

**CRITIQUING THE MANIPULATIONS OF FEMALE
REPRESENTATION IN CINEMA: A STUDY OF *THE EVIL
QUEEN* (IYKE ODIFE, 2007)**

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Abstract

*From Hollywood to Bollywood and to Nollywood's cinematic productions, there has been a trend of filmic manipulations of the woman's identity, which is crafted through male subjugation of women and gender stereotype in which there is a systematic assigning of denigrating roles and routines to female characters in cinema. Sexism in cinema has been grossly responsible for lopsided view of characterization and film narratives. In the Nollywood film: *The Evil Queen*, Egondu who became accidental leader of Achalike Kingdom is portrayed as callous, opportunist, power monger and murderer, who only represents darkness and evil to her society. This work encourages women to take up the fight to rewrite history and change the featuring of popular, gender-biased but infamous culture and themes in film genres, with more objectivity and determination.*

Introduction

Stereotypes and roles exclusiveness have been the clog in the spool of cinematography and movies. As a result of this repressive, conservative, retrogressive and regressive trend, the best side of the other sex may unfairly have not been harnessed and experienced. This also excludes variety and limits the viewing audience from the mixed thrills that go with

Emily Oghale God'spresence

swapping of roles among performers: this could have left them with better sense of entertainment, judgment and value for their investment in time and money. Johnston (1976, p. 213) noted that “a strategic use of the media and film in particular, is essential for disseminating our ideas.” She further 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” (as cited in God'spresence, 2013, p.52).

Johnston 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, p. 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, and self-sacrificers to gratify the man's desire, etc. As Johnston observed, it is purely manipulative and thus “a conscious strategy of the Hollywood dream machine” (as cited in God'spresence, 2013, p. 52). This continuum existing in the cinema today is further traced to the origin 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 realization 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, pp.209-210).

Furthermore, God'spresence (2013, p. 53)) observed that "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." She noted that, 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 its ancestors hence the recurring decimal of women stereotypes to the degree it has attained today, but " 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 woman's image so as to counter the 'eternal and unchanging' image of women in the media" (God'spresence, 2013, p. 53). She however noted that it is little wonder that women have been projected in some Nollywood films, although in a very minimal way, as leaders and people who can effect changes in society positively. Unfortunately, at the 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 much aspirations (p.53). Some other narratives go as far ascribing witch craft or evil power to a heroine for being too powerful such example is seen in *The Evil Queen*. This is vitally important because throughout the history of film, woman has been characterized or represented in negative stereotypes therefore "feminist film critics must not rest on their oars till patriarchy, female subjugation, male chauvinism, voyeurism, etc, are totally proscribed from film narration (God'spresence, 2013, p. 55). These stereotypes and characterizations that have been perpetuated throughout the history of film must be corrected.

Sexist ideology and the manipulation of the woman's image in film narratives is objectionable

There are several ways through which the image and identity of woman is suppressed in cinema below the limelight. According to Constance Penley's observation, "film after film, the recurring image of woman as nothing but the projected fears and desires of men and cosmic victim" (Penley, 1976, p. 208) has been portrayed. In her critical analysis of the films *Cries and Whispers*, she opines that woman has been characterized 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, evil incarnate, and earth mother (Penley, 1976, p. 206). This representation of women's image in cinema has been blamed on male directors, writers and artists who are guilty of this "emotional, physical, and intellectual crippling of women" who have now "labeled as Art this human sacrifice for the expiation of their sins" (Penley, 1976, p. 207). This age-long representation of women in films, including Nigeria video

films (just as we shall see in *The Evil Queen*), is exaggerated. Perhaps Vivian Gornick's essay entitled "Woman as Outsider" will succinctly explain the reason:

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, p. 207).

Women have always been presented as people worthy of sacrifice, to appease men and to appeal to their insatiable desire for woman subjugation. If, and only if, women could be marginalized, stereotyped and eliminated through the manner in which they are represented in films, the male folk will be free of "rivalry and competition" and will be happy. This is a utopian submission because feminist film critics will never give up on their fight for proper and positive gender

representation by filmmakers. It is therefore, the responsibility of the filmmakers (script screen writers, directors and producers), especially the females among them, to demolish and abolish the so called "dominant ideology" which says that the woman's image in film is "eternal and unchanging," because this does not align with the current trend in our society today, especially in the political sector where women have taken great strides in occupying leadership positions all over the world. "All films or works of art are products: products of an existing system of economic relations, in the final analysis" (Johnston, 1976, p. 213). This implies that:

film is also an ideological product---the product of bourgeois ideology. The idea that art is universal and thus potentially androgynous is basically an idealist notion: art can only be defined as a discourse within a particular conjuncture---for the purpose of woman's cinema, the bourgeois, sexist ideology of male dominated capitalism (Johnston, 1976, pp. 213-214).

Johnston's view of ideology is that film is not synonymous with reality because the camera cannot totally capture truth or reality in films because "new meaning has to be manufactured within the text of the film." Johnston argues that although the camera was developed so as to reproduce reality accurately and to safeguard the bourgeois notion of realism as replaced in painting, yet "the tools and techniques of cinema themselves, as part of reality are an expression of the prevailing ideology: they are not neutral, as many 'revolutionary' film-makers appear to believe" (Johnston, 1976, p.214). She argues that the camera grasps the 'natural' world of the dominant ideology and

that women's cinema cannot afford such idealism, and that the 'truth' of women's oppression cannot be 'captured' on celluloid with the 'innocence' of the camera but that it has to be constructed or manufactured and that 'new meanings have to be created by disrupting the fabric of the male bourgeois cinema within the text of the film' (p. 214). At this juncture, it is vitally important to challenge and interrogate the male, bourgeois cinema because

any revolutionary strategy must challenge the depiction of reality; it is not enough to discuss the oppression of women within the text of the film; the language of the cinema/the depiction of reality must also be interrogated, so that a break between ideology and text is effected (Johnston, 1976, p. 215).

The narrative technique where high angle shots and all other codes of narration are used to debase the woman as products of ideology that is socially and culturally constructed is questionable. Thus, Karyn Kay's submission is apt at this juncture as she succinctly posits that

As for the women, to once again quote Emma Goldman, "...society creates the victims that it afterwards vainly attempts to get rid of." The women, after all, no matter the nobility or bravery of their acts, are still outlaws from the community of people (Kay, 1976, p. 193).

Thonborrow (1996) decries the manner with which women are represented in the media whereby women "are given conflicting messages about who they are and what sort of behaviour is expected of them" (p. 209). 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, p. 207).

This goes to show that the intervention of feminist filmmakers is vitally important for the positive profiling of women's image in films since "new meanings have to be created by disrupting the fabric of the male bourgeois cinema within the text of the film" as Johnston earlier stated. After all, if what screenwriters project in film is all "manipulation," including women's stereotypes, then it is the duty of the female filmmakers, (if the males will not comply) to re-write their stories according to current trends in our society. This aligns with the submission that "there is no such thing as unmanipulated writing, filming or broadcasting," rather, as Hans Magnus Enzensberger puts it:

The question is therefore not whether the media are manipulated, but who manipulates them. The revolutionary plan should not require the manipulators to disappear; on the contrary, it

must make everyone a manipulator (as cited in Johnston, 1976, p. 213).

Everyone now has the license to manipulate. This ought to be advantageous to women in redirecting their representation, if and only if they have filmmakers who have the same goal and mindset as these feminist film critics whose singular goal is on proper representation of the woman's positive image in cinema.

Deconstruction of conservative cinematic narratives to highlight virtues of women

The deconstruction of socially constructed sexist ideologies must be taken seriously by women filmmakers. All women and feminist film critics as well as female 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, p.185). It is time filmmakers rose to deconstruct the traditional approach to film narration where women are peeped at through a keyhole (as Judith Mayne has observed) or where they are taken as sacrificial objects, or sexual objects, or any form of representation that debases the woman's true image and personality. In her analysis of the film, *Marked Woman* (1937), Karyn Kay lays “special emphasis on the female characterizations as revealed by dialogue and action to show how the film rejects the customary myths about prostitution and criminal reform” (Nichols, 1976, p.186).

Kay observed that, although the film had the disclaimer of “bearing no resemblance to any person or persons living or dead,” it shows the courage and power of women and it “defies every stereotype and every expectation common to the usually invisible melodramatic theatrics of the topical, expose drama.” She observed that the women in the film were not portrayed as

stereotypes of good-bad girls neither were they heroine, and they were not redeemed through love, romance nor did the film end in the “sacrifice-through-death” which ends most films on prostitution, rather, “the genuineness of the ending” and the believable and due manner with which the characters acted made it striking and appreciated (Kay, 1976, p.186-187). This goes to show that there is a need for a new perspective in narration that exalts and represents a woman's true strength, dignity and authority, as her male counterpart. To further drive his point home, Nichols makes reference to Johnston's work where she asserts that

Feminist film practice must challenge the dominant film practice, whose means of signification are keyed to a patriarchal ideology that reconstitutes sexuality in hierarchical or oppositional terms: “it is this imaginary unit, the sutured coherence (that centres on the phallus as paradigm of male sexuality, marking the female as “object rather than the subject of desire”), the imaginary sense of identity set up by the classic film which must be challenged by a feminist film practice” (Nichols, 1985, p. 315).

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 skeptical posture, but certainly not cynical approach, about how facts are formed.” Masterman (1985) decrying the impact of the media on the populace submits that

At present our schools largely continue to produce pupils who are likely to carry with them for the rest

of their lives either a quite unwarranted faith in the integrity of media images and representations, or an equally dangerous, undifferentiated scepticism which sees the media as sources of all evil (as cited in Hart, 1991, p.107).

Perhaps one should state that the content of the films should be scrutinized to ascertain whether its anticipated positive impact on society is achieved. It is important to note that feminist critics both in film, the press and literature, are projecting the same theory, which has to do with the manner in which women are represented. Negative or improper representation in the media is absolutely misleading and does not portray the true virtues and qualities of women, whether African or Western (God'spresence, 2013, p.59).

The place of feminist film criticism on women's image in cinema

“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, peek through keyholes, offering bold demonstrations of the voyeuristic pleasure that has been central to virtually every contemporary theory of the cinema” (Mayne, 1990,p.9). She buttresses the need therefore, “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” (pp.6-7). She thus refers to Teresa de Lauretis critical analysis in *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*, on women's dilemma as follows:

Represented as the negative term of sexual differentiation, spectacle-fetish or spectacular 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 cinema as representation and outside the cinema as subjects of practices (as cited in Mayne, 1990,p. 6).

Mayne however foresees prospect in the feminist interrogations 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, p. 92). Any representation that suggests patriarchal dominance in film viewing and production, that is, structures that make 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, repressed by patriarchy, will be given its true voice by feminism” (Mayne, 1990, p. 90). She opines that an examination of female authorship in literature would serve as a point of reference to the issues of female representation in cinema. Thus, the importance of female authorship cannot be underplayed just as Judith Mayne has asserted that

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, p. 91).

The filmmakers have a task to accomplish. The onus lies on them to redeem the debased image of womanhood whose representation is a product of the society, the ideology of a patriarchal society. The representation of women in film is consequent upon the way the society and 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, p. 544). It is indeed true that the image of the women, 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 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 (1985), 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 the woman, through narration, and project her in her true light, as a leader, a society builder and a strong sex.

Critical Analysis of *The Evil Queen* (Iyke Odife, 2007)

The film, *The Evil Queen*, is a sequel to *A Heart of Slave* where Queen Egondu (Patience Ozokwor) orders Azuka, one of her guards to kill Uzumma (Ebube Nwagbo), her step daughter. *The Evil Queen* tells of the wicked Queen Egondu who rules over Achalike Kingdom. She rules in the stead of her husband, King Ibuna Ikogu whom she hypnotizes and locks up in solitary confinement in a room in the palace. She also kills his first wife, (her senior mate and Uzumma's mother) Lolo Asanma for being pregnant with a male child, and a heir apparent to the throne.

This film leads the viewer to seeing an unsavoury and detestable representation of women leadership in the character of Queen Egondu. The film still toes the line of the mundane stereotype of women as unfit for leadership who are sometimes unnecessarily tough and overly strict, once saddled with any position of power. The role of the queen played by Patience Ozokwor distorts the naturally endowed attribute of women as nurturers and mothers. In the Film, *The Evil Queen*, Egondu is depicted as evil personified, fetish and endowed with evil machinations and a callous leader, thus negating the notion of women as trusted leaders and agents of social change.

Character Analysis of Egondu

Egondu is a sadist. She is selfish, wicked, jealous, and devilish. She kills her mate and enslaves her step-daughter (Uzumma) Egondu has no aspiration for leadership and no agenda for her

subjects. In fact, her ascension to the throne is a result of her jealousy over her mate becoming the mother to the heir apparent to the throne, so she accidentally becomes the Queen Ruler of Achalike kingdom, to avoid the throne being vacant.

Film Analysis

This film, *The Evil Queen*, centres on one woman's leadership, Queen Egondu. The film narrative deviates from the power tussle of female aspirants in a political process vying for leadership through elections. *The Evil Queen* focuses on an entity, a woman who usurps power through some diabolical means without any intent to solving the problems of her kingdom or ameliorating the plight of her subjects. In fact, she is in leadership just for self-protection and to subdue her subjects to perpetual servitude and torture in her reign of terror as she believes she is the sole owner of everyone in Achalike kingdom. Some attributes which can be deduced from her leadership are as follows:

a) A Heartless Leader

Egondu is portrayed as a very callous queen who has no desire for the welfare of her subjects. As the film progresses, we see Azuka, (Jeffrey Onuigbo) one of her guards kneel before her with a bowl of a bloody object which we perceive to be Uzumma's heart. Her inhumane characteristics make her reduce her subjects to mere objects just as she soliloquizes: "I can kill anyone I like. They are all my slaves. I own them. I can take their lives anyhow, anytime." This kind of portraiture is rarely associated with women who are readily self-sacrificers who know the pains of child birth.

Before a woman will become as barbaric and odious as represented in the character of Egondu, she must be a witch or

possessed by some evil powers. This is a machination of male filmmakers to represent women as overly wicked. Thus, Siew Hwa Beh observes in her article, *Vivre Sa Vie* (Beh, 1976, p. 201) that all that we see in films is "the tragedy of being a woman," "the woman as the excuse and victim of male action," and "a woman leading a victorious army is a witch and a disciple of the devil." 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" (pp. 6-7).

b) Accidental Leadership

Since her ascent to power is accidental and sudden, she feels no obligation towards the people and cares less about the consequences of her selfish actions. For example, Akwano, one of the slaves stealthily walks to meet Ejike who comes to inquire of Uzumma's whereabouts after her disappearance. She complains to him about Egondu's complacency over the situation: "what I don't like is the way the Queen is taking it. She's not bothered. It doesn't bother her at all."

c) Negative Mentorship and Role Modelling

Egondu is portrayed as a bad mother and a threat to Uzumma's rights as a princess. Egondu models as an evil mother and queen before her daughter Odochi, who believes in her mother's abilities to handle everything. Egondu's negative influence on Odochi also reflects when Odochi orders one of her guards to go and beat Ahanne mercilessly for confronting her. Odochi soliloquizes: "How can a commoner insult me like

this? I'm still trying to get over Ejike, and now that fool, Ahanne wants to be my problem. Well, I won't let it happen, I won't." Odochi later stabs Ahanne with the intention to kill her just like her mother kills.

Egondu's personality and role are manipulated by the film medium, like every other mass media, where the images of women are distorted. Thus a UNESCO report on Women in Media, 1980 states:

The mass media ... tend to reinforce traditional attitudes and often present a degrading and humiliating picture of women which does not at all reflect changing attitudes in society, and especially, the changing roles of the sexes.(as cited in Nwankwo, 1996, p.77-78)

Egondu dies at the end of the day as the repercussion for her wickedness while her daughter, Odochi stabs herself to death. Thus Egondu and her daughter are outsiders who must die for the peace of men in the kingdom. This kind of representation is what is perpetuated in cinema, especially those films produced by men.

Summary

On the whole, there is nothing to desire of Egondu's leadership as it is fraught with enslavement and human sacrifice. This kind of character, created by one of Nollywood's male filmmakers shows women as evil, who must die as a repercussion for their wicked actions. This kind of representation aligns with Emma Goldman's observation, as earlier mentioned that, "society creates the victims that it afterwards vainly attempts to get rid of."(as cited in Kay, 1976, p. 193). Egondu is a product of male's creation depicting

women as bad leaders. This heart throbbing dilemma of women is summarized such that "the women, after all, no matter the nobility or bravery of their acts, are still outlaws from the community of people" (Kay, 1976, p. 193).

The Impact of Gender Stereotyping in Cinema

The impact of gender stereotyping in cinema cannot be underestimated. 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, p. 161). This form of representation has been consistently presented, thus "woman as the bearer of continuity, the pierce-together, is a figure first of all in the men's stories" (Sage, 1992, p. 178). This shows that representation in film or cinema and literature is socially constructed by authors. This assumption is ascertained by Monteith (1986) who states that "one of the immense positive gains from feminist criticism has been the realization that the female in literature is a literary construct" (as cited in Eko and Emenyi, 2002, p. 170).

Since literary works were first on the frontline to represent women in their stereotyped roles, which most Nollywood films are emulating, the resultant effect should not 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 film makers. Female film makers 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, p. 171).

Conclusion and Recommendations

A juxtaposition of all the views projected by the feminist film critics examined in this study have revealed that women are exploited to their disadvantage and no matter the society (whether Western, Asian or African) which the filmmakers belong; and that the innovations they 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. Eko and Emenyi (2002, p. 171) put it this way: “Apart from very few exceptions, most of these films recount sordid tales of female atrocities against the social system”

Hauwa Sani Dangogo, in her article, “Women in Electronic Media” is also 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, we work the same hours as our menfolk and get our entitlements if and when due (Dangogo, 1985, p. 210).

This exceptionally fair atmosphere of power sharing and gender equity that exists in media houses as Dangogo has observed where men don't usurp and arrogate authority to themselves, but allow the women to have a fair share is commendable and should be emulated by all other work places and organizations. This aligns with Madunagu's observation

that “there are women in our society who occupy senior posts in economic, social and political institutions, government and para-government departments, and enjoy comparable privileges as their male counterparts” (Madunagu, 1985, p. 135). This same assertion is further endorsed by Eko and Emenyi that “the African women is not a new comer to the world of power as the gender inclusive nature of political institutions in some part of pre-colonial Africa shows,” but that these women, who are models of power, “used their positions of power to maintain social cohesion because power to them mean service to humanity not crass materialism” (Eko & Emenyi, 2002, p. 176).

This work encourages the “less-favoured sex” (traditionally, the females) to take up the fight with more determination and objectivity, so as to rewrite history, change the patterns of popular but infamous culture and themes in film genres, especially as it pertains to women and their portraiture. More females must be encouraged to be behind the camera, either as producers, directors, or as other crew members. By so doing, they will be in a better place to dictate and control the content of what is produced for the consumption of the viewing audience (Okerra, 2006, p.92).

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 “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, p. 92). If the woman's dilemma must be totally circumvented and finally laid to rest in the nearest future, then no one else should take the lead in the struggle, but women themselves. Only then can women be free to chart their own course in film representation and real life situations.

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Filmography

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