

Article

Assessing the Misrepresentation of Igbo Cultural Values in Nollywood Films

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Abstract

Portrayal of traditional values of any culture requires a high degree of accuracy. Quite some Nollywood films have continuously provided a misrepresentation of the indigenous culture and traditional values of Igbo people. Over the years, this misinformation has continued to serve as a guideline in the perception of their custom which stems from a place of colonial inferiority and bogus capitalist tendencies. Findings show that many Nollywood films are hastily churned out and distributed with little or no research. This paper aims to evaluate the extent to which the industry has gone to undermine the Igbo culture, in terms of religion, customs, social practices, intrinsic values, and cultural heritage. The study examines the correlation between the Nollywood space and the Igbo society, and more so, how detrimental many of the themes and messages they pass across continue to portray a biased and inept view of the Igbo culture. The paper interrogates the industry with the intent of shedding light on the misconceptions with a view to counter the narratives erroneously being peddled by the industry and to rectify the aberration evident in many of the Nollywood films. The study concludes that unprofessionalism, the quest for quick money, and the lack of creative strength to carry out adequate research about the history and traditions of a people before embarking on movie-making often lead to erroneous representations and sheer stereotyping of the people's way of life. The paper adopts Cultivation theory and qualitative methods of inquiry using secondary source materials in analyzing the issues involved.

Keywords: Nollywood, misrepresentation, film industry, culture, Igbo, distortion

Introduction

"Nigeria is a multicultural nation and every community in Nigeria has its own peculiar culture that keeps to the value of the people and every culture carries with it, popularly accepted values that are morally acclaimed" (Effiong, 2017: 360). The movie industry provides a means of entertainment for the people of any society. The intention borders not only on entertainment but also indoctrination and enlightenment for the members of the society. Aniago, et.al (2020:1) explain it thus, "that watching film agitates the imaginations, ideologies, and inclinations of the consumers". An important feature of the film industry is that "it should promote the well-being of humanity" (Onuzulike, 2008:26) and that it should represent the cultural practices of the people. The rise of the Nollywood industry in the 1990s has led to heavy misrepresentation of the indigenous culture and values of the people especially that of the Igbo culture. It has been shrouded with that which is not obtainable in the Igbo society and the result is a scenario whereby many of the audience who watch the Nollywood movies have a misconception of the customs of the Igbo people.

The foregoing not only affects the people who are not from Igbo ethnicity but also the Igbo people themselves by providing a debased image of the Igbo society. Over the years, the misconception has not been corrected and remains largely presented by the industry. Though it could be said that the entertainment industry is that



which serves to entertain, however, one must not replace the facts from the assumptions which they use for the movie production for the gain in which they intend to maximize, rather than depicting the reality on the silver screen. As aptly put by Oguejiofor, "literal works, whether fictional or factual are great tools in re-orienting and educating people" (Independent Newspaper, 2018).

An important instance of the misrepresentation by the Nollywood industry is the antecedents to the historical occurrences that ensued in Igbo land which have become heavily disjointed and conflicted to serve as the truth. In many of the movies, the Igbo custom and traditional religion are portrayed as evil that needs some miraculous intervention by the higher foreign being when the two encounter each other in the movies; thereby, sending wrong on-screen depiction of events not just to Igbo people but to those in the diaspora, or even foreigners who are interested in glimpsing the culture of the people. The cultural values of any society are the core representation of which they hold importance. For the Igbo, their cultural values are shown in their religious belief in a supreme being, good behaviour that is reflected in hard work, the language of the people, and the political system. The Igbo society is a highly religious community that believes in a higher being, their morality, communal cohesion, and socialization are inculcated from childhood where they are taught the importance of hard work through fables and folklore. Most African societies do not accord respect to any man who acquires his wealth from any other means apart from hard work (Igbo, 2011). The political and socio-cultural system of the Igbo people is one with no centralized authority, which has different groups with responsibilities required of them.

The misrepresentation of Igbo movies by the Nollywood industry can be seen in different forms. They include the language that is used in the portrayal of Igbo epic movies which is the English language. Also, the depiction of the Igbo society as being centralized under a monarchical system and the stereotype associated with the Igbo as being money-greedy and power-hungry individuals, who would do anything for wealth including rituals and sacrifice among others. Nollywood is not a poor industry by any means, buttressing this fact, Tochinsky (as cited in Aromona, 2016:21) has this to say, "The industry is valued at 5 billion dollars as of 2014, and it is the largest and most valued industry after Hollywood and Bollywood". Toeing the same line, Omanufeme (2016) states that a movie production in Nigeria takes about \$25,000 - \$70,000 and is profitable within two to three weeks of release. In the Nigerian currency, that goes for ₦9,525,000 and ₦26,670,000 as of 30th April 2021. From the views of Tochinsky and Omanufeme above, it is not the lack of funds that induces the misrepresentation in the industry. Eze-Orji (2016:110) attributes this to "the wanton extravagance of illiteracy and ignorance among many Igbo filmmakers. Their works reveal a proud display of inadequate research and unnecessary generalization and assumptions, especially those of them that embark on epic film production."

From the foregoing, it can be inferred that the Nollywood industry embarks on productions for profit maximization. The filmmakers conceive ideas, no matter how fabricated and outwardly they might be, all in a bid to make a profit in the industry, thereby giving a distorted outlook not only to the Igbo culture and customs but to Africa in general.

In light of the above, this paper, therefore, interrogates the industry, specifically the Nollywood epic movies, by analyzing selected movies that are centered on Igbo culture and pointing out the errors inherent in these movies with a view to re-educate the audience. Epic movies in this context are movies whose settings are in the pre-colonial Igbo society. In an effort to document the Igbo historical past, its culture, and practices, the representation onscreen is, at best, assumed perception of what would have existed in the past. Again, research is not embarked upon by the filmmakers to properly educate the masses through entertainment, rather these epic movies are either regurgitated from earlier productions and the recycling from earlier movies.

An Overview of the Nollywood Industry and Theoretical Considerations

Onuzulike (2008) states that the history of the Nigerian film industry can be traced to the pre-independence era. The first film was screened at Glover Memorial Hall Lagos in August 1903. These movies were documentaries with political inclinations by the colonialists. He asserts that Nollywood production of movies skyrocketed from late 1992 after the production of Ken Nnebue's movie *Living in Bondage* which sold over 750,000 copies, thus leading to mass production of inferior movies. Onuzulike associates the brand name of Nollywood with being an imitation of America's *Hollywood* and India's *Bollywood*. His argument on the poor quality of movies is also stressed by Madichie(2010) who defines the Nollywood industry as having poor acting and directing, as well as poor sound quality. He adds that lack of creativity has led to the loss of interest by the target audience. Asogwa, Onoja, and Unekwu (2015) are of the view that the influx of Western ideas and cultures makes the movies appear unoriginal starting from the brand name of Nollywood which holds no significant meaning. They also exemplified some Nollywood movies that are a rip-off of Hollywood. In their words, "*Save the Last Dance* and *Cinderella* whose titles and content were retained by Nollywood in their versions; whereas, the American's *Two Can Play the Game* was translated and converted by Nollywood into *Break Up*" (98-104).

Thus, Asogwa, Onoja, and Unekwu (2015) agree that the cultural values of the people are reflected in epic movies, but the filmmakers only focus on the negative aspects of the people's customs. They believe that by continuously portraying Epic movies in that light, the global audience tends to view the culture of the people in that light. Similarly, Ojukwu and Ezenandu (2012) support the statement by Asogwa et.al (2015) on the aspects of culture represented on screen. They agree that many of the movies produced by Nollywood emphasize negative worldviews inherent in Nigerian culture. He adds that the industry instead of engaging in the imagery of these customs, blows it out of proportion and hardly explores or unveils the uniqueness of the Igbo society in terms of hard work, business enterprise, and resilience among other attributes of the Igbo people. This abysmal observation led Giwa (2014) to contend that, the contents of Nollywood have intensified and attributes characterization in Nollywood movies to the Western influence on the person which is not typical to the Africans. However, the author believes that the reason for the Western influence is to make an impression around the world and that this has brought exposure of Nollywood to the global world (2014). The author

agrees that the Nollywood movies are rich in their message and one can draw knowledge from the valuable stories.

In retrospect, the assertion of the valuable message is not reflected in Igbo themes because of the disparity that lies in these movies and the cultural values they misrepresent. The author fails to point out the valuable messages that many of the movies convey to their audience, from the Igbo language which is non-existent in Igbo-themed movies to the stereotype of occultic and diabolic men which the movies erroneously portray. Nollywood sends these messages not only to their local audience but to those in the global world. These messages are assimilated by non-Nigerians as the real Nigerian culture. One of the authors recollects an embarrassing situation she encountered in 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya where people who knew she was from Nigeria, kept questioning her about witchcraft, and money rituals among other vices that depict the Igbo traditional religion as evil.

Eze-Orji (2016:118-120) also writes on the "Misrepresentation and Bastardisation of the Igbo Culture" where he posits that Nollywood movies are merely recycling of overused concepts that give a certain stereotype to the cultural identity of the Igbo people and thus derides the custom of the people. To further support his assertion, he pinpoints the people involved with the production of movies, from the scriptwriters, and producers to the marketers of these movies as being responsible for the misrepresentation of culture. In addition, he believes that the people to be blamed majorly for the bastardisation are the distributors as they give the instructions not only to the directors but the producers, scriptwriters, and actors alike. For this author, the misrepresentation of Nollywood lies in the promotion of unethical behaviours and immorality in the movies for the sake of garnering profit.

To this end, the above analysis ascribes to George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory propounded in 1960. This socio-cultural theory examines the role of audio-visual content in shaping viewer's perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and values among others (Gerber & Gross, 1976). The main proposition of the theory is that the more time people spend watching the television (movies), the more likely they are to believe that social realities align with the presupposed realities on the screen. As Shrum (2017) avers, the primary hypothesis of cultivation theory is that the more people watch audio-visual content, the more they will come to adopt its underlying messages. That is they are likely to hold beliefs that are consistent with the world as it is portrayed on audio-visual content. Thus, the portrayal of Igbo cultural values as evil, witchcraft-ridden, money rituals are in the main a negation of the resilience and hard-working majority who are excelling all over the world. Again, it has negatively impacted the psyche of Igbo urban dwellers who believe their uncles and aunts in the villages are evil men and women destroying the destinies of their relations. This consumption of negativity has destroyed the Igbo communal living in contemporary times. The researchers have outlined the ways by which Nollywood does not represent the cultural heritage of the Igbo but they did not draw a parallel to that which the Nollywood industry portrays as African culture and the intrinsic culture of the people, in this context, the Igbo culture. Therefore, now that the problems of Nollywood have been identified, and the reason for the limitations outlined, it remains to be seen what can be done to bridge the failures of the industry in the depiction of the cultural values of the society and make the

industry to be in a better shape than what is symbolised onscreen. Before that, it is necessary to gain an insight into other countries' film industry for a better understanding of the issues involved.

An Overview of Relevant Film Industries

Other movie industries in the world such as Hollywood for America, Bollywood for India, and Hallyuwood for South Korea, have amassed a great viewership not only within their country but in the global space. It is important to examine the various industries to have an insight into the factors that enabled them to become well-recognised in the wider world while retaining their authenticity. For Hallyuwood, the industry had come a long way since the split between North Korea and South Korea. Yecies and Shim (2011) noted that North Korea censored movies heavily before release as far back as 1979. It was not until 1996 under first Korea's civilian president, Kim Young Sam that movie censorship was declared illegal. Thus, the aftermath saw the emergence of major filmmakers in the industry. The success of the movie Industry of the Koreans is attributed to Governmental policies favouring the movie industry, the audience preference for local movies authentic to their culture, and the offering of a range of dynamic genres that dazzles the audience by the filmmakers. The industry does that by blending genres and collaborating with international production companies to share the Korean story. Supported by Kim (2011) who attributes the influence of the government in aiding the industry to the success of Hallyuwood, he identifies that the government introduced a screen quota whereby movie industries must allot certain times for Korean movies to be aired and the government also subsidised the costs of the re-editing and adding subtitles to films for export and marketing which made the movies acceptable in the foreign markets. In addition, Miroudot(2019) asserts that the success of the Korean film industry is the investment of money as budget and as such, the best acts, stunts, special effects, and cinematography are produced to appeal to the audience. In that way, there is a hybridisation of the local Korean culture and foreign culture in a way that remains genuinely Korean. Also, he examines the high contribution which the Hallyuwood movie industry has on the country's GDP. The industry has a 38 dollars per capita turnover, which places it at the fourth-highest income in the global industry, only behind the US, the UK, and France. He notes that Korea has a box office similar to that of the UK's and France's about US\$ 1.5 billion in 2016. This is opposed to Nigeria's Nollywood which though it ranks as one of the biggest producers of movies, contributes only 1.42% to the country's GDP (Omanufeme, 2016).

For the Bollywood Industry, its rise to stardom was not without help. Hafeez and Ara (2016) surmised that the industry got some benefits from their government for the production of their movies during its early beginnings. Their picture houses enjoy tax benefits, the government not only established a production company for filmmaking, but they gave monetary assistance to promising filmmakers to churn out movies. This was after they calculated the commercial value of Indian movies as far back as 1960. As a result of these, Indian filmmakers continued producing movies promoting Indian culture which would later influence the global sphere, particularly on the musical incorporations in movies. As with the Korean movie industry, Bollywood productions are exorbitant finances that are hugely invested in

making movies that would be blockbusters with special effects and technologies promoting more appeal to the international audience.

Other movie industries such as Kazakhstan use the cinema as a medium of representing their society on-screen. Dinara, et.al (2020) reveal how important the director, Darezen Omirbaev is in addressing the political and social issues of Kazakhstan. The director portrays a reflection of the structure of Kazakhstan society through the internal conflict of his movies – *Heroes*, thus providing a more in-depth look at the movie and society. As the authors rightly declare, Cinema connects the world more than the media. Thus, serving as a bridge between government policies and how they relate to society. In the Nigeria situation, the government is not actively involved in the movie industry, neither are there subsidies tendered to Nollywood filmmakers. However, that is not enough reason for movies, specifically many Igbo-themed movies to misrepresent Igbo cultural values. Kannywood, the film industry of the Hausa people of Nigeria, is known to accurately portray their cultural values, although they are not without their challenges. Ibrahim (2019) notes that although Kannywood started before Nollywood, its presence in contemporary times is not well-known. The industry is influenced by Bollywood in style but their language remains the Hausa language. He attributes the unpopularity of the Kannywood industry to the harsh censorship by the Sharia law prevalent in the North, while also noting that many of their movies are poorly scripted and many of their subtitles are known to be shoddy. However, the biggest competition remains Nollywood. As with Nollywood on Igbo Culture, the Yoruba segment of the movie industry portrays the values of the Yoruba people in light of "adulteration, distortion and exaggeration of the Yoruba history and culture for commercial purposes" (Sesan, 2013:10). However, in the case of the Yoruba culture, the misrepresentation in culture is not as well-pronounced as with the case of Igbo culture in the movies which faces a huge degradation and mutilation. On this note, this paper examines the various forms in which Nollywood grossly misrepresents the culture and values of the Igbo people.

Misrepresentation of Igbo Culture through Language

One of the core identities of the culture of any society is the language. Wardaugh (as cited in Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu, 2012:121) opined that "language forms part of the culture of a people and it is also through the language that culture and the collective consciousness of the people receive expression". It is expected that Igbo language should be accurately captured in Igbo-themed movies, most especially in the epic movies which are supposed to represent the core cultural values of the Igbo people. Alas, that is not so in the epic movies representing the Igbo indigenous society of the Pre-Colonial period. Several epic Nollywood movies use the English language medium as a means of communication, with many of the actors expressing themselves in foreign accents. Notable epic movies such as *Egg of Life*, *Ijele*, *Ojukwu*, *Igodo*, among other movies where the language communicated by the actors in the English language, with Igbo language emerging in only incantations and for emphasis. This phenomenon is prevalent in many movies that are allegedly set in Pre-colonial times when the Igbos had no access to the English language. It is startling that the above is what is presented as motion pictures, and thus clearly negates the essence of the movie since it is assumed to be Igbo culture-inclined.

One might argue that the usage of the English language is for a wider audience. However, there are viable options that can be adopted by the industry such as the use of subtitles in the movies, just like other cultures use their indigenous language in the portrayal of their movies. The Bollywood industry which has garnered mass recognition in the global sphere makes use of the indigenous languages of the Indian people, with subtitles provided for the audience that do not understand the language. The same goes for the Korean movie industry which has garnered a huge fan base in Nigeria. Hollywood movies are not exempted either as there is a disparity in the accents and vocabulary as obsolete English words are opted for in Epic Hollywood movies than the usage of English in their contemporary movies.

UNESCO has estimated that the Igbo Language might become extinct by 2050 and with how the entertainment industry continues to push the English language agenda, it could be possible. The majority of Igbo speakers find it extremely difficult to speak the language strictly in their usage. There is no better means of subconscious inclination to a language save for the entertainment industry; most especially since the language is neither the Lingua Franca nor is it a compulsory subject for students. This alienation by the speakers is intensified by what the industry portrays on-screen. Because these Nollywood movies serve as a means of entertainment for the average Igbo family, it would have been a huge factor in the education and promotion of the Igbo language to the audience, especially in this age when the Igbo language has become an endangered language. As such, these movies should have been a means of indoctrination to the people. Regrettably, many Nollywood movies do not present such and thus invariably aid in the endangerment and possible extinction of the Igbo language.

Monarchical Misrepresentation in Nollywood Films

The monarchy is not a true picture of the pre-colonial Igbo communal life and the placement of monarchy as having unchecked power gives a wrong message about the pre-colonial customs of the Igbo people to the audience. The Nollywood representation of Igbo people spans from ostentatious lifestyle by the Kings which was never in reality with the Igbo people. For one, except for a couple of Igbo rulers such as the Obi of Onitsha, the Arochukwu people, the Igbo society was a large communal society where the age-grades and council of elders decided what should or should not happen in the society. Nollywood makes a mockery of that by providing scenarios whereby the kings in the pre-colonial society cloak themselves with beads and adornments which are alien to the Igbo society.

Some of these home videos have titles indicating kingships such as *Restless King*, *The King's Happiness*, *Dangerous King*, and *The King's Planet* among others. The kings are depicted as having lavish and numerous guards following them to and fro the palace, whereas the princesses are seen with troops of guards while they parade around the palace with numerous maidens spraying petals of flowers on the ground that they step on. At times, these guards are seen with machetes which they use against people who are not deferential to the royal families and their cohorts. The above is far from what was obtainable in the native Igbo cultural society. The Igbo pre-colonial society was highly Republican. It is the closest to a democratic society in pre-colonial Nigeria with different groups having specific roles assigned

to them. The hierarchy includes The Council of Elders, Chief Priests, Traditional Medicine Men, the Male Kindred called 'Umunna' and the Female Kindreds called 'Umudada.' They had the age-grade which served as the army while the Masquerades acted as the police. None of the groups was inferior to the other and they acted in tandem with the other.

Ohadike (1994) summarises it thus,

In Igbo society, the age groups assigned special duties and responsibilities to the age-grades in terms of seniority. While the middle-aged age groups which consisted of men between 16 to about 40 years, functioned as the executive arm of government, the senior male groups, those between the ages of 40 and above, were responsible for judicial matters. The age-group system provided respect. Juniors deferred to the seniors and the groups acted together, and the friendships they cultivated in childhood remained intact through life.

The highest title in the Igbo society then was the *Ozo*, and the titled men were greeted with salutations such as *Igwe* and *Ogbuefi* meaning "His Highness" and "one who slaughters bulls" respectively. The eldest chief presides over meetings but does not act unless a consensus is reached by the council. However, they were stripped of their power and subordinated to the Warrant Chiefs appointed by the British officials (Ohadike, 1994). The absence of kingship in Igbo society was one of the reasons the Igbo were in opposition to the Warrant Chief system. For instance, the people of Afikpo began the opposition to the Afikpo Warrant Chiefs by evading taxes by running to the hilltops and taking refuge in bushes. The Warrant Chief System then became targets by the irate women because they were regarded as perpetrators of injustice and were lackeys of the colonial government. Their protests would later escalate to the Women's War of 1929 which would later collapse the Warrant Chief system and the introduction of Native Authorities (Enwo-Irem, 2018).

Misrepresentation of Igbo Religion in Nollywood Movies

The Igbo indigenous society is highly religious due to their belief in the gods and spirits. They believe in the existence of both benevolent and malevolent spirits and thus shroud themselves with charms to ward off evil and malevolent spirits. The traditional worldview of the Igbo people is what Nwoye (2011:307), referred to "as being anthropocentric which means that the activities of the spirits are seen as meaningful as far as they relate to human life. As such, they engage in divinations and rituals to protect themselves by pledging allegiance to these spirits". Nollywood movies indoctrinated the idea that all gods are evil and the need to destroy them by an all-powerful God, in this case, the Christian God is used as the solution to the afflictions of society. Therefore, the only time they are represented in movies is when they are inflicting pain on the people. For instance, in the movie *Narrow Escape*, an elder warns the protagonist that the other missionaries who have been sent to the villages were killed by the gods. The twist that always appears in Nollywood movies is one in which some items are destroyed or cut down to ward off the spirits invariably ending their sufferings and thus, converting the villagers to Christianity. The drivers of the Christian faith have destroyed Igbo cultural heritage

as a fetish while the movies further brainwashed the people into believing that their ancestors were evil people who worshipped evil gods. The Igbo people have an affinity for other societal gods as part of their cultural heritage. Zeus, Hades of the Greeks, Vishnu and Krishna of the Indians, and Horus and Oris of the Egyptians are not perceived as threatening or evil to the Igbo people whereas gods like *Amadioha* and *Ekwensu* that are culturally the same as Zeus and Hades make Igbo people petrified of identifying with it.

In addition to the Nollywood influence on religion, as Nigeria is a highly religious and superstitious country, people believe that the cultural aspect of gods' worship is barbaric and so it is discarded. They attribute the misfortune they experience as being a result of ancestral curses whose forebears were heathen and fetish. Hence, images of these gods are destroyed when they could have been preserved as archaeological artifacts that should be kept in museums to promote tourism in the country. People go to the extent of travelling to their indigenous villages for spiritual deliverance to burn these artifacts and cut down trees believed to be evil in contradistinction to upholding a better environment through planting more trees and maintaining decent housing facilities.

Nollywood movies such as *Festivals of Fire* portrayed the missionaries as being persecuted by the Igbo people, whereas, in reality, the Igbo people were one of the first ethnic groups that welcomed the missionaries with open arms. In the civilizing mission of 1841, the CMS visited the palace of the Aboh monarch. One of the missionaries, Simon Jonas who had previously been sold into slavery, came back with the missionaries and acted as the interpreter between the missionaries and the Aboh monarch, Obi Ossai also spent weeks in Aboh preaching to the children that flocked around him (Okonkwo, 2018). The only known persecution that the missionaries experienced was malaria which caused the demise of 54 Europeans (Okonkwo, 2018). The subsequent civilizing mission of 1857 Niger Civilizing Mission was also a success because of the "reciprocity they preached on the relationship between them and God" (Nwoye, 2011:314). However, Nollywood fails to display the above in their movies.

Igbo Values in Contemporary-Themed Movies

Contemporary Nollywood movies are not left out and contemporary in this context refers to Igbo-themed movies set in modern times. The movie, *All for Nothing* tells the story of two brothers, John and Albert who were unable to support their family. They beseeched help from people, and thus when it had hung on their necks, they decided to resort to rituals, using their children as a quick money scheme to earn money. The theme in the above movie can be traced back to the premiere of *Living in Bondage* in 1992 which starred Kenneth Okonkwo as Andy Okeke, who used his wife *Merit* for rituals to get money. The stereotype thus became associated with the Igbo of those whose wealth is gotten from rituals and the idea that the wealthy do not get their wealth from legal means but through occult sacrifices and rituals. Some of the movies with such themes include *Blood Money* (1997), *Billionaire's Club* (2004), and *Occultic Battle* (2005), among others. Many subsequent Igbo movies follow the same trend in the cultural stereotype of the Igbo, as being power-hungry. Eze-Orji (2016:109) summarizes it with the statement, "The themes and sub-themes

of *Living in Bondage* have been so much recycled that people now see ritual, bloodletting, and occultism as part of Igbo lifestyle, thereby misrepresenting the Igbo cultural matrix". Movies like this are majorly home videos that the average Nigerian watches for entertainment and education. Thus, many subconsciously imbibe the characteristics of the characters portrayed, which in turn reflects in the lifestyle found in contemporary society. Thus, projecting the observation of Gerber and Gross, (1976) that the more time people spend watching the television (movies), the more likely they are to believe that social realities align with the presupposed realities on the screen.

These filmmakers shed the wrong light on Igbo cultural values. In the olden days, the vices of money rituals and being power-hungry were not found among the Igbo people. They made use of folklore, idioms, fables, and proverbs to teach moral lessons, thus laziness is highly discouraged. These stories have indoctrinated children from childhood to have good virtues and behaviours. This is surmised by Nwoye (2011:310) in the statement:

The moral heroes of the Igbo are picked from the animal world. These include the tortoise that is admired for its capacity to deploy its creative ingenuity in the direction of finding solutions to the problems of the living. For the Igbo, these qualities reflect an imaginative deployment of intelligence and well-being. Similarly, the Igbo believe that although the world is often hostile and difficult to live in like the ram each should endeavour to learn the virtue of endurance in facing the obstacle of the human experience.

As opposed to the depiction of Igbo men in Nollywood movies as being only after wealth and going to great lengths to amass wealth, including sacrificing their children, mothers, and wives, the Igbo cultural values place more prominence on children and women than material property thus they name their children Nwabugwu (child is honour), Nwadiuto (child is sweet), Nwakaego (child is greater than wealth), Nwamaka (child is good), Nwabueze (child is king), Nneamaka (mother is good), Nnediogo (mother is graceful) and Nwanyibuife (the woman is something), among others. In Igbo tradition, it is believed that children are the parents' greatest achievement and are also their insurance in their old age. The children, especially the first sons and daughters have a priority in looking after their parents, thus the populous Igbo name, *Nwakaego*, meaning "Child is more precious than money" (Nwoye, 2011:311).

Furthermore, contemporary Nollywood movies depict a comparison between the village setting and the city which is portrayed to be a place that flows with goodness and wealth, while the villages are made out to be full of evil actions and backwardness. As such, the message such themes send to the audience is one in which the Igbo villages are places of stagnancy to be abandoned. In an article in *Punch Newspapers*, the writer puts it thus:

Anytime a Nigerian movie focuses on an Igbo village as well as the city, there are some constant narratives, the village is the home of poverty while the city is a place of wealth and a good life. The village is the home of witches and wizards while the city is the home of good men and

women. The traditional religion in the city is good and always overcomes the darkness in the village. The village is a lawless society that overcomes the darkness in the village. The village is a lawless society where one man can seize the property of anybody, especially widows with nobody stopping him except by divine intervention, while the city is a land of order (Onwuka, 2017).

The bane of the points explained above is an improper indoctrination of the viewers of the movies, especially the younger generation. Today, the above is the impression of many young Igbo boys and girls who are always afraid of their kith and kin in the village. There is always an imaginary uncle lurking somewhere in the village to kill through charms or impede people's progress. The result is constant rural-urban migration where people not only run away from lack of facilities and opportunities in the villages but rather from village uncles who are ever ready to harm innocent nephews, nieces, and prospering kith and kin. For the contemporary movies that give an inept perfection of the cities, the youngsters who readily relocate to the cities to make it would discover that the movies are not reality and may end up venturing into vices and ritualistic tendencies.

The depictions of the villagers as evil people deter the younger generation from associating with villagers and relatives who they believe are idol worshippers, evil and malicious people. The destruction of the traditional gods and monuments eradicates the antiquities of the Igbo people that should be kept for posterity and the non-portrayal of movies in the Igbo language encourages the extinction of the language. As Aniago et.al (2020) rightly put it, a filmmaker can be an opinion moulder, a manipulator of emotions, and a conjurer of ideas. Thus, they sway the thoughts and perceptions of the viewers, oftentimes, negatively. Nollywood movies with such themes give a distorted view of the customs of the people, even to those in the diaspora. The representation has effects on the perception of the practices denoted in these movies and it is a total misrepresentation of the practices which are the fundamental cultural practices of the Igbo people. In the case of Nollywood, the regurgitating of stories is frequent, and this not only reinforces but encourages the same stereotypes of which a particular culture is known, thereby making the movies cringe-worthy and monotonous which in turn reflects on the industry as being bland, mediocre and thus, a negation of the Igbo culture and values.

In the opinion of Ezeugwu (2020), recent studies have shown that the representation of women in Nollywood films has remained stereotypical and tends to cast their image in the mould of weaklings and very dependent species, who are often left at the mercy of men. Adding to this, (Ukata, 2010) states that despite the fame of the Nigerian film industry, both locally and internationally, some critics still see it as a poor imitation of the real thing. The films also have significant influences on the way others see us. Nigerian films more or less, do not seem to be aware of the shifting parody in women's discourse. Adeseke (2015), while toeing the same line, states that some Nigerian home videos' portrayal of our cultural ethos and women are inappropriate, misleading, and therefore unacceptable.

Conclusion

This research examined the nature of the portrayal and representation of Igbo traditional values in Nollywood movies and its impact on the audience both in Nigeria and in the diaspora. The researchers are of the view that the new Nollywood needs to put more effort into the rectification of the misrepresentation by movie makers. The solutions that can be supplemented to the industry are the intent to study the history of the people through in-depth research. The scriptwriters should not just write scripts for entertainment's sake but should also write to educate the masses on the happenings in their society. It should be ingrained in the industry that mediocrity would not be tolerated by any of the top-notch producers. The industry could borrow a leaf from Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart* which represented the Igbo customs considerably with the depiction of solidarity between brothers. Perhaps, if the industry is unable to get screenwriters to produce scripts that have a tilt of fact in them, they could resort to turning some literature works to movies, instead of merely churning out perceived ideas of what they think of the society.

The books by some prominent African authors such as Chinua Achebe, Flora Nwapa, Esiaba Irobi, Emeka Nwabueze, and Chukwuemeka Ike among others can be used as a blueprint in the representation of the Igbo in Nollywood, as opposed to assumptions and half-baked scripts that are churned out by the industry. Adding to this, Onikoyi (2017) decries that at present, the majority of our filmmakers except very few are shutting out a very lucrative aspect of filmmaking which is that of published literature. One might argue that there are a couple of books turned into motion pictures such as *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, but several other prominent authors do not have their works adapted into motion pictures.

In addition, movies that focus on histories such as biographical movies of African heroes and legends should be encouraged. There are no motion pictures of people like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Odumegwu Ojukwu, Flora Nwapa, and Margaret Ekpo among others. Even about notable festivals that are widely heralded in Africa such as Ofala festivals among others. The advantage of the above is that it not only gives historical learning to the people but serves as a means of telling the story of Africans from an Afrocentric point of view, in the enlightenment of the masses and a boost in the Nollywood industry. If one takes a look at Hollywood for instance, there are several movies on their historical legends and myths, for instance, *The Odyssey*. Their ability to fuse the myths and the historical occurrences into creative prowess are reasons Hollywood remains insurmountable as an industry because they never run out of stories. Decisively, the incorporation of the essential cultural values of the Igbo will go a long way in serving as a means of not just entertainment, but the education of the masses.

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