

## SEXUALITY AND WOMANHOOD IN SELECTED NIGERIAN FILMS

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### Abstract

*There appears to be a high rate of negative stereotyping of women's sexuality, behavior, interests, skills and self-perceptions in the narratives of the Nigerian films. Regardless of women's increasing active roles in nation building and development in the Nigerian society, women are yet to be represented appropriately in the actions and dialogue of these video films which are exploitative of womanhood and therefore do not represent an ideal picture of African women. This paper thus investigates sexuality and womanhood in Nigerian films anchoring on Laura Mulvey's-Feminist Film Theory to analyze specifically Chinwe Egwuagu's 'Mr and Mrs.' (2012), Emem Isong's and Ini Edo's 'Knocking on Heaven's Door'(2014), Moreno Paul's 'Ije – The Journey'(2012). The findings show that women were generally portrayed in the movies as objects of sex appeal for men, the weaker sex, domestic servants, the wicked mother in laws and working class women as insubordinate wives and uncaring mothers, among others. The paper therefore concludes by acknowledging that women should be portrayed in positive roles in order to avoid these negative misconceptions in the larger Nigerian socio-cultural environment.*

*Keywords: Portrayal, Nigerian films, Society, Stereotype, Sexuality, Womanhood, Women.*

### INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the Nigerian film industry into the Nigerian viewing culture in the late 80's was a welcome substitute to the celluloid and of course a reassuring hope for the already declining economy. Hence the films produced by the industry popularly known as "Nollywood", was received with enormous

satisfaction and subsequent approval by Nigerians because on one hand, the industry has given to Nigerians what neither Hollywood nor Bollywood could give, and on the other hand it is expected that it has come to right the wrongs done to the black race using other media including films. One can assert that Nollywood has done a lot to provide the needed entertainment for the Nigerian populace after the day's hustle and bustle. However, in spite of several handicaps such as no infrastructural development, film has continued to develop with spectacular speed; defying all odds and enjoying amazing patronage of its dozens of movies which are released into the market weekly.

With the increasing popularity of the Nigerian film industry, many Nigerian scholars are concerned about the kind of negative portrayal in its depiction of women. In this regard, Okunna (2000), believes that "the film medium ought to a relevant role in shaping people's ideas and perceptions. But the worrisome issue is that they are dominated by stereotyped images of women in the negative" (23). Also, Ukata (2010 :1) holds that the depiction of gender roles has failed to go beyond the domain of traditional roles and images of women deeply rooted in the "dominant social." Though women form a greater percentage of the labour force and audience in Nigeria, women still account for less than one percent of the production force. It is also pertinent to note that Nigerian films have since inception been mostly dominated by men as sole producers and directors and this arguably has an adverse effect on how women are depicted in the movies. Hence the portrayal of women's images tends to have a bearing with the social structure that privileges patriarchy. Patriarchy is an institutionalized structure that privileges men as the head and is organized through the principles of a male cause. The man therefore becomes the dominant figure within the patriarchal society thereby relegating women to the background and silencing their voices respectively. On that note, Bunmi Olujinmi (2008:119) attests to the fact that film producers/directors churn out films in line with male

domineering status that emanate from the patriarchal school of thought.

The worrisome issue however is that the producers of these video films in an attempt to maximize profit have copied wholesale from the commercial excesses of both Hollywood and Bollywood movies. Hence, while there has been a remarkable improvement in the way women are portrayed in movies and the general status of women in most of the societies where the other major film industries operate, the same cannot be said of Nigeria. For instance, most of the Bollywood movies such as 'Destiny', 'Promise', 'Saloni' etc. have recently projected their women to the limelight, featuring them in a more positive and responsible role. Also, Smith (1999:34) in a study based on longitudinal data from the US General Social Survey, run by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, reported that over the past 27 years, a lot changed in terms of role stereotyping in the US. He concluded that; 'even within marriages, the changes have been tremendous as more and more women have entered the labour force and roles have become more homogenous amongst both sexes' (cited in Gauntlett, 2002: 38). But can the same be said of the level of stereotyping of women in Nigerian films? On that note, Abah (2008:39) reveals that though Nollywood films 'celebrate African women of all shades, shapes and sizes and portray women in 'varying professional roles from wives and CEOs to Prostitutes, the activities of these video films still display a stereotyped image of women (2008:39).

Results of numerous studies conducted on the portrayal of women in Nigerian films have profoundly revealed that women are usually represented as wayward and of low moral standing, materialistic, lazy, subservient to and dependent on men, causes of family rifts, fit for domestic rather than professional and career roles etc. (Okunna, 2000:23; Okunna, 1996:34). Women are represented in outrageous roles such as sophisticated thieves and murderers which is not a true reflection of women. Women in some Nigerian films resort to the use of charms superstitiously believed to embody magical powers like juju to get what they want.

They are also portrayed in criminal roles and some other vices like prostitution, roguery traits among other character traits with excessive or irrational devotion to the activities which will eventually ruin them. This forms the basis for interrogating the stereotyping of women in Nollywood movies in ways which are negatively charged.

In her analysis of Nigerian films, Mabel Ewrierhoma (2008:115) laments that due to the late entry of women into film production and directing in Nollywood, women affairs are presumptuously labeled negatively and irresponsibly in the activities of these video films. This is reflected in the various forms of portrayal that bring out the bias that informs women roles in Nollywood narratives. This arguably, may not have been so if Nigerian women had become more actively involved in film making from inception. She cautions that the 'social arrangement of masculinity that the home video entrenches 'should be disabused; noting that 'what the world sees about the Nigerian woman through the eye of the camera should be that which will dignify womanhood and not the misrepresentations currently going on in Nollywood films. Considering the constant portrayal of women in the negative, Ozele laments thus:

This image of women as portrayed in the Nigerian video film industry cuts across the country from North to South, though with differing intensity. The difference being that the rituals and murders which occur in Southern films do not yet appear in Northern movies. Still, lots of women in Northern films are not reflected any better; they are seen as greedy, fickle minded, weak, unable to make their own marital decisions and are readily available for the highest bidder (Anyanwu 84-85).

In the same vein, Okunna (1996:34) notes that Nollywood movies portray women negatively and she reveals that these images are 'unrealistic, counterproductive and damaging to the cause of

women' (34). Furthermore, she argues that such movies could 'lead to the subjugation of women because they can increase men's disdain for women, sow distrust amongst women, undermine their self esteem and self confidence in themselves and eventually strengthen the forces which relegate women to the background'(Okunna, 1999:34). Also Cobby (1994:8) reinstating his view reveals that;

Negative imagery propagandized the 'differences' in groups who are outside the controlling stratum. Negative imagery may create negative perceptual stereotypical self- attributions. These self-attributions include values, attitudes, behaviours, skills, interests, and standards.

Also, the constant treatment of sex role stereotypes in the films 'reflect the patriarchal domineering force in the Nigerian society' (Ebewo, 2007:49). This constant treatment however, suggests the general impression that women are negatively portrayed to be able to appeal to the male gaze. Ozele (2008:20) also criticizes Nollywood's image of women, and stresses that 'the industry has up until now yet to critically address the fundamental issues of gender equality and equity, violations of the rights of women, traditional stereotypes of females, and the struggles of the female child for equal educational opportunities'(20). He further reinstates that:

Such uncomplimentary depiction of the 'Africanness' in women undermines the lofty virtues of African women, especially in other spheres of life. Also the influence of these negative portrayals on adolescent minds who view movie actors as heroes could only be left to the imagination. (2008:20).

The paper however poses some critical questions as follows; why do Nigerian films still dwell on the portrayal of women in ways that are sordid and out of tune with reality? Why would women's affairs be portrayed negatively in the narratives of Nigerian films

and of what significance is this? Why do Nollywood directors fail to recognize the changing roles, values, and commitment of women in our society? And finally the paper seeks to critically investigate whether or not there has been any remarkable improvement in recent times, as far as the portrayal of women in Nollywood is concerned. Questions like these draw impetus from the social stratifications that encourage patriarchy in the society, which explains why these male dominated producers insist on portraying women's images negatively.

The paper therefore interrogates these negative portrayals of women in the selected Nigerian films and posits that the implication of this level of negativism is not only demeaning but has undesirable effects on the younger minds psychologically. The paper adopts the qualitative approach for the analysis of the three selected Nigerian films which are; Chinwe Egwuagu's - Mr. and Mrs. (2012), Moreno Paul's - Ije (2012), and Isong and Ini Edo's - Knocking on Heavens Door (2014). This implies that for this study, the author is more concerned about the nature of stereotypes in varying degrees and the implications of these misrepresentations. In an effort to examine negative portrayal of womanhood, the three video films considered had to contain an actress as a lead character. However, several stereotypes emerged in data analysis. Emphasis on women's bodies was apparent and of course womanhood was lopsidedly represented. Obviously, the male characters always occupy the good exemplary roles. Also, scenes of conspicuous consumptions and romance were apparent in many of these films.

### **ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S IMAGES IN NIGERIAN FILMS**

Over the years, the lot of women in Nigerian films have been presented through images that are false and of course not a true reflection of women in real life. It is instructive to note that a great percentage of video films produced in Nigeria, portray women as evil, greedy, home breakers, witches, Prostitutes, husband prisoners, as well as being prone to all other vices that anybody can

imagine. They are rarely portrayed as company executives and professionals; rather they play domestic roles where they cause family problems or rifts, engaging in diabolical acts in a bid to either secure a husband, lover, child, wealth or fame. In some films women are given little or no voice and often demeaned through various forms of behaviours. Even when they (women) do attain visibility, it is done with biases and negative stereotypes.

Most of the thematic concerns of these films appear to be constructed based on social realities. Considering this, one would deduce that most Nigerian movies are developed from social happenings based on subjective and objective reality. Placed against the sociological milieu of the present socio-political platform; it becomes apparent that the social realities of these films are estranged from the realities of the present Nigerian woman and therefore, may not hold any socio-cultural significance for womanhood. Women's subservience to men is often demonstrated in the casting of women's roles in movies. Such roles as Secretaries, Receptionists, Nurses, Teachers, Domestic Servants, House wives, among others often make caricatures of them in seemingly provocative appearances. Unfortunately, women are only eulogized for fulfilling patriarchal roles. However, a cursory observation in certain key issues indeed suggests male dominated producers who in their bid to maximize profit end up portraying women in not too complimentary and positive images. These producers have portrayed women as being sexist, outlaws, gossips, criminals, murderers, selfish, etc. For instance, the character of Dumebi in *Dumebi- the dirty girl* (2012), who was classified as a stupid and illiterate girl was paired with Mr Frank, classified as a classy banker and masters degree holder in accounting who got Dumebi pregnant because of her stupidity. Also, Emma- an economically independent single lady was tagged irresponsible because of her educational qualifications and marital status. Just like *Dumebi-the dirty girl*, the character of Esther in *Sexy Vampires* (2012) also follow a similar trend. In the film- *Sexy Vampires* Esther is classified as a young beautiful and sexy lady, whom the agony of life landed into a circle

of occultic prostitutes known as the Sexy Vampires. Other films that revolve around this same trend are as follows; *Mission of Angels* (2013), *White Gold Sellers* (2012), *Unrefined Gold* (2013), *Dirty Diamond* (2012, etc. They therefore construct negative and outrageous images of women in conflict. They do this by wiping away completely anything good in their female characters.

However, in their configuration of an ideal woman, it appears that these male producers, directors and scriptwriters in the industry have the picture of an ideal woman as married, submissive, and of course with children. Economically independent women seem to have negative stereotyping in some of the films and as such, women are said to be more dangerous when they are 'economically, socially, or politically independent' (Abah, 2008:339). Video films like 'Women's Cot', 'Women in Power', 'Mr. and Mrs.', etc. which emphasize women empowerment and gender rights, thematically cast women in the 'culture bound definition of domestic roles' (2008:353). Women who acted outside expected and culturally defined gender roles end up being depicted as bad and doomed. In some of the earlier films to come out of Nollywood, women are portrayed as wayward and of low morality and easily lured by material things. In some others, women are generally represented as 'the weaker sex', less ambitious than men, sexual objects and looking glasses – subtly displayed to satisfy the erotic gaze of men.

On that note, Ezeigbo (2006: 118-119), says something that effectively summarizes the portrayal of women in these films. Describing this portrayal as 'unrealistic and stereotypical', she writes:

Two broad types of major women characters) are delineated – those who are good and those who do evil – and each female character is cast in a group. The good women – and they are very few – are docile, passive and extremely accommodating... the evil women are delineated



as vicious, diabolical and morally bankrupt. They seem to have no virtues at all; and one wonders how a character can be so utterly depraved... Considering the nature of female characterization in these films, one is amazed at the objectivity of male characterization, men are realistically portrayed, and none of them is either totally good or completely evil. Their positive and negative attributes are highlighted, making them complex and more psychologically satisfying as characters.

Also in 'Ije-The Journey', Anyanwu the wife of Machino - a music producer who was raped by the husband and associates, was jailed for defending herself from the shackles of three male rapists including her husband. In some other movies such as; "Runs Babes", "Mission of Angels", "White Gold Sellers", "Sexy Vampires", "Unrefined Gold", it could be deduced that the only asset a Nigerian woman has is her sexuality and this is a culturally negative image for the country. Bloodletting, violence, female robbery gang, murder, uncensored illicit and provocative sex, provocative and near-nude costumes, pornography, assault, witchcraft and cultism, ritual killing, get rich quick syndrome have been substituted for good morals, mores, social values, that originally characterize typical Nigerian culture. Through such thematic treatments, the country's high moral standard and values have been thrown into disrepute. The fact that that we experience some of the above mentioned vices does not imply undue over exaggeration as if they are the only social problems that pervade the populace.

Based on this outlook, one can only guess that one of the reasons for these sexualized images in Nollywood films is the fear of commercial failure. Another could be the vigorous competition of copying wholesale the activities of the western culture through its films and attributing it to the popular culture that sex sales. However, this undue competition confuses its primary audience rather than enlightening, and informing them. The deliberate distortion of images, cultural heritage and values of Nigerian people

found in recent Nigerian videos, which inevitably induce into the system anti-social and immoral behavior is quite disheartening and unacceptable. These critical positions, perhaps, explain the unwarranted placement of half-nude and sexually suggestive pictures (both in animation pieces and motion pictures) of which images of women are displayed in provocative appearances.

In spite of several women movements which concern themselves with the challenges of sexual representation of women in a manner that is obtrusive and harsh; there are still needs to adopt a more coordinated approach towards redressing this obviously lopsided representation. With a long list of successful women such as Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili, the former Education Minister and Founder - Bring Back Chibok Girls (BBCG), Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, the former Minister of information, and now Vice President of the World Bank, among several others who have played significant roles than men in the economic and educational growth of Nigeria, one wonders why these enviable achievements are not portrayed in Nigerian movies. Despite the unprecedented achievements and success of the industry over the years, the content of some of the films are yet to portray a good image of contemporary successful career women and female captains of industries.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The discussion and analysis of the findings from this study is within the framework of Laura Mulvey's Feminist Film Theory. Similarly, the Feminist Film Theory takes a look at how women characters in particular are seen in film narratives. It is focused on how women are portrayed in movies in relation to the dominance of the male gaze in video films, the stereotypes depicted, and the extent to which women are shown as either active or passive and of course the amount of screen exposure given to women. On that note, Laura Mulvey's influential essay titled- Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema published in 1975 supports the analysis and on

the conception to argue that in cinema, women are typically depicted in a passive role that provides visual pleasure through 'scopophilia'. Mulvey refers to 'scopophilia' as the pleasure involved in looking at other people's bodies as objects of male sexual desires. Continuing, she explains that "in their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness, and as a result contends that in film a woman is the bearer of the meaning, and not the maker of the meaning. Hence the theoretical grounds for rejection of Hollywood and its pleasures, noting that men and women are differently positioned by the cinema; men as subjects identifying with agents who drive the film's narrative forward and women as objects for masculine desire and fetishistic gazing (cited in Freeland n.d).

Based on this outlook, the researcher is of the opinion that the Nigerian film industry having copied wholesale the commercial excesses from Hollywood provides viewing conditions that facilitates the sexual objectification of female characters and also the narcissistic process of identification with an ideal male ego seen on the screen. She argues that female characters in films are plagued with 'to-be-looked-at-ness' in which the male sees the woman as either a whore or a weakling incapable of making her own decisions. Thus Nigerian films in their myriad thematic interests depict women as sex objects meant to satisfy the male desires and also as very weak vessels, unable to make the right decisions. The Feminist film theory is the key to understanding how film creates such a space for female sexual objectification and exploitation through the combination of the patriarchal order of the society.

## **SYNOPSIS OF SELECT VIDEO FILMS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The three Nigerian movies are randomly selected, and analyzed and discussed in the context of their negative stereotyping of women using content analytical methods. These films are; Mr.

and Mrs.(2012), produced by Chinwe Egwuagu, Ije- The Journey (2012), produced by Chineze Anyaene, and Knocking on Heavens Door, co-produced by Emem Isong and Ini Edo (2014).

### **Mr. and Mrs.**

“Mr. and Mrs.” is a movie that vividly captures the realities of role stereotyping, domestic abuse of women and women as sex objects in a male dominated social order. The film revolves around Susan Abah, a trained Lawyer who is reduced to a domestic servant by her husband- Kenneth Abah, a proud and arrogant son of a Petroleum Minister, who feels that the place of women ought to be only in the kitchen and in the ‘other room’. This entails that she must prepare and cook good and fresh meals on a daily basis; tidy and keep the home clean, and of course satisfy her husband’s incessant sexual desires at any point in time. While the physical and emotional assaults and insults on Susan by her husband and mother-in-law continue, Susan eventually grows insensitive to their numerous demands which later dovetails into rebellion and nagging. In his bid to enforce total submission from Susan, Kenneth threatens divorce. While the divorce is on-going, Susan with the help of her legal friend – Mrs. Brown devises a scheme to help restore her marriage and get Kenneth to learn to love, appreciate, and respect his wife Susan. The scheme eventually works out as planned. Kenneth on the other hand is somewhat insecure and frustrated by the new found freedom and confidence displayed by Susan. In the process, he becomes depressed and is finally compelled to reunite with his wife, totally accepting her conditions for reunion. Thus they live happily together thereafter.

### **Ije –The Journey**

The movie captures the story of Anyanwu who left Nigeria in search of greener pastures and fame in the music industry of Hollywood. In the States, Anyanwu marries a white man- Mr Michael Machino, who coincidentally is her producer. Mr. Michael Machino is a core business man who makes a living out of

exploiting his wife's sexuality to achieve a personal gain. On one such occasion, he places his wife on bet in a poker game with his friends. He loses the bet and watches unconcerned as his friends and co-gamblers assault and rape his wife, right before his eyes. With no shame, Mr. Machino even tries to roll after his friends, but Anyanwu, in a bid to defend herself from their assaults, pulls the trigger from her husband's pistol, killing him among his two other friends. Consequently, she's arrested and charged for manslaughter. When the news of Anyanwu's ordeals filters to Nigeria, her kid sister, Chioma embarks on a rescue mission to save her from being convicted for murder. In the process of investigation, she almost gets trapped in the web of intricacies surrounding the investigation of her sister's murder case as she is arrested for concealing implicating evidence. After frantic efforts with the support of a young disillusioned attorney, she succeeds in unveiling the truth behind the death of her sister's husband and his friends. Anyanwu finally regains her freedom having served a 210-day jail term, being her punishment for committing voluntary manslaughter under extreme physical and emotional duress. Chioma also found love in the process, and gets engaged to Anyanwu's attorney- Jalen Turner. It is of importance to note that in Anyanwu's final submission during the final court proceedings; that in African, 'there are Kings and no Queens.' This submission underscores the earlier position concerning prevailing cultural beliefs and practices in the society having some influence on the cinematic roles of women.

### **Knocking on Heavens Door**

The film 'Knocking on Heavens Door' is co-produced by two notable actresses of Nollywood namely; Emem Isong and Ini Edo in 2014. The movie revolves around Moses who constantly maltreats his wife Debbie as a result of his fears of unwanted competition in the Music industry. He has this phobia that one day his wife would leave him for another man. He usually subjects his wife to all manners of abuse to the extent that she loses four pregnancies in the process. One faithful day, they had a fight and Debbie decides

to leave the house and ends up in the house of Thompson; the man who has a carefree attitude towards women. Also while searching for his wife; Moses ends up in the arms of his ex - Brenda - a Journalist. Moses gets drunk through the machinations of Brenda who is being portrayed as the mistress of seduction and home breaker. As usual, Brenda insists that the mood should end in the bedroom, but she was rejected and was addressed as a cheap whore who men can use and dump at any time. In anger, Brenda pushes Moses in that drunken state and he hits his head on the stairs and passes out. Brenda on the other hand sets a trap for Thompson to go to prison for the murder of Moses. However, she is later caught and jailed.

Arising from the three video films is a negative portraiture of womanhood. An analysis shows that the producers of these three films characterize women as domineering, uncultured, weak, lazy, adulterous, powerless, home breakers, insensitive to their husbands and kids, seductive, and objects of sex appeal to the men. In the film *Mr. and Mrs.*, the character Linda is the one who dictates the schedule of events in her home, including love making. She is unable to prepare meals for her family except for Sunday's breakfast which is strictly bread and tea. She sees cooking and tidying the house as the chores for house maids. hence, she left her home, husband and kids in the care of Maggie- the house maid. This is revealed in some of her lines in the movie;

Susan: Linda...

Linda: Yes, my friend

Susan: Are you sure you're not going to come with me to the kitchen? So that...we can gist.

Linda: No ooo...I can't stand the heat please. The only time I enter the kitchen is on Sundays for breakfast. And it's strictly bread and tea. Charles

is an angel. Even when I don't feel up to it; he doesn't make a fuss or try to pick up a flight.

This kind of characterization is really unrealistic in all its bearing given the African context of marital relationships being represented. One therefore wonders the kind of orientation that informed her actions towards the husband and children. Again Linda is portrayed as lazy and domineering. Her inability to fulfill her husband's sexual demands at all times causes a rift in her marriage, hence, her husband's justification to start sleeping with their house maid Maggie. The effect of this kind of image on the Nigerian audience is not only the promotion of negative perception against women as home breakers, irrational beings and so on, but also the promotion of negative behaviour and wrong values.

Also in the movie *Ije- The Journey*, Chioma Opara who came all the way from Nigeria to rescue her sister from prison was flirting and making out dates with Jalen Turner, Anyanwu's supposed attorney. Anyanwu Machino was also assaulted by her husband for his own selfish gains. It is pertinent to note that in many Nollywood films, the producers tend to pair male characters with very beautiful and attractive female characters for purposes of creating visual pleasure. And in so doing, position the men as subjects who drive the narrative forward and of course women as objects of sex appeal and gaze.

For instance, in *Knocking on Heavens Door* the conversations between Moses and Debbie and Moses and Brenda are very instructive;

Moses: (to Debbie) You are my wife! I own you! And you belong to me.

Moses: (to Brenda) You are a cheap whore and no matter how hard you try, you can't get me. You will be that woman who will always be used and dumped by men.

Brenda, though an independent and hardworking Journalist, is busy flirting around with Moses and Thompson. Also some other female characters in the scene of the house warming party can be seen as objects of male gaze and see through as their costumes suggest. As a matter of fact, the three films portray women as sex objects in the hands of men. The films project women as people who are wayward and who are readily available to the highest buyer. This entails behaving indecently at the sight of any man with 'cash' (money), exposing parts of their bodies just to please the men and other negative attitudes. These inappropriate portrayals of women could have negative effects on womanhood by reducing the values placed on women. Such portrayals could also send out the wrong signals to young minds. There is every possibility that these stereotypical images of women in Nollywood films could translate into replications of such actions on the streets and campuses.

## **CONCLUSION**

Nigerian women have not been properly portrayed in their diversities and complexities in some Nollywood films. Generally, there is more depiction of sexuality in the representation of women in Nigerian films. The entertainment industry has however failed to recognize the ever changing roles and values of women in our society, but rather prefer to portray women as people who engage in anti-social and negative behaviours and attitudes such as prostitution, home breaking, gossiping, violence, armed robbery and so on. Often, rape cases and other forms of violence against women are engendered and encouraged through these kinds of films and if this continues, women's images will continue to be battered. In view of the fact that film narrative functions as an agent of change through learning perception, the constant portrayal of women's sexuality may instigate misconceptions of views about women, which invariably would encourage low self esteem in them. Therefore it is imperative to eliminate the promotion of derogatory roles of women in ways that are obtrusive and harsh in our filmic



compositions and expressions. This is possible by encouraging women to embark on filmmaking in order to write womanhood back to glory. Women in governmental and non governmental agencies could play their role in exposing and challenging where necessary negative portrayals against women in their respective communities, with a view to positively empowering women and promoting an egalitarian society. Finally, theatre and Film Practitioners should not just shout out in anger at conferences, or get into heated debates on televisions, but should rather begin to address some of these imbalances noticeable in Nollywood narratives by telling our own stories and making movies that will project positive images of Nigerian women to film audiences.

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