

Nollywood: A Contextual Embassy

Maureen Ndu-Udeji

Abstract

Films function in a number of ways. Different peoples, organisations, and nations use the film medium to achieve many purposes. Film has been seen by several governments to be very important for the purposes of inculcating moral and for propaganda. The films of a nation are the nation's embassies to all countries of the world and the actors and actresses their ambassadors. As embassies and ambassadors, their representation of the country should be such that the country can compete favourably with other countries in the international scene without any form of prejudice.

The research sets out to examine what Nollywood tells the world about Nigeria and Nigerians in their representations. The research justifies or queries the kind of image projected of Nigeria and Nigerians to the rest of the world. Robert Merton's theory of functionalism and the social learning theory of Albert Bandura provide fulcrums for the work. The method is critical analysis and three movies are read.

Findings reveal that the image Nollywood portrays about Nigeria fails to fit into the theories of functionalism and social learning in which Nollywood is to maintain a social order and social structure as well as create models for people to imitate respectively through the image it portrays of the nation. Hence, the moviemakers need re-orientation and training so that the audience can perceive professionalism in their art. The stereotypes Nollywood makes of its citizens determine their worth. Therefore, moviemakers as ambassadors owe the nation a great deal on image formation and projection which will enhance a better perception.

Introduction

Films function in a number of ways. Different peoples, organisations, and nations use the film medium to achieve many purposes. Film has been seen by several governments to be very important for the purposes of inculcating moral and for propaganda. From the time film began telling stories, early in the twentieth century, its enormous potential on the audience had been known. In times of crises, the national film industries everywhere in the world have been mobilised to mould public opinion. The film, *Miral*, with the Israeli-Palestine war setting, produced in 2010 directed by Julian Schnabel, screen played by Rula Jebreal, was used to foster the teaching that education is the only solution that opens the way to peace.

Film has a very powerful persuasive appeal on the audience; hence, film as a tool for propaganda, according to Franck Stern (Panaité 2015), is effective because it establishes visual icons of historical reality and defines public attitudes of the time it is depicting. It also mobilises people for a common cause or calls attention to a neglected cause. Film, by nature, propagates particular ideological messages, values and stereotypes.

Maduka (1994) is of the view that film cannot be separated from propaganda because, directly or indirectly, the film produced is either meant to disseminate an idea, or information, or rumour directed purposely or otherwise to help or injure a person, an institution, programme, or a cause.

Film also functions as a tool for advertising a product, a group of people, as well as a nation and its citizens. Advertising, according to the Business Dictionary, is paid, non-personal, public communication, about courses, goods and services, ideas, organisation, people, and places, through means such as direct mail, telephone, print, radio, television and internet. This is designed to inform and motivate. It explains that the objective is to change the thinking pattern or buying behaviour of the recipient so

that he or she is persuaded to take the desired action by the advertiser.

It is through a country's films that you know how advanced a country is. The way a country is being portrayed has serious implications; the reception or non-reception of a people largely depends on the views or opinions that have been formed on them from what is being projected of such people through their films.

All we see in the Nigerian film and video is a reflection of the country and ourselves, and that is what we sell or disseminate to the world. Film is a tool to promote social transformation, pass information, and bring about positive changes in society. Thompson and Bordwell, according to Enem Benjamin (2008), is of the opinion that undoubtedly, films go a long way in moulding lives, shaping characters, influencing behaviours and attitudes.

The films of a nation are the nation's embassies to all countries of the world and the actors and actresses, its ambassadors. As embassies and ambassadors, their representation of the country should be such that the country can compete favourably with other countries in the international scene without any form of prejudice. Their portrayal of the country should not strive towards attracting ill-treatment to the citizens as Tony Ishiekwene (in Utoh-Ezeajuagh) laments below:

Those of us in the western world, Europe and America in particular, would testify to the humiliation and embarrassment suffered daily in the hands of banks, potential employers and ordinary neighbours because we have Nigeria links, never mind that we have naturalised and become citizens; legal residents of our host countries. And it is not only the whites that stigmatize Nigerians, South Africans, Zimbabweans and a host of our surrounding neighbours in West Africa, look on Nigerians as crooks, liars, drug pushers, 419-ers, kidnappers, assassins and social miscreants of various grades (Utoh-Ezeajuagh: 2008, p. 256).

The films, in presenting Nigeria in good perspective, will also serve as a medium of transformation in the country and in the lives of its citizens for better perception.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on two media theories. First, the theory of functionalism, which was established by Robert Merton (1949) as a theoretical approach to the study of society known as "paradigm for functional analysis", in the decades immediately after the Second World War. Functional analysis of mass communication centres on the role of the media in the maintenance of social order and social structure, and examines how they perform or do not perform certain tasks necessary for the maintenance of equilibrium in society.

The relationship of the theory of functionalism to this study is based on the fact that the film (Nollywood) is to maintain a social order and social structure through the image it projects of the nation. The study is set to examine how Nollywood performs or does not perform this task necessary for the maintenance of equilibrium in society through the image it projects of the country and its citizens.

Another media theory of interest in this work is the social learning theory of Albert Bandura. According to Kevin Williams, Bandura argues that the media are powerful role models whose actions provide the information on which individuals base their own behaviour. Albert Bandura believes that the media are the most efficient means of teaching new ways of behaving, particularly to children and young people. People could learn new behaviours and the solutions to problems more quickly and with less cost through the media than in everyday personal interactions.

Bandura, in an experiment, showed where an adult being watched by three groups of children bullied a plastic man-size Bobo doll. The children who did not see any consequence of the actor's action and those who saw the actor being rewarded repeated the same action with smaller dolls they were individually provided with in different rooms, while the third group who

viewed where the actor was rebuked did not bully theirs but actually bullied their toys when they viewed where the actor was rewarded with drinks and sweets and hailed as a champion. The conclusion Bandura reached after the Bobo doll studies was that "new patterns of behaviour could be learned by simply watching filmed portrayals of them."

Based on the social learning theory, Nollywood movies influence the life and behaviours of the audience and the perception of the nation and the citizens either negatively or positively. Nollywood movies can be used to create models, which the audience can imitate. As evident in Bandura's Bobo doll study, seeing a film model being punished for exhibiting certain behaviour was found to decrease the chances of that behaviour being imitated, and depictions of a model being rewarded for prohibited behaviour increased the chances of that behaviour being copied.

The Realities in Nigeria and Nollywood Films

Of recent, works have been written by researchers and critics of Nollywood on the content and functions of the Nigerian video films: researchers and critics like Ekwuazi (2008); Lanre Bamidele (2008); Bashiru Lasisi (2008); Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajuah (2008); Lilian Igboecheonwu (2008); Oni Adebiyi Ayodeji (2000); Enem Benjamin (2008); Chukwuma Okoye (2007); and a host of others, have taken different stands on the social function of films.

Some of these researchers and critics are of the view that Nollywood, in its bid to mirror the society and portray the negative happenings, becomes guilty of further tarnishing the nation's image. Some other blocks are strongly of the view that what Nollywood is portraying is the way the country is; so they create storylines full of murder, ritual killings, kidnappings, oil bunkering, treasury looting, prostitution and the likes. Utoh-Ezeajuah asserts that Nollywood is presenting the realities of Nigeria: "We make bold to say...that the film industry is not

responsible for the negative image of the country being projected to the international community" (2008, p. 255).

Nigeria, according to Paul Ugor, has not recovered from the backlash of the economic depression, which peaked in the 1980's, and the woes that came with institutionalisation of the military rule for over two and a half decades. He goes further to state that in spite of the adoption of democracy, which brought with it greater freedom for the citizenry and benign atmosphere for foreign investments, the Nigerian nation, is still under the yoke of weighty economic problems. Now, the problem has grown much bigger; the country is bedevilled by problems of insecurity with the Boko Haram saga; bombing in different parts of the country almost on a daily basis. Utoh-Ezeajugh describes Nigeria in relation to the nation's image:

Nigeria is a nation that loves chasing shadows despite the obvious fact staring us in the face that much of the muck-staining nation's image is coming from the unclean Augean stables of the ruling class. How can we, in all sincerity, claim for instance, that it is not in Nigeria's character to be thieves and all other shades of criminals, when our leaders are busy cleaning out our coffers? Or, that it is not in our character to lie, kill or engage in forgeries and '419' activities, or patronise native doctors at will, when our legislators are busy doing just that (2008, p. 255).

Utoh-Ezeajugh and Okoye agree with Ugor's listing of the unemployment, irregular wages, high poverty level, and general low standard of living, as some of the basic problems confronting Nigeria. The resultant effects of all these are a meteoric rise in robbery, ritual murders, arson, and general atmosphere of insecurity (2001, p. 105). Ugor traces the astronomical rise in social crimes to the people's desperation for survival and upward mobility in the social ladder. He then argues that the Nigerian video film (Nollywood) has become the medium through which "the nefarious activities by avaricious city inhabitants are

Maureen Ndu-Udeji:
Nollywood: A Contextual Embassy

mirrored". To buttress his point, he quotes Onookome Okome who asserts that "the city discusses itself through the videos."

In agreement with the above assertion, Okoye strongly affirms as follows:

The more decisive social, political, and economic condition is loosely typical of the existential challenges confronting postcolonial African nation... this condition is characterised by a high rate of unemployment, disease, poverty, oppression, mismanagement, and inequitable distribution of justice and national wealth, as well as ethnic diversity, large population, urbanism and the various national events, activities, and foreign encounters which constitute reality of the people (2007, p. 23).

Like a refrain to a song, he choruses, "These provide a network of heterogeneous and continuous narratives which define the very character of the video film" (2007, 23). Ekwuazi (2008) observes that from the first video film that brought Nigerian home video industry to the limelight, *Living in Bondage*, the prevalent themes have been witchcraft, cultism/rituals, prostitution, armed robbery, fraud, and murder. He goes further to state that these themes formulate the image the industry sells to the outside world and to us in order to amass wealth for self-aggrandisement. It is very sad and unfortunate that these moviemakers do not give a damn to the consequences of their productions, as they insist on not being the cause of the ills, claiming to draw from society to give back to society.

Kenneth Nnebue speaking as the producer of *Living in Bondage* and the president of the association of movie producers, goes on the defensive. This is as quoted by Ekwuazi:

Movie producers are not the cause of the rituals you experience here and there. Movie producers are not the cause of area boys. Movie producers are not the cause of

Ijaw and Warri-Itsekiri riots. Movie producers are not the cause of corpses littering here and there in public. Movie producers are not the cause of prostitution going on everywhere... But the work of we producers is to tell the public. This is what is going on. To tell government that this is what is going on... (2008, p. 300).

In debunking this claim, Ekwuazi retorts:

At any rate, no other means of artistic expression has done more disservice to both the Nigerian personality and the Nigerian nation than the Nigerian home video. This is so because of the stereotype it creates and fosters. For it says to the rest of the world: this is Nigeria a state of anomie... this is the Nigeria- he thrives only in a state of anomie; for money, he will do anything, including the ritual killing of children... It is interesting and significant how Nollywood mirrors itself inadvertently (2008 p 303).

Ekwuazi agrees that, while the films may belong to popular culture, the ethos/morality, which the movies encode, should not matter less. Animasaun reports the Executive Director of National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), Ademola James, as saying that when a movie of 90 minutes shows a person that got rich through ritualistic means and 60 minutes is spent showing how the ritual was carried out, such a movie is promoting rituality or devilish things.

In another vein, the executive secretary, National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), Dr. Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma, in an interview with the management team of the Peoples Media Limited, accused Nollywood of portraying the Nigerian culture as fetish. Niyi Osundare wonders and questions why Nollywood dwells in the almost forgotten past when other countries advance into the future with their movies. He posits thus, as quoted by Akande:

Maureen Ndu-Udeji:
Nollywood: A Contextual Embassy

One of the flaws from the problem of presenting supernatural cinematographically...is (the) pandering to clamorous but misguided call for the exotic in culture, a facile glamorisation of our disappearing past. The Nigerian film is yet to catch up with the dynamics of Nigerian life and establish its relevance to the Nigerian condition (2009, p. 52).

Osundare goes further to state that the impression these make on the minds of the people that watch these movies is that our life as a people is dominated by *juju*. In a similar vein, Folarin Babatunde wants to know why such films that portray and project Nigerians as "people who would rather...bastardise nature than rationally exploit her for human happiness, a people who are more inclined to look for short-cuts to greatness" (Akande, 2009 p 52), are made.

These films project no good image of the country and its citizens. Akande, Osundare, Folarin and Ayakoroma agree that drastic steps should be taken to combat the bad image being projected by Nollywood in its movies. Ayakoroma reveals a move towards this direction as he states, "I have had a meeting with the DG of the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) on the issue of the impact of Nollywood; we are really worried about it and we are working on a conference" (2012).

Nigeria Film Policy and Nollywood Movies
The Nigerian Film Policy states as follows:

The film is a unique means of communication. Its visual bias gives it the most universal appeal and impact. It is a means of education and entertainment, socialisation, information and mobilisation. More than any other means of mass communication the film can be used as a tool to promote positive social transformation as well as to consolidate and build a new relationship between culture and national development. As an aspect of

culture, the film is both an art and industry (*Nigerian Film Policy*; p. 3).

The Nigerian Film policy recognizes that film has a unique function in a nation or society, hence the above introduction. For the nation, as other nations of the world, to stipulate laws and guidelines through institutions and agencies on how its film industries are to operate means that the nation wants its filmmakers to use film to achieve the purposes outlined above.

Although, other policies have existed before now, this policy was put in place after a National Policy Workshop organised by the Nigerian Film Corporation was held at Jos in 1992. The preceding policies and laws were:

Cinematograph Act, 1963

Nigeria Enterprises Promotion Decree, 1978

Nigerian Film Corporation Decree, 1979

Copyright Decree, 1988

Cultural Policy for Nigeria, 1989

National Mass Communication Policy, 1990

The objectives of the policy that was the brainchild of the 1992 Jos workshop, which also is the policy guiding the activities of the institutions and agencies that are the principal organs for its achievement, are as follows:

- a) To establish a virile, self-sustaining, profit-oriented film industry;
- b) To serve as a vital instrument for information for international image building;
- c) To protect our rich cultural heritage and our national aspirations in the process of industrialisation and integration;
- d) To serve as a tool of national cohesion;
- e) To serve as a vehicle for public enlightenment, education, entertainment and mobilisation;

Maureen Ndu-Udeji:
Nollywood: A Contextual Embassy

- f) To encourage the production and exportation of film; and
- g) To mobilise and motivate the people by propagating ideas which promote national pride, solidarity and consciousness.

Of utmost concern to this study are the objective numbers b, c and g which state that film is to serve as a vital instrument for international image building, protect our rich cultural heritage and our national aspirations in the process of industrialisation and integration and mobilise and motivate the people by propagating ideas which promote national pride, solidarity and consciousness.

From these it is very clear that Nollywood is to project an image of the country that will foster a better perception, create a good international relation, protect, and project the rich cultural heritage of the nation and its people. Moreover, it should promote pride, solidarity, and consciousness in its citizens through institutions and agencies as the different guilds, associations and societies in the industry, as well as the Nigerian Film Corporation, the federal, state, and local government film units. The film policy for Nigeria also stipulates in its articles number 4.4 the focus of implementation in the areas of film production in Nigeria. It states that in order to give a positive orientation to locally produced films, the state shall, through appropriate legislation,

encourage the exploitation of our heroic past and cultural heritage in the production of films designed for both local and external consumption;

encourage the adoption of themes, which shall emphasise the desirable, rather than the negative aspects of our present social existence, including belief in the capacity of our people to overcome extreme adverse conditions of nature and socio-cultural arrangement;

encourage development of indigenous heroes and heroines that can serve as models for our people, in all areas of human endeavour – political leadership, military, science

- and warfare, education, science and technology, moral character, trust, integrity, hard work, and concern for the sanctity of human life, etc.;
- encourage the use of film potentials to counter prejudices and misconceptions of the international community about the black race;
- encourage the use of film potentials to establish the common identity and interest of all Black peoples and cultures throughout the world;
- encourage the deliberate exploitation of film potentials for the advancement of national unity, social co-existence, education, science and technology and the peaceful resolution of social problems and conflicts in our society;
- promote decency of appearance and discourage the dehumanisation of the Nigerian people, including child abuse;
- encourage the extensive and authentic use of indigenous costumes, make-up, music and dance in Nigerian films.

Actually, the workshop on film policy by the Nigerian Film Corporation came because of the kind of films or cinema being produced then. According to Jonathan Haynes in a paper titled, *Nigerian Cinema: Structural Adjustments*, he expresses

... embarrassment and chagrin at finding that Nigeria cinema had come to mean atrociously made films about witchdoctors and adultery (which) led to proposals for censorship, including one suggestion that films liable to convey a negative image of Nigeria abroad, through their technical quality and/or cultural content, be denied a license necessary for exporting the film (1997, p. 17).

Haynes goes on to observe that the Nollywood moviemakers never employ any form of systematic approach or analysis of the situation created or make a suggestion of a political alternative. What they do is create popular imagination, give it themes, and create symbols around it, but never show the way forward. Based

on this, the policy "is full of nationalist concern for Nigerian's image abroad, countering racist stereotypes and so on."

Haynes also reports that the speeches of most participants in the workshop followed the above sentiments – personalities like the then Military President Babangida, the Minister of Culture, and Film Makers like Ladi Ladebo, Kunle Balogun. He quotes Ladebo as saying:

Everyone seems to be in agreement as to what commercial film content ought to be. We all agree that our locally made film should present the facts of life in Nigeria so that others may appreciate and understand those things, which may appear strange or ridiculous. It is only natural for us to be uncompromising in our objective of using our films for positive self-projection (1997 p. 18).

Ladebo also sees the similarity in the Nigerian film policy and that of the Federation of Pan African Filmmakers in the Charter of Algiers, which calls for films to be used as a means to teach the people to think critically and to mobilise them for political action for the liberation of the African Continent. The policy and charter have common concern: to "counter racist images, provide role models Africans can be proud of, dust off and dress up traditional values" (p. 19).

The concern that gave rise to the Nigerian Film Corporation in 1992 to organise a workshop for the formulation of film policies is also the concern of this study.

ANALYSIS OF SELECT FILMS

Synopsis of *Hoodlums 1 and 2*

Hoodlums, a movie written by Azubuike Obunsel, produced by Ndiribe Desmond Uchenna and directed by Olawore S. Sunshine, is about a hoodlum, Olololo, in Ghana. This ghetto, full of crime, is ruled by a gang of criminals led by Swagitto (Prince David Osei). This gang rapes girls, maims and kills when you disturb or

stand in their way. Suddenly a gang of girls, ex-convicts, disturbs the peace of the Swagitto's gang. Naomi (Bibi Bright), the leader of the girls, wants a change in the community. "This hood is my birth place", she answers Swagitto when he orders her to vamoose from the hood and stop disturbing their peace. Her father died in the hood for the same cause she is pursuing and her mother fears the worst. Naomi would not leave the hood until she brings justice and order to the disorder that sent her to prison. Naomi challenges Swagitto to a contest after they burnt down her father's house. This contest does not hold, after they have gathered and challenged each other verbally, owing to the lack of guts or cowardice as the girls accuse Naomi. At the other end, the Swagitto's gang accuses him of backing out of the contest.

Barbra is so bitter about the failed fight between Naomi and Swagitto that Naomi accuses her of hatred. Barbra wishes that Swagitto kills Naomi, because of what Naomi did to her in prison. Barbra and Naomi were prison mates where Barbra was queen. In one of the fights, Naomi gives Barbra the beating of her life. Naomi reminds her of it and walks out on them. That same night Swagitto and his boys catch Barbra and stab her. They use her phone and send a distress text to the other girls, except Naomi. Because of this, the girls assume that Naomi killed Barbra. Naomi declares her innocence and, to stop the Swagitto's gang, she has to face and fight Swagitto. Naomi gives him the beating of his life and he is arrested by the police with his gang and girl friend.

With crime removed from the hood, it becomes peaceful and sanity and order return. The remaining hoodlums seek for means of livelihood and some go back to school. Government attention is drawn to the hood, which only explains the drastic change that the hood experiences.

Analysis of Hoodlums 1 and 2

Hoodlums sets a stereotype of life and people in the ghetto but with a mission of changing the perception of people about the ghetto and the people living in the ghetto for good. If you are born into poverty and crime, it does not mean that you must become poor

and criminally-minded. The ghetto can be transformed into a decent setting, if its inhabitants so decide. The movie, *Hoodlums*, is an example of a film that has a purpose and function to fulfil in the society. The movie does not just celebrate crime but immediately matches the crime with a counter force. A girl's phone is stolen as usual and the counter force in person of Naomi chases the thief, retrieves the phone, and returns it to the owner. The efforts do not go unchallenged but the powers that be conquer in the end.

Based on the theory of functionalism the movie functions as surveillance, transformation, and a form of transmission of positive cultural and social heritage from one generation to another. *Hoodlums* enables the people and the society to notice the changes happening around. The movie also presents the platform for the society to identify the threats as well as the opportunities around them. Smally (Dorsia Kwao), a girl who makes it her profession to steal, and Bonboyi, a boy who smokes "wee" and steals from his mother and others, and even the audience are shown the opportunity of becoming better and responsible people.

To fulfil the function of correlation, the movie brings the individual and the society together to respond to the opportunity and threat through the process of explanation and interpretation of events. The plot of the movie is built around this very explanation and interpretation process. In the movie, after Naomi and the girls have done community services, like cleaning and clearing the environment, practically helping people to show a change from the hardship suffered in the community and the ones meted out to them by Swagitto and his gang, they rally round the people to create this awareness and expose the threat and opportunities that abound in positive action in the society.

The function of transmission brings to bear the transmission of culture and social values from generation to generation. With the movie, the orientation of the individual will change especially those in similar situations and conditions and will serve as a tool of orientating and mobilising people to

participate in social development and change. Based on the theory of social learning, the end of Swagitto and his gang is a form of learning for the audience. The victory of Naomi and her girls is also learning for the society that one can bring a change if one persists in the course. Evil can be brought down. Not the issue of "if you cannot beat them join them". You can actually beat them!

Synopsis of *Lagos Girls* (Sisi Eko)

Lagos Girls, a film made by Afeezco Films International Ltd. in conjunction with Sunny Ali Films, tells the story of the lifestyle of girls in Lagos. Omoyeni (Funke Akindele), a trendy Lagos girl, with her friends earn their living from the money got from men. Omoyeni disrespects and maltreats her father. She buys a generator and refuses her father using it because she bought the fuel. Her mother (Fausat Balogun) supports her, and when, in the heat of the argument, her father slaps her, she hits him back, and her mother still takes sides with her.

Clara (Dapo Amusa) who lives in the slump with her mother, who does petty trading hangs out with friends and extorts money from men. Aremu (Azeez Onifade) brings *suya* (grilled meat) to Tofunmi (Bimbo Thomas) who rejects the gift and abuses Aremu, with her friends. Tofunmi collects the *suya* and throws it into the waste bin through the window. Immediately Aremu leaves, she goes to get it, and they consume the *suya* with *garri* and water. When Aremu walks back into the scenario to pick his keys, he is surprised at what he sees. The girls again abuse him out of the house.

Niyi (Sunny Alli), in search of a good woman to marry to give his aging mother a grandchild, finds Titolope. Titolope brings her friends to Niyi who takes them out to an eatery where they make gluttonous demands amounting to twenty two thousand naira. Niyi, who left the house with only ₦10,000 pays for the food he ordered and leaves the girls there to pay for what they ordered. Of course, they pay with their belongings because they do not have money on them.

Omoyeni (Funke Akindele) marries Niyi but still lives her wayward life and still hangs out with the girls. Clara buys a car and Omoyeni demands for one even a very small one from her husband. Her husband refuses and she insists that she will buy one for herself. She does and her husband gives her an option of returning the car to wherever she brought it from or leaving his house. Omoyeni leaves with the car to live with her friends.

They continue in this waywardness until they meet their death. Before Omoyeni dies, the film takes another dimension. When the Ifa priest demands that her father bears a sacrifice on her behalf, of course, her father refuses. In a bid by his family members to make him to do it to save the girl's life, it is discovered that the girl's behaviour to their father comes from what their mother told them about their father. A greater revelation comes out that the miserable condition, Owonte, Omoyeni's father (Taiwo Hassan), finds himself is caused by a spell put on him by his wife, Omoyeni's mother (Fausat Balogun). She does it to punish him for having a child with another woman at the time.

For cleansing, he will have to undergo a seven-day spiritual bath before bearing the sacrifice on behalf of Omoyeni, but before these seven days elapse, Omoyeni dies.

Analysis of *Lagos Girls*

Lagos Girls by Sunny Alli is a film produced in Yoruba language and subtitled in English language. The film portrays an image of Lagos Girls and the larger picture of the Nigerian girls as prostitutes and fraudsters; girls who do not have self-respect and dignity; girls who, no matter how sophisticated they claim to be, can do a 'quick one' with even a *danfo* (commercial bus) driver. Clara, after abusing a *danfo* driver for lusting after her, gives in to him and does it in a pit toilet for a neck-chain as pay. What a dirty and disgraceful image to project!

The girls are pretenders, greedy, liars, and ill-mannered. Titolope (Adeola Sholoye) brings two girls to her boyfriend and introduces them as her friends, Rikiat (Adeola Adekokun) and

Joyce (Juliet Jato) from the UK and who do not speak Yoruba whereas these girls are just local greedy girls with no thought of the consequences of their deeds.

The image portrayed of the Nigerian mothers is that they do not care about where the girls bring their money and other things from. These mothers will go to any length to fight whoever opposes the so-called progress and wealth they enjoy through these girls as portrayed by Clara's mother and Omoyeni's mother. Clara's mother does not question her when she brings a big car home; rather, she rejoices. Omoyeni wants a car because her friend Clara has bought one. Her husband says he does not have money for a car. To satisfy her greed and feeling among friends, she buys one for herself. Her husband asks her to return the car to wherever she has brought it from, or forsake her marriage. She chooses to forsake her marriage and her son for a car and worldly living. This is stating that Lagos girls and, of course, Nigerian girls, are not marriageable.

There is no positive social message in the movie and no desirable function as such. Omoyeni dies because of the curse she incurs by the way she treats her family, not because of whatever makes their nostrils bleed. Of course, the fact that Nigerians believe so much in the supernatural, ritual and *juju* is confirmed in *Lagos Girls*. The storyline changes from the plight of the girls to 'Omoyeni's family crisis'. Instead of ending the movie with the girls, an *Ifa* priest is brought in, changing the dimension and focus of the movie. The portrayal here is that the average Yoruba woman must visit the *Babalawo* and in time of crisis must run to an *Ifa* priest for solution.

Synopsis of *Reloaded*

Reloaded, a film written by Emem Isong and directed by the duo of Lancelot Imasuen and Ike Chukwu, tells a story of troubled marriages and relationships. Ebubechukwu (Van Vicker) lives with Weyinmi (Stephenie Okereke) for seven years without being married to her. Each time she raises the issue of sealing the union in marriage, he complains of not having enough money to give her

a befitting marriage ceremony. He makes her kill her unborn babies six times but goes on to marry another woman because she is pregnant for him. His mother claims that he has to marry the other woman because they are from the same town and must not jeopardise the relationship between the two families. Full of scorn, she unleashes her fury on him by kidnapping him on his supposed wedding day. She releases him only after the supposed wedding day and vows not to take him back even if he comes crawling back to her.

Femi Wellington (Ramsey Noah) and Omoeze (Nse Ikpetim) are married without a child, yet they live a cat-and-dog life. Omoeze, in her bid to check her husband's infidelity, trails him even to the extent of kidnapping one of Femi's girlfriends. Her chasing after Femi and his women earns him suspension from his company. In his anger, he declares he is no longer interested in the marriage. And in her reaction, although pregnant now, she sells the house but she is willing to take him back if he should come back.

Osita (Desmond Elliot), an overbearing Igbo man, never sees anything good in his wife, Tayo (Ini Edo). He abuses her, beats her, and refuses to show any appreciation for anything she does simply because he has paid her bride price. Despite his attitude of a tough, hard man, he falls for just an IT student who wants work without pay. He comes to nothing by falling for the trick of a woman and appearing naked before a board to which he is supposed to present a very important proposal. On getting home, he gets the shock of his life. The IT student turns out to be a setup by his own wife.

The relationship between Chelsea (Rita Dominic) and Edwin (Enyinna Nwigwe) goes sour when she catches him with a same sex bed mate.

Analysis of *Reloaded*

G.M.P. reloaded, as the presenter Tracia (Uche Jumbo) calls it, was done by Nollywood's finest; a complete team of seasoned actors: Ramsey Noah, Rita Dommic, Monalisa Chinda, Stephanie

Okereke, Ini Edo, Van Vicker, Uche Jumbo, Desmond Elliot. The kind of celebration at the end of the movie follows a project that is a success both in vision and in mission.

It has already been cited as a film meant to promote social transformation, and bring about positive changes in the society. The assertion of Thompson and Bordwell has also been cited but for ease of reference, a recall is necessary here. They assert that beyond all reasonable doubts, films go a long way in moulding lives, shaping characters, influencing behaviour and attitudes.

Reloaded as a film falls short of these objectives; the film is a slice of life, a mirror through which society sees itself. Every piece of art has a message to pass to the society. *Reloaded* makes negative stereotypes of Nigeria men and women without a single effort to correct the situations raised. The image portrayed of the men is those of irresponsible and wayward schemers. Bube lives in a house with Weyinmi without a job, and when she goes to work, he takes in a girl and beds her in the same house. Eventually she catches him, but he takes advantage of the love she has for him. She turns out to be the one to beg for forgiveness. To add to his scheming, he refuses to take responsibility for pregnancies and always plays on her mind and sweet-talks her into aborting them.

Bube is also wayward in language and manners. He defines 'wife' thus: "W- Washing, I- Ironing, F- F... (She gives 'it' to him whenever he wants it), E- Et cetera". He is not God-fearing and he is heartless. He never considers the consequences of his actions and when his friend pities Weyinmi on his wedding day with Ifeoma, he calls Weyinmi "bad luck".

Femi's irresponsibility is on the very high side. Despite his being successful, thanks to his wife, he runs after anything in skirt. He takes advantage of his wife's absence to bring a woman into his matrimonial home and bed. He is full of lies and deceit. When the tables are turned against him, he blames his wife, accuses her of having a bitter and dry womb, and opts out of the marriage.

Osita, who neither appreciates his wife nor spends on her, does that on a little girl who is a setup by his wife. He is so irresponsible that despite his having a presentation to make to the

Board of Directors of his company, he succumbs to having a "quick one" with the girl, who leaves him naked in the bathroom under the pretext of getting protection. She takes his clothes and he appears before the board naked and, of course, loses the job.

Edwin (Enyinna Nwigwe), a very loving and caring boyfriend that dotes on his girl, Chelsea (Rita Dominic), also dotes on a fellow man. When she catches him, he blames it all on a habit he acquired while young and finds difficult to shelve, and thus begs for help.

The issue of tribalism is raised, a kind of disunity in unity. The marriages and relationships cut across Nigerian tribes. Ebubechukwu is Igbo, living with Weyinmi, a Yoruba. Osita is also Igbo married to Tayo, also Yoruba. Then Femi, a Yoruba is married to Omoeze from the Niger Delta. The image portrayed is that of a nation in unity, where marriages take place across ethnic groups. In this apparent show of unity, there is glaring disunity in the case of Ebubechukwu (Van Vicker) and Weyinmi (Stephanie Okereke). Ebube's mother says that Bube will have to marry the other girl; first, because she is pregnant for him, second, that they are from the same town and third, not to sour the good relationship the families have enjoyed over the years. This is tribalism in action.

These images of the Nigerian men projected in the film will surely affect the perception of many Nigerian men. The argument that it is what is obtainable in the society does not hold water. The society knows this already and they do not need to see it, without any attempt at correcting it! These are ills; and they should be placed alongside ideals.

The image portrayed of the women refutes the popular stereotype made of them as the weaker vessels. Yet in this portrayal, the women are still shown in bad light. In Africa and in Nigeria, divorce is not an acceptable means of solving marriage problems. A woman is not just married to her husband but to his entire family. None of the women brought their families to intervene in their problems.

Weyinmi, with her beauty, education, and age, falls for the same trick for seven years and has six abortions. The worst she does is to kidnap him, cry her eyes out and let him go, after the supposed wedding day.

Omoeze, apart from running after her husband and his numerous women, just sits at home, and not seeking other ways of making her marriage work. A lot of things make marriages break up aside nagging and refusing to do your wifely duties; however, there are positive attitudes like being nice and supportive, even when you feel otherwise, or even if you are the one that set him on his success. When a woman does not even know what there is for dinner, she ends up making her marriage the gossip of the town. Through her behaviour, her husband is suspended and she walks out of the marriage. This is because she sees herself as a tough woman who cannot be threatened. She sells the house despite the fact that she is pregnant for him. Tayo brings her husband shame, makes him lose his job, beats him up and divorces him.

The Nigerian woman is meant to be seen as a homemaker. Tracie (Uche Jumbo) keeps advising them on the virtuous woman, but none heeds her advice and they are happy with how they end their marriages. No effort is made in this movie to portray an ideal woman and an ideal marriage.

There are no visible desirable functions and positive learning in the film to serve as an instrument of moulding lives, shaping characters, and influencing the behaviour and attitude of the audience and creating a better perception of the society. After watching the film, catharsis is not achieved.

Conclusion

From the movies analysed above, it is shown that Nollywood can make films that have desirable function and positive learning as exemplified in the movie *Hoodlums*. As embassies and ambassadors that represent and speak for the country, and knowing that foreign and other writers depend on Nollywood movies for information on Nigeria and Africa, Nollywood should be mindful of the kind of image it projects of the country and its citizens. The

Nigerian video film has come a long way and it has come to stay. There is no doubt that it has contributed immensely to the economy of the country; nevertheless, positive values must be set. Originality and professionalism should always play out. Although many movie producers do not comply with the Censors Film Board's directives, the Board should not be deterred in its duty of providing acceptable standards for movie production in the country. This standardisation will place the industry in a better position to play its role of projecting the nation positively to the world.

The movie producers should not wait for the government to finance their productions before making movies that will add value to the lives of the citizens and project them positively to the world. Animasaun reports Clarion Chukwura-Oduneye as saying that Nollywood movies are to function as tools for promoting positive and progressive African values and move the Nigeria people forward where change is necessary. This is to enable Nigerians adapt to, and compete favourably in, the world that has become a global village of fast, instant communication.

References

- Akande, B. 2009. Enter-Educate Concepts as a New Paradigm for the Nollywood Film. Thesis, Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan.
- Animasaun, K. 2011: NOSRA THEORY On Gaze setting and Analysis of Nollywood Movies. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- Ayakoroma, B. F. 2012. Culture is Key in Ameliorating Nigeria's Problems. Retrieved May 24, 2012, from www.nicogove.ng/news/518-culture-is-Ameliorating-nigeria-ayakoroma-html.
- Ayodeji, O. A. 2000. Film as a Tool for Product Advertising: A Case Study of Some Selected Films. Diss. Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan.

- Bandura, A. Social Learning Theory. Retrieved April 2012, from www.instructionaldesign.org/theory/social-learning.html.
- Business Dictionary. 2016. Retrieved September 2016, from www.businessdictionary.com/.../
- Ekwuazi, H. 2008. Nollywood: Living in the Bondage of Wealth Creation. *International Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Scholarship*. Nos. 3 – 5: 299 – 307.
- Enem, B. E. 2008. Content and Context of the Igbo Film. Diss., Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan.
- Maduka, C. C. 1994. Propaganda in Films: An analysis of Oliver Stone and Richard Attenborough's Films Diss., Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan.
- Merton, R. Functionalist Theory. Retrieved April 2012, from sociological.about.com/od/sociological-Theory/a/Functionalist-Theory.htm.
- National Film Policy, 2000. Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lagos: Federal Government Printer.
- Okome, O. and Haynes, J. 1997. *Cinema and Social Change in West Africa*. 2nd Ed. Jos: Nigerian Film Corporation.
- Okoye, C. 2007. Looking at Ourselves in our Mirror: Agency, Counter-Discourse, and the Nigerian Video Film. *Film International*. 28. 5 – 4: 20 – 29.
- Panaité, M.M. 2015. Propaganda: Theoretical Analysis on *Miral* Movie. Retrieved March 2016, from www.artciencia.com
- Ugor, P. 2001. The Rise and Thematic Preoccupation of Igbo Film in Nigeria: A Study of Five Contemporary Igbo Video Film. Diss., Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan.
- Utoh-Ezeajuagh, T. C. 2008. Beyond the Negativisation Syndrome: Nigerian Video Films and National Image Laundering. *International Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Scholarship*. Nos. 3 – 5: 249 – 258.

Williams, K. 2003: Schools of Thought: Developing Approaches To Media Theory. *Understanding Media Theory*. Great Britain: Hodder Education pg. 44.

Williams, K. 2003 Effects, What Effects? Power and Influence Of The Media. *Understanding Media Theory*. Great Britain: Hodder Education p. 168.

Filmography

1. Title - Hoodlums 1 and 2

Story - Azubuike Obunsel
Screenplay - Sunshine Olawore
Executive Producer - Ndiribe Desmond Uchenna
Director - Sunshine Olawore
Actors - Prince David Osei, Gloria Safo, Vivian Achor, Bibi Bright, Amanda Obeye
Language - English
Date - 2012

2. Title - Lagos Girls 1 and 2

Story - Afeezco Films International Ltd. In conjunction with Sunny Ali Films
Executive Producer - Sunny Alli
Director - Sunny Alli
Actors - Funke Akindele, Fausat Balogun, Dapo Amusa, Azeez Onifade, Sunny Alli
Language - Yoruba
Date: 2012
Distributor/Marketer - Afeezco Films International Ltd. in conjunction with Sunny Ali Films

3. Title - Reloaded

Story Enem Isong
Screenplay - Bola Aduwo, Eme, Nselkpe
Executive Producer - Desmond Elliot/ Emem Isong
Director - Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen/ Ike Chukwu Onyeka

Actors – Ramsey Noah, Rita Dominic, Monalisa Chinda, Stephanie Okereke, Ini Edo, Van Vicker, Uche Jumbo, Desmond Elliot

Language – English

Distributor/Marketer – Royal Arts Academy.