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REVIEW OF NIGERIAN AUDIENCE'S RECEPTION TO CULTURE-ORIENTED FILMS

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ABSTRACT

Research into Nigerian films as an emerging popular culture is an exercise still considered to be enduring. There are also few studies conducted on African film and folklore which form the background of this research into the popular culture and Nigerian films. The paper demonstrated Nigerian audience's attitude and response to culture-oriented films. Cultural theory is adopted for the study, it allows the study to find meaning in the use of oral tradition in the actions and interactions of Nigerian actors/actresses in the selected films. The conveyance of traditional peculiarities and identities in the oral form of languages used in Nigerian films considered the approach appropriate. The methodology is textual analysis from film viewing. The result showed that most Nigerian film audiences are comfortable with culture-oriented films because they catch fun and find pleasure in knowing their traditions and beliefs. It is suggested that films with cultural repertoires or tropes should be promoted.

Keywords: *Nollywood, Nigeria audience, reception, culture, films*

INTRODUCTION

The article tends to evaluate the film contents in Nigerian films with a view to addressing the artistic interests of Nigerian film artists. The viewing audience are the focus or target when producing a film. The film maker in any film production tries to give out what will interest or appeal to a wider/target audience. The film maker reads the psychology of the audience on what will really appeal to them at a particular time or circumstance. Their response or reaction informs the acceptability or creditability of the film production. According to Teslim (2009), 80% of the audience is comfortable with films that are produced in the context of tradition and culture. In Yoruba film productions, for example, Teslim (cited in Onabajo and M'bayo 2009) presents that 'The audience needs to agree in unison over the usage of the intricacies and actions in the film in line with the Yoruba tradition and culture'. Film directors and producers alike try to align these traditional contexts with topical issues in society, for instance, when developing a film storyline that will link traditional values with crime prevention in the community. Nollywood movies have produced films that interpret the activities of folklore. An example of these films is *Isaakaba* parts 1 & 2 (2006, 2008), a group of vigilantes that are charged with crime detection using charms and punishing criminals based on the dictate of the law of the tradition. Others include *Sussana* (2016), *World Apart* (2016) and *Songs of Sorrow* (2015). Onabajo and M'bayo (2009) states that 'Yoruba film is based on thematising and emphasising the socio-cultural issues and problems of the Yoruba society. The films usually highlight the strength of indigenous culture'. Besides the cultural tendencies to indigenous film production, another genre of film that is good for the audience is the historical film.

The Nollywood films titled: *76* (2016) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2013) are historical films based on the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970. These films are highly patronized because the audience wishes to see and know about the past Teslim (2009) also confirms that the content of Nigerian films, most especially the indigenous language films, depending on their dominant tendencies, can be conveniently grouped into two; those that thematically emphasized culture and those that bend towards history. Records of early film producers in the Yoruba region like Ogunde (2003) showcase that, oral repertoires were highly influential to his audience participation and reception. Teslim (2009) adds that "the theme in Hubert Ogunde's films basically focuses on folklore and traditional myths… to bring out the true-to-life position of scenes and events. Teslim (2009) also confirms that Hubert Ogunde satisfies his audiences when showcasing films in a traditional outlook; 'Ogunde's films really brought out the traditional and cultural elements of the Yoruba people into the fore and the audience had more than enough to satisfy their thirst for good and entertaining movies' (2009). M'Bayo and Onabajo (2009) affirm that one of the major successes of Yoruba films producers like Kola Ogunmola and Duro Ladipo is that they produced classics films from the traveling theatre as *obakoso*, *Moremi,* and *Obawaja*. They brought 'Ifa' the Yoruba divinity poetry to the stage and also used Yoruba religious songs and dances all accompanied by traditional musical instruments.

Audiences are moved when their traditional beliefs are demonstrated in films. The beliefs are enacted in order to appeal to the audience. Teslim (2009) states that 'The traditional belief of the people came to life through the actions in the films and audience participation either directly or indirectly could easily be felt'. Viewers are in tune with films contents that display their traditional culture. M'Bayo (2009) attests that: The traditional and cultural element in the film titled *Aiye* was decisive and rightly so, for the release of the film brought an unprecedented crowd to the National Theatre venue where the film was shown. Ladi Ladebo (1992) produces a film titled *Ewo-Taboo* (1992), in which the producer experiments with a storyline and theme which combines aspects of old cultural values and modern issues. Aderigbe (2000) attests that

the Yoruba beliefs also characterized their film culture'. They are Belief in the Supreme Being, belief in divinities, belief in spirits, belief in ancestors, and belief in medicine and magic….
These beliefs are exhibited by characters in Yoruba films which 'serve as a reminder of Yoruba heritage, the dressing, bearded mediators, rural setting and language' (Aderigbe 2000). Films on oral narratives are considered as a medium for cultural preservation and transfer.
In the particular case of Hausa films, producers and directors use the influence of Indian popular films on the audience to produce their own culture films. Since Islam is embedded in Hausa culture, the films are always tilted towards Islamic doctrines. Liman (2009) states that the Hausa language is being mixed… with the religion of Islam. Producers could use that to promote both religion and language. It is asserted that though the Hausa film setting is metropolitan, the plot still revolves around the Hausa culture. This is reflected in films like Gagare, (1997) and Shamsiya (1998) by Joe Ajiboye and Auwalu M. Sabo as producers.
The filmmakers always read the psyche of their target audience, and they try to please them with the contents of their films. Teslim (2009) puts it that 'the influence of Islam tells much on the cultural background of the earlier Hausa films. He further comments that Hausa film producers and directors need to embark on qualitative film production. The scriptwriters, directors, and producers 'should focus on thematic choices that will enhance cultural harmony, and religious tolerance and uplift the Hausa culture.

Hausa Film Culture

Hausa films have their origin in Hausa oral performance and its culture and traditions. A drama text entitled *Wasanin Hausa Shidda (*Six Hausa plays) by R.M. East was the first Hausa play written in 1930 (Mugadi and Gulumba, 2002). Hausa films are developed centrally from Islam; their traditional culture contains oral tales (Tatsuya) and oral historical traditions (liberal). The first Hausa film by Ahmed Joda was entitled Baban-Larai-Larai Father (1955) made to educate farmers. Their films include proverbial lore (Karin Magana); riddles and tongue-twisters (kachinchin-kachinchin), praise epithets (kirarai), and praise songs to persons, places, animals, and objects and generally performed by professional singers and drummers. Drama, which could be in oral or written form, is as old as mankind.
Here, legend presents the story of human actions in such a way that is perceived by the audience to be plausible. Curtin (2009) further illuminates that in literature, legend presents actions and happenings as if they have taken place in human history (verisimilitude). As articulated earlier, Hausa drama text or film script could be oral in the form of traditional performance and written in the form of plays. The book or script forms of drama are for people to read and/or meant to be acted. Hausa's oral performance strictly depicts Hausa culture and traditions. As part of the Hausa religious (Islamic) obligations, the Hausa, set aside a few days of the month of Ramadan (fasting period) every year to dramatize in the form of plays (tashe) the different behaviour of people in order to enlighten and correct, especially those engaged in anti-social activities, which are not in consonance with the culture of the Hausa people. The existence of this practice lends itself to further artistic development in film, like the Yoruba theatre. These cultural practices were significant drivers of the early film industry.
Larkin (2000) narrates that, in the 17th century however, some Islamic scholars started writing different literature on the 'Riwayar Annabi Musa' (Revelation of Prophet Moses) as well as songs such as 'Shirir Hausa and 'Jamuya' written by Sheikh Ahmed Tila, until in 18th century when Shehu Usman Dan Fodio came and did a lot in Islamic songs composition and prose writings for the purpose of the propagation of Islam. One of the earliest Nigerian films in Hausa was a film titled Baban-Larai-Larai's Father (1955) directed by Ahmed Joda, who was then a Chief Information Officer in the Northern Nigerian Ministry of Information. The film was shot at Daudawa in the then Katsina province and some parts of Zaria province. The film which

was also recorded on 35mm gauge solenoid black and white (cinema) was targeted at farmers so as to educate them on and promote the farming of groundnuts, cotton as well as cattle rearing (Larkin, 2000).

These early films are a combination of documentaries and entertainment. Documentary films are meant to recast past events or provide certain information in forms of sensitization, awareness, or orientation. Most documentaries are featured in national television programmes such as; Nigeria-Biafra Civil War (Annual event); Boko Haram: Journey from Evil Film Screening (Annual event) and Nigeria's Climate and Environmental Crises (Annual event) and many others. Entertainment films address issues that concern societal happenings with the intention for lessons to be learned. The filmmaker entertains the audience using dialogues and other special effects like costumes, actions, and reactions of actors and actresses.

Yoruba film culture

Yoruba films are developed in the context of traditional and ritual functions, although their films also explore the tensions of Christian converts in an effort to balance them with traditional ways. With the advent of Christianity, the ritual faith and religion in African traditional settings are thus deeply embedded in almost every socio-religious ritual. Dipio (cited in Elegbe 2017) clarifies that ritual features are the bedrock of African culture and religion. African traditional life which constitutes the groundwork of the majority of themes and storylines of the earlier film productions is syncretized with the tensions that follow the change in new ritual belief (Christianity). The syncretism of these dual beliefs has become part of the people's socio-religious life. The tension generated by this conflict is good material for films' storylines.

Igbo film culture

The Igbo people are the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria. Their central activity is business as demonstrated in films such as *Across the Bridge* (1992) and *Blood Money* (2015). The Igbo people believe in their deity – Amadioha (the god of vengeance) is reflected in the contents of their film which foreground the themes of the supernatural, vengeance, retribution, folk tradition, domestic travails, cultism, and human ritual sacrifices. Most of the early Nigerian film actors/actresses, producers, and directors are from the Igbo background. Igbo films tend to be high on budget, with an eye on both the local and foreign markets. According to Adeiza (1995), the financial success of video films from the Igbo-speaking part of the country is well known. Films like *Living in Bondage* (1990), *Glamour Girls* (1992), and *Betrayal* (1994) were good attempts that other producers have taken their lead.

The Concept of Intertextuality

Although intertextuality has 'Euro-western origins' Kehinde (2003) shows the prevalence thereof in African literature where he asserts that contemporary African writers are participating in the global literary trend of intertextuality for several reasons, chiefly among which are the following. In the first instance, there is cultural homogeneity among the peoples of the world; this calls for writers to model their works on some precursor works. Again, human existence revolves in the same vicious circle of tumult consequent upon bad leadership and other social and ontological ills. Therefore, there are configurations and connections between works and writers within the different literary genres Biodun Jeyifo, (1988). Literature does not evolve within a vacuum. It depends on the socio-political realities of its enabling milieu and the precursor texts (oral/written) for its impetus. Thus, for the proponents of intertextuality literature evolves from literature. African writers also depend on earlier texts for their themes and styles. This is quite pertinent in this era of multiculturalism and globalization.

Kehinde (2003) quotes Izevbaye who examines the interplay between intertexts in African literature and concludes that it "establishes a relationship among a variety of writers and literatures, and help enhance… understanding of literature as a human activity with similar aesthetic and social functions in different cultures". A classic example of intertextual writing in African literature is Achebe's rewriting of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), wherein he also includes elements from Igbo folklore and culture.

Other critics who have influenced Kristeva and developed her idea further are Derrida (1980), Barthes (1987), and Lacan (1980) by demonstrating the 'intersection of textual surfaces'. Barthes's notion of intertextuality also suggests the frequent anonymity of the 'sources' of intertextual quotations. Julia Kristeva conceives textuality in much more the same way as Barthes by supporting the fact that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations 'any text is the absorption and transformation of other texts' (Barthes, 1987). Culler (1976), Riffaterre (1980), and Genette (1989) are of the same opinion that intertextuality is used to achieve higher interpretative certainty. Marko (2008) in his work on intertextuality, cites a series of pronouncements in which writers from ancient times to our postmodernist age prove awareness of intertextual occurrences and the fact that every work necessarily takes into account that which was written before. Juvan (2008) testifies that:

> Would I have phrases that are not known, utterances that are not strange, in a new language that has not been used, free from repetition, not an utterance which has grown stale, which men of old have spoken? Nothing is said now that has not been said before.

More precisely, it means that a text is a collection of quotations; and or the application and modification of another. In the space of a work of art, many words or expressions, taken from other works, intersect and neutralize one another in the form of cross-cultural influences. By its natural linguistic logic, it means the relation between texts, interweaving of texts, weaving of one text into another, connectedness and interdependence of at least two related texts, as established in literature and film, the characteristic of a text of establishing a relationship with another text or having another or multiple texts woven into it or interrelatedness or interaction of texts (Marko 2008).

To further elucidate on intertextuality, Plato′s theory of imitation also exemplifies the classical idea of intertextuality. The film versions of real events flourish (imitation). A Classic example is the film version of the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington DC where the poem versions of the events are produced; such as Hood's (2002) *The Double Dream of Falling*, Harjo's (2002) *When the World as We Knew it Ended* and Robicheau's (2002) *The Eleventh of September* are composed to reflect the memory of the happenings. Equally, films like *The Rise and Fall of Idi Amin* (1984) a replica of the dictatorial leadership of late President Idi Amin in post-independent Uganda. In these cases, the events are known and the film version of the events is also treasured by the people. Still and Worton (1990) respectively narrate the contribution of Cicero and Quintilian on intertextuality, where it is illustrated that imitation is a consciously intertextual practice.

Narrative in Indigenous Films

In the words of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, (1985) 'Language is the carrier of culture as well as memory' - that language and culture are inseparable being that language is used to express culture. To support this view, Ebele (2012) testifies that 'Any tribe that loses its language has invariably lost its identity'. The common narrative in Nigerian films is determined by the target audience that the filmmakers have in mind. Films meant for the consumption of the majority of Nigerians are produced in either English or Pidgin (language of wider communication). However, Igbo filmmakers prefer producing films in English for a wider audience with the

intent of bigger marketing, but Yoruba and Hausa filmmakers mostly make films in their respective languages with subtitles in English. Statistics by Nigerian Film Censor Board (2011) have shown that films produced in local languages have more patronage when compared to films produced in English. In this regard, Ebele (2012) reports that the reality is that the Nollywood of today survives based on indigenous language films. The champions of the Nollywood of today are the Yoruba films, and the market for the Yoruba language is booming, Hausa films are also selling. The Nigerian Film and Censors Board presents a chart showing the percentage linguistic output of films produced in the various local languages from 2001-2011(National Film & Censors Board (2012).

Yoruba, English, and Hausa film productions are competing in terms of reception. Igbo film production is insignificant because they constitute the majority of films produced in English. This report is supported by a survey conducted in 2006 by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS: 10) that concluded that about 56% of Nollywood films are produced in Nigeria's local languages, namely Yoruba (31%), Hausa (24%) and Igbo (1%). English remains a prominent language, accounting for 44%, which may contribute to Nigeria's success in exporting its films to other parts of the world.

Folklores and Film Making in Nigeria

In his documentaries on Nollywood film production, Meltzer (2007) reiterates the fact that understanding the art of storytelling in African societies is that, it is often attributed to the cultural figure of the griot who tends to function as a symbol of the oral tradition, focuses on the products of the Nigerian video film industry as serving a social purpose to share dramas that are relatable to the common individual through generic forms like the ritual, the epic, and the action film. It is important to note that the film audience is also a stakeholder in the culture, therefore needs to be carried along in a way that suits their experiences and feelings or their culture. Ugochukwu (2013) expresses the idea of foreign language as a barrier to the reception of Nigerian films outside the linguistic milieu. His findings reveal that European audiences prefer dubbing while Africans have a preference for subtitling. He suggested that Nollywood films can only be measured by how they cut across cultures. Omeora (2013) also emphasizes the need to introduce the cultural frontiers of Nollywood beyond the mainstream film industry. He reiterated that other cultural boundaries need to be elevated for wider and grassroots audience reception. This agrees with Ugochukwu's view of language as barrier to the reception of Nigerian films. His argument motivates the idea of varied indigenous film productions like the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultural films.

As is the case in other African countries such as Senegal, Ghana, Kenya, Benin as well as Togo, Nigeria developed its film industry from the colonial era to what it is today. Bayo (2013) explains that the cultural transformation of the Nigerian film industry began with indigenous traveling theatre like the Yoruba traveling theatre known as 'Alarinjo' which gave rise to theatre icons like Hubert Ogunde, Moses Adejumo and Moses Olaiya popularly known as Baba Sala. This period introduced the use of film to promote Nigeria's cultural heritage. For instance, Chief Hubert Ogunde's films had storylines and themes that seemed to reinforce the moral and philosophical roots of Nigeria as well as other African countries. Ladebo (1992) is another filmmaker who used cultural values to illustrate juvenile delinquencies and the role of the ancestors in applying the law of retribution.

Nigerian fiction film has basic elements such as theme, plot, character, point of view, setting, language, tone, and symbolism. Language includes speech, talking drums, gongs, folklore, proverbs, body movements, songs, incantations, imagery, and mythical and legendary elements, with a thematic expression that refers to how ideas are artistically manipulated by other components like characters and styles. Folk media which constitute a significant aspect

of culture are the indigenous equivalents of modern media like radio and television. Aina (2002) points out that those traditional festivals which constitute aspects of culture transmit ideas, aspirations, and the philosophy of a people. This also makes life meaningful and re-enacts historical, religious, and traditional events to enhance interaction…to foster unity. Cultural presentation in the form of film influences people to learn morals, ethical principles, and historical figures; thus, using culture as an unconscious instrument of instruction Onabajo & M'Bayo (2009). The Nigerian film *Thunder Bolt* (2016) demonstrates prejudice as a cultural problem that should not be permitted in the human mind, hence the marriage of an Igbo woman to a Yoruba man (which signifies cultural differences) is demonstrated to encourage cultural unity. A study of the films titled *Oduduwa* (2014), *Oranmiyan* (2014), and *Sango* (1997) illustrates the use of parables, proverbs, and riddles to communicate morals and sharpen minds. Music and poetry in films also play an aesthetic role in entertainment and are used to criticize or satirize scandals and other vices in society.

In illuminating the cultural status in media communication, Curran (1976) also examines the relationship between cultural objects and the material basis of society, in terms of aesthetics into an apparent sociological theory in term of analysis of media contents. It is in this light that the media is said to produce definitions of situations and socially constructed realities. Haynes (1997) reveals that the theme of Hausa films in Nigeria revolves around culture and morality which are presented often in a classroom manner. The significant thing about Hausa films of Nigeria is the ability of the producers to economize words in titling their films. Mostly, single-word titles, such as *Tarko*, 2013 (*Trap*), *Sangaya*, 2009 (Name of a Princess), *Buri*, 2015 (Ambitious), *Sutura*, 2016 (Clothing), *Kiyaya*, 2015 (Hatred), *Gagare*, 1996 (Stubbornness) are common in Hausa films. These single words are encoded with meanings.

With Islam incorporated into the film culture of the Hausa people, film directors, and producers often take advantage of this incorporation to develop their films so as to attract audience reception. Hence, the typical Hausa film plot revolves around aspects of Hausa culture as illustrated in films like *Gagare*, 1996 (Stubbornness), *Shamsiya* (2006) (Name of a Lady) by producers like Joe Ajiboye and Auwalu M. Sabo. It is no doubt that the influence of Islam tells much about the cultural background of the early Hausa films. These films adopt folktales and other Hausa folklore like the film titled *Daskin da Ridi*, 2002 (Name of a Prince) which projects Hausa and Islamic cultures. To further look at how Nigerian films contextualize their production on cultural substances, Zeb Ejiro (2006) a prominent Nigerian producer, in an interview describes some of the movies as a mixture of horror, magic, and melodrama some of which draw life from the older tradition of the Yoruba traveling theatre, which were also anchored on ritual sacrifices and witchcraft, popular rumours and widespread folk beliefs. Other scholars like Adesoka (2004), Adeleke (2005), Ajeluore (2010), and Ukata (2010) believe that these cultural themes and motifs are reflections of the contemporary down-to-earth concerns and beliefs of the average Nigerian, reflecting the hopes, fears, and aspirations of the common man. Ogunleye (2003) in agreement with this assertion re-affirms that such films portray the supernatural world of witches and the devil and how unscrupulous elements within the society cause these evil powers to exert undue influence upon their fellow human beings.

The Igbo films focus on the themes of supernatural, diabolism and human ritual sacrifices. This theme is central in the production of their films. The films titled *Occultic Battle* and *Hot Money,* these films demonstrate how people and societies resorted to cultism and occultism as means of getting rich. The cultural approach to film-making is based on thematizing and emphasizing the socio-cultural issues and problems of society. Producers working within this tradition have criticized the negative influence of foreign values, particularly, external cultural domination by highlighting the strengths of indigenous culture. Oladunjoye (9) places culture in a better

perspective when he states that 'I am not aware of any nation that has been able to achieve development without proactive cultural components…'
Adenuga (2013) is in agreement that culture not only facilitates development but also promotes ample raw materials for the filmmaker to work with. He observes that 'the film industries that have been able to use their culture as a springboard for cinematic expressions and other uses are renowned all over the world.' Omije (2015), in his research on indigenous language film as a paradigm, vividly enumerates some film scholars and producers conducting various studies that explore their cultural identity and affiliations. Omeora (2009) also contributes that the film audience will prefer the contents of Nigerian films within the context of Nigerian culture which will help them to live within the culture of the people. Umezinwa (in Omijie 2015) also highlights that watching home movies affects the behaviour of people.

Narrative in Indigenous Films

The common narrative in Nigerian films is determined by the focused audience that the filmmakers have in mind. Films produced for the consumption of the majority of Nigerians are produced in either English or Pidgin English (a neutral language). However, Igbo filmmakers prefer producing films in English for a wider audience with the intent of bigger marketing, but Yoruba and Hausa filmmakers mostly make films in their respective languages with subtitles in English. Statistics by Nigerian Film Censor Board (2011) have shown that those films produced in local languages have more patronage because film patronage is usually with the masses (lower and middle class).
In this regard, Ebele Orakpo (2012) reports that the reality on the ground is that the Nollywood of today survives based on indigenous language films. The champions of the Nollywood of today are the Yoruba films, and the market for the Yoruba language is booming, Hausa films are also selling. The Nigerian Film and Censors Board presents a chart showing the percentage linguistic output of films produced in the various local languages from 2001-2011. Yoruba, English, and Hausa film production are competing in terms of reception. Igbo film production is insignificant because they constitute the majority of English-made films (Popular films). This report is supported by a survey conducted in 2006 by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS: 2017) has it that about 56% of Nollywood films are produced in Nigeria's local languages, namely Yoruba (31%), Hausa (24%) and Igbo (1%). English remains a prominent language, accounting for 44%, which may contribute to Nigeria's success in exporting its films. Haynes Jonathan (2016) also contributes that both Hausa and Yoruba filmmaking have deeper relationships with literary as well as theatrical traditions than the Nollywood English version does. Hausa films sprang from pamphlet literature… with Hausa literature and literacy Adamu (2007). In the Yoruba case, much has been said about the traveling theatre influence, but Yoruba writers have been more prominent than English-language writers have been both as sources for film scripts and as screenwriting collaborators.

The Theory

The cultural theory allows the study to find meaning in the use of oral tradition in the actions and interactions of Nigerian actors/actresses in Nigerian films. The conveyance of traditional peculiarities and identities in the oral form of languages used in Nigerian films is considered the appropriate approach. Looking beyond the context of Nigerian films, countries like South Africa, Ghana, Senegal, and Kenya also have their film culture. To corroborate this study, it is important to look beyond Nigeria and verify whether orality in other countries also influences their filmmaking. African film scholars and producers also express their object of using traditional tales and cultural motifs to produce their films. Directors /producers of Nigerian films are of the view that the blend of cultural themes makes their films have a thematic impact. For instance, Gaston Kabore's film *Wend Kuuni* (2003), thematically informs its viewers of

the need for women to fight for their rights; here, the director infuses the message into a popular oral narrative. Kabore (2000), speaking about his motivation to use return-to-the-source mode, says:

> I wrote Wend Kuuni in the form of a traditional tale. I wanted the most popular indigenous narrative mode and cinematographic narrative to mutually fertilize each other, to create something that draws strength from one or the other. I believed that it was (…) a new cinematographic narrative. I stayed with this idea since then. My other films like Rabi (…) Buud Yam, my last film made in 1997, continue to draw their foundation from this cinematographic approach.

In Kenya, a film like Albert Wandago's *Simbi Nyaima* (2004) is an example of a Kenyan traditional narrative film. It relates the mythical story of the origin of a small lake in Western Kenya called Simbi. Few Nigerian and African films resort to code-mixing or code-switching in film language in order to appeal to the majority of the audience. Nigerian Yoruba films like *Oja* (2016), *Sijuwade* (2017), *Aworawo* (2017), and some Igbo films like *Oriakwu* (2016), *Njem Elu Uwa* (2016), and *Ada Eze* (2017) employ the use of code-mixing (using two languages in film dialogue) for a wider audience. Kenyan films such as Wanjiru Kinyanjui's *The Battle of the Sacred Tree* (1995), Anne Mungai's *Saikati* (1992), and Gamba's *Kolormask* (1986) are among the Kenyan films which resort to code-mixing between English and local Kenyan languages in their bid to appeal more strongly to the Kenyan audiences. *Kolormask* exemplifies African films that are communal in nature and usually invoked active community participation. Scholars who work on the transfer of orality and its derivatives into Nollywood movies include but are not limited to, Ukadike (1994), Anyanwu and Ibagere (2008), and Diawara (1988). Berber (2006) declares that research on verbal arts, or an instance of a genre, can be understood in terms of the way it is constituted as text. Research on oral verbal art usually proceeds by collecting a number of examples of a recognized, named genre (a particular kind of poem, song, dirge, chant, and tale) and then examining them for 'characteristics features' they share.

A critical review of scholarly works by distinguished scholars in the field of oral narratives and filmmaking demonstrates the instrumentality of oral narratives as the essential narrative text filmmakers use in producing fiction films. Oral narratives as a culture-based phenomenon provide the validity, plausibility, or verisimilitude of fictional artistic creativity in films. Omolola (2013), in his research on oral tradition in Yoruba movies, elucidates how elements of Yoruba oral tradition create an identity for the Yoruba film culture following the prevalence of these cultural artifacts in Yoruba films. Okashoro (2009) conducts research on African filmmakers and the content of African films. Okashoro's findings that film audiences prefer the contents of Nigerian films that demonstrate cultural values to films that display fetish or absurd ritual contents. Furthermore, Usman *et al* (2013) in a study on the contents of Hausa movies in Northern Nigeria conclude that the majority of Hausa fiction films draw from Hausa folktales.

Ezeigbo (2013) who studied the relevance of oral tradition-folklore in the education of Nigerian youths emphasizes that the inclusion of core ethnic values in Nigerian educational curriculum will help to calm down the rising juvenile delinquencies among Nigerian youths. Traditional stories are told for moral upliftment. It teaches the youth all the moral traits in the community like honesty, obedience, hard work, respect for elders, and patriotism. These folktales also teach the youth to shun vices; lying, stealing, brutality, disrespect, and disobedience. Ezeigbo's study is in agreement with Claudia's (2001) research on oral tradition and memory in African film, where the author elucidates that African stories (folktales), culture, and history can be

taught using the medium of film. Omijie (2015) pilots similar research to Claudia's idea on oral memory in films. Omijie (2015) looks at Nigerian films and the cultural re-orientation of Nigerian youth. The author emphasizes how Nigerian films by their rich cultural content positively promote cultural heritage among the youth.
In addition, Onuzulike (2017) conducts research on how the Nigerian movie industry impacted positively by promoting the cultural norms of the film audience. The study demonstrates that orality is used in promoting these films. Omijie further reiterates that the demonstration of oral forms, songs, rituals, festivals, traditional religion, dance, music, and performing arts which constitute the dominant elements of Nigerian culture is represented in Nigerian films. Oluyinka (2015) in his analysis of film audience and Nigerian films illuminates the cultural and social contexts of the film audiences which are good for film stories. From the perspective of African films and oral narratives, Delphine (2007) conducts research on traditional African culture in Tanzanian films and concluded that indigenous oral narratives constitute the artistic canons and inform the form and contents of Tanzanian films. In South Africa, Urther (2015) did a study on African oral traditions and national heritage through film images, in which the author presents oral tradition on screen as a means of revitalizing traditions via visual and literary narratives, in which he asserts that oral narratives carry a freight of cultural meanings infused in different modes of expression while articulating the philosophies and beliefs of African people. It is important to recognize and (re)discover the critical role played by oral narratives in order to understand the epistemologies and ontologies that inform the construction of African films (Urther 2015)

The film audiences use these oral forms in films to entertain themselves and to remind them of their past and what they cherish. In Nigeria, the Igbo film *Amadhioha* (2015) depicts the Igbo traditional god of vengeance and nemesis. The producer illustrates how the gods respond to those who are guilty of hidden crimes. In the same vein, Gitimu (2015), a film editor in Nairobi, Kenya further elucidates that when African films are examined; they are influenced consciously or unconsciously by oral traditions. Filmmakers in Africa use oral traditions as a point of reference which they either follow or contest.
The author also reports that the importance of literature to film was underscored by the ninth Ouagadougou film festival (FESPACO, 1985), held in Ouagadougou brought together writers, filmmakers' critics, and historians to discuss the possibilities of adapting African classics on film. Comparing different movies adapted from the oral tradition and those adapted from the African literature written in the former colonial languages, the Gitimu report shows that oral tradition was a better source of inspiration than African Literature because they fully participate in the culture than fiction.

Conclusion

As earlier mentioned, the viewing audience of Nigerian films is the focus or target when producing a film. The filmmaker in any film production tries to give out what will interest or appeal to a wider/target audience. The filmmaker reads the minds or interests of the audience on what will really appeal to them at a particular time or circumstance. Their response or reaction informs the acceptability or creditability of the film production. Films use the materials of oral tradition to reflect the ideology or realities of the time. They can combine the functions of different independent stories to form a new one. Historians and critics have pointed out that African filmmakers have in front of them a rich body of oral traditions and written literature from which to take lessons on narrative devices, history, and culture and incorporate them into their films. Studies also demonstrate that Native American oral tradition is reflected in the film

with the view to finding out whether the film is an appropriate medium for demonstrating Native American oral tradition.

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