

HIS 350L | AFR 374 | WGS 340

Between Nollywood and Hollywood: Historical Imagining of Africa in Films

Course Time: Tuesday 3:30—6.30 PM
Class Location: MEZ 1:216
Instructor: Toyin Falola
Office: Gar. Hall, 2.142
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday: Strictly by appointment
E-mail: toyinfalola@austin.utexas.edu



COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Since the late 1980s, the African film industry has undergone radical changes that reflect increased globalization, the availability of new production and distribution methods, and the rise of a new generation of African filmmakers. This revolution is characterized by the low budget, direct to video films commonly referred to as Nollywood. While these films have drawn criticisms for their low production values and popularization of negative cultural stereotypes, the Nigerian video industry has become the third largest film industry in the world, following Hollywood and Bollywood, sweeping across the continent and throughout the global diaspora. This course examines the genesis of a popular African art form and the rise of Nollywood. Through a combination of films and readings, students will explore how Nollywood, in comparison to Hollywood, depicts the society and culture of Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Each week addresses a different theme in an attempt to introduce students to the various dynamics that shape African cultures, societies and governments. Additionally, this course seeks to engage students in a debate about how popular films affect historical imaginations and memory. While these images have previously been the product of Hollywood and European

films, this course will introduce Nollywood as an African alternative to how films depict, and people understand, their history.



READING LIST:

Matthias Krings and Onookome Okome, eds., *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Adeshina Afolayan, ed., *Auteuring Nollywood: Critical Perspectives on The Figurine* (Ibadan: University Press, 2014) to be supplied by the Instructor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To increase the knowledge and understanding of African history, culture, and society.
2. To identify key themes in African history that transcend national boundaries.
3. To help students understand the social, cultural, political, and economic agents that shape African history.
4. To assess the viability of films as a historical source.
5. To understand popular perceptions about Africa depicted in films and how they lead to misunderstandings of the past.
6. To teach the art of writing and critical thinking.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignment		
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Attendance		10
Group Participation (2 per student)		15
Film Review		15
Conference Attendance, Report, and Volunteering		25
Book Review		15
Final Paper		20

*Assignments to be submitted by Email.

** Group participation: Join a group. A group presentation, three pages, will be submitted and presented in class. This is to teach how to work in a group, debate, exercise leadership, and reflect. Presentation should be less of a summary but condensed opinions of group members. Dissent is allowed where a group member disagrees. A copy of the report has to be submitted to the Instructor. A note by the group leader must indicate the participation, contribution and level of commitment of each member.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week I: Jan. 17, Introduction

Course Introduction: Nollywood in the context of films.
Introduction to Nollywood.

Reading:

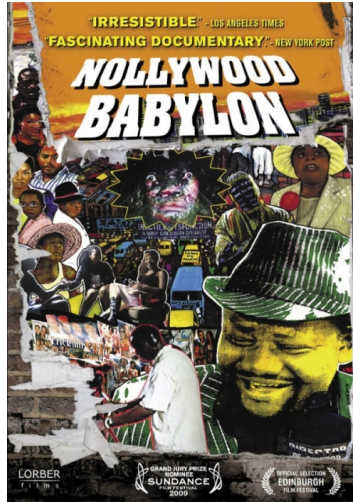
J, Shaka, Femi Okiremuette. "Nollywood: Reconstructing the Historical and Socio Cultural Contexts of the Nigerian Video Film Industry."

AVAILABLE AT

<http://www.supplemagazine.org/nollywood-reconstructing-the-historical-and-socio-cultural-contexts-of-the-nigerian-video-film-industry.html>

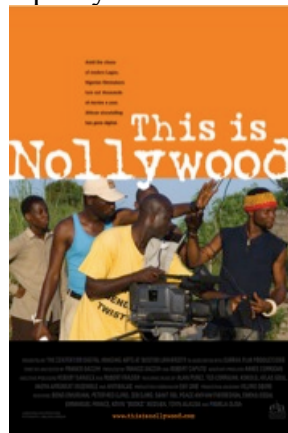
Films: Nollywood Babylon

<https://utexas-kanopystreaming-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/video/nollywood-babylon>



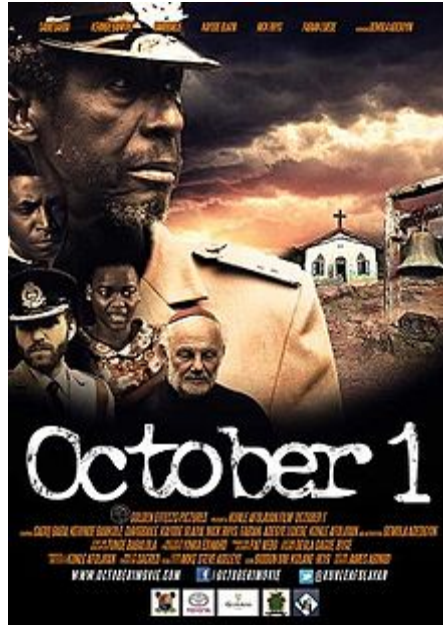
This is Nollywood

<https://utexas-kanopystreaming-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/video/nollywood>



Week 2 –Jan. 24: The Past in the Present

Film: October 1 (Iroko TV)



Reading: *History of Nigeria*, pp. 1-15.
 Afolayan, *Auteuring Nollywood*, 1-50.

Group A Presentation.

Week 3 –Jan. 31: Modernizing Mythologies

Reading: *History of Nigeria*, pp. 16-60; Afolayan, *Auteuring Nollywood*, 118-134.

Group B Presentation.

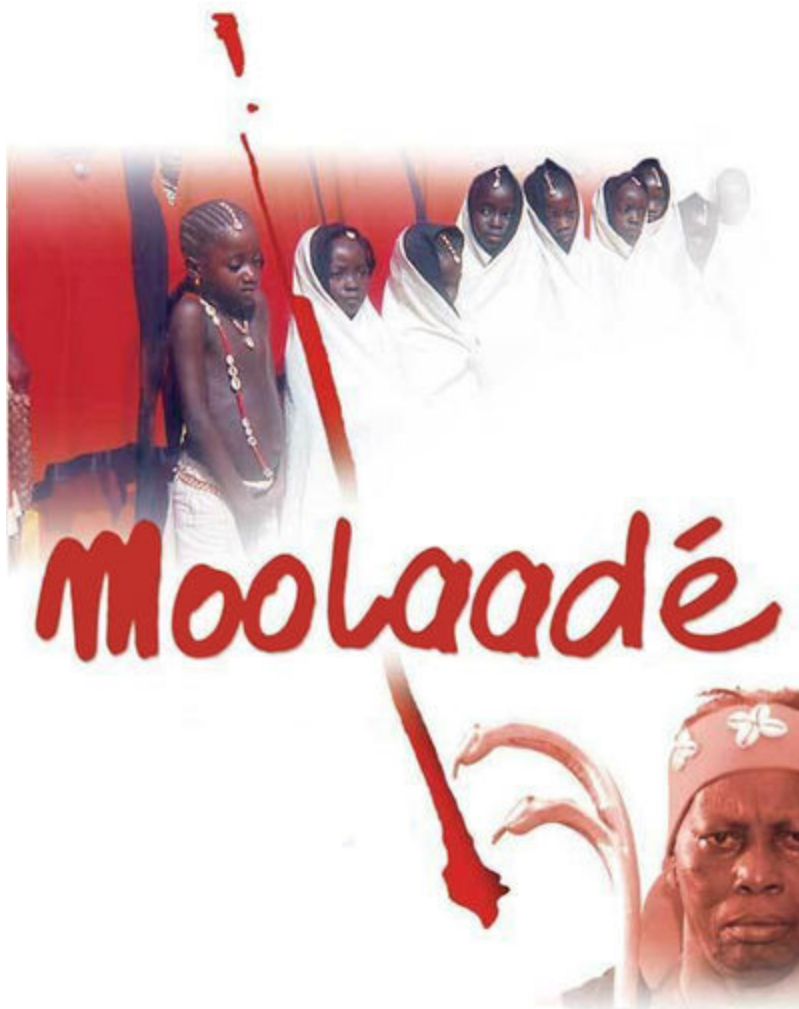
Film: The Figurine (Media player, YouTube)

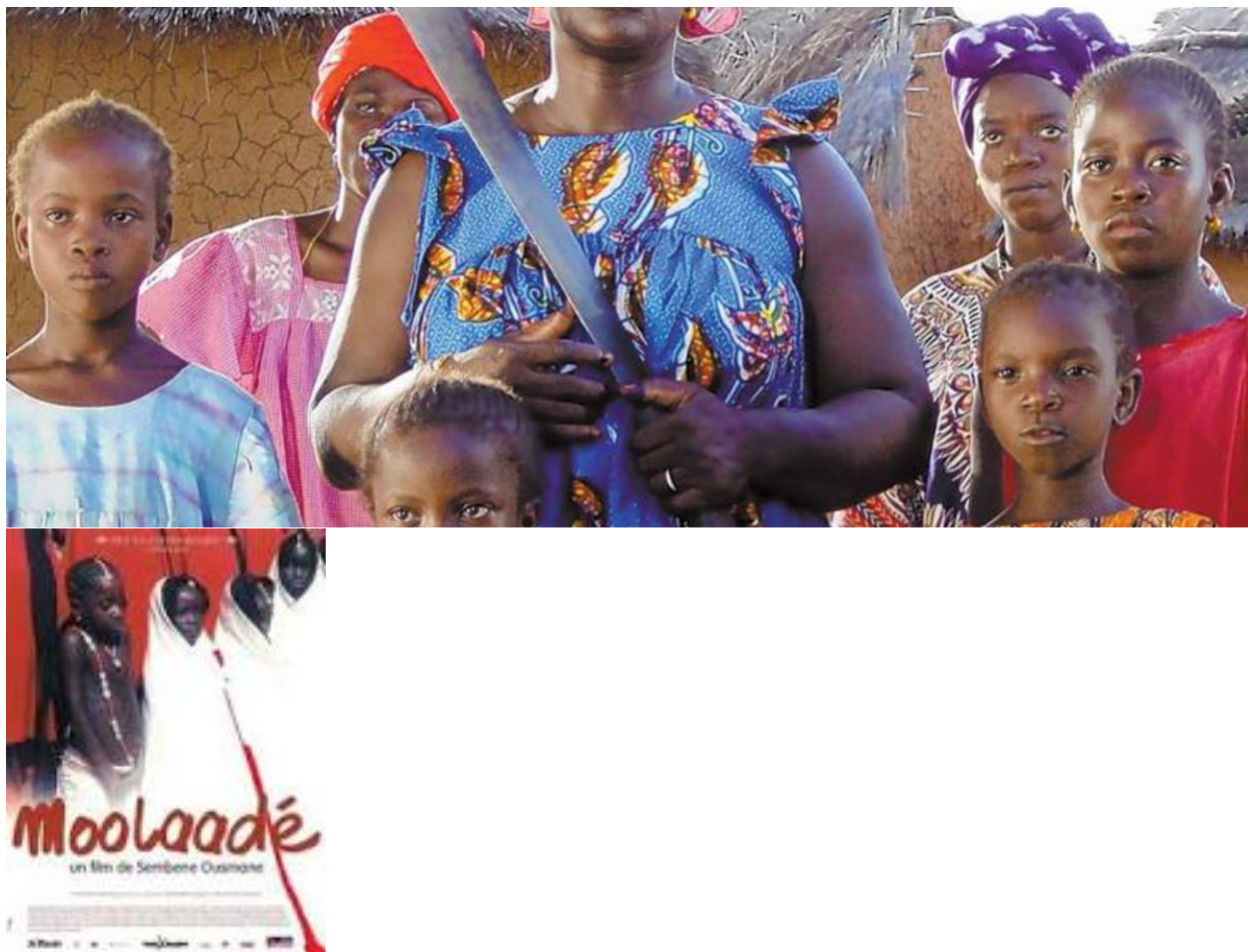


Week 4 –Feb 7: Challenges of Modernity
Reading: *History of Nigeria*, pp. 61-109.
Group C Presentation.

Afolayan, *Auteuring Nollywood*, 217-236.

Film Moolaade (Ousmane Sembene)
Guest Lecturers: Dr. Ken Kalu and Chukwuemeka Agbo
Group C Presentation





Week 5—Feb 14: Class and Social Relations

Guest Lecturers: Dr. Ken Kalu and Chukwuemeka Agbo

Film: The Wooden Camera (by Mtshavheni Wa Lurili)



History of Nigeria, pp. 110-157; Afolayan, *Auteuring Nollywood*, 237-256
Group D Presentation.

Week 6—Feb. 21: Romance and Politics

Film: *Knocking on Heaven's Door* (Iroko Tv)



Reading: *History of Nigeria*, 158-208.

Afolayan, *Auteuring Nollywood*, 324-331.

Group A Presentation

* Submit Film Review: Any film of your choice. Report must incorporate evidence of reading.

Week 7—Feb. 28: Worldview and Love

Group B Presentation

Reading: *History of Nigeria*, 209-279.

Afolayan, *Auteuring Nollywood*, 332-350.

Film: Tango with me

<https://utexas-kanopystreaming-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/video/tango-me>



Week 8—March 7: Contrasting Lifestyles

Film: Phone Swap, 120 minutes

<https://utexas-kanopystreaming-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/video/phone-swap>



Reading: *Global Nollywood*, Introduction, Chapter 1

Group C Presentation

Week 9—March 21: Fatherhood and surrogacy

Film: *The Contract* (Iroko Tv)

Reading: *Global Nollywood*, Chapter 2.



Week 10—March 28: Education and Social Change

Film: The First Grader (By Justin Chadwick)



Reading: *Global Nollywood*, Chapter 3.
Group D Presentation.

*****Conference, March 31-April 2**

Week 11—April 4: Modernity and Marriage



Reading: Global Nollywood, Chapter 12.

Reading: *A Mouth Sweeter Than Salt* (chapters of your choice).

*****Submit conference report.**

Week 12—April 11: Child Marriage, Child Abuse, and Disease

Film: *Dry* (Iroko TV)



Reading: *A Mouth Sweeter Than Salt* (book for revision)

Class presentation (chapters of your choice)

Week 13—April 18: Relationship and Deception

Film: The Visit (Iroko TV)



Reading: Your research

Discussion: Research and Research Sources

Students to present their topics: topic; significance; sources; outline

*Submit book review

Week 14—April 25

Film:

Reading: Your research

*Submit a one-page introduction of your research paper

Submit research outline and bibliography

Week 15—May 2

Research findings and short presentations of papers

FINAL PAPER DUE, May 5 at 5 PM (Submit by Email)

**Attendance Guidelines:**

Students must be present to view each film, and engage in discussions. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. Late attendance will disturb the class. You must arrive on time. Make-ups will be granted only in the case of medical illness or university-related conflict. Such conflicts will require signed documentation explaining the reason for your absence. Students who miss class must arrange to view the film on their own time. Each unexcused absence will result in an automatic 5 points deduction from your cumulative grade.

Group Discussion:

A student must belong to a group. The group leader will convey a meeting where they will all discuss the reading for the week, make questions for the rest of the class, and offer analytical presentations of the materials. Group leader will report participation to the Instructor.

Conference Participation and Report: All students must endeavor to attend the 2016 Africa Conference to hold from March 31-April 2 (additional information will be announced in class).

For information and panels, go to <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/africa-conference/>

The conference is part of the attempt to provide students with new knowledge about Africa. Attend a minimum of two panels and a Keynote (not two presenters!) of your choice and write a report on them, minimum of 3 pages. A panel consists of a set of presenters. **Participation in the conference is part of the class and it is mandatory. There is no substitute assignment unless on medical grounds or mandatory official duties.** During the presentations, students will be allowed to ask respective presenters questions on issues pertaining to the lecture. For the review, students will be expected to fulfill a two-fold task: first, summarize the lecture in no more than 1 page (roughly 300 words); second, give your opinion of the lecture in no less than 1 page (roughly 300 words). Report will be due in class on April 6, 2017.

Film Review Guidelines:

A good way to write a film review is as follows.

Watch the film (The Figurine). Give your opinion of the film. What are your overall impressions? Likes and dislikes? Make sure to provide impartial details that support your assessments of the film. Understand that you are writing to an academic audience. Facts and specifics are mandatory, as is objective prose. Saying something “sucks” or “stinks” is unacceptable unless you can back up your opinions with facts. Give an outline of the film without excessive details. Too much detail will result in summarization, which you want to avoid. Make sure to analyze the acting performances. How is the film’s structure? Does the plot flow? Are there continuity gaps? How does the film use music? How does the music add or distract from the story and your connection with the film? Remember that this is a history class and that readings go along with the films. How does the film bring to light aspects in the readings, or vice versa?

Book Review Guidelines:

Each student is required to write a review of the book *A Mouth Sweeter Than Salt*. Reviews should be between 1000 and 1500 words, typed, double-spaced and stapled. The book is not part of your weekly assigned readings. Therefore, you are responsible for reading the book apart from your weekly assignments.

Reviews should be analytical, and not just a retelling of the book’s chapters. The best way to do this is by synthesizing the different aspects of the book in your own mind and then critically examining such things as the content, style and the overall impression these had on you. Additionally, you will need to incorporate examples and evidence from the reading that either support or contradict your statements. Feel free to express your own opinion, but do so in a clear statement. Organize and develop the main points you wish to make and re-emphasize them in your conclusion.

A summarization of the book and its chapters is acceptable in your introduction, but this can be no more than one page. Do not simply retell the book’s chapters, but discuss the context, style and perspective of the book.

A good way to learn how to write book reviews is to look up reviews written by others. You can find these on the university libraries webpage. Go to the “Research Tools” tab at the top of the library homepage. In the drop down menu select “Find Articles Using Databases.” Warning: review the plagiarism guidelines. Reviews are intellectual property, too.

Proofread your review before submitting it. See the format guidelines section of this syllabus for further information. Turn your review in on time (that means at the beginning of class) because late reviews will be penalized half a letter grade for each day late. Emailed submissions will not be accepted. Your book review is worth 15 points of your final grade.

Final Paper: Contextualizing Nollywood

Each student is required to write a research paper that addresses one or more of the key themes of the class (i.e., colonialism, traditionalism vs. modernity, relationship, affect, sexuality, love,

gender dynamics, corruption, etc.) through the use of films and written texts. Examples: “Nollywood and Women;” “Nollywood and Magic;” “Nollywood and Globalization,” etc. The professor may also suggest research topics. While students are allowed to use films and texts from class, they are also required to explore the growing body of literature about African cinema as well as the increasing number of African films becoming available. The Fine Arts Library and online databases has a wealth of material available.

Research papers must have a clear thesis statement and organizational structure.

Research papers should be between 2400-3000 words, typed, double spaced, with size 12 Times New Roman font and stapled. Proofread your research paper before submitting it. See the format guidelines section of this syllabus for further information.

During the next to last week of class, students will present their paper. Presentations should be between 5-7 minutes long followed by several minutes of questions from the class. You are allowed to include a power point presentation.

Turn your research paper in on time (that means at the beginning of class) because late papers will be penalized half a letter grade for each day late. Emailed submissions will not be accepted. Your research paper is worth 20 points of your final grade.

FORMAT GUIDELINES:

All assignments must be stapled, typed, double spaced, have 1” margins and size 12 Times New Roman font. Assignments that do not follow these guidelines will not be accepted.

A part of writing history includes clearly communicating your ideas. As such, written assignments must conform to standard rules of written English including the organization of essays, grammar and punctuation. Students who require assistance can use the undergraduate writing center in the FAC free of charge.

PLAGIARISM:

How do you avoid committing plagiarism? Here are some basic tips:

1. Historians use a variety of citation formats, including footnotes, endnotes, and indicating their source directly in their text within parentheses. Within those formats, they use a variety of styles. Ask your instructor for guidance on a uniform system of citations--and follow that advice.
2. Take notes carefully. Whenever you copy a direct quotation, protect yourself by putting quotation marks around it. Attach a full, accurate citation to any borrowed passage, whether quoted or paraphrased, and keep it attached as you write.
3. Although borrowed ideas must be fully acknowledged in a citation, you do not need to provide a citation for information that your reader can reasonably be expected to know. When in doubt, include a citation.

4. You can avoid plagiarism by learning how to paraphrase. It is much easier to avoid plagiarism that involves verbatim copying or handing in the same paper twice than it is to avoid plagiarism that involves paraphrase, probably the trickiest area of all. Certainly it is the area where most instances of plagiarism occur. Plagiarism includes taking direct quotes or ideas from a source without giving the original author credit through citation.

CLASS POLICIES:

Make-Ups: Make-ups will be granted only in the case of medical illness or university-related conflict. Make-ups will only be given when a request is made prior to the date of the exam or assignment except for documented medical emergencies.

Assignments: All assignments must be submitted on due dates. Half a letter grade per day is deducted thereafter. Failure to read the assigned materials will incur negative grading and treated as an evidence of cheating. Answers to questions will be used to reveal the failure to read.

University of Texas Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Any student found guilty of scholastic dishonesty may receive an “F” in the course and be remanded to the appropriate University of Texas authorities for disciplinary action. For more information, view Student Judicial Services at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>.

Use of Class Materials: No material presented in lecture may be directly or indirectly published, posted to the Internet, or rewritten for publication or distribution in any medium. Neither these materials nor any portion thereof may be stored in a computer except for personal and non-commercial use. All information derived from the internet must be adequately cited.

Student Privacy: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) require that student privacy be preserved. Thus the posting of grades, even by the last four digits of the social security number, is forbidden. All communication will remain between the instructor and the student, and the instructor will not be able to share details of the student’s performance with parents, spouses, or any others.

Documented Disability Statement: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone).

GRADING SCALE:

93-100: A	90-92: A-	
87-89: B+	83-86: B	80-82: B-
77-79: C+	73-76: C	70-72: C-

67-69: D+ 63-66: D 60-62: D- 0-59: F

APPENDIX: INFORMATION ON THE MOVIES FROM INTERNET SOURCES

1a THIS IS NOLLYWOOD (2007)

‘An amalgam of ‘Nigerian’ and ‘Hollywood,’ the ‘Nollywood’ in question in the title of Franco Sacchi’s documentary This is Nollywood refers to the Nigerian film industry, which, as of the mid-late 2000s, blossomed to such a degree that it began churning out 500-1,000 movies a year - many, many times larger than the equivalent yearly output of Hollywood. And the revolution in question, in fact, is almost exclusively attributable to the process of digitalization impacting Nigerian cinema - a process that allows producers and directors to shoot films on the cheap, turn them out and distribute them to African audiences via the web. As a point of entry to this industry, Sacchi and co. hone in on Bond Emeruwa, a young man valiantly attempting to shoot a feature with \$20,000 in nine days. Emeruwa counters obstacles nonexistent in other countries and their respective film industries - including the presence of street thugs who violently attempt to extort money from him, noise interference from mosque prayers on loudspeakers, and a host of other irritations - but refuses to ever give up. The filmmakers then travel to Lagos, where scores and scores of aspiring actors attend auditions and the progenitors of Nigerian cinema discuss their obligations to educate audiences by weaving social issues into their cinematic narratives.’

http://www.fandango.com/thisisnollywood_v419062/plotsummary

1b NOLLYWOOD BABYLON (2008)

‘Hollywood and Bollywood watch out; in this documentary examining Nigeria’s booming movie industry, filmmakers Ben Addelman and Samir Mallal highlight the reasons why it doesn’t take a multi-million-dollar budget to produce a wildly entertaining movie. Idumota market, Lagos: amidst the hustle and bustle of the endless stalls, movie stars are born. Nigeria is a place where traditional mysticism and modern culture clash to form an atmosphere where anything seems possible. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in the inventive, low-budget B-movies produced by enterprising local filmmakers with no goal other than to entertain the viewer. From the epicenter of this African metropolis emerges a new breed of cinema known as Nollywood, a brand of film that’s remained a well-kept secret...until now.’

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1213870-nollywood_babylon/

2. October 1

‘*October 1* is a 2014 Nigerian dark psychological thriller film written by Tunde Babalola, produced and directed by Kunle Afolayan. It stars Sadiq Daba, Kayode Olaiya, David Bailie, Kehinde Bankole, Kanayo O. Kanayo, Fabian Adeoye Lojede, Nick Rhys, Kunle Afolayan, Femi Adebayo, Bimbo Manuel, Ibrahim Chatta and introducing Demola Adedoyin; it also features special appearance from Deola Sagoe. The film, which is set in Colonial Nigeria, narrates the story of Danladi Waziri (Sadiq Daba), a police officer from

Northern Nigeria who is posted to a remote town of Akote in Western Nigeria to investigate the frequent female murder cases in the community, and have the mystery solved before the Nigerian flag is raised on October 1, Nigeria's Independence Day.

The lead character of the film, Dan Waziri, particularly posed a challenge during casting, as the director had a particular look he wants for the character; Daba was eventually selected for the role after a series of research, and thereby marked his return to the big screen after over a 10-year absence from the industry. The film received sponsorships from the Lagos State Government, Toyota Nigeria, Elizade Motors, Guinness and Sovereign Trust Insurance. It was shot in Lagos and Ondo State for a period of over forty days using RED cameras, after four months of preproduction. Production design for the film was done by Pat Nebo, who has also worked with Afolayan in his previous film projects; he and his team made almost half of the props used in the film, while the other props such as television sets from the '50s, shotguns and antique vehicles, were acquired and refurbished for the film.^{[6][7]} Golden Effects also partnered with Haute Couture to provide primordial costumes used in the film.

After several release postponements, the film had a number of special screenings and eventually premiered on 28 September 2014; its premiere which was tagged "'60s", required guests to dress in native costumes and hairstyles from the 1960s. The premiere also provided tours of sets, and also displayed the props and costumes used in the film. The film was met with positive critical reception, mostly praised for its production design, cinematography and its exploration of powerful themes; which include tribalism, western imperialism, paedophilia, homosexuality, Nigeria's unification, and also establishing a strong connection between western culture and the cause of present-day Boko Haram insurgency.'

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_1_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_1_(film))

3. The Figurine

'The Figurine: Araromire is a 2009 Nigerian thriller film written by Kemi Adesoye, produced and directed by Kunle Afolayan, who also stars in the film as one of the main protagonists. It also stars Ramsey Nouah and Omoni Oboli.

The movie narrates the story of two friends who finds a mystical sculpture in an abandoned shrine in the forest while serving at a National Youth Service Corps camp, and one of them decides to take the artwork home. Unknown to them, the sculpture is from the goddess 'Araromire' which bestows seven years of good luck on anyone who encounters it, and after the seven years have expired, seven years of bad luck follow. The lives of the two friends begin to change for good, as they become successful and wealthy businessmen. However, after seven years, things start to change for the worse.

The original idea for a thriller film came long ago from Kunle Afolayan himself and Jovi Babs and it was to be titled Shrine. The script took nine months to be finalized and the development stage took five years. The movie was shot in Lagos and Osun state for three months and received sponsorship from companies such as MicCom Golf Resort, GSK, Omatek, MTN, IRS Airlines, and Cinekraft. It also had media partners like HiTV and others. There were no professional stunts on the ground, so most of the stunts were performed by Kunle Afolayan on set.

The film received ten nominations and won five awards at the 6th Africa Movie Academy Awards, including the awards for Best Picture, Heart of Africa, Achievement in Cinematography and Achievement in Visual Effects.”

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Figurine

4. Moolade

Roger Ebert<http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-moolaade-2007>

“For fear of enduring genital mutilation, a group of girls flee their own "purification" ceremony and take refuge with Collé (Fatoumata Coulibaly), a woman who had spared her daughter from the same fate. Collé casts a spell to protect the girls, which causes much consternation among the village... More

Cast: Fatoumata Coulibaly, Maimouna Hélène Diarra, More

Languages: French, Bambara

Awards: Prize of Un Certain Regard, National Society of Film Critics Award for Best Foreign Language Film

Tweet

"Moolaade" is the kind of film that can only be made by a director whose heart is in harmony with his mind. It is a film of politics and anger, and also a film of beauty, humor, and a deep affection for human nature. Usually films about controversial issues are tilted too far toward rage or tear-jerking. Ousmane Sembene, who made this film when he was 81, must have lived enough, suffered enough and laughed enough to find the wisdom of age. I remember him sitting in the little lobby of the Hotel Splendid in Cannes, puffing contentedly on a Sherlock Holmes pipe that was rather a contrast with his bright, flowing Senegalese garb.

His film is about, and against, the custom of female circumcision, practiced in many Muslim lands (although Islamic law forbids it). Does that make you think you don't want to see it? Think again. Sembene embodies his subject so deeply with his characters, and especially with his heroine Colle, that it becomes a story about will, defiance, and ancient custom.

It is never actually too specific about what would be done to the four girls who flee to Colle for *moolaade*, or protection. Sembene trusts us to know. He doesn't exploit blood-drenched horror scenes, and his approach is actually more effective because he limits himself to off-screen cries, or a brief glimpse of the knife used by the village's *doyenne des exciseuses*, the woman in charge of circumcisions. The knife is very small, wickedly hooked, hardly seen, and more frightening than a broadsword. Yet we learn that women support the removal of the clitoris because no man will marry a bride who has not been "cut." The actress Fatoumata Coulibaly, who plays Colle, has said that she herself was circumcised; the result, as with most victims, was an absence of sexual pleasure, and often pain during sex.

Why would a man insist on this mutilation? Perhaps out of deep insecurity and a distrust, even fear, of women. But "Moolaade" makes no such sweeping charges, and observes how the women themselves enforce and carry out the practice -- because, of course, they want their daughters to find husbands.

Colle has refused to let her own daughter be cut, but now the girl is engaged to a man returning home from France. Will Europe have freed him of ancient barbarities, or will he demand a bride who has been cut? Since the village hopes for wealth from the returning man, there is social pressure on Colle. And just at that moment, the girls on the brink of adolescence run weeping to Colle and beg for shelter in the compound she shares with her husband and his other wives.

Colle evokes moolaade. She ties a string of yarn across the doorstep of her house, and the law says that as long as the girls stay inside, no one can enter after them. Her husband is enraged. He loses status in the village council because he cannot control his woman, but his Number One Wife supports Number Two, and he is stalemated. One of the themes coiling beneath the surface of the film is that the women in this society have great power, if they are bold enough to exercise it.

Another theme is suspicion of the West, of modernization, of the outside in general. One of the ways groups create their identities is by enforcing costume rules that conceal individuality and impose a monolithic look. Uniforms are a way of saying that those who wear them are interchangeable. One who is obviously an outsider is *le mercenaire*, the itinerant peddler who visits the village to sell pots and pans, postage stamps, T-shirts and toys, and to pick up and deliver mail. He has a lively eye for pretty women, suggests secret rendezvous, and in general ignores the code that a woman belongs to a man.

Among the most important items in his stock are batteries, needed for portable radios and flashlights in this district without electricity. The radio stations are in the cities, and broadcast words and music reflecting dangerous freedoms. When the frustrated all-male village council meets to ponder the challenge of Colle and moolaade, it doesn't occur to them, of course, that women might have perfectly good reasons for not wanting to be circumcised. They blame the outside. The radios. They order a sweep of the village to confiscate all the radios, which are deposited in a big pile, some of them still turned on. This pile becomes a central image of the film, and inevitably evokes bonfires of hated books, or videos, or rock 'n' roll, or people.

The construction of Sembene's film is subtle and seductive. He spends little time denouncing female circumcision, and a great deal of time studying the human nature of dissent and conformity. There is humor in the paradoxes that the men debate, and in their impotence against their women, and suspense when the prodigal son returns from Paris. On the most fundamental of levels, this is an entertaining film. Also a beautiful one, as we admire the artistry of the architecture, and appreciate how the people of the village live within the rules and respect them, even when opposing them. These people, despite some of their practices, are deeply decent and civilized, and Sembene loves them for it. The movie contains less outrage than regret.

Sembene's death at 84, on June 9, 2007, brought to a close an extraordinary life, one that parallels in some ways Nelson Mandela's. Neither was born into wealth and privilege, and both achieved greatness. Although he was known for years as "the father of the African cinema," and wrote six novels before he decided films would reach a larger audience, Sembene as a young man (I learn from *IMDb.com*) was a mechanic, a bricklayer, a soldier for the Free French, a labor leader, an autoworker and a stevedore. His first novel came in 1956, his first movie ("[Black Girl](#)") in 1966.

That film told the story of the ill treatment a young Senegalese woman finds when she goes to work as an au pair in Paris. But Sembene did not devote himself to dramatizing

the evils of whites against blacks on his continent. He was more interested in drama, conflicts and comedy within the vibrant African civilization.

Consider his wonderful film "Guelwaar" (1992). In his country, Muslims live side-by-side with Catholics, and his story involves a mix-up that accidentally results in the burial of a Catholic body in a Muslim cemetery. When an attempt to move the body is made, the Muslims are outraged -- not because the body is there, but because the removal would desecrate the cemetery. A local policeman, himself a Muslim, tries to defuse the situation and prevent a nasty fight.

This story could involve stereotypes and fan the flames of prejudice. But not with Sembene. He portrays all the characters as people who are reasonable, by their own lights, and would be content with a solution that did not violate their beliefs. And all religions contain a fuzzy area that allows common sense to sometimes win over dogma. All it takes here is a persuasive policeman, and some wise people on both sides who are weary of the hotheads.

Sembene's work so often dealt with his society from the inside, with sympathy, insight, and the sly wit of a Bernard Shaw. He made political films that didn't seem political, and comedies that were very serious. His regret was that many of his films, including "Moolaade," were not welcome in Africa. He won awards at Venice, Karlovy Vary and many other important festivals; "Moolaade" won first place in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes. But according to IMDb, the film has played nowhere in Africa except Morocco. The message is not heard where it is needed.

Ousmane Sembene was born into an Africa where a black man was not expected to write novels or direct films. He dedicated his life to making brave and useful films that his continent needed to see. He did that even knowing they would probably not be seen. They exist. They wait. They honor his memory."

5. The Wooden Camera

"The film takes place in and around Cape Town and a nearby township, Khayelitsha. The film centers around two teenage friends, the younger Madiba (Junior Singo) and the elder Sipho (Innocent Msimango). One day, as they are playing alongside the railroad tracks, they find a dead body. With him they find a gun with one bullet and a video camera. Sipho takes the gun and Madiba takes the camera, which he puts inside a wooden toy camera to make it seem a not-working toy. Sipho seems to harmlessly joke about the gun at first, but begins spending more time in Cape Town, robbing parking meters and paying for glue to sniff. He eventually starts living in abandoned places in Cape Town with a group of thugs.

Madiba films the world around him, finding beauty in both Khayelitsha and Cape Town. He tries many filming techniques and is skilled, but finds his videos very personal and does not normally let other people see them. While in Cape Town, he meets and forges an unlikely friendship with a white Cape Town girl, Estelle (Dana de Agrella) from a rich family, who gets into conflict with her racist father about this. Sipho uses the gun to rob people. Madiba disapproves and does not want any of the stolen money, but

still considers him his friend. One of Sipho's robberies goes wrong and he is killed. In the end Madiba and Estelle run off and take a train together.”

6. Knocking on Heaven's Door

<http://www.nigeriafilms.com/news/26681/45/nollywood-knocking-on-heavens-door.html>

“The Nigerian entertainment industry is really growing in a fast pace as movies are being premiered and released almost every month. This time around, Royal Academy in conjunction with Achievas Entertainment presents, ‘Knocking On Heaven’s Door.

According to the producers, the movie is said to be an emotional story based on domestic violence, betrayal, passion, faith and love. The movie stars the likes of Majid Michel, Ini Edo-Ehiagwina, Blossom Chukwujekwu, Adesuwa Etomi, Robert Peters, Lelee Byoma, Evaezi, Steve Onu aka Yaw. Produced by Emem Isong & Ini Edo-Ehiagwina and directed by Desmond Elliot. This hit movie is set to be premiered on Friday, 18th April, 2014 at Silverbird Galleria, Victoria Island.

Debbie (Adesuwa Etomi) is a beautiful singer with a heavenly voice, married to the handsome and charismatic Moses (Blossom Chukwujekwu), she is the envy of many. Debbie however harbours a dark secret that she tries to keep hidden within the confines of her perfect world; she is being physically and emotionally abused by Moses and the strain of it threatens to break her.”

7. Tango with me

Lola (Genevieve Nnaji) and Uzo (Joseph Benjamin) are the perfect, newly, married couple, with both their lives ahead of them. Until a mistaken identity during the happiest day of their lives lead to the beginning of their worst nightmares. The couple are jolted onto a journey of self-discovery and moral truth. Tango with Me is a contemporary story about marriage, forgiveness, values and faith. A story that proves that love conquers all. Mahmood Ali Balogun is a graduate of film and television production from the University of Ife. Before setting up Brickwall Communications Limited Mahmood worked briefly at the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). He is actively involved in the Nigerian motion picture industry and regularly participates at some of the most prominent international film festivals.

8. Phone Swap From IMDb

“Akin and Mary meet for the first time at an airport where they accidentally bump into each other and mistakenly swap their identical phones . This leads to a destination mix up after they receive one another's text regarding a travel destination. Consequently, Akin ends up traveling to where Mary is supposed to go and vice versa. Neither knows about the swap until they have reached their opposite destinations and "the phone" stops ringing

(In Mary's case) and "Won't stop ringing" (In Akin's case). As a result of the phone swap, they agree to help carry out each other's missions, armed with the information and data on each other's phone. But it's not as easy as they both think as new obstacles and complications rise at every turn as they both struggle to adapt to their alien environment and situation. Mary has to walk in Akins shoes and represent him in a company meeting while Akin has to represent Mary in her the family meeting. This they do with hilarious results.”

9. The Contract

<http://www.360nobs.com/2014/02/movie-review-the-contract/>

Director- Shirley Frimpong-Manso

Written By- Herty Owusu, and Shirley Frimpong-Manso

Cast- Hlomla Dandala, Joseph Benjamin, Yvonne Okoro

Genre- Romantic Comedy

Run time- Disc 1-1:15:20; Disc 2- 1:10:36

“There are millions of girls who will have a baby with me, for the right price... Peter Popolampo.

Successful businessman Peter Popolampo is the ultimate alpha male and a staunch bachelor. Despite his mother’s persistent attempt to find him a woman, to settle down with, Peter sticks to his guns of a non-committal casual relationships, freedom and complete control of his life. Not wanting to live solo for the rest of his, he devices a structured means to have a child without the normal drama that comes with it. Enter Abena Boateng, a crude but clever local girl who is anything but impressed with Peter’s influence. With a clear definitive contract outlining the dos and don’ts, these two opposites must exercise every ounce of will power not to kill each other until their child is born. The choice of characters for this movie was totally apt. Haven’t seen any of Yvonne Okoro’s movies so imagine my surprise as I watched her hold her own against top industry people like Benjamin Joseph and Hlomla Dandala. As a crude girl she was almost village like, naïve but still held on to her pride. I would have preferred her a bit older than 27 but been that age wasn’t too bad.

Joseph was awesome, his character played an extremely vital role in advising his loyal buddy and not insisting his friend change his ways, I loved his demure and carriage playing this role was a winner for me and I can’t readily think of anyone who the role suited more like it did Joseph. For the main attraction, Hlomla Dandal was my champion. While on Channel O as a VJ, I had watched and enjoyed his style of presenting. As Jacob Makhubu of Jacobs Cross I adored him and as Peter he was spot on. He was a good alpha male, running his life as a routine and never wanting his schedule broken. His role was totally relatable to what we have out there and when people say roles are made for certain people, this role was created with him in mind and it was totally commendable.”

10. The First Grader

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_First_Grader

“*The First Grader* is a 2010 biographical drama film directed by Justin Chadwick. It stars Naomie Harris, Oliver Litondo, and Tony Kgoroge. The film is based on the true

story of Kimani Maruge, a Kenyan farmer who enrolled in elementary school at the age of 84 following the Kenyan government's announcement of free universal primary education in 2003.

Plot

In 2003, a disc jockey announces over a Kenyan radio station that the government is offering free primary school education to all natives who can prove citizenship with a birth certificate. Kimani Maruge (Litondo), an 84-year-old villager, hears this and decides to take it upon himself to seek an education. Arriving at his local school, he meets Jane Obinchi (Harris), the principal and teacher. He expresses his desire to learn how to read. Her teaching colleague Alfred (Munyua), ridicules him and demands he leave. Later, Jane informs her husband Charles (Kgoroge) about Maruge. He discourages her in supporting his educational endeavor.

After beginning his initial classes, Maruge is plagued by memories of his service during the Mau Mau Uprising against the British in the 1950s. He begins to hallucinate and becomes confrontational with the students, struggling to continue his academics. Controversy begins to stir over Maruge's education. Soon enough, the story that an elderly man going to school becomes national headlines. Mr. Kipruto (Kunene), a superintendent of the school district, is alerted to the situation and strongly disapproves of Maruge's predicament and suggests that he go to an adult educational facility.

Meeting with the head of the education board to plead Maruge's case, Jane is overruled. It is explained to her that if an exception is made to keep Maruge in the school, others will follow, and many schools will eventually become filled with older people sitting aside children. Maruge is forced to attend an adult learning centre, where he soon finds himself surrounded by people with no motivation or ambition to study. Maruge vows to never go back to the adult institution. Jane later decides to offer him a reprieve, to work as her teaching assistant. As Maruge's story gains publicity and attention, the local press descend on the school, causing friction among the parents. The villagers believe Jane and Maruge are seeking fame and fortune at the expense of the children. Following negative feedback and random acts of violence against the school, Jane soon receives a letter that she is to be transferred to another educational institute a few hundred miles away.

Jane reveals to Maruge that she is relocating, and then commences an emotional goodbye with the children. Following protests and disobedience on part of the students towards their new teacher, Maruge is motivated to travel to Nairobi to appeal himself to the education board. Jane is reinstated at the school, where Maruge and the children are there to welcome her. The film's epilogue displays a series of graphics stating that at age 84, Maruge is the oldest person to start primary school according to the Guinness Book of World Records. Supplementally, he was invited to make a speech before international leaders at the UN in New York regarding the power of education. He inspired a whole new generation of people to go to school for the first time. Maruge later died in 2009."

11. Forgetting June

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forgetting_June

“Eddie (Majid Michel) and June (Mbong Amata) share what seem to be the perfect marriage. Eddie began to lose control of his life when June had a fatal accident on a trip out of town. Eddie's junior brother Tony (Ben Touitou) appealed to June's best friend, Tobi (Beverly Naya) to help Eddie recover from the emotional breakdown from the death of his wife. Tobi eventually persuaded Eddie to join her dance group which eventually led to an emotional connection between them. Several months had gone by and, Eddie and Tobi finally decided to get married despite the reservation of Tobi about their union. It's about 2 years since June was involved in the accident and Tobi is now pregnant with Eddie's baby when June shockingly visited their matrimonial home explaining the circumstances regarding the accident and how Dr George (Blossom Chukwujekwu) saved her. After several power tussle events between June and Tobi, Eddie finally decided to keep both of them as wives. after some consultations made by June bwith Eddie's work colleagues she decides to return to George whom she refused to heed to his romantic advances towards her.”

12. Dry (film)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dry_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dry_(film))

“Dry is a 2014 Nigerian drama film directed by Stephanie Linus and starring Stephanie Okereke, Liz Benson, William McNamara, Darwin Shaw and Paul Sambo. On 20 July 2013, a teaser trailer for the film was released, in response to the Child marriage controversy ongoing in Nigeria at the time.

The film's theme focuses on Vesicovaginal fistula condition and underaged marriage among young women¹ narrating the story of a thirteen-year-old girl, Halima (Zubaida Ibrahim Fagge), whose poor uneducated parents marry her off to Sani (Tijjani Faraga), a 60-year-old man, who constantly rapes her. Halima gets pregnant and suffers Vesicovaginal Fistula (VVF) after child delivery; she's consequently abandoned by her husband and discriminated against in the society. Zara (Stephanie Okereke), a medical doctor who also suffered a horrific childhood meets Halima; she tries to help her get through her situation and also save other young women under such circumstance.

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Production

Okereke had been disturbed with child marriage issue since she was in College and had been thinking on how to tackle the topic. The making of *Dry* was inspired by a true life story of a lady Okereke met in Northern Nigeria.¹ She stated: "I have been to the North and to other parts of the country, and I have seen first-hand how this health issue defies normal living for girls and women of different ages. I have decided to share their stories through *DRY*" "The issue might seem controversial, but if it will set one girl free and open the minds of the people, and also instruct different bodies and individuals to take action, then the movie would have served its purpose". According to Linus, the film was in production for three years; it was reported in September 2012 that Stephanie Okereke just hit location for the film. The film marked the return of Liz Benzon to the big screen after a long time of absence from films. The opening scenes which were initially meant to be shot in Los Angeles were later moved to Aberystwyth, Wales by the line producers, Akanimo Odon and Murtza Ali Ghaznavi. The film was also shot in Aberystwyth University campus, in which the university acted as a production partner. Students from the University's Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies were present on set

to gain practical experience and to also help with the film shoot, and several University staff had minor acting roles, in addition to the professional cast

Release

The film's teaser trailer was released on 20 July 2013.^[1] This was around the time of "Child marriage controversy in Nigeria", when the senate was unable to remove a clause of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which states that "any woman that is married in Nigeria is of full age" due to shortage of votes from members of senate. This however was misconstrued by the general public as a bill for underaged marriage, which drew a lot of media attention at the time. Stephanie Okereke coincidentally just concluded the principal photography of the film at the time, so she released a RAW footage teaser trailer to lend her voice against the "alleged bill". The official trailer was released on 3 September 2014.

Dry premiered on 29 November 2014 at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Wales. *Behind the Scenes* documentary video for the film was uploaded on "NextPage" YouTube channel on 30 July 2015, and the film premiered at the Silverbird Galleria in Lagos on 3 August 2015. The film also premiered in Abuja on 13 August 2015, before going on a general release the next day, on 14 August.

Reception

Critical reception

The film has been generally met with positive critical reception, mainly because of the film's message. Onyeka Onwelu on *Premium Times* commends the film's cinematography and story, concluding "No matter how you may want to summarize it, *Dry* is a propagandist work but a beautifully stitched story about humanity; it drags you through the facades of beauty, it takes you on a walk through the surface of imperialism. Ms. [Stephanie] Linus has created unforgettable characters, stapled with a storyline that, at once, amazes and truncates you. *Dry* is masterly orchestrated".^[16] Chilee Agunanna of *Nigerian Entertainment Today* notes that the film overtly plays like a documentary, but concludes: "*Dry* is a beautiful movie whose new star should be up for some major awards during the next awards season. The issues raised in the movie are genuine and demand attention".^[17] Amarachukwu Iwuala of *360Nobs* notes several inconsistencies in the film due to poor research and scripting, but concludes: "The screenwriter, who also happens to be the director, could have been more thorough in her research to close up the gaping holes, many of which arise from storytelling. However, the visual demonstration of Halima's suffering is enough to melt a stony heart and even if it is for that reason alone, *Dry* is worth your while". Wilfred Okiche of *YNaija* notes that very few attention was paid to detail, but concludes: "*Dry* is funny and at the same time, sad. But it is a story we will all like for the beauty of its storytelling"

Criticism

The film has been criticized for too much generalization, and the constant reference of "Coming to Africa" like a country which sounds hollywoodish.

Themes

Stephanie Okereke stated: "*Dry* as a movie is going to bring up a lot of the maternal issues that we have in this country and the fact that a lot of less privileged women are dying during childbirth. It also dwells on early marriage and the backlash. It is also going to bring to focus the need for young girls to be allowed to live their lives".^[1] Isabella Akinseye commented: "*Dry* does not hold back in putting burning issues of rape, child

marriage, obstetric fistula and the societal stigma that comes with it in our face" "It shows us through the character of a young girl who is forced into an early marriage with devastating results". Okereke also stated in an interview with Jones Magazine: "VVF is a major gynecological problem in many parts of the developing world. The film will be used as an educational tool to create awareness and bring to consciousness the degrading experience young unprivileged women go through in Africa during childbirth."

13.The Visit

"Novelty is always a testament to healthy imagination and the existence of limitless possibilities in any calling. *The Visit*, the sophomore production from KOGA Studios, captivates the viewer. The rarity of feature films, which keep viewers glued to their seats for more than two hours is the singular most important reason to see *The Visit*, where a four-man cast offer unending entertainment.

Whereas Eugenia (Bhaira McWizu) and Chidi (Femi Jacobs) are prim and proper, their neighbours with whom they share a building, Ajiri (Nse Ikpe-Etim) and Lanre (Blossom Chukwujekwu) are carefree and rough. An incident prompts the latter couple to visit the former and the masks of nobility, respectability and affectation, which envelop these couples, come off totally.

Chukwujekwu wears the character of Lanre Shagaya (Lord Shagwell) like a prized birthday garment in what is arguably his most brilliant performance yet; his looks are well-crafted for this role. Femi Jacobs is competent as the slimy Chidi while his wife, Eugenia cannot be beaten by anyone, real or imagined, in the 'faking' game. McWizu's performance is at par with her portrayal of Cindy in her Amstel Malta Box Office (AMBO)-winning movie, *Cindy's Notes*. Of course, Ikpe-Etim does not disappoint.

READ: [#Nollywood Movie Review Of Mo Abudu's 'Fifty'](#)

The screenwriters are acknowledged for creating expectations and taking the story to a different direction, each time. For instance, when Lanre calls Ajiri a bitch and she responds by asking him, 'Is it is not losers that marry bitches?', one thought domestic abuse will follow, but the story goes another way. In fact, whenever Lanre steps up to his wife in anger, it appears a showdown is underway. The deployment of witty dialogue and innumerable subtexts do not go unnoticed. Even the sexual innuendo in the name Shagaya – Shagwell – is apt.

The movie also tasks the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) and other traffic regulatory agencies albeit subtly to introduce punitive penalties for Driving Under the Influence (DUI) so as to deter offenders and saving lives at the same time.

The Visit's shortcoming is that it is built on, at least, two faulty premises. One, the contact between the two couples is triggered by the unruly behaviour of the Shagayas, which becomes intolerable when the glass window is shattered. Two, Ajiri and Eugenia are said to have grown up in Warri and Sapele (two neighbouring towns in Delta State) respectively.

READ: Thy Will Be Done Was Pedestrian, Bland: #Nollywood Movie Review

For the former, an upwardly mobile couple like Eugenia (a popular, full-time blogger) and Chidi, an IT Professional who consults for Google, would have thinned out the smell of marijuana plus the noise from their neighbours by constantly turning on their air conditioners, which are seen one of the days Ajiri and Lanre run round the house. Yet, there could have been explanations as to why their windows are open. They live in Nigeria where electricity is still a luxury. It could have been that their generator is faulty and the regular repairer has not come to fix it. Eugenia's condescending attitude is enough to keep the generator repairer away for days; then maybe the couple do not like too many hands touching their machines and appliances. Additionally, since everything is on schedule for Eugenia, maybe the windows have to be open every Saturday to let in fresh air, but locked on other days.

On the second faulty premise, the Warri variant of the Pidgin English is unmistakable, contradicting Ajiri's claim that she was raised in Warri and lived there for 18 years. Above all, she could not pronounce her name appropriately, the Warri way. Ajiri is pronounced /əʒiri/ as in measure not /ədʒiri/ as in judge; same for Ejiro and Damijo, two other names from that part of the country.

The fact that Ajiri is from Warri should have come from her accent, she did not have to say so herself because dialogue could also show action in film. However, the director fails to execute this properly. Even when Eugenia speaks Pidgin English, the "Waffi" accent is not very discernable. Eugenia could not even properly pronounce Sapele the second time. Still, the producers could have made two ladies come from any part of the country.

Eugenia says "**offsprings**", offspring does not take 's' in the plural form. The prim and proper Chidi tells Ajiri that she has been **running her mouth**. Please, what does that mean? The subtitle is not accurate and/or complete in some places. Many times, the subtitle appears fully before the character completes a statement, distracting viewers and giving them the information beforehand.

The editor should have made the words appear as the actors voice them. Nse's name is written as **Nse-Nkpe Etim** instead of **Nse Ikpe-Etim**, how wrong, particularly in a film where the producers did not have many names to compile! Lanre says, "**I grew up in GRA**", which GRA? I grew up in a GRA or in the GRA would have been a better expression.

If Oyefunke Fayoyin had been more thorough, she might have ended up with a film in the mould of *Violated*, *Out of Bounds*, *Hostages*, *The Truth*, *Diamond Ring* and *The Untold*. Needless to say, it is not enough to hit on a brilliant idea, the execution of the same to achieve excellent results is even more important and this is where *The Visit* falters."

Source: <https://www.360nobs.com/2016/03/nollywood-movie-review/>

