

**CULTURAL PROMOTION AND IMAGE PORTRAYAL  
IN THE NIGERIAN MOVIES**

**By**

**LINDA IHECHI NWOGU**

**2007**

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A Thesis Submitted to the Postgraduate School, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of a Master of Arts (M.A.) Degree in Development Communication, Department of Theatre and Performing Arts Faculty of Arts Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria.

**2007**



## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me and that it is a product of my own research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted elsewhere previously in application for a higher degree. All sources of information including quotations are acknowledged by means of reference.

Linda Ihechi Nwogu

## **CERTIFICATION**

This dissertation entitled "Cultural Promotion and Image Portrayal in the Nigerian Home Movies" by Linda Ihechi Nwogu meets the regulations governing the award of Master of Arts in Development Communication in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, and it is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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## **DEDICATION**

To the Memory of my  
dear, departed brother,  
Late Mr. Sheriff Ndubuisi Nwogu.

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Above all, I give reverence to the Almighty God for the gift of life and



extravagant grace to carry on. All Glory, Honour and Praise are unto His name,  
now and forever more.

## **ABSTRACT**

Entertainment has been one of the vibrant outfits that sustain man and add to his longevity because it plays a very vital role on his psyche. It is generally accepted that the western nations are dominating the entertainment sector in the entire media practice today. Therefore, the need to project Nigeria in the entertainment sector gave rise to the Nigerian Home Movie Industry. The Nigerian Home Movie Industry is nationalistic, a movement that tries to challenge the influx and the influence of foreign culture through foreign movies on Nigerians. Through the movies Nigerians are educated on their indigenous culture as against the foreign culture represented and promoted globally. Several misconceptions about Nigerians are also corrected.

Though Nigerian culture is being promoted, there are still mounting challenges, as the image of Nigeria is being represented positively and at the same time negatively. The problem has to do with local hegemony in form of the money bags who determine what the thematic thrust of each movie made will be. Consequently these persons engage in making movies that are violent, full of crime, obscene behaviours, and movies that encourage behavioral decadence. At the climax of the control of these overlords, there came up what is called alternative hegemony, a struggle by some positive - minded Nigerians to counter the repeated show of crime with movies that are worthwhile and which promote morals.

The focus of this study is to project the hegemonic activities of the Home Movie practitioners in the business of film making. The study takes a closer look at the ways the image of Nigeria is represented and the impact of such representation on Nigerians and the general public, using four Nigerian movies, namely, "Dons in Abuja," "Hot Girls," "The Peace Maker" and "The Price". "Dons in Abuja", and "Hot Girls" stand for negative image portrayal while "The Peace Maker" and "The Price" stand for positive image portrayal. The objective of this study is to recommend ways of using the Nigerian Home movies as a tool for identity promotion and image laundering for Nigerians in the effort towards national development.

The study adopted various tools in the collection of data; library research on work previously done on areas related to the study. It used for its information materials both in audio - visual and live interviews. The study reveals that the motion picture is one of the fastest and one of the most viable ways of exporting culture for economic gains. It also observes that the Nigerian movies have not succeeded in promoting the culture and image of Nigeria as a result of local hegemony on the side of the practitioners. Most importantly, the study reveals that the movie practitioners are more concerned with enriching their pockets, relegating to the background the cultural implication of such representation. Therefore, it suggests that movie - making for image laundering should not be left in the hands of individual producers but should be sponsored and controlled by government and philanthropic Nigerians who have the development of the

country in mind.

The study establishes that hegemony taken from a positive light can be adopted in making good image portrayal to be the dominant and controlling feature in every movie made in Nigeria as against the dominant and controlling negative image portrayal.



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The years of British colonial rule in Nigeria so much transformed her pre-colonial culture that, by the time Nigeria gained independence in 1960, a great deal of the British educational system, British moral values and the English Language had already become nationally accepted and entrenched in virtually every aspect of Nigeria’s national psyche. According to Mahdi Adamu in Clark, E and Jegede, D. (1992:24):

By virtue of the colonial experience, English Language became our official language through which pre-primary, primary and post primary education are taught in this country. Official actions and utterances in this country have shown that to be formally literate, one needs to learn to read and write in English language.

In the field of political culture also, the similarities are clear and distinct. It was the British type of parliamentary democracy that Nigeria’s first democratic

experience was fashioned after from 1960 – 1966 until 1979 when Nigeria embraced the American political system. In the absence of an accepted alternative which is truly Nigerian, Nigeria adopted the European system of governance. Even in commerce, the remarkable similarity is also evident. To further explain this, Mahdi Adamu (1992:26) asserts:

The Nigerian economy has been so intricately tied to the apron strings of one European capitalist economy, that we no longer have our own commercial system different from that of our mentors.

One thing is clear; the advent of colonial administration in Nigeria greatly and negatively affected the development of indigenous socio-cultural structures. This situation is responsible for the continuing dependency relationship between the colonized nations and European nations.

The most obvious implication of this, according to Tylor's study cited by Bashir in Nasidi and Bello (1991:20) is that some African, hence Nigerian cultures are overwhelmed by western cultures (knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, etc). Through the media, alien consumer patterns are being promoted among the people of Africa. Consumer societies have been created with lifestyles, values, tastes and inspirations based upon models and commodities of the western industrial countries. The conviction is that the fate of a victim of this cultural imperialism will continue to be decided from outside and in this way its progress and growth will be retarded, as its production and consumption patterns will be fashioned out in accordance with the needs and values of an

alien society. As a result of this, western nations have dominated the cultural and political lives of people in the Third World countries.

The argument above is supported by Bill Ashcroft et al. (2000:49) when they say that no society ever attained full freedom from the colonial system by the involuntary active disengagement of the colonial power until it was provoked by a considerable internal struggle for self-determination or, most usually, by extended and active violent opposition by the colonized.

Today, we live in a global village dictated by high information technology subsumed in the wider concept and practice of globalization. Globalization does not mean the same thing for all. According to David Held et al. there exist three schools of thought who have different views about this phenomenon. These are the hyperglobalizers, the transformationalists and the skeptics. For the hyperglobalizers, globalization defines a new epoch of human history characterized by the emergence of a single global market, resulting in the "denationalization" of economies and thus in the lack of meaning of the nation states. An economic logic prevails in this view shared by neo-liberals "who welcome the triumph of individual autonomy and the market principle over state power" and by radicals or neo-Marxists for whom contemporary globalization represents the triumph of an oppressive global capitalism.

The transformationalists embrace it enthusiastically as a positive feature of a changing world in which access to technology, information, services and markets will be of benefit to local communities; where dominant forms of social



organization will lead to universal prosperity, peace and freedom, and in which a perception of a global environment will lead to global ecological concern. The skeptics argue that it is a form of domination by First World countries over under - developed economies in which individual distinctions of culture and society become erased by an increasingly homogeneous global culture and local economies are more firmly incorporated into a system of global capital. (Bill Ashcroft 2000:111). Central to this work is the notion that globalization is perpetuating deeply rooted patterns of inequality and hierarchy in the world economy, thus creating the economic marginalization of many Third World countries. "It primarily served the interest of the world's most powerful nation but theoretically, it is said to have the common good at heart and presented development as a set of technical measures outside the realm of political debate". (Gilbert Rist 1997:78).

The position for or against globalization is taken according to various renditions and perceptions. This difference in understanding is propelled by the different levels of technological, economic and social development of the various peoples of the world. With the trend of events, the world, no doubt, has become a global village, a single entity, but is that all there should be? Are there some things to worry about in this whole issue of the global village? Assessing this global phenomenon, Yakubu Nasidi (1999:33) questions thus:

Where are we African countries in this single place? What does globalization hold in store for Africa? Rather than join in an uncritical celebration of globalization and its supposed benefit, one should further ask, to what extent

have we been globalized and to whose benefit?  
What precisely is globalization globalizing?

The core of globalization is to achieve economic hegemony of a few rich states, the United States of America in particular, as well as the hegemony of western consumer culture threatening the people's culture, methods of living and spiritual values, thereby ensuring the continuous underdevelopment of the Third World Countries, to use Julian Morris' word, perpetuating poverty (Toby Miller 2005:91) (emphasis mine)

High information technology has no doubt made the dissemination of information easy, globally. The coming and fast advancement of information super- highways has brought information to the doorsteps of people, and has an indispensable factor in socio-economic advancement. Typical examples of this are the computers, Internet and GSM. However, this development is not without disadvantages, especially to the Third World countries. As positive and laudable as this impact of information dissemination may be, the

... opening which the information technology has created has an impact on almost all aspects of human life (culture, religion and values are all affected as people all over the world are exposed, more than ever before, to different and alternative views). The fear of cultural imperialism, therefore, underscores a point that globalization could also be seen as a process of harmonization of different cultures and beliefs. Central Bank of Nigeria Review (1998:341).

Or at best, the elimination of weaker cultures by the super- cultures of the west.

Thus the central focus of global culture today is the politics of incorporation of

the weak by the strong. This incorporation is total for it affects not only the regional, national and local information network but the different people's cultures, their ways of life, their taste and sometimes influence even the choice of entertainment (Idegu 2004:20).

Globalization and its fast growth in technology poses a threat also to the indigenous art forms as their mode of presentation seems to be somehow old-fashioned. Some local performances have disappeared and are forgotten. Femi Osofisan (1997:5) observes that with the development of satellites and the internet, the world wide pages CNN comes directly from Atlanta into our bedrooms and parlours, bringing such cargos as the spice girls and the funeral of Princess Diana along with numerous European Sports and comedy channels. Eagerly and enthusiastically, we consume the movies, C.D. ROMS, records produced in Hollywood, etc. Martin and Schumann (1997:74) assert that globalization means little more than the Americanization of the world because of the total dependence on American culture. Mazrui (1980:290) also argues that we have arrived closer to having a world culture of the West than having a world agreement.

This exposure to the American way of life has brought about modernization of tradition causing the fading away of indigenous culture and embracing almost completely western culture. This accounts for the understandable apprehension in traditionally oriented societies where there is some noticeable mounting anxiety about the impact of mass and global

entertainment on the daily life, men - women relationships, sexual immorality and the obligations of parents and children. Old certainties about how human beings should behave have been shattered by new social and sexual mores that the global media has helped and are helping to spread. Families find it difficult to censor what their children and wards see or hear as they remain glued for hours on end to the cable networks on the television (Idegu 2004:21).

It is generally accepted that western nations are dominating the entire media practice today more than hitherto. This has a powerful effect on the culture of the Third World, which is heavily exposed to western values and views that are most often contrary in form and content to indigenous cultures. Western civilization produces the majority of the media (films, news, and comics) because they are far more economically empowered. Therefore the Third World countries are watching media filled with the western way of living, believing and thinking. The Third World countries then start to copy the same thing in their own countries. The effect of this is the destruction of the indigenous cultures of the Third World counties.

The transmission of mass- produced cultural products from the West such as films is now a dominant feature of life in developing countries. It has gone so far in colonizing the minds of Nigerians that today they are losing their identity. Looking at the behavioural pattern of the youths, the preference attached to western culture is on the increase compared to the relative indifference to indigenous culture. Television and film, because of their visual power and

seductive nature, have played a prominent role in importing western cultures into the Third World countries generally and into Nigeria in particular.

The need to project Nigeria in the entertainment sphere gave rise to an intellectual movement initiated by a handful of writers and private film and performing arts graduates, not only in reaction to and rejection of alien cultural domination but also to reinstate Nigeria's cultural heritage and re-orientate Nigerians suffering from a colonial mentality. (Adesanya in Haynes 1997:13). The Nigerian home movie industry, as an indigenous art form, is a part of this reformation movement. This industry has come up to challenge, as it were, this western culture masquerading as 'universal', by creating and producing films focusing on indigenous themes and issues. The pioneers of the Nigerian Home Movie seek to stop or rather drastically reduce the invasion of foreign cultural products in Nigeria, thereby promoting the Nigerian indigenous culture locally, internationally and globally.

### **THE NIGERIAN HOME MOVIE: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

Humanity, as vibrant as it is, has been sustained, amongst other activities, by the vibrancy of the entertainment industry (Idegu 2004:167). Entertainment has quite a lot of impact on man's psyche and this has contributed to his longevity due to the regular release of stress. In Nigeria, particularly before the coming of the white man (pre-colonial period), entertainment was part of the people's folk tradition and culture. This exists in form of festivals, songs, dance,

rituals and story telling. However, our exposure to the western life through colonial administration and post-colonial experience introduced us to foreign media and glamorous forms of entertainment which began to eclipse the truly indigenous forms of entertainment. This statement is buttressed by Ejike Asiegbu (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007) when he asserts that:

At this particular point, most of the television programmes were foreign soaps. We didn't have our own indigenous entertainment programmes.

Consequently some Nigerians became zealous to create our own form of entertainment. As a result of this zeal, Mirror in the Sun was born, which, according to Amaka Igwe (2007:10), was the first soap opera produced by an independent producer on the Nigerian Television (NTA). This gingered other private individuals to start writing and submitting scripts to the Nigerian Television Authority. Consequently, the NTA came up with Behind the Clouds. People like Zeb Ejiro and Amaka Igwe came up with Ripples and Checkmate respectively. These made huge success and attracted others who came with a lot of ideas but they could not make any headway, as recorded by Amaka Igwe (2007:1) thus:

Because of what Ripples and Checkmate achieved, a lot of young people who desired to do something could not because NTA had a problem. There was reduced sponsorship of play production and a lot of staff were retrenched.

Upon the reduced sponsorship of play productions on television, there was

a massive sack of technicians from the TV stations and from the film units of the Federal Ministry of Information and from the audio – visual sections of similar parastatals (Idegu 2004:169). As a result of the economic crunch, the Nigeria Television Authority started patronizing cheaper but second hand Mexican and Brazilian soaps, whose themes, storylines and plot structures were often alien to the Nigerian culture and entertainment values. They were only concerned with filling the space created by the non – availability of the indigenous soaps they earlier sponsored. Critical Nigerians watched this trend with concern and lamented over this development because they felt that the superimposition of western values and cultures on Nigerians could be detrimental to the moral, cultural, traditional or even intellectual development and orientation of Nigerians. This, in turn, could lead to the wiping away of Nigeria’s cultural values. However, these fears somehow became reduced as the Nigerian home movie industry, as a cultural practice, has come to present and represent Nigeria in the film world.

Among the critics who were affected by the retrenchment and provoked by the non-sponsorship of indigenous soaps is Zeb Ejiro, one of the known television drama producers. Zeb Ejiro (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007), commenting on this, states:

Though there was problem in NTA and we were out of job, but I see this as a blessing in disguise. I was caged in NTA because they used to censor every drama you present. I didn’t want to be monitored. I didn’t want to hear “this can go, this can not go” I needed to task my creative abilities. Our aim was to change TV programmes because

they were boring at that time. But as we worked, made (our) names, one will want to match success with status for people will want to assess you based on what you have, what you wear and what you drive.

Today, Zeb Ejiro is one of the most prolific home movie producers in Nigeria, both of national and international repute. The response to the influx of foreign forms of entertainment was not only out of love for the promotion of indigenous art forms, but a move to counter poverty as a result of joblessness. This the home movie producers have done by giving employment to many, employment being critical for development. The Nigerian home movies industry emerged when it was needed. It came as a rescue to the Nigerian society, though this, as it is, may not be its utmost task. The pioneers then may not have envisaged that their effort would grow as fast as it has done today. Alozie Uzoukwu (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2007) opines:

There was a vacuum that was created by the non-existence of local expression and which void the Nigerian home movies has filled, looking at its antecedents. There was no medium that could draw the story home as much as home movie achieved from inception.

A study of the coming of the Nigeria home video industry and its productions can in no small way make one to understand the sum total of being a Nigerian, the people and their cultures. Raymond Williams (1961:61), expressing his opinion of such a study, asserts

... if the art is a part of the society, there is no solid whole outside it. The art is there as an activity, with the production, the trading, the politics, the raising of families. To study the



relationship adequately, we must study them actively, seeing all particular and contemporary forms of human energy, if we take any one of these activities, we can see how many of the others are reflected in it, in various ways. Thus art, while clearly related to the other activities, can be seen as expressing certain elements which could only have been expressed in it.

The Nigerian home movie industry can therefore be seen as representing the emergent cultural aesthetics that play vital cultural roles as producers express themselves, and their cultures by mapping out their own space of articulation based strictly on their emergent aesthetic principle of causing into being an alternative mechanism of entertainment. For this reason Wole Ogundele, in Jonathan Haynes (1997:50), states

... the ubiquitous presence of the video play in Nigeria, plus its popularity point to its importance for the production, dissemination and consumption of one specific form of culture.

The Nigerian home movie practice, as an emergent culture, derives its materials from the historic cultural formations and yet is also dependent on the apparatus of the dominant culture to disseminate its message. As old as most stories are, this new entertainment outfit uses equipment and high information technology made available by the dominant group to pass across its stories to its audience. (Idegu 2004: 172). The representation of the folk culture which comprises the past and the present in movies has resulted in their total acceptance as evident in the consumption and pathways of these movies, Zeb Ejiro (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2007) asserts:

Before Nigerian home movies, we watched foreign movies in our homes and during the vacuum created by the non – existence of an indigenous entertainment, the foreign movies took over the market. 90% of what Nigerians were watching was foreign movies. But when Nigerian home movie came, we (the practitioners) fought the battle, the reverse was the case. Now 90% of what Nigerians watch are Nigerian home movies, only 10% of foreign movies.

However, the Nigerian home movies have also in form and content at several points tilted towards the reproduction of some foreign cultural values as opposed to the set out goals, which, as earlier stated, are the creation and provision of a local expression of the Nigerian society. This clearly can be seen as the effect of the hegemonic nature of the dominant culture (western culture). This dominance is no more a forced one but one by consent. The Nigerian movies practitioners have in their productions of arts yielded to the subtle manipulation of hegemony.

This influence is traceable to the influx of western films that propagate western cultures and the exposure of the makers of these emergent home movies to foreign media productions before the emergence of this indigenous art form. These foreign cultures have so overtly taken over the whole industry that their effects are adversely felt by every member of the society. Consequently, there is an outcry to curb these adverse effects. In this regard, the Nigerian movie producers are expected not only to be producers of entertainment but good ambassadors of Nigerian culture, which is the bedrock of development.

Aside from petroleum, Nollywood is the second

highest foreign exchange earner for this country. In addition, Nollywood has created a lot of employment for a lot of unemployed youths of this country.

Before the inception of the Nigerian home movie, at a point, celluloid films dominated the movie market. Ekwuazi (1997:6) records that

From 1962 to 1990, over one hundred films were produced in Nigeria. The 80s was a period of high productivity, and over 40 features were made in this period alone.

Celluloid film is expensive and capital intensive. Because of the cost of production, film makers started finding it difficult producing celluloid films in the early 90s and this led to the decline in the production of feature films. In the face of the high cost of production and lack of assistance from the government, the film makers found it difficult to source and get funds for production. Oluranti Babatunde (1997:9) summarizes the situation, thus:

Film makers like Francis Oladele, Ola Balogun, Ladi Ladebo, Eddie Ugbomah and others who went into active production in pursuit of an indigenous film industry and who had spread their dragnets, trying to garner from home and abroad financial and material resources for its implementation had their dreams unfulfilled

Economically, the home movie culture in Nigeria was partly a response to the increasingly prohibitive cost of celluloid production. This necessitated that the emerging new technology of video camera and video recorders be made full use of. (Okwori 2003:10). At the period of decline in celluloid film production,

came the vibrant Yoruba theatre practitioners who were the major actors in the emergence of the Nigerian home video industry. The travelling theatre at first took their stage plays to television houses in their immediate environment. Because of the familiarity of the Yoruba audience with stage plays, the television houses had a ready audience to feed. Later, the travelling troupes could no longer be sustained with the economic standard of the television houses. Idegu [2004:175) observes that

The traveling troupes having worked closely with the television producers and technicians, the Yoruba travelling theatre directors, had been able to pick up some technical know how. Seeing that video production could be another greener pasture, they delved into video productions for commercial purposes and to remain professionally relevant. A good example of such theatre exponents is Moses Olaiya (Baba Sala).

Though Nigerian home video productions emerged then from the Yoruba Travelling Theatre practitioner, its sustenance, continuity and growth has never remained as a result of the sole effort of the Yoruba theatre. Other ethnic groups and interest bodies such as the video marketers, visitors, trained film makers and others embraced it. Different ethnic groups began to produce movies in their own languages. Igbo movies at first came out without subtitles but later, English subtitles were introduced. The production of Igbo film could be taken as a reaction to the domination of Yoruba films in the market, though the Igbo home movies did not achieve a recognizable effect until Kenneth

Nnebue, an Igbo business man and a producer, brought to the limelight the fact that a larger market could be created by releasing video cassettes. He stormed the market with the first Igbo home movie in Nigeria titled Living in Bondage produced by Nek videos. This became a huge success among the Igbo audience, whose language was the medium of communication in the movie. Along with the Yorubas, others had been blazing the trail, but it was the entry of the imaginative Igbo video maker into the home – video business and practice that transformed the nascent practice. (Okwori 2003:10).

When Kenneth Nnebue launched the Igbo video film, Living in Bondage, in 1992, signifying the entry of the Igbos into the business, the enterprise became a boom. Today there are thousands of films being released into the market for the yearning appetite of an insatiable audience (Okwori 2003:10). People like Zeb Ejiro also plunged into home movie making. Summarizing his fascination over the success of Living in Bondage he states that

At that time, I was into another soap opera titled "Mega Fortunes". Kenneth Nnebue's "Living in Bondage" was a great success, though he made use of some of my artists. It triggered off my interest that was when I decided to go fully into home movie production.

The effect of this success was the production of lots of movies, especially from 1993. Films flooded the market which include "Evil Passion", "Skeleton", "Ashes of Hatred", "Jezebel", "Circle of Doom", "Brotherhood of Darkness", "Dirty Deal", "Unforgiving Sin I and II", "Ikuku I and II", "Taboo I and II", "Fatal Desire", "Nneka the Pretty Serpent I and II", "Obiora", "Love Without Language",

"Deadly Affairs", "Red Candle", "Echidime", "Moment of Bitterness", "Possessed", "Lies of Destiny", "Rattle Scorpion", "Witches Command", "Rattle Snake I and II", "Taboo I and II", "Adanma", "Violated I and II", "Igado", "Ekulu", "Evil Men", "Scars of Womanhood", to mention but a few. Indigenous script writers from each part of Nigeria emerged with scripts based on their ethnic culture. They project what their immediate society or target audience is known for and give it some embellishment to attract national relevance. The themes of the typical Hausa home movie revolve around Hausa language, religion, morality and tradition, these being major elements of culture. The Igbo home movies have their themes revolving around love, crime, fetishism, questions of making money by all means, self-recognition, personal achievement for power to rule, dominate and control floods the Igbo home movie. The Yoruba home video revolves around the potent power of the gods, their relationship with the living and their influence on human activities and the relationship between the born and the unborn.

Another reason given for the fast growth in the Nigerian home video movie market has been the fact that women are active consumers of the products because of its home packing as against the predominant film going culture of their male counterpart. Haynes and Okome (1997:32) state:

... Everywhere in Nigeria, cinema – going is predominantly a male activity and, for that matter, an activity for younger, poorer, and rowdier males. It is considered of more or less dubious respectability for girls and women... the advent of television and then video cassettes has opened up to women a media environment

that was largely closed to them before.

These video sub-plot and plot structures have affinities with oral narrative patterns and with indigenous conceptions of fate and destiny. (Haynes and Okome 1997:28). But there are several instances where these movies are tailored around alien cultural identities. The traditional theatre practitioner that transferred from cinema to home movie at the early stage still respected morals, but as competition becomes stiff, acceptance high, hunger for financial/commercial gain increased, morality was thrown to the dustbin, giving rise to the negative representation of the Nigerian society.

### **Statement of Research Problem**

The Nigerian Home Video has challenged the influx of western cultures that invade Nigeria through film and other media products. At inception it brought to the fore what Nigerians could identify with. This is evidenced in the nearly total welcome and recognition by both Nigerians and non – Nigerians worldwide. The Nigerian home movie created an alternative entertainment for Nigerians and non-Nigerians. Through the movies, good cultural values and the people of Nigeria have been recognized and promoted globally and a lot of wrong perceptions upheld by non-Nigerians about Nigeria are corrected. Based on this, the Nigerian Home movie is a viable tool for cultural promotion to enhance the nation's development, socially, economically and culturally. However, despite the successes it had recorded, there are still inevitable

problems in the way the practitioners engage in this activity of film making. There are both trained and untrained practitioners who are business - oriented, churning out films without considering their cultural implications. Most of these practitioners, driven by some selfish interest (money), have ignored the main reasons for their being and have gone into the act of creating what is alien to the Nigerian society. The Nigeria home movie industry knowingly or unknowingly incorporates negative themes and cultures which are capable of corrupting the members of the society. Violence, crime, quest for money and behavioral decadence, become the overriding factor in some of the movies, which impacts negatively on Nigerians and non-Nigerians.

Therefore, this work focuses on the positive and negative portrayal of the image of the Nigerian society in the Nigerian home movies, the positive representation being issues and themes that will uplift the citizens of Nigeria, bring peace, understanding, self-control, unity, promote growth, and then development, while the negative representations are the incessant show of crime, violence, avarice, corruption and immorality which will ensure the deterioration of the Nigerian society and hasty generalization and judgment about Nigerians by non-Nigerians.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The home movie is one of the most prominent aspects of living room/viewing room culture in Nigeria today. They have become a 'must have' in most Nigerian homes. As a result of this acceptance, popularity and exposure,



the home movie directly or indirectly impacts on the general public. Therefore, this research sets out to do the following:

1. Access how local hegemony operates and affects movie making in Nigeria.
2. Project the ways Nigerians have been portrayed in the movies and the likely effect of such portrayals to the general public.
3. Recommend ways through which the Nigerian home movies could be dominated and controlled by movies with good thematic concepts for the promotion of the image of the Nigerian.

### **Scope of the Study**

There are many organs responsible for communicating and promoting culture. The mass media, e.g. magazines, television, computer, Internet, transmit cultures. There are also some non – material vehicles to this effect, e.g. music. But for the purpose of this research, attention will be focused only on home movie as one of the media that communicate and transmit culture around the world. The researcher selected some relevant Nigerian home movie plates and CDs that respectively embody positive and negative portrayal of the Nigerian society. The selected movies that represent the positive traits are “The Peace Maker” and “The Price”, while those that represent the negative traits are “Dons in Abuja” and “Hot Girls”. The characteristics of hegemony – control\power and dominance - are used as tools of analysis to project these traits.

### **Justification of the Study**

The effect of these audio-visual artifacts (Home Movies) on our culture seems to be somehow overlooked. Nigeria home movies showcase Nigerian indigenous culture as well as alien culture. These foreign cultures embedded in these movies have eaten deep into Nigerians, thereby relegating their heritage to the background. Values totally alien to the society have permeated and even engulfed their psyche, through foreign communication forms and items they have been exposed to.

It is justifiable, therefore, for Nigerians to guard the salient aspects of Nigeria's culture against the forces of westernization. This work is a call for Nigerians to look inward, see themselves, be themselves, re-assert their history, their being, and their uniqueness through the production of movies that promote good cultural values of the Nigerian society instead of leaving these essential matters under the control of the money bags who are only concerned with money making. The study will also project Nigeria as a peaceful and peace-loving nation as against the crimes and violence repeatedly shown. This will form the basis of the long desired sustainable development because no meaningful and sustainable development comes without a proper regard for the people's indigenous culture.

## **Research Methodology**

The research attempts a study of the activities in the Nigerian home movie in the light of promoting Nigerian culture as well as the negative and positive representation of the Nigerian society in the home movies. The study therefore evaluates four select movies, two for negative representation and two for positive representation. Different approaches were adopted for the collection of data for this study. Data was also collected from the library and through documentary observation. Live and published interviews constitute sources of data as well as the researcher's participation in discussions in areas related to the research. The data acquired through all these means are trimmed down essentially to those that are of relevance to the subject matter. Below is a further description of how all of these methods of research were employed.

## **Research Tools**

- 1. Library Research:** This comprises published and unpublished materials related to the research. It also includes works that have been done that are considered in the review of related literature. These are books, journal articles, reports, dissertations, magazines, newspapers and other printed forms of materials.
- 2. Documentary Observation:** The researcher collected relevant data from various tapes and CDs of the Nigerian home movies. More attention is paid to the movies that are analysed, using the concept of hegemony as a tool of analysis. The analysed Nigerian home movies which are relevant to the research include, "The Peace Maker" and "The Price" for positive representation and

"Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls" for negative representation.

**3. Interviews:** Interviews were conducted to collect data for this research.

Attention was focused largely on the practitioners in the field of this research (Nigerian Home Movie industry) and some members of the National Film and Video Census Board (NFVCB). The questions for these interviews were designed to bring to the limelight the practice, constraints and breakthroughs in the industry, considering the cultural values of Nigeria.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW.**

#### **CULTURE**

Culture as a broad concept has been defined by scholars in various fields, especially by historians, archaeologists, sociologists and anthropologists. The two latter groups look at culture from different angles but their thoughts arrive at similar meaning(s). Edward B. Tylor defined culture from an anthropological point of view. According to him, culture or civilization, taken in its wide, anthropological sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society (Ajayi 2005:2) Culture can also be seen as a pattern of thinking and doing that runs through the activities of a people and distinguishes them from all other people.

In later years, culture became a term used to describe the distinctive human mode of adapting to the environment as well as molding nature to conform to man's desires and goals. By 1952, two anthropologists, A. L. Kroeber and C. Kluckon, gathered more than 150 definitions of culture, none of which was significantly different from Tylor's. We may therefore say that culture is a learned pattern of behaviour, ideas, beliefs, as well as artifacts that a people share and transmit from one generation to another. This consists of distinct behavioral patterns that are particular to that group of people at a given point in time. It includes everything that makes man what he is, as well as the heritage



he possesses. It finds expression in his religion, language, philosophy, music, dance, drama, architecture, political organization, technology and so on. (Ajayi 2005:3).

Culture is also the means through which members of the society interact meaningfully among themselves. It helps the members of society to identify themselves within a certain environment. (Richard Olaniyan 1982:1). Much more than this, it also embraces the methods a group of people adopt to subdue their physical environment as well as the ways by which they find solutions to their problems. Moreover, it defines people's perception of right and wrong, good and bad, beauty and ugliness, truth and falsehood, life and so on (Ajayi 2005:4).

What is important from the above is that there cannot be a society without a culture and that environment plays a vital role in the culture of a society. Each society has its own unique culture which has developed through its history and which is passed on from one generation to another. New members born into the society concerned do not inherit their culture biologically (nature) but it has to be learned from childhood. This means that everyone born into a particular society has to learn the way of life of that society (which will empower him or her as he or she grows) and will in this process of growing up, acquire certain beliefs, attitudes and patterns of behavior in common with others in that society which will make them different from people in another society. However, it is needful to say that there is no absolute model or vile in culture, what is regarded as bad or immoral in one culture may not necessarily be so in another.

Each culture thus has its own assumptions about the purpose of human existence, man's proper relationship to God, ethics and appropriateness. This means that what is good among one cultural group may be unacceptable in another.

The relevance of culture, therefore, to social and economic development is something on which there is virtually a unanimous agreement. It features in all the outstanding works of nationalists, academics, as well as the policies of government. It is an accepted fact that without culture, there can never be any meaningful form of development. This development begins with the process of change which culture undergoes. In the words of Acholonu cited by Menegbe (2006: 93), culture changes as man changes. A well developed culture creates a process of positive impact on national development. In the real sense, cultural development is equal to national development. She goes on to say that "development is no development unless it is started by nature and springs from the cultural soil. True development, therefore, can only spring up from the people and cannot be borrowed or imposed, though there is no culture that does not experience a little borrowing here and there. Culture can be used in projecting, promoting and protecting not only the identity of a people but also its freedom. In that direction, culture in its positive and progressive form serves as nourishment, making or creating an enabling environment for making better the lives of a people.

There is a tendency on the part of some developed countries to impose

their experiences, expectations and viewpoints on the less powerful countries under the pretext of promoting certain universally applicable scientific principles (Acholonu cited by Menegbe 2006:94). We see universalized modern development or modernization divorced from people's indigenous cultural roots and artistic processes and as something which is simply even for all times and for all occasions. That is why, for instance, Nigerians are recipients of a culture other people have created.

Cultural promotion, in the broadest sense of the term, is thus the preservation and provision of the entire heritage of a society to inform and influence their inherent ability to invent and innovate in the face of present day challenges. This promotion becomes a sole business of the people directly concerned, their ability to create new and productive means of tapping their cultural heritage based on the past without necessarily going back to the past, because culture is dynamic. Furthermore Nasidi and Bello (1991: 12) opine that

Culture and its promotion do not mean to return to the past, but rather an appreciation of the resources of the past and its contribution to the present as well as our imaginative response to such contributions in the light of our present problem and as a strategy towards our development in the future.

In this sense, the task of cultural promotion should consist essentially of making the contributions of the past available to the present in order to inform, educate and inspire desirable creativity today. Furthermore, when we invoke the term culture, it is often forgotten that it is in fact a synonym for human creativity, and

that behind the term culture, are people, human beings, who ultimately are the creators of culture. Nasidi (2001:2) advances this view when he submits that

Culture is a healthy term when it is seen as the record of our response to the challenges of living in a given socio-historic environment. There is no foundation for culture outside a people's response to the challenges of actual living. In short, people create or produce culture in the process of creating their lives.

Culture has been used as status symbol. There is high culture which is the culture of the high class, the well read/educated and the aristocrats. The art, music, dance and theatre belong to the high class. These set of people are also referred to as the civilized, the cultured and the elites who have nothing in common with the people in the lower class. The culture of the lower class is known as low culture. It is the culture of the unlearned, the common people and the masses. Members of this group are farmers, the peasants and the villagers. Popular culture, on its own, tries to break barriers between high and low culture. Popular culture often contrasts with a more exclusive, even elitist "high culture". It finds its expression in the mass circulation of items. Popular culture comprises the daily interactions, needs and desires and cultural moments that make up the every day lives of the mainstream. It can include any number of practices, including those pertaining to cooking, clothing and the mass media and the many facets of entertainment such as sports, literature, music and theatre. Theatre is therefore an avenue for the manifestation of the culture of a people so that cultures of different people will be seen and appreciated. Theatre is a seed

born out of human creativity in search of solutions to the many problems that challenge the society. It is a reflection of life which dwells upon the culture of a people. Invariably, in reflecting life, theatre reflects the culture of the people; therefore, culture and theatre are inseparable. Through theatre, the culture of the people is investigated, improved upon, documented and disseminated (A. D. Menegbe 2006:232). Indigenous cultures are sometimes discarded and forgotten or at least negatively influenced as a result of colonial experience. It is the realization of this negative influence that leads to cultural re-awakening and promotion of traditional values especially such that can exist side by side with the positive aspects of the foreign cultures. Several scholars and professionals do this, amongst whom are dramatists. Playwrights, for instance, look back into their archival past with the aim of unearthing the rich culture, philosophy, poetry, dignity, in fact, values that colonialists had wantonly destroyed. It is this kind of cultural renaissance that gave birth to plays like Soyinka's The Strong Breed, J. P. Clark's Ozidi and his poem, "The Agbo Dancer" (Menegbe, 2005: 233). Theatre is the core of any people's culture. It embodies the philosophies of the people and their cosmology (Hagher 1986:61).

As theatre disseminates this cultural information, it projects the quality of culture expected. The promotion of culture through theatre also brings about development in traditional practices. This display in form of promotion and propagation of cultural practice provides for a better future. This is because information invariably sparks off economic activities that enhance the people's

life, social activities that promote unity and peace and other positive cultural practices. Looking at the role of theatre, especially as it affects cultural development, Osofisan (2004:6) says "the theatre is and has always been a platform for making real the dreams of the future".

Raymond Williams (1780 – 1960:15) writes of culture as a general state of intellectual development in a society as a whole, "the signifying system through which a social order is communicated, reproduced and explored". Walter Benjamin (2005:1) discusses the speed with which the work of art has left the various limited confined places like theatres or concert halls, bookshops, libraries, museums, spreading to a wide range of people. Benjamin (2005:3) states that today cultural productions – books, films or recordings and television - often reach a multibillion audience. The modern age, as Benjamin tells us, among other things, produces its identity and reproduces the sign of its identity through the mechanics of technology. Viewed in this way, mechanical reproduction, industrialization and urbanization have an emancipatory potential in the creation of popular culture seen in form of goods that are mass produced and appealing to a broad spectrum of the public.

Among the results of mechanical reproduction, according to Walter Benjamin, is film. Film is art and popular and can be used for cultural emancipation and reproduction because it appeals to and satisfies the lowest common denominator. It is seen as a reflection of the dominant beliefs and values of its culture. The place once occupied by literature in the humanities or

the arts is now challenged by films. It is now more or less accepted that the function of film in our cultures goes beyond that of being simply exhibited aesthetic object (Greame Turner 1998:149). The pleasure that popular film provides may indeed be different from that offered by literature or fine arts, probably, because of the moving pictures. Movies has replaced high-quality drama with gardening, cookery and other "lifestyle" Film has a life beyond theatre runs and reruns on television; it becomes part of our personal culture, our identity (Bello 1991:46). Film is a social practice for its makers and audience, in its narrative and meanings; we can locate evidence of the ways in which our culture makes sense of itself.

In order to understand better how film might be part of the cultural systems, it is necessary to enquire more closely into film as a specific means of producing and reproducing cultural significance. Film was examined as a cultural product and as a social practice, valuable both for itself and for what it could tell us. David L. Sills in S. Bello and Y. Nasidi (1991:189) gives an insight into the immense impact of films:

What effect this artistic, social and economic phenomenon has on the cultural values of both creators and viewers is an international problem of magnitude, since cinema is a world-wide language that can be grasped by the illiterate as well as the educated. Nothing less than the control of men's mind and emotion is at stake. Since aesthetic in this case has become linked both with economies and with political action responsive to the uses of visual communication, cinema is the major cultural force in the second half of the twentieth century.

In the same vein, Opubor et al. in S Bello and Nasidi (1991:190) believe that

Of all the media of mass communication, the motion picture has perhaps the most universal appeal and impact. Properly received and executed, a film can rise above the limitations of language and cultural barriers by the power of visual images, its uses of music and sound effect and can succeed in conveying much the same message of audiences of heterogeneous backgrounds.

Thus, film is concerned, to a large extent, with the promotion and preservation of the culture of the people by showing their historic activities for identification. This enables viewers to know the different ideologies that are behind every action or behavior in a given cultural group. On the great impact of motion picture on viewers, Opubor in Ekwuazi (1987: 34) observes that

Any Indian film watcher knows a typical leitmotif of Indian fiction is the unfailing presence of snake danger to the damsel in the thick jungle forest and the inevitable timely intervention of the Good Samaritan who often is loved out of gratitude.

According to Wenders (1995:56), the Americans have colonized our sub-consciousness. He goes on to say that it is a fact blessedly confirmed that the American movie is affectionately received by audiences of all races, cultures and breeds on all continents, amid turmoil and stress as well as hope and promise. Miller (2005:65) tells us of Hay, a young man who boasts of Hollywood's tremendous influence upon the people of the world, that in 1927, he informed



the bright young things of Howard's Business School, thus;

I could spend all my allotted time telling you how the motion picture is selling goods abroad for every American manufacturer ... Trade follows the films ... every foot of American film sells \$1.00 worth of manufactured products some place in the world.

As Hay rightly says, most times, the audience sees these foreign movies as mere entertainment, but of a truth, it goes beyond that. The effect is evident in the audience's conception of ideas and behaviour. The primary aim of these foreign films is cultural hegemony, luring the entire world into upholding and identifying with their culture as opposed to the indigenous cultures. Miller (2000:53) agrees that America is not just interested in exporting its films; it is interested in exporting its ways of life.

The western cultures spread and received through film is evident in the lifestyles of the people of the third world countries. They tend to forget the norms and tenets of their culture and embrace those of the west which do not conform to their society. And the young ones are only challenged to grow up with what is alien to their culture and unfriendly to the society. This exposes them to the danger of not knowing who they are and the subsequent loss of identity and self-esteem. This adverse effect of foreign films on Indians led Baburo Petals cited in Miller et al. (2005:79) to document that

Hollywood undertook this cultural insemination of millions of people, their most powerful weapon in the world – the movies. Pictures after pictures were sent to India during the two wars-pictures that taught us to dance rumbas and sandas; pictures that taught us to coo and

woo; pictures that taught us to utter "Hi" and "Gee" , pictures that taught us devilry and divorce and pictures that took us to jinks and drinks

In furtherance of his assessment of the negative effect of Hollywood movies on Indians, Baburo Petals advances his condemnation that

Hollywood stripped our women of the beautiful cholis and savis and wrapped them in shirts and slacks. Hollywood dropped our women into swimming pools with more skin than cloth on them. Hollywood turned our seashores into bedrooms of illicit romance. Hollywood robbed our men their character and gave them guns to rob others. Hollywood ruined our homes and built clubs and dance halls on their ruins. Hollywood debauched the sanctity of our married life and glorified the illicit thrills of free love. Hollywood destroyed the philosophic fibre of the East and turned us into a frenzied mob of neurotics.

For Baburo Petals Hollywood culture had penetrated virtually every fabric of the Indian cultures and he concludes that

Hollywood has vitiated our food, water, air, arts, music, culture, costumes, philosophy, life and human relations, whatever Hollywood touched was contaminated. A thousand American sins became as many Indian fashions. That is how Hollywood taught us the "American way of life" through entertainment.

The influx of global cultures through foreign films and cable network to Nigeria encouraged the commencement of an alternative form of entertainment through the home movie industry in Nigeria today. The return to the indigenous (home movie) can be seen to be a response to globalization covertly or overtly.

Faced with a particular form (cable network, foreign programmes or films) Nigerian artists are carrying out what can be termed a globalizing reaction to global compression. The speedy development of film in Nigeria is characterized by a lot of variables. In a sense, however, what is happening to this vibrant entertainment industry in aesthetic perception arises from Benjamin (2005:4) when as he observes that the representation of reality by the film is incomparably more significant because of the thorough-going permeation of reality with mechanical equipment. This magical power of the film is expressed thus

... by close-ups of things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exposing common place milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, the film on one hand extends comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives, on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexplored field of action (Hannah Arendt 1968:236).

The place of the Nigerian home movie industry in representing Nigeria and its culture is further boosted when cultural issues dominate their thematic thrusts. The industry consciously or otherwise makes efforts to revive those elements that are regarded as crucial to induce a renewed sense of pride or belonging to the ethnic and regional identities they advance. This motivation for embarking on an act that can be seen as cultural renaissance is the perception by the industry to remain relevant in the face of global cultural incursion through the high information technology. Faced with this global invasion, the industry

endeavors to emphasize those traditional, cultural, and historical and identity elements that take care of the belief system and emotional feeling of their audience. But this growth is not without some constraints. Activities in the movie industry are segmented and there are different motives that are produced in the industry. The Owerri, Onitsha, Idumota and Alaba merchants are the new leaders of a home-bred hegemony. This has consequences for who goes in and who does not, what is produced and what is not. However, through the Nigerian home movie, Nigeria has something different from western movies, what is Nigerian, though not in the complete sense of it. Haynes and Okome (1997:16) argue

Taken together, they give us something like an image of the Nigerian nation – not necessarily in the sense of delivering a full accurate and analytical description of social reality, but in the sense of reflecting the producing forces of the nation both economic and cultural.

The existence and survival of the home movie industry has not been a bed of roses. It faces a lot of difficulties and challenges. But its survival and continuity till date alone is a way forward and requires commendation and support. Babajo (2004:54) believes

The term “home movie (Nollywood)” is radically naturalistic and patriotic. It is created by cultural analysts as a descriptive term which strives to distinguish between alien/foreign and European based or American videos and movies. Cultural analysts with afro centric perspective opted for this term.

This achievement may be said to be a response to a long term yearning, an

answer to questions, a challenge on creative artists who engage themselves in some other forms of creativity for entertainment. Francis Onwoche (14<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2007), an actor, summarizes:

Nollywood is an answer to a yearning; can we do this ourselves? Is it possible to create what can become a success, what can begin to impact on the minds of the viewers, satisfies people and of course make money thereby?

Supporting the above statement Rotimi Vonn (Feb. 14, 2007), the chairman, Lagos State Film and Video Censors Board, confesses:

I want to commend the people who started the industry ... I have high regard and respect for the industry and some of them who are great ambassadors of the nation. Nollywood is the first to be reckoned with world wide. You need to go outside the shores of Nigeria to see the respect people have for Hollywood to the extent that foreigners come to this country to understudy how we are able to make out so many movies in two or three weeks...

Similarly, Ejike Asiegbu (14<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2007), President, National Actors Guild, records the enthusiasm of some audience towards Nigerian home movies, thus:

With the coming of Nollywood, people now believe because the awareness has been created. People now say, "so our people can do it, we even have beautiful homes like these we can shoot, oh! So we can really do it. With the coming of Kenneth Nnebue's 'Living In Bondage' which made a huge success, people started saying, "oh my God, so Nigerians have arrived, this is beautiful".

Nollywood has been able to put Nigeria on the world map as the third

most prolific movie – making nation in the world. It is believed that the Nigerian movie is the most watched movie in the African world today. A lot of negative perceptions of the existence of Nigerians in the world have been corrected through these movies. Zeb Ejiro (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2007), an established Nigeria home movie producer and director, states

We've taken some of our stars to the Caribbean because they demanded that they want to see Nigerian artistes. They couldn't believe we are Africans because of the way Americans have treated us as animals in the world history. In Barbados, before our films got there, they thought Africans live on trees, don't wear clothes like monkeys but when the Nigerian movie got there, they saw that we live in big and beautiful houses, drive flashy cars; people are rich, even better than them. They now have a better picture of the Nigerian society.

Video films have established themselves as the dominant form of Nigerian popular culture, with more than 1,000 titles being released every year. Many of the Nigerian video films are popular because they are a reflection of the way of life of Nigerians. In this light, Barclays Fambiri Ayakoroma (2006:3) records that majority of the video film possess originality, vitality, and creativity which portray strong cultural indices of the Nigerian society. Here different practices, ceremonies and activities engaged by the Nigerian people become part and parcel of the packaging of the home movies. Important in these cultural values is language, language being an indispensable factor in culture. Speaking on the effort made by the Nigerian movies in promoting cultural practice and the teaching of indigenous languages, among the people of Nigeria, Prince Ifeanyi

Dike (15<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2007) chairman, Board of Trustees, Actors' Guild of Nigeria, states:

We are teaching ourselves and our children our culture, e.g. "Living in Bondage" which was produced in Igbo language. We also have the Yoruba and Hausa movies which use the indigenous language respectively. We also show movies where we conduct marriages, breaking of kola nut, respect for elders and relationship with people, etc.

Supporting this view, Shan George (Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>. 2007] states that Nigerian movies go beyond teaching cultural value, teaching the belief system of the Nigerian people:

They tell us about people's culture, how they conduct marriages, burial and child naming ceremonies. They also show us the power of the gods. E.g. how Shango, the god of thunder, reacts to a community that fails to adhere to its rules.

Nigerian video films, in the words of Okome (2001:24), constitute the people's art, defined by the people and sustained by their enthusiasm. Nigerian movies are popular and poignantly African because of the mixing of melodramas with horror and magic and the linkages of financial with sexual and spiritual corruption. Indeed, these movies are highly attractive because they approximate the art of the people by using expressive traditional music, dance, chant reminiscent of traditional festivals, costumes and make up which the immediate Nigerian target audience can readily identify with. The popularity of these movies is evident in the recognition given to these films not only in Nigeria but also in

the rest of the world. Francis Onwoche (Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> 2007) asserts that:

A lot of attention is now being drawn through the practice of Nollywood in Nigeria. It has become so huge, so phenomenal both in Nigeria and outside the country. It is important in the entire international circuit.

The reception given to the Nigerian artistes internationally is yet another plus for this vibrant industry. They have attended a lot of film festivals where they featured. And it is interesting to note that:

... even people in Hollywood are looking up to Nigeria for stories. There was a conference held some time ago on Nigeria home movies. They can not understand how we make our movies. There was a full page write up in New York Times on the Nigerian home movies. This is a plus. We are using our indigenous material to battle the global entertainment upsurge. My satisfaction as a Nigerian home movie producer is that the Nigerian home movie industry has been recognized globally (Zeb Ejiro, 14<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2007).

It is not only that our films have gained recognition in the global market; actors and producers now have the opportunity to attend regular film festivals worldwide. Moreover, shows are now packaged locally, put in CDS or on internet and they go global. A positive development in the Nigerian movie industry has been the capturing of the Black and African film markets in such a way that Nigerian movie artistes enjoy the glamour of stardom in many countries. Perhaps apart from soccer, the video film industry has positively projected Nigeria on the international scene. The video film industry has also witnessed the



rise of movie awards, bringing the industry into focus nationally and internationally. The African Movie Academy Award (AMAA) proudly hosted by the Bayelsa State Government on Saturday April 30, 2005 and Sunday, April 29, 2006 respectively is a case in point. The packaging of the event was advertised on CNN and African Magic as well as the network services of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Africa Independent Television (AIT). The venue of the event, the set design and the attendance were such that the award has been adjudged the best thing so far to happen in the movie industry in Nigeria.

Nigerians, Africans and indeed the blacks of the Diaspora, are part of the audience for Nigerian home movie. These movies offer them the opportunity to romanticize their past as well as have a glimpse at going back home. Similarly, these movies are invaluable to their children who have been greatly exposed to American life. Steven Gray (2000:13) captures this when he states that the movies offer their very Americanized children a glimpse of modernity and traditionalism (indigenous culture) and the battle between fundamentalist Christian, Islamic and African Traditional religion that is sweeping the African continent.

According to Lola Fani-Kayode in Okome and Haynes (1997:36), the most important thing now is that Nigerian home movies exist; all other questions are secondary. But that does not mean that those other questions are not crucial and subject to discussion. These issues referred to as "all other questions" by Fani-Kayode can be said to be the negative representations of the image of the

Nigerian society in the movies. As the industry becomes more popular and recognized, a major issue which calls for researchers' attention is the problem of some representation of identity and culture. Okome and Haynes (1997:38), supporting this, state:

Their audience had grown up saturated by the international, chiefly American culture industry. Hollywood is frequently invoked as a model or inspiration by the Igbo and English language film makers... the innovations of Hollywood signify a betrayal of African culture in the face of the neo-colonial (global) invasion of foreign media.

Ann Kaplan (1983:24) informs that design and visual materials of movies indicate the ideological motif of the producer in his portrayal of meanings. She states that design material can enrich the visual production or mise -en - scene, that is, the characteristics of film, thereby reinforce the movie message. In essence, the props used in movie production convey vital information and then determine the cultural tone and the image credibility of the movie. Haynes (1997:36) states:

The conjunction of the representation of humorous elite lifestyle and an incipient capitalist organization of video production might suggest that there is a serious tendency towards a consolidation of bourgeois art form which will detach itself from the category of the popular arts.

The representation of Nigeria as a capitalist, affluent society is seen in their mode of production and their style is virtually indistinguishable from American

television. No wonder some critics like Jonathan Haynes accuse the Nigerian home movie industry of offering American soap operas in form of video film:

What is now being offered in the video genre is a rehash of television programmes packaged as movies and this explains why this set of producers who are made today do not have a scope any wider than the width of a television screen and possess a dramatic consciousness that does not extend beyond parlor audience. (Haynes 1997:10):

The movie industry has changed from focusing on scriptwriting and dialogue to movies that focus on the basic instincts of aggression, violence, occultism, greed and seduction. These were so pervasive that they effectively usurp the fiction on made stories on vices to become the society's primary form of entertainment. By getting involved with these, the Nigerian home movie now presents ritual killing as an avenue for money making. Jenkeri Okwori (2003: 8 – 9) is one of the researchers who have reacted vehemently against the misrepresentation of Nigeria in rituality and seduction. According to him, "the movie presents a society dramatically feeling a struggle between good and bad which invariably invokes the supernatural along with the plots, schemes and designs of the people that would want to be rich and live in affluence at all cost. At the inception of depiction in the movies, the audience is forced to believe that the intention is to eulogize rituals but at the end of the movie, they turn around to condemn it. This they claim as the intended message in the movie, even though the attention is not always as pronounced as it was during the presentation at

the movie.

Kayode [2006:33] observes that the presentation of human sacrifice as effective means of becoming wealthy in Nigerian movies was a major problem for movie analysts, the spate of horrendous unsightly human sacrifices and the desperate move to be rich. Okwori (2003:4) wondered that modernity, Christianity and Islamic religions have not made a serious impact on the Nigerians' belief in the efficacy of charms to the extent that in Nigeria, people are actually turning to rituals for protection or more proactively for social or professional betterment. The people's reaction to economic possession in Nigeria, therefore, is to shun hard work and become desperate to make money and live comfortably with little or no care about the means. A good number of the Nigerian ritual movies, according to Okwori (2003:5), showcase the conflict between rituals and secularity, tradition and modernity, thereby presenting Nigeria as divided and dichotomized. Still on the question of why blunt representation of ritual killing in Nigeria home movies, Ernest Obi, in an interview with Idegu (2005:10), gives reasons for what they present, thus

... should tell the story wrongly, that there is nothing like rituals in the country today, that I should not show people with their breast and genitals cut off. That there are no children starving on the streets and destitute everywhere... Am I obliged to them? I am rather obliged to the society to tell what I see the way I see it.

Though Ernest Obi may be right when he says the society is corrupt, he

should also know that there is no society without corruption and that, by and large, the relationship between the artist and society is symbiotic. Even if he disagrees with his society, he is not likely to create an alien picture or image of his society since he draws sustenance from it. [Kafewo in Ajayi 2005; 197]. Moreover, a society or country that is craving for revolution should not engage in the show of demeaning behaviours and traits. This incessant use of ritualistic themes has prompted many to allege that the Nigerian home movie flicks are synonymous with rituals. Some critics do not even like watching Nigerian movies, and some seldom watch but ban their children from watching. Alozie Uzoukwu (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2007), Director, Silver Bird Entertainment, expresses himself thus:

I don't watch it too often. I only watch when my wife is around. Even when I watch, I have some specifics – the comedies. They may not tell me a story but for the fact that they are talking and I am hearing what they are saying, makes me laugh.

Seduction, nudism or eroticism is another area in which the moral credibility of Nigeria is called to task. Newspaper reportage of this is a replication of the negative scenes most movies have created. Rasheed Musa (2004:190) conducted a survey on nudism and the national image. He did content analysis of Omo Empire, Out cast I and II, Night Out, and Shattered Homes in his attempt to discuss the proliferation of nudity and eroticism in Nigerian movies and outright disregard for censorship demand. He asserts that seduction movies assault the psyche of the Africans as they violate all known rules of decency,

good taste and mobility within their culture. In his analysis, data show that almost all the theatre workers, artistes, production and managerial crew are guilty of glamorizing aspects of immorality. Artistes subject themselves to this act of immorality in order to achieve fame and material wealth instead of professionalism; this can be counted as some of the reasons artistes expose, debase and 'sell' their bodies with impunity. Rasheed Musa (2004:196) concludes that the southern Nigerian movie crews (Igbo and Yoruba) are common rivals trying to out-do each other in the noxiousness of nudism.

Kaplan (1983:24) sees the voyeuristic display of the anatomies of the actresses as patriarchal intimidation and commodification of the female gender. This idea is reinforced by the newspapers and the websites; ironically some Nigerian artistes enjoy it. Domitilla (Ashawo no be work) produced by Zeb Ejiro was such a commercial success and was cursed by most Nigerians after watching it. Whatever the promises and failings of Domitilla, the movie proved that in show business as elsewhere, nothing sells like sex. This is confirmed by the producer, Zeb Ejiro, who takes pride in saying that the movie was a success because he made good profit. From the above confession, one can infer that the aim of most of the producers is to make sales and a fat purse. Prior to this, a huge appetite had been stirred by Kenneth Nnebue's Glamour Girls. Smart in the way it manoeuvred within the iron gates of censorship, Glamour Girls was able to show some flesh; that of Eucharia Anunobi in a bath tub scene with Zack Orji. This, according to Kayode (2006:38), gave birth to a star, as Eucharia Anunobi

emerged Nigeria's first sex symbol. Movie-viewers went on to dub her Nigeria's Sharon Stone, and Eucharika lived up to that name, shedding her clothes in more films including Native produced by Theo Akatugba.

Similarly, Cossy Orjiakor is said to have maintained that whoever wished could come and fondle her breasts. Though good acting ability was not her strong point, she became an instant phenomenon with her generous display of her most prized assets, in the process building a cult following of drooling perverts. Some say that Cossy never pretended to anyone that she could act a great deal. Her ticket to fame was her natural endowment, and with that chest, she redefined sex on the screen, not only taking it to the roof but dismissing the likes of Eucharika Anunobi and Shan George (Kayode 2006:43). Before Cossy, Nigeria home movie featured voodoo, romance, epic, comedy and gangster movies. With Cossy, sex or erotic thrillers was blatantly added, scripts were written specifically for her and movie producers raced after her with those scripts. With films like Outcast and Itohan, the story lines all had excuses and sequences for Cossy to bare her body. As it turned out, Cossy's mammary endowments were as sought after outside film location as inside it.

Artistes like Barbara Udoh, Halima Abubakar (nicknamed the wild cat) and Bimbo Akintola, the graduate of University of Ibadan, whose former boyfriend (actor Yemi Solade) revealed that she never wore anything under her dress joined the train. Shan George shocked her pastor, dramatically shedding her good girl image only to snap up in rapid succession of semi-nude roles which she

interpreted with leather outfits that left little to the imagination. An actress Amah Grace (2005:13) takes a stand that the actresses who take up erotic roles do so because of the money involved. She also makes it clear that these actions which they display on screen are oftentimes a continuation of the sexual harassment by the producers who abuse their female artistes that are desperate to have a role in order to make ends meet. Alozie Uzoukwu (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2007) seems to have a similar notion with Amah Grace when he says that a lot of what goes on in the industry have been revealed to him. He states that he has first-hand information about sex and immorality between some producers and some actresses. This he believes is utmost counter-productiveness in the industry. However, another actress, Franca Aerna (2005:13), blames some of the girls who are abused. She asserts that though there are some producers who actually abuse artistes sexually, there are also a good number of the female artistes who pose for sex in the industry. Franca continued by saying that these artistes that pose for sex in the industry are those who have nothing to offer except their bodies, while there are some women of virtue who are talented and strongly believe they have something to offer.

For the Yoruba artistes, David Ajiboye (2005:21) reports that:

Bisi doesn't see anything wrong in facing the camera nude so far as the pay is justifiable and the message it is intended to pass across will be of immense value to the society.

"Of immense value" indeed. One may begin to ask what will be of immense



value to the society. Is it appearing nude on screen or the debasing value of the feminine gender in a society that has norms guiding behaviours? This madness which they don't seem to realize contributes to the major criticism and problem of the Nigerian home movie. They are aggravating and increasing immorality in the society instead of the presumed awareness creation. Also, Lanre Falana, a Yoruba artiste who grew up in the United States of America as cited by Kayode (2006:44) says, "If the prize is right, my wife can bare it all". He actually meant he could allow his wife to play erotic roles in movies for the financial reward. This stand varies with the responses given to this question by home - based Yoruba artistes like Tunji Kadri, who maintained that it is uncultured for a woman to appear nude, to out rightly display eroticism on the screen. Lanre Falana's position, therefore, justifies the notion that the display of nudism in Nigerian movies is the artistes' direct and wholesome imitation of foreign cultures. The statements of those who support seductive scenes in the movies are a direct expression of the media support for exposing women for high commercial gains.

Nudism is a direct attack on social value, which actresses, directors and producers claim to be protecting. Glamorizing immorality to promote morals is like tearing a cloth to mend another. Erotic scenes or seduction in movies is a direct threat to the battle against sexually transmitted disease (STD) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Considering the effects of such exposures of eroticism and seduction on the psyche of especially the adolescent audience, the fight or campaign against STDS and HIV may be a wasted effort (Kayode

2002:44).

The cultural confusion occasioned by the oxymoronic representation of religions and locations bothers Oha (1997:97) when he states that movie producers could not be honest by stopping the perverse misrepresentation of Nigerian cultural and religious beliefs, even as they use the element to promote the modern religions and urban setting. Igbo movies especially, in spite of dangerous happenings in the urban areas and penetrated by the so – called religious Nigerians, still perceive the rural settings as backward, barbaric and uncivilized. In epitomizing the urban and modern religions, therefore, there is a situation of misrecognition of the real social/political issues facing the masses. This is because the masses are represented in a way that falsifies problems and makes solutions unimaginable. (Kayode 2006:46).

The mis-representation of settings and religions is an abuse of the role of the griot of modern times that African movie makers are supposed to be playing in the interpretation, historicization and presentation of the Nigerian and African societies. As an integral member of the society he is expected to be objective and un-sensational in his depiction of the society (Ngugi 2003:65). Therefore what we have in most Nigerian movies is contrary to Oliver Barlet's (2000:22) assertion that African film makers have for a long time reflected the dual western gaze with its components of abject poverty. Instead, most Nigeria home movies keep recycling this western gaze and culture under the guise of producing Nigerian movies.

In the clamour for the promotion of indigenous knowledge biodiversity, it is an aberration that most Nigerian movies do not perceive traditional settings and religious deities. After all, the uniqueness of Hollywood and, for instance, the intricacies of the James Bond series, are in its technical manipulation of sets and lighting to represent the western technology aspirations and myths through the movies. In view of this, while rural settings can be developed, superficial elements in traditional technologies embedded in the deities should be a cause for its exploration and presentation to show - case the African science and not as a "fabu", as is wrongly described by Harding. [Kayode 2006:47). The movie producers have hidden beneath technological innovations employed in movie making to exploit fantasies and superstitions. Reviews of such movies, too, have been limited to three indigenous groups, forgetting that within these groups - Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba - are other subgroups with unique cultures yearning for expression. (Charles Ogu 1998:3).

On the movie standard and quality, Ahmed Yerima (Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> 2007), General Manager, National Theatre and Artistic Director, National Troupe of Nigeria, maintains that the industry is made up of people who know little or nothing about acting and theatre. Yerima observes thus:

Most of them are accountants etc. Some were jobless people who came to Lagos and overnight found it easy. If you look at some of them you will find out that they don't even look like artistes but they are the ones performing for the country and going about calling themselves 'superstars'.

To Ejike Asiegbu (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2007), the industry is made up of a lot of the 'I want to acts' and the 'I can hackts', meaning they don't know their right from their left. Furthermore, Rachael Oniga (2005:20), an actress, complains that there is no originality and professionalism among the movie artistes of this era.

According to her, "we do rehearsals before we go for shooting, but now, people just jump from one set to another, not waiting to erase a character before taking on a new one. No wonder Yerima observes that actors who were formerly involved in stage performance in the National Theatre and National Troupe, now find it easier to feature in the home movies. He states:

It is easier to face the camera alone, do only a little while the camera does the rest, than facing a live audience watching them perform on stage, and the eye to eye contact. Why then would they rehearse, learn a lot of lines for stage performance when they can do it scene by scene in home movie. All they do is stay in a place, like Presidential Hotel, Enugu, where it will be easier for producers to locate them and they shoot many movies, one after the other, in one location.

The problems of poor quality, pedestrian plots, table casting and type casting, among other things, have stunted the growth of the industry. It has been alleged that producers ignore auditioning as the proper way of choosing a cast for a production but hand scripts over to the known faces even in their individual homes without auditioning. The producers have also been accused of insensitivity in the use of cultural and religious images in their flicks. An example of this is Helen Ukpabio's "Rapture", where she condemns the religious beliefs

and practices of a group (the Catholic Church). In the movie, she presented this group as the Anti-Christ, preached against by some Christian groups

Though Ellis (2004:25) informs that the aim of every movie should be towards satisfying the audience's needs through meaningful productions done using relevant set and locale, stressing that they assist in studying the cultural dimensions of the narrative. The hope of this cultural rebirth is turned to disillusionment because of the abnormality often witnessed in most home movies. According to Nwadiuwe (2005:6)

The producers... engage in unbridled denigration of indigenous Nigerian cultures through un-researched story lines, historical distortion, and flagrant abuse of special effects, gaudy visual representation and the penchant to ape western filmic style

This un-researched, distorted historical story line provoked Alozie Uzoukwu (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2006) to say that the Nigerian movies are telling the story without the substance thus:

They have failed woefully in the sense that they are not reproducing art as art should be. Life is art and art is life. If you are going to tell me a story of my town, tell it to me the way it was so that if I didn't exist in that period/era, I could learn something and say yes, this was how my people used to be, dress, did their things. But they have managed to scratch it on the surface. May be, they are in a haste to make money.

In considering cultural production in cultural industries, this work will look at some theories of cultural promotion.

## **THE DOMINANT CULTURE**

Raymond Williams (1955, 1963) made an attempt to show how modern notions of culture arose out of changes and processes like industry, democracy, class and art. He argues that this development attempts to create ultimate values at which to aim and by which to judge other social and economic activities. Williams has usefully and comprehensively conceptualized the process in three distinct dimensions of level of culture; the residual, the dominant, and the emergent. However, we shall discuss the dominant and the emergent as they relate to this study. The issue of dominance is of great concern, particularly as no society can successfully dominate another without the diffusion of cultural patterns and social institutions, neither can any society or system successfully diffuse all or most of its cultural patterns and institutions without some degree of domination.

Foreign film/productions which dominate the whole society portrayed foreign cultures as being superior and indigenous cultures inferior, unimportant and unrecognized. The source of Hollywood power extends far beyond the history of cinema, to the cultural communication complex that has been an integral component of capitalist exchange since the end of the nineteenth century. The US as the world's leading screen exporter was transferring its dominant value system to others with a corresponding diminution in the vitality and standing of local languages and traditions that had nurtured national identity (Miller et al. 2005:74).

## **THE EMERGENT CULTURE.**

Following Williams's conceptualization, the cultural values of the West can be seen as dominant culture which is, however, challenged as it was by emergent cultural formation. According to Raymond Williams (1977:123), the emergent culture refers to the "new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship that are continually being created." The Nigerian home movie industry is an emergent cultural practice because themes, styles, stories, character, and values which were created, formed, or lived in the past and which still have significance because they represent areas of human experience, aspiration and achievement which the dominant culture of the west sometimes 'neglects, undervalues, opposes, represses, or even cannot recognize' (Williams, 1977:123) has so far thrived to represent Nigeria globally in the entertainment sector.

We have so far in our discussion stressed that the dominant culture in the Third World countries and in Nigeria in particular is that of the West made effective through the invasion of their films into the country. This cultural domination is the hegemony of the West which they enjoyed because of their position and function in the world of production. [Robert Kavanagh 1985;14-15] The dominant culture is therefore challenged by the emergent culture, the emergent culture seen in the effort of the Nigerian home movie industry in creating an alternative nationalistic entertainment outfit. Through the home movie, the Nigerian tries to regain in the cultural sphere, a freedom and an

authenticity lost by history, but finds himself trapped in the prison house of “non – African” concepts and practices. The capitalistic overlords of Owerri, Onitsha, Idumota, Alaba, etc are creating a new hegemony in the industry. They ignore the fact that African [Nigerian] values often differ from their western counterpart, except for the alienated ones. (Nasidi 1986:109-110).



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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical thrust of this work is cultural hegemony along the lines expounded by Raymond Williams and Anthonio Gramsci. These two Marxists propounded their theory as a tool to underscore the cultural imperialism of the West, hegemony not being forceful like colonialism but a subtle manipulation by the West of the Third World countries. According to Gramsci (1957), hegemony is the spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group. He goes on to say that this consent is historical, caused by the prestige [and consequent confidence] which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. Through Gramsci, hegemony acquired a significant sense. He sees hegemony as domination by consent and fundamentally, the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interest of all (Gramsci 1970:5). Dominance is thus

exerted not by force nor even necessarily by active apparatuses such as persuasion, but by a more subtle and inclusive power over the

economy and over state as education and media by which the ruling class interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted (Ashcroft et al. 2000:116)

To Gramsci, hegemony has psycho-cultural implications. He shows how the dominant classes were able to convince those who were being exploited that their situation was natural and thus universal (Berger 1995:65). Similarly hegemony is a process by which members of society are persuaded to acquiesce in their own subordination, to abdicate cultural leadership in favour of sets of interests which are represented as identical but may actually be antithetical to their own. The aim of Western hegemony, therefore, is to resist social change and maintain the status quo (Turner 1988:136).

Raymond Williams states that the traditional definition of hegemony is political rule or domination, especially in relation between states. Williams played a significant role in the explanation of hegemonic operations in cultural production. Williams, cited in Berger (1995:63), uses the word 'saturate' to describe how hegemonic thoughts fill our lives. Hegemony is more pervasive, more abstract and dominates everyday life, our assumptions, and the world of what "goes without saying". It is a process that we find hard to discover because it is ubiquitous and amorphous. Hegemonic domination is so much more difficult to isolate and understand because it involves social and cultural spheres which are the basis of our life and which also give meaning to values. (Williams 1977:108). Hegemonic domination is thus widespread, more hidden or disguised

(Beger 1995:64) Overpowered by the hegemonic discourses of the West, Third World societies are stunted in their capacity to articulate their own identities and world view, they tend to initialize the perspective of the modernizers and developmentalists. This is done not only through the control of media but also through ownership and control of the whole infrastructure of the production of knowledge.

The cultural and political leadership of society by one class had to be reexamined, not from the rigid viewpoint of an abstract economy nor from the more obvious one of force and direct political intervention, but in terms of what Gramsci called consent. Gramsci (1971:10) states that domination is effective because of the extent the values and practices of the dominant classes permeate society such that they come to assume for the dominated classes a "natural unquestioned status". In short, Hegemony articulates a relationship between classes in which the 'strong' or the dominant, by virtue of certain structural privileges, incorporates the weak or subordinate (Williams 1977:109).

Importantly this incorporation achieves effects of consciousness, creates a consensus and sets limits or values and on the perception of reality in favour of one class. [Nasidi 1986:113] In the contest of bourgeois Europe's universal conceptions of itself, Africa had come to represent the very negation of the absolute spirit towards which European man could dialectically aspire. Hegel (1978:187) sees Africa as a continent that was an embodiment of regression which Europe had dialectically superseded:

Africa proper, as far as history goes back, has

remained, for all purposes of connection with the rest of the world, shut up; it is the gold land compressed within itself, the land of childhood, which, lying beyond the day of self-consciousness history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of night.

Ultimately for Hegel, the most essential point had to do with the peculiar outlay of the African; he had not yet learned to distinguish "between himself as an individual and the universality of his essential being" (Gossman in Nasidi 1986:124) Therefore the African had to be "liberated" from nature, saved from his own savage self, then, and a 'free individual', he would become a part of a world history. Hegel's scheme, as Marcuse explains, is really inextricably bound up with the global spread of bourgeois hegemony: the "free individual" is but the indispensable corollary of private property – the central benchmark of capitalism. (Nasidi 1986:122 – 123). Henceforth, the savage would be speechless, broken, humiliated and oppressed. To speak, he must rely on his conqueror's language and modes of signification. To function in the new world order he would have to rely on his 'master's voice'.

There is, then, the need to understand the concern of Antonio Gramsci and Raymond Williams that in certain social and historical circumstances, the home movie itself, far from being a transcendent and emergent practice, may come to serve as the most significant mode of incorporation into an effective dominant culture, by virtue of its very specific quantities.

As it were, in South Africa, with the several efforts made to counter the



hegemony of the whites, so it is with Nigeria and the emergence of Nigerian home movie to combat the influx of foreign culture that Nigerians are exposed to through foreign movies. This struggle is aimed at exposing and entertaining Nigerians and others with indigenous programmes. Yet, there is also internal hegemony in the industry. The ruling class which can be said to be the money bags dictate the thematic thrust of most of the movies in the industry, solely for the financial gains. To achieve this aim, these producers engage in the negative representation of Nigeria in the movies. However, some positive thinking Nigerians are subverting this hegemony through an alternative hegemony by their efforts in producing movies that portray Nigerians positively. The colonial masters and the missionaries who first introduced cinema in Nigeria did it with the aim of spreading colonial influence, among other reasons. Films from this perspective are not mere entertainment; they become tied to political mass movement and are used as instrument of ideological battle. (Berger1995:66)

We have in our discussion so far surveyed the various meanings and application of the concept of hegemony in cultural production as expounded by Raymond Williams, Anthonio Gramsci, Berger and Robert Kavanagh. This study adopts the concept of hegemony as dominance and control to underscore the activities and the packaging of Nigerian home movies using "Dons in Abuja", "Hot Girls", "The Peace Maker", and "The Price" as case studies.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ANALYSIS OF SELECT NIGERIAN HOME MOVIES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, we saw how hegemony was employed by both the West and Nigeria. The West through their movies gained cultural dominance in Nigeria and Nigerians reacting to this launched a nationalistic struggle to free themselves from the cultural hegemony of the West by coming up with indigenous home movies. However, the Nigerian society is represented negatively in the Nigerian home movies by the ruling class who control productive forces; the new capitalist overlords have thus emerged as the local hegemony. The negative representations are the glamorous show of such traits that portray Nigeria as a corrupt nation, whose citizens are heavily involved in criminal and immoral acts. There is also positive representation by a group of producers who are not comfortable with the ways Nigerians are represented in most movies. The positive representations are the projection of the Nigerian society as a nation that embodies good moral behaviours that are capable of improving and developing a nation. This chapter, therefore, proceeds to analyze the negative and positive representations of the Nigerian society in the Nigerian home movies. There are many home movies to this effect, but for this research,

attention shall be focused only on four Nigerian home movies. The selected home movies are "Dons in Abuja", "Hot Girls", "The Peace Maker", and "The Price". "Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls" stand for negative representation, while "The Peace Maker" and "The Price" stand for positive representation.

### **JUSTIFICATION FOR SELECTED CASE STUDIES**

The four case studies, "The Peace Maker" and "The Price" and "Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls", project the two sides of the coin, i.e. the negative and the positive representation of the Nigerian society in the Nigerian home movies.

The four case studies are chosen for the following reasons:

1. "The Peace Maker" and "The Price" are both positive. They teach good morals, promote unity, peace, tolerance, hard work, perseverance, love, kindness and forgiveness. These are potentials, which, when emulated, are capable of keeping and uniting the nation for progress and development.
2. "Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls" are an extreme show of violence, avarice, crime, hatred and ritual sacrifices which are capable of tearing a nation apart, thus leading to destruction.
3. The two categories of movies, "The Peace Maker" and "The Price", "Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls" are two parallel lines. While "Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls" embody potentials that tear apart and destroy a nation, as evidenced in the violent action of the cultists, "The Peace Maker" and "The Price" embody good moral values that unite, uplift, ginger, encourage, spur and create a

conducive atmosphere for Nigerian citizens to operate in all spheres of life and thereby bring progress and development.

### **CASE STUDY I: "DONS IN ABUJA"**

Chief Okaomee, Nwoko, Onwa and others are members of a secret cult called the Venerable Circle. These secret cult members virtually control the economic and political affairs of the city of Abuja. A young man called David receives the tongue - lashing of his father for going to the city and returning without making money. Out of frustration, David goes back to the city, meets his friend who introduces him to the Venerable Circle and he is initiated. In order to pay his rite and get the ticket of being wealthy, he is asked to sacrifice his mother and he complies. Onwa, on his own, visits the village from time to time, takes some young boys to the city pretending he sends them abroad but ends up using and selling them for ritual sacrifice. Nwoko betrays his friend, Chief Okaomee, by intercepting a parcel that is meant for him. To pay back, Chief Okaomee kidnaps his only daughter.

As usual, Onwa sells four boys to Nwoko for ritual sacrifice. Unfortunately for him, the spirits reject one of them who finds his way home and reveals Onwa's secret to the entire village. Unknown to Onwa, he visits his village to get more boys but is apprehended and arrested by the police.

### **"DONS IN ABUJA" AND HEGEMONY**

Having completed a plot summary of the movie, "Dons in Abuja", we shall

now consider how the theoretical framework hegemony manifests in it. The elements of power\control and dominance in hegemony shall be used to analyze this movie. It is also worthwhile to note that these elements of hegemony may not be completely divorced from each other.

### **Hegemony as Power\ Control**

Gramsci (1970:5) sees hegemony as the power and ability of the ruling class to present their interest through the media as the common interest. Power and control is the ability to make decisions on how an organization, area, etc is run. It is also the ability to make somebody or something do what you want. Furthermore, power and control is the act of restricting, limiting or managing something or a method of doing things. In the Nigeria movie industry, power and control are in the hands of a few individuals, who dictate the thematic thrust of the movies produced. These few individuals are the moneybags who have the cash and are willing to sponsor productions. These moneybags are businessmen who are only interested in investing and making huge profits and little or no attention is paid to the content of the movies. Having profit as their primary aim and coupled with the fact that they do not possess the intellectual knowledge and artistic skills, they churn out movies of questionable features, as long as they entertain a large audience and bring good returns. Here money becomes the piper that dictates the tune, as summarized by Prince Ifeanyi Dike, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Actors' Guild of Nigeria (Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>., 2007), thus:

The average investor in the Nigeria home movie industry is a business

man who wants to make his money. He is not interested in the culture. He wants something that will make his movies sell because he is an investor. This kind of response is not peculiar to Prince Ifeanyi Dike; others like Zeb Ejiro, a well known producer, Ernest Obi, producer and director, confirm the above response. Amaka Igwe (2007:11), one of the pioneers of the Nigerian home movie, submits in a more subtle way, thus:

.... People have to understand the psychology of the Nigerian home movie for it to be. People were just trying to eke out a living. They just wanted to put food on their table to survive.

As a result of this dictatorship, thousands of movies that are full of excesses, violence, crime, avarice, indecent behaviors, corruptible traits that destroy a nation, as seen in "Dons In Abuja", flood the market. Others are "Billionaire's Club I and II", "Abuja Connection I, II, and III", "Living in Bondage", "Open Secret", "Angel in Hell", "Hot Girls", "Itohan", "Domitilla", "Shattered Homes", "Prostitutes", "Night Out (Girls for sell)" " Adulteress", "Outcast I and II", "Glamour Girls I and II", " Aristos", "Hit the Street," etc.

Actors themselves who have the intellectual skills also engage in this act of hegemony. Because of their skills, so much power and control is exerted in the way and manner they demand high payments for playing a role or taking up a character. There was a time when some people like Pete Edochie, Richard Mofe Damijo (RMD), Genevive Nnaji, etc demanded such exorbitant payment that the National Film and Video Censors Board had to intervene and fix a maximum fee of N500, 000.00 for any lead actor. Actors like Pete Edochie, Enebeli Enebeliwa,

and Alex Usifo, to mention but a few, have also colonized outstanding roles and characters in almost every work in which they feature. They have taken control of such roles and characters like Dons, influential wealthy and powerful men who are respected and revered for what they possess. To them playing a minor or a poor man's role is degrading and belittling. Reacting to this, Prince Ifeanyi

Dike (February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007) states

A lot of abnormalities exist in the industry. We now have a set of actors and actresses who are known and established for particular roles. Instead of conducting proper auditioning, the producers and directors take scripts to their various homes, because they believe they have such areas as their specialty. You can imagine that this is one of the reasons why we have a lot of excesses and poor performances in the Nigerian home movies.

As a result of this control and colonization of particular roles by certain actors in almost all the movies, people, according to Prince Ifeanyi Dike (February 14<sup>th</sup> 2007), cannot differentiate one movie from the other because one particular person is, for instance, a king or a Don in all the movies in which he features. In a discussion with Zeb Ejiro (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>., 2007), he explains that the essence of this is to promote sales. He asks, "Don't you know that faces sell movies? When we feature the unknown or new artistes the movies will not sell, so since we want to get back the money we invested we make use of the established faces so that the movies will sell. If I make a movie featuring Genevieve Nnaji, Pete Edochie, RMD, Liz Benson, who are known, and I make another one using the unknown faces, which movie will you like to watch? I know you will like to see Liz Benson



and the likes because you have seen them perform and you were thrilled; so, that's the point." In "Dons in Abuja", Pete Edochie is Chief Okaomee. The name Okaomee alone says it all, "He who speaks and accomplishes." This name gives him the power of one who controls the destinies of men. As the movie opens, he is seen in his executive sitting room, heavily and beautifully furnished, receiving reports and issuing orders.

Enebeli Enebeliwa is yet another actor in the Nigerian Home movie who always acts major roles. Enebeli settles not just for a major role but a wealthy oppressor who has no regard for humans. He exalts himself and brags about because of his ill - gotten wealth. In "Dons in Abuja", Enebeli Enebeliwa, featuring as Onwa, the "Moonlight that shines to all," is seen with his entourage entering his village. The villagers, young and old, male and female, run out to hail him and he sprays them with money. He also takes boys from the village to the city under disguised benevolence. These two actors, Pete Edochie and Enebeli Enebeliwa, among others, also exhibits this hegemonic control of prestigious roles in other movies like, "Billionaire's Club I and II", "Open Secret," etc. With the above discussion, one can therefore comfortably see and feel active hegemony in the Nigerian home movie industry.

### **HEGEMONY AS DOMINANCE.**

Dominance means the most important or noticeable feature of something or somebody. In the Nigerian home movies there are features that at a time

dominated in almost all the movies made. These features ran from ritual of human sacrifice to violence, and crime, as quick and easy ways of becoming wealthy, powerful and influential in the society. The motive for these vices becomes the power to dominate, control as against the culture of a traditional African society that upholds communal living. These movies introduce the western concept of individualism that emphasizes the supremacy of "I" embodied in most Hollywood films (Shehu in Bello and Nasidi.1991:191). In line with this, Ekwuazi (1987: 32) remarks that the films, on account of their acculturation/socializing potentials, played an invaluable role in bringing about this new dispensation in creating an emergent mobility - oriented society characterized by its highly individualized values, a social fabric into which is braided individuals' pride, ambition, acquisition and consumption... on the one hand, it held up the traditional communal ethos to ridicule, while on the other hand, it extolled the virtues of individualism.

Ritual killing as a means of acquiring wealth, power, respect and recognition is the most dominant feature in "Dons in Abuja". The movie begins with violence and ends with violence. David, a young man who went to the city and went back to the village without anything to reckon with, is being tongue-lashed by his father. In order to save his face from his father's venom, he goes back to Abuja, frustrated. He meets his friend who introduces him to a secret cult, "The Venerable Circle". The means of breaking from the shackles of poverty becomes ritual of human sacrifice. Having been initiated, David is asked

to sacrifice his mother so that he can be wealthy and live like other rich men. At first, he tries to resist but his friend persuades him, telling him of his own experience:

Look at me; my mother had to go for me to be what I am today. You have no choice, Dave. It's either you sacrifice her or you will be sacrificed. The moment you step into the venerable circle, there is no going back. It's either you belong or you are dead. Go to the village, get her photograph and get this thing done.

The above statement made by David's friend signifies that he equally made his own money through rituals. At this point, David had no other option than to oblige. He travels to the village, gets his mother's photograph and she is sacrificed. Within a short time he becomes wealthy and starts living like his friends. Money becomes a yardstick for measuring happiness and comfort. Similarly this hegemonic portrayal of rituals and violence is also evidenced in the character of Onwa. Possessed by the spirit of wealth acquisition, he makes trips to his village from time to time, returns to Abuja with a good number of boys whom he kills and sells for rituals. He tells the elders of his village lies concerning the well being of these boys. The elders are not able to discern the real situation because Onwa uses money to control their thinking faculty. The elders fail to perform their duties as ambassadors of the community; instead, they remain docile to the dictates of Onwa. Once rich, a person, without any moral scruples, is automatically elevated to the heights of prestige, status and respect. Under the weight of extreme wealth, societal decorum is abandoned (Okwori in Taylor

and Francis, 2003:20).

During the burial arrangement of Emeka's mother (Emeka is one of the boys Onwa killed for rituals), Onwa promises to donate half a million Naira for her burial. Having promised such an amount, he plans to visit the village again to get more boys for ritual sacrifices:

It's high time I went to the village to replenish my stock. My stock is highly depleted. Am sure there'll be more cooperation this time. After all, I am donating half a million naira for Emeka's mother's burial.

Human beings become stock, consignment and goods that are sold, run out of stock and need to be replenished. There is no more regard for the human being because of wealth. Sanctity which guarded human relationship is now replaced with weakness, cruelty, murder and violence. However, Onwa makes for the village but before then, he delivers four boys to Nwoko for ritual sacrifice. Nwoko takes the four boys to a native doctor who performs the sacrifice. Here, the producer tries to some extent to cover the violence with the use of montage style but there is shock on the audience still as the sounds of chopping of the heads is heard. In the process, the spirit rejects one of the boys who finds his way home and reveals the whole of Onwa's secrets and Onwa is eventually arrested. The movie ends, leaving viewers to assume a lot of things. No one could tell if Onwa received the punishment due to him. Secondly, apart from Onwa who was arrested, the movie tells the viewers nothing about the other members of the cult whom they have seen indulging in crimes, enjoying ill-

gotten wealth and splendour. Therefore it may be assumed that life continues for the rest of the cult members undisturbed and that it is possible for one to engage in such crimes and go both rewarded and unpunished.

This repeated show of ritual sacrifice in Nigerian home movies has amounted to stereotype. There is then a hasty generalization over the people of Nigeria. The producers of these kinds of movies are hereby called to caution, considering the power and versatility of this medium, as summarized by Taylor and Francis (2003:69) thus.

For most of us, a major source of information about other people is the media rather than personal contact. In order to construct an image of some place, persons or things of which we have no direct experience, we rely heavily on visualization presented by others and made available to us.

Another dominant feature in the Nigerian home movies is the representation of the urban communities as "heaven", the abode of the rich and wealthy, while the rural communities are portrayed as "hell" where poor and wretched people live and depend on the wealthy in urban areas for sustenance. Good life is therefore synonymous with the cities while poverty is synonymous with rural communities. This sharp contrast is revealed in the use of sophisticated modern, related setting and simple, poverty-related setting. Onwa, who lives in Abuja, comes to his village with sophisticated cars and in a convoy. The road is tarred smooth and well maintained. Immediately he enters his village, the setting changes as we see bad, narrow and damaged roads, mud and

thatched houses, etc. The dwellers run out, looking unkempt and deprived, singing Onwa's praises, and he sprays money on them. Similarly Onwa promises to take some boys to Abuja where they can be established. The feature under discussion is also seen in the argument that ensued between David and his father:

Are you not ashamed of yourself? You went to the city and came back without anything. Oh! You came back so that I will feed you when you know that things are too hard here in the village. Or did you come back to force words out of my mouth? Your mates are out there making it, better think of what to do with yourself before I curse you, good for nothing son.

David's father actually means that the city holds fortune for one while the rural community holds doom. To accomplish his father's desires, he is out to Abuja where he hopes to make money because, while at home, he is jobless and has no future. David finds himself in Abuja, and finally makes money by sacrificing his mother. The idea of portraying modernity as the only means of survival encourages rural-urban migration. People tend to leave the rural areas, and surge to the urban areas, thereby causing congestion and overcrowding. Most often, they go to the cities without any tool to earn a living. Consequently, when the situation becomes unbearable, the victims of such migration soil their hands with evil and societal menace will be on the increase.

## **CASE STUDY 2 "HOT GIRLS"**

"Hot Girls" opens with prostitutes standing on the street at night, half

naked, waiting for men who patronize them. Chief, one of the patronizers, pulls up by their side and picks Rosy, one of the prostitutes. He takes her to a room, sleeps with her and pays her off. On the other hand Floxy, a middle – aged woman and a sugar mummy, is seen with her lover, Demian, a young man of about 25 years, discussing the nice moments they had together. Lizzy, Floxy's friend, lusts after Demean, even when she has her own lover called Kelvin. They cheat on each other, luring each other's lover to bed. This degenerates into a quarrel and they fall out with each other. Resultantly, Lizzy hires killers who kill Floxy. As usual, Rosy and her friends go out for their usual sex trade and, unfortunately, Rosy falls into the hands of ritualists who murder her and cut parts of her body. Finally, Demean and Kelvin confront Lizzy and accuse her of Floxy's death. Lizzy shoots Kelvin and the police close up on them, shooting Lizzy and arresting Demain.

### **'HOT GIRLS' AND HEGEMONY**

Nudity and sex have become a major problem in Nigeria. It came to a point that one Cossy Orjiako became a type cast because she will not utter any word in the movies but walk about almost naked just because sex is selling everywhere. (Yerima, Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> 2007). This has become a deplorable theme in the Nigerian home movie. The producers are fascinated to invest heavily on such movies that promote indecency and immorality in the general public. This can be attributed to the financial gains attached to such roles and the belief that

negative things sell more. E.g. if a wife washes her private parts and uses the water to cook for her husband to love her more, people will rush to watch the movie". (Zeb Ejiro, Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007] These films are not for charity; don't forget that sex sells and the film makers want to sell" (Bob Manuel, Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007). In this film, women come explicitly to show that apart from selling their bodies, there is no other way they can be useful to themselves and the nation. This has helped immensely to batter the national image.

"Hot Girls" is characterized by indecency, obscene pictures and immorality. The opening scene shows prostitutes, dressed almost naked, standing on the streets at night waiting for men who come to pick them up and pay them at the end. This behaviour is seen through the skimpy dresses they wear, exposing their laps and their boobs. The street light, which shines in the dark, signifies that they are standing on the road at night ready to sell their bodies in exchange for money. Decency is thrown to the ground and trampled under foot. These prostitutes use their seductive antics to attract men to their sides; even their conversation is vulgar. Chief, a patronizer, pulls up and one of the girls walks seductively towards him, laughing in between her words, "you want some smooching tonight? Chief answers, "Well, I always like smooching with a baby, I like them fair". Rosy fits into this description and she is beckoned to meet chief. She walks seductively to chief, shaking her boobs, "Do you like what you see? I mean do you like this (pointing at her boobs) Cost a lot of money." Chief agrees to her terms and drives off with her to a room. In the room, Chief lifts Rosy up,



pushes her to the bed, lies on top of her, caressing and kissing her all over. Chief pulls his clothes off and asks Rossy to pull off hers. She pulls off her dress from the down side, almost nude. This same character, Rossy, also played a similar role in a movie titled "Itohan." In this movie, she bathes naked in a swimming pool, frolicking and shedding her clothes at the slightest demand by men, all for money. In one of the scenes in "Itohan," she performed an illusory act of sleeping with a dog. Though it was mere dissembling for artistic purposes, she did not actually sleep with the dog - but a layman who must have watched this movie would believe that she did sleep with a dog. For example, a certain man who happens to watch this movie was highly embarrassed by this very action and he said, "So these Nigerian girls who travel abroad go about sleeping with dogs?". This particular commentator couldn't watch the film to the end because of the repugnant nature of the movie.

This sex trade cannot have its origin in Nigeria because sex is highly respected and held 'sacred' in the African/ Nigerian society. But because of our contact with the western world where everything goes, Nigerian home movie is now bold enough to show such immorality and obscenity on screen. In the movie under analysis, sex is presented as a lucrative business one can proudly and boldly engage in, no matter your age and sex. Lizzy, a sugar mummy, meets with her lover, Kelvin, in a hotel room. Kelvin fixes his price for the job and Lizzy obliges. The two lovers get into bed, with Kelvin lying on top of her. They roll over each other, kissing and caressing each other. Floxy, whose lover is Demain,

meets Kelvin and desires to have him which she does at last. Sex trade is presented in this movie as an enterprising business through which Demian and Kelvin are able to pay their tuition fee in the university with the money they earn from sleeping with these sugar mummies.

The whole movie is littered with sexual profanities. This can probably account for the media information on some of our campuses about wealthy and foreign men who come to induce Nigerian girls with a pittance. That the movie has shown that bestiality is no crime is not fallacy. One may not always blame those who traffic in Nigerian girls and those who sneak out of the country to be sex slaves. They have a documented reference, after all, because besides the refusal by some and total resignation to fate by some other in the movie, the producer did not draw total conclusion to show the evil of such practice.

(Kayode in Okwori 2002:160). To them it does not matter because they claim to be teaching morals, which are not well defined. The producers of this kind of movies hide under the cloak of entertainment and churn out films that are of negative impact on the public and the nation as a whole. Some practitioners are out for business, therefore they give little or no attention to these excesses.

Rotimi Von (Feb., 14<sup>th</sup> 2007) reports:

When I ask them why producers don't produce films that will impact positively on the lives of people, the answer I get is, "Listen chairman, people want to see what is happening, prostitution, armed robbery attack, witchcraft, husband sleeping with his wife's sister, etc. These are the things that appeal to the people".

But, come to think of it, the producers are actually the ones that have fashioned the taste of the public who crave for these immoralities in movies. If they avoided such from the onset, the public would have no choice but be entertained with the available materials. After all, in the pre-colonial period, when Nigeria had no cinema, film and movies, they made do with the form of entertainment available. This unrestrained show of sex, nudity, violence and crime of all kinds in home video movies moved Dr. Walter Ofonagoro (1997:14), former Information Minister of Nigeria, to caution that:

Video producers and marketers should ensure that their films and video marks are not dominated by negative foreign cultural influences, which these pornographic and violent films have on our children and culture.

The National Film and Video Censors Board are there to checkmate the activities of the industry. Section 373, sub section 1, and paragraph item II, of the Board's decree states that the films should not expose the people of Africa and their heritage to ridicule or condemnation. The same section 373, sub section 2, paragraphs a – c states that the film committee shall not approve a film which, in its opinion, depicts behaviour which is

- a. Indecent, obscene or likely to be injurious to morality or
- b. Likely to incite or encourage public disorder or crime or
- c. Undesirable in the public interest.

With these laws and guidelines, one would think that the excesses will be curbed

but they still persist. The question now is, is the Board averse to implementing their rules or is it as a result of negligence of duty that these have persisted.

Ejike Asiegbu (Feb.14, 2007), asserts that "some producers maneuver their way through to avoid censorship by the board. That is why we still have excesses in our movies up till today".

This answer is confirmed and supported by Rotimi Vonn (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2007) when he states:

In every industry, you have bad eggs. There'll be people that don't pass through the census board and some use fake classification numbers. In every part of the world where you have regulations, you don't expect 100% compliance. Just like people have faked NAFDAC numbers, people have also faked classification numbers. Obviously there are people like that.

This show of violence and the passing of bad messages have become the philosophical base for the production of most movies. With their scathing captions and seductive horrifying scenes, the movies instead of promoting good cultural values and preaching moral regeneration, preach moral degeneration.

For a change, Claude Eke (2002:61) advises:

It is true that we have violence with us now, with various armed robbers and assassination. But our goals as the mirror of the society is not to encourage these negative aspects by reflecting them too much on screen.

At the climax of this control and dominance of violent themes, some good

ambassadors of Nigeria sprang up and emerged with movies that challenge the repeated show of Nigeria as a violent society. Producers like Helen Ukpabio, Mike Bamiloye, Cajetan Obi, Sunday Ekegbo, and P. A. Collins, etc., came up with movies that promote hard work, perseverance, tolerance, chastity, love, forgiveness and, above all, which teach good moral as good cultural values obtainable in Nigeria. Such movies are "The Peace Maker", "The Price", "The Gods Are Dead", "Never Say Goodbye", "The Longest Bridge I and II", "Speak The Word I and II", etc. However, we shall, for this study, attempt an analysis of "The Peace Maker" and "The Price" in order to project these positive traits.

### **CASE STUDY 3: "THE PEACE MAKER"**

The movie projects the predicament of a poor family who live in a rural community. The story is woven around Ndukwe, an ambitious, hard - working young man who is determined to break the ice on the face of his parents. The first scene portrays this family as living from hand to mouth. They depend on the meagre resources earned from doing some menial jobs in the village. Eager to break from the shackles of poverty, Ndukwe and his elder brother, Achebe, plan to go to the city. Their uncle, Anyiam, quickly volunteers to help. He takes Ndukwe and Achebe to Lagos and offers them accommodation and a token to start with. Achebe and Ndukwe start struggling for survival. They go from pushing carts, carrying loads for people and then mechanic apprenticeship. Progressively, they get a room of their own and bring their two younger siblings,

Peace and Ifeoma, to Lagos.

Ndukwe, because of his deep sense of responsibility, makes sure that his parents benefit from his earnings. As luck would have it, Abel, Ndukwe's friend who sails abroad, takes him to Holland. While in Holland, Ndukwe works hard and sends money to his elder brother, Achebe, to build a house, start a trade for Peace and Ifeoma, take care of their parents and start up a good business for himself. He also makes sure he sends money to be saved in the bank for future use. Unfortunately, Achebe decides to be frivolous; he manages to open a trade for Peace and Ifeoma and squanders the rest of the money on a woman whom he eventually marries.

Having gained enough abroad, Ndukwe comes back to Nigeria to establish himself. He is utterly disappointed at his brother's irresponsibility. Ndukwe and Anyiam try making peace between the two brothers, but Achebe refuses to listen and, to worsen things, throws Ndukwe out of the house. Ndukwe, left with no other option, retires to the village. Out of shock their father becomes sick and dies of stroke. Anyiam's kindness is immeasurable; he gives Ndukwe a cheque of N500, 000.00 to start up a business. Finally, Achebe comes to his senses and the family reconciles and lives peacefully thereafter.

#### **CASE STUDY 4: "THE PRICE"**

The Price is a 'Liberty Film' Production produced by Helen Ukpabio and directed by Teco Benson. The movie is about a couple, Pastor Ken and his wife, Peace. This couple faces unnumbered trials and circumstances but believes in the power of prayers as the key that unlocks every closed door. In one of his counselling meetings, a young lady, Rita, comes to seduce him but he resists her. Angrily she frames him up. Pastor Ken, unable to prove his innocence, is suspended by the members of the board of trustees of the church, on the condition to be called back if he shows humility and repentance. Peace, Pastor Ken's wife, believes his innocence; she shows him love and cares for him. However, at a point, she can hardly stand the pressure of people's comments and almost gives up. Nevertheless, she is encouraged by her husband and prayerfully, the couple hopes on God to avenge their cause. At the end of six months facts emerged and Pastor Ken is cleared of the allegations and he is called back to resume his office as pastor of the church.

Barely surviving this return, another girl, Flora, gets pregnant for somebody else, runs away from home and after giving birth to a baby boy, dumps him at Pastor Ken's gate with a letter indicating that the baby is the result of their union. Pastor Ken is excommunicated and forcefully ejected from his house. Peace, Pastor Ken's wife, is confused and in tears she leaves her husband. Pastor Ken is not shaken in his faithfulness to God, believing that God will see him through. Luckily, Pastor Ken meets a sister who volunteers to accommodate him. Finally, Rita and Flora confess their false allegation on Pastor

Ken and he is called back to his ministry.

## **COMPARATIVE STUDY OF "DONS IN ABUJA", "HOT GIRLS", "THE PEACE MAKER" AND "THE PRICE"**

Having completed a plot summary of the four select movies, it will be worthwhile to attempt a comparative analysis of these movies to establish the various ways they have respectively represented the image of Nigeria positively or negatively. The comparative study will also show the effect of such representation on the general public. The analysis will be broken into the following segments; Thematic Concept, Quality of Form and Expression, Morals and, finally, Effect.

**Thematic Concept:** The thematic preoccupation of every movie, to a certain extent, stems from the title. This is to say that the title given to a movie has a great bearing on the message the movie intends passing across to the audience. "Dons in Abuja", as the title goes, depicts wealth, riches, possession, power, authority, affluence and oppression in a modern city. The movie revolves around wealthy men and their oppressive, inhuman and wicked activities in acquiring and accumulating wealth for themselves. Occasions, situations and messages are all executed through ritual fantasies confirming the assertion that almost every Igbo movie contains a representation of some ritual either as the main theme or sub-theme. In "Dons in Abuja", Onwa, Okaomee, Nwoko, David and his friend are all ritualists. Onwa betrays the trust invested in him by his people by turning the boys he picks from his village into human cargo. Nwoko buys children from



Onwa and uses them for ritual sacrifice. David and his friend sacrificed their mothers to become wealthy. Likewise in "Hot Girls", the prostitutes sacrifice and sell their bodies for money. On the other hand, "The Peace Maker" and "The Price" revolve around peaceful living and bearing one another's burden. Pastor Ken in "The Price" and Ndukwe in "The Peace Maker" were greatly hurt, but they chose to follow peace against violence as in "Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls"

**Quality of Form and Expression:** A good movie makes use of cause and effect and there should be motivation for every action. Most of the actions in "Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls" are disjointed and the audience is detached from the movie. Such actions could hardly attract purgation of pity from a viewer. "Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls" are full of illogicalities. The plot is illogical; dialogue is minimal while the characters are shallow and unconvincing. For example, in "Dons in Abuja", Onwa is arrested at the end but no punishment is pronounced on him. Okaomee, Nwoke, David who are all involved in one crime or the other disappear unpunished. Similarly, in "Hot Girls", Demean, though arrested, is not punished. These movies violate the convention of story telling which says that evil should be punished to serve as a deterrent to others and good be rewarded to encourage people to do good. Furthermore, the show of massive wealth and modernity in these two movies could be regarded as representation of elite and highly westernized lifestyle which are being criticized as being excessively 'onyinbo' (white or foreign) (Haynes 1977 :36). The reverse

is the case in "The Peace Maker" and "The Price". The plot is logical and one action flows into the other. All the characters that are seen from the beginning of the movie last till the end; none is dropped on the way except for death. For example, in "The Peace Maker", though Ndukwe's father dies, the resolution has it that the family unites and lives happily thereafter. In "The Price", Pastor Ken's challenges gradually and naturally unfold and he goes back to his church and unites with his family. "The Peace Maker" and "The Price" attract sympathy and empathy from the audience who is rarely alienated from the movie but sees himself or herself on screen absorbed completely because of the convincingness of the actions in the movies.

**Morals:** Unlike "Dons in Abuja" where "success" is achieved through ritual of human sacrifice, Ndukwe achieves success through hard work, determination and perseverance. Ndukwe in "The Peace Maker", just like David in "Dons in Abuja", comes from a poor family background. The two are also ambitious, but, unlike David who sacrificed his mother, Ndukwe chooses hard work. He pushes carts, carries loads for people and he goes into mechanic apprenticeship where he perseveres until he is able to travel to Holland. Even while in Holland, he does not venture into anything dubious but works round the clock to break away from the shackles of poverty. Hard work and perseverance is also seen in the conduct of Peace and Ifeoma, the two younger sisters of Ndukwe. In the daytime, they are in the shop sewing; at night they are at home carrying out house - hold chores before they retire to bed. Peace and Ifeoma's hard work and

accountability help them to save some money which they use to start up a new shop in the village and to sustain their parents when Achebe sends them out his house. Pastor Ken in "The Price" exhibits optimum perseverance and endurance throughout his trials and it pays him at last when his innocence in the two allegations levelled against him is proved. During his trials, he does not lose hope but proves himself a man of God. Pastor Ken is faithful to both God and man and hopes that God would see him through. Pastor Ken's wife, Peace, also exercises a reasonable level of patience, enduring the shameful effects of her husband's alleged sins before she later gives up and leaves his house.

"The Peace Maker" and "The Price" intend to teach that bearing one another's burden and patience develop a society. In a traditional African society, it is customary to show hospitality to strangers, visitors and the needy. If a member or some members of the community are suffering, it affects every one, including the rich. Mutual love, concern and care are held with high esteem in a traditional African society. Thus, African culture enhances the ideals of socialism. As Nyerere cited by Kayode in Okwori (2002: 154), puts it:

Nobody starved, whether of food or human dignity, because he lacked personal wealth. He could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he is a member.

In "The Peace Maker", this good gesture is seen in Ndukwe's uncle, Anyiam, on two occasions. First, through him, Ndukwe and Achebe are able to go to Lagos.

He gives them accommodation and some money to start with. Most strikingly when Achebe denies Ndukwe access to his assets, after making futile efforts to make peace between the two brothers, he gives Ndukwe a cheque of N500,000.00 to start up again. Anyiam proved himself a good African by showing love and concern in the predicament of these two young men, Achebe and Ndukwe. Here the notion of class struggle which predominates in the western world is alien to Africa. Again Nyerere cited by Kayode in Okwori (2002:155) believes that 'class' is non-existent in the language of Africa. He elucidates his view:

A country in which all her citizens are equal,  
where there is no division into rulers and ruled,  
rich and poor, educated or illiterate, those in  
distress and those in idle comfort... in this country,  
all will be equal, all would have an equal right to  
respect, to the opportunity of acquiring and the  
necessities of life.

Pastor Ken, in "The Price", is kind and cares for his church members, especially the members of the board of trustees of his church who find it difficult to believe that he is innocent of the allegations against him. He does not hate them but prayed earnestly that God forgives them, especially Sister Rebecca who calls him "Randy Pastor" and vehemently insists that strong action be taken against him. Peace, his wife, does not hate or despise him because of the allegations, but supports him, encourages him and prays for him, which makes her an ideal wife.

Furthermore, unlike a number of Nigerian home movies where young girls who face hardship resort to prostitution and other vices for survival, "The Peace

Maker" presents Nigeria as a society where young girls of good moral behaviour are found. Peace and Ifeoma face enough hardship but they believe in hard work and chastity. The two young women have all that it takes to go into hawking their bodies for money, as is portrayed in "Hot Girls," but, instead, they opt to sew clothes and sell tailoring materials, to earn a living. This chastity is mostly portrayed at the time Achebe sends them out of his house. They leave the city for the village; using the money they saved to open a new shop. Pastor Ken in "The Price" is an epitome of chastity. He has every opportunity to be randy, as Sister Rebecca says, but he comports himself with decorum before man and God. For instance, when Rita schemes to seduce Pastor Ken, he vehemently resists her and throughout the movie, there is no record of Pastor Ken's involvement in an illicit or extramarital romance or affair.

Above all, dialogue stands in place of violence. "The Peace Maker" promotes unity and peace, unlike "Dons in Abuja", where issues are addressed through violence. "The Peace Maker" and the "The Price" use dialogue to settle scores while "Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls" use violence. In "Dons in Abuja" when Nwoko double-crosses Okaomee, Okaomee revenges by kidnapping Nwoko's only daughter. In "Hot Girls", Lizy kills Flozy for sleeping with her boyfriend and when she is confronted, she shoots Kelvin as well. But in "The Peace Maker", Achebe does more than double crossing; he takes away everything Ndukwe worked for. Achebe is so heartless that he sends Ndukwe out of his house and denies him of every property and asset. Instead of Ndukwe

killing or paying Achebe back in his own coin, in one of his meetings with Achebe, he says,

I have thought of what to do to you, but I will not allow my hands to be soiled with blood. It is evil. I will not do that, not at all.

He reports the matter to Anyiam to make peace between him and Achebe through dialogue. Though Achebe proves stubborn in the beginning, later on, he repents, asks for forgiveness and he is forgiven by all. At the end, the family comes together as one. In "The Price", Pastor Ken accepts to appear before the board of trustees of the church, to dialogue over a case he knows nothing about. Ordinarily, one would think that Pastor Ken would react or approach the issue in a fierce or violent way because he is innocent and to prove his innocence, considering the effect of such a mess on his personality, but he settles for a more mature and gentle approach. At the end he is found innocent: thus the saying, 'the end justifies the means'.

**Effects:** The whole idea of movie as it affects the society can be summarized by the assertion made by Walter Benjamin (848-870:34) that the traditional role of art has changed; rather than absorbing their beholders, they are absorbed by their beholders. Ritual killing for money making has been so greatly glamorized in Nigerian movies that it appears as if it is the only thing Nigerians do. Nigerian home movies have succeeded in making their numerous viewers to see Nigeria as a country of ritual killers as a result of what they view on screen:

consequently, the near banning of Nigerian movies from being distributed and marketed in Ghana. Prince Ifeanyi Dike (Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> 2007) submits:

I admit that we have too much of ritual sacrifice in our movies. A few years back, we were in trouble with some of our clients in Ghana. The Ghanaian government almost banned our films because they say that it was corrupting their people. It was making them bolder, teaching them how to get involved in ritual killing and things like that.

Nigerians are not only seen as ritualist but they are kept at arms length by people from other countries. Yerima (Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007) reports:

Nigerians are now known for ritual killing and gun shooting. When we took a play to Benin Republic (just across the road) I was telling the artistic director of their country to pay me a visit in Nigeria and he said "Oh no, no, no you kill, kill people, on the roads, dead bodies", But after I harassed him and he came. When I asked him how many dead bodies he saw, he said "sorry, sorry". The point is that he got this impression from home movie and that's a minus

Similarly, another encounter Yerima had with the Minister of Culture, Zimbabwe, proves that Nigerian movies are betraying Nigeria. The Zimbabwean Minister of Culture also had a very bad and negative impression about Nigeria as a result of what Nigerian movies portray. Yerima states:

There was also a day I took a flight from Nigeria with the Minister of Culture, Zimbabwe and she told me she was not expecting what she saw. I asked if she was expecting that a chicken will be killed before she enters the plane or before the plane takes off and she said "something like that because every time in your movies, you kill

chicken, you kill, you kill chicken, you kill, you kill...

The effect that this repeated show will have on the young impressionable minds should not be overlooked. If they continuously see the society in which they live being portrayed as such negative stereotype too many times, there is the tendency that the young ones will begin to assume and believe that the portrayed behaviour is appropriate and so they attempt to fit into the wrong pattern. Furthermore the society will live in total fear, not knowing who to trust. The unequal punishment given to the offenders may be to teach that evil is punished with evil but it apparently goes beyond that in the audience perception. The vulnerable nature of man may push the susceptible members of the audience to believe in making the money, becoming rich and if necessary in dying afterwards, leaving the wealth for their children. Pornographic images in an attempt to mimic foreign movies, also, are an assault on the serious minded adults and a corruption of the young ones, especially adolescents, thereby bringing about moral and behavioural decadence in the society.

“The Peace Maker” and “The Price” reveal that there is a conducive, friendly environment, and that there are responsible people in Nigeria. The values embodied by “The Peace Maker” and “The Price” are good cultural and behavioural values in the Nigerian society. These two movies have, in no small measure, countered the culture of some producers who present Nigeria as a hostile and unfriendly society. Concerned about the good moral values exhibited by Nigerians, which are worthy, of presentation in Nigerian home movies, Rotimi



Vonn, Chairman, NFVCB (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2007), states:

I can not comprehend why most producers have chosen to represent Nigeria the way they do. Nigerians are loving people, they are kind, they are benevolent. Nigerians are very helpful, you can come to me for assistance and I will whole - heartedly help you. I've seen a beggar in Nigeria who was able to obtain a first degree. So who says Nigerians are bad? Nigerians can also pray, they believe in God so much and he changes their situations. Nigerians are peaceful and tolerant: if not, we would not have been together as a nation up till today. These are good values that can uplift a nation. I advise our film and movie makers to venture in this direction and the results will be pleasing at all levels.

Finally, the negative representation of the Nigerian society in the Nigerian home movies is still on the high side. It is true that we have violence, armed robbers and assassinations, but the Nigerian movies should not encourage these negative aspects by reflecting them too much on screen. However, the present condition is not irreversible; it can be corrected by using the available resources to concentrate on movies that aim at inspiring the people of Nigeria to positive actions which will bring progress and development.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Summary and Findings**

This study has attempted to look into how cultures are promoted through an indigenous art form, the Nigerian home movies as the current vibrant wave of cultural promotion. Attention has also been paid to the positive and negative representations of the Nigerian society in the movies. The study discusses four select home movies, two for negative representation and two for positive representation. The movies that stand for the negative representation are "Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls," while those for positive representation are "The Peace Maker" and "The Price". Through these movies, we found out that the dominant cultures are alien. Immorality and violence are glamorized with the good cultural heritage of the Nigerian society relegated to the background and almost unnoticed.

The study deployed various research instruments for data collection. These instruments include library research and internet sources. Interviews are used as well as documented observation of some movies including the case studies.

The theoretical framework used as a tool of analysis is got from Raymond Williams', Antonio Gramsci's and Robert Kavanagh's cultural hegemony. Raymond Williams and Antonio Gramsci propound this theory as a tool to underscore the cultural imperialism of the West. Hegemony, not being forceful

like colonialism but a subtle manipulation by the West of the Third World countries, the latter consenting to their dictates in accepting and reproducing the culture of the West in their cultural industries. This, in turn, contributes to the near total destruction of the traditional indigenous cultures of the countries of the Third World. Robert Kavanagh extended the application of hegemony to the struggle by the Third World Countries to dominate in cultural production; this he calls alternative hegemony. Therefore, the work adopted hegemony as dominance and control of violent movies in the industry and alternative hegemony as a struggle to counter these violent movies with ones that are worthwhile as seen in the four movies that are analyzed.

This study reveals that film/movie is a very potent tool in the promotion and propagation of cultures. The West, through its films and other media products, has been able to export its cultures across the globe pushing quite a great percentage of indigenous cultures to the background. The result of this is ultimately the continued underdevelopment of the Third World countries.

This study finds out that the motion picture is one of the fastest and most viable ways of exporting cultures for economic gains. Film, therefore, plays a very significant role in nation building and national development, as a cultural process. To support this, Yaro Gella (1992:10) asserts that

Self-reliance, self-sufficiency and national development objectives hinge on the recognition of culture as the springboard of policies. The UNESCO's cultural re-orientation is to draw attention to the necessity to search for solutions to various national issues by looking inwards to the indigenous cultural traditions of the various

peoples of the world.

Clark records that theatre arts generally is a potential wealth generator for the people and the nation at large. From the time Hubert Ogunde withdrew theatre from the open courtyard of the traditional rulers and took it indoors, theatre has continued to perform this role, till date (Clark 1980:4) These art forms have witnessed several trends and today the home movie is the current phenomenon which has continued to create employment for the trained and semi-trained theatre artists, other professionals and non-professionals.

The Nigerian home movie Industry has, however, failed in one way or the other to meet and achieve this intended result of cultural promotion because of its employment of some traits that are negative. Principal among these counter-productive traits that lead to this failure are the engagement of people who do not possess the required professional and ethical training on how to make a productive movie for cultural promotion. This unprofessionalism makes this cultural industry a business venture where the practitioners are seen as business men who invest their money in movie productions. These groups of people cook up and produce hasty, unresearched stories that have nothing to do with image laundering. Rotimi Vonn (14<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2007) sees these people as having no understanding of the essence of film/movie making. He says that he does not understand an industry that allows so much unprofessionalism. People who do not have the slightest idea about film making are controlling the industry. Consequently, money making becomes the primary aim of these productions

while cultural promotion becomes secondary, an afterthought and oftentimes forgotten.

The Nigerian home movie industry is made up of majority of non-theatre artists. As a result of this, the quality of the performance and the content are not laudable, thereby reducing the supposed standard of the movies. The lack of professionals who can create stories based on indigenous thematic concepts leaves the industry in the hands of mediocrities, who, in turn, make bad movies. The Nigerian home movie industry then absorbs and accommodates these western values which negatively affect the national cultural identity and socio-economic development of Nigeria. (Epskamp 1989:365). Professional video production is therefore an area that is still largely unexploited. (Haynes 1997:100).

The study also reveals that the Nigerian home movie industry lacks adequate sponsorship from the government and other agencies. As a result of this, private individuals or business men who are profit-oriented sponsor movies production. Here both the producers and the executive producers are mindless of the effect of the content of the movies on the society; they employ every kind of indecency and obscenity, which, they claim, enhance sales.

Activities in the Nigerian home movies are not harmonized. There are three major groups in this industry; the English movie makers dominated by the Igbo-speaking people of Nigeria, the Yoruba movie makers largely for the Yoruba speakers, and Hausa movie makers having the practitioners and a good portion

of the viewers as Hausa – speaking people of Nigeria. These groups are almost independent of each other. According to Ejike (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> 2007), the English movie makers feel the Yoruba movie makers are not educated and so have nothing substantial to offer them, while the Yoruba movie makers think they can make a headway producing in their indigenous language. The Hausas, on their own, are strongly attached to their religion - influenced culture and so are different from the other groups. These disparate ideologies warrant the different concepts inherent in the industry and hence no common goal seems to emerge.

There is also the issue of poor distribution network for Nigerian movies. What we have is movie trading during which every other Monday, movies are released at Idumota and Alaba and people go there to buy and sell. There, retailers begin to sell and the video club operators do their own business as well. This poor distribution network creates room for piracy in the industry and this, according to Amaka Igwe [2007: 10 -11], is the biggest problem in the Nigerian home movie industry.

### **Suggestions and Recommendation**

With the technological advancement and innovations what the Nigerian home movie industry should do is not to advocate that people return to the village squares at moonlight where through story telling as a form of entertainment, cultures are passed to the children who pass them on to others. The Nigerian Home Movie Industry, being a cultural industry, should, as a matter



of fact, be a cultural ambassador for Nigeria world-wide. The industry should document and preserve aspects of the indigenous cultures in movies for consumption instead of dancing to the tune of the western cultural hegemony by accepting and reproducing the cultures of the west as ideal or general culture. The struggle against this cultural hegemony demands that there be no deviation from local inspiration and firmly rooted local thought. (Esteva and Prakash in Majid, with Victoria, 1997:282).

Nigeria needs quality films which will be the cultural flagship of the nation. Financial capital should no more be the first/main objective but cultural capital should be the goal (Greame Turner 1986:143). This implies that for development to be meaningful as well as relevant to the people, for whom it is intended, there is the need for it to be located precisely within the cultural purview of the people, deriving, as it were, from their conception of the ideal worldview, taking into consideration their cultural perceptions. This field of culture offers a remarkable terrain of communication which can be exploited to project a positive image of the Nigerian society as a people to other parts of the world to contribute to the attainment of her foreign policy objectives. (Umar - Buratai in Ewrierhoma 1999:73).

This fight entails initiatives by the people, independent of external institutions, with a view of changing the existing situation. The fact being that while the people need to have contacts with external institutions, for some interactions, they also need to retain control over the product of these

interactions. At present the situation in the Nigerian home movies is predominantly bad, as thousands of films are churned out without proper consideration of the Nigerian cultural heritage. The solution to this problem may not be a total ban of the existing movies; rather, new movies should be produced as the cultural flagship of Nigeria. A more diligent approach could be a saving grace. To this effect Adelugba, in Idegu (2005:12), suggests a way forward; he says:

I have always taken the position that within the capitalist economy that we operate, it is going to be difficult to do what others have suggested we do which is, throw all these unsatisfactory products away, because the whole business of film making is an expensive enterprise. My own suggestion is that we should try and make more and more movies that will make the point, through their excellence, that those movies we are condemning are worth condemning. But if we just condemn and we have no alternative home movies of good quality dealing with themes that are worth-while, challenging the watcher of the home movie to think about life more deeply, if we don't make such home movies and we merely criticize, then I think we are on the wrong path.

This comment boils down to quality of form and content and positive representation of the Nigerian society. To make movies that are worthwhile and capable of laundering and promoting the Nigerian culture remains the duty of professionals. Professionalism here becomes an indispensable factor in the whole issue of movie making. These professionals will bring about a Cultural Revolution, the type Nigeria needs, a revolution construed to mean the

transformation of art in a way that it can induce action for social regeneration.

Theatrical practices (like film) should be turned from a monologue fostering passivity or pseudo-therapy into dialogue in which the audience is actively engaged in the production of meaning. This converts the audience from passive recipients of received truths to active protagonists in creating theatrical experience (which reflects their own sense of their situation), criticizing it and using this analysis in working out strategies and engaging in the struggle. (Kidd and Byram 1981:12) This experience is exemplified by Hubert Ogunde and others who demonstrated the potentials of theatre as an agent of change and development by celebrating the rich cultural heritage of Nigeria around the world.

With the productions of movies with relevant thematic concepts, the Nigerian people may discover the beauty of life as opposed to what they are used to. These could be in form of the lessons of history, the problems of the society, and their rich cultural heritage. In doing this, they gain better insight and perception of man and the world around him and may eventually become better members of the society as a result of the experience gained through the movies. (Nwamuo 1987:86 –87).

Strict professionalism should therefore be introduced in the industry for the full exploitation of professional movie production, to bring about this change. "You cannot practise law unless you are a law graduate who has gone to law school; you cannot be an accountant unless you are chartered. In the same vein,

you are not supposed to be a movie maker if you are not trained in the field (Rotimi Vonn, Feb 14<sup>th</sup>. 2007). The practitioners should be seasoned and well learned on the subject they are practising. When this is guaranteed, the numerous excesses, obscene and un-researched stories will be replaced with worthwhile movies anchored in the promotion of the cultural heritage of the Nigerian society. The energy and resources that are employed in making movies that are bad will be channelled to making positive ones. This is a task the industry must take up and uphold to bring about the desired change.

The gap between the intellectuals and the practitioners should also be bridged. These two bodies should come together and function as one body with one purpose. The intellectuals in the various universities should design and organize enlightenment programmes in form of seminars on making good stories which will help in making the art of movie making clearer to the practitioners. The universities where Theatre and Performing Arts is studied should be provided with equipment, e.g. cameras and other studio equipments for practice. This is to give room for training in the area of coverage for those who would want to become camera men and women in their career. In addition to universities that study Theatre and Performing Arts, there is the need to establish and build film schools where movie making will be studied as well.

Amaka Igwe (2007:13) believes in the potentials inherent in the young university graduates/undergraduates who trained or are being trained. She believes that the breakthrough expected in the Nigerian home movie industry lies

in the hands of these youths when she opines that;

It is not this group (current practitioners) that will bring glory to Nollywood, it is the younger people. That is why we are working so hard with the university students... they are the ones who are going to join hands together with the older generation to shock the film world with challenging movies and make the work successful.

This challenge cannot just happen within a twinkle of an eye; it has to be a chain of effort. The Ministry of Education should introduce as part of primary school and secondary schools curricula the study of Drama, underscoring its importance in national development. Drama should be taught to children because of their nature and their ability to internationalize ideas. When they are taught drama, they learn, see and grow with it, accepting it as their way of life. This, then, makes it easier for them when they graduate to the higher institution, because something has already been planted in their young, impressionable minds and their creative horizon opened by the basic knowledge got at the primary and secondary school levels.

Making movies that will promote the image and culture of Nigeria is virtually a task that the government has to take with the utmost seriousness. The government should be ready to sponsor movies so that the basic aim of the movie will be promoting the Nigerian culture and spreading it all around, instead of leaving it in the hands of business men who are more interested in making money than in creating art. According to Zeb Ejiro (Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007), in countries

like Canada and France, the government contributes 60% of their budget for films that promote their culture. In America also their government is heavily involved in sponsoring movies. That is why America is being presented the way they are seen and interpreted in movies. The government and other agencies should promote and sponsor the production of movies that are inspiring, encouraging, thought - provoking, motivational and which will spur Nigerians into positive action. Movies on good family relationship, hard work, tolerance, unity and peace should be promoted. Movies should be made on people who have really done something great in Nigeria and to Nigeria; personalities like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Tafawa Balewa, Ahmadu Bello, Obafemi Awolowo, etc. This will serve as a kind of motivation that will spur the younger minds to innovate, create and set strategies and means of solving problems facing the Nigerian society, thereby fostering development instead of engaging in malicious criminal and violent behaviors.

The Nigerian Film Corporation, NTA, government agencies, could commission that stories be built around the indigenous festivals, languages, clothing, make-up, food, etc of the Nigerian society. By so doing, people will be entertained and at the same time these activities common with Nigeria will be disseminated world-wide. Funds should be made available without the least reservations. Corporate organizations and culturally disposed philanthropic individuals should be encouraged to sponsor the promotion of cultural activities. The government, through the censor's board, should come up with some policy

that will work around monitoring scripts. In this regard, it will be expedient that script conferences be called to create stories with relevant thematic concepts instead of leaving it in the hands of a few individuals who are being driven to write by some selfish hidden interests.

The National Film and Video Censors Board is yet another body that is entrusted with a lot of duties as far as monitoring the activities of the Nigerian home movies industry is concerned. They have been invested with power to control the industry. Therefore, the Board should be more diligent in executing their duties. These duties should be executed without bias or sentiment. Mr. A should not be favoured against Mr. B. The Board should look at the aspects of the Nigerian cultural heritage that have been violated and abused, and control them in such a way that Nigeria will be perceived as a society of decent people. (Ahmed Yerima, Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007). They should enshrine it in their law that every movie must promote at least one aspect of the cultural heritage of the Nigerian society. This may, however, call for a revision of their existing rules and regulations.

There should be unification in the industry rather than the divergent groups and their ideas. (English, Yoruba, Hausa). These groups should come together to promote a common interest. There must be a total reorientation in the industry against the constant show and portrayal of moral decadence, and where such behaviours are shown probably to expose the evil or ills in the society. There should be a proper storyline so that, at the end, whoever watches

benefits to some degree or gets a message.

Nigerians need to use the movies as a political tool, a formidable tool because it is one of the fastest and most long-lasting mediums of message dissemination. Every movie should be a developmental tool, for good grooming, role modelling, empowerment rather than just entertainment. The content of the movies should be the prevailing community standards and the unique indigenous knowledge that could be tapped to promote development, as in "The Peace Maker" and "The Price", not, as hitherto, the continuous negative representation of Nigeria as seen in "Dons in Abuja" and "Hot Girls". The industry should do away with issues of dehumanization and exploitation reducing the production of movies which degrade human dimension; the overt portrayal and promotion of sexuality and seductions (Kayode 2006:216) but dwell more on movies that promote good conduct and human sanctity. This does not mean that there are no immoralities, violence and crime; they can be alluded to without necessarily glamourizing them and sacrificing the social norms. These vices can be expressed verbally, leaving the audience to assume something instead of being too graphic. E.g. "he was robbed", "he made love to her", "she was ritually murdered", "she was burnt alive", etc. By so doing, a lot will be left to the imagination, signifying that the audience are active participants in the whole activity and not just passive observers.

Finally, for the Nigerian home video industry to satisfy the main thrust of its essence, the government, the practitioners and agencies must, as a matter of



urgency, revisit the drawing board, consider the ethical, technical, artistic and professional demands or the implications of the industry over and above the economic gains that jeopardize outrightly the same interests they profess to protect (Idegu in Okwori 2002:24). Anything short of this change of direction amounts to a total negation of cultural promotion in the Nigerian home movie as a dynamic and potent communicative medium for cultural promotion and development.

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