

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Nollywood has mostly presented migrant experiences as rosy and gay. Its narrative of migrant experiences most times depicts migration as a quick patch to hunger, poverty and joblessness. Unfortunately, this has become the picture of migration that many Nigerian youths are bequeathed with. This may possibly have contributed to the raging crisis of irregular migration in the country. This study therefore investigated Nollywood's representations of migration and migrant experiences as mostly single narratives that lack the comparative balance of a counter narrative. Thus, the study through a juxtaposition of the documentary and Nollywood feature films argue that Nollywood's treatment of migrant stories as seamless and wealth bound is more of a myth than reality. Three Nollywood feature films have been used as a representation of the vast majority that imbibed similar narrative approaches in the representation of migration and migrant experiences while three documentary films were also used to show the counter narrative that is lacking in most Nollywood narrative of migration.

Nigeria is largely challenged by mass exodus of its youths to foreign countries in search of livelihood and wealth especially in the face of failing economic and government structures. The belief in migration as a route to abundant wealth and way out of the problem of poverty in Nigeria has continued to increase rather than decrease. The reasons for this however may be found in film narratives of migrant experiences as witnessed in films like *Money Making Machine* (2018), *OzoemenaOzubulu*(2017) and *The Billionaires* (2018) which form part of the case studies for this research. Thus many Nigerian youths are fixated on international migration

with the mindset of making quick wealth. As a result, many resort to migrating through means that make their migrant status irregular in their destination countries. Many of these irregular Nigerian migrants become victims of human smuggling, trafficking, prostitution, rape, slavery, imprisonment and myriad of inhuman treatments, while some eventually meet their demise on the migrant routes. Many who embark on undocumented journeys to Europe by road perish on the dunes of the Sahara desert as reported in Lisa Schlein (n.p) while many others who go by water sometimes end up in the bellies of the Mediterranean or at the feet of the Atlantic Ocean (Jonathan Zaragoza Cristiani, n.p ). Upon all these travails which are continually reported in main stream media, Nollywood feature films have continued to mostly present migrant experiences from the prism of flamboyant and exotic life styles. Unfortunately, this attitude to the representation of migration rather than douse the raging challenge of irregular migration in the country ends up igniting the myth of migration among youths who are inadvertently driven towards the experience of the 'European dream'.

Migration is an age long phenomenon. It is the movement of people from one location to another with the intention of settling down or making a living from such a place. People move from place to place in search of better livelihood or comfort. There are possibly many reasons why people move from one place to another. The need to satisfy a particular yearning and to meet a physical or social need might account for the choice of movement from one geographical location to another. Human beings like other lower animals move from places of low comfort to places of high comfort level. The implication is usually visible both on the migrants and the destination communities. Samuel AntwiDarkwah and NahangaVerter believe that the influence on receiving countries can be both positive and negative. According to them, "High movement of people can negatively affect the vibrancy in countries' labour markets whilst others might see the benefits

more than the costs of cross-border migration” (321). Migration as it concerns humans on the other hand involves the movement of people, in other words a relocation of individuals from one location to another. Migration may be voluntary or involuntary. When people move on their own accord in search of better livelihood or fulfillment, such migration exercise is termed voluntary migration. However, there are circumstances that may force a person to move outside his place of comfort against his will. This type of migration exercise is mostly seen in places where there is disaster whether man made or nature induced. AdepojuAderanti argues that “the historical evolution and stages of political development are crucial to an understanding of migration in general, the distinction and linkages between internal and international migration, their causes and policy issues”.

Thus famine, hunger, war, politics and government policies can force people to move from environments where they are threatened to environments where they will have better protection of their lives and properties. Magdy Martínez-Solimán opines that “Conflict, climate shocks and lack of opportunity, repression and violation of rights, extremism and widespread poverty top the list of development failures that produce forced displacements”. UN Refugee Agency’s annual Global Trends study as reported by Adrian Edwards found that:

... 68.5 million people had been driven from their homes across the world at the end of 2017, more people than the population of Thailand. Refugees who have fled their countries to escape conflict and persecution accounted for 25.4 million. This is 2.9 million more than in 2016, also the biggest increase UNHCR has ever seen in a single year. New displacement is also growing, with 16.2 million people displaced during 2017 itself, either for the first time or repeatedly. That is an average of one person displaced every two seconds. And overwhelmingly, it is developing countries that are most affected.

The figures from the UN report show that there is an obvious problem of migration and displacements across the globe. Between 2016 and 2017 alone, there is a whopping growth of 2.9

million in the global refugee statistics. The implication is that there is a geometric surge in migration all around the world. According to Michael Dimock:

...more people worldwide live outside their birth countries than ever before; 244 million in 2015, triple the total in 1960. To put that in perspective, if international migrants were a nation of their own, they would make up the world's fifth-largest country, just behind Indonesia in terms of population.

The reason ranges from inequalities in economic distribution, to crisis and to political and ideological change. Mathias Czaika and Hein de Haas pin it down to the advancement in technology and the “growing social, economic, and cultural interconnectedness epitomized by the concept of “globalization” (n.p).

Africa on the other hand has a large share in the figures riddled above. Marie-Laurence Flahaux and Hein De Haas are of the opinion that “Africa is often seen as a continent of mass displacement and migration caused by poverty and violent conflict”(1). War, political restiveness, leadership challenges, famine and hunger are largely responsible for the cross-border migrations witnessed in Africa in recent times.

Migration also may be regular and irregular. Irregular migration is undocumented movement of migrants from their country of origin to another through a back channel. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), irregular migration is “Movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries”.

Migration in Africa has become a very serious issue as many of the migrants are most times willing to migrate clandestinely under perilous conditions. The understanding is that most of the migrants are without choice as they are most times left to choose between certain death on home soil and dying on migrant routes with the hope of better life. Gumisai Mutume's description of the irregular African migrant is laced with gory pictures. According to him “sometimes, for months,

young African men and women risk everything, including their lives, to take on the perilous trip across dozens of borders and the treacherous waves of the Mediterranean Sea in search of a better life in the North” (np). Of this desperation for migration, Philip Connor pinpoints the Sub-Saharan African as mostly responsible for the African-Europe migration. Based on the United Nations’ data on the number of emigrants, Connor argues that sub-Saharan Africa accounts for eight of the ten fastest growing migrant populations since 2010. In Connor’s words:

The total number of emigrants worldwide from all sub-Saharan African countries combined grew by 31% between 2010 and 2017, outpacing the rate of increase from both the Asia-Pacific (15%) and Latin America-Caribbean (9%) regions. Only the Middle East-North Africa region saw a larger increase (39%) of people living outside of their birth country during the same span, driven largely by people fleeing conflict in Syria (n.p).

Nigeria particularly has a huge number of its population engaged in cross-border migration. The number has become increasingly alarming in recent times. Research by UcheIsiugo-Abanihe and IOM’s Research Division shows that “The number of Nigerians living outside Nigeria more than doubled between 1990 and 2013, from 465,932 to 1,030,322”. Espousing this claim, Black et al opine that Nigeria has witnessed a ‘reverse migration transition, transforming itself from a net immigration to a net emigration country’. From being an immigration hub for other West African countries in the 1980’s when the oil boom made Nigeria’s economy a global hopeful, Nigeria has suddenly become an emigration hub as more of its citizens leave the country in droves in search of better livelihood. The excessive drive to emigrate by most Nigerian youths has burgeoned the figures on illegal migration across the Sub-Saharan Africa. The 2017 report from the International Organization for Migration highlights poverty, joblessness and restiveness as the major factors that drive Nigerian-Europe migration tide in modern times. The BBC report of April 28, 2017 shows that, about half of the 40,000 sub-Sahara African migrants that crossed the Mediterranean in 2017 are Nigerians. The recent migrant crisis in Libya, South Africa, Italy and

some other European countries in the recent past have also shown that migration has become a teething problem in Nigeria.

Unfortunately, the monotonic narrative of migration and the continued romanticization of migrant experiences in most Nollywood feature films may have contributed immensely to the raging myth of migration as solution to the debilitating economic challenges in modern Nigeria. The challenge is not in narrating the beauties and promises inherent in migration, the challenge is in telling it as if it is the only truth. Single stories are dangerous especially where they intentionally leave out the contrasting opposite that is the dominant truth. According to Chimamanda Adichie: “The single story creates stereotypes. And the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story”. Thus, a contrastive x-raying of the narrative of migration showcasing the dangers and horrors inherent in irregular migration which has become very prominent in Nigeria will go a long way in forming the right mental imagery of irregular migration among the local population.

Film is a very influential media form. It enjoys humongous viewership all around the world. Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell are of the opinion that millions of people watch movies at any given time (1). The effect of these movies on the viewing audience cannot be underestimated. According to Noah Uhrig, “The unique properties of attending the cinema can have decisively positive effects on mental health” (6). Film as an artistic ensemble encapsulates different artistic forms. These art forms which mostly stem from the performing and visual art forms are gelled together to excite, educate and entertain the film audience. As a social art, film is endearing and has a magnetic appeal that naturally draws audience to it. By so doing, its effect on the psycho-physical dispositions on society has formed a discuss point over the years all

around the world. Film influences the psyche and acts as a very powerful medium for mass education and social propaganda. Thompson and Bordwell opine;

Nobody needs to be convinced that film has been one of the most influential media for over one hundred years. Not only can you recall your most exciting or tearful moments at the movies, you can also probably remember moments in ordinary life when you tried to be as graceful, as selfless, as tough, or as compassionate as those larger than life figures on the screen. The way we dress and cut our hair, the way we talk and act, the things we believe or doubt – all these aspects of our lives are shaped by films. (1)

Therefore, film is a very potent means of social engineering. In times past, films have been used to achieve political propaganda in Nigeria. Films like *Liquid Black Gold* (2011), *Blood and Oil* (2010) and *Black November* (2012) have been used as propaganda to counter the government narrative of the Niger Delta oil conflict in Nigeria. Government regimes and social groups have also used films in the past to influence public opinion and affect policy formation and adoption in society. According to Gary Jason “The power of film as a tool for propaganda is real” (219). Vikas Shan also espouses this opinion and sees film as a powerful tool for “culture, education, leisure and propaganda”. Jason goes on to highlight ‘propaganda’ as one of the most fascinating uses of the cinema, (203). It is therefore crystal clear that films sometimes tailor the mind of the audience and influence opinion building. Nigerian films to a large extent have painted a picture of what may ‘generically’ be referred to as ‘African culture’. Its representation of Nigeria most times becomes the picture of Nigeria that is known all around the world. Hitler’s government is exemplary in the use of film for public indoctrination and opinion marketing. Jason (214) reports that the Nazi German machines likened Hitler to great figures from history in order to endear him to the people while foisting unpopular policies. Films like *Birth of a Nation* (1915), were used to portray the notorious white supremacist American group Ku Klux Klan (KKK) as defenders of society who were preoccupied with ridding the Southern America of criminal

blacks that made it inglorious. Other films like *Act of Valor* (2012), *Black Hawk Down* (2001), *White House Down* (2013), *Olympus has fallen* (2013), *American Ninja* (1985) and a host of others are all propaganda movies used to show the supremacy of the American military and its fire power. Apart from serving as a tool for propaganda, film has helped the culture and education industry marvelously. Film has served the tremendous function of globalizing world cultures and enhancing interconnectivity of cultures. PietariKääpä in Masoud Yazdan highlights some of the sociological importance of film:

... a communicator of ideas and an essential component of the culture industries. It is also a crucial pedagogical tool that facilitates efficient learning and motivates participation from new generations of audiences. It can help audiences, 'old' and 'new', to rethink their place in the world, and crucially, it can also motivate them to do something about the injustices and exploitation to which they are witness. (12)

The Nigerian film industry 'Nollywood' has through the use of film globalised the rich cultural heritage that abounds in Nigeria. It has become a medium and an artistic force that markets the Nigerian world view to the global community. Nollywood with its copious outflow thus has greatly marketed Nigeria in terms of cultural exportation. The importance of the industry is best woven in its historical evolution. The industry came about as a child of circumstance in the face of an abandoned cinema tradition in the early nineties. The pre-Nollywood cinema of Nigeria met a dreadful decline in the face of economic depression and inflation that greeted the post oil boom economy of Nigeria in the 1980s. In the face of the economic depression, the cost of production of celluloid became too high for local producers and thus the subsequent demise of the celluloid tradition that had boomed the Nigerian cinema culture (UchennaOnuzulike 25). Abiodun Olayiwola (183) holds the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) economic policy of President Ibrahim Babangida led government directly responsible for the eventual dearth of the pre-Nollywood cinema of Nigeria. However, what is today known as Nollywood came out of



this circumstance. In a bid to fill the debilitating vacuum left by the defunct celluloid film culture in Nigeria; local producers resorted to the use of analogue VHS cameras for the creation of contents. In the words of Mridul Chowdhury et al:

The digital revolution in the film industry started at the beginning of the 90s, when digital camcorders substituted 35mm motion film cameras, and digital supports replaced celluloid as recording and distributing devices. (14)

With the release of Kenneth Nnabue's *Living in Bondage* in 1992, a new era was born in the Nigerian film industry. The new 'home video' medium popularly described as 'Nollywood' became very popular among Nigerians. The name Nollywood first was used to describe the Nigeria budding film industry in an article written by Nomiritsu Onishi and published in New York Times in September, 2002 (Jonathan Haynes). The medium that took off with analogue camera has evolved tremendously. From the use of VHS camera recorders and video cassette players, the industry within a few years transited to digital technology. Digital cameras with more flexibility and much higher video resolution replaced the VHS cameras. VCDs and DVDs replaced the cumbersome video tape players that were used for home playbacks. More so, as the digital camera technology became more sophisticated, Nollywood has further evolved and now incorporates a cinema culture reminiscent of the pre-Nollywood cinema culture of Nigeria. The invention of the high definition camera technology once more gave lease to the reinvention of the big screen which in effect has reinvigorated the cinema culture of Nigeria. This however is what is referred to as the 'New Nollywood'.

The New Nollywood beyond the technological upgrade is also an upgrade on the whole paraphernalia of film experience in Nigeria. Its motivation stems from the desire to compete at the international levels. The New Nollywood therefore works to achieve the cinema standard

while shooting with the digital video technology. The underlying difference between Nollywood and New Nollywood according to Jonathan Haynes include;

larger budgets, slower production schedules, the possibility of shooting and/or releasing films on celluloid, scripts that go through many drafts over a period of years, international coproduction, revenues from foreign distribution built into financial calculations, international training, rubbing shoulders at international film festivals (58).

More so, having evolved from the home video tradition, Nollywood was mostly designed to treat issues of social importance. It has played a very important role in society building, image creation, opinion formation, value building and information dissemination among most Nigerians. According to Orewere; “Film is a powerful medium of entertainment and transmission of cultural values” (206). Thus, thematic fixations in Nollywood mostly revolve around the socio-cultural, ethno-religious and socio-political world view of the Nigerian peoples. It tells the Nigerian story and tackles social problems that are faced by ordinary Nigerians in their daily lives. The implication is that Nigeria and Nigerians are adjudged through the eyes of their screen. More so, Nollywood has carved its niche as a projector of Nigeria’s cultural experience. It has become the voice of the common man on the street, the voice of the oppressed and the voice of the many cultures that want to be heard both within and across Nigeria. Olabanji Akinola Opines:

The unprecedented rise of Nollywood in the past two decades attests to its successes in uniquely telling African stories from the perspectives of Africans, a storytelling role that had for too long been left in the hands of many who portrayed the continent as the bastion of dangers and backwaters of human civilization. (12)

Buttressing the social importance of Nollywood to the African continent, Adesoke as cited in Onuzulike sees the video film industry as representing “a mode of self-conception and self-advancement through which people renegotiate the changing sense of selfhood in contemporary

West African societies...” (178). This therefore stresses the popularity of the medium among the local population. It is this belief and dependency on the medium that surreptitiously empowers it as agent of socialization, a crusader and as a social commentator both within and beyond the Nigerian state. As a result, its representation of social issues like migration is not to be treated without the carefulness required in safeguarding the mentality of a nation. This is because Nollywood occupies a strategic place in Nigeria from where the majority of the people are socially oriented. Thus, if the vast majority of films churned out from the industry regurgitate a single narrative of migration as seamless and wealth bound, that becomes the image of migration that most of its adherents from the local population are bequeathed with.

Irregular migration happen mostly among the youth population in Nigeria and Nollywood is adjudged to have great influence on most Nigerian youths. Nsikak -AbasiUdofia&EkaetteOkon in their studies conclude that explicit content on Nollywood directly affect the sexual behavior of most secondary school students in the country (83). More so, research by Dauda Enna, Emmanuel Idakwo and OlakuAkpovye also show that there is a direct relationship between the perceptions of Africa by most teenage children in Nigeria and portrayal of magic in Nollywood (186). Many studies that show that Nollywood has a great influence on the value system of most Nigerian youths abound. This therefore is why this thesis is critical of the one dimensional portrayal of issues in Nollywood feature films of which irregular migration is of the immediate concern.

Documentary on the other hand deals with factual representation of life. The documentary film format seeks to represent truth without the colorations of fictional embodiments. Thus, while the feature film seeks to entertain through a creative narrative of imaginations, the documentary film is preoccupied with the depiction of truth through the presentation of recorded and verifiable

facts. Documentaries dig into events, history, people and nature with the view of unearthing the hidden truths therein. Thus, John Grierson as cited by Brian Winston defines the medium as “a creative treatment of actuality” (14). Documentaries therefore serve as tools for factual narratives and advocacy. Carl Platinga recognizing the value of the medium asserts that “documentary can perform many of the actions for which language is used—warning, asserting, identifying, informing, ridiculing, and critiquing” (1). The word ‘documentary’ is said to have first been used in qualifying *Nanook of the North*, a film short in Canada and released in the United States in 1922 (Betsy McLane 4). The work was an attempt by Flaherty at showing his audiences who had very little knowledge of the Eskimos, what Eskimos whom he had met in his travels looked like. It is this attempt that gave birth to the new form of film making referred to as ‘documentary’. His second film *Moana* (1926) became quite more eventful. It was in the attempt to qualify it that John Grierson devised a new usage of the word in his review in the *New York Sun* on February 8, 1926. The word has since become very entrenched in film making and has been used to qualify a film form known for its attraction to realities. The philosophical drive of the documentary form is derivable from its Latin root ‘docere’ which literally means ‘to teach’. Thus the major objective of the form lies in its ability to teach through the presentation and representation of factual information about life. Patrick Aufderheide further explaining the concept sees truth as an indispensable element of the form. Thus, he opines that “A documentary film tells a story about real life, with claims to truthfulness” (2).

More so, truth becomes a principal marker and an indispensable index in the qualification of the documentary form. Bill Nichols sees documentary as a more complex concept which deals basically with representations. The problem with representations according Nichols lies in perspectives which in itself may be as varied as the number that has it. In Nichols’ words, a

documentary “is a representation of the world we already occupy. It stands for a particular view of the world, one we may never have encountered before even if the aspects of the world that is represented are familiar to us” (20). Therefore, the very nature of documentary though told from perspective of the film maker makes it a better purveyor of reality than the fictional film. Though It is an established truth in scholarship that documentary has been manipulated variedly for the purposes of propaganda and opinion creation, documentary is still considered a creative treatment of actualities. Its underlying principle makes it imperative that its narratives are based on truths which though maybe manipulated by the filmmaker to achieve his selfish desires. This then explains the place of the documentary film in this thesis. Documentary in this study helped the researcher to achieve a contrastive view of the realities of irregular migration and migrant experiences as presented in most Nollywood feature films. Documentaries like *Letters from Libya* (2018), *Surprising Europe* (2017) and *The Nigerian Immigrant Experience of South Africa* (2017) were used to weigh the objectiveness of migration as presented in Nollywood. Its non-fictional approach at story telling makes it a more trusted source for information on migration experiences of Nigerians. Buttressing this position, Frank Ukadike opines:

The African documentary seeks to interrogate the African experience; the documentary frame presents what might be seen as a transparent window on history, culture, and other issues of resistance. The social issues, cultural values, and politics of African world are portrayed with both sensitivity and realism (89)

The films used as case studies in this research serve as a representation of the vast majority of Nollywood feature films that represent migrant experiences as a sure way out of poverty. The movies all have this theme in common. In *Ozoemena Ozubulu* (2017), Ozoemena after years of suffering in the village abandons his resolve to make his wealth in Ozuburu and goes to Malaysia in search of greener pastures. He comes back after barely six months with lots of wealth. Obinna in *Money Making Machine* (2015) out of frustration goes to Europe in a bid to liberate his family

from poverty. He comes back after two years and becomes the richest man in his community. Ukpaka in *The Billionaires (2018)* uses Malaysia as a cover up for his involvement in money rituals through which he makes enough money to install his father as the ‘Igwe’ of Ukpaka kingdom. This narrative trend is what has sparked the researcher’s interest to determine if the grass is always greener at the other side as represented in most Nollywood feature films.

Bearing in mind the copious influence of Nollywood on Nigerian youths, its treatment, presentations and representations of migrant experiences most certainly will influence the dispositions of many Nigerian youths towards migration and which most times are conducted through irregular means. It is against this background that this study has critically dissected Nollywood’s representations of migration and migrant experiences in a bid to determining the objectiveness of its narrative approach.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Representation of migration and migrant experiences has been mostly single storied in Nollywood feature films. This lacks the critical perspective needed to weather the effects of these movies in the minds of its viewers. The viewers are therefore left with ‘half truths’ of migration and its experiences. Nollywood feature films’ narrative of migrants’ experiences has been dominated by the unrealistic view of migration as a sure and easy path to untold wealth and affluence. Thus, the problem of this study is the fantasized representations of migration and migrant experiences in Nollywood films. However, this narrative seems to be largely contradicted by the documented real life experiences of many migrants (prominent examples include cases forming part of official reports of local and international agencies). The craze for

migration to foreign countries among Nigerians is founded on this myth that setting one's feet outside the shores of the country automatically sets one on the path to the long sought-after economic paradise; a misconception that has misled many, to tragedies including those related to human trafficking. The concern here is that when the media (including films) become a ready channel for projecting this sort of myth, there is the likelihood that its (the myth's) influence on the social psyche becomes continuously reinvented and strengthened, because the power of the feature film in constructing and sustaining myths is widely accepted in scholarship. The threat is even worse because Nollywood feature films have become popular sources of entertainment for the local population hence, such heavy reliance on local feature films for entertainment would mean that this local population will potentially be influenced by the messages (including myths) embodied by these feature films. This study therefore explores the gap created by the approach of a counter narrative through the interrogation of migrant images in Nigerian feature and documentary films and in the process, presents the argument that the juxtaposition of images of trauma, agony, hopelessness and dismay with images of affluence and untold wealth acquired by migrant returnees in feature films, will present a more balanced narrative which can go a long way in discouraging irregular migrations.

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This research was predicated on the raging problem of irregular migration in Nigeria and the roles the Nigerian movie industry can play towards ameliorating it. The underlining aim of this research therefore was to bring to the fore the lopsided nature of the narrative of migration in Nollywood and how this deformity in content could be contributing to the hazy problems of irregular migration in the country. The objectives of this research therefore included;

- i. To bring to the fore the varied approaches to narrating migration in Nollywood feature and documentary films.
- ii. To critically unearth the philosophical dichotomy between the representations of migration and migrant experiences in Nollywood feature and documentary narratives.
- iii. To find out the medium whose representation of migration is more consistent with real life experiences of migrants.
- iv. To find out how Nollywood through its feature narratives can contribute more positively towards ameliorating the raging problem of irregular migration in the country.

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This research work is designed to interrogate Nollywood's representations of Migration through a comparative analysis of feature film narrative of migration and documentary accounts of migration in main stream media. The research investigated six films as its data sources: three narrative fiction films and three documentary films. The feature films include: *The Billionaires* (2018), *OzoemenaOzubulu* (2017) and *Money Making Machine* (2015). The documentary films include: *Letters from Libya* (2018), *Surprising Europe* (2015) and *Nigerian Immigrant Experience of South Africa* (2017). This work is scoped around the confines of this design.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Cross border migration has become a global concern in recent times. The osmotic migration that occur between economically viable and economically non-viable societies has sky rocketed in



recent years. Nigeria has a significant place in migration discourses due to the recent surge in its emigration activities. The importance of this study to scholarship and to the society in general cannot be over emphasized. This research work has foreshadowed Nollywood feature film as a viable option for the fight against irregular migration in Nigeria.

The study is also very significant in the sense that it has further brought to the fore the social importance of feature films in Nollywood as agents of socialization and also as formative agents. This study has also contributed to the understanding of how Nollywood feature films construct social phenomena especially as it relates to migrants' experiences, one of the leading issues currently in the country and in the global arena.

The study has also deepened empirical insight into the subject through a comparative analysis of Nollywood feature films and documented non-fictional accounts of migrants' experiences. Theoretically, the study's relevance also lies in the fact that its findings have contributed in widening insights into the validity or otherwise of theories like constructivism, representation and framing, which hold that the media (including film) do not necessarily represent reality but may in fact construct a "reality" different from the real time social experience.

The significance of this study also greatly lies in its contribution towards debunking the myth of migration that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian society. By juxtaposing the representations of migration as made in Nollywood narrative fictions with documentary experiences of Nigerian migrants, the study may be serving to equip the audience with some intellectual resources for critical consumption of the content of such films. This way, the fight against ills such as irregular migration and human trafficking may be advanced

## **1.6 Methodology**

The research methodology of any research is geared towards achieving a systemic data collection, data coding and analysis with the aim of reaching an objective conclusion on any subject area of research. Thus, the research method aims at making sure that the approach to gathering the necessary information for the research is unbiased and representative of the right data needed. Thus, for this research, the methodology used was geared towards getting the right answers to the following research questions;

1. How does Nollywood narrative fictions represent migration?
2. What is the dominant approach to narrating migration in documentaries about Nigerian migrants?
3. Is there a significant difference in the representations of migration in Nollywood feature and Documentary Narratives?
4. Is the myth of migration as represented in Nollywood feature films consistent with real life experiences of migration especially as it concerns undocumented migrants?
5. How can Nollywood achieve a more balanced approach to narrating migration?

### **1.6.1 Research Design**

The interest of this study in exploring representations in Nollywood feature and documentaries made it imperatively necessary that films would be studied and used as primary sources of data for the study. The interest of the research in understanding the frame perspectives in the representations of the subject matter also made it imperative that the case studies selected would

undergo a thematic review on the subject matter of interest. The case study and textual analytical approaches of the qualitative research method were used for data collection and analyses. The case study approach was used in order to have an empirical locus from where valid inferences were made.

### **1.6.2 Sources of Data**

The case studies chosen for this study constituted the primary sources of data for the study. The researcher also made use of secondary research data from library and internet sources to support the claims gotten from the primary data. The case studies were chosen equally in studying the representations in both the feature and documentary films. Three films were selected for each of the two film forms. In effect, a total of six films were critically analyzed. The films used as case studies for the feature film form include;

- i. *The Billionaries* (2018)
- ii. *OzoemenaOzubulu* (2017)
- iii. *Money Making Machine* (2015)

The films used as case studies in analyzing the representations of migration in the documentary film form include;

- i. Letters from Liby
- ii. *Surprising Europe* (2017)
- iii. *The Nigerian Immigrant Experience of South Africa.*

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on theories, postulations, claims and assertions themed on media representations and effects. There are various theories that fall within this purview with each subtly differing on grounds of specificities. Given that the study is preoccupied with a comparative reading of two film genres - feature and documentary film genres for purposes of interrogating how they variedly represent irregular migration in Nigeria and the possible effects on film audiences, the Theory of Media Framing by Ervin Goffman was used to buttress the study. Ervin Goffman's Media Framing Theory presents an idea that is crucial to the development of scholarly argument in the study.

##### 2.1.2 Media Framing Theory

The concept of framing has its roots in interpretive sociology. Interpretive sociology basically holds that people's understanding of life and reality are highly dependent on interaction and definition of situations (Ardèvol-Abreu 427). However, it was Bateson who first posited the concept in 1972. He defined frames as "spatial and temporary bounding of a set of interactive messages" (197). The theory of media framing strives to explicate the imperatives of perspectives in representation in audience meaning making.

Ardèvol-Abreu observes that the theoretical foundations that gave birth to framing theory are to be found in interpretive sociology, which holds that people's interpretation of everyday reality is fundamentally dependent "on interaction and the definition of situations" and in defining situations, individuals are influenced by the activities of others. "In other words, people's approach to reality takes into account the contributions of others. The performance of people would be determined by this interpretation, and that is why the definition of the situation is linked with action and interaction" (427). Framing thus explains the various viewpoints which we impose on phenomena; the different ways in which we understand persons, things and events. Whenever we are experiencing or reporting reality, it is usually through specific frames of understanding and these frames determine the impressions this reality makes on us, the feelings we have about it, and the judgment we make on it (Chong and Druckman 100). Against this background, McQuail sees framing as "a way of giving some overall interpretation to isolated items of fact" (380).

The theory of framing in media studies was propounded by Ervin Goffman in 1974 in his book *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Goffman laid the foundation for the concept of framing in his 1959 work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. The work is an insight into the management of impressions and images. The theory of framing suggests that how something is presented to an audience to a large extent determines the choices that audience makes. Framing sharply contrasts the concept of rational choice theory which posits that people always try to make the most rational choices open to them. Frames are pointers that direct the audience meaning making system and in effect subtly hijack the sensibilities of the audience as to what to think about a particular thing and the degree of importance to ascribe to the images or

frames he is presented with. According to Entman as cited in Ardèvol-Abreu “framing can be defined as a process in which some aspects of reality are selected, and given greater emphasis or importance” (424). Frames provide meanings through selective representations and they are subtly contrasted by deplorable opposites. In Ardèvol-Abreu’s view, “Frames draw attention to some aspects of reality at the expense of others...” (424). In framing therefore, the content provider through a systemic representation leads viewers to accept one meaning over another. It is a psychological maneuver aimed at taking control.

Goffman posits that people tend to make meaning of their daily realities through the employment of frameworks or ‘schemata’ of interpretation. He calls this schemata ‘primary frame work’ because it is seen by those that apply it “as not depending on or harking back on any prior or original interpretation” (1). This primary framework however according to Goffman has two distinctions: natural and social. Natural frameworks identify events as physical occurrences having natural drive and without social causative agents. Goffman uses the words “unguided, unanimated and unoriented” to describe the cause of natural frameworks (22). Social frameworks on the other hand view events as artificially machinated by other social players. Goffman assumes that individuals are capable of using these frameworks on a daily basis whether they are aware of it or not.

In simple terms, framing theory explains the process whereby an originator of communication builds into their message the perspectives which they want the audience to read the message from. The basis of the theory is that any given issue, event or development can be viewed and understood from varying perspectives. Stated differently, every phenomenon can be seen through

different frames of meaning depending on who is seeing and the circumstances of the seeing (Chong and Druckman, 101). Hence, framing has been described as “the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (104). A frame is developed “through selection, emphasis, and exclusion.” A given frame makes people to direct their attention on certain messages while failing to see the others” (Ardèvol-Abreu 428). In other words, a frame determines what is perceived and what is not perceived, what is understood and what is not understood, what is felt and what is not felt (Ardèvol-Abreu 428).

The framing theory crisscrosses disciplines and is applicable to virtually every area of human endeavor where communication is used. The concept had its root in sociology but has since traversed a whole lot of disciplines where human interactions are prioritized. The concept has been applied to psychology, economics, politics, media arts, film studies and philosophy. Media framing however was initially applied to the news media in achieving media effects on society. Gradually as the media arts broadened, it has over the years become applicable to the various arms of the media with film inclusive. Film being a strategic media art form shares from the hypodermic attribute of the news media and thus has the ability to influence the human psyche and the society tremendously.

### **2.1.3 Media Framing Theory and Film Representations of Migrants’ Experiences:**

In relating the theory of framing to film representation of migration and migrants’ experiences, filmmaking like any other media communication process is thus understood as an art of meaning creation. The framing theory therefore helps to put in perspective the role of message creators

(filmmakers) in influencing the judgments and feelings of the audience by virtue of what they highlight and what they fail to highlight in their representation of migration and migrants' experience. Since framing theory posits that message creators influence meaning by choosing what to emphasize and what to leave out in weaving a narrative (Chong and Druckman, 101), the theory will be helpful in assessing the activities of filmmakers in seeming to tell only one side of the migration story in feature films which is its rosy side. From the perspective of the theory, the filmmakers have other alternatives in telling their story including by representing as best as possible other sides of migration and migrants' experiences which may be ugly in themselves. Thus, framing theory will be applied by the researcher in inquiring into the perspectives from which the story of migration is told dominantly in Nollywood feature films and how this perspective (frame) contrasts with the perspective through which the same story is told in documentaries about Nigeria.

## **2.2 Conceptual Frame Work**

This work embodies some technical terminologies which may be slightly adapted for the purpose of specifics and clarity in the cause of this thesis. In order to avoid the broadened connotations that some of the terms contained in the title of this work may embody, a conceptual definition becomes very pertinent. Therefore, the following words will be conceptualized;

- i. Migration
- ii. Feature Film
- iii. Documentary Film
- iv. Representation



### 2.2.1 Migration

The concept of Migration has been defined and conceptualized variedly. Migration can be defined as the movement of people from one place to another with the intention of finding better livelihood. Chris Whitehead defines it as the “the movement of people from one place to another, particularly over national borders, in order to take up permanent or semi-permanent residence”.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in their *Glossary on Migration* has defined migration as the

“ process of moving, either across an international border, or within a State. Encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people, and economic migrants.” (2)

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies while agreeing with the above definition in the *Phenomenon of Migration* adds that there is a close relationship between migration and religion throughout history. In effect, they argue that religion most times have been the greatest precursor of migration. Barbara Luthi slightly disagrees and argues that migration according to these definitions is constricted and most certainly very restrained. According to Luthi,

The term *migration* allows for many possible trajectories, time spans, directions and destinations. It can be temporary or long-term, voluntary or forced. It can occur in stages or in cycles, and can be mono-directional or more varied. Generally speaking, however, human migration can be defined as crossing the boundary of a political or administrative unit for a certain minimum period.

More so, there has been a lot of scholarship fuss in an attempt to get a dogmatic definition and conceptualization of migration. PietekKok attempts to sum up these arguments and opinions surrounding the concept by making the submission that migration is a “permanent” movement of people from one location to another (30). Trewartha G.T. while not disputing any of the above

definitions completely steers the discuss away from the disputations of movement, duration of stay or religion. In her view “migration is an indicator of racial, linguistic and nationalistic mixing of earth’s population” (136).

However, asides the controversies of conceptualization, migration have been studied in terms of crisis and its sociological implications in the global arena. The literatures in this effect are motivated by the crisis arising out of migrant issues in different countries of the world. Stephen Castles has studied the migration surge in 21<sup>st</sup> century as chiefly caused by globalization. Michel Beinea, Frédéric Docquierb and ÇağlarÖzden have written extensively on the role of the diasporas in international migration flows. According to them; “diasporas not only influence the future flows but also their other characteristics, such as composition and concentration” (639). More so, UNESCO has, in their 2017 report on migration shown that cross border migration can affect societies adversely from where the migrants originate. The most immediate effect of this according to the report is ‘brain drain’ and that has become very evident in many sub-sahara African countries.

However, migration can be classified into many different types. Rudolph Heberle classifies migration into two major types which are differentiated by sociologically significant criteria. Herberle makes his two major classifications based on “the way in which migration affects the social relationships of the migrants” and “the differences in socio-cultural systems between areas of origin and areas of destination” (66). Based on these, his classifications birthed two major migration types; voluntary and involuntary migration.

Voluntary migration according to Heberle is migration by choice. It is migration that is induced by one’s willingness to move from one geographical location to another in search of better

livelihood or economic survival. According to Heberle, this migration type is tantamount to Nomadism which may be individual based or community based. Nomadic migrants are motivated by different factors. It could be economic, social, whether induced or the drive to dominate and expand. Nigeria for example has many nomadic migrants. The Igbo people of Nigeria mostly move in search of viable trade environments where they can settle and ply their business. Their major motivation is economic and business opportunities. The Hausa/Fulani on the other hand are nomadic settlers who are motivated by change in season. Being majorly cattle herders, their search for green vegetation occasions their move to the different parts of the country as the seasons change in search of animal feed. Involuntary/ forced migration on the other hand according to Heberle is migration by force. The Canadian association for Refugee and Forced Migration studies (CARFMS) defines forced migration as “any foreign-born people who have migrated... because they have been displaced from their home country, have a fear of persecution, or have been moved by deception or coercion”. International Organization for migration (IOM) also defines forced migration as “A migratory movement which, although the drivers can be diverse, involves force, compulsion, or coercion”. Forced migrants are propped to leave their homes to other places due to circumstances beyond their control. Victims of war, earthquakes, hurricanes and war disasters most times are forced to seek shelter outside their homes by these distortion agents so as to protect their lives. Human trafficking also falls under this migration category.

However, having explored the different perspectives in migration and the connotative usages of the word and its varied meanings, the researcher will for the purposes of focus and clarity conceptualize migration in this work to mean cross-border movement of Nigerian nationals in search of greener pastures. This movement could be regular or irregular but not within the

precincts of forced migration. In nutshell, the word migration in this research work is used to represent voluntary movement of Nigerians through regular or irregular means to foreign countries in search of livelihood.

### **2.2.2 Feature Film**

The term feature film was originally used to refer to fictional film narratives that can stand alone as the main item in a cinema program. Hasa defines a feature film as “a film that is made for the purpose of entertaining the audience. They are often commercial films”. The term etymologically was birthed in film with respect to film duration and time. In film evolution, the early films that were produced were short length movies that were strung together for commercial purposes at the theatres. However, when longer films were developed, the term feature film was used to differentiate the long films from short films which were referred to as ‘shorts’. This in effect influenced the definition of the concept by both the American and the British motion picture Academies. In a bid to ensure standardization of the concept, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the American Film Institute and the British Film Institute all defined feature film as a film that “runs for at least 45 minutes ( $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour)”. However, with the evolution of film and cinema studies, the term has developed beyond its definition within the ambit of playing time. The term “feature length” in modern times is rather used to refer to films that have a run time of 45minutes and above.

More so, the feature film concept has evolved and is used mostly in modern times to refer to fictional narratives that have striking entertainment features. Annette Kuhn and Guys Westwell posit that:

the term feature film was used to draw “a cinematographer’s attention to film’s various ‘features’: the appearance of a well known actor, an intriguing concept, high production values, and longer running time, with the later connotation later eventually becoming very dominant” (155)

By implication, Westwell and Kuhn are clearly referring to the fictional narrative films which have in them the elements contained in the definition above. The usage and connotations of the term however maybe relative to individual film cultures. Ina Bertrand and Willian Routt espouse the notion of relativity in the usage of the terminology. Bertrand and Routt rather posit that “feature film cannot be defined scientifically so that everyone will agree what a feature film is, because feature film is not a scientific term” (16). This further solidifies the difference in usage in different film cultures. Based on this premise, the term is used in this research to mean Nollywood fictional narratives. Nollywood feature film in this research is used to describe Nollywood movies that are not factual presentation of events or history as opposed to documentary films.

### **2.2.3 Documentary film**

A documentary is a non-fictional film narrative that deals with factual presentation of life. Patricia Aufderheide defines a documentary film as “a movie that does its best to represent real life and that doesn’t manipulate it” (2). The idea of documentary stems from the motivation to preserve facts about people, events, history in a visual form. Shiela Bernard in her definition of the concept opines that “Documentaries bring viewers into new worlds and experiences through the presentation of factual information about real people, places, and events, generally portrayed through the use of actual images and artifacts” (2). The term documentary was coined in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by John Grierson, a Scot who used the term to qualify *Moana* (1926) a

movie made by Robert Flaherty. During the early days of film evolution, most film makers used different words to qualify their works. While some of the early film entrepreneurs referred to their works as ‘educationals’, others called theirs ‘interest films’, ‘actualities’ etc. It was Grierson who however for the first time defined the term as an “artistic representation of actuality” (Aufderheide, 16). The history of documentary film making is traditionally traceable to Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* (1922) which eventually was followed by his 1929 *Moana*. The drive to tell his new audience about the Eskimos whose pictures and visual images most were yet to have was what motivated Flaherty’s narrative in *Nanook of the North* (1922). The goal of the documentary genre is predicated in its Latin root. The term documentary was derived from the Latin word “docere” which literary means ‘to teach’ (Mclane, 5). The genre has however evolved over time and has developed different narrative forms. Mclane however maintains that no matter the change in form and style, documentaries are “derived from and are limited to actuality” (3). Bill Nichol in *Introduction to Documentary* classifies the documentary genre into six different types which are: expository, poetic, observational, participatory, reflexive and performative. While the content is guided by the pursuit of truth, the approach may differ depending on the target audience of the particular documentary film. However, while the documentary film and the feature film narratives may be different, both are geared towards story telling. The difference lies in their narrative goals. Hasa observes that the underlying difference between the two film types lies in purpose and subject matter.

Nollywood documentaries as used in this research however are those films that tell the truth, render the fact and stay real to their narrative of the factual Nigerian experience. They are those movies made by Nigerians or Non-Nigerians that have at its heart the objective of telling the

truths of events, history and lives of Nigerian citizens. These films are more often than not, sponsored by Non-profit organizations, made by individuals, corporate bodies or commercial broadcast houses. For specificity, the documentary films referred to in this research have as their preoccupation the factual narrative of the Nigerian experience as it pertains to irregular migration.

#### **2.2.4 Representation**

Representation is a systematic construction and portrayal of information, idea, people or event in order to create intended meanings. The way information is presented before a given people, audience, or community determines the meanings they will make of that information. Representation creates perspectives and creates shades of meanings. Individuals, groups, events, places and ideas are continually subjected to representations in society. The politics of communication and interaction is subjugated on meaning creation. The creation of meaning inadvertently is predicated on representation. The theory of representation has its origin in the works of Serge Moscovici, a social psychologist. In his theory of ‘social representations’, Moscovici posits that:

Social representations concern the contents of everyday thinking and the stock of ideas that give coherence to our religious beliefs, political ideas and the connections we create as spontaneously as we breathe. They make it possible for us to classify persons and objects, to compare and explain behaviours and to objectify them as part of our social setting. While representations are often to be located in the minds of men and women, they can just as often be found “in the world”, and as such examined separately. (Moscovici, 214)

Representation therefore is everything in communication. The ‘how’ in the communication process is super powerful in identity politics and information dissemination. Thus, Moscovici in

*The Myth of Lonely Paradigm* posits that the ultimate aim of representation is to “make something unfamiliar, or unfamiliarity itself, familiar” (24). The implication is that representation determines what is perceived and conditions what we know. In clarifying the power and potency in social representation, Birgitta Höijer opines “A new political group may be named as terrorists, a new ill-health is called the Black Death of our age, the complex scientific phenomenon climate change may shortly be labeled as the weather, and so on”(7). Stewart and Kowaltzke have outlined the ways in which representation works. According to them, “A representation consists of repeated elements”. Through the process of repetition, an element becomes normal and is surreptitiously planted in the psyche of the audience. It is a psychological manipulation that subtly coerces the audience to accept an element as normal without willingly consenting to it. This strategy is used in modern times in advertising and content promotion.

Representation also works by inviting the audience to either identify with or recognize the element being represented. By showing something the audience recognizes, the producer or media creator may have a perspective about something that is very similar to the audience’s experience. If the representation suits the audience’s idea of who they are, naturally the audience may choose to identify with the idea. However, if the content provider sees a person, an event, an idea etc as different from them; the audience is invited to identify the idea or object of representation from his own experiences.

More so, representation also works by categorizing people, events and ideas. The media in the process of representation creates groups, construct identities and labels with which the elements of categorization are tagged. Examples of such tags include; ‘the unemployed’, ‘the aged’, ‘women and children’, ‘third world’ etc.



Representations also contain perspectives and viewpoints. The meanings conveyed in representation carry the bias that influences the choices made by the media producer. The implication is that representations are carefully selected and adjudged before a representation is made. The implication is that every representation is made is structured towards achieving the producer's agenda.

Finally, Representations have a mode of address: representation has an air of natural. However, there are certain assumptions about identities from which the representations are made.

Representation being an omnibus theory has been applied to the different aspects of human scholarship. It's been applied to the field of mathematics in understanding algebra and equations. In Psychology, it's been applied in the study of human behavior and political manipulations. The concept has also been applied in the field of communication studies to show the underlying relationship between the object of communication and its intended audience. Media representation deals with the way and manner issues, ideas, people, groups and events are portrayed to the audience through the media. In his youtube lecture on representation, Gabrielle Boado is of the opinion that "everything we see in the media is portrayed differently to what we see in real life, they show us reality but it does not define reality itself due to different views we see of the same subject". In effect, the concept of representation has motivated a number of theories in the media. Laura Mulvey's *Gaze* deals with the representation of women in mainstream media. In the *Gaze*, Mulvey argues that in visual cinema, women are represented as sex objects to enhance the viewing pleasure of men.

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy unto the female figure which is style accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their

appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be=looked-at-ness* (Mulvey, 62).

Elvin Goffman's 'Framing' is a theory of representation. Framing explains the different viewpoints which we impose on phenomena; the different ways in which we understand people, places, events and ideas. Goffman posits that that people tend to make meaning of their daily realities through the employment of frameworks or 'schemata' of interpretation (1). Tessa Perkins stereotype theory is also a theory of representation. In the theory, Perkins asserts that it is not every stereotype that is bad. The assumption aims at proving that some stereotypes are not ill intended and are good in themselves. His theory also clears the notion that stereotypes are always about minority groups. Perkins theory disputes the notion and asserts that majority groups are also stereotyped. More so, the theory also posits that stereotypes are not rigid but flexible. The implication is that there are variables that occasion stereotypes and identity tags and that these stereotypes change as the variables change. Perkins also in his theory posits that stereotypes are not always false. He disputes the wholesome negation of stereotypes as always false representation. Perkins theory disputes this notion and posits that some stereotypes are truthful representations.

George Gerbner's Cultivation theory also stems from the concept of representation. Gerbner in the Theory posits that the more time people spend watching the television and listening to the media, the more effect the media is bound to have on them. Jean Baudrillard's Hyper-reality theory sees the media as being over sensationalized and filled with idealistic representations which are in effect exaggerated portrayal of reality.

Having gone through the nature of representation as expressed by the various scholars that have been interrogated under this subtopic, representation in this study is used to mean the shades of

narrative employed by movie makers in telling the experiences of migration in Nigeria. Beyond these shades, representation in this study portends to the choices made in the politics of storytelling migrant narrative in Nigerian movies.

### **2.3 Irregular Migration as a Contemporary Social Issue**

Migration gradually has become an issue of global concern. According to the international Organization for Migration in the World Migration Report 2018, “migration has emerged in the last few years as a critical political and policy challenge in matters such as integration, displacement, safe migration and border management” (13). The issue of irregular or undocumented migrants has become an issue giving vent to immigration crisis in many countries especially countries with seeming peace and countries that are economically robust. As a result, various researches have been carried out with respect to the issue of migration in a bid to proffer lasting solution to the problem of irregular migration in the global arena. One of the major problems has been on arriving at a definition or conceptualization of irregular migration.

Martin Baldwin-Edwards in his work *Towards a Theory of Migration* defines irregular migration as “migration that occurs outside of the legal institutional frameworks established by states” (1449). The International Organization for Migration as cited in Amy Pope defines irregular migration as “the movement of people that occurs outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit, and receiving countries”. The migration data portal on the other hand gives three conditions under which a migrant can be referred to as an irregular migrant;

i. He or she may *enter* the country irregularly, for instance with false documents or without crossing at an official border crossing point;

- ii. He or she may *reside* in the country irregularly, for instance, in violation of the terms of an entry visa/residence permit; or
- iii. He or she may be *employed* in the country irregularly, for instance he or she may have the right to reside but not to take up paid employment in the country

More so, Daniel Whyte in his online publication *Illegal Migration: The Challenges, Trends and Hard Search For a Better Life* highlights “Dissatisfaction”, “dystopia”, “unhomeliness” and “dislocation” as the major factors that predicate irregular migration around the globe. Amy Pope in *Responding to Irregular Migration Flows* is of the opinion that the increase in the number of irregular migrants is unprecedented since the Second World War. This she attributes to the incessant wars that are littered all around the globe. Pope reports that “At the end of 2015, more than 65 million people were displaced worldwide, more than half of them children—a number that does not include the many millions more who moved for purely economic or other reasons”. Patrycja Sasnal in *Domesticating the Giant* reports that the number of global migrants has risen to 250 million in 2018 as compared to 170 million in the year 2000. In his words,

Migration levels will certainly grow while hostilities continue in the most conflict-ridden regions of sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, the global wealth gap persists, climate change aggravates living conditions in many areas, and the poorer half of the globe becomes more populous.

The International Migration Policy Program (IMP) in *Meeting the Challenges of Migration* reports that “people who have migrated without proper authorization (i.e., without documents or with false documents) account for one third to one half of new entrants into developed countries, which is an increase of 20 percent over the past 10 years” (16). The organization goes on to state

that Europe and America ranks among the highest receiving countries. In breaking down the figures of migration in these two satellite areas, the organization reports that:

...in the US, where the population totals approximately 294 million, the total number of irregular migrants is as high as 12 million. The EU, home to approximately 454 million, is estimated to host about 500,000 irregular migrants each year (16).

However, the figures above are not without major challenges and most especially with the management of the irregular migrants. GumisaiMutume however sees migration as being at the center of disagreement between the mainly poor sending countries and the richer receiving nations. The International Organisation for migration (IOM) in its 2018 report states that there is increasing rate of morbidity in migration. The death rate among migrants has skyrocketed as compared to the recent past. The IOM reports that “7,927 migrants worldwide died or went missing in 2016, 26 per cent more than the number of deaths and missing migrants recorded in 2015 (6,281)” (26). James Smith and Leigh Daynes attribute the high morbidity rate to “tighter border controls and associated programmes of involuntary detention”. Evidence shows that things can only get worse as the rate of irregular migration towers. Guido Friebel, Miriam Manchin, MariapiaMendola and Giovanni Prarolo assert that the cost of irregular migration can only get higher. Evidence to that abounds in the stiff migration policies that are fast springing up all around the developed world. Guido Friebel et al opine:

Yet, legal migration channels are becoming increasingly scarce and congested, destination countries are investing in administrative and physical barriers, and irregular migration has become one of the most controversial public policy items in many of the destination countries, especially in Europe and in the U.S (2)

The United Nations (UN) in their report 2019 *Migration and Human Rights* reports that about three percent of the world’s populations are currently living outside their countries of origin. It becomes more worrisome that many of this population are on migrant status on forced account.

The conditions most times are not very palatable as they are in many occasions not offered full rights as citizens. Thus the UN in the report above posits that “Migrants in an irregular situation tend to be disproportionately vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and marginalization, often living and working in the shadows, afraid to complain, and denied their human rights and fundamental freedoms”.

More so, Africa has its fair share in the global irregular migration trend. Many irregular migrants from Africa go to the west in search of better livelihood. Charlotte Karagueuzian and Audrey Verdier-Chouchane are of the opinion that “Demographic pressures and youth unemployment have also contributed to the rise of migration in Africa, as well as to the changing and blurring destinations and patterns of migration in the continent” (1). The journey is most times made by land to Europe with the view of beating border laws and security. Hein De Haas opines that: “Europe’s increasingly restrictive immigration policies and intensified migration controls have led to a growing reliance on overland routes” (17). Libya has served as the horn of irregular migration over the years. Migrants from all over Africa would engage on a Northward movement in attempt at crossing to Europe through Libya. According to Yermi Brenner, Roberto Forin and Bram Frouws “The Western Mediterranean route has recently become the most active route of irregular migration to Europe. As of mid-August 2018, a total of 26,350 refugees and migrants arrived in Spain by sea, three times the number of arrivals in the first seven months of 2017”. Altai Consulting (IOM’s official consultants in Nigeria) classifies the Africa – European irregular migrant route into two; the central Mediterranean route and the Southern Mediterranean route. According to them “The Central Mediterranean Route through Niger is the most prominent route to North Africa and Europe. Agadez, in Niger, is the main hub for smuggling to the North. Migrants found on this route are from all over West Africa” (37).

## 2.4 Migration Trends in Nigeria;

Africa in recent times has become very conspicuous in the global media with regards to migration and the many challenges it poses. Scholars too have made bountiful contributions as concerns migration in Africa. Marie-Laurence Flahaux and Hein De Haas (1) in their reading of Africa described Africa as a continent of mass displacement and migration. They conclude that the Africa-Europe migration that has become very rampant in recent times is majorly caused by poverty and starvation. Charlotte Min-Harris (163) agrees with Flahuax and his colleagues but adds that what happens in the international migration pattern is also prevalent in intra-migration flows as many youths are driven from the poverty stricken ruralities to urban settlements in most African states. This he cites as reasons for the over congestion of most cities in Africa. In effect Background Paper prepared for UN Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility and International Migration et al highlights the impacts of migration on the African continent. Mariama Awumbila (2) has identified the search for economic opportunities, duty to kins, political factors, conflict, population density and environmental factors as the major drivers of migration Africa. AderantiAdepoju in *Linkages between internal and international migration* on the other hand is of the opinion that migration is mostly occasioned by economic needs. He opines that “economic incentives arising largely from disequilibria between and within sectors of the economy and between countries and regions” (389). Istifanus JoshuaandJerryMakama while agreeing with Adepoju add over population as a major migration causative factor (36). Adepoju in *Reflections on international Migration and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* insists that “the major factors prompting emigration are the huge disparities in earning potential between poor and rich countries” (302). Mathew Kirwin agrees with Adepoju that most migrants from West Africa are motivated by economic reasons (12). Kirwin in his research findings opines that

apart from the economic push to migrate, poor policing and inter-ethnic crisis are also major migration push in Nigeria (17).

Uche Isiugo-Abanihe and IOM Nigeria have studied emerging trends in international migration. According to them, “The number of Nigerians living outside Nigeria more than doubled between 1990 and 2013, from 465,932 to 1,030,322. In 2013, nearly two thirds of emigrants (61.4%) were residing in more developed regions. This is a relatively new pattern” (2). Kennedy Eborka and John Lekan Oyefara have also conducted an in-depth research on the trends in international travel in Nigeria. Their research findings show that;

...there is a time dimension to the pattern of international migration. (...) irregular migration appears to be more prevalent among later-day migrants who left the country from the late 1990s onward; while the majority of those who travelled in the 1980s and early 1990s were less likely to resort to irregular means of migration (24).

Godwin Ikwuyatum in *The Changing Face of Migration in Africa* agrees totally that there has been a remarkable change in migration trend in Africa. Among his major findings is that migration in Nigeria has become more feminized, commercialized and diversified (6 – 7). In Ikwuyatum’s words,

The male dominated migration pattern which is the tradition in most parts of West Africa has been significantly altered with the increasing involvement of women in long term and long distance migration. Female nurses in Nigeria and Ghana are increasingly been recruited to work in Saudi Arabia, Canada, UK and other parts of Europe with better pay packages. (6)

Philip Connor in a research for the Pew Research Center has also delved into the study of migration trend in sub-Sahara Africa of which Nigeria is inclusive. His conclusion shows that “Sub-Saharan African nations account for eight of the 10 fastest growing international migrant



populations since 2010”. Clare Henshaw as cited in Robert Egbe holds misrepresentation of migration and its stories as responsible for the teaming overflow of irregular migration in Nigeria. According to her, “Migrants often assume they will achieve success in Europe and believe that they will quickly find a job and make money easily, but this is not true”. LanreIkuteyijo in *Illegal Migration and Policy Challenges in Nigeria* accuses the Nigerian government of complacency in the management of its irregular migrants. In his words, “Migration management issues were considered backburner priorities in Nigeria until Italy and Spain confronted Nigerian authorities with evidence of large numbers of trafficked women from Nigeria” (2 - 3) .

Human trafficking as an aspect of irregular/forced migration in Nigeria has also been variedly researched. Adepoju in *Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa* reports that the sub-Saharan Africa is very prominent in human trafficking. In his words, “Trafficking in girls is reportedly rampant on the Niger/Chad/Nigeria border – the ‘triangle of shame’. Hundreds of girls from Edo state, Nigeria, end up in the sex industry in Italy” (45). Samson Dubukumah sees Nigeria as a major human trafficking hub. According to him, “Nigeria is a center of trafficking in human beings, especially women and children. It is an origin, transit and destination country for trafficked children and serves predominantly as an origin country for trafficked women” (2). GoddyOsimen et al have also looked at the travails of trafficking. They are of the opinion that “Trafficked persons are victims of violence, threats, ill treatment, incarceration and extortion, and they have to pay off considerable debts to meet the costs of their transportation and documents (133). S.kKigbu has also investigated the challenges in investigating and prosecuting human traffickers in Nigeria. He cites lack of adequate and effective legislature on human trafficking, inadequate coordination of law enforcement agency, and challenges of investigation and prosecution as the

principal hurdles in prosecution of human traffickers in Nigeria (149 - 153). These literatures have shown that migration has become a global problem that seeks solutions from all around the globe.

## **2.5 The Role of Donor Agencies in Documentary Sponsorship**

Documentaries have become a tool used widely for social sensitization and awareness creation by non-profit agencies whose major goal is to achieve humanitarian objectives. Government agencies and many humanitarian agencies over the years have used documentary as a tool for selling ideas and for achieving social conscientization. This is in line with Barbara Abrash's opinion of the medium as "serving as the core for innovative spaces and practices that mark a new kind of public media –accessible, participatory and inclusive". Advocacy groups and Non-governmental organizations who seek good public relation strategy into the inroads of modern society make maximum use of the documentary medium. In the words of KaRyn Elizabeth Daley, "documentary film, has been perceived by advocacy groups and NGOs as a powerful tool in this new cause-related marketing and public relations practice" (3). Mullman as cited in Daley making case clarification of the medium opines that "Both the Ogoni tribe of Nigeria, a group seeking redress for human rights violations, and the Lost Boys of Sudan, an advocacy group attempting to bring publicity to the plight of child soldiers, used documentaries in the publicity of their causes" (3). The medium has become very powerful due to its seeming objectivity in ensuring realistic representation. Thus histories and events of the past become better re-lived through artistic documentation via the documentary medium. John Stover sees the documentarian as an activist and a social historian. In his words "documentary filmmakers play a particularly significant role in shaping activist histories long after events have transpired" (56).

Jessica Clark and Barbara Abrash further appraising the contributions of the documentary medium to social orientation assert that;

Documentary film projects have increasingly become core elements of social issue campaigns. Telling deep human stories about complex societal problems, they serve as catalysts for organizing, network-building and civic action. In an environment of information overload and polarized sparring, social issue documentaries provide quality content that can be used to engage members of the public as citizens rather than merely media consumers.

It is this potency that is laden in the documentary film that has made it attractive to donor agencies for advocacy and sensitization. Advocacy documentaries enjoy wide sponsorship from corporate bodies, NGO's, activist groups and other humanitarian bodies who place as their primary goal the duty of achieving an end for the many difficulties suffered by disadvantaged people all around the globe. Foundations, NGO's, government agencies have spearheaded the production of documentaries as a communication alternative for addressing social based problems. Documentaries like *The Undocumented* (2013), *In the Middle* (2013), *Strangers in Town*, *The Fable of the Lion and the Coyote: A Band on a Hurry but with No Visa* (2017) are some of the many advocacy documentaries that have been produced and financed by donor agencies with the aim of bringing to light and tackling the menace of irregular migration. The McArthur foundation has through the use of documentaries advanced its humanitarian engagements in different parts of the world. Its website blurb about its usage of documentaries shows that the foundation has supported more than "300 films that combine exceptional storytelling with in-depth journalism... to spark conversations and activities that contribute to social and policy change". Some of the documentary films that have been sponsored and produced by the organization include; *Mandela in America* (1990), *On borrowed Land* (1990), *Just Plain Hardworking* (1990), *After Spring* (2016), *America to Me*(2016)etc. Other donor agencies like The Ford Foundation, W.H.O, UN, UNICEF, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

and many other foundations have made enormous use of the documentary medium in the propagation of its humanitarian creed.

More so, the African continent has benefitted from some of these donor/humanitarian bodies who design afro-centric themed documentaries that are geared towards engendering development and fostering a healthy living condition within the African suburbs. The British Broadcasting Corporation has contributed immensely in sponsoring and producing documentaries that are afro-centric. In its archive of Africa include documentaries like *Cameroon: Anatomy of a Killing*(2018), *Meet the Night Runners* (2019), *Malawi's Humann Harvest* (2018). *Sweet Sweet Codeine: Nigeria's Cough Syrup Crisis* (2018). Other Multinational establishments like CNN, Al Jazeera, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), United Nations and many otherdonor agencies have contributed numerous social documentaries investigating different social issues in Africa. More so, migration has had a copious representation from some of these donor agencies in the realm of documentary films.

## **2.6 An Overview of Nollywood**

Nollywood since its evolution has provoked numerous literatures. Jonathan Haynes' article "*Nollywood: What's in a Name?*" explains the sudden rise of the Nigerian film industry and compares it with other film industries on the continent. Armstrong Idachaba et al, in their writings have traced the history of the Nigerian video industry to the collapse of the post colonial cinema in Nigeria (5). UchennaOnuzulike in the *Birth of Nollywood* partitioned the Nigeria film history into four different era viz; the colonial period (1903 -1960), the independence period (1960-1972), the indigenization decree period (1972-1992) and the Nollywood period (1992 –

till present). Ogbechie in his narrative of how the Nollywood industry came about has the following to say:

In 1992, a trader bought a huge supply of videotapes from Taiwan, and he was trying to sell the videotapes. Well, the empty videotapes weren't selling very well. So he decided the tapes would sell better if they had something on them. So he got his friends together, got a standard video camera and shot this film called "Living in Bondage". He dubbed it onto the videos, and he sold about a million copies. That was how this thing (the local film renaissance) started.

He marks the beginning of Nollywood with the production of *Living in Bondage* (1992). Abiodun Olayiwola disagrees with Onuzulike and Ogbechie's *Living Bondage* periodisation of Nollywood. He credits the Yoruba travelling theatre as the originators of the video film industry in Nigeria. He opines that "Undoubtedly, the Yoruba traveling theatre troupes were the originators of the video-film tradition in Nigeria, however, most available historical records on the history of Nollywood identify *Living in Bondage* as the premier video film" (189). Sola Fosudo while not disputing the periodisation of Nollywood, asserts that the activities of the Yoruba travelling theatre were instrumental to the evolution of Nollywood (97). Alessandro Jedlowskin has researched the evolution and its perceptions within the global arena. In his words,

...the success of the Nigerian video industry lies in the specificity of its format, what I defined as the "small screen cinema" format. It is in fact largely thanks to the original way in which Nigerian entrepreneurs have remediated pre-existing media experiences into a new format that Nollywood has managed to establish itself as the main entertainment media product in the continent (242 -243)

Jonathan Haynes captures the paradigm shift in technology, budgeting and philosophy of the industry in his book "*New Nollywood*": *Kunle Afolayan*. In the book he positions Kunle Afolayan as the visionary director who has staged a break away from the home video tradition in an attempt at re-institutionalizing the cinema tradition in the industry. It is these new blocs who are on an upgrade mission that he terms "New Nollywood". He also observes that the distribution system in this new trend adopts (56). Lizelle Bisschoff also draws a major distinction between

the 'New' and 'Old/Standard' Nollywood. According to her "These films are seen more widely than standard Nollywood fare and are accessible to non African audiences" (2-3). Emmanuel Adedun and Onyekaba Cornelius Eze lists the major trends of the New Nollywood thus; properly trained film makers, emergence of budget films, a return to celluloid filmmaking, the re-emergence of viewing centers, emergence of box office system, international cooperation and collaboration, global acceptance and screening at film festival and proper marketing and distribution framework (132 -137). Asogwa Chika, Onojalbe and Ojih Emmanuel are of the opinion that "Nigerian's Nollywood remains the dominant film industry in Africa that is poised to championing the projection of the Nigerian cultural values through film" (102). Elizabeth Giwa also sees Nollywood as the most prevalent movie activity in Africa especially in terms of Numerical output (1). This is possible because Nollywood has become a force to reckon with in film globally. According to LizzelleBisschoff, "Nollywood's popularity has spread across the African continent, to the African diaspora in Europe, North America and Australia. It has even gone as far as the Caribbean and Pacific Islands "(1). Its giant strides in production have seen it achieve a giant feat in global film industry rankings in 2009. According to UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) survey; "The Nigerian film industry has overtaken Hollywood and closed the gap on India, the global leader in the number of movies produced each year" (news.un.org). With this statistics, Nollywood therefore has attained global coverage and has attained relevance in global film circles.

However, Stanislaus Iyorza has inquired into the quality progression of Nollywood films by studying their ratings at the annual African Movies Academy Awards (AMAA). His findings show that

The Nigerian film industry has excelled by bagging most of the prestigious awards amidst stiff competitions, especially at the inception of AMAA between 2005 and 2008. With movies from other African countries making the competition stiffer, the excellence in Nollywood movies from the 2009 edition of the awards diminished drastically until 2016. At inception, Nigerian movies of the 21st century bagged over 15 awards in different categories in 2005. Perhaps, it was obvious that the 2005 edition of AMAA witnessed the selection of Nigerian movies only. By 2011, Nigerian movies bagged only three (3) awards in two categories that involved participation from other countries. In 2014, Nigerian movies bagged only six (6) out of twenty-four (24). This is a clear indication that the Nigerian movies have depreciated in content, cast quality, story line, costume and other aspects (82).

Jonathan Haynes (2016) in his book “Nollywood: The Creation of the Nigerian Film Genre” balkanizes Nollywood movies into genres and differentiates it from conventional genres easily identifiable in Hollywood. Barclays Ayakoroma (2015) in his book “Trends in Nollywood: A study of selected genres” engages in a dialectical analysis of most recurrent trends in the Nollywood industry. The work apart from historicizing Nollywood attempts a theorization of the industry and its production system. Uche-chinaemereNwaozuzu (2012) also has studied the thriller genre in Nollywood and has made remarkable suggestions on how directors can improve the genre. Haynes in *The Nollywood Diaspora: A Nigerian Video Genre* captures a new Nollywood genre which according to him ‘tells the stories of Nigerians abroad’ (74).

Asides the evolution and history, Nollywood has been studied in terms of gender. BabafemiBabatope has in his critique of Kelani’s *Narrow Path* argues that feminism was shabbily treated in the movie. He argues that feminism should be represented in movies in a way that it does’nt leave negative connotations (186). Femi OkiremuetteShaka and Ola Nnennaya Uchendu agree that gender representation in Nollywood validates “some gruesome traditions of trial by ordeal which women are subjected to at the demise of their husbands as a way of proving their innocence” (14).OlusholaAromona on the other hand has interrogated the representations of African women in Nollywood films (43).She argues that Nollywood has a template for

representing African women as stereotypes. Ifeoma Dunu, Cornelius Ikwueze and Godfrey Ekene are of the while not differing with Arumona assert that “Although women had over time been subjugated in both the society and movies, sometimes they partake in their own subjugation which dignifies and eulogizes the male folks” (112). Adesina Azeez argues that the Nigerian audience perceives the representation of women in Nollywood differently. He posits that While men and less educated women interpret the representations in conformist manner, having the preferred meanings of the ideological meanings embedded in the representation, educated women interpret the representations ‘oppositionally’ and ‘agitatively’ (206). Olayinka Egbokhare researching into the audience perception of female criminals in Nollywood concludes that the spate of violence credited to women in Nollywood films may a hyper-exaggeration of what maybe obtainable in real life (412). Emily OghaleGod’spresence however in evaluating the place of women in film makers in security and national development is of the opinion that the duty of the women film makers to produce counter narratives to combat the gender stereotypes that abound in the Nigerian film industry. In her words, “negative profiling and dehumanizing stereotypes played by women on screen which are validated and re-established through repetition should be the raw materials for Nollywood women filmmakers in re-creating a new and realistic identity for Nigerian women” (48). Beyond the representations of gender, Tayo Adenuga argues that marriage is a limiting factor in the carrier of most female actors in Nollywood (359). OsakueOmoera and John Edemode posit that children have not been duly represented in Nollywood. This in effect offers no option to children whose consumption of rated movies in Nollywood has the ability to affect them negatively (370).

In line with effects gauge and contributions to society, Nollywood scholars have variously researched the industry with the aim of gauging its effects on its viewers. UchechukwuAjiwe,



Sylvia Okwuosa and Samuel Chukwu-Okoronkwo are of the opinion that Nollywood with its popularity and wide reach, Nollywood has the ability to influence the society tremendously (62). Nsikak-AbasiUdofia&EkaetteOkon Tom in the same vein have gauged the effect of Nollywood explicit contents on the sexual behavior of Nigerian secondary school youths. Their conclusion shows that many Nigerian youths model their sexual behavior after what Nollywood sex portrayals (83). Destiny Oberiri in trying to determine the influence of Nollywood on the dress pattern of students reaches the conclusion that “Youths, especially of the impressionable age range, 21-25, who constitute the population in Taraba State University, Jalingo imitate what they see in these media, especially the home movies medium” (40). Church Akpan and Chukwu Anyianuka while espousing the fact that Nollywood is influential in the Nigerian society debunk the claim that the preponderance of ritual killings in Nigeria is occasioned by Nollywood (261).

Nollywood too has been studied and researched in relation to audience attitude and perception. Dauda Musa Enna, Emmanuel Paul Idakwo and Olaku Dorothy Akpovye have investigated the audience perception of the magic in Nollywood films. They conclude majority of audience “believe that the magic and superstitious images represented in Nigerian films influence viewers” (185). Eno Akpabio is of the view that Nollywood is criticized widely because of its portrayal of social obscenities like sex, ritual and voodoo. She however states that not minding the criticisms,

...respondents have a largely favourable attitude to Nigerian home video productions even though they expressed the view that there is too much emphasis on themes such as sex, violence, prostitution, sibling rivalry, evils of polygamy, devilish spiritualism and related themes (99).

Christopher Ihidero while accepting that Nollywood audience are eager to see an improved Nollywood asserts that the tendency of some Nollywood directors to take Nollywood audience for granted is the greatest obstacle in the path of the industry's continued growth. This tendency according to his respondents is evidenced in the unrealistic plots, bad picture quality, bad sound and in the recycling of star faces (334).

Costume and Makeup design has also been an important area in Nollywood studies. Nkechi Okadigwe asserts that costumes are message codes that embed a lot of meanings (105). Toyin Bade-Afuye affirms this stance and posits that costume and makeup in a film is an important artistic embellishment (420). Alex Asigbo and Anurika Okafor while recognizing the importance of costume and makeup are of the opinion that the art is still very much under-utilized in Nollywood (372). Nkechi Asiegbu in *Costume, Set/Scenery and Location as Narrative Agents in Worlds Apart* however sees costume/set/scenery and location as narrative agents in film. She opines that the three agents play signifying roles in the delineation of character and worlds in Nollywood (4).

The economic imperative of Nollywood has also been studied variedly. Jade Miller comparing the distribution and production system in Nollywood to other dominant global film cultures sees Nollywood as brokering an alternative market for entertainment features. Her position is succinctly summarized in this excerpt;

Nollywood movies are produced and distributed with virtually no direct connection to the networks that structure global Hollywood. And they are consumed in places and amongst communities that are generally left out of dominant global cultural industry distribution networks. After all, the majority of Sub-Saharan Africa does not figure in global Hollywood's distribution plans. And the only way to acquire Hollywood movies in places outside of Hollywood's networks is through black market and other alternative networks, as explored by Brian Larkin (2004) and Tristan Mattleart (2009). In this exclusion from dominant

global networks, however, lies Nollywood's many actual international and global connections. Mostly forged by hand, by individual entrepreneurs, these global connections, taken as a whole, constitute alternative networks that run counter to and under the radar of dominant global networks (2).

Nollywood has also been studied in respect to the numerous challenges that it has faced from inception to present. Silver Ojieson interrogates the sources of funding for the Nollywood industry. He asserts that funding in Nollywood is still an individual effort. According to him "The implications of relying on internal funding are that Nollywood will continue to churn out shoddy productions and remain elusive to the prospects of breaking even at the cinemas" (235). Françoise Ugochukwu on their other has researched into the language problem that seems to limit the spread of Nollywood films to global audience. He observes that while Nigerians prefer subtitling for better understanding, foreign audiences find dubbing more convenient and attractive. Jacob Agba in contrast appreciates the giant strides the Nollywood industry has achieved within the short period of its existence. He notes that though Nollywood experienced some form of colonization from Hollywood and Bollywood, Nollywood is eventually evolving into a monolith within the African hemisphere (162). Chukwuma Anyanwu on the other hand has researched into the problems of publicity in the Nigerian film industry. In his words, "what limits or hinders the growth of film publicity and indeed threatens its future is the poor state of or rather decline of cinema houses in the country" (135).

More so, Nollywood has also been researched in terms of its contributions to culture. Uchenna Onuzulike in *Nollywood: The Influence of the Nigerian Movie Industry on African Culture* asserts that "Nigerian videofilms as a representation of Nigerian culture have a great influence on an entire population of Africans due to similar cultural practices" (239). Sunday Alawode and Uduakobong Sunday assert that "Nigerian cultures are undoubtedly revealed in the films packaged in the home videos. The story lines/themes, lifestyles, foods, norms and

values, and even manner of dressing reveal the ways of life of the people; sometimes, indigenous languages are introduced into the film plots through interjection of vernacular (to identify the cultural settings of the story)” (31). Nkechi Asiegbu has also researched into the portrayal of ritual in Nollywood. Her findings show that “the ritual representations found in almost all the genres of Nollywood films represent the dominant ideas and the belief systems of the populace” (240). Azuka Onwuka posits that Nollywood demonizes African culture in its treatment of indigenous stories. In his words, “anytime traditional practices are depicted in Nigerian films, they are shown to be evil. At the end, a pastor will be invited to destroy the forces of darkness”. George Tasie agrees with totally with Azuka and posits that Nollywood tends to stigmatize African traditional religion (28). Euphemia Asogwa, Ibe Onoja and Emmanuel Ojih are of the opinion that Nollywood representation of the Nigerian heritage has not been fair to the country as it dwells more on the negative aspects of the Nigerian culture. They opine that “the Nollywood remains grossly inadequate or usually situated out of context thereby re-enforcing the negative image fostered on Nigeria and Africa at large by the foreign media who usually approach Africa and Nigerian cultural values from a distance and through their own cultural telescope” (105). Benedict Binebai examines the place of indigenous culture in Nollywood. His study shows that indigenous culture is suffering serious imperial suffocation in the hands of globalization (105). Dauda Musa Enna, Emmanuel Paul Idakwo and Olaku Dorothy Akpovye have investigated the impact of the magic in Nollywood films and believe that magic as portrayed in Nollywood is not good for the image of the country (185). Uchenna Onuzulike in *Nigerian Video films as a Cultural and Technological Hybridity* is of the view that Nollywood representations of the diaspora gives Nigerians with hybrid identity a sense of belonging. According to him, “Nollywood videofilms appeal to people with hybrid identities. The African

diaspora uses the Nollywood videofilms to connect to their cultural heritage, thereby contributing to cultural and technological hybridization” (185). In *Identity, Creative Reality and Representations of Popular Culture in Select Nollywood Movies*, Sola Fosudo believes that Nollywood has been faithful and realistic in its portrayal of the Nigeria’s social realities (205). Building on this, Onyekaba Cornelius posits that the representations of police checkpoint in Nollywood have been “critical, committed, and unabashedly full of lived experience rather than the imagined (120). OnookomeOkome panders to this idea of social validation in Nollywood. For him, the Africa that is represented in Nollywood is ‘spontaneous’ with no regard to the image of Africa in Europe (116)

### **2.6.1 Genres in Nollywood**

Nollywood has evolved tremendously. Its span of existence has witnessed varied modes of production and artistic contents. Productions in Nollywood are made to suit and entertain specific audience. Artistic contents are also basically motivated by trends in society which act as precursor to films that embody societal narratives. Based on these indices, stories told in Nollywood come in different shades, forms and are given variegated treatments to suite the mood of the audience. The development of stylistic specifics gave rise to the creation of actors and actresses who have been stereotyped to play particular type of roles. Actors like NkemOwoh, Jim Iyke, John Okafor, Victor Osuagwu, OsitaIheme, Patience Ozokwor, Pete Edochie, Nkiru Sylvanus and a whole lot of others have been stereotyped and given specific acting modes which the audience members have massively identified with. In accordance with this, Nollywood productions have been theorized into genres. The idea of genre is predicated on the need to

specify and identify along narrative styles, techniques and thematic preoccupations. This goes in line with Dan Clinton's classification based on "kind; sort and style". Aristotle's designation of the concept birthed the whole idea of the usage of genre in the media. Aristotle conceptualizes the notion thus:

"the medium being the same, and the objects [of imitation] the same, the poet may imitate by narration - in which case he can either take another personality as Homer does, or speak in his own person, unchanged - or he may present all his characters as living and moving before us" (53)

To be more specific, Luciano Mariani has a very insightful explanation of the film genre. According to Luciano, genrefication in film is "a way to classify films into more or less homogeneous categories, which help viewers (but also, and in the first place, producers) to identify films and to make choices" (1). Barclays Ayakoroma in *Trends in Nollywood* (81) notes that there are two major conditions needed in classifying a movie to a particular genre. He notes that "one must be able in the first place to describe the individual film... and be able to explain the principles on which it can meaningfully be associated with other films of that genre".

Moreso, with the constant evolution in trends, different scholars have attempted a generic classification of Nollywood movies. Two of the leading scholars in this regard are Jonathan Haynes and Ayakoroma. Ayakoroma in *Trends in Nollywood* identifies the major trends inherent in the Nigerian film industry as determined by film movement. He identifies the basic Nigerian film genres as: Language films, Epic/ Historical Genre, Prostitution/ Ghetto life Genre, Cultural/Traditional Genre, Love and Romance Genre and Crime and Gangster.

Ayakoroma (90) identifies language films as films that are shot in local languages other than English. Films in this genre actually predicated nollywood and championed the evolution of the Nigeria movie industry. Kenneth Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* which is considered as the pioneer

film in Nollywood falls into this genre. These films usually are shot in native language and subtitled for the benefit of other audience members who are alien to the local language used in the movie. Language movies are considered quite helpful for the sustenance of indigenous languages in Nigeria. Thus Benjamin Njoku opines that “For Nigerian indigenous languages to be preserved and saved from total extinction, there is an imperative need for the government at all levels to encourage the production of indigenous language films”. However, Ayakoro (90) is of the opinion that indigenous language films could be cumbersome for audience that is purely dependent on subtitles for his viewing experience. Such exercise he opines will “subtract from the overall viewing experience of such movies. Some of the movies that fall into this category include; *Living in Bondage* (1992), *Rattle Snake* (1995), *Blood Money* (1997), *Rituals* (1995) etc. it is very important to note that African magic which is about the highest distributor of Nollywood movies on TV has a channel dedicated for local language movies shot in the three main languages of Nigeria which are Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba.

Epic on the other hand is used to qualify movies that go back in history and depicts grand historical antecedents. Its spectacular usage of costumes makes it the more appealing and culturally enriching to the eyes. The epic genre however has evolved over time and is used relatively to qualify certain kinds of movies in different film cultures. The Schirmer encyclopedia of film as cited in Encyclopaedia.com clarifies a major difference between epic as a term and as a genre. The encyclopedia posits that

as a term, "epic" is associated with historical films of all kinds, particularly those dealing with events of national or global import or scale. As a genre it thus encompasses a number of war films and westerns as well as films set in earlier periods. But because of its links with ancient classical literature, it is associated above all with films set in biblical times or the ancient world. (<https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/epic-films>)

Randal Wallace however believes that the epic in a film is determined by the feat a character is able to achieve in his journey to self discovery. In his words “Epic scale is a measure of the scope of a character's inner journey”. Randal believes that a film must reach a certain standard to be grouped in the epic genre. According to him:

To qualify as epic, a story must have the universality of myth, the enchantment of saga. So an epic is more than a cracking good tale; it tells us something we'll always remember; it makes us walk out of a theater and whisper into our own hearts, "I'm changed.

Based on the controversies that surround the usage of the word epic in grouping films into genres, Andrew Elliot (2) differs with caging the genre to into definitive stylistics that have been posited by different scholars. Elliot posits that the designation of epic is relative to individuals depending on the individual’s perception of the action of the movie. The implication is that genrefication of the epic is within the exclusive reserve of the audience who determines what tag to place on any given movie. In Nollywood however, epic as a genre is popularly accepted as a historical narrative of bravery and achievements that aid the sustenance of society. The epic concept in Nollywood is best aligned to Tim Dirks definition of the genre as “historical or imagined event, mythic, legendary, or heroic figure, and add an extravagant setting and lavish costumes, accompanied by grandeur and spectacle and a sweeping musical score”. Nollywood epics are usually tales of war, love and sacrifice set in a long historical past depicting costume that most times predates colonialism. Ayakoroma in *Trends in Nollywood* (90) observes that epic in Nollywood are produced with fairly big budgets slightly more than other genres. He defines the Nigerian epic films as “those narrative films texts whose screenplays are derive from legends, myths, folklore/tales and mores/lore of the people” (122). Nollywood epic is best



exemplified in the following movies; Ojadike (Amenechi, 1997), Igodo (Amenechi&Obaseki, 1998), Ijele (Amata, 1999) and so on.

The prostitution or Ghetto genre is a Nollywood feature genre that has its thematic fixation in prostitution and the ghetto life style of its protagonists. This was part of the early genres that evolved in Nollywood during the early years of its formation in the late nineties. According to Ayakoroma, the prostitution genre “comprises of works which examines the life of young girls who due to the love for money resort to selling their bodies to make a living”. The genre is motivated by the proclivity of young girls who out of the need to meet up with social trends resort to commercializing their body in exchange for money and other material benefits. Films like *Glamour girls* (Onu, 1995) *Domitilla* (Ejiro, 1996) and the *Prostitute* (Amata &Opechi, 2001) pioneered this genre. The genre was quite prominent among many Nigerians due to its revelation of government failure in providing adequate social welfare for citizens which in effect results in ghetto living and crime.

Just as the name implies, the cultural/traditional genre is prominent for its seeming propagation of the traditional African culture and its belief system. Ayakoroma in *Trends in Nollywood* (91) calls it the traditional belief genre. The genre has a lot of similarity with the epic in Nollywood due to its preoccupation with culture and tradition. However it slightly differs with the epic genre because it tells the story of contemporary Nigerian experience with respect to religion and cultural belief system of the people. This genre is thematically preoccupied with projecting the rich cultural heritage that abounds in Nigeria. Ayakoroma defines the films that are classified in this genre as “films which portray the norms and mores of the traditional African societies; ... delves into ancestral belief system, the communal life of the people, land ownership system, marriage, burial traditions and widowhood practice among others” (92). Films in this genre most

times have a fairly big budget, and a large cast, and an elaborate set. Nollywood movies in this genre include; *Submission* (Onu, 2001), *ArusiIyi*(Amata, 98), *Gold Diggers* (Opeoluwa, 2000) and so on.

The love and romance genre is majorly youth oriented. They are targeted at capturing female and young audience who are intrigued by the narrative of love and its hurdles. The romance genre is majorly themed on love and romance. Its conflicts arise out of the need to overcome the many challenges that makes it virtually impossible or seemingly difficult for the two persons in love to be together. Tim Dirk defines love genre as “love stories, or affairs of the heart that center on passion, emotion, and the romantic, affectionate involvement of the main characters (usually a leading man and lady), and the journey that their love takes through courtship or marriage”. The love and romance genre usually feature young ravishing actors whose physical attributes are used to endear young audiences to it. Some of the movies that within this genre include; *A million Tears* (Chikere, 2006), *Still in Love* (Onu, 2004), *Romantic Attraction* (Iroegbu, 2002) *Two Become One* (Chukwu, 2004) *Wedding Party*( Adetiba, 2016), *When Love Happens* (Babatope, 2014), *Isoken* (Osiberu, 2017) and many others. Crime and gangster genres are movies that narrate the failure of the security apparatus in state and the rise of dangerous armed gangs who oppress the people and rob them of their belongings. This genre mirrors the state of hopeless, lawlessness and anarchy occasioned by armed robbers as a result of government inactiveness in the area of security provision. AmakaIgwé’s *Rattle Snake* (2005) pioneered this genre in the early years of the movie. According to Ayakoroma, the genre “portrays the failure of policing system in Nigeria, which had necessitated law abiding citizens to adopt stringent measures for self defense or personal survival” (92 - 93). The genre features heavy gun battles, violence, car chases and high use of street language. Writing on the gangster hero Joseph Boggs

and Dennis Petrie opine that “the hero *achieves success* temporarily but eventually meets his deserved end. Although he may be given a chance for reform and redemption, the criminal side of his nature is too strong to be denied” (416). Usually the hero *dies in* other to for the movie to achieve social justice. Some of the movies in this category include: *Isakabba* (Imaseun, 2000). The Comedy Genre is one of the most popular genres in Nigeria. Its popularity transcends class and social stratification. While the socio-economic realities in Nigeria makes life very difficult and inclement to most of its citizens, Nollywood comedies injects a gay feel which in effect lifts the mood and tension that hitherto is spread by the deplorable economic realities. Not minding the poor quality of sound and the technical incongruities that characterize most comedies in Nollywood, its acceptance is widely acclaimed. Its stars are popular among the people and are celebrated beyond the borders. According to Ayokorom Nollywood comedy genre are “made of films which are light hearted and are designed to amuse and provoke laughter. This is achieved through exaggerated situations, language, profuse actions, stock characters and relationships” (95). Many of its stars are treated in real life in relation to the characters they play in their movies. This is prevalent because many of the comedy stars take stock roles that overlap between movies. Prominent among them are John Okafor, Nkem Owo, Victor Osuagwu, Ossi Ihome, Bishop Imeh etc. Films in this genre include; *Omugwo* (Chikere, 2002), *Osuofia in London* (Ogoro, 2003), *Ten Days in Suncity* (Ugah, 2017), *Chief Daddy* (Akinmolayan, 2018) and others.

In summation, literatures have been reviewed to reflect a fair mastery of the previous works that have been done in the area of Nollywood and Migration in Nigeria. Terms have also been conceptualized to foster specificity in their usage within this work. Literatures on migration with specific interest on Nigeria have been duly reviewed. Nollywood being the fulcrum on which

this research is anchored has been well rummaged and its literature widely studied in a bid to foster a trajectory for this thesis. Documentary films and the role of donor agencies in initiating and funding film projects have been reviewed.

However, although writers like Jonathan Haynes, Dauda Enna, Emmanuel Idakwo and OlakuAkpovye, Nsika-AbasiUdofia&EkaetteOkon Tom, OsakueOmoera, John Edemode, OnokoomeOkome, Sola Fosudo, OnuzulikeUchenna and others have all investigated the impacts of Nollywood films on the Nigerian society, none has zeroed down to the problem of migration and Nollywood's representation of migrant's experiences. AllesandroJedlowski's *Nigerian Migrants, Nollywood video and the Emergence of an anti-humanitarian Representation of migration in Italian Cinema* provides a good theoretical base for this study. However, the article focuses on Italian cinema and borders itself with the one-sided narrative of Italian authorities in the treatment of migrants in search of succor. While all these provide invaluable theoretical base for this research experience, none has made a theoretical inquiry into the issues of migration and Nollywood's contributions to the raging problem of migration in Nigeria. This is the research gap this study has set out to fill.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF MIGRANT EXPERIENCES IN SELECTED NOLLYWOOD FEATURE FILMS

In this chapter, the researcher unbundles the substance of the research through a careful interrogation of the case studies in the light of their treatment of migration in Nigeria. The three Nollywood feature films under study are hereby thoroughly analyzed in line with their mode of portrayal of migration. The films include: *The Billionaires* (2018) directed by Don Single, *Money Making Machine* (2015) directed by Ifeanyi Azodo and *OzoemenaOzubulu*(2017).

#### 3.1 Synopsis of *Money Making Machine* (2015)

*Money Making Machine* is a 2015 movie produced by Crystal Touch Movies and directed by Ifeanyi Azodo. The movie themed on wealth, migration and greed is a fictional narrative that brings to bare the contemporary Nigerian world view with regards to its treatment of wealth and migration. The movie conspicuously set in eastern Nigeria tells the story of Obinna, a migrant returnee from Holland, his friends Osanga and Aja, and IgweJinjikiliji the traditional ruler of their town Nkpologwu. Obinna returns from ‘abroad’ heavily loaded with cash. He throws the money around and doles out heavy sums to people who come to welcome him. The Igwe hearing of his return and newly found wealth invites him to the palace. Obinna goes to the palace to see IgweJinjikiliji. He tells IgweJinjikiliji that he wants to take a traditional title. Igwe declines on the ground that all the titles mapped out for the year by the council members had all been given out. Obinna offers to buy each of the five titles with two million naira. Igwe accepts and confers on Obinna the titles that according to him had all been given out. Osanga and Aja his friends who had been in the village awaiting his return are disappointed that Obinna came back and

refused to ask of them. They approach Obinna with hope that he will rescue them from poverty since he has made money. Obinna refuses to help them because he was told by his uncle that Osanga and Aja could not provide the twenty thousand needed to save his father while Obinna was away. Osanga and Aja are angry and remind Obinna of how they engaged in robbery in order to raise the money with which he travelled abroad. In the melee, Susan comes to Nkpologu to commiserate with Obinna's family on the death of Obinna. She stumbles into Aja and tells Aja that she is Obinna's wife in Holland and that she has come to commiserate with Obinna's family on his death. Aja decides to take revenge and tells Susan that Obinna is alive and is in the village enjoying his newly found wealth. Susan is devastated on finding out that Obinna had faked his death in order to dupe her of the wealth bequeathed to her by her father and resolves to take revenge.

### **3.2 Representations of Migration in *Money Making Machine* (2018)**

The perspectives of migration and migrant experiences represented in *Money Making Machine* (2018) are mostly replete of the dominant notions of migration that abound in contemporary Nigeria. The movie is set in the south eastern part of Nigeria. The contemporary Igbo society in which the movie is set is prominent for its respect for industry and personal achievements. Thus, recognition and social importance are most times given based on an individual's achievements. A man most times is regarded in the light of his material achievements. It is this pride in achievement that is most times cited as the reason for the Igbo man's industry, hard work and economic success. It is this need that makes it imperative to move in search of greener pastures. As a result, migration whether local or international has become synonymous with economic success. This is because of the way migration is represented to the people mostly by migrant returnees whose flagrant display of affluence and wealth on their return to the country creates a

lopsided narrative of migration. Thus, as in the movie under study, migration is seen as a quick fix to poverty and hardship that abound in the country. The image of migration presented lacks a contrastive balance needed to achieve a realistic representation of migration and migrant experiences. However, international migration has in recent times subtly become integrated into the Igbo/Nigerian thought system as a sure path to acquiring affluence. In effect, migrant returnees are burdened with dozens of expectations as they are considered successful the moment they leave the shores of the country. They bear the burden of expectations which most times pressure them to strive to appear extravagantly wealthy. They enjoy respect, admiration and adoration from home-based relatives and community members who pay obeisance in expectation of material gifts.

Thus, this perspective is greatly represented and reinforced in the movie at various points. The narrative approach in *Money Making Machine* (2018) toes this popular notion of migration. The frames and perspectives of migration created in the movie are represented through the major characters both in their actions and dialogues. Ervin Goffman's postulations in the 'theory of media framing' become crystal clear with the analysis of the characters of IgweJinjikiliji, Sussan, Osanga and Aja, and Obinna the quintessential Nigerian migrant returnee.

The character of 'IgweJinjikiliji' is used to create a suiting background for the eventual construction of the desired idea of migration as represented in the movie. The opening scene of the movie is used to establish IgweJinjikiliji as someone who has great regards for migrant returnees and would do anything within his powers to make sure that his daughter marries one. Discussing with his daughter on his preferred choice of a man for her, IgweJinjikilij opines "I have always wished that my only daughter marries a man from abroad. Susan, bring him for marriage. I don't want anything later". The director's choice of IgweJinjikiliji's words and

thought flow is deliberately designed to subtly achieve a social validation of this lopsided representation of migration. In *IgweJinkjikiliji*, one is presented with a desperado whose whole plan and visions of financial liberation are tied to his connections to the ‘world abroad’. The director’s choice of *IgweJinkjikiliji* for this character trait is presumably predicated on *IgweJinkjikiliji*’s social standing and status. As such, an *Igwe* being the ‘*primus inter pares*’ is considered as an opinion leader, a thought influencer and a social model. The powers imbedded in such a character therefore is endless as his status within the social order makes him emulatable and ideal for many who may lack the philosophical depth to understand his actions as a deviation from the ideal. However, *IgweJinkjikiliji* not only shows continuous admiration for Obinna but is also always willing to kowtow to him as he splashes money and other material gifts on him. In other words, the king is willing to sacrifice his royal honour, dignity and status as a custodian of values just to share from the proceeds of migration. Thus, the gains and allures of migration are kind of elevated above the dignity of the royal stool. *IgweJinkjikiliji* could have been constructed differently; he could have been constructed to realistically be the social crusader that stands and preaches against irregular migration and the very many vices that accompany it. There are many other positive attributes that could have been accorded that character if the director was not intent on achieving a one directional framing of migration as gay, attractive and fashionable to his target audience.

More so, in a bid to build attention and channel it to the omnibus power of migration as a redeeming venture, *IgweJinkjikiliji* is constructed to denigrate hard working youths who ply their trade within the shores of the country. Later events in the story, especially his careless courting of Obinna on his return from Holland would uncover the reasons for his unholy desperation which is directly tied to his inordinate desire to amass wealth. Through the actions and utterances



of IgweJinjikiliji, the filmmaker speaks volumes about migration and surreptitiously elevates ‘migration’ as noble, worthwhile and an escape route from material poverty. One however would think that as the custodian of tradition and as an opinion leader that IgweJinjikiliji would be made to be more interested in having his daughter marry a man of good moral standing. However, the frames created would negate this perspective in an attempt to frame the audience’s attention to the greatness of Obinna as a migrant returnee. That short casual conversation with Susan his daughter exposes IgweJinjikiliji from the very first scene of the movie. This is nicely depicted in the following conversation that occurred between IgweJinjikiliji and his daughter Susan:

- Igwe:** Susan I called you to ask you specifically since you don’t want to tell me
- Susan:** Tell you what papa?
- Igwe:** About the man that drops you off in *Okwuotoekeneeze* (SUV) here
- Susan:** Papa his name is Onyemaechi. He is a spare parts dealer in Cotonou
- Igwe:** (Impressed) Oh, Cotonou?
- Susan:** Yes
- Igwe:** You mean he has actually travelled outside the shores of this country?
- Susan:** (Laughs)
- Igwe:** And not even only that, he does business there
- Susan:** Yes papa
- Igwe:** *Okwuagwu*(very impressed). You see, I have always wished that my only daughter marries a man from abroad. Susan, bring him for marriage. I don’t want anything later.

- Susan:** Papa Onyemaechi has not proposed yet. Besides I am a princess, I cannot tell a man that I want him to marry me. And who says I want to settle down with him anyway?
- Igwe:** Your father, IgweJinjikiliji said so. *Ife obodooyibonaamasi m, onaamasi m* (I will be happy to have somebody that lives abroad as an in-law)
- Susan:** Papa relax, yes relax. I like everything to take its natural cause. You are the sitting king, just relax, everything will fall into place.
- Igwe:** Ok I will relax. *Mana achoromonyenaefen'enun'efetuefetu. Achoro m ndi ji ukwuaga* (... let that person be somebody that goes abroad and comes back. I don't want local people)

Furthermore, the director's decision to make IgweJinjikiliji sell the chieftaincy titles which had already been administered to some other illustrious sons of the land to Obinna further consolidates the claims of this research; lopsided representation of migration as a sure path to material wealth. Having established Obinna (the migrant returnee) as someone with a poor background before the sudden wealth, one would have expected the Igwe to first inquire into the source of Obinna's wealth while he was abroad as traditional title takers are expected to have an acceptable moral standing in order to avoid scandal in the future. Rather IgweJinkiliji acts in the contrary and uses Obinna's status as a migrant returnee with visible wealth as the only grounds for conferring five chieftaincy titles on him. The scenario even becomes more nefarious when one thinks that the five chieftaincy titles already designated to carefully chosen sons of the land were retrieved single handedly by the Igwe and conferred on Obinna in a kangaroo manner. A cursory reading of the following conversation between IgweJinjikiliji and Obinna will enhance the understanding of this discuss:

**Obinna:** (to IgweJinjikiliji)... I also want to use this medium to tell you that I want to take a chieftaincy title.

**IgweJinjikiliji:** Chieftaincy title

**Obinna:** Yes

**IgweJinjikiliji:** ehm... the five chieftaincy titles we created for this year, we have given all of them out. I don't think there is any other one remaining.

**Obinna:** *Udo* (no problem). Ehm... before we go into the chieftaincy title issue, I want to clean this palace with two million naira (drops a bundle of dollar notes on Igwe's table)

**IgweJinjikiliji:** (dumbfounded) NwaOgbuagu...ehm... it's true that we have actually given out the titles, well I am the Igwe and I am the one who decides what happens. The people we gave out these titles to, the recipients paid hundred thousand naira each and you are using dollars to clean my table. NwaOgbuagu (the son of Ogbuagu) take all the titles.

This scene goes out to reinforce the power of money and the countless possibilities it can achieve. The underlying message of the scene is that with money and foreign status one has the world at his feet. Thus, migration is implied to be directly proportional to wealth. The director in the scene cited above continues his onslaught on local values at the behest of migrant power, influence and social attainment. Beyond the two million Obinna used in cleaning the Igwe's palace, he uses extra 10 million in buying the five titles over. The reckless display of money and the gracefulness with which Obinna gives it out further more consolidates the notion of migration as a quick way to acquiring stupendous wealth. Igwe's denigration of the initial conferees who contributed 100 thousand naira each further paints a picture that does not encourage the long gradual and systemic way of making a living locally. He only appreciates that which comes fast, easy and from abroad. The creation of IgweJinjikiliji's character in that manner is a careful way of pushing forward a perspective of migration which in itself does not bring to play the alternative experiences which also form part of migrant experiences as is obtainable in real life.

More so, the director uses the character of Obinna to frame the minds of his audience towards migration and to paint migration as seamless, sure path to wealth, gay and comfortably reassuring. He is used as a metaphor, a centralized metaphor carefully positioned to paint a picture of migration that reinforces the lopsided narrative seen in many other Nollywood feature narratives. This is better implied in the kind of shots used on him and other supportive objects, the choice of words given to the character and the character mannerisms and carriage. The film opens with Obinna emerging from the lobby of an airport. He is placed on a wide angle shot to expose the grandiose of the environment in relation to his character. The shot indirectly slips into the mind of the audience the importance of the character in line with the new wealth that reflects all around him, his social demeanor and an alluring air of wealth, affluence and power. This is further exacerbated by the flagrant display of affluence built into material metaphors that aggravate the lopsided notion of migration as a solution to economic difficulties, poverty and its accompaniments that abound in the life of an average Nigerian. Obinna is introduced into his community in a most luscious manner that makes him dwarf every other legitimate business person who plies his/her trade within the country. On his way to the village, he stops over at the market to announce his arrival. He does this by gathering a group of market women and goes on to spray money in a manner that makes the women sing his eulogy, dance to his name and tell the tale of him coming from abroad. The underlying implication of his actions is aptly contained in the following lines from Obinna “Obinna nwaOgbuagatugo down ka alusi, ifeniilemebe, yamebe”. A literal interpretation of the sentence in English would mean “ I, Obinna the son of Ogbugu have landed, let the party begin”. By this he implies that he has come back with abundant wealth and is ready to showcase and extravagantly show it off. He is announced as a migrant returnee and made to court attention by flagrantly making him engage in copious display

of wealth and affluence. This becomes significant as Obinna was known as a never do well, village urchin, and a man from a low background. In less than two years, a magical transformation happens and the never do well becomes the center of attraction on his return from Holland. His house becomes a sudden pilgrimage center where local pilgrims enter empty and emerge with bundles of money. This is best substantiated in the conversation that ensues below between the Igwe, a member of his cabinet and two of such local women pilgrims returning from the visit to Obinna's compound:

**Ichie:** This one you people are walking on the road counting lots of money, what happened? Did a white man visit?

**1<sup>st</sup> Woman:** *Nnaanyi* you can see from what I am holding that a white man visited.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Woman:** You are right, but Igwe it is not that kind of white man you are thinking. It is Obinna the son of Ogbuagu, the one that lives abroad. He has been sharing money to everyone of us, fifty fifty thousand.

**1<sup>st</sup> Woman:** Igwe it is everyday oo. Sharing money, sharing money.

Obinna further promotes an impression of wealth that further makes migration more seductive and overwhelmingly attractive to a local audience. His confidence in his wealth even makes him spend in a most frivolous manner. First, not minding that he already has a fleet of cars, he orders for a car when he was summoned by IgweJinjikiliji. When the car dealer tells him the price of the car, Obinna makes a transfer and adds extra hundred thousand naira to it and asks the dealer to use the hundred thousand for his transportation back home. The car dealer is dumbfounded and surprised that Obinna did not even haggle the price he was told but goes ahead to add extra tips for him. This makes the dealer to exclaim in Hausa "Kai walahi, kwudi pass kwudi". A literal interpretation of the phrase will mean 'money pass money'. The phrase *kwudi pass*

*kwudi* underscores the migrant dominance, power and wealth as represented in the movie. *Kwudi pass kwudi* simply makes one understand the social promotion given to Obinna in the movie as a migrant returnee. He is framed to have surpassed the immediate worries of local dwellers by constantly demonstrating an air of superiority in spending. This frame becomes most glaring in the following conversation between Obinna, his mother and his uncle:

**Obinna:** Look uncle, tell me exactly how my father was buried and not how he died.

**Uncle:** Obinna

**Obinna:** yes

**Uncle:** We tried the best we could. We bought a coffin for eight thousand naira, three jars of palm wine, schnapp, snuff and three cartons of beer. Then the NdiNze insisted that your late father being a titled man must be buried with a cow. So in that situation we had no option than to sale the little piece of land he left behind for you for a ridiculous price of sixty five thousand naira. The cheapest *efi Igbo* (local cow) we saw in the market was seventy-four thousand naira, so we had no option than to settle for two laps. That is *ukwuefin'abo* and for thirty eight thousand naira. We spent the remaining money for the little little expenses that I mentioned in there.

**Obinna:** Uncle, are you trying to tell me that what you people used to bury my father who was a titled man is laps of cow

**Uncle:** that is what I am telling you, the situation was bad

**Obinna:** my father who killed a lion with his bare hands and was given the title of Ogbuagu? That is the man you people buried with only two laps of a cow? God! Look uncle, I will rebury my father. I will exhume my father's corpse from where ever you people buried him and deposit his body in a good mortuary, a very expensive mortuary and I will be paying them good money so that my father can be resting there while I make arrangements to give him a proper burial.

**Uncle:** what has come over you? Nothing like that has ever been heard

- Obinna:** You will hear it now uncle
- Uncle:** if you have made money, use it on some other good things. Your late father was properly buried, accorded all rights and is resting peacefully
- Mama:** Obinna *nwa m, biko* listen to your uncle. See we had to do it that way because there was no money. See, your father is happy where ever he is
- Obinna:** Mama you people should stop telling me that thing. The man that fathered Odowgu? The man that fathered *Egbe ana agba anyanwu ka enii ka oke*. How many musical groups came?
- Uncle:** Three solid musical groups came
- Mama:** Akwunechenyi, Achikolo and ndiogene. We tried na
- Obinna:** Only?
- Uncle:** Yes and they all performed well
- ObInna:** MoroconwaMmaduka did he come
- Uncle:** You see we would have been mad to ever consider inviting him, we didn't have the money to pay
- Obinna:** what about Onyenze n' Ogidi, my man
- Uncle:** That sensational young musician? We didn't have the money to pay him
- Obinna:** what are you people telling me, my father will be reburied. I will exhume him from that place where you people buried him and put him in a good mortuary where he will be resting while I make arrangements for a proper burial for him.

The director in a bid to show case the depth of Obinna's wealth makes him intoxicated with a foolhardy desire to show off. He has no regards for the tradition, mores and culture of his people. For Obinna, his wealth is the determinant of culture and tradition. Thus, he is not bordered by the cosmic implications of exhuming his dead father and taking the remains to a mortuary just so he could give a 'befitting' burial to a man already buried. He defies the admonitions of his uncle to

allow the dead rest but rather goes ahead to make an immediate transfer of two million naira to the musicians whose presence at the planned burial will further establish his class. This is a subtle way of elevating class above cultural values. Thus, with his new class as a wealthy migrant returnee the modest burial accorded his father embarrasses him. The fact that the uncle only showed a weak resistance to Obinna's abominable plans of exhuming the father so as to rebury him shows that the director subtly framed Obinna's migrant status above cultural norms. He is tolerated by everyone in so far as he keeps doling out the money. This scenario was also repeated when he went to IgweJinjikiliji and asked to see his daughter. Without performing any marriage rites or even making a statement of intent of marriage IgweJinjikiliji allows him take Susan home even though Susan is already betrothed to someone else. This model by implication promotes the template of dialectical materialism. At the behest of migrant returnees like Obinna, rules bend and culture can even afford to shift some sacred grounds. This in effect consolidates the one sidedness of the narrative perspective of migration painted in the film by the director.

Furthermore, the director through the instrumentality of the characters of Osanga, Aja and Ugonwanyi strengthens the lopsided representation of migration in the movie. In a flashback to the life of Obinna on the eve of his migration to Europe, the viewer is made to know that Obinna's travel was financed by Osanga and Aja his bosom friends and Ugonwanyi his girl friend. Osanga, Aja and Ugownanyi see Obinna's travel as their route out of poverty. In a bid to make sure that he embarks on the travel, they engage in armed robbery so they could finance the journey. In their valedictory meeting, the filmmaker through Aja extends the thread of representation that promotes migration to Europe as a sure path to wealth. Aja makes it clear



that they were only investing in Obinna so he would travel to Europe, make money and take care of them. The following lines from Aja will enhance an understanding of the situation:

**Aja:** Obinna, this money here was raised by me and Osanga. This money was from the menial job we did and the hard job which you were supposed to be part of (robbery) but you failed to be part of that job but thank God we survived that day. We made it and so decided that we can't continue suffering in this village. So we decided to give you this money to help your travel through land to Libya to Europe. We know that if you succeed on your quest to Europe, we will all be taken care of. We believe that once you travel you are going to send for us or you are going to be sending something for us with which we can be taking care of ourselves.

The picture of migration painted by Aja is that of desperation. This representation enthrones migration as the safe harbor and the place of refuge for the teeming jobless youths in the country. This exactly is the reason why the director did not fail to bring to bear the untold sacrifices and misery most Nigerians go through in order to set their foot in Europe. The Libyan route is famed for its oddities and one would have thought that in balancing the narrative the director could at least have brought to light the difficulties and dare devil experiences encountered by migrants who migrate to Europe via the Libyan route. In line with the framing agenda, he avoids the ugly and brings to light only those experiences that make migration seductive and alluring to the average Nigerian youth.

More so, the unalloyed fixation with which Aja and Osanga attach their economic survival to Obinna's migration to Europe further substantiates the claims of this analysis. This fixation drives them to even go out of their way to engage in armed robbery just to make sure that Obinna goes abroad. The director's treatment of Aja and Osanga in the film paints a picture of a hopeless society where youths fantasize about migration as the only way out. Rather than find something

worthwhile to do, they roam the village awaiting Obinna's arrival. The following encounter between Osanga, Aja and Ozo best substantiates it:

- Osanga:** I Osanga asked you to give us drink on credit and you said you no longer sale on credit.
- Ozo:** Osanga or what did you call yourself. I said I no longer sale on credit. Did you see Okezie the son of Okechukwu that came back from Garbon. He bought drinks for Everybody including you Osanga and Aja and he paid cash.
- Aja:** Ozo let me ask you. So because Okezie came back from ordinary Garbon
- Osanga:** (interjects) *Garbonnkeazuuno*
- Aja:** That's why you are treating us your best customers like this?
- Osanga:** Ozo let me tell you, very soon Obinna our man will come back from abroad and when he comes back from Holland, that Gabon guy will hide his face in shame. It is better you be nice to us now because once Obinna comes back from Holland, our destinies will change.

The excerpt above even brings to light the subtle denigration of African countries in the representation of migration by the director. A contrastive analysis of the excerpt highlights the director's comparison of intra-Africa migration with intercontinental migration. In the words of Osanga "very soon Obinna our man will come back from abroad and when he comes back from Holland, that Gabon guy will hide his face in shame". Here both Garbon and Holland are used as metaphors to depict the continents of Africa and Europe. By implication, the representation of migration in the movie points to Europe as the ideal migration ground where wealth abounds. This again brings another dimension to the lopsided narrative of migration as it fails to take into consideration variables of economic success. It rather continues on a stereotypical thread to represent intra-Africa migration as inferior to Africa-Europe migration.

### **3.4 *OzoemenaOzubulu*(2017): a Synopsis**

*OzoemenaOzubulu* is a 2017 movie produced by Chinedu Collins Ezenwa and directed by Kenneth Nwawueze. The movie themed on love, migration, fast money and the quest for money is a metaphor of the common man in Nigeria, his ordeals with poverty and the corresponding frustrations from his encounters with money and what money can do. Ozoemena is a young man who has made up his mind to spend his life in his home town Ozubulu. He is contented with his life in the village and takes pleasure in praising himself and pours eulogies on himself at every little chance he gets. His happiness revolves around Ozindu his girlfriend whose heart he won in a fight with Makuo during his school days. Unfortunately, Makuo who had left the village since their secondary school days comes back from Malaysia a very wealthy young man. Makuo begins to have an affair with Ozindu's friend and eventually match makes Ozindu to his friend Tobe who is also a migrant returnee from Malaysia. Ozoemena gets wind of it and becomes perplexed. In a bid to save his relationship with Ozindu, Ozoemena becomes desperate and confronts Makuo and his friend Tobe. As Tobe continues to flirt with Ozindu, Ozoemena becomes violent and threatens to shoot Tobe and Makuo with his catapult. Makuo intimidates him with the police and gets him arrested. Ozoemena's mother tells his friend Emeka who is also a Malaysian returnee and Emeka goes to bail him out from police cell. Ozoemena is embittered and comes to the realization of what money can do. Emeka promises to help him by taking him along to Malaysia. Ozoemena accepts to leave Ozubulu for Malaysia so he can make enough money with which he can challenge his traducers. Eventually, Ozoemena follows Emeka to Malaysia. After six months, Ozoemena comes back in grand style with a lot of money and begins to live lavishly. He confronts all those who had intimidated him with money and takes revenge on his ex-girlfriend Ozioma who left him for Tobe because of money. He proclaims himself the

richest man in Ozubulu and demonstrates it by throwing dollar notes around where ever he goes. Unfortunately, the money finishes and he runs back to Malaysia in a bid to save face and not be mocked by the people (villagers).

### **3.5 Representations of Migration in *OzoemenaOzubulu*(2017)**

In line with the almost monotonous approach of representing migration and the experiences of migrant returnees in most Nollywood films, the director once more creates an illusion of migration that makes it almost a haven for the teaming poor and frustrated youths of the country. He carefully selects frames and narrative perspectives that will aid the narration of migration as seamless and a sure path to wealth. Representations of migration in the movie are built around three major characters in the movie who are: Mekus, Makuo and Ozoemena. The analysis of the representation will be made as it concerns these principal characters that form the cardinal points of narration in the film.

The film set in the eastern part of Nigeria opens with a gay tone that is neither suggestive of a tragedy nor an express comedy. The two principal characters Ozoemena and Makuo are introduced in the very first scene of the movie in an altercation that would set the mood, tempo and eventually the conflict that would run through the whole of the narrative. Thus, the moviemaker finds it apt to establish a remote rivalry between two age mates who will eventually be used to push a perspective that makes migration the resort for the poor and a sure path to departing the line of poverty.

Ozoemena's life in the village may be described as that of a contented stubborn village boy who feels fulfilled with a good treat from the woman he loves. After the initial altercation with Makuo in the beginning of the movie, Makuo disappears and Ozoemena lives a happy life doing the little things he can to make sure Ozindu his girlfriend is happy. His world revolves around Ozindu and his happiness, fulfillment and achievement as a man is defined by Ozindu's state of mind. Thus for Ozoemena, Ozindu's happiness is paramount to his existence. The underlying suggestion is that once his place in Ozindu's life is threatened, then Ozoemena is threatened and peace will cease to exist. The following dialogue between Ozoemena and his best friend Okoro will shade a little light on this:

Ozoemena: I can't wait to get to Mama Ozi's shop. First and foremost I will use this one to buy paper soup and malt for Ozim, then I will give her this one for pocket money, then I will go home with 30niara and I will be a very happy man

Okoro: Ozo

Ozoemena: Yes

Okoro: So after working you will go to mama Ozindu's shop to give Ozindu the money you made?

Ozoemena: Is it your business? That is what gives me joy na, it's all about my happiness. If I give her this money now I will be happy.

Having woven this combustible premise, it becomes very easy to spark conflict and weave crisis on the things that will redirect Ozoemena's drive and such a thing becomes primeval, principal and subtly consolidates as the objective substance in the mind of the viewer. Thus Ozoemena's night mare is not a man of his ilk neither is it someone from a plane where he can figure out. The film maker introduces a character who is re-invented in class, money and oozing with a degree of foreignness. What makes it even the most frustrating is that Makuo used to be

Ozoemena's contemporary whom he could beat and subdue in their school days. Thus, it becomes more tormenting that his antagonist is a rival he knows but does not understand. To re-introduce Makuo into the movie as a migrant returnee, the director clothes him with exotic vehicles carefully arranged in a convoy, a style which has become a conspicuous element in the monotonous narration of migration in Nollywood. The car element along with its accompaniments of cash sprays and women have all but become stereotypical in the narration of migrant experiences in most Nollywood films. These elements aid the lopsided representation of migration and migrant experiences makes it a single story culminating in material success. This style was also very evident in the introduction of Obinna in *Money Making Machine* (2015). The cars are so exotic that from the conversation between Okoro and Ozoemena, the audience could deduce that owing such exotic collections is synonymous with migrant returnees whom it is taken for granted are always successful. Though the director aimed at re-introducing Makuo with the convoy, his personality was carefully muted so that Okoro and Ozoemena do not discuss the individual who owns the convoy, but a group who have become synonymous with owning such collections. In doing this, 'abroad boys' becomes the categorization that is used to qualify migrants who supposedly are bound to be successful. This representation surreptitiously creates an impression of migration as a wealth bound exercise. Thus once someone leaves the shores of Nigeria in search of greener pasture, he is classified in the group and is bound to come back wealthy. This brings to the fore Ervin Goffman's theory of framing which in its entirety is applied in this instance. In framing, the filmmaker/producer carefully selects what to show while neglecting the other parts. Knowing the overriding power of the media in opinion formation and social orientation, the producer carefully chooses what to feed his audience in a bid to achieve a desired goal. 'Abroad boys' in this sense is used as a tag to qualify migrant returnees who are

assumed to always be successful. Thus the gory parts of their experiences as migrants are neglected while only flowery parts are projected. The director carefully avoids the narrative of the many difficulties that are encountered by migrants abroad, he carefully also avoids the transitional process in which many of the ‘abroad boys’ die on the road to Europe and Asia. He does not bring to fore many of these ‘abroad boys’ who may have sold their kidneys or testicles in a bid to survive in a foreign land. He also carefully avoids adding to this group the very many Nigerian youths who are languishing in different prisons abroad, many of whom are on death roll conviction as a result of drug dealing and other crimes with capital punishment. Instead he only presents the version of ‘abroad boys’ that further exacerbates the notion of migration that through its seductive appeal makes irregular migration irresistible to most youths in Nigeria. The following dialogue will best shade a little light on the issue:

**Ozoemena:** Okoro, Those boys are thieves. Those boys that drove past with those big big cars

**Okoro:** Ozo, you know sometimes when poverty takes over your life you start saying things you are not sure of. Those boys are not thieves, they are abroad boys. Let me tell you, the car I heard Oga Njoku’s son Makuo will come back with is even bigger than the ones we just saw.

**Ozoemena:** Taaaaaa

**Okoro:** Look at you. You don’t know that this is the time when these abroad boys come back from where ever it is they have gone to. They will come and start intimidating home based like me and you.

Makuo is further represented in the movie in a way that elevates him beyond all the local boys who are yet to cross the shores of the country. On his first encounter with Ozoemena as a migrant returnee, he acts with an air of condescension that dwindle Ozoemena and other locals who came in contact with him. The director achieved this by making the character a boastful

spender, flippant and unrestricted with his propensity to show off his wealth. Having established Ozubulu as a poor community inhabited mostly by the lower middle class who have a total adoration for money, he endows Makuo with much money that would cow the spirit of the community and command underserved loyalty from people who muddle character with money. These frames further reinforce the notion of migration as a way out and a sure path to success. Thus to humiliate Ozoemena, he brings out money and begins to spray on him in a bid to break his ego. Ozoemena is cowed as even Ozindu his girl friend publicly switches loyalty to Makuo who wields the instrument of power. In doing this, the director further reinforces the migrant experience as powerful and over reaching. Ozoemena could only beckon on his friend Emeka who is also a migrant returnee to save him from the public ridicule in the hands of Makuo by making a public display of wealth on his behalf.

More so, the non contrastive and lopsided representation continues with the introduction of Emeka. Once more, Emeka is an ‘abroad boy’ who came back from Malaysia. He is presented as fresh and calls himself the ‘king of money’. He boasts of his riches and tells Ozoemena that his wealth is unimaginable, a boast that makes Ozoemena lose his psychological balance and become Emeka’s hype man. The director here continues the single narrative. He continues the psychological construction of the one sided image of migration in the mind of the audience. Thus, here is another migrant returnee from Malaysia who has once more come back very rich. The following is an excerpt of the encounter between Emeka and Ozoemena:

**Ozoemena:** Mekus, who is the owner of this car

**Emeka:** My car, one of them

**Ozoemena:** Jesus wept. Your car?



- Emeka:** (moving round and admiring the car) Jesus wept, Jesus wept, Jesus wept, Jesus wept, Jesus wept, Jesus wept,
- Ozoemena:** Mekus, this is your car
- Emeka:** One of them. This is just one of the cars in my collection
- Ozoemena:** One? *Mekusibutegoikee* (Mekus you have made so much money)
- Emeka:** *Ike dikwanuegwu* (wealth beyond your imaginations)
- Ozoemena:** You ran away and abandoned me to die in OzubuluAnakpu
- Emeka:** Ozonwanne I did not. Remember when I was making necessary arrangements I told you and you said you were not ready to leave Ozubulu and I had to leave.
- Ozoemena:** Chai. Mekkus God has blessed you oooo. So you have been in Lagos for two years now?
- Emeka:** no nonooo, I travelled two years back
- Ozoemena:** so you left Lagos two years back
- Emeka:** *Nnaagalum* Malay (I migrated to Malaysia)
- Ozoemena:** Malaysia! (Excited)
- Emeka:** *tugodu m Emy Malay* (Call me Emy from Malaysia)
- Ozoemena:** *YabunaafagibuziniEmy Malay* (So your name is now Emy from Malay)
- Emeka:** Ego Mbute (Fast money)
- Ozoemena:** Emy Malay
- Emeka:** it's me

Once more the director in the above dialogue continues his mesmerization of the local audience. Emeka is once more presented in a manner that will make any youth from the lower class to salivate and want to model his life after Emeka. This kind of representation re-enforces the belief that has gradually gained stay among the local population in Nigeria. The belief that the grass is

always greener at the other side has subtly become a major world view of many youths from the Eastern part of the country. An average youth whether educated or not, skilled or unskilled strongly believes that life is better ‘abroad’ and will do anything to migrate in search of greener pastures. This is substantiated in a research by Thomas Isbell and Oluwole Ojewale with their findings showing that “More than one in three Nigerians (35%) say they have considered emigration, including 11% who say they have given “a lot” of thought to the idea” (3). Emeka makes it clear that he could not have made the kind of wealth he has in Nigeria and not even in Lagos. The narrative propaganda is even made worrisome by Emeka’s announcement that the money was made within just six months of travelling to Malaysia, a feat he couldn’t imagine all the time he was in Nigeria. He says this to further mesmerize Ozoemena who is already astonished at how so much a man can own within so little a time.

**Ozoemena:** So you spent two years in Malaysia and bought this car?

**Emeka:** Who is talking about two years, just six months

**Ozoemena:** So within six months in Malaysia you bought this car?

**Emeka:** *Ego Mbut*

**Ozoemena:** Jesus wept again

**Emeka:** I started importing cars and have been importing cars.

*Ego Mbut* literally creates an impression of money that is freely packed from the streets. The image of Malaysia created by Emeka in the dialogue above is that of easiness, freedom and a stress free way of making money. The director creates the impression that there is money lying everywhere on the streets of Malaysia where anyone who goes there from Nigeria goes to pack money. The underlying suggestion is that travelling to Malaysia is a guarantee of becoming wealthy like Emeka and other abroad boys who come back to the village during Christmas

periods to show off. The director carefully leaves out important information that will at least let the audience into the process of becoming rich in Malaysia. He does not talk of the business they do in Malaysia that guarantees the kind of wealth that Emeka is telling Ozoemena about. From the dialogue, the only thing needed for making Money in Malaysia is migrating to Malaysia. This narrative approach to migration has become ubiquitous in the narration of migration in Nollywood. One of the ways framing becomes very effective according to Stewart and Kowaltzke is that a representation consists of repeated elements. In the words of Stewart and Kowaltzke “through a constant repetition of an element, the element being repeated becomes normal and natural. Thus repetition helps in making elements normal. This method is employed by brand promoters, advert managers and many media content providers in marketing their contents and ideas. It is an aggressive propaganda strategy that works perfectly amongst uncritical media consumers. Thus by constantly inundating the local audience with the single story of migration to Malaysia, it creates an air of the natural in the minds of the audience who now have it in their subconscious that travelling to Malaysia is a guarantee of wealth. Thus this repetition is even made more aggressive and direct in the following discussion between Ozoemena and Emeka:

**Ozoemena:** I am a hard worker, I work hard. Everybody knows that I work hard. So what do you mean that I should work hard and make money? Do you want me to become a thief?

**Mekus:** There are no two ways about that. But sometimes we work hard towards the wrong direction. Two years ago, I talked you into travelling to Malaysia with me to make money; real money so that when you come back people will respect you. But you insisted staying here in Ozuburu and that you will die in Ozuburu. So take the humiliation my guy.

**Ozoemena:** Malaysia? I should come close so you can tell me what is happening

**Mekus:** Ozoemena come close let me teach you how to make money, real money. You see, if I take you to Malay, I will teach you how to make money, real money so that when you come back and spend money people in the village will respect you.

**Ozoemena:** Malaysia then let's go naaa

With this re-assurance Ozoemena capitulates and accepts to leave his much cherished OzubuluAnakpu in chase of greener pastures. This even becomes more convincing with the intimidation and harassment from Makuo who is also a Malaysian migrant.

More so, the filmmaker continues the assault on the psyche of the audience by making a repeated representation of the six months window claim of making money via migration to Malaysia. Having migrated with Emeka his friend to Malaysia, Ozoemena returns after just six months with class and wealth. The single narrative is even consolidated the more with this onslaught. Just like Emeka promised, it doesn't take forever to make money in Malaysia; all one needs is six months and sometimes less than that. This systematic repetition and re-narration is most likely to achieve a lethal psychological effect in the minds of the uncritical viewers who actually constitute the majority of Nollywood audience demography. Ozoemena is re-invented just after six months. To demonstrate the change, the director envelopes him in the awe of funny but classy costumes and adorns on him tattoos aimed at achieving a mental reclassification of the new Ozoemena in the class of the 'abroad boys'. Just after six months, he comes back rich, bold and confident. From the airport he calls Zeruwa his mother and announces his return and the newly acquired fortune in the following manner:

**Ozoemena:** Mama it's me Ozoemena. Mama, tell our people that OzoemenaOzubuluAnapku is back straight from Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur to be precise. Mama I am rich forever. Mama in fact go to our market square and slap three people and when I say three

people I don't mean barrow pushers or tomato sellers. As a matter of fact, look for the three richest people in town and slap them for me so that the case will be on while I am on my way back. Mama I have gone to Malaysia and I have made money.

The manner of representation of migration and migrant experiences in the film is summarized in the last sentence from the dialogue above “Mama I have gone to Malaysia and I have made money”. The representation of migration in the movie is skewed towards the imaging of the concept as an easy, stress-free and sure path to wealth. Migration in the movie is painted in one directional manner which lacked the contrast needed to achieve objectivity in narrating a socially sensitive theme. Thus with the new status, Ozoemena regains his ego and all who denigrated and betrayed him come back begging including Ozindu who left him for Tobe the ‘abroad boy’.

### **3.6 Synopsis of *The Billionaires* (2018)**

The Billionaires is a 2018 Nigerian movie produced by OsitaEze and directed by Don Single Ndubuisi. The movie themed on succession battle, poverty, wealth, ritual and migration metaphors the ordeals of material driven consciousness and its preponderance of moral derogation in Nigeria. The throne of Agbara kingdom is vacant and needs to be filled. As the tradition of Agbara demands, the throne is rotated among the villages that make up the kingdom. Accordingly, it is the turn of Chime's family to be king and Chime is the eldest member of his family and by right should be king. However, Ezekwueche a young man from the village of the immediate past king who has made a great fortune supposedly from ‘abroad’ nurtures the ambition of becoming the king of Agbara Kingdom. He offers ten million naira to Chime so that Chime can relinquish his rights to the throne. However, Chime finds it absurd and does not want to sale out his birthright because of money. Ezekwueche forcefully makes moves to take the title

by bribing his way through. Victor, Chime's son trolls the father for not accepting the money from Ezekwueche as that will go a long way in changing the family's fortune. Table turns as Akpaka, Chime's second son supposedly returns home from Malaysia with so much wealth and vows to fight Ezekwueche to a standstill so as to make sure his father gets what rightly belongs to him. Akpaka elects to take Victor to Malaysia where 'his dignity as a man will be restored'. Victor is happy and follows his brother. Unfortunately, Victor finds out that 'Malaysia' is Akpaka's cover up for money ritual. Victor is initiated into the cult at the expense of his younger sister who is used as the object of sacrifice. He becomes rich just like Akpaka and the two come back to the village to fight Ezekwueche from a united front. The conflict crescends as Ezekwueche's family come to the discovery that Ezekwueche has been the one responsible for the sisters' miscarriages. He faces stiff fight from both Chime's family and his sisters and eventually crumbles in the hands of the sisters who confront him with an alternative spiritual reality.

### **3.7 Representations of Migration in *The Billionaires* (2018)**

Representations in the movies that have been discussed above all toe the line of narrative that paints a picture of migration in a way that makes it seem as a sure path to overcoming poverty in Nigeria and gaining all the beautiful things that money can bring. These goodies range from having social influences to possessing certain powers that having control of huge sums of money can bring. Migration also have been represented in the movies as an escape from objective diligence and the systemic laws of economic logic that still guarantees unimaginable success and material rewards. The Billionaires all the same is not different.

Migration in the movie is used as a shade, a cover up for social miscreants whose pursuit of wealth and materialism pushes them to the edge. Though the movie leads the audience into the

open secrets of both the protagonists and the antagonist and reveals them as avaricious ritualists, the representations of migration in the movie still pushes forward a narrative that brings to bare the lopsided perceptions of migration by most Nollywood filmmakers. Ezekwueche is a young man who nurses the ambition of climbing the rung of social leadership in his community. In doing that, Ezekwueche needs money to force social acceptability. As a result, he indulges in spiritual manipulations and rituals in order to have abundance and wealth. However, having such wealth demands an explanation that will have some level of credibility. In order to construct a convincing explanation that won't spur suspicion and betray him as a villain who makes material benefits by sacrificing his family, he credits his wealth to have come from his sojourn in Malaysia. Thus with the explanation of his money being made abroad, all inquisitiveness as to the source of the wealth naturally disappears. Thus the director imbues Ezekwueche with his desired perspectives of migration, the demeanors and mannerisms of a Malaysian mogul returnee. By so doing, Ezekwueche is not portrayed in his reality as a ritualist but a returnee Malaysian mogul interested in the politics of his local community. Thus the pictures of migration and experiences of a migrant returnee are painted in the movie through the character of Ezekwueche. In line with the dominant approach of narrating migration in Nollywood, Ezekwueche is presented as a money mogul who has acquired unlimited wealth abroad. Once more, car convoy, armed bodyguards and a hype man who perpetually sings his eulogy become part of the realities with which migrant returnees are identified. The signification is affluence, power and pleasure which are products of his sojourn abroad. Thus, the local audience is once more inundated with a narrative monotony that configures their idea of migration and makes it a vision, a dream and an ideal path for economic emancipation. Ezekwueche is rich and bold and has his way with everyone in the community. Thus with his money, he achieves the impossible

and arrogantly intimidates others into allowing him have his way. The following is the conversation between him and Chime.

**Ezekwueche:** How much do I give you so that you kill your dreams of becoming king of Agbara kingdom?

**Chime:** *O nya ka anaegbuluojaniile a? Ikaebukwunuigede wee bia ka amalununaibiaraije.* (Is that the reason for this funfare? Maybe you should have brought a band along to demonstrate your seriousness). If I heard you very well, *ifeinaekwubu ego one igaenye m ka m wee were ezeluumnyegi, oburoya?* (You are asking how much you want to give me so that I relinquish my rights to the throne)

**Ezekwueche:** yes

**Chime:** Igbanii (You tried). You see in this kingdom, kingship is not for sell and it is not our tradition. Even if it is for sell I will not sell mine.

**Ezekwueche:** (To his bodyguard) Get the brief case, open it and show him the content. I understand your situation chief Chime, I understand that you are poor, very poor. And because of that I have made arrangement to fix you. In the brief case is ten million naira, take it and leave the throne for me.

**Chime:** Ten million naira? You have tried. But I want you to understand, very like you said but I will not sell my crown for all the money in the word. Not after all the centuries my family has waited. It is not possible

**Ezekwueche:** *Imarokwa ka m sikwado* (You don't know prepared I am for this)

More so, the characters of Akpaka and Victor are treated similarly. Though the two brothers have not passed through the borders of the country, the claims of being Malaysian migrant returnees also helps endows on them the status in the eyes of the public. Thus in order to live up to the claim, the director just like in Ezekwueche's case endows in them his notions of migration which once more toes the line of narrative that has become the dominant representation of migration and its accompanying experiences in Nollywood. Thus Akpaka comes back very rich



that he could afford to throw dollar notes around. The way and manner with which he is introduced by the director furthers the image of migration as the answer and a break from poverty. Once more exotic cars and armed bodyguards are used as codes for the representation of migrant returnees. The signification is power, wealth and over whelming social influence. On his return he announces the overwhelming wealth to his brother Victor and asks him to handover every of his belongings including his shop and apartment to his apprentice.

**Victor:** Who are these people? What did you do? They want to arrest you? Wait....

**Akpaka:** No no Vic, these are my guys, they are my body guards. I can't owe anybody. In fact the people that owe me they should keep the money. This is Akpakana Malay

**Victor:** Akpakana Malay?

**Akpaka:** Too much money

**Victor:** You are looking good. Let's go somewhere now and discuss. (To his apprentice) Oya close my shop.... Lock the shop

**Akpaka:** No nono, use the shop the key and everything in it to settle him.

**Victor:** I should settle him?

**Akpaka:** give it to him. Let him take it. Even you apartment give him the key to your apartment and everything in it. E jim ego, I have money

Through Akpaka and Victor, the director continues the single narrative of migration and presents only the allures and attractions while neglecting the gory that most times characterize migration most especially in situations where it is irregular. The director paints the picture of untold affluence and wealth. In line with Ervin Goffman theory, a media producer eliminates choices by presenting only that which he wants the audience to see. Espousing this thought, Ardèvol-Abreu's opines that, "Frames draw attention to some aspects of reality at the expense of

others...” (424). The director in the film builds frames of migration that are selective and lack the option of a comparative balance. Thus the three migrant figures Ezekueche, Akpaka and Victor are wealthy and wield overwhelming influence as a result of their wealth. Thus by induction, the audience builds a surreptitious image of migration that as well lacks the contrast to balance the realities of migration. Akpaka and Victor in their bid to challenge Ezekwueche throws money notes around and engage in flippant spending that make them the attention of the whole community. They gift cars, houses and money in abundance to all those who are willing to listen to their course. Chief Kalu reports to Ezekwueche thus:

Akpakanamalay and his brother Viki naKualar Lumpur are now the topic in the kingdom. They bought the house of Chief Ogbuke’s son that stays in America. They sprayed money from morning till night the day they came back. They even went as far as giving dollars to the neighboring villagers, they said their money can never finish and that their money is too much for one kingdom to enjoy alone.

This is the kind of narrative with which migration has been stereotyped with; Wealth, women, drinks, social followership and flamboyancy. Malaysia in the movie is very significant in the sense that it has been used to signify wealth and affluence. Thus, migration to Malaysia just like in *OzoemenaOzubulu* is sure path to money. Akpaka uses Malaysia in a symbolic representation of departure from poverty to wealth. He tells his brother Victor that he will take him to Malaysia ‘where the dignity of men are restored’. This is the picture that best describes the representation as made in the movie. Akpaka advises his brother Victor thus:

We are going back to that village to take over that kingship but before we do that I will take you to Kuala Lumpur. Kuala Lumpur is very close to Bengala Jaya and Suban Jaya where the dignity of men is restored. I will take you there.

Thus, the for the filmmaker, migration is the key to the restoration of human dignity initially soiled by poverty and the many frustrations that faces the common man in Nigeria. This in effect shows the reason for the lopsided narrative that runs through the whole of the movie.

### 3.8 Analysis of Migration and Migrant Experiences in Selected Documentary Films

This sub-chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the following documentary films: *Letter from Libya* (2018), *The Nigerian Immigrant Experience of South Africa* (2017) and *Surprising Europe – Making Ends Meet* (2017). The researcher aims to analyze the documentaries mentioned above with the view of interrogating the reality of migration as represented in the films.

#### 3.8.1 Synopsis of *Surprising Europe*

*Surprising Europe* is a documentary film produced by Aljazeera and basically themed on the experiences of African migrants in Europe. The documentary is broken in parts and each of the part is given a title to depict the central focus of that particular part. Three parts from the film; *Making ends meet*, *Under Pressure* and *Hopes and Dreams* have been chosen for close analysis in line with the research concerns. In the first part; *Hopes and Dreams*, the documentary concentrates on the experiences of four African migrants who share their experience of migrating from Africa to Europe. Steven a Ghanaian migrant has spent about twenty-six years as an African migrant in Netherlands and has become a successful entrepreneur. Michael on the other hand has spent seventeen years of his life as an African migrant in Spain. He does menial jobs and is frustrated and disappointed that the impressions he had about moving to Europe do not in any way match with his experiences as a migrant. He is yet to find his feet after seventeen years of migration to Spain. The narrative in part 2; *Under Pressure* shows Rose, a young female Nigerian migrant sharing her ordeal and disappointments since moving from Nigeria to Europe where she expected bliss of life. In the part 3; *Under Pressure*, a Nigerian migrant (Mopi) and his clique of African migrants from various African countries share their experiences as migrants since their movement from their various countries in Africa where life is seemingly difficult to

Europe where they have found out that the grass is not always greener on the other side of the wall.

### **3.8.2 Representations of Migration and Migrant Experiences in *Surprising Europe***

Documentaries are visual chronicling of actualities. The medium with the aid of seasoned journalists and visual producers strive relentlessly to sniff out truths most of which are hidden behind the ornamentation of romantic covers. *Surprising Europe* through the relentless efforts of Aljazeera and its team in putting up realistic representations of happenings around the world pries into the life and experiences of African migrants in Europe and in the process obtain personal accounts of these experiences from the migrants themselves. In *Surprising Europe*, African migrants living in different parts of the European continent were investigated. The underlying findings from these investigations evidence the disparaging contrast between the perceptions of Europe based migration by most Africans and the actual experiences of African migrants in Europe.

The documentary series begins its narrative by giving out a data set that throws light on the enormity of Africa-Europe migration trend. This data set according to them helps in fostering better understanding of the number of displaced African migrants and African migrants whose migrant status are irregular and undocumented within the threshold of the European Union. Consequently, these data sets most importantly help in shading light on the true situation of the number of African migrants in Europe who are either underpaid or not working at all as a result of their irregular migrant status and as a result live below the standard and most times find living in Europe more frustrating than living in their home soil from where they undertook the Europe

poised migration. The revelation from the data reeled out by the narrator shows that the number of Africans who live below the radar as undocumented migrants in Europe is twice the number who are documented and as such enjoy the social benefits open to migrants who stay within the broadband of government's awareness. In the words of the narrator:

Every year, thousands of our brothers and sisters leave the African continent and head towards Europe. Right Now there are about four and a half Million Africans who officially work or study in Europe plus seven to eight million Africans who are here unofficially. That means, without working papers.

The ordeals of living in Europe in an irregular situation make it dehumanizing and depressing as an undocumented migrant. The approach by this documentarian does not romanticize the European experience but rather brings to fore the gories and macabre realities of having to pass through untold hardships in the quest to live and have a grip on the European dream. The representation in this documentary has empirical support that shows in effect that the narrative is mostly fact based, objective and directly representative of the real experiences of most African migrants resident in Europe. The documentary's imagenization of the ordeals of living in an irregular situation in Europe are best substantiated in Michele LeVoy and Eve Geddie. According to Michele LeVoy and Eve Geddie:

Once in an unregulated status, migrants are systematically denied those elements that constitute a basic standard of living and face a de facto violation of their fundamental rights. They lack health care, are denied education, are deprived of labour protections, occupy the worst available housing conditions, and largely remain invisible in the eyes of policy makers (88).

Levoy and Geddie's assertions about the kind of living available to migrants with an unregulated status dominates the narrative in the documentary under discuss as many of the subjects studied are either living in that condition or did at one time or the other struggle to regularize their stay in Europe as migrants with irregular status. Rose's expectations of making a better living

migrating to Europe were dashed when she realized that the only job available to her as an irregular Nigerian migrant is prostitution. Not left with much choice, she is thrown into a horror filled twist of a fast-changing destiny which leaves a much sour taste in her. From being a university student in Nigeria who worked to finance herself in school, Rose as a matter of necessity switches to trading her body in Italy in a bid to survive the harsh realities she has come to meet in Italy. Sunna is not different. Sunna prior to migrating to Amsterdam was a journalist in Uganda. However migrating to Netherlands as an undocumented migrant subjects him to doing petty cleaning jobs which he was able to locate with extreme luck. He is faced with a different reality from the dreams he had before relinquishing his journalistic work in Uganda for the opportunity to migrate to Europe. The underlying metaphor portrayed through the frames of the documentary narrative of *Surprising Europe* points out the sad contradictions between the perceptions of Europe by Africans living in Africa and the realities of migrating to Europe most especially as undocumented African migrants. The representation is filled with odd and uncolorful pictures of living in odd situations most of which leaves utterly nothing to write home about. Contrary to the wanton expectations of exotic environments, flashy cars, designer body gears and lavish food menus, the scenic location of most of the migrants are rather appalling, psychologically disturbing and aesthetically discombobulating. Due to the living condition of the many of the migrants, the picture frames are replete with images of squalor and the viewer is faced with the oddities of perplexed subjects living in an abject ghetto condition. This is the situation with virtually all the migrants studied by the documentary in their different countries of residence in Europe. The documentary however does not make it seem like a blanket representation of every African migrant living in Europe, but a fair representation of most unskilled migrants living in Europe and most especially as undocumented migrants.

Critically one may ask why do the migrants on their realization of the mirage of the European dream stay through the horror rather than go back home from where they undertook the journey. Fortunately, the documentary through the instrumentality of its case studies explores plausible explanation to the ever-nagging question. The documentary narrative points out that these migrants rather than go back home to embrace their former lives are held back by shame. In the words of the narrator “shame is what keeps many Africans in Europe. They can’t go back to their families at home without having made a fortune”. Thus out of shame many of these migrants would rather continue struggling, suffering and being dehumanized in Europe than go back home. For someone like Sylvia who had at one time contemplated suicide due to her situation and seeming loss of hope, she couldn’t still go back or risk being deported because of shame. In her interview in the documentary, Sylvia demonstrates the resolve to stay back in Europe to struggle through the storm than going back home to face a life of shame. Below is an excerpt from the interview with Sylvia in the documentary.

**Sylvia:** People might wonder why people in Europe fear to be deported. The thing is when you go back there (Africa), they laugh at u, I mean you become a laughing stock. From the day you step your feet on the airport everyone laughs at you, you have come with no bag; you have come with no money where as people are expecting you to be in a different state.

The documentary under study represents migration as a dare devil affair rife with uncertainties and indecipherable twists. The narrative approach further helps in bringing the viewer very close to first hand narrative of the harsh experiences of living in Europe especially as an undocumented migrant. The image is painted in a way that it will drive in the real story of migration to the world and mostly youths in Africa who still view migrating to Europe as an answer to their prayers against poverty and its accompanying tribulations. In line with Ervin Goffman’s theory of media framing, the documentary’s principal frame selection directly

balances the narrative by choosing individuals who mutually compenstrate the experience of the European dream. However, these frames in abiding with the propositions of Goffman's media framing theory counter the migrant myth that romanticizes the migrant experience and migration as a haven and a shortcut to wealth. This frame of representation also shows that there is prospect which obeys the natural laws of productivity and wealth creation. Hence, having highlighted these frames, the documentary lays emphasis on two basic things; hope for legally accepted migrants who imbibe the virtues of hard work, diligence to duty and socio-economic discipline. On the other hand, the documentary lucidly and vividly makes an obvious statement of doom for migrants whose situation of stay within the European territorial space is irregular or undocumented. The implication of the narrative is that with hard work and discipline, legally documented migrants may eventually have a clement experience of the European dream while undocumented migrants are bound to have horrible experiences of the European dream as underdogs. In doing this, it however represents illegal migrant experience as hellish, gory and an exercise in futility and foolhardiness. The story of Stephen, the middle-aged Ghanaian migrant and Ssuna, the Ugandan migrant typify the second frame which shows the migrants settling in to enjoy the European dream with years of hard work and constant self-development. For Stephen, it took him seventeen years in the Netherlands to find his feet as an undocumented African migrant after years of hard work. This is not without carefully profiling Stephen's effort at getting documented and achieving self-upgrade. The documentarian made sure to stress Steven's effort at personal development channeled into education as the success formula. Thus, his diplomas in travel agency management and travel consultancy were well advertised in the documentary. The conspicuous display of the certificate on Stephen's office wall is a deliberate attempt to achieve emphasis by the director. The camera from the medium shot of Stephen



creatively zooms in to display the graphic content of each of the certificate frames broadly displayed on the wall. The underlying aim for laying emphasis on Stephen's method is to make sure the viewer does not get the wrong notion about Stephen's success story as his story only constitutes a rare fragment of African migrants' stories in Europe. This is why his years of toiling and working petty cleaning jobs took longer time in the documentation of his success story. Thus the representation gives the perception that making it to the top in Europe may be harder than making it to the top in Africa. In effect, Stephen's signoff words dramatically demonstrate the underlying objective to this second frame of representation. Prospective young African migrants are thus forewarned in Stephen's words; "to all Africans who want to come to Europe, it is not as easy as you think. It is hard work, education, God fearing and the blessings of God".

More so, the position of the documentarian in this narrative is carefully laid out in the individuals who constitute his focal point. The numerical overwhelming of the migrants with pitiable experience of Africa-Europe migration over the few who have eventually found comfort through years of hard work and discipline helps to drive down the point. Nigeria as a major contributor in the Africa-Europe migration experience has much to learn from the experience of Rose who represents myriads of Nigerian girls in Italy trafficked and used as sex merchants all around the world. The Chatham House report on Nigerian migrants in Europe shows that Nigeria has become prominent for human trafficking because of the myriads of its girls who populate the streets of Europe trading sex. The report vividly states that "In Italy, in particular, men using sex workers often preferred new arrivals from Nigeria over their Italian counterparts, many of whom had drug addictions, due to the fear of aids" (n.d). Rose as represented in the documentary is just one among these girls who hold the story of horror, of frustration, of dejection and perplexity as

their migrant realities. The story of Rose and her experiences as a Nigerian migrant in Italy aptly captures the relationship between the myths of migration in the country mostly among the youths and the subsequent experience of migration in Europe. The myth of migration as promoted within the country largely contradicts the account of the experience of migration put forward by bold migrants like Rose whom through the account of their experiences seek to discourage vulnerable Nigerians who dream of seeking greener pastures abroad. Rose like many young Nigerian girls is tricked into migration to Italy where she was promised jobs and significant change in her fortune. Again, like many young gullible and vulnerable Nigerian youths who seek to better their living conditions and those of their families, Rose fell for the Romantic pictures of Italy painted by her supposed benefactor and migrates to Europe unaware of the horrors that await her. Her narrative is thus summarized in the following excerpt:

**Rose:** I was expecting to find a job as a cleaner or an office job. That is what I was thinking that I will find in Europe but that is not what I found, I found prostitution in Europe. The person that brought me, she was a family friend, she told me she was going to take me to Europe and when I come to Europe there is job everywhere and I was excited. I quit my school, I quit my work. She gave me things to put on. She took me to the street and said I should stand there and I said stand there and do what and she said I should stand. I told them that I can't do it and that I want to go back home but they refused to take me back home. Yes, I have been doing prostitution for six years now.

The documentarian in this documentary through the interface with many other African migrants sought to bring to the fore the realities of migration to Europe most of which is mostly romanticized within the African hemisphere. The documentarian was strong in his representation, categorical in his pictorial narrative and balanced in his discussion presentation of findings. The representation of migration and migrant experiences in the documentary has laid emphasis on the disparaging gulf between perception and reality. The director's treatment of the stories the documentary narrative if anything was strongly made to real life experiences of

African migrants in Europe most of which are not palatable as in the Stories of Rose, Ssuna and Stephen.

### **3.8.3 *Letters from Libya (2018): a Synopsis***

Letters from Libya is an expository documentary that tells the horrors of Nigerian migrants who get stuck in Libya in their quest to migrate to Europe through land. The documentary is focused on representing the ordeals of the transit process through which most Nigerians embark on European migration through Libya by water. The documentary built on the factual narratives of two migrant returnees who survived the Libyan carnage addresses the menace of illegal migration to Europe by land and gives an insight into the atrocities, horrors and sufferings that beleaguer the deadly experience of the Sahara-Libya-Italian migrant route. In addition to this, the documentary also exposes the extent of deterioration of the Libyan society that is evidenced in the tacit legitimization of slavery and human trading, zero respect for the sanctity of human life very much reflected in the wanton killing of migrants who go to Libya as a transit point to Europe and the unofficial participation of the law enforcement agents in the commission of crimes that endanger humanity. The film whose title was gotten from a song by Dunno (also by the same title) used for the sound track is an advocacy against illegal migration. The documentary can be described as pedagogic, didactic and most importantly, expository.

### **3.8.4 *Representations of Migration and Migrant Experiences in Letters from Libya (2018)***

Libya has been known for long as the migrant hub and a transit point from where Africans, mostly from the sub-Saharan hub illegally embark on their migrant journey to Europe. The place

of Libya in sub-Saharan migration narrative is quite prominent in illegal migration discuss circles around the globe. The quest to migrate away from home to Europe by many West African dwellers has largely contributed to the migrant crisis currently raging in Libya. This is because of Libya's vantage positioning between the Mediterranean Sea and Italy. As such, the route has become a departure harbor for illegal African migrants who seek greener pasture in Europe. UgwumbaEgwuta reports that:

The geographical location of Libya renders it a transit route for migrants journeying to Italy and many other parts of Europe. The migration crisis in Libya and its attendant consequences was made more possible by the instability in Libya, occasioned by the October 2011 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)-led war against Muammar Gaddafi's regime.

Thus, the narrative in *Letters from Libya* is representative of the experience of the dominant migrant views of European migration through the Sahara-Libya-Italian route. The representation is rife with pictures of death, sorrow, frustration, despair, sadness and heartbreaks that are encountered on the road to having the European dream through illegal means. For the two migrants whose experiences structured the narrative in *Letters from Libya*, migration through irregular and illegal means is not worth a trial. For the second respondent, "illegal migration is not a story of life and death, it is a story of death". The director's treatment of the narrative in *Letters from Libya* instills in the audience a sense of fear, horror and trepidation. Thus, his choice of words, pictorial imageries and style of interview were all geared towards baring in its entirety the ugliness and horrors of migration through the Trans-Sahara route.

Right from the beginning of the narrative, the audience is psychologically prodded into the story and surreptitiously predisposed to receive the story from the hypodermic perspective of unpleasantness and ugliness. The psychological maneuver applied in the montage where the two respondents are fused in a tight oval image with the concave visual effect further tacitly creates

the impression of repression, loss of freedom and difficulty. The documentarian follows these images up with an audio frame that describes the respondents as ‘victims who had dreams of getting to Europe through the land medium’ to further create an intro that will dispose the audience to make a choice against illegal migration even before he is exposed to the world of the narrative. Representations mostly are communicative weapons that directly influence the audience’s meaning making system. In line with Ervin Goffman, the director achieves a tag by using the words ‘victims’ which gives the audience an air of superiority over the respondents whose unfortunate stories they are being exposed to. In effect, the ‘victim’ tag used on the respondents reinforces the audience’s belief in the superiority of their choice as non-participants in irregular quests like migration to Europe by road. The director’s presentation of the two respondents as victims is deliberate and was used to achieve a negation of the subject from the start. The tag ‘victim’ is used to achieve a distinction that places the respondents in a pitiable pedestal, a position that ab initio predisposes the audience towards a self preclusion from similar ordeals. The implication is that one does not fall prey to the push and pull factors that may have been responsible for the respondents’ choices which resulted in their unfortunate experiences en route Italy through the Sahara . More so, the director through this angle of representation further strengthens the resolve in the audience to preclude the appeals of illegal migration as a solution to the socio-economic anomalies of living in an economically repressed country like Nigeria. This narrative perspective is further strengthened by the revelations the respondents made in their interviews as the story progressed. The director made sure he did not either outrightly or impliedly romanticize the Nigerian experience by making sure the respondents mention the socio-economic decay in the country as their push factor. He however counters the idea of illegal migration as a way out of the Nigerian melee by highlighting and subsequently laying

tremendous emphasis on the horrors of irregular migration. The director achieves the counter strategy by crudely exposing the audience to harsh realities of the choice of illegal migration through the Sahara. The gory pictures of undecayed bodies of dead migrants in the Sahara, pictures of helpless migrants in sinking tube boats at the center of the Mediterranean and pictures of migrants captured and placed in cages as slaves were used to inundate and forge the audience's memory of irregular migration. More so, the director follows the images up with a strong demonstration of resolve by the respondents never to try such a journey in their life time not minding how difficult the Nigerian experience becomes. Thus, in line with Goffman, the director's choices directly solidify his perspective which is contained in the frames the audience sees as finished work. In effect, these frames were used to suggest to the unsuspecting audience what meanings to attribute to the images shown or created through the narrator or the respondents as well as the choices to make about migration as an escape from the Nigerian reality.

More so, the director through the narrative of the respondents further lays tremendous emphasis on the theme of death as a constant factor in illegal migration. The director's imaging of the Libyan migrant experience was geared towards making death a central and conspicuous metaphor in order for the audience to fully appreciate the enormity of the dangers involved. The constant allusion to death in the documentary is a strategy employed by the director to heighten the fear and exacerbate the goriness associated with Africa-Europe migration by road. This is because death in the Sahara and the Mediterranean has become a dominant constant in migrant narrative across the Sahara through North Africa to Europe. The IOM Missing Migrants Project reports that "MMP recorded 3,139 deaths and disappearances in the Mediterranean last year, more than 90 per cent of which occurred in the Central Mediterranean route between North

Africa and Italy”. The mortality rate along this migrant route has been known to be high. Death along the Sahara also contributes immensely to this data set. The IOM also reports that the “MMP recorded more than 1,700 migrant deaths, with over 690 reported in the Sahara Desert”. These figures therefore vindicate the director’s obsession with migrant deaths in the documentary and his rather morbid representation of migrant experiences in the documentary.

The first respondent in his narrative paints a horrifying picture of his encounters with death in the desert. These encounters further espouse IOM’s claims on mortality on the Sahara and across the Mediterranean. The uncertainties associated with the desert experiences even makes death a close encounter on a daily basis in the desert. Thus, of the twenty persons that left with him from Niger State Nigeria, five persons lost their lives and were buried in the desert. The first respondent’s confession on the in the Sahara Desert death was further reinforced with graphic display of the international Organization for Migration’s (IOM) data sheet on migration which states that “more than 22,500 migrants have died or disappeared globally since 2014”. This graphic support was quickly followed by another which states that “more than half of them died while trying to cross the Mediterranean”. The reason for the sea death according to the third graphic display is attributable to the use of none sea worthy vessels used for smuggling migrants by Libyan traffickers. Below is an excerpt from the first respondent’s interview in the documentary:

**First Respondent:** ... if you come across rebels and deny you don’t have money they will stab your anus and make sure they see if there is anything you are hiding. The journey is not an easy journey, I will not encourage anybody to embark on that kind of journey. I saw hell, sixteen days I was inside the desert, our water got finished and we were inside the desert for sixteen days. All our food finished and what remained was only Garri but there was no water to drink. Some of us were drinking piss (urine), you can’t find water. We trekked to a place called Duruku for three days. After then about 5 of us were confirmed dead and we buried them inside the desert there.

This confession was his encounter with death on their way going to Libya when hopes of making it to Europe through Italy were still high. However, having encountered the realities of illegal migration, the director paints a picture of the migrant who had left with high hopes of escaping the hard life in Nigeria praying and begging God to give them one more chance of setting their feet on the Nigerian soil. The director once more brings death to the fore when the first respondent's prayer was answered and he set out on the journey home to Nigeria. Once more, the picture of death and trepidation is painted thus:

**First Respondent:** When we were coming back, it was during the sun, there was no more cold again. I saw hell, we buried a lot of people. We had a lot of attack, their soldiers raped our girls and used them without condoms. You can't even say anything because if do, anything they have they will use it on you. It's not a journey for anybody to attempt.

The director does not however end his emphasis with the account given by the first respondent.

In the encounter with the second respondent whose story has a lot in common with that of the first respondent, death as a constant factor in illegal migration features once more. The emphasis on death is in consonance with the frames of narrative that guides the director's philosophy of representation in the documentary which is geared towards the demonization of illegal migration across the Sahara. This philosophy is further represented in the following excerpt from the second respondent's interview in the documentary:

**Second Respondent:** We spent three days in the Sahara Desert; we came across many dead bodies in the desert. With sun in the desert those corpses did not even decay because they were dried up like stock fish. I looked around and even our water got exhausted. Many of us that left didn't come back alive and most of us that came back alive, many of them were with bullet injury some in their legs, some in their hands and some in their waists. Some of them they removed their eyes just because of money. They do kidnap some people and torture them so that their parents will send money from Nigeria



here to free them over there. The ones that couldn't meet up with the money, those ones will die in their hands.

More so beyond making death a frosty constant in the narrative, the director also fiddled with the theme of slavery in his representation of migrant experiences in the documentary narrative. Slavery has evolved as a twenty first century reality in the Libyan migrant crisis. Slave trade has resurfaced in Libya with the death of Muamar Gaddafi who acted as the balance that stemmed the tide in the North African political narrative. Lucas Mafu is of the opinion that the lawlessness in Libya is attributable to the overthrow of Muamar Gaddafi's dictatorship and political and military intervention from the west. The western Regime installed since the overthrow of Gaddafi has found it difficult to exert political control and to instill sanity in the Libyan socio-political system. This inadvertently has created a gapping lacuna that has led to the infiltration of the system and establishment of camps in Libya by the ISIS terrorist group. Thus the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMML) reports that "the breakdown in the justice system has led to a state of impunity, in which armed groups, criminal gangs, smugglers and traffickers control the flow of migrants through the country" ( 1). This is however not to say that agents of government are clean of the impunity and inhuman crimes against migrants. This is because one would like to think that if the west installed Libyan government is completely absolved from the situation, there would be a strong demonstration of resolve against dehumanization and enslavement of transit migrants in Libya. The UNSML reports however states that they have reliable information "that some members of State institutions and some local officials have participated in the smuggling and trafficking process" (1). As a result, the human rights situation in the country has deteriorated completely and migrants from other African countries find themselves manhandled, dehumanized, enslaved, used for forced labor and in many cases used as prototypes in medical experiments. Some of them also have their vital organs harvested and sold

to black market human organ harvesters. The director in line with his philosophy of representation in the documentary makes a conspicuous reportage of the Libyan human rights situation as a glaring factor in the Libyan migrant experience. The representation even becomes more gory with the testimony from the respondents revealing the complicity of the Libyan government agencies in the enslavement of migrants as reported by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. However, the revelations from the interview with the second respondent shows that even in the United Nations controlled camps, the safety of the migrants are not assured as many of its agents are compromised. Thus, some migrants are even extracted from the UN deportation camps and sold human traffickers. Below is an excerpt from the second respondent's interview in the documentary:

**Second Respondent:** All of a sudden, the United Nations troupe came and busted our camp where they put us and they said they want to return us back to Nigeria. That was how the whole story became afresh again. So after they have arrested us they took us to UN deportation camp. The torture, the starvation and everything, starved us. So it was there we spent another a month and some weeks in the UN custody. When we were in the UN custody, the Arab police really dealt with us because even the food they were giving us sometimes they drugged them. And they will come and take some us to Trankay where they sale them to people that do kidnap people. Those ones will pay. So we that were praying against deportation while going now began to reverse our prayer. Oh God, let deportation come, we want to go back to Nigeria.

The excerpt above summarizes the director's philosophy of representation in the documentary. The philosophy enshrined in the campaign against illegal migration and most especially through the Trans-Sahara route completely guided the director's representations in *Letters from Libya*. Thus, the documentary in its completeness avoided every form of romanticization of the Libyan migrant experience by confronting its audience with the gory facts and pictures of the Trans-Sahara European migration route. Thus, the audience is forced to come to terms with the experiences which have dehumanized many of the Libyan migrant returnees. And like the second

respondent, the audience is expected to achieve a psychological loathing of the idea of illegal migration even when presented with a hundred-million-dollar cheque.

### **3.8.5 *Nigerian Immigrant Experience of South Africa: a Synopsis***

*Nigerian Immigrant experience of South Africa* is a documentary that x-rays the experiences of Nigerian migrants living in South Africa. The documentary which in itself is expository pries into the affairs of Nigerians in South Africa with particular focus on Nigerian migrants living in Johannesburg which is supposedly the municipality with the highest concentration of Nigerians in South Africa. The documentary interviewed the migrants both educated and uneducated with the aim of getting first hand narratives of the treatments they receive both from the South African government agencies and the natives whose relationship with Nigerians and many other African migrants have become strained in recent years. The documentary in a bid to have an objective narrative has its respondents drawn from all parties represented in the narrative which include both Nigerian migrants on the streets, South African civilian nationals and the South African police who seem to be at the center of the narrative as regards police brutality and infringement on the rights of Nigerian migrants resident in South Africa. The documentary is also structured around four central themes which include; police brutality and high handed treatment of Nigerian migrants, negative and unfair stereotyping of Nigerians in South Africa by most south African natives, attack on Nigerians and other African migrants by South Africans and the seeming mutual resentment that has grown between Nigerians living in south Africa and South Africa nationals who carry out xenophobic attacks on Nigerians and other migrants nationals living in South Africa.

### **3.8.6 Representations of Migration and Migrant Experiences in *Nigerian Migrant Experience of South Africa***

South Africa has been constant in the media in recent times for many wrong reasons. The incessant attacks on black migrants in the country have become a reoccurring event. Thus its xenophobic attacks against foreign nationals from other African countries have been described as Afrophobia and have received tremendous attention from all around the world. Thus living in South Africa in recent times as an African migrant may have lost the spark it had in the late nineties with the over throw of the apartheid regime in South Africa. According to Olubukola Adesina “Migrants are increasingly viewed negatively in South Africa and xenophobic attacks and intolerance of migrants, most especially African migrants, have increased in the past two decades. Nigerians are a major target of these attacks” (109). The reason for the resentment for immigrants according to Adesina is predicated on the perception of migrants as being responsible for the rising job losses by the citizens, increase in crime and subsequent stifling of the social welfare plan as a result of consequent increase in migrant population. Nigerians particularly seem to be the most singled out group in these attacks. The reason for this may be found in the growing tension between Nigeria and South African as a result of the ‘cold’ economic competition between the two African giants for the control of soul of the continent. Aurelia Segatti, Olufemi Adeagbo and Samson Ogunyemi report that the media representation of Nigerians in South Africa by the South Africa media does not objectively represent the activities of the majority of Nigerians living in South Africa (5). The implication is that the South African media seems to be more interested in reporting only the negative contributions of Nigeria migrants eschewing the majority who may be on the path of excellence and contributing to national growth. In their words “Since the end of the Apartheid regime, the South African

media have portrayed Nigerians as criminals and threats to South Africans' physical and economic security" (5). Owing to the hypodermic power of the media, this kind of profiling may have contributed immensely to the negative perception of Nigerian migrants and subsequent hostilities they receive in the hands of the South African nationals and its security apparatus.

In effect, the director in *Nigerian Migrant Experience of South Africa* makes a vivid representation of some of these hostilities as meted out to most Nigerians domiciled mostly around Johannesburg municipality. In line with Ervin Goffman's theory of media framing, the director selects about four basic pointers or themes under which the migrant experiences of Nigerians in South Africa was discussed. These as already listed in 4.5 include: police brutality and high handed treatment of Nigerian migrants, negative and unfair stereotyping of Nigerians in South Africa by most South African natives, attack on Nigerians and other African migrants by South Africans and the seeming mutual resentment growing between Nigerians living in South Africa and South African nationals who carry out xenophobic attacks against Nigerians.

Nigerian migrants in South Africa witness tremendous resentment from South African natives as part of their migrant experiences in South Africa. The documentary represents the issue of resentment as part of the reasons why the migrant experience of Nigerians in South Africa is seemingly tensed. The implication is that Nigerians seem not to be welcome in a country they feel entitled to considering their involvement in the dismantling of the Apartheid regime in South Africa. However, the spate of attacks on Nigerians and the seeming government inaction to stem the attacks and bring perpetrators of the attacks to justice further exacerbates the notion of Nigerians that fuel the resent Nigerian migrants in South Africans. Fisayo Soyombo in an interview with Al Jazeera airs the following experience:

I had barely spent 10 minutes on South African soil when I knew that Nigerians were unwelcome. Arriving at the O R Tambo International Airport, an immigration officer irritatingly asked me how long I was staying, despite seeing clearly on my passport that I had a visa to stay up to 30 days. "Just five days," I replied slowly, as confidently as I could. "And that is because I cannot wait to be back in my country." Taken aback, the middle-aged woman reclined and removed her glasses before saying: "That is very surprising. There are a lot of people from your country in here and we keep telling them to go, but they won't.

Flicks of Soyombo's experience with the immigration official are contained densely in the representation of migrant experiences in the documentary under discuss. Many Nigerians interviewed in the video narrated their encounters with the immigration officials who harassed and intimidated them at every given opportunity. Some of the respondents interviewed in the documentary testified to the fact that the South African Visa in their passport are sometimes crudely mutilated by the immigration officials without due course. Some also testified to the random arrests and harassment they experience regularly in the hands of immigration officials who raid and arrest them though their legal documents of stay in the country are still very valid and were duly authorized. For DJ Rexi who is a well-known non-air radio personality in South Africa, the story is not different. Below is an excerpt from his interview in the documentary:

**DJ Rexi:** As a foreigner in South Africa it's very tough especially as a Nigerian in South Africa. Even me with the name I have got in South Africa I still go around with my passport which is right here in my pocket because if I don't have this, they can stop me on the way.

This resentment is further expressed in the voxpopuli conducted by the documentarian on the perception of Nigerian migrants by young South Africans. The views expressed by the native South Africa young stars further shows that the feeling of resentment of Nigerians in South Africa is not speculative but a factual statement rooted in objective experience and research. The three young stars who expressed their views in the voxpopuli have the following feelings about Nigerians:

**1<sup>st</sup> Respondent:** They think they own the world or own the country or something

**2<sup>nd</sup> Respondent:** They are promoting crime

**3<sup>rd</sup> Respondent:** They must go we don't want them here

The notions expressed by these young stars are common among many South Africans. Though the native South Africans feel very much uncomfortable with the influx of other African nationals to their country, they seem to have taken a special dislike for Nigerians who have been negatively stereotyped as drug dealers, corrupt and criminally minded. Though there is empirical evidence to show that some Nigerian migrants engage in dishonest activities on the streets in pursuit of material wealth, the generic tagging or representation of every Nigerian as dishonest is unfair and has grave consequences. This stereotype representation further makes the migrant experience tensed as the generic tag does not exonerate anybody including the many honest Nigerian migrants who contribute to the development and growth of the South African economy. According to the narrator “the stereotype that paints all Nigerians as dishonest affects professionals”. Thus, the experience is general irrespective of one's line of work or mission in the country. Stereotypes especially the negative ones are bad and have the capacity to destroy a people. Stereotypes are single narratives that tend to portray a people, an individual or something as just one thing. The single story lopsidedly represents only but a single side of a people or a person's narrative and makes them remain only that in the eyes of the world. The effect of the single story according to Chimamanda Adichie is brutal and makes for an unfair treatment of a people. In her words, “The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar”. This exactly is what the single story of Nigerians as dishonest have achieved in South Africa. It has created a mutual tension between the South African nationals and the Nigerian migrants that are resident in South Africa. The effect is however over bearing

on most of the Nigerian migrants as it robs them of many opportunities that would have made for a better experience of their sojourn to South Africa. Thus, Godfrey Ezeugo who is a business owner in Johannesburg testifies that an average South African is afraid of going into business with a Nigerian because they believe that an average Nigerian is a crook. It becomes more frustrating when even professionals get affected by the tags and get constantly disrespected because of generic stereotyping. The following is an excerpt from an interview with a Nigerian Lawyer on his experience as a Nigerian migrant in South Africa:

As a lawyer I come to this country and people tell me am I a drug dealer? Because I am Nigerian I must be doing drugs or 419, that is very very frustrating and it creates anxiety.

One of the many consequences of creating negative stereotypes and single stories about a people is that it exposes them unfairly and makes them cheap targets of oppression, subjugation and intimidation. As Chimamanda puts it, “Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign”. They can also “break the dignity of a people but stories can also repair that broken dignity”. The underlying power of framing, representation and storytelling is endless and can make a people or break them. However, in the case of Nigerian migrants in South Africa, the documentary makes it clear that the negative stereotypes have made police brutality an everyday reality of many Nigerian migrants in South Africa. It has also made them easy marks for armed robbery and xenophobic attacks. Thus, the documentary reports that “Nigerians are the single group most likely to be robbed”.

More so, the single story seems to have exacerbated the extent of police brutality against Nigerian migrants in South Africa. The director’s representation of migration and migrant experiences in South Africa shows that there is an ever-increasing tension between Nigerian migrants and the police who are believed to be all out against Nigerians in South Africa. The



representation shows that many of the migrants are unduly manhandled, extorted and oppressed by the police who seem to treat every Nigerian as a crime syndicate and drug dealer. The documentary reports that there is a constant raiding of Nigerian communities by the South African police and most times many Nigerian migrants are carted away without due documentation. In the words of the narrator “Police raid residences where Nigerians stay and arrest even those that have resident permits”. This kind of raids make the migrant experience in South Africa horrible and gory. Stories of police brutality and high handedness against migrants and most especially migrants of Nigerian extraction abound. Illegal extortion of money, unlawful arrests and killing of migrants by the police are part of the realities that shape the experiences of many Nigerian migrants in South Africa as represented in the documentary. According to a respondent in the documentary, “ATM is a common slang amongst the South African police. When they are broke, they go into where we have Large Nigerian communities or other foreigners”. Thus, Nigerians are seen as financial reservoir for corrupt police men and have to be milked to meet their financial needs of the corrupt local police. Fear of being killed by the police has formed a major part of the experience of the migrants in South Africa. According to Sahara Reporters “118 Nigerians had so far lost their lives in different attacks over the years, out of which 13 Nigerians were killed by the South African police”. The killing of Dominic Onuogazi is one case the Nigerian communities did not fail to protest against according to the documentary. Dominic had been arrested by the police and was badly manhandled which eventually led to his death in front of the police station. Eye witnesses interviewed in the documentary testify to Dominic’s death as a case of extra judicial killing by the police. Below is an eye witness account of how the police killed Dominic as reported in the documentary:

**Respondent:** They brutally beat him up, he couldn't even walk because they hit him in his private area and one of his balls burst and by the time they checked him up he was already dead.

Sequel to this, Austin Okere who is the Chairman of Nigerians living in Johannesburg in the documentary reports that he has sent home hundred and twenty dead Nigerians who died either as a result of xenophobia or brutality from the police. Many Nigerians have been killed in South Africa in recent times and the number has risen geometrically as a result of xenophobia. Sahara Reporters on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2019 published the number of Nigerians to have been killed in South Africa to have risen to 127. The recent murder of the Deputy Director-General of Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria, Elizabeth Ndubusi-Chukwu has roused outrage among many Nigerians the Nigerian senate warning that more killing of Nigerians in South Africa will attract grave consequences.

Thus, death as in the case of the Libyan experience once more becomes a recurrent index in the representation of migrant experiences in South Africa in the documentary. The director's representations go beyond the romanticization of migration to bring to the fore the very many things that Nigerian migrants in South Africa undergo. Thus, the viewer is made to know that there is deep rooted resentment of Nigerians by a significant majority of South Africans and that Nigerians undergo many unpleasant experiences as a result of the generic stereotyping of them by native South Africans.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE REPRESENTATIONS OF MIGRATION IN NOLLYWOOD FEATURE FILMS AND DOCUMENTARY

The representations of migration and migrant experiences have been treated extensively in the two chapters that precede this chapter. Migration and migrant experience as represented in Nollywood feature films have been extensively analyzed in chapter three while the representations of migration and migrant experiences have been thoroughly analyzed in chapter four. Though a close reading of the two closely highlights the points of divergence and convergence in both representational approaches, there is however a nagging need to clearly and explicitly spell out these differences in a distinct chapter that deals specifically with the comparison. Thus, the comparative analysis will be made with the aim of highlighting the underlying differences in representational approach, narrative settings and the nearness of the representations to real life experiences of migration.

#### **4.1 Approaches to Representation**

The film medium is a very broad medium that uses varied approaches in achieving its narrative. The nature of the genre largely determines the treatment and narrative style used in telling the stories. Features and documentaries are largely different in the sense that both are designed to achieve varying objectives. While the documentary is designed to achieve a narrative of actualities by building its narrative on facts and verifiable realities, the feature is designed basically to entertain, educate and stimulate critical thinking by weaving imaginations that don't necessarily have to be based on facts or realities. The implication is that while the documentary is bound to be faithful to certain dictates of reality, the feature/fictional film narrative is obliged

to roam the boundless realms of the director's imagination which is not confined to be faithful to historical or social accuracy.

The first point of divergence is noted in the handling of the theme of migration in both narratives. The feature films analyzed in this study seems to have all romanticized the idea of irregular migration. This is because virtually all the characters analyzed in the movies were by implication represented as migrants living in their places of settlement in an irregular migrant status. The representation failed to bring to bear the nagging issues of migration especially as it concerns irregular migration. This is in direct contrast with the treatment of the issue in the documentary films studied which however did present the challenges overwhelmingly without eclipsing the many possibilities in regular migration. The treatment of the topic in the feature films romanticizes the idea and presents it as a sure way to economic empowerment and carefully eclipses the overwhelming challenges of living in a foreign land as an irregular migrant. It is this approach to thematic representation in *Money Making Machine* (2015) that makes the handling of Obinna as a migrant returnee hyper-romanticized. The issue even does not emanate from the reintroduction of Obinna as a migrant returnee; the romanticization began from the point Obinna was to leave for Europe. The desperation with which everyone wanted Obinna to travel and the continued expression of conviction that accompanied it literarily achieved a holistic commonization of the topic. Thus, while the respondents in *Letters from Libya* (2018) tell of their woes and make effort to dissuade other youngsters from embarking on irregular migration based on their first hand experiences, the director does the exact opposite in *Money Making Machine* (2015). It is the certainty that Obinna's migration to Europe would open doors and liberate them from poverty that makes Osanga and Aja to engage in armed robbery just to make sure Obinna travels. The trans-Sahara routes thus was not even presented as horrific, the

director's commonization of the horrors of trans-Sahara route to Libya becomes worrisome when compared with the real life narratives of the respondents in *Letters from Libya*. The treatment in *OzoemenaOzubulu* (2017) is also not different. Not minding his deep rooted desire not to leave Ozubulu and to make his money in his father land, Ozoemena is intimidated into migrating to Malaysia to make money so he can take his pound of flesh on Ozioma. Expectedly, Ozoemena comes back just after six months in a flagrant display of wealth and class. Ozoemena's lack of skill even makes the narrative worrisome and utterly suspicious. A critical thinking of this line of narrative makes one to wonder what legitimate work could have given an unskilled migrant like Ozoemena millions just within six months of migrating to Malaysia. Representations like this can only end up sending the wrong message and achieving a direct opposite of the anti-irregular migration advocacy. The approach to representing unskilled migrants in *Surprising Europe makes* nonsense of feature characters like Ozoemana in *OzoemenaOzubulu*(2017), Obinna in *Money Making Machine* (2015) and by extension the duo of Akpaka and Victor in *TheBillionnaires* (2018). *Surprising Europe* engages in a painstaking research of representing migrants in their true nature of stay in Europe. The documentary through a direct interaction with migrants makes it clear that life in Europe as an unskilled migrant could be depressing, disappointing and extremely difficult. More so, it shows what awaits the likes of Victor, Akpaka, Obinna and Ozoemena if they were to travel in reality as unskilled migrants to Europe or Asia looking for survival through legal means. The documentary's representation however balances its narrative by presenting the likes of Stephen who had to go through a process of self development and skill acquisition in other to make ends meet. Thus, to achieve the European dream, one must acquire some skills like Stephen and be documented in order to have access to the economic opportunities available for documented

migrants. The documentary also does not fail to explicitly state that the Stephen formula does not work like magic; it makes it obvious that the process takes time. Unlike Ozoemena who only spent six months in Malaysia to make a fortune, the documentary makes it obvious that it took Stephen seventeen years of self development to have a glimpse of the European dream. The *Nigerian Migrant Experience of South Africa* further shows another dimension to being unskilled as a migrant in South Africa. The documentary makes it obvious that there are limited jobs which the citizens are not willing to share with migrant settlers. As part of its message, the documentary makes it clear that this is largely responsible for the xenophobic attacks against Nigerian migrants and other African migrants by native South Africans as a way of demonstrating their anger, disappointments and desperation with the open policies of the South African government which seems to exacerbate the pull attraction for intra-continental migration influx to the country. Thus, the few Nigerian migrants who are able to get meaningful employment are skilled and mostly educated while the rest resorts to crime as a way of making ends meet. A Nigerian respondent in the documentary makes an admission of this “There is no job, so the alternative means to survive is to commit crime and you can’t take that away from people”. The consequences as stated in the documentary are a generic labeling of Nigerians as criminals and the constant harassment and intimidation of Nigerian migrants on the streets by both the South African natives and the police alike. *Letters from Libya* (2018) also represents the fate of the numerous African migrants in Libya in a gorier style. The documentary narrative shows that many African migrants in Libya meet horrendous ordeals in the hands of Libyan Taliban who deal on slave trade. Thus, contrary to the rosy display of migrant experiences in the feature films, its narrative shows that migrants are sold variously while many have their vital organs harvested in the process. The reality of death as a major an entrenched migrant experience

is made very conspicuous in the documentary narrative. The stand of the documentarian is best summarized in the following lines from the second respondent; “illegal migration is not a story of life and death, it is a story of death”. The message is categorically unequivocal and beams a red light on the urge to migrate through irregular means.

More so, another significant difference in the narrative style lies in their choice of settings and locales. The style of narrative in the feature film allowed the actors to report their migrant experiences from the point of view of successful returnees without actually beaming visual images of their experiences as migrants in their respective countries of settlement. Thus, in the three films, the story of migration narrated by the characters are told from Nigeria. In effect, the narratives are more oral than visual. In *Money Making Machine* (2015), the closest the film came to a visual display of Obinna in his migrant state was at the airport in Nigeria on his return from Belgium. The film was in totality set in Nigeria while his experience of migration was reported orally through his conversation with other characters in the film. The situation is same in *OzoemenaOzubulu* (2017). The Malaysian experiences that formed the crux of the narrative in the movie were completely reported as migrant returnees in Nigeria. Tobe, Okwudili and Ozoemena were never shown in Malaysia even though their Malaysian experiences littered the length and breadth of the entire narrative. In fact, virtually every part of the story of the six part movie was set in Ozubulu. The *Billionaires* (2018) however is different in the sense that the film explicitly made the audience to understand that Akpaka and Victor’s claim of going to Malaysia is a smoke screen used for covering up the real source of their wealth. In effect, it is completely understandable that there is no point for a visual display of the Malaysian part. This is the trend that ran through the three feature films analyzed in the chapter three of this work. Thus, the

characters only expressed their stories mostly through their exotic pecuniary displays that attest to their success stories abroad.

The trend is however different in the documentary films studied in chapter four of this work. The documentary took a very different approach by meeting the migrants in their foreign settlements and backing the narratives with visual displays. The directors in their representation in all the films set their characters in their destinations of migration. In *Surprising Europe*, the film set the story of the characters in their respective migrant environments. Every of the migrants whose story featured in the documentary were interviewed and filmed in Europe. This approach has the ability to achieve a mental validation of the story by the audience. The Nigerian Immigrant experience of South Africa also was set in South Africa where the subjects live. The audience visually follows the story and sees the authentic migrant in the migrant destination as he tells his story. The Only subtle exception to this is *Letters from Libya* (2018) in which the director sets his visual narrative in Nigeria and Libya. While the two migrants told their stories from Nigeria as migrant returnees, pictures and video footages from real life events in Libya and the Sahara were superimposed on the voice over to give the audience a feel of what the narrators passed through.

In a nutshell, the representations both show perspectives which may have been informed by the filmmakers' exposure to the issues of migration. The representations in the feature film greatly demonstrate a naïve understanding and exposure to issues of migration especially as it concerns irregular migration. The perspectives showed in the movies demonstrates a limitation in the understanding of the topic of migration and the discuss trends that accompany it. This may account for the monotonous representation which seems to single story the idea of migration in most Nollywood feature films. The documentary films on the contrary demonstrated fidelity to



reality. The frames of narrative employed in the documentary are mostly in tandem with migrant realities as it is obtainable in recent times. It makes it obvious that migration is not an easy affair contrary to the philosophical implication of the representations in the feature films. Prospective migrants are duly and accurately exposed to the everyday realities that face people on mobility especially as it concerns irregular migrants.

#### **4.2 The Influence of Narrative Forms on Representational Approaches**

Film forms largely determine the approaches to story representations. Story treatment in films is aimed at enticing designated audiences and the film maker designs the films for specific audiences based on his motivational incentives. Film is therefore a flexible medium that adapts very easily to designs that are dedicated towards achieving particular objectives. It may be a tool for enlightenment and public education. Films designed for this purpose are most times non-profit oriented films designed by the government or donor agencies purely for achieving mass education and influencing development in remote environments. Such films are most times sponsored by agencies whose aim is to drive development in particular fields of life. Films are also capitalist ventures designed purely for profit making. In this case, films become an investment exercise with profit maximization as its driving factor. Films in this cadre are mostly designed for the satisfaction of a paying audience. The implication is that the films are made solely to achieve commercial gains. More so, films are also political tools aimed at scoring political points and winning public sympathy. Films in this category have often times been used to stimulate propaganda in society. Though both the fictional narrative and documentary films can be used for this purpose, the documentary films have mostly been used in this regard going

by historical antecedents. Thus, the approach to narration in a film is largely determined by the intention of the film maker for the film and motivations behind it.

The fictional narrative films are basically made to intrigue, entertain and capture wide range of audiences. Feature films most times are capital investments aimed at breaking box office records and raking in tremendous profits. Thus, the primary aim of the producer of this film form is profit making. As a result, the indices of intrigue and fantasy become very primeval in the treatment of stories in order to attract enough audiences that can offset the investment on the film and as well make enough profit for the investor. Though fictional narrative films may be motivated by a historical event or by trends and events in society, they are designed to reflect flashes of such events without necessarily being faithful to historical accuracy. Since the aim of filmmaker of this film form is to capture the heart of a commercial audience so as to boost his profit, he most times plays with the elements of fantasy and intrigue to achieve his objective.

Nollywood particularly being a purely capitalist industry is driven mainly by investors whose main concern is to dominate the industry with their movies and to maximize their profit ratio. As such, most films from Nollywood are designed to capture the interests of its local audience through a picturesque romanticisation of its stories. Thus, narratives inspired by real life events in the society are spiced up and told in a way that the local audience will be enthused by its intrigues and twists. Jonathan Haynes citing reasons for Nollywood's speedy monopolization of the African film space cites "the racier, more adventurous styles of Nigerian filmmaking, the more astounding displays of glamour" as a contributing factor. (n.p). In effect, glamour is intrinsic in Nollywood's film formula. This formula also is applied in the treatment of social narratives themed on migration. More so, because migration has become a major alternative to the unromantic experience of living in Nigeria for many youths, many Nollywood filmmakers

tend to key into the popular narrative of migration as a sure path to wealth. This explains the treatment given to Ozoemena and his Malaysian counter parts in *OzoemenaOzubulu*(2017), Obinna in *Money making Machine* (2015) and Akpaka, Victor and Ezekwueche in *Billionaires* (2018). It is the desire to feed the audience with the intrigues of migration and its money laden prospects that made the director to toe the line of narrative that brings out the hero in the migrant without necessary highlighting the many horrors of irregular migration. Thus, flashy cars, money sprays, women, designer wears and power are all attributes showered on the migrants who tacitly were evidenced as irregular migrants. The element of luxury and glamour which fits into the audience expectations of migration becomes singled out and highlighted by the director in a bid to meet the market expectations.

The documentary on the other hand is a tool for the narration and documentation of history and social events. The onus of the documentary is to narrate mostly facts and by so doing be faithful to historical antecedents. The documentary just like the narrative fiction film is subservient to the interests and motivations of its maker. However, unlike the narrative fiction genre, the documentary genre is most times not designed for purely commercial purposes. As such, its non-profit driven nature affects the approach and treatment given to the documentary film. More so, that which is emphasized is not determined by the interest of the film audience, it is rather designed to swerve the narrative to suit the interest of the financier who may be a government institution, a donor agency, a business owner or a political aspirant. The popularity of the documentary as a political medium is predicated its non-profit nature. The focus is therefore not to intrigue but to reveal truths though the truths may be shaded by interests which in effect influence the treatment of its narrative. The documentary films that have been analyzed above were all sponsored by humanitarian agencies who are geared towards the protection of

fundamental rights of migrants in irregular status and whose aim is to also prevent the continued escalation of irregular migration in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, the complete emphasis on the horrors of irregular migration and the gory of living in irregular situation in foreign countries. The dominant treatment of the experiences of migration as gory in the films is predicated in the underlying intentions of the donor agencies.

In a nutshell, the approaches to representation in the documentary and fictional narrative films studied are significantly determined by the nature of the two genres. While the fictional narrative films were designed to meet the expectations of its commercial audience, the documentary films were treated to meet the expectations the humanitarian agencies that commissioned and financed the movies.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The researcher in this study has engaged in an in-depth analysis of the concept of migration in Nigeria and Nollywood's diverse approaches to the representations of migration and migrant experiences. A close reading of migration and migrant experiences as represented in Nollywood feature and documentary films shows that the two film forms have disparate perspectives to their representation of issues of migration and migrant experiences. The analysis in chapter three of this dealt mostly with a critical appraisal of the approach to representing migration and migrant experiences in the films *OzoemenaOzubulu* (2018), *The Billionaires* (2017) and *Money Making Machine* (2015). A major take home from the analysis is the monotonic representation of migration in a seductive and romantic manner. In effect, the researcher observed that the feature films under study narrated migrant experiences from in a way that foreshadows migration as a quick patch to the socio-economic maladies that afflict the teeming populace in Nigeria. Considering empirical data on the issue of migration especially as it concerns Nigeria, the representation can be said to be mostly illusive and highly misleading.

The documentary films on the other hand were direct and unequivocally blunt with their representations of the migration and migrant experiences. The documentaries through direct engagements with migrants in their respective places of settlement gave voice to the many horrors that characterize migrant experiences in both Europe, Africa and the transit paths. The representations direct contrast the narrative in the feature and shows migration, especially the irregular migration as a quicker path to depression, dejection and sometimes death. It however

shows that regular migrants may have future which is guaranteed by years of self-development and skill learning.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Films have tremendous power to influence and shape how people see the world. How sensitive issues like irregular migration are treated in film narratives to a great extent will influence people's attitude to such issues. Nollywood with its great appeal amongst the majority of the population has unimaginable potentials as tools for mass orientation. It is therefore imperative to have a balanced reportage of issues to reflect alternative dimensions in order to avoid creation of mass hysteria. Single stories have the power to destroy and perpetually subject the society to all forms of frustrations, dejection, depression and disappointments. It enhances an illusionistic existence which when confronted with the truth tends to crack and break the basic resistance man has for surviving precarious conditions. The single stories of migration in Nollywood feature films are therefore toxic and unhealthy for the continued consumption by the Nigerian audience.

Nollywood in itself has been positioned as the cultural core of Nigeria. This is because it has amassed tremendous followership among Nigerians many of which form the irregular migrant population. Thus, as a cultural instrument, it has become very effective for the dissemination of information, formation of ideas and the projection of socio-political propaganda. Treatment of sensitive issues like migration is therefore bound to be taken seriously as it helps in the formation of opinion especially among the non-critical audience. Continuous representations of migration as gay and worthwhile without the comparative narrative of its gory experiences will only help in the promotion of irregular migration in Nigeria. It will also encourage brain drain which spells doom for the future of the country. It is therefore very pertinent to devise means of making

Nollywood feature films balance its narrative of migration as that will help intended migrants develop a better understanding of migration and the numerous dangers inherent in irregular migration. There is an obvious potential in the use of the feature format as an advocacy which also has an equal effect if used inversely. The potential of Nollywood feature films as advocacy tools for the campaign against irregular mobility is endless considering its reach. A more objective approach to treating sensitive narratives like migration will go a long way in saving the country the many loss of human capital it encounters as a result migration on a daily basis.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Having critically x-rayed the weaknesses of Nollywood feature films in narrating migration from an objective perspective, the researcher recommends that:

- i. Workshops between government agencies like NAPTIP, Nigerian Immigration Services (NIS) and the Ministry of External Affairs and Nollywood stake holders will go a long way in sensitizing the Nollywood film makers on the dangers of narrating migration from a single perspective. Such sensitization must be geared towards honest partnerships that will enhance a mental upgrade in narrating migration.
- ii. Regulatory boards like Nigeria Film and Video Censors Board should also be made to live up to its duty of regulating mentally damaging contents in narrating migration. Stiff measures should be put in place in order to ensure that stories on migration in Nollywood feature films are balanced in such a way that the audience has the exposure to the real truths of migraton.

- iii. The government should commission feature film projects aimed at countering the misleading myths of migration and providing a more balance perspective on irregular migration and the dangers therein.



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