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**Popular fiction television production in Nigeria:  
Global models, local responses**

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POPULAR FICTION TELEVISION PRODUCTION IN NIGERIA:

GLOBAL MODELS, LOCAL RESPONSES

Ogochukwu C. Ekwenchi

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores the ways in which popular fiction television is produced in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and through it the investigation of social relations in the industry and the analysis of its products. In so doing the thesis also interrogates the assumptions of social theorists regarding the impact that the globalization of culture is supposed to have on local cultures.

Drawing on empirical evidence from fieldwork carried out in Nigeria between February and June 2006 involving participant observation in the location production of a television drama series, semi-structured and unstructured interviews with 15 people in Nigeria's television industry, the thesis argues that despite some production practices in the industry not yet being, according to the practitioners, up to scratch, Nollywood has also evolved social and institutional structures which are recognisable features of the structure of the television industry everywhere. The thesis also argues that despite its having an industry that is ranked third in the world in terms of output, the West, but Hollywood in particular, retains a strong grip on the imagination of Nigeria's popular fiction television producers.

For a more nuanced account of the impact of the globalization of culture on Nigeria's popular fiction television industry, however, I propose that we need to go beyond how people speak about what they do, to how they do what they do. Analysis of popular conventions of a less powerful audio visual industry, like Nigeria's Nollywood, alongside

those of Hollywood will help unpack further the nature of the impact that dominant cultures are assumed to have on local cultures.

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## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to the three most important women in my life: My beloved grandmother, Queen Ekemma Egbeyiugo Okafor, the wife of Obi (the traditional ruler) of Umudim who everyone simply and naturally called Nne (Mother). Although quite old in 2003 when my Commonwealth Scholarship award came through, and despite that she did not go to school herself, Nne could still appreciate the potential for life transformation that ‘come and study free of charge’ (which was how the word ‘scholarship’ was translated for her in Igbo) had for her granddaughter as she proudly shared the good news with her friends and our relatives at Umudim, Nnewi. Nne did not keep her promise that she would still be there when I return from England as she passed away in 2004, but her strength and spirit were a constant source of inspiration to me throughout this study. My mother, Mrs. Ezumalu Ifebi and my Aunt, Mrs. Azuamaka Udechukwu, from whom I learnt that giving up is never an option whatever the challenge, this work is for all of you.

## **Chapter ONE**

### **Globalization, Culture and the Spatial Dialectic**

#### **1.0 Introduction/Statement of the Problem**

This thesis explored the impact of cultural globalization on popular fiction television production in Nigeria. Contrary to the assumptions of homogenization theorists that dominant Western cultural forms, like Hollywood films, have the capacity to homogenize local cultural practices, this research found that resident local ideologies would usually preclude any wholesale emulation of foreign symbolic products. In addition, local popular conventions that might appear as an instance where Nigerian popular fiction television producers have appropriated the discursive practices of Hollywood films could have a longer history than the current phase of globalization. Regarding also the prediction by globalization theorists like Tomlinson (1996) and Featherstone (1995) that global connectivity effected by communications media and the ubiquity of global cultural forms have the capacity to intensify our consciousness of the world as a single place, so much so that people in a particular location can develop a sense of proximity to, of attachment to and identification with people and conditions elsewhere, this research confirmed this to be the case with popular fiction television producers in Nigeria. However, the awareness of other places that people in a specific location might have and regardless of the closeness they may feel to people and issues in locations external to them, these facts may not necessarily alter the circumstances and practical realities which shape the context in which such people live and conduct their day-to-day activities, as is the case with Nigeria's popular fiction television makers. Academic debate surrounding the status of locality as a category relevant to contemporary social research may continue for years to come, but this research demonstrated its centrality in grounding some of the assumptions and claims of social theorists regarding the impact globalization processes are supposedly having on local cultures.

The increasing complexities that define the contemporary global cultural flow have been among the reasons for theoretical shifts in scholarly and academic debate in which conceptualisations of place, culture and identity are a key concern (Strinati 2006:208). This is especially so when there is a high level of penetration of a locality by the forces external to it that it becomes difficult to establish any boundaries between them. As a case in point, scholars like Thussu (2007a: 92-6), Dissanayake (2006: 35-6) Mytton (2003) and Tunstall (1977: 39) have observed, that Western-owned business interests establish and operate television stations, cable and satellite television channels as well as fund programme production in countries like Brazil and India. In some parts of rural India, as Mytton (ibid) pointed out, multiple cable channels have become not only available to most of the population but are also affordable to the point of supplanting cheap radio as the primary source of entertainment. This is evidence that poverty and spatial barriers are sometimes no obstacle to the homogenizing power of global capitalism in the shape of media conglomerates.

Moreover, globally circulating technological innovations, like video, adopted for cultural production by popular fiction television producers in such sub-Saharan African countries as Nigeria and Ghana, highlight the problematic of place in contemporary cultural research in Nigeria. This is not only because technologies that enable cultural production originate elsewhere, but the context of production could also be pervaded with an awareness of what is happening in other parts of the world, thus blurring the neat demarcation that could be thought to exist between the local and global. This is the situation encapsulated in Wolff's (1991:164) argument that social life everywhere has been affected by the outside world, carried through media images, imagery, forms of discourses and representations. From this perspective, the challenge for a cultural producer and by extension cultural researcher is thus seen as that of location in a globalised world where the concept of place has, as Wilson and Dissanayake (1996:1) have argued, become fractured and altered.

However, the notion of locality as an abstraction and as a discursive construct in the discourses of globalization has not been unproblematically accepted. David Morley, while he attributed this borderless perspective of the world to modernization theory and its hegemonic conceptualisation of development which ignored the existence of other cultures, at the same time highlighted a crucial aspect of locality: the differences or diversity of human experience. To underline his argument Morley (2007: 170) was of the opinion that, ‘there is no making sense of the world by those ignorant of local, context-specific issues ...nor by those indifferent to cross-regional forces.’

In their argument for the conceptualisation of locality in concrete terms and underscoring the relevance of lived experience, Ang (1996: 151) and Polan (1996: 257) variously employed the terms ‘social specificity’, ‘intimacy’ and ‘concreteness’ to describe locality. Aligning with the above argument, this thesis argued for a perspective that sees locality in physical terms. As a geographic referent and a spatial materiality, locality is an inescapable fact of contemporary geo-political configuration which, regardless of the debate about how borderless or politically impotent<sup>1</sup> it has become due to global capitalist forces (Ohmae 1995: viii, 1990), the modern nation state continues to represent for many. Nigeria, as a geographic reality, occupies an area of about 923, 768 square kilometres (about 356,669 square mile) and is home to about 148,000,000 million people<sup>2</sup> who speak among them some 250 languages. For most of the population, locality represents both home and a site of cultural production, of social relationships and social struggle. In other words, locality for the Nigerian people is also a means of delineating the borders of a particularity, of a representational space, or as Rinaldo (2002:136) puts it, ‘a means of circumscribing a zone of shared representations.’ For the Nigerian popular

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<sup>1</sup>The titles of Kenichi Ohmae’s two books, *A Borderless World* (1990) and *The End of the Nation State* (1995) encapsulate this position. Part of the author’s argument in *A Borderless World* is that the forces of economic globalization are increasingly rendering physical boundaries between nations irrelevant.

<sup>2</sup> It is highly unlikely that one will ever find accurate census figures in any source they consult on the issue of Nigeria’s population. This is because census figure is a major criterion in resource sharing in Nigeria and has as a result become a politically charged matter in which all the ethnic groups in the country engage in inflating population figures for economic and political advantage. The source of the above figures on Nigeria’s population and area is the *BBC World News* website [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country\\_profiles](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles)

fiction television producer, culture and tradition also play a crucial role in demarcating this boundary of difference.

While in their notion of progress, Enlightenment thinkers like Baron d'Holbach (Featherstone 1995: 12, Giddens 2002:38) would rather see its end, as for them it was an encumbrance, the resilience and in some cases the revival of tradition<sup>3</sup> witnessed in some nation states in recent times, has confounded assumptions of its datedness and irrelevance to modernity. According to this assumption, for traditional or non-Western societies to become modernized, they are to march unimpeded by tradition towards progress measured in terms of their absorption of Western ideals of modernization.

Scholars like Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) and Giddens (2002) have made compelling arguments about the idea of tradition and its usage in modern times. Tradition as something with origins in the distant past is, according to this viewpoint, open to debate as much of what we think of as traditional and therefore timeless is actually an invention of modernity, as is the nation state with which tradition is mainly associated (Giddens *ibid*:39). However, Hobsbawn and Ranger did distinguish between invented tradition and that which is genuine, which originated in a locality and was not midwived by external forces, as is the case of Indian soldiers and their colonial-era military uniforms of sashes turbans and tunics invented by the British and meant to serve as distinguishing features from imperial Britain's colonial military officers. While Giddens would argue that all traditions are invented, he does not also discount their use in connection with non-Western societies. It is also the case that among some Nigerian cultures, some traditional cultural practices and ritual celebrations may have become casualties of modernity (Giddens *op.cit.* p.44) such as *Ebili*, celebrated by women in such Igbo towns as Nnewi and marked by dances condemned as 'pagan' by Western missionaries and eventually destroyed. Others have as well become supplanted by modernity. Tales by moonlight and wrestling, once popular recreational activities among some cultures like the Igbo,<sup>4</sup> have become largely replaced by modern forms of entertainment such as television, especially

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<sup>3</sup>The resurgence in Islamic fundamentalism in Moslem countries like Iran and the religion's strong appeal among its adherents here in the UK, for instance.

<sup>4</sup> See Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958)

in towns and cities, what is left of them being mostly confined to rural villages these days. Nevertheless, the study makes a difference between African oral tradition, in the form of cultural beliefs, mythology, oral literature, masquerades, rites of passages; and festivals and cultural celebrations like *Afia Olu*<sup>5</sup> that have not only survived modernity but have continued to thrive in their locality and in some cases in also multicultural contexts and whose continuity nonetheless depends on their continued relevance in the lives of the people. While Giddens' (ibid p. 45) reason for predicting the continued existence and relevance of tradition in contemporary life is also mainly based on the grounds of its utilitarian value as, tradition, in his words, gives 'continuity and form to life', oral tradition among many Nigerian ethnic groups is the people's way of life, intimately linked to the individual's life and part of them from birth until death (Ugboajah 1985:166). Predating colonialism, written literature and cinema, and right into the present, this way of life has become soldered into the numerous ethnic and cultural groups that make up the modern Nigerian state. With the current phase of globalization providing Nigerian popular fiction television producers with the technology to express it, oral tradition has become absorbed into popular fiction television representations that form the texture and context within which Nigerian popular fiction television producers not only assert their difference, but one through which they also challenge certain forms of representations and discourses in dominant global popular cultural forms.

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<sup>5</sup> *Afia Olu/New Yam*, a celebration by Igbo people of Nnewi, featuring masquerade displays, dances, feasting, visits, etc, to mark the harvest and eating of new yam, has through human migration, acquired a global character. This annual *New Yam* festival is celebrated in the UK by Nnewi people in London, complete with most of the pomp and ceremony. In August 2007, for instance, the traditional ruler of Nnewi, Igwe Kenneth Orizu the 3<sup>rd</sup>, one of his wives, some members of his cabinet, travelled from Nnewi to London to celebrate the *New Yam* with Nnewi people in London and those living in other parts of the UK. Giddens has argued that the passage of time could erode some aspects of tradition, which also happens to be the case with *Afia Olu* festivals. The awe-inspiring masquerades, for example, that were once features of the festival in Nnewi, are becoming increasingly fewer as the older male generation become less energetic or die out and the majority of the younger men shun getting into the costume and the masks, the tag of paganism stuck on these celebrations first by missionaries and these days by churches, is still a powerful enough deterrent among the younger, church-going generation. While this thesis did not insist that *Afia Olu* will continue to survive but it did agree with Giddens' argument that its continued existence will depend on whether the people of Nnewi at home and in Diaspora continue to regard the festival as a relevant aspect of their existence.

## 1.1 Rationale for the Study

Although the first television in Africa was established in the western Nigerian city of Ibadan in 1959 by the then Western Regional government, followed in 1960 by a second television station set up in Enugu, eastern Nigeria, by the government of former of Eastern Region (Tunstall 2008: 291-2), television could not be said to have become an integral part of the life of Nigerian people even many years later. This is because many rural villages and even cities were yet to be connected to the national grid. Poverty and illiteracy, in addition, put the medium out of most people's reach. The 1970s post-civil war Nigeria was grappling with a more immediate problem of reconstruction and television development was understandably not very high on the agenda, nor was the acquisition of such trappings of modernity as television sets a top priority with people impoverished by the war. However, the 1970s in Nigeria was also referred to as the period of the oil boom, a time when the country had begun to exploit crude oil in greater commercial quantity. Within this decade also, Katz and Wedell (1977: 270) estimated the number of television set per 1,000 people in Nigeria at just one, and that of radio at 76 per 1,000. Then, the effect of revenue from the oil boom which was fast transforming Nigeria's economy from one almost based entirely on agriculture into one dependent on the export of oil must have begun to be felt within the country. From a mere \$83 in 1969, the country's per capita Gross National Product had jumped to \$400 in 1979 (Edeani 1985: 46). The improved living standard that came with oil wealth also meant television sets became affordable to more people. The impact of the new wealth on the ownership of television sets is reported in George Wedell's work on radio and television in Africa. Wedell (1986: 44) put the percentage of television set ownership in Nigeria in 1985 at 6-10 per population of 100. Even at this, up to this point in the history of television in Nigerian, some might argue, with some merit, that television still remained largely an urban phenomenon in the country. However, the decade of one of the worst economic recessions to ever hit the country, the 1980s, could also paradoxically be conceptualised as the one which produced the technological moment that revolutionized the face of television in Nigeria. As well as transforming television in Nigeria into a popular form,

video technology also became the engine behind the country's video film industry, Nollywood.

Previously employed by the wealthy in Nigeria to document social events, like children's birthday parties, naming, weddings, funeral ceremonies and chieftaincy title conferment (Shaka 2003a: 42, Ogundele 2000: 97), the appropriation of video technology and its successful adaptation from the early 1990s for commercial film production could be said to present a clear illustration of what happens when a peripheral culture achieves visibility, the moment a competing god was unleashed on the global arena of cultural production and the time when one of 'the rest that are increasingly speaking back to the West' (Featherstone 1995:13) emerged in sub-Saharan Africa. Put another way, the political fallout of the appropriation of video technology by Nigerian video-film producers and its increasing use in the construction of popular discourses that counter the popular discourses of similar issues in Western symbolic products is likened to, as Irobi (2007:6) put it, obtaining 'the secret of the enemy' and using it 'against the enemy.'

Besides the above external dimension, the appropriation of video technology by video film-makers has broad internal implications for television in Nigeria. The technology has freed television production from the hands of government establishments, thereby enabling the participation of 'ordinary' people in the country in the matter of the mediation of cultural taste. By exploring themes in their narratives with which the consumers can identify and in many cases by employing indigenous Nigerian languages, more people than ever before are now watching television.

With the popular appeal of the video films, it is also safe to predict that television is fast emerging as the number one entertainment medium in Nigeria. This is a position, nevertheless, which will encounter opposition from proponents of radio as the premier communication and entertainment medium in Africa. Such positions as that of Bourgault (1995: 105) usually cite cost for radio's popularity and the reason that many more people are likely to own it than television. In fact, in one such *BBC* 1993 study of urban households in Nigeria, as reported by Abdulkadir (in Fardon and Furniss eds 2000:130),



statistics showed 93% of the respondents owned radio sets compared to 53% who owned television sets. However, Jeremy Tunstall has made an important observation regarding research involving statistics in Africa which highlights the misleading picture that conclusions based on statistics, as in the one by Abdulkadir, above, can sometimes present about ownership of television set in Nigeria. Tunstall (2008: 286) has argued that problems associated with research in urban towns in Africa, such as sampling, interviewing and language, could make the conclusions of any research based on statistics suspect. That its relative affordability has always been seen as radio's main advantage over television is a fact that the current study does not contest; but neither is radio exempt from adverse economic conditions, it appears. In his analysis of media situation in Africa, Mytton (2000: 38) attributed what he called 'a leveling off' in radio listening in Ghana to the economic downturn in that country in the 1980s, and a rise in radio and television set ownership due to economic recovery in the country in the 1990s.

In terms of television set ownership and in regard to Nigeria, it is common knowledge that secondhand television sets that flood the country through many routes that are not patrolled by the Nigerian government are considerably cheaper and more affordable than the brand new sets, which could sometimes be the basis for these statistical evaluations and comparisons with radio ownership. As it is not illegal not to register a television set on purchase, as is the case in the UK, no accurate figure of television set ownership can be established at any given time in Nigeria. Besides, television in Nigeria, more than radio, for both the government and the individual, remains the ultimate symbol of modernity; for the government that of political power, and, for the individual, of economic success, achievement and prestige. With cultural material more available than ever before and in some cases produced in Nigerian 'minority' languages not catered to by the three dominant languages: Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa, these developments in television production, it can be argued, would mean not only a rise in television viewership, as Harding (2003:78) has also pointed out, but a corresponding growth in ownership of television sets as well.

In his discussion of conditions in which globalization can be said to have taken place, Thompson (1995: 162) identified key prerequisites for a culture to be said to be globalised:

- media products circulate in international arena
- material produced in one country is distributed not only in the domestic market but also—increasingly—in a global market

Nigeria's video film industry has been described as the third largest audio visual industry in the world mostly in terms of the quantity of the industry's output but not necessarily due to its economic worth.<sup>6</sup> Nollywood's video films are marketed outside Nigeria by enterprising Nigerian businessmen and women living and doing business in other mainly sub-Saharan African countries. Here, in London, these video films are sold mostly by Nigerians from market stalls at East Street, Peckham, and in other parts of Britain with large Nigerian populations. Already, debates are beginning to emerge on the implication for identity of the pervasiveness of Nollywood products on sub-Saharan Africa. Such scholars of African popular culture as Tope Omoniyi (2007) have directed attention to what is increasingly looking like the cultural colonization of sub-Saharan African countries by Nigerian video films and the concern this is generating in such countries.<sup>7</sup> Access to these popular cultural products from Nigeria are also not limited to the VHS and DVD formats which individuals in these African countries can buy for home viewing. Nigerian television drama series like Wale Adenuga productions, *Super Story* and *Papa Ajasco*, are shown on the national television of such countries as Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Ghana. In addition, cable and satellite channels like DSTV, BEN

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<sup>6</sup> There is no one account of Nigeria's video film industry's net worth. According to Jonathan Hayes (2007: 7), the total yearly worth of the industry is \$200 million. The estimate of the Nigerian Film Corporation in 2007 (contained in a flyer entitled, *Nigerian Motion Picture Industry: Potentials and Opportunities*) was, however, that the industry was worth \$450 million. The insignificance of the economic value of Nigeria's video film industry becomes clearer when understood against the backdrop of the value of US films whose global sales in 2004 were estimated at \$25.24 billion with \$9.54 billion generated within the US domestic market alone (Thussu 2006: 156).

<sup>7</sup> The ubiquity and popularity of Nigerian video films caused such concern in Ghana in 2004 that in addition to being destroyed in markets and stores in the country, it was considered illegal to import Nigerian video films into Ghana. A Kenyan student at the University of London's Institute of Education surprised the researcher the first time they met by speaking Igbo to her when the researcher had told him that she was Igbo from Nigeria. When she asked him how he picked up the Igbo words (which he only has a smattering of, however) he told the researcher his knowledge has come from watching Nigerian video films which, according to him, are quite popular in Kenya. Apparently, the video films are sold in Kenyan markets by Nigerians doing businesses in that African country.

TV, OBE TV, routinely screen Nigerian video films. Apparently, Nigerian video films are also popular with people of African descent in other places as Obiaya (2008: 7) reported that the video films are ‘hawked in the Caribbean.’ If as Thompson (ibid: 150) has maintained ‘globalization arises only when... activities take place in an arena which is global or nearly so rather than regional’, contemporary popular fiction television production in Nigeria, as shown, can therefore be said to occur within a context that is global.

## **1.2 Theoretical Overview**

This research into contemporary popular fiction television production in Nigeria can be generally described as a globalization study and can be located more specifically within the body of studies that focuses on the impact of the globalization of culture. Investigations like this also serve as points of critique for approaches to the study of contemporary culture whose analytic scope is limited to national cultures, models of cultural analysis that this study mostly considered inadequate in the interpretation of Nigeria’s popular fiction television industry. How have the debates regarding the impact on less powerful cultures of the globalization of cultures been shaped in the literature, and how relevant are these debates in the light of the current context of Nigeria’s Nollywood? Can the issue of adequate methodological strategies, which writers like Rantanen (2006) and Held et al (1999), among others, have identified as a major obstacle in a satisfactory account of the impact of cultural globalization be surmounted? To answer the first question, one influential theoretical interpretation of cultural globalization and its consequences, cultural homogenization, was discussed as well as some of the main critiques of the approach from the heterogenization camp. The criticisms are mostly in relation to the positions of the cultural heterogenization theorists on cultural diversity which accord in general terms with the concept of global culture as understood in the study.<sup>8</sup> The author answered the second question by: a) arguing for an

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<sup>8</sup> For instance, such cultural heterogenization theorists as Tomlinson (in Thussu 2000: 79) contest arguments about the process of homogenization which is argued to attend the global spread of cultural products originating from the West on the grounds that the forces of fragmentation and hybridity are present in, and have become a feature of cultures everywhere from which, even the economically and

approach that sees contemporary Nigerian video films as a global culture and b) proposing a model of cultural analysis, the relational and cross-cultural comparison approach as well as social historical model as advocated by Mike Featherstone (1996, 1995), Pertti Alasuutari (2000) and John B. Thompson (1990) respectively. At this point also the way the concept of cultural globalization was understood in the context of the current study is explained which Diane Crane has helpfully defined as ‘the transmission, or diffusion across national borders of various forms of media and the arts’ (Crane, in Anthony D. King 2004:31). This is the sense from which the researcher conceptualised Hollywood films and Nigerian video films as global cultures.

Cultural homogenization has been one of the two main rival explanatory frameworks which writers have employed to account for what is supposed to happen when weak national cultures are exposed to the influence of, or are penetrated by, powerful cultures from elsewhere. As well as being one of the most influential and prolific writers in this regard, Herbert Schiller was also one of the earliest scholars to theorise what the consequences of this encounter were likely to be. His book *Mass Communication and American Empire*, first published in 1969, and his cultural imperialism thesis was a response to what he saw as the implications of the global ascendancy of America, following the end of WW11, as an economic, military and technological power as well as the global spread of her cultural influence. Among the ‘victims’ of America’s drive to export her cultural influence around the world were the cultures of the newly independent countries, mostly in the ‘Third World’, whose poverty, technical and technological incapability for local cultural production predisposed them toward a heavy reliance on communication technologies and cheap cultural products from powerful cultures like America. Schiller (ibid: 9) argued that these dominant cultural forms and technologies become ‘channels through which the lifestyles and value systems [of the powerful country] can be imposed on poor and vulnerable societies.’ This is the key argument that underpins cultural imperialism which, as Schiller (1976: 9) has explained:

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culturally powerful nations of the West, are not immune. Later in this section, a fuller discussion of the concept of global culture, considered a more adequate explanation of contemporary Nigerian popular fiction video films, was provided.

best describes the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre.

The consequence for the particular local culture in this unequal relationship becomes cultural homogenization, as it becomes submersed ‘from the mass-produced outpourings of commercial broadcasting’ Schiller (op cit: 112). In other words, homogenization of weaker national cultures by the dominant American culture becomes the inevitable outcome and the logical conclusion of America’s cultural imperialist drives, which Schiller argued was the overall objective in a collaborative venture involving the American military, transnational corporations and the American culture industry.

In their study of the patterns of international flow of television programmes and news in 1972-3, Nordenstreng and Varis argued that the one-way flow of cultural materials from powerful centres of cultural production, like the United States, to weak cultures or developing countries was a key feature of global cultural flow. In his essay, published in 1986, titled *Patterns of Television Program Flow in International Relations*, Varis reaffirmed this position by saying: ‘In essence, the global pattern is a one-way flow without reciprocal systems of equitable exchanges or a reverse flow.... (1986: 56)

Though they did not conclude that homogenization would be the likely consequence of what they saw as a lop-sided flow of cultural materials, Nordenstreng’s and Varis’ study, like Schiller’s, betrays the fundamental assumption of their analysis, which is the culturally powerful West and the culturally weak and vulnerable ‘Third World’, which is mainly at the receiving end of this unequal flow that characterises contemporary global cultural landscape.

Other more recent theorists of cultural globalization who draw on the arguments of cultural imperialism, like Robert McChesney (1998) and Oliver Boyd-Barrette (1998), usually also point to the emergence of information and entertainment conglomerates owned and controlled by a few rich nations in the West, but especially the US, as portents of an unavoidable homogenization of global cultures and information. In fact, in his essay

titled *Media Convergence and Globalization*, and even though the basis of his analysis has since<sup>9</sup> shifted to some extent, Robert McChesney saw corporate domination of global market for the export of cultural product as the consequence of the rise of global commercial media, like AOL-Time Warner, Disney and News Corporation. McChesney's key argument is that with the global market for the export of media products controlled by a few media conglomerates, which also have control over media content and distribution, with mergers and conglomeration characteristic of big media corporations, cultural diversity will be lost and 'one brand with one voice' will be the order of the day (McChesney in Thussu (ed) 1998:30).

On his part, Oliver Boyd-Barrett's media imperialism, is a critique of what he sees as a colonization and homogenization of global communications space by Western popular cultural producers, like Hollywood; international suppliers of news like Reuters, Associated Press, AFP (who in some cases also own television stations) and which, according to Boyd-Barrett (1998: 161), also 'directly or indirectly represent a lineage of global hegemony that reaches back to the middle of the nineteenth century.' Included in his analysis of major global media conglomerates which have colonized global communications space are the computer giants Microsoft and Apple Computer, as well as media and entertainment giants AOL-Time Warner, News Corporation, Disney, Bertelsmann, etc., the same corporations in McChesney's analysis. Boyd-Barrett's concern is with the control over access which their power allows the media conglomerates (mostly located in the West and especially the US) at the expense of less powerful nations and how uniform communications could easily become the result of such domination of communication space. However, Boyd-Barrett's conceptualisation, though he acknowledged there might exist communication channels which individuals in less media-powerful countries may have recourse to, failed to fully recognise the power of such media. Boyd-Barrett also failed to take into account the fact that there might be people whose lives are not all that directly impacted by the activities of big media

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<sup>9</sup> Sony, described by Thussu (2006: 107) as a 'Tokyo-based consumer electronics and multimedia entertainment giant' has since purchased Columbia Tristar, one of Hollywood's top film production studios, in addition to going into a joint venture with Bertelsmann, one of top five global media conglomerates.

corporations. For the researcher's illiterate mother in the village, who does not understand English, to whom neither CNN news nor news broadcasts from cable or satellite channels mean much, and who does not use the Internet at all, the activities of the big media corporations mean little. In Nigeria, where about 80% of the population live in rural areas and where about 32%<sup>10</sup> of the population are thought to be illiterate, a sizable section of the country's population are therefore people like her mother. Nigeria's situation also happens to be the case in many 'Third World' countries. Nigeria's video film industry also demonstrates that it does not require big media corporations or 'powerful' individuals to start a revolution. Many Nigerian video film producers like Kenneth Nnebue are sellers of electronics products, are also mostly semi-literate and illiterate (Haynes 2007: 2), and are almost certainly people without political power in Nigeria.<sup>11</sup> Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi's (1994) study has after all also highlighted this fact that sometimes big social changes are initiated and brought about by media that are not considered powerful in Boyd-Barrett's and McChesney's conceptualizations of power. The Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi's work (ibid: xviii) directed attention to the crucial role played by such 'not-so-powerful' media, consisting in:

traditional networks of social communication, which were enhanced and extended by an innovative use of various temporary 'small media,' including photocopied leaflets and audiocassette tapes

used by religious leaders in the Iranian Islamic revolution, headed by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, which overthrew the Shah of Iran in 1979. Video technology, which transformed audio visual production in Nigeria, is therefore considered as another instance in which powerful communications media are not necessarily critical in order for a revolution, a cultural one this time, to come about. As control of information space is a

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<sup>10</sup> This figure, like census figures in Nigeria, should be treated with caution as accurate data on these matters are difficult to come by. In addition, there are regional and gender variations. The predominantly Christian Southern Nigeria generally has higher literacy rates than the mainly Muslim North. The percentage of the male population able to read and write is also thought to be higher than the female population. Here again, there are bound to be regional variations. In relation to school enrollment and with specific reference to some states in Eastern Nigeria like, Anambra, Imo and Abia, there are more females in education at all levels: primary, secondary and tertiary than males. For more information on Nigeria's population see <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html> #Geo

<sup>11</sup> Mr. Nnebue is said to have only primary school education (Obiaya 2008: 3).

key concern in Boyd-Barrett's formulation of media imperialism, the democratic nature of video film production in Nigeria makes the media imperialism argument mostly inapplicable to Nigeria.

George Ritzer's theory of 'McDonaldization' is another example of how scholars have conceptualised the globalization of dominant cultures from the West as necessarily having a homogenizing impact on cultures elsewhere. Ritzer (2003) has employed the term 'McDonaldization' to describe what he sees as the capacity of the business practices<sup>12</sup> of American popular cultural icon, McDonald's fast food franchise, not only to homogenize our choice and taste in food, but also those of social practices around the world. Such social institutions and practices in countries within which Ritzer argues McDonald's-style homogenization can be seen to be at work include work, health care, travel, leisure, dieting, politics, the family, etc. In his own words, 'McDonaldization has shown every sign of being an inexorable process, sweeping through seemingly impervious institutions and regions of the world' (Ritzer 2003: 2). Ritzer's argument is, however, largely moot in relation to Nigeria. Although there are certainly McDonald's-type fast food businesses, like Mr. Big's, found mainly in some Nigerian big cities within which the uniformity in practices Ritzer describes, like predictability, can be found, Nigeria has neither the same amount of material resources, nor similar social institutions, in some cases, to stand at risk of McDonald's-style homogenization. In other words, Nigeria has neither the economy, and nor are some of the social institutions that obtain in the country like health care, work, leisure, organised in the same way as is the case in Western countries which makes such a theory nothing more than an assumption inspired by a way of life in the West with little relevance to many lives in other parts of the world.

Cultural homogenization has also come under much critical fire from cultural heterogenization theorists, not only because some of the assumptions of the theory about the impact powerful cultures are supposed to have on less powerful culture are seen as flawed; what their proponents base their conclusions on is also in some cases

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<sup>12</sup> Ritzer listed these business practices as efficiency, calculability, predictability, control through nonhuman technology.



methodologically suspect. The scholars John B. Thompson and Terhi Rantanen, in their critique of the approach, made a very important observation regarding its limitations. Rantanen (2006: 2), for instance, aptly pointed to its marginalization of people's experience. John B. Thompson, who in his book *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* had made the same point much earlier, argued that no effective and accurate accounts of the ways globalization processes impact on a locality can be produced without paying attention to the specific and varied ways the particular people engage with such globalised cultural forms. Thompson (ibid: 171) in his critique of Schiller's theory made this point more vivid:

Like many arguments influenced by Marxism, Schiller's argument commits a version of what I have described elsewhere as the 'fallacy of internalism.' Schiller tries to infer, from an analysis of the social organization of the media industries, what the consequences of the media messages are likely to be for the individuals who receive them. But inferences of this kind must be treated with scepticism. Not only are they very speculative but, more importantly, they disregard the complex, varied and contextually specific ways in which messages are interpreted by individuals and incorporated into their day-to-day lives. In short Schiller's argument ignores the hermeneutic process of appropriation which is an essential part of the circulation of symbolic forms (including media products.)

Garofalo's (in Mano 2004:14) criticism of the theory that it assumes 'local and oppositional creativity is of little significance', has, however, a more direct bearing on this research because it resonates with the arguments pursued in this section of the thesis and elsewhere in the study regarding the cultural contestation role which popular fiction television producers in Nigeria, like Mr. Adenuga, are seen by the author to play in the current phase of cultural globalization.

Evidence from studies of media consumption in specific cultural contexts also adds to reservations about the relevance and explanatory purchase offered by cultural homogenization theory in grasping contemporary conditions of global culture. Studies of programming choice have shown television viewers would normally prefer domestically produced programmes to foreign imports, regardless of whether such programmes are from the United States of America. Reporting on findings about audience programme preference in such countries as Australia, Brazil, Canada (Quebec), Albert Moran (1998),

stated that audiences would usually prefer locally produced programmes and ones in their local languages to foreign ones. With regard to Africa, Strelitz (2002) has also reported that black South Africans prefer African popular cultural forms such as drama and music to similar cultural materials from America. If audiences, as is the case in these studies, prefer to consume their own domestic productions instead of foreign imports, including American ones (and this is especially so when we remember it is toward these context-specific consumers in less media-powerful countries that the concerns about cultural homogenization are mostly expressed), then arguments about the capacity of dominant cultures to homogenize local cultures look increasingly unsustainable.

As Janet Abu-Lughod (1997) has also pointed out, for one culture to be said to have homogenized another, there needs to have occurred a transformation in the worldview of the people thus homogenized. In his own critique of the approach, Hall (2001) has also argued that countervailing tendencies exist in every culture which will ensure that such a culture is not homogenized or prevailed over by another. Nor is linearity of flow of cultural materials, from the West to the rest, as Nordenstreng and Varis' study concluded, any longer the key feature of global cultural environment. In what some writers are interpreting as a power shift in global cultural flow from centre to periphery, this view of cultural globalization has been challenged by the emergence and success of vibrant cultural industries in such 'Third World' countries as India, Brazil, Mexico, and new centres like Nigeria, and Ghana in sub-Saharan Africa. These 'Third World' countries have thriving and prolific audio visual industries which produce and export their cultural materials to the West and to other parts of the world in what Sreberny (2000:96) has called 'reverse imperialism.' Although in his contra-flow theory, Daya Thussu was more concerned with highlighting the positions of India's Bollywood, in addition to those of China, Brazil and Mexico as centres of cultural power and ones from which global culture issues which challenge the assumption of unidirectional flow than in talking about sub-Saharan African countries like Nigeria (whose video film industry has been around for about a decade and a half now), nevertheless his arguments against the linearity of flow of global culture have emerged as one of the major critiques of homogenization theory. Thussu (2006: 62) contends that the contemporary flow of culture, especially in audio

visual products, is characterised by a contra-flow, a flow from ‘periphery to the centre and between the geo-cultural markets, especially in the area of television and films.’ What he further saw as the implication of the emergence and success of these non-Western centres of cultural production and circulation, like India, Mexico, Brazil, that ‘media power may not just be concentrated in one centre but distributed among many mini-centres or satraps located in regional hubs’ (Thussu 2007b: 4) also underscores his concern with illustrating that cultural power in contemporary times should be more accurately conceptualised as being dispersed and fragmented, rather than concentrated solely in, and issuing from the powerful West, as cultural imperialism has argued.

With particular regard to Nigeria, and while the researcher accepts that some of the points that Schiller and other writers made remain valid today like, a) the ubiquity of American cultural materials, b) the lopsided nature of global traffic in cultural materials in favour of Hollywood films and c) dependence on technology from the West by Nigeria’s popular fiction television producers, she also strongly maintains that the assumptions of the vulnerability of local cultural forms, expressed by Schiller (ibid: 110-111), because of what he saw then as the unlikelihood of the emergence and flourishing of local cultural production in ‘Third World’ countries like Nigeria due to lack of finance and expertise required for programme production, have mostly become dated. Still in reference to Nigeria, the contrast that is the current landscape of television in which the video film industry, Nollywood, releases at least one video film every single day,<sup>13</sup> where the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) specify that 60% of all programmes shown on Nigerian television stations must be domestically sourced and where locally produced programmes dominate prime-time slots of the NTA,<sup>14</sup> could not be sharper when compared with observations made by Dr. Lloyd A. Free. Dr. Free was the then Director of the Institute for International Social Research in America. Below is his observation in

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<sup>13</sup> Accurate figures of the number of video films released in Nigeria annually may be hard to get. One of the reasons is because some video film producers release their products to the market without first submitting them to the NFVCB for classification. Haynes (2007: 1) for instance, estimated the number of video films released every year in Nigeria at about 1000.

<sup>14</sup> The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) 2006 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Network Schedule (1<sup>st</sup> January-26<sup>th</sup> March), for instance, the prime-time slot, 9-10 p.m., is for network news broadcasts everyday. Wale Adenuga’s *Super Story*, is also shown from 8-9 pm every Thursday on the NTA network.

1967 about television programming in Nigeria which must have helped form Schiller's opinion regarding the condition of local cultures at the time:

I did a study in Nigeria a couple of years ago. During that time I watched Nigerian television. Do you know that most of the prime hours of programming time on Nigerian television was made up of filmed television shows from the United States, many of them of soap opera variety?...The Nigerian apparently watched because there was nothing else to watch...The reason that it is utilized that way is that it is cheaper for the Nigerian television networks to buy American films than produce their own or get other types of material (Schiller *ibid* 1970:155-6).

While the researcher does not know whether Dr. Free is still alive and aware of the present state of television in Nigeria and whether his views would have remained the same regardless, Jeremy Tunstall is, however, one writer who is not remiss in acknowledging the changing context of global cultural production and circulation. His book, *The Media Were American*, published in 2008, in which he dedicated a section to the discussion of African media in general, and the Nigerian media in particular, with a specific emphasis on the industry, Nollywood, represents for the researcher, a recognition of the changed and changing context of global flow of media in which peripheral cultures are making their voices increasingly heard in the West. This is very significant, especially when seen in the light of Tunstall's 1977 book, *The Media Are American*. The author gave a kaleidoscopic account of media production centres in some parts of the world, highlighting especially the dominant position of the United States in the global media production and export, while paying only a marginal attention to the Nigerian media. Again, Tunstall who in 1977, saw the development of feature film industries in some black African countries as being at 'token level' (*ibid*: 111), in 2008, saw the Nigerian video film industry as the sphere where the 'biggest media growth' (*ibid*: 297) has occurred on the country's media landscape.

At this point, we turn our attention to the second question: the issue of an adequate methodological framework for the study of the impact of cultural globalization, an issue which has itself been the focus of much of the critique of globalization study. Globalization scholars, like Terhi Rantanen, have highlighted the way the issue of

analytic strategies could have a link with some of the conclusions that writers sometimes make regarding the impact of cultural globalization. This is also perhaps the reason that two identical sets of data can yield two divergent interpretations and theories. Rantanen (2006) used the example of James Lull's (2000) and Cees Hamelink's (1983) observations to highlight this factor in cultural globalization study. As the development of an adequate framework for the analysis of contemporary culture is of interest to the current study, the two sets of observations, the conclusions and the theories of cultural globalization that the two scholars generated from them are presented here. Firstly, Hamelink's data:

In a Mexican village the traditional ritual dance precedes a soccer match, but the performance features a gigantic Coca-Cola bottle. In Singapore, a band dressed in traditional Malay costume offer a heart-breaking imitation of Fats Domino. In Saudi Arabia, the television station performs only one cultural function—the call for the Moslem prayer. Five times a day, North American cops and robbers yield to the traditional muezzin. In its gigantic advertising campaign, IBM assures Navajo Indians that their cultural identity can be effectively protected if they use IBM typewriters equipped with the Navajo alphabet.

From the evidence, Hamelink had concluded that 'the impressive variety of the world's cultural systems is waning due to a process of cultural synchronization that is without any historic precedent.' The next set of observations was made by James Lull and is presented below:

A Peruvian band playing traditional Andes folk music at a tourist restaurant in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, suddenly breaks into the English band Queen's 'We will rock you' to the delight of German and Canadian girls in the audience. The Milan collection of lamps sold in the United States are made in Taiwan and distributed by a French wholesaler. More than 400 million people worldwide, in countries including Russia, Tunisia, Zimbabwe, and Switzerland, regularly watch TV soap operas that originate in Spanish-language nations. A German pop music band travels to the United States where they perform solely for Vietnamese-American immigrants who use the music to unite their community.

Lull concluded that 'despite technology's awesome reach, we have not, and will not, become one people' (quoted in Rantanen *ibid*: 93-94). Surely, there is a problem somewhere in the account of globalization as the conclusions of the two examples above clearly show. However, assuming it is generally accepted that their methodological framework is the reason for two such differing conclusions as in these two cases, is it not

then the case that part of the effort in globalization scholarship should be concentrated in developing more adequate and appropriate ways to produce its account? Some writers have, for this reason, been proposing ways to study contemporary culture from which could be evolved analytic strategies for an account of the impact of globalization of culture. Dayan (1999: 31) believes that contemporary cultures can no longer be conceptualised within ‘small stable societies’, while Blommaert (2003:612) advocates ‘a holistic and world-systemic view in which local events are read locally as well as translocally.’ Writing from the perspective of Screen Studies, Toby Miller and his colleagues (2005) have also proposed a framework for the study of contemporary cultural production that will, according to the authors, focus on an ‘analysis of hysteresis whereby overlapping causes and sites can be understood’ (Miller et al *ibid*: 45). On the scope required for such an analysis, the authors proposed that it should be:

both macro and micro scales and a focus on: (i) the global, where capitalism is ordered, (ii) the national, where ideology is produced, and (iii) the local, where work is done (*ibid*: 45).

Mike Featherstone, on his part, proposed that the study of contemporary culture could be more adequately conducted alongside the study of other cultures or, as he put it ‘in the relational matrix of their significant others’ (Featherstone 1995: 112). While agreeing broadly with the arguments of Dayan, Blommaert and Miller et al above particularly with regard to the scope necessary in studying contemporary culture, the author aligned her research more closely with the framework and the notion of global culture for which Mike Featherstone has argued.

### **1.2.1 The Notion of Global Culture**

In sketching out his perspective on global culture, Featherstone (1996: 60) proposed global culture be understood ‘in the sense that the globe is a finite, knowable bounded space, a field into which all nation-states and collectivities will inevitably be drawn.’ While Featherstone sees global culture in terms of a field and space, Crane et al (in King 2004: 27) see it, however, as forms of culture which the authors explained as ‘forms of

media and the arts, originating in many different nations and regions, which are transmitted or diffused across national borders.’ Featherstone (1995: 114, 102) further suggested that the globe be understood as a ‘cultural form’, a ‘dialogical space.’ This perspective of culture will also recognise the features of contemporary global configuration as being interdependencies among nations brought about by their increasing contact, contact which produces the sense of the world as one place. This sense of the world as a single place is enhanced by among other things the simultaneous communication of events by satellite broadcast to millions of people around the world, the huge flow in the volume of images, information, imagery, consumer goods, etc., between nations. However, global cultural interconnection does not mean that there is now a common culture or uniform history for all the nations in this interdependent relationship. Rather, the increasing contact between nations is to be seen to result in a clash of perspectives or clash of cultures, or as Featherstone (ibid: 114) put it, the ‘interpretations of the meaning of the world formulated from a perspective of different national and civilizational tradition.’ Global culture is created as a result of this interaction and clash of perspectives (Hopper 2007: 99).

Featherstone also distinguished global culture from national culture which, as he argued, has traditionally emerged at the same time as the processes in the formation of a nation state. He further sees cultural producers or, ‘third cultures’, who function with the relative autonomy of a nation state but who have a ‘global reference’ (Featherstone ibid: 91) to play a key role in the development of national cultures. The emergence of ‘third cultures’ in the current phase of globalization, Featherstone argued, is another sense from which to conceptualise the existence of a global culture. The popular fiction television production company, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., which emerged in Nigeria in the 1980s following the globalization of video technology, in its work as fictional television producer, is seen by the author as a ‘third culture’ and video films or television mini-series the company produces, is seen to contribute to the global traffic of popular culture. Featherstone has argued that popular fiction television producers, like Mr. Adenuga, have assumed the role of cultural interpretation in the current globalization phase due to the unprecedented flow and complexity of global popular culture which has created a

pressure on the part of nation states that are integrated into the global configuration to construct a separate cultural identity for their citizens. This argument is especially applicable to Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., as Nigeria's film industry, not known for its prodigious output, had all but collapsed in the 1980s, while cheap pirated Hollywood and other foreign films were easily available on video cassettes. However, this was to change following the introduction of video technology into Nigeria, as was argued more fully in the next chapter. With regard to Mr. Adenuga and the television mini-series he produces, the author also argued, that his 'African stories to Africans' which due to class and ethnic factors may not match the desire of all Nigerian citizens for entertainment, nonetheless represents a 'national face', or Nigerian popular culture that embodies the values, norms and practices which distinguish them from audio visual products from elsewhere, like Hollywood films.<sup>15</sup> Due to this cultural role of constructing a common 'national face', Featherstone has also argued that the work of 'third cultures', like Mr. Adenuga, should not be understood solely as a response to forces of opposition within the nation state.<sup>16</sup> Processes in the construction of cultural identity, as Featherstone further proposes, should also be understood as being linked with or having a relation to forces external to the nation state. The forces external to the Nigerian nation and the popular television producer, due to which the national face has become imperative in recent times, the researcher argued, are mostly those of cultural globalization and the wide availability of cultural materials from Western countries like America, which have

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<sup>15</sup> Mr. Adenuga, had told the author in an interview in 2006, that part of his mission as a popular fiction television producer is to tell 'African stories to Africans.' The reason for arguing that Wale Adenuga Productions' *Super Story* might not appeal to all Nigerians is because, as noted later in this part of the thesis, a popular fiction television industry, which positions itself as being different from Nollywood, (Nollywood is regarded as a phenomenon of mainly Christian Southern Nigeria) exists in the mostly Muslim Northern Nigeria. Another reason for the view that Wale Adenuga's *Super Story* might not be to the liking of all audio visual audiences in Nigeria, is contained in the observation by Tunstall (1977: 111). The author has argued that the effect of Hollywood films, to whose influence African people and especially the elite have been exposed over the years, could be to predispose such audiences to expect too much (in terms of picture quality and sophisticated narratives) from their own culture industries. This could equally be the case with many Nigerian audio visual audiences and the elite.

<sup>16</sup> Wale Adenuga Productions' *Super Story* is shown on Nigeria's national television (NTA) and it is within this context that its role in constructing a Nigerian face, which it does through its storylines about various rival ethnic groups living in harmony, can be understood. This is why the researcher argued that his drama series can play a part in preventing and perhaps even dousing ethnic tension and other counter-nationalistic forces which might be seen as a threat to the existence of the Nigerian state. The *Super Story, Oh Father, Oh Daughter*, is a good example of where the producer, Mr. Adenuga, employed television fictional narratives for this purpose.



successfully penetrated parts of the country to become a feature of her audio-visual landscape. For this reason, therefore, the researcher saw the role of local popular fiction television producers in Nigeria, such as Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., in the current phase of cultural globalization more as cultural contestation than cultural interpretation.

Power asymmetry is also a key feature of this interdependency, as the symbolic products of some nations appear to be more dominant on the global cultural stage than others. Regarding this inequality that characterises global culture, Shohat and Stam (1996: 147) have also observed that ‘while culture is produced everywhere, only some locales enjoy the power to project their cultural products around the world.’ Crother (2007: 20) has explained the nature of the upper hand which American popular cultural producers have on the global stage as consisting in their ‘powerful advantages of capital, knowledge, distribution networks compared to local producers in the rest of the world.’ Nigerian video films, while they may be popular in Nigeria and some sub-Sahara African countries, while they may be broadcast on some cable and satellite channels and while also they could be sold from market stalls in London and other cities in Western countries<sup>17</sup> they, however, do not enjoy the same scope of circulation as Hollywood films. This is because, as Jonathan Haynes, a scholar of Nigerian commercial video films has pointed out, the issues of poor technical quality, unfamiliar representational conventions and language barrier, all factors which made Haynes (2000: 3-4) conclude that Nigerian video films will be unlikely to appeal to American film audiences, are the same factors, which the researcher argued, will mean that Nigerian video films will most likely continue to circulate in limited global spaces as they currently do. While it may be the case that all cultural forms harbour globalist ambitions as Machin and Leeuwen (2003: 496)<sup>18</sup> have argued, but for the reasons given above with regard to Nigerian video films, the chances of these cultural materials and the discourses they embody reaching global populations of audio visual audiences to the point that the same levels of concern about their impact on other cultures that have been expressed in the literature about

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<sup>17</sup> Nigerian video films, as Obiaya (2008:7) among others have reported, can be found selling in Germany, by African store owners, ‘by website entrepreneurs in the US and UK, hawked in the Caribbean ...’

<sup>18</sup> The authors have further explained that the reality of the globalised world means no cultural product is strictly speaking ‘local’, as their content could give the impression of being local, but such cultural forms could also contain global themes.

Hollywood films and other American popular cultural forms are expressed about them, are seen by that researcher as very slim indeed. Another scholar of the Nigerian popular culture, Tope Omoniyi, seems to think this is the case too. In his essay on culture shift and identity construction under contemporary conditions in which he used specific programmes broadcast by Minaj Systems Television, a local television station in the Eastern Nigerian town of Obosi, the author, while he argued that hybridity characterises identities in both North and South, nevertheless concluded:

...while the resulting hybridity occasioned by Northern appropriation ships fairly well southwards, those resulting from Southern appropriations seem incapable of penetrating Northern borders sufficiently if at all to influence the consumption of culture and therefore cause any real culture shift (Omoniyi 2003: 378).

This is also the dimension from which the current research conceptualised the power imbalance which exists in global cultural production and cultural circulation.

### **1.2.2 Studying the Impact of the Globalization of Culture: A Model of Cultural Analysis**

If the availability within a particular culture of such Western cultural materials as Hollywood films is argued to be capable of homogenising social practice in that particular cultural context, the researcher was of the opinion that an aspect of global cultural analysis that is seriously concerned with producing a nuanced account of the impact of globalization of culture on a locality that has experienced a deluge of Hollywood films, like Southern Nigeria, will be to identify specific Hollywood films and locally produced films that have treated the same topics, and to analyse them on the same matrix. Such Hollywood films would also have been produced and released before the local one to allow for a time lapse within which the foreign cultural product would have diffused into and received at the local level. Analysis of specific discourses in such films will make visible the particular ways in which any instances of homogenisation, or heterogenisation for that matter, can be seen to have occurred. This is the researcher's

interpretation of what Blommaert meant when he had proposed that contemporary culture be ‘read locally as well as translocally.’

The two programmes by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., *Campus Babes* and *Daddy’s Girl*, that were used in the analysis were produced in 2003 and 2004 respectively, more than a decade after the two Hollywood film, *Pretty Woman* and *Problem Child 1* (also used in the study), which were both produced in 1990. In this understanding and in the study of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., programmes, Pertti Alasuutari’s cross-cultural comparison approach was also helpful. In his book *Researching Culture*, Alasuutari (2000: 135) offered a cultural analyst whose study’s focus is a culture of a specific context, as is the case with this research, a way out of the banality and the inability to see ‘beyond the horizon of the self-evident’ that can sometimes come with researching one’s own culture. The author added that the challenge for the researcher, who adopted the cross-cultural comparison approach, is for them to find:

a point of comparison in a different culture that you do not know so well....By looking more closely at a world where things are different from home, you can try to make the familiar look strange (ibid: 135).

The points of comparison which were identified for this purpose are discursive conventions. Wale Adenuga Productions programmes, *Campus Babes* and *Daddy’s Girl*, treated the social issues of female prostitution and problem behaviour in children as did the two Hollywood films, *Pretty Woman* and *Problem Child 1*. In adopting the relational approach to cultural analysis which Featherstone has proposed, the researcher believed the current study partially answered Alasuutari’s challenge. This is an approach that will no doubt also rejuvenate the study of national cultures and cultural globalization and one which will avoid the powerful effects trap that can be seen in some conclusions of globalization studies which are in some cases, as in that of Hamelink, based on such superficial evidence as the presence of popular cultural forms from one cultural context in another cultural context. The relational and cross-cultural comparison approach to global cultural analysis which the researcher proposed and adopted in the research is based on the idea that a) ideologies are embedded in popular discourses, and b) that a

cross-cultural reading of such discourses on the same analytic grid is one way to study the kind of impact that dominant cultural forms, like Hollywood films, have on the narrative conventions of a local culture that is exposed to their influence, as well as one which has been penetrated by them.

In addition, symbolic products, as Thompson (1990) has reminded us, are embedded in particular social and historical conditions. Any framework for cultural analysis, like the analysis of the impact of cultural globalization must, the researcher believed, also propose a method for the study of the social-historical context in which cultural materials, like Nigeria's video films, are produced. The purpose of such social-historical analysis, as Thompson argues, will be 'to reconstruct the social and historical condition of production, circulation and reception of symbolic forms' (Thompson *ibid*: 282). In the framework they suggested, Held et al (1999:14) set out what they saw as prerequisite components for a satisfactory production of such an account as consisting in:

a coherent conceptualization; a justified account of causal logic; some clear propositions about historical periodisation, a robust specification of impacts, and some sound reflections about the trajectory of the process.

With a slight modification, the above authors' methodological propositions can be productively applied to the study of Nigeria's video film industry. The researcher also aligned with, and adopted for this research, the social-historical approach which Thompson has proposed. The reason for her methodological affinity with Thompson's model was due to her position regarding historical accounts. The researcher's position was that the nature and scope of the account which a study aims to produce, should to a large degree, determine the measure of the emphasis that is placed on the historical dimension of a globalization study. The story of video films in Nigeria is a fairly recent one; most of the major actors in the industry's birth are still alive and active in the business of video film production. In other words, as the social structure of Nollywood is still evolving, an approach to history, like that of Thompson's, which is flexible enough to take account of the present and new development in the industry, was considered more appropriate for providing the account of the context of Nigeria's video film industry.

The key argument of Thompson's social historical approach is that 'symbolic forms do not subsist in a vacuum; they are produced, transmitted and received in specific social and historical conditions' (p: 281). In the framework he developed, Thompson proposed three levels, which also characterise a social context, at which a researcher can conduct a social historical analysis:

- a) spatio-temporal settings (Here, the researcher describes and reconstructs the locale in which the symbolic form is produced and received.)
- b) fields of interaction (Thompson himself explained the form of analysis which a researcher can produce at this level: 'We can analyse a field as a space of positions and a set of trajectories, which together determine some of the relations between individuals and some of the opportunities available to them' (ibid: 282).
- c) social historical analysis at Thompson's third level is concerned with social institutions and social structure. While the analysis of social institution entails an analysis of rules, resources and social relations within the specific social institution, analysis of social structure, on the other hand, pays attention to inequalities, differentials or asymmetries, which are a feature of social institutions.

The approach to cultural analysis developed and adopted in the study, through which the researcher described the landscape of Nigeria's media, in addition to social relations that have evolved in the video film industry using a popular fiction television production company in Nigeria, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., and at the end reflected on the research process, she believed, generally met the analytic challenge by Held and his colleagues as well as that of Thompson's social historical approach.

### **1.3 Delimiting the Study**

In keeping with its cultural diversity, landmass and population, Nigeria's popular fiction television industry is a vibrant and understandably diverse one. The diversity of the industry is not only generic (a mixture of melodrama, crime, politics, fantasy, etc.) and linguistic (Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Edo, Pidgin) in character, but geographical as well.

Variouly described as Kollywood or Kaniwood (after the Northern Nigerian city of Kano), a separate (mainly Hausa language genre, and styled different from Southern Nigeria's Nollywood in its thematic engagements), a popular fiction television industry also exists in the largely Moslem Northern Nigeria. However, the popular fiction television production environment described in the study was limited to Southern Nigeria. Even then, the research focused mainly on Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. Again, the audio-visual texts used in the study were programmes by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., and Universal and Touchstone studios in the United States. The researcher based her decision to use Hollywood films in the research on a number of considerations. Western countries may appear in the frame when cultural imperialism is spoken of in connection with developing countries whose inability to produce enough programme content resulted in most cases in a preponderance of foreign programmes in their media. However, the emergence at the end of WW11 of the United States of America as a global political, economic and cultural superpower and of Hollywood's premier position in motion picture and television production have resonances for cultures around the world.<sup>19</sup> It could be argued, and with a lot of merit, that just as Imperial Britain alone at one point ruled 'directly or indirectly—over a quarter of the human race and encompassed more than a fifth of the globe' (Thussu 1998:1-2), not much of the world has been left untouched by American influence, particularly in the sphere of popular culture. Although the situation may have changed since then,<sup>20</sup> the authors Downey (2006:37), who wrote that the United States at some point commanded 85% of total global trade in cultural goods and Tomlinson (1997: 134) who spoke about the presence in all parts of the world of US cultural products and what looked increasingly like a 'cultural empire', seemed to think this is the case.

To further illustrate, there are in academic texts documented experiences of researchers attesting to the global reach of American popular culture in, sometimes what are

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<sup>19</sup> Film productions may not have begun first in the United States. However, Hollywood which emerged round about 1898 has established the format and standard in film production which are copied and adopted across the world today by most national film industries (Tunstall 1977: 13).

<sup>20</sup> The situation in some 'Third World' countries like Nigeria, which now have booming domestic audio visual industry and therefore have no overwhelming need for foreign programmes imports as before, may have resulted in a decline in demand for US cultural products in such countries.

considered, distant regions of the world as that by Pico Iyer in his *Video Nights in Kathmandu* (in Featherstone 1995: 8). There is also the vignette recalled in Giddens (2002: 6) of the Western anthropologist studying village life in central Africa who, invited to an evening's visit with her African hosts, had expected some African 'traditional' form of entertainment. Instead, Hollywood blockbuster, *Basic Instinct*, which was yet to be available in cinemas in major European cities like London, was played on a video cassette recorder for the Westerner by her African hosts. With regard to Nigeria, although infrastructure in terms of movie theatres and good road networks was a problem in colonial Nigeria, (a problem which still persists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century), this problem did not seem to hamper much the penetration of US films in the country. Ukadike (1994a: 106) observed:

...while the Indian and Kung Fu movies play in urban theatres, U.S. films have had a double advantage—exhibiting in theatres as well as in mobile cinemas that penetrate every nook and cranny of the rural areas.

Although currently said to be second to India's Bollywood in film output, Hollywood films, nevertheless, due to the efficient distribution systems of the industry and the enormous popularity of the products, tend to circulate more widely than popular films from any other region in the world. In Nigeria, this is still the case especially in the Southern half of the country.

#### **1.4 Research Questions and Assumptions**

The study asks three broad questions regarding the context of popular fiction television Nigeria and cultural products:

- Under what conditions is popular fiction television produced in Nigeria?
- What impact has the globalization of culture had on the industry?
- What is the nature of the symbolic product of Nigeria's popular fiction television industry?

In addition, the study made the following assumptions:

- a) the globalization of culture and the availability of all forms of information, media images, imagery, ideas and popular representational conventions from other places have an impact on popular fiction television in Nigeria
- b) discourses are one such sphere in cultural production where this impact will be most evident, as their years of exposure to Hollywood discursive conventions will predispose Nigerian popular television producers, like Mr. Adenuga, to copy and adapt these forms in constructing his own popular narratives.

### **1.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has set out the main arguments that underpinned the research as well as the reasons for engaging in the study of popular fiction television production in Nigeria at this point in the history of television in the country. While adherents of radio will no doubt continue to point to affordability and perhaps other features as attributes that best qualify it as a true mass medium in the African context, video films in Nigeria, as was argued in this chapter and the next have, however, mobilised the Nigerian media producers and consumers in a way that radio has never managed and may perhaps never match. However, the complexity that characterises contemporary culture, which the problem of adequate methodology most aptly illustrates, has also meant that studying how popular fiction television is produced in Nigeria presents many challenges to the cultural analyst among which is finding fresh ways of conceptualising and studying culture in modern times.



## Chapter TWO

### Nigeria's Media Landscape: Background to Popular Fiction Television Production

#### 2.0 Introduction

While some of the factors in the nature and structure of the contemporary landscape of media in Nigeria either predate or are consequences of British colonisation of the country, other factors have a more recent origin. Bourgault (1995: 2) has, for instance, identified the oral culture or oral tradition of societies that make up the present day Nigerian state as having a direct bearing on the use of language in the Nigerian media. The ethnic affiliation of some national newspapers in present day Nigeria also has its roots in the activities of nationalists who fought the British colonisation and administration of the country. However, more recently, there have also been developments that have had a profound impact on the Nigerian media landscape; developments that also have implications for the way television in Nigeria has been previously analysed in the literature on African media. One such development which has already been noted in the previous chapter was the introduction of video technology to the country in the 1970s by Igbo businessmen.<sup>21</sup> This inaugurated the video film industry Nollywood, in 1992, with the release of what was then the most commercially successful video film, *Living in Bondage 1*, an Igbo language film with English subtitles produced by the Igbo businessman, Mr. Kenneth Nnebue. The next was the liberalization of the television sector by the then military government of Ibrahim Babangida in 1993, which not only expanded the number of television stations in the country, but also has resonances for the production and consumption of audio visual entertainment in general. More television channels mean more choices for television viewers in the country, as well as more outlets through which the video films are brought to the attention of the

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<sup>21</sup> Femi Shaka (in Ogunleye (ed) 2003: 42) wrote that the terms 'video coverage', 'video man' and 'video camera' became known to most Nigerians from 1970s when Igbo electronics importers and dealers, who do business in Asia, introduced the technology into the country.

consumers. This chapter provides an account of media technologies in Nigeria in the chronological order of their introduction, the circumstances of their introduction and their development. Understanding Nigeria's media in this light is important as these factors, as was shown in the discussion, are largely responsible for the nature of their content and the basis also for the popularity of video films in the country. More broadly, however, the chapter serves as a background for an account of the impact of globalization processes on Nigeria's popular fiction television industry as well as a context for understanding how the video films have, as a result, become a global cultural form.

## 2.1 Newspaper

Although the first modern mass medium to be introduced into Nigeria, there are certain reasons why newspaper is unlikely to be a popular cultural form in the same way that video films have recently emerged in the country. The first newspaper, *Iwe Irohin*, published fortnightly in the Yoruba language with an English translation, was established in Abeokuta in western Nigeria in 1859 by the Church of Scotland Mission under the Reverend Henry Townsend. Early on, the newspaper specified that its mission consisted in inculcating in the people 'the habit of seeking information by reading' (Coker, 1968: 1). The contents of *Iwe Irohin* were hardly also designed for mass appeal or entertainment concerned as they mainly were with religious matters, such as information about transfers of church officials from one parish to another, news of baptisms, ordinations, deaths, births, etc. News carried in *Iwe Irohin* also included information about the home country of interest to the expatriate class, such as appointments in the colonial service; commercial news such as those of arrivals and departures of ships, news about produce prices, etc (Coker *ibid* 1968: 2).

Understandably, *Iwe Irohin* did not enjoy a wide circulation, a situation which was not due to its limited content alone. The nature of pre-colonial Nigerian society was also largely responsible. It was a predominantly illiterate society. Traditional communication channels (which still figure to a large extent in the life of many rural societies in modern day Nigeria) used in these societies such as drum, town crier, age group, marketplace,

village head, etc., and performance-based entertainment forms such as dances, songs, masquerades, had required no Western-style educational qualification from their users and participants. The first educated class (and these were also mostly former slaves) only emerged in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their activities were also confined to coastal cities like Lagos, Abeokuta and Calabar where they had settled on their return to Nigeria following the abolition of the slave trade and slavery in Britain (Sobowale 1985). What all this meant was that a sufficient population of literate people very crucial for the emergence of newspaper readership, did not exist in the country. The intra-ethnic conflicts of the period among the Yorubas over slave raiding coupled with problems over trade involving Europeans also meant *Iwe Irohin* had a short life span. The newspaper ceased publication in 1867 following the expulsion of the Europeans from Abeokuta by the Egbas aggrieved with them for siding with their rivals in disputes over trade in agricultural produce (Coker op cit).

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with more educated Nigerians, the newspapers initially established, mainly by former slaves and their descendants and later by nationalists like Dr. Azikiwe's *West African Pilot* in 1937 and Chief Awolowo's the *Nigerian Tribune* in 1949, were political in purpose. Their owners (Dr. Azikiwe and Chief Awolowo) had set them up as political tools<sup>22</sup> for the purposes of wresting political power from British colonialists and to build their political power bases. Though these newspapers, especially Dr. Azikiwe's newspaper group,<sup>23</sup> mostly offered more diverse information to their readers and were therefore more successful than *Iwe Irohin*, their combatant stance ensured they were first and foremost nationalistic papers (Mytton 1983:117).

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<sup>22</sup> The political rivalry that developed between the Igbo nationalist, Dr. Azikiwe, and his Yoruba antagonist, Chief Awolowo, before independence deepened and became more acrimonious following independence. The two rivals used their newspapers to launch stinging attacks on each other, with their supporters equally joining in the fray and using newspaper pages as their battleground. See Jeremy Tunstall (2008) regarding how newspapers are used in Nigeria for political reasons.

<sup>23</sup> Increase Coker (ibid: 20) credited Dr. Azikiwe's newspaper chain Zik's Press Ltd., and especially its flagship, *West African Pilot*, with the introduction of certain journalistic innovations into newspaper work in Nigeria. Among the innovations was the use of sensationalism in news reporting, a human interest angle, which means that 'ordinary' people in the Nigerian society were considered as much a fit subject of news story as members of the political and moneyed classes. Drama was also introduced into news reporting.

With independence achieved in 1960 and the common enemy, the British colonial masters dispossessed, the nationalists turned on themselves. The nature of the power tussle this time was mainly over the war booty, Nigeria, and how to carve it up between them. Newspapers were once again deployed as political tools for the abuse and denunciation of political opponents (Tunstall 2008: 293, 296). Although the nationalists who agitated for political independence are mostly dead these days, geo-politics and ethnic cleavages that characterised the journalism of that era still thrive in the modern day Nigerian media scene. Though newspapers from these regions such as the *Daily Champion* from the East, *The Tribune* from the West and *Daily Trust* from the North may be categorized as national dailies,<sup>24</sup> ethnic politics continues to characterise their reports and their coverage of issues. For instance, Steve Ayorinde's analysis of some Nigerian media coverage of Nollywood video films and personalities provides a contemporary example of the divisive legacy of nationalist-era journalism in Nigeria. Ayorinde (2007:5) observed that the above mentioned national dailies carried feature articles and news reports about artists and video films mainly from their ethnic blocs: Eastern (Igbo), Western (Yoruba) and Northern (Hausa) regions respectively. These main blocs also happen to make up the pre-independence geo-political structure of Nigeria and the power-bases of the nationalists. The sum total of these factors, coupled with economic recession, is low sales figures. The circulation figures for the most widely read daily newspapers are estimated at between 95,000 to 110,000 (Ayorinde *ibid*: 7). These are the sales figures for a country of about 148 million people.

However, low newspaper sales figures in Nigeria may not be due to ethnic factors alone. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century and with Western education more widely available than ever before, the illiteracy level in the country is still estimated as being as high as 32% of the entire population. Illiteracy of this form is not confined only to the inability to read and write in a foreign language, such as the English language, by such illiterate people. They are also unable to read and write in their first language. The modern day Nigeria is still very far

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<sup>24</sup> Some Nigerian newspapers, like those mentioned above, are categorized as national newspapers because of the areas in which they circulate. Such papers are likely to be found in major Nigerian cities.

from reaching the literacy level of Western countries and the level prerequisite for the emergence of newspaper as a popular form.

Illiteracy does not happen to be the only challenge to wide newspaper circulation in Nigeria, however. There are economic factors as well. Newspapers in Nigeria are mostly located in urban centres and hence the urban phenomenon tag which the medium has acquired in the country. The reason is that the economic lifeblood of any newspaper organization; industries and newspapers readers, are based in Nigeria's cities and state capitals. Educated people, whether in business or employed in government ministries and educational institutions (which are themselves located mostly in the cities), are the people with the educational and financial capital to access print publications. Industries and businesses such as banks, which are sources of advertising revenue for newspapers, are also mostly to be found in the cities. Where a preponderance of the population, about 80%, live in rural areas (Thompson 1995: 164) and where social amenities like good road networks are poorly developed as is the case in Nigeria, newspapers can mostly be said to be accessible only to the minority of the population who live in cities and urban centres.

In addition to the newspapers, there is an array of magazines published in Nigeria, ranging from newsmagazines like *Tell*, *Newswatch*, *The News*, *The Source*, to mostly women magazines like *Hints* and *Hearts*. The global trend in celebrity and fashion has also spawned such glossy magazines as *The Gallery*, *Ovation*, *National Encomium* and others such as *Fame*, *Ace*, *News of the People*, etc. Factors like the illiteracy level and the choice of city as a site of publication and circulation can equally affect magazine sales figures in Nigeria, even though they may be politically neutral and are specifically for entertainment.

## **2.2 Film**

Film was also introduced into Nigeria during the period of British colonial rule with the first film screened in 1903 in Lagos at the Old Captain Glover Memorial Hall. The British colonial government did not, however, get involved in commercial film

screenings in cinema theatres. This job was then undertaken largely by English and Spanish independent commercial film exhibitors. When the colonial government did get involved in film production, the focus was on instructional and documentary films. With the help of the Mobile Film Unit, which the colonial government established in 1931, and with Regional governments setting up their own Mobile Film Unit under their various regional ministries of information, these educational films were taken by van to many rural locations in Nigeria for exhibition.

Following the outbreak of WW11, the colonial government created the Colonial Film Unit. In 1946, the Colonial Film Unit was renamed the Federal Film Unit (Shaka 2003b: 53) and before it stopped producing films in 1955 had, according to Ekwuazi (1987: 8), produced a total of 280 films.

The films produced by the Colonial Film Unit could rightly be described as propaganda films. This assertion is borne out by the mandate of the Colonial Film Unit which included according to Ekwuazi (ibid: 2):

to show/convince the colonies that they and the English had a common enemy in the Germans..., to encourage communal development in the colonies...and to show the outside world the excellent work being done in heathen parts under the aegis of the Union Jack

Aig-Imoukhuede (1992: 88) has pointed out that these films were not produced primarily to be sold to consumers for profit. Their entertainment value or audience appeal is therefore understandably not a priority for their producers. That popular entertainment or appeal was not a priority of the colonial government and the Colonial Film Unit is evidenced by some of the titles of the films produced by the unit between 1948-1956.<sup>25</sup> Brendan Shehu (in Konkwo 1992: 76) summarised the central purpose and message of the documentary films:

The underlying theme of the documentaries never deviated from the stereotype of promoting colonialism and colonial values, colonial governor's visits and tours of

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<sup>25</sup> *Empire Day Celebrations in Nigeria* (1948), *Small Pox* (1950), *Leprosy* (1950), *Port Harcourt Municipal Council Elections* (1950), *Queen Elizabeth II's Visit to Nigeria* (1956) Femi Shaka (2003: 53).

emirates, development projects, installation of local personalities as representatives of the colonial administration and multinationals in positive action.

The Nigerian-born Black African cinema scholar, Nwachukwu Ukadike (1994b:109), also attributed the non-emergence of a vibrant film sector in Nigeria at this period to Britain's philosophy of indirect rule, which she had adopted in administering her African colonies, a policy Ukadike described as 'pragmatic business.' Film, according to Ukadike's argument, was not seen by the British as economically profitable and this was therefore the reason for the inadequate attention given to it.

The fear of what might result from letting into the scripts what Harding (2003: 79) has described as 'subversive ideas' could also be part of the reasons behind the mostly anodyne subjects and themes favoured by the Colonial Film Unit. Britain at the end of WW11 in 1945 was after all economically bankrupt, a situation made worse by the loss of the Jewel in the crown of the British Empire, India, two years later. Nigeria, as one of the few remaining geese whose golden eggs helped to keep the British economy going, was too economically important a possession to lose just yet.<sup>26</sup>

Ukadike (1990) and Ampka (2003) have also directed attention to what could be described as a more insidious political and ideological motive behind the project which Ampka (2003: 29) has called British 'colonial modernity' in Africa, seen in some films about Africa produced by British film makers during the colonial era. This could also explain the reason for the nature of some of the films by the Colonial Film Unit. While generally highlighting the manner in which American, British and French<sup>27</sup> cinema systematically engaged in negative portrayal of Africa, Ukadike has argued with

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<sup>26</sup> Before Nigeria's independence in 1960 and for over a decade after that, foreign companies and multinationals were in control of the country's economy with controlling shares of about 85% or 100% as the case may be. Such sectors of the economy like banking, mining, shipping, forwarding and clearing, manufacture and a host of other middle level businesses were controlled by foreign, but especially European (mainly British), and American businessmen (Biersteker 1987:53-6). Ekwuazi (1987: 6) has also observed that before the Indigenization Decree of 1972 that the ownership and distribution/exhibition of films in Nigeria had been exclusively in foreign hands.

<sup>27</sup> Early films about Africa by French film makers, most of which were ethnographic and anthropological in nature, showed better understanding and more sympathetic portrayal of Africa peoples and cultures according to Ukadike's analysis in the above article.

reference to such films by British films producers like *Sanders of the River* (1935), *Day Break in Udi* (1949), *Men of Two Worlds* (1944) that they served the purpose of valourization of European culture as well as providing a justification for the colonization, dehumanization and subjugation of Africans by the British. Ukadike (1990: 34-5) described the films' mission:

The general tendency was to project the British ways of life as desirable and that of the African as foolish, in order to instill in the mind of Africans feelings of inferiority about their own tradition, culture, and indeed their whole being.

Ekwuazi (op cit: 4) has observed that the structure of the film industry in Nigeria after independence in 1960 underwent some changes. He identified such changes as consisting of the restructuring of the ways the Colonial Film Unit had operated previously to allow other players in the business of film making, distribution and exhibition. These include federal and state governments, state ministries of information, educational institutions, private production companies, foreign embassies, etc. However, the preponderance of films produced mostly by the state and federal governments were mainly the documentary (educational/informational in purpose) genre which was exhibited in cities, villages, schools. These different bodies all paid little attention to the production of commercial feature films.

From 1970, commercial feature film production began to receive some attention. However, efforts in this direction were mainly co-productions involving Nigerians and non-Nigerian film producers from Lebanon and United States. Such films as *Son of Africa* by Fedfilm and *Kongi's Harvest* by Calpenny were seen by Ukadike (1994a) to be unsuccessful because of their thematic irrelevance and unfaithfulness to the original literary text, respectively.<sup>28</sup> By 1973, however, Nigerian-born independent films makers

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<sup>28</sup>In 1970, the film *Son of Africa* was produced by the Lebanese –Nigerian film production company Fedfilm Ltd. With actors who played lead roles being mostly Lebanese and just one Nigerian, scenes of belly-dancers alien to Nigerian cultures, funded mainly by the Lebanese who also worked as technicians, although the film was supposed to be a co-production, the negligible input by Nigerians in all aspects of the film's production cast serious doubts on any claims it might make to being a Nigerian film. *Kongi's Harvest*, an adaptation of Wole Soyinka's work and a joint production between a Nigerian film maker,



and directors like Eddie Ugbomah, Ola Balogun and Adamu Halilu were producing films that drew their themes, actors, narrative techniques, languages and aesthetics indigenously. Among such films were Ola Balogun's *Amadi* and *Ajani-Ogun*, produced in 1975 and 1976 in the Igbo and Yoruba languages respectively. In fact, Ukadike (ibid: 147) attributed the success and appeal of these films for their audiences mainly to the producer's use of indigenous Nigerian languages.

In 1979, the Nigerian Film Corporation was established by Military Decree Number 61. Among the mandates of the film corporation was the production of films for domestic consumption and export; supporting domestic film production by helping local film makers with funding and training. The film corporation was also to acquire and distribute film. However, as Ukadike (ibid: 143) observed, the mandate merely makes pronouncements which have largely remained unaccomplished.

Although the productions of the above indigenous Nigerian film makers were screened in cinema theatres in some Nigerian cities and Ola Balogun continued to record successes into the 1980s with films such as *Orun Mooru*, produced in 1982, as did the productions by Yoruba theatre directors,<sup>29</sup> films nevertheless never quite managed to catch the imagination of audio-visual audiences in Nigeria in the same way that video films have, nor did the film industry become a commercial success in the way the video film industry has.

Scholars have advanced various reasons for the failure of the Nigerian film industry, from its life as the Colonial Film Unit to the introduction of video technology. In one such analysis by Ansu-Kyeremeh (1997: 32), he referred to the observation of Morton-

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Francis Oladele, and an African American, Ossie Davies, also failed due to problem of adaptation even though the playwright, Soyinka, had starred in it (Ukadike 1994a: 144-5).

<sup>29</sup> What Ukadike (1994a:149) has described as 'theatre on the screen', mostly Yoruba theatre practitioners had begun in the 1980s to shoot their productions on film as feature length films. Among such films produced by these dramatists were those by Ade Folayan like *Kadara* (1979), *Ija Orogun* (1982), *Taxi Driver* (1983), *Iyaniwuru* (1985), *Ojun Ajaye* (1986), *Mose Bolatan* (1986). Other films produced in this Yoruba theatre tradition also include Hubert Ogunde's *Jaiyesinmi* (1981) and *Aropin N'Tenia* (1982). They were also produced almost exclusively in Yoruba language save for Folayan's *Kadara* which was later subtitled in Hausa language as were Mr. Ogunde's two productions which were also later subtitled in English.

Williams (1952) regarding his study of the impact of educational films made by the Colonial Film Unit. Morton-Williams, according to Ansu-Kyeremeh, had faulted the underlying assumption of universal relevance assigned to films by their makers. Such assumption had meant that cultural differentials like communication patterns of the Nigerian peoples were not taken into account by the film makers. From Ekwuazi's (1987: 7) perspective, the major problem with such films made by the colonialists, steeped as they were in imperial ideology, was that the people they were made for never had much say in the making of these films. In the author's words:

From scripting and directing, through shooting to editing and sounding, Africans figured only significantly in minor roles. Even when traditional stories were solicited for scripting, such stories ended up being slanted to reflect the stance, the bias, the predilection of the producer (CFU): production policies were formulated over and above the heads of Africans for whom the films were made.

Other analyses like those of Shaka (2003b), would blame the high cost of shooting on celluloid and the generally poor state of the country's economy for the meagre output of the Nigerian film industry.<sup>30</sup> Besides the enormous amount of capital required for film production, producing films in Nigeria comes with its own unique challenges. Almost everything used in film production except for storylines and actors (elements which, as has been noted earlier, were themselves almost exclusively foreign at a stage), is sourced from overseas, mostly Britain and America. Obiaya (2008) described the situation of film making in Nigeria in the 1970s and 1980s before the introduction and availability of video technology. According to him, components for film making, such as cameras, raw stocks not only attracted high import duties but are sold at exorbitant rates so that film makers could not afford to pay for them. The passing years have not made the situation any better as the country's currency has continued to depreciate against major international currencies. Post production work at the same time has to be undertaken in film laboratories overseas. Although the Nigerian Film Corporation now has facilities for post production work, Nigerian film scholars like Ekwuazi (1987) also argue that these facilities are hardly ever operational with equipment left to rust from lack of maintenance.

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<sup>30</sup> Only about 50 films were produced on celluloid between the 1970s and 1980s (Shaka *ibid*).

For other divergent perspectives, such as those expressed by Larkin (2001), however, the failure of the film industry to exploit the enormous potentials of the home market and its elitist stance is the major reason for its underperformance. Shaka (2003b) also seemed to echo Larkin's position when he attributed the failure of films like *Kongi's Harvest* (1970), by the non-Nigerian director Ossie Davies, to appeal to the majority of Nigerian audio-visual audiences to their producers' failure to integrate Nigerian film aesthetics in their productions. Ekwuazi (ibid: 20-1) was however more specific in his reasons for the film's failure. In its employments of such cinematic elements as rhythm, texture and style *Kongi's Harvest*, according to him, had been produced with foreign audience in mind rather than for the domestic market.

As the productions of the Yoruba theatre practitioners were mainly in the Yoruba language, their popularity could also be said to be confined largely to Yoruba-speaking people. Besides the language barrier, the crucial factors in the films' success among their Yoruba audiences, other issues like the cultural beliefs of Yoruba people represented as metaphysical elements, are aspects of the narrative which might not be shared by other ethnic groups in Nigeria. When Nigeria's video film industry evolved from the early 1990s, the circumstances in its emergence can be said to be the opposite of the above factors and are therefore the reason for its success and popularity.

### **2.3 Radio**

The first radio broadcasting service, the Empire Service, was established in Nigeria in 1932 and was, according to a perspective in National Broadcasting Commission (2004: 5), concerned with promoting political, economic and cultural ties between the British Empire and its dominions. However, because radio was introduced to Nigeria by the British colonial government, one could also argue that one of the main reasons the colonial government established the medium at the time was the same purpose it had set up the press. Tunstall (1977: 108) has seen the key idea behind what he described as the imposition of 'British-style media' on the then British African colonies such as Nigeria,

as being to serve ‘British businessmen, teachers, settlers, government officials and soldiers...’ The merit in Tunstall perspective becomes clearer when understood in the context that the Empire Service had been a rediffusion service, a limited service, which relayed *BBC* programmes to radio audiences at a subscription rate of five shillings, a rate which only mostly British people living in Nigeria and other affluent city-dwelling Nigerians could afford at the time. When radio broadcasting was extended to more Nigerians in 1935, it had been because another system, Radio Distribution Service (RDS), which Atoyebi (2002: 6) described as ‘technically feasible and economically viable’ had been developed. Other scholars have equally offered other perspectives regarding the reasons at the core of the British Empire setting up mass media in the now ex colonies which also contest the position in the National Broadcasting Commission referred to above. Shohat and Stam (1996: 148) have, for instance, argued that the idea behind what they described as the ‘communications infrastructure of the empire [such as] the networks of telegraph and telephone lines and information apparatuses which literally wired colonial territories to the metropole’ was to enable imperial powers like Britain ‘to monitor global communications and shape the image of world events.’ According to Thussu (1998:2), ‘control of the airwaves was a key factor in the propagation of the idea of empire.’ The Radio Distribution Service, first launched in Lagos, was later extended to other Nigerian cities like Ibadan in 1939, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Kano, Zaria, Abeokuta, etc., toward the end of WW11, mainly because, it served as a propaganda and information tool for the colonialists, as Atoyebi (ibid: 6) has also noted.

The Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS), inaugurated on June 26, 1952, with transmitters in the capitals of the three former regions, Enugu (East), Lagos (West) and Kaduna (North), replaced the previous two services (Aig-Imoukhuede op cit: 168, Atoyebi: ibid). Linked by telephone lines, NBS transmitted national, network programmes through the stations located in these regions. However, NBS was perceived by the nationalists as an organ of colonialists and so in 1956, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), was established and began transmission in 1960 (NBC Handbook 2004: 5, Atoyebi ibid: 7). Following independence in 1960, the regional governments that set up their own television stations, were also operating radio stations. With the regions

fragmented into state structure during and at the end of the Nigerian/Biafran civil war in 1970, even more radio stations were established in the newly created states. Again, each state in Nigeria would most normally have a radio station in addition to the one set up by the federal government in the same state. In some of the states, like Enugu, the radio stations transmit their programmes on different frequencies such as AM and FM. In 1993, radio, like television, once solely operated by the governments (state and federal), became deregulated.

On the whole, however, there are more radio stations in Nigeria than there are television stations. Part of the reason could not be unconnected to cost, as it is generally cheaper to set up a radio station than a television station. There are cases of governors of some newly created states in the country, who, faced with the urgent task of establishing a mass medium through which to reach their people, opted for radio before television, and only setting up television stations at a later stage. The broadcast media in general, but especially radio stations, are equally known to be high-stake sites in Nigeria for the enactment of power change.<sup>31</sup>

## **2.4 Television**

The first television station in Nigeria, and in Africa, was set up on 31 October 1959 in Ibadan by the then government of the Western Region. The former government of the Eastern Region also established the second television station in Enugu on October 1, 1960 (Aig-Imoukhuede (1992: 167, Bourgault 1995: 104). The Northern Region was to follow in March 1962 with its own radio and television stations. In addition, the central government started its own television broadcasting in April 1962 (National Broadcasting Commission Handbook 2004: 6). This was the structure and organization of television broadcasting in Nigeria before the outbreak of the Nigerian/Biafran civil war in 1967.

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<sup>31</sup> At the height of military dictatorships in the country from 1970-1998, radio stations in Nigeria were mostly the channels through which the subjugated Nigerian people, especially the southerners, were made aware that another 'General Saviour' from northern Nigeria, has answered the 'urgent call' to serve his 'fellow Nigerians.' Put bluntly, radio stations are the first channels that would usually be hijacked during any of the numerous military coups that characterised this era, coups carried out by mainly northern Muslim 'generals' whose underlying reason for change of government did not always transcend the feeling that it was their turn to help themselves to the vast oil wealth from southern Nigeria.

However, at the end of the civil war in 1970 and in order to neutralise the power of the regions,<sup>32</sup> the state structure replaced the old regional structure. From the initial 12 states in 1970 to the present 36 states and a federal capital territory, every state creation exercise in Nigeria has since been followed by the launch of new television and radio stations in the new states. This means that every state government owns and operates a radio and television station. The federal government is, however, the foremost operator of broadcast television in Nigeria. Toward this effort, the then Federal military government, through Decree 24, set up the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) in 1977 as the only network television in Nigeria (Bourgault *ibid*: 132).

The presence of NTA stations in all the states could be said to have a deeper motivation, which cannot be unconnected with information surveillance and which is ultimately bound up with questions of power. At the end of the civil war in Nigeria, the post-civil war military dictators (mostly Moslems from Northern Nigeria) not only concentrated political power at the centre but also went on to demonstrate the fact of their being in control. Besides their dominance in the country's armed forces and police, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) also became symbols of this political power and control. By transmitting federal government programmes and policies from their backyards, the state governments, especially those in the former breakaway Biafra, are constantly reminded that there is an eye watching them, or rather an ear that is firmly kept on their ground should they at any time entertain further thoughts of secession.

From its early days to the present time, broadcast television in Nigeria can also be described as a status symbol. Mytton (1983: 121) has highlighted this factor in his observation about how some governors of newly created states in Nigeria embarked on setting up television stations, despite the extreme financial strain this venture put on their budget. The medium, particularly the government-owned stations, is in addition mostly a

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<sup>32</sup> Colonel Odumegwu Emeka Ojukwu, the military governor of Eastern region and the leader of the break-away Republic of Biafra had, after all, fought and held out against the might of the federal forces for about three years. The feeling after the war was therefore that the regional structure made for powerful regional governors and a vulnerable centre. The state creation was seen as one way of weakening the power of the regions.

propaganda tool of the ruling class and the elite. This could account for the reasons that government-owned television stations, though production of entertainment programmes may suffer from inadequate funds, news and current affairs programmes, due to their centrality in promoting the personalities of politicians and elites, are unlikely to be as much affected as Ukadike (1994b: 115) has pointed out. In relation to television broadcasting in Nigeria and with regard to propping up the political class, the difference between the programmes (especially news and current affairs) of the government-owned television channel and commercial television in Nigeria is sometimes hard to establish.

Television and radio broadcasting, which was deregulated in Nigeria on August 24, 1992 by Decree No 38, is seen as expanding the options available to broadcast television consumers by offering them more diverse content. From the initial 14 private operators who were issued licences in 1993, the number of broadcast stations in Nigeria in 2002 (both private and public) rose to more than 250 (Nigerian Broadcasting Code 2002: 3). Among the first wave of private television stations were Minaj Broadcast International in Obosi, Anambra State, and African Independent Television (AIT) in Lagos. These commercial television stations are also mainly located in large and densely populated cities in Nigeria. This notwithstanding, private television channels in Nigeria cannot be described as really independent as a multiplicity of channels of information or entertainment, as is the case in Nigeria, may not necessarily equal diversity of entertainment types, themes, representations or plurality of views.

One reason for this perspective is the way commercial television is funded in Nigeria. With no subsidy from the government and dependent almost exclusively on revenue from advertising for survival, private television operators in Nigeria in addition have to tread carefully in order to keep from causing offense to the government, which might lead to the withdrawal of their license. The stipulations of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) regarding the content of broadcast media and the penalty for transgression are unequivocal. One of the mandates of the Broadcasting Code regarding broadcasting in Nigeria, for instance, is to determine and apply sanctions among which is the 'revocation of licences of defaulting stations which do not operate in accordance with

the broadcast code' (National Broadcasting Commission Handbook 2004: 9).<sup>33</sup> The financial implication of the withdrawal of an operator's license could be far too crippling for such an operator to contemplate challenging official viewpoints that concern entertainment or news programming. The production of 'safe' and uncontroversial programmes could be seen to be the likely consequence for entertainment programming and the broadcast television audience where a television station operator is not allowed the freedom to be innovative. In Nigeria's case, since such private operators could have connections with the government,<sup>34</sup> anyway, the possibility of commercial television broadcasters presenting any form of challenge to the dominant position occupied by both the state and federal government in setting the news agenda for important issues in Nigerian society is slim indeed.

The government also exercises another form of power over the private broadcaster, which though technological in nature nonetheless has political undertones. The government determines the capacity of the transmitter to be allocated to a specific broadcaster and therefore the proportion of the country's population the broadcaster can reach. In this way, the federal government ensures that no private individual or state government can use the unique qualities of broadcast media, which are also part of their strengths over the print media (transcending the barrier of illiteracy and the capability to address audiences in their first language) to come to national prominence or challenge its authority.

Ukadike (1994b: 100) has pointed to a key feature of early government-run television stations, which to some extent holds true for contemporary television stations in Nigeria. He identified inadequate domestic programme production with the resultant heavy reliance on foreign programme imports as two of the characteristics of the early television channels. Television stations are also most likely to have film units which produce mostly documentary films. Tunstall (2008) and Bourgault (op cit: 106) linked

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<sup>33</sup> The Nigerian government set up the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in 1992 to regulate and license broadcasting in the country. In 1993, the National Broadcasting Code was also inaugurated. (NBC Handbook 2004 p.7, Nigerian Broadcasting Code 2002 p. 8)

<sup>34</sup> Silverbird Television, for instance, is owned by former NTA general Manager Ben Murray-Bruce, who was also a close friend of Mrs. Stella Obasanjo, the late wife of the former President Chief Olusegun Obasanjo.



the issue of inadequate domestic programme production and reliance on imported programmes to funding. Poorly resourced stations restrict the production of entertainment programmes to mostly sports and drama, while relying on mainly cheap imported entertainment fare to fill airtime.<sup>35</sup> A practice which could be directly linked to inadequate funding, charging for air-time, has as a result emerged in Nigeria's broadcast television sector, including the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), modelled on the *BBC* ethos of public service.<sup>36</sup> For independent popular television producers who have to finance their productions and who may not be able to secure funding from advertisers, the situation where they have to pay a broadcaster in addition to production costs can only be described as an economic double whammy. When it first emerged, therefore, the video film producers resorted to formatting and packaging their products in order to reach their audiences directly, without having to go through the broadcasters. This is no doubt a key reason for the success and popularity of Nigeria's video film industry.

## 2.5 Video Film

It is safe to say that Aig-Imoukhuede (1992:88) must have seen the future promise that video technology held for film production in Nigeria when he predicted that the future development of the country's film industry lay in progress in technology. After all, video technology introduced into Nigeria from Asia in the 1970s was already being employed by Yoruba theatre practitioners in film production in the 1980s. The theatre practitioners had at the time been successfully transferring their stage productions onto videotapes,

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<sup>35</sup> This is not, however, to say that dramas on Nigeria's television channels, like the NTA, only serve to fill air-time. On the contrary, there have been some past and current locally produced or acquired dramas and comedies of the NTA that have enjoyed long runs at the network and whose long years of broadcast could be more accurately explained as being largely due to the ideological function such dramas served for the federal government. Among such well-known past and current drama series broadcast on the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) network are *Masquerade*, *Village Headmaster*, *Checkmate*, *Cockcrow at Dawn*, **Super Story**, etc. For instance, *Cockcrow at Dawn*, a drama based on the story of a young lad who fled his rural and agricultural roots for the uncertain life in the city where he suffered numerous hardships only to find happiness and fulfillment following return to his roots, a programme that ran on the NTA in the 1970s, served the ideological purpose of discouraging the mass migration of people from Nigerian rural areas to cities. *Cockcrow at Dawn* also carried the inherent message in the then policy of the military government of General Olusegun Obasanjo, the Green Revolution, aimed at encouraging agricultural production.

<sup>36</sup> In 2006 the rate for a 45-minute programme on prime-time slot at the NTA was about one million Naira or about \$8,000.

which they exhibited to audiences in theatres and other public places. Kenneth Nnebue's video film *Living in Bondage 1*, which launched the video film industry, Nollywood, had also been produced in 1992. Though he did see the beginnings of the impact of video on the film industry, the above Nigerian author, it can also be argued, could not have foreseen the huge impact video technology would later have on the country's audio visual industry. There were other circumstances at the time which worked against the industry and which did not make for much optimism.

Besides the high cost of production, which had paralysed film production in the 1980s as already observed, armed robbery had also at this time become a plague in major Nigerian cities like Lagos and Onitsha. The result was that nightlife in these cities was almost extinguished. People preferred the safety of their homes to the uncertainties and risks associated with visiting cinema theatres. The national currency, the Naira's free fall against major international currencies, coupled with the difficulty of obtaining foreign exchange, meant film makers could not import the materials they needed for production. Large-scale unemployment in the country at this period and rising inflation due to the IMF-recommended economic policy, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), had also meant people had less money to spend on cinema attendance.

Commercial exploitation of VHS in the early 1990s was to change the way in which video technology had been previously employed as well as expanding the contexts in which film and television had previously been consumed in Nigeria. Okome in Obiaga (ibid: 3) has explained how this transformation of Nigeria's film industry by VHS came about. Kenneth Nnebue, an Igbo businessman dealing in electronics, is said to have imported a large cache of empty VHS cassettes from Taiwan. Owing to his smart business sense, a trait generally seen in Nigeria to be possessed in a good measure by the Igbos, he figured a clever way of disposing of the empty video cassettes and therefore diverted them to recording audio visual productions. He produced *Living in Bondage 1* in 1992 using these blank tapes which he packaged complete with cellophane wrap, jacket printed in colour, and so on, to look like films imported from America. Nnebue's *Living in Bondage 1*, as the first commercially successful feature video film, also became the

film which, as Obiaga (2008: 3) has pointed out, ‘established the market as well as what would become the common themes for commercially produced Nigerian video films.’

Nnebue’s bold and successful experiment was also to extend the context in which film and television had been consumed in Nigeria. In other words, while television in Nigeria had been mainly consumed in the family and group contexts (like the beer parlours or pubs to the British) and films in theatres and other public places, video films created viewing contexts that never existed before in the country, such as video parlours, while expanding old ones like group viewing.

Group viewing is common among city dwellers, and especially the urban poor. Group viewing arises when people other than family members (and these are in most cases the less affluent) drop in on or visit their friends and neighbours who own television sets in order to watch their favourite programmes with such friends. This practice is not only common in urban areas, but is more so in rural villages where again the private homes of the relatively wealthy, who have television sets, can be turned into a public space for the purposes of the watching of television by neighbours, relatives and friends. This occurs when such a family has bought a newly released video film or rented a film. All such neighbours need in some cases is to hear the sound of a television in the house that owns a set to invite themselves over. Such homes also usually have electricity generators.<sup>37</sup> In rural villages, as Haynes (2007:1) has also noted, ‘itinerant exhibitors make the rounds with televisions, video cassette players, and generators,’ where they exhibit video films to audiences. Group viewing is also particularly common during such global events as the World Cup or Olympic Games.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> The situation with power generation has arisen in Nigeria because, the country’s national electricity power company, National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), is infamous for its erratic power supply, a situation that resulted in frustrated Nigerians interpreting the acronym as Never Expect Power Anytime. To shed the unpopular name tag, the corporation has been recently renamed NEP (National Electric Power). The original name has, however, stubbornly stuck, as change of name has not been followed by improved electricity supply to energy users in Nigeria. Generators, have as a result, become an integral aspect of life in Nigeria, even in the cities, which have themselves, not escaped Nigeria’s perennial power shortage and outage.

<sup>38</sup> In the summer of 2006 when the author was on fieldtrip in Nigeria, a major international soccer event, World Cup, had been going on. As the author’s family in her village Okofia Otolo in Nnewi, a town in the Eastern Nigerian State, Anambra, has a television set and an electricity generating plant, people from her

However, video parlour is a television viewing context which has evolved exclusively with commercial video film. Video shops, which rent and sell video films, in some cases, also have rooms attached to their premises for screening video films and the users of such services are charged small fees. Helping in the development of this practice has been the general poor state of the economy and the rate at which Nollywood releases video films, by some accounts 20 or more every week, or one or two video films every day according to others.<sup>39</sup> What this means is that even people who own television sets and VCR may not always be able to afford to pay the N700 or N100 (about \$5 and less than \$1 respectively) to purchase their favourite programmes.<sup>40</sup> However, paying to watch at video parlours can cost much less and where the viewer is well known to the owner of the video shop, sometimes nothing.

## 2.6 The Notion of ‘Popular’ in the Nigerian Television Industry

Various African media scholars have also offered explanations for the popularity of Nollywood. In Nwachukwu Ukadike’s analysis regarding the circumstances of cinema’s emergence and development in black African countries can be found some of these factors in the popularity of video films in Nigeria. European colonizers, as he argued, controlled film production in sub-Sahara Africa until political independence in these countries. This, coupled with the poor state of the economy in these African countries

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village and the neighbouring village, Utuh, came over to watch some of the matches on their television set and the films the author brought from the UK on her laptop. The living room of the family house was the setting for this form of group viewing.

<sup>39</sup> The data on the rate of Nollywood video film releases was retrieved from the website of Collaborative Projects on The Nollywood Film Industry and the African Diaspora in UK, Ferguson Centre for African and Asian Studies 2007. According to the flyer published by the Nigerian Film Corporation also in 2007 titled *Nigerian Motion Picture Industry: Potentials and Opportunities*, the audio visual industry releases 2000 titles every year.

<sup>40</sup> Renting a video film on VHS usually costs about N20 naira, or about 20 cents. Programmes formatted on DVDS, because they are generally perceived to be of better quality than programmes on VHS, usually cost slightly more, about N50 or about 40 cents.

after independence, hindered the development of what he called a 'real national cinema capable of speaking for and to Africans' (Ukadike 1994b:1). This circumstance in its development, coupled with the reality of political independence has also meant that video film production was spared some of the burden of expectation that Black African cinema has had to carry.<sup>41</sup> So, from early on, video film producers started to explore and depict themes based on such cultural beliefs in Nigeria as magic, the supernatural and witchcraft, without worrying whether they are making ideologically acceptable statements.

Video film production in Nigeria was also started by indigenous Nigerians who had looked for financial assistance from neither their government nor foreign bodies. This beginning was in contrast to Franco-phone African countries like Senegal, where the French government has since before and after independence assisted feature film makers financially, and Nigeria, where the government has on few occasions funded some film production projects (Shaka 2004: 328, Ukadike 1994a). This fact in the industry's emergence is also the reason for its democratic nature with the result that anybody with the necessary capital can become a popular television producer in Nigeria. As the entrants into all categories of work including producers, actors, directors, technical crew, etc., do not necessarily require a minimum entry qualification, the popular television industry is becoming one of the highest employers of labour in the country (Okwori 2003:7).

The relative affordability of video technology and the ease of production has also meant that individuals could shoulder the cost of production without the threat of financial ruin. This is in part because producing on video does not demand extensive post production work and expensive facilities which may not be available locally, and for which Nigerian

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<sup>41</sup> Nigeria fought a debilitating civil war seven years after political independence between 1967-70. The name Nigeria has also become synonymous with official corruption, which has impoverished millions and killed the dream of many pan-Africanists of economically and culturally vibrant Black African nations. The expectation placed on cinema, mainly by Africanists, of representing black Africa to the world to correct the distorted image of Africa by European and American film-makers, being what Ukadike (1994a: 4-5) has described as 'national consciousness films' as well as being 'a powerful instrument in developing the cultural ethos of a people', among others, has by now become less bright. So, when commercial video film production started in Nigeria in the early 1990s, it began as a commercial rather than ideological venture.

film producers had needed to make overseas trips in the past, before they could screen their films to the audiences.

As already pointed out, the popularity of video films also lies in the route which the producers adopted to reach their audiences, the direct-to-videotape format. This strategy, besides saving the producers some of the problems associated with screening films in theatres in Nigeria, like those ones noted above (security issues and conditions at movie theatre), also has the effect of overcoming the problem of low penetration and poor signals associated with broadcast television in Nigeria. This is in addition to providing entertainment to their audiences which, judging by the rate at which the industry turns out new films, can be said to be more to the consumers' taste than the ponderous fare that is in most cases on offer on government television. With some of the films exploring political themes and plots as some do (Haynes 2007), and with specific reference to Nigeria, Amkpa (2003:28) has argued that video films have joined such popular forms of expression as music as counter-hegemonic voices that oppose the government.

The historical intersection between the licensing of private television broadcasters in 1993 and the emergence of Nollywood in 1992 is one which has resulted in a kind of economically symbiotic relationship between broadcast and non-broadcast television in Nigeria. Private broadcasters are required by regulation to ensure at least 60% of the programmes they broadcast are local productions (Nigeria Broadcasting Code 2002: 53). With about 1000 video films by some accounts (Haynes 2007, for instance) released each year and popular television producers recently diversifying to the production of mini-series, (Haynes 2006: 511, Amaka Igwe 2007<sup>42</sup>), private television stations including government-owned stations can be said to be more than well supplied with content by the industry.

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<sup>42</sup> Amaka Igwe, during a question and answer segment following her presentation at the conference on Nollywood organised by the Ferguson Centre of the Open University in August 2007, observed that in Nollywood some video film producers, like herself, have taken to producing mini-series and selling the rights to television stations.

What, however, is the nature of the relationship between video film producers and the Nigerian television station operators? Do video film producers pay the commercial television stations for airtime just as independent television producers like, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., do at the NTA, or do the commercial television stations pay the video film producers for the right to broadcast their programmes? Haynes (2007:3) provides an insight into this relationship, and which is that, ‘television stations broadcast them without buying the rights.’ At any rate, this should be seen as being mutually beneficial to television stations and video film producers. Television stations have access to overabundant supply of locally-produced programmes with which to fill air-time, while the producers benefit from the free advertising that comes from having their products seen by many people who might hopefully like them enough to want to purchase their own personal copies. With television stations now more likely to broadcast video films produced in Nigeria in their late night movie slot,<sup>43</sup> it is safe to predict that many video films will be brought to the attention of potential buyers in this way.

However, in relation to the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), the notion of ‘popular’ can be understood in a different way altogether. As it is the largest network television channel in Africa, and because it also uses more powerful transmitters than any other television station in the country, there is the assumption at the NTA that the station is the most watched television station in Nigeria. Aiding in this assumption is the fact that state government and private television stations can only reach the populations of the specific state, or at best the populations of neighbouring states. In other words, the restrictions placed on the private operators by the federal authorities whereby the capacity of a transmitter permitted a private operator can only reach particular parts of the country but never all, means that the national government is the only broadcaster with a national reach. So, because it also maintains a presence in all the states and uses more powerful transmitters, the assumption at the NTA is therefore, that their programmes are watched by more people in Nigeria than programmes of any other television station, a fact that has become the basis on which the NTA defines programme popularity.

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<sup>43</sup> In the Nigerian Television Authority’s (NTA) 2006 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (1<sup>st</sup> January-26 March) Programme Schedule, for example, the late night slots from Monday to Thursday were devoted to showing locally produced films.

With no statistics on viewership, however, it is difficult to establish if channel ubiquity translates into channel ‘followership’, or loyalty to the NTA. In Nigeria with its history of erratic power supply, it is not only hard to determine channel or programme loyalty, it is equally difficult for any programme to cultivate or sustain such loyalty. Broadcast television, already hampered by its transient nature, (except where viewers have the technology to record their favourite programmes to watch later) therefore becomes doubly circumscribed in a situation like Nigeria where programme loyalty is unlikely to be rewarded with consistency in transmission.

When applied to programmes broadcast at the NTA like the drama production, *Super Story*, by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., the term ‘popular’ can also be understood in another sense. The popularity of such productions derives from the production company’s compliance with the NTA broadcast code and its ability to pay for a time-slot at the station. Drama series broadcast on Nigeria’s national television, the NTA, is usually subjected to intense scrutiny by the gatekeepers to ensure it passes the ethnic sensitivity test, among other things. According to the broadcasting code, programmes broadcast on the NTA must not be seen in any way to denigrate any ethnic group or individual in Nigeria, whether such people are still alive or are already dead.<sup>44</sup> This is not the only broadcasting law to which programmes like *Super Story* must conform. The producers of such a programme must also be able to afford airtime either by themselves or by programme sponsors. In the case of Wale Adenuga Productions’ *Super Story*, ethnic sensitivity has also become an economic logic as the programme is part-sponsored by the multinational, Unilever PLC, who understandably would not want to alienate any segment of the Nigerian population on whom it depends for the sale of its products. As the NTA had not set up any form of audience research strategy in 2006, nor carried out any, the ability of a programme to pay for airtime has, as a result, therefore evolved at the network as a criterion of a programme’s popularity.

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<sup>44</sup> There is more discussion of this aspect of NTA’s broadcasting code in Chapter Four of this study.



## 2.7 Nigerian Video Films: Distribution, Advertising, Regulation and Economic Impact

Nollywood has built its reputation on its marketing strategy of selling directly to consumers, utilizing a host of individuals in this distribution chain. The products formatted on VHS, VCDs and DVDs are sold to end users through a network of distribution channels who may include anything from big distributors in major commercial and such densely populated Igbo cities as Onitsha (Upper Iweka Road) and Aba, and Lagos (Idumota),<sup>45</sup> to hawkers who sell from carts and those who carry their wares on their heads. The latter two categories of end distributors mostly sell to commuters caught up in busy city traffic.

Individuals who sell the video films outside Nigeria constitute another major channel of distribution. Nigerian video films, as has been noted in the previous chapter, are sold outside Nigeria and in other sub-Saharan African countries as well as in Western capitals and cities by people who are not always the representatives of the video film producers. Some may be traders who have bought the video films from Nigeria to resell in other countries. Others could equally be pirates whose activities have blighted the industry economically and to which it alleges it loses millions of Naira in earnings every year. Scholars like Jonathan Haynes (2007: 2) have highlighted the problem piracy poses to the industry. With no effective anti-piracy laws and little means of monitoring the market, Nigeria's commercial video film industry, rated third in global output after Bollywood and Hollywood, is said to be worth around only \$200 million dollars annually, which as Haynes (ibid: 8) observed, is a sum that can be easily grossed by one Hollywood film. Nollywood, according to comments credited to Ramani Mohammed in the journal *Film News* (2006: 13<sup>46</sup>), loses about \$5 million annually in the United States and other places in Europe to opportunists, who capitalise on poor distribution and marketing of the industry's products, to rob the video film industry of revenues that should have accrued

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<sup>45</sup> Upper Iweka, in Onitsha, Eastern Nigeria, is a major road with large open air and street markets. Idumota is also a large market in Lagos. Upper Iweka Road and Idumota are where the major marketers and distributors, who are also the major financiers of Nollywood films, are mostly based.

<sup>46</sup> The journal *Film News* is edited by Emmanuel Okezie.

to it. Some Nollywood insiders like Amaka Igwe also think that a substantial amount of Nollywood's revenue, mostly generated from sales of the product outside Nigeria, accrues to pirates. Within the industry in Nigeria, as Igwe (2007)<sup>47</sup> and Haynes (op cit: 3) have also noted, piracy is widespread, with clandestine audio-visual duplicating facilities flooding the market with video film titles within days of their release.

Nigeria's video film producers bring their products to the attention of the consumer using varied routes. Trailers, a 'within-product' form of advertising which the industry's practitioners must have borrowed from older film industries, like Hollywood and Bollywood and entails alerting the consumer of a current product to either a-soon-to-be-released sequel or a new offering, is used extensively in the industry. As well as being reviewed and advertised in Nigeria's mass media, as Ayorinde (2007: 3-5), Adejunmobi (2002:88) and Oha (2001:196) have written, billboard advertising is also very popular with the video film producers. This involves the use of huge posters with blown-up pictures of the stars in poses that suggest the likely theme of the film. These posters are plastered on every available flat surface in cities, such as fly-over walls, buses, buildings, etc. As advertising using billboards is not well regulated, people who post the posters (sometimes unemployed youngsters) superimpose theirs on existing and in some cases newly placed posters, therefore, both the producers and the consumers they want to reach in this manner are aware of the transient nature of billboard advertising, which can appear and disappear in a matter of minutes.

That it started out as a self-financing industry, which it has largely remained ever since, does not also mean that Nollywood operates outside the ambit of the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, however. Established by Act 85 in 1993 to regulate the film and video film arm of the Nigerian economy, the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), currently, not only classifies film and video products, but also licenses film and video film exhibitors, and distributors. Some have seen the addition of video films to

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<sup>47</sup> Amaka Igwe, who is one of the most prominent video film producers in Nigeria, made the observations during a question and answer session at the conference titled 'Nollywood Film Industry and the African Diaspora in UK' organised between 8-12 August, 2007, by the Ferguson Centre for African and Asian Studies.

what was previously the Nigerian Film Censors' Board as an acknowledgement on the part of the federal government of the potentiality of Nollywood in influencing the social, political and economic spheres of national life. Other viewpoints, mostly those from the industry's practitioners resentful at the move, see the law which requires them to submit to the board any new titles before releasing them to the market, and the fees they are required to pay, as another example of the federal government being too eager to profit from what it has not invested in, or as Nigerians would put it, rushing in to reap where it has not sown.<sup>48</sup> The significance of the law also lies in its timing, especially when we recall that *Living in Bondage I*, the video film that launched the industry, had been released a year earlier. At the same conference on 'Nollywood and African Diaspora in UK' organised by Ferguson Centre in conjunction with the Open University, in August 2007, Emeka Mba, the Director General of NFVCB, who by some ironical twist was previously the spokesperson of a Nollywood association of film producers, but has now been recruited by the government to 'sanitize' the industry for which he once acted as a representative, elaborated the purpose for his board:

... the task is to determine the likely impact of a movie on the audience, bearing in mind the age, social and religious sensitivities, as well as the overall social benefit of the material in question.

Mr. Mba, in addition, outlined some of the tests which video films hoping to be cleared for release must pass, tests which not only reveal the suspicion the federal government of Nigeria still reserves for audio visual cultural products, but which also underscore the fact that the government recognises the crucial role video films could play in identity construction and formation:

...such a film or video work has educational or entertainment value apart from promoting the Nigerian culture, unity and interest; and that such film or video work is not likely: to undermine national security; or to induce or reinforce the corruption of private or public morality; or to encourage or glorify the use of violence; or to expose the people of African heritage to ridicule or contempt; or to encourage illegal or criminal acts; or to encourage racial, religions or ethnic

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<sup>48</sup> Amaka Igwe referred to this feeling within the video film industry at the same question and answer session during the conference on Nollywood that was organised by the Ferguson Centre in August, 2007. Obiaya (2008) also captured this feeling in his own analysis of the industry.

discrimination or conflict; or by its contents to be blasphemous or obscene; or to denigrate the dignity of womanhood.<sup>49</sup>

Despite the existence of the regulatory body, however, many films are also released which their producers have not submitted to the board for approval especially those made in Northern Nigeria as Ikechukwu Obiaya (2008) and Jonathan Haynes (2000) have pointed out.

Besides its contribution to the Nigerian economy through the sale of its products and the fees paid to the NFVCB, Nollywood also contributes to the Nigerian economy in other significant ways. Analysts and scholars of the industry have directed attention to the role of the industry as a major employer of labour in Nigeria. Although accurate figures in these matters are hard to come by, the *Economist* in 2006, noted that Nigeria's video film industry employs up to one million people, who work in various capacities, which makes the industry the country's biggest employer of labour after the agricultural sector (Obiaya *ibid*: 8). Besides people like producers, actors, directors, technicians, writers, make-up artists and other people who work directly in the industry, Nollywood has created employment for people, like the marketers and distributors of the video films, as already mentioned, hospitality businesses, like catering which boom around movie sets,<sup>50</sup> especially for those with little educational qualifications, among others. The importance of Nollywood is furthermore highlighted by the mention it got in the 2004 budget speech of the then President Olusegun Obasanjo (Haynes 2007) in relation to the industry's contribution to and potentiality as a major generator of foreign exchange for the country. This event assumes greater significance when understood in the context of the overall Nigerian economy which has depended almost entirely on crude oil for its export earnings.

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<sup>49</sup> See slide 12 of the paper entitled 'Censorship & Development of the Nigerian Video/DVD Industry since the 1990s' by Emeka Mba, DG, NFVCB, presented at the Ferguson Centre, August 9th, 2007.

<sup>50</sup> At Ikorodu, a sprawling town on the outskirts of Lagos, close to where Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., has property for location production called Papa Ajasco House, many provision stores, food sellers, pubs, etc., have sprung up where cast and crew of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., shop for food, snacks and other items during location shooting.

## 1.8 Conclusion

Haynes (2000: 4) had said about the video films, that they ‘offer the strongest, most accessible expression of contemporary Nigerian popular culture....’ Larkin (2001)<sup>51</sup> had echoed the same perspective when he observed about the industry and its products, that ‘from almost nothing 10 years ago, video films have blossomed to become, perhaps, the most vibrant new form of media production in Africa.’ Broadcast television in Nigeria may still be predominantly an urban phenomenon, accessible as it mostly is to audiences in urban centres. However, Nigeria’s video film industry, which has emerged without financial intervention from the government or any other external agency and has continued to be almost totally financed from within the country is also one, which the researcher argued, is responsible for video films’ popularity. While the circulation of the Nollywood product in global cultural spaces has meant Nigerian video films can no longer creditably be seen in terms of a purely local cultural product or analysed as such (as already argued in Chapter One), in the same vein, the diffusion and penetration of video films into rural villages, which could be in some cases, outside the reach of broadcast television signals and electricity supply from the national grid, has meant television in Nigeria may no longer be credibly described as an urban phenomenon or an elite medium.

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<sup>51</sup>Brian Larkin in an article on the popularity of Nigerian and Ghanaian video films entitled *Video Awudjo!* Retrieved November 2006 from <http://www.africanfilmny.org/network/news/Rlarkin.html#video>.

## **Chapter THREE**

### **Researching Contemporary Popular Fiction Television Production in Nigeria: A Case Study Approach**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, an account of how the research into the way popular fiction television is produced in Nigeria was provided. It was a qualitative study which used interview and observation as data collection techniques and documents as a data source. Why Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., was chosen as the focus of the research was explained, as well as the reasons for the choice of the various methods used in data collection, their relative strengths and weaknesses in relation to the research. Reasons for the choice of the audio visual texts used in the study were given, the method of textual analysis adopted, interpretative explication, was specified. The three-stage approach to textual analysis, which was developed and adopted in the analysis of the audio visual products, which was informed by the depth hermeneutical tradition of interpretation as proposed by Thompson (1990), was outlined. The discussion concluded by making a case for the depth hermeneutical framework as applied in this study while also acknowledging the limitations of the approach.

#### **3.1 Choosing the Case**

Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., cannot be said to be typical or representative of popular fiction television production companies in Nigeria, yet the decision to use it as the focus for the study of independent popular fiction television production in Nigeria was anything but random. The production company was chosen for theoretical and practical reasons. Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., is one of the numerous popular fiction television

production companies which emerged in Nigeria from the 1980s following the globalization of affordable video technology. For this reason, the production company offered a vantage point from which to analyse the impact of the globalization of culture and technology on a local culture like Nigeria and to interrogate the assumptions of social theorists laid out in Chapter One regarding the nature of the impact that dominant Western cultural forms, like Hollywood films, have on social practice in less powerful cultures.

Again, inherent advantages for this research were found in selecting Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., as its focus. The production company has a well-organised management structure and employs up to 20 people<sup>52</sup> on a full-time basis. Nollywood may have emerged in 1992<sup>53</sup> but programme production is characterised by ad hoc arrangements in which staff are assembled for the purpose of a particular production and disengaged when the last scene is shot. The industry, as Haynes (2000) has also observed, witnesses a rapid turnover of births and demises as many companies go into and out of business within a very short time. The staying power of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., which has been consistently producing television drama series since 2001, its visible infrastructure and organizational structure are all factors which helped the researcher in collecting relevant data. As the company produces regularly, the researcher was able to observe location production during her fieldtrip. As the production company also employs people who work in Nigeria's popular fiction television industry, Nollywood, the author was able to obtain valuable perspectives on production practices in the industry from the very people who have been part of its history almost from the very start. Establishing this contact and

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<sup>52</sup> In an interview with the Corporate Affairs Manager of the company in 2006, he told the researcher that the company employs about 100 people. Later, the researcher discovered that most of the people were ad hoc workers, recruited for a production and disengaged when production ended. However, the company does have an administrative headquarters as well as a media training school, both of which employ staff on full-time basis. As the company is cagey with accurate figures on these issues, calculations were based on the author's observation during her visits to these buildings and offices.

<sup>53</sup> Any time one enquires into the history of Nollywood, they are most likely to encounter conflicting accounts regarding the emergence of the industry, conflict that is not unconnected with the politics of ethnic rivalry and chauvinism that have characterised relations between Igbo and Yoruba, the two dominant ethnic groups in Southern Nigeria. *Living in Bondage 1*, an Igbo language film with English sub-titles, is nevertheless generally regarded as the first most commercially successful video film produced in Nigeria and as such was credited with inaugurating the industry as a commercial venture (Obiaya 2008, Haynes 2007, Shaka 2003b:57).

gaining information from Nollywood insiders was especially helpful particularly when understood in the context of the size of the country, one, which in addition, does not have reliable telephone directories.

Finally, financial considerations figured in the decision to use Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., as a case study. Lagos in Western Nigeria, where the corporate headquarters of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., is located, is the financial capital of Nigeria and thus attracts millions of people from hundreds of rural villages in the country. The researcher has relatives who are in business living in Lagos and whose hospitality proved invaluable to her during her fieldwork.

### **3.2 Choosing the Methods**

The main aim of this study, which was to study the context in which Nigeria's video films are produced and through it gain an understanding of the ways globalization has had an impact on the industry informed the choice of the methods for data collection. Informed by the knowledge of her society, in which interpersonal relationships are characterised by informality, the researcher knew from early on, that it is individuals who work in the industry that would provide her with informed insight of the industry. Face-to-face interview is a method which allows a researcher in such a context to establish connection and rapport with the respondent, which is crucial for the generation of relevant data. Therefore, although most of the respondents were literate, the structured interview method, which employs a questionnaire, would have been very formal and so not very effective. This is because the major ingredient in human communication in Nigeria necessary for production of useful data, interpersonal interaction, would have been absent. In addition, the research, as already observed, is located within the hermeneutic tradition. In contrast to a mostly logical and formal analysis that quantitative



research, which employs questionnaires leans to, the depth hermeneutical approach, which was adopted in the study, privileges human experience rather than logic. It was this human experience which was of analytic interest to the research and it would therefore be better captured in the words of the people involved as they responded to questions asked of them. The researcher concluded that she would gain better insights into this experience in this way than would be the case when respondents are made to describe their experiences from the pre-determined answers constructed by the researcher. Besides, interviews with their inherent flexibility by which, as a researcher, you can modify your format to suit both the context and people, meant the author used the same method to collect data from both the ‘powerful’ and ‘ordinary’ people<sup>54</sup> in the industry. The researcher also required first hand experience of how popular fiction television is produced in Nigeria, experience that would come from observing practitioners at work. Information about media in Nigeria was necessary in order to provide a background to the study. Documents, literature on media in Nigeria, and people proved invaluable sources of useful information for this purpose.

### 3.2.1 Collecting the Data: Interview Method

A semi-structured interview format was employed in three ways in the data collection. The first group consisted of people characterised as ‘powerful’ in Nigeria’s television industry (Mr. Adenuga, Mr. Igho and Mrs. Moses), by the researcher. The semi-structured interview format, accompanied by an interview schedule, was employed. The context and conduct of the interview with the three people were also more formal than the other interviews conducted with workers in the industry. Interview with the three people took place in their offices. Formality also characterised its conduct.<sup>55</sup> It was

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<sup>54</sup>By ‘powerful’ people the author means people who wield a lot of influence in production and broadcast matters in Nigeria’s television industry, such as the Executive Director of Programmes at the NTA, Mr. Igho and the Executive Producer of *Super Story*, Mr. Adenuga. Mr. Igho makes many important decisions regarding which programmes are to be broadcast on the national television. Mr. Adenuga, on his own part, is the sole owner of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., a company which provides employment for many people. Mrs. Moses and her husband own *Gogo Africa*, a company which produces mainly documentary programmes and employs about five people on a full-time basis.

<sup>55</sup>The exception was with Mrs. Moses, who like the researcher, is a woman and Igbo, factors which made for better rapport between them and therefore less formal interview context.

formality that was born out of the researcher's recognition of the important positions they occupy: as producers and network programme director respectively. They are very busy people and therefore very effective use of the time with them, to get them to answer as many questions as possible had to be made.

The same semi-structured format was used for the second group of respondents, those called 'less powerful people.' The nature of outdoor production (which is the setting in which Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., shoots most of its programmes) was more suited for this interview format, but here also context dictated the structure (or lack of it) which the interview took. They may not be as powerful as Mr. Adenuga at the offices of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., in Lagos, but during programme shooting, the Associate Producer and Director wield a lot of influence with cast and crew. The nature of production, in which filming of all of the episodes in a programme could be wrapped within a week, means that on location, these people, whose responsibility it is to ensure production runs without a hitch, are not always easy to get hold of. The context of the interview may thus be less formal, but the conduct could be more structured as it was necessary to ask questions as quickly as possible before they are called out for the next shoot or retire for the day. On location, therefore, the semi-structured format was followed in interviews with Associate Producer, Director, Technical Crew and Actors who played the title roles using interview schedules in order to assist with the interviewer's memory of the questions. However, the more formal conduct of the interviews was counterbalanced by the less formal context in which they took place, which ranged from the sitting room, bedrooms, kitchen area and car hood.<sup>56</sup>

There was a third context in which the semi-structured interview approach used was in the format which Uwe Flick suggested could be better described as ethnographic

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<sup>56</sup> For instance, the Associate Producer was interviewed in the sitting room of Papa Ajasco House, a large compound containing three one-storey houses that belong to Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., and where cast and crew are accommodated during production. Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, an actress who played one of the lead roles, was interviewed in her bedroom at Papa Ajasco House because she was tired after a long day in the open shooting various scenes. The interview with the Director took place on the hood of his car while he was waiting for the production crew to load equipment on the bus for the next production. Another actor, Segun Arinze, was interviewed in the kitchen area during a mealtime. The Soundman and Assistant Director of Photography, were both interviewed in one of the rooms at Papa Ajasco House.

interview. He distinguished between this form of interview and other semi-structured versions. Ethnographic interviews are a series of conversations and the time and place for them are not often pre-determined. As Flick (2002: 90) explained, chances for ethnographic interviews in most cases 'arise spontaneously and surprisingly from regular field contacts.' The type of interview conducted with the cast and crew of *A New Song* during the time spent on location with them fitted the situation Flick described. Regular contact with cast and crew during this period helped to forge an informal relationship with them. This meant, for instance, that when an actor was in-between his lines, a conversation could be started with him or her on an aspect of their work. These conversations, would in some cases, start with an observation from the researcher about the weather and then lead on to the conditions of service in the industry. Normally, the early stages of these conversations, which only served as introduction, were not recorded. Recording would only start when we got into something interesting, in all the cases with the permission of the respondent.

In total, 15 people in Nigeria's television industry were interviewed. Some of the respondents, for example, the Executive Director of Programmes at NTA, Mr. Igho, and the producer of *Super Story*, Mr. Adenuga, Associate Producer and Soundman were interviewed more than once. Among other people interviewed at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., were: the Associate Producer, Director, Script Writer, Script Editor, Corporate Affairs Manager, Soundman, Assistant Director of Photography. During location shooting, five actors were interviewed. Although extensive use of data generated from them was not made, interviews with the Producer of *Gogo Africa*, Mrs. Moses, and the Unilever Nigeria PLC Communications Channel Manager, Mr. Adedoyin, contributed relevant dimension to the understanding of the research topic. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The interviews sought information on various aspects of Nigeria's television industry. Among the questions asked the Executive Director of the NTA, Mr. Igho, were those relating to the nature of the network's relationship with independent producers. For instance, one of the questions he was asked related to what constituted infringement and

breach of broadcasting codes at the NTA and the form of arrangement with regard to programme acquisition or co-production that NTA has with Wale Adenuga's **Super Story**. For a different perspective Mr. Adenuga, the producer of **Super Story**, was also asked about the nature of the relationship he had with the NTA. However, in order to get a sense of how the work of television production is done in the Nigerian context, the researcher also asked Mr. Adenuga to illustrate with an episode of one of his programmes, the processes (from the inception of a story idea until the programme is ready for transmission at the NTA) of popular fiction television production as well as the challenges he encounters in his work. The questions that were asked the actors were those relating to their experiences of working in the industry and conditions of service as regards their fees and welfare. In addition to the challenges that confront them as media producers, the Associate Producer and Director were asked about their experiences of location and studio production and their relationship with actors in the industry. The Script Writer was asked the sources of her story ideas as well as how she ensures that her scripts are not rejected by the producer and the broadcaster. Members of the technical crew, the Soundman and Director of Photography, were asked the form of technology available to them, how such technologies aid or impede their work and if given the chance, the form of technology they would prefer to work with. The Corporate Affairs Manager was asked about the structure and organization of the company, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.<sup>57</sup>

One important advantage of interview, as already observed, lies in its flexibility; one can modify one's format to suit the occasion. Its flexible nature also means data collection need not cease with the end of the formal fieldtrip. Interviewees were happy for the researcher to have their contact details should clarification on any issue be needed. This offer was exploited in the course of writing the thesis by having phone interviews with Mr. Adeoye, Associate Producer at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., the Script Editor, Ms Blessing Ogheneghe, the Script Writer, Mrs. Ayorinde, Unilever Nigeria PLC

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<sup>57</sup>With the exception of the interview with the Script Editor (the researcher's telephone interview with the Script Editor was only to obtain clarification on some issues relating to background information and so the conversation was not recorded and transcribed), full texts and transcripts of all the interviews are provided in Appendix E.

Communications Channel Manager, Mr. Adedoyin and Mr. Banjo, the Corporate Affairs Manager. Phone interviews also offered a way around access restrictions at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. Phoning such people like the Script Editor, who the researcher had not been previously allowed to interview after she had left the field, meant she could still get the information she needed without endangering crucial relations in the field. Such follow-up phone interviews, while obviously expensive and lacking the personal dimension of face-to-face interview, can also produce more frank answers. For instance, in a later interview with the Associate Producer, the worshipful and obsequious manner with which he spoke of the Producer, Mr. Adenuga, had dissipated somewhat. He was more frank and open about their fees and general conditions of service.<sup>58</sup>

The downside of interview, especially in a society like Nigeria where informality, as already pointed, characterises much of human interaction, is the amount of data by way of preliminary information that most respondents felt was needed for simple and straightforward questions. Both the recording and the transcription took a lot of time as did studying the data in order to determine the perspective for the analysis. However, such detailed answers also contained invaluable background information about the industry.

### **3.2.2 Observation**

Observation was another method of data collection used. People in the television industry, their interactions, events, situations, location, things like production equipment, etc., were observed. Though Flick (op cit: 140) identified forms of observation like non-specific (general observation which is non-descriptive) and specific observation (which is more focused) observation of the production context was mostly at a general level. As interest in location production was only to get a feel, a general sense of how this is done,

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<sup>58</sup> In the earlier interview while the researcher was in the field, Mr. Adeoye, then working for Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., had only praises for the production company and the boss. His change of tone at a later phone interview with him could be a case of sour grapes as he was no longer in Mr. Adenuga's employ. However, the poor pay and 'unprofessional' practices at his former place of work which he spoke about concurred with the perspectives of other respondents in the industry on the issue with regard to the industry in general.

this level of observation suited the overall goal. Focused or selective observation at a later point in the research, which would concentrate on specific aspects of production, it was decided, was not necessary.

Observation also requires the researcher to make certain decisions concerning his/her position in the field. In other words, the researcher decides whether to make his/her presence known to the observed or not. May (2004) called these two variants of observation covert and overt. As the nature of location shooting is such that a researcher needs to see what is going on to be able to write about it, it is unavoidable that she or he will be seen by the people she or he is observing. The researcher decided against covert observation as she would also interview those people observed. Besides, on a film set and in close association with the cast and crew, how does one explain one's presence if one had no business on the production set, thus, the researcher was open about her presence with both the cast and crew.

Observation, as a technique, has some inherent advantages in relation to this study. The researcher was able to study popular fiction television production in Nigeria in its natural setting. Although location production, which was observed, could not be said to be a natural setting for popular television production in the general sense (for instance, studio production is widely used in Western countries where there is a high level of infrastructural development) but in Nigeria, it is the predominant method of popular fiction television production.<sup>59</sup> Observing people in their work context and asking them questions about aspects one does not understand is one of the quickest ways to understand practices of which one has no previous experience. Not having prior experience of television production before the fieldwork and having a limited amount of time to spend in the field, the researcher needed to learn as much as possible within a short time. Collecting data through observation was for this reason also practical for this

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<sup>59</sup> Natural setting in this sense does not really mean the outdoors though this is a huge part of what location production means in the context of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. Location production in Nigeria is understood as a method of programme production in which a popular fiction television producer, because he does not have the facilities (buildings, wardrobe, and other props) that he requires for production, sources them through friends, family and other contacts. The producer normally acknowledges and thanks (by specifying the form of help s/he received) in the closing credits of his/her production, the people, institutions or organizations which provided such help and services.

study. Observation was also an ice-breaker before interviews. It afforded the researcher the chance to first develop a friendly relationship with interview subjects before the actual interview.

Notwithstanding the advantages, observation has a downside. Where other things could be going on at the same time, as in location production, the researcher's attention could easily become fragmented. Although much of it provided the necessary background information for this research, only a small amount of observation data was, however, used in the actual writing and this mainly in footnotes by way of providing additional information. Extensive use of lengthy quotations from observation notes, which only served to add more detail to the developing argument, could slow down the pace of an account. As a researcher gathering information through this method, one is also never quite sure whether the polite smiles one generally receives in the field are contrived or genuine. The researcher was never certain whether the niceness was a command performance from the Producer, Mr. Adenuga, staged for her benefit. After all, she had come from the UK, and Nigerians, wary of the negative headlines about them in the international media, were determined to leave her with a good impression to take back about the production company. It could well be good old African hospitality in action. One is never quite sure.

### **3.2.3 Documents**

Documents were important data sources for the research also. Helping the researcher understand the 'way in which events are constructed, the reasons employed, as well as providing materials upon which to base further research investigations' are some of the reasons May (2004: 175) gave that researchers use documents in social research. In relation to Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., every scrap of documentation available from the company was collected. However, these were mostly in-house promotional publications providing general information about the company, its owner, the programmes, awards the company has won, etc. Such documents proved a useful information source necessary to the background account of the industry. The drama series

produced by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., which the researcher collected and used in the chapters on textual analysis, was also very relevant. However, considerations about cost and what was achievable in the framework of the research played a role in the choice of the programmes. The company has produced 19 programmes from 2001 to June 2006. At first, random sampling was used to collect as many programmes as cost would permit, five from the 19. Later, informed by the form of textual analysis she intended to pursue, discourse analysis, the researcher used purposive sampling method in selecting the two programmes analysed: *Campus Babes* and *Daddy's Girl*.

As a data source, documents could become a central element and a key evidence that underpins an entire research project, as was the case with this research. The chapters on textual analysis (Chapters Six and Seven) where some of the strongest statements about the research were made were based on documents, programmes produced by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., and two Hollywood studios: Universal and Touchstone.

### **3.3 Conceptual Framework**

Concepts such as discourse, critical analysis, ideology, history/context, intertextuality were central to the analysis of the selected media texts as well as interview texts and the discussion below centred on the sense in which these were used in the study.

*Discourse* was understood in two senses. As knowledge, discourse consists of ideas, images, opinions, beliefs and practices. As a way of constructing knowledge about a particular topic or field of activity, institutional sites, etc., discourse was also understood in the Foucauldian sense and was used in its plural sense, *discourses*, to refer to 'conventional ways of talking that create and perpetuate systems of ideology...' (Johnstone 2008: 29). This is the link with ideology which Jaworski et al (2003: 137) explained as a 'set of shared beliefs, attitudes and values, [which] moulds members' categorization and representation of the world in such a way that it appears to them natural and unproblematic.' Some of the means through which these conventional ways of thinking operate to constitute popular knowledge, or views about the world, which people in a particular cultural context can hold regarding some issues, can be discovered



by studying the ways popular cultural forms, like films and popular television drama series, represent particular themes and topics. Language is central in this role of constituting knowledge about the world. The study also understood language in the social constructionist sense, a view of language which is linked to the notion of discourse and its constitutive role as elaborated by Hall (1997: 45).<sup>60</sup>

In relation to *critical analysis*, Barbara Johnstone explained some senses in which the word ‘critical’ can be used. Criticism, according to her, can be evaluative or non-evaluative and can carry a negative or positive charge in either case. Critical thinking, she further explained, means ‘careful, systematic, self-conscious thinking, without any necessary evaluative goals...’ (Johnstone op cit: 29). Critical, as Fairclough (1992: 9) has also explained, ‘implies showing connections and causes which are hidden.’ In the course of *analysis*, an analyst engages with media texts by breaking down, dividing up, deconstructing such textual materials with the aim of discovering the patterns and devices which structure and function within them (Thompson 1990: 289). Such an analyst also employs a range of explanatory techniques, or what Thompson has called ‘objectifying’ methods in the process of textual interpretation. *Critical analysis* is therefore understood as analysis that explains the ‘relationships between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power relations’ (Richardson 2007: 27). The goal of the mainly ideological analysis produced in the chapters on the analysis of popular discourses was not evaluative, but rather, the analysis sought to relate the discursively constructed popular knowledges (in the discourses of prostitution in *Campus Babes* and *Pretty Woman*) to the operations of power in the contexts in which the texts were produced. The purpose of the analysis of discourses of parenting in the texts, *Daddy’s Girl* and *Problem*

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<sup>60</sup> Hall (1997:24-5) identified the reflective, intentional and constructionist approaches as three major theories which are used to account for where meaning in a cultural text, for instance, comes from. The reflective approach argues that meaning lies in the text and that language only reflects this meaning. The intentional approach posits that meaning comes from the author of a text who employs language to impose his own meaning on text. The constructionist approach, however, argues that textual meaning is constructed, as according to this perspective, meaning cannot be fixed by any one individual. Social constructionism, in other words, recognizes ‘the existence of the material world’ as well as the ‘the symbolic practices and processes through which representation, meaning and language operate’ (ibid:25).

*Child 1*, was also, to relate them to the assumptions about parent/child relationship in the contexts of the texts.

*Context or History* is used interchangeably in the study. History or context is understood in the sense in which Bordwell (1989:134) explained it as the ‘external world--one of general human affairs and concern.’ On how history is constructed, Fairclough (ibid: 102) observed that texts are key artifacts in constituting history and explained the rationale: ‘Text absorbs and is built out of texts from the past.’ Human beings, as producers and consumers of symbolic forms, as Thompson (1990: 276-7) also argued, are part of history; and the values, traditions and meanings they have inherited in their social and cultural contexts make up part of what people are. Cultural texts, like films and television series or video films, were understood by the researcher as being inherently intertextual. *Intertextuality* means the interconnected and interrelationships that a particular popular cultural text has with other texts in its context of production. Kristeva (1986: 39) argued that intertextuality implies the ‘insertion of history (society) into a text and this text into history.’ Intertextuality is thus about the dialogic quality of texts. Talbot (2007: 63) also explained that the notion of dialogism allows a textual analyst to understand a media text as ‘a tissue of voices and traces of other texts.’ In order, therefore, to understand what other meanings lie within the texts (both interview and popular texts), certain questions were asked of the texts. The researcher’s understanding of these other voices which have been embedded in the texts was the basis from which she produced her analysis of them.

### **3.4 Preparing for Analysis: Sampling, Methodological and Theoretical Considerations**

In the methodological discussions in Chapter One, the researcher argued for a framework for the analysis of contemporary culture, the relational and cross-cultural comparison approach as proposed by Featherstone (1995) and Alasuutari (2000) respectively. The approach, through which cultural materials produced in different contexts such as the United States of America and Nigeria can be analysed on the same matrix, is also one which offers a cultural analyst a way of studying the impact that dominant cultures are

argued to have on weak cultures. In other words, the relational and cross-cultural comparison approach to the study of culture provided the researcher the argument with which to analyse two Hollywood films, *Problem Child1* and *Pretty Woman*, and two Wale Adenuga productions, *Daddy's Girl* and *Campus Babes*, side by side. Alasuutari (ibid: 135), as already noted in Chapter One, further suggested that part of the responsibility of a cultural analyst who adopts the cross-cultural comparison approach will be to identify a 'point of comparison' in a unfamiliar culture which the analyst can then study side by side with the same aspect in her own culture. Convention, which Casey et al (2003: 42-3) explained as 'any kind of social, cultural and hence textual practice shared by members of a particular culture', was the point of comparison or aspect of culture which is common to the cultural products by Universal and Touchstone studios and those by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., which the researcher identified in the context of this research. Conventions, as those embodied in the Nigerian video films or Hollywood films, are not value-free but are, as Shohat and Stam (1996: 154) have also reminded us, 'experiential grids or templates through which history can be written and national identity created.' Therefore, if as scholars like Morley (2007) and Wodak and Meyer (2001) have argued that the globalization of dominant popular cultural forms like Hollywood films has been attended by the globalization of popular discourses they embody, a position supported by Ang (1996),<sup>61</sup> then the relational and cross-cultural comparison approach offers one viable means of making visible the specific ways dominant Hollywood films can be seen to have homogenised the conventions of Nigeria's popular fiction television.

The researcher also proposed that a cultural analyst adopting this framework should not only identify the cultural forms from both different/dominant and familiar/local cultures that treated the same topics. The analyst must, in addition, see that the unfamiliar/dominant cultural forms have been produced and released before the local ones, more than a decade in relation to the current study, to allow for a sufficient time lag

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<sup>61</sup> Ang (1996: 153-4) has made a similar observation that in addition to the globalization of cultural contents that the 'parameters and infrastructure which determine the conditions of existence for local cultures', which she explained as 'ideological and pragmatic conventions and principles which govern and mould the accepted ways in which media production, circulation and consumption are organised throughout the modern world', have become increasingly globalised.

within which the dominant culture would have been received at the local level. In relation to this research also, purposive sampling was used in choosing the four popular texts analysed. What guided their selection was equally thematic relatedness. Wale Adenuga Productions' *Daddy's Girl* is related in theme to Hollywood's *Problem Child1* as both explored the same social issue of children's behavioural problem in the same way that Hollywood's *Pretty Woman* is related to Wale Adenuga's *Campus Babes*, both of which engaged with the social problem of prostitution. The cultural texts were further conceptualised as discourses, thus *Daddy's Girl* and *Problem Child1* were seen as discourses of parenting and *Campus Babes* and *Pretty Woman* as discourses of prostitution. These analyses were provided in Chapters Six and Seven of this study. In the case of interview texts, parts of them were conceived as localism and globalism. Greve (2005: 149) explained globalism as the discourse of globalization. This means that the two concepts were seen as talks about the local and the global or the ways the global and local were spoken about by Nigeria's popular fiction television producers. Chapter Five of this thesis, which was based on the excerpts of the interviews with some of the media producers in the study, was therefore an analysis of some of these varied ways the local and global were perceived and spoken about by people in Nigeria's popular fiction television industry.

Before proceeding with textual analysis proper, a number of questions were posed to the texts through which the researcher activated them. Among the questions asked in relation to the texts *Pretty Woman* and *Campus Babes* were: a) how did the texts discursively construct causes of prostitution? and b) how did the text constitute the identity<sup>62</sup> of the prostitute? With regard to *Problem Child1* and *Daddy's Girl*, the question asked was also one about how both texts discursively constructed problem behaviour and its causes in children. For the interview with the Nigerian popular fiction television workers, the general question asked of the data was: how is the local and global spoken about by people in the Nigerian popular television industry?

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<sup>62</sup> The researcher understood identity as traits, features, characteristics, qualities which are attributed to the female subjects portrayed as prostitutes. These attributes thus become visual and discursive means through which the characters thus portrayed are seen, related to and understood as different.

Barbara Johnstone's theory of the heuristic was helpful in structuring the questions, particularly as its key assumption is that a text is shaped by the context and the context is in turn shaped by a text. Johnstone (2008: 9-10) explained a heuristic as 'a set of discovery procedures for systematic application or a set of topics for systematic consideration.' Of six of these text-building strategies<sup>63</sup> which constitute Johnstone's heuristic, one was of particular relevance to the analysis. While an analysis applying all six could lay claim to being systematic and achieving a good level of comprehensiveness, Johnstone herself pointed out that an analyst need not adopt them slavishly (p. 10). The strategy relevant to the analysis produced in this research was the one that directed attention to the relationship of discourse and the world. A related position about the relationship of text and context could be found in Norman Fairclough's CDA framework for textual analysis. While Fairclough's CDA has mostly been applied in linguistic analysis, CDA also has analytic interest in social practices and history or relations of discourse to power and ideology. The commitment that the two analytic frameworks have to the concepts of history and ideology, a position which Thompson (1990) in his depth hermeneutical framework for ideological analysis sketched out more fully, allowed the researcher to draw from theories of ideology to develop an interpretation of the four media texts. In answering the above questions which were asked of the texts, the following steps were taken. The first step was to transcribe the texts. The act had the effect of imbuing a transient oral communication with form and structure. As written text, lines of dialogue could be studied to identify and select relevant data, or what Bordwell (1989: 32) has described as 'salient passages' or 'key portions', which represent examples of the type of meanings that have been embedded in the texts.

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- <sup>63</sup>Discourse is shaped by the world, and discourse shapes the world.
  - Discourse is shaped by language, and discourse shapes language.
  - Discourse is shaped by participants, and discourse shapes participants.
  - Discourse is shaped by prior discourse, and discourse shapes the possibilities for future discourse.
  - Discourse is shaped by its medium, and discourse shapes the possibilities of its medium.
  - Discourse is shaped by purpose, and discourse shapes purpose (Johnstone *ibid*: 10).

### **3.5 Analysing the Context and Content of the Nigerian Video Films: A Depth Hermeneutical Approach**

In the depth hermeneutical framework for cultural analysis that he proposed, Thompson (1990: 279) argued that the first stage in cultural analysis (what he has also called ‘ethnographic moment’), must start with a cultural analyst working within this tradition, producing an account of ‘hermeneutics of everyday life’, or what Thompson has called ‘the interpretation of doxa.’ This form of analysis, as Thompson further elaborated, requires an analyst to explain the ways cultural texts are understood and interpreted by the people who produce and consume them in the context of their everyday lives. Thompson was of the opinion also that a textual analyst could employ such research methods as interviews, participant observation and other forms of ethnographic research, in order to explain the social context of production and reception of cultural products. What Thompson proposes, in other words, is audience and contextual analysis. Due to the focus of this study which is on contextual and textual analysis, however, audience analysis<sup>64</sup> was not attended to. The ways in which Thompson’s depth hermeneutical framework has been adopted in this study are explained subsequently.

The study first provided an account of the context in which Nigerian video films are produced. This was done through a focus on social relations in the industry. This involved describing the roles and positions of Producer, Actor, Director, Script Writer and Technical Crew who work in the industry and highlighting the various forms of power asymmetries that characterise these relationships. Interviews with people in Nigeria’s television industry, participant observation, and documents, were sources of data for the analysis. Next, the ways in which people who work in the popular fiction television industry talked about their context and other places were analysed. It was in other words, an analysis of discourse of the local and global. Through symptomatic reading, further interpretation of these discourses was offered, interpretation that was

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<sup>64</sup>The position of the study on where meaning resides, and the role of the analyst in the production of meaning, meant this dimension of textual interpretation was not pursued in this study. The position was taken that the production of textual meaning does not reside solely with the audience and therefore the de-emphasis on the role of the audience, and the privileging of the critical reader in meaning production.

anchored within relevant scholarly debates on the consequences of globalization. The purpose of symptomatic reading, as Grisprud (1995: 118) has explained, is to discover the forms of 'consciousness embedded' in talks.

The next procedure, or phase, in Thompson's framework that was adopted in this study is textual interpretation. A key idea underlying the depth hermeneutical approach with regard to analysis of media texts, as Thompson (1990: 274) pointed out, is that, 'the study of symbolic forms is fundamentally and inescapably a matter of understanding and interpretation.' Underpinning the approach is also the assumption that textual materials embody meanings in the forms of extra-linguistic elements like power, ideology and history, for which linguistic analysis, with its emphasis on formal features of language, is not designed to account. Thompson (p. 289) has justified this approach to cultural analysis on the basis that, 'however rigorous and systematic the method of formal or discursive analysis may be, they cannot abolish the need for a creative construction of meaning, that is, for an interpretative explication of what is represented, or what is said.' As the study of textual materials was concerned with illustrating how the four media texts used in the analysis function as ideology in the contexts in which they were produced, Nigeria and the United States, that is, the textual analysis took the form of interpretation of ideology. To this end, the researcher developed a three-step strategy starting with the summary of plot.

In the first step, plot summary was combined with an analysis of denotative/explicit textual meaning. This came in the form of the analysis of internal or manifest meanings in the texts. The texts were divided up into chunks. The researcher was aided in this exercise by paying attention to certain meaning-bearing devices operating in the texts, such as binaries and allusions. These cues were nevertheless not formulated in terms of developing explicit schemata or guidelines for them during analysis as the researcher saw the cues as being largely implicit in the texts. They were made explicit through the quoted relevant passages or portions of dialogues which related to topics and themes that were of interest to the explanation that was being pursued. These relevant portions were

also conceptualised as examples of discourses and discursive practices.<sup>65</sup> This strategy, in which the plot summary was provided followed by the interpretation of the important passages, has been described by the scholars Gripsrud (2002: 134), and Meyer (2001: 16) as the hermeneutic circle.<sup>66</sup> The strategy was to ascribe meanings to the quoted relevant passages or sentences, meanings which were then related back to the texts' overall meanings.

In the second stage of analysis which was contextual, attention was paid to latent meanings, which are meanings buried in the texts. Context is understood as the ideology that structured the texts. An analysis of ideology in symbolic products, as Thompson (ibid: 293) explained, is the explication of 'the connection between the meaning mobilised by symbolic forms and the relations of domination which meaning serves to establish and sustain.' In relation to *Campus Babes* and *Pretty Woman*, for instance, the analytic strategy adopted was to connect the discourses of prostitution to relations of power in the contexts in which the texts were produced, and then show the ways in which these discourses function as ideology in the process. Employing the textual cue of binaries, for example, textual interpretation here focused on showing the ways in which the Nigerian and Hollywood patriarchal ideology shape the discourses of prostitution in the texts.

The third level of analysis of the popular discourses, the connotative, followed very much the same pattern as the second level, but this time was cast more as a comparative ideological analysis. There were, however, no neat demarcations between the three levels, as analysis of the three, though focused on distinctive features of the texts, also drew from, and fed into, the others in the process of interpretation. The levels only serve to artificially distinguish one dimension of analysis from another. In the main, therefore, the analysis of texts offered was very much an exercise in the construction of meanings which, as Thompson (op cit: 289), explained involves 'a movement of the thought' of the

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<sup>65</sup> Jager Siegfried (2001: 33) explained discursive practices as 'speaking and thinking on the basis of knowledge.'

<sup>66</sup> Meyer (2001:16) explained the argument of hermeneutic circle in relation to textual meaning as being that 'the meaning of one part can only be understood in the context of the whole, but that this in turn is only accessible from its component parts...'



analyst. The movement of thought at the connotative level can thus be said to serve to open up the texts for further interpretation which could not be obtained at the level of denotative analysis.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In relation to this research, the depth hermeneutical framework has some strengths as well as weaknesses. A dimension of the strength is its flexibility which meant it could be modified, stages could be skipped or added to suit the purpose of the research. In addition, because it involves interpretation, this approach gave the researcher the freedom not only to explore possible meanings that might be embedded in the texts without having to worry about the restraints which coding would have placed on her, it also gave her the freedom to be a creative meaning producer. For instance, in the way the framework was applied, rather than isolating blocks of dialogue and exhaustively and exclusively analysing or interpreting them, the strategy employed was instead to use the texts and their contexts as some sort of wallpaper or backcloth for explaining the meanings of the dialogue chunks highlighted in the analysis. This strategy has the advantage of ensuring that the analysis is internally coherent while at the same time respecting the texts' unique qualities, or what Gripsrud (2002: 142) has called texts' 'individual specificity.'

In relation to the kind of the textual analysis, that is, ideological analysis that was pursued in the study, the approach also has some weaknesses. Ideological analysis is, as Thompson (op cit) acknowledges, a risky business. The risk arises because textual interpretation involves the projection of 'a possible meaning, one of several possible meanings which may diverge from, or conflict with, one another', as Thompson (p. 294) also points out. This makes ideological analysis particularly vulnerable to contestation, especially from people who come from the social context of the specific text. In the case of the analysis offered in the study, the researcher was aware this may be the c

## Chapter FOUR

### **Building an Industry's Social Structure: How Popular Fiction Television is Produced in Nigeria**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

Hesmondhalgh (2006) has in his essay entitled *Media Organizations and Media Texts: Production, Autonomy and Power*, reviewed some of the perspectives from which a number of media researchers and scholars in the UK have studied media production, the methods that they used in data collection and how these authors conceptualised the power of media producers. Such studies as those by Hall et al, for instance, which employed content analysis to study news reporting on youth crime, perceived media producers as having little autonomy and as being mostly 'cued in to primary definitions by powerful sources' (ibid:85). Keith Negus, who on his part studied rap as well as other genres of popular music employing mostly interviews, was of the view that the power of media producers depends largely on wider social processes. Other scholars like Schlesinger and Tumber, who studied crime reporting also using interviews and content analysis, saw media producers as being relatively autonomous.

This chapter was, however, an analysis of the context in which popular fiction television is produced in Nigeria or as Miller et al (2005: 45) put it, the analysis of 'the local, where work is done'.<sup>67</sup> The analysis focused on the industry's social structure, and the power asymmetries that characterise various positions and roles, such as Producer, Associate Producer, Actor, Director, Script Writer, and Technical Crew using Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., as a case study. These social relations also illustrate the fact that while popular cultural producers could have a global reference, as some theorists like Mike Featherstone (1995) have argued, and which happens to be the case with some members

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<sup>67</sup> In their methodological propositions in Chapter One, the 'local where work is done' is the third level at which the authors Toby Miller and his colleagues suggested that an analysis of culture can be conducted.

of the cast and crew of Wale Adenuga Productions' *Super Story*,<sup>68</sup> the context in which they work could, however, be shaped mainly by local practices. In addition, while it may also be the case that popular cultural forms like Nigerian video films, could have a global reach, as was established in Chapter One, the conditions in which such cultural forms are produced may also be mostly local. The chapter concluded by advancing an explanation for the pull that working in popular fiction television industry appears to have for the Nigerian practitioners, so much so that despite their expressions of dissatisfaction with their fees, conditions of service and other production practices, most would rather work in the industry than consider career options in other sectors of the country's economy.

#### 4.1. Producer

Gripsrud's (1995: 29) observation with regard to the role of the television producer in the United States as being the most stable member of the production team can be productively applied to the analysis of the role of a producer in Nigeria's popular fiction television industry. In the Nigerian context, however, the stability is drawn mainly from the producer's position in the industry than from any other consideration. She or he is in some cases, the sole owner of the production company and the one in charge of its day-to-day management, delegating responsibilities to loyal staff members. The producer also finances programme production, either single-handedly, or through external sources sometimes in the form of programme sponsorship by manufacturers who use the programme to advertise their product, as in the case of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., *Super Story*, which is partly sponsored by Unilever Nigeria PLC. Within the industry, Nollywood, production is also mostly financed by video film marketers and to some extent, by investors with an interest in the video film industry.

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<sup>68</sup> Mr. Adenuga, besides holding a university degree in business management, also travels widely outside Nigeria and especially to South Africa, attending film/art festivals, forums in which he also sells his productions. Mr. Banjo, his Corporate Affairs Manager, who has a university degree in journalism, either goes with him or is delegated to represent Mr. Adenuga. Mr Arinze, one of the actors in the study, travels quite a bit himself, attending award ceremonies in honour of Nigerian video film actors in the UK. Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, another actor in the study, was a guest of the Liberian government in 2004 at the Peace Festival for the Disarmament of the Liberian Child. In the interview she also spoke of her friends from Ghana, Sierra Leone, and of her partner who lives in the UK. They are all also university graduates.

Sole ownership of a popular fiction television production company in Nigeria, as in the case in Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., has implications for the product as well as for social relations. As regards the product, story selection provides a good point for the analysis of the consequences of this power. Mary Talbot has pointed to the power wielded by cultural producers, like television producers, in their position of constructing imaginary audiences for whom they represent a way of seeing the world. She observed that due to their position, producers are able to ‘attribute values and attitudes to their addressees, presenting them in a taken-for-granted way’ Talbot (2007: 47). This attribution of values can take all sorts of forms, like assumptions of audiences’ preferences in matters of cultural taste, the prescription of acceptable way of conduct, all of which form the cultural pool of commonsense knowledge which the audience draws from in order to read or decode a text. The ‘taken-for-granted way’ with which producers can represent supposed audience needs, and especially where statistics about the audience are non-existent, can lead to the conceptualisation of the audience as a mass or aggregate. This can also lead to false assumptions about a programme rating and performance with the audience as is the case with Wale Adenuga Productions’ *Super Story* and the NTA.<sup>69</sup>

Coming to the implications for labour relations of a situation where a producer singly owns a popular fiction television production company, John Richardson’s discussions on power and particularly the form of power which exists in hierarchically structured organizations is especially helpful. Richardson (2007: 31) in his elaboration had pointed to the way individuals in stratified organizations or societies gain power over others in social relationships. He explained that a dimension of this power consists in one person getting another to do what that other person may not want to do. Although Richardson linked this form of exercise of power to discourses, the same form of power can be said to operate in the context of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., where a single individual makes all the important decisions. In such a setting as Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., sycophancy and exploitation also become inevitably interlinked. The total power to hire and fire which the Producer, Mr. Adenuga, wields is evident in the manner in which he is

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<sup>69</sup> Mr. Adenuga, Producer of *Super Story*, believes his programmes enjoy nationwide appeal. This is despite the fact that neither his production company, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., nor the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), had any method of ascertaining viewership, as at 2006.

fawned over by his staff. These people are in some cases in their middle age, as is the Producer. This is the case with the Director, Mr. Laniyan, and the Associate Producer, Mr. Adeoye, both married men with families and, although no blood relatives, call Mr. Adenuga ‘Uncle Wale.’ The attitude of the two men is, however, not uncommon in a society where power is implicated in the patronage system.

Bourgault (1995: 51) has described the patronage system as an ‘informal reward structure.’ Barber (1997a: 4) employed terms like capillaries, networks, constellations, vertical-orientation, and described the system of patronage as the means through which ‘‘small men’...are linked to some ‘big man’ through whom they can ‘get a share of the good things in life.’’ The reward in relation to Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., could be in form of ensuring regular work for the ‘small man.’ The system also thrives within organizations characterised by authoritarian models of leadership which value, as Richardson (op cit 2007: 31) has further explained, ‘loyalty and obedience and sensitivity to the demands of those in authority [while] undermining the values of excellence, independence, originality and goal-orientation.’ The response of the Actor, Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, to an interview, illustrates how patronage works within a popular fiction television production company and also highlights how this practice can undermine social relations in an organization. The Actor, when asked whether working conditions<sup>70</sup> impacted on their performance, alluded to directors who, because they wanted to be perceived by the Producer as loyal, and thus ensure their chances of regular work, negotiate the welfare of actors out of production deals with the producer. Her answer is quoted extensively here:

It does. It does. Everything has a history. Pardon my saying this, but some of the directors we have do not help the situation. They have compromised too much, and that takes us back to what I said about the level of poverty that the industry still has. I don’t want to say it but some (directors) are disgruntled. There are some directors you

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<sup>70</sup> In the course of the researcher’s fieldwork in 2006, while on location production with the cast and crew of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., television drama series, *A New Song*, she observed that the cast and crew could be all day in the extreme tropical heat because there was no provision for trailers, or hotel facilities on location. Most actors also, whatever their role, are required to be on hand and in the sun (The rich and established names who can afford their own personal transport seek shelter from the sun in their cars. For the less well off, and there are plenty of those in the industry, the trees provide the shade.) as they can be called upon to perform at any time.

work with that will not compromise the comfort of the actor because they need the actor to be in the right frame of mind to deliver. These directors go out of their way to make sure. You, the actor, may not be there when they fight these battles for you with the producer, and the actor is well treated. Why is that person still in the sun? If she is not working, put her in the hotel. What hotel are you putting the actor? Because the director knows that invariably it's going to show in the job. But there are some directors you work with and he won't even complain and they give you this look of 'you're complaining too much.' You have those who even team up with the producers because they want job guarantees, they want job security. So, they don't protect the welfare of the artist. So, when you're seated out there in the sun for so long and you're called on to perform and you do not perform, he does not want to know. All he knows is just perform. Some directors are sycophants because they want to continue working. So, you see all that is like a chain. There's no how you take someone and you put the person in the sun and you, as an artist, know I'm going to wear my make-up; I'm going to wear my costume and the African costume is very, very heavy. And when you'd be sweating and you're expecting to deliver and the director all he knows is come and read and deliver. There is no how it cannot hinder your performance no matter what a wonderful actor you are.

Casting, as a sphere of work in television production where the producer has the final say, presents another means of analyzing the face of patronage and how this practice can undermine 'the values of excellence' Richardson (op cit) spoke of, and the impact on the outcome of the product. This is especially so if it happens to be the case that 'the big man' is returning a favour. When the producer therefore selects an inexperienced or wrong actor for a role, the director is left to clear up the mess during production. The mess can be inconvenient in some cases. As the director aims to stay within budget by wrapping up shooting within projected timeframe, this practice has the downside of not only undermining the authority of the director during production; (as she or he sees they have to tread carefully around the favoured one who can send reports back to the producer about happenings on location calculated to cast the director in a bad light) it can also generate resentment on the part of other members of the cast and crew, when they sense a case of selective treatment. A source who wished to remain anonymous, however, was less tactful in discussing the constraints with which directors, like Mr. Laniyan, who work with Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., are specifically faced:

A lot of actors are being imposed on the director and he has to shout sometimes at these actors. And when the director is having a problem with such an actor it becomes a big issue. And these actors (read girlfriends) will give feedback to their

‘uncle’, (the producer) reporting the director: ‘he (the director) complains about us too much, he even altered some words.’ Just because they have a relationship with the big man...The director has even resigned himself to how the system works. That’s why we see a situation where the producer says ‘ I don’t want to use this person on my programme.’ He may be a very good actor but he won’t be used because of personal reasons.

However, in a situation where work is not exactly thick on the ground, as in Nigeria, it is unlikely that most directors will be seen walking away any time soon from the difficult position into which this practice puts them.

With regard to Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., the patronage system can impact on social relations in other ways. This can be in the form of ‘small men’ making false or exaggerated claims about their welfare in order to make the ‘big man’ or his business look good.<sup>71</sup> By massaging the ego of the powerful, the weak are seen to be acknowledging where power is located in the production company: with the producer. However, the loyalty of ‘small men’ secured by patronage, can sometimes, only last as long as rewards from the ‘big man’ last. In the case of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., loyalty may not continue beyond the current production.<sup>72</sup>

This model of popular fiction television production company ownership in Nigeria also means television is not a producer’s medium and neither is the role of popular fiction television producers necessarily a creative one in terms of their being responsible for the story ideas or the introduction of innovations. The producer in Nigeria’s popular fiction television industry differs in this sense from his counterpart in the United States, who is in some cases responsible for developing story ideas, casting and editing, as Cantor (1992: 71) has observed. In terms of developing story ideas, producers like Mr. Adenuga

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<sup>71</sup> The Script Writer of *A New Song* in an interview she told the researcher that she was on a regular payroll at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. However, when the researcher informed the Script Writer that she was told something different, she wanted to know who the researcher’s source was. Hearing that her informant had been the company’s Corporate Affairs Manager, the Script Writer changed her story and now assured the researcher she was a freelancer paid according to the quality of her script.

<sup>72</sup> This is because several months after the researcher’s fieldwork when she had phoned the same Associate Producer for clarification of some issues, as already noted, his tone had undergone a remarkable change. The once worshipful reverence for his boss had disappeared because he no longer worked for Mr. Adenuga and was now critical of some of the production practices at his former place of work.

buy stories from free lancers that meet the company's requirements, which according to the guideline for story selection at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., include novelty, uniqueness, in-built moral lessons and conformity with the NTA broadcast requirements. When this is the case, story development may just take the form of merging some stories under one title, from which a required number of episodes is developed. The producer may play a more direct role in story development by making changes in the original story and incorporating his own ideas. As he produces mostly continuing series that encompasses different generic forms, this form of story development seems to be a more practical way for a producer like Mr. Adenuga, who does not maintain a team of script writers.

In terms of introducing new ideas in television production, the popular fiction television producer, whose programmes are scheduled on the network service of Nigeria's national television, the Nigerian Television Authority, is in any case too heavily circumscribed by the terms of reference set up by the NTA, which leaves the producer little room for manoeuvre. The NBC codes and NTA regulations are so strictly enforced at the network that a producer would be risking having his efforts rejected. As there is little chance for any financial compensation or a successful legal challenge, producers like Mr. Wale Adenuga always toe the line. Some of the regulations have to do with issues of ethnic sensitivity, taste, and public morality, as has already been noted in Chapter Two. NTA's Executive Director of Programmes, Mr. Peter Igho, elaborated on this aspect in an interview:

There are a whole variety of dos and don'ts. In terms of content, we do not allow on our screens any programme that derogates any group, whether religious or people, that plays on anybody's handicap, that promotes a particular religion or denigrates any religion. Again, we do not allow sexual, overt sexual material, and depending on when the programme is scheduled, no alcohol advertisement is allowed if the programme is before 10 o'clock. If it is after 10 o'clock, we do allow alcohol adverts, but even then no overt drinking and celebration of alcohol drinking. So these are some of the areas that we look at in terms of the content and then technical quality before we pass a programme as being fit to be transmitted on the NTA channel.



The above statement also yields insights into some of the values that underpin the national culture which the Nigerian state is striving to develop, as well as the conservative ideology of national television. The statement also demonstrates how concerns of a nation state for political and religious stability can become tied to issues of cultural taste and become articulated as broadcast codes and regulations. The workings of the principles that structure what comes to television audiences as drama series, with particular reference to Nigeria, also become manifest from the above statement.

However, this does not mean that popular fiction television producers in Nigeria have no political or social orientations. In fact, Mr. Wale Adenuga sees television drama as a light that is beamed in the dark corners of society and his programmes as the medium that wields this torchlight, which it is scattering to all the homes in Nigeria.<sup>73</sup> Television drama, Mr. Adenuga believes, must embody a moral in addition to the entertainment function it performs otherwise it becomes empty entertainment.

The popular television producer in Nigeria may also not normally have a background in television production, as is the case with Mr. Adenuga, who started as a popular magazine publisher and only made a transition to video film production following the availability of the technology. However, print and electronic formats are not necessarily the same, as indicated by the executive position that Mr. Adenuga mostly occupies in his company these days as opposed to his more active role as editor and sole illustrator of his comic magazines, *Ikebe Super* and *Papa Ajasco*.

Other types of producer obtain in Nigeria's commercial television industry besides the above model. These other models of producers also provide a good indication of how popular fiction television production is financed in Nigeria. A Nollywood video film producer, does not as a practice, necessarily have to come up with all the money for programme production. There are essentially about three ways that production is financed in the industry. In the self-sponsorship or sole-investment model of financing popular

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<sup>73</sup> Or perhaps one should rather say the many of the Nigerian homes that have electricity, or can generate their own power. Electricity generation by the national grid in Nigeria, as already noted in Chapter Two, has gone from being a national joke to being a national nightmare.

fiction television production, a wealthy producer will usually put up all the money needed for the project. When she or he puts up all the money for programme production, such a producer is usually pretty much his or her own boss, answerable to no one. The only landmine they have to watch out for is normally in the story content, as the nation state in the shape of National Films and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) can refuse to classify any product they deem to embody some of the 'don'ts' that the NTA Executive Director of Programmes enumerated above.

The second method of financing production involves what might be described as the use of 'external people' as sources of funding. When they fund production, they become producers although they may not need to participate in an active sense in production. The work is left mostly to the person with the relevant experience. These external people can include anyone: friends, neighbours, family members, etc., of the one who has the experience in television production. Such people would also usually reach an agreement regarding how to share proceeds from the project. As Nollywood film productions are, as the Associate Producer of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., *A New Song*, Mr. Adeoye, himself a Nollywood producer, described it,

a one-off', a short runner... much like buying and selling. You go to one village to buy garri<sup>74</sup> and you go to another village to sell it and collect your money at the end of the day

the investors usually expect to recoup their investment in the shortest possible time.

The third model of financing in the television industry also involves funding provided by marketers and distributors of video films, who are really the main financiers of Nollywood productions. Here, the producer makes a pitch to a video film marketer (and it helps if the producer has a proven track record of making successful video films), for instance. Based on the financial arrangement reached, the marketer finances the production. In this model of programme financing, the producer does not enjoy much autonomy with regard to decisions, as the video film marketer who is underwriting

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<sup>74</sup> Garri, made from cassava, is a staple food in Nigeria.

production costs may have his own personal interests, which the producer is expected to accommodate. Such personal interests may come in the form of imposing the marketer's choice of actors on the producer.

An important aspect of being an independent popular television producer in Nigeria can, therefore, be said to be such a person's ability to provide finance for a production whether by himself or herself or whether the cost of production is underwritten by a group of investors. It is also, therefore, more accurate to describe the popular fiction television producer in Nigeria as a businessman or business executive rather than as an artistic creator or artist. This does not mean, however, that there are not popular fiction or video film producers who are artistic creators, like Amaka Igwe and Tunde Kelani. But these people are most likely to be in the minority. Popular fiction television may not be the product of a single artist, but in Nigeria's commercial television industry one person may make all the important decisions, from story selection to the actors who translate the story.

#### **4.2 Actor**

Previously considered as something one did as a sideline, which provided occasional employment for the enthusiast who combined it with a more 'serious' conventional job, such as government employment, television acting in Nigeria is currently seen by the practitioners as a full-time 'profession.' The surge in interest in the acting 'profession' has, however, created both a dilemma in the commercial television industry about its status as well as a problem for the professionally trained actor. This excerpt from the interview with the Actor, Yemi Solade, when the researcher had asked the actor what the state of acting was in Nigeria, helps to put this problem into context:

*Solade:* The thing just evolved from soap opera, somebody toying with the idea of recording drama on tape and then letting people view that. That was what gave birth to home video. And then now, all Nigerians now want to act. Everybody is now an actor.

*Researcher:* (Surprised) What are you talking about!

*Solade:* Everybody, the medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, they all want to act now! Yea, so, we are the ones they are contending with, we the professionally trained ones.

*Researcher:* And why do you think that is? Is it because they believe you're making so much money and they want to get into the action themselves?

*Solade:* Ah, yes. Some see it as a way of making money; some see it as a way of expressing some hidden talent. You know, in the African setting, parents want their children to practice disciplines that are lucrative. To them, that's what they believe. Truly those disciplines were lucrative in those days: medicine, law, engineering, accountancy, but now, it isn't so anymore. You see medical doctors who are just roaming all over the place and not really doing well; lawyers who are looking for criminals to bail, and looking for people to write affidavits for. You go to the High Court, you see them. You see doctors who complain every time. So, they feel like, 'well, if actors can ride cars with AC (Air-Conditioning), when you see them highly celebrated, then why don't we go there too.' So it's just about all coming to have a try, it might gel (that is, they may make a success of it) and then they quit the main practice and then take this up. Some enjoy the glitz, the razzmatazz, the limelight... We are the exception, those of us who've started a long time ago. Before home video we never knew we were getting to this era. But the ones that are coming now, all they think about is, 'o.k., I need to be popular.' For some, money may not be the main reason but you find, especially with the ladies, when they come and make their names, the big boys in the society run after them and offer them the world of comfort, buy them cars that they cannot afford, give them the luxuries and they will be like 'ohh'. The ladies enjoy that. That's why you find a lot of Nigerian actresses are very light-skinned! (Solade was referring to bleaching chemicals in some body creams marketed in Nigeria which are sometimes used by people to achieve light skin colour thought to make one look more attractive.)

This being the case, it is therefore unsurprising that acting is among the category of television work where an audition is not always conducted for a role because if they do hold an audition, according to a cast and crew member of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., Mr. Jimoh, in an interview, 'the whole nation will turn out to be auditioned.'

Though a bit exaggerated, the above observation gives an idea of the appeal of television acting in the country and the problem with calling it a profession.

Peters (1974:41) identified certain features of acting in America which, according to her, make the use of the term ‘profession’ in its description somewhat problematic. They include the lack of a generally accepted minimum entry requirement and an absence of a logical structure for career advancement, or promotion of people who have made acting a career choice. One would encounter the same complexity in trying to analyse popular fiction television acting in Nigeria. At a general level, however, television actors in Nigeria can be said to fall into three main groups: the professionally trained actors, who are mostly graduates of theatre arts departments in Nigerian universities or other institutions, like Wale Adenuga’s Productions Ltd., Pencil Films and Television Institute (PFETI). University educated actors, perhaps due to the number of years—four years at least—which their training requires, generally consider themselves better trained and therefore professional actors. The next group consists of acting enthusiasts with no formal training of any sort, who rely mostly on youth, looks, connections, and the bare-boned conviction that they can succeed in the business. The more established and university educated actors regard this group as ‘opportunists’ or ‘gatecrashers’, but still manage to organize financially lucrative workshops for them.<sup>75</sup> The first two groups are paid for their skills and the work they do. The third group of actors belongs to the improvisation category and they consist of people who happen to possess certain bodily features necessary for achievement of realism in a particular scene, pregnancy, for instance. Only that relevant part of the body is used in these cases, after which the actor in this category is usually thanked and sent on his or her way. They are never paid.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> In an interview with the actor, Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, she mentioned a workshop which she recently helped organise to teach acting skills to inexperienced actors, training which the beneficiaries nevertheless had to pay for.

<sup>76</sup> There was a part in the hospital scene (during the production of *A New Song*) being shot in which the lead actress, pregnant at this stage in the story, was supposed to be having her baby. She was, of course, not pregnant in real life. However, the director had to use a pregnant woman for the scene. The setting was a maternity hospital ward, a real one. The doctor’s wife had been at the same university as the Associate Producer. When shooting had to be interrupted because the scene required a pregnant woman, the solution was, therefore, easy: the doctor’s wife simply walked to the main road and waited for passers-by. In no time at all, she came back with a light-skinned, very pregnant woman who happily allowed her pregnancy to be filmed for the scene. The actress playing the pregnant wife is light-skinned too. The Old Boy Network

Although to the audiences they may be the most recognizable part of the creative process of a popular fiction television drama, though their images may dominate movie posters and grace magazine covers, and despite also the huge lure it holds for Nigerians, the irony is that acting in Nigeria is generally not financially rewarding, nor do actors wield much influence or power in the production process. Power resides almost completely in the hands of the one paying the piper, that is to say, the producer. A combination of circumstances, ranging from the nature of organization of work in the industry (a model where the producer is the one who sets up the company or finances production and therefore wields most of the power) and the poor state of the economy, which means actors are poorly paid,<sup>77</sup> could be said to be largely responsible for the powerless position of actors in Nigeria. If a ‘proliferation of appearance’ on broadcast television is an index of an actor’s star status, as has been argued by White (1992: 193), the structure of broadcast television in Nigeria provides no such enabling environment for the actor. The structure of broadcasting in the country, which is a combination of the public service and the commercial and the fact that only the programmes whose producers are able to pay for airtime at the NTA, for example, are broadcast (and even this is also infrequent, once a week, as in the case of Adenuga’s *Super Story*) makes the emergence of fictional television actors as ‘stars’ with power almost impossible. The structure of commercial television broadcasting, in which the broadcast spectrum allocated to a licensed broadcaster has a limited reach, also makes it highly difficult for an actor to gain national prominence to the point that the survival of a show depends on him or her, a factor crucial in assessing the power of an actor (Gripsrud 1995:49). With reference also to Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., the continuing series format in which a story may have as little as two episodes (*Daddy’s Girl*) or as many as 36 episodes (*Oh Father, Oh Daughter*, being the series with the largest number of episodes the company has so far produced) is unlikely to transform the status of the Nigerian television actor in the near future. Star television actors are most likely to emerge from continuous serial formats,

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and a willing passer-by helped to provide realism, as well as ensuring that shooting went on (from the researcher’s field-notes, 2006).

<sup>77</sup> In 2006, actors with starring roles in a Wale Adenuga production were paid about twenty-five thousand naira (about \$195) per episode and as little as 3000-5000 naira (about \$23-\$29) per episode for those playing minor roles.

such as soap operas or other long-running serials; but the format does not yet exist on any Nigerian television station.<sup>78</sup> However, even where it does exist like in Britain, the number of years a programme has run is sometimes no adequate protection for the actor. This is especially the case when a programme is declining in popularity and watching the budget becomes necessary. When this happens, actors' roles are the most likely of all the category of television work to become directly affected, as Gripsrud (ibid) has pointed out. This happens through the killing off of an actor's fictional character.

Besides the issue of finance, which could constrain a production and lead to an actor's fictional character to be axed, other factors, such as a clash of perspectives with executives, can directly affect an actor's chances of getting work. Not even lead characters are spared in this event, as Dorothy Hobson aptly illustrated with the character of Meg Mortimer portrayed by Noele Gordon in the British soap *Crossroads*.<sup>79</sup> An incident in 2006 involving some of the cast of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., popular *Papa Ajasco* television series offers a Nigerian example.<sup>80</sup> This being the case, the Nigerian television actor who only ever appears in productions that last no longer than a year and once a week; is unlikely to be such a key member of production that he will be in a position to name his or her fees, or to have an impact on a story's development.

Unless they are able to finance their own productions, in which case they will have the artistic autonomy to create roles for themselves, actors in Nigeria also accept whatever roles they are offered with little leeway for making alterations. However, the level of education and social relationships developed over the years can be said to have a bearing

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<sup>78</sup> Although *Masquerade* and *Village Headmaster* enjoyed a relatively long run on the NTA, but the number of years they were broadcast are short when compared with British soaps, like *Coronation Street*, which has been running for more than twenty-five years.

<sup>79</sup> Noele Gordon, a very popular actress, who played the lead character, Meg Mortimer, was dramatically sacked by the producers of *Crossroads* in 1981 (Hobson 1982: 13). No amount of public outcry or letters to the television station executives was able to make the producers reconsider their decision and reinstate the actress.

<sup>80</sup> Some of the members of the cast had held a live dramatization of the television series in the Western Nigerian city of Ibadan, a performance which the producer considered to be in breach of the terms of the actors' contract which regarded as illegal any performance of the story in another medium by the actors. Mr. Adenuga subsequently replaced all the cast involved with new people, despite complaints from viewers that the programme was never the same. Mr. Adenuga, however, insisted that viewers would in time become used to the new cast and accept them on their own merit.

on the amount of latitude an actor is allowed with the changes she or he can make on a script. This also demonstrates another strand of the relations of power in the popular fiction television industry. University-educated actors, who are usually fluent in English, can with director's approval substitute original words in the script with others.<sup>81</sup> In Nigeria, where television programmes and broadcasts have increasingly become for many (especially those with limited formal training in educational institutions) the final arbiter of what constitutes the correct form of English language pronunciation and usage, such actors see themselves as a cut above the less educated actors and their fluency in English a selling point which they are not willing to jeopardize. The less well-educated, and those actors playing minor roles are, however, less likely to make this demand as they are more dispensable, being in a more vulnerable position than the 'stars.'

Even with all this, getting roles at all with Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., depends on the actor's 'good behaviour.' If an actor is perceived as 'difficult', work is likely to dry up for such an actor, a situation no actor wants to be in, as unemployment in the television industry, especially for actors, is notoriously high with as little as 15% working at any particular time, even in countries with huge domestic markets such as the United States of America (Cantor 1992: 75). Mr. Adenuga's elaboration of how some actors can become 'a problem' and of how, as a producer, he has to be careful in his choice of actors, explains also the source of the power of the Director on a *Super Story* production set and what can strike an observer as docility on the part of actors who could wait for hours under the sun, shooting a particular scene for as long as the director wished, without complaint. Words can quickly travel back to the Producer. Mr. Adenuga's statements in an interview regarding the challenges he faced in his profession as a producer, provide an insight into how an actor can acquire a 'difficult' tag:

...the actors that we use, you know, like I said, you have to really watch out for artists with good characters, because most artists, when they let success get into

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<sup>81</sup> From observing location shooting on the set of *A New Song* in April 2006, and an incident in which an actor, Bimbo Akinloye, a university graduate of theatre arts, had asked to substitute 'connect' for 'relational' and got the Director, Mr. Laniyan's, approval. However, the less well-educated, and those actors playing minor roles did not make such requests.



their heads, they start misbehaving, they become unruly. You can no longer manage them.

The power of producers, like Mr. Adenuga, over the Nigerian actor is further highlighted by the fact that they can set up a television production school to provide their own actors. Mr. Adenuga's The Pencils Film and Television Institute, which provides training for all sorts of categories of television work from acting, to script writing, editing, directing, etc., illustrates this point. From this pool, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., draws its supplies of actors, only using the big names and established performers to supply 'star' quality when necessary. There is even a policy in the production company that only those actors who have graduated from the school can get work in their productions.

The net effect of all this financial circumscription on the Nigerian actor is that she or he is in no position to demand such basic services as hotel accommodation, pre-shooting rehearsal, wardrobe or personal transport on production sets such as those of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. On the set of a Wale Adenuga's Productions Ltd., actors provide their own wardrobe in some cases, accept the accommodation the production company offers<sup>82</sup> or pay hotel accommodation themselves. This is regardless of the type of roles the actor plays, as not even those who are given lead roles in the television company's productions are treated any differently in these matters. The situation is no doubt complicated by the perception of acting in Nigeria as an all-comers' game, which contributes to the underlying tension in Nigeria's television industry between university-educated actors and the actors that are dubbed 'gatecrashers.' The tension stems mainly from the apparent preference and tendency of Nigeria's commercial television industry, Nollywood, to use 'hot young things' more often in lead romantic roles since the university-educated actors may have the relevant skills but lack the looks and youth.<sup>83</sup>

The Nigerian actor is not likely to be represented by an agent as having one appears to be anathema to the industry. The actor, Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, when asked in an

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<sup>82</sup> Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., has houses at Ikorodu, a town on the outskirts of Lagos, which are used to accommodate the production crew during location production.

<sup>83</sup> The university trained actors on the set of *A New Song*, like Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, Segun Arinze, Bimbo Akinloye, are in their forties.

interview the reason for the absence of this category of television workers in the Nigerian popular fiction television industry, believed agents would be an encumbrance rather than an asset to the Nigerian actor:

I don't have a manager, not that I cannot afford the services of one, but you get a manager here and it's like, 'whoa, what's happening', and everybody begins to keep away from you

Producers, according to this analysis, would give any actor with an agent a wide berth, suspecting the motive behind the actor needing the services of an agent. However, the present situation can be attributed to the general poverty in the industry where 'star actors' barely manage to live on what they make, and also to the fact that practices in television production in Nigeria are still very much 'work in progress.' The industry is still growing and in time may reach a point where the use of agents will become common practice. However, when this happens, it is most likely that actors will also combine this role as some interviewees described themselves as producers, and/or managers, in addition to acting. At the moment, the Nigerian television actor, of whatever hue, is too busy scouting for work for themselves to be in a position to play Lord or Lady Bountiful who helps to get work for another cash-strapped actor.

#### **4.2.1 Actors Guilds**

Mosco and Lavin (in Thussu (ed) 2009) have shown in their analysis of some workers and labour organizations that have a global reach, an analysis in which the authors used the case of Union Network International (UNI), a trade union federation based in Switzerland which represents workers in information, communication and media, that a united workforce or what the writers described as 'labour convergence' can sometimes serve not only as a safeguard against labour exploitation but also as an effective tool for 'collective bargaining' (Mosco and Lavin *ibid*:3). The authors especially highlighted how major trade unions in North America, like Communication Workers of America (CWA), Washington Alliance of Technical Workers (WashTech) and the Canadian Communication Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) could, through union

convergence, win a court battle against big corporations such as the computer giant, Microsoft. Such trade unions that have not broadened their focus as the Screen Actors Guild, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists were, however, according to the authors, not equally as successful in winning disputes. Insights about workers and labour organizations as these by Mosco and Lavin could be productively applied in the analysis of some guilds representing Nigerian actors and the reasons for their relative ineffectiveness as trade unions.

The Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN) and The Association of Nigerian Theatre Practitioners (ANTP) are among the main actors unions in Nigeria. These two guilds are ethnically-based, representing mostly Igbo and Yoruba actors respectively.<sup>84</sup> In other words, work in Nigeria's popular fiction television industry could be said to be polarised along ethnic lines. Therefore on a movie set, linguistic uniformity is a way of affirming ethnic and cultural identity and can sometimes determine the treatment a person receives.<sup>85</sup>

Lack of solidarity could also be said to provide a conducive environment in which the exploitation, alleged by the workers to be rife in the industry, can thrive. When lack of unity combines with poverty as is the case in Nigeria's popular fiction television industry, it can also create an atmosphere of suspicion. This excerpt from the interview with the Actor, Yemi Solade, when the researcher asked him what the situation was in the industry in relation to trade unions, highlights this point:

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<sup>84</sup> AGN, headed by an Igbo man, Mr. Ejke Asiegbu, gets work for and represents mostly Igbo actors, while ATPN, headed by Jide Kosoko, represents mainly Yoruba actors. Apparently, the rivalry between the Yoruba and the Igbo, inflamed by the nationalists, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo man, and Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Yoruba man, during the pre-independence and post-independence struggle for political domination, and which was exacerbated by events in the Nigerian/Biafran Civil War, has continued to poison relations between the two rival Southern Nigeria ethnic groups.

<sup>85</sup> One of the local women caterers had been deliberately rude to the researcher during a mealtime when everybody had queued up to be served. The woman had belligerently refused to serve the researcher, but capitulated when the researcher held up the queue. The Associate Producer, himself a senior member of the production crew, who had come to find out what was going on, largely helped to resolve the problem also. The researcher, certain she was treated the way she had been because she was Igbo and the caterer a Yoruba, was sharing this experience with some of the lead actors later. It turned out the actors had on their part had similar rude treatment on the set of Igbo-owned productions.

We have splinter groups called professional bodies here and there. But most of these outfits sprang up as a result of the advent of home videos in Nigeria. The initiators of these movements, of course, had maybe some other ambition. Some people form unions all in the bid of making a name and then linking up with people in government. I think that's basically what happens in most cases. If the chairman or president of a body wants to pay homage to one governor and he gives them a million naira (about \$8000) then, they split it within the executive members and the congress members afterwards. So you don't know anything. All you know is that the executive visited the governor of a state and he gave them something and the something is never disclosed. So, there's this lure to always want to, you know, serve.

Lack of unity among labour organisations can also generate a feeling of insecurity among workers, and in the case of Nigerian popular fiction television actors, is mainly responsible for the back-stabbing which allegedly sometimes characterises social relations and interactions in the industry. The actor, Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, referred to the existence of this practice in the industry when the researcher asked, in an interview, whether it was not time that Nigerian actors came together to demand better conditions of service. According to Ms Okere-Falana:

People that you want to fight a war with, people that you're going to unite minds with, they are people who you expect will stand by what you say. However, they are the same people who will go and backstab you. They are people who are sellout. You're doing a production and you're with your co-stars, and you say, 'it's wrong to be treated this way' and you'll now begin to sound like the voice in the wilderness. And you don't see anybody echoing with you. But once the producer or director, or whoever is out of earshot, they begin to agree with you. That's the problem. Of course, it's time...yes, the time is ripe. We deserve it, we have worked hard enough for it, but the chorus is not the same. Behind the people, the powers that be, yes we all chorus the same. But you'll be surprised that you're talking about these things and your own colleague is putting you on a speaker phone and recording you and sending to marketers or director. Then, you find out that you're not given jobs, 'you're making demands.' That's why some artists were banned. Earlier, 2002, we all stayed at home for four months, all actors, we all laid down our tools. We were at home for four months. People were starving. We said we want to restructure the industry. Some artists, the likes of Kanayo, were in the forefront. And they said, 'we've been paid pittance long enough.' They came out with the least fee for a star artist, as 500,000 naira (about \$4,000). And people were like, 'can't they be realistic, what kind of thing is this,' and they went and told the marketers. The marketers blacklisted these people, Ejike Asiegbu and co and stopped giving them work. But these people saw that it was time for actors to earn as much as 500,000 naira, but the same actors went and backstabbed them and when they blacklisted them for almost two years and they were not working, the same actors (the backstabbers) were working. But what

happened? Two years after, artists were paid 1.5 million naira (about \$12,000) which means they foresaw what was right but people did not back them up. But these same artists ended up earning 1.5 million. Are you following me?

Mr. Adenuga, the producer of **Super Story**, also spoke of the same disunity in the industry when the researcher had suggested that perhaps producers like himself should come together and resolve not to do any more business with advertising agencies which allegedly owe television producers in Nigeria large sums of money until every penny was on the table. Mr. Adenuga's response had been:

You see, that's the problem. It's very difficult to get all producers together under one umbrella. I don't know, may be human problems there, but it is difficult. If the three of us hold a meeting and say, 'ok look, we are not going to accept any adverts without payment,' one of us will betray the group and then, the agency will now blacklist you. That is why everyone is 'to your tents oh, Israel.'

In a country like Nigeria, where most sectors of life are plagued by corruption, it is therefore unsurprising that corruption is also implicated in the impotence that seems to characterise the operations of trade unions in the commercial television industry. Yemi Solade, in the same interview with the researcher, referred to this state of affairs:

The unions are just toothless bulldogs. They are not functioning. They just want to go with the designation 'chairman of this body that caters for the welfare of artists', whereas we see no welfare that is being catered for. All they want in the associations is just to collect your union dues. There are those ones who use that to oil the system they are in. You see them living fat off of you. Everybody is sucking, just sucking everybody's blood. Yea, it's so pathetic.

The issue of ethnicity is such a complex and divisive aspect of political and social life in Nigeria that even the actors themselves do not see a future where these differences are successfully surmounted and a united and strong trade union will emerge in the face of the challenges. Yemi Solade's response, when the researcher had suggested that perhaps the solution to the low wages that the actors were paid lay in the formation, in future, of a union that will represent all the ethnic groups, had carried the suggestion that the issues of ethnicity in Nigeria are such deeply rooted ones and as such certain to sabotage any effort in this direction, even with the involvement of the central government:

Well, there's a body that has been set up by the government to regulate everything that happens within the Nollywood called MOPICON (Motion Pictures Council of Nigeria) which will be the apex body regulating the motion picture industry. If the Nigerian factor does not come in. Nigeria's problem is basically ethnic, as you know. You want every tribe in a parastatal so everybody on board would fight for his own constituency. That is basically the problem here. So, who heads it now? If an Igbo person heads it, the Yorubas will scream blue murder, Hausas will say no. It won't work. So, that is the biggest problem.

Such situations as these can only further weaken the positions of the actor. Therefore, though they may belong to various actors guilds, these unions that represent the Nigerian actors are not very effective in protecting the interests of their members, a situation, which besides the poor state of the economy, could account for the poor fees and the powerlessness of the Nigerian actor.

The issue of ethnicity and lack of labour solidarity also highlight the lack of power of the Nigerian actor in another way. Agreements can be broken with impunity with the production company that is in such a breach not being unduly troubled about any consequences. This is because there are usually no signed contract agreements and these transactions are mostly informal. With no legal protection and no strong union to plead his case in such situations, coupled with the grinding poverty within the industry,<sup>86</sup> an actor cannot therefore seek legal redress in the event on unfair termination of an 'agreement'.<sup>87</sup> Regardless of how polarised these guilds are, they nevertheless can be said to be the one sphere of media work that currently plays the role of agent in Nigeria's popular fiction television industry. Only the first two categories of actors, professionally trained artists and the 'gatecrashers', are also represented by the actors guilds.

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<sup>86</sup> The Actor, Segun Arinze's answer, that an actor in such a situation is better off using the money to buy food for his family, when the researcher had asked Mr. Arinze whether as an actor he would not consider taking legal actions against a producer that backs out of an agreement with him without compensation, just goes to show how survival, not comfort or luxury, is mostly the terms, which poverty compels the Nigerian actor to think of.

<sup>87</sup> The case of Yemi Solade, who played Julius in *A New Song*, illustrates this point. In 2005, Mr. Solade had auditioned for a role in an Igbo-owned production and was given the part. However, when the producer had learnt that Mr. Solade, who resembles an Igbo man (he is light-skinned and has facial features normally associated with Igbos), was Yoruba, he ordered that an Igbo man be given the role. The producer was after all financing the production and he reserved the right to decide who played what role. Mr. Solade was subsequently told he no longer had the part.

Marriage and linguistic competence, however, do occasionally tend to transcend ethnic factors in the industry. An actor who is fluent in Igbo and Yoruba stands a good chance of getting work in both camps. For instance, Segun Arinze, who played one of the key characters in *A New Song* and who because his parents are Igbo and Yoruba and because he speaks both languages fluently, gets work with the two rival guilds. Marriage also tends to take some of the edge off the Igbo/Yoruba rivalry. Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, who played another lead role in *A New Song*, is an Igbo married to a Yoruba man and is fluent in Yoruba. This factor could also explain why she has starred in a number of *Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.*, television series, as Mr. Adenuga is a Yoruba and about 99% of the production staff are Yoruba. The language is also the medium of communication at *Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.*, headquarters at Oshodi, Lagos. In the context of *Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.*, Yoruba language can be said to serve as not only a form of cultural identity but has also become what Coupland (2003: 466) described as a ‘necessary workplace skill.’<sup>88</sup>

### 4.3 Director

The Director in both Nollywood and the context of *Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.*, is contracted to direct a particular episode, or the entire story if he has a good relationship with the producer who hires the production staff. In the case of Nollywood productions, however, where there is just a single story and because shooting is crammed into a few days (less than a week in some cases for the location production of a single story) one director will usually complete a particular production.

For episodic series like *Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.*, *Super Story*, which has been on air since 2002 and where there is a greater chance of regular work, the director needs to be on really good terms with the producer. Mr. Laniyan, who has directed more *Super*

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<sup>88</sup> Among the production staff that includes the Producer, Associate Producer, Director, Corporate Affairs Manager, Post Production Editor, only the Script Editor, Ms Blessing Ogheneghe, is non- Yoruba. The production crew is 100% Yoruba. Mr. Adenuga had his Corporate Affairs Manager present while the researcher was interviewing him and would from time to time confer with the his employee in the Yoruba language which the researcher does not speak.

*Story* than any other director (Mr. Laniyan also directed *A New Song*) apparently has such a relationship at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. The good terms in the case of Mr. Laniyan, can be said to have been achieved through the Director's loyalty and his deference to the producer, as well as, perhaps, to the quality of his work.

A Director can equally be an actor in Nigeria. This is because the university curriculum in theatre arts offers general production courses, such as acting, script writing, directing, etc., and so a television director with a university degree in theatre arts could combine acting with directing, or may have been an actor at some point, a factor that has the potential to enhance job performance. Mr. Laniyan, himself an actor on occasions, affirmed that having acting experience is crucial in the work of directing:

I trained as a professional actor because I believe if you must direct an actor, you yourself must be good, because you may get a situation where the actor asks: 'How do you want me to do it?' You have to get yourself to do it, show him how you want it done. Some people believe that you may not know how to act and still be a director, but I believe you need to know how to act before you stand in front of people and say you want to direct. What if you're meeting a very, very good actor and you say, 'move like this,' and he says, 'no, I prefer it like this', and of course, it will be obvious that his own interpretation is better than yours.

Perhaps, the propensity for working in multiple jobs that is a feature of the popular fictional television industry in Nigeria explains why there is no directorial specialization in that industry. A director of comedy can equally direct children's television drama or melodrama, as in the case of Mr. Laniyan. As pre-shooting rehearsals hardly ever take place, the director on location is at the same time a floor assistant, placing the actors in specific positions and generally staying very close to the scene of the action. Rehearsals, which are mostly in the form of read-throughs, are also skipped until the very day of the shoot. What is common practice, therefore, is the Director with his eyes most likely to be focused on the shooting script, occasionally looking up to correct a wrong voice modulation and barking out 'cut' when the lines have been read to his satisfaction.

The Director wields a lot of influence with the cast and crew, influence that is usually manifested in the respect and deference to his wishes by actors and production staff



during location production. With the technical crew, for instance, the Director determines what kind of shots and camera angles he wants. During this time the Director is in complete control, just consulting the Producer when something very major happens, for instance, if a key actor cannot complete the shoot, in which case a back-up may be called. The Director does not, however, have much power with regard to major decisions, especially those that concern casting. The final decision on the choice of actors, as already observed, usually lies with the Producer. For a director, a professional actor is invaluable during production. Mr. Laniyan's response regarding the level of pre-shooting preparation he is necessarily required to make, underscored the importance of relevant training for an actor. It also carried the suggestion that the Director could sometimes be made to work with unprofessional actors:

Believing that the people you're bringing along are professional actors, you won't have much to do. Once that person has read well, and you know he has good diction, modulation and all that; yes you study all that. The next is to tell your actors what to do. Once they are professionals, they are just made to be moved.

Rose (1999 xiv-xv) has identified such factors as the size of the television screen, which limits the director's ability to innovate, the nature of the television serial, which requires many directors, thus discouraging the emergence of an independent director as a programme's author, and the commercial structure of the television industry, which makes directors appear to be highly disposable and very dispensable technicians, as some of the reasons why directors in America's television industry rarely command the same respect or prestige as their colleagues in other sectors of art, like film. In Nigeria, however, a director of television drama series may have his name on the credits at the end of the programme, but like the actor he directs, and earning as little as 30,000 naira (or \$240<sup>89</sup> per episode at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.), poverty can be said to compound the invisibility of the director in the industry.

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<sup>89</sup> The exchange rate used in these approximations is the black market rate of Naira 125 to one United States dollar. The reason for the use of unofficial exchange rate is because most Nigerians buy foreign currency at the black market as only a handful of Nigerians have access to the official rates in transactions involving foreign currencies. Note also that these unofficial rates are not fixed; they are subject to fluctuations in the currency market and seasonal changes. More Nigerians are more likely to travel to

#### 4.4 Script Writer

People who write for popular fiction television in Nigeria are mostly freelancers who combine writing with other forms of employment. Successful script writers--success is mostly because such writers have had their scripts produced as television drama series or as video film--can also be commissioned to produce a script on a story idea supplied by the Producer.

Writing scripts for Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., has an element of democracy and meritocracy. This is because illiteracy is not a barrier to budding writers. Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., employs a full-time Script Editor whose job is mostly reading stories written by budding script writers and evaluating them for production potentials. The Script Editor's duties also include listening to and helping those unable to read and write get out their stories. As the issue of artistic autonomy in television production is a question of power, power that translates into freedom from interference, (Gripsrud 1995: 53) whether they are literate or illiterate in Nigeria, television script writers, and especially those who write for Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., *Super Story*, have neither much power nor much artistic control over what they write. As they must write within the framework specified by the national broadcaster, which has become a form of a guideline for production companies like Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., the creative autonomy they have can be said to consist in specific interests, inclinations or the inherent gifts which a writer calls on in the process of creating a story. These guidelines mostly concern story plots and portrayals of people. In a multi-ethnic country like Nigeria, where religious and ethnic violence can flare up with little provocation, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) is especially careful with the kind of programmes that are shown on the

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Europe and other Western countries in the summer than in the winter and so the exchange rate for the pound and the dollar tends to be higher during this season.

network channels, as already seen from the statement of NTA's Executive Director of Programmes, Mr. Igho. Mrs. Ayorinse, who writes stories for Nollywood as well as for Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., elaborated on some of these factors that determine content. Her explanation, in an interview, also illustrates the difficult position such rules can put an independent popular fiction television producer in a multi-ethnic society into and the implications this can have for creativity.

The producer has certain things he wouldn't want to go on air. For example, things like religious biases, tribal issues, sensitive things, you know, Nigeria being a diverse, multi-ethnic nation and with different religions and all that. We try to shy away from things that will affect...like, you know, people from the North, we avoid using people from the North in a negative light, because they are kind of sensitive. They feel the Southerners portray them in a wrong light, things like that; things that will generate controversy, that will not be of any benefit to us because the programme is shown all over the country. We want it to be accepted by everyone, it is generally accepted everywhere. So, we have to ensure we appeal to everyone, we tell story without touching sensitive areas. Just like in America, you do a film about people's sexual preferences, you do a film about racism, but they are things that can touch on sensitive areas. For films, you can do that but for TV you have to watch some of these things. You watch you don't go too far if you have to criticize the government and all that. So, these are some of the things we take into consideration when we develop a story.

The television Script Writer in Nigeria is also most likely to be a single individual who works alone, rather than a group of people who work as a team of script writers. However, an individual script writer's work can be subjected to alterations that confer the element of team work on the script. The way the popular television industry works in Nigeria at the moment is such that a Script Writer loses control over the script as soon as it is bought by a production company. Like the actor who has no power to make changes regarding the character he is portraying, the Script Writer equally has no control over changes that may be made to his or her script. The production company, or the individual who has bought the script, reserves the right to do what they like with it: rewrite the script, merge it with other scripts, or decide not to produce it after all. The Script Writer is, in addition, not entitled to royalties from a successful programme, even if their names do appear on the closing credits, as is the

case with Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., programmes, nor are they liable in the event of a programme flopping.

Like some other spheres of work in the industry, writing for television is not a lucrative business at the moment. With the exception of perhaps some members of the production crew, writers, if anything, are worse off financially than most. What is considered a 'good' script with the crucial elements of 'high moral value and uniqueness' could only fetch about 10,000 (\$80) at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., in 2006.

#### **4.5 Technical Crew**

The issue of technical quality has in most cases drawn the harshest comments in the critiques of Nigeria's commercial television industry. Analysts of Nollywood, like Shaka (2003a: 46), have attributed the poor technical quality that mostly characterised the industry's early output to the technology (VHS camera) used in production at the period, which was believed to cause a high rate of depreciation after post-production. However, even with production companies like Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., using digital cameras these days, the issue of technical quality in the discourses about the industry has not completely disappeared. The persisting problem has also been blamed on the practitioner's lack of knowledge about film making.

Lack of knowledge of the technicalities of film production is not unconnected to the issue of the available training in Nigeria. Presently in the country, there is an array of institutions such as Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., Pencil, Film and Television Institute (PEFTI), Lagos, the Nigerian Film Institute (NFI), Jos, NTA TV College, Jos, Lagos Film Institute, Independent TV Producers Association of Nigeria (ITPAN), Lagos, The Skills Factory, Lagos, and others, which offer training on different aspects of film-making. However, such training may, in some cases amount to no more than acquisition

of the basic aspects of film-making.<sup>90</sup> The training could equally be in the form of short courses. For instance, for a fee of 20,000 Naira (about \$160), training in film editing, directing, acting, etc., takes as little as three months at Wale Adenuga Productions' Pencil, Film and Television Institute (PEFTI). As at August 2006, only one qualified film editor (also employed by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., but who has since left as he is in great demand) was teaching editing to over forty trainees. Even with this, people that work as technical crew in the industry are likely to be people who have learnt on the job. For instance, most of the technical crew who worked on Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., *A New Song* in 2006, belong in the group described by Shaka (ibid 2003: 42) as 'semi literate urban youth.' They have no formal training but have worked on previous Wale Adenuga productions, learning their skills along the way. At Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., this category of popular fiction television producers is most likely to be men in their mid-twenties and thirties. They are also mostly recruited for a particular production, with their services dispensed with as soon as shooting is wrapped. They also have the least power and influence in the industry. Despite this position of relative impotence, both in terms of the fees they are paid (less than 5000 Naira per episode, or \$40) and their status in the industry as being comparable to a dozen sparrows that can be bought with a penny (as their work is especially seen as not necessarily requiring formal training and for this reason as something which anyone can do), rivalry and jostling for position and power can sometimes erupt among this category of workers at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.<sup>91</sup>

Another reason for the poor technical quality of Nigerian video films is that a preponderance of the practitioners are business people, for whom video film production

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<sup>90</sup> Some departments of mass communication in Nigeria's universities and polytechniques may have technical sections also, but it is not certain whether the training they offer is of the quality required for film production.

<sup>91</sup> On the set of *A New Song* shot in March 2006, the Director of Photography and his assistant were barely on speaking terms throughout the shoot. Both are young men in their late twenties. The assistant, a university graduate of theatre arts, who has previous work experience with NTA and also produces video films, expressed his dissatisfaction about his relations with the Director of Photography to the researcher in an interview. Apparently, the Director of Photography, with no formal training, was not receptive to suggestions about such things as better camera angles from the Assistant, who obviously had more experience in these matters. The DOP may feel that his job would be on the line if he is seen to defer in all the cases to his assistant.

is another line of business to be explored for its profit-generating potentiality.<sup>92</sup> The result is that turn-over, in terms of how many video films one is able to produce (all aspects of production including pre-production, shooting and post-production are crammed into a month's work), and the profit they can make, becomes everything and takes precedence over the matter of technical quality. This is the context in which, the issue of technical quality as a problem that may most likely persist for some time yet in Nollywood, can be understood.

The above reasons for the existence of poor quality technical quality notwithstanding, Robert Allen has, in what the researcher shall call a critique of critiques of poor technical quality of Nigerian video films, offered a way to understand the harsh comments that have been largely reserved for made-in-Nigeria video films in the discourses of the technical quality of Nollywood products. Allen (1992: 25) has observed that the availability of such programmes as glossy and cheap American audio-visual cultural material, with their high technical quality, in the overseas markets of such developing countries as Nigeria, has the capacity of 'cultivating standards against which that country's domestic programs will find it difficult to compete.' This could not be more true in the case of Nigeria. Allen's critique also offers one way of accounting for the consequences of the globalization of culture on local cultural production, like popular fiction television production in Nigeria, while directing attention to the hidden cost of cultural dumping.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In Nigeria's commercial television industry, if there is one criterion that determines the amount of control and power any one individual can exercise, that criterion can be said to be finance. Someone with money and an interest in popular television production can set up their own production company and engage people to work for him or her as is the case

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<sup>92</sup> The Igbo television series and video film producer, Amaka Igwe (2007), recalled her experience of Igbo business men requesting her to put them 'in the line.' Putting someone 'in the line' is Igbo business terminology for teaching the person the tricks of the trade.

with Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. Money also determines the structure of a popular fiction television company. For instance, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., which can be considered economically successful, has a corporate headquarters as well as up to 20 staff on full-time employment. In the case of mildly successful ones, like Goge Africa, the company could be set up in a flat with about five staff on full-time appointment. Such companies, as is the case with Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., and Goge Africa are hierarchically structured with their owners at the head.

In addition to the argument that as he obviously finances programme production, whether directly or indirectly, and such a high level of financial investment will demand an equally high degree of personal interest and commitment in the operations of the production company, the enormous power that producers like Mr. Adenuga wield could also be analysed as a need to keep a firm grip on matters. With power thus hierarchically structured, as in Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., everyone knows their position and job description, a recognition which makes for the discipline that is so necessary during location production. With Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., the stratification of power can be said to have become a major element in the routinization of production.

Poor remuneration is also a key feature of work in Nigeria's commercial television industry and the puzzle is why the industry has such pull for the practitioners. Besides the poor state of the country's economy, which could be given as a reason for the tenacity of the Nigerian popular fiction television producer (they do not have many other more appealing options) and the passion the actors profess for their chosen work, writers have attempted to account for why people choose to remain in a line of work which delivers little financial benefit to the practitioners, as does work in the commercial television production in Nigeria. Peters (ibid 1974: 47-8) has employed the term 'drive for eminence' to explain the tenacity of American actors in labouring in an occupation in which so many never manage to achieve fame or fortune. For such people, the hope of future success in their career keeps them going, regardless of their disappointment or dissatisfaction with their job.

Anthony Giddens has, on the other hand, explained the situation in terms of the response strategies people deploy to help them cope with unfavourable conditions. Giddens (1994: 134-7) argued that people faced with adverse conditions deploy some adaptive or coping strategies. Such people pragmatically accept their situation and focus on survival rather than disengaging from the unfavourable work condition. They can also continue to hope and have confidence (sustained optimism) that things will get better. The actor, Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, who said she considered quitting at some point and later changed her mind believing 'unprofessional' practices would gradually change, and the actor, Segun Arinze, who said he could not consider working in another profession outside television entertainment, however poorly paid this may be at the moment, can be said to deploy both sustained optimism (Peters 'drive for eminence') and pragmatic acceptance respectively, in their response to a poor work environment. For such actors, the hope of the realisation of financial reward may lie only with Nollywood, while appearing in Wale Adenuga productions provides a step in that direction. Appearing in such a production as *Super Story*, which is shown nationwide, according to Mrs. Okere-Falana, may bring her to the attention of some important person in the Nollywood industry and then her big pay day will come. Some actors who play lead roles in Nollywood productions are believed to earn as much as \$3000 according to Haynes (2000). This is against the \$195 Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., was paying such actors in 2006. Three thousand dollars for one week's work for such an actor is more than a university professor in the country can make in three months and what the actor might not make in a year in the Nigerian civil service with his or her university degree. This, this author argues, is the most sustainable explanation for so many actors in Nigeria persisting in pursuing a career in a 'profession' where only a few will ever manage to get a big break.



## **Chapter FIVE**

### **Globalization and the Nigerian Popular Fiction Television Producers: A Case of Ambivalence and Binaries**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter was an analysis of some of the ways Nigeria's popular fiction television producers perceive and speak of the outside world, themselves, their work and the relationships that obtain in the industry. This underscored arguments respectively made by John B. Thompson (1995) and Arjun Appadurai (1996) about the impact mass mediated communication could have on locales and people as well as the key role of imagination in the constitution of modern identity. Extracts of some relevant sections of interviews with some of the popular fiction television producers in the study were provided. Using discourse analysis these excerpts were then analysed and an interpretation of them offered. Drawing from the arguments social theorists like Anthony Giddens (1991) made about identity under conditions of modernity, the discussion concluded by arguing that a fetishization of the West has become one of the consequences of the globalization of culture on the self-identity of Nigeria's popular fiction television producers.

#### **5.1 Locally-situated lives, globally lived experiences**

Ambivalence can be said to characterise the ways people who work in Nigeria's popular fiction television industry speak about their social and cultural context and about other places. Such binaries as standard/sub-standard; professional/unprofessional; exploitative/humane; could be used interchangeably to describe local and global situations and to compare their experiences with what they believe obtains outside

Nigeria. In such discourses, in which ‘standard practice’ is conceptualised in progressive terms and used as a term of approbation, it stands for places where the popular fiction television producers believe ‘standard’ and ‘professional’ practices are upheld and to which similar local practices should do well to aspire. For instance, the comments of the actress, Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, while talking about the changes she would like to see in the current practices in the industry, encapsulated this line of thinking:

I need the working environment to be different. I need the pace to be different too. I need everything to be different. I need the Nigerian movie industry to actually follow the ideal situation, not playing to the Nigerian thing. Home movie is not a Nigerian thing. We are copying, so let’s copy right.

This theme of the global as a space of ‘standard’ practice and where things are done in a ‘professional’ manner is also seen in the response of the actor, Segun Arinze. In an interview with the actor about how he gets the roles he plays,<sup>93</sup> his response, which was sometimes self-deprecatory, nevertheless provided an understanding of how popular television producers in Nigeria define ‘standard’ or ‘professional’ practice:

Huum, (snorting in self-mockery) when you say agent, you’re talking as if you’re in Hollywood. Please, there is no agent. The actor is his manager, the agent, the everything. He negotiates by himself, which is highly, highly unprofessional. Unprofessional in the sense that a lot of sentiments now come in the way. Because, if, as an actor, I’m contracted for a job, or if I’m about to be contracted for a job, my agent reads the script first, hands it over to me, I read it and we both agree. Then he goes out and does all the negotiations. That way, they don’t see me. They only see me when they need me on the set. Unfortunately for us here, the actor here in Nigeria is the one who reads the script. He is his own agent. He is his own PA. He is his own everything. He even provides his own clothes to work because we are more of interpersonal relationship here. We haven’t got to the highest level of professionalism in the business.

Apparently, the development of ‘standard’ practice in Nigeria’s popular fiction television industry is considered to still be at the rudimentary stage when compared to places of ‘standard practice’, places that have ‘arrived’, such as Hollywood. Through the

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<sup>93</sup> The actor had been asked whether his agent negotiates his roles with producers or what the practice in Nigeria’s television industry is with regard to how actors get the roles they play.

standard/sub-standard binary, some key elements of locality that make for 'sub-standard' practice such as interpersonal relationships and sentiment, are highlighted. Sentiment, for instance, is seen to interfere with practical matters such as those of finance. Mr. Arinze further elaborated on other dimensions of this interpersonal relationship in television production in Nigeria when asked about wardrobe arrangement in the current production and as to whether he always provided his own wardrobe:<sup>94</sup>

No. No. But because the producer Bakky spoke to me at length and told me he has hiccups and all that. So, Yemi and I, Bimbo and Steph-Nora and all of us agreed; 'o.k., we'll do it for you.' That is based on person to person relationship.

This method of business negotiation in the industry which is characterised by informality, appears to be a well established practice especially with actors in the predominantly Yoruba actors' guild, the Association of Theatre Practitioners of Nigeria (ATPN) where, an actor who is a member, could agree to appear in another member's production for a pittance and sometimes free of charge. These informal relationships, which are in some cases social networks forged in university/school days, also influence how members transact business with other members of the group in other ways. Bakky, the Associate Producer, who had persuaded the actor, Mr. Arinze, and other actors to provide their own clothes for the production, had in another interview touched on this form of informal business association in the industry. When asked about his relationship with the actors on the production especially, seeing that some of them are among the big names in Nigeria's popular fiction television industry, Bakky's (Mr. Adeoye) explanation provided some useful insight on the delicate balance that sometimes has to be struck in order to maintain this form of relationship:

Yea, it is fun, I tell you, it is fun. Though sometimes, you know, they get on your nerves because this is somebody that you know his background. You all started together. He has become a star and he feels, 'aha', you must give him some star treatment. But, you know what? These are people who have worked hard; they have made a name for themselves in the industry. They have become stars. Most of the stars I use are people we have known for over two decades and as such they might not completely demand various star treatments from me, you know.

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<sup>94</sup> There is a practice in Nigeria's popular fiction television industry, as already noted, where producers expect actors to provide their own wardrobe.

Because they know that we know each other; we know our background. Some of them, we went to school together, some of them were my juniors in the university, you know. We expect respect from each other. But be that as it may, sometimes they demand a bit of unnecessary respect or unnecessary star treatment. Since you know your job must go on at the pace you want the job to go on, you bend here a little for them and you put your foot down here sometimes. They too will bend, because they know that you know them, you know. You have partly studied most of them and you know their weaknesses too, and they know your weaknesses too. Sometimes, they just become funny and you just laugh over it. You make it look like it's fun and work goes on. It's mostly like this, you know.

At other times, the global could also be seen as exploitative and inhumane. When, for instance, the Associate Producer, Mr. Adeoye, was speaking about the challenges of producing popular fiction television and the practice where advertising agencies allegedly owe the production company, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., a lot of unpaid advertising fees, he linked this problem to capitalism. The global, symbolised as capitalist economic ideology is seen as powerful and exploitative:

You can have some agencies owing you for a year, for instance, owing you millions of Naira, for a year, before you start getting your money. I don't really know the cause of that. We are in a capitalist, exploitative environment where our people would rather go and invest your money in some other businesses, rather than give you your money immediately.

The capitalist ideology is seen as a corrupting and corrosive influence, which can alter the character of the people who embrace it and imbue such people with tendencies that make them apathetic to other people's needs. The above opinion of the Associate Producer could be understood as a criticism of capitalism as practised in Nigeria, which along with certain practices in the country's popular fiction television industry, is seen to be inferior to what obtains elsewhere. Then again, the statement could be seen as a criticism of monetised economy and the balance of power which it seems to tilt rather too heavily in favour of the person with the money, when compared to the old form of exchange common in African societies before the introduction of a money-based economy, that is, trade by barter. The barter system of exchange did not, after all, depend on money and therefore, the chances of one frustrating another's business just because they held the means of payment were minimal.

Some implications for the local of the power inequality that exists in the local/global interdependency are also brought to light through the talk of Nigerian popular fiction television producers. Television production in Nigeria is one hundred percent dependent on technology from overseas. So, it becomes a case that the industry catches a cold when the international currency market sneezes. The owner of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., Mr. Adenuga, explained how his overheads have global connections when he spoke about challenges of producing popular fiction television in Nigeria:

The second group of challenges can come under materials. (He had earlier described the first group of challenges as money.) Under materials, most of the materials we use are imported, so their prices keep going up without any notice. The prices keep going up and all these increase the cost of production. Then under machines, all these cameras we use are sourced from abroad. They, too, they have their problems. Sometimes, you buy one and within six months, it goes bad and you start worrying your head as to what to do and where to repair it.

The global represents both a solution as well as a problem. Global developments in technology have enabled peripheral voices to talk about themselves by themselves. Nevertheless, the high rate of equipment degeneration and obsolescence also means that the global calls the shots in this unequal relationship.

The global in these discourses could also symbolise a space of financial might and ‘big budget.’ The explanation of the same associate producer, Mr. Adeoye, when he gave reasons for the predominance of location production by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., compared with studio production,<sup>95</sup> cast the local as economically deprived and the global, represented by the Hollywood film set, as a place of wealth and a conducive working environment:

With studio, it is set up for recording, and you just go on more or less like there is no problem. If you want to construct your own location like the studio thing, we don’t have that kind of budget in this environment. Nobody is ready to invest 20 million Naira in a film (or about \$160,000). A lot of people are not even ready to do a 10 million Naira film (or about \$80, 000) and for you to construct houses for

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<sup>95</sup>Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., shoots most of its programme on location.

your own studio, you are talking of 100 million Naira (or about \$800,000) or something more. You don't even have the market for it. Our marketing people have not opened up the market to such an extent that you can do a big budget film and get your money back.

When the Associate Producer in the above statement talked about Nigeria's television industry as not having a well developed domestic market which can help a producer recoup his investment, it is obvious he is aware there are such countries like the United States of America, with that kind of market. The United States of America has the richest and biggest domestic television market in the world, as writers like Allen (1992: 22) have pointed out.

The global can also become some form of a guide for the people in the industry. In other words, Nigeria's popular fiction television producer appears to have developed what Thompson (1995: 220) has described as non-dialogical, 'non-reciprocal relations of intimacy' with other places. What happens in such situations, as in the television industry, is that individuals from elsewhere (usually Hollywood movie stars), incidents that have occurred elsewhere and scenes from global popular cultural forms provide points of reference, ideas and tips on human behaviour for the Nigerian popular fiction television maker. These external resources also increase the cultural producer's range of options on how to handle real life interpersonal relationships situations. The actor, Mr. Arinze, while relating his experiences with the Nigerian media and a particularly damaging article which a local magazine *Encomium* had published about the actor in the spring of 2006 (The magazine had alleged that the actor was in the terminal stages of the AIDS virus), referred to a Hollywood film he had watched and the ideas he had got from it. Apparently, lessons he had learnt from the film had influenced his response to the publication, as Mr. Arinze's answer when asked why he never considered a legal action against the magazine illustrated:

**Arinze:** But for me I won't fight them. What I've learnt to do in the past years is ignore them; it will go away. I watched a movie *Double Platinum*, where Diana Ross and Bambi. I don't know if you've seen that movie?

**Researcher:** Uh, uh. No.

**Arinze:** They were saying something somebody picked up from Al Pacino. And the next guy was talking, 'hey, hey, listen, this is the media, it sucks, let it go.' That's the attitude, ignore it and it will die. That's what I've learnt to do. Because, immediately you start to make a noise about it, you blow it out of all proportions and, of course, everybody begins to look at your objection. So, I've learnt to ignore the press.

Nevertheless, the global does not always represent a site of positive practices worthy of emulation. It is sometimes seen as a site of negative practices while the local, though as yet undeveloped in such a sense, is preferred to the global. In such a discourse, the local is seen to be spared some of the repercussions of the 'standard' practices and 'professionalism' that are features of the global. For instance, such individuals as groupies, and practices such as stalking that are associated with places of 'professional standard practices', like Hollywood, are almost unknown in Nigeria. When such comparisons are made, local practices in cultural production that are considered underdeveloped and lacking in professionalism tend to carry a positive charge. Lack of professionalism is then seen as something of a shield for the local cultural producer. This is a protection which the global cultural producer has lost, living as he does in a global space where the positive intimacy that characterises interpersonal relationships at the local, has become corrupted for material gain. Mr. Arinze's subsequent statement, when he spoke about actors in Nigeria being spared false allegations of sexual harassment and abuse that their better known counterparts in 'developed' countries sometimes suffer at the hands of their fans, elaborates this point:

And it's so good a thing for us in our society. Our society has not got to that advanced level of blackmail. We have no problem of blackmail, unlike places where if a female fan manages to gain access to you and talks to you and says one or two things, you get carried away and the next thing you know, she has reported to the police that you've sexually harassed her and they'll pick you up. We're lucky we've not got to that level.

However, for people in Nigeria's popular television industry and especially performers, the local can equally be articulated as a site of exploitation, despair, deprivation, and a place of incremental development. For instance, dishonesty has been seen as the main

reason for the organization of work in the industry characterised by multiple roles. It is not unheard of to see someone who describes himself or herself as an actor being a producer, director, writer, etc., at the same time. The development of multiple roles which popular fiction television makers in Nigeria assume is seen to have arisen in the industry due to the exploitative tendencies of certain people at the distribution end of the industry, who allegedly plead poor sales figures in order to bilk actors out of their rightful fee. Steph-Nora's response, when asked about remuneration for actors and what she thought about their fees, shed light on this alleged dishonesty and how this practice has created distrust in the industry:

No, I won't say I'm happy, and I won't say I am sad. You know, the regular African wants to rip you off, if he can. Not because he doesn't know your worth, he knows alright, but he will still try to get his way around it. The pay to me, comparing it with when we started, is a whole lot different. It's a whole lot better, but it's still not right. And why it happened like that was because of what I said earlier. Some people who were money-minded capitalist came into the industry and now they are doing it as if you're trading things, buy tomatoes, sell and make a little profit. But they are not being truthful about their profits, their sales, so they are not paying us what we're supposed to be earning. That saddens my heart because some people want to keep all the money for themselves. I'm a producer too. But regular the producer finds it difficult to produce a film because he is scared of losing his money; because some people might not just level up with him when it comes to the sale of the movie. So, you find the industry has just been commandeered by some people. So, now, it's got to an era of writing, producing, directing, acting. People are not doing the normal work because some aspects of the industry are not being truthful about what really is the situation. We are made to believe sales are poor. The man who claims sales are not good, why are you still in the industry? Why are you building houses? Why are you buying new cars? Why are you attaining new grounds? You don't want the man next to you to grow. So the pay is alright, as in you can feed your family, relatively; you can buy this one car that you've been pushing around; pay your rent and the rest of it, but entertainment is more than that. We have more than 150 million people in Nigeria and people are telling us that they can't even sell up to 200,000 copies. I think that's sheer robbery. I'm not happy about it. Even when some people came out and took the bull by the horns and said, 'pay us a little more than you pay us,' they got slammed with a ban. I find that very insulting.

Another actor, Mr. Arinze, was, however, more uncompromising and brutal in his condemnation of the unprofessional activities of local cultural producers: 'Here, they want to exploit you, explore you and destroy you. It's unfortunate.'



However, the same actors that complained about being exploited by producers and marketers are in some cases themselves producers. Some, like Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, accepted she did not pay her actors as much as she would like to, and blamed her inability to do so on another form of ‘unprofessional’ practice in the industry. According to her, the aggressive business tactics of wealthy independent producers with a good network of distribution outlets, is a strategy that results in high overheads for poorly-resourced independent popular fiction television producers, like herself. In such a hostile business environment, breaking even becomes impossible and hence the poor fee the actor-producer is forced to pay fellow actors who star in their own productions. Therefore, it is safe to say that exploitation thrives, as it does in the industry, because of the level of poverty, as well as the inability of the people affected to mobilise for action in the form of trade unions. Where the exploited could equally become the exploiter, there is certain to be a lack of will to change the status quo.

Unfulfilled expectations could also be said to have a bearing on how people in Nigeria’s popular fiction television industry talk about the local and the global, which is sometimes seen in the way they represent facts and issues. It would appear that the tendency to exaggeration observable in the two actors’ statements, (for example, the population of Nigeria which Steph-Nora Okere-Falana had claimed to be more than 150 million is not based on any known census figures. In any case, census data about Nigeria, as has been observed, is to be treated with scepticism.) could be said to be a way of driving the point of their exploitation home for the listener, as well as being employed to produce shock effect. In this discourse of affluence and deprivation, the local thus constructed becomes a space where reality is inseparable from fiction in the conception of the popular fiction television maker. It is also an arena where poverty is implicated with ‘unprofessionalism.’ Steph-Nora Okere-Falana has, for example, argued that the poor conditions which actors in Nigeria are made to endure on film sets could not only impact on her performance, but that such conditions existed at all was because poverty pervades all aspects of commercial television work in Nigeria. Besides the impact in the sphere of interpersonal relationship already identified, namely cultural producers needing to suck

up to people in power for economic survival, trivial material things can equally highlight this general environment of lack inhabited by the Nigerian popular fiction television producer. For instance, the same actor when asked the reason she used her own make-up<sup>96</sup> instead of the production company's, complained she had in the past developed rashes, discolourations and acne from using make-up provided on a movie set and thereafter resolved to use her own make-up. Perhaps, pervasive poverty, it can be argued, may not be the sole reason for the existence of the situation. The use of cheap make-up could be a money-saving device by the producer and a way of demonstrating further the producer's total control over production. It could also be a subtle message from the producer to performers, who in some cases on these productions also supply their wardrobe. In other words: 'if you want to be in my production, be prepared to contribute to it in every sense', appears to be the unwritten message from Nigeria's popular fiction television producer to their actors.

Just as the local is seen as a site of deprivation, there is also the tendency to exaggerate the financial rewards existing 'elsewhere' in order to highlight the disparity or differences in practices and working conditions between the local and the global. The good life is always lived by the counterparts of the Nigerian popular fiction television makers in the places where 'professional' practices are the norm. In these comparisons also, the United States of America in most cases provides the reference point, and Hollywood actors are the beneficiaries of what is regarded as an appropriate reward for workers in the audio visual industry. The comfy conditions of service for audio visual workers in such countries are in most cases imagined and exaggerated. Mr. Arinze had affirmed, for example, that the Hollywood actor, Will Smith, was previously earning about \$20 million to star in a film, but that the same actor currently commands as high as \$40-\$60 million in fees for starring in a film. However, no account of Hollywood actors' fees in scholarly literature or entertainment magazines, has to the knowledge of the researcher, credited any actor, male or female, even among the highest paid, who played a starring role in a film, with earning as high as \$40 million. Mr. Arinze's claim is therefore similar to

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<sup>96</sup> The researcher had in the course of observing location production noticed the actress using her own make-up as well as making-up her own face. This was despite there being a make-up artist on the set who was on hand with studio make-up.

accounts in armchair travelogues where some place-bound narrator makes copious references to places they have not visited and paints glowing pictures of ways of life they have not experienced.

The Nigerian popular fiction television worker also wants many aspects of the practices in the industry changed. However, the changes are in some cases expected to be delivered by some agency other than the local cultural workers themselves. The unfavourable practices in the interviews could sometimes be depicted as forces that are overwhelming and too strong for the local popular fiction television maker to deal with without help from external, powerful forces. Mr. Adenuga's idea of a solution, when telling the researcher about the practice by advertising agencies in Nigeria in which cultural producers, like himself, are owed large amounts of money, which hampers their work, illustrates the above argument. When the researcher wondered why Nigerian popular television producers could not come together and resolve not to do any business with the agencies until every penny was on the table, Mr. Adenuga's answer was a resigned 'I don't know how. I don't know who will sanitize this for us. I don't know, I don't know.' His 'I don't know' is reminiscent of the actress Steph-Nora Okere-Falana's own suggested solution: 'I don't know why. Somebody should correct that idea. It's so terrible' when expressing her own frustration over the issue of actors in Nigeria not having agents. An often expressed sentiment among some Nigerians, though in most cases considered tongue in cheek, can help explain this form of response to unfavourable conditions characterised by what looks like an appeal to some power that exists somewhere beyond the world of the local actor for intervention. The researcher shall call this way of thinking a re-colonization wish. There are people in Nigeria who are convinced that political independence set the country on a downward spiral into economic and political underdevelopment. This strand of the argument has it that if the British had been still ruling Nigeria, meritocracy and sound practice in every sphere of national life would have been assured. The air of resignation or helplessness, and a plea to someone somewhere to help in solving local problems other than the people directly involved, expressed by these popular cultural workers could, therefore, be read as an expression of a dimension of this line of thinking: a wish for a dominating force to come

to the rescue. The situation where captives fell in love with their captors to the point that such dominated people prefer captivity to freedom has been known to exist. In the case of the popular fiction television producers in the study, the point of view they expressed is also related to nostalgia, a trajectory of desire, which Appadurai (1996:3) has argued the processes of current globalization could intensify. It is possible that media images of people, homes, street scenes, etc., from, and news about affluent Western nations, could highlight for the Nigerian popular fiction television producer the differences in the way of life and lifestyles of people in these other places and thus, perhaps, present to them a tantalizing, if not at the same time an erroneous picture of what might have been, assuming the British were still ruling the country. For such people in Nigeria, the only solution to the endemic corruption in the country and other 'unprofessional' practices could lie in the coming back of the colonial master who would only ever have to crack the whip and every ill afflicting postcolonial Nigerian society would be made to disappear, every badly behaving individual or organization would not need persuading to sit up too. The problem with nostalgia is, however, that the negative aspects of the object of longing, like exploitation, subjugation and domination of a race that characterised the British colonisation in Nigeria, are in some cases forgotten by the people who express these desires.

All is not, however, gloom and doom in Nigeria's popular fiction television industry, as the above analysis expressing the actor's dissatisfaction might suggest. This is because in the same breath that unhappiness is expressed, expressions of hope and optimism usually soon follow. Nigeria's popular fiction television workers would most likely express the hope that things would improve, however gloomy issues of practices and their prospects in the industry might appear at the moment. The actress, Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, who said she considered quitting at some point because of what she considered the influx of mediocrity whose 'unprofessional' practices and activities resulted in the lowering of standards in the industry, was glad she reconsidered her decision and stayed on. According to her, 'things are getting into shape now.' Ms Okere-Falana's optimism is expressed from an economic dimension based on hope for future improvement in performers' wages. However, Mr. Arinze's expression of hope was tied to a political

event in the country's history which had a global connection. He tied the improvement in practices in Nigeria's popular television industry to the country's re-admission into the league of 'democratic' nations following long years of alienation by the international community when the country was in the grip of brutal military dictatorships in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>97</sup> According to Mr. Arinze:

We are going on smoothly. Well, I won't say smoothly, but, of course, every country has its own problem. We are all staggering, we are all stumbling, but of course we'll perfect it as we go along. American democracy was not perfected in one day. They had their own problems, same thing with UK, and same elsewhere. Would you have ever thought in Nigeria before that you would see something like *Big Brother Nigeria* showing? That Nigerians want to watch their own movies; Nigerians would like to listen to their own music? Before it was, 'please, can we have Michael Jackson, Lionel Ritchie.' Now, you play any Nigerian music, everybody will ... If you doubt me go to any night club now. It's Nigerian music they want to listen to, Nigerian Jamz. They want to watch film, everybody wants to watch Nigerian home movie. Would you ever have thought Nigeria would give birth to, sort of inspire, Multi-choice to say, 'o.k., let's create a channel fully dedicated to home movies and they call it African Magic? It's working.

Political stability in Nigeria therefore becomes equated with stability, growth and improvement in the country's popular cultural industry. The United States and the United Kingdom always figure in these discourses of the wealth and power of the global more than any other Western country. Until political independence in 1960, Nigeria was a British colony, following the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates by the British colonial government in 1914. So, it is not surprising that the UK is often referred to in talks about the global among artistic creators in Nigeria. Apart from the global dominance in the military, economic and cultural spheres, the history of the slave trade and slavery and the prominent positions of African Americans in entertainment offer the most credible reasons for the United States of America as a reference point for Nigerian popular fiction television producers. The American music superstars, Michael Jackson and Lionel Ritchie, referred to above, both African Americans, can also be said to provide a point of identification for the Nigerian popular television worker. His or her

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<sup>97</sup>The suspension had come about because of the brutal murder of Ken Saro-wiwa and nine other Ogoni activists in the oil-rich delta region of Southern Nigeria by the Dictator, Gen. Sani Abacha.

identification could be due not only to shared racial characteristics with the African Americans but also because they are in the same line of work: entertainment.

What the researcher sees as resistance to globalization processes was also observed in her interviews with people in the industry. Such resistance can be provoked by the perception of the global as a homogenizing influence. Segun Arinze, an actor who described himself as a producer and director, did not like the idea of Nigeria's popular television industry being called Nollywood:

I hate calling it Nollywood, because there is no reason why I should call it Nollywood. I prefer to call it Nigawood, if it has to be any 'wood' at all.

The suffix 'wood', which derives from Hollywood as a centre of film production in the United States of America, is seen as being employed as a legitimating factor in naming any country's audio visual industry. Although his assertion of particularity, or the 'right to be different', is incomplete, as seen in his retention of 'wood' in his preferred 'Nigawood', the speaker's objection to the appeal for legitimation that is implicit in the use of 'wood' and the substitution of H with N in the word Hollywood can be understood as a form of resistance to the universalization of the name Hollywood. India's film industry alone has spawned other 'woods' such as Kollywood (Tamil) Tollywood (Telugu) besides the more famous Bollywood. Pakistan cinema industry goes by the name Lollywood. And there must be other 'woods' besides these better known ones if one looks hard enough, such as Northern Nigeria's video film industry, Kaniwood.

## **5.2 'Sub-Standard' Practices or a Fetishization of the West? Situating some Aspects of the Discourses of the Local and the Global by Nigeria's Popular Fiction Television Producers**

Some social theorists, like J.B Thompson and Arjun Appadurai, have highlighted the central role imagination can play in this phase of globalization, a role which has a connection with self-identity formation in modern life. Appadurai (1996:5), for instance,

contends imagination has become not just a form of work, but also a 'form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility.' He also identified the media, which present varied images, complex and sometimes undifferentiated information to audience around the world with imagination. The consequences for consumers of undifferentiated media images according to Appadurai (ibid: 9), is that:

The lines between the realistic and fictional landscapes they see are blurred, so that, the further away these audience are from the direct experiences of metropolitan life, the more likely they are to construct imagined worlds which are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other imagined world.

Lefebvre (1991:93), who described this form of imagining as a fetishization, appears to echo Appadurai's position. As he argued, the replication of exact physical space in representational form is never possible. Nevertheless, however inaccurate such representations are found to be, they could ironically still play a crucial role in social practice. The error arises when people treat such a representational social space as factual. When other places, that should be seen as unreal, are treated as real, as the Nigerian popular fiction television producers seem to do, the result becomes according to Lefebvre that:

its practical character vanishes and it is transformed in philosophical fashion into a kind of absolute. In the face of this fetishized abstraction, 'users' spontaneously turn themselves, their presence, their 'lived experienced' and their bodies into abstractions too. Fetishized abstract space thus gives rise to two practical abstractions: 'users' who cannot recognise themselves within it, and a thought which cannot conceive of adopting a critical stance towards it.

As elsewhere seems to provide a good deal of the cultural and informational resource which the Nigerian popular fiction television producers to a large extent use to define their identity, they can be said to have evolved a way of seeing the world which is largely through a lens whose critical edges have become blunted by adulation of what obtains somewhere outside the popular fiction television maker's locality. Elsewhere, which is described by Lefebvre (1991:94) as great Fetishes, and characterised by what Thompson

(1995: 225) has described as ‘non-reciprocal relations of intimacy with distant others’ becomes for the Nigerian popular television producer embodiment of ‘professional’ practices. James Lull’s distinction between lived and mediated experience is helpful in understanding and situating this discourse of globalism and localism. Lull (2007: 65) explained lived experiences as ‘first-hand encounters of everyday life’ and mediated experience is a relatively new way of seeing the world that ‘generates events that lack direct involvement of lived experience.’ From the way the interviewees, who may not have had, and perhaps never will have, any first hand experience of the places or people they talked about so knowledgably, it could be argued that mediated experience has, in some cases become so successfully incorporated into lived experience so much so that the seam in this stitched experience does not show any longer.

Their discussion of transnational media consumption and how such media can have an impact on the desire of their consumers also supports this argument, when Shohat and Stam (1996:164) wrote:

Transnational spectatorship can [also] mold a space of future-oriented desire, nourishing the imaginary of ‘internal emigres’, actively crystallizing a sense of a viable ‘elsewhere’, ...evoking a possible ‘happy end’ in another nation.

Their imaginings and desires can be said to have turned Nigeria’s popular fiction television producers into ‘internally displaced people’ or ‘armchair émigrés’, imagining the existence and possibility of a better life elsewhere.<sup>98</sup> This better life could be anybody’s and, in the case of the Nigerian popular television producers, perhaps, only a one-way ticket and a plane ride away to Hollywood.

Anthony Giddens’ discussions on self-identity formation under conditions of modernity offer another way for explaining the responses of Nigerian popular fiction television producers which could be seen as symptomatic of the conditions the social theorist has described. Giddens (1991:5,199) has argued that in addition to the disembedding of culture from the national space, the decline in the economic and political power of the

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<sup>98</sup> Tarik Sabry (2003) has made a similar argument in his analysis of the impact on the identity of young Moroccans of the consumption of Western media.



nation state posed a problem for identity construction in the modern world. Self or social identity is, as a result, in flux, constantly updated, never really finished, always in process. For the Nigerian popular television producer whose economic context is characterised by poverty and lack, media images of lifestyles of the rich and famous in the global media not only look desirable, but they also carry a suggestion that it is a life at which to aim, for which to aspire. For them also, the images of the rich and famous in Hollywood and in America's entertainment industry have become the models for the definition of the self. As it is highly unlikely that the country's local popular television industry and economy could ever support the kind of luxurious lifestyle which success in a film career guarantees their counterparts in Hollywood, the Nigerian popular fiction television producer will either accept, be satisfied with, or work to develop what their locality offers. The alternative is a perpetual state of dissatisfaction buoyed up perhaps by the occasional but vain hope that some superpower, somewhere, will one day take charge and whip everything and everyone into line.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Giddens (in Tomlinson 1996: 64) has explained an aspect of the experience of contemporary globalization as being 'the intersection of presence and absence, the interlacing of social events and social relationships 'at distance' with local contextualities.' This intersection of the local and the global has become intensified in the modern world with implications for identity. As Thornham (2000: 109) has argued, an 'era's structure of feeling represents the expression of its lived experience', a lived experience often felt as a 'certain kind of disturbance or unease, a particular type of tension.' The current phase of cultural globalization can be said to have produced a structure of feeling in the Nigerian popular fiction television producer that can be described as an adulation of the West. In relation to the poor financial reward that characterises most categories of work in Nigeria's television industry which has led to the fetishization of the West, Giddens's (2002: 15) observation with regard to some less benign consequences of globalization processes, that they have created 'a world of winners and losers, a few on the fast track to prosperity, the majority condemned to a life

of misery and despair', could not be more apt. One could argue with regard to the impact of globalization of culture on Nigeria's popular fiction television industry that, while it may be the case that cultural globalization processes are neither responsible for the poor fees that the popular television makers are paid nor the economic disparity between developing countries, like Nigeria, and the economically advanced West, these processes certainly help to highlight this inequality.

## **Chapter SIX**

### ***Problem Child 1, Daddy's Girl and Discourses of Parenting***

#### **6.0 Introduction**

In Chapters Four and Five, analyses of the social structure of Nigeria's commercial television industry as well as the ways the media producers in the study spoke about themselves and elsewhere, were provided. The analysis highlighted the fact that cultural producers in the study, but especially the actors, appeared to hold Hollywood up as the place where the 'ideal' and 'professional' practices of film production are found. Hollywood, in other words, is seen to have a firm hold on the imagination of these local media producers. However, as the researcher also argued, conclusions regarding the impact of globalization of culture that are solely based on the ways local cultural producers speak about themselves and elsewhere, like those in this study, could present a partial picture of the conditions of cultural production in a locality in particular and the impact of cultural globalization in general. For this reason, she proposed that for a more nuanced account of the impact of globalization of culture on a locality, we need to go beyond how local media producers talk about their local conditions in relation to the global; we also need to analyse the cultural materials that such media workers have produced.

In the relational and cross-cultural comparison approach to cultural analysis proposed in Chapter One and elaborated in Chapter Three, the researcher argued that analysing the popular conventions of Wale Adenuga productions alongside those of Hollywood films is one way of producing this more in-depth account of the impact of globalization of culture and popular discourses on local social practice. In this suggestion, the researcher also drew from the argument made in the Chapter Three that context shapes a cultural text. This context consists primarily in values, beliefs, assumptions and knowledges (ideology)

which are found in the societies in which media producers and audiences live and which shape their view of the world.

With regard to the context shaping the text, therefore, the discourse of parenting as constructed in the Hollywood film *Problem Child1*, this chapter argued, is structured predominantly by American neo-liberal ideology. The same discourse in *Daddy's Girl*, a two-part popular television drama series by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., is shaped mainly by African traditional values intermixed with Judeo-Christian principles. This chapter also drew mostly from subject theories as developed in theories of ideology and psychology to offer a reading of the texts using the notion of dysfunction as an organising concept. The aim was to account for the influences on the representations of problem behaviour in children as presented in the two texts, as these influences also have a bearing on the approach to good parenting and parent-child relationship as constructed in them. The texts explored the discourses of parenting through the themes of who a parent is, as well as the reasons for problem behaviour in children. In analysing the texts, their plots were summarised. This was followed by denotative and connotative interpretation. Then, a comparative analysis of the two texts was offered. This strategy was followed in this chapter and the next. Chapters Six and Seven of this thesis, in which the researcher engaged with the analysis of the four media texts are, therefore, to be understood as the application of the cross-cultural comparison and relational approach to cultural analysis as proposed in Chapter One and developed in Chapter Three.

### **6.1 Representing Problem Behaviour in Children: *Problem Child1* and *Daddy's Girl***

*Problem Child1* tells the story of a boy, Junior, abandoned by his biological mother, who leaves him in a basket on the doorsteps of a wealthy-looking house. The initial introduction between the baby and the mistress of the house, who admires him and wonders, 'Who on earth would want to abandon such a wonderful baby boy?', is not,

however, an auspicious one, as the baby proceeds to urinate all over her. From then on, Junior, as a baby and Junior as a young boy, is shunted from one home to another and has been returned a total of 30 times for disruptive behaviour. His homes have also included orphanages. Then the Healy family adopt him and after many instances of misbehaviour and patient understanding from Mr. Healy, Junior finally finds a stable relationship and home with Mr. Healy.

The discourse of parenting in *Problem Child1* is presented as the causes of problem behaviour in children, which comes from two broad influences: humans (mainly adult) and society. The discourses of adults, as major factors in children's misbehaviour, are constructed as poor parenting skills, characterised by insufficient understanding of what being a parent entails on the part of the adult and this is seen to have the effect of instilling fear of rejection in the child. Society, as a factor, is presented as the influences of television and negative role models.

From the narrative, Junior's behavioural problems are seen as starting with his biological mother, who has given birth to a baby she is not ready to bring up. This early rejection by the mother and the subsequent rejections suffered at the hands of other adults, like the nuns and all those other homes which have returned him, are blamed for the child's behavioural problems. Junior himself has said at some point: 'Nobody really ever accepted me. Who'd be that loving? Who'd be that caring? Who'd be that dumb?' It is this conviction that he is unlovable and his fear of rejection that is seen as driving Junior to all the disruptive behaviour, which is exemplified by the incident at the birthday party. The birthday girl, a six year-old, has not initially wanted Junior at her birthday party, but is forced to issue an invitation when her mum has threatened to withdraw some of the arrangements for the party, like clowns. At one point on the day of the party and now in the company of her young friends, the celebrant has forbidden Junior from going outside with them for that part of the celebration. As a way of expressing his frustration due to his exclusion, Junior has proceeded to cause chaos at the party by throwing the birthday girl's presents in the swimming pool, deflating the balloons festooning the scene of the celebration, water-hosing a bedroom, cutting off a guest's (little girl's) ponytail with a

pair of scissors, replacing the candles on the birthday cake with sticks of explosives which blow apart the cake splattering the guests with wet cake pieces, putting a live frog in the birthday food, and so on.

Rejection is further constructed as the reason why children adopt the wrong/negative role models. This point is highlighted by Junior's admiring words 'What a good looking guy', about a violent criminal, Martin Beck, whose antics Junior has been watching on television. Beck, nicknamed the 'Bowtie Killer' is on this occasion resisting arrest by the authorities and protesting 'I'm not bad, nobody cares about me, I'm just misunderstood' as he is dragged away by the police. Junior's subsequent action in opening a box and taking a bowtie off a teddy and putting it around his own neck to symbolise his identification with a criminal who has claimed he is 'misunderstood' (and this is also happening at the same time that Junior looks out of the window and sees a fellow resident of the orphanage who now has a new family, being hugged and fussed over by his adoptive parents), is used to underscore a likely consequence of rejection in a young life as well as the influence of television as a factor in a child's [mis]behaviour. Junior has earlier switched on the television to watch some cartoon. The first channel has been showing news about the captured convict and so have the other channels that Junior has tried to tune into, which makes him conclude: 'The guy is pretty popular. He's on every channel.' The discourse of factors in children's problem behaviour here appears to intermix with, or draw from, sociology of media discourses about the powerful effects/influences some media messages are thought to have on the behaviour of those exposed to such messages. Junior has, after all, during a class assignment when other children are writing to the people they admire, such as the Queen of England and Bishop Desmond Tutu, been seen writing to his idol, Martin Beck. In his words, 'Nobody understands us' and he assures Beck 'I'm still wearing the bowtie, so I can be like you.' Junior is also to wear this bowtie all through the narrative and the only time he pulls it from around his neck is when his admiration for a negative role model becomes replaced by the realization he has the unconditional love of another adult, this time a positive role model, in the shape of his adoptive father, Mr. Healy. The implication is that it could take a long time before the damage dealt early to a child's psyche is reversed, and a time

within which such an emotionally damaged person could inflict hurt on innocent people in society. Though there is no account of his early life in the narrative, Martin Beck, the criminal, represents such destructive consequences on society in a life that suffered early emotional damage.

The concept of good parenting skills is explored in the narrative in the opposing constructions of the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Healy. It is in the character of the more fully developed Mrs. Healy (played by Amy Yasbeck), as the materialistic and shallow potential mother, than that of Junior's biological mum, however, that the notion of bad parenting is better delineated. Mrs. Healy can be said to represent parents who do not fully appreciate the level of responsibility or commitment that goes with parenting and is therefore an advertisement for all the wrong reasons for wanting children. It is also the failure of such people to understand what is involved that can impact on a child's behaviour with far-reaching consequences. Mrs. Healy's reason for being against adoption that she 'does not wear second-hand clothes and so won't have a second-hand child' provides this early insight into her character as lacking the 'right stuff' or quality that makes for a good parent. When she does reconsider, her reason for agreeing to adoption is because she wants to get accepted by the other parents in the suburbia and to get invited to their parties.

Mrs. Healy is first introduced in the narrative at the doctor's surgery where she is arguing the merits of boys' names with her husband, who is browsing through a magazine. Mr. Healy (played by the late John Ritter) has suggested naming the yet-to-be-conceived baby Henry, because according to him the name connotes strength, loyalty and love, but the wife thinks that name is for losers. Mrs. Healy instead suggests Donald, because according to her, Donald is synonymous with wealth and power and 'that's the kind of a kid I want.' Reference to Donald Trump, the American billionaire real estate tycoon, is unmistakable here. Then this conversation with the husband ensues:

**Mr. Healy:** Look, it doesn't matter how he will turn out. After all he'll be our child.

**Mrs. Healy:** But it wouldn't hurt if he's also Chairman of the Board.

It transpires, however, that the couple are biologically incapable of having their own child. The doctor suggests adoption, about which the couple initially have doubts but which Mr. Healy begins to give serious consideration, especially after seeing a man and his son (at Big Ben's sporting shop) enjoying a warm father-son relationship. However, when Mrs. Healy changes her mind about adoption, it is not because she now feels the need to have a relationship with a child, or due to any tugs at her maternal instincts. Rather, as already noted, it is because she feels left out of parties by families with children. According to her, (as she observes people going into a neighbouring house to a party to which the Healys have not received an invitation): 'you can't go to a kid's party if you don't have a kid. Being a parent is power and once you're in that circle, you keep everyone else out.' Mr. Healy has a different opinion of being a parent, though, as he explains to his wife: 'Flo, being a parent is about sharing. It's about a mom and a dad and a kid.' Mrs. Healy has responded, 'Except there isn't going to be a kid, Ben. It's about you and me, forever.' Seeing his wife stroking a cat, and believing that could be the right moment, Mr. Healy tries again to persuade her to accept adoption. He tells her they have so much love to give and why 'waste it on stupid pets.' Mrs. Healy disagrees about the intelligence of the pets and insists 'they are not stupid!'

But then, Mr. Healy makes an association with going out to adopt a child with something else which the wife understands: 'Think of it this way. All those mothers have to make do with what nature gave them but you and me get to pick out our own kid. It will be like shopping.' Comparing adopting a child with shopping finally strikes one of the few concepts Mrs. Healy can identify with: conspicuous consumption. She might have expressed other doubts relating to those of the opinions of their neighbour because as she puts it, 'the neighbours will know we have adopted. What will they say?' The husband reassures her that the only thing the neighbours would say would be, 'look, that's Ben and Flo Healy going out yet to another party with their new son. Look at that dress! Where did she get the bag to match those shoes? And then they will say, 'let's invite that Healy family over for dinner.' Now convinced, Mrs. Healy casts into a corner the cat she has been playing with a moment ago.



Through the above conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Healy, the discourse of parenting here is presented as the thinking that influences some people's decision to adopt a child and therefore the reason why such people make bad parents. Mrs. Healy's preoccupation with appearances, seen in her shallow reasons for wanting to adopt, is only matched by the triviality of reasons on which she bases such a major decision which involves the life of and relationship with a child. For instance, when Mr. Peabody first shows the Healy's Junior's photograph, Mrs. Healy's first concern is the boy's appearance: 'Oh he does look presentable in that little bowtie.' When at a later stage she sees Junior, Mrs. Healy has also enthused: 'He's so handsome. I will be the envy of the whole neighbourhood.' She may have had her doubts about the boy's age (seven), which is too old because according to her: 'I wanted people to think I had the baby myself.' Then, Mr. Peabody spells out the 'downside' of adopting a younger child: 'That's understandable. A lot of women feel that way. You want a cute little infant. One that will start screaming in the middle of the night and you have to stumble downstairs in the dark to change his soiled diapers.' Mr. Healy adds, 'See, we could skip all that baby junk and move into the real stuff like parties and more parties.' Mrs. Healy's misgivings dissipate completely, especially as she remembers and is reminded of other advantages adopting a child could bring to her status and her house: 'I could be president of the PTA by September.' Reminded also that a child would provide company for her cat, Fuzzball, Mrs. Healy is now totally convinced and tells the representative of the orphanage, Mr. Peabody, 'You have yourself a deal' with Mr. Peabody answering 'and you've got yourself a kid.'

Being a parent is seen by the shallow as a business deal or an arrangement which they can get out of if the terms later cease to be to their liking. The minute they take the child home, Mrs. Healy begins to see plenty of reasons why they should opt out of the 'deal.' The child provides her with 'good' enough excuses to do just that. Even the patient Mr. Healy at one point admits to the wife: 'I think we've got a problem.'

Mrs. Healy offers her advice: 'Oh, you think we've got a problem? You want to know what I think? I think we should get rid of the kid and buy a new cat!' That the safety of the child she has taken into her home as her own does not figure too highly with Mrs. Healy is seen also in the plans she immediately begins to make about Junior's future on

the day the escaped convict Martin Beck visits the Healy home. Junior has adopted Beck and has taken to communicating with him since his days at the orphanage. As soon as she hears Junior introduce Beck as an uncle and without thinking of taking the safety precaution of calling the orphanage to confirm if Junior's birth details have names of close relatives, Mrs. Healy begins to plot how to offload Junior on this 'blood relative.' This attitude could be said to be a commentary on conspicuous consumption that characterises the lifestyle of the rich and famous in affluent capitalist societies manifested in acquisition of goods as a symbol of wealth and social position (as in the case of Mrs. Healy) and which can be discarded or replaced with the latest, trendier object if the old favourite falls out of favour.

Other poor parenting skills represented in Mrs. Healy's character include not having faith in the future prospects of your children. Mrs. Healy, after Junior's performance on the baseball pitch (Junior has caused chaos at the baseball match by chasing around and hitting other boys with his baseball bat) sees returning the boy to the orphanage as the only option to solving the disruption brought to their lives by the child. Her husband's argument that they would be giving up on the boy if they returned him and that he might become the President of the United States draws this response from her: 'President of the United States! Are you brain-damaged! Junior's gonna be a convict before he's in third grade!' The use of derogatory names is also constructed as bad for a child's mental health and Mrs. Healy, the archetypal bad parent, does not disappoint here either. 'Little creep', 'twisted', 'brat', 'monster', are among the choice names she reserves for Junior.

Bad parents like Mrs. Healy make no effort get to know their children. The child is in her life only to help gain her the acceptance with suburban families that she so desperately craves and nothing more. Throughout the narrative, there is not one incident in the child's life in which she is seen to play a central role. The only time she ever displays any form of interest (and in most cases it is only to criticize and condemn) in the child is when there is another of Junior's numerous behavioural problems. Following their kidnapping (Mrs. Healy and Junior) by Beck, who demands \$100,000 ransom for their release, Mr. Healy sees a chance of ridding himself of a wife with whose shallow life he has become

thoroughly fed up. The fact that Mr. Healy only goes after Martin Beck to rescue Junior and not his wife (who has developed a violent passion for the brutish Beck, who treats her with total contempt) and her undignified ride on the back of an animal truck out of the lives of the 'good parent' and his son, symbolizes the removal from a child's life of a contributory factor in his behavioural problem. The speed with which Mrs. Healy falls in love with Beck, who she has known for a total of one day, is used as a critique of irrationality of consumerism and its acquisitive tendencies.

Mr. Healy is, however, the opposite of his wife and his reasons for wanting a child could not be more different from Mrs. Healy's. This discourse of good parenting in the text uses these qualities inscribed in Mr. Healy to underscore what are considered as the right reasons for wanting a child, as well as the ideal parent-child relationship. While arguing the merits, or otherwise, of a particular name for a male child with his wife at the doctor's surgery, for instance, Mr. Healy has insisted it does not matter what name they give to their child or what he grows up to become because the important thing is 'he'll be our child.' When he discovers his wife can never have children, Mr. Healy still wants to raise a child because he feels he has 'so much love to give.' The good parenting skills manifested in Mr. Healy's relationship with Junior include bottomless well of patience. This means never losing your temper with a child, or yelling at them, however outrageous the behaviour. Patient understanding and love are seen as being more effective in cracking problem behaviour, as Healy explains to his wife:

We're gonna love him when he is bad. We're gonna love him even harder when he's worse, until one day he's gonna crack and say: 'hey, these folks really do love me. They aren't gonna quit on me like the rest.

Putting the welfare of the child above material possessions is another quality of a good parent. The incident on the first day of Junior's introduction to his new home and Granddad, Ben Healy Senior, illustrates this point. The child has just been shown a well decorated room as his own. Junior's response is first to dismiss the decoration as having too many clowns and proceeding to set fire to the room. When the adults return to the smoke filled room, Mr. Healy's initial reaction is to snatch his father's jacket (with Mr. Healy Senior reminding him the coat has cost \$1000) and use it to douse the fire and

asking Junior, 'Buddy, are you ok?'. Even after the accident (also caused by Junior who has thrown the cat Fuzzball at Mr. Healy Senior, forcing him to tumble down the staircase) and Ben Senior calling Junior 'little punk' and 'devil' and telling his son to 'get rid of him', or he will not 'set foot in the house again', Mr. Healy resolutely still sticks up for Junior in defiance of his own father. Mrs. Healy's expression of concern for the cat's welfare above the child's 'Poor Fuzzball, he'll never be the same again', not only draws an apathetic but horrified reaction from Mr. Healy:

Are you out of your mind? Is that all you can think of, your stupid cat? What about the fact that father is on his way to hospital? Or Junior's traumatic first day. Did you stop and think about the poor boy? He must feel horrible.

Good parenting in addition means taking interest in your child by making time to be with them and to do things with them also. This is seen as creating a bond between parents and their children. Such opportunities as a camp trip, which good parents take their children on, are seen as opportunities where bonds that last into adulthood are forged. The lack of such opportunities to bond with his own father during his childhood is seen to have a direct bearing on the absence of a genuine father-son bond between the now adult Healys, Ben Senior and Little Ben, that is, Mr. Healy. As Mr. Healy tells Junior when he suggests the camping trip, but Junior says he prefers to watch cartoon: 'Don't be such a noodle. When I was your age, my father, your granddad, was too busy to take me on camping trips. You're a lucky duck.'

So, determined to be a good parent and not to repeat his father's mistake, and as camping trips are seen as good contexts for forging a bond between parents and their children, Mr. Healy suggests to his family that they all go on one with the Roy family. Mrs. Healy, as an example of a bad parent, however, has no interest in these things as her response clearly shows, 'Not me. I'm going to buy a dress for the party. Give me some money.' (Mrs. Healy, has thanks to Junior, been invited to a party.) Surprised at her lack of enthusiasm over what he sees as a good chance to get to know their child better, Mr. Healy asks 'Does that mean you're not going camping with us?' The chance to show off new clothes has, after all, been Mrs. Healy's main reasons for adopting and she is not

about to give this up. She snatches the money from her husband's outstretched and snaps, 'Not on your life' and flounces off to pursue her own particular hobby, shopping.

Being a good parent also means being honest with your children and treating them as intelligent and reasonable human beings. Being honest with your child is especially seen as forging a bond of trust and sharing between parent and child. Mr. Healy is not embarrassed about sharing with Junior his own feeling of inadequacy on the first night they brought the boy home with them. Mr. Healy, after the earlier incident with the fire in Junior's room, later seeks to reassure the boy (who says he is having difficulty sleeping) by telling him that it is normal to feel scared the first night in a big house. Mr. Healy also admits to feeling scared himself as, according to him, it is his first time at being a dad. This frank admission from Mr. Healy is constructed as an effective parenting approach, as it is seen to successfully reach into the fear factor that is responsible Junior's behaviour, thereby providing Mr. Healy his first inkling of the source of the boy's behavioural problem. Junior, on hearing Mr. Healy admit to fear of failure assures him:

**Junior:** You will learn quick enough.

**Mr. Healy:** (confused) Learn what?

**Junior:** What it's like to be a dad and then you'll get rid of me.

**Mr. Healy:** Get rid of you, Junior? We're never gonna get rid of you. You're here forever. The two of us, we're gonna do everything together. We'll ride bikes, go fishing, play catch. I really want to be a good dad. I want to be a great dad. You know what? I will never be too busy to listen to what's on my son's mind over a cup of hot cocoa.

Although it takes Mr. Healy some time to get to this stage, eventually Junior comes to trust him. With this trust, which is finally secured when Mr. Healy goes after Beck to rescue Junior, the child feels on a safe enough emotional ground to express his love for Mr. Healy by calling him Daddy. This final act of acceptance of an adult figure in his life who he can trust symbolises the child's conquest of his fear of rejection. Good parenting becomes synonymous in *Problem Child1* with Western liberal ideology and its principles of individual freedom which under this philosophy have precedence over 'control or direction by the state or other agencies (family, for instance) which may be deemed

unfriendly to human liberty.’<sup>99</sup> As a true liberal, Mr. Healy has allowed Junior this freedom to be himself, which Ben Senior and Mrs. Healy have sought to direct, control and ultimately limit.

The discourses of parenting skills as contributory factors to children’s misbehaviour in *Problem Child I* do not only take the form of a dichotomous binary of good versus bad parenting/parents, they also show the possibility of an existence within a particular social and cultural context at any given period, of other competing models on the same subject, as well as attitudes towards a dominant model. Conservative ideology is both the competitor as well as the opposed in the narrative. The attitude of the nuns in the orphanage where Junior’s misbehaviour is a constant source of aggravation (and which other more intrepid children find either entertaining or alarming depending on who is around), for instance, underscores this tension which is also manifested in their scepticism of ‘expert’ knowledge. The scene where Mr. Peabody, a representative of the body that owns the orphanage where Junior has lived at the time, has tried to convince the nuns to allow the boy to still remain at the orphanage and the nuns’ response, illustrates the position of conservatives on new ideas. Mr. Peabody has used the theory of positive reinforcement to launch his appeal: ‘Alright look, I don’t claim to be some kind of a brilliant psychologist. I’m not. All I’m saying is, may be, all the child needs is to be loved.’ The head nun’s answer, ‘let’s cut the crap, Mr. Peabody! Either Junior goes, or you find yourself some new nuns’, encapsulates this tension between two ideologies in the American context: neo-liberalism and conservatism. Another example of opposition to conservatism is seen in the nuns’ dictum that ‘a growing body needs nutrition and discipline’, (Puritan ethic of hard-work, thrift and discipline which counters the soft love, positive reinforcement approach of child psychologists) and Junior’s challenge that if the food is so nutritious, why then are the nuns not eating it. The other more pliant children, as products of the nuns’ conservative ideology, show their dissatisfaction with this form of parenting by admiring (when it is safe to do so) Junior’s audacious challenge to the ideology symbolised in the authority of the nuns, which they themselves are too afraid to oppose.

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<sup>99</sup> See *A Dictionary of Social Sciences* by Gould & Kolb eds. 1964: 388

*Daddy's Girl*, on the other hand, tells the story of the girl, Nike, born to a married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Falamo, after five years of anxious waiting for a child. Nike is also the couple's only child. The couple, however, subscribe to different schools of appropriate parent-child relationship. Mrs. Falamo's preference for strict discipline is the direct opposite of her husband's more indulgent approach. Nike who easily gets her way with her father but not with her mother concludes her mother hates her. To win her mother's love, Nike joins a cult which, unknown to her, engages in human sacrifice (the members' close relatives) in return for any power it gives to its members. Nike first donates her grandmother, but is later compelled to sacrifice another family member, this time a closer blood relative. On her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, Nike and her mother finally achieve the warm relationship Nike has always craved when her mother confesses to having always loved her. Nike understands at last that what she has seen all along as cruelty by her mother has instead been love. When it becomes inevitable that she must sacrifice one of her parents, Nike fights hard to save her father's life and eventually gives her own life in place of her mother's.

The discourse of parenting here represents children's problem behaviour as due to bad parents, as well as the result of peer pressure. Nike's problem behaviour is constructed first and foremost as the outcome of the parents' divided positions on the appropriate parenting method to adopt with regard to their daughter. This split is constructed as what fosters an environment in which a child's character is ruined by one overindulgent parent and left confused by the other who is too strict. Such a child is also likely to become manipulative, preferring the soft parent (whose approach, which the child construes as love, is perceived as only having the effect of encouraging and rewarding misbehaviour in children) to the strict parent (whose approach is believed to be better in the long term for the child, but which the child sees as hate, because she is still too young to appreciate it).

The department store and the mealtime incidents provide some instances of the couple's exchanges over their daughter's behaviour, which illustrate this divisive role of two

different approaches when they operate at the same time to provide the environment which shapes a child's behaviour. In the first incident, Mr. and Mrs. Falamo have gone to shop for grocery with their eight-year old daughter. Nike wanders off by herself, but the mother prefers her to stay close to them. The girl whimpers that she wants to play, with her mother reminding her department store is not a playground. Mr. Falamo is all for yielding to Nike, as he reminds his wife that they are after all not in Oyingbo Market (a large, open air crowded market in Lagos). With this argument still unresolved, Nike expresses an interest in an ice-cream; the mother also pays for the particular flavour the daughter has requested. While she is still eating her chosen ice-cream, Nike has seen another child with chocolate-flavoured ice-cream and immediately loses interest in her original choice. She wants her parents to buy her that as well, but the mother will have none of it. Nike then starts to whimper and another argument develops between her parents, with the mother insisting that Nike first finish eating the ice cream they have bought her and threaten to flog her if she continues crying. Mr. Falamo turns to his wife in an appeal:

**Mr. Falamo:** Come on Shade, let's get her the ice cream at least to shut her up.

**Mrs. Falamo:** She will shut up when she's tired. (But Nike continues to cry softly)

**Mr. Falamo:** Come on, she is just a kid. Will you have her cry all day long?

**Mrs. Falamo:** No, she will tire out. In the next 30 minutes she will.

Angry with the wife because the daughter is still crying, Mr. Falamo storms away to his car. Mrs. Falamo now strides menacingly to her daughter who is still crying ordering: 'keep quiet, right now.' With the father, who would have taken her side, out of the way, Nike ceases her crying almost instantly, with the mother declaring her victory: 'that's better.' After Mrs. Falamo's no-nonsense strategy has succeeded in getting their child to stop crying, Mr. Falamo returns with money which he extends to the wife saying, 'at least, this will keep her quiet.' By now really very angry, Mrs. Falamo snatches not only the money but also the ice cream from their daughter. Mr. Falamo cuddles their crying daughter up to him and reassures her, 'Daddy will get another one for you. Don't you trust Daddy? Let's get home first, ok?'



It is situations like this that children are seen to exploit to their advantage. The disadvantage largely lies in the 'soft' parent being left in a position where he/she mainly resorts to bribery or 'positive reinforcement' to buy the child's cooperation or good behaviour. The 'tough' parent is left feeling resentful and his/her authority undermined by the other half. Yielding to a child's whims is also seen as only serving to give the child a skewed view of reality. Life is seen by such a child as one easy ride where he or she can get their way all the time, provided they can call up a few tears when necessary.

In the second example, Mrs. Falamo is having lunch with the daughter. Nike says she wants more food, a request which the mother sees as a ploy by the daughter to get an extra piece of meat. Nike gets more food only for her to disinterestedly push it around on her plate, declaring later she cannot eat any more because there is no meat in the food. When her mother insists the daughter finish the food she has requested, Nike's answer is that she is not a prisoner and that only prisoners are given food without meat. When the mother threatens to flog her if she does not finish the food she has asked for, Nike threatens right back that she will report her mother to her father if she does. Mrs. Falamo flogs her daughter and sends her outside the house. Nike continues to cry until her father returns from work to discover the reason for the daughter's tears. This exchange then takes place between the parents:

**Mr. Falamo:** How dare you flog my daughter?

**Mrs. Falamo:** Maybe you've forgotten she's my daughter too, and that I carried her for nine months in my womb. I went through the most excruciating pain and this effectively gives me the permission to discipline her.

**Mr. Falamo:** What happened, why did you flog her? This is getting too much.

**Mrs. Falamo:** So you've not found out yet. Do that and perhaps afterwards we can have a more parental discussion under a better atmosphere.

**Mr. Falamo:** I don't know what your problems are. If you knew you didn't have it in you to be a mother, why then did we go through all the trouble to have her.

**Mrs. Falamo:** Haven't you heard the saying that it's only the child you love that you chastise?

**Mrs. Falamo:** And you call this chastisement?

**Mrs. Falamo:** And what other name do you have for it Mr. Wole Falamo?

**Mr. Falamo:** Wickedness, that's what.

**Mrs. Falamo:** Well, I think you have a problem with adjectives especially where this girl is concerned.

**Mr. Falamo:** I will not allow you to make light of this issue.

**Mrs. Falamo:** (challengingly) So, what are you going to do? Flog me in return? Oh, please, do that.

**Mr. Falamo:** (with eyes blazing in rage) From now henceforth, do not lay your fingers on my daughter. Don't ever.

**Mrs. Falamo:** I promise I will but lay hands on my daughter whenever it's necessary to. I'll not spare the rod to spoil my child. Never.

**Mr. Falamo:** Are you challenging my authority in this home?

**Mrs. Falamo:** No I dare not. But let me tell you, I will not allow Nike to grow up useless. Not if I can help it. I went through much pain to have her and I will not allow you or anyone to make those pains to be in vain. Never.

It is the co-existence of conservative and liberal approaches to parent-child relationship within a family where a child is spoiled by one parent and over-disciplined by the other that the text constructs as a cause of problem behaviour in children. The 'tough' parent is made to overcompensate or overdo the strict discipline to cancel out what he or she sees as the negative influence that the other half is having on the child's life. Such a child is left confused and her world lacking in psychological balance. It is in the bid to bring such balance to her world, which will come by being assured of the love of both parents, that Nike looks for solutions. Her peer group has offered Nike the answer to her problem which is to prove so costly eventually and it is this peer influence which *Daddy's Girl* also depicts as a cause of problem behaviour in children.

Elizabeth represents this negative peer influence. Quiet and rather unthreatening, Elizabeth is also the prototype of the subtlety of temptation. She has shown kind understanding and empathy about Nike's difficult relationship with her mother. However, it is all a front, because Elizabeth is a recruiting agent for an evil occult group. Being the smart agent she is, she has represented the cult as a benign force that will help Nike attain

the level of happiness she desires. Nike has been convinced because she knows Elizabeth to have a warm relationship with her mother which she, Elizabeth, has credited to the power of the group. Nike only realizes Elizabeth is not a true friend when the group's leader demands the life of Nike's father and she turns to her friend for support. Elizabeth's answer that 'it's not in my hands Nike, the leader has the final word' and that the death of Mr. Falamo will be for Nike's good, has shown where her real loyalty lies. As a final act of betrayal following a chance meeting between the two friends soon after Mr. Falamo has died, Elizabeth's words of comfort to Nike was a casual and dismissive 'Don't take it to heart.'

## **6.2 Ideology and Discourses of Parenting: Comparing *Daddy's Girl* and *Problem Child1***

The values, beliefs and assumptions of African traditional principles which shape the representation of problem behaviour in *Daddy's Girl* are seen to be generally the opposite of American neo-liberal ideology which shapes the depiction of the same issue in *Problem Child1*. This contrast is seen in the manner in which the two texts depict the tension in the families of the two children, tension which turns the Falamo family into an unstable site of struggle for power, ideological power, that is. This struggle for power is seen in the relationship between Mrs. Falamo and her daughter, and between Mr. and Mrs. Falamo. Mrs. Falamo represents African traditional values and its view of elders, but especially of one's parents as authority figures, to which a child must submit. Age and experience are believed to be invaluable sources of wisdom and knowledge, which the parents possess and which the child does not yet have. By listening to and obeying its parents the child will be socialized into these moral principles. Nike has shown her scorn for these values by her preference for the liberal values of 'freedom from control or direction',<sup>100</sup> her affinity with her father and her resistance to her mother's authority and thus the traditional African values she represents. In other words, Nike is seen to be

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<sup>100</sup> See A Dictionary of Social Sciences (ibid: 388)

questioning the kind of knowledge and the way of life her mother represents. Her assertiveness and individuality are therefore values which fly in the face of this way of life and can only bode evil. They are a sign of a child who has been thoroughly ruined and who, it is feared, will grow up into a useless, irresponsible and out-of-control adult. The popular belief in Nigeria is that such damaged adults are capable of any act: armed robbery, prostitution, etc. This is because the moral foundation and fibre crucial in forging a responsible adult character (as these are the qualities with which as an adult s/he will be able to resist these temptations) are assumed to be lacking in their life during this critical period of their formative years. Though Nike's reason for joining the cult is to get her mother to love her, it can also be read that she is looking for a route to circumvent parental authority. She has seen parental discipline as a problem requiring a solution. It can be argued that if only she had accepted her mother's authority, perhaps, the mother would have seen less need to be as strict as she was.

In Mr. Falamo's relationship with his wife and his soft love approach to parenting which has elements of Western liberal values and their recognition of individuality, we also observe this struggle for power. Mrs. Falamo represents the opposition to this ideology. The rightness of her ideology is upheld in the way in which the text resolves the tension in the family: the deaths of her husband and daughter who have opposed her position. Mr. Falamo has slipped on an invisible banana peel (left there through the agency of the spiritual world) and has fallen, hitting his head against the solid porcelain bathtub. The death of Mr. Falamo, which initially appears somewhat ironical, however serves a moral purpose. The irony here is that the man who has always gone with whatever the daughter wishes dies on the only occasion that he ignores a request from her. Nike has earnestly pleaded with her father not to have a shower on the day of her twenty-first birthday because, according to her, she has a feeling something bad connected with having a shower will happen to him that day. The request that Mr. Falamo dismisses as trivial proves to be a deadly underestimation. His death also serves a didactic purpose that will be understood in the Nigerian context as a suitable punishment. Mr. Falamo has after all only got his just desserts. As the Igbo saying goes, he who gathers ant-infested firewood should be prepared for a visit by lizards. Mr. Falamo, through his actions in stubbornly

choosing to wear blinkers rather than correct his daughter's misbehaviour, will be seen to have sown the wind and therefore reaped the whirlwind by his death. His liberal ideas on parenting are represented as a route to ruin, to dysfunctionality. Just as Mrs. Healy in *Problem Child I* is driven away and into the unknown in the back of the animal truck to symbolise the removal of a major factor in Junior's misbehaviour, the deaths of Mr. Falamo and his daughter can be said to be symbolic of the ineffectiveness of modern/liberal ideas on parenting against the received wisdom embedded in African cultural values. From this perspective, *Daddy's Girl* can be seen as a critique of Western liberal values.

However, it is not surprising that the group which Nike joins turns out to be an evil one. In a patriarchal culture like Nigeria's, where female power is viewed with suspicion both in reality and as documented in popular culture, it is no wonder Elizabeth's all-girl group has been constructed as blood-thirsty.<sup>101</sup> It is not uncommon to hear men in Nigeria express their feeling of trepidation at the thought of having a woman at the helm of political affairs in the country in any argument with an assertive woman. The belief is that any form of power allowed a woman will mean the complete emasculation of the male of the species. The leader, on Nike's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday (her coming into majority in the Nigerian context), and to symbolise the fate that awaits the male of the species in Nigeria when women come into position of power, has told Nike 'your maturity here as a member, your rise to a higher level of power lies with the life of your father.' This all girl-group, with its assertive female leader, who has also declared to the members, 'now, you have the power that you seek. From now, nobody shall be able to make you unhappy without paying for it, no one', becomes the projection of this male fear. Represented as sub-cultural, the group can thus be seen as challenging traditional African values and parental authority, which it conceptualises as a problem needing a solution. To illustrate further how no good can come out of such female power, Nike is seen on one occasion using her power from the group to cast a spell on her mum and cause her to almost cut off a finger. Nike has sought revenge because her mother has insisted she go into the kitchen

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<sup>101</sup> A fuller analysis of Nigerian patriarchal ideology and the representation of the feminine in popular culture is provided in the next chapter.

and do the chores assigned to her instead of watching a television programme. Never mind that Nike has made a perfectly reasonable request that her mother allow her watch the end of the programme first and then wash the dishes later. The use of her power for petty purposes is therefore just one example of how frivolously women will deploy any power that is allowed them and the reason why they should not be permitted to exercise such power in the Nigerian male-dominated culture. This is also the reason which makes teaching them the value of docility as ideal feminine quality all the more necessary, as Mrs. Falamo has threatened to in her own words 'descend on' her daughter if she does not get up that instant to wash the plates. Without further protest, Nike has got up from watching her favourite TV programme to carry out her mother's orders. In this way, Nigerian patriarchy is seen to be stipulating appropriate feminine conduct from the early years. This is echoed in what seems to be Mrs. Falamo's preoccupation with the inculcation of 'wifely' qualities or what Thornham (2000: 189) has called 'feminine values', in Nike.

In *Daddy's Girl*, both at home and at school, Nigerian patriarchy can be seen stipulating appropriate roles and 'model feminine' behaviour for the female gender. Submissiveness or docility is an important aspect of this desirable quality in a woman, especially in the Nigerian context, which will ensure her suitability as a wife. At the tender age of only eight, therefore, Mrs. Falamo has expected Nike to 'grow up' which McRobbie (2000: 5) has explained as 'becoming settled in outlook, stable in disposition' to be assured that she is on track in raising a 'good' daughter for whom finding a husband will not be a problem. In fact, in some cultures such as the Igbo, discreet enquiries are normally instituted with regard to a woman's background by the family of the man that has an interest in marrying the woman in question. The character of the future mother-in-law is usually indirectly at the centre of this 'investigation' (Oyeneye 1985: 158). The future mother-in-law must be well-thought of in the community and how she has raised her daughters and her relationship with her own husband are especially crucial. This is because such matters are believed to provide a good barometer for evaluating the character of the potential wife. Further marriage arrangements have been known to have been cancelled where research has provided evidence that the potential mother-in-law is

the one that wears the pants in her family, or does not cook for the husband. The assumption is that the daughter must have learnt only too well from her mother. So, when Mrs. Falamo ordered her daughter to abandon the television programme she has been watching and go into the kitchen to do the washing up, she can be said to be ensuring that she has brought up a girl who would be unlikely to give her husband a 'tough' time in the future. As a representative of Nigerian patriarchal ideology, Mrs. Falamo strives extra hard to ensure she brings up a 'model' daughter. It will, after all, reflect poorly on her if she is perceived to have failed in her job of raising a 'good' daughter in which case she will become another 'unfortunate' Nigerian woman whose daughter will expire on the shelf in her house.<sup>102</sup>

At school, the games Nike plays with her schoolmates (and this is also always with other girls and never with boys) only consist in the safe clapping and skipping considered feminine and lady-like. As 'femininity' is seen as Nike's 'natural identity' (Thornham and Purvis 2005: 115), the expression of emotional need that does not fall within this narrow definition is looked on with suspicion. That is why her desire for independence and the assertion of her individuality, qualities seen as 'unfeminine', are represented as sulkiness and insubordination. Little wonder also that the all-girl group where she finds this autonomy is stigmatized as the work of evil spirits.

Through this compliance forced on women from childhood as in Nike's case, the notion of the 'ideal woman' as one who is submissive to the man that is constructed in such popular forms as television drama series and celebrated in the mainstream media can be said to have become naturalized in Nigeria. This is also perhaps responsible for the idea of passivity associated with black African women, martyrs who suffer without complaining.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> It is considered a blot on the family in Igbo culture when grown daughters of families are still unmarried, especially if they are past their twenties. Then such families, it is feared, will be 'saddled' for life with women that no man had wanted. Though the times have changed a lot of things, but marriage is still regarded as the highest calling for a woman, whatever else she may have achieved in this culture.

<sup>103</sup> Abike is one such character in another of Wale Adenuga production, *Oh Father, Oh Daughter*. Her bottomless patience and unfailing belief that marriage is for keeps, makes her tolerate an abusive and adulterous husband, in order to keep the family together until her errant husband comes to his senses and

The ways *Problem Child1* has depicted problem behaviour are seen to be the opposite of those espoused in *Daddy's Girl*. The contrast can also be explored through the tension in the Healy family. We observe the tension represented also in the form of a struggle for ideological power in the relationship of Mrs. Healy and Junior, between Mr. and Mrs. Healy, between Mr. Healy, Junior and Mr. Healy Senior and between Junior and Mr. Healy Senior or Big Ben.

Mrs. Healy has sought to limit Junior's autonomy through her advocacy of strict discipline. Junior, who embodies the neo-liberal ideology in America, resists this infringement of his cherished values by getting into numerous escapades. Though his advocacy of discipline does not come from his belief in its inherent value for the child but rather as a value which furthers his capitalist values of profit, the tension between Ben Senior, (Junior's grandfather) and Junior is also ideological. Ben Senior has, like Mrs. Healy, sought to restrict Junior's freedom to express his individuality. He and Mrs. Healy become the victims of Junior's pranks as a result. On the other hand, Junior and Mr. Healy, who has recognised and respected Junior's individuality, and who shares his values, become friends. As opponents of the neo-liberal views which Junior and Mr. Healy Junior stand for, both Mrs. Healy and Ben Senior have also been removed from Junior's world (though not through death, as in *Daddy's Girl*) by the end of the narrative.

Although it is possible that entertainment value could be largely responsible for the mostly hilarious depiction of problem behaviour in *Problem Child1*, which contrasts it with the more serious tone of *Daddy's Girl*, however, the justification for the rightness of neo-liberal ideology and reasons to prefer it over conservatism, can also be seen to be built into the narrative. This also accounts for the generally positive attitude which has shaped the representation of problem behaviour in the text. For instance, Junior, the problem child in the narrative, is a creative genius who manages to triumph over his adult tormentors, like the nuns. The total irreverence he reserves for the adult world and its

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returns to them. This figure of non-threatening, sexually non-provocative ideal Nigerian woman, can be seen in the female newscasters at the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA).



establishments, his scorn of well-behaved children as in the Roys whom Junior describes as sharing a brain (because they always agree with each other and are rarely a problem to their parents) the many ways he can fake the remorse he is far from feeling after one of his escapades, which manages to fool the adults, are just some examples of the representations of Junior's disruptive behaviour in the text which point to the influence of this ideology and its justification as the right one. The seven-year-old Junior is, thus constructed to embody these characteristics of individuality and free speech which will ultimately lead to an enterprising and successful adult. At seven, therefore, he has become an individual whose character has been forged in various schools of experience (from being shunted from one home to another, and from one orphanage to another) and has in the process acquired wisdom beyond his years. The notion of independence and street-smartness that works through the character of Junior, the boy hero, has resonances with the way another popular child character, Annie, in the American film of the same title has been constructed. In her book *Daddy's Girl*, Walkerdine (1997: 87) made an observation in relation to the girl heroine, an observation which can be seen to parallel the depiction of Junior's character:

Annie has parents but neither she, nor the reader knows who they are. Positioning her as an orphan and destitute places her as without any kind of social or community support or without any psychological support: she is the archetypal self-made individual, the person, who it seems does not need anybody else and just has to get by and fend for herself.<sup>104</sup>

John Fiske has also directed attention to how individuality, as represented in Junior, is connected to the notion of masculinity in American popular discourses. In his analysis of the US TV show *The A-Team*, Fiske (1987:200) has shown how the notion of masculine identity as constructed in the show has been based on the idea of power, strength and maturity as attributes of masculinity. Other qualities associated with masculinity include self-assurance, lack of fear, being in charge or in control and independence or

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<sup>104</sup> In the same work, Walkerdine observed that the figure of street-smart and rational little orphan girl first became popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in America in the poem of by James Whitcomb Riley titled, 'Little Orphan Annie.'

individualism. Fiske, on the same page, especially highlighted how at a very early age the idea of maturity is instilled in young boys with the admonition 'be a man' which has the underlying message that boys are expected to behave like people older than themselves. Even at only seven, this idea of strength and self-reliance is seen to be encoded in Junior's character. The trauma of rejection he suffers early in life instead of damaging Junior imbues him with wisdom and self-reliance. Seeing himself as up against the whole world, Junior has only his own strength to fall back on. This is why he is unfazed by any situation. Junior is never seen crying or complaining but instead rationally assesses the situation and always manages to figure a way out of any situation. He can, therefore, be shunted off to any orphanage or home, but he has the right masculine qualities to get him through.

Fiske (ibid: 201-202) has also argued that the physical strength of 'ideal' males is extended symbolically through such technological items as cars, guns and machinery, which Fiske has called 'social manifestations of male power.' For young boys, the technologies also serve as 'means of entry into the masculine.' Though physically still immature, this symbolization of male power through technology can be seen working through Junior. To register his displeasure at the prospect of being returned to the orphanage, Junior has taken Mr. Healy on a hair-raising ride around the city. This is despite there being no stage in the narrative where Junior is seen taking formal driving instruction, but he is still able to get behind the wheel of Mr. Healy's car and manages to steer them through busy city traffic without ramming into other vehicles. In the narrative, Junior is not seen much playing with the toys which are considered normal playthings for boys of his age. One of the few times he has been seen with a toy, he has employed it as a missile and he is only about three at the time. An 'expert' child psychologist has been on TV extolling the virtues of psychotherapeutic approaches to behavioural problems. Junior has picked up his toy and with a disgusted 'what do you know', hurls the toy at the TV screen, smashing it. Junior is not only demonstrating his strength and resourcefulness, he is also showing another aspect of masculinity, which is lack of fear. Masculinity is also all about standing up for oneself and not running from any situation. When a member of the family which had taken Junior in has deliberately stamped on and broken his toys,

Junior's reaction does not just end in the question 'So you want to play rough?' He gets in a tractor and crushes their mobile home. He is sent back to the orphanage protesting his penitence: 'I was only kidding.'

Adventure also has a connection with the ideology of masculinity, and so when Junior wreaks revenge on the nuns because he finds their routine too constricting, or sets fire to his room in the Healy house, he is only being a boy. Boys are meant to be that way, boisterous or rambunctious, as Mr. Peabody has put it. They mean no harm. In Junior's case, it is seen as a phase and nothing to worry about. 'Normal' men were once boisterous young boys or something must be wrong with them, like the Roy kids who play no pranks on their parents or other adults. As an embodiment of masculine qualities and individuality, apparently, Junior at only seven, cannot be seen as too young to possess these qualities.

One of the last scenes in the narrative between father and son captures this overall positive attitude in portrayal of problem behaviour in the text. 'Repentant' Junior is frightened here that he might lose Mr. Healy (who is lying unconscious on the ground after he has been shot by Beck) and so tells Healy:

Dad, please don't go. I'm sorry for all those bad things I did. If you come back, I promise I will never do anything naughty again. Daddy come back, I love you.

However, as soon as he assures himself Healy is really alright, Junior wants to renegotiate the deal:

**Junior:** Now you're not gonna hold me to all that stupid junk I said about being nice, are you?

**Mr. Healy:** Of course not. I just want you to be yourself.

**Junior:** (hugging Healy) Some people never learn!

The narrative can therefore be said to construct Junior's character as a symbol and a testimony to the effectiveness of the liberal ideology of individual liberty and positive reinforcement in solving behavioural problems in children. The success in parenting and

turning around such a ‘damaged’ character as Junior’s is seen as much more rewarding than the lack of challenge in parenting ‘normal’ children. Successfully ‘healing’ a character like Junior’s, in other words, becomes comparable to the biblical story of the Good Shepherd and the one lamb which is lost from a flock of one hundred lambs. The challenge for the Shepherd was to find this one lost lamb, and in order to do this he had to leave the remaining 99 lambs, which had never given him any problems. When he successfully recovered and restored the lamb to the fold, the Shepherd, according to this parable by Jesus, celebrated his success in great style.

### **6.3 *Problem Child1, Daddy’s Girl* and Models of Psychotherapy**

In both texts also, misbehaviour in children is seen as a problem requiring treatment. The approaches to solving this problem also draw from psychotherapy and ‘moral treatment’ (psychic or moral therapies<sup>105</sup>) models. Moral therapies have varied emphases or methods of treating the mind two of which correspond to the approaches deployed in the two texts. One is the ‘correction of disordered behaviour and thought by physical coercion, discomfort and pain’ and the second is ‘encouragement of healthy responses by kindness, sympathy, and personal interest’ (A Dictionary of Social Sciences 1964: 556). *Problem Child1* can be said to have adopted the second, the therapeutic model of human relations, which sees Junior’s behavioural problem or dysfunctional behaviour as a ‘social problem, a breakdown of normal functioning in the individual caused by abandonment.’<sup>106</sup> Junior manifests this breakdown of normal functioning in his personality mostly through rebellion against the world of the adult. The application of the second form of treatment of problem behaviour in *Problem Child1* can be seen in Mr. Healy’s relationship with Junior. Mr. Healy has provided the context of kindness, personal interest and sympathy in his relationship with Junior. It is also the approach which eventually wins Junior over in

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<sup>105</sup> The phrase psychic therapy was, according to Gould and Kolb (ibid: 556), first used in early 19<sup>th</sup> century to refer to ‘a variety of therapeutic methods presumed to have a direct effect on the mind itself, as opposed to the methods of physical therapy which were thought of as primarily affecting the body and only secondarily the mind.’

<sup>106</sup> See Collins English Dictionary (2003: 513)

the context of the narrative. This method also has resonances with the notion of positive reinforcement in psychology.

*Daddy's Girl* can also be said to construct problem behaviour in children as a problem of the mind as well as a social problem due to abandonment or rejection. Nike can be said to manifest the dimension of abandonment as being responsible for her behavioural problem through her joining of the cult, as Junior's has been through rebellion against the world of adult. It is in the treatment of the mind espoused in *Daddy's Girl* that a noticeable split appears between Western liberal ideology and African traditional values. The best treatment approach also appears to be encoded in the texts in the characters constructed as having the best parenting skills. Therefore, Mrs. Falamo's method, that includes flogging and verbal humiliation inflicted on her child, equates the approach that advocates the employment of 'physical coercion, discomfort and pain' as a way to correct problem behaviour. Good behaviour in children is in other words achieved through discipline and punishment. Instead of the therapeutic model of human relations from American popular culture, as in *Problem Child1*, that would seek to understand the working of the mind and therefore the subconscious through drawings,<sup>107</sup> African popular culture, like popular fiction television and popular literature, would in most cases represent problem behaviour in children as possession by evil spirits. One of the reasons, as Haynes (2000:80) has argued, is because popular producers in Nigeria, like fiction television producers, do not usually engage much with representations of the rationalization for human action seen in how aspects in their narratives are merely touched on, but these are in most cases left unexplored. Psychological motivation of the fictional characters is one of those aspects and possession by evil spirits has become a convenient way to account for this dimension of human character in the Wale Adenuga production *Daddy's Girl*. Nike's dysfunctional behaviour, caused perhaps by her confusion over what she sees as a harsh treatment at the hands of her own mother, is

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<sup>107</sup> Not that this method is seen positively in *Problem Child1*, as it is represented as subject to misuse and abuse. For instance, the nuns use it to erroneously conclude and also try to convince Mr. Peabody that Junior is a maniac. The 'expert' psychologist also employs it to evaluate Martin Beck, who when shown a black ink dab on a white paper, claims he sees furry bunnies only to strangle the 'expert' a few moments later. Perhaps, the killing of the 'expert' by the violent criminal whose, release from prison he is trying to secure, symbolises the ineffectiveness of this method as a way of accounting for subconscious thoughts.

therefore presented in the narrative as possession by evil spirits and realized narrativistically through her joining of a cult. This is also the method of discovering the mind and thus the subconscious thoughts, through which Nike's insubordination to her mother has been accounted for.

#### 6.4 Conclusion

*Daddy's Girl* and *Problem Child1*, as discourses of parenting, could therefore be described as two models of parenting. While, in *Daddy's Girl*, good parenting becomes synonymous with parental authority and control, in *Problem Child1*, a good parent/child relationship is seen as a partnership of equals marked by respect for each other's freedom. In the manner of portrayal also, the parents in the two texts are presented in opposing binaries with the mother, or adoptive mother, cast as too strict and therefore cruel. However, while Mrs. Falamo's 'cruelty' in *Daddy's Girl* is a 'positive cruelty' (because it is seen to be in the child's interest), in *Problem Child1*, Mrs. Healy's 'cruelty' (resulting from her preoccupation with appearances and complete apathy towards Junior) becomes 'negative.' The fathers, who are more indulgent and therefore bond more easily with the children, are seen as better parents. In *Daddy's Girl*, the type of bonding between father and child is seen as one which comes at the expense of discipline and is therefore of a 'negative' order. In *Problem Child1*, the bonding of father and adoptive son is a 'positive' one, as it leads to trust which eventually enables the child to bid farewell to a negative influence in his life. *Daddy's Girl*, as a discourse of parent-child relationship and a reaffirmation of parental authority in the maintenance of familial cohesion, can therefore be said to take the form of the parents-know-best model and *Problem Child1* that of parents-as-friends.

## Chapter SEVEN

### *Pretty Woman, Campus Babes and Discourses of Prostitution*

#### 7.0 Introduction

As in the previous chapter, this chapter showed that the discourses of prostitution in *Campus Babes* and *Pretty Woman* were shaped by the contexts of their production. The strategy adopted in the analysis was to show how prostitution was constructed in the two texts. This entailed accounting for how the texts represented the causes of prostitution and also how the identity of the prostitute was constituted. In accounting for the way the identity of the prostitute was constituted, subject theories as developed in theories of ideology and psychoanalysis were employed. With regard to *Pretty Woman*, it was further argued that the discourse of prostitution and the prostitute as a subject-in-ideology were not only shaped by Hollywood patriarchal ideology, the discourse was also constructed through the prism of the American dream. The same discourse in *Campus Babes* was, on the other hand, shaped by the ideology of Nigerian patriarchy. As in the last chapter, the plots were first summarised, then a denotative and connotative analysis of meaning was provided. Finally, the ways the two texts have represented the feminine were compared.

#### 7.1 Representing prostitution: *Pretty Woman* and *Campus Babes*

*Pretty Woman*, a Hollywood film produced in 1990 starring Julia Roberts and Richard Gere, tells the story of a romance between a billionaire corporate raider, Edward Lewis, (portrayed by Richard Gere) and a prostitute, Vivian Ward (portrayed by Julia Roberts). Mr. Lewis, who is in the business of acquiring and then breaking up companies in financial trouble, has come into town, Los Angeles, to force a hostile take-over of a

financially wobbly company. After a party at the LA offices of the Edward Lewis' Enterprises organised by Mr. Stuckey, Mr. Lewis' lawyer, Mr. Lewis drives downtown in search of his hotel, the Regent Beverly Wilshire. Not knowing directions, he picks up a prostitute from Hollywood Boulevard, Vivian Ward. A one night-stand develops into a romance with the billionaire businessman proposing marriage to the one-time prostitute, Vivian Ward.

The discourse of prostitution in *Pretty Woman* is presented as reasons for female prostitution and, to do this, the narrative uses the notions of a responsible, goal-oriented and unhappy-being-a- prostitute woman and an irresponsible, substance-abusing, prostitute-without-goals or and without ambition woman. This is seen in the depiction of the two prostitutes, Vivian Ward and Kit de Luca. In Vivian are encoded the values of a prostitute-with-goals as she will sometimes ask Kit, 'don't you want to get out of here?' Prostitutes like Vivian are also forced by circumstances into prostitution and have every intention of getting out. Vivian, in her own words, does not plan to 'turn tricks forever.' Vivian Ward is first introduced in the narrative as she gets ready for 'work' as a hooker. Though a prostitute, she is a responsible and law-abiding American citizen. She does not 'do drugs' as she protests to Mr. Lewis when he thinks she is hiding cocaine only for him to discover it is dental floss because, according to this health-conscious prostitute: 'You must never neglect your gums.' The health-aware prostitute also always uses condoms, as she explains to Mr. Lewis:

**Vivian:** Look, I use condoms and get medical checks every month. Not only am I better in the sack than an amateur, I'm probably safer.

**Mr. Lewis:** I like that. That's very good. You should have it printed on your business card.

**Vivian:** If you're making fun of me, I don't like it.

**Mr. Lewis:** No, I'm not. I wouldn't offend you. I'm sorry.

Though she is in a profession considered demeaning, Vivian still manages to carry herself with dignity. In the hotel room, and to further highlight her commitment to playing safe, even though she is in a profession usually associated with the spread of health-debilitating diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Vivian brings out assorted colours of condoms



and tells Mr. Lewis to choose whichever he prefers. Mr. Lewis is impressed, even though he mockingly calls the condoms 'a buffet of safety' with Vivian assuring him, 'I'm a safety girl.'

Miss Ward's sense of responsibility means she considers as priority matters like rent payment, with which her less responsible roommate, Kit de Luca, can't be bothered. Kit, has on occasion, even used their rent money, which Vivian has been hiding in the toilet water closet, to buy drugs. The sense of responsibility is a result of innate honesty which will never allow Vivian to take advantage of anybody. The first night in the hotel room with Mr. Lewis, she wants to get started with the business of giving pleasure to her customer and does not understand why Mr. Lewis is wasting time by ordering champagne and strawberries. This honest prostitute, who, concerned about the cost to Mr. Lewis of every single minute she spends without delivering value for the money she will be paid assures him:

**Vivian:** Look, I appreciate this whole seduction scene you got going but let me give you a tip, I'm a sure thing, ok? I'm on hourly rate. Can we get started?

**Mr. Lewis:** Somehow, I sense this hour thing is an issue. Why don't we get through that now? How much for the entire night?

**Vivian:** Stay here? (Smiles and adds) You couldn't afford it.

**Mr. Lewis:** Try me.

**Vivian:** \$300.

**Mr. Lewis:** (without hesitation) Done. Now we can relax.

Apparently still wondering if she is not cheating Mr. Lewis, Vivian suggests: 'Are you sure you want me to stay the entire night. I mean, I could pop you good and be on my way.' Another instance of this honesty that appears to be part of Vivian's character is seen when Mr. Lewis proposes she spend the entire week with him and that he will pay her to be at his 'beck and call.' Vivian says she would like to be his 'beck and call girl' but is concerned about the amount of money Mr. Lewis will be spending for her services and therefore gives him advice on how to economize:

**Vivian:** Look you rich and classy guys can get any girl free.

**Mr. Lewis:** I want a professional.

**Vivian:** If you're talking 24 hours a day, it's gonna cost you.

However, where Vivian is represented as a prostitute-with-a-goal, and therefore one with a good prospect of getting out (which she eventually does toward the end of the narrative in her determination to quit prostitution and finish high school and the eventual marriage proposal from Mr. Lewis) Kit is, on the other hand, constructed as a prostitute-without-goals or ambitions. Although both women are seen as having taken the easy option, in the case of the goal-oriented prostitute, however, prostitution is just a stopgap, until she rediscovers her focus, as in Vivian's case. The unambitious prostitutes who are not thinking in terms of the future remain in prostitution for a very long time. In their own parlance, they hope to 'always turn tricks.' The conversation between Vivian and Kit underscores this point. Vivian, after expressing her anger with Kit for spending their rent on drugs, asks her in exasperation: 'Don't you want to get out of here?' to which Kit responds 'get out of where? Where the fuck do you want to go?'

The tragedy of such prostitutes is not that they barely manage to make a living out of prostitution, but after 'trading their sorry selves' (as a pimp puts it), what little they make goes into feeding an addiction, that is, drug dependency. In the case of other prostitutes in the narrative, like Skinny Marie (whose body was discovered in a dumpster) and Rachel (who got arrested) a very certain end, death or imprisonment, awaits such women. The two do not even have the benefit of a surname, their anonymity highlighting their status as 'a waste of space', a blot on the face of humanity which must be removed to make room for more deserving people, seen in the death of one and the arrest of the other.

Prostitutes without a 'higher' purpose in life are also unlikely to get their priorities right. As has already been observed, Kit used their rent money to buy cocaine, leaving Vivian to worry about how to keep a roof over their heads. Such prostitutes in the process become very vulnerable and are also the type who get easily taken advantage of by pimps. The pimp, Carlos, has managed to maintain a hold over Kit due to her drug dependency to the point that Kit would go into hiding because she has no money to repay the drug dealer. However, intelligent and goal-oriented prostitutes like Vivian are wise to

the ways of the pimps and do not leave themselves open to that kind of exploitation. The conversation between the two friends on Hollywood Boulevard (while waiting for a potential customer for the evening) highlights how having a goal as a prostitute could influence the way one looks at situations.

**Vivian:** (observes to Kit with regard to 'business') It's rather slow tonight.

**Kit:** I know. Maybe we should get Carlos to be our pimp. He kind of digs you, you know.

**Vivian:** And then he'll run our lives and take our money. No.

**Kit:** You're right. (repeating a dictum, no doubt taught her by Vivian, adds) We say who. We say where. We say how much.

Kit's life again provides an insight into the kind of world inhabited by low-ambition prostitutes. Kit is responding to Vivian's question as to why she has not picked up their rent before the time she eventually does: 'I was busy, I have a life. Nino got beat up. I had to visit him in the hospital. Rachel got arrested. It was a mess.' This is not only Kit's notion of life but the kind of life that is the lot of prostitutes who lack the ambition to better themselves. This kind of existence also appears to be the only kind of life such women will ever know.

The discourse of reasons for prostitution is also inscribed in the lives of Vivian and Kit but especially Vivian. We first have an idea, through Kit, about Vivian's life story early on in the narrative. Vivian has just been remonstrating with Kit for spending their rent money on cocaine when Kit reminds Vivian of the help she has been to her: 'Look, you came here, I gave you some money; I gave you place to stay and some valuable vocational advice.' It is, however, Vivian herself in a conversation with Mr. Lewis who provides more details of her early life and from these emerge a clearer sense of what led to her becoming a prostitute.

**Vivian:** The first guy I ever loved was a total nothing, the second was worse. My mum called me a 'bum magnet.' If there's a bum within a 50 mile radius, I was completely attracted to him.

**Mr. Lewis:** (smiles) Uh

**Vivian:** That's how I ended up here. I followed bum number three. So here I was, no money, no friends, no bum.

**Mr. Lewis:** (smiles and asks) And you chose this as your profession?

**Vivian:** I worked at a couple of fast food places, parked cars at wrestling. I couldn't make the rent. I was too ashamed to go home. That's when I met Kit. She was a hooker and made it sound so great. So one day I did it. And I cried the whole time. But then I got some regulars. It's not like anybody plans this...It's not your childhood dream.

**Mr. Lewis:** You could be so much more.

**Vivian:** People put you down if you start to believe it.

**Mr. Lewis:** I think you are very bright, a very special woman.

**Vivian:** The bad stuff is easier to believe. You ever notice that?

From the above dialogue, the reasons for prostitution are seen to be due to such factors as falling in love with the wrong person. They are wrong because they have no prospects of achieving a good life and are therefore in no position to lift anyone out of a lowly economic position. The next is a lack of skills or good qualifications, which means low-pay jobs and therefore an inability to make a good living for oneself. The third is lack of encouragement from people around one which leads to low self-esteem. Wrong 'vocational advice' from other people is also identified as a reason why women become prostitutes.

However, that social position or money is a key factor in the discourse of reasons for prostitution is seen further in the conversation between Kit and Vivian. Kit has at last come to the Regent Beverly Wilshire to pick up the rent money that Vivian has left with the hotel's receptionist. Outside the hotel and in the pool area, the two friends talk about Vivian's transformation into a 'respectable lady.'

**Kit:** You know, he<sup>108</sup> would bust something if he saw you in this outfit. I was afraid to hug you up there. I might wrinkle you. You look really good.

**Vivian:** (smiles and points to some deck chairs in a shaded area of the swimming pool) Something with shade.

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<sup>108</sup> The pimp and drug dealer Carlos who fancies Vivian and has been trying to get together with her.

**Kit:** You clean up real nice. You sure don't fit in on the Boulevard looking like you do, not that you ever did.

**Vivian:** Well, thanks.

**Kit:** It's easy to clean up when you got money.

Kit's last statement seems to imply that having money goes a long way in helping a woman avoid the life of prostitution and to achieve respectability.

Class and social status are presented as a factor in making a good marriage, they are also seen as what limits a woman's chance of meeting and marrying someone with money and are therefore a reason why some women are likely to turn to prostitution. This means that women born into money have the chance to meet and marry wealthy men, a chance on which those women born on the other side of economic prospects cannot count. At the polo match, to which Mr. Lewis has taken Vivian, he has introduced two women to Vivian as 'the Olsen sisters who have made marrying well into an art form.' Mr. Stuckey's comments about Vivian when he is mocking Mr. Lewis about his choice of dates, 'Edward, you are the only billionaire I know of who goes looking for bargain basement street walkers', underline the fact that people from a particular social class are more likely to meet and marry one another. Even the prostitutes themselves understand this economic logic in human love relationships. Kit has just forced an admission from Vivian that she loves Mr. Lewis. To spare her friend's feelings about how highly improbable the chance of marriage to someone outside their social class is in the real world in which they live, Kit tries to encourage Vivian into believing there might be a chance of that happening to her in this case:

**Kit:** You fell in love with him. You kiss him on the mouth. That does not teach you anything?

**Vivian:** Look Kit, I'm not stupid, okay?

**Kit:** He's not a bum. He's a rich, classy guy.

**Vivian:** Who will break my heart, right?

**Kit:** (wanting not to appear too pessimistic) Oh no, come on. You don't know that. He asked you right? Maybe you guys could get a house together, buy some diamonds and a horse. I don't know. Anyway, it could work. It happens.

**Vivian:** (smiles at the naïve expressions of optimism and asks) When does it happen, Kit? When does it really happen? Who has it worked out for? Did it work out for Skinny Marie or Rachel?

**Kit:** Those were specific cases of crack heads.

**Vivian:** I want to know who it's worked for. You give me one example of somebody that we know that it happened for.

**Kit:** You want a name? You mean, name someone? (Kit holds her head dramatically and says 'oh, the pressure of a name' before remembering and answering) Cindy-fuckin-rella! When Kit tells Vivian that Mr. Lewis is not a bum, but a 'rich classy guy' and Vivian adds 'who will break my heart, right?', it is a reminder that so far the only people Vivian has fallen in love with and who have returned her love in their own fashion have been 'bums.' As someone with unpromising economic prospects, falling in love with a 'rich classy guy' is one thing, but having such a man return that feeling to the point of offering marriage, becomes another issue. This seems to suggest that the chasm that divides the classes is not that easily bridgeable. This is seen in Kit's difficulty in recalling a name of someone known to them to whom such a happy ending happened. She could only come up with the name of a character from a fictional tale, Cinderella, meaning instances of such relationships leading to marriage between people of such contrasting social status mostly happen in fairy-tales. This means that life for women without the head-start of a financially secure background, and they are in the majority, will be lived on the economic fringes that can include prostitution. Such women are also most likely to marry within their social class thus ensuring the continued preponderance of the poor in the society. Vivian has said her mother called her a 'bum magnet.' She has so far met and been with three 'bums', which could mean that the possibility of her meeting someone that is not a 'bum' is very limited due to the social class she has been born into and the kind of people that belonging to such a class limits her to meeting. Kit's suggestion that Vivian and Mr. Lewis could buy a house, diamonds and horses, trappings associated with wealth, suggests the conception of the world of the rich that the poor have. It is thus safe to conclude that these things do not constitute part of the world of the prostitute whose major preoccupation is with provision of basic human needs and which in some cases they cannot even manage to do (rent payment and food in the case of Vivian and Kit).

*Campus Babes*, on the other hand, tells the story of Made, a female undergraduate student in a Nigerian university. Lessons from her conservative background are put to severe test when Made begins to share campus hostel accommodation with other female undergraduates, who do not share her values. Made is still a virgin at the start of her university education, but is soon to embark on a different kind of lifestyle of parties, men and sex with her roommates. With her life completely transformed, Made's education is now almost forgotten. However, this life comes to an end one evening when the girls go to a hotel in search of men who will pay them for their sexual favours. The old male friends who eventually pick the girls up that night, unknown to the girls, are armed robbers by profession who have come to rob the hotel. They drive away with the girls and shoot them all dead, with Made as the only survivor.

The discourse of prostitution in *Campus Babes* represents the causes of female prostitution as due to negative peer influence and family background. To do this, the text follows a dichotomous construction of innocent /virgin 'good' girl with a good upbringing who becomes corrupted by the 'evil' in society, in the shape of the sexually active 'whore/evil' girls lacking in proper upbringing and therefore vital moral values. Made, the 'good' girl, is portrayed in the narrative as a goal-oriented, focused young woman who has gained a place in a university, and considering the quota system which in most cases rules out qualified candidates from some Southern Nigerian states in order to accommodate more academically challenged candidates from mainly Northern Nigeria, this is no mean achievement indeed. This aspect is evidenced in Made's response when another female student promises to take Made under her wing, as according to her, she would not want to see Made running home to her parents due to loneliness: 'Run back home after all the hassles of gaining admission? Never!' This goal oriented girl from a 'good' family is also determined to gain a first class in her university first degree examination, as she is seen studying very hard even before classes have formally begun.

Made's innocence marked by her sexual inexperience is highlighted by the clothes she wears-- generally long skirts and loose blouses—and the fact that even though she now

lives away from home, she still lives by the injunctions of her upbringing regarding how to behave. This model of living is, however, to be subjected to a test when Made encounters another way of life, represented by her roommates. Her new roommates, Pat, Sola and Nkem, openly talk about their boyfriends, sex and parties, an alien world to Made, whose horrified reaction at the girls' choice of topic of discussion the first time she is in their company is: 'Are you not afraid that if you go to such parties, the guys might get the girls drunk and sleep with them, maybe in groups?' Her roommates are however, unimpressed with Made's question, but are at the same time intrigued by her perspectives which they are determined to change, as the following conversation shows:

**Nkem:** What is life for but to experience it?

**Made:** (in shocked exclamation) Nkem!

**Nkem:** (failing to see what the fuss was about) No, don't go all innocent on me. Do you mean to tell me you've not secretly wished you had such a wild time?

**Pat:** (looking at Made with disgust, asks) Do you know whether she's still a virgin?

**Sola:** Is it true Made, could you really still be a virgin at this age?

**Made:** (looking at the girls in horror asks) Are you girls not?

(The three girls burst out laughing as though Made has just confessed to having a serious case of a social disease)

**Sola:** So, it's true, you're still a virgin!

**Pat:** (scoffs) Virginity, who needs it here right now!

**Nkem:** Surely not me.

**Made:** (looking at the girls in confusion) Is it a bad thing?

**Sola:** (preening and fussing over her appearance) Well, depends on which side you are, the first side or the other side.

**Made:** But my mother told me it's an honourable thing for a young lady to keep her virginity until she's married.

**Nkem:** (in a longsuffering tone) I'm sure she didn't also tell you that it's an honourable way to miss a whole load of fun.

**Made:** Fun?

**Nkem:** Yes fun (spelling out the word) f-u-n. That's what life is about.



**Pat:** (looking at Made with pity) Hey, girl, wake up. You're not gonna be young twice, are you.

With her perspective on life thus challenged by the other girls, and especially after experiencing the atmosphere of the party scene from outside, (after her roommates have left for the party, she follows the music to the venue of the party) Made's reaction becomes a questioning of her own position: 'They all seem to be really enjoying themselves, the music seems to be very moving. I wish I could go in there now.' Though she eventually decides to explore this other model of living, she nevertheless comes into it with residues of her old viewpoints. She loses her virginity to Austin Obande, a male student with whom Pat her roommate has set up a blind date for Made, and naively believes the sexual experience will culminate in marriage. Austin Obande, apparently the love-them-and-leave-them type,<sup>109</sup> will, however, soon put her wise, as he callously tells her: 'just because you flung yourself at me and we had it once, you think you have a claim over me. Now, get out of my house.' After this betrayal and rejection, Made can only think of her lost 'treasure', her virginity, as she bemoans its loss to the male student, Lanre: 'You'll never understand, I've cast my pearls to the dog and I can't retrieve again, I can't', and to her roommates: 'How can I live down the shame of losing my virginity? Everybody on the campus will now look at me as the girl who has been deflowered and dumped.' Later, buoyed up by her friends' advice on how to get over a broken heart (which is to date other men) and particularly following her successful negotiation of a fee of 20,000 Naira (about \$160) with one of the new men that her roommates have introduced her to, just to go out for drinks, Made symbolically makes a complete break with her past, seen here in her declaration in a conversation with her friends:

**Made:** I can't believe this, just for drinks 20,000 Naira! He says it's just for drinks, and he meant it.

**Nkem:** Where are the Austins of this world?

**Pat:** Who wants to be clean anyway?

**Made:** To hell with being clean! (The other girls cheer)

**Nkem:** Welcome to the real world.

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<sup>109</sup> Made has just paid Austin a surprise visit within days of sleeping with him only to see him with another girl.

From this point, Made totally embraces this new lifestyle as she begins to play an active part in their plans, consisting mainly in, as Nkem once puts it, ‘storming hotels’ to look for men who will pay them for sex. From this point also she makes no pretence of being a student as their life becomes one of coasting for male clients, shopping and vulgar discussions of proceeds from their nights out in town. This style of living only comes to an end following the girls’ hotel encounter with old male ‘customers’ who turn out to be armed robbers. The student Lanre, (Lanre has from the outset wanted to be more than friends with Made, and who still remains her friend, despite the loss of her innocence and her eventual slide into a life of prostitution) in a conversation with another male student regarding Made, captures this discourse of prostitution as what happens when a ‘good’ girl has the bad fortune of being thrown into the company of ‘evil’ women:

**Lanre:** If only she didn’t have the misfortune of sharing the same room with three Jezebels, if only.

**Friend:** How she suddenly changed and became one of them still remains the greatest mystery to me.

**Lanre:** (still looking confused and worried) You’re right, you’re very right.

Where the discourse of causes of prostitution in Made’s case is seen in terms of a ‘good’ girl from a decent family who is lured away from the path of virtue by ‘wicked’ women; the life of prostitution of the other girls is attributed largely to their family background. To emphasize this discourse of family background as a reason for female prostitution, where Made has her father visit her in the university, there is nothing said about the other girls’ family in the narrative. From Lanre, who wonders why Made does not join the party-goers inside the house,<sup>110</sup> this notion that the type of family a girl comes from as largely responsible for her conduct and character, is also conveyed:

**Lanre:** As you seem to be enjoying the music, why don’t you join them?

**Made:** No, No, I can’t go in there

**Lanre:** Why? Let me guess, you’re too nice to be in that kind of crowd. You have a better upbringing.

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<sup>110</sup> Made has been drawn by the music to the venue of the party, but is resisting the temptation to join in.

Apparently, only girls from certain types of families go to parties and in this context they are assumed to be girls (and not nice ones) with questionable upbringing. The families they come from are also seen as lax and not subscribing sufficiently to traditional African values necessary for instilling 'good' behaviour in girls. This is therefore the reason for the girls' lack of reservation in talking about sex, and why for them keeping their virginity does not appear to be 'an honourable thing' to do. Not being brought up within this value system is also seen as the reason that these girls prefer the 'evil' life of indulging in pre-marital sexual relationships and getting paid for them, disdaining hardwork and generally mocking anyone who makes an effort, as here when they make fun of the focused and studious Made:

**Pat:** Look, look at this bookworm. We've not started or even had any lectures yet and they are already burying their heads in books.

**Nkem:** Don't mind them, they are wishing for first class.

**Pat:** Is it only first class, let them go for first class upper!

To further emphasize their aimless life, these female students, who are products of such families, are never seen or heard discussing academic work, or even studying. When they make the effort of going to classes at all, they will either be napping while others, usually male students, are busy studying. When the girls do manage to stay awake in class, their time is given up to discussions about the men they have recently been with, how they are going to have more fun, and how and where they will go to in order to meet new men. Theirs is a life of endless rounds of parties and fun:

**Nkem:** It's going to be a wonderful party.

**Pat:** I always look forward to attending a campus party.

**Nkem:** I hear they're real fun.

**Sola:** The best thing about the party is that it will give me the opportunity to be close to Steve guy.

**Nkem:** (exclaiming in mock admonition) Sola! (and continuing in a less censorious tone) I don't blame you, I mean, who doesn't want that guy. He's a real hunk.

**Sola:** Not to mention he's the son of a minister. (There follows a general gushing by the girls)

**Pat:** For me, I can't fight over somebody who already has his hands full. Brown is my guy!

Life for the 'evil' girls also consists in shopping and vulgarly talking about the night after the party in the hope of impressing or reeling in the vulnerable, like Made.

**Nkem:** The party was kpunk. ('kpunk' is Nigerian slang meaning very groovy or enjoyable, entertaining and successful)

**Pat:** The music, the guys.

**Nkem:** Just the way I dreamt it.

**Sola:** No wonder you disappeared for sometime.

**Nkem:** (to Sola ) You nko,<sup>111</sup> do you think we didn't see you?

**Sola:** Why cares who saw me. All I know is that I enjoyed myself.

**Pat:** Abi oo,<sup>112</sup> especially during the period of disappearance.

**Made** (who has been trying to, or pretending to study while all the talk is going on in their room, turns from her reading table to the three girls) You girls make this sound so sweet.

**Pat:** No, we don't make it sound so sweet, we actually say that it is sweet because it really is.

**Nkem:** You should try it sometime.

**Made:** (truly interested by now, enquires) So, you all disappeared at some point except Pat?

**Nkem:** Pat? She is the first person to disappear.

**Sola:** As a matter of fact, she disappeared twice!

**Pat:** (in a lazy voice that could be described as the purr of a well-fed cat drawls) You girls should not blame me, now. (In other words, she couldn't help herself, she was enjoying herself only too well).

However, this 'corrupt' way of life has to end at some point in the world of the narrative and it is through the removal of the 'evil' characters by death.

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<sup>111</sup> The expression means, 'what about yourself'? Nko is an Igbo word meaning 'what of' or 'what about.'

<sup>112</sup> Yoruba word meaning 'exactly' or 'isn't it?' It is used in conversations when a person generally agrees with what the other person has said.

## 7.2 *Pretty Woman* and the American Dream

As already observed, the discourses of prostitution in *Pretty Woman* promote and are shaped by the ideology of American dream. The popular culture theorist, Dominic Strinati, has pointed to the link between certain Hollywood film narratives and this ideology which such narratives are seen to embody. Though the meaning of the American dream has not remained static over time, Strinati (2000: 27-8) identified some basic features of this ideology that have remained fairly fixed over the years:

Its main proposition is that material wealth and success in life can be achieved by anyone who has the necessary initiative, ambition, ingenuity, perseverance and commitment.... It suggests that the road from rags to riches is open to anyone willing to take it. The only barriers to its attainment lie within people themselves and their lack of the qualities demanded to achieve the dream....The dream stresses the desirability of achieving financial and material rewards, such as high incomes and consumer goods....The only barriers individuals will experience will be their lack of qualities required to achieve the dream, opposition from enemies of the dream, those who ignore, pervert, or subvert it...The American dream is about success and how to achieve it.

Strinati further identified the dream as consisting of ‘money, power, fame, happiness, contentment, ‘the good life’ (Strinati *ibid*: 27). Three characters, Vivian Ward, Kit de Luca and Edward Lewis provide examples of how this ideology has been encoded in *Pretty Woman*. From Strinati’s analysis of the underlying principles of the American dream above, ambition, perseverance and commitment are seen as some of the prerequisite qualities one must possess in order to achieve ‘material wealth and success’; qualities which, it can be argued, are possessed by Vivian Ward. These qualities are also the reason for her determination and success in lifting herself out of the life of prostitution.

Through her own account of why she turned to prostitution for a living, the life of Vivian Ward provides a good instance of the relationship between Hollywood narratives and the ideology of the American dream. Her reasons for turning to prostitution included her knack for falling in love with the wrong man; inadequate education, which means no skills or qualifications that will get her a good job and lack of a self-belief because people

around her were always putting her down. However, Vivian Ward, as already observed, is also portrayed as a prostitute with an ambition and a dream of one day leaving this way of earning a living. This aspect of her having a goal in life that is higher than prostitution is shown early on in the narrative, when she asks Kit if she does not want to get out of prostitution. Vivian can therefore be said to have the essential quality of ambition or aspiration and the focus necessary to achieve the dream. Her dream is to make enough money to go back and finish high school. Finishing high school means better job prospects for her and therefore represents her route to social mobility. She demonstrates her commitment to the achievement of the dream by using the money she has made from the week she has spent with Mr. Lewis (she calls this money the 'Edward Lewis' Scholarship Fund') to go back to Milledgeville, Georgia and complete high school. That prostitution is only a stopgap on her way to achieving this dream is seen in her refusal to be Mr. Lewis' mistress, or even to spend one more night with him, because now she has the money she needs and so sees no further need to sell her body.

In the narrative, Vivian also has to overcome barriers or 'opposition' to her achievement of the dream in the shape of people around her. Among the barriers are the 'bums' she always seems to be drawn to. Therefore, when she tells Mr. Lewis, 'so here I was...no bum', while explaining to him how she has ended up as a prostitute, the end of her relationship with bum number three can be said to mark the removal from her life of a barrier to success. That Vivian may also have had other forms of opposition, in the form of discouragement from people, can be seen in her observation above that 'people put you down if you start to believe it.' With Mr. Lewis providing encouragement by telling Vivian 'you could be so much more, I think you are very bright, a very special woman', she finally has the positive influence and reinforcement which can be said to have the result of countering all the previous negative influences in her life. With her self-belief and esteem restored, and with the new zeal to seek success through better paying jobs by completing her education, the narrative achieves a desired closure in the fashion of the ideology of the American dream, which recognises 'social mobility' as success. As 'it is the individual who through their efforts manage to climb the ladder of success' (Strinati *ibid*: 27), Vivian can be said to have achieved this success. The marriage proposal from

Edward Lewis, which caps Vivian's life as a success story under this ideology does not, however, come in the narrative until Vivian has made the ultimate commitment of quitting prostitution and finishing her education. Apparently, there are no shortcuts to achieving this dream; the individual who has aspirations and the other necessary prerequisite qualities also needs to go the whole nine yards.

Edward Lewis represents a model of the success story in the values espoused by this ideology: 'economic success, individual achievement social mobility...competition and winning' (Strinati *ibid*: 28). He has also gone the whole nine yards or 'all the way' as he tells Vivian who has asked how far he has gone with his education. Though nothing is said about the ages of the fictional characters in the narrative, Mr. Lewis, (going by Gere's age in 1990 when the film was produced) may only be in his late thirties or early forties, but he is already a billionaire. He has not had an easy ride on the road to success either, as his mother is only a music teacher. His father is the half of the partnership with the money but Mr. Lewis Senior has also taken his money after he divorced Mr. Lewis' mother, leaving Mrs. Lewis to struggle alone to raise her son. To further highlight the aspect of his character as a self-made success story, Mr. Lewis' disclosure to Vivian 'I never spoke to him in fifteen years' shows there has not been much contact between father and son subsequently. All these obstacles in his early life notwithstanding, Mr. Lewis' ambition, perseverance, drive, all necessary requirements for success, have ensured that: a limousine was the first car he ever drove; his father was the President of the third company he took over; he was already a billionaire and therefore enjoying the good life while still relatively very young.

Kit de Luca, on the other hand, represents the individual who lacks what it takes to succeed under this ideology: no goals, no ambition. Her lack of the required qualities for success, seen as weakness, is also portrayed through her drug dependency. She does not understand why Vivian is always talking of getting out of prostitution. Even when Vivian offers her a chance to leave prostitution and go back with her to Georgia, Kit's response is: 'and leave all this? Not in a million!' Her low ambition and therefore little chance of the economic success that is so central in this ideology, is seen in the choice of career she

eventually makes. Even in this small step, Vivian's influence on her is apparent as she tells Kit on the day she gets ready to leave for Georgia:

**Vivian:** We think you've got a lot of potentials, Kit Luca.

**Kit:** (Very pleased to hear this) You do? You think I've got potentials.

**Vivian:** Oh yea. Don't let anybody tell you different.

**Kit:** Ok.

Next time Kit is heard telling a new roommate:

**Kit:** I'm gonna be charging you a little bit more than Vivian because I've got this beauty course I'm looking into. I'm not gonna be there that much. You know, because you just can't turn tricks forever. You gotta have a goal. Do you have a goal?

**New Roommate:** You know, I always wanted to be in Ice Capades.

Kit may have made a decision to leave prostitution at some point, but it is also apparent that the career path in which she has expressed interest will never really guarantee her the good life and financial success as defined by the American dream. She and her new roommate, perhaps another hooker, are destined for life on the economic fringes. Their lack of aspiration, seen in their limited goals (beautician and being in Ice Capades), will never generate enough earnings to enable them to live the American dream.

### **7.3 *Campus Babes* and Nigerian patriarchy**

The analysis argues that the discourse of prostitution in *Campus Babes* is structured by the ideology of Nigerian patriarchy. Among the values underlying this patriarchal ideology in relation to women are female subjection to the headship of the man in a marital relationship, and an emphasis on female virginity. Made's virginity evidences her good behaviour and therefore her suitability for marriage. Marriage and procreating are also seen as the crowning glory and testimony to her femininity.

The constitution of the identity of the prostitute in *Campus Babes* highlights the store that is set by virginity and marriage by this ideology and through which the Nigerian patriarchy patrols the borders of female conduct. Among some cultural groups in Nigeria (Moslem Hausas in the North especially) female virginity is particularly prized. Such



values are sometimes based on the assumption that lack of previous sexual experience acts as a restraint on a woman's sexual conduct and appetite during marriage. Put another way, relatively sexually inexperienced women are assumed to make more faithful wives. After all, unlike the sexually active girls of *Campus Babes* one of whom has affirmed 'one has to sample (that is, sleeping with as many men as possible) as many as possible before settling down with one is just the right action for you', virgin wives have done no such 'samplings' and so are unlikely to have 'benchmarks' against which they can unfavourably compare their husbands' performance in bed.

In defining the boundaries of acceptable female conduct, Nigerian patriarchal ideology can be said to be related in purpose to the construction of femininity in romance novels of 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. According to Fiske, (1989: 116) constructing the domestic space as the woman's place and her role that of marriage and producing and the nurturing of breadwinners in these novels, worked in the interest of the newly emerging patriarchal industrial capitalism. Analysts of Nigerian video films, like Garritano, have identified female virginity as an aspect of gender construction in popular discourses through which the Nigerian patriarchy not only constructs the social meanings of gender, but also struggles for the control of the woman's body, or what Fiske (1989) has called the 'confinement of femininity.' A male fictional character in one of the Nigerian video films Garritano (2000:175) analysed, for instance, reminds the female character about how he has 'kept and nurtured her like a gem and cherished her virginity.' In the same narrative, in which the virgin has been kidnapped by the same admirer and, following her safe return to her parents, one of the first things the girl's parents do is to take her to hospital. Their reason is not, however, to be reassured that their daughter is in good health, but 'to verify she is still a virgin and therefore is still a suitable wife' for one of the male characters to whom they intend to marry their daughter off (ibid: 176). Loss of her virginity would have meant her value as a wife has depreciated. So, by labeling women through the binary opposition of virgin and whore, as in *Campus Babes*, the Nigerian patriarchy could also be seen to be patrolling the borders of female sexual behaviour.

In *Campus Babes*, the construction of the social meaning of gender thus takes the form of the patriarchal stipulation of rules governing gender conduct and the use of the female body. Made's body, (which has all her life, until she started her university education, been under the supervision and control of patriarchy, symbolised by her parents) and those of the other girls, become a site of struggle over social meaning, identities and social relations (Fiske 1993: 306). In Made especially, the definition of social meanings and identity takes the form Fiske (op.cit: 24) has described as 'discipline through knowledge.' Made has come to the university guided by knowledge of what her mother has taught her to be appropriate and acceptable way of using her body, which is to save it for her husband (and which is really the values prescribed by patriarchy) and this knowledge has disciplined her behaviour until her undergraduate years. What is constructed as the corruption of a 'virtuous' girl by 'wicked' women in this discourse of prostitution could thus really be described as a young woman discovering her sexuality and rebelling against the confinement of her femininity by patriarchy. It is possible that Made, even before she met and began to share accommodation with the other girls, may have had promptings from her body which she was too scared of the consequences of rebellion against patriarchy to obey or explore. This conversation with her roommates, as well as Made's conduct afterwards, supports this position. One of the girls, Pat, has said she has a male friend in mind for Made. Made is outraged at this assumption by her roommate that she is in need of a man:

**Made:** Did I ever tell you I need a man?

**Pat:** You don't have to tell us, we know.

**Made:** How?

**Pat:** We were once there ourselves.

**Sola:** You know, I can see desire and curiosity bursting out of every pore of your being.

**Made:** (pretending to be fed up with the conversation turns back to her books) Leave me alone, I don't know what you're talking about.

**Nkem:** Come on, don't fight it, don't. (The other girls continue to cackle)

Made (Gets up, and picks up her books to leave the room) Excuse me, if you don't mind, I've got some reading to do. (The girls continue to laugh)

**Sola:** Don't worry, we know just where you'll be.

**Pat:** Made, you can run but you cannot hide.

**Nkem:** Sooner or later it's bound to happen, so why run.

The same evening, Made is seen outside the house where the party is going on and wondering if she is not missing out on a vital dimension of living. The contradiction between what she is feeling and wants to do and what she has been taught is the right form of conduct, and the confusion this must have created in Made, is captured by Fiske in a statement he attributed to Madonna. Fiske (1989: 103) in his analysis of the American musician Madonna quoted a statement made by the pop star:

When I was tiny...my grandmother used to beg me not to go with men, to love Jesus and to be a good girl. I grew up with two images of women: the virgin and the whore. It was a bit scary.

Made has also proudly recounted to her roommate an injunction from her mother that sounds like Madonna's grandmother's advice to the pop star: 'my mother told me it's an honourable thing for a young lady to keep her virginity until she's married.' Outside the watchful eye of patriarchy, in the form of her parents, Made is less certain about this teaching. Therefore, in her initial resistance to her 'whore' roommates who urge her to express her sexuality by having sex with men and wearing skimpy clothes, Made could be said to be battling with the two contradictory images of women (the good woman who saves her virginity for her husband and the whore who sleeps with men other than her husband) that her mother has instilled into her, especially when she herself is experiencing the same urges she has been taught to believe are evil. Her final capitulation to her sexual needs can be interpreted as an interrogation and rejection by modern Nigerian woman of this opposing binary construction of the female body by Nigerian patriarchal ideology, represented as traditional African values.

In Made also, patriarchy can be seen as stipulating acceptable social relations. 'Good' girls must keep the company of only 'good' girls who share the same values. 'Good' girls should also date only 'good' boys, who will help safeguard their 'pearl', their virginity, that is. This is seen in the opposing constructions of Lanre and Austin Obande in the narrative. Men like Mr. Obande, who is represented as being only interested in one thing,

are seen as a poor choice for a 'good' girl and Mr. Obande does not disappoint. The responsible and studious Lanre who will 'cherish' the virginity of a 'good' girl on the brink of discovering her sexuality and individuality, as in Made's case, is constructed by patriarchy as the ideal male company for her. Lanre's protests and spirited efforts to talk Made out of going on a date with Mr. Obande goes to prove this point:

**Made:** (about Austin) He is only a friend.

**Lanre:** Austin Obande, a friend? He's not good for you. Just look at you, look at what you're wearing. This is not Made. (Lanre runs his eyes over Made's sexy clothes with barely disguised disgust.)

**Made:** (Angry by now at this interference) Since when have you become an authority over me.

**Lanre:** Since the first night I met you, I've never seen such innocence, I've never seen such purity. This is not you. Please, I beg you, don't go.

When Made defies him and leaves with her friends in the car for the party, Lanre mutters, 'Made, this is the end of your purity and innocence.' Her body thus becomes a site where, as Fiske (1993: 306) has put it, 'patriarchy (represented by the two male students) rushes in to assert its control over [its] identities and social relations.' Lanre after all makes no secret of his reason for his interest in Made's body. He has told Made he was drawn to her because of her 'innocence.' For Austin Obande, perhaps, Made's virginity represents a challenge to overcome and perhaps, brag about later. Even though Made could have been drawn to Austin Obande for reasons that could include his looks and personality (he is the better looking of the two male students), patriarchy, however, has to stipulate the right male company for the 'innocent virgin woman' regardless of what her choice in the matter may be. Arranged marriages thrive in some Nigerian cultures and a woman's body becomes a commodity for barter which is sold to the man with more to give.

Made's roommates, on the other hand, are constructed as sluts early on in the narrative because they have rebelled against this exercise of control over their body by patriarchy. Their depiction as 'whores' by the patriarchy is because they are seen to like sex, which according to this ideology, should only be experienced by a woman within the boundaries of marriage. This notion of a single, sexually attractive woman as a prostitute in Nigerian

popular culture because she insists on having relationships before marriage, can be related to Sharon Smith's observation about images of women in 1930s Hollywood films. As Smith (1999: 16) pointed out, such women are cast as castrating women because they actively like sex but on their own terms.

In the narrative, the girls, however, harness this sexual freedom to gain financial empowerment. This conversation between Made and Lanre, where they are arguing about the possibility of Made graduating from the university at all, makes this argument more explicit. Lanre has been remonstrating with Made for missing tests:

**Lanre:** I just wish you'll concentrate on your academics and graduate first.

**Made:** Thanks but don't you worry about me, I will surely graduate.

**Lanre:** But how? You miss lectures and tests, so tell me, how are you going to graduate?

**Made:** Don't worry, you take your route to graduation, I'll take mine.

**Lanre:** What route, tell me what route?

**Made:** You don't want to know, you don't.

**Lanre:** (finally understanding what she means, turns and grabs her hand and shaking her) So, you've deteriorated to such a shameful level?

**Made:** That is the point; that is why our friendship can no longer work. We're now on different levels. If you will excuse me...

Made's cryptic answer about 'different routes' and one whose full implication fills Lanre with such shocked horror is that she will pay lecturers for grades. This is also presumably the path to graduation being followed by her friends.

Fiske's (1989:32) concept of the 'art of making do' which he explains as 'the everyday practices by which people in subordinated social positions win tricks against the system,' will help explicate this form of power exercised by the girls in *Campus Babes*. Making do by marginalised people, Fiske (ibid: 24) has also explained, entails such people making effective use of the little they have, or as the author puts it 'making do with what they have.' What they have may be 'feminine tricks', which help the weak 'to use the resources provided by the strong in their own interests.' The campus girls' ability to buy grades and pass examinations without having to study for them, using the money they

make from men, an exercise of power in which male lecturers are the main targets, can be interpreted not only as a form of female financial empowerment but also as a reverse form of subordination, and in this case that of the Nigerian patriarchy. By taking control of their bodies and using those bodies as a means to secure financial power, the young undergraduate women in the story can be said to have wrested from the Nigerian patriarchy the metaphorical right of self-determination, or in this case, the right to determine what to do with their bodies and in the process they have collapsed the boundaries within which prostitution has been defined. If the male lecturer can be bought with money, he is after all offering or selling something in order to make money: grades. This act places him exactly on the same plane as the women who offer what they have: their body, for money. After all, it is common knowledge in Nigeria that some female undergraduate students, particularly the mistresses of politicians and rich men, enjoy luxurious lifestyles of which university lecturers can only dream. Made and her friends express this aspect of their financial power and autonomy by rarely going home to ask their parents for money and by conspicuous consumption, manifested in their shopping trips. This form of ‘girl power’ is also seen in Made and her friends not having time for ‘mushy’ romantic love with male students. They have placed themselves in a social position where they determine the kind of males they want to be with, instead of settling for what the system offers.

In their financial empowerment and independence, the campus girls can be said to symbolise the present generation of well-educated, high-earning, career-minded or successful business, single, Nigerian women who are constructed in popular discourses as man-eating monsters whose sole aim is the emasculation of the male.<sup>113</sup> This is because their financial autonomy and power assure them of a relatively higher social status in the male-ruled society where the generality of women, who to be assured of the occasional money for the children’s food (and I’m thinking of my mother and grandmother here),<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Toyin Tomato, a character in Wale Adenuga Productions’ *Super Story Oh Father, Oh Daughter*, is an example, and so are others in the popular genre, Onitsha Market Literature. In these narratives, single financially successful women are typecast as embodiments of evil.

<sup>114</sup> To get back at my independent-minded and assertive mother, for instance, my father would give my mother’s co-wife and her children money to buy food. He would also give the other wife and her children yams for their lunch, but never to my mother and her children, especially if they had had an argument. This

have to subordinate their individuality to patriarchy in the form of their husband's authority. As these successful women do not also appear to be overly interested in marriage, like the campus girls, this lack of interest and sexual freedom is seen as threatening the institution of marriage, which is after all a patriarchal institution (Fiske *ibid*: 99).

In her analysis of three Nigerian video films,<sup>115</sup> Garritano (2000: 168) has also pointed to the way popular discourses on women in the texts link female autonomy with wickedness, because such a woman 'does not accept her 'natural' lot as dutiful wife....' Some cultural groups in Nigeria, like the Igbos, even have sayings like 'a woman's honour is her husband' to underscore the idea that any achievement by a single woman which does not include marriage is empty. This power of the modern Nigerian woman, like the university undergraduates, who shun the identity constituted for them by patriarchy to construct their own identity that is not restricted to the domestic sphere, has thus to be contained. What better way than by labeling them prostitutes,<sup>116</sup> to the end that whatever the women think they have achieved can thus be demeaned and devalued, so making their power less frightening to patriarchy. In the case of the 'sluttish' girls in *Campus Babes*, who refuse subordination by patriarchy, have the audacity to enjoy sex before marriage and make a living out of it, they are in any case unfit for marriage and motherhood and so deserve one fate: liquidation. With the girls thus made the 'scapegoat of men's fears' as Thornham (1999: 11) has put it and are seen off through violent death, patriarchy is assured that its 'sexual and social pride' is restored and intact (Ogundele: 2000:117).

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was especially hard on my mother with many children to feed, particularly during planting seasons, when our food supplies would be running low. My mother, had also, on many occasions, been savagely beaten by my father, just to teach her a lesson in humility and an object lesson in being subject to one's husband. My father's other wife had an easier time of it, as she was generally the compliant type, who never opposed our father in anything.

<sup>115</sup> *Hostages, Dust to Dust and True Confessions*

<sup>116</sup> In fact, smartly-dressed young women, especially if those clothes are trousers, are still stared at in Nigeria, including the major cities and are, in some cases, even openly called prostitutes. Married women who wear trousers are generally seen as unfaithful wives.

*Campus Babes* also employs shopping as a means of stigmatisation and as a way of delineating the identity of the prostitute. This is done using some of the physical symbols of their empowerment: clothes. In other words, the discourse of consumerism in the narrative becomes a criticism and a condemnation of the girls' newly-found financial autonomy and the empowerment which the girls express through shopping. John Fiske's useful explanation of forms of shopping helps in accounting for how the notion of shopping is used as a means of criticism of the campus girls' behaviour and to mark them out as prostitutes. There is shopping as part of leisure, and shopping as part of domestic work. Shopping as part of leisure is fun, liberating and empowering, while shopping for the family subordinates and 'confines a woman to her role as housewife and mother' (Fiske 1994: 137). For the women in *Campus Babes*, shopping is empowering and liberating. This means that the girls shop to please themselves and not out of necessity to feed their family. This is why in the text, the girls' pleasure in shopping has to be demeaned and devalued as empty, because it does not serve the acceptable role of domestic work that buying should be seen to serve.

Karin Barber's (1997b) analysis of two popular Yoruba plays that explore the theme of wealth also captures how the constitution of the identity of the prostitute in *Campus Babes* works ideologically through displacement. Wealth from oil, which transformed the country's previously agrarian economy, also created a deep contradiction in Nigerian society regarding wealth creation and acquisition, as Barber points out. The wealth from oil resulted in massive official corruption, which saw people being transformed overnight into multi-millionaires without apparently working for the wealth. Barber identified armed-robbery and magical money as areas where this criticism of dubious wealth has become displaced in popular discourses in Nigeria. In Nigerian popular culture, gender has also become what Kinder (1999: 2) has described as a 'symbolic rallying point' for the crusade against corruption and what Barber has called 'baseless wealth.' In *Campus Babes*, the bodies of the undergraduate female students become a symbol of this corruption. This is not only symbolised through the apparently expensive, and mostly Western-style clothes the women wear, which they are seen to afford without visible means of employment, but also in the way they enrolled for a university degree with no



intention of studying for it but with every intention of getting one by the expediency of bribing lecturers. Causes of prostitution, as an ideological construct in *Campus Babes*, are thus due to the moral failings or materialistic tendencies of the individual. The campus girls' slide into prostitution is seen not to be the result of privation, but is mostly the result commodity fetishism, which has become an addiction needing a regular fix. The more clothes the girls buy, the more they desire and the more money they get, the higher they set their sights. This is seen in the girls' determination, as they put it, in 'storming' more posh hotels and going after even richer men than those they had the last time. Thus constituted as a symbol of corruption, the narrative can be said to function ideologically by deflecting attention from the nation state and its masculinist male leadership, and displaces Nigeria's corruption onto the female gender which has the least say in the affairs of the nation state. The poor state of the country's economy, ruined by years of military and civilian dictatorships, and the IMF-mandated harsh economic programme, SAP, which impoverished a previously thriving middle class in the 1980s, are thus all personified in the bodies of the female undergraduate students in *Campus Babes*.

#### **7.4 *Pretty Woman* and *Campus Babes*: Convergences and Divergences**

There are identifiable similarities in the discourse of prostitution constructed by *Pretty Woman* and *Campus Babes*, especially in the way both represent the physical appearance of the prostitute. In both texts, the prostitute is an attractive young woman and clothes are also employed as semiotic code in constituting their identity. In both, the sexy clothes which display the body of the women are signifiers that they earn their living through the use of their body. Through this means, the prostitute is distinguished from 'respectable' women who dress conservatively and properly, and who are either married or are in 'proper' employment.

There are instances in the texts that support this argument about the use of clothes as a tool for the distinction of the feminine and in constitution of the identity of the prostitute. In *Pretty Woman*, for instance, the women who manage the expensive clothes shop and who would not serve Vivian Ward the first time because of her barely-there clothes

(which mark her out as coming from the wrong professional side, that is, prostitution) are quite eager to wait on her when she returns the same day but dressed differently. In *Campus Babes*, Made's clothes before the change in her character, which are mainly conservative, floor length clothes and loose blouses, are used to signify respectability. Her subsequent taste in clothes is also used to represent her 'fall' from respectability. Her father's shocked reaction on seeing Made in tight trousers and a halter top also underscores the argument about the role clothes play in the representation of femininity and the stipulation of appropriate female fashion. The first question Made's father asks her on seeing her in her new clothes is: 'What is this you are wearing?' to which Made replies 'Clothes, Daddy.' His disapproving comments are an indication that he does not share his daughter's definition of clothes, as he orders her afterwards to put on her own clothes when she returns to her room.

Both texts also construct marriage as an appropriate female role. In the texts, marriage is used to distinguish respectable women from prostitutes. The women at the polo match who make catty remarks to Vivian Ward, calling her Mr. Lewis' 'flavour of the month', are described by Mr. Lewis as 'the Olson sisters who have made marrying well into an art form.' The Olson sisters' reference to Vivian as 'flavour of the month' is also meant to underscore the transience of Miss Ward's relationship with Mr. Lewis, as well as their disdain for 'loose' single women who give their bodies to men without the benefit of marriage. Vivian's reply to the women that she is 'not trying to land Mr. Lewis, but I'm just using him for sex' contains the underlying message that captures this argument. Although there are no instances of where the prostitutes are thrown together with 'respectable' women in *Campus Babes* in order to highlight their difference, the girls' relatively slim figure can be said to be used to symbolise their single status and by extension, the fact they have not yet procreated and are unlikely to do so. Their stomach may therefore be flat compared to the more corpulent figure of most Nigerian women, but this is only because it is unlikely to be swollen with pregnancy any day. The reason is that such women are thought of as having destroyed their womb through multiple abortions.

In addition, both texts have two categories of prostitutes. In *Pretty Woman*, as already noted, there are prostitutes-with-aspiration, represented by Vivian Ward and prostitutes-without-aspiration portrayed in Kit de Luca. The categorization in *Campus Babes* takes the form of prostitutes-beyond-redemption and salvageable prostitutes. In this regard, the life of the good time, undergraduate female students in *Campus Babes*, who have no interest in studies and only live for men, sex and parties, becomes comparable to the substance abusing, low-ambition and irresponsible prostitutes in *Pretty Woman*. Constructed as highly disposable, the prostitutes-without-aspiration and the unsalvageable prostitutes in the two texts share a similar fate: death and arrest in *Pretty Woman* and in *Campus Babes*, violent death. In *Campus Babes*, Made who is constructed as still salvageable, is spared the fate of her friends as is the prostitute-with-aspiration in *Pretty Woman*, who goes on to marry her 'knight in shining armour.'

However, there are also marked differences in the ways the texts constitute the feminine as seen particularly in the function of the gaze. Though both texts have constructed the feminine as the object of the male erotic gaze, the objectification serves different purposes in the texts. Insights from feminist film theory and criticism help to explain how these two different types of objectification of female body work in *Pretty Woman* and *Campus Babes*. Laura Mulvey, in her psychoanalytic theorization of the ways the pleasures of looking work in cinema, used the concept of scopophilia to describe the objectification of people, or as she (1999: 60) explained, the subjection of people to 'controlling and curious gaze.' If, as Mulvey (p.62) has argued that the pleasure of scopophilia is due to 'using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight', the body of the two women, Vivian Ward and Kit de Luca, can be said to function in this manner in *Pretty Woman*. Even the respectably married men cannot help but lust after the two women. The man in the reception of Regent Beverley Wilshire Hotel, for instance, although he is there with his own wife, is also openly gawking at Kit de Luca, who is wearing only a bra and very brief pair of shorts. Kit has smiled at him seductively and, to the horror of hotel guests and staff, extended a mock invitation to him: 'Fifty bucks grandpa, and for 75, the wife can watch.' The escalator scene with Vivian and Mr. Lewis and a married couple also illustrates this purposeful direction of the gaze to the

woman's body for the pleasure of the gazer. It is the night when Mr. Lewis has taken Vivian for the first time to the hotel. They are waiting for the lift with two other hotel guests, a man and his wife, who are older than Mr. Lewis and Vivian. The two, but especially the man, have also been stealing covert looks at the scantily-dressed Vivian. Vivian, noticing the couple's interest in her body provocatively hitches her already short skirt even higher and, in a seductive voice, complains she has a 'runner' in her pantyhose, but she is not wearing any pantyhose. At last, when the lift arrives, the other man makes to share the space with Vivian and Mr. Lewis, but is pulled back by his irate wife who advises him in a voice dripping with barely suppressed rage: 'Close your mouth dear.' Apparently, the man has been distracted by the young prostitute's body to the point that he does not realize he has been staring open-mouthed.

However, the body of the prostitute is made the object of the male gaze for a different reason in *Campus Babes*. In other words, this objectification is one which does not encourage the gazer to take positive pleasure in the object displayed. Instead, the gazer is encouraged to despise and disavow the object at which they look. Made and her friends have been constituted to look sexually desirable with their Western-style clothes and flat stomachs, but their bodies are constructed to signify corruption and therefore are objects of contempt. The feminine in the narrative is primarily seen as a womb which must not be contaminated by pre-marital sex, but the bodies of the girls, Made and her friends, have become corrupted, the fact that also renders their womb contaminated and therefore unfit for motherhood. The purpose of the gazer will therefore be to recognise the uselessness of such a body and the fact that it has become perverted. So, it is unsurprising that in the narrative armed robbers, loathed in the same measure by society, and in Nigerian popular discourses symbols of corruption, are represented as the only fit companions for Made and her friends.

Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze can also be used to explain the form of punishment meted out to the female body in both texts. Mulvey (1999), in her explanation of the way the male gaze works in films, also points to the contradictory emotion that the female figure could evoke in the male spectator. The displayed female

figure, due to its obvious absence of a penis, Mulvey has argued, produces castration anxiety in the male looker. The male takes two routes to escape this anxiety: fetishistic scopophilia or overvaluation, or voyeurism and its associated sadism. She explains fetishistic scopophilia or overvaluation as 'complete disavowal of castration by substitution of a fetish object or turning the represented figure itself into fetish so that it becomes reassuring rather than dangerous' (p.65). Escape through voyeurism, Mulvey also says, takes the form of a 'preoccupation with the re-enactment of the original trauma (investigating the woman, demystifying her mystery), counterbalanced by devaluation...asserting control and subjugating the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness' (p.65). Made, in *Campus Babes* and Kit de Luca in *Pretty Woman* can be said to present instances of the way the male gaze that resorts to voyeurism to escape a fear of castration works. Made is forgiven, and thus spared the fate that befell the other girls for the Nigerian patriarchy to use as an object lesson to teach girls 'acceptable' sexual behaviour. Having watched her friends die so violently, Made has become a changed person. In fact, Made's voice is the one at the beginning of the narrative enjoining mothers to get their daughters to watch the programme together.<sup>117</sup> This is a reassurance to patriarchy that the challenge she once posed to its authority through her sexual freedom is now neutralized and contained. In *Pretty Woman*, Kit de Luca as a substance-abusing, expendable prostitute who decides at the end of the story that she is not going to remain a prostitute forever, is forgiven and spared the end that met Skinny Marie. Kit's expressed willingness to quit prostitution and in the future earn a living in a 'respectable' way is a sign of her capitulation to patriarchy. As Mulvey (ibid: 65) has further argued, 'sadism...depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat...' Both the prostitutes that die of drug overdose (in *Pretty Woman*) and the ones shot dead (in *Campus Babes*) are instances of the way sadism works through punishment and defeat, according to Mulvey's explanation. Their liquidation is the ultimate punishment and marks patriarchy's total victory over them. In Vivian Ward is represented the male gaze that escapes castration anxiety through fetishistic scopophilia, which Mulvey (p.65) also

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<sup>117</sup> After the opening credit and Unilever's logo, *Campus Babes* begins with a young woman appearing on the screen and telling viewers not to ask her any questions, but to believe the dramatization they are about to see is a story that happened to people she knew.

explains works by building 'up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself.' Through his money, Mr. Lewis transforms a former hooker into a lovely woman that not only he, but other people also look at with undisguised admiration. He has proposed marriage to her in order, as he once told her, to get her 'off the streets.' The body that was previously any man's to pay for and use is now possessed by and belongs exclusively to Mr. Lewis. The satisfaction for Mr. Lewis, it can therefore be argued, lies not only in his success at transforming a former prostitute into a 'lady', but also in the exclusive right he has to that body.

### **7.5 Conclusion**

These similarities notwithstanding, the discourses of prostitution in this chapter and those on parenting in the previous one, represent a view of the same issues from two different social contexts and espouse divergent representational conventions. It is these different conventions that encapsulate the assumptions, beliefs, ideas and values deemed important in a particular cultural context which have resonances for this study, resonances that have implications for the theories of cultural globalization. The discussion of some specific plot devices used in the four texts was taken up in the next chapter and were employed to interrogate some of the assumptions of globalization theorists regarding the consequence for local cultures of the globalization of culture and popular discourses.

## Chapter EIGHT

### **There is Hollywood but, then, there is also Nollywood: Assessing the Impact of Cultural Globalization on Nigeria's Popular Fiction Television**

#### **8.0 Introduction**

The discussion here took issue with the assumptions of cultural homogenization theorists that dominant Western popular discourses, as of those in Hollywood films that embody Western values, worldview and modes of thinking, marketed around the world, have the potential to homogenise less dominant cultures in 'Third World' countries like Nigeria. To examine these claims in the light of this research, the four popular texts analysed in the last two chapters were used as reference points in the discussion in this chapter. The researcher found that, in relation to Nigeria's popular fiction television producer, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., the nature of the impact of globalization of culture is much more extended and complex. The two programmes by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., *Daddy's Girl* and *Campus Babes*, embodied features that are both local and global. They are local because the narrative conventions that structured the two texts are mostly culturally specific to Nigeria. On the other hand, the influence of Hollywood was also evident on these two programmes. This could be observed in the ways Mr. Adenuga had in these two productions, tended to lean on the glamour and commercial success of Hollywood.<sup>118</sup> As a cultural producer with a global reference, Mr. Adenuga must have been aware of these films' commercial success, and so, to reduce risk and perhaps replicate this success, he could be argued to have emulated their themes as part of his production strategy. Notwithstanding, this does not represent for the researcher, an

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<sup>118</sup> Though they did not break any box office records when they were released in 1990, as *Pretty Woman* grossed a total of \$178.3m and *Problem Child1* \$50.3, the two films can be described as commercial successes, nevertheless. *Problem Child1* went on to inspire two more sequels, *Problem Child 11 & 111*, and *Pretty Woman* launched Julia Roberts' career in addition to inspiring another film, *Runaway Bride*, which also starred Gere and Roberts, with Roberts again as the object of Gere's romantic interest. See [mdb.com](http://mdb.com) for information on how the two films, *Problem Child* and *Pretty Woman* performed at the box office.

example of a homogenization of a local, weaker culture by a more dominant American culture. To elaborate this argument, two plot devices used in the four texts that were analysed in the previous two chapters-- resolution of conflict and displacement of social problems on the fictional characters in the narratives, were identified as distinctive aspects of discursive practice which undermine any such conclusions about the impact of cultural globalization.

### **8.1 Discussion**

From the analyses of the discourses of prostitution and parenting, we can identify resolution of conflict as one area of major difference between Hollywood narrative and that of the Nigerian popular fiction television producer, Mr. Adenuga. In *Pretty Woman*, we notice, for instance, the influence of the expression 'everyone deserves a second chance', commonly used in such Western countries as Britain, at work. Vivian Ward in the story had taken a wrong turn by turning to prostitution to make a living. She had made her mistake, had paid her dues by tasting the life of uncertainty and loss of dignity that goes with living on the wrong side of the law. She was not expected to go on paying for her mistake for the rest of her life. The resolution, the prostitute Vivian's social salvation and subsequent marriage to a rich man, is a happy ending which will perhaps not surprise popular film audiences in the West. Such a happy ending has become a convention in Hollywood and is the way conflict is resolved in the world of the narrative. The same happy ending in Nigeria's popular fiction television narratives, like Wale Adenuga Productions' *Campus Babes*, would perhaps shock and even confuse audiences who believe evil deeds and evil doers must be punished, not rewarded. If the prostitutes Made and her friends had gone on, married rich men and lived happily ever after, as Vivian Ward in *Pretty Woman* has done, such an ending would be in contravention of the moral order of African traditional values and patriarchal ideology which shaped the discourse. In *Campus Babes*, the killing of the prostitutes by the armed robbers who spared just one to tell the story afterwards is therefore a narrative closure which fulfills the purpose of teaching a moral lesson. African popular cultural forms like literature have traditionally been used by their producers for didactic purposes as Barber (1997) and



Newell (2002) have noted. This is the role which, if they are seen as failing to serve, they are seen as being nothing but empty entertainment which serves no purpose, as Mr. Adenuga argued. The two texts by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., clearly followed this formula.

In *Daddy's Girl*, the same didactic principle could be seen to be at work in the punishment by death of the characters whose actions threatened and challenged the validity, and by extension, the continuing existence and stability of African traditional principles. The child, Nike, who refused to accept the authority of her mother is destroyed together with her father, who overindulged her. Their deaths again are expected to serve as a moral lesson to others of the consequence on a family of allowing children to go without discipline from both parents. *Problem Child1*, however, offered a completely different resolution. Junior and his overindulgent stepfather are constructed as characters who upheld the social universe of the narrative in the shape of individualism,<sup>119</sup> freedom and positive reinforcement embodied in Western liberal ideology and theories of psychology. So while Mrs. Healy, who stands in the way of Junior's expression of individual liberty, is driven away to an unknown future, Junior and Mr. Healy return home to live as father and son. The pair would have been destroyed had they been characters in *Daddy's Girl*.

The displacement of social problems onto the fictional characters is the other plot strategy which distinguished Wale Adenuga Productions' discourse of prostitution in *Campus Babes* from the same discourse in the Hollywood film, *Pretty Woman*. In the constructions of the discourses of prostitution, the producers of *Pretty Woman* and *Campus Babes* projected some of the problems of their societies or cultures onto the bodies of the female characters. Drug addiction has emerged as one of the contemporary social problems of rich Western nations, like the United States and the United Kingdom, over which these governments and the addicts, in some cases, are spending a lot of money on treatment programmes and treatment. The text constructed this as a problem

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<sup>119</sup> Crothers (2007: 12) explained individualism as embodying the 'idea that individuals have rights that should be protected by government even as most individuals are expected to be responsible for their own decisions and their own fates...'

which is destroying the nation by stipulating the penalty and likely consequences for the offender. *Campus Babes* has a different perspective on societal ills. It is not drug addiction among Nigerian populations; it is instead corruption. It is unbridled greed which is seen to be fueling official corruption and crime in Nigeria. It is this corruption that is symbolised in *Campus Babes* as the girls' conspicuous consumption and an insatiable desire for paid sex with men. The liquidation of the prostitutes is the symbolic eradication of the problem that has blighted the chance of a better life for millions of Nigerians. In *Pretty Woman*, the removal of the substance-abusing women through death or arrest could be interpreted as a recommended penalty for offenders and also a solution offered by the producer to Western societies' drug problem.

Going then by the differing approaches to social issues which the Nigerian and American producers expressed through the two plot devices, it would appear that despite the wide availability and affordability<sup>120</sup> of Hollywood films in Nigeria, the consequence of the globalization of culture on Nigeria's popular fiction television producer, Mr. Adenuga, has not been homogenization. As expressions of the producer's worldview, the discourses of prostitution and parenting by the television production company, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., could also be seen as offering alternative conventions to those stabilised in Hollywood films. For instance, by favouring strict discipline as the best parenting method, Mr. Adenuga can be said to not only be contributing to the debate about the future of the family, but is also prescribing a solution to the problem of family instability that Anthony Giddens has argued is the consequence of globalization. Giddens (2002:58) is of the opinion that globalization has irreversibly transformed family and marriage relationships turning marriage into what he calls a 'shell institution.'<sup>121</sup> Western liberalism, with its strong accent on individual freedom as well as psychological theory of

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<sup>120</sup> That Hollywood films are affordable in Nigeria is largely because video rental outlets charge as little as 10 Naira to rent these films, a situation helped, no doubt, by pirates who flood the market with cheap copies of these films.

<sup>121</sup> Part of Giddens' argument is that family, as an institution, is undergoing huge transformations in most countries of the world. High divorce rates are becoming the norm and this is the case even in countries like China where divorce rates were once very low but which is now experiencing high rates of divorce. The emergence of single-parent families is another dimension of the argument. Yobbism in Britain, for instance, is seen as an aspect of this breakdown in family, because young people and children are growing up in families with no father figure and positive role models.

positive reinforcement, has been presented as the solution to problem behaviour in children in the film *Problem Child 1*. However, Mr. Adenuga offers a completely different solution to the problem. The producer's depiction of problem behaviour seems to suggest that when it comes to the parent-child relationship, Western liberal values are to blame for children's problem behaviour and wrecked families. Mr. Adenuga implies this in his depiction of Nike. Nike sought to be the independent and assertive child, who, in American popular cultural discourses of parent-child relationship, like *Problem Child* or *Home Alone*, is the epitome of the 'ideal' smart child, but she instead brought destruction on herself and her family. The differing conventions in the Nigerian and American popular cultural forms in the study, underscore the argument that Machin and Leeuwen (2003: 496) made about the globalist nature of popular discourses. The authors, as already noted in Chapter One, are of the opinion that no contemporary popular culture is completely local, as its content could appear local, but it could embody global themes. Parent-child relationship and prostitution represent such global content because they are social issues and problems from which no part of the world can be said to be immune. For this reason, *Problem Child 1* and *Daddy's Girl* are seen as two parallel and rival models of parenting vying for attention and competing to gain the upper hand on the global popular cultural stage. This is the cultural competition and rivalry which Mike Featherstone (1995) has argued is the feature of the global cultural scene. In other words, the two popular discourses are means through which socially and culturally situated cultural producers project their ideologies and through which they aim to sell their worldviews to other national and cultural entities in the contemporary world, which is characterised by various forms of interdependencies and interconnections between nations as Featherstone (ibid) has also argued.

The researcher has also argued in Chapter One that what might appear as an example of where local popular cultural producers, like Mr. Adenuga, copied the conventions of Hollywood, such as in the depiction of women as 'evil', could have a longer history than the current phase of globalization or the screening of first foreign film in Nigeria in 1903. The reason for the researcher's position is because the depiction of women as corrupt and evil, popular in contemporary Nigerian fiction narratives, was first popularised in the

folklore of many cultural groups, like the Igbos. The theme was then formalised by the famous Onitsha Market popular literature writers in the 1950s,<sup>122</sup> well before the current phase of globalization and before the two Hollywood films were produced. Again, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., had grown out of *Ikebe Super Org. Nig. Ltd.*, a bi-monthly popular magazine established by Mr. Adenuga in 1976. The magazine, [in] famous for its lurid stories, also followed this template of portraying corruption in Nigerian society through its female cartoon characters, who use their 'bottom power' to get on.

At a general level of the impact of the globalization of culture and ideology, however, what are today regarded as African traditional values could again not be entirely African. They could be argued to be a product of the impact of the interaction of African peoples with values and ideologies of other cultures, especially Judeo-Christian ideology introduced into African countries like Nigeria during the era of European colonialism. Wale Adenuga Productions' *Daddy's Girl* shows evidence of this influence of the Christian religion, which is seen in the speeches of Mrs. Falamo. There is, for instance, where she said (while justifying to her husband her action in punishing their daughter) that one can only correct people whom they love. This can be said to be a direct reference to the Bible, and in particular, the Book of Revelation Chapter Three, verse 19 which says: 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten....' So when media theorists like Thompson (1995: 170) noted that untainted local ideologies per se do not exist because they may have been entwined with beliefs, values and practices from other cultures, the assertion can be said to hold true in relation to *Campus Babes* and *Daddy's Girl*.

## 8.2 Conclusion and lessons for the theory of global culture

While it could be the case that the globalization of popular cultural forms, such as Hollywood films, has been attended by the globalization of popular discourses, analysis led the author to conclude that cultural differences still remain a crucial aspect of global

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<sup>122</sup> In such titles as '*Beware of Harlots and Many Friends*' and '*My Seven Daughters are after Young Boys*', the authors Anadozie, F.O. and Okenwa Olisa respectively, could be seen articulating for their readers the complexity of modern living in which how best to relate with 'evil' women figures prominently in their advice to readers.

cultural scene. Local cultural values are also more likely to influence the discourses that popular fiction television producers in Nigeria, like Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., construct than global ones. Global factors, in the shape of the wide availability of popular films and television programmes, may provide the themes and topics which the local cultural producer may imitate, but the emulation does not amount to a rejection of the producer's local conventions. With regard to the impact of the globalization of culture on Nigeria's popular fiction television producers, it is also evident that social identifications and identities are no longer completely local. Rather than their every day experience being exclusively built on interpersonal experience, mediated experience thus forms a crucial part of the lived experience of the producers seen in the way they aligned themselves with persons and events elsewhere because of the affinity they believe they share with such people as 'colleagues' in the same profession. However, this non-reciprocal relationship can also lead to a situation of 'false brotherhood', a feeling to which a fetishization of abstract space is prone to give rise. This is because Nigerian popular fiction television producers may feel that they have more things in common with their 'colleagues' elsewhere than is actually the case.

On the impact of the globalization processes of technology and culture on Nigeria's popular fiction television industry in general, it is also safe to conclude that the globalization of affordable video technology has provided cultural producers with the means to tell their own story, while the globalization of culture has provided them with a field from which to contest some ideologies encoded mainly in the films and television programmes which they encounter in this field. How this contestation is done by Mr. Adenuga has been illustrated through the analysis of his programmes within which he embedded ideologies that mostly oppose the ideologies in Hollywood films.

### **8.3 Contribution to Knowledge**

This research makes an important contribution to our understanding of cultural globalization. By studying a popular fiction television production company (Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.) in a specific local context (Nigeria), analysing this context

and the textual materials it produces, the research could claim to have provided a nuanced account of the kind of impact the globalization of culture can be said to have on a local cultural product like Nigeria's popular fiction television and on the identity of people exposed to the influence of foreign popular culture. For instance, the analysis of interviews with some of the popular fiction television producers in the study showed in concrete terms some of the ways that the globalization of culture can be seen to influence and shape the way we see the world. In the case of Nigeria's popular fiction television makers, it was established that Hollywood films and other communication media are implicated in the perception of their working conditions and themselves which these people have. This is seen in the way they use Hollywood stars and films as reference points. This led to the conclusion that Hollywood, through its star system, represents for the Nigerian popular television producer among the strongest symbols of the good life, a lifestyle to desire and to which to aspire. Therefore, despite their prodigious output, Hollywood, findings from the research show, nevertheless still maintains a strong grip on the imagination of Nigeria's popular fiction television producers. By focusing also on the two aspects of cultural production above, that is context and text, the study avoided a common error in the analysis of the impact of cultural globalization, which Thompson (1995: 171) has described as the 'fallacy of internalism', the tendency some scholars have of drawing conclusions on the consequences of cultural globalization based on their analyses of the media industries while ignoring the dimension of cultural reception.

This research can claim to contribute in another way to the study of culture. The methodological approach proposed and adopted, the cross cultural and relational approach (for the cultural materials) and the social historical approach (for analysis of the production context), is one which will hopefully challenge scholars into new ways of thinking about cultural globalization and how to study it. If this becomes the case, then this research can also claim to have been part of the solution to the persistent problem of an adequate methodological framework for the study of globalization.

It has already been acknowledged in the methodology chapter that the research has some weaknesses, especially in the chapters on the analysis of popular discourses. The main

weakness is mostly due to the polysemic nature of symbolic products. In the case of the analysis produced, this is even more relevant as it is ideological analysis which, as Thompson (1990:71, 290) has pointed out, is vulnerable to contestation. However, it was mostly intended that the textual interpretation produced be seen as just one potential meaning and not an exhaustive explication of all potential meanings. As a qualitative research, the weakness of the study is also that it is not generalisable to media production contexts and cultural texts elsewhere. However, the research makes no claim to being generalisable to conditions of media production and texts in other places. The conditions described in the study are only applicable to Nigeria and to Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. Even then, the analysis could not claim to have grasped all the subtle nuances of the social relationships in this company.

#### **8.4 Suggestions for Further Study**

Ideally, the research should have included an analysis of how media audiences in Nigeria interpret the texts analysed. This would have had the advantage of revealing the differences or similarities that might exist with regard to textual meaning between the critical reading offered by the researcher, as an academic, and the understanding of the same text that audiences without, perhaps, similar academic training in textual reading may have. However, because a line had to be drawn somewhere, this aspect of media research was not covered in the current study. This is an aspect on which, perhaps, someone with an interest in television production in Nigeria might one day carry out research.

The current research also focused almost exclusively on the impact of the globalization of culture and in so doing marginalised other processes of globalization that are interconnected with culture, like the economic processes of advertising. In fact, the researcher had wanted to explore this dimension alongside the current study because the multinational, Unilever PLC, part-sponsors Wale Adenuga Productions' *Super Story*. However, this was not possible because of access issues as explained in the next chapter. Perhaps, sometime in the future, feelings surrounding the true intention of a researcher

(which the researcher believed was the main reason she was not allowed the kind of access she had requested at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.) would have changed as more media researchers in Nigeria make production studies their focus. Then, perhaps, people in Nigeria who own popular fiction television production companies, like Mr. Adenuga, would begin to understand the difference between academic and tabloid interest in what they do.<sup>123</sup> Perhaps then a student of Nigeria's popular fiction television scene can take up a study of the relationship between popular fiction television and advertising and through it analyse the form of impact that multinational corporations, like Unilever PLC, have on local culture.

Another interesting aspect of television in Nigeria that could be studied is the relationship between the national broadcaster, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), and popular fiction television producers. Such a study could examine some aspects of the relationship, especially that of power. It could equally be an investigation of the relationship between non-broadcast popular fiction television producers like Wale Adenuga Production Ltd., and commercial broadcasters. These possibilities mean that the future of television research in Nigeria promises to be an interesting and exciting one.

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<sup>123</sup> Tabloid interest has, unfortunately, been the bulk of the story in encounters between Nigeria's popular fiction television producers and people who want to write about them.



## **Chapter NINE**

### **The story of the Research**

#### **9.0 Introduction**

Researching popular television production in Nigeria presented the researcher with a lot of challenges. Some of the problems were cultural in nature. There were others which were mostly methodological and theoretical. Some, especially the ones encountered during the fieldtrip were also to change the direction of the research altogether. In this chapter some of these difficulties and the routes followed in order to get around them were discussed. The story was divided into two parts. In the first part, some of the fieldwork experiences were related while the second part was concerned with methodological and theoretical issues that confronted the researcher mainly during data analysis.

#### **9.1 Fieldwork Experiences**

The researcher set out to study the production context of popular television in Nigeria and to focus more specifically on the organizational structure and production routines of a popular fiction television company. Through this she had hoped to account for the command structure and the processes of production at such an organization, much in the way that Ettema and Whitney (1982:91) had proposed television could be studied. However, the issue of access proved to be a big problem in this regard. Mr. Adenuga, the owner of the production company Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., and the producer of *Super Story*, would not grant the researcher permission to interview members of his organization. All the contact allowed with his organization was through the Corporate Affairs Manager, Mr. Banjo.

Besides not being allowed to speak with anyone else other than the Corporate Affairs Manager, the researcher's request to be allowed to take part in management meetings was also rejected. This meant she could not account for the command structure and processes of decision making in a popular television company which she had hoped to do also. She was, however, given permission to go on location at Ikorodu with the cast and crew of a *Super Story* production, *A New Song*. It was during location production and while observing and interviewing some cast and crew of the production that her data began to point her in other possible directions that the research could take. She had noted that during these interviews, including the two interviews with Mr. Adenuga himself in his office at his company's headquarters at Oshodi, Lagos, almost everyone made references to the conditions of service in Nigeria's popular television industry. Though the researcher certainly sought to find out more at the time by asking other questions about the industry, it was while studying the data from these interviews that she observed the subjects in the interview would also make references to individuals, situations and events that have a direct bearing on the way they see themselves and their working conditions. These individuals and events are not always local in origin. That was when the idea of analysing how Nigeria's popular television producers talk about their own context and elsewhere was born. This was also how the idea of investigating the impact of the globalization of culture on Nigeria's popular fiction television industry came about. Accordingly, the researcher redirected her focus to analyse conditions of popular fiction television production in Nigeria, rather than the processes of production as initially intended.

Collecting documentary evidence for this research also had its own brand of challenges. These challenges also revealed something about the nature of fieldwork and some of the reasons for the access problems that researchers using documents encounter. Suspicion, was for the researcher, at the heart of the problem of access to the main research site, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. It was the distrust of her presence in the company and what she might do with the information she wanted to gather that meant that at first practically everything was kept off-limits from her. It did not matter that she showed the letter from the Research Office attesting to the fact that she was a research student of the

University of Westminster but the letter did also help a bit. At a later stage and with more visits to the production company, the mood began to thaw considerably. What also seemed to help was the fact that during this period of fieldwork, between February and June 2006, the researcher had attended an international conference on African Literature in Accra where she presented a paper which was based on Wale Adenuga Productions' *Super Story*. The researcher had mentioned to Mr. Adenuga that she would attend that conference and was going to talk about his programme. He requested a copy of the paper that the researcher presented which she later gave to him. The researcher believed Mr. Adenuga was quite impressed at the level of academic interest (PhD) from a UK university (degrees from UK universities are highly valued in Nigeria) that she was investing in his work. He also told the researcher almost the same thing on her last day at the company when she had finished her fieldwork and gone to thank him and his Corporate Affairs Manager. To return to the initial challenges of fieldwork, apart from documents for promotion and advertising, little else was non-restricted at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. These documents were also the category to which the researcher was mainly allowed access. Allowing her access to documents relating to how a television production company is run might have seemed to Mr. Adenuga to be revealing his company's secrets to her. No amount of reassurances was able to make him change his mind. This handicap again meant that the researcher could not pursue her original analytic interest, which was understanding and accounting for the organizational structure of a popular fiction television company in Nigeria. The issue of access at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., even extended to the programmes produced by the company. With the exception of a few early ones, like *Face of Deceit*, the drama series that the company produces is not commercially available on video tapes or DVDs in Nigeria as are Nollywood video films. For this reason, it was also difficult for the researcher to collect these programmes for analysis, as Mr. Adenuga would not hear of her copying them. He had good reasons for his refusal, however. It is proceeds which come from the sale of his programmes (Mr. Adenuga sells his programmes to some television stations in Africa) that help him run his company and allowing the researcher to have copies of these programmes was like handing over his copyright to them. The researcher might, after all, duplicate them and make a tiny fortune which should have been his by right. The

situation was looking desperate for the researcher at this point as the problem looked set to scupper her entire research. She explained to Mr. Banjo, the Corporate Affairs Manager, that her whole career and academic prospects depended on getting those programmes. Mr. Banjo, with whom the researcher had dealt directly since she started her data collection at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., and with whom she had also developed a relationship of trust during this time, promised to help convince his boss. Finally, we reached a compromise whereby the copy that was made for the researcher had 'promotion copy' written across it. Victory was a little pricy, however, as she had to pay about 100 pounds for two programmes of three episodes and two episodes respectively.

The situation with access was, however, much better at the NTA, the letter from the Executive Director of Programmes, Mr. Igho in Abuja, to the NTA office in Lagos cleared many of the hurdles for the researcher. The Assistant Director of Programmes in Lagos was not quite sure it was such a good idea to allow the researcher that level of access to NTA files. She could, nevertheless, do nothing about her reservations (which she expressed to the researcher on many occasions) when the researcher carried a letter from her superior that said it was alright. Though Mr. Adenuga's decision not to allow the researcher to see his company's documents was understandable, and not uncommon in Nigeria, where information relating to the most routine matters is shrouded in administrative secrecy, the researcher, however, wondered why NTA was more amenable to her access request to official files than Mr. Adenuga. The researcher concluded that the level of risk involved for both men (Mr. Igho at NTA and Mr. Adenuga) or the issue of who has the most to lose in the event of costly poor judgment, was perhaps the reason for the two men's approach to access to official documents. Mr. Adenuga, has single-handedly set up his production company, is responsible for financing his productions and paying his staff. He is not in receipt of a budgetary allocation from the central government like the NTA. If the researcher's activities were such that they would hurt his company, Mr. Adenuga would be the one to pick up the pieces. On the other hand, Mr. Igho of the NTA is only a civil servant and can count on being bailed out by government

allocation if anything goes wrong. The most personal implication a bad decision could have for Mr. Igho might just be job loss and this is the worst case scenario.

In documentary research, however, even though the question of access might not be a big problem as was the researcher's experience at the NTA, other things namely: time, cost and legal agreements could be. The sheer volume of the files to be trawled through in search of relevant documents meant the researcher had to adopt a criterion of relevance. She had to decide what kind of documents would help to advance the account of the production she was hoping to develop. This helped her to save cost, as photocopying the materials was very expensive indeed. There were also documents with a legal clause forbidding disclosure to a third party. This category was off-limits to her. As all the documents were not going to be relevant to her analysis, she focused on only those that were, such as applications and letters to the NTA from people and organizations (including Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.,) requesting something from, or complaining about another to the national broadcaster. It was intended to use the notes (internal memos) that were made on these documents and applications to account for the process of decision making at the NTA and what implications these decisions could have for organizations like Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., which depend on the national broadcaster for transmission of their productions. In other words, the researcher was interested in the issue of power relations in Nigeria's television industry. However, as she did not follow up the original research plan of analysing the relationship of the national broadcaster, NTA, and a popular television company, these documents, regretfully, were not used in the study.

Other problems encountered were of a cultural kind. When the researcher had paid the sum of about 100 pounds for the two programmes by Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., purchased during her fieldtrip, she understood the informal nature of most business transactions in Nigeria and accordingly never asked for the receipts as evidence of the transaction that had occurred. Though it can be given when requested, but issuing receipts is not a common business practice in the country. The other programmes, the two Hollywood films that were used in the study, were purchased here in London. The proof

of purchase was given to the researcher without her having to ask for it. It is, after all, a normal business practice in the UK that a buyer is given a receipt after a transaction. The researcher had not thought much about these differing approaches to business transactions in Nigeria and the UK which she had only at the time seen as just one more difference between an advanced capitalist economy and a less developed economy in the 'Third World.' It was only when the receipts of the transactions that were done in Nigeria were required before the researcher could get authorization for some financial claims she had made that the difference assumed a greater significance for her research. She had to wait for many months before she got the receipts from Nigeria and to finally have access to the funds provided by her sponsors. Such time lapse and over mere receipts too.

There was another matter which highlighted, for the researcher, the ways in which the issue of context in which a research work is done, can either enable or hinder a research process. The researcher had needed to collect more data after she had left the field, that is, after she had left Nigeria for the UK. The data, which was of a visual nature, entailed photographing television/video film viewing contexts in Nigeria, such as video parlours and other group viewing contexts. She also needed the photographs of the human channels who distribute/sell the video films, such people as street hawkers, market stall owners, etc. As the researcher was unlikely to travel to Nigeria to collect the data herself, she had asked a friend in Nigeria for help which he was glad to give. The problem was getting the subjects to agree to their photos to be taken. Many of them did not believe the explanation that the pictures would be used for research purposes only. Some of the people in the group viewing centres, for instance, feared that there was a sinister motive behind the project. Their main fear was that their pictures might end up in the hands of some diabolical herbalist in schemes involving money-making ritual. There were others also whose fear was that my friend was working for the corrupt Nigerian police. Their fear was that the police were going to use the pictures to identify and arrest them on some trumped up charges for purposes of extorting large sums of money from them before they can secure their release.<sup>124</sup> Some of these people even threatened to physically harm the

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<sup>124</sup> This fear about the Nigerian police and what they might do with the prospective subjects' photographs is, unfortunately, not with basis. The Nigerian police, without reason, in many cases, arrest their victims,

researcher's friend and destroy his camera. The response of these Nigerians resident in the country was in direct contrast, however, to how the same request to have their pictures taken, was treated by Nigerians selling Nigerian video films here in London. The researcher had visited the East Street Market, in London Southeast, in July this year, to request permission from some Nigerians selling the video films from market stalls, to photograph them and their wares. The first person the researcher spoke to had no problem whatsoever with having his pictures taken. The ease with which she got the video film seller's approval here in London and the difficulty her friend in Nigeria had getting permission from the same Nigerians but who live the country, led the researcher to conclude that context, perhaps, has a hand in the way people behave as well as in the way such people perceive the world.

## 9.2 Theoretical and Methodological Issues

In this part of the story, the researcher related the methodological and theoretical challenges she also confronted in her study. One of these related to her position as a cultural analyst. As Joisten Gripsrud (1995) observed, any media research which makes analysis and the interpretation of texts a key aspect of the study is necessarily embroiled in debates not only about what qualifies as a text. Such a study also becomes entangled in scholarly disputes about the location of textual meaning and the relevance of textual interpretation. However, as media research is such that no one approach can credibly claim to offer all the answers on how to understand the meanings of texts, the nature of a study is therefore what should determine, to a great extent, the approach adopted in a research. The researcher was aware that her decision to undertake textual analysis was going to fly in the face of all the arguments about the central role of the active media audience in meaning production. She was also aware of the invaluable insights and contributions to media scholarship in such works as Morley's *Nationwide Audience*

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who, in these situations, are mostly young men. These victims of police corrupt practices are also frightened into handing out large sums of money in order to avoid being thrown into the notoriously filthy Nigerian prison cells. The police are well aware of this reputation of the Nigerian cells and the horror that entering them fills Nigerians with, particularly young men, (whom the police can equally label armed-robbers and shoot without any provocation) and therefore make young men who gather in groups the target of such arrests.

(1980), Ang's *Watching Dallas* (1985), Liebes and Katz's (1993) cross-cultural study of audiences of US hit drama series *Dallas* in *The Export of Meaning: Cross-cultural Reading of Dallas* among others. Nevertheless, the researcher discovered that textual interpretation suited her research better, but she also had to justify this choice. She did what any obscure media researcher in her position will do, which was to look for some giants' shoulders to climb on and mount her defence from there. Jostein Gripsrud's argument that studies that privilege the role of the audience in meaning interpretation should not be seen as having sounded the death knell of the role of the critical textual reader lent her much needed ammunition. Gripsrud (1995: 22) further argued that if media audiences are 'able to act as fully competent critical readers of media texts' what is the point of scholars undergoing rigorous academic training to acquire the necessary skills for textual criticism? The researcher had not only invested some four years in PhD media research, but believed that she has acquired some relevant skills of textual criticism and now was as good a time as any other to put them to use. Norman Fairclough (1995) has also argued that the importance of the text will be lost as well as the relevance of the textual reader when the active audience is privileged as the sole site of meaning production. Therefore, while the researcher did not dispute the centrality of the experiences of the audience members or the significance of hearing what they make of the media texts in their own words, but neither can we do without the rich insights that popular culture theorists and textual analysts, like John Fiske, have brought into cultural analysis and our understanding of media texts.

Still justifying her role in her research as a critical reader, the researcher noted that Fairclough (1995: 16) has observed that 'although readings may vary, any reading is a product of an interface between the properties of the text and the interpretative resources and practices which the interpreter brings to bear on the text.' Stuart Hall<sup>125</sup> made much

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<sup>125</sup>Hall, in his seminal work *Encoding/Decoding* (1973), has argued that media consumers depending on class, gender, social position and race, etc., would assume any of the three major decoding positions in the process of textual interpretation, which he identified as negotiated, oppositional and dominant. As a black African woman from Nigeria, the researcher grew up in a polygamous household and so had a first-hand experience of what it means to be a girl in a male-dominated society. As an adult, married woman and a university teacher, both cultural and social positions which she occupied in relation to the texts, predispose her to certain ways of seeing which could differ from the way her mother or my mother's mother (both



the same argument earlier about the social and cultural positioning of media audience members being instrumental in the kind of meanings those audience members will most likely take from media texts. This could not be more true in the researcher's own case as the ideological analysis offered in Chapters Six and Seven of her thesis was mostly inspired by her experiences as a woman academic from a male dominated black African country. Such insights as hers, that are borne out of personal experiences, that are not just some dry-eyed, clinical exposition from someone who has never experienced the issues they interpret, can only be a good thing for cultural analysis in general and our understanding of ideology in particular. While a critical reading may not bring the same insights into textual understanding that audience study does, the researcher argued that she has personally experienced the issues written about in the chapters on textual analysis, issues and their analyses which she believed will resonate with the experiences of thousands of women in her society.<sup>126</sup> The researcher's understanding of her position in the analysis as a critical reader was also the reason that she mainly conceptualised the texts as contradictory and as having implied meanings, or 'gaps and fissures' as Bordwell (1979: 92) put it, which needed discovering and filling.

Text was another issue she had to resolve. Though Talbot (2007: 7) described it as tangible proof, a finished product of a discursive process, text was a dimension of the study which was caught up in scholarly debates regarding what its status is or what qualifies as a text. Such debates, which previously focused, as Graddol (1994: 43) has pointed out, on the texts' physical materiality drawing on the traditional notion of the text, have with more recent technologies included transient forms like oral communication, which can be captured through these technologies. The researcher used some theoretical arguments to justify the decision to see the textual materials she analysed as texts or discourses. Johnstone (2008), Graddol (ibid: 44-5) have argued that the act of transcription both turns spoken communication into a physical object and

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women did not go to school and both also are third and second wives respectively in polygamous relationships) would have read the texts.

<sup>126</sup>The researcher recalled the response she got after her presentation which was based on Wale Adenuga Productions' *Oh Father, Oh Daughter*, in 2006 in Accra, Ghana at a conference 'African Literature Association.' Some women from Nigeria who had been in the audience came up to her telling her they could relate to the experiences of the fictional characters and the interpretation of their portrayal that she, the researcher, had produced.

imbues it with recognisable structure. Graddol (op cit: 44) further added that when the semiotic dimension of texts becomes the focus of analysis, both written and spoken communications are treated as texts.

The next challenge was with the conceptualisation of text. In conceptualising the popular texts produced in Nigeria and the US as objects of analysis, the researcher was faced with the problem which Wilson (1996: 315) quaintly referred to as the 'awkward gap.' The 'awkward gap' was due to her methodological commitment, the relational and cross cultural comparison approach whereby she was committed to analyzing cultural texts from different cultural contexts on the same matrix. In other words, she had to set up this relationship of a dominant global and weak local culture. She resorted to what Wilson (ibid) has described as staging the opposition. This consisted in determining which films from a stupendous amount of globally circulating films produced by Hollywood explored the same themes and topics as Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., programmes, which she had selected for analysis.

The next methodological quandary was that of providing a sound academic argument for analysing film and television texts on the same matrix. Norman Fairclough's concepts of disarticulation and recontextualization proved very helpful in this regard. He argued that texts are mobile and this capacity to travel from one context to another involves a process of taking them out of one situation and replanting them in another. As Fairclough (2003: 13) explained:

Recontextualization is the movement of practices, strategies, discourses, etc from one context to another; in the process of disarticulation from one context and rearticulation in another, such entities are subject to transformation.

This enabled the researcher to conceptualise the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) broadcast, *Super Story*, as a discrete programme taken out of the flow of other NTA programmes -news, shows, current affairs, commercials, promotions, etc,- which have been woven together and presented in such a way as to convey the impression of continuity, but each of which can be taken out and analysed as a separate media product.

In other words, the researcher understood Wale Adenuga Productions' *Super Story* as a television programme, as well as a video film. This conceptualisation also provided her with the justification to focus on the popular texts in the format (DVD) on which their producers have packaged them. (The two Hollywood films used in the study were also formatted in DVD.) This approach to television also differs from Raymond Williams' conceptualisation of television as 'flow', which implies a notion of seamlessness.

The researcher also needed to think through the matter of how to approach transcription. Due to her commitment to the analysis of the interrelationship of discourse and ideology, she downplayed such features of language as lexis, grammar, cohesion and such conversational strategies as turn-taking, politeness strategies, etc. Due to this focus also, she did not produce the detailed transcriptions which would have been required had the analysis attended to speech and intonation, for instance. The quoted speeches or utterances are literal transcriptions from audio-visual texts and interview tapes and as the focus of analysis was not on interaction, there was no effort to reflect voice pitch or any other aspect of speech besides documenting the utterances of the speakers. Nonetheless, she achieved a high degree of comprehensiveness in the transcription of interview texts and the lines of dialogues in the popular texts, especially the Hollywood products *Pretty Woman* and *Problem Child1*. The near verbatim transcription of the two popular texts she was able to produce was mainly because of the inclusion of subtitles by the producers, which saved her a lot of time. Besides, the subtitles spared the researcher the confusion during transcription which would have resulted from her encounter with unfamiliar words like Ice Capades in *Pretty Woman*, and proper nouns, which may be familiar to a Westerner, but will be difficult for someone, who has not grown up in the West, like the researcher. That they came subtitled did not, however, mean she took the subtitles at face value. She still had to check what was spoken against what was written. This resulted in the discovery of occasional discrepancies between the spoken dialogues and their subtitled equivalents. In all the cases where she found such discrepancies, the meaning intended was the same in both the spoken dialogue and the subtitles, only that the subtitles are more concise. Wale Adenuga Productions' programmes, *Campus Babes* and *Daddy's Girl*, however, proved more difficult to transcribe. Neither was subtitled and the

action was slower-paced. Though she did not transcribe all the words as faithfully as she had managed with the Hollywood-produced texts, she nevertheless showed a high level of fidelity to those parts of the texts which contained the relevant portions used in the analysis. She based her decision to exclude those parts in the Wale Adenuga texts that were not relevant to her analysis in Barbara Johnstone's concept of entextualization. To 'entextualise', as Johnstone (2008: 20) explained, means the analyst makes choices about 'how to select and delimit chunks out of the flow of talk or writing, make these chunks into texts, and treat them analytically in much the same way we have traditionally treated written texts.' To this extent, the researcher can claim accuracy for the transcription she produced, as Johnstone also argued.

### **9.3 Conclusion**

Having come to the end the research process, and retrospectively, the researcher wondered if she should have done certain things differently during her fieldwork. For instance, should she have persisted in pressing Mr. Adenuga for access in order to stay loyal to her original research plans? The researcher did not think such a strategy would have been productive. She was convinced persistence would not have made much difference and would instead have hurt her cause. Trying harder to get Mr. Adenuga to change his mind would have led to suspicion regarding her true intention. If this had been the case, the little opportunity (to observe location production) she was given would also have evaporated. The researcher found that in the field, certain things were beyond her control, but hoped that in the final analysis, it can be said that she made effective use of the access she was allowed.

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## APPENDIX A

### List of Interviewees

(The description/title that accompanies the names of some of the interviewees, particularly the cast and crew of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., that were involved in the location production of the *Super Story, A New Song*, refers to the position they held during that particular production. Some of the people, like Associate Producer and Soundman, Corporate Affairs Manager and Script Editor have since left the production company and are working in other capacities somewhere else.)

Wale Adenuga, Owner of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., and Producer, *Super Story*

Peter Igho, Executive Director of Programmes, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)

Nneka Moses, Producer, *Goge Africa*

Bakare Adeoye, Associate Producer, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.

Antar Laniyan, Director, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.

Segun Banjo, Corporate Affairs Manager, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.

Lucille Ayorinse, Script Writer, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.

Blessing Ogheneghe, Script Editor, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.

Biodun Jimoh, Soundman, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.

Mr. Abimbola, Assistant Director of Photography, Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd.

Segun Arinze, Actor

Steph-Nora Okere-Falana, Actor

Yemi Solade, Actor

Dele Osawe, Actor

Demola Adedoyin, Communications Channel Manager, Unilever Nigeria PLC

## APPENDIX B

**List of Audio Visual Materials Used in the Research** (Because of the study's emphasis on place of production, the name of the studio or production company rather than the name of the director or producer is used here.)

*Campus Babes*. Prod. Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. English. 2003

*Daddy's Girl*. Prod. Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. English. 2004

*Pretty Woman*. Prod. Touchstone Studios. English. 1990.

*Problem Child*. Prod. Universal Studios. English. 1990.

**List of Films and Documentaries Mentioned in the Research** (Note: Rather than the names of the studios, names of directors are used in the references here. However, where the researcher was unable to find information on the name of the director, the producer's name or country of production has been used instead.)

*A New Song*. Prod. Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. English. 2006.

*Ajani Ogun*. Dir. Ola Balogun. Yoruba. 1976.

*Amadi*. Dir. Ola Balogun. Igbo. 1975.

*Annie*. Dir. John Huston. English. 1982.

*Aropin N'Tenia*. Dir. Hubert Ogunde, Frederic Goode. Yoruba. 1982.

*Daybreak in Udi*. Terry Bishop. English. 1954.

*Dust to Dust*. Nigeria. English.

Empire Day Celebrations. Nigeria. English. 1948.

Face of Deceit. Prod. Wale Adenuga. English. 2003.

*Jaiyesinmi*. Dir. Hubert Ogunde, Frederic Goode. Yoruba. 1981.

*Home Alone I*. Dir. Chris Columbus. English. 1990.

*Hostages*. Nigeria. English.

*Ija Orogun*. Prod. Ade Folayan. Yoruba. 1982

*Iyaniwuru*. Prod. Ade Folayan. Yoruba. 1985.

*Kadara*. Prod. Ade Folayan. Yoruba. 1979.

*Kongi's Harvest*. Dir. Ossie Davis. English. 1970.

*Leprosy*. Nigeria. English. 1950.

*Living in Bondage I*. Prod. Kenneth Nnebue. Igbo. 1992\*.

- Men of Two Worlds*. Dir. Thorold Dickinson. English. 1946.
- Mose Bolatan*. Prod. Ade Folayan. Yoruba. 1986.
- Oh Father, Oh Daughter*. Prod. Wale Adenuga. English. 2004.
- Ojun Ajaye*. Prod. Ade Folayan. Yoruba. 1986.
- Orun Mooru*. Dir. Ola Balogun. Portuguese. 1982.
- Port Harcourt Municipal Elections*. Nigeria English. 1950.
- Problem Child1*. Dir. Dir. Denis Dugan. English. 1950.
- Sanders of the River*. Dir. Zoltan Korda. English. 1935.
- Small Pox*. Nigeria. English. 1950.
- Son of Africa*. Fedfilm Ltd. Nigeria. English. 1970.
- Taxi Driver*. Prod. Ade Folayan. Yoruba. 1983.
- Queen Elizabeth 11's Visit to Nigeria*. Nigeria. English. 1956.



## **APPENDIX C**

### **Acronyms**

BEN TV Bright Entertainment Network Television

DSTV Digital Satellite Television

OBE TV Original Black Entertainment Television

NEPA National Electric Power Authority

NBC Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation

NBC Nigerian Broadcasting Commission

NBC National Broadcasting Code

NBS Nigerian Broadcasting Service

NFVCB National Films and Video Censors Board

NTA Nigerian Television Authority

## APPENDIX D

### Glossary of Terms

**Culture** is understood in a number of senses in the research. It is used in the sense that Chambers 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dictionary (1999: 327) explains it as, ‘the customs, ideas, values, etc, of a particular civilization, society or social group.....’ The term is also used to denote the ‘works and practices of artistic or intellectual activity [such as] the recognised products, artifacts and texts of a group or society’ (Casey et al 2002: 60).

**Globalization**, as a concept, has been explained from varied perspectives by scholars and social theorists. For the purpose of this researcher, however, the sense the term is used derives from its explanation by Thompson as ‘the growing interconnectedness of different parts of the world, a process which gives rise to complex forms of interaction and interdependency’ (in Rantanen 2006: 7). Globalization of culture is also understood as the wide availability within the borders of contemporary nation states, of cultural products such as films, music, television programmes, etc., originating from other national entities. The global is also seen as any place or location that is external to the borders of the geographic location or country where particular people live and conduct their day to day affairs.

**Local** or locality, as the opposite of global, is understood in a concrete sense to mean a particular place occupied by particular people, such as a nation state, which has recognised and recognisable geographic borders, government or constitution, which demarcates such a location and people from another location or other people.

**Patriarchy**, as a key concept in feminist studies, has been explained by feminist scholars from varying perspectives. For radical feminism, for example, patriarchy equals male domination over women. Patriarchy can be described as an ideology, ‘a system of male authority over women’ (Humm: 1995: 200) whose operations are sometimes made visible through discourse.

## APPENDIX E

**Interview Transcripts (Note that with the exception of the transcript of the phone conversation with the Script Editor at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., which is not provided here, the transcripts are provided in the same order as the list of names in Appendix A)**

### (1) Transcript of the interview with Mr. Wale Adenuga, Producer, Super Story

*Researcher:* Thank you again for your time Mr. Adenuga. Well, this morning you said you can only spare 15 minutes so I guess, well, that's okay by me. It's actually about company that I'm interested in at this stage and how you started as a popular fiction television producer.

*Mr. Adenuga:* Well, we started off in 1976 as publishers of magazines and we had three beautiful programmes in magazines then: **Super Story**, *Ikebe Super*, and *Binta*. And if you look at our programmes now, you can see they are offshoot of these programmes. So what we have done is lift them from print to electronics. Do you understand? Most of the stories we started with **Super Story** have already come out in magazine form many years ago. So, the magazine has already become popular among Nigerians so that by the time we came on television with **Super Story**, it was an instant success. *Papa Ajasco* too, is formerly in magazine form. You can see all the characters in cartoon form: Pa James, Papa Ajasco, Pa Jimoh, you know. So they all started as cartoon characters. We just started to bring them to life in the television programme. The same thing with *Binta*. We had *Binta* magazine before the *Binta* programme on television. So, in short, what I'm trying to say is the programmes were borne out of magazine format.

*Researcher:* I've read this in your bio, but I'm going to ask you the same question, nevertheless. I mean, for a guy with a degree in business management, is this talent innate or is it driven by pure business instinct, I mean how did you get into this?

*Mr. Adenuga:* Well, how I got myself into this?

*Researcher:* Yes sir

*Mr. Adenuga:* (Chuckles) You dey issue wahala oo! (Nigerian pidgin English expression meaning in a joking sense that the researcher is asking him some troublesome questions)

*Researcher:* I'm sorry

*Mr. Adenuga:* (Still seeing the question as too broad and showing reluctance to answer it) Nooo, aha.

*Researcher:* (Narrowing the question this time) Talk about the creative side of the business, for a start.

*Mr. Adenuga:* The business we are into is a creative business. You cannot just wake up and find yourself in a creative business. Certain talents have to be innate in you before you can explore such talents for business. So, I was born, yeah, an artist, a cartoonist, so I can draw very well. In fact, when I started this magazine, the first four years, I was drawing everything myself. So, when I entered University of Lagos, I was involved in campus magazine. We used to do bogy magazine then, making fun of one another, you know, things like that. And the magazine was selling on the campus. I left the University of Lagos in 1974, I graduated 1974, went to Youths Service. I came out 1975/76. So it's a matter of thinking of how to continue with that kind of campus magazine for the larger society. That was what really gave birth to *Ikebe Super*. On the campus we were publishing cartoons for our own pleasure. The magazine was not circulating beyond the campus. But now on coming out of the university, I wanted to cook up something for the entire society and *Ikebe Super* was born. I started distributing all over the states and it was well received and some years later, the television version was born.

*Mr. Banjo, the Corporate Affairs Manager who was at the interview reminded Mr. Adenuga that he is yet to talk about how he became a film producer. Mr. Adenuga continued to elaborate.*

I first came out with a film on celluloid in 1983. I think we were publishing from 1976. In 1983 we now did, we started as cinema first, as a feature film, as a big celluloid film. It was a box office hit. We were all over the place. It was called *Papa Ajasco*. So we took the film round and that was '83. It was not until 1987, '88 that we started the television series.

*Researcher:* So you mean it was like Hubert Ogunde's Travelling Theatre.

*Mr. Adenuga:* Film, yeah, not theatre, celluloid film.

*Researcher:* Alright.

*Mr. Adenuga:* Then I used Christy Igbokwe, we used all these people. We used this Igbo comedian, Chika Okpalla and all those people in the production, *Papa Ajasco* in 1983.

*Researcher:* (Helping Mr. Adenuga with the name of the television series) *Masquerade* caste. (*Masquerade* was a popular prime-time drama series on the NTA in the 1980s and the title of the drama series the characters Mr. Adenuga mentioned had starred in)

*Mr. Adenuga:* (Appreciating the help) Aha, *Masquerade* caste then, yes. So we did the big film in '83 and it was well received. It was not until 1996-7 that we started the television series, *Papa Ajasco and Company*, on AIT which has since spread out to other stations.

*Researcher:* Who underwrites the cost for **Super Story** production because I recall the earlier discussion I had with you where you mentioned you've had this understanding for many years with Unilever and actually you produce the programme for them. Please, can you talk me through the arrangement you have with Unilever.

*Mr. Adenuga:* Well, ahh, by 199---, when did it start, five years ago, when was that? 2001, Unilever was looking for a (Turned to Mr. Banjo)

*Mr. Banjo:* 2000

*Mr. Adenuga:* Okay, year 2001, right. In 2000, Unilever was looking for a good television drama. Don't forget that Unilever has been, can I say, sponsoring a particular time belt on NTA network for the past 25 years which was Thursday 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. every Thursday. That is the same slot on which they sponsored *Checkmate*, *Village Headmaster*, all those big television drama series. It was on that belt. They sponsored all.

*Researcher:* Did they sponsor *Masquerade* too?

*Mr. Adenuga:* No, no, no, no, no. *Masquerade* was not on that time belt

*Researcher:* Okay

*Mr. Adenuga:* That was at 8 p.m. every Thursday. Then there was *Village Headmaster*, then after that, *Checkmate* by Amaka Igwe and some other programmes before we now came in. So, they advertised for TV drama, good TV drama series in year 2000. Then we already had the pilot episode of **Super Story** that we just shot in year 2000. We now sent it to them for consideration. So, it competed with about 150 other entries and by year

2001, they said we've won the sponsorship. So, they started sponsoring the programme since the first episode till now.

*Researcher:* Thank you. My next question is in connection with finance. Unilever, well, is obviously sponsoring your production, **Super Story**. Can you tell me how much they pay you to produce an episode?

*Mr. Adenuga:* We don't ever disclose that. But what happens is this. What we are paid for is ... you know, to every work of art, to every television drama you produce, there are many rights, different rights attached. There's one you call television rights. Television right is into two forms, there are two major forms of television rights: we have free to air television rights, we have cable rights, we have home video rights. So, the rights Unilever is paying for is free-to-air television right, that is every Thursday we show the programme with the adverts and that's all. So the programme belongs to us. So, that is why we don't really mind how much they pay us for sponsorship. In most cases the money they pay us is not enough to even produce the programme. But what we do is we now commercialize the programme. After showing on Thursday, we sell to other television stations inside and outside Nigeria to make money and to make profit. So, that's what we do. Usually, the agreement is ...when you're signing an agreement with either a TV house or a sponsor, there is a part which precludes a third party from gaining any knowledge on the terms of agreement. This is the agreement between the NTA and other independent productions. If you read through at the back, you will see that we are not allowed to divulge the contents of the agreement to anybody. So, it's a normal thing in our business. They call it, I don't know what they call it again, something like confidentiality. Look at it. (Mr. Adenuga brought out a document and read from it.) Listen to what it says, 'the Authority and Company shall not disclose to any third party any confidential business or future plans, or cost...' So, that's why we cannot disclose to you that. We also have a similar agreement with Unilever. We cannot divulge any aspect of the agreement.

*Researcher:* So, it means the spin-offs whether they are in DVD or VHS format, all these, I mean, you own the rights to them.

*Mr. Adenuga:* We own the rights. Right now we are already. (Mr. Adenuga brought out more documents and read from them.) See, these are other agreements we are signing

with Dove Media for the release of the home video. Agreement which---and what those media for the distribution and marketing of our home movie called **Super Story**. So, we own other rights. We sold cable rights to DSTV. We sold home video rights to these people, so that's the way it is.

*Researcher:* You sell these rights but do you also keep track of how many of VHS copies that are sold, for instance, or DVD, things like that.

*Mr. Adenuga:* Okay, for the cable rights, they pay you per episode, they pay us per episode. For home video rights, they pay so much for every copy sold. Do you understand? So, if you monitor these, their account is always open, it's an open book. They show you how many copies they have sold and the amount you agreed with them, and they pay you. So there's no story any more.

*Researcher:* Of course, you are wrestling with the problem of piracy. How do you think this has affected your business?

*Mr. Adenuga:* Number one, piracy does not affect television showing. Number two, piracy doesn't affect cable showing. Now, this home video format piracy is a major concern of the marketer, do you understand? There are many ways of beating piracy. If you don't create artificial scarcity, pirates cannot feed on your work. What really happens is when a producer is about to release a work, he is not sure whether it will be accepted or not. So, usually he prints out a few limited copies. And when people love it and they cannot get it, pirates feed on it by dubbing such a work for public consumption. But, if you are dealing with a company that has the financial muscle to print out enough copies, maybe flood the market with 100,000 copies and at the right price, piracy will be checked. Piracy will not thrive under such circumstance.

*Researcher:* I read in your bio that some of these programmes like *Papa Ajasco*, **Super Story**, these two especially are airing in other countries like Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia and some other African countries. Did you make a pitch to them or they saw these programmes and approached you. And, what kind of agreement do you have with them regarding the showing of your programmes in these countries.

*Mr. Adenuga:* Well, some of the people we now supply outside this country, we met them at Sitengi Film Festival in South Africa. It holds every year. So, you go there with your work, and you display what you have. They come in and buy. Like we do, the payment is

done per episode. They are paying for your products or TV drama series. They pay so much per episode. So, if you are supplying 13 episodes, it's times the agreed sum. Don't forget that a tape like this comes on 10/7 episodes of 30 minutes. They pay per episode, so, there's no arguing. They pay for a set before you supply like I've said.

*Researcher:* Can you also talk me through what challenges as a producer you have to negotiate to get these programmes ready before deadline. Or what difficulties or challenges that confront you as a producer?

*Mr. Adenuga:* Well, the challenges could be grouped into, can we say five: the one that borders on money. Sometimes, advertising agencies owe you so much and you want to produce new episodes, you are short of cash. You start running around pillar to post, trying to get them to pay you, things like that. Advertising agencies in Nigeria, they owe a lot, they owe a lot and that's a very great problem for me. I mean, it poses such a threat to our business. They owe a lot of money (2times more). So, sometimes, you don't get money in time for your productions. So, that's one problem. The second group of challenges can come under materials. Under materials, most of the materials we use are imported and their prices keep going up without any notice. The prices keep going up and all these increase cost of production. Then under machines, all these cameras we use, they are sourced from abroad. They too have their problems. Sometimes, you buy one and within six months, it goes bad and you start worrying your head as to what to do and where to repair. And then of course, there is the problem of generator. Because NEPA has failed, it has made Nigeria not-too-investment friendly.

*Researcher:* Bring your own infrastructure

*Mr. Adenuga:* Exactly. And so we spend so much on generator. Your generator will work and work until it breaks down and then that becomes a problem. I group these problems under the five ms of money, material, machines, management and (Mr. Adenuga forgets the last m and says 'kini kocha', a Yoruba expression meaning what is the other one called?). So under men, which is the actors that we use you know, like I say, you have to really watch out for artists with good characters. Because most artists, when they allow success get into their heads, they start misbehaving, they become unruly; you can no longer manage them. So, that's another problem, especially when you are using stars for your programme. Problem of continuity. Because, a single artist can hold you to ransom



for two three days, you know. And you cannot change him so you don't confuse the viewership. So we have problems with artists. With management, we have little or no problems because we have capable hands running the company. So we have no problem with management. Marketing, yes, again, it's a game. Yea, you produce your programme, go to the NTA, pay air time and then source adverts. And adverts come in through the agency. Agencies get money from their own clients, give you adverts and for years they have not paid you. That's where the problem comes. It's a major problem in the industry. It is not a secret, it is an open secret. Every producer groans under colossal indebtedness by agencies. The same thing if you go to all these TV stations and radio stations, they too are adversely affected by agencies' indebtedness. We are only hoping against hope that one day, maybe there will be a new order that will change things. But it is a major problem for us. Most of us producers have our money held up with agencies. If you have 20 million, you can be sure that 18 million is held up with agencies. Then they pay you in trickles. An agency which owes you 6 million could sign a cheque of 200,000 and expect you to say thank you.

*Researcher:* And you can't just insist that every penny is on the table before you insert their products in your programme?

*Mr. Adenuga:* It's not possible. The thing is this; most businesses in our sector, in our industry, are done on credit. All these magazines and all these newspapers you see, most of them are sold on credit to vendors. They are sold on credit. The same with us. If you have any advert to give and you are an agency, you give us an advert, and then we even sign an agreement with you that you won't pay until after three months.

(Turns to Mr. Banjo for confirmation and asks, 'no be so' which means, 'isn't it?')

*Mr. Banjo:* Yes

*Mr. Adenuga:* If only they have been paying at the expiration of the three month period, we won't be having any problem. But three months will now extend to six months, to one year. That's the problem. You can interview any producer or TV house. That's the problem. Yeah, it is a serious problem (2 times) I don't know how, I don't know who will sanitize this for us. I don't know, I don't know, I don't know.

*Researcher:* I'm suggesting perhaps, independent producers like yourself come together and have this agreement among you that you're not doing business on credit any more.

You insist on the cash being on the table before ever releasing even an episode. I think, that will take care of the problem.

*Mr. Adenuga:* You see, that's the problem. It's very difficult to get all producers together under one umbrella. I don't know, maybe human problems there, but it is difficult. If the three of us hold a meeting and say, ok look, we are not going to accept any adverts without payment, one of us will betray the group and then, the agency will now blacklist you. That is why everyone is to your tents oh, Israel.

*Researcher:* A house divided

*Mr. Adenuga:* To your tents, oh Israel (chuckles). Every one is on his own, you know. And that disunity allows the agencies to now exploit the situation.

*Researcher:* Thanks for your patience, if, well like you promised...

*Mr. Adenuga:* (laughing) Ask your questions now.

*Researcher:* (laughing also) No, I can't afford to exhaust you, Mr. Adenuga.

*Mr. Adenuga:* Look, exhaust me. (The interview concluded with all three of us laughing including Mr. Banjo)

## INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (2)

*Researcher:* Using one of your programmes in the **Super Story** stable, could you tell me the story of how your programme gets produced and aired on the NTA?

*Mr. Adenuga:* (seeks clarification) Ahm, you mean from ahhh...

*Researcher:* Yea, from the inception of the story idea, from when a story idea is born, to the processes of taking the idea in form of synopsis to the NTA, to the plans you need to make before these programmes get produced and eventually aired, matters like that.

*Mr. Adenuga:* Well, like I said much earlier, we source the story from various sources,

*Researcher:* Alright

*Mr. Adenuga:* We receive from various sources. Maybe, it is something we saw, that happened to someone we may know or it is a story submitted by a story writer, or it's something we imagine. Sometimes they are just figments of our imagination. So, we get the story. As a producer, we now look for the right kind of director that will help you project that kind of story because we have different directors for different kind of stories.

There are some that are good in comedy, some are good in very serious drama while some are good in children's drama. So, we get the right director and then...No before that, you discuss the story with your script writers, you develop the stories, then, they now go ahead to write the scripts, the shooting scripts.

*Researcher:* ummm (in agreement)

*Mr. Adenuga:* Again, after that we now get the director, assembly your crew members

*Research:* Okay.

*Mr. Adenuga:* Then you cast, you do the casting, matching roles with the artists and then... I think casting is very very important in any production, because if you cast the right kind of people, good artists for the job, the story will look credible. But if you cast the wrong type of artists, maybe, where you should use an older artist, you are using a young person, or something like that. You commit any error in casting, it affects the story. After casting, then you go on location, then everybody plays his part. You shoot and bring back the rushes to the editor to edit and put together, and then the TV drama is born. Then you take it to NTA, get a sponsor, and show the programme.

*Researcher:* What can you say is the key idea behind **Super Story** and who is the programme aimed at?

*Mr. Adenuga:* And who is the programme...? (Appears for a moment to require elaboration but quickly grasps the general direction of the question) O.k. Yes, **Super Story** as I said developed from a magazine that we published in the early 1970s. We published that magazine for about 20 years. It was a cartoon magazine that we were using to entertain Nigerians with good stories, you know, didactic stories. And later we decided to transform the magazine to television drama and hence **Super Story** TV drama was born. That's about five, six years ago. We started with the stories in the magazine. Then later we started writing new ones. And sometimes we even adapt stories from books, you know, like *The Gods are not to Blame* by Ola Rotimi. And as to whom the stories are directed, I will say, they cut across really. Because, like I said, **Super Story** is an umbrella name under which come different stories and these different stories are aimed at different sectors of the society. Some are aimed at the children, some are aimed at their mothers, some at their fathers, some at government, you know, as in the *Lion of Mogun*. These are towards government. So it's different stories for different targeted viewership.

That's the way I will call it: different stories for different demographics. Like we did *Omoje* that focuses on child abuse and child pregnancy and exploitation of children, that kind of thing. We've done the one that came with corrective measures for the police force. You know, we've done many different things, really. We've done one on sexual harassment. So, **Super Story** is like torch light that is being beamed on different dark corners of our society. And we're like prophets, delivering God's messages to our people, trying to make this world a better place to live in and to make good people better and better best. I think, that's the objective and I think we have impacted a lot of lives from the response, from feedback. We get a lot of letters, a lot of phone calls on daily basis, people telling us how **Super Story** has changed their lives. And that's why the programme is very popular because they see themselves in **Super Story**. They see their neighbours, their family members, their friends in **Super Story**. And in most of the stories, the good is always rewarded. People see good versus bad and they always know it is good to be good.

*Researcher:* Good triumphs over evil.

*Mr. Adenuga:* Good triumphs over evil and that it doesn't pay to be criminally minded, things like that. And it also helps children that are growing up. Because they are not discerning enough to know good from bad but from what they see on TV, they see **Super Story**, they learn a lot of things, a lot of morals. That's why when **Super Story** is on air, you find a lot of parents inviting their children to come and learn lessons. So they see **Super Story** as a teacher, a life teacher.

*Researcher:* Well, talking about parents and their responses, apart from the letters you get, have there been researches, scholarly or otherwise to document, I mean, in a coordinated manner, these responses so that we have hard data talking about how popular or unpopular **Super Story** is, or how it has been received in certain quarters, how audiences respond to it.

*Mr. Adenuga:* O.k, like I told you last week, **Super Story**, apart from being shown in Nigeria, it's also on DSTV that shows in 40 countries in Africa. And of recent, about two, three weeks ago, DSTV carried out a popularity rating of all the soaps that featured on DSTV. We visited their website to see what the picture looks like. So, you can even use

their website. It's African Magic Forum, you know. See, **Super Story** (Mr. Adenuga gives me a piece of paper)

*Researcher:* Thank you very much

*Mr. Adenuga:* (continuing) beating all other programme hands down. So, this is to show the popularity of the programme, not only in Nigeria. We know **Super Story** is number one in Zambia, Ghana, Malawi, Zimbabwe, all these places, number one. It means people are well disposed towards the programme. These are the things that attract people to it: that is, presence of morals in it. In Africa, TV drama, or drama generally is not all about entertainment. Any drama that comes without education, without moral, is not appreciated by Africans. Especially because Africans are story-tellers. You know, in those days, our fathers used to tell us stories under the moonlight. So, it's part of Africa. Story is very important to the African. So, **Super Story** is a typical African story that comes with different morals for different sets of people. And that is why people love it. Because, you tell stories without morals, that are just entertaining and nothing else, people call you an unserious fellow. In Yoruba, they call it (alawa dayi), a jester. But if the story carries some morals or lessons of life, people love it. They even record it and keep for future reference.

*Researcher:* Calling **Super Story** a soap because it does have a lot of characteristics of a soap opera...

*Mr. Adenuga:* (interjecting) I won't call **Super Story** soap opera

*Researcher:* (continuing) because I know that one of the qualities of soap opera especially when it first started out in the United States as a radio drama, the cost was underwritten by detergent companies, and that's how it came to get the name soap.

*Mr. Adenuga:* (appreciating getting this information on the origin of the name soap opera interjects) Soap!

*Researcher:* (continuing) And when **Super Story** first started life, most of the ads it carried were household goods by Unilever. But recently, I think I've noticed V-Mobile ad. So, can you tell me why the change from Unilever products to V-Mobile.

*Mr. Adenuga:* What happened is, up till December last year, that is 2005, Unilever was the sole sponsor of **Super Story**. But towards the end of last year, there was a significant increase in the cost of production of **Super Story** and then the cost of airing the

programme on NTA network. You cannot believe that to show **Super Story** on NTA network, one episode cost about a million naira.

*Mr. Banjo:* (interjects to confirm the figure Mr. Adenuga quoted)

*Mr. Adenuga:* So, we now held a meeting with our sole sponsor. They love the programme, they wanted to continue with the sponsorship, but their budget could no longer carry the financial weight of the programme. And so since we have six minutes window on the programme, by that I mean six minutes within which you can show your advertisement, they said they will sponsor 3 minutes out of the 6 minutes. The remaining 3 minutes we should go and sell to interested companies that are not competing directly with them so as to make up the remaining cost of producing and airing the programme. So, from January this year, we have more or less commercialized the programme. They are no longer the sole sponsor now. They sponsor half of the whole thing and the remaining half is being bought by various companies. That's why you find different companies like V-Mobile, MTN, Dangote, Nikon. They are the ones sponsoring the remaining three minutes. It's open to all companies, really.

*Researcher:* That now explains the...

*Mr. Adenuga:* the change

*Researcher:* Yeah. The next question I wanted to ask you, which I think you have addressed actually, but I will go on all the same to still ask. I mean, the central responsibility of television drama, we know, is to engage with social, and political problems of contemporary society. Well, you have told me that **Super Story** does that, like addressing political issues or social issues like prostitution and things. And, do you think, **Super Story** has succeeded in doing this?

*Mr. Adenuga:* Yes, we have succeeded because we get feedback. We have a way of conducting our own research on our viewership and we know it's made a lot of impact, a lot of people, in the papers, they commend what we are doing. And that's all the more reason why I think we've been winning awards. We are the best TV drama and because of the appreciation.

*Researcher:* Not just because I am your student, but I agree.

*Mr. Adenuga:* You are our teacher.

*Researcher:* Your student, I'm studying you.

*Mr. Adenuga:* O.K

*Researcher:* One final question. I was with the cast and crew at Ikorodu. There was a particular scene they were shooting and I was apprehensive because the locals were spilling out onto the streets, not getting in the way of production, particularly. But I thought of health and safety, I mean, especially as it concerns the performers, the cast and the members of the public. Do you have any, because I guess you must be a private liability company?

*Mr. Adenuga:* (helping out) Limited

*Researcher:* O.K. So, do you have anything by way of insurance to protect in case of, in the event of accidents, the safety of artists, members of public and perhaps, the production crew?

*Mr. Adenuga:* We don't have. That's all. We don't have yet. But now that you mentioned, I think it's worth considering, it's worth considering. We never thought of it, really. You know, the film industry in Nigeria is still at its, it's still at the.....

*Researcher:* Formative stage

*Mr. Adenuga:* Yes, formative stage. So, I think it's worth considering. We've always been, you know, enjoying cars, houses, things like that, light. But we've not actually thought about that. But I think I will note down, we'll look into it. We'll look into it.

*Researcher:* Once again, Mr. Adenuga, thank you so much for your time. You have been more than wonderful, more than generous with your time.

*Mr. Adenuga:* First and foremost, I thank you for thanking us. Yes, and we don't see, I don't see anything special in what we have been doing, you know. And we don't also see anything special in the way we have received you. We just believe we are doing our work and we should be appreciative of the fact that you are interested in what we are doing.

*Researcher:* Many people are certainly interested in what you are doing.

*Mr. Adenuga:* Yes. It is another way of recognition because, if we've not been doing it right, or if there is no substance in what we've been doing, you'll not be interested in us. Even if you passing by and we ask you to come and interview us, you'll tell us 'there's nothing to report about you.' But for you to have come all the way to learn about what we are doing, to want to know what we are doing, I think it's a challenge to us, to do what we are doing better, and to always realise that people are watching us and that the

generations yet unborn and the ones coming behind us are watching us. They see us as role models and we need to work harder at it to remain on top. We thank you for coming and we wish you all the best in your endeavours and we wish you a successful stay in Nigeria before you go back to your country.

**(2) Transcript of the Interview with Mr. Peter Igho, Executive Director Programmes, Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Abuja**

*Researcher:* Thank you Mr. Igho for agreeing to this interview. May I start by asking you what your job as NTA Executive Director of Programmes entails.

*Mr. Igho:* Well, as Executive Director of Programmes at the NTA, simply put, I am the chief adviser to the Director of the NTA in all matters relating to programming, that means production of the programmes, scheduling of the programmes, and monitoring of the programmes so that at the end of the day, (we) based on the monitoring we do, I am able to arrive at some kind of guidelines as to which programmes are popular, which programmes should be dropped, which should be changed and all that. So, simply put, I am on the board of management and I represent the director general in all matters relating to programming: the production of it, the scheduling of it, the transmission of it, and all related other matters. In the production of programming, we have a variety of options in acquiring the programmes that we transmit. There are those we produce in-house, there are those we co-produce with independent producers and there those that we either commission or acquire. Right now, the percentage is, in fact we had a meeting yesterday in which I directed, I wanted a proper breakdown in terms of percentages of how what quantity is in-house productions, the commissioned production, the co-production and those we acquire. As it is right now, most of the programmes that we have on the schedule, some of them have been acquired not necessarily by programme specification alone, because there are those produced by independent producers who specifically come to request for airtime and they are scheduled based on whether we have free time or not. But those that are supervised by the directors of programmes based on those we produce, commission, or acquire, the percentage is more like and (and this we have to verify) is more like 75% in-house production, but 20% co- production and may be about 10% or



so that we acquire. Some of those we produce are of course programmes like AM Express, Forum, Flying High, Rising Star, Bandstand, Variety shows, documentaries and a few others. Those that are co-productions are a few like African Pot and Echoes from the Valley. Those we acquire, one of them that stands out is Solitaire. Solitaire is a drama series which is quite new on the network schedule and is very, very popular also. I did say after these ones that we produce or commission or acquire, there are those by independent producers that come to us, we look at what they have and we allow them a slot on the schedule. One such programme is Wale Adenuga's **Super Story**. It is not produced by the NTA, it is not commissioned by the NTA, it is not acquired by the NTA but it is on NTA schedule, as an independent production for which we found a space. What we do with those programmes is that when they come to us to say they have a programme that they have produced and they have a sponsor to sponsor the programme, we give them our cost for airtime which they pay. But we must also, my directorate must also vet the programmes to ensure that they meet our standards and that also they in no way infringe set-down rules by the NBC, our broadcast codes, and that they meet our standards in terms of content and quality. Then we pass them for scheduling and they are scheduled. But my directorate still supervises them. We receive their tapes, we go through them and monitor them and guide them in terms of what is acceptable or not acceptable. So that's the relationship between the NTA and Wale Adenuga's **Super Story**. We do not own the right, we did not commission it, it is not our acquisition. It is one of the independent producers that has been given airtime because when they brought it to us, we looked at them and we found that they met high standards and that they in no way infringe any codes of conduct set by the by the NBC or by the NTA. Therefore all copyrights of the programme rest with Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd. We are aware of the spin-offs that have arisen from that programme but because we have no right to it we cannot have access to or demand that we share any revenues that come from such spin-offs.

*Researcher:* Well, you mentioned programme conforming with NBC's recommendations. What are of those things that if a programme does not live up that may result in it not being accepted by you? What are the codes of NBC that will more or most likely, if you want, make a programme unacceptable to you?

*Mr. Igho:* There are a whole variety of dos and don'ts. In fact most of the NBC codes of conduct or of practice were actually culled from NTA's codes of practice. If you recall, NTA has been on the ground since 1977, well before NBC was actually set to regulate broadcasting in Nigeria. So a lot of the material in terms of what you should do or what you should not do actually were taken from what the NTA in self-censorship has put down to ensure that programmes that are allowed to be transmitted on the network schedule meet those standards. One of them is the fact, of course, that it must be of high technical quality. The programme must be shot with broadcast facilities and meet minimum technical quality in terms of resolution to audio quality and all that. Secondly and relating to content, we do not allow on our screens any programme that derogates any group whether religion or people, that plays on anybody's handicap, that promotes a particular religion or denigrates any religion. There are many such dos and don'ts that we do not allow on broadcasting. Again we do not allow sexual, overt sexual material. And depending on when the programme is scheduled, no alcohol advertisement is allowed if the programme is before 10 o'clock. It is after 10 o'clock that we do allow alcohol advert, but even then no overt drinking and celebration of alcohol drinks. So these are some of the areas that we look at in terms of the content and then technical quality before we pass a programme as being fit to be transmitted on the NTA channel.

*Researcher:* The next question I will like to ask is how the Programmes Department of the NTA fits in with the rest of the departments of the NTA?

*Mr. Igho:* Well, basically you may say the two core directorates in the NTA are the Directorate of News and Directorate of Programmes. These are the two directorates that provide all the contents that are on NTA's schedule. Now to service these two directorates, there are other directorates: Directorate of Marketing, to market the contents that we produce, Directorate of Engineering to provide all the technical facilities, to maintain them and provide all the technical facilities that are needed for both directorates. The Directorate of Training that provides proper training and capacity building for all the staff in all the directorates. Directorate of Finance and Admin provides all the admin and financial support for those two directorates and others. So, in a sense, these are the programmes at the core of the directorates but they do have all other directorates that

relate to these two directorates in providing support and services to ensure that the content production meets the standards that are set.

*Researcher:* Why did the NTA not acquire **Super Story** but could still broadcast it?

*Mr. Igho:* Well, I did say that that programmes, like most other television programmes, are brought to the director/administrator of programmes. When they come to us, we look at them and if they meet the standards and we feel that they have potentials, then we accept them and then look at all those guidelines I talked about, the dos and don'ts, whether they meet all those things. Once they do that and we have reviewed the programmes and analyzed them and that they meet the yearnings of our viewership and they will fill some gap in our scheduling, we accept them. In the case of that particular programme, I recall that I was one of the first people they contacted and sent an advance copy. And when I previewed it, I called programmes department to said, 'this has potentials and is likely to be a hit.' And when it was passed for the programme preview department to look at, they also had the same opinion and it was scheduled and the rest has become quite history.

*Researcher:* You did mention an aspect of viewership and what I will interpret as audience research. Do you have any solid data on viewership, viewing patterns and what audiences actually want to see?

*Mr. Igho:* Well, unfortunately I have to answer that in the negative. I know that in the last few months, this issue has come up at the management and marketing department, the directors of marketing have been mandated to put in place not only in-house monitoring facilities to enable us to measure our viewership but also independent analysis and appraisal of those who are watching us: programmes that are popular or not popular, the number of people watching us, what they want, what they desire and all that. So that is being put in place. I know that two companies have been commissioned. They have actually submitted the preliminary reports which we are absorbing now and on the basis of which we are now re-examining our own plans of production and all that. So, in short, we do not now have one I can present to you. But I know they have put in place such audience surveys for internal and external independent monitoring of what we are doing.

*Researcher:* We were talking about the audience a moment ago. What is your conception of the audience? What specific group or groups is **Super Story** targeted at?

*Mr. Igho:* Well from most of the responses we have had, it is basically the entire family. Again, that belt, the 8-9 belt, again starting from 6:30 to 9 belt, we are targeting the family. And that's why we are careful that whatever we show in that slot is something that will not offend any member of that family, whether the youths, whether the wives, whether the fathers, or mothers or whatever, that the programmes in that particular slot do not offend any these members. So in general terms, it addresses, targets families because from most of the storylines, they deal with issues of children, with the youth, with the mothers, with the general universal themes of love, of hatred, of marriage, of marriage failures and issues that affect members of the family, culture, tradition and all that.

*Researcher:* We know that Nigeria is a developing country and of course television does not achieve the same high penetration as radio. Do we have any data as to how many Nigerian actually have television sets and what forms of technologies people have access to?

*Mr. Igho:* It is difficult for me to ascertain. I do know that we do talk in relation to television about 30 million viewers and that was predicated on, at the time and that's over 15 to 20 years ago now, the assumption was based on some analysis of sales of TV sets that there were about six million sets sold and that there was an average of five viewers per set. In each household, you will have an average of five people watching. And if six million sets have been sold, we estimated that we have at least 30 million viewers watching the NTA. So we bandied that figure around but we believe now that with more, if you like, developments in technology in terms of transmitters that we have put all over the country, better signals and all that and more programming addressing a variety of issues from sports to news, entertainment, documentaries, a wide variety of all programme types, we believe that number must have grown. But again, I cannot give you any hard fact based on any data. That's part of what we are doing with the audience research/survey that had been put in place. We have commissioned companies to do that and they are in the process of giving us all that data so that as we go along we are able to tell you what is what. But what we do know is that based on the technologies that are available to us now, we are able to sometimes say what number are watching at least some of our NTA programmes. For example, AM Express, we have AM Express website. Yesterday, the person in charge of the website addressed us and showed us data

that showed that the AM Express website is the fastest growing website in Africa. Two, that there is an average of 100,000 hits on that website on a daily basis. And that barely four weeks ago, a lot of reporters living in the UK were like shutting down because of the attention drawn to AM Express website. What has happened is that we've been running a lot of ads, quiz programmes in which we give a lot of prizes. In the last All Africa Nations Cup, we gave out a car, we gave out so many other prizes. So the hype on the AM Express is such that about four days ago, when we now told people that we were going to give the first ten people who went on the website recharge cards for their mobiles, we received 2.7 million hits. It's unprecedented. We have a company that has come to us that surprisingly has done a study of the NTA. And they have given me, unfortunately I don't have it here, they are trying for us to partner, to market ring-tones, face savers for the youths, who from the analysis are over, they have about 8million of whom are watching the NTA. Now, I don't know how they arrived at that figure, I don't know how they got that, but they said it is based on a study of the viewing patterns, and age groups and they want to take advantage of that in marketing these things. They know that that particular group are actually the ones with loose money to spend and are observing the GSM phenomenon now to be able to make contact of this level. We are just working up with them. So, I'm afraid I can only talk to you in general terms when it comes to figures but I know in the next few months we'll be able to give you those figures. We're going to be transmitting soon to the UK and America and we need those kinds of figures to be able to say this is the largest network in Africa, our viewership is exactly this, our programmes and viewership across the range, target this viewership, ages, and sex and all that. That's why for now I'm more in talking to you in general terms than actual figures.

*Researcher:* What is the mission of the NTA and what can you say is the perception of Friday night at the NTA?

*Mr. Igho:* Well, to quickly summarize, the mission of the NTA will be to provide entertainment, enlightenment, and education, to please viewers across the nation and across Africa and hopefully show the world, bringing in those contents, showcasing in those contents the rich variety of peoples and cultures that are in Nigeria and also to provide the African view to the world. That is important especially because most times

the views of Africa that are put forward by other media are not true to what Africa represents. We believe that the NTA as part of its mission will do that: provide the true African perspective to the world.

*Researcher:* And the second part, the perception of Friday night at the NTA.

*Mr. Igho:* Well, I suppose you are talking about the phenomenon that we now have on Friday night. Are you talking about the schedule of the programme around the room or a particular programme from there? I don't know Fridays, are you talking about scheduling? (Researcher provided further explanation) Well, for us Friday night is the beginning of the weekend and most of the scheduling you find are mostly entertainment programmes. There are more of that starting from Friday and because we believe that once people close from work on those Fridays, the weekend begins from then and so our scheduling has been more entertaining on those days than during the week and leads on through Saturday and Sunday before we now go back to these less entertainment, if you like, menu from Mondays to Friday.

*Researcher:* So, are you saying that Friday all through Sunday, these days basically are seen as the days people relax back in the homes and then NTA fills their relaxing hours with these programmes.

*Mr. Igho:* Mostly, I must say mostly because most people when we reach them say during the week, some of them say they have no time to watch, they are at work, they don't have time to watch programmes but from Friday night on when they are back home, they now can put their feet up. And what we do is we now begin to bring a rich menu of variety of programmes with a little more entertainment and relaxing content than during the hard week.

*Researcher:* This is leads into the previous question, is **Super Story** still shown on the network service of the NTA on Fridays from 8-9 these days? This is because I caught an episode of *The Lion of Mogun* on the NTA channel five Plus, Abuja, on Thursday, March 9. Originally, and I am speaking of 2003 up to September before I left for the UK, **Super Story** was showing on Fridays between 8-9 pm on the NTA channel in Enugu. And I want to ask why was **Super Story** was given 8-9 p.m. billing on Fridays and then why the change from 8-9 p.m. on Fridays to 8-9 p.m. on Thursdays these days.

*Mr. Igho:* No, **Super Story** has always been 8-9 p.m. belt on Thursdays. If you saw that on Friday, it must have been a repeat. But the scheduled day for **Super Story** is Thursday and that has come from a long tradition of the company that sponsors the programme. They used to sponsor *Village Headmaster* and *Village Headmaster* was showing every Thursday. And when we rested it and years later the same company that now sponsors **Super Story** they chose that same day Thursday and it's always shown on Thursday. So what you saw must have been a repeat of some sort.

*Researcher:* (Still confused regarding the actual day **Super Story** is broadcast observes) Even the information they posted on the NTA website has it that **Super Story** is shown on Fridays from 8-9 p.m.

*Mr. Igho:* No, that's wrong, it's not true; our schedule has always been 8-9 p.m. on Thursdays for **Super Story**.

*Researcher:* May I ask this last question. I believe you must have answered it somewhere but just to be sure. Concerning programme regulation, do you need to clear with the Films and Video Censors Board before transmitting your dramas? Or have you at any point had a disagreement with the regulators over an issue in any of your programmes both commissioned or in-house?

*Mr. Igho:* None at all. We do not have to clear our programmes with the Censors Board. I believe that is done with the film and video industry. Our, if you like, our regulators are the NBC. And like I told you, even most of the NBC codes of conduct were taken from the NTA. NTA has a very strict regime of dos and don'ts and that is more than respected so that there's no one out there who needs to breathe down our necks to censor what we do, not the Censors Board definitely. NBC, yes, but not the Censors Board.

*Researcher:* May I use this opportunity to you once again thank you for your time and for sharing your views with me. Thank you very much.

### (3) **Interview with Mrs. Nneka Moses, Producer, Goge Africa**

*Researcher:* Thanks for your time and well, I've explained to you the purpose of the interview. If I may, can I start by asking how the idea for *Goge Africa* was born and what you set out to achieve through your programme?

*Nneka:* O.k., thank you. My name is Nneka Isaac Moses, presenter, co-producer, *Goge Africa*. The idea was conceived over seven years ago. We observed on television, especially back then, Africa does not have enough representation on African TV stations. The stereotype we had then was show more of foreign films, foreign-packaged programme. And we felt that these were not representing us well. So we decided to do something indigenous, something that will represent and project and promote Africa as well as tell the true African story. So that's how *Goge Africa* came about.

*Researcher:* (Reminds Nneka of the second part of the question) And what you hope to achieve through your programme?

*Nneka:* Except you want me to add the fact that young people are, whether knowingly or unknowingly, drifting from our culture and embracing foreign cultures, the hip-hop culture, the American style and other Western culture that is quite alien to us and that has affected the behavioural pattern of our youth. So, trying to give them a sense of belonging by showcasing what is theirs and making them proud of it is also part of the objective of *Goge Africa*.

*Researcher:* Thank you very much but can I ask what your background is, how did you come to become a producer?

*Nneka:* Well, I studied English at the University of Lagos. After school I went into the production of clothes. I make clothes; I'm a fashion designer, because that's what I love to do. Then my husband, besides being an Insurance graduate from Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, he stumbled into voice-over because he has a good voice, and somehow he found himself in that field. Besides that, he was also into modelling and acting for home video. So, from there, he used to manage artists, African artists. When he decided to do a radio programme that will project and promote African music and artists, I talked him into TV for these reasons I've mentioned. So, we teamed up together, we decided to do it ourselves because we didn't have the money to engage what you will call professionals or those who are more versed in the field. So, what led us was basically the fact that we knew what we wanted, we knew what it should look like. So, we said, 'o.k.



let's do it and see what it comes out to be.' So, we put our money where our mouth is and then we produced *Goge*. The first year features we never put on air because we didn't like them. But when we came up with what we really liked, we presented it to the NTA (Nigerian Television Authority), AIT (African Independent Television) and other stations. They embraced it and decided to show it and that was the beginning of *Goge*.

*Researcher:* Thank you. Now you mentioned AIT, NTA, and these other television stations, are all the television stations that you do business with in Nigeria? Where else in Africa are your programmes shown? I understand when I listened to you during your presentation at the BOBTV event in Abuja in March that you do have other arrangements with other television stations in other African countries. Can you tell me about these?

*Nneka:* O.k. Presently, *Goge* is shown on over 35 TV stations, I'll say around the world, actually in three continents. In Nigeria alone, we are on over 20 stations. We're shown in the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia. Of course, we are on African Magic, that's M-NET which covers the whole of African continent and surrounding island. We're in London, OBETV; through cable we're seen on the East Coast of America. We're on SKY Digital. The first stations I mentioned were those we started out with. Over time we've spread our tentacles to include all these others.

*Researcher:* Thank you. Now, talking about the NTA, actually, I'm interested in understanding what kind of relationship you have with the NTA as an independent producer.

*Nneka:* Well, I'll like to say that when we first started, NTA was more like our biggest network. Because then we were on network, primetime with them. It was fresh, it was new, there was almost nothing like it on Nigerian TV as at then. So, they embraced us; we started with them. And the relationship we had then was more like we do our production, they provide airtime and we jointly market the programme and share the revenue from the programmes. We did that for years and we got into other stations. NTA, over time changed their rules, anyway. They said we should be paying for airtime. After a while they felt we should be paying to show our programme since the programme has gained momentum especially in the advertising world. So, on our own part, we felt that if we produce a programme and take the stress of doing that, all that remains is the marketing of it. We had wanted them to market while we produced, but when they

insisted that we should start paying for airtime, we decided that we wouldn't pay airtime on any television station because we know the worth of the production we are doing. We know the vacuum *Goge* is filling in the media world today, especially for Africa. So we said, 'o.k., it's either you acquire the programme and market it yourself like other television stations are doing. All the other stations we are on have acquired our programmes. Or alternatively, we do a kind of joint partnership whereby we produce, you air and we jointly market.' So, that's what happened with the NTA as a network. We left the NTA network and decided to stay on those NTA sub-stations where our advertisers indicate interest that they want to be. They may want to advertise on a particular day and they say to us, 'we want to cover Uyo, for instance, can you go to NTA Uyo?' Sure, then, we go to NTA, Uyo. They may also say, 'o.k., we want to be in Abuja, we want our presence felt in Abuja through the NTA but through your programme', so, we get hooked up to NTA, Abuja. That's how we came to be on five NTA stations within Nigeria: Jos, Aba, Uyo, Lagos, Abuja, because sponsors said they want us to be there so they can advertise.

*Researcher:* Alright, the initial arrangement you had with the NTA, you talked about marketing together. What did it entail: sourcing for advert funds or something? Can you explain the marketing aspect?

*Nneka:* The marketing aspect, even with or without marketing with NTA, we have to market the programme to be able to get money to sustain it. There are various kinds of marketing but we market and source for events. If there's an event happening in a particular place, we get the people organizing the event or the government involved to sponsor us to the event for coverage. After coverage and production, we still have the problem of how to put it on air. So since we decided that we won't pay for airtime, that's where the stations come in: they provide the airtime to have it aired. But it doesn't end there. We want to put money in our pocket and in the pocket of the station also. We could get adverts from Unilever, from Coca Cola, from Nigerian Breweries. They may put in 60 seconds of ad each. And then at the end of the day, some lump sum comes out of it. And from this money we now share it with whichever station that the programme is being aired. But for those stations which acquire the programme outside Nigeria like the Gambian Television, for instance, or Ethiopian Television, we do not put ad, we do not

source for ad, we just produce and give them and they pay us upfront. The same thing with M-NET, the South African channel.

*Researcher:* Thank you. Alright, when I initially asked you what was the driving force behind you going into this business, you talked about young people gradually getting away from our culture and you felt there was this need to, well, call back the prodigal daughters and sons to their roots. (Nneka agrees with the description ‘prodigal’) They were wandering away, so to say. So, are they your target audience, and perhaps Africans who will embrace other people’s cultures wholesale while jettisoning their own. Who is your target audience?

*Nneka:* We have a wide variety of audience. First of all, the first audience for *Goge* is anybody who is interested in the Black culture. So, that covers foreign people who are studying the African culture, even regular people who just want to know about the world. Africa is part of the world; it’s a huge part of the world we live in. So, there are people who want to know what is happening on the other end of the world. So, we have a wide audience. Now, if I narrow it down, Africa generally, the whole of Africa and Diaspora are also our target audience because we are celebrating them. We are talking about those things that make us distinct as human beings, our culture, our way of life. So, you come into Africa, *Goge* has something for older viewers. It brings back memories of things they used to know that they no longer see except when they go to the villages or when an event comes up and they are able to attend. And you know that you cannot be everywhere. So, *Goge* brings up such memories for them, it’s like fond memories of times past. Then for the youths, it opens their eyes to what they ordinarily would not know if *Goge* was not there. So, it makes them aware of themselves as Africans, it makes them proud of the fact that they have this tan, this black skin and the fact that the sun is an important aspect in shaping our way of life. So, there’s so much that *Goge* does for both the young and old. So, like I keep saying, our target audience is wide. Tourists are attracted to *Goge*. You come into Nigeria, you want to have a first hand experience or at least something to tell you about the people, you’ll probably be writing us and saying, ‘please, this episode I saw on the Igbo Traditional Marriage Ceremony, can I have a tape? I need to take it back to Finland.’ So, it becomes a collector’s item.

*Researcher:* Thank you. I know that programme-making is a very expensive venture. Apart from when you finish these programmes, can we go back to when you actually start out to produce something, how you source for funds or how you absorb the cost involved because I know it's an enormous sum. I remember seeing you, the first time I saw this programme, you and Moses were out on location somewhere in some African country. I remember seeing you in this African attire and you were dancing and wiggling your hip. I remember thinking to myself that you look very gorgeous and there you were in these African clothes and promoting African culture. That was my first encounter with the programme. So, I know it's not a cheap thing producing something like what you do. Apart from when the advert funds start pouring in, how do you absorb the cost of producing these things?

*Nneka:* Unfortunately, in this part of the world, sometimes when you have an idea you might not have someone or organization to back you up and fund your ideas. However, if you believe so much in it, you have to look for the money to get it done. So, what I did, because I had my primary source of income which was production of clothing and my husband had his primary source of income which was acting and voice-over, what we did at first was put our own money into the production. We believed so much in it and it's something we felt could be done. So, that's what happened. We started producing it, going to places and with time, we found transporters, airline executives that said, 'oh, I like your programme, wherever you want to go, we'll take you there.' People like Lufthansa, I mean, international airlines like that came in to help us. They were willing to take us to places within their route, Ethiopian airways and all the rest of them. Apart from that, hotels when they see you, the recognition, 'we like what you do, next time you're in Port Harcourt, come and stay with us; next time you're in Kenya, come stay with us.' So, we started working out partnership and a kind of networking that would bring down the cost of production. So, that's basically how we came up. And over time we find different governments inviting us, 'come to my country, we have this and we have that and we want you to showcase it.' The Zambian government has invited us, Ethiopian government, the President of the Gambia himself, not to talk of within here in Nigeria, South Africa, Angola, you know, different places, they just keep calling us to come for

one event or the other. We've been to Burkina Faso, Cotonue, Benin Republic, so many places we've been to.

*Researcher:* This has really afforded you the opportunity of exploring Africa. It reminds me of a small dream that has flowered into some giant venture. This is great. Well, is it just specifically you and Moses, I mean, in this programme, do you have people like actors, people working for you or do you single-handedly produce these programmes?

*Nneka:* Initially we did everything by ourselves, besides editing. I write the scripts, Isaac directs, we both produce and present, and I also manage our costume. But that was initially and we did that for close to four or five years. But today, we have about ten staff under us. We have our marketing, production and research teams. We also deal with consultants who consult for us on different fields as well as, of course, our front desk officer, the accountant and all the rest of them. So, now, we have more hands on deck because we have enough budget to take care of their own payment.

*Researcher:* Interesting. So, that means you're an employer of labour right now.

*Nneka:* Oh, yes. Yes we are.

*Researcher:* So, how many people? You mentioned...

*Nneka:* We have five permanent staff and from time to time, depending on the level of production we have here and there, we also recruit more hands, like cameramen and all the rest of them. You see, it's not always wise to keep a pool of cameramen waiting on you. You get them as you need them.

*Researcher:* Talking about personnel, can you talk me through what equipment you have at your disposal or facilities like editing suite. I noticed a guy over there doing something like editing. You have you own editing suite, I suppose?

*Nneka:* Yes.

*Researcher:* Do you also have your own equipment because you mentioned not keeping cameramen lined up when you may perhaps not need them.

*Nneka:* We have chains of camera but sometimes when you invite us to an event, we come with about three cameras or four or more.

*Researcher:* All belonging to you?

*Nneka:* Yes. They are ours. But this does not mean we do not hire. We hire because, for instance, in April, during the Easter period, we had about four shows in different parts of

Africa. Two of them were in Nigeria; the other two were outside. We had to recruit more hands, get production personnel from other companies, especially, those that hire production staff on ad hoc basis. This way we employed some cameramen, production assistants and all that and sent them to these other locations where we couldn't go to ourselves. We, however, got our in-house man to supervise them. For some of the assignments we go with them. So we find that even when you have four cameras in-house, your four cameras cannot take care of your peak period when you have too many productions at the same time.

*Researcher:* Alright. You mentioned being invited by these world leaders and other people who require your services or who express satisfaction with your production, can I ask how the idea for these topics come about, that is, apart from when people specifically commission you to do a particular job?

*Nneka:* Well, the ideas do not just come, they are there; they are with us. They spring up everyday and it's just the question of whether you have the strength to piece them together.

*Researcher:* So, do you do market research then, or do you depend on intuition?

*Nneka:* First of all, the environment provides the idea. I have friends all over the country who may hear of something. Somebody says, 'oh, there's this thing happening in my place. It's a particular kind of marriage that is celebrated by Calabar or Swahili or Igbo people.' That's a topic in itself. So, what we do is we send our researchers; we research on the topic. We find out what we need to know and then look forward to the day when the actual event will take place. But we are not recreating, we are not dramatizing, we record the actual events as they happen and then tell the story of what happened and the significance.

*Researcher:* This is a documentary then?

*Nneka:* More of a documentary, yes. We document facts.

*Researcher:* Thank you. The next question I'd like to ask is how many programmes you get to produce in a year and the average cost of each programme?

*Nneka:* O.k. In a year, the production year has 52 weeks for someone who has a weekly programme. So, in a year we are expected to produce at least 52 episodes. But with *Goge Africa*, it does not work that way since we are not producing drama or make-believe. We

capture the events as they happen. And you will agree with me that sometimes you may be in South Africa, for instance, and something is happening in Nigeria and the time they have given you to cover it is too short, you can't cope. So, you have to wait for that same event for the next year because most of these events are yearly events. Some of them are events that come once in a lifetime. For example, when we covered the coronation of the Jaja of Opobo, I mean, it doesn't happen every year. Before the next one will happen, the present ruler will have finished ruling and probably passed on before the next coronation will happen. So, you find that the events are there, but you can't keep producing every week because producing *Goge* is very tedious. Apart from the money, it takes planning and your physical presence; you need to be there to monitor things and all that. So, we don't get to produce 52 in a year. Sometimes when we are lucky, we do half of that in a year.

*Researcher:* And the average cost?

*Nneka:* Well, the cost of programmes differs. What it will cost me to produce an episode on the Eyo Festival of the Lagos people will differ from what it will cost me to produce something on Abu Sahel or the crossing of cattle in any of these Northern African countries. The reason is that these involve traveling, ticket, air fare, lodging, feeding and other logistics. So, when you put all these together, you now add the days the camera has to be out, the production crew and what you are paying them. You now come back and add these to what it will cost you to put these together and you start your editing and all that. So, the cost usually differs. It's never the same with any production. It depends on which one we are talking about, we could work it out and let you know exactly how much.

*Researcher:* So, what is your theory of success in making these programmes?

*Nneka:* My theory of success is when you set out to do something, do it well and appreciate what you do. Remain relevant in the chosen field. And when you're able to feed yourself and take care of yourself from what you enjoy doing, to me, that is success. I don't have to have billions of dollars in my account to know that I'm successful. I have succeeded. If your question is whether I've succeeded in what I set out to do, then my answer is yes I have.

*Researcher:* Thank you. What do you shoot on, that is how do you normally record your programmes?

*Nneka:* Let me tell you what we do not record on for now. We do not record on celluloid because it is very, very expensive. We record on digital format. We use HD cameras. It could be Cannon, Sony or Panasonic. And we are planning to get these high-definition cameras that are in vogue now, just to make sure the quality of production keeps getting better. But we are not on celluloid now. Maybe in future, if we have a co-production with a bigger partner that has the financial muscle to get that, yes, why not.

*Researcher:* What can you say are the major challenges that you face in this profession as an independent producer?

*Nneka:* The major challenge really is money. Because if, for instance, we get a grant to do a particular production, you can hire good hands, more hands and the troubles will be less on you. So, money is the first challenge. The fact is that there is no money out there for you to, you know, use for your production. But the other challenge remains the fact that in this environment, you produce, you're expected to pay marketers. Some TV stations are lazy, they want you to come and buy airtime. Nobody switches on the TV because they want to watch NTA. No, they want to watch programmes and that's why they do that. And nobody actually switches on his TV because he wants to watch adverts. No, people want to watch something that means something to them, something that makes them happy and something they can relate to. So, why would a TV station expect an independent producer to produce a programme, give you content to fill your airtime and at the same time give you money for filling your airtime. It's absurd! So, the TV stations are some of the challenges we face. And the other major challenge is with the advertisers. The agencies, the money doesn't usually come out on time, you know. So, they stall with your money. Sometimes, if you don't have other ways of making money for the company, you find out that staff will still be looking for last month's salary even though you are mid-way into a new month. But for those of us who also sell programmes and documentaries and also have other forms of sponsorship deals besides advertisers, we get by. So, the challenges are enormous. But because I love adventure, I wouldn't say that traveling all the time or being on the road all the time poses a challenge. (At this stage, there's a knock on the door signaling that Nneka is needed elsewhere)



*Researcher:* (Laughs with Nneka) Thank you so much. Saved by the bell or saved by the knock on the door, I should say! (Nneka, still willing to continue with the interview instructs the receptionist, ‘tell him to come in and sit down, he can come in.’) Actually, I’ve asked my last question. Thank you so much, Nneka. It’s been great speaking with you. Thanks.

*Nneka:* O.k., I’ll be giving you a copy of *Goge Africa*.

#### **(4) Transcript of the Interview with Associate Producer, Bakare Adeoye**

*Researcher:* Alright. Thank you Mr. Bakare for agreeing to speak with me. You are the Associate Producer of this current production, *A New Song*. Please, can you explain to me what being an Associate Producer is all about?

*Bakare:* Well, in the milieu of Wale Adenuga Production Ltd., the Associate Producer here is more or less the producer on set. He’s the coordinator of production, he’s the production manager, he approves payment, he’s part of the casting, part of the production, he’s like the producer on set. While by the book, by theory, the Associate Producer is an assistant, he’s somebody who assists the producer in sourcing for funds, but in the milieu of what we are doing here, or in the milieu of Wale Adenuga Productions, the Associate Producer is the producer on set and also the production manager, the coordinator, the director of production, all the planning, he makes production come alive.

*Researcher:* Whoa! All these things all on one man! How do you cope with the challenges?

*Bakare:* Well, for me I think man is made to face challenges; man is made to work. I see only one way to prosperity; I see only one way to success in life. I don’t believe in ritual money; I don’t believe there is any way of making money but work. You work, get money and as such if I have more than this to do on a set and be earning more money, and be earning more experience that will make me more relevant to the industry, I will accept that.

*Researcher:* Alright. So, you mean these different positions that you fill in this production, there is a fee for you for each position, I mean, in this production?

*Bakare:* As the Associate Producer of the production and the Production Manager, there is a payment. The whole thing is a composite. It's not as if you are pampered, for being the Production Manager and you're collecting X amount, for being the Associate Producer, you are collecting X amount, for doing the job of Location Manager, you are collecting X amount, No. It's a composite thing. And the payment is quite good, I mean, by the standard in the industry, by what is happening, by the circumstances surrounding production, and, yea, by the standard in the industry, the payment is quite o.k. I am satisfied.

*Researcher:* I understand you are a producer as well. Have you produced many films or home movies and in what genre? Is it a TV drama like what we you're producing currently? Can you well, elaborate a little bit about your experiences as a producer?

*Bakare:* Yea, I have produced a couple of films. I have produced a couple of films in the Yoruba genre. I have produced one film in the English genre. Actually, the one that I produced in English is just as I'm doing here, like standing in for the producer, you know. It's called Sundade. Sundade was produced some ten years ago, 1996. But in the Yoruba film genre, I've produced a couple of films about six, seven, films. My first film was produced in 1997. Recently I produced Timeri.

*Researcher:* And who are your sources of finance? How do you source your funding?

*Bakare:* In the Yoruba film genre, there are basically three ways of getting funding for your production. One is by self-sponsorship, as in self-investment, you have some money somewhere, and you turn around to produce your own film, that's one. Secondly, you can source funds from external people, your uncles, your friends, your family, or even asking somebody on your streets who you know is interested in what you are doing to invest money in the industry. And the third way is by getting a marketer, who believes in you, who knows that you know what it takes to produce a good film to invest money on you and take some commission after the film has been done. All this is what I have been doing. I have used marketers' money to produce films. I have got money from a sister or an uncle, obviously. And I have used my money to produce nothing less than four, five films, by investing my own money.

*Researcher:* There must be some differences between producing for television and for home video. Can you share your experiences of having worked in both situations with me?

*Bakare:* Yea, in producing for home video, you know, home video basically is a one-off, number one and as such it is a bit more capital intensive. It's a bit more on, 'o.k., just do it and get out.' The television industry is more of a developmental thing, more of special development and as such, payment might not be as big as they are in the home video industry, that's one. Then, when you are producing for television, you are like a long-runner in business. People who are short-time runners cannot produce television programmes because it is not something that you make now and start making your money. You have to invest, re-invest and re-invest. It's like doing a magazine, investing money in the magazine industry, producing magazine. You might not start making a profit in the next three, four, years. People must have known that person is a co-producer for them to start investing money on you even for television. That is why you don't see many people producing television. Like in Nigeria now, how many television programmes do we have? One of the problems is the sponsors for television programmes are very, very few. Not a lot for direct sponsors of advert programme where you have agencies, companies, pushing their adverts to sponsor, just placing their adverts in your programme. This is also a problem. You might produce, normally you don't get the money immediately from the agencies; it might take some time for the money to start coming in from the agencies. You can have some agencies owing you for a year, for instance, owing you millions of naira, for a year, before you start getting your money. Well, I don't really know the cause of that. But I think it's because in most cases they plan the budget for a year. And when they get the money it may not be fast coming to the end-user of the money. We are in a capitalist, exploitative environment where our people would rather go and invest your money into some other businesses rather than give you your money immediately, you know. Which is what somebody like Adenuga has not been doing. You work for Adenuga Productions, when your job is finished you collect 100% of your money. I am sure that today nobody can say Adenuga owes them, no artist dead or alive. You only have artists owing him may be in form of, 'you loan me some money and I'll pay you later' or in form of IOU while they have not finished the job. In

the home video, you invest your money; you sell the thing in the next two, three months, you get your money back. The home video is more or less like buying and selling. You go to a village to buy garri, you go to another village to sell it and collect your money at the end of the day. While in television, you invest and invest and now you start getting the money back piecemeal. As such it requires somebody with long term interest more than short term investment interest, so he may be there day after day.

*Researcher:* I've been on location these past few days with you and I've watched you guys out there for hours on end. Now, you've also done studio production. What is your experience of working in both environment and staying out for such a long time, is it a problem for you? The second part of the question is if you can please share your experience of location production and studio production as an Associate Producer.

*Bakare:* Well, for location, even studio, you know, I must also say that any area, from whatever professional area, they have their different challenges. But you have to go on location, you have to ask people to use their property, you know, you face a double problem. And because, number one, you have to think of the owner of the property, if it is convenient for him for you to use that property at that particular point in time. You have to think of the environmental noise; you don't want to shoot a film where there is a block industry near the house, you start to produce and you hear gboogboooogboo (imitating the sound of falling hammer on nail as carpenters do) you cannot work. You don't want to go and shoot a film where there is a church around the place on a Sunday and service is on from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., you cannot work. These are some of the things. Sometimes, you just get into a place where you're working in a block of flats for instance, and you are using one of the flats. And there are four flats in the house. There is somebody in another flat who is playing his music and who tells you, 'you can't stop me from playing my own music, you're not using my flat.' Sometimes you go and work even in a duplex that is hired, rented out to the person from whom you have taken permission and the landlady of the place says, 'well, you can't shoot in my property.' Even though the person you have taken permission from has paid up his rent, she still wants you to come and take permission from her and I'll just say, 'no way.' Cancel there. These are some of the problems. And you know, location, a lot can happen there. You want to use a particular place, there is problem of security: armed robbers have gone to that place

before and as such they don't want artists coming there because they don't know everyone of you coming there; they don't know who is an armed robber among you; they don't know who might be a thief or armed robber with you. You go out and hear that an armed-robbery has taken place maybe two, three days after you've left and they will just come and round all of you up. In the studio environment, you will not need to contend with all these problems. With studio, it is set up for recording and you just go on more or less like there is really no problem. But then you cannot do all your shooting in the studio, I mean do everything you want to do. You cannot convert a studio to your house. If you want to construct your own location like the studio thing, we don't have that kind of budget in this environment. Nobody is ready to do a 20 million naira (about \$160,000) film, you understand. No one is ready to do it. A lot of people are not even ready to do a 10 million naira (about \$80,000) film and for you to construct houses for your own studio, you are talking of 100 million or something above. You don't even have the market for it. Our marketing people have not opened up the market to such an extent that you can do such a big budget film and make your money back. Experience on location as a producer or associate producer, I'll say it's fun. For me, making production, doing films is fun. You can go to a place and they tell you, 'no, I can't give you the place.' For me it's fun. I just go to another place. For me, basically, it's like 'o.k., you can't have it all.' You move on, you know. I can work in a particular location for two, three months. For me it's fun, it's what makes you a man. If you expect the fact that you're just making the money and things and just having everything smooth, it can also be rough once in a while. That is the beauty of the job; you encounter failure here and there, you encounter challenges here and there. That's what makes you a man, that is when you'll look and say, 'he is a good production manager.'

*Researcher:* And it appears you're having fun doing what you're doing?

*Bakare:* If I come back to this world three times all over, I will be a manager, I will be a producer. It's the only thing I can do in my life.

*Researcher:* So, what is your background? I should have asked you this from the outset but I didn't.

*Bakare:* My background, definitively, I did not come from a family of film-makers. I came from a family of stark illiterates. My parents never went to school.

*Researcher:* Join the club. Mine never did, either.

*Bakare:* That's right! They never went to school. They never had anything to do with the film industry. I don't think my father ever saw a film before he died (he chuckles). Though my mother watches films; my father was completely against my choice of course, my choice of course of study when I said I was going to read theatre arts in the university. Yea, I read theatre arts at the University of Ife. I have a BA, from the University of Ife. I finished in 1987. And since I finished school, I've not done anything else. I've been producing, I've been managing, I've been in production, from stage to film, to television and here I am today. I hope to be a producer for the next hundred years.

*Researcher:* Well, I did see some big name artists, big name stars on this production. What is your experience of working with these big names? I mean, you've heard so much about temper tantrums and stars demanding star treatment. So, what can you say is your experience relating with these people?

*Bakare:* Yea, it is fun; I tell you, it is fun. Though sometimes, they get on your nerves because this is somebody you know his background, you all started together, he has become a star and he feels, 'aha', you must give him some star treatment. But, you know what, these are people who have worked hard, they have made a name for themselves in the industry; they have become stars. I tell you most of the stars I use are people we have known for over two decades and as such they might not completely demand various star treatment from me, you know, because they know we know each other, we know our background. Some of them we went to school together, some of them were my juniors in the university, you know. We expect respect from each other. But be that as it may, sometimes they demand a bit of unnecessary respect or unnecessary star treatment. And since you know your job must go on at the pace you want the job to go on, you bend here a little for them and you put your foot down here sometime. And they too will bend because they know that you know them. You have partly studied most of them and you know their weaknesses too and they know your weaknesses too. Sometimes, they just become funny and you just laugh over it, you make it like it's fun and work goes on. It's mostly like this,. It's unlike working with up-coming artists. When you're working with up-coming artists, your job tends to be faster. Because the up-coming artist, if you say 7

o'clock, the up-coming artist is likely to be there at that 7 o'clock. But if you're working with a star, if you say 7 o'clock, you call him at 10 o'clock, he has not even woken up in his house. You expect he'll be there soon, but he has not even woken up and you have to wait for him. And they have so many other engagements too. Some of them are doing some other personal things. Some of them will take up some other acting job elsewhere and you have to somehow, somehow bend to their schedule once in a while so that your own job will go on. They have their catchments area. They have their fan and as such you need them in your production. They also need you for the money anyway and for the relevance.

*Researcher:* And exposure, perhaps.

*Bakare:* Yea, for the relevance, for the exposure. They need you too. But at the same time, you know the star thing. They've been in the job and they feel that you should give them some star treatment. Then you bend here once in a while for them, to make your job go on.

*Researcher:* Finally, I've spoken to a lot of people and they are cagey about this topic when you ask them. What is the pay like in this industry? Nobody has come out to tell me how much they are getting for their appearance in this production. So, are you generally happy with your wages and from your experience, have the performers or stars who have worked with you, are they generally happy with what they get?

*Bakare:* Yea, I will say first and foremost that nobody can pay for a work of art, you know. Nobody can pay for the service of an artist because it can't be quantified. But with what obtains in the industry, I think we are one of the highest payers in the industry, one of the highest players in the industry in payment terms. Aside from jobs that are one-off like M-Net jobs where they can pay you big money because they have big sponsors, they have funds from abroad, but in local production, I think we are one of the best in payment. But be that as it may, I believe there is still room for improvement in payment. But for the artist, I believe that a lot of artists camp out to work with Adenuga Productions not only because on the average it pays well but they know that he pays them as and when due. He does not owe you and as such they are happy to work with us in that environment. They are happy that when they are going, even if it ten thousand naira (about \$80) is what they'll get, definitely that money is going to come at the end of the

production. For some of them, it's even before they finish the job. Normally what we do is we encourage paying you 100% of your money when you finish the job but you know, the normal actress, usually most of them are, the normal actress is usually broke. You get some artists demanding for some advance payment or IOU which in most cases, in fact in all cases we oblige them, pay them whatever the balance they get when they finish. In most cases they are quite happy. I cannot say there's hard and fast rule about how much they get for appearing in a production. What Segun Arinze will get might be different from what Yemi Solade will get, might be different from what Bimbo Akoloye will get, or what Steph-Nora will get. But it depends on your negotiating power. We have no standard as in payment. We know that this person having produced this much in the industry should get up to this level and in most cases they are usually very happy about the payment. Our payment can come sometimes close to the home video industry.

*Researcher:* But even then you're still not giving me any exact figures.

*Bakare:* It is difficult because what we are paying them usually is different from what we are paying Bimbo Akinoye. It is not a flat rate. It is not eh...

*Researcher:* But your highest paid actor, do you know how much you have ever paid to an actor with a 'star' quality?

*Bakare:* We've paid as much as 25,000 naira (about \$200) per episode to artists even more than that. We have paid up to 30,000 naira (about \$240) for an appearance on one episode. And in most cases, the artists that work with us are not appearing in one episode. Sometimes, they will get like 10,000 (\$80) 15,000 (\$120) 20,000 (\$160) per episode and they are appearing in seven, eight, ten episodes. So, it is the overall payment that is bulk, unlike you just coming in and appearing in one production and you get that.

*Researcher:* Do you know how long it takes ordinarily, normally, to shoot an episode?

*Bakare:* Uh, for us here, two days, two and a half days, yea.

*Researcher:* Are there any other experiences you can share with me as a producer?

*Bakare:* Experience! Ha! (Good-natured feigning of exasperation)

*Researcher:* Wherever in the story of production, anything else you can tell me.

*Bakare:* What, the experience I can say I can share with anybody is my relationship with the man I call 'Uncle Adenuga.' I thought I was brilliant, I thought I was very smart, I



thought I was very clever, that I was very intelligent. But when I met him, I realised that I haven't started.

*Researcher:* And that for a man who never read theatre arts

*Bakare:* Believe me, believe me...

*Researcher:* He (Mr. Adenuga) studied business administration in the university

*Bakare:* Business administration. Believe me, I cannot stop learning from him. There is no day we sit to talk, we talk. In fact, a lot of people call me Adenuga because I have picked up a lot of his nuances, a lot of his behaviour, you know, having worked with him for almost ten years. I continue to learn from him every day; I continue to learn from him about how to handle life, about how to do production, about how to do business. I, in fact, yea, I will say that he is one person who has taught a lot of people, a lot of other producers this job of production. Film-making, television production, theatre is business; there should be business in it. We should not just look at the artistic, the creativity. We should also look at the business side of it. In fact, just like a banker will go the university and study banking, or an engineer will go and study engineering and come out and make good money for himself, the artist should go to school to read drama or theatre art and come out and compete in business with that person who read accounting or engineering and make good money from it also. In fact, he normally tells us that we have not even tapped the business in the industry. And I cannot stop learning from him.

*Researcher:* Thank you so much Bakky for your time, for your patience and for bearing with these conditions. (It's an extremely hot and humid day)

*Bakare:* Yea.

##### **(5) Transcript of the Interview with Director, Antar Laniyan**

*Researcher:* I haven't met any of you people in production before now but you guys accepted on trust. Perhaps Mr. Adenuga spoke to you about me because I took to him my identification letter that confirmed my claim of being a student and doing this for research purposes. Since, I came down here, you guys have been so wonderful, I mean, allowing me come on location with and things like that. So, I have to thank you for that before I start. I have a few questions regarding the job you do and your experiences as a

director. If you'll be so kind to share your experiences with me because I will be analyzing this interview data, out of which I hope to tell a story of how popular fiction television is produced in the Nigerian context. I've spoken to some people already. I've spoken to Mr. Adenuga himself. I will go back to him at a later stage, actually. But what directing is or what the role of a director is all about is of particular interest to me. So, if you'd be so good as to be forthcoming and not hold anything back and talk me through these issues, I'll be so grateful to you, Mr. Antar. Can I start by asking you what your job entails. Can you describe for me, or to me, if you prefer, what the nature of your job as a director is.

*Antar:* Well, the director is some kind of an overall boss. He has to know the script in and out. He collects the script from the producer. First of all, he reads to understand, the second reading, to interpret, the third reading, to block, that is, how do I make my artists move on my set. So, having read for more than three, four, five times (*Antar's mobile rings*) excuse me...(Conversation over, the Researcher continues)

*Researcher:* Thank you, you were explaining to me what your job as a director entails.

*Antar:* Yes, like I said, you need to read about four, five times. First to know the story, second one to interpret, third one to block and all that. Director is that person that knows every character in the play. He teaches each and everyone the tricks, you know. He tells them this is how lawyers behave; he tells this one this is how a mad man, a mad woman will behave and all that, you understand what I'm saying. So, he's the overall boss. The story, the play, he's already watched the same in his brain. So whatever he has in his brain is what he gives out and that is going to be the picture that everybody will watch at the end of the day.

*Researcher:* Alright, have you always been a director? I mean, can you talk me through your experience, your background, that is, regarding how you came to become a director, what various or varied experiences you went through.

*Antar:* At university, I majored in directing and acting. But, I trained as a professional actor because I believe if you must direct an actor, you yourself must be good because it may get to a situation where the actor says, 'how do you want me to do it?' You have to know yourself how to do it before you can show him how you want it done. I always say, some people believe that you do not need to know how to act and still be a director. But I

believe you need to know how to act before you stand in front of people and say you want to direct. What if you're meeting a very, very good actor and you say, 'move like this' and he says 'no, I prefer it like this', and of course, it will be obvious that his own interpretation is better than yours. So, I started as an actor, then, at a later time, I picked up directing. Of course, it's already in me, I already studied it, and so I see every work I handle as a challenge. I don't say is it just to block actors and tell them what to know, no. I do a different interpretation because I see every job as a challenge. Even when I was acting, I'm still acting, anyway, when I was solely acting, I see everything I do as a challenge.

*Researcher:* For how long have you been directing now?

*Antar:* Uhm, I started directing in 1988

*Researcher:* '88?

*Antar:* Yea

*Researcher:* That's quite some time back.

*Antar:* 1988. I started with Queen Esther

*Researcher:* And have you directed many made-for-television dramas, or have you branched out into home movie directing?

*Antar:* It's like the two go pari-pasu, you know. You direct here, when you're on break here, people outside want you to do what you're doing here for them. So, the two go together but I started at the stage.

*Researcher:* Stage?

*Antar:* Stage

*Researcher:* Besides **Super Story**, that is the current production, have you directed any other genre like documentary, things like that?

*Antar:* No, I've never laid my hands on documentary but I've directed TV, directed melodrama, serious drama, children's play, children's adventure play, for NTA 10. That was about ten years. Some of the children are now grown up. Most of them are stars. (laughs)

*Researcher:* (Laughs with Antar) Also, that means you've truly had your finger on every pie, literally. Well, that being the case, can you talk me through, as a complete novice

that's what I am, what pre-production preparatory work you need to do or requires to be done before you start to shoot.

*Antar:* The first thing like I said is study the script. The script will determine who and who you're going to cast, who and who are going to play in the production. Then the script itself determines the budget that you're going to spend, and the script determines the cadre of artists, you know. Because if you need say a grade one artist to play a particular role, because you know he can play it, you have to pay his fees. That's extra budget. So, you study the script first, then, you outline who and who you want to play what. Then when you've done that, then you now have a production meeting with your location manager, with your co-production manager, with your technical director of photography, the cameraman, all of them, because it's not a one-man show. You all must sit together and achieve it together. That's what you do before you go on location otherwise you get to location, you'll be like someone that is floating, floating in the water. You'll be going up and down and nobody to help you and before you know it, you'll start to crack up. (laughs)

*Researcher:* I've been on location with you since Tuesday. The picture of you or my assessment of you is that of quiet efficiency. Because I don't hear you scream or shout at anybody, you sit there quietly but you seem to wring the best performance out of your actors. How do you manage to do that?

*Antar:* I will not agree with you on that because probably you're here at a time when we have artists that are not difficult. They are not difficult to handle, they take to the directorial guide that you give; they understand it so easily. Some actors don't get it once and when you're running behind schedule and you're losing daylight, like we always say, your time is going, money is running, and you know, you seem not to have achieved much, there is the tendency that you start screaming and shouting on that actor. He's not ready to act, and of course he makes a mistake and starts laughing. You now start coaching him. That's why I tell them, when you're on camp, you're not on picnic, you're here to work. Work hard and go away, go to your house and rest. We are not here to wine and dine. Do the job and get out.

*Researcher:* I've also noticed that you... well, can I start by asking before I make my observation, do you have something like pre-shooting rehearsal before you go on location because I noticed you rehearse a lot before proper shooting starts.

*Antar:* What I normally have before we come on location is reading, proper reading. So, believing that the people you're bringing are professional actor, so you won't have much to do once that person has read well, and you know he has good diction, modulation and all that. He now gets here, you start molding that person, because it is the set that determines how you move the actor. When you get to...o.k., (Antar illustrates) this is the exterior of the house, the director looks at every available space there, 'how am I going to use this space that I won't lose anywhere, I won't waste the space and all that, use the ground level and upper level, all the space so that it doesn't seem as if you packed your actors on one side and this space is useless.' Yes, you study all that. After that you tell your actors what to do. Once they are professionals, they are just made to be moved.

*Researcher:* Can you describe yourself as a perfectionist because I've seen you rehearse as many as four times or five times. And from where I'm standing, sometimes it appears to me as though the first effort is perfect, is flawless. But then you'll insist on them having a go at it for up to at least three, four more times. So, how do you describe yourself and attitude to directing?

*Antar:* Well, when we move once and think it's ok, you're doing that because, maybe you do not know much about directing. The rehearsal you must have seen and thought, 'ah, it's o.k.' maybe not be perfect. I, as the director will see the fault, or must have seen the fault there before I say let's do it again or stand up to do some correction. Once it's not good, it's not good, because it's a challenge and you want to shoot to a film that people will be watching for some 20 years or 30 years to come. You may be alive, you may not be alive; you want them to say good things about you. So, you have to do it perfectly. This is your chance to do, so do it. That is my attitude to work. I want it done perfectly and to the best of my ability. It's only God that does something perfect. Ah, but at least try your possible best.

*Researcher:* Why do you need to take a particular scene as many times as you do, I mean, shoot as many times as you do. Because remember the scene where the little girls were playing a moment ago and then in a matter of seconds they swung into action, playing the

tired children of the couple that had just come back from a party. Yea, the first effort, there was this spontaneous applause because the girls were just fabulous. But you went on to take that particular scene many times still. What is the reason?

*Antar:* I remember the scene you're talking about, the first attempt was perfect. But the thing is that when you have, say you have five people on set, the first one we take is called a long shot; it's to establish the situation. Then when you do that, you now have a group shot, to give the audience a closer shot. Then there's another shot, which is cu, we call it cu, close-up, it gives detail of their facial expression. O.k., that girl that came out of the car and was walking all like this, if you don't have the closer shot of the face, you won't really know what is wrong with her, 'is she drunk, is she sleeping, is it she is just waking up from her sleep and all that. That's why you have to re-shoot and re-shoot. O.k., you shoot everybody, you shoot them two and two, to show their intimacy. Then, you shoot them one on one as individuals to see the expression on their face. By the time we now get to the studio, we now join it and it becomes a film.

*Researcher:* Alright, what do you shoot on because I've heard people talking about shooting on celluloid, on film, on tape. So, what do you record on?

*Antar:* We record on HD, HD Camera. It is the latest in town. It's formerly SDLCAM, DVCAM, DV Camera. Now, it's HD.

*Researcher:* Is it a film or a tape, then?

*Antar:* Sorry?

*Researcher:* Is it a film or a tape?

*Antar:* It's a tape. There's film on the tape, inside the tape.

*Researcher:* O.K.

*Antar:* So, it's not celluloid as in big machine, because I don't think anybody can individually afford that unless, of course, you have assistance from the bank or government.

*Researcher:* As a director, what medium would you have ordinarily preferred to work on?

*Antar:* If there's money, I will use cine.

*Researcher:* So, is there a great difference between celluloid and tape?

*Antar:* Yes, because you know, after you shoot on cinecam, you have to take it the laboratory to process. And it lasts longer, it's clearer. The picture comes out as if it is

real, like something that is not on tape. And the durability, it is very, very durable. If you keep it in a good laboratory, may be years later, you can still pick it up. That's why you still see a film of Charlie Chaplin and all that today. Because if it is this one, if you keep it for too long especially if you keep it in a bad place, moisture and all this dust and all that, you have to clean and clean and all that. That is one more reason why people prefer cine, but there's no money.

*Researcher:* Alright. I guess you must have done studio production or directing as well as location directing. What is your experience of both environments? What are the challenges?

*Antar:* Well, you see, I will not want us to talk about challenges because the approach you take to the one in the studio is the same approach you take to the one you're shooting on location. But, you're given a chance to create more reality on location than at the studio. At the studio, you have to build this, build that. But if you're going on location, so many things that you'll have without creating it. By this I mean that the environment is there already unlike what you get to studio and start building houses. Generally, I prefer location because you're able to express yourself better. When you move to location, they give you a whole place like this, creativity will flow. When you have a set that is built and you're just to use it, it affects the movement of the actor, it affects the expression of the actor bodily, so that's why I prefer location. You come on location, you get a whole house, real house, not make-believe in the studio.

*Researcher:* Are you generally satisfied with the script of **Super Story** and given the chance, what are the things you would want to change in the current script?

*Antar:* You see, one thing I know is before the script gets to my hand, it must have undergone so many, Uncle Wale, the producer, must have discussed the story itself. It will have been discussed before we now tell the writer, 'listen, go and write this story, go and do the screen-play.' He will return it to the producer, Wale Adenuga. Wale Adenuga, you know, is a workaholic. He takes his time to read every word, o.k. it before the script gets to us. If we now have anything that is not so clear about the script, if the producer is not on location, or the writer is not on location, we call, 'so and so scene, this is what we think about it.' He or she thinks about it too and he says, 'it's o.k., the way you want to

do it too is good,' we agree. But if there's any reason why we must change some things, it's rare. The writer is there. We always agree, they come and go.

*Researcher:* Good. Going back to location and especially that first day I was with you on location, I noticed a great deal of time passed and well, subsequently I noticed it's also the case: a great deal of time passing between shoots and you have performers hanging around, some in the sun, some in their cars. What is your feeling about this great time that elapses between shoots and the welfare of the performers and especially the children because on that first day, they were on location with us, even until when shooting was wrapped up there and we went to do the pub scene, the children were still with us. What is your feeling about the time aspect?

*Antar:* Generally, no good father will feel happy if a thing like that happens, but I must tell you that whatever happened was not deliberate. Something must be holding us back, it's either we're waiting for somebody that is important to that production, it's either the lead actor is not around and he has to be on that set and we are waiting for him, and we just cannot do it without him. So, something like that must have happened, it was not deliberate because we too, we want to get out of here, go and get our rest before another script will come.

*Researcher:* Antar, **Super Story** is a one-hour-per week programme and well, you're currently shooting a new story. How do you cope with deadline pressure? Do you have such a pressure on you as a director?

*Antar:* Sorry, come again.

*Researcher:* I mean, **Super Story** the programme shown is once a week; it's shown every Thursday, for an hour and you are a director. My question is: Do you have any deadline pressure on you, pressure on you to hurry up and have the programme in the can before airing and how do you handle it, especially when the schedule overflows, how do you handle it?

*Antar:* Yea, there's normally, the way we plan over things here, we work in a way that we won't have pressure. It may surprise you to hear that this one we are shooting will not go on air until say June because we've worked ahead. I'm sure we have about three months programme on the ground now that we've not touched, that has not been shown. So, by the time, before they finish, this one must have been edited. By the time they are showing



this, we've started another one. So, there is no pressure. Though some people shoot every week, the one they will show on Thursday, they'll start recording it on Sunday and all that, we don't do it like that. This one we are doing now is just seven episodes, which means eight weeks, that is, two months. There's no way we won't come here in another two, three weeks to shoot another seven that will take care of another two months. So, we have it ahead, the episodes ahead. It's a planned thing.

*Researcher:* Oh, that's good to hear, because, I mean, I was really feeling for you guys how late you sometimes have to stay out in order wrap things up.

*Antar:* If we stay out late, it's because we want to achieve. It's because, generally we can't leave when we feel we've not done much and we have actors around, workers around, we just say, 'let's take some two more,' at least, to fill in any gap that we must have been left.

*Researcher:* What can you say are your needs as a director because I know that actors, for instance, need to get into the psyche of their fictional characters, understand their motivation and things like that? So, what can you say are your needs as a director?

*Antar:* Well, I just need an actor that is ready to listen, that will take my directorial guide, a cool-headed person that I can work on, and he's is going along with me to the character, before I know it he's got there and he's delivering. I just need a good actor, a good hand. If he doesn't know much or he cannot perform much, you should be able to submit yourself to me so that I can take you there. You'll be surprised when you are watching yourself, 'huu (in disgust) am I the one that did this.' Then that's when you now know that that director has not been cruel.

*Researcher:* Finally, what can you say, although you have partly answered this question, but if we can revisit it and you provide more details, what can you say are the challenges that confront you as a director?

*Antar:* Yea, the challenges are so many but they are the kind of things that every director must encounter. Like I said, every job I handle, I see it as a challenge otherwise you will not achieve it. Yea, some challenges, you know, if you have 28 children as a father, all of them will not behave the same way. Some will behave as thugs, some will be cool-headed, some will be intelligent, some will not be intelligent. But when you have intelligent actor on set, yea, you're happy. But, when you have those who don't know

anything but they have what you're looking for as in facial expression and all that, you still have to do some extra work to bring that person to the level that you want. And you have some actors that will come late and you're sitting down and waiting for such a person. These are things that can make the director actor scream. When you have it up there and you want to pour it out, it's just too bad the actor is not around. That particular aspect has to be postponed and all that. Meanwhile, you have another one that you have to prepare for. If he doesn't come at that time when you're ready for it, you may lose it. And when it comes, you're giving another thing entirely. And may be the one you had before would be better than the new one that is coming to you now the actor is available.

*Researcher:* I've asked you this before but I will ask again. These challenges, I know there are no tried and tested ways of overcoming them, but as a person, how do you grapple with these challenges and overcome them and if you have suggestions for younger directors, what can you tell them?

*Antar:* First of all, you must study the person. There's something I used to tell my co-directors, I'd say, there must be a school that'll teach child study. You have to study the person, see if he's the type of person that gets angry, or is he some kind of person that is ready to listen, ready to take to your directorial guide, study that person before you do anything. Because if you do not, may be he can deliver, may be you're not patient enough to work on him to deliver. And if he's some kind of person that gets angry he may say, 'o.k., I can't do it again, look for another person.' Time-wasting, you deprive him of becoming an actor, just because you are not patient enough and of course he's not patient. O.K. And, one has to be cool-headed. Different people come to your set and you're the only person that's dealing with them, so, different approach with different people. These are the challenges because we are not from the same house anyway, so we're not meant to behave the same way.

*Researcher:* And even those from the same house do have their own peculiar ways of behaviour

*Antar:* Even children of the same mother, they behave differently

*Researcher:* Uhm (in agreement) I don't know how to thank you. We've been standing here for nearly an hour and you've patiently taken me through all these. Thank so you.

*Antar:* My pleasure.

**(6) Transcript of the Interview with Corporate Affairs Manager, Segun Banjo**

*Researcher:* Well, like I said, at this stage, it's just by way of introducing me to the company, Mr. Banjo. As the Corporate Affairs Manager, I'm sure you know the company very well. Can you talk me through how the company is organized, in terms of the departments and how each department fits in with other departments.

*Mr. Banjo:* Basically, we have the Managing Director (MD), the MD's office. We have the Marketing Department, the Corporate Affairs Department, the Accounts Department, the Admin Department and the Studio Services Department. So, those are the core departments. In charge of these departments are Directors of Marketing, Director of Studio Services, Director of this and that. Operations there are interwoven. Basically...(There was an interruption from Mr. Banjo's office colleague)

*Researcher:* Alright, shall we continue with you telling me what these departments are and what they do, what the various heads' functions are. Obviously I will go to them one by one and find out from them what their job specification is and how each department contributes to the overall running of the company

*Mr. Banjo:* Well, we have the Marketing Department. They go out to source for adverts to sustain the programme. Basically, that is their own core area and sometimes they discuss with companies about arrangement for product endorsement or other promotional details. The Accounts Department is divided into two. One of the accountants works as the in-house person. He is there to see to the advert orders that are brought in by these marketers. We'll schedule them and then move them down to the studio where they will add special effects to them. They will put these in materials, intra-programme, within the programme. So, that's that about that. Naturally we have the Script Editor because basically we source for stories.

*Researcher:* (Interjects and reminds Mr. Banjo about something he started discussing earlier which he was yet to complete) You were saying something about the Accounts Department being divided into two

*Mr. Banjo:* O.k. Yea. The in-house accountant supervises the Marketing Department; they relate more, all the details. I mean, if the marketer gives somebody some discount, he is the one to confirm if it goes by the company policy. If it is an unusual thing, he'll

liaise with the MD and say, 'well, this person is getting more than the circulated rate of discount.' So if it is o.k. well, he can waive it and if not, he can say, 'well, this is not good enough. We can't take this advert.' Whereas the other person does credit control. He is also an account, he is the director, in fact, he is the one that heads that department. He does credit control, agencies that are still owing us, companies that are still owing us, he goes there to remind them, maybe a little push to encourage them to pay. And he also supervises the stations, because with some of these stations we pay them for the airtime that we use. Sometimes, our programmes that are scheduled for 8 are not aired by 8 o'clock or there are discrepancies in figures and all that, so he relates with these stations and the individuals in charge. He is also sometimes, a major contact between our company and potential business-partnering company. Talking about the MD, most of the HoDs report directly to him. One of the persons that reports directly to him is the Script Editor. We source for stories. People come to us from all over the country. They want to share an experience, something that happened to them, to their neighbours, to their sisters and relations and all that. So, when they come in here, we request that they write it in a particular format, may be just a summary, the synopsis. What the Script Editor does is to go through these stories, summarise them a little for easy comprehension for the MD. So when he goes through the little summary, if he is interested in the entire story, he'll read through it. And it is then that he accepts or rejects that particular story. So, if it is not o.k. by him, he will write it on top of the script, indicate there and pass it back to the Script Editor. She'll now get in touch with these people and inform them that 'your story is rejected, your story is accepted and we are paying this much.' So that's just about that. We have the Studio Services Department. (At this point, the researcher interrupts to ask...)

*Researcher:* Sorry, apart from these heads of department reporting directly to the MD, can you also spell out a little bit of what the job of the MD is all about?

*Mr. Banjo:* Well, I will say he is the general overseer of the entire organization. He supervises all the activities of every department. Apart from the running of the organization, when it comes to the core of the production, he is also in charge. For any story to be produced, he goes through the entire script to ensure that it is o.k. by him. It has to be o.k. by him before we hit the location. It is not that the Script Writer will finish

it and next we're going on location. He'll read through everything and then we'll now sit with the production people, probably the Director, the Associate Producer, and sometimes the Script Writer, our in-house Script Writer. Now, when they sit down, they discuss roles and thrash out the details in terms of casting. They'll consider the characters in the story. The Script Writer has a picture in mind about a particular person. Let's say this is the story: a doctorate person's out to investigate us. He (MD) says, o.k., the kind of picture I have in mind is that the person must be slim, must be fair, must wear specs and all that. So, in trying to fit into that, they now identify, 'oh, I think this person should be able to handle that role better. No, no, I don't think so,' before they now conclude who should do what on the programme. Subsequently, the Associate Producer briefs the Director, if the Director is not involved in the casting process, briefs him and of course, the Associate Producer is in charge on location. The Producer basically just goes around the production set when they are on location, just goes there briefly to ensure that things are running smoothly. When we have said o.k., this is the person that is going to play the role of the doctor, but is the actor available? Every other thing is moving on smoothly. He (MD) is there now as I'm talking to you. He is in the office, the production process is on. They are recording as I'm talking to you now. So, if everything is running smoothly, he'll only need to go there just to be sure. Sometimes, he needs to see certain things on location and his observation may be, 'why is this person moving like this?' He may just probably advise the people involved. So, the Director, the Associate Producer, when it comes to production, reports to MD directly. Every other person reports to the Director and the Associate Producer. Regarding the Studio Services, when the production process is concluded, the rushes are taken to the studio for editing. The Editor uses the script as a guide to join the picture together and he has the sound gear necessary and all that. We also have a Finance Director. He actually is more of an admin person. He takes care of the staff and all that. Anything that is administratively involved, you report to him. He'll now naturally brief the MD and all that. We have the Traffic Department. Traffic Department basically previews programmes that go to stations to ensure that the quality is right and sometimes where adverts are involved, that the right adverts are placed within the programme. The Traffic people are guided by the schedule. The schedule for that programme, when you are watching this programme, for instance, you know that 15

minutes into the programme, there should be an advert, or there should be two adverts. The specific adverts that should be placed there, they ensure that they are there. So, that's what the Traffic Department does. Well, we are now here! (Talking about his own department) Corporate Affairs basically, I relate with the public. Any information that needs to be released about our activities, about our programme, about our organization, about my MD, I handle that. And sometimes or most of the time when proposals for companies need to be prepared, I do that. When press releases, voiceovers and other activities need to be done, sometimes when meetings are scheduled, maybe we have a presentation somewhere and my MD is involved, we go together. We meet with other people, companies, we liaise with them in terms, I mean, we break the ice in these relationships, so to say. Subsequently the marketing people will do follow up. I relate with the media naturally.

*Researcher:* You said something about when the Script Editor goes through a script, she visualizes the right people to play various roles. Do you then have a pool of performers that you draw from? Do you have your regular performers that you can call on or is it just any member of the public that you know has acting skills that you get to work for you on these programmes?

*Mr. Banjo:* She (Banjo points to Ms Blessing Ogheneghe who shares an office with him) is actually the Script Editor. The people I'm talking about are the Script Writers. Script Writers are the ones that prepare the script, as it were, that are taken to location. What is the question again?

*Researcher:* You said she goes through the stories that members of the public bring in and she well, she summarizes them, takes to the MD, she runs a list of potential actors through her head and ...(Banjo interrupts to say it is the Script Writer who does that) Alright, the Script Writer does, not Script Editor. I see.

*Mr. Banjo:* The Computer Department. We have the Computer Department, they type the script and the schedule. So, most of the cast come here and pick it up when we've informed them on phone that we're shooting on so and so day, you are to play this role, are you available? If the person is available, then we put his/her name down. After the casting is done, sometimes they include extras so that in case an actor is busy, we have an

option. So, we call the people, speak to them on the phone. If the person is okay by it, the person comes here and picks up his or her script.

*Researcher:* So, it means that this practice in Hollywood, I mean regarding dealing directly, or dealing with actors and performers directly, because I'm aware that in Hollywood, the practice is that you go through the actors' managers or agents. They (actors) don't deal directly with film companies or any such companies. Do they just come in to pick up their scripts? You don't sign contracts or things like that? Tell me the process of getting a performer to play a particular character or role.

*Mr. Banjo:* I may not be able to tell you much about that because I'm not involved in the core production process. I mean, the little I see is what I've just told you. So, when you speak with the MD, he'll be able to answer that better.

*Researcher:* The Studio Services that you mentioned, then you own these studios? Do you own your editing suites or you rent from other people? Tell me about the resources that you have.

*Mr. Banjo:* Well, we own the cameras, the light, the sound equipment that we use on location. We also have four well equipped, digital, non-linear editing suites. I will show them to you after.

*(Mr. Banjo later showed the Researcher around the company's buildings, offices and the editing suites.)*

## **Second Interview with Segun Banjo**

*Researcher:* Good afternoon Mr. Banjo. Thanks again for your time. Well, I'm still continuing with my questions regarding the company's organizational structure. Last time we were talking about the Studio Services and editing suites. Can we continue with these discussions and with the job of the Editor?

*Mr. Banjo:* Well, basically he is in charge of editing and all editing details. Sometimes when we have to shoot on location and it's somehow technical, he'll have to be involved, be on location, sometimes for special effect and all that. He can also be involved with production by advising on camera angle, on what to do and all that, to aid this job. Beyond editing, they do dubbing because most of our programmes are on several

stations. *Papa Ajasco*, for instance, is on 32 stations across the country, *Inside* is on about 28 stations, **Super Story** is on the network and we have about 10 other stations repeating the already broadcast programmes. So, they are in charge of editing and all that, editing, dubbing and every detail when it comes to editing. That is basically their major duty.

*Researcher:* I recall the other time there's a room you called Traffic. Please, can you also explain to me what that room does?

*Mr. Banjo:* For monitoring of all the stations and the particular episode that was aired and sent to these stations. All these things are documented. And that is why Traffic is there. The person in charge of Traffic is doing mainly two jobs. He previews any tape that will go out of this place to ensure the quality is alright, that there is no technical hitch. At the studio, the editor may have dubbed it and would think that it is ok. And it will get to the station and the pictures will either be shaking, be wobbling and all that. So he watches the tape to ensure that everything is alright. If it is not alright, he will notify the editing unit. If the wrong adverts are inserted into the tape, for instance, he will bring this to their notice because he has all these details right before him in black and white. So, he will be cross-checking with what is written down to ensure that the right adverts are the ones that are recorded. (Phone rings and interrupts)

*Researcher:* O.k., alright, can you also talk me through the responsibilities of Director Marketing?

*Mr. Banjo:* Yea, to sustain our programmes on the 32 stations, marketing of adverts on **Super Story** and all that. We mainly have marketers that will go to advert agencies and indigenous companies and other potential advertisers to market our programmes to them so that those people will buy advert slots on our programme. Some will prefer to do block booking so that they can enjoy some fascinating discount. And some will buy as far as they can afford. So, the marketers basically move around to ensure that all our programmes have adverts to sustain their being on the air because some of these stations we pay to be there. So, all these adverts are what we use every week to pay for the airtime on that station as well as run the organization.

*Researcher:* About financing your productions and running the organization, I understand also that you have an arrangement with Unilever and that Unilever actually bought the Thursday 8-9 p.m. time-belt at the NTA as far back as 25 years ago. Are you under any



pressure, I mean, considering the fact that Unilever, I believe pays the NTA for the time-belt, do you need to pay the NTA as well for broadcasting **Super Story**? I assume the cost would have been underwritten by Unilever as Unilever products are basically what are advertised during the forty-five minutes that **Super Story** runs. In other words, do you also need to source for advert with regard to broadcasting **Super Story** or is it just for other of your productions like *Binta and Friends* and *Papa Ajasco* that you need to source advert money for?

*Mr. Banjo:* Mostly before now, it was just for other programmes like *Papa Ajasco and Company*, *Thislife*, *Oddworld* and *Binta and Friends*. But more recently, **Super Story** is now included in that the initial arrangement with Unilever has been reviewed. The initial arrangement was that they were totally sponsoring the programme. They pay for the airtime as well as pay for the shooting, the production of **Super Story**. But now due to an increases left and right and all that, which they feel that they can't bear the cost alone; it has increased enormously from what it used to be. So, the arrangement is now that they take part of the advert slot available and the other 2% we will use to sustain our programme so that the quality and standard of programme is still maintained.

*Researcher:* Besides the Director of Marketing, does your organization have other departments that are concerned with finance?

*Mr. Banjo:* The Director of Finance/Account is actually more of an administrator, an overseer administrator so to say. He is in charge of admin, all staff matters and all that and there's no way you will deal with staff matters that money will not be involved. You can't empower somebody without giving him the authority. So, he is in charge of finance to a very large extent and basically that is it. But we also have the Accounts Department separately where we have the accounts person. The Accounts Department deals with every little detail of money coming from agencies, the cheques and all that. But the Director of Finance mostly handles the money that is used to run the organization. In other words, when we tell him we need this and that, he'll say, 'o.k.' He will write the cheque depending on the funds that are available. (*Researcher* interjects to ask whether the accountant also prepares staff salary) Yes, yes, prepares the salary and all that. But the accounts people deal with money coming in, monitor the details, 'o.k., what discount do we give to these people, how much are they paying, does it tally, what other

inducements can we offer them and all that.' So, the Accounts Department basically deals with money coming in in terms marketing and in terms of other activities that we use to generate funds for the organization.

*Researcher:* Thank you. There is also the Director of Personnel/Admin. What does this office do?

*Mr. Banjo:* Yea, the Director of Personnel/Admin was the one I was referring to because incidentally we call him FD that is Finance Director. He's been that for a while but recently when he was elevated and the other office was created, there was a split of duty. It's only in-house that we call him FD. But he handles more of admin matters. Like I said, you can't empower somebody without giving him authority. So, he's in charge of finance matters, handling in-house activities: staff, organizational, items that are needed. We need to fuel the generator every week, the cars, the maintenance, car parts, their conditions and all that, he's in charge of all that, all administrative matters.

*Researcher:* Are you saying that Admin and Finance are now one office?

*Mr. Banjo:* The Director of Finance like I said, the Personnel/Admin Department is different. It handles all admin matters and the Finance Department now basically handles money coming in, you understand? So, the Director of Personnel and all that is also involved with money but to the extent of running the organization (*Researcher:* o.k.) you now understand, and maintaining the staff and condition of staff, yea.

*Researcher:* Finally, it's now Corporate Affairs. I think I know a bit of what your job is all about, you liaise with the public. Well, beyond that, what else do you do, or can you elaborate a little more on what you do?

*Mr. Banjo:* Erm, I liaise with the public like you said and because of my background as a journalist, I also handle all media matters. I also facilitate documents and the representation of the company, we have public presentation, we have meetings to attend, and all that. We want to write proposals, I liaise with the MD to do that. We have things to do like students are coming in for research, I provide all that without bothering the MD. Much more. But basically, the core of my job is media matters and relating with the public coming in to know more about the organization, know more about our activities. People who are potential advertisers, when our marketers are not around, I attend to them, see to their needs and all that.

*Researcher:* Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., seems to be a sprawling business enterprise these days. I mean, you have Binta International School, you have PEFTI School. Can you tell me a little bit more about these other businesses that have spun out of Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd? What does PEFTI do?

*Mr. Banjo:* Yea, the PEFTI was conceptualized to meet the need that the industry created. We discovered over time that people are just jobless, people just feel that they could cope on the screen. (Banjo's phone rings. He answers. Call terminates and the *Researcher* reminds him of where the discussion was before the call)

*Researcher:* You were telling me about PEFTI, Can you spell it out for me, please?

*Mr. Banjo:* It's the Pencils, Film and Television Institute. So, PEFTI was necessitated to meet the vacuum in the industry, the vacuum in the industry whereby people from their house just walk straight to the screen. From my house I feel, 'I'm sure I can do this too.' I just walk up to the producer and he'll say, o.k., you have a lovely face, I'm sure you'll be able to do it.' And before you know it I'm acting. And the core professionals who probably studied theatre arts in the university or some other things are left behind, probably because they don't have the looks and all that. So, the gatecrashers have taken over. We see that even the gatecrashers, if they have the opportunity to study, will appreciate it because they want to know more. They are people who are already practicing, who in their heart know there's a need to learn, to learn about this thing they want to make a career out of. So, we now created a school so that that need can be met. So, now we have people who come there to learn about acting, to learn about directing, producing, production management, in fact, about all the details of production: lighting, sound, editing, cinematography, presentation, all what have you. As far as production is concerned, every bit of it is taken care of at PEFTI.

*Researcher:* And do you have trained, experienced teachers to impart these skills and what is their background, if you have an idea?

*Mr. Banjo:* All our lecturers are graduates, Masters Degree holders, PhD holders in their different fields, who apart from their degrees and all that, have practised for several years in the industry. So, beyond the theoretical aspect, they can speak on the practical aspect. Most of them are even still practicing in their different fields. The person that is teaching acting still acts, the person in charge of cinematography still handles the camera, the

person that handles editing, for instance, is the Director of Studio Services. So, these are people and these students are lucky enough, that beyond training them, they can come around here to learn a few things, sit around the editor to learn a few things. People learning acting, can come on location, get roles, see how it is done, learn from the practicing professionals on their beat, the production management, directing. So, those are the added advantage, you see. Beyond what you are taught, you have the opportunity, the benefit of learning live and direct.

*Researcher:* And these lecturers, are you employing them on full-time or are they working elsewhere, say UNILAG (University of Lagos), for instance, and they just come here on part-time basis or are they your permanent staff?

*Mr. Banjo:* Like I said, they are all practicing, so they make out time from their tight schedule to ensure that this is done. Like I told you, the person that handles editing is the Director of our Studio Services. So, despite how busy we are, we still encourage that he goes there to teach students, because we know of his ability, we can guarantee that.

*Researcher:* What is your student population? Do you know how many you have? And how many years or months does it take for one to graduate from make-up artistry for instance, and these other areas?

*Mr. Banjo:* The student population over time now, I think it should be close to three hundred or more and the school is less than two years old, just a year plus, really. But the core of the students, the bulk of this population that we just spoke about is from the acting class. Others are for directing and all that. What is the next question?

*Researcher:* How long it takes to graduate?

*Mr. Banjo:* Yea, to graduate. For acting and some other courses, they are three month courses. But for the core technical job, cinematography, editing, and directing, those are six month courses. (Seeking further specific clarifications, the Researcher asks for the duration of the training of specific fields with Banjo supplying the answers. Make-up artist: three months, Editing: Six months and all the other core, technical courses.)

*Researcher:* Thank you. Can we talk about other businesses that have come off of Adenuga Productions Ltd., like Binta International School? What does it do?

*Mr. Banjo:* Binta International School basically offers Primary, Secondary, and the Nursery education. We have a boarding school and it is headed by Mr. Adenuga's wife. So, it's our subsidiary as you said and it is situated in Ejigbo.

*Researcher:* The secondary school, do you have up to SS (Senior Secondary) 3?

*Mr. Banjo:* Yes, it's a regular, registered, private school.

*Researcher:* Are there other businesses that have grown from Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., because it is looking like a veritable monster these days!

*Mr. Banjo:* Yea, we also do a live presentation, called *Laughter Explosion*. It is supposed to be a family gathering for people to have fun. We have *Papa Ajasco and Family* cast live on stage. We have stand-up comedians, we have musicians who will perform live on stage, to encourage family outing.

*Researcher:* Are you trying to recreate the now superseded Yoruba Travelling Theatre? Is it what it is trying to do, to recapture the glory days of Yoruba Travelling Theatre because it's live performance, like you said?

*Mr. Banjo:* No, I will say no to that but because being an urban setting, everybody is busy and you hardly have time for your family and all that. At Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., we have this focus; in all our productions, family is our focus. And so despite that daddy may be watching **Super Story** in the office, mummy may be watching it in a friend's place, the children may be watching it at home and all that, such productions as *Laughter Explosion*, we believe, will give the family an opportunity of being together. The target is to encourage unity in the family.

*Researcher:* Thank you so much, Mr. Banjo. I don't want to leave out anything. I saw a tag on the door, it says Script Editor. I believe you have told me what the Script Editor does. Please, do you have something more you can add to what you have already told me regarding the role of the Script Editor in your organization?

*Mr. Banjo:* Because we call for stories, we don't see it all, we don't get it all. So we believe that people outside can inspire us with incidences, situations and all that. So, we call for stories in and around. So, when these stories come, she goes through them, summarises them and takes them to the producer who will now use his discretion to either accept or reject the stories. So, now, she would have given the story a tag, number

and the date at which the supplier should come around or call to confirm the situation on their story.

*Researcher:* Thank you so much, Mr. Banjo.

**(7) Transcript of telephone interview with the Script Writer at Wale Adenuga Productions Ltd., Mrs. Ayorinse, 31 March, 2007**

*Researcher:* How do you ensure the stories you write are accepted by the producer? Are there criteria, guidelines you need to follow?

*Ayorinse:* We have a story guideline. Sometimes the story comes from me and other times, they are stories that people have sent in. We have what we call story development. So we have a development and I then submit it to the producer. Then he goes through the development, gives his input, whatever he has to add or subtract. So that's how we work it out.

*Researcher:* You wrote *A New Song*, how did it come to be produced, what are the considerations, what kind of discussions preceded the story's acceptance?

*Ayorinse:* We already have a kind of guideline on the things we can show. The programme is shown on the national television so even that is a kind of check on us to know how far we can go. The producer has certain things he wouldn't want to go on air.

*Researcher:* What are some of those things the producer wouldn't want to go on air?

*Ayorinse:* For example, things like religious biases, tribal issues, sensitive things, you know. Nigeria being a diverse, multi-ethnic nation and with different religions and all that, we try to shy away from things that will affect, for instance, people from the North. We avoid using people from the North in a negative light, because they are kind of sensitive. They feel the Southerners portray them in a wrong light. Things like that; things that will generate controversy that will not be of any benefit to us because the programme is shown all over the country. We want it to be accepted by everyone, to be generally accepted everywhere. So, to ensure we appeal to everyone, we tell our story without touching sensitive areas. Just like in America, you do a film about people's sexual preferences, you do a film about racism, but they are things that can touch on sensitive areas. For films you can do that but for TV you have to watch some of these

things so you don't go too far if you have to criticize the government and all that. So, these are some of the things we take into consideration when we develop a story.

*Researcher:* So it's a kind of self-censorship you can say?

*Ayorinse:* Sort of.

*Researcher:* Have you ever had your scripts rejected because of these reasons?

*Ayorinse:* Scripts for Wale Adenuga Productions?

*Researcher:* Well, for them and for Nollywood also, because you write for Nollywood as well.

*Ayorinse:* I have not. Because as a writer, it means you should know your medium, your audience. If it's for television you have to know where to stop. If it's for film it's different because anybody could go to the shops and buy your film. But for TV, you have to recognise.... For me, I write and edit at the same time. It takes me much more effort. I edit the script as I'm writing, so I put in so much emotion, so much effort in the work I do. So by the time it comes out, it's very difficult for any producer to reject that script. So, so far, the work I've been doing for Wale Adenuga Productions, none of my scripts have been rejected.

*Researcher:* Unilever PLC is the main sponsor of the programme. Do they have an input into the ideas that you incorporate into your story?

*Ayorinse:* No they don't.

*Researcher:* So they don't have any say whatsoever?

*Ayorinse:* Except if they have a special project which they want to use **Super Story** as a medium to reach their audience. So, they give us an idea of what they want, we develop a concept which is what we did for them early this year, you know, an exhibition programme. They tell us, 'this is what we want', then we develop the concept which is a story to blend into our own concept of **Super Story**. But they can check if we gave them what they wanted. But apart from that, every other story we are solely responsible for that.

*Researcher:* So, you mean they don't get to dictate to you what kind story, what plots or themes to develop?

*Ayorinse:* The only thing is that the script goes to NTA, they read through the script, they check the story.

*Researcher:* Interesting. Ever before production gets underway?

*Ayorinse:* Yea.

*Researcher:* Can you tell me some other things I should know about the early processes of story development, like what kinds of discussions that go on with the production team.

*Ayorinse:* We have script session where the story is discussed and everybody brings in whatever things they can put in, their ideas about this, their ideas about that. But it's left to the producer and the director to decide which one is a better idea. Because no one man is an island, you have to entertain other people's ideas to broaden what you had down originally. I also do some research. Like in the course of writing, what you have, your development, you may not follow your development line by line, or concept by concept. You might have a development and in the course of writing you might decide to use another concept. In such cases, I discuss with the producer. I also do some research. Like the script I'm now writing on telecommunication, I'm not too versed with their in-house terminology and things like that. I try to get information on that through textbooks and things like that to make sure it wouldn't be...though I don't want it to be too text-book-like, but at least I need to know how certain terms are used. So, these are some of the other things I've done.

*Researcher:* Sorry this is going to sound a little bit personal, but are you married? Apart from writing, do you have some other job, because you know what we think of free-lance work in our country. The work is not conventional, it's not regular. So, are you purely a writer?

*Ayorinse:* I'm married with 2 children and I work solely as a writer. Because the work I do is such a developed profession that I can't afford to do anything else.

*Researcher:* Beautiful! So, you're living off writing completely, a full-time writer nothing else on the sideline and you're comfortable?

*Ayorinse:* Oh well yes but I'm married as well!

*Researcher:* Well, Mrs. Ayorinse, I really thank you for your time and for talking to me.

*Ayorinse:* My pleasure.

#### **(8) Transcript of the Interview with Soundman, Biodun Jimoh**



*Researcher:* Thank you and well, can I start by asking you what your previous experience was and how you came into the movie industry, television production, especially?

*Biodun:* Uh, immediately I finished my secondary school, I went for computer training at Glory Computer College. I've worked for several years as a graphic artist, using packages like Corel Draw, Photoshop. Then came a time I lectured in Desktop Publishing at KENMAC Computer College. I think I'm a very adventurous person; I like to travel a lot. So, in the course of that I traveled to Kano. So, when I saw the place, (without knowing anybody there, I just went there to survey) I decided to settle down there. Because, Desktop Publishing was a hotcake then in the 90's and so, they were always looking for graphic artists. So, I went there, I got a job, got a place to stay. Eventually I went to a tertiary institution in Kano where I studied French and Social Studies/Education. Since then, I've been a teacher of French Language because I fell in love with the language. But in the background, I've always been a writer. I used to write stories; I used to create a lot. I loved to be a writer. But when I got back to Lagos, everywhere I took my stories to, I discovered it wouldn't pay me to be a writer. If you're not a celebrated writer, you know, it's always very difficult. I started with novels. In fact, I wrote a novel that was published online with one American company. They even sent me a copy. It's called False Target. So, they published it. I'm yet to get anything out of it.

*Researcher:* So, how did you come to be on Adenuga Production, **Super Story**?

*Biodun:* Fine. Like I said, I've always been a writer, and I want to create stories that I will see and say this is my story. So, anywhere I go, when I couldn't get through with novels, people started advising me to write for home videos or these TV series, that's the in thing now. So, I started taking my stories to TV production outfit. But the money they were offering is not worth all the trouble I had undergone writing stories. So, from there they started advising me to go from writing to interpreting all these things I say I'm dreaming of. I said o.k., let me give it a try. So, I started going for auditions and fortunately they started offering me roles. I've worked with MNET, Age of Five, Mamako, then, Yoruba movies. Then, Bakky, the AP has always been a friend. While I was a graphic artist, while I was still working at the computer, there was a time, I think, in 1995 that he brought a script for us to type, back there at Mushin, in Lagos. So, we got to know each

other. So, we were close friends but we lost contact. But I've always tuned in, each time watching Wale Adenuga Productions. So, I decided to contact him since I've started acting. So, when I saw him at first, he went 'ah, Biodun, you've really grown and you look like a model.'

*Researcher:* But did you go to any acting school, any acting experience, or you just got into it by accident or on the advice of your friends? How did you get to be an actor in terms of training?

*Biodun:* Yea. I trained with Taji Balogun. In the Yoruba setting, they have this thing that they call Rehearsals. It's like training, more of training than rehearsals. So, we used to have rehearsals. I used to go there. I underwent certain training at his Kalid Ventures. That's the name he calls his own group.

*Researcher:* How long did it take you to graduate from such experience, because that's what I will call it or rehearsal by your own expression?

*Biodun:* Six months

*Researcher:* O.k.

*Biodun:* Six months. At some stage, he delegated me to be training the students when he saw that I could do very well. So, because he used to be very busy at the time, he's always on location, travels out of the country, he was now looking for somebody to stand in for him any time he's not around. So, he made me their teacher and in the process of teaching I started learning more myself.

*Researcher:* In this production, you are the Assistant Soundman, can you talk me through what this role entails and what your job on the set is?

*Biodun:* O.k. As a Soundman, I'm here to monitor the audio of all these things. There are lines and dialogue, we don't have cordless, just maybe panoramic shots or montage, but any time there is a line we monitor the audio to ensure that everything that the artist in the scene has said is being recorded and entering the right channel. So, that's what we do in sound.

*Researcher:* What do you mean by channel?

*Biodun:* Take for instance, we have left and right channels. When recording, that is why sometimes when you record certain things, if you're using a system that has that passage left and right and if your machine...(illustrates with my recording device) take for

instance this computer, you're using it to watch film, it's switched to the right alone, it's not balanced. And the thing is recorded to the left, you might not see anything. So, you have to balance it, you have to make sure it's balanced. And you have to make sure the sound is not humming, make sure that everything is entering properly. It's not humming and you make sure that it's not cracked. So, you make sure everything is entering smoothly. So, that's why we monitor sound and reduce the mike.

*Researcher:* Alright. I have seen you wielding a microphone. I think we have two on the current production. Can you tell me, because I've seen the mike held aloft, that is, directly above the performers or lowered or...So, what effect do you achieve from the various positions whether held aloft or lowered? What effect or what kind of sound do you achieve by these positions of the microphone?

*Biodun:* O.k. Firstly, if you want to position your boom mike, you have to take the camera into consideration. You don't want the boom to enter the shot. So, firstly, if you want to create a boom, you have to wait for the cameraman to set his angle. So, when he sets his angle, we check his print, to see if it's medium shot, wide or close shot. So, if he sets his angle and it's a close, I have to take the mike closer

*(There was an interruption from eternal noise)*

*Researcher:* Can we start from there again, what the various positions of the microphones do?

*Biodun:* Take for instance, if you're taking a wide, you know what that is, a wide shot?

*Researcher:* Explain it to me, how it works and what it does for a scene.

*Biodun:* If it's exterior, we're outside and there are four people on the set. We take a wide shot that's going to contain the four people from the farther up. So, any time we're taking the wide shot, the cameraman is positioned at the edge, the edge of the room. Take for instance, it's the edge of this room, then the man carrying the boom will make sure that he is beside the cameraman, then raise his mike up. The mike is going to take everything around that place. That is why when we are taking the wide, we need everything to be very quiet. That's why we need to be up any time we're taking wide.

*Researcher:* So, how do you describe your mike, is it unidimensional or? Because I think there are microphones fitted in a way that they can pick sounds that are directly in front

of them, or behind them, or any sound within that vicinity. So, what kind of in-built system does your mike have? Is it unidimensional and all these things?

*Biodun:* Yea. It's not unidimensional, it can pick from environ. But for safety, because we use audio mixer.

*Researcher:* o.k.

*Biodun:* With the audio mixer you can control everything around. You can control the focus, may be in a particular area, not to take much ambiance, just directly to where the mike is for safety. Because, if you leave the sound open with ambiance or you're ready to pick up like you said, to pick up from every angle, it can pick up a prayer from somebody, a sneeze, a whisper, because it's very sensitive like that when you open it to ambiance. So, we like to block all those background voices or background sounds and focus where we are so that we can have clarity. That's why we do it with ambiance sound.

*Researcher:* Do you think two microphones are enough for a production on a set or in a studio? Because on this set all I have noticed are two microphones. Do you think two microphones are enough?

*Biodun:* Yes, because we're using two cameras. If we were to be using one camera, one microphone is enough. Two cameras, two microphones, that's the way it is. We're running on two microphones.

*Researcher:* Given the chance, would you prefer to work with other forms of microphones or you're comfortable or o.k. with this type of microphone, the fishpole type and you having to hoist it or lower it?

*Biodun:* Definitely, I'd like to work with a more convenient microphone, rather than you carrying your mike all the time and your arms aching, you know. The world is advancing now and we have various forms of microphone that you can use on set that are more convenient for a soundman to carry.

*Researcher:* So, what can you say are the challenges that you face in this job as a Soundman?

*Biodun:* The major challenges I'm facing right now is that I myself, am still learning and they come here, they want to achieve everything as fast as possible. So, they wouldn't have time for someone who is delaying the job, who is not catching up, or who does not

understand everything about it. So, I've had to pay extra attention, I have had to really take myself out of my normal capability to grasp things in order to learn some of the things I know about sound now. I've been very fast so that I can learn in order to be able to cope.

*Researcher:* Is this then the first job you've ever done as a Soundman because you trained as an actor, you were first of all a teacher, a computer teacher, a French Sociology teacher, then an actor, and now a Soundman. Is this your first job or the first time you're working in this capacity as a Soundman then?

*Biodun:* It's not my first job but it's the first time here at Wale Adenuga Production, but it's not the first job. It should be about the fifth.

*Researcher:* As a Soundman

*Biodun:* As a Soundman

*Researcher:* Right, thank you for your time and for sharing your experiences with me. Thank you very much.

*Biodun:* Thank you.

#### (9) **Transcript of the Interview with Director of Photography, Mr. Abimbola**

*Researcher:* Mr. Abimbola, you are the Director of Photography on this shoot?

*Abimbola:* No.

*Researcher:* O.k. So, what do you do in this production?

*Abimbola:* Well, basically in the **Super Story** shoot, I'm working as a second unit Cameraman but naturally I'm a Director of Photography.

*Researcher:* O.k. so, right. On this assignment you're a Cameraman?

*Abimbola:* Yea

*Researcher:* O.k. But being a cameraman has also something to do with directing photography, isn't it?

*Abimbola:* Well, definitely. But I have to say I'm not the Director of Photography on this particular shoot. Naturally, I'm a Director of Photography but you can't have two DOPS on a particular shoot. It has to be one person that is a head of the team so that you don't get to that situation where you're not able to work as a team. The only thing I do is based

on my experience, my knowledge, I will just make suggestions. I can say, 'o.k., DOP what about if we do it this way, how would you feel?' And if he feels that's not what he wants to do, good.

*Researcher:* So, can you talk me through what your previous experience was, your background, that is, before you came to work on this production?

*Abimbola:* Well, basically, I started at the NTA, and I worked there for about four years with the News Directorate. I have worked with the Programmes Directorate too as a cameraman. When I left here, I worked with Senate Production. We used to do more of music video. Then, later I moved to Mainframe Production to work with the number one cinematographer in Nigeria, Tunde Kilani. I worked with Tunde Kilani for about five years and I've been doing this consistently on a daily basis. And apart from working at the company, I have worked with the best hands in the industry. When you are talking about the Tunde Kilani, Uche Okafor, Taji Kita, Wale Adenuga or whoever, I have worked with them in different capacity. Along the line while I was training, I trained more as...I have knowledge of everything from camera operation to lightning, to editing, to presentation, to sound, make-up, acting, editing, costume. So, I have a broad knowledge of everything and so when I'm talking to you or when I'm shooting as a DOP, I tend to have the set design at heart and I'd say, 'o.k., what do I do to at least purify this stock?' If we have a set designer, I'd say, 'o.k., give me this colour, let's add this colour to this and it should give us this.' If the set designer does not do his work well, there is no how I will photograph it and it will come out well. And at the same time I have to remember the man at the post-production unit, which is the editor. I have to always think about him and give him the necessary pictures that will help him tell his story later. Because you know the editor has his own angle to every story and so I have to always give him every necessary material and think about every other person in the department.

*Researcher:* Can you describe for me what kind of camera you use and how it works, in this production, that is?

*Abimbola:* Well, basically, we've been using the HD camera but we shoot more on DVD. Most of the time, we try to put up the two cameras to work at the same time. But any time they set the right shape, the DOP prefers to use one camera which is the master camera to take the master shots but when it comes to close-ups, the other camera comes in.

*Researcher:* I have noticed your cameras have something like blue sheet, cream sheet. Are these what you call diffusers and why do you need them?

*Abimbola:* Well, basically, you know, there are different ways of lighting plate metals. You have the daylight way of lighting and you have the tungsten. Most of these lights are tungsten generated. Any time you see the blue gel, we call them gels, the blue gels are converters. They convert the light to daylight because, normally, the kind of light that the daylight brings is yellowish in colour. And you need something else to convert that so that it gives more of the daylight feel. And that is what the blue gel does. Then, the other one that is yellowish in colour is called a tracing paper, we call it a trace. What the trace does is it cuts down the density of light that comes out. Because sometimes, the light that comes out is so hot that you need to cut it down from the light itself before you now move into the camera and begin to cut it down and reduce it.

*Researcher:* Thank you. Well, in planning a shoot, do you have complete freedom with determining what camera angles you require to shoot a particular scene or sequence?

*Abimbola:* No. No. No

*Researcher:* So, who makes the ultimate decision?

*Abimbola:* On this shoot, we don't have complete freedom because the Director is there and he decides what he wants so we try as much as possible to give him that. O.k., he has the idea, he has the dream and we just try to actualize it through the pictures.

*Researcher:* Alright. Well, can you talk me through the challenges you encounter in the job of being a Cameraman?

*Abimbola:* Well, you have to say in the job of being a Cameraman.... Every job has its own challenges and you are as good as your last job. Whatever you do, I feel well, you attack every job the way it comes. If it's a job they are o.k. for you to suggest things, good. And if it's a job they already have a standard, they already have a method of operation, you can't come from somewhere and start to change it all in one day. You can only suggest and when you suggest and they feel that is not what they to do or that is not what they want, you just keep your mouth shut and keep your ideas to yourself. So, that is one of the challenges that I'm facing basically here. You just try o.k., let's work it out, let's try and make it look good. **Super Story** really is widely watched, but it can be better. And that is one thing. If most of the foreign soap operas, like *When You Were*

*Mine* and the rest of them, if people sit down every evening in order to watch them (and these are not things that we even do in Nigeria, we didn't shoot them in Nigeria, we didn't do them in Nigeria and a lot of people stay glued to it and always want to watch it) then there is something that is drawing them to it. Is it the plot, is it the camera work that makes them like the programme? And apart from the acting, I like the camera work in there, the lighting and every other thing because most of the time you act as if you're shooting the movie. Most of the time you see the orange movie is easier so you don't really see so much difference in between the two end.

*Researcher:* Alright, given half the chance, or if you have the opportunity, would you want to continue working with same camera you're working with at the moment or would you prefer to do some other thing like work with a different camera? Tell me what you think.

*Abimbola:* I'm more of a DOP that does not give so much credit to the camera because it's actually not the camera that is doing the work; it's the man behind the camera that does the work. So, it's how good you are because the camera is just a machine, you tell it what you want it to do, you understand me. The camera we currently have here is the best so far now, of the highest level of technology. But at the same time...

*Researcher:* How do you describe it, the HD?

*Abimbola:* HD, it's the Higher Definition.

*Researcher:* O.K, Higher Definition. O.K.

*Abimbola:* Higher Definition camera and one thing one has to understand about it is that you could make the best camera in the world look stupid and you could make the smallest camera in the world look so good. It depends on the operation.

*Researcher:* I think I understand.

*Abimbola:* So it's more of you than the equipment.

*Researcher:* Right.

*Abimbola:* A lot of people feel it's the equipment that is doing the trick whereas it's not the equipment. (Brings out a digital camera and shows the Researcher the picture/movie he shot with the equipment) The stuff I showed you, I shot it on DX 1,000. The DX 1,000 and DX 900 and this as you see is a small camcorder. It's not as big as, it's not as sophisticated, so unless I told you what I shoot some of these things with, you can never know. It's all about getting the pictures right.



*Researcher:* Thank you very much, Mr. Abimbola. And I don't know if I explained to you that all I'm using this to do, the data, when I transcribe this interview data is just to tell a story of how TV drama is produced in the Nigerian context. And thank you again for sharing your, knowledge, your experiences and your viewpoints with me.

#### **(10) Transcript of the Interview with Actor, Segun Arinze**

*Researcher:* Thank you Mr. Arinze for agreeing to speak to me. If you don't mind, can I start by asking you what your background was, how you came to be a performer, that is?

*Arinze:* Uhhmm, background, naturally, a very normal one, playing all the truanicies a child would play, also being brought up to be on the straight and narrow path. But I knew from the outset that I was going to be an entertainer. So, I would say I started out as an entertainer and I'm still an entertainer. Now, entertainment is all encompassing, be it sports. Sport is another form of entertainment. Music, theatre, movies, live theatre, dance and all that but I found myself as an actor and a singer and every other thing followed, that's being a director, a producer, being a voiceover talent and writing once in a while. But, when I started, I started out as an entertainer. I started in my secondary school, the Troopers of Commerce, ADC, Kwara State Victory College of Commerce. I used to appear on *Youth Scene*, NTA Ilorin, where I used to sing and read poems. Once in a while, we'll do drama. And then I got introduced into theatre proper by my friend. He said he saw me in Kwara State and thought I could make a good actor and then he felt my spoken English was good. He felt I have a future in it and I should give it a try. So, we started out something called Palm Players in those days.

*Researcher:* And what year was all this happening?

*Arinze:* This was in the early 80's, 1980, '81, thereabouts. Then we started out Palm Players. Then we did Ken Saro-wiwa's Transistor Radio. We made #11.30. The fee was preposterous then but it was money. But that didn't deter us, didn't deter me. I knew I wanted to be an actor and so I stayed focused. And then I continued doing that and when it was time for me to go and broaden my horizon in terms of school. I decided I was going to read dramatic arts. So, I went off to Ife to do dramatic arts. I was trained by

Chuck Mike, in the African Studies Department. Bakky and Yemi Solade, we were all in the same department. Yea, we were in the same department. From there I moved on to work with Anamse Playhouse. I'm still with Anamse Playhouse. I was with Anamse Playhouse initially. From Anamse Playhouse, I went to school and then came back to Anamse Playhouse. Anamse Playhouse was being run by Bassey Effiong then. He's now deputy minister of culture, Cross River State Centre for Art Council. I'm branching now into print and Nollywood. But I hate calling it Nollywood, because there is no reason why I should call it Nollywood. I prefer to call it Nigawood, if it has to be anything wood at all. Before it was christened Nollywood, we were doing small, small soaps and on TV and some other little things here and there. It was what you call TV dramas those days. I remember it was the only thing that gave us any ray of hope then aside from the *Village Headmaster*. Another series I was on was *Mirror in the Sun*.

*Researcher:* You were in the *Village Headmaster*?

*Arinze:* I was in *Village Headmaster*. I appeared on *Village Headmaster* but was on a guest, that is the revised, the modernized version of *Village Headmaster*. So, don't start looking at me as an old man of over 70 years or thereabouts (Starts chuckling). Of course, you know Deji Molowu there who is playing Kabiyesi (the actor Deji was sitting nearby during this interview)

*Researcher:* That's what Deji told me.

*Arinze:* Did you ever get to watch it?

*Researcher:* No. Unfortunately no. I caught some episodes, but not a lot of them and that was a long time ago.

*Arinze:* He was the Kabiyesi who was always going huh, huh, huh, in those days. Yea. There are friends (mentions some people who he says are his friends in those days) and quite a number of them who were in the *Village Headmaster* and we used to look up to them, then. We'd never miss *Village Headmaster*. It was a Sunday, Sunday tonic, then.

*Researcher:* Just like **Super Story** is these days?

*Arinze:* These days

*Researcher:* Yea.

*Arinze:* And then from then on *Mirror in the Sun* came. *Mirror in the Sun*, they had a house, the team. They introduced *Pap* what was later on changed to *Third Eye*. Then we

had *Ripples*. It was then I came; I surfaced. I did *Ripples*. I did some television dramas and then went on to do *Fortunes* which metamorphosed into *Megafortune* where I was playing James Gomez. I guess the rest is history and that's how I started. And what gave birth to those things we have now is a story that has been told over and over again.

*Researcher*: Can I hear your version of it, anyway?

*Arinze*: That Kenneth Nnebue was marketing Yoruba films then for Nec Video, his company and he felt the need to do something too for his own uh..

*Researcher*: Ethnic group?

*Arinze*: Ethnic group and he did *Living in Bondage* and it was subtitled and it was a runaway success.

*Researcher*: Please, do you know what year exactly that programme came out or that home movie came out?

*Arinze*: I think, eh, if I remember very well it was sometime in the early '90s. I think it was '91, '92. I can't precisely remember now but I know they did *Living in Bondage*. I'm not too sure now but I have to do some references to find out the date. But I know it was in the '9s that they did *Living in Bondage* and it was a runaway success.

*Researcher*: I think that can be considered as the year that Nollywood can rightly be said to have been born?

*Arinze*: I don't even want to say that because that will be a great injustice and disservice to our forebears in the industry. Because remember that before now, we had the culture of celluloid. There were cinema houses. We had Rex Cinema; we had Ben Cinema; we had Cinema House and Glover Hall and all that. I think what really attracted us then; we would have gone beyond this now, far beyond this. But the fact that Nigeria was so militarized; there was always this truncating of democracy. Whenever democracy tried to come, the military came and truncated it. And for one reason or the other, it was more of the political that affected us. And then with the advent of oil coming in, we also did not take advantage of it. Years, we had the likes of Balogun, Eddie Ugboma, we had Baba Sala. Yea, they were all shooting on celluloid. Even Wale Adenuga shot on celluloid when he did *Papa Ajasco*. The first *Papa Ajasco* ever was on celluloid.

*Researcher*: Was it?

*Arinze:* Yea, it was on celluloid and also a runaway success. And when I say a runaway success, it was a runaway success. I remember I was in Ikorodu here then. He was living in Ikorodu here as a young man. I was a teenager then and I remember he was everywhere. We went to the National Theatre to watch *Papa Ajasco* and we came back with tales of joy and were so excited about seeing a truly Nigerian movie production. People were not shooting on celluloid then. It was so unfortunate for us that politics came into it and then as the world was progressing and everybody was going to democracy and all that and things started changing. The crime rate grew as a result of unemployment. From then people could not go out to the theatre to go watch films because they would be mugged. People were mugged. You go out and you were mugged. That wasn't nice at all. And so, gradually we started ebbing, drifting into doldrums and before you knew it we lost the culture of going to watch films in theatres. So what you see now and then are just flashes here and there, people coming to do one or two things and then they go back again. And then of course the producer and directors also started looking elsewhere. There was no producing and directing here. They were now going outside and things started changing and all that and that really, really affected us.

*Researcher:* Segun, you mentioned politics as a major contributing factor in the decline of the emerging film industry in Nigeria. Please, can you elaborate; how politics affect the baby that was coming into life, if I can use the expression?

*Arinze:* What I said, I was giving instances, because we were so militarized, right? Nigeria was generally seen as a pariah state. We were a pariah state whether we liked it or not. Unfortunately for the film industry we were a pariah state; nobody wanted to do anything with us. Now, I will give you a perfect example. When the home videos newly started, after *Living in Bondage*, others started producing films in Igbo, and they were subtitling in English. And all of a sudden people said, 'hey, why are we doing this? Why don't we start doing English movies? And people started doing it in English. We were doing *Fortunes* and *Fortunes* went off the air because there was a form of disagreement between the producers and the NTA. And NTA said, 'you guys, go and sort yourselves out.' And so, when that went off, what was the next thing to do? They decided, 'o.k., let's put everybody together and make a home video of this.' And they called it *Dark Goddess*. And that in itself gave rise to the battle of the movies. Now, people are no

longer going to the cinema houses to go and watch films. They rather prefer to buy and sit in the comfort of their homes in private and watch the films. Right.

*Researcher:* Was the politics then...?

*Arinze:* I'm getting to that issue now.

*Researcher:* O.k.

*Arinze:* You understand? Now when I said politics now started affecting it, when everybody would rather just go into full democracy, what happened? June 12 happened. And when we were rising, it even affected the music industry. When the politics stabilized, you start thinking of music, or thinking of movies. Everybody started thinking there was a slow pandemonium in the state, in the polity. The polity was heated up. So, we didn't know where we were going. Were we going forward or backwards? And again based on the fact that people had gone through the experience of war before, the first time civil war and nobody wanted to. So, foreign investments couldn't come in. Nobody was going come in, you couldn't bring in equipment; you couldn't work. It was politics and militarization of Nigeria that adversely affected us.

*Researcher:* So, it was nothing ethnic? I mean, there weren't ethnic undertones?

*Arinze:* No, no, no. I had nothing to do with ethnicity. Ethnicity had nothing to do with it. Anybody who says that is a pathetic liar, a pathological liar. It was strictly politics. It had nothing to do with the politics of the nation. And now we can begin to see the gains of it. Now we are democratized.

*Researcher:* Alright

*Arinze:* We are going on smoothly. Well, I won't say smoothly but of course, every country has its own problem. We are all staggering; we all stumbling but of course we'll perfect it as we go along. American democracy was not perfected in one day. They had their own problems, same thing with UK. And same elsewhere. Would you have ever thought in Nigeria before that you would see something like *Big Brother* Nigeria showing? That Nigerians would want to watch their own movies; Nigerians would like to listen to their own music. Before, it's, 'eh bring Michael Jackson, Lionel Ritchie.' Now, you play any Nigerian music, everybody will go wild. If you doubt me go to any night club now; it's Nigerian music they want to listen to, Nigerian Jamz. They want to watch film, everybody wants to watch Nigerian home movie. Would you ever have thought

Nigeria would give birth to, sort of inspire Multi-choice to say, 'o.k., let's create a channel fully dedicated to home movies and they call it African Magic? It's working.

*Researcher:* Alright Segun, having appeared in so many made-for-television dramas, what is your experience of television drama production in Nigeria?

*Arinze:* Well, there are two forms, we can call one home video and the other television soap. Home videos, as we know, are affordable on VHS tapes and DVD and people buy them and watch in the privacy of their own homes. And of course television drama, like what we are making right now, is for the national network. My experience has been a mixture of everything: the good, the bad, and the not-so-good. Sometimes you work with people who are highly professional, who know what they are doing. Sometimes you work with people who don't even know what they are doing at all. And sometimes we celebrate mediocrity and that is the worst ailment, the worst part. And that is the worst ailment you can ever think of when we celebrate mediocrity. Because we find people who don't have schools but have to train people. So, a lot of people we see doing this job are learning and training on the job and experience is now what carries them. But if they have the wherewithal to go to school, they would have. And if of course, the structures were provided, they would have but unfortunately for us, the structures were not provided. In Nigeria, the Film College, the Nigerian Film Institute is dead, it's there in Jos, moribund. We have equipment there worth millions rotting away. They don't even know what they are doing.

*Researcher:* Was it established by the government or the individuals?

*Arinze:* Fully, fully established by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Nigerian Film Institute. It's over there in Jos. You should take time out to go to Jos and see it. It's moribund right now. You have millions of dollars of equipment there rotting away. I don't think they have even trained one or two...there's nobody you will see now and ask 'where did you school?' and he'll tell you 'Nigerian Film Institute.'

*Researcher:* Can it be because there are really no trained professionals or people with the skills to train future producers or perhaps people in production?

*Arinze:* Well, there are. There are people but of course, the infrastructures are provided but the structures are not provided, the wherewithal for them to impart this knowledge is not there.

*Researcher:* How do you mean?

*Arinze:* For instance, you don't have any inducement. I mean, if you have...lecturers in Ghana, there is a film institute there. Now it's a vice versa. In Ghana there's a film institute, they train well, but unfortunately for them they don't churn out good stories. But in terms of their sound, they are ok. Now come to Nigeria, there is no film institute but they churn out movies. Whether we like it or not we do try to churn out movies. So, you see, on both sides, we have problems. But I'll like to see a situation where we won't even have a problem here. Where we say, 'hey, o.k, you want to read theatre arts, you want to do child training, go to school, go and learn and when you come out, you are a practitioner on the field.' Because if I know one thing for free it is that there is nowhere in the world where government comes and says, 'hey, we are sponsoring a movie, or putting money in this production.' It's not done anywhere. Even Hollywood was made strictly a private venture. The only thing government could help out with is by providing support. And when I say support, they'll give things that will cushion the after-effect. In terms of bringing in equipment, they'll say o.k., we'll give tax-relief on this, import duties here and there. They can help in that regard. If you want to go the extra mile, they will say, 'o.k. let's establish credit fund, a bank for films. So, you don't have money to shoot, you have a good idea, go to the fund. They screen you, you do everything, get your references, take the money, shoot the film, make your money, monitor it all the way, bring the money back so that the next man that comes will see something to take. But of course I know Nigeria. I'm not trying to run my country down. But I know that if you probably put money there people will go and take money; they won't pay that money back and it will become another failed white elephant project.

*Researcher:* Alright. Let's come home now to the current production, **Super Story**, how do you see the character you are portraying, Demola?

*Arinze:* Interesting. Very interesting guy. But, see, once in a while in your life, even though you're acting, there are certain things that you can draw from that has a semblance with the experiences you have. I find myself in that position where Demola has a small semblance with the same thing I've experienced before. Demola would pick a gun and shoot his wife and shoot his friend. Segun Arinze won't shoot his wife and shoot his friend.

*Researcher:* So, do you have a problem reconciling your character with that of the fictional character you're portraying?

*Arinze:* That's what I'm trying to explain to you that I don't have that kind of condition. For me, I've always believed in being a method actor. I'm a method actor. Did I say method here? Yea, I'm character actor. I believe in the study of Fadis Lasky who is an internal person. From my training, Chuck Mike also is an internal person. So, you're working, you're working from within. Same thing with Robert Benedette, Chukwurah who are trained actors who are internal. So, I believe that I'm a method actor. I pick up a role, I play it, and once I'm done with that role, I purge it, purge myself of that and dump it and go. I was just giving you striking instances, I was giving you semblances. And I said that Demola would take a gun and shoot his wife and shoot his friend. Segun Arinze won't do that.

*Researcher:* Alright. Purging yourself of the fictional character when shooting ends. Well, good, but, how do you get into the psyche of your fictional character?

*Arinze:* Getting into the psyche of my fictional character is reading the script thoroughly, sitting down with my director to discuss the character. First you ask yourself, 'how old is this character, how he does he relate to the other characters in the story, why does he react like this, what is his background, why does he do this, if he does it this way, there must have been something that triggered him off to do it this way and so you begin to draw instances and begin to mold the character. So, these things go into molding the character. Right. So, I do believe, once I pick up a script, I read it thoroughly and if I like to do the job, I sit down with my director to work out the detail. But I make sure as much as possible that there are no close semblances between the character I play and myself in person.

*Researcher:* Now, coming to the work environment, how can you describe location shooting and studio shooting, any differences or similarities?

*Arinze:* Oh, definitely, definitely a lot of differences between location shooting. Location, of course, like we say, location is going out to the field to do the job. You also have sound problems. We have to treat the sound so sometimes when we come to down to editing board you must clean up your sound because of noise pollution from outside, distractions here and there, cars honking, street market women, children, everybody



making noise and of course passers-by who want to stop and chat about what you are doing. Studio is basically because everywhere is acoustically treated and you build your set in there and so when you shoot you have no problem with your sound. So, these are two basic differences but of course there are other differences between location and studio shooting.

*Researcher:* But what about acting in both environments?

*Arinze:* It's the same. It's the same. Whether you're acting on location or studio, it's the same.

*Researcher:* You made reference to all the distractions that you have to contend with during location shooting. You mean these distractions in no way impact on your own acting?

*Arinze:* It's doesn't have to impact on me, I'm an actor, I'm trained. I'm trained to focus. I'm trained to concentrate on my job. I If there's going to be distractions, that's why we have location assistants, personal assistants on location to help you curtail that problem. Let me give you an example, was it three nights ago? We were shooting at Eriwu Supermarket, and I was doing a drive scene. Three nights ago, I was doing a drive scene at night about 10:30 to 11. No, about 9-30 p.m. to 10 p.m. And there were these guys we call area boys, all gathered there and were watching, messing about and asking me my real name and the camera was rolling. That was a distraction but I try most of all to concentrate. Now, it's the job of the production assistant there to hush them up, 'hey, please, he's working.' When I have done with that I can come out. If I'm in the spirit to camaraderie with you, I camaraderie with you; if not I'll let you go.

*Researcher:* Alright, coming to fans, attention whether from the media or the fans. How do you handle that kind of attention and have you had a lot of them, I mean, both from the media and fans? How can you describe attention from your fans and the media?

*Arinze:* You see, fans, I quote it to you early, you must manage fans the way you manage your money.

*Researcher:* Yea? Can you tell me about it?

*Arinze:* Yes, because they are the ones who made you what you are and you must be very careful in handling them. Now, we are all humans and we're fallible. Sometimes, you find fans who are very unruly, sometimes you find nice ones and sometimes ones who are

highly indifferent. So, it's how you comport yourself and how you carry on with them. And they don't want to even know whether you've got problems or not. What they expect is, 'hi Segun' and you reciprocate, 'hi, how are you, what's your name?' Sometimes, you find ones that are unruly. They want you to give them money. When you don't have money to give them, they get abusive, they insult you. And you also try to control your temper. And sometimes, because we are humans sometimes, you find yourself letting your guard down. I've learnt one thing: that being in the public eye is a lot of job, it's a big burden. But, I've learnt to take it in my stride. And as I go along the way, each step, the same temperament, I try to handle them. And then, some of the female ones, some of them want to end up in bed with you. Some of them just want to be seen with you. Now, depending on what any of them wants to be with you, the worst mistake you can make as an actor is to misconstrue the feelings of the female fans for love. Because you don't know what it is. But I try as much as possible to keep them at bay. It's a difficult task. There are some that will bug you; some asking you something useless. Some will go to look for your phone number no matter how much it costs. They'll buy that phone number just to call you, just to hear your voice. I've had to change.... This is the second or third time I'm changing my numbers. They'll say, 'hello, is that Segun Arinze? Is it true that...?' Just because you don't have anything else to say, you just say, 'hello, is this Ramsay Noah, Is this RMD?' You find all sorts. We appreciate all these things. It makes you feel wanted, it makes you feel, yes I'm appreciated, I know that what I'm doing, I'm touching someone's life somewhere. But you must also learn how to keep them at bay or else you get into trouble. And it's so good a thing for us in our society. Our society has not got to that advanced level of blackmail. We have blackmailers, because you get a female fan who may just walk come in and talk to you and say one or two things and you get carried away. And the next thing, she reports to the police that you've sexually harassed her and they'll pick you up. We're lucky we've not got to that level.

*Researcher:* What of attention from the media? Have they been negative, positive?

*Arinze:* Attention from the media is also a crazy one. It's really, really, crazy. Because you find they make all sorts of reports: spurious, true, scandalous.

*Researcher:* Have you ever been a victim?

*Arinze:* Have I been a victim? I'm still a victim. If you ask, they will tell you I'm the most bashed actor. I'll tell you something for free. The recent *Encomium* that just came out came with a funny story that I have full-blown Aids.

*Researcher:* Segun Arinze has Aids?

*Arinze:* That's what is in the paper. They coded it. They wrote it in some kind of coding but of course with their description you know who they are talking about. Now, these are the things we have to face. They indemnify themselves in a way because when you sue them, they will say we didn't call your name. Did we mention your name? You see. So, they indemnify themselves in a way that they can get away with it.

*Researcher:* I see.

*Arinze:* It's now left for you to find a way of fighting them. But for me I won't fight them. What I've learnt to do in the past years is ignore them; it will go away. I watched a movie Double Platinum, where Diana Ross and Bambi. I don't know if you've seen that movie?

*Researcher:* Uh, uh. No.

*Arinze:* They were saying something somebody picked up from Al Paccino. And the next guy was talking, 'hey, hey, listen, this is the media, it sucks, let it go.' That's the attitude, it will die. When the Sharia came, what did Obasanjo tell them? 'Let it go, it will die.' And that's what I've learnt to do. Because, immediately you start to make noise about it, you blow it out of all proportions and of course everybody begins to look at your objection. So, I've learnt to ignore the press. Have the media contributed to my name? They have, they have. Without the media, I also don't think I will be here. They have done some good things too. Much as they have done bad things, they have done some good things too. So, it's visa versa, it's both ways.

*Researcher:* Thank you.

*Arinze:* But we as public figures should learn to keep ourselves in check. If we put ourselves in check... We're all humans, sometimes we let our guard down. But I learn everyday. Everyday is a learning experience.

*Researcher:* I've been on location these past two, three, days. In between shoots, a lot of time elapses. Does it bother you that you have to wait for so many hours and sometimes under conditions that are not all that, do I say, mind-blowing or conducive for want of a

better word. I've seen people...(Not wanting to seem too critical of some of the conditions she's witnessed, the Researcher pauses but Arinze helps out)

*Arinze:* Sleep on the floor...

*Researcher:* Yea, play just to divert themselves. What can you say as a performer and a big name at that without a trailer or your own caravan and you're out there battling mosquitoes. So, what can you tell me about in-between shoots and this so much amount of time that you have to fill before your turn comes up to feature?

*Arinze:* Good enough a thing you're saying this because you've been with us like four, five days when we have to shoot late into the wee hours of the morning, three, four o'clock in the morning.

*Researcher:* I really empathize with you guys.

*Arinze:* (chuckles) Well, that's it. We don't catch enough sleep. I think it also has to do with the training. We'll get there, about trailers and trucks for us. I think we'll get there. But, the biggest problem is logistics. Getting the logistics right. If you don't get your logistics right, then there's no...If a problem happens, it happens. Sometimes you plan something and it doesn't work, you go to plan B. But they have ways of cushioning the effect. That's why the trailers and all that. But here what are you thinking should be happening? If doesn't work, give that actress a room to stay. Nothing stops them from creating a bar here where somebody will be selling drinks and you have flat screen TV, everybody is watching and all that. And if there's a snooker board and table tennis for people to play. `And if the director says, 'hey, 'hey, o.k. we're waiting for you, in the next ten minutes you get yourself ready.' Not I'm on the floor, sprawled on the floor there out of boredom

*Researcher:* And everybody goes on location whether they're performing or not. Everybody is on location.

*Arinze:* Sometimes, the light goes off here; they might not want to put on the generator because they want to conserve fuel and use it later on in the evening. All these are things that border on logistics. The Adenuga people are even trying.

*Researcher:* That's what I heard.

*Arinze:* They are trying. There are some sets you'll go and you don't even...what is logistics? You don't even hear 'LO'...not to talk of 'GISTICS'. It's crazy, it's really,

really crazy. But we've attuned ourselves to it because we say, 'hey we're building an industry' and an industry we must build. So, we just let that go. I know that it's the people that are coming after us that are the people who will probably enjoy all these things, all the benefits.

*Researcher:* Alright. On the set, do you provide your own wardrobe or does the production company supply you the wardrobe?

*Arinze:* Ah, unfortunately on this set, I provide the wardrobe. I provided my wardrobe here.

*Researcher:* Do you do it in every production, I mean, provide your own wardrobe?

*Arinze:* No. No. But because the producer Bakky spoke with me at length and told me he has a few hiccups and all that. So, Yemi and I, Bimbo, Steph-Nora and all of us agreed, 'o.k., we'll do for you' and that is based on person to person relationship.

*Researcher:* But in productions that have to provide, do you have the freedom to choose what you want to wear, I mean out of their selection?

*Arinze:* Depends on if the wardrobe person or let me say the costumier because here we don't really have a costumier, we have wardrobe people. If he has a firm grasp and understanding of what the script is all about, if they do have, then, they begin to say, 'this is how I want you to look or that is how I want you.' Because you don't just put on any fabric. There is a certain reason why you wear certain things, like the message you're trying to pass on. Like I tell people, 'we're in a movie.' You should tell a story. The actor tells a story, the camera tells a story. Right? Everything all comes together to project the director's vision of the movie. So, we're all tools in the hand of the director, so he decides what he wants to do. Right? We don't go all dressing gorgeously because we just want to look gorgeous. No, no, it's not done that way. Of course, if you're doing a party scene and you have all these glamorous attires or apparels to put on, fine by me. Please, do.

*Researcher:* What can you say is your single most important contribution to television acting in Nigeria?

*Arinze:* I'm still contributing. I can't say one. They are numerous. I'm still contributing every day of my life to see that our industry grows and grows well. And that people will begin to look towards Nigeria's direction because we have the stories, we have the

personnel to run it, we have the locations to do it. We have everything going for us to do it. And we're one big strong nation that can stand on its feet and roar and everybody will listen. Because I know very well that if we put our mind to it, we'll do it.

*Researcher:* Thank you. What can you say are your most important needs as an actor? Perhaps, some people have this need to get the script weeks before shooting starts. What can you say are your needs because I know many actors happen to have certain personal needs regarding their profession?

*Arinze:* I like to have the script on time to read my script and understand, have a firm grasp of the story. But when you talk about personal needs as in cars, houses and all that, I'm not much of a materialistic person. I am not that. Because, I believe everything that is given is to us is given us by God. You will never see me envy anybody who says he wants to buy a hummer. If you buy a hummer, you're humming on your own! If I buy my jeep tomorrow and God has given me the wherewithal to buy the jeep, I'll buy a jeep. But I don't go out on my own and say I want a big house. The most important thing I do and which I'll continue to do as my life goes on and I continue to have a turning point, high points in a man's life is to be able to rededicate myself before Christ and serve God and know that for everything I do is all to the glory of God. I may be playing an armed-robber tomorrow, using a gun to scare people. But I tell people, when you watch such films and you don't learn, you don't get the moral from the story, that means I've failed as an actor, that means my director has failed as a director and that means that entire movie has failed. But when you watch it and you find the moral in the story that there is nowhere in this world where evil will triumph over good, then, we have achieved that. So, for me, it's to glorify God, give God all the glory because He has everything.

*Researcher:* Given the chance what is the single most important thing you would like to change in the script of *A New Song* and in the character you're portraying at the moment?

*Arinze:* I would have liked not to see Demola die, in spite of all the problems he went through. I didn't like it but yes, he has a temper and that's why he did what he did. So, I would have loved to see him alive and see him manage the crisis and try to him turn his life around and turn the life of his wife around. Because in life we all make mistakes. It might be a small mistake, it might be a big mistake but a mistake is a mistake. I'd have

loved to see Julius and Becky have repercussions rather than see Demola shoot himself and shoot them, you know. If given the opportunity, I'd have loved to change that.

*Researcher:* Finally, what are the challenges that face you as an actor, or if you prefer, what are the challenges you have to contend with as an actor in this industry?

*Arinze:* I have a lot of challenges everyday of our lives. Every once in a while you find new talents coming and, of course, producers and directors run after them to your own detriment. So, when I said in the first instance, when you are on, make the best of it, make the best use of it and try as much as possible to be very relevant when you're on so that your yesterday will remember your today and not that you do something that your yesterday will be forgotten and today you will be gone forever. No, I'll like for my yesterday to remember me for tomorrow and project me from today. That's what I will like to think.

*Researcher:* Segun, hang on, let me just make this observation. It's the female actors or actresses, if you prefer, that usually worry about new talents coming on the scene and perhaps dislodging them from their throne.

*Arinze:* Uh, It's not a competition, mind you.

*Researcher:* I know.

*Arinze:* This is the only business you never, ever get to retire unless you're tired.

*Researcher:* O.k., thank you. But you said you feel threatened by new talents.

*Arinze:* I never feel threatened.

*Researcher:* But you did mention something about new talents and ...

*Arinze:* O.k., let me paint the picture straight for you. I'm not saying...I don't feel threatened. I said every once in a while, new talents come and will like to give you a run for your money. I'm saying that, whilst you're that, your greatest challenge is that you must do something to make yourself relevant

*Researcher:* Alright.

*Arinze:* That's what I'm trying to say here. I, for one, I'm not trying to be mouthy or boastful here. I know that in my 20 years, this is my 21<sup>st</sup> year in the entertainment industry, I have been relevant all the way. I'm what you might call, without necessarily wanting to sound arrogant, a recurring decimal. Because, any point in time, I've always been...I've never been, 'hey, I'm reigning, reigning, reigning.' I've always maintained a

certain level that I'm only just there, doing my thing my own way. Because, God has so blessed me with so much talent. I'm so blessed, darling. If it comes to acting and I see I'm being disturbed in that place, I move over to voiceover. When I'm getting bored with voiceover, I move to music. When music starts getting boring, I go into shooting of commercials, writing and directing commercials. If it's that I go into PR. So, you see where I am?

*Researcher:* You're a singer as well, you mean?

*Arinze:* I'm a singer as well. God has given me so much diverse talents that sometimes, I get very confused and I will say, 'Father, God, what do I do next? He'll say, My son, you know what to do'. And I know that He at the appointed time is waiting for me because He has a purpose in giving me all the talent and so when the time comes, you'll use it to do what I want you to do.

*Researcher:* I can't reconcile the apparent contradiction in your names. Your first name is Segun and the last name is Arinze.

*Arinze:* Well, because I'm mixed breed. My mother is Igbo and my father, my late father, was Yoruba. So, I'm Yoruba and Igbo. So, I'm a mixed breed.

*Researcher:* And you speak both languages fluently?

*Arinze:* Luckily for me, I speak the three major languages fluently.

*Researcher:* Oh, good. Segun, I can't really thank you enough for your time and for sharing your opinions and viewpoints with me as generously as you have just done. Thank you.

*Arinze:* The pleasure is all mine. Thank you.

*THE RESEARCHER, THINKING SHE DID NOT TURN THE RECORDING EQUIPMENT ON DURING THE FIRST INTERVIEW, REQUESTED AND GOT ANOTHER CHANCE TO INTERVIEW MR. ARINZE THE SAME DAY*

*Researcher:* Thank you once again for your patience. I'll start yet again by asking you to talk me though what your background is and how you came into the entertainment business.



*Arinze:* Alright, I've always been in entertainment right from my childhood, from my days in secondary school at the Trinity College of Commerce, ADC, Kwara State. I knew I wanted to be an actor. I got introduced into acting by a friend when I was in secondary school. When I was in secondary school, I was doing things for NTA then. I used to sing, act, read poems and all that. And after that, I made up my mind I was going to read theatre arts, so I moved on. I went on to Ife, Wycliffe and Anamsa Playhouse. I did dramatic art under Chuck Mike in African Studies Department in Ile Ife. It was called University of Ife then, now Obafemi Awolowo University. Ever since, I've not looked back.

*Researcher:* Thank you. And what can you say is your experience of being an actor all these years? What has it been like for you in the industry?

*Arinze:* I've seen it all. I'm still seeing (chuckles). I've had the good, the bad and the not-so-good. I've had all the challenges, the fights on the production set, the quarrels, agreements, disagreements, we agree to disagree. Every shenanigan you know that goes with production, I've gone through it all but I'm not deterred because I know I'm focused and I want to achieve this not just for myself but for the industry. Because, I know when you contribute your quota to the industry, the industry grows bigger and bigger. My experience as an actor has taught me also how to cope in life because you see, as an actor, you go through various scripts, various experiences, and people living other people's life and you try to equate that to your own life and in between you try to find a balance, some sort of equilibrium in between. So, for me, being an actor is the most wonderful thing that will ever happen to me. If I die today and have to come back tomorrow, I'll like to be an actor over and over again.

*Researcher:* Well, thank you. Have you had a lot of problems reconciling your own personal character with your fictional character and if I can also add this, how do you prepare yourself before playing your fictional character?

*Arinze:* Erm, I try as much as possible, when I play it, I don't play things that have any semblance to me as a person, that is, the fictional character and myself. I try as much as possible to divorce them. Even though sometimes, when you pick up a script and you just read through and you say, 'hey, I had this experience sometime back, this is what happened to me.' And now I have to play this role and how do I reconcile it. And you

find yourself in a war of trying to sort it out. But I try to sort it out; I eliminate myself and completely isolate myself and say, 'hey, it's a job I'm doing, focus on that job and just do the job.' I play a bad boy but that does not mean I'm a bad boy. I've carried guns but that doesn't mean I have guns in real life. So, you see, it's left to the audience, the viewing public to decide and some of them get carried away believing that what they see is real. Some come up to me and say, 'hey, the way you play that role, are you sure you're not that way, how do use this stuff?' And so I begin to break it down, this is a job. This is me for real. So, when I pick up a role, I read it, I try to understand the character, I discuss with the director. I'll say, 'hey, how do you want the character?' And we'll try and mold the character. I'm a method actor and I believe in method acting. I'm of the school of Blasky and Robert Benedetti and I'm that. I believe if I have to play a bad boy, I play it in ten different ways, with ten different meanings so that there will be no conflicting signs there, no conflict. So, that's just me. So, when I pick up a role, I'll say, 'hey, this is how I want to play it.' I discuss with the director such things as how the character relates to every other character, what prompts him into doing things, how old is the character? Once all that is sorted out, we play it. And once I finish playing it, I purge myself of the character; I dump the character and move on.

*Researcher:* Segun, can I ask how you get the roles you play: the producer contacts you through your agent, or he talks directly to you?

*Arinze:* Hummm, when you say agent, you're talking as if you're in Hollywood. Please, there's no agent. The actor is his manager, the agent, the everything. He negotiates by himself, which is highly, highly, unprofessional. Unprofessional in the sense that a lot of sentiments now come in the way. Because if as an actor, I'm contracted for a job, or if I'm about to be contracted for a job, my agent reads the script first, hands it over to me. I read it and we both agree. Then he goes out and does all the negotiations. That way, they don't get to see me. They only see me when they need me on that set. But unfortunately for us here, the actor here in Nigeria is the one who reads the script; he is his own agent, he is his own PA. He is his own everything. He even provides his own clothes to work because we are more of interpersonal relationship here. We haven't gotten to the highest level of professionalism in the business. For instance, I'm a director Segun Arinze and I want to contract Steph-Nora Falana, and I'm reading through the script. After the script

has been done by screenplay people and we are talking with my production company who is going to phone them up. I'll say, 'hey, I want Steph-Nora for this role. I don't care what you guys do, look her up.' We get her agent's number, 'Hello sir, we'll like Steph-Nora to do this.' He says, 'o.k., bring the script.' He goes through it and says, 'Steph, there is a script here for you, I think you'll like. I think you should do it.' For so so and so reasons, she goes through it and they get back to us. Steph has agreed. O.k., 'when can we work out the contract? Can we see in our office tomorrow?' We agree to everything. After agreeing, all we do is pack the scripts and give to Steph. All Steph has to do is endorse the contract. She finishes, and now when the business is there working, the agent is saying, she will report for work at 8a.m. and at 6 p.m. she is leaving that set. If for any reason you have night scene, she will not come all day, she will resume at 6 p.m. At 6 p.m., we want her provided with coffee, a trailer, this and that for her comfort. You understand. So, that is how it is done there.

*Researcher:* You have just painted the ideal situation, how it is done there. Now, tell me how it is done here.

*Arinze:* All the ideal situation here is, the director calls me, 'Segun, I have a script for you. I want you to play so, so role.' I ask, 'How much?' He has not told me the story, I have not read the script. 'How much?' Meaning that he has standardized the fee in his mind, the picture at the back of his mind, 'Segun earns one million naira per picture, so give Segun, I don't care how many... And sometimes when they want to circumvent you because we are very good at that, 'Segun, erm, erm, it's just only four scenes.' I don't do that, I don't tell you I only do four scenes. I tell you, 'I'm in your movie, I'm in your movie. Four scenes, one scene, I'm in your movie. 'And you're going to give me my credit. And you must also write 'starring Segun Arinze.' You must be starring Segun Arinze. If it's not a major role and I don't fall into the first five titling, but if it's a major role, I must fall into the first five titling or else we are not working. So, if I don't fall within the first five titling, then make me special guest appearance. If I'm in your movie, I'm in your movie. Don't tell me the number of scenes, I don't want to know. All I'm doing is I'm a professional, I want to come on your set and work. So, don't exploit me and don't circumvent me. All that is gradually beginning to change. And that leads us to the issues of the ban. The ban came into effect as a result of the fact that most of these

young stars who are in the business wanted to change the status quo. But they didn't go about it the right way. Now we're going to go about it the right way.

*Researcher:* Can you talk me through what you mean by 'the ban' because I'm totally in the dark?

*Arinze:* O.k. totally in the dark. Let me put you in the light! The ban meant that some actors were demanding for one million naira and they said, 'No you can't ask for one million, you're banned. Don't work with us again.'

*Researcher:* And who are the people that banned them?

*Arinze:* The so called lords. The Lords of the Manor. The Lords of Idumota.

*Researcher:* They are in this industry?

*Arinze:* I said the lords of Idumota. Who runs Hollywood? The Jews run Hollywood, don't they? The Jews run Hollywood.

*Researcher:* Yea. MGM, Metro, Goldwym and Mayer

*Arinze:* MGM. Everything. Steven Spielberg is a Jew.

*Researcher:* Yea, of course he is.

*Arinze:* So, the Jews run Hollywood. And so the Igbos are the Jews of Nollywood. So, they are the ones running it: Idumota, Alaba. (Arinze here speaks in Igbo) *Nna obulu na ima mme anyi aga akwu gi ugwo* which means 'If you don't accept our offer then, we you don't get paid.' So, that's why it is. Do you understand? But all that will begin to change. They have come; they have played their role. Now is the time for us to move to the next level.

*Researcher:* How do you envisage the change? How is it going to come?

*Arinze:* The change will come when we as the actors or we as the practitioners in the business put our foot down and say, 'hey, this is the status quo. This is how we want things done.'

*Researcher:* And is there a possibility of a thing like that happening, I mean you actors forming a guild, a very strong guild?

*Arinze:* We have a guild already.

*Researcher:* Alright

*Arinze:* We have a very strong guild.

*Researcher:* O.k.

*Arinze:* We're gonna change it. There's a guild already. It's not whether we do have one. We have. It's over ten years standing now. (Turns to another performer sitting nearby for confirmation) Of course, if I'm wrong... Ten years standing. She (Ms Okere-Falana) was former Vice President. We were both in office at the same time. We will change it. It's not a day's job, but we definitely will get there. Because we're not just doing this for us, it's for posterity. There are people who are going to come after us. They may even ask us, 'what did you guys do?' So, we must do that. We must have a stand on that. Very soon, I'm sure in the next two, three months, no actor goes on stage to work without signing a formal contract. He will be fined.

*Researcher:* Alright, you mean at the moment you are signing no contract?

*Arinze:* We're signing no contracts.

*Researcher:* So, what happens when the producer backs out, when says he doesn't require your services any more but he has phoned you up, he's told you has given you this role and then at the last minute he changes his mind. You mean there is no legal document that will make that agreement legally binding on him?

*Arinze:* (lapses into informal English) *That money wey you go take find legal document, better use it and go and feed yourself at home and forget about the man.* The statement means 'You'd be better off feeding yourself rather than wasting your money and time on legal actions.' Because here, it doesn't make any sense. Where are you going to start fighting him from? But if you have a contract, a binding contract, you can do that.

*Researcher:* O.k.

*Arinze:* But here, he might even insult you to your face and say, 'O.k., (Arinze makes a languid sign of a jaded rich person) let me give you 20,000 naira (about \$160) for your troubles.' And as soon as you take that 20,000, he's going to tell everybody that's what he gave you. They are not in the habit of secrecy. If Steph-Nora is paid 500,000 naira (about \$4000) for a job, they tell everybody they paid Steph-Nora 500,000 naira and every other person follows suit. That's what they want to continue to pay Steph-Nora. So, Steph will not want... they won't want her to move. You see. It's now a stunted growth.

*Researcher:* Yea. They have put a glass ceiling.

*Arinze:* They've put ceiling

*Researcher:* A cap on the wage

*Arinze*. But just for the fact that Steph worked with Segun Arinze and Segun paid her 500,000 naira based on a personal relationship doesn't mean she has to work with you that way, or work with him that way or anybody else. I can take ten kobo today and the next movie I can....Let's take a film like *Rush Hour*, for example. Chris Tucker took one million dollars to do *Rush Hour 1*, when it came to *Rush Hour 2*, he took 20 million.

*Researcher*: He did?

*Arinze*: Yes, it was 20 million he took

*Researcher*: And what about Jackie Chan?

*Arinze*: Jackie Chan was the executive producer.

*Researcher*: Oh, I see.

*Arinze*: The film was a runaway success. So, when it came to part 2, he said, 'hey, for crying out loud, this is what I want,' and they gave it to him.

*Researcher*: Fast talking guy, Chris Tucker! They did?

*Arinze*: Will Smith takes 20 million dollars. Now he is in the region of 40, 60 million per picture. You don't have to be stuck in one particular place. Aghaa!!(makes a sound of exasperation) They sell this Eva water (A brand of bottled water in Nigeria) here 80 naira on the street. You go to Sheraton Hotel, how much is Eva water there? Two hundred and fifty. You go to another place Hilton, how much? Sorry, it's 500 naira (about \$3.50).

*Researcher*: Right.

*Arinze*: But the street value is 80 naira. (less than one US dollar)

*Researcher*: I see.

*Arinze*: But, it doesn't mean because you bought it 80 naira, you have to...it varies. All ten fingers are not equal but here they want to exploit you, explore you and destroy you!

*Researcher*: Jesus!

*Arinze*: It's unfortunate.

*Researcher*: As bad as that? Segun, you have acted in home videos and you've acted in television dramas as well. Can you share your experiences of working in the two genres with me, please?

*Arinze*: Well, they are basically...they have semblances. For TV you're working for time, for movies you're working for time but on movie, time is a bit extended and you begin to talk about details here. The cause and effect, why, why, why? Television you can afford

to ask why now and next time I'll explain to you. Movie, you have to tell that why now. The experiences, they're basically the same.

*Researcher:* What of conditions or service in terms of how you're paid, your welfare. Like I've been talking about being out the whole day on location and you stars of the show, you have no personal trailers where you relax in between shoots.

*Arinze:* (Chuckles) I'm in my personal trailer right now as I speak with you! (We were in a make-shift tent, in the kitchen and eating area) This is my personal trailer. Like I said, things will change. We'll certainly get to that level but one at a time. Television in Nigeria, I must be honest and frank with you, is not paying. Most of the ones that are doing it, are doing it for PR, because you want to be relevant, it's a job. So, once it's shown and somebody is watching and ahhh (enacts a one-sided telephone conversation with a likely studio boss) 'Hello, Steph, how are you. I've just been watching you in **Super Story**. Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful, keep up the job good. Eh, when can we see? I have a script I want us to...' So, it has paid off. It has paid off. But in terms of...forget about it, forget about it. It's nothing to write home about.

*Researcher:* Is it television?

*Arinze:* Yes, television. It's nothing to write home about. We just do it for PR and for the love of the business.

*Researcher:* Alright: How do you relate with your fictional character in **Super Story**, the character of Demola you're playing at the moment? Does it resemble your character in any way? And how do you get into your fictional character?

*Arinze:* No, it doesn't resemble my character in any way. The only semblance you might find in it is the females around Demola. Yes, Segun Arinze has a lot of females around him. I have a lot of females. I'm not a womanizer but I have a lot of friends. That's where it ends but in terms of every other thing, he's brash. No, no, no.

*Researcher:* Alright, talking about female friends, that leads me to the issue of fans. Have you had a lot of attention from fans by way of recognition on the streets, fan letters and from the media?

*Arinze:* I get that every day. I get that. And I'll say managing fans is like managing money. You must manage your fans very well because you have the friendly ones, the ones that are not so friendly and the indifferent ones. You must be able to manage them.

And each and everyone with their different temperaments and each and everyone with their different understanding. And each not bothering whether you have your personal issues to sort out. They just know that once they say ‘hi Steph, hi Segun’ you must answer. You must reciprocate and that’s where it’s very tough. Once in a while we let our guards down because we’re fallible and we can lose our temper. Because sometimes you find very unruly ones. For the female ones, you must also curtail them. Some of them want to end up in bed with you just out of ...what do I call it now? Phantasmagorism?

*Researcher:* Chuckles

*Arinze:* Up to that level. Some just want to be seen with you, just to be identified with you. Some will look for any other ploy, any other means. But like I tell my male colleagues the biggest mistake you can make, or the biggest injustice you can do yourself is to mistake the feelings of a female fan for love or for anything. If you do it, you could get yourself killed, you could get yourself burnt. So, you get watch that, you’ve got to be very careful about that. But apart from that, I don’t see any other problem. You must manage them, whether female or male, you must manage them.

*Researcher:* And from the media?

*Arinze:* From the media, both good, bad, and not so good. Sometimes they tend to be too sensational because they want to sell their stuff. Sometimes not hitting the nail on the head and sometimes going totally off the mark. And sometimes being positive. I don’t want to go into other details.

*Researcher:* Have they written anything damaging about you?

*Arinze:* They have written so many damaging things about me, from my marriage to my personal life, I’m bashed. So, now I’m still being hit. I’m still taking a new sense of what they said. The *Encomium Magazine* said I have full blown Aids. Haa. So, that in itself is damaging. But of course they will indemnify themselves, they didn’t mention my name.

*Researcher:* And do such reports bother you?

*Arinze:* I’ve learnt to ignore them; I’ve learnt to. When I don’t have it why should I bother? It’s when I have it that I will begin to bother myself. I don’t have it so it’s not my business. I don’t even think about it, I ignore them. It’ll pass, it will go. The Igbos have a saying, ‘*Onu kwulu njo, ga ekwu nma.*’ (The statement means ‘The mouth that slandered you today will tomorrow say nice things about you.’) So, they’ve said the nonsense now,



tomorrow they will forget they wrote it and then they will ask you for a favour and then you remind them. But I'm not what you call...what do you call these characters that don't forgive?

*Researcher:* You mean you don't hold on to grudges?

*Arinze:* No, I don't bear grudges, I don't bear grudges. I'm not vindictive. I'm not vindictive. I don't believe in you did something to me so I'll wait for you, set a trap for you. For you even doing anything bad to me, you've done yourself bad; you've done yourself a grave disservice. It's you and your God, right. I don't bother myself with things like that.

*Researcher:* **Super Story**, I mean previous stories in **Super Story** like *Oh Father, Oh Daughter* that I've seen and the one that is running currently which is *Lion of Mogun*, which is actually political because it has this political message inscribed on it. Now, as an actor who has played in both home movies and television drama, what aspects of social existence is what you can call your forte, what you like to play. What kind of message inscribed on the character that you portray do you most wish to play?

*Arinze:* You mean, if I can to change anything in it?

*Researcher:* No, not that. But, you see, there are messages that are inscribed on each story be it political, social. So, which of these aspects of society inscribed on the characters that you play, or that you have played that you revel in playing?

*Arinze:* Huh, that's a tough one. (chuckles) There are some roles...we are all pencils in the hand of God. I think I'll like to play something like that. We're instruments of God, so use me. I'll like to play such roles that I know at the end of the day, I'm using it to edifying and glorify God. I'll like to play such roles.

*Researcher:* What of your current character in *A New Song*, Demola, who apparently has everything going for him, except perhaps happiness? I don't know the full story.

*Arinze:* Happiness is relative.

*Researcher:* But how do you see Demola and the message, social message perhaps, inscribed on that character you're portraying?

*Arinze:* The social message inscribed on that is that in everything we do we must be reasonable and not be brash in taking decision. Temper, anger, can cause a lot of damage. That's just the general message there. And the second most important message there is

that we must persevere in spite of anything we're going through, we must persevere and hold on steadfastly and tenaciously to our belief in God and have implicit faith in Him. Because I believe that if he had had faith, and held on steadfastly and he was tenacious, he wouldn't go chasing women, he would have hold to his wife and they would continue to pray and God would bless them with the fruit of the womb. But unfortunately he wasn't that patient. He waited five years; he thought it wasn't coming, so he decided to look out. And in the process of looking out, he lost communication with his wife. And the wife in her own way wanted to pay him back in his own coin and she went overboard. So, in every marriage, again, another message, you must always keep communication link open.

*Researcher:* You keep mentioning God, looks like religion is a huge part of your existence or your life if you wish. Are you a religious or moral person? How do you see yourself?

*Arinze:* How I describe myself: I'm a Christian.

*Researcher:* Alright

*Arinze:* Religion is not...I can't see myself as religious. Moral? Yes, I believe in morals because every nation is founded on morals and discipline, every family, every person is founded on morals and discipline. But I'm a Christian, I believe in God

*Researcher:* Right. Coming to work situation, location shooting and studio production, you have worked in both environments. What is your experience of working in both environment?

*Arinze:* They are basically the same. The only difference between location and studio is that in location you have distractions, sound, noise, people who want to come in and watch, want to talk to you. You know, sometimes you can curtail them; sometimes, you won't be able to curtail. But when you come to studio, you start editing those sounds out. But basically they are the same thing.

*Researcher:* Alright, but well, being different environments don't they have their own different, unique challenges like perhaps location is a more comfortable environment to work in as it relates to your own comfort as an actor?

*Arinze:* Let me give you an example. When you were in your room a while ago, doing this interview, did you hear any sound? All you could hear was AC (Air Conditioning)

because you needed it for oxygen. Now, suppose you switched off the AC, you wouldn't hear anything. Now the car is making noise, the music from afar is making noise. So, basically that is the difference. (The recording device made a crackling sound. Not really sure what caused the sound) Ah, and you're asking me the question the same way you're asking me the question inside is the same way you're asking me...(There was interruption, perhaps electricity went off) I'll leave these people and get out of this place any minute from now. No, I can't, my car.

*Researcher:* O.k., thank you again. Coming to shooting proper or coming to working in a production, who supplies your wardrobe?

*Arinze:* Professionally, your costumier or your wardrobe person. Now, we too also understand there is a difference between a costumier and a wardrobe person. A wardrobe person collects all the fashion designs and keeps. A costumier reads and designs for the production. He might say there is a specific reason why I want to wear this and goes out to design for that reason. A wardrobe person has shirts, ties, shoes and everything. If you want this, he brings it; you want that, he brings it. But the only difference now is that he or she must provide television-friendly colours. There are some colours that are very friendly with the camera. He must provide all these things. It is what we call blending or branding on TV or film. But the costumier designs. That's how it's done professionally. But unfortunately for us, sometimes you find out that the actor or the actress provides his or her own clothes.

*Researcher:* What are your major challenges or what have been the major challenges so far that have confronted you as a television actor or as a home movie actor?

*Arinze:* So many challenges, so many. Sometimes, you pick up some roles that could drive you up the wall take all the energy from you. Sometimes, you could also be faced with challenges of working with a different kind of director, or with a different kind producer. Sometimes, you're faced with the challenge of working with a name that is bigger than you and you have to match up with that. Sometimes you also have to face the challenge of a new talent who is breaking in and everybody is going after that person. It's also a sort of challenge. So, it's basically it.

*Researcher:* How does a new talent challenge you? Is it you feel under pressure to live up to the standard he has set?

*Arinze:* No, no, no. He hasn't set any standard. He is under pressure to live up to the standard you have set, that is, if you have set any for yourself. And he is paying you respect. And also don't forget that it's not a competition. Now, let me give you an example why I said that about a new talent. In a team, in a national team, you have the older generation of players and you have the younger, newer generation of players who are quicker, faster than the older generation. But the older generation have the experience. They may not run as fast as the younger generation but when they hold the ball, they know what to do with the ball. Now the younger one will get the ball, believes he is faster and runs, he still messes about with the ball and does not achieve the target. But the older one will hold it, as long as he has the experience and no matter how badly placed the keeper is, he drops it and goes off and scores the goal. But the younger one, out of youthful exuberance and excitement says 'ah', and he fires the ball and it goes wide, because he doesn't have the experience. That's number one. Number two, a younger persons who is playing in a team with an older person has someone who happens to be watching on television and saying, 'I saw Obi playing on alongside J.J. Okocha.' And that motivates and inspires him. So, these are the challenges we are talking about. When I was looking up to the likes of Olu Jacobs, Solomon Ayikire, Jimmy Solanke, all of them, but when I worked with them, 'ah.' But when I was reading Femi Osofison's book and when he was directing me, telling me what to do, I was honoured. I felt proud; it was motivational; it was inspiring for me. And I believe it is reciprocal. I also inspire someone somewhere; she also inspires someone somewhere. We all have people we inspire and we have people that inspire us. These are the challenges that we face.

*Researcher:* What can you say have been your contributions so far and in which ways do you hope to contribute to Nigeria's television industry or home movie industry?

*Arinze:* By the simple fact that I appear on set in a particular production that is aired is a contribution. Somewhere, somehow, you're touching the life of somebody, you're making a change, you're contributing your quota to the development of the industry. That's a contribution.

*Researcher:* And in which ways do you hope to contribute in future?

*Arinze:* So many ways I intend to contribute, so many ways. We're talking about changes now in the industry. I also want to be, I also see myself, I look forward to imparting the

knowledge, the experiences I have to the younger ones who are coming so that they themselves will learn, imbibe this and then forge ahead. And when they get to the destination where I am, by then I would have moved up from my current rung to the next rung. They will impart it to the next person and they will move up to try and catch up with me at that destination. By then I'll be up. So, it's a whole cycle.

*Researcher:* Have you been any previous stories of **Super Story** before or is this your first appearance in a Wale Adenuga Production?

*Arinze:* This is my second production. I did *Enough is Enough* with them and this is my second production.

*Researcher:* So, how can you say you have contributed to, not really in the sense of advancing the narrative, but in what way can you say you have contributed to Wale Adenuga Production, **Super Story**?

*Arinze:* Like I told you, it's the same answer I will give you. The very fact that I appeared on the set, that I agreed to it, is a contribution. That fact that I agreed to come here and do it, leave everything I was doing or would have done and I'm seated here and doing this, I think it's a lot of contribution.

*Researcher:* Yea, at the moment you're playing Demola in the current episode, *A New Song*. What things given the chance would you want to change about the character you're playing?

*Arinze:* Given the chance, I'd like...I don't think I like the idea of seeing the guy shoot himself. I think that's too extreme. I would have wanted to see a situation where he probably throws the wife and his friend out of the house, he goes through a whole metamorphosis, he sits down to brood and thinks about where he has gone wrong. The wife also sits down and thinks about where she has gone wrong, even if they don't come back, but at least Julius and Becky would have had to face repercussions. Demola would have learnt a lesson even the hard way. Going to shoot himself was too extreme. If I had the opportunity, I'd change that. But unfortunately, I'm not the producer or the director, the writer. So, I can't change it.

*Researcher:* All the characters you've played, I think you told me that you've always set out to put out a message there.

*Arinze:* Yea. When you watch movies and you don't get the moral of the story, I think we all have failed as actors and producers, and directors. Look beyond what you see and look at the moral of the story. When you've been able get the moral of the story, you've got the message. Then we have succeeded. Then we're doing something.

*Researcher:* Thank you Mr. Segun Arinze and for making yourself and time available for this interview. Thank you very much.

*Arinze:* You're welcome

#### **(11) Transcript of the Interview with Actor, Steph-Nora Okere-Falana**

*Researcher:* O.k., Steph, I think I have to go through the pace once again of introducing myself and what use I'll be putting this interview data to. I feel it's necessary so that you know I'm not from a tabloid press. The discussion, if that's alright to call it that, that I'm going to be having with you is purely for academic purposes. I'm a doctoral media research student of the University of Westminster in the UK and my interest is in media production. I'm studying Wale Adenuga productions specifically and mercifully you're on this production and so perhaps you will be so kind to share your experiences. You've acted in Nollywood productions as well as television drama series. So, your varied experiences are really what I'm looking for. Can talk me through what your background is and how you came to be an actor.

*Steph-Nora:* (Ahhhm...ohhh...made a sound of mock exasperation) I've said that so many times that I'm beginning to sound like a cracked record.

*Researcher:* You're not a broken record, please, go on.

*Steph-Nora:* Well, I started acting way back when I was in primary school. We used to go on TV in children's variety. I always found myself involved in the drama aspect. Then in secondary school I did quite some play text. Then, some of the ones we were reading for literature, we put them into play. I happened to be prominent in acting then. That was when people around me like my parents were like, 'this girl, she is going to be good in all this area.' Then I used to do a lot of singing and dancing too. After secondary school, I went to on Obafemi Awolowo University to study dramatic art. Yea, I specialized in play

writing actually. Since then I graduated in `93, during my Youth Service in `94 I joined the Nigerian Home Movie industry. So, for me, it has been a lifetime, lifelong experience of acting.

*Researcher:* Thank you. And what can you say is your experience of acting in Home Movie industry (Nollywood) and television drama series production?

*Steph-Nora:* What do you mean by experience? Generally?

*Researcher:* Generally

*Steph-Nora:* It's been an experience on its own. But talking about the confines of Nigeria, I've had experiences as a regular artist would but personally, I've also had some reasons that made me think of quitting the industry. If not for the fact that I have the love for the job right from when I was a child, I would have quit. But, I have persevered, I have helped to salvage the industry the best I can. I've been like Segun (Mr. Arinze, another actor) told you earlier, a National Vice-President. I also ran orientation programme for non-artists who want to become artists. I've been part of the building the structures of the industry and when it comes to the acting part, I've worked up the ladder to where I am today. So, in all aspects, let me say, I just have paid my dues and where I am now is the place I think I should be at this point and getting me ready for where I will be in future.

*Researcher:* Can you share some of the experiences that really made you want to quit, that you talked about.

*Steph-Nora:* Part of the experiences that made me want to quit is because of some situations where you find that there is an influx of mediocrity, influx of novices. I even think a novice is better than a mediocre. A mediocre thinks that he/she is knowledgeable and then he has his half-baked knowledge and the he doesn't want a professional around him because a professional will see the mediocrity in him. But the novice is open to what he is being given. So, you can even teach a novice. So, it's the mediocrity that came in, it's the influx of people who came into the industry because of the money not because of the love of the job.

*Researcher:* As performers or as producers?

*Steph-Nora:* In all areas: as performers, producers, writers, in all the aspects. And when they came in, they came in with a totally not quite impressive view about art and that was what I found irritating. And I realised incidentally they even climbed to the helm of

affairs because in the country where you and I are in, you find out that money rules a lot of things. When they came in with their bags of money they altered the industry and that really made me at a point think of getting a job, do something else. But I realised this is where my heart is. So, I'm glad I stayed on. Things are getting into shape now. But the influx of mediocre, novices, and non-professionals really put me off at a point.

*Researcher:* Alright. Apart from the disenchantment with all these situations that are becoming, mercifully, a thing of the past, can you tell me more about conditions of service in the industry in terms of wages? Are you generally happy with what you get as one the top rated actresses in the country?

*Steph-Nora:* No, I won't say I'm happy and I won't say I am sad. You know, the regular African wants to rip you off, if he can. Not because he doesn't know your worth, he knows alright but if he can get his way around it. The pay to me, when compared with when we started, is a whole lot different. It's a whole lot better but it's still not right. And why it happened like that was because of what I said earlier. Some people who were money-minded capitalist came into the industry and now they are doing it as if you're trading things, buy tomatoes, sell and make a little profit. But they are not being truthful about their profits, their sales. So they are not paying us what we're supposed to be earning. And that saddens my heart because some people want to keep all the money for themselves. Honest producers too. But a regular producer finds it difficult to produce a film because he is scared of losing his money because some people might just not level up with him when it comes to the sale of the movie. So, you find some people have just commandeered the market. They say what goes around comes around. It's got to era of writing, producing, directing, acting. People are not doing the normal work because some aspects of the industry are not being truthful about what really is the situation. We are made to believe sales are poor. You can fool some people sometimes but you cannot fool all the people all the time. The man who tells you sales are not good, why are you still in the industry, why are you building houses, why are you buying new cars, why are you attaining new grounds. You don't want the man next to you to grow. So the pay is alright as in you can feed your family relatively, you can buy this one car that you've been pushing around, pay your rent and the rest it. But entertainment is more than that. We have more than 150 million people in Nigeria and people are telling us that they can't



even sell up to 200,000 copies. I think that's sheer robbery. I'm not happy about it. And even when some people came out and took the bull by the horn and said, 'pay us a little more than you pay us,' they got slammed with a ban. I find that very insulting.

*Researcher:* Were you part of the people that got this tag as difficult to work with or who were banned because they came together to demand a little bit of what they've put in as a reward for their effort.

*Steph-Nora:* Well, practically speaking, I was not banned. Nobody pronounced a ban on me. But I'm one of such artists too that had been branded as difficult to work with some time ago. And that's because I held on to my tenets, what I learned, I held on to the basics I know, I held on to the ideals, I held on to what I know it's supposed to be as against what is happening in the industry. So, you find people saying things like, 'She is difficult to work with.' But as time went on, I told myself, if you want to catch a monkey you have go on all fronts. And if you can't beat them, you cannot correct a set-up from the outside, you have to get on the inside to do that. So, I decided to put my off certain things and just move on with the crowd. When the situation stabilises, I will be there, you know. But if it's as in coming out to pronounce me banned, nobody did such thing. But that doesn't mean some people were not laid off, you know. There's always this general consensus in laying some people off even when they don't know about it. I wasn't laid off, I've been working regularly. But I know that there are certain things I will not handle, certain things I cannot live with, certain things that I can't take. For this reason, if I'm not working, I'm not supposed to work, fine. But I'm holding on to my God.

*Researcher:* O.k., so the ban actually is in this form: a group of people came together and decided that they weren't going to work with a particular set people any more because you mentioned laying off. By this the laying off, do you mean, 'we are not hiring you even if you came a dime for a dozen.'

*Steph-Nora:* That's right, that's it. And it's all nonsense. It could have been anyone. After all you cannot actually lay off someone you didn't make, someone that you didn't train, someone.... If you don't want to buy my product, then God bless you. If you don't want to buy my product, why would you stop the other man? So, it all boils down to mediocrity. Mediocrity, yea. Because I think it's absolute ignorance. It boils down to ignorance, unprofessionalism, capitalism. What is the word? It boils down to dictatorship.

You believe the balls of another man are in your hands and you want to crush them, just because you know you're calling the shot. So, laying off some people simply because they were asking for better pay. Reminds you of the saying, 'if you want to hang a dog, you give it a bad name. They said they were difficult to work with, although some people became like that. But pronouncing a ban on people, to me, is insulting.

*Researcher:* I know you may not like to do this, but can you just mention one or two names of the victims of this ban.

*Steph-Nora:* Well, everybody knows who they are: there is Genevieve Nnaji, there is Richard Mofe-Damijo (RMD), Omotola. There is Dede. Dede, I learnt, is banned out of error. His name wasn't even supposed to be there. But when they made that mistake, because of their ego, they refused to reverse it. Up till now, they have not reversed it.

*Researcher:* You mean nobody is working with RMD and Genevieve these days, not any more?

*Steph-Nora:* I can't say nobody because I think internationally, they still do stuff. The industry does not start and end in Nigeria, you know. It's unfortunate. Everybody knows who the banned artists are. And it was very disheartening to find that some people were actually applauding the act. Because they are very myopic and they are not even...If you look at some of these people, they don't even know which side their bread is buttered from. It's just the bandwagon kind of people, otherwise if you had your senses in the right box which is your head, you should be able to know it could have been you. The banning didn't happen because of the reasons they gave us. There's more to it than meets the eye. Because it was a protest. And when they got to their wit's end, they made up a list of people as their scapegoat, their sacrificial lamb. So, that was what happened.

*Researcher:* You mentioned you're a producer yourself. I'm talking about wages that people in the industry, performers get. How much have you been known to pay your topmost artist for a production?

*Steph-Nora:* O.k., let me tell you, I'm one artist who would love to pay an actor 20 million naira (about \$160,000) if I'm sure I can make it back. The first movie I made, I paid like I'm supposed to pay because there's something I said. If you're an independent producer, you are frustrated. They will gang up to frustrate independent producer out of the job circle, out of the business. So, you minimise your budget to the barest minimum. I

don't want to say I've paid my artists so and so because it will be so low. But I cannot afford to pay more than that because I have to pay such that I can recover, you know. If I begin to tell you how much I have paid an artist, it may be like I'm being hypocritical because I'm not even paying as much as some other people have been paying. But we independent producers try to cut down our costs so that at the long run you still make some money back while still fanning the ember of the entertainment industry by still patronizing the art and providing service to the people to the best of your ability.

*Researcher:* Do you mean that everybody in the home movie production industry is not independent producer because I'm aware that in television, my understanding of independent producer or independent production is either this person is commissioned by the NTA to do this programme for them, the person or his company is not in the direct employ of the NTA. So, my understanding of the home movie industry in Nigeria is that everybody, every producer is an independent producer.

*Steph-Nora:* That's in the television sector. In movie the industry, they are producers who collect money from marketers. What we mean by independent producers are producers who are the source of their own funding, not from any sponsor, not from anybody. They are people who use the money from their own pocket to shoot their movie. They are not answerable to anyone; it's their hard-earned money. The people we call independent producers are the producers that marketers use to produce films. All they do is send money to the producer to produce for them. They have their strings attached to them. They yo-yo them the way they like. They are tied to the apron strings of the marketers so to speak. Those are not independent producers. Sometimes, independent producers go out to get a sponsor, actually outside the confines of the industry but we still call them independent producers because the autonomy is when you're not dependent on the marketer at Upper Iwaka, Idumota or Aba. So, that's just the demarcation. That's why other denominations of dependent or independent producer. But when it comes to TV and maybe stage, the notion of independent production is different. You don't take money from any TV station; you're independent because the stuff you're showing to them is brought to them. So you're independent. But in the movie industry in Nigeria, what makes you independent is because you're not going into that market to source funds. So, that's just it.

*Researcher:* Thank you. Now, coming to your appearances or characters you portray in these films, do you, because right now you are playing Funke in *A New Song*, have any empathy, do you see any similarity in your character and the fictional character that you portray and do you empathize with your fictional character in any way? Or the messages that are written on the character, because any character that is portrayed has a story and a message written into it, can you share your experiences of the characters you have portrayed and how you have related with them or how you see them?

*Steph-Nora:* Well, let's look at Funke as a character. She is just a regular human being. But she is a peculiar human being in the sense that she is pretending to be a Christian. But I'm no such person. I'm not the kind of woman that will ward off my step-daughter like Funke is doing. I have a step-daughter, you know. I'm not the kind of person who will be happy over seeing other people's travails, like she is happy about the other person and all those petty things. I'm not a petty person. So, the character Funke, does not relate to my person in any manner at all. Earlier you think she is a Christian, later you find out she isn't. I'm a loyalist, I'm a Christian and I hold my belief very highly and very strongly. So, I don't want to be caught playing double standard with my Christianity. So, Funke is not any way near my personality. She is just a character I have to play. And the empathy? Well, does any one like Funke, actually? It's very painful; it's very regretful if anyone actually turns out to be that way because she is a very pathetic human being. She is not the kind of person you want to envy and want to be like. That's just it.

*Researcher:* Alright. You've been in this business since 1993 you said, since you graduated from Obafemi Awolowo University and ever since you've been in the business. How do you handle attention from your audiences in terms of when they recognise you? Do you have any fan letters from them, any media attention whether positive or negative? How do you handle these attentions?

*Steph-Nora:* When it comes to my fans, well, I've had my fair share and not so-fair share. I've had the phone calls, I've had the reactions. I've had the spontaneous reactions that are not so pleasant from the movie thing. So, I've had reactions, applauses and criticisms from fans. When you criticise me, I still see you as my fan, because it takes you sitting down and studying me to be able to criticise me. So, you must have really watched me to criticise me. So, I've had that and I have handled it the same way I handle every part of

my life. I didn't come into the movie industry by accident, you see. It was well-orchestrated from the beginning of my life. I already had it in my mind that I want to end up as an actress. But then, it was just TV. In that I'm thankful. So, I know when you're an actress....when I was a kid, we had this woman that was in one TV soap opera then, *For Better, For Worse* and she was living near my house. And we all used to come out in the morning. She was working with the NTA and in the programme. So, in the morning we know that when it's 7 o'clock, she goes to work. So, in the morning we were all at the balcony, me and my sisters, waving to her. I remember this incident when it was raining and she was caught in the rain and we ran into the rain with our umbrella to walk her to her place. So, I already knew that if you get on TV you're going to get popular. So, I wasn't caught unawares when the fan thing began because I know it's part of the job. Though, sometimes, the reactions you get are more than you think it would be like. When I went to Liberia, the kind of reaction I got in Liberia, I never got it in my whole life even within Nigeria.

*Researcher:* Can you share that reaction with me?

*Steph-Nora:* Well, I was in Liberia in the year 2004. I went for a Peace Carnival that was for the disarmament of the Liberian Kid before they restored democracy. I was invited by another friend who is a Sierra Leonean that I met in Ghana for the show. It was a ten-day show and I represented Nigeria alongside Sheila Okoye who couldn't go because she had a show in Ghana. So, I went to Liberia believing it was going to one of those shows where you make an appearance and people come around. So, I just went. I was not warned it would be a grandiose occasion. And I said, let's see, it's just an occasion. But when I got to the airport, the reception I got! People singing with my name, all the UN, the CNN, it was a big thing. At the time I did a double take and I was like, 'is there anyone on this aircraft that I do not know that they are calling?' It was when I heard them singing with my name and had T-Shirts with my name. Yea, I even had a convoy. I felt really good. I was taken to a VIP lounge for a press conference. From when I stepped into that country until when I left, for the first time, I ...in Nigeria, you get treated like a star in some ways, but then, that time in Liberia was grandiose. And at the end of the day, I was given an award, the Queen of African Solidarity, by the UNO and the Liberian Government. It was very, very grandiose, you know. Such you don't really expect. I'm a

modest person, I don't like to see you and expect you to know me. I don't see you and think you should know me.

*Researcher:* Like I didn't recognise you; I didn't know who you were when I saw you.

*Steph-Nora:* Until I put on my make-up

*Researcher:* Yea. Yea.

*Steph-Nora:* Why did that happen?

*Researcher:* And you began to look like, 'yea, I think I have seen that face before.'

*Steph-Nora:* Yea, you know. I didn't even want you to treat me like a TV personality. Treat me like Steph-Nora Okere, the regular girl. Because I'm a regular person. I remember the papers wrote about me and said, 'her ordinary look.' I'm not a classy person, I'm not a very...I don't try to be what I'm not. So, I'm a modest person. So, when I went to Liberia and all that happened and when I went to Sierra Leone too, it was about the same thing. I said, 'whoa, boy.' So, that's for the pageantry of fans and fanship or whatever. But when it comes to publicity, when it comes to the newspaper write-up, if you take a questionnaire of people in Nigeria, they will tell you I've had a very terrible outing with the press. I've not really had...until I got married, even after I got married, they were still on my case. Because erm, before then I had a good relationship with the press. I came out from the university and not quite long after, I became the National Vice-President and I was working tenaciously; I was doing what I was supposed to do and I was being applauded. But I ran into bad waters with one pressman who tried to exploit me.

*Researcher:* How? Can you elaborate on the incident?

*Steph-Nora:* It was *Hints Magazine*. They used my picture for a novel, I mean, they put my photograph to sell the novel. It's not a magazine. So, I told them no and that was the height of it. I'm supposed to be paid. But the first man that did it collected money, lied to them that he had paid me some money. So, when he got into trouble with *Hints Magazine*, he now came threatening me, that he could run me out of the industry if I did not take the stipend he was giving me. And I said, no, I'm not taking that money from you. And that was how it all started; that was how the bad publicity started. And then he had a gang who now teamed up with him. For a long time, they were on my case. They were telling all sorts of stories, just trying to paint me black. I think when they ran out of

steam and got tired of the whole thing, they started retracing what...The same guy came to me and took a comprehensive interview that ran the whole page of a magazine. So, like Segun said earlier, 'onu kwuru njo ga ekwo mma...(Igbo expression meaning the mouth that slandered you will one day turn around to sing your praises) all that. Now, I've not had a good... But recently, for two years, for a year running, I've refused to do an interview until like three, four months back, I opened up and I gave them my reasons. And I think they are beginning to launder what they've done to my image. So, that's just it. I think it's borne out of trying to create sensation around someone. Somebody you see and you say this is news material and you want to create sensation but you mess people up when you do that. What these people don't seem to realise is that people like me that they write about have families, they are not isolated, they are not an island, they have people, they have names to protect. So, that's it.

*Researcher:* Thank you. Well, you are on this **Super Story** production, have you been in any other **Super Story** before now?

*Steph-Nora:* Yes, if you turn to the wall clock (directing the Researcher's attention to a framed picture on the wall), you will see me. I was in the second. You know they have the first one, *Oh Father, Oh Daughter*. The next is one, *Face of Deceit*.

*Researcher:* *Face of Deceit*?

*Steph-Nora:* I was the lead character in *Face of Deceit*. Have you seen *Face of Deceit*? I was the woman...

*Researcher:* Oh my God! (The Researcher has only just then realised the woman in the photo was the actress)

*Steph-Nora:* So, you didn't know it was me.

*Researcher:* So it was you! You look totally different now, more glamorous. Did they go out of their way to give you the dowdy, schoolmarmish look?

*Steph-Nora:* No, if you, even now, if you want me...like before I came here I just finished a movie we went to shoot in Badagary. I played the village girl. I am lucky with that. I can go all the way, if I want to go. I can go all the way and be what the character wants me to be. I like to read a lot. That's when I saw this book on research (She is referring to the book on research the Researcher had with her during the interview) I was

attracted to it. I like to be the character and that's what has really kept me on in the industry.

*Researcher:* So, you mean you're not a vain person. Because I remember Charlize Theron. Charlize in the movie *Monster* was made by the powers of make-up to be really ugly. But Charlize is one of the most beautiful women on earth right now. So, you mean you are not vain, anything that your fictional character requires, you're ready?

*Steph-Nora:* Once I say 'yes I will play the character', I just lay down all my tools and let the director mold me. And one thing I try to do is to work closely with my director and if the writer is on the set, I'll work with the writer so that I get the original concept of the character. Because when I'm in the character then I can deliver, then I can act the character. So, when I was acting *Face of Deceit*, I was even more glamorous than I am now. Then I used to wear a lot of big hair; I used to wear a lot of make-up; I used to wear a lot of long nails. I used to be slimmer then, always on high-heeled shoes and everything. But now, I'm even anything. But if you see me then when outside the character, you'll see the difference then. So, it's just the character I portrayed, it wasn't me. Like the wig I wore yesterday, it's because I know I'm playing a born-again woman, that's why I looked for a wig that would make my hair look like it's natural. I didn't want a wig that will make me look like I'm wearing artificial wig, you see what I'm saying. Otherwise I have other wigs that I can wear that will look classy but I decided on the one that will blend with my hair so they will think I went to the salon to set my hair because that's what born-again Christians do.

*Researcher:* And that's exactly the look you achieved. I thought that was your natural hair. If it was the effect you went out of your way to achieve, you were 100% successful. Because you even had me fooled. Remember I was asking you if that was your natural hair.

*Steph-Nora:* Yea, I try to be the character.

*Researcher:* Right, talking about working closely with directors on the set, what can you tell me has been your experience in the industry in relation to how you get your roles, things like pre-shooting preparations such as getting the script before production, rehearsals before shooting proper, things like these, really.



*Steph-Nora:* Well, you know, Segun (another actor, Segun Arinze) was talking about the management side of the industry and some structures that we don't have yet. That is one of the aspects that disheartens me, you see. Because I'm this type of person, I'm a bit laid back on certain things about life. I don't know how to push my way through. So, if there are some aspects of the industry that have not developed much, I will say it is the managerial side. I'll be so happy when this happens because then, I will just sit there and the manager gets the job and all the work I have to do is work on my accessories and on my plot, you know. But about how I get my work, it is just the regular, 'hi Steph, I have a script for you.' I don't know how to go the extra mile, I don't know how to try to compromise, try to cut corners, try to jump in through the window, because I didn't... If I had to go to university and spent five years learning how to do it, I might as well toe the line; I might as well be on the queue. So, getting my work is always right... From the inception when I came into the industry, it was through audition. You go for audition, you get drilled, if you fit in, you get the role. Sometimes, even when you fit in and you delivered and something happens, and the other girl gets the role, I still keep keeping on. And by His grace, that's the grace of God, I am who I am today, that I can be remembered without me going for an audition. I just know, I still get my jobs by recommendation or someone writes a script and I'm featured. Although, sometimes you have friends in the industry that you can call up and ask what is happening. Because I don't have a manager, not that I cannot employ the services of one but you get a manager here and it's like, 'whoa, what is happening,' and everybody begins to keep away from you. I don't know why. Somebody has to correct that idea. It's so terrible. So, that's how I get my jobs, you call me up and say you have a script for me. Or you're my friend and you're a producer, sometimes I can call you and look in to see if there is anything. So, that's how I've been going.

*Researcher:* Alright. I've gone on location with you and I have seen how you rough it out, everybody does. And these are the big stars who have the lead roles in the production. I mean, having to stay out under the sun, waiting for their turn to perform. Does this in any way affect the performance you put in?

*Steph-Nora:* It does

*Researcher:* In what ways?

*Steph-Nora:* It does. It does. Everything has a history. Pardon my saying this. But some of the directors we have do not help the situation. They have compromised too much. And that takes us back to what I said about the level of poverty that the industry still has. I don't want to say it but some directors are disgruntled. There are some directors you work with that will not compromise the comfort of the actor because they need the actor to be in the right frame of mind to deliver. These directors go out of their way to make sure. You the actor may not be there when they fight these battles for you with the producer. And the actor is well treated. Why is that person still in the sun? If she is not working, put her in the hotel. What hotel are you putting the actor? Because the director knows that invariably it's going to show in the job. But there are some directors you work with and he won't even complain and they give you this look of 'you're complaining too much.' You have those who even team up with the producers because they want job guarantees; they want job security. So, they don't protect the welfare of the artist. So, when you're seated out there in the sun for so long and you're called on to perform and you do not perform, he does not want to know. All he knows is 'just perform.' Some directors are sycophants because they want to continue working. So, you see, all that is like a chain, you know. There's no how you take someone and you put the person in the sun and you as an artist know I'm going to wear my make-up, I'm going to wear my costume and the African costume is very, very heavy. And then you'd be sweating and you're expected to deliver and the director, all he knows is come and read and deliver. There is no how it cannot hinder your performance no matter what a wonderful actor you are. Because, the atmosphere, the environs, is not conducive to you. So, of course it does affect me but we all try to do our best. I for one I try my best to deliver but I know I can do a lot better. I always tell people that I have not been fully explored. It's just a chip of my acting ability they have been seeing. I have not been...I'm like an iceberg that has something concealed inside you have to break. So, I believe the industry is just chipping on the surface. They have not really gone in-depth to uncover me and I'm still waiting for that opportunity to be able to really show what I am because I'm a stage actor, a trained actress rather. As an actress with experience of the stage, I know I've had my own applauses in the right places. So, I believe it can still happen.

*Researcher:* And talking about dressing yourself, I also saw you applying your own make-up yourself. But I also did notice two make-up artists. Does it mean by applying your own make-up yourself, that you have more confidence in your own competence to make your face up than you have in the make-up artists that are on this set?

*Steph-Nora:* I will not typify it that way, I will not characterise it like that. It has a history, you know. And so when you generalise, you generalise from the fact that a large percentage of the people are like those; you generalise about those people. More often than not when you finish a production, you have rashes on your face, you have discolouration. You have problems with your face because of the quality of make-up that is used on you, because of the kind of puff that has been used on you, because of the kind of brush that is used on you. Are you following me? And the actor's tool.... The equipment I have as an actor is my body and my voice. But first your body because they see my body first before they hear me speak, you know. So, because of this, we the commercial actors we find ourselves doing our make-up ourselves. And you see that these make-up artists become laid back instead of them to prove to you that they can be better. They are like, 'well, I'm getting paid, if she wants to do her make-up, that's okay.' So, as time went on, it has by now become a habit. I do my make-up myself. But when we started the job, it used to be like a competition. You see a make-up artist, he will really sit down and make you up and you're so impressed and you know this is a professional. But now what you have are people who just, they come around in the industry hoping to earn some money. It's they that work in the industry.

*Researcher:* And coming to your wardrobe, I saw you get in and out of a lot of clothes. Did all these clothes come from you, I mean, on this particular production?

*Steph-Nora:* Most of them came from me. I brought some of them. It's not a new thing like Segun told you earlier. Sometimes, we bring our own stuff with us. Normally when we get a job, there is what is called wardrobe fitting, you come and fit for costume. Those days when we first started, when it was professionals still handling the industry, after fitting, they take your measurement. You come for dress rehearsal so to speak. But now, there is no such thing. In fact, nobody even calls you to ask you your size. So, to be on a safe side and knowing that you want to finish this job and move on, so you come with

your stuff, just in case, so you don't get messed up or you wear what you naturally wouldn't have liked and you're stuck with it. That's it. But they have costumiers.

*Researcher:* Coming to your welfare as a professional actress, do you think that it's not yet time that you can stand up and demand that you be treated right. I mean, you're not throwing tantrums around here or you're playing the prima donna or you want all the attention. All you're asking for is a bit of comfort, to be moved out from the sun. Don't you think that time is ripe to start to make some of the rules in this business, like demand for a dressing room perhaps, when you're on a shoot?

*Steph-Nora:* You know I said something about poverty; the poverty rate is too high. I don't talk about poverty in the financial sense alone, cash is not just where poverty ends. There is also poverty of spirit, mental poverty. In fact, the worst that can happen to anyone is mental and spiritual poverty. Because, it's these two that will determine your physical state of prosperity. If you're spiritually poor and mentally poor, there is no how physically you will not be poor. Am I right?

*Researcher:* Yea.

*Steph-Nora:* So, people that you want to fight the war with, people that you're going to rub minds with, they are the people who expect will stand by what you say. They are people who will go and backstab you. They are people who are sellout. You're doing a production and you're with your co-stars, and you say it's wrong to be treated this way and you'll now begin to sound like the voice in the wilderness. And you don't see anybody echoing with you. But once the producer or director, or whoever is out of earshot, they begin to cooperate with you. That's the problem. Of course, it's time. The time is now. I believe that time for...if I want to do anything, if I'm lying here now and think up an idea, I take up a pen immediately and begin to write it down. If I'm not around my PC and as soon as I get home, I punch it into my computer. And God willing, if it's something that's worth doing, I pursue it. Because, I believe the time for everything is now. There is no time as soon as now. So, to now put it off until another time is procrastinating and that is a lazy man's way of life, you understand. So, yes, the time is ripe, we deserve it, we have worked hard enough for it, but the chorus is not the same. Behind the people, the powers that be, yes we all chorus the same. But you'll be surprised that you're talking about these things and your own colleague is putting you on a speaker

on the phone and recording you and sending to marketers or directors. Then, you find out that you're not given jobs, you're making demands. That's why some artists were banned. Earlier, 2002, we all stayed at home for four months, all actors, we all laid down our tools. We were at home for four months. People were starving. We said we want to restructure the industry. The likes of Kanayo, some artists were in the forefront. And they said, we've been paid pittance long enough. They came out with the least fee for a star artist, 500,000 naira (about \$4,000). And people were like, 'can't they be realistic, what kind of thing is this,' and they went and told the marketers. The marketers blacklisted these people, Ejike Asiegbu and co, stopped giving them work. But these people saw that it was time for actors to earn as much as 500,000 naira but the same actors went and backstabbed them and they blacklisted them for almost two years and they were not working. But the same actors (the backstabbers) were working. But what happened? Two years after, artists were paid 1.5 million naira (about \$12,000) which means they foresaw what was right but people did not back them up. But these same artists ended up earning 1.5 million. Are you following me?

*Researcher:* Who are the artists that are earning? Those that were banned or the backstabbers?

*Steph-Nora:* Backstabbers started earning the same money they were too afraid to demand for. Are you following the logic now?

*Researcher:* Yes, but are these people, the banned artists, now unbanned? Are they working, are they now being hired to star in productions?

*Steph-Nora:* Yes, yes. Now they are working. But when they foresaw it was time for us to earn this much, people betrayed them and they were run out of the job market for a while.

*Researcher:* Steph, can I ask a personal question? Have you been paid as much as 500,000 naira or one million to be in a film?

*Steph-Nora:* I have not been paid.

*Researcher:* What is the highest fee you have ever been paid as an actress?

*Steph-Nora:* I will not discuss fee that much but I've not been paid 500,000. Yes, maybe when I do part one and two together, then it can be that much. But for a movie or one part movie, I've not been paid that much. That's the truth. That's the truth. So, you see, that's what we are saying. If you now come out now and say it's time for us to own a room, a

dressing room while we are shooting (makes a murmuring noise to imitate a complaining voice. 'These Nigerian, you can never satisfy them'), people will mumble and murmur behind you. But eventually when that kind of incentive comes, they will enjoy it. They even enjoy it more than you that pushed for it.

*Researcher:* Apart from this welfare issue, can you talk me through other challenges that you have faced in this industry?

*Steph-Nora:* A lot. First, I faced the challenge of being a graduate of theatre arts.

*Researcher:* How come?

*Steph-Nora:* I tell you right away. When I came into the industry, there were very few people that were graduates of theatre arts and some people did not feel good about it. Especially, when they opened their mouths to talk, you are talking about what you know inside out and what they don't know. And, you're bringing out the emptiness in them. So, you're warded off, 'I know you know, but stay there, let me deal with it my way.' They will not employ professionals, they will rather employ novices and which worsens the job. That's one of the challenges. The other challenge I faced was the challenge of compromising as a woman. I will not compromise for any reason, otherwise I should not have gone to school at all. I come from a home, I have a background and I know where I'm coming from and I will not compromise it because I want to be popular. Eventually, I got popular. I may not be earning 20 million, 30 million or whatever in every other movie but I'm satisfied. And I know with all that I went through, if I got to where I am, I will get to higher ground. That's part of the challenges. And some people showing up too, like Segun said, upcoming artists. They just show up and they think it is a bed of roses. So, at the beginning you just watch. There was a time like last year, job for me was a bit scarce and the year before and that was because there was an influx of actresses who believe they can come and depose you. But you just stay on the side and watch because you know what you have in you and you believe in what you can do. You believe in what you can do and hang on and time will always tell. In such situations you just succeed there and I see it as challenge. Then sometimes too, you find yourself doing a job that regularly you shouldn't be doing. Because you know you have to foster the image of the industry; you have to what do...(struggles to remember the word) what you call it, salvage the industry. You have to keep the flame burning, you find yourself working with

some people, doing some production. You want to just keep being in the business because when it changes, you want to still be there. Because you cannot correct a situation from the sideline.

*Researcher:* If there is any one single thing you'd like to change about the storyline and your fictional character, can you share what angle or what route you'd take if you were given the chance to change anything about your fictional character or the storyline as a whole.

*Steph-Nora:* Well, what I would have loved to change is the regular step-mother step-daughter thing. All step-mothers are not bad. I'm a step-mother to my husband's darling daughter. I don't think all step-mothers are bad. So, it's becoming a regular. She (talking about Funke, the fictional character she had played in *A New Song*) didn't expect a step-daughter and that's no reason to maltreat her. I believe there would have been a different angle, a different twist to the story that could have made it more interesting that it would not become bandwagon thing with the regular step-mother. So, that's the aspect. When I saw that aspect I was like, 'Oh, the same old song.' Why couldn't we sing it another way and still come out with the same result. So, that's just the area I didn't quite like. As for the area of Funke, Becky and everything, it's ok; it happens. But that area of the step-mother maltreating the step-daughter, it's becoming one too many. That's the area I didn't quite like. Not that I didn't agree with it; it happens. But it could have been treated some other way.

*Researcher:* What can you say are your needs as a professional actress? I mean, it could be the need to get the script weeks before shooting starts; it could be the need to get into the thinking of your fictional character. It could be any of these things. So, what can you say your needs as a professional actress are?

*Steph-Nora:* First, I need a manager. I need a manager.

*Researcher:* Right

*Steph-Nora:* I need a manager

*Researcher:* So why not get one?

*Steph-Nora:* Look, God bless you. I'm going to get a manager but I may need a manager for an international market, not for Nigerian market. Nigerian market has so broken itself down such that having a manager is like putting a block in front of you. If I get a manager

it may be for international market, so I need a manger. I need a manager and if I'm working with a manager, I need it to be different.

*Researcher:* What particularly, or what especially can a manager do for you or your profession?

*Steph-Nora:* For me as a person, I am one person like I said earlier, I don't know how to lobby. I am running an artist management, running an artist grooming outfit. Then I know if I'm going out to look for a job for an artist, I know I'm not coming to sell personality to you, I'm coming to sell someone. I feel justified. I don't feel okay when I have to walk into your office and say, 'I need a job and the job is for me'. It doesn't feel good or when you have to call me and negotiate with me. I believe it should be better than that, you understand. So what a manager will do for me is a whole lot. A manager will get my job for me. A manager will keep my weight in check. I will know I'm responsible to someone.

*Researcher:* A manager keep your weight in check? I believe a personal trainer is the one who does that.

*Steph-Nora:* A manager will get me a personal trainer. A manager will get all these because I'm his product and he will do everything to fine-tune his product. Then I'll know I'm responsible to someone, so I have to act responsibly. That's why some of us get laid back. But if you know there are people who have a stake and who can sue you, you will be on your toes, you'll be up and doing. So, I need a manager. But as it is here, not with the Nigerian movie industry. Two, I need the working environment to be different. I need the pace to be different too. I need everything to be different. I need the Nigerian movie industry to actually follow the ideal situation not playing to the Nigerian thing. Home movie is not a Nigerian thing. We are copying, so let's copy right. Let's copy right. That's just the thing.

*Researcher:* Whoa. I'm sure I must have exhausted you. Thank you Steph-Nora Okere Falana for your time and patience. You said you've not given an interview in years and you did give one about four months ago, so I feel quite privileged to have this time with you. Thank you very much

*Steph-Nora:* My pleasure.



**(12) Informal Interview with Actor, Yemi Solade, on location and in-between shooting of episodes of *A New Song* at Ikorodu**

*Researcher:* What are your fees like? Are you generally happy with what you are paid?

*Solade:* The fees are nothing. Check all the cars here, everybody is complaining about threadbare tyres. My car is not here too (chuckles mirthlessly). Where is the stardom thing? Where is it? You can't see.

*Researcher:* So you mean there are no true super stars in the commercial television industry?

*Solade:* There are no stars. Don't put the word 'super'. There are no stars here. As far as the Nollywood, the home video in Nigeria is concerned, there are no stars. Stars don't buy refurbished cars. They buy brand new cars and live in big estates. You don't see them cheaply on the streets. I'm sure you know. You live in the advanced world. (Solade refers to the Researcher living in London.) You don't see Roger Moore, Sean Connery, you don't see them. These people are legends. You don't see them over there cheaply. You don't see all these people but you feel them; you know they are somewhere around because you feel the aura. Anybody can just walk up here and go, 'Yemi Solade, what's up', at a personal risk to me, you see. So I don't kid myself; I say it as it is. I've just told you my fee here is about 25,000 naira (about \$200). I'm aware that it is professionally wrong in a sense to disclose your fee. But we read in the magazines about Will Smith taking home 18million dollars for *Men in Black* and all. Okay, fine. But in Nigeria, because the fees are not there, so nobody wants to talk about it.

*Researcher:* So, you mean you don't have an organization of a sort to look out for the interest of the performers?

*Solade:* No we have splinter groups called professional bodies here and there. But most of these outfits sprang up as a result of the advent of home videos in Nigeria. The initiators of these movements, of course, had maybe some other ambition. Some people form unions all in the bid of making a name and then linking up with people in government. I think that's basically what happens in most cases. If the chairman or president of a body wants to pay homage to one governor and he gives them a million naira (about \$8000) then, they split it within the executive members and the congress

members afterwards. So you don't know anything. All you know is that the executive visited the governor of a state and he gave them something and the something is never disclosed. So, there's this lure to always want to, you know, to serve... (Researcher adds, 'play close to the seat of power'). Yea. So, for me, I'm just an artist; I do fieldwork. I don't want to know anything about administration. I've been there but I don't do it the way it's done.

*Researcher:* Thank you. On locations like we are at the moment, I've noticed even from yesterday that performers, no matter how big they are in the Nigerian context, don't even have so much as a trailer of their own (Solade laughs without amusement) where they could change between scenes. I saw you pulling off your pants (Solade interjected 'by the roadside'), yea and getting into your shirts, or pulling off your pants, stripping down to your boxers. So, what can you say about the situation and the welfare of actors in Nigeria.

*Solade:* It is still at the lowest ebb and we are not developing. The producers want to minimise everything and maximise everything profit-wise. If an actor wants to change his costume and he wants to do it the ideal way, you know, a changing room, it's nothing. But the producer is on your neck, telling you, 'come I'm losing time, you're wasting people's time, please get into your costume.' And the costumes are not even supplied by the producer. But because we are used to playing in this style, in most cases, we don't like to complain. So, when you see some big names want to display some attitudes, you don't blame them. You see, this thing is a mental thing. You want to psyche yourself to want to do it. Look, I'm using my car, you didn't buy me this car; you didn't fuel it; you won't service it for me, it's my costume, my clothes. (Clutching his clothes, Solade continues) These are my personal clothes that I appear in movies in; they are mine. So, I may choose not to wear them. I can say, 'go and get everything that you need, after all, you are the one making the bucks.' But right now, this is how we do it to get results. So, you consider the communal thing and say, 'ok, let me do it.' You see, interestingly, even within the rank and file of actors, because of commitments here and there, you find actors who come and just feature in some few scenes and they want to get out in two hours or so. So, if you want to play professional, your colleagues will not aid you, rather you'll run into troubled waters with them because they have to be somewhere else. (Lowers his

voice and imitates the voice of a pleading colleague) ‘Man, please, help me just this once. I’ve got this other job somewhere in Leki.’ So, you say o.k. because you want to help the guy to feed his family and so you help him get off early to do this other job. We have no welfare, nothing. You have to be there to get water. So, it’s more or less like a concentration camp business. It’s just that the actors don’t have a choice; this is what they do 24/7 and so the producers capitalize on that to exploit.

*Researcher:* How do you get your roles, are you in direct contact with the producer, how do you come by the roles you play.

*Solade:* Yea, the roles, here the system is to be cast. You know this guy, he’s there, he’s been tested and he’s trusted. He’s is reliable, he’s dependable and he can deliver. He gives you what you want. So, you just, it’s a matter of GSM, cellular phone and then you call him, ‘I have a job for you.’ If you’re not hooked up somewhere, you say o.k., fine. Everything is settled on the phone in most cases. And then, you carry your baggage and then you’re off to work.

*Researcher:* No such things as contracts, no such things as going through your agent, (Solade interjects, ‘no’) no such things as drawing up an agreement? (Solade answers in the negative also.)

*Solade:* In most cases, no. I will say 95-98% of productions turned out in Nigeria have nothing to do with contract agreement, no contractual agreements. It’s mostly based on sentiments: a friend is calls you up and says, ‘ah my pall, please, you’ll work with me; how much do you say I should pay you?’ You tell him how much and few minutes later the agreement is sealed.

*Researcher:* And are you generally satisfied with the fees?

*Solade:* Never, never, never. But it’s like the popular adage here that says before the farmer has a harvest he has to go out and clear the bush. That’s just it. If you say you’re not doing it the way it is done which is unprofessional, then the producer gets much lesser, very cheap actors. So, there’s nothing like standard. The producer wants the best yet he doesn’t want to pay. You, the actor, do not have any other means of livelihood and so you just have to grab anything that comes your way. And if you say, ‘no, I’ve risen above this’, you’ll be pricing yourself out of the market. And then be ready to do something else and not this. This is Nigeria, you know. Once you’re not agreeing with the

producer, he goes for an actor he'll not pay even half of what he has offered you. So, it's worse. The system is corrupt. The only word for it is exploitation.

*Researcher:* And there's no organization, no union to look out for your interest.

*Solade:* The unions are just toothless bulldogs. They are not functioning. They are just there like I said, they just want to go with the designation 'chairman of this body that caters for the welfare of artists', whereas we see no welfare that is being catered for. All they want in the associations is just to collect your union dues. There are those ones who use that to oil the system they are in. You see them living fat off of you. Everybody is sucking, just sucking everybody's blood. Yea, it's so pathetic. (Researcher adds, 'tragic')

*Researcher:* And last night, I also noticed that you were rehearsing before the start of the shoot. Is it the usual practice, or yesterday was just a one-off? How long do you get your script before shooting starts, that is?

*Solade:* Yea, in an ideal setting, scripts should come in weeks before work; but that isn't the case here. It isn't the case. At times you don't even get to see some scripts at all. So most of the things we do, I'm talking about the Nollywood experience largely, most of the time, they are based on improvisations. So, it's mostly an impromptu thing. You get there and if you're not playing a major role, you're playing two or three scenes, you don't even know what the story is all about. All you do is your segment and you're off. At times it's that bad so much so that these movies come out and you don't remember being part of them. The producer does that for commercial reasons. He needs one's face to sell the movie, 'once I get his face on the poster and jacket, people will buy' (Solade chuckles mirthlessly). So, scripts come in for those who have been told what characters they will play. They are the ones who get the scripts early enough. So one studies these characters, reads the script, thoroughly analyses it and completely assimilates the thematic concerns, you know what you're going out there to do. But for people who think that 'this is Yemi; he'll do it. Just call him and under two hours he'll come here and he will deliver.' That has been the major practice.

*Researcher:* Alright, Yemi, if you're called upon to deliver an impromptu performance, can you say that you're being true to yourself as a professional, that is. Because I think you need time to study your character, try to analyze your character and even perhaps, because sometimes, if it demands going to the hospital, to the natural situation of the

character, to get to know what are the motivations and things, you also need to do those. So, how do you manage as a professional, to get into these impromptu productions or acting without the benefit of the scripts or studying the character as a professional?

*Solade:* See, most of the time, the roles that one plays are very familiar ones. So it makes the work a lot simple. The casting director would from the outset consider one or two factors before giving out the roles. 'O.k., we need a rounded person, he must be light-skinned. Who does it best? Yemi Solade, he has his musical business, he is a good rapper, you know, and all that. He moves his body well and all that, the facial expression, subtle touch to the character.' So it all becomes a stereotype. If you're looking for the hard ones, you know where they are. So, the actors have been departmentalized: if you're looking for the rough ones, you know where to get them, you're looking for the smooth ones, you know where to get them. And so it's so easy for the directors to just stretch forth the arm and then drag you in. The thing one asks in a situation that is impromptu, you say, 'come on, what is the character all about?' He'll say, 'oh no, it's one rich boy, there's no problem; I know you'll do it.' That's what the producer tells you. Then you ask him, 'Am I married?' He'll say: 'Yah, yah, so, so and so is your wife.' 'Do we have grannies?' and he'll say, 'so, so and so is your granny or your mum.' We are like one family; we've been working together for years like that because it's a cycle. There's no actor that is really strange within the top ones. So we know one another. Even if we've not worked together for some years but we've done it once or twice before. Then when we meet again, the relationship continues. We pick it up from where we left off. So it makes it a lot easier for us. But with a new actor, you don't even have any chemical flow, no chemical flow, nothing, you know, no time to relate to the other player. Unlike on the stage, that happens on the stage. It's like football, you have to rehearse, and rehearse and master your act before presentation. We achieve that on the stage but this is not before the camera. In Nigeria it's about, 'come, I have this camera and it's 10,000 naira (about \$80) per day. I've paid for four days and I don't want to overshoot my budget.' So, everyone is on edge: the producer, the actors and the technical crew. (Solade imitating the pleading voice of the Director, perhaps) 'I don't have extra money to pay. Please, people, let's us do this thing.' When you're supposed to sleep, they are pushing you under those halogen lights. You have to stress it out, just do it, even when the mood is not right. You may not

even be healthy enough to do. They'll say, 'do it, do it now so that we don't have to come back tomorrow. We only have the use of this house for today.' So, you're being pushed, like you know, like there's a cudgel somewhere and you too, you want to understand that this is how we do it. And so doing an impromptu is no big deal but one has to know, you have further questions like I said earlier: 'who am I playing with? Is it this person? What is happening there?' So, once you know all these things such as 'you are not married' and so they don't expect my wedding band, I pull it off. Those are the cases most of the time. And they expect that you're supplying your costume in most cases too. They just say, 'o.k. change, change, change.' Then you ask, 'change to what?' They say, 'give us corporate' and you head straight for your car boot. So you're expected when you hear the 'office boot', you start going into your car, open the boot, and very quickly put on a tie and blazer. So you know they are ready and you're ready and all that. That's why I change in the boot of my car. People are used to me like that. So, I want to quickly get out of that place too because I'm going elsewhere. And it's all because, the pay, the take home is nothing. Otherwise, I won't have a reason after one job I go to the next job the next day. No, no, I shouldn't be, but because I have commitments, I have a family and all these things.

*Researcher:* I guess I should be letting you go for the time being, but definitely I'll be coming back to you, Yemi.

*Solade:* No problem

*Researcher:* Thank you so much.

*Solade:* You're welcome

### **Further informal interview with Yemi Solade on the same day.**

*Researcher:* So, you mean most of these big names like Genevieve Nnaji, Zach Orji, Nkem Owo, Segun Arinze, and you Yemi, you mean you don't get up to 200,000 naira (about \$1,600) for appearing in a film.

*Julius:* Some do, I don't, some do, I don't. You've already seen Segun (Solade meant Segun Arinze, another actor on the set) You've seen him? (Researcher answers in the affirmative) Even if he tells you he does, but you, as someone who has sat down to

evaluate what you've seen so far, you'll come up with a conclusion. It may be hasty but you'll be very close to it. You've heard us complaining about silencer of our cars: this one is overheating. That is nothing new. That is the way it is. We don't... I don't fool myself; I don't live in a fool's paradise. I say it as it is. But that is not canvassing or soliciting sympathy, no. Because you see, there are a lot of people out there who feel we live big. So, they even attack us. They come, the miscreants come. They want to demand money; they want money, 'give us money.' These people come to where we shoot and demand, 'we want money, give us money.' So we are harassed.

*Researcher:* And this is all because someone out there put out a word that you are paid so much.

*Solade:* Yes they think, 'these are big boys, these are big people.' But come and visit where our people live. We don't live like, you know. We're only surviving.

*Researcher:* And how long do you think this is going to last? Are you seeing a future where the interest, where your welfare will be better taken of in terms of your earnings?

*Solade:* Well, if we continue at this pace, with much articulation and we are able to get the white paper from the government, there's a body that has been set up by the government to regulate everything that happens within the Nollywood called MOPICON (Motion Pictures Council of Nigeria) which will be the apex body regulating the motion picture industry. If the Nigeria factor does not come in, you know this federal character syndrome where they have to have balance... You know Nigeria's problem is basically ethnic, as you know. You want every tribe in a parastatal so everybody on board would fight for his own constituency. That is basically the problem here. So, who heads it now? If an Igbo person heads it, the Yorubas will scream blue murder, Hausas will say no. It won't work. So, that is the biggest problem. Even the government at the centre has the problem too. But we are artists. We live a liberal life. Artists really are not materialistic. But the talent in you secures you a good lifestyle, gives you all you want in life. So, that's what I think. But then I'm not making comparisons here because if you talk of Hollywood, Hollywood is over a hundred years. They know how far they have come. Even the Indian experience Bollywood, they are old too. So, Nollywood is just like, it's still a teenage thing, not quite 16, 17 years now.

*Researcher:* When exactly did it start?

*Solade:* I think around 1990.

*Researcher:* 1990?

*Solade:* Yea.

*Researcher:* Alright.

*Solade:* The thing just evolved from soap opera. Somebody toying with the idea of recording drama on tape and then letting people view that. That was what gave birth to home video. And then you now see the influx of...all Nigerians now want to act. Everybody is now an actor.

*Researcher:* (Surprised) What are you talking about!

*Solade:* Everybody, the medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, they all want to act now. Yea, so, we are the ones they are contending with, we the professionally trained ones.

*Researcher:* And why do you think that is? Is it because they believe you're making so much money and they want to get into the action themselves?

*Solade:* Ah, yes. Some see it as a way of making money; some see it as a way of expressing some hidden stuff. You know, in the African setting parents want their wards to, you know, practice disciplines that are lucrative. To them, that's what they believe. Truly those disciplines were lucrative in those days: medicine, law, engineering, accountancy, but now, it isn't so anymore. You see medical doctors who are just roaming all over the place and not really doing well; lawyers who are looking for criminals to bail, and looking for people to write affidavits for. You go to the High Court, you see them. You see doctors who complain every time. So, they feel like well, if actors can ride cars with AC (Air-Conditioning), when you see them highly celebrated, then why don't we go there too. So it's just about all coming to have a try, it might gel (that is, make a success of it) and then they quit the main practice and then face this and then that's about it. Some enjoy the glitz, the razzmatazz, (Researcher, yea) you know, yea (Researcher: I know, the limelight).

*Researcher:* Well, do you really believe there could be a success story in a professional abandoning the profession he's trained in for another profession where he doesn't even know the first thing and hope to make a success of it. Do you think this is possible?

*Solade:* In Nigeria, anything goes. We've seen it; we've seen stories like that. But it's just that any professional who abandons his original profession to cross-carpet to another one



is risking a lot. Unless he undergoes the rudimentary training, yea, get some form of training, crash programme, yea, he might do. But other than that, we have these talents deposited in on us. You could be a lawyer today because you just wanted to satisfy your parents and then with time you discover that you never have the knack for law and you always see yourself as an entertainment person, a performing artist. Now that you have grown older, you've taken control your life, then you can just veer into anything. Yea, we've seen things like that happen, and some have been successful, while some have burnt their fingers. Some of them ...because you see, most people came into acting these days just to make a name. When the name is made, the goodwill, which is the main thing that comes with the name, has been lost these days because a lot of people have come into acting. We are the exception, those of us who've started a long time ago. Before home video we never knew we were getting to this era. But the ones that are coming now, all they think about is, 'o.k., I need to be popular.' For some, money may not be the main reason but you find, especially with the ladies, when they come and make their names, the big boys in the society run after them and offer them the world of comfort, buy them cars that they cannot afford, give them the luxuries and they will be like 'ohh'. The ladies enjoy that. That's why you find a lot of Nigerian actresses are very light-skinned! (We chuckled together knowing the source of the light skin is bleaching chemical in some creams marketed in Nigeria!)

*Researcher:* Thank you. As a professional who started out before the advent of the home video, do you have favourite characters or roles you'd like to play? And now that you've made your transition to the home video, do you still have favourite roles you'll like to play?

*Solade:* Yea. I'll like to play heroic roles, like, not action movies, though, we cannot get that right here because we don't have the apparatus to achieve productions like that. But I'll love to play great names, like, for instance, I may not be as tall as Mandela, but those are the kind of people I'll want to play, play roles like that, you. I can imagine people have been playing the role of Jesus Christ and all that, what they probably wouldn't have been feeling like. Yes, I'll like to play great names like that. You know, Will Smith played Mohamed Ali, Jamie Foxx played Ray Charles. I'll love things like that. I'd love to. Those are the things. For me I'm into great minds. I read a lot of biographies and

autobiographies and I admire men like that. Even though I don't have role models, but I admire a lot of people like that who got to that top, some still living, some are gone. So, I'll love to get that challenge some day. I've even played with stuff like that recently. With my beard I've made... I think I look like Charles Taylor! (The former President of Liberia, who at a point, faced charges of Crimes Against Humanity at the Hague) If somebody writes the story, I'll play that role, yea complexion and all that, I think I can.

*Researcher:* (Chuckles and says) I think you'll do at that! But the make-up artist has to make you age a little bit more.

*Julius:* There's a time I thought I could play Ngige (A former governor of Anambra State in Eastern Nigeria, who in 2003, was at the centre of a battle for political power in the state), only that I'm a bit taller than Chris Ngige. Because at the time (and with my light skin) I had also left my beard rather bushy, which in those days was my trademark until I decided to groom it, I had looked remarkably like the governor. So, I'd be standing and people would be calling out to me, 'you look like Ngige. Play him!' And would I feel that somebody could see that and then write a story and invite me to come and play Ngige titled: *The Saga of Ngige*. I wouldn't mind, or *The Rise and Fall of Charles Taylor*!

*Researcher:* Assuming your dream comes true and you get to play your favourite key role, Mandela, say. With the situation where you don't get the script sometimes until the shooting day, how do you study this character, try to get being into being this character, do you see any possibility in the Nigeria movie-making business of the performer being given enough to really study the character, get into it? We've heard of people like Charlize Theron during her preparation for *Monster* and even Julia Roberts when she played the woman who fought the big water corporation and won in *Erin Brocovitch*. Well, these actresses took months to make their preparations. O.k., the most recent example, because I've just watched one of his movies, is Russell Crow. When he played Jim Braddock in *Cinderella Man*, he studied this man's boxing moves for months and even got the man that trained Jim Braddock to train him. Well, do you see yourself undergoing such extensive preparation for a role in the near future?

*Solade:* Yea, Yea, why not. Nollywood, like I said, is about pay and quick money now and it has affected everybody. It's a bug. It's an epidemic and people just look at the monetary angle and leave every other aspect to suffer. You see, it's only on stage that we

realise these things. I've played the legendary situations like that for the stage. On stage you could rehearse for three months. It gives you ample time to get into your character, study and do all that, yea. But for the movie, a serious producer can achieve that and yea, it's workable. It happens too. When I say serious producer, we have a couple of them around who could call to say, 'Yemi, we'd be working together in November, are you ready to have the script now?' You can imagine. So that will give you about six months or so. So, I as an actor who wants to do a serious job, will not for any reason have not done my research very well. I'm playing Nnamdi Azikiwe, I will rely on footages and all that and in tandem with the producer's provision too, who may say, 'o.k. take this, take that, study it.' At the time I was reading out, 'I have Dream' by Martin Luther King Jr. I did that a lot. I was always in the UI (University of Ibadan) Library. A guy too was reading 'Die for Solabi.' We were enjoying ourselves, you know. That will tell you how much one could go out there and research a character. But the home video experience is a different ball game entirely. It is killing professionalism. A time you want to be professional, the producers aren't. Anybody is a producer in Nigeria. Once you can just get one story from the gutter and then you get one funny looking person to direct it, and you know that there is Segun Arinze there and Steph-Nora is there, you have a film. These ones (the actors) too will need the money. (Solade makes a clicking sound of calling someone's attention with the fingers) 'Give them the money and then they will come in their cars and then we shoot it five days, everybody goes home. And then the noise in Idumota and Iweka Road! (Idumota in Lagos and Iweka Road in Onitsha, Eastern Nigeria, are video film marketing headquarters in Nigeria) Because there are too many people in Nigeria, and we kind of service the whole continent and Nigerian movies litter TV stations across the continent, we think we are doing it very big time. But since we are still evolving, we'll get there, we'll get to there. But we just pray that those of us that have done so much laying the foundation before we bend would at least be part of the mouth-watering experience when it eventually comes. Like what football is doing for Nigerian youths, some guys played football for this country and regretted it but not the likes of Okoacha and Kanu; they are the big boys.

*Researcher:* Thank you Yemi, thank you.

(13) **Transcript of Informal interview with Actor, Dele Osawe, on location**

*Researcher:* Erm, I've noticed it takes a long time from when shooting starts in the morning until termination, until you come to the end of the shooting for the day, that is. I was here two days ago, yesterday as well. We got here at about 10 a.m. yesterday and by the time I left and that was about 9 p.m., you guys were still here on location and I asked some people today when it was they finally got back to the camp. Someone told me 1:30 a.m. Why do you think it takes so long to do a shoot in a day?

*Dele:* There are many factors responsible. Well, it could be artist factor, it could be equipment factor, it could be climactic factor. I think those are the three major reasons. Now, about the artist factor, majority of us artists are all struggling artists, so we tend to get jobs here and there and at times we may be on one location when they will be expecting you on another location. And if it happens that you have collected money from one place, you will like to at least satisfy them before you move to another location. So, under that you may not be available on location and others will have to be waiting for you. That is one. But in some production, some directors know how to handle such a thing. If it is possible, they may likely change the cast, kind of. But usually they delay. And some artists too, I will say, the irresponsible ones, they deliberately come late to production. Then in relation to equipment, you cannot predict equipment. The equipment may break down. May be, if you're doing some kind of interior shooting and you need light, one of the bulbs will just blow. And if you don't have a spare, you'll have to wait or go and look for another. So, that kind of thing leads to delay. It may be sound; it may be camera even. Then some logistics that connect with equipment may happen. So, that's concerning the equipment. Then coming to climate now, if you're doing exterior shooting and unfortunately the rain just starts, you have to pack up and maybe wait for another time when you will have brighter weather. Then again, maybe through some unforeseen reasons you shoot towards the evening and you cannot get enough light for your external shots, then you have to fold up, you have to fold up. So, those are the three major reasons one can easily point to that delay production. It's because we are not well prepared or well-equipped for such things. Concerning the artists, if there are strong legal arrangements, artists will not disappoint. Then concerning equipment, if we are well-

equipped, if one bulb packs up, you'll easily bring in another; that will not cause any delay. You may have many cameras, if one packs up, then you pick another camera. That's it. Then concerning the climactic condition, if you're shooting in the evening and it's getting dark, you can easily put up powerful lights that will turn the whole night to a day. So, everything now boils down to finance. We're not all that financially strong to at least stand up with the foreign producers. So, those are the reasons.

*Researcher:* Assuming we have a situation where for instance, all the cast are there, equipment not acting up, logistics in place, do you think that we still have to go through these long delays? Take two days ago, for instance. It was just one of the little children playing the children of Julius and Becky in the film. It was her clothes they forgot and they had to wait for hours to get her a pair of trousers and a top that she needed for the part. Do you think that when all these things difficulties you listed, when they are all taken care of, do you think that we can see a possibility of shooting taking place within two hours, for instance, three hours, five hours, so that the cast and crew can go back to the camp or to hotel and rest in between shoots, until the next shoot, that is, in the evening. Do you think a situation like that is likely to be possible in the near future?

*Dele:* Well, in the near future, if everything is in place as you have just mentioned, it's possible. But then, looking at the nature of people, directors have different, different styles. A scene may take a director a whole day or two days, it all depends on the style of the director. Now, there's a particular thing a director wants and not until he gets it, he'll not give up. So, that kind of situation may prolong the period of shooting. There are some directors we call quickie directors. Within a short period, they have packaged everything. But then, there are some that are very, very...how do I put it? (Dele searches for the right word and the Researcher supplies, 'thorough') Yea, very, very thorough, thank you. They look at the angle, may be they want to take a close-up. A particular close-up, they may take it from different angles. It all depends on the director, what the director wants. Film shooting is not a thing you can rush. But being that we don't have money, we don't really have all that we need for production, that's why we rush production. Usually, production should not be rushed. Take for example, films like Mahatma Gandhi, I understand that film took them ten years to complete (Researcher expresses surprise and amazement at this piece of information). They had a period of preparation, that is pre-production, then

they went for shooting, then post-production. So, film production is not something you can rush, but here, it's 'wait and take' (reference to Polaroid film that develops instantly) and rush the whole thing.

*Researcher:* Alright, I spoke with Yemi Solade yesterday about his vision of the entertainment business in Nigeria. I did ask him what roles he'd like to play in future. He told me he really liked these heroic characters like Mandela and his dream is to play Mandela or any of these important people one day. Do you think that with the current setting where we rush everything: shooting, production, that this is possible? I mean, taking into consideration the time it takes, the amount of time it takes for the artist to study the character he's going to portray and all the preparations, mental, psychological and otherwise. Do you think the Nigerian film or entertainment industry is ready to absorb this length of time and what it takes to produce a film like that?

*Dele:* Well, like my good friend always said, that's Chief Eddie Ugboma, he'd say, 'we are expanding, but not progressing.' That's his own way of describing the Nigerian film industry. Now, if you want to do a production, taking for example, as you have just mentioned Yemi Solade taking heroic roles, now you need to prepare for this. I made mention of Mahatma Gandhi film. The person who played the role of Mahatma Gandhi, (Researcher answers, 'Ben Kingsley') yea, had to go to India. I mean, it took him some time to diet in order to have the physical feature of the old man. And the language, they went to so many levels. Now, who will now give you money in Nigeria for you to prepare for a particular production that may take two or three years. They will say you're tying their money down. So, until when we are educated, until when we are enlightened about how film production works, may be then we can get people who will say, 'o.k., we are voting this money for this production.' Maybe, it's going to take three or four years before they now start to expect anything from you. So, I'm sure we'll still get to that stage. I'm sure we'll get...because when we are getting serious competition, then, that one will force us to that level. Take Tunde Kulani, for example, he doesn't rush his films; he makes the necessary preparation. In his own case, he's a distinct film-maker on his own. So, others may likely copy him, because, any time Tunde Kulani film comes out, it is a bang. It's a box-office hit because he usually makes necessary preparation; he doesn't mind how long it takes him. So, when other producers, when other financiers have seen

it, maybe, they will hopefully start to copy him because we live in a competitive world and I'm praying that time will come.

*Researcher:* Can I ask you this also? In between shoots, take yourself for instance, you were here all of yesterday, yet your character wasn't featured and you are here again today and it's about 4:25 p.m. and you've been going from one location to the other with them. How do you feel standing out here in the hot sun? I mean, in relation to your welfare, your comfort? Do you feel happy with the situation because I didn't see you arriving in your own car or owning a trailer and neither have I seen any star actor for that matter owning anything like trailer and yet you're expected to deliver. So, how does this impact on your performance as an actor?

*Dele:* Well, you see, this is very interesting, because Nigerians, I will say, are a very special species. We perform under any situation. Look at the country itself, when things are really bad, we still forge ahead. So, the same thing happens in our profession, we know the situation on the ground, we know you can't have everything that you need. So, within that scope, you have to try as much as possible to manage and give your best. I know we are just stoic, we are used to it. If we are in good environment, where you have everything, o.k., like we are staying in the hot sun now, we should be staying in an air-conditioned environment. May be by then, our performance will be better, somehow. But as it is presently, I'm telling you Nigerian artists are rugged, we are very very rugged. Under this condition, they still give their best and that's what you're seeing. I'm telling you there is no production presently that I know of that you have every comfort that you need. No, you don't.

*Researcher:* But at least, a reasonable degree of it. Do you think that if this had been a home video production set, the conditions would have been better?

*Dele:* It's all the same thing. It's only when we are discussing that we say, 'this television, this is home video.' It's all the same. The productions all take the same form. Even stage production, it has its own hassles too. So, we don't have all that we need to make a good production, but Nigerian artists are rugged, so, they give out their best.

*Researcher:* Talk to me about welfare of performers on the set.

*Dele:* O.K., Concerning welfare, as far as I know, in many productions around, the only welfare they know is to give you food, and that's just the only thing. And that's why they keep on saying welfare, the cook or the caterer is usually the welfare officer.

*Researcher:* So, you mean, no doctors go on any location with you? So, what happens if somebody falls sick? What happens?

*Dele:* That will be very unfortunate, that will be very unfortunate. If anybody falls sick, that will be very unfortunate. Maybe, the friends or fellow artists may rush such a person to hospital. But for any production, at least majority of the productions that we know, we don't have a stand-by doctor or nurse. We don't have. And there is no insurance. And in most cases, productions are rushed. May be within two weeks. And I don't blame them because some of the people who produce, they rent equipment and equipment may be for 10,000 (about \$80) naira a day and he has already budgeted for probably seven days or 15 days. So, you can know how much that will cost somebody probably having like 500,000 (about \$4000) naira or one million (about \$8000) naira budget. That's the situation, there's no real welfare for any artist, there's no real welfare. It's only food that they regard as their welfare and that's why they call the cook or the caterer 'the welfare officer, the welfare officer,' up and down. You can go to any other production, they will tell you. In Adenuga productions, there's a kind of sanity there.

*Researcher:* Tell me about it.

*Dele:* Because, there's a lady who you can easily go to and say, 'oh I have a headache,' and she can get you some tabs, at least some little medicine that you can use. And I'm sure with the nature of the person I know, that is Wale Adenuga, if anything happens on his production, he will definitely take care of you. He's somebody I know that will do that. But you can't get that in other productions. You can't. If you're sick, you're sick for your family and that's all. They get someone else to replace you.

*Researcher:* Expresses shocked surprise.

*Dele:* That's the blunt truth about it. They have no provision for all these things. What concerns them is getting artists into the set and saying, ACTION! After you've played your role, they forget you. That's all. Recently, one of our prominent artists died, Funso Alabi. That guy is an embodiment of production. He's a good director, good actor, but he recently died cheaply, like a fowl. He was sick for a long time and somebody tried at



least to help him. But then, that's not enough. So, that is the state of artists generally in Nigeria. That is the state of artists generally. So, if you fall ill on location, that's your luck, that's just it.

*Researcher:* The picture you've just painted is reminiscent of great artists like Rembrandt. Picasso lived to enjoy his fame and the fortune that came with his being famous, not one of the unfortunate ones that get sung well after they are dead. So, do you mean this is the same story that Nigerian television stars and home movie stars will unfortunately live to tell: live in poverty, live in squalor, and perhaps after they are dead and gone, we think, 'oh what a great man, what a great woman this person once was.' Is this the kind of life history that you're foreseeing for Nigerian performers?

*Dele:* Well, presently, I will say yes. I will say yes. But now, my prayer is that things will improve. If the production situation is improving, then we can think of better life for artists generally before they are dead. But, I'm sure, things will get better. I'm sure things will get better. But at the moment, that's just the situation, you can ask anybody, that's just the situation. As artists, we are not taken care of. The so called marketer, or the producers, what concerns them is the profit they want to make and that's all.

*Researcher:* O.k., thank you Dele Osawe, for sharing these viewpoints of yours with me. Thank you so much.

*Dele:* It's a pleasure.

**(14) Transcript of Telephone Interview with Mr. Adedoyin, Communications Manager, Unilever Nigeria PLC, April 4 2007**

*Researcher:* Why the choice of **Super Story** out of all the other programmes that you perhaps saw?

*Adedoyin:* Before **Super Story** was selected, we needed to be sure we had a production with contents that our consumers will be able to connect with. So the clear reason for selecting the programme was because we were in search of media content that would enable us connect with our target audience. We needed to pick from options and **Super Story** was picked from the options that were many things. Because the main motive was

we needed to get the media content that would give us that leverage to connect with our audience and **Super Story** was chosen for that reason.

*Researcher:* When you talk about content, can you specify what you mean by content?

*Adedoyin:* The content we're talking of has to be relevant in two ways: suitable for television which is the medium we are talking about and relevant to our customers, not just to Unilever. We needed to get the consumers involved. They told us **Super Story** was the one that connected more with them and we would not want to overrule their choice.

*Researcher:* You just used two words, relevance and content. Did you do some sort market research to determine which kind of programmes your consumers might want?

*Adedoyin:* We had a panel of consumers, women, come in and have a view of different options and they all chose **Super Story** ahead of the others. It is not a single panel. It is a research tool. It's nothing like rocket science, this is a consumer panel that came in and then chose **Super Story**. It wasn't our decision, we funded the sessions, we organised receptions; it was the consumers that said 'this is the one that will connect with us in line with our own expectations.'

*Researcher:* And what are your expectations?

*Adedoyin:* Consumer engagement, that is, whatever they feel is good for them. But what we were looking for was consumer engagement, what would engage them more and for anything to engage the consumers well it will need to be much more relevant to them, it must not be above them or below them. It must really need to connect with them and for you to get that it must have a very high level of relevance.

*Researcher:* Do you watch **Super Story** yourself, I mean when it comes on on Thursdays?

*Adedoyin:* I watch it but not religiously. I watch it consciously; I watch it because I need to. I watch it but not religiously. I'm not really interested.

*Researcher:* You don't really find it very interesting from a male perspective, you mean?

*Adedoyin:* No, no, the issue is the kind of job I'm doing; I want to be a 360% person. For instance, at the time when some people are watching **Super Story**, some other people are watching other programmes, what programmes are these, who are these people? I'm all ready to check these out because **Super Story** is still not 100%, you know. So you'll

notice even if **Super Story** is merely 40% or 50%, some other people are interested in other things and you like to know what that is, what is going on out there, you know. It could be anything; it could be some new forms of relevance. You know, the problem right now is we are trying to de-emphasize radio-TV-friends mentality; you have to be 360% now. Ten years ago you could say five times in this street people would be watching TV by 8 o'clock and 9 o'clock. But these days, I tell you, in so many homes in Nigeria today, mummy is in the kitchen at that time, and if he is home, daddy could be in his study or reading his newspapers. So many things have changed. It's not just radio and TV any more. You need to be on the internet, 'what are people doing on the internet at the time when they are not watching TV?' So for me I need to think about these things; I'm not in love with any particular one.

*Researcher:* (Chuckles) But this is disloyalty, I mean this is a programme you commissioned after all and one would have thought you would be one of the ardent devotees.

*Adedoyin:* No, you're not in the real picture. You must be able to divorce yourself from your choice of media. At times, there are many of my friends who have good programmes that I like. Some think you're in Nigeria, you have to be a Nigerian. It's not me, sorry. It's not me that decides, it's my consumers that will decide. If my consumer wants it, I'll be on it. If they don't want it, I can't go on because I'm not the one that will buy the volume that will deliver profits to Unilever. So, it is with us watching **Super Story**. We just use **Super Story** to deliver value and we use **Super Story** among other programmes here to deliver that value to Unilever. So, it's not we devote 30% or 80% in watching **Super Story**. **Super Story** is one of the many things we do on TV and TV is one of the many things we use to connect with our consumers.

*Researcher:* Yes, I think I understand you now because you do have Unilever advertised in different other media. TV is just one of the media you use. You do have other media. O.K, do you remember what year you commissioned **Super Story**?

*Adedoyin:* I think it's about four years ago.

*Researcher:* What was the initial agreement?

*Adedoyin:* In terms of what arrangement was at that time and what has changed, I can give you my colleague's number 08033035463

*Researcher:* Can I go on to some other things. Who gets to determine the storyline? Does the company have a say in the kind of story that gets produced?

*Adedoyin:* No we don't.

*Researcher:* Why? You mean you commission a programme and you don't have a say in what happens?

*Adedoyin:* We leave them to do their thing. We allow their creative spirit to flow. We don't interfere. If we have to interfere, it will be by special arrangement.

*Researcher:* What kind of arrangement?

*Adedoyin:* If we have to interfere, it will be, for instance, in relation to health and nutritional matters. Recently, there was the issue about the role of garri and about what Nigerians need to know about this. There was a story about the role of garri and akpu. (Garri and akpu are made from cassava which is a staple food in Nigeria) You know that kind of thing. Fine, so we had to interfere to let them know the real facts about these public things. Stories involving public interest and health, we have to interfere.

*Researcher:* I think you have answered my questions. Thank you very much for talking to me.

