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AMA ... is a journal of Theatre, Film, Humanities, and Cultural Studies. It is a peer-reviewed journal published by the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. The journal affords Academics opportunity to publish scholarly articles in the areas of Theatre, Film, Culture, other media and Humanities. Articles on Performance, Critical- theories, Literature, Culture, Film and Cinematic Art, Music, Religion Fine and Applied Arts, Book Reviews, Interviews and other areas are accepted for review and publication by the Editorial Board of *Ama ...* Manuscripts not more than twenty-five (25) pages, typed double line spacing in twelve points Times New Roman should be submitted electronically to: amajournalunizik@gmail.com or amajournalnau@gmail.com. No dead line for submission, articles are considered in order of submission

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

With emerging trends in theatre research and scholarship, *AMA: Journal of Theatre and Cultural Studies* has maintained its stand as a dependable and reliable resource material in inter-disciplinary scholarship.

This Volume: Vol.15, No. 1, of 2021 is an eloquent testimonial to the resilience of the editorial team in ensuring a continued history of astute research and scholarship in order to guarantee adequate learning and pedagogy.

Although the articles in this volume have individual trusts, they are inadvertently related in a collective call for the revitalization of the dramatic, performing and media arts. It is actually what can be termed an "awareness" volume as the essays bother on advocacy.

Awaritoma Agoma's discourse on Solo performance titled "Solo Performances and the Restructuring of the Theatre Curriculum: A Study of Tunji Sotimiri's Performance in Solo Africa" makes a case encouraging teachers and students of Theatre Arts to pay special attention to Solo acts. He traces that evolution of Solo performance and outlines the benefits to the individual actor, the institution and the society. Similarly, Emmanuel Iroh advocates for the use of dramatic techniques in the pedagogy of prose in secondary schools. His work, "Adaptation of Novel to Dramatic Drama for Classroom Teaching: The Efficient Secondary Commercial School, Uyo Experiment" explores the use of drama as an alternative way of teaching prose and as a means of ensuring better understanding.

Martina Omorodion in her essay "Good Governance in Nigeria: The Place of Women" equally calls on women to rise up to their responsibilities as co-equals with their male counterparts in the society. She advocates for the active participation of women in politics. As Martina recognizes the fact that women are beginning to make little impact in politics, Kelechi Ogbonna and Chisimdi Ihentuge call for the utilization of the ethnic identity as a unifying factor for the political and economic growth of the nation. In their essay, "Exploring Positivity in Ethnic Identity for National Re-Integration in Nigeria: A Multimedia

Perspective" is a call for policy makers to cash in on our seeming 'unity in diversity to galvanize a united nation.

Canice Nwosu takes the role of teachers of drama further in his "The Teacher of Teachers as Developer of Human Resources: A Re-appraisal of Dan Uwandu's 'Child Development through Drama'". Here he extols the virtues of a teacher and submits that teachers are nation builders because they are character molders as well as nation builders through the formation of persons they instruct. Likewise, Felix Gbenoba, shows how the medium of drama is an effective way for the interpretation of poetry in "Drama as Style for Enhanced Patronage of Modern Nigerian Poetry: A Reading of Selected Poems in Hope Eghagha's *The Governor's Lodge*". He draws semblances of drama in the poetry of Hope Eghagha and explores how these dramatic elements have helped in a better comprehension of the poems. Equally, in "Nigeria's Female Dramatic Creativity: An Analysis of Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods* and Salami's *Sweet Revenge*", Rosemary Asen calls for an end to negative cultural practices against women. These practices, the author contends, hinder the growth and development of the womenfolk. It calls for the assertion of female rights and better collaboration amongst themselves. And Chibuike Abunike calls for a reduction in violent movies in his work "Examining Domestic Violence through the Film Medium in Nigeria: An Analysis of Selected Films". This lessening of violence in movies he believes can be achieved through proper censorship.

In another wake-up call, Josephine Odunze proffers solutions towards the revitalization of the Abuja carnival. Her essay, "The Defunct Abuja National Carnival: Towards a Rekindling of the Dying Embers" seeks avenues towards the renaissance of the Abuja Carnival. She contends that the carnival is a veritable source of revenue and great tourism potential. As Josephine is calling on cultural administrators to bring forth resources towards the rebirth of the Abuja carnival, Onyeka Ebekue and Somtoo Arinze-Umobi in "Between the Nollywood Classroom and Nollywood Practice: Absence of Synergy or Synergy of Absence" are advocating that there should be a synergy between the Nollywood film practitioners and the Nollywood academia for quality assurance in Nollywood video films.

The use of signs and symbols in dances as expressed in some war dances is explored in Tochukwu Okeke and Judith Ume's

discourse in “The Significance of Cultural Symbols in *Ogbo* traditional War Dance”. The authors use this work to underscore the importance of symbols in traditional dances and explain how such signs aid the audience’s understanding of the performance. Charles Nwadiuwe and Ebuka Ilukwe make a call for an overhaul of the Nigerian Creative Industry in order to create a level playing ground for performers through a review of the Copyright law. The article "Copyright Law and the Challenge of Piracy in Nollywood Business" advocates for stricter penalties for defaulters in the creative business. And, Ver-Or Kachii sums up these calls for a better society in his article "Theatre and Revolution in Esiaba Irobi's *Hangmen Also Die*". Here the author calls for continued use of the theatre as means of sensitization and mass orientation. It is believed that through revolutionary plays like *Hangmen Also Die* that the cries of the masses will be heard and a better society will emerge from the ashes of the old.

We look forward to receiving more articles on this advocacy for the revitalization of the performing arts and similar discourses especially works that encourage interdisciplinary research.

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EXAMINING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THROUGH THE FILM MEDIUM IN NIGERIA: ANALYSIS OF SELECTED FILMS.

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Abstract

The importance of the media as means of social interaction and communication is growing. The social impact of research has usually been analyzed through the scientific outcome. Several researchers have found that repeated viewings of violent films instill violent attitudes in the minds of the viewers. For instance, viewers, including women, appear to become more callous in the face of films portrayal of violence against women. The continuous rise in cases of domestic abuse in countries like Nigeria precipitates the need for this research inquiry. Indeed, there are so many ways the efficacy of film can work against the cause. However, violence against women in movies is gratuitously portrayed to draw and titillate audiences. This study investigated how film as a medium helps in exposing societal issues. The researcher employed the qualitative research method which entails the analysis of text, online journals and handbooks for proper content analysis and appreciation. The researcher also analyzed two Nollywood films; that is *Scream and Damaged*. Hence, the research work explored the issue of violence against women and children as evident in the two video films.

Introduction

There is an increasing recognition given to the importance of media and its positive and negative potentials in relation to researching societal issues, there is relatively little accessible evidence on what works, guidance for practitioners, or attention from donors.

The increased presence of film media in people's everyday private lives as well as institutional practices and public environments means researchers often have access to 'naturally occurring' film data. Film is increasingly the data collection tool of choice for researchers interested in the multimodal character of social interaction. The use of film has also

been expanded by increased access through the low cost of video cameras and high quality video facilities on mobile phones. According to Heath Michaels, researchers have used video (and before that film) for many years particularly in workplace studies (5).

Domestic violence has received some prominence in academic and social discourses in recent times, thus different scholars and authorities have attempted to give them definitions and concepts. Thus according to Abayomi:

Domestic violence against women is an issue of global concern that is gaining more and more prominence. It transcends national, cultural, racial and class boundaries. It is a social malady that is threatening the stable and balanced psychological development of children in the Nigerian society. Children raised in violent homes are known to imbibe violent tendencies as they grow up. (8)

In the same vein, Aihie posits that:

Domestic violence is the intentional and persistent abuse of anyone in the home in a way that causes pain, distress or injury. It refers to ‘any abusive treatment of one family member by another’ thus, violating the law of basic human rights. It includes ‘battering of intimate partners and others, sexual abuse of children, marital rape and traditional practices that are harmful to the partner’ (1).

There are various dimensions of violence in intimate partners’ relationships. In the case of violence against women, Abayomi and Kolawale highlight that “violence against women can happen anywhere, on the street, in the work place, at home or at school” (7).

It is on this premise that this study seeks to examine domestic violence through the film medium with its attendant new media features including user-generated content and the likely demands on the communication professional and practitioner to devise some form of control mechanism in a rapidly evolving industry.

Media Influence, Violence and Society

Each violent act should be understood in the context of its own political, social and cultural context in addition to its specific media system if we are to understand the best media practices to pursue. Violence today is, in many cases, more complex and multidimensional than ever before. For instance, Efetie E. R observes that most deaths occur during

domestic violence rather than between states and regular armies (para 2). Over the past decade there has been an increase in violence relapse rate. Violence is less likely to be resolved through traditional political settlements due mainly to the emergence of disagreement that tends to undermine its legitimacy.

Most people would rapidly agree that what we see, read or hear via the media influences and does produce a response in us. For example, watching a violence film can make one violent, a television sitcom or comedy can tickle us to laughter and a disturbing news report can make us feel afraid, worried or angry. For instance, the meteorological predictions of heavier rainfall and in effect worse flooding for the year 2013 had some Nigerians worried after the massive flood disaster of the previous year. It is the power which the media wields over the society that advertisers exploit. Groups, organizations and people would not, otherwise pay over half a million naira to place a spot advert on national television. (Ekwuazi H. 34).

At one time, the media bound people culturally, especially early radio and television networks. People across a nation, whether diverse or otherwise, heard the same broadcast- comedy, drama, music, news and sports. In Nigeria the early radio and television stations WNBC, the FRCN and NTA had the monopoly. The result was a strong cultural cohesion where the children could tell the moral lessons culled from *'Tales by Moonlight'* and the adults could swap stories about the recalcitrant, mean and moody Uncle Gaga of *'Cockcrow at Dawn'*.

Media and Advocacy

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) developed a holistic framework consisting of eight pillars of peace that are both interdependent and mutually reinforcing, such that improvements in one factor would tend to strengthen others and vice versa. According to IEP, one of these pillars is the free flow of information, which covers how easily citizens can gain access to information, whether the media is free and independent, as well as the extent to which citizens are informed and engaged in the political process. A recent rapid evidence assessment commissioned by DFID suggests that film, radio, TV programming and digital media can positively affect people's attitudes towards others thereby improving social cohesion. However, the report (IEP) notes, the transition from attitudinal change to behaviour is left unexplored in the body of evidence and it is unclear whether such changes are durable, or

can be readily reversed if conflict returns. Some research assessments conclude there is not yet sufficient empirical evidence to confirm or reject claims that media promotes or prevents conflict and there is a reliance on anecdotal evidence to illustrate the media's positive impact on democracy, governance and accountability.

There is also a lack of data showing how many conflicts have been averted and what methods work best because metrics of success for conflict prevention are notoriously hard to come by given that the optimal outcome, the absence of conflict could hypothetically have been achieved without any intervention at all.

James Deane of BBC Media Action argues that:

Media and communication increasingly matter in fragile states, in different ways according to the country. But...while media and communication sectors sometimes create the conditions for sustainable political settlements, at other times they undermine the chances of them. (4)

Women are often considered to be *underrepresented* whether as media practitioners, objects of news coverage or other subject matter that is termed important such as politics or finance. This underrepresentation creates a picture of no importance as they do not hold positions that are termed important in media houses such as news editor or media director nor are their success stories given prominence. Women are often placed in non-visible positions and this enforces the cultural belief that men are more important and should get more attention and exalted positions in the workplace and be objects of news coverage. Also reflecting this under-representation is the news selection criteria which tend to push topics relevant to women to the margins of the news. Thus, this suggests that what is of interest to women is less important than that which interests' men.

Peters further explained that; one contributing factor to this underrepresentation of women as top media officers is the cultural definition of who should be the head. (42) In a patriarchal society such as Nigeria, it is culturally expected that women be reverential, subservient and subordinates to men. Little wonder then that women's stories are not given prominence in mainstream media due to marginalization of women in the creative industry. It is important therefore to have enough women in positions of power in the media ecosystem. Gross argued that,

“women capable of acknowledging that every story is a potential gender story will be an instrumental factor in creating the conditions that will ensure equality of coverage” (29). In support of this argument, Mill quoting Wood states that more women occupying executive and positions of authority would “offer more positive portrayals of women” (32).

Social Learning Theory

This work is hinged on Social Learning Theory which was propounded by Albert Bandura. This theory maintains that individuals learn social behaviours by observing and imitating other people. Imitation of models is the most important element in how children learn. This process can be seen in the development of language, aggression, and moral decision-making. Moreso, social Learning theory avers that family violence arises due to many contextual and situation factors. Contextual factors include individual/couple characteristics, stress, violence in the family, or an aggressive personality. Situational factors include substance abuse and financial difficulties. Social learning theory also extends these factors onto the influence of children growing up within a combination of these external forces. Social learning theory is one of the most popular explanatory perspectives in marital violence literature. Often conceptualized as the “cycle of violence” or “intergenerational transmission theory” when applied to the family, the theory states that people model behavior that they have been exposed to as children. Violence is learned through role models provided by the family (parents, siblings, relatives, and boyfriends/girlfriends), either directly or indirectly (i.e., witnessing violence), it is reinforced in childhood, and continues in adulthood as a coping response to stress or as a method of conflict resolution (Leff and Posner 22).

Albert Bandura as quoted by Stephen Leff and Posner strongly asserts that:

Individuals become aggressive towards family members because their behaviours are learned through operant conditioning and observing behavior in role models. Operant conditioning is the strengthening of behaviours through positive and negative reinforcement (Leff and Posner 12).

Thus, during childhood and adolescence, observations of how parents and other significant people behave in intimate relationships provide an

initial learning of behavioural alternatives which are “appropriate” for these relationships. Children infer rules or principles through repeated exposure to a particular style of parenting. If the family of origin handled stresses and frustrations with anger and aggression, the child who has grown in such an environment is at greater risk for exhibiting those same behaviours, witnessed or experienced, as an adult. Gelles states that:

...not only does the family expose individuals to violence and techniques of violence, but the family teach approval for the use of violence. Children learn that violence is acceptable within the home and is an effective method for solving problems or changing the behavior of others (68).

The primary hypothesis for the intergenerational cycle of violence is that violent and abusive adults learned this behaviour as a result of being the victims of or witnesses of aggressive and abusive behaviour as children. If children are abused by their parents, they may internalize beliefs and patterns of behaviours that lead them to abuse their own children; if children observe parents who hit each other, they may develop a greater propensity toward abusing their own spouses. Transmission of violent behaviour occurs through processes of modeling, failure to learn appropriate ways to manage conflict, and reinforcement for violent behavior.

Synopsis of *Scream*

Three wealthy couples living in different places have domestic violence as their common predicament. The three men; Ken, Leon and Kelvin are so selfish and wicked that their wives are void of love and full of fight, disagreement, beating and rape. The wives were beaten and raped at a slightest provocation even though it does not call for such ill-treatment. They are sexually molested that they do not have a say in the affairs of their families. They become prisoners of violence and not protective of their husbands. Leon and Ken are best of friends and always talking on how to subjugate the rights of their wives, owing to the saying that birds of a feather flock together. These men have the same ideology about women. Sandra, a marriage and relationship counselor whom the other two women look up to for help willingly finds herself a victim of what she preaches against. The women coincidentally become friends and join forces to liberate themselves and say ‘No’ to domestic violence. Justice is finally served to the husbands respectively even though one of the wives, Esther, dies fighting.

Synopsis of *Damaged*

A prominent married couple Taiwo and Sarah, played by Kalu Ikeagwu and Uche Jombo respectively, have a life that is marred by domestic violence. When things are going well, their relationship is blissful, but when it is going badly, it is hellish. On one occasion, the husband surprises his wife by spelling out 'I love you' with petals by their swimming pool but when they fight, it is vicious and violent. Quick-tempered Taiwo appeases his wife by buying her gifts after they fight. Their home life affects their children in the worst way. Their son is violent at school and their daughter is withdrawn to the point of muteness, which is her own way of protesting, but the couple refuses to see the violent nature of their relationship as responsible until it is too late.

Violence against Women and Children in *Scream* and *Damaged*

The film narrative presented three women with contrasting spouses. These three families have domestic violence as the 'watch word'. They suffer and experience domestic violence in different dimensions. The researcher categorized these families into A, B, and C respectively for clarity.

The family A in which Ken, Esther and their daughters are bedeviled with domestic violence. Ken is so overbearing and domineering that his wife Esther does not have a say over anything in the family. Her opinion does not matter as far as her husband is concerned. This is a typical example of patriarchal dominance. Her opinion is ignored and her husband's desires and wishes come first in everything.

This is exemplified in one of the scenes captured in the excerpt below:

Ken: (angrily) Go and make me another breakfast.

Esther: Please, the kids are running late to school and you should have told me earlier that you no longer eat noodles. What is wrong with the food?

Ken: You ask me what is wrong with the food. You made me a stone meal and you are asking me what is wrong with the food.

Esther: You always like your noodles like this. What happen now?

Ken: Because I am a man and my preferences can change anytime.

Esther: But you should relate the changes to me next time. I am not a soothsayer to know when your desires change.

Ken: Go in there and make me a fresh meal.

Esther: What can I make in two minutes? The kids are running late to school.

Ken: That is your business. My desires come first. You have 10 minutes and your time starts now.

The other families suffer different but similar acts of violence domestically that the women coincidentally met at a mini mart. Serah who calls herself a relationship and marriage councilor advises them in her office but on getting home that very day; she gets the beating of her life and sustains bruises. She becomes so weak and discouraged as she becomes the victim of what she preaches against. She lacks the zeal and power to counsel the two other women. Sandra is raped by her husband at the slightest provocation and subjected into being a full house wife. Subsequently, the husbands are reminded in prison for domestic violence against the women. Unfortunately, Esther died fighting the cause.

Damaged portrays the abuse of marriage and high level of domestic violence, incessant battering and acts of violence. Taiwo, the husband to Sarah is very temperamental and believes in the patriarchal system which makes him the man of the house and that his authority and words supersedes the wife's. Again, he always gets very angry at any slightest provocation and ends up beating his wife. The film shows how psychologically unbalanced Taiwo is, for not being considerate of Sarah getting seriously injured while dragging her down the stairs. However, once he is calm and realizes his actions or wants something from the wife, he apologizes. This is seen where Taiwo is pleading with his wife to forgive him and perform her marital duties (sexual intercourse) to him. The wife initially refuses to yield to his advances but, after a little persuasion from the husband, she yields. At this point, Sarah begins to laugh and starts playing with her husband only for the son to come in and disrupt them. Taiwo's mood changes immediately and he tries to persuade the son to go back to his room which he refuses as the mother pampers him to sleep on their bed. Then, Taiwo gets angry hitting his two hands on the bed and checks his erected manhood.

Their incessant quarrels and fights are extended to their kids. This is seen when the Junior's school head teacher narrates their child's behaviour in

school. The director uses a flashback technique to establish their son's behaviour of how Junior settles every argument in a fight. Psychologically, the fights have made their daughter stop communicating with them in words. She now prefers writing a note to tell them her wants. All these culminated into Bisi having psychological trauma such that when she sees a street fight, she replaces the fighters with her parents (Taiwo and Sarah).

Sarah refuses being subjected to the house. This is why she goes to work in her father's company and even buys a car for herself. Her status as a working class lady showcases a society where the place of women and children are not important, but the doorsteps of survival, depending on what the survival appears to be eventually; where the do-or-die battle ends invariably without a possible female emancipation. She often disagrees with her husband. Consequently, during their fights she often frees herself from the clenched fist of her husband by hitting him with objects around the house that is within her reach. Taiwo and Sarah's incessant fights result in the psychological imbalance of their daughter which leads to the replacement of images. Bisi starts keeping to herself and her thoughts rove about her parents' series of arguments and fights while walking on the road and it finally leads to Bisi's death with a scissors being plunged into her stomach. Thus, the technique used in showcasing her psychological imbalance is the use of blurred clips of images of her parents fighting.

Conclusion

The advancement in science and technology of media has quickened global changes and has placed great responsibility of enormous dimensions on today's media. According to Aliede, "multiplicity of compelling challenges stares communication professionals in the face" (317).

Media in this part of the world, in all indications, does not promise a short life span. Its popularity speaks volume. The onus lies on professional practitioners to harness the potential of some films to mold character and ethics while propagating right cultural values.

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