THE IMAGE(S) OF WOMEN IN NIGERIAN (NOLLYWOOD) VIDEOS

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Johannesburg, 2010
Abstract

The study explores the representation of women in the video films produced in the Nigerian video industry, otherwise known as Nollywood. It uses a feminist approach to map out the most dominant images of women in Nollywood videos. It argues that the narratives adopt perspectives that are informed by traditional, patriarchal and Christian ideologies that valorize certain gendered notions of love, marriage, the division of labour, family life, amongst the wide range of factors that constitute and condition existence. In charting the complexities and contradictions of the latter experiences, the videos rely on the deployment of the stark and melodramatic binaries of good and evil. Consequently, the most recurring archetypes of women are those that depict them as: the incarnations of evil and immorality, as greedy and materialistic, as weak and fickle in relationships and as susceptible to a wide range of deviant and transgressive forms of behavior and identities. The thesis critically engages with the different forms of images presented and it considers what images of women should be discouraged and those which should be encouraged. The study uses five Nigerian video films - *I Was Wrong, The Tyrant, Masterstroke, Omata Women* and *More than a Woman* - to interrogate the gendered politics that lead to the imaginary representation of women in Nollywood videos. It also suggests some possible interventions and measures that can facilitate a more positive portrayal of women in Nollywood videos.
Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

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Agatha Ada Ukata

2010
Dedication

This work is dedicated to the ever fresh and remarkable memory of my late brothers Barrister John Anozeng Ukata and Dermot Brendan Ukata. John you were a bosom brother, friend and confidant. I will forever cherish all we shared together especially our childhood experiences, our journey from Afafanyi to Obubra created a bond that death cannot destroy. Dermot you just didn’t wait to see my graduation but heard of the award of this doctoral degree and congratulated me. My earlier appreciation which you didn’t get to see now comes posthumously: you were my star and you ran the race to the end and you have won. Indeed I am short of words to say how much you are cherished. Indeed you are ever green as you often called yourself and also prestigious until death.

John you encouraged and spurred me on when I was to start this journey to South Africa. You ensured that my application forms where submitted and never got tired of encouraging and sharing in my struggle to succeed with prayers, support, advice and the sharing of personal experiences which kept me focused. You made me to remember that where one started did not matter and that God orders the footsteps of His own. Even on your sick bed you encouraged me in e-mails and phone calls to go on as though nothing was happening to you, assuring me that you will be fine. But alas, the cold hands of death deprived me of such a wonderful brother and support. I know you are not here to rejoice with me but I continue to remember and appreciate your love for me. Thank you for all that you did for me. I imagine how you would have jumped up in joy, announcing to all who care to hear, that “my sister has made it again”. But I take solace in the fact that you lived a short but humble life, tailored towards Godly dictates which gives me the hope and assurance that you are resting with God. Adieu my brother! John you were a great hero and I say to death, “be not proud”. May Almighty God continue to smile at you and Dermot and may you both rise up with the saints at the resurrection. Adieu Bhatumabum!
Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks and gratitude goes to my supervisor Professor Bhekiziwe Peterson, for his guidance, patience and unreserved support that led to the successful completion of this thesis. You shared your wealth of knowledge and made me to comfortably engage with a terrain that was completely new to me. Thank you so much and may God almighty, who sees all your labour for me, bless you abundantly.

To all my lecturers in the Discipline of African Literature: Prof. Isabel Hofmeyer, Prof. James Ogude and Dr. Dan Ojwang, I am forever grateful to for all you have done for me. You all made me to feel at home in South Africa, you all attended to my needs and made me to have a sense of belonging. To Dr. Ojwang, I have regarded you as a brother, thank you for everything. I sincerely thank Mrs. Merle Govind whose support and encouragement throughout this programme is immeasurable. Thank you for all you have done for me. I also thank Mrs. Marilyn Thorne for all the support. May God almighty bless and reward you all.

To my mother Mrs Philomena Obu Taupo Ukata, I say thank you. Mama you have never been tired of seeing and treating me like the child that I ever remain to you, showering me with much care, affection, love and support. Thank you for laying a good foundation for me. You are a perfect example of a mother, a blessing to us your children. Yes you made me to build self confidence and brace up to challenges. May God bless you real good.

To my brother Dr. Patrick Obeten Ukata, words cannot explain my appreciation to you. You have continued to be my mentor and my father figure. You have laboured with me from my early beginnings until now and have never looked back to ensure that I, and my brothers, get the best in life. For all you have done to bring me to this height I say thank you and pray that God bless you.

To my brothers Godwin and Benedict I say a big thank you. Benedict and my late brother Dermot I remain ever grateful to both of you for encouraging and helping me to take
major decisions in my life and for all the brotherly love and support that you have continued to provide, I say thank you. You are a winning team.

I appreciate the support of my family members who left this world during this programme, my father Hon. Chief Brendan Egbe Ukata, my immediate elder brother, Barrister John Anozeng Ukata, and my younger brother Dermot Brendan Ukata may your gentle souls rest in perfect peace amen.

To Evangelist Helen Ukpabio I am very grateful for all the support. I thank my Pastor Dr. Pius Oba and the entire Unity Model Parish of Redeemed Christian church community in Haughton, Johannesburg, for the spiritual and moral support you provided me, that made me to be stabilized and focused throughout this programme. God reward you all for your labour of love.

I say thank you to Prof. Tawana Kupe, Nicholeen Potgieter and Julie Poyser whose support is immeasurable. To Drs. Dina Ligaga, Osita Ezeliora, Senayon Olaoluwa, Grace Musila, Lumagugu Masango and Letheko Modisane, who have gone ahead of me and have helped me in one way or another, I say thank you. My thanks also goes to Nnamdi Uzokwe, Dr. Ajuji Ahmed, Wale Idebi, Celestina, Mekusi, Jendele Hungbo, Sean Rogers, Jennifer, Kwezi, Kris, Edwin, Keneuoe, Phyllis, Dr. Iyabo Usman, Dr. Modupe Oguronbi, Sarah Agbor, Balkisu Ahmed, Nonso Ikeanusi, Monica Adinye, Connie Steel, Brima and Dr. Maria Suriano. I sincerely appreciate the assistance of Prof. Sue Van Zyl, Sharlene Khan, Vedaste, Mapule Tsoari, Shepherd, Beverly, Joyce, Thabisani, Delia, Joann, Nombulelo, Jo Zondo and many more who have helped me to complete my programme. I remain very grateful and say thank you all.

I also thank Mpumi, Lenore, Thelma, Doomnul, Pastor and Mrs. Aderigbigbe, Mr and Mrs. Adeleke, Ndidi and the staff of the Wits Libraries, especially Mapule and Margaret.
I would like to thank the University of the Witwatersrand for all the awards and financial support. Finally and most importantly, I thank God who has brought me thus far. To you alone be all the glory honour and adoration.
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