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Between e-culture and real culture: a peep through the lenses of Nollywood

Abstract

E-culture otherwise referred to as electronic culture has become a robust field of study especially in understanding its trajectories and intersections with politics, economy, propaganda, education, culture, and arts. The term which generally captures everything that can be classified as online or digital culture has become a dominant factor in (re)imaging, projecting, and influencing opinions about individuals, ideologies, policies, culture, and arts. It has also fueled debates about fidelity between what is projected online and the reality of the situation offline especially as seen in Nollywood films. This work pilfers from the canons of Cultivation and Spiral of Silence theories, to investigate the fidelity of Nollywood as e-culture to Igbo culture and the consequent transnational impressions created by the medium about the Igbo character and his cultural allegiances. Through assessment of Igbo cultural motifs in domains of costume, makeup, and Igbo character portrayals in recently selected films, this work fingers Nollywood as responsible for the demeaned diasporic perceptions about Nigeria as well as the persistent Igbo cultural erosions. It concludes that while we give credit to Nollywood in areas of thematic rendering of the Nigerian realities, the Igbo contextual (Igbo periodic and geographic settings) presentation is what this paper classes as pseudo-culture, a culture that betrays its source or what Ernest-Samuel Gloria refers to as "imitation of imitation." It recommends among others, the privileging of a re-engineered mindset of filmmakers and cultural research in Igbo films to redeem the Igbo identity and possibly avert the UNESCO prediction of erosion of salient aspects of Igbo Culture by 2025.

Keywords

Nollywood, e-culture, Culture, Igbo, Igbo identity

Introduction

To say that communication is one area that has received the bulk of technological innovations is to say the obvious. Man is in constant search of ways to improve relationships with others and the environment hence, we have recorded several eras in civilization identifiable with their distinct communication technologies. Through the ages, we have seen the transition from traditional communication media to the emergence of radio, newspapers, television, as well as film, and other electronic and internet-based media. These media within their own spaces have continued to reinvent themselves in line with the realities and demands of the society so much that today, the emergence and sophistication of these media have been known to be one of the key factors that have "shrunk the world"[1] among other factors like transportation. Technological advancements in communication and its seamless contribution to societal workings have raised several academic debates pondering its nature, dynamics, and roles. These salient areas over the years have constituted a robust academic framework to assess the various trajectories of the media and their fidelity to society and vice versa. The rapid advancements of the contemporary mass media especially as deduced from its electronic and data-based infusions have birthed a thriving electronic culture in all societies of the world.

Electronic culture also referred to as 'e-culture' describes the various expressions of man in society in digital forms. This culture according to Ernest-Samuel is founded upon three premises thus; "Communication and information defined by digital media technologies; New arena concerning arts, libraries, cultural heritage institutions; and Involves instrumental application, cultural innovations, changes and developments in the institutions within the digitalization society."[2] Placed side by side with the contemporary society, one is tempted to throw a sweeping statement that e-culture is the myth of today's world as virtually all aspects of human cultures and endeavors in business, arts, education, information, politics, education, and religion thrive on the platform of the electronic or digital media. In their views, Uzelac and Biserka state:

> Digital culture is a new complex notion: today digital trends are increasingly interloping with the world of culture and arts, involving different aspects of convergence of cultures, media, and information technologies, and influencing new forms of communication. The

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[1] S. Kirsch, *The Incredible Shrinking World? Technology and the Production of Space*, "Environment and Planning D: Society and Space" 1995, *13*, p. 529.

[2] G. Ernest-Samuel, *E-culture and African Video Films in a Globalized World: Amayo Uzo Philips* "*Akwaeke Na Odum* and *Sacred Tradition*" *as Paradigms*, "UJAH: Unizik Journal for Arts and Humanities" 2012, *13*(2), p. 56–57.

new possibilities created by ICT – global connectivity and the rise of networks – challenge our traditional ways of understanding culture, extending it to digital culture as well...[3]

The fact that the above acknowledges electronic culture as a convergence of cultures helps this work a great deal since it corroborates the fact that electronic culture is a culture based in the sense that the various apparatuses and utilities of digital media recognize, obey, and projects the culture of the host. It also helps this work in the sense that it recognizes factional delineations between real culture and digital or electronic culture as well as the challenges that digital media poses to traditional culture. It is on this premise that this work focuses on the film medium as an aspect of electronic culture to interrogate the fidelity of Nigerian films to the culture it projects and the impressions imposed on those who view these films which in turn conditions their opinions and reactions about the subject matter, culture, and characters presented. Enahoro corroborates this idea that:

> A film industry does not develop in a vacuum, its impetus, shape, direction is influenced by social, political, and economic forces in a particular society. We cannot ignore the relationship between the film and other forces. Filmmaker responds to his social environment with his total personality.[4]

The Nigerian film industry otherwise referred to as 'Nollywood' is the name that houses all video films that are produced in Nigeria and reflect the realities of the Nigerian situation. The African film industry started as a medium to rewrite the negative African narratives as represented in foreign films like *The Gods must be Crazy* and others. In corroboration of this thought, Anyanwu opines that "understandably, African cinema was founded based on countering the erroneous and misleading propaganda of the Whiteman against the blacks/Africans."[5] However, the film medium grew in leaps and bounds since the last two decades to become one of Nigeria's largest employers of labor with the medium serving as a mirror through which Nigerian stories are projected for appreciation by viewers in Nigeria and Diaspora.

One will also observe that due to the nation's cultural diversity and tribal affiliations, the film medium has seamlessly found itself a suitable medium in projecting certain cultural idioms and values from these tribes. To this end, there is the existence of Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Efik, Idoma, and Ijaw films. The spotlight of this study beams Igbo films. Igbo films in this context are intended to cover all

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[3] A. Uzelac, C. Biserka, (ed.), *Digital Culture: The Changing Dynamics*, Zagreb 2008, p. 3.

[4] A.U. Enahoro, *Semiotics of an African Cinema*, Lagos 1997, p. 22.

[5] C. Anyanwu, *Nigerian Home Videos and the Demolition of the Family Structure*, "Journal of Creative Arts" 2000, *1*(2), p. 59.

films produced in Igbo language and/or English with Igbo imaginings in settings, characters, worldviews, idioms, performatives, and perceived cultural nuances in makeup, story, props, and costume.

The Igbo character and identity is a personality that is centered on communal values "which are necessary fallouts of his metaphysical and cosmological world centered naturally upon his God."[6] In a complimentary note, Ossai observes that "the Ibos have a rich culture, lots of myths, legends and folktales to tap from and adapt into screenplays"[7] while Obiako recounts thus:

> The gratification of being reckoned as an Ibo knew no bounds. You were held in high esteem, beheld as one whose smartness and resilience could carve out a way where people thought there was no way; whose brilliance and intelligence could make something out of nothing, who could always read the handwriting on the wall even before any other person saw the wall...[8]

This character finds backing in some of the early Igbo films like Don Pedro Obaseki's *Igodo: Land of the Living Dead,* although expressed majorly in the English language; one notices the societal renewal efficiencies of the Igbo worldviews and belief systems as well as the collective will and foresight of the Igbo character towards resolving individual and societal conflicts. The heroes in the films are such that embodied the respect for culture as well as the concern and willingness to contribute to communal progress which are the hallmarks of the Igbo identity. In films like Lancelot Imasuen's *Issakaba* also, one notice how the ritual potencies of the Igbo people can contribute to the maintenance of law and order as well as be instrumental to the enforcement of true moral standards in Igbo land which again is the true hallmark of the Igbo character.

The films above can be viewed as sufficient responses to the decolonization campaign of African Cinema where filmmakers are charged to experiment with films that have its "language rooted in both traditional pictorial composition and African culture."[9] Language in this instance does not refer only to speech, dialectical variations, and slang infusions but embraces other idioms like dress codes, settings, properties, and norms that are peculiar to Africans. When these films are placed side by side with recent films produced in Nigeria, one sees a demeaning,

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[6] C. Ani, E. Ome, A. Nwankwo, *Re-Examination of Igbo Values System, and the Igbo Personality: A Kantian and African Comparative Perspective,* "Open Journal of Philosophy" 2014, *4*, p. 398, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275999328_Re-Examination_of_Igbo_Values_System_and_the_Igbo_Personality_A_Kantian_and_African_Comparative_Perspective [accessed: 12.08.2021].

[7] E. Ossai, *Nigerian Home Videos and Ethnic Identities*, Jos 2019, p. 65–66.

[8] C. Obiako, O. Okey, *Cannibalism: Igbo and the Truth*, "Daily Champion" 1997, September 11, p. 38.

[9] B.F. Ayakoroma, *Trends in Nollywood: A Study of Selected Genres*, Ibadan 2014, p. 34.

if not total defamation of the culture and identity of the Igbos which forms the stimulus for this research; to ascertain the extent of damage done to Igbo culture by makers of Ibo films and extent of the seeming character defamation of Igbo character in these films. The transnational dimension of Nollywood films has become, even more, the reason why this work is burdened with an assessment of cultural contents and expressions on the screen especially noting the power of the film medium to shape characters and influence decisions. The fact that in this contemporary world also, people make their decisions and view cultural phenomena from the way and manner they are presented in these media spaces, is another reason why this study is pungent to the Igbo society.

Theoretical Framework

This work will hinge on the media theories of cultivation and Spiral of silence to interrogate Nollywood as e-culture and her identity position in recent Igbo films which aid in the formation of perceptions of a wide range of audiences about the Igbo character and cultural make-up. Cultivation theory projects the view that heavy consumption of media messages shapes the perception reality and opinion formations of its consumers. Propounded in 1976, its proponents such as George Gerbner and Larry Gross set out to look at how the television and other media can shape and influence perceptions of reality. To them, the more time spent living in the television's world, the more its viewers carve their social realities in line with that which they see in the television.

The theory seeks to advance the assumptions that most of what we know, or think we know, we have never personally experienced and that we know these things because of the stories we see and hear in the media. This theory, later modified to include mainstreaming and resonance views, argues that heavy viewing leads to a convergence of outlooks across groups. In this sense, it attempts to decode how heavy media consumption with its recurring patterns of images and messages, can influence assumptions about the world because "though we cannot always see media effects, they do occur and eventually will change the culture in possible profound ways."[10] These changes are in the light of their presentation within the media space thereby creating opinions in its viewers which they consciously or unconsciously express or find ways to express.

The spiral of silence theory as propounded by Elisabeth Noealle-Neumann is an attempt to buttress the fact that "public behavior is affected by public opinion

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[10] S. Anaeto, O. Onabajo, J. Osifeso, *Models and Theories of Communication*, (4th edition), Bowie 2012, p. 104.

assessment."[11] This means that the opinion one has about something is greatly influenced by the opinion of the media. In the words of Noelle-Neumann, "to a large extent, it is the media which create opinion... occurrences and persons exist in public awareness practically only if they are lent sufficient publicity by the mass media, and only in the shapes that the mass media ascribe to them."[12] Majority of people tend to see and judge issues, groups, and persons from the lenses of the media.

The two theories above serve this work first to evaluate Nollywood films as media outlets capable of creating impressions on their viewers as well as influencing their perspectives and attitudes about people, places, and events presented in them. These opinions can be positive or negative and over time also, the persistent portrayal of these images tends to build a certain cultural outlook about the subjects so much that it takes the place of reality while reality becomes the illusion. This means that in today's world, existence and values are largely the functions of media constructs and notions of reality. Furthermore, these theories help this work to desiccate the persistent negative contextual trajectories of e-culture vis-à-vis Nollywood on the identity of the Igbo nation and character as represented in Nollywood films over time. This is so especially seeing the maligning feedback and berated figuring of the Igbo society by non-Igbos in both Nigeria and Diaspora. Orji elaborates thus:

> While it (the film medium) controls and enjoys the largest network of viewership and market returns, it has deliberately and heavily misrepresented its primary constituents: the Igbo. Video films usually x-ray a particular culture and within the visuals, content and aesthetics, an aggregate of the people's social attitude is formed. We can say that Igbo image in the Nigerian movie industry is replete with misrepresentations and casts doubts about the sincerity in their business successes and general life-style; and this is invariably as a result of misconceptions from Nigerians about Igbo cultural matrix and mores.[13]

Lastly, the theories set the platform upon which the researcher grounds his recommendations for the re-imaging of the Igbo content and context in Nollywood films to serve as a revivalist tool for cultural survival and sustainability beyond this millennium, thereby complimenting the several attempts to avert the UNESCO predictions of the impending apocalypse of aspects of Igbo culture.

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[11] *Ibidem.*

[12] Folarin B., *Theories of Mass Communication: An Introductory Text*, Ibadan 1998, p. 71.

[13] B. Orji, *Misrepresentation and Bastardization of the Igbo in Nollywood*, https://www.research-gate.net/publication/315374404_Misrepresentation_and_Bastardisation_of_the_Igbo_in_Nollywood_Films [accessed: 10.08.2021], p. 108.

Igbo Cultural Assessment in Selected Nollywood Films

This work gives credit to scholars like Edward Ossai, Orji, Gloria Ernest Samuel, Barclays Ayakoroma, and others who have given insights into the background, history, and nature of the Nigeria film industry as well as the Igbo films. On a general scale, Orji opines that in the near two scores of its existence, the Igbo film culture has more often than not presented the Igbo as a nation of voodoos, occultists, dupes, witches, sorcerers, ritualists and prostitutes, thereby undermining their cultural diplomacy and importance.[14] Ernest Samuel[15] who investigated the cultural representation of the Igbos in Amayo Uzo Philips *Akwaeke Na Odum* and *Sacred Tradition* decried the language codifications and dialectical misrepresentation amidst gross disregard and sordid representation of cultural codes in the films. It is important to note that the Igbo language is one major aspect of Igbo identity that UNESCO predicts to become extinct in 2025. The language issue has become a major problem for the Igbo people since the last decade especially seeing the fact that the killer arrows of the culture according to Duruaku, stem from

> (...) The relentless surge of vampire cultures is aided, even if unwittingly, by the very people who ought to preserve them: the owners of the culture. These people are blinded by the glitter of other cultures and being bereft of the preserving love for their heritage and history, readily absorb what they consider better and more acceptable.[16]

This study does not intend to toe this line however, one cannot but notice with dismay, the dialectical variations, and language inappropriations mumbled up in recent Igbo films. This section is not also given to plot summaries of recent Nigerian Films but will rather look at Igbo cultural presentations in three categories; costume, makeup, and character portrayal in recent Nollywood films to interrogate cultural fidelity between the real and screen culture.

Costume and Make-up

> What would a man be without his clothes? Without his clothes, a man would be nothing at all. The clothes do not merely make the man... clothes are the man. Without them, he is a cipher, a vacancy, a nobody, a nothing.[17]

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[14] *Ibidem.*

[15] G. Ernest-Samuel, *E-culture and African…*, *op. cit.*

[16] T. Duruaku, *Animated Graphic Film for the Rejuvenation of a Fading Culture: The Case of an African Oral Heritage*, "African Journal of History and Culture" 2015, *7*(6), p. 123–124, https://academicjournals.org/journal/AJHC/article-full-text-pdf/6FE887653554 [accessed: 10.08.2021].

[17] J. Umukoro, *The Nigerian Dress as a Cultural Icon. Dress Culture and National Development*, Ibadan 2011, p. 68.

Costumes like language are vital in character and cultural delineation; it is a tool for cultural "expression (…) a great purpose of cultural identification. It showcases the cultural aesthetics, artistic styles, and traditional representation of a people. A metaphor of cultural space, providing an identity and consciousness among the people."[18] In recent films like *Ije Elu* produced in Igbo language and setting, a heightened misrepresentation of the Igbo culture in areas of dressing, language, and context is noted. The film which one could arguably dismiss as an epic, parades characters who are supposedly or intended to be dressed in pre-colonial Igbo attires and speak the Igbo language. The Igbo culture can be addressed in three major periods viz; pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods which the filmmakers should be careful to portray as it is the first information a viewer could pick from the beginning of the film. The reason for this is the fact that the setting of any film is deduced from the very opening scene with visual images of the characters; their names, costume materials, props, and environment sells out the geographical and periodic setting of the film.
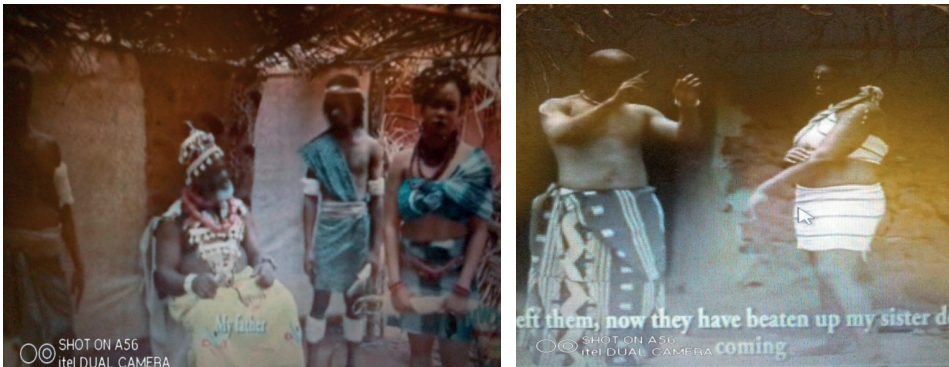
Picture 1. Scenes from *Ije Elu* revealing the periodic disparities in costuming

A general outlook of costuming in the film *Ije Elu*, as deduced from costume presentations in the above plate, the periodic setting is betrayed. One notices the wrongness and juxtapositions of periods in the costuming making it difficult to pick out the periodic settings of the film. The king and female characters wear quite recent, sophisticated beads, and play alongside bare-chest males clad in just wrappers in the attempt to replicate a pre-colonial Igbo society. The palace guards are dressed in contemporary sequence materials which are products of modern

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[18] C.P. Eze, N.C. Akas, *Costume and Makeup, as a Tool for Cultural Interpretation: A Study of Egba Festival of the Kokori, Isoko Local Government Area of Delta State*, "Arts and Design Studies" 2015, p. 25.

technology which again, is a betrayal of the pre-colonial and even early colonial identity. Besides these flaws, referring to modern events like ECOMOG through their lines, demean whatever periodic settings the film attempts to portray and these inconsistencies (born from a lack of research) saw a juxtaposition of contemporary, pre-colonial, and colonial codes which negatively affects the Igbo aesthetic identity. One is also forced to ignore the relevance of the makeup to the cultural disposition of the film since the period cannot be fingered. To this end, makeup is functionally irrelevant both aesthetically and otherwise.

Picture 2. Picture revealing the geographical setting of the film *Ije Elu*

One notices a betrayal of the geographical setting of the film in regards to Igbo culture. From the image above, the hut was originally built with mud but its entrance is reinforced with cement giving the idea that the setting could have been colonial or early post-colonial Igbo communities but the costumes and makeup used in the film betray the above which then puts a question mark on the visual location of the film amidst renderings in inconsistent Igbo dialect.

Igbo Character Representation

In this category, this work will look at certain character portrayals in Igbo films as a precursor to the overall negative imageries and overlapping implications to Igbo society. The people make up the society and the society is as good as the quality of people it parades. In the light of this statement, films like *Shina Rambo*, *Brothers Fight*, *Mafia Kingdom*, *Street Bandits,* and *Black Cult* among others puts a question mark not just on the Igbo character but on the Igbo race. The above-listed films are replete with several negative shifts in the character of the Igbo people. These films figure Igbo as ritualistic, cultic, lazy, irresponsible, terrorist, and individualistic among other vices against the ideal hallmarks of the Igbo race whose "cultural her-

itage ... had no place for social vices of all types including corruption, dishonesty of any sort, and bloodshed, among others."[19] The above films are rather a celebration of highly individualistic Igbo characters with an unquenchable thirst for negative re-imaging of the social, political and religious tenets of Igbo culture.

The film *Shina Rambo* celebrates the triumph of individualistic tenets over communalism; a total reverse of the Igbo social and political order. It parades Igbo youths as cultists and harbingers of destruction as well as breakers of peace and security. *Brothers Fight* presents lost family values of the Igbo character, gross disrespect for elders and family. It also parades a celebration of ill-gotten wealth, trample and abuse of currency notes, wasteful spending, and social vices which again demeans the Igbo character. Understandably, the dramatic medium thrives on the hero and villain conflict but in the above films, there is more emphasis, almost a celebration of the amoral activities of the villain so much that viewers begin to imagine them as embodiments of the Igbo nature and personality. Little wonder why non-Igbo indigenes refer to Igbos as a people that can do anything for the money.

The height of these worrisome figuring of Igbo characters is perceived in *Black Cult*. This paper ranks this film as most disturbing in the Igbo negative image projection of all films assembled for this investigation. This is so, first, because it is the most recent at the time of this research and lastly because of its setting and dealings with Igbo character which the researcher finds nauseating due to its implication on the general image of Igbo. The film set in a university deals with cultism, diabolism, and all forms of violence within the campus. The quarrel here is not with the thematic thrust of the film but with the fact that the leaders and executioners of these cults (both male and female) are Igbos (deduced from their character names and language nuances).

As deduced from their language codes and slangs, the student representatives who extort their fellow students and provide sexual satisfaction to lecturers for grades are Igbo. It is as bad as the fact that no Igbo male or female student character is spared any ennobling virtue which also raises several issues. First, a university is an open-for-all system, how come only Igbo students are leaders of all the cult groups and are capable of all manner of vices within the campus? Secondly, cultism is not peculiar to Igbos; they are issues of national concern in the various universities of the country. Why then is the bulk of Igbos figured as perpetrators of all manner of vices in the film? Lastly also, is the fact that the producers of these films are of Igbo descent who perhaps due to mercantile satisfaction, have slain the cultural ethos of the Igbo people.

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[19] J. Chukwu, *Traditional Igbo Humane Character: Nature and Application*, "Journal of Culture, Society and Development" 2015, *10*, p. 10.

The above films in question run in several parts replete with the heinous activities of these villains and the punitive measures are not spelled out leaving the impression that Igbos encourage and celebrate these vices. How can a film run in five to six parts or more with the villain left to dominate the movie only to be brought to book in the last three or four scenes of the last part? It is an error and it furthers the above impressions about the Igbos and their character. By extension, the present and younger generation are negatively influenced little wonder the surge in the get-rich-quick syndrome with the hydra-headed appearances in ritual killings, cyber crimes, banditry, and kidnapping for ransom among others. This paper finds Nollywood culpable for the negative framing of the Nigerian youth in their celebration of violence and all manners of amoral lifestyles in films.

Rethinking Nollywood for Igbo Identity Redemption

> The most important single justification for devoting an entire issue of the conch to the Igbo life and culture is that… they have up till now been inadequately exposed: Very little precise knowledge about the Igbo exists and a good deal of this little is shrouded in the midst of half-truths, misrepresentations, myths, and plain misinformation.[20]

The above is no doubt the perception created by the various media about the Igbos. At this point, it is relevant to also retell Asigbo and Dandaura's tale about a Nigerian in June 2003, whose flight back to Lagos from his shopping in Dubai, had to stop over in Kenya to get a connecting flight to Lagos. While waiting for the flight at the airport manager's office, the Airport Manager became nervous after he learned that the young man was a Nigerian. She would practically leave her office open to get a clear view of the man and the office even while outside of it. Whenever the Nigerian shifted in his seat, she becomes nervous and fearful which prompted the Nigerian to inquire about her sudden uneasiness. In her response "we have been watching your Nigerian films here and you Nigerians are too cultic. I don't want you to drop anything here… so I was just wondering if you could sit elsewhere."[21]

The above no doubt is an insight into the transnational images of the Nollywood films on the identity and character of Nigerians. Ayakoroma maintains that "the bastardization of the African culture can only be checked to a large extent, if indigenous filmmakers produce films that would adequately promote the ways

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[20] E. Obechina, *Nchetaka: The Story, memory and continuity of Igbo cultur*, Owerri 1994, p. 17.
[21] A. Asigbo, S. Dandaura, *Mercantilism and the Mis-application of Ritual in Nigeria's Nollywood Entertainment Industry*, [in:] A. Adeoye (ed.) *The Dramaturgy of a Theatre Sociologist: A Festschrift in Honor of Ayo Akinwale*, Illorin 2012, p. 119–131.

of life of Nigerians."[22] On the above submission, this section will evolve ideas to redeem the Igbo identity and character from further defamation which include; Re-orientation, research, and government inputs.

Re-Orientation

As important as it is that filmmakers should make a profit from their investment in films, it is also important not to betray or negatively figure Igbo cultures in their films rather the medium is supposed to be a projection of positive images and characters about Igbos especially as seen in the Yoruba movies which Falola observes:

> (...) has become arguably the most powerful contemporary form of spreading Yoruba worldviews, the recuperation of older values, the propagation of newer ones, and the celebration of multivalent stories ... the adept manipulation of Yoruba language with images and scenes that reveal Yoruba landscapes and storylines, rich in values grounded in changing Yoruba culture.[23]

Adeoti adds his voice to reasons for Yoruba cultural fidelity in Yoruba films that

> The popularity of Yoruba video films is a product of the circumstances of its origin and development. It is a tradition in which the narrative and the performative traditions of the people are still surviving alongside their poetic chants such as *Oriki* (panegyric), *Iyere Ifa* (Ifa divination poetry), *Iyala* (Chants of hunters), Rara (Ballad) (...) the film medium also projects Yoruba rituals, festivals, and other religious practices.[24]

Bollywood films proudly showcase their cultures and worldviews in their films and portray them in good light to the admiration of audiences wherein through these films, they have attracted tourists to their regions which in turn boosts tourism in India; the same with the Chinese films where they use the medium to retell stories of myths and legends, as well as project the culture and moral ideals inherent in the region. Hollywood is known to protect national values and strength in unity. This is why in Hollywood, especially in war films, the Americans will always come out victorious, surmounting whatever invasion, insurgence, and intrusions of external forces.

The above shows how these cultures indigenize and utilize the film medium to create ideal images about themselves, press this image on to their viewers through

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[22] B.F. Ayakoroma, *Trends in Nollywood…*, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[23] T. Falola, *Atlantic Yoruba and the Expanding Frontiers of Yoruba Culture and Politics*, Ibadan 2012, p. 64–65.

[24] G. Adeoti, *Nigerian Video Films in Yoruba*, Lagos 2014, p. 28.

consistent broadcasting, and consequently boost their tourist patronage. The Igbo films have sacrificed identity and culture on the altar of economic gains which consequently have reduced national and transnational perception and prestige for the Igbo character. Filmmakers can begin to tap into our myths, legends, language, aesthetics, folktales, folklores, atavisms, and culture to begin to refigure our identity. Building credible stories around the ideals of the Igbos; their industrious and communal life, worldviews and morality, social and economic as well as a seamless blend with an accurate display of the various Igbo performatives is a good step in the right direction to rewrite the negative narratives hitherto made by the media in the last decade. Also, when the nemesis takes its course on the villains, it should be given more emphasis than the razzmatazz or seeming 'enjoyment' of the villains while they exhibit these vices. In order words, punitive measures are meted to erring characters, betrayers of Igbo identity and norms, they should suffer it long enough and possibly in greater proportions so that viewers especially youths are deterred from indulging in them and by extension sanity is restored to the Nigerian society.

Research

If there is anything that has plagued Nollywood in recent decades more than everything else, it is relegating the place of research. The glorification of mercantilism has demeaned the place of research in Nollywood films, especially in films that tend to bother on culture. It behooves filmmakers henceforth to engage in research to ensure periodic, geographic, and cultural fidelity to events, language, and actions. This will help the much-needed need to redeem Igbo cultural identity as well as restore originality and quality in the films. Research is the underlying factor that can help the redemption campaign; costumes must be appropriate to place and time, dances and other atavistic performances if employed must agree with the locale, language, and context to ensure quality representation. Research will help to harmonize language and dialects in Igbo films as well as ensure that the issues of general concern such as banditry, cultism, and diabolism among others are not entirely hinged on the Igbo characters to the detriment of their identity.

Government Inputs

Government must play a critical role in salvaging the nation from negative imaging in transnational spaces through films. The Nigerian Films and Video Censors Board must live up to its cardinal categorical imperative of ensuring that films produced cohere with national values and identity. Ensuring that policies are put

in place to regulate the production and representation of culture in films is key in a time like this. Indeed, by extension, these misrepresentations are tantamount to the misrepresentation of national values and images which should have been under check by the censors' board. Secondly, the government in times like these should put machinery in place to ensure that scripts are doctored by professionals before gaining a license to produce these films because Nigerian identity and culture have been plunged into desperate times and desperate times calls for desperate measures.

Conclusion

It is not out of place to state that of all media of mass communication, the film has clinched universal appeal and force. The medium has become a handy and ready avenue to "articulate cultural, economic, political, social, and ethnic identities and that film is the vanguard of cultural expression."[25] Hardly do one find any film irrespective of the genre that do not handle one or more cultural aspect of a particular people and as a medium for cultural projection, it behooves filmmakers to ensure that what is projected adequately represents the target culture in all respects. Igbo filmmakers hitherto have not lived up to the expectation of Igbo cultural fidelity wherein Igbo identity is slain on the altar of mercantilist ideologies. Misrepresenting the Igbos through video films business in Nigeria breeds culture of mediocrity ad a society of debased and tarnished culture[26] which by implication, signals the extinction of Igbo as predicted by the UNESCO. More than ever now, there is a dire need to rewrite the negative impressions and perceptions about the Igbo race especially as seen from this study, how the film forges impressions about a people in real life; there is need for correctness in Igbo identity portrayal for improved cultural diplomacy.

The film medium is a powerful medium and having been negatively employed to deface the Igbo identity and character in recent decades, still has the potential of redeeming these images and countering the negative opinion of the public about the Igbo person and character. Fidelity to Igbo cultural ideals and aspirations will go a long way to rewrite the present socio-political perspectives in the country. The present sidelining of the Igbos in the political landscape of Nigeria due to majority of negative impressions about Igbo character could be addressed when filmmakers begin to ensure correctness and fidelity to Igbo cultural ideals and character. Filmmakers must, therefore, as a matter of urgency, ensure that their films are in constant touch with the ideals and shared values of the Igbo people, deploy the

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[25] E. Ossai, *Nigerian Home Videos…*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
[26] B. Orji, *Misrepresentation and Bastardization…*, *op. cit.*

richness of our collective realities, performance idioms, cultural codes, not excluding correct language expressions and desisting from accruing nauseating issues (banditry, cultism, and diabolism) of national concern to the Igbos.

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