language, symbols, dance, the law and the morals expectations of the community, but also the wisdom of their past and the education of the present and the future. It is therefore important to restate here that culture identifies a people and is central to primordial and self- determination sentiments in the themes of films.

### **Communalistic Representations in Nollywood**

Like every other part of Africa, Nigerians believe that 'man is a product of a universe in which all energy and everything is interconnected, born out of a "primal force" which has spread a little of itself into all it has generated' (Barlet, 1996: 84). By this, it means that Africans generally believe in a world that is unified between all beings, whether material, spiritual or metaphysical. Thus, for Onwubiko, 'the world of Africans is one of inanimate, animate, and spiritual beings and there is the influence of each category of these beings in the universe in which they inhabit' (1991: 3). This inhabited universe according to Nwoga is a 'space' which is a field of action and not

just a location made up of discrete physical distances and separate physical spaces. *Alammuo* (spirit world) and *alammadu* (human world) according to him, are the plains of spirit action and of human action, and these need not be physically separated. It 'is the non-separation of these entities in physical terms that makes interaction between the various worlds possible so that spirits and their activities impinge on realities that are seen in the human and the physical' (Nwoga, 1984: 36).

It is this view of 'non separability' of the two worlds that is expressed in films like *Things Fall Apart* (1986) and many other African and Nollywood films, where there is the constant tendency to consult the oracles (spirits) before taking up communal obligations which is part of African ontology.

The spirit world is seen to be part of the human world and the mediators between these worlds are culturally called the chief priests or '*Dibia*' in the Igbo speaking part of Nigeria and '*Babalawo*' in the Yoruba area of the nation. Significantly in both literature and film adaption of *Things Fall Apart*, the reality of this worldview is concretely represented. In the description of who the earth goddess or *Ani/Ala* (as called in Igbo language) is, and what role she plays in the life of people as a local deity in *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe writes: '*Ani* played a greater part in the life of the people than any other deity. She was the ultimate judge of morality and conduct and what is more; she was in close communication with the departed fathers of the clan whose bodies had been committed to earth' (Achebe, 1958: 221).

In the adapted film of this novel, the elders often meet in consultation with communal deities like *Ani*, the earth goddess and *Amadioha*, the god of thunder, in order to carry out communal duties. This is the case before the funeral rites of Ogbuefi Ezeudu, for instance, in the film, *Things Fall Apart*, and in *Igodo: the Land of the Living Dead*, when the community experienced massive deaths as a consequence of the wrath of the gods. The role of the traditional priest in this village ontology is therefore significant in every community, since he or she bridges the gap between the real and the supernatural worlds, striving to sustain peace and harmony between all members (Kalu, 1994: 52).

### Characteristics of Nollywood Storylines

Nollywood films are typically about lived-in situations of Africans and Nigerians in particular. As Esosa (2005) argues, 'finding concrete references to their own lives seems to be more important to African viewers. Even in the horror genre or in action films, Nigerian videos are clearly orientated toward everyday life in Africa. Traditional aspects such as magic and witchcraft are integrated into the plots such as urban city, exotic cars, modern houses and laptops' (Esosa, 2005).

According to Uwah (2013; 53);

These films develop and portray themes with existential significances for ordinary Nigerians: childless marriages, political assassinations, discrimination of victims of HIV/AIDS, religious scandals, election frauds, village celebrations, students' lives in colleges and the like. The film producers and directors of Nollywood can be said to first of all attract home audiences by playing out symbols that resonate with their lives, wherein the landscape, locality, attire, food and music have meanings based on their proximity to audiences.

Nollywood recaptures what is happening in Nigeria, whether socially, culturally and politically. For instance, *The Stubborn Grasshopper* (2001), the political story surrounding the late former head of State, Gen. Sani Abacha, who ruled Nigeria from 1993 to 1998, was represented, underpinning real life situational issues encoded in filmic

storylines. Other films like *Government House* (2004), *Girls' Cot* (2006), *His Excellency and the Siren* (2004), and *National Anthem* (2004) among others, reflect the political scenarios in the country at one stage or another. Some others like *Igodo* (1999), *The Return* (2003), *Widow* (2007), *World Apart* (2004), *Last Ofala* (2002), *Coronation* (2004) explore the day to day living issues of the populace from the traditional and cultural perspectives. Also the representations of films that reflect the religious tendencies of groups like the Catholic, Muslim, Anglican, and Pentecostal churches. Among the films that explore religion for example are *Bless Me* (2005), *Power to bind* (2003), *Tribulation* (2007), *21 Days in Christ* (2005), and a lot more.

### Genres and Audiences

Paradoxically the production of Nollywood films, like in any other genre based media, is guided by audiences' taste. The producers and directors guide themselves by the desires of audiences in order to recoup investments. Film therefore, as Turner indicates, 'provides us with pleasure in the spectacle of its representations on the screen, in our recognition of stars, styles, and genres and in our enjoyment of the participation in the film. Film is a social practice for its makers and its audiences: in its narratives and meanings, we can locate evidence of the ways in which our culture makes sense of itself' (Turner, 2006; 4). By this measure arguably, Nollywood audiences are taken on board to make successful films. This entails fashioning films according to genres that satisfy audiences' pleasure. Even though some genres in Nollywood may be quite different from standardized mainstream classifications, the movies cover lot of storylines in diversified categories. Whether it is the Nigerian English films, Igbo, Hausa or Yoruba films, Uwah, comments that,

with a plethora of genres in the new cinema products, Nollywood, set either in the local language with English subtitles or in pidgin English, is successful and there is a deliberate attempt to use the film medium as a "voice of the people" and by so doing, a concerted effort to achieve an indigenous film culture distinct from the dominant foreign commercial cinemas especially by means of cultural and national film aesthetics. (Uwah, 2013; 135)

The audiences in Nollywood can be said to interact fundamentally with filmic texts at home or anywhere. Since the films are products of their cultures and traditions. Adesanya (1997:1) highlights audience's pleasure and participation when he states that,

"the audience in the Yoruba theatre reacts by participation. They provide endings to proverbs take up the chorus of chants and punctuate stories with exclamations or interjections and approbations. The occasion of an assembly in a community calls for the use of the resources of oral tradition and once the audiences' experience is evoked, they show aesthetic pleasure in the widespread participation".

The context of viewing these films can vary depending on where one is at a time, the main modes of consumption as understood here are family viewership and video parlour consumption. This is not being prescriptive, but to underscore the dominant patterns of audiences' interactions with texts, especially given the availability of new domestic technologies in the country.

Generally, there are two main ways of consuming Nollywood films in Nigeria. These are: the in-house and rental club consumption modes (Kunzler, 2006:11). While in the home consumption, family members gather in private or sometimes in public to watch the films. In the rental clubs people pay to join others to see movies in the bars otherwise called video clubs.

### **Positive Portrayal of the Nigerian Society**

One basic fact about people especially Africans, is the fact that our lives are shaped by our culture, because it's a way of life. This culture has reflected in our movie industry, Nollywood. An interesting thing about the industry is its resilience in the face of harsh economic indices, favoritism, nepotism, inadequate and sometimes non-existence infrastructure. The industry has grown and has consistently told the story of the Nigerian society and people, which as a matter of fact is the reason why the Nigerian film industry has been a beehive of a cities research, investments, and visits. Over the years, the industry has promoted certain identities and images about the country which in a way has helped to boost the country's reputation (Haynes 2005; 136-147).

There are a good number of international film events holding around the world and in Nigeria which recognizes Nollywood, its practitioners and the nation. Among these are AMAA (Africa Movie Academy Awards) whose second edition was held in Yenagoa, Bayelsa, Afro Hollywood Awards, which has been holding since 1996 and it is designed to host in collaboration with the London Film Institute. There is also the Annual Lagos International Film Forum being hosted by ITPAN (Independent Television Producers' Association of Nigeria), The Best of The Best Television (BOBTV), The Zuma Film Festival and so on.

### **Nollywood and Nigeria's Indigenous Cultural Development**

Prior to 1972, the World Heritage Convention was adopted by UNESCO to encourage international cooperation for the protection of the cultural heritage of mankind and called upon the international community to help in the identification, protection and preservation of such heritage and not to take any deliberate measures, which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage situated on the territory of the state, societies or people. There was also the recognition that the deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful display of the heritage of all the nations of the world (Uwah, 2011:98).

The Nigeria film industry evolved on the platform of Nigeria's rich cultural heritage in the arts. The talents from traditional street theatres, traditional story telling culture and early attempts at indigenous television programming also made enormous contributions to this evolution. For building on the antecedent of indigenous cultural values, Esan (2008) states that:

“Nollywood evolved around a dominant language structure which also reflects the original geopolitical structure of Nigeria. The industry thus has three distinct sectors; Yoruba films, Igbo films and Hausa films. The films tend to reflect the cultures in these areas and are often produced and distributed from the commercial nerve center in these regions and Lagos-the nation's commercial capital. This structure has been inherited by the Nigerian film and video censors Board as a basis of classifying the videos. There are also English Language productions and what has evolved as a distinct category – the Engligbo, because of the tendency to use both Igbo and English languages”.

The ethnic affiliation around the industry is very clear in the storylines, shooting location and sometimes even in the cast. To this end, it becomes easier for audiences to relate to and identify with Nollywood. The collateral challenges fostered by Nollywood are as a result of diverse interests, needs and preferences of its heterogeneous audiences. This heterogeneity is rooted in the range of ethnic, linguistic, religious and other socio-political factors within Nigeria and other parts of Africa that constitute the primary market for Nollywood movies (Esan, 2008).



## Theoretical Framework

### The Bullet Theory

The Magic Bullet effects theory, sometimes called the hypodermic needle model, assumes that a media message is “injected” wholly into the recipient’s consciousness and is accepted entirely at face value. The Bullet theory of Mass Communication, propounded by Harold Lasswell in 1920s, states that the media (film) had very immediate and direct impacts on its audience. The bullet theory or hypodermic needle theory postulates that the media (needle) injects the message into the minds of the audience, hence causes changes in audience behavior and psyche towards the message. This theory therefore refers to mass media audience members as passive and hence at the mercy of mass media contents. It therefore holds that persuasive media contents achieve the desired attitudinal change from the target audience (McQuail, 1994).

Although the power to change people's minds directly is limited, the media does influence our lives and our thinking, usually in more subtle ways. The basic assumption underlying this theory is that people receive information directly from the media and react to it immediately which in turn can affect the way they think, feel, and shape the audience perception (McQuail, 1994). Thus the bullet theory is used in this research because the media or film has the potential to create a vivid image about a particular people and country. Therefore the content of Nollywood films can direct positive or negative impact on their audience.

### METHODOLOGY

The study adopted empirical qualitative research methodology in form of ethnographic investigation. The primary sources of data for this study include the use of selected Nollywood video films such as: ‘*Lionheart*’ directed by Genevieve Nnaji 2018. The selection of the film was based on the fact that they reflect some of the genres in Nollywood. This category of film contributed significantly to unraveling the different lifestyles and socio-cultural experiences of Nigerians in their ethnic and national contexts. These films portray some of the different major cultures in Nigeria-(Igbo, Yoruba, Benin, Hausa and colonial language-English). The secondary sources of data include existing scholarly literatures such as books, journals, theses, newspapers, magazines, internet sources, and other relevant materials that centre on Nollywood films and culture. Data were collected from these sources and analyzed in relation to the questions and objectives of the study. The methods used in this research for data collection are documentary observation and content analysis. Qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data to help the researcher uncover the media image of cultural representations in Nollywood. To this end, descriptive analysis used was to describe the basic features of the data in the study and the phenomenon of culture in filmic texts.

### Results and Discussion of Findings

This section contains the data presentation and analysis of the research findings. The study made use of documentary observation and content analysis methods on selected Nollywood films such as: ‘*Lion heart*’ produced directed by Genevieve Nnaji 2018

These films were analyzed in details according to the criteria indicated earlier in the research methodology. The research has detailed the sampling procedure and the justification for the choice of the films, the method to be used in the analysis and the reasons for the choice of particular methods over others. The unit of analysis of the qualitative content analysis is as follows:

|                   |   |                        |
|-------------------|---|------------------------|
| Culture Portrayed | = | Local or Foreign       |
| Costumes/Props    | = | Traditional or Western |

|                  |   |                         |
|------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Language         | = | Nigerian or English     |
| Setting/Location | = | Rural or Urban          |
| Food             | = | Local or Foreign        |
| Etiquette        | = | Proper or Improper      |
| Names            | = | Native or English       |
| Mode of Dress    | = | Traditional or Western  |
| Song/Dance       | = | Afro-Hip Hop or Western |

Furthermore, the portrayal is represented by (\*) where variable is portrayed and (-) where the variable is not portrayed. The observations, analyses and interpretations of the films are hereby presented below:

### SYNOPSIS OF THE FILM 'LIONHEART'

**WRITERS:** GENEVIEVE NNAJI; CHINNY ONWUGBENU; C.J OBASI, ISHAYA BAKO; EMIL GARUBA

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:** GENEVIEVE NNAJI; CHINNY ONWUGBENU

**PRODUCERS:** CHINNY ONWUGBENU; CHICHI NWOKO; OLIVER ALEOGENA

**DIRECTOR:** GENEVIEVE NNAJI

**DURATION:** 1 HOUR 34 MINUTES

**LOCATION:** NIGERIA (ENUGU, KANO)

The story revolves around an ambitious woman, Adaeze, played by Genevieve, who works as a director in her family's transport company, understudying her father, Chief Obiagu (Pete Edochie)—a wealthy Igbo businessman. At the same time, she nurses personal aspirations towards taking over from him as the company's overall head and being the one to move the family legacy into a new generation. Adaeze faces the ultimate test of her credentials, as her ailing father steps away from his seat, and entrusts the company into the hands of his brother, Godswill who is supposedly taking her spot, amidst the revelation of financial troubles and challenges that could sink the entire empire. Lionheart tells the story of the Obiagus, a family in the transport business that encounters financial crisis and has to be saved by the smarts of its heiress, Adaeze (Genevieve Nnaji) and the understated shrewdness of her uncle, Godswill, played by the magnetic **NkemOwoh**. Despite her disappointment with her father's initial decision not to entrust her with the family business, Adaeze, with her mother as her counsel, has to pick herself up and save the family business from wolves in the form of an insider and a business rival.

**Kanayo O. Kanayo** commands an imposing presence as Igwe Pascal, an opportunistic business rival who's ready to pounce at the hint of blood. Adaeze asks Godswill Obiagu to join her in the meeting as well and he agrees. The auditors tell them that they are in debt of about 950 million naira. They tell Adaeze that the chairman Chief Obiagu took a loan to acquire 100 luxurious buses against their advice. They tell them to pay all they owe in 30 days or risk losing everything. Not long after, her father (Pete Edochie) has to take his hands off the business, which is in trouble, and although Adaeze believes she is the natural successor, an uncle is named head by Ernest Obiagu. This uncle, Nkem Owoh plays himself as he always does, with cunning and comic charm, but, if anyone was really thinking; his character's eccentric nature should do nothing for the troubled company.

Still, Adaeze has to work with uncle to rescue the company from the hands of the rival businessman Igwe Paschal. Together they have to try to rescue Lionheart company, even if it takes them to other parts of the country.

Table 4.1.1 Content Analysis for the film “*Lion heart*” 2021.

| Variable           | Local | Foreign | Traditional | Western | Nigerian | English | Rural | Urban | Local Cuisine | Inter-Continental Cuisine | Proper | Improper | Local | English | Traditional | Western | Afro hip-hop | Western |
|--------------------|-------|---------|-------------|---------|----------|---------|-------|-------|---------------|---------------------------|--------|----------|-------|---------|-------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| Cultural Portrayal | *     | *       |             |         |          |         |       |       |               |                           |        |          |       |         |             |         |              |         |
| Costume            |       |         | *           | *       |          |         |       |       |               |                           |        |          |       |         |             |         |              |         |
| Language           |       |         |             |         | *        | *       |       |       |               |                           |        |          |       |         |             |         |              |         |
| Setting Location   |       |         |             |         |          |         | *     | *     |               |                           |        |          |       |         |             |         |              |         |
| Food               |       |         |             |         |          |         |       |       | *             | *                         |        |          |       |         |             |         |              |         |
| Etiquette          |       |         |             |         |          |         |       |       |               |                           | *      | *        |       |         |             |         |              |         |
| Names              |       |         |             |         |          |         |       |       |               |                           |        |          | *     | *       |             |         |              |         |
| Dressing           |       |         |             |         |          |         |       |       |               |                           |        |          |       |         | *           | *       |              |         |
| Song/Dance         |       |         |             |         |          |         |       |       |               |                           |        |          |       |         |             |         | *            | *       |

Source: Researcher’s Qualitative Observation, 2021.

#### 4:1:2 'LIONHEART' ANALYSIS

Lion heart is a 2018 Nigerian drama film produced by Chinny Onwugbenu and directed by Genevieve Nnaji. The star actors and actresses are Pete Edochie, Genevieve Nnaji, Onyeka Onwenu, Kanayo O, Kanayo and Nkem Owoh. It was acquired by Netflix on 7 September 2018, making it the first Netflix original film produced in Nigeria. *LionHeart* premiered at the 2018 Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The movie was Nnaji's directorial debut as and the film was released worldwide on 4 January 2019, by Netflix.

The movie which started in a car park somewhere in Enugu State, South East, Nigeria depicting the notoriety of motor part touts who go about eliciting for the payment of operational levies which is synonymous to the daily experience of what most Nigerian motorists go through when using this form of transportation. However this negative portrayal of human relation and the ability of Nigerians in managing conflict situation were brought to bear in Genevieve's interaction with the motor park tout leader and their daily experience. Finally, the voice of reason overcomes that of violence. Thus,

Adaeze; Stop it, stop it .....Who is in charge here?  
 Tout leader; .....Biko nye ego anyi, ka si abe poru(Please give us our Money let leave here)Or  
 lest,there will be no bos that will stepOut of here. Umaka udi ogarahia se na  
 American wen bata,biko unu ka mu ju won nu,o out uwa kai si me motor  
 business?  
 (Rich kids from America,please let me ask you,is this how wedo transport  
 business)I bata go na Naijiria, I mee ka Naijiria  
 (You are in Nigeria behalf like a Nigerian).....

Adaeze Ihea unu mega kataa, kedu uru o baara unu, ole ko ge di?(if I give you money,  
 how much will it do)s.  
 it do)Look at the faces of everybody 's life you are stopping right now, for  
 what? What is our business? Taking people from one destination to another,  
 contributing to society.

#### *Lionheart* (1:15-3:20mins)

Running a company can be challenging, especially as a female in a male dominated industry like transportation. Adaeze deals with the everyday sexism that saturates workplaces everywhere, and captures the delicate balance between honouring one's family while finding the courage to strike out on one's own. For instance, the dialogue between Adaeze and her uncle Godswill and the bank manager is a clear picture of sexism in the business. Adaeze steps up to the challenge when her father, Chief Ernest Obiagu is forced to take a step back due to health issues. Here, we see a contemporary Igbo film that celebrates a female child rather than the male. Also the fine role or example displayed by Obiageli Obiagu as wife of Chief Obiagu, shows how African women support the decisions of their husbands. They also stand as the pillar of the immediate and extended family. This is seen in the way and manner she handles the appointment of Uncle Godswill as Managing Director of Lion heart Company.

Adaeze- It is about my Uncle's appointment as MD.

Obiageli-Adanne , your uncle is just there to supervise.

Adaeze- Who is he here to supervise?

Obiageli-My daughter a second hand always helps.

Adaeze- But I have been working side by side with Daddy all these years. I should be his second hand.

Obiageli- I am sure he has his reasons and you have to trust him.

Adaeze- Those reasons will not exist if Obiora were in my shoes.

Obiageli-Sit up and shut up (were uche gi ne me ihe)

The 'Lion heart' film is said to be a promoter of indigenous innovation in the car manufacturing industry (Innoson Motors). The film strives to promote local industry especially in car manufacturing and transportation sector of the Nigerian economy. Here again, industrialization of a society is seen as a form of its cultural industry. Although some might claim the technological advancement like vehicle production and transportation business should not form a part of cultural portrayal, advanced countries like America, Germany to mention a few have all used this to project their culture to the rest of the world especially in films like '007' and 'Transporter 1&2'.



Plate 1: Chief Ernest Obiagu and Alhaji Danladi Maikano depicting the Igbo and Hausa culture. (*Lionheart*)



**Plate 2: Atilogu cultural dance group (*Lionheart*)**



**Plate -3 Chief Ernest Obiagu and family in a dinner setting (*Lionheart*)**

*Lionheart* is heavy on family values which are evident in the family dinner scene (Plate-3). *Lionheart* projects family values, perseverance, and love which is evident in the family dinner scene where the casts used proverbs and Igbo language exclusively to convey strength of family togetherness and fun time (njakiri).

### **Discussion of Findings**

Film has been the product of cultural industries for a very long time. A clear example over the years has been the cultures projected by Hollywood and Bollywood. The two movie industries depict the western and India or Hindi cultures to the rest of the world. For instance, the Hollywood film industry projects western language, values, mode of dressing, processes of governance, arts and sports as well as technological innovation and products to the rest of the world. Similarly, the Bollywood movie industry did the same and had influenced to some extent the Hausa speaking population in the northern part of Nigeria.

The literature review of this study reveals that Nollywood or the history of film in Nigeria shows that film in Nigeria has been used to project indigenous cultures of the people or the host community, first as a propaganda used by the British colonial administration to promote their own ideology. In 1970 and 1990, the National Television Authority (NTA) created and broadcast rich and compelling television shows like the 'Village Headmaster', 'Cockcrow at Dawn', 'Mirror in the sun', 'Behind the Cloud', 'Supple Blues', and 'Checkmate', which later transform into the production of the first Nollywood hit 'Living in Bondage' by Kenneth Nnebue.

Today Nollywood is counted as one the major film making industries in the world, with a broader scope and style. As Nollywood grows, film-makers are becoming bolder in their output and with an increasing international audience. Nollywood made it possible for Africans to view films made by Africans on a huge scale. The telling of our stories by Africans has dissolve a lot of mutual suspicion and mistrust and encourage intra-African tourism, trade and business engagement, as these films cast light on common traditions, habits and culture across and beyond the continent.

New Nollywood films are broader in scope and style as the filmmakers are becoming bolder in their output and narratives. Nigeria film industry now releases roughly 1000 films a year, which currently travel beyond the

continent of Africa and with few getting global attention. In addition, through online channels like Netflix, Iroko TV, DSTV Showmax and YouTube the viewership patterns of Nollywood are constantly growing.

### Conclusions

Nollywood films have become very popular among Nigerians and international audiences communicating cultural essence and contents of over 500 indigenous language and 300 societies that make up the Nigerian nation state. Nollywood must therefore showcase originality and mirror the Nigerian and African society right. Africa has for decades been a dumping ground for unsavoury cinema products from Hollywood, Bollywood and Hong Kong. Today, Nollywood, being the continent's leader in this respect, can change the status quo if it is effectively deployed for the set purpose. It can reshape Nigeria's cultural diplomacy and by extension, reposition herself and Africa in the global space, positively. The study therefore concludes that Nollywood serves as a veritable medium for the promotion of indigenous cultural development of Nigeria better than any other medium. No one can tell our stories better than ourselves.

### Recommendations

1. Nollywood films should be seen as a national industry that serves as a vehicle of popular socialization whereby self reflection and definition by its cultural representation of her traditions will be translated and mediated through film and thus promoting the cultural identity with some nationalistic view in mind.
2. Nollywood films should be painstakingly researched before they are produced or released film to ensure that every sequence in the films promotes Nigeria's cultural heritage, realities and values, positively.
3. Nollywood should evolve a system and practice where it sets annual or quarterly themes, geared towards development, national re-orientation and rebranding of Nigeria's image internationally to which all films produced in Nigeria should conform.

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