

THE WOMAN'S FILM GENRE: TOWARDS A REVOLUTIONARY INTERVENTION FOR FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN CINEMA

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Abstract

Sequel to the incessant cries of feminist writers and critics (especially feminist film critics) against the negative portrayals by male writers, directors and producers, some critics have proposed an alternative to women's representation and gender profiling in films under the nomenclature "the woman's film" or "women's cinema." The phrase "women's cinema" is explained by Mayne (1990: 2) as "films made by women, and by women directors for the most part (as opposed, say to screenwriters or actresses)." Thus the woman's film serves as an alternative to the negative mode of women's representation in films made by male filmmakers. This article examines the various ways in which women have been negatively portrayed in cinema, both within and outside Nigeria, emphasising the need for feminist filmmakers in Nollywood to experiment with the woman's film and help re-orientate the minds of the audience towards the potentials and attributes of the woman as an agent of social change and not an object of male visual pleasure as is currently the case.

Keywords: Woman's Film, Stereotyping, Nollywood, Voyeurism, Patriarchy.

Introduction

According to an online encyclopaedia, woman's films are films made for women by predominantly male screenwriters and directors whereas women's cinema encompasses films that have been made by women. It states that the woman's film is a film genre which includes women-centred narratives, female protagonists and is designed to appeal to a female audience. Thus, "woman's films usually portray 'women's concerns' such as problems revolving around domestic life, the family,

motherhood, self-sacrifice, and romance" (*Wikipedia*). The source notes further that the woman's film is different from other film genres for it is primarily addressed to women; and that the genre originated from D.W.Griffith's *A Flash of Light* (1910) and *Her Awakening* (1911). The woman's films were popular in the 1930s and '40s and reached their zenith during the Second World War. Although the term disappeared in the 1960s, it was revived in the early 1970s and in the 1980s the woman's film finally became an established genre (*Wikipedia*). According to Mayne (1990:2), women's cinema, which may also be called the "woman's film", has acquired another meaning, citing Molly Haskell's observation that it is the "most untouchable of film genres". Haskell is quoted further as follows:

At the lowest level, as soap opera, the "woman's film" fills a masturbatory need; it is soft-core emotional porn for the frustrated housewife. The weepies are founded on a mock-Aristotelian and politically conservative aesthetic whereby women spectators are moved, not by pity and fear, but by self-pity and tears, to accept, rather than reject, their lot. That there should be a need and an audience for such an opiate suggests an unholy amount of real misery.

Tracing the genesis and growth of the woman's film, Mary Ann Doane sheds further light on this genre in the following words:

The label "woman's film" refers to a genre of Hollywood films produced from the silent era through the 1950s and early '60s but most heavily concentrated and most popular in the 1930s and '40s. The films deal with a female protagonist and often appear to allow her significant access to point of view structures and the enunciative level of the filmic discourse. They treat problems defined as "female" (problems revolving around domestic life, the family, children, self-sacrifice, and the relationship between women and production vs. that between women and reproduction), and, most crucially, are directed toward a female audience (Doane, 1987: 3).

Feminists' Views on the Woman's Film Genre

A juxtaposition of Mayne's previous analysis of women's cinema as a film made *by* women, and Haskell's "woman's film" as a film made *for* women certainly puts the woman at a very challenging position. She either takes up the task of re-framing and re-claiming her image or stands the risk of accepting any screen identity imposed on her. According to Haskell, women are moved, not by pity and fear but by self-pity and tears to accept, rather than reject, their lot. The onus then lies on female directors, screenwriters and producers to assimilate the critiques of the feminist film critics and adopt their proposals for alternative representation, otherwise the "woman's film" will continue to remain in the doldrums. According to Mary Ann Doane, the conventional film "identifies female pleasure in the cinema as complicit with masochistic constructions of femininity," asserting that a typical theme of the woman's film deals with obsessive sacrifice for one's children at the expense of self (Doane, 1987: 3).

Mayne explains her resolve to retain the plural term "women's cinema" because, according to her, "it is the singular – the woman's film – which is used more frequently to refer to the Hollywood product, and the plural – women's films – to refer to works by women directors" (Mayne, 1990: 5). The stance of feminist film criticism which rejects female gaze, female voyeurism, fetishistic desires, female as sex objects, etc, as an embodiment of the woman's film, is the basis for the proposition for the women's cinema, which could be an ace given to women filmmakers to tell their own stories their own way. The ambiguity in the terms "women's cinema" and "woman's film", and the arguments over the contents of these films, have inspired the following submission:

Now, one could argue that precisely what separates the "woman's film" – where figures of women serve the "scopic and narratological regime" to which Silverman refers – from "women's cinema" – where that regime is problematized or themes put into question – is the attempt to metaphorize the

cinema in other ways. That is, women's cinema may well be characterized, not necessarily by an outright rejection of voyeuristic and fetishistic desires but by the recasting of those desires so as to open up other possible pleasures for film viewing (Mayne, 1990:5).

Since the content of these films is the bone of contention, in Mayne's view, which probably is also the desired result of feminist film critics, it is therefore important to look in the direction of filmmakers, especially the females, for a re-writing of the woman's script because men may not always be the only culprits involved in the lustful gaze. Perhaps, Mayne's thinking may be relevant here, where she observes that "although most often the keyhole is always associated with a woman who is being looked at as the proverbial object of the look by a male but that there could be a reversal or the positioning of the subject where women are positioned on both sides of the keyhole." The onus therefore lies on women and the ability of women filmmakers to begin to look at the image they project in their films to see if they have achieved the desired result. To this Mayne asserts that:

The question is not only who or what is on either side of the keyhole, but also what lies between them, what constitutes the threshold that makes representation possible (Mayne, 1990:9)

For her, the key issues to look at are the basic factors that form the bedrock of the films she has analysed in her book – *The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema* – which are "the threshold between subject and object, between inside and outside, between virtually all opposing pairs, is a central figure for the reinvention of cinematic narrative" (Mayne, 1990:9). Thus, she submits that "the cinema has been described more than once as the realisation of an ancient dream, or nightmare, depending on your point of view" (Mayne, 1990:16). If ever women and feminists are to achieve the aims of feminism through women's cinema or the woman's film, as a genre, then the argument posited by feminist film critics must be examined for

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proper evaluation and analysis. The filmmakers, especially the female folk, should not just gloss over auteur theory but should critically challenge the perennial method of representation that has put the woman's image at a disadvantage, and channel a new course of narration that does not make the woman an object of visual or sexual pleasure. Mayne, however, foresees prospect in the feminist interrogation of the cinema, explaining that

the narrative and visual staging of the cinematic desire relies, as most theoretical accounts would have it, on the massive disavowal of sexual difference and the subsequent alignment of cinematic representation with the male-centred scenarios (Mayne, 1990:92).

Anything that suggests patriarchal domination in film viewing and production should be reviewed by female filmmakers (female screen writers, directors and producers). Any structure that makes the woman the viewed, and the man, the privileged viewer, ought to be deconstructed, so that the "belief in the positive value of female identity which is repressed by patriarchy, will be given its true voice by feminism" (Mayne, 1990:90). As Judith Mayne asserts, the importance of female authorship should not be underplayed.

My point is not that feminist film critics have the proverbial "much to learn" from feminist literary critics, but rather that the paradigm of female authorship in literature may provide a useful point of departure to examine the status of female authorship in the cinema (Mayne, 1990:91).

Feminist Filmmakers' Interventions

Feminist filmmakers have a task on their hands. The onus now lies on them to redeem the debased image of woman whose representation is a product of the ideology of a patriarchal society. The representation of women in film is consequent upon the way the society or culture takes them; thus, the audiences have the same ideology as the films that are produced for them; they fill the cinemas, and that is how the machine keeps turning (Metz, 1985:544). So, whether the film producers perpetuate negative representation of women all in the name of popular culture, or they are out to make money, or the directors and screenwriters are projecting an ideology that is already enmeshed in the culture, (since the representation of women is viewed as a social construct), the woman's identity and dignity are at stake. It is sad to note that the film produced is "the product of society which consumes it, as an orientation of consciousness, whose roots are unconscious, and without which we would be unable to understand the overall trajectory which founds the institution and accounts for its continuing existence" (Metz, 1985:545). It is, indeed, true that the image of woman, as represented in films, is socially constructed by a patriarchal society that perpetually subjects her to a state of servitude and sexual degradation. Therefore, such structures which have continually been stamped in the audience's memory through repetition of stereotyped images in film ought to be deconstructed. An ideology may be a product of society, as posited by Christian Metz, and could be projected back to the viewing audience through the film medium. This becomes important for that same film medium to reposition and re-represent the image of woman, through narration, and project her in her true light, as a leader, a society builder and the stronger sex.

Perspectives on the exploitation and stereotyping of women

Constance Penley, in her critical analysis of the film *Cries and Whispers*, criticises the way women have been characterised in the same image throughout the history of films that have been produced; and that woman has been seen in the following manner: "woman as victim, temptress,

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evil incarnate, and earth mother (Penley, 1976:206). This age-long representation is often exaggerated in films, including Nigerian video films. The only difference is that a little slant of **Africanness** is added to give them their uniqueness which may include witchcraft, voodooism/spiritualism and self-sacrifice. This is vitally important because in most African and Western films, woman has been characterised or stereotyped as incapable of making positive changes in society. This character stereotype that has been seen throughout the history of film must be deconstructed. Vivian Gornick, in her essay titled "Woman as Outsider", explains the reason for directors' ambivalence towards women in laying emphasis on the negative aspect of the woman's image.

The life of woman, like the life of every outsider, is determinedly symbolic of the life of the race; that this life is offered up, as every other outsider's life is offered up, as a sacrifice to the forces of annihilation that surround our sense of existence, in the hope that in reducing the strength of the outsider – in declaring her the bearer of all the insufficiency and contradiction of the race – the wilderness, grief, and terror of loss that is in us will be grafted onto her, and the strength of those remaining in the circle will be increased. For, in the end, that is what the outsider is all about; that is what power and powerlessness are all about; that is what the cultural decision that certain people are "different" is all about: if only these Steppenwolfs, these blacks, these women will go mad and die for us, we will escape; we will be saved; we will have made a successful bid for salvation (as cited in Penley, 1976:207).

She compares the life of a woman to the life of every outsider that "is offered up, as a sacrifice" to appease men who constantly desire women's subjugation. She observes that men have insatiable desire for women to be marginalised, stereotyped and eliminated through the

manner which they are represented in films, so that the male folk will be free of "rivalry and competition" and will be happy. This is a utopian dream because feminist film critics will never give up on their fight for a proper and positive gender representation by filmmakers. This means that male chauvinists and advocates of patriarchy in their entirety will continue to be on their feet as long as feminism thrives and remains on course. This negative representation of women in cinema has been blamed on male directors, writers and artists who are guilty of this "emotional, physical, and intellectual crippling of women" (Penley, 1976:207). Penley, however, comments on the ambivalence surrounding female representation in films, observing that the recurring image of woman as nothing but the projected fears and desires of men and cosmic victim has been advanced but "yet, for most women, the need for love still far outweighs the fear of loss of self" (Penley, 1976:208).

In a more deplorable, dehumanising and demeaning view, Siew Hwa Beh, in her critical analysis of the film, *Vivre Sa Vie*, says that the film uses prostitution as a metaphor for the study of woman, adding that it is a legitimate metaphor; asserting that "every woman is directly or indirectly a prostitute" (Beh, 1976:180). This is a further evidence that feminist film critics must not rest on their oars till patriarchy, female subjugation, male chauvinism, voyeurism, etc, are totally proscribed from film narration. Similarly, deconstruction of socially constructed or constituted ideologies must be taken seriously by women filmmakers. And if the "woman's film" as a genre, must thrive and survive, all women and feminist film critics as well as filmmakers must collaborate in making this a reality so as to salvage the woman from her "eternal dilemma in a world that is defined by men, money, sex without love, and violence" (Beh, 1976:185). It is time filmmakers rose to deconstruct the traditional approach to film narration where women are peeped at through a keyhole or where they are taken as sacrificial objects, or sexual objects, or any form of representation that debases the woman's **true image**.

In her work, *Sisters of the Night*, Karyn Kay analyses the film, *Marked Woman* (1937) and is quoted as placing "special emphasis on the

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female characterizations as revealed by dialogue and action to show how the film rejects the customary myths about prostitution and criminal reform" (Nichols, 1976:186). Kay decries the dilemma of the woman who always falls victim of the law in cases of prostitution where only the women are harassed, and punished, while their male counterparts, even when found guilty under the law are seldom convicted.

In a similar vein, Thonborrow (1996) decries the manner with which women are represented in the media. According to her, whatever material a woman reads, whether literature or entertainment, the text addresses her in a particular way which inadvertently makes her a particular kind of reader, and that the text also gives a specific social role and also positions the woman in a specific relationship with the world, just the way it has been represented by the text. Thus the woman is a consumer of art and media texts. In her words:

We could examine the role of women as producers of art and literature, or of women as 'consumers' of art and of media texts: as readers of books, as buyers, watchers, and users of television and radio, of videos. We could also look at how women are actually represented in paintings, in literature, in films, on the television screen and in advertisements (Thonborrow, 1996:207).

It is indeed disheartening to feminist film critics to see film writers and directors hibernating around the media with the image of the woman as a tool for showcasing their creative prowess without caring about how she is represented. This demeaning manner of representing women, who are victims of literature and media text, is further buttressed by Thonborrow in images painted as *modus operandi* for advertisements which are very devastating to the image of the woman. With reference to Ros Coward (1984), Thonborrow remarks that women are constantly told in adverts that their bodies are fragmented into different parts which they can work on and that the pictures of models in glossy magazines are the standard for the right shape and right size. Failure to observe this prescription will

rob them of men's attention which is the basis for their future happiness. With the media usurping the privileges and freedom of women to be themselves, they are confronted with the challenge of trying to measure up to a false reality, so to speak. This false reality created by the media (especially by men) puts the woman on her feet, and occupies her with thoughts and attempts of how to make herself acceptable to a male-chauvinistic world. In the desperate bid to gain acceptance, she sacrifices her talents and gifts on the altar of the patriarchal society in which she finds herself.

It is indeed very disturbing to observe the way the media use representations of women to sell products in advertisement, coupled with the discourses that accompany these images. Thonborrow cites the example of a car and price tattooed on a lady's arm and wonders the relationship between a car and a woman's body, and remarks that "the discourse of car advertisements in general makes an interesting study into media representations of women, as they are often constructed around stereotypical background assumptions concerning the relationship between men, women, money and control" (Thonborrow, 1996:212). The worrisome relationship between a car and a woman's image in the media advert published in the *Guardian* (11 June 1993) for a Rover Metro car further elicits the following response:

...so the link between the woman and the car is created by the use of particular... features: women, like cars, are 'noticed' and 'looked over' (i.e. they are the focus of the male gaze); they can 'attract the wrong kind of attention' (i.e sexual interest); and they can also be 'stolen' by rivals (there is a central-locking and anti-theft alarm); they can be bought (there is a price on the woman's body). So this advert hinges on (a)...metrical, heterosexual relationship of property and ownership, through the implication that men can 'possess' this car in the same way that they can possess a woman... (Thonborrow, 1996:212).

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Perhaps one has to state that the content of what is presented in the media is influenced by the perennial 'status quo' existing in the patriarchal society. Thus the consumer is entertained with products, films, adverts or any form of art that has been determined by the culture; hence women stereotypes in films have become the norm of the day. The question is: is this really the consumers' area of interest? Do they really approve of the representation paraded in the media, especially on the woman's image? What informs their process of formation of facts? Are they any close to reality? Are those selections or manner of representation highly desirable by the public to the detriment of the female folk? Masterman (1985) observes that the values and assumptions that lie behind what is presented to the viewing populace should be traced and that it requires a wary and perhaps sceptical posture, but certainly not cynical approach, about how facts are formed. Well, whatever the process is that affects the formation of facts in the movies we watch, whether cultural, societal or ethical, the image of the woman should be well represented in line with current societal and global reforms. Perhaps one should state that the content of films should be scrutinised to ascertain whether the anticipated positive impact on society is achieved. The core of feminist film criticism tends to correct the distortion of the woman's image as originated by a patriarchal culture. Mayne traces this representation to early films where "mostly men, but occasionally women, peep through keyholes, offering bold demonstrations of the voyeuristic pleasure that has been central to virtually every contemporary theory of the cinema" (Mayne, 1990:9).

Johnston argues that the source of women stereotype can be traced to early cinema as detected by Panofsky to the effect that man's image underwent rapid differentiation but that "the primitive stereotyping of women remained with some modifications." She observes that writing on women's stereotype in the media usually starts with "a monolithic view of the media as repressive and manipulative" and this has indeed made Hollywood to be seen "as a dream factory producing an oppressive cultural product" (Johnston, 1976:209). The implication of this

submission is a stern warning for women to know the origin of female stereotyping: their image as object of male gaze, sex objects, sacrificers to gratify the man's desire, etc. It is purely manipulative and thus "a conscious strategy of the Hollywood dream machine." This continuum existing in the cinema today is further traced to the origins of cinema as a means of helping the audience understand the narrative thus:

Iconography as a specific kind of sign or cluster of signs based on certain conventions within the Hollywood genres has been partly responsible for the stereotyping of women within the commercial cinema in general, but the fact that there is a far greater differentiation of men's roles than of women's roles in the history of the cinema relates to sexist ideology itself, and the basic opposition which places man inside history, and woman as ahistoric and eternal. As the cinema developed, the stereotyping of man was increasingly interpreted as contravening the realisation of the notion of 'character'; in the case of women, this was not the case; the dominant ideology presented her as eternal and unchanging, except for modifications in terms of fashion etc (Johnston, 1976:209-210).

Johnston has succinctly traced the source of the woman's stereotyped image in film as having originated from Hollywood filmmakers who see the man's role as being dynamic and the woman's role as static. Since the Nigerian video film industry is still developing and learning modes of narration from Hollywood, it is obvious that Nollywood only treaded along the path of Western media; hence, the recurring decimal of women stereotypes in films we see today in Nigerian video films. Thanks to the challenges posed by African feminist film critics like Foluke Ogunleye, Femi Shaka, Frank Ukadike, and a host of others who have questioned the origin and basis for this representation, and have taken further steps to launder the African woman's image so as to counter the "eternal and unchanging" image of women in the media. It is heartening to note that women have been projected, although in a very minimal way, as leaders and people who can effect changes in society positively. However, at the

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end of such films, the women are still brought under the control of men by falling in love or getting married, to submit to their men, or are punished for trying to "lobby" for "men's positions" and for having too many aspirations. Hence, there are few films that have presented women in a positive light.

The impact of gender stereotyping is enormous since it affects women negatively, thus "in most instances, gender stereotyping disadvantages women economically and socially, blocking them from a range of opportunities, including access to more skilled and high paying forms of employment" (Phalane, 2004:161). This shows that representation in film or cinema and literature is socially constructed by the script writers or authors. This assumption is ascertained by Monteith (1986) who states that "one of the immense positive gains from feminist criticism has been the realisation that the female in literature is a literary construct (as cited in Eko and Emenyi, 2002:170). Since literary works were in the forefront of representing women in their stereotyped roles, which most films are emulating in Nigeria, the resultant effect should not be expected to be different. By this I mean that since literary feminist critics have championed the course of addressing the problem of female representation and gender profiling through female authorship, the gains should also be exploited by feminist film critics, as regards women's representation in films; which should also be championed by female filmmakers. Female filmmakers should be committed to the feminist ideology which, according to Grace Okereke, is "sensitive inquiry into the female personality and her condition" (as cited in Eko & Emenyi, 2002:171).

Assessing the representation of women, Pandian (1999) describes the role of women in films "as obscene and were found to sexualize women and invariably present them scantily dressed," and that, such representation is "sexualized, stereotyped, simply negative" (cited in Adesoke, 2002:35). To add her voice to this discourse on feminist film criticism especially on the image of women in Nigerian video films, Foluke Ogunleye condemns the negative representation and stereotyping

of women in the film medium which, according to her, "furthers the wrong socialization of the female in society." She observes that these negative stereotypes are reflected in themes such as prostitution, adultery, jealousy and crime; and that film has become "one of the most powerful agents of change within society" therefore, there is every need for the image of woman to improve. She notes further:

It is a confirmed fact, however, that the role of women in society is changing. Today's women are better educated and participate in diverse spheres of society hitherto regarded as male preserves. Therefore, it has become important that the image of the "stereotype woman" be dropped from the film medium and that film-makers be encouraged consciously to assist in presenting woman as she is and enabling her to perform her role in development (Ogunleýe, 2005:128).

Similarly, Shaka (2002) examines the narrative techniques of the Nigerian video film industry in relation to characterisation. He comments on how characterisation is still handled in the conventional tradition of "gender hierarchy in African society." He explains that the male is often the subject in narrative while the female serves as "an object of male spectacle or vilification, serving more to be seen than heard" (Shaka, 2002:22).

The sum total of all the views by the feminist film critics examined in this study is that women are exploited to their own disadvantage no matter the society (whether Western or African) to which the filmmakers belong; and that the innovations filmmakers claim to have introduced into cinematography is a "continuation of the old in a glamorous way – perhaps the completion of women's story as told by men, because, apart from very few exceptions, most of these films recount sordid tales of female atrocities against the social system" (Eko and Emenyi, 2002:171). It is in this light that the theme of women leadership in some selected Nigerian video films will be examined to see how the issue of representation has been tackled, to ascertain if there

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have been some positive changes in the profiling of the woman's image in Nollywood films.

Hauwa Sani Dangogo, in her article, "Women in Electronic Media" is optimistic that women's exploitation is to their advantage, asserting that

To my mind, our subjugation in the media is demonstrated by our having to be assigned to perform tasks thought to be exclusively for women rather than being allowed to follow the dictates of our consciences. We, depending on the area we are assigned, work the same hours as our menfolk and get our entitlements if and when due (Dangogo, 1985: 210).

Dangogo believes that no matter the area women in the media are assigned, they put much effort to work productively like their male counterparts despite the fact that they, as women, are not allowed the privilege to choose to work in areas they have proficiency in. Therefore, they suffer subjugation and marginalisation by working in areas assumed to be feminine while they are denied other areas termed to be exclusively the preserve of males.

Challenges before Nollywood Female Filmmakers

In Nollywood, the majority of the screen writers, directors and producers are male. Emem Isong, Amaka Igwe and Helen Ukpabio are the few renowned female filmmakers in Nollywood (although Amaka Igwe is beginning to work more on Television Soap Operas). Suffice it to say that the awareness by these women filmmakers of the necessity to experiment with the "woman's film" is still a far cry from its realisation. Thus, there is the need for all the female directors, screenwriters, producers and actresses to be enlightened on the positive changes the experimental woman's film could bring upon women's image and status in cinema if adopted. These few female filmmakers need to give much consideration to the roles they create for female characters in their

narratives. There is the need for female filmmakers to adopt the concept of the "woman's film" as a potent and corrective medium through which women's denigrated image can be restored and also get their stories told best.

Male filmmakers conspire to represent women as being unfit to rule Nigeria, whether as clan leaders, queens of kingdoms, or providing political leadership at the state or national level. Thus, Siew Hwa Beh (1976:201) observes that all we see in films is "the tragedy of being a woman...the woman as the excuse and victim of male action...a woman leading a victorious army (as) a witch and a disciple of the devil." True to Beh's observation, a woman is often associated with evil if she manages to break through patriarchal structures to become a leader. Similarly, Judith Mayne (1990), buttresses the need "for feminism to be able to analyze the distortion and lies of patriarchal culture" and also to let women tell their own stories from their own perspective because the perspective of women as 'real historical subjects' may not be reducible to the images of woman projected within patriarchy" (6-7). She thus refers to Teresa de Lauretis' critical analysis of women's dilemma as follows:

Represented as the negative term of sexual differentiation, spectacle-fetish or specular image, in any case ob-scene, woman is constituted as the ground of representation, the looking-glass held up to man. But as historical individual, the female viewer is also positioned in the films of classical cinema as spectator-subject; she is thus doubly bound to that very representation which calls on her directly, engages her desire, elicits her pleasure, frames her identification, and makes her complicit in the production of (her) woman-ness. On this crucial relation of woman as constituted in representation to women as historical subjects depend at once the development of a feminist critique and possibility of a materialistic, semiotic theory of culture. For the feminist critique is a critique of culture at once from within and from without, in the same way in which women are both in the

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cinema as representation and outside the cinema as subjects of practices (cited in Mayne, 1990:6).

Teresa de Lauretis's observation helps to show how Nigerian women are subjected to poor representation in films just as they are marginalised in the cultural practices of today. The impact the woman's film would make in redirecting men's interest on the importance of female leadership should never be underestimated.

Conclusion

Women filmmakers should therefore be encouraged to speak in their own voices through cinematic codes and techniques that tell their own stories the way that is most appropriate and suitable for them because, as Mayne posits, "the works of women filmmakers offer reformulations of cinematic identification and desire." This goes to explicate the fact that "the attempts by women directors to redefine, appropriate, or otherwise reinvent the cinema are crucial demonstrations that the boundaries of that supremely patriarchal form are more permeable, more open to feminist and female influence" (Mayne, 1990:92). In this respect, I should like to submit that Nigerian feminist authors and filmmakers have the ability to exterminate the patriarchal structures that have bound the woman socially, culturally, politically, financially and educationally. If the woman's dilemma must be totally circumvented in the future, then no one else should take the lead but Nigerian women themselves. Only then could they be extricated and the male filmmakers will have no choice but to follow suit. In sum, the woman's film genre is highly recommended for Nollywood female filmmakers for, it is only through it that women's voices can be heard loudest, and their stories told specifically from a woman's perspective.

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