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Crossing Over: The Influence of Black American Female Representation on Nigerian Films and Music Videos

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CROSSING OVER:
THE INFLUENCE OF BLACK AMERICAN FEMALE REPRESENTATION ON
NIGERIAN FILMS AND MUSIC VIDEOS

by

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A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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Sharon Stone (2002), *\$1 Dollar* (2002), *Pretty Woman* (2004), *American Dream* (2006), and *Beyonce & Rihanna* (2008) are examples of popular Nigerian films. Given the fact that many of the titles include references to American celebrities and themes, one might initially think that these films were Hollywood productions. Importantly, the movie titles illustrate the fact that the American entertainment industry is very influential in many societies. For example, in Nigeria, hip hop, rap, and R& B are the most popular forms of music. These genres originated in the U.S. but have crossed over into many African countries. Many young people listen to these genres of music, instead of the more traditional African styles of music that their parents listened to. The films mentioned in the beginning are well-known names of the American culture.

The influence of the American culture may be a result of the growing popularity of Nigerian films and music videos, in America and in Africa. The growth and popularity, specifically, is due to the negative and sexual depiction/ portrayal of women in these forms of media. For example, in America sex sells; films, TV shows, and music containing sexual themes and imagery are usually popular forms of entertainment. In “Hollywood's Negative Impact on Society” Kelley states that “The old cliché, “sex sells,” is very true in the world of Hollywood. Hollywood films and music videos glorify sex” (Kelley, 2010). It seems as if Nigerians are adopting this same attitude in order to increase the demand for Nigerian film and music videos.

Nigerians borrowing certain aspects of culture from Black Americans results in similar representations of women in films and videos. This paper explores the influence of African-American female representation on Nigerian films and music videos. I begin by recounting a brief history of Black American female representation in film, TV, and

music videos, which is followed by a discussion of the Nollywood Industry. Nollywood, which will be explained further in this paper, is the Nigerian film industry. The film industry has been growing since it began in the early 1990s. Upon explaining Nollywood, the paper is followed by a discussion of the way (Black) American culture is influencing certain aspects of the Nigerian culture, which includes the film industry and the Nigerian music video industry. The last section of the paper will be comprised of textual analyses of two Nigerian films, *Beautiful Faces* (2004) and *Love Games* (2008), and three music Nigerian videos, “Tongolo” (2005), “Ifunanya,” and “Naira” (2008). The analyses will examine the manner in which representations of African-American women have transitioned to the Nigerian entertainment industry.

The Past and Present: Stereotypical Portrayals of Black Women In TV, Film, and Music Videos

In order to understand the manner in which depictions of African American women in the media are influencing Nigerian female representation, it is important to discuss the historic portrayals of Black American actresses’ in film and TV. In *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, & Bucks*, Bogle discusses three images that black females were often relegated to playing in early Hollywood films. The roles played by females were the coon, mulatto, and the mammy. An example of a female portraying a coon, is “Topsy” who was played by Mona Ray in the 1927 version of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Topsy was clownish and used as comic relief in the film. The character, starred in her own film called *Topsy and Eva* (1927) (Bogle, 1974, p. 8). Bogle (1974) explains that “[coons] appeared in a series of black films presenting the Negro as an amusement object

and black buffoon. They lacked the single-mindedness of tom.” (p. 7). According to Bogle (1974):

Before its death, the coon developed into the most blatantly degrading of all black stereotypes. The pure coons emerged as... unreliable, crazy, lazy, subhuman creatures good for nothing more than eating watermelons, stealing chickens, shooting crap, or butchering the English language. A character named Rastus was just such a figure. (p. 8)

While the coon was a character of amusement, the mulatto was unhappy with her divided racial inheritance. Thus, the mulatto caricature was often referred to as “the tragic mulatto” because the character was bi-racial (half black and half white). In many films audiences were led to believe that the mulatto character’s life would have been better if she was fully white. Bogle (1974) explains:

Humanity’s Cause, In Slavery Days, and The Octoroon, all [films] made around 1913, explored the plight of a fair- skinned mulatto attempting to pass for white. Usually the mulatto is made likeable—even sympathetic (because of her white blood, no doubt) – and the audience believes that the girl’s life could have been productive and happy had she not been a “victim of divided racial inheritance”. (p. 9)

Examples of mulattoes are visible in *Pinky* (1949) and *Imitation of Life* (1934 and 1959). In *Pinky*, Patricia “Pinky” Johnson played by Jeanne Crain is very light skinned (she is half black and half white) and passes in the film as being fully white. Pinky hides her black heritage from everyone, while she is in school in the North. In both versions of

Imitation of Life the story deals with two young girls, Peola and Sarah Jane, that were both very light skinned (and both half black and half white). Both girls also pass as being fully white, because of their confusion of their identity. This confusion of their identity, results in them disliking and being embarrassed of their dark skinned mothers. In all three films the females hid their identities from people, because they felt that it would set them back and hurt their images.

While the mulatto was someone generally a pretty character with a fair complexion, the mammy was on the opposite end of the spectrum. According to Bogle, the mammy has dark skin and is “distinguished... by her sex and her fierce independence. She is usually big, fat, and cantankerous” (p. 10). Mammies were headstrong women and matriarchs to white families. One of the best known examples of a mammy is Hattie McDaniel in *Gone with the Wind* (1939). In *Black America, Body Beautiful*, Bailey (2008) describes Hattie McDaniel as “a heavy-set, dark-complected African American woman who often played the maids or the mammy in major motion pictures” (p. 99). In addition to Hattie McDaniel, other actresses that played the mammy were Ethel Waters who played the grandmother in *Pinky* (1949) and Louise Beavers who played Peola’s mother in *Imitation of Life* (1934).

The coon, mulatto, and mammy were all negative roles that Black women mainly played, early on, before the 1960s. The way that African Americans were depicted on American film from the 1920s to the 1960s was demeaning in a few ways. Since then there has been very little change on the way they are depicted. According to Bogle (1974):

In the 1960s, they appeared as angry militants. Because the guises were always changing, audiences were sometimes tricked into believing the depictions of the American Negro were altered, too. (p. 22)

These images of Black American women were so dominant in film that they crossed over to TV where Black continued to be misrepresented. For example, in *What's Happening!!* (1976-1979) Mabel Thomas and Shirley Wilson both portrayed roles reminiscent of mammies. Besides the coon, mulatto and mammy images, Black American females of the 20th century did not have many other images in films and TV to identify with. Many of them felt that the television shows and films during that time portrayed them in a negative light. This can affect the way a person views his or herself. The way some people view society and the world around them is heavily influenced by what they view from TV and film. In *Black America, Body Beautiful*, Bailey (2008) stated the following:

American television is extremely powerful in establishing visual images and our self-perception of society, but most importantly how our society is perceived by others. These visual images, particularly as they represent specific groups such as African Americans, can either provide a deeper understanding and appreciation of those people, or they can provide more of a misconception and stereotype of a people. UnfortunatelyAmerican television and movie industries have historically portrayed African Americans in more of the stereotypical roles, both culturally and physically. (p. 84)

The people in power and in charge of showing and distributing these forms of media, which are usually men, are to blame for the bad depiction of women. Although women

make up the majority in a society, they still are considered a minority because of their gender. Edgar & Sedgwick (2002) stated that “Women, for example, may be a majority in terms of sheer number, but are minoritarian if their interests are marginalized by the dominant power structures and signifying systems which operate in a society or culture in such a way as to place them in a position of social inferiority” (p. 241). It is made apparent that women are not the creators of these media industries, because of the negative depiction of females in certain TV networks such as MTV, VH1 and B.E.T.

Bailey explains how Black women are negatively portrayed in certain popular forms of media. He asserts that “the one major media venue on mainstream American (MTV, VH1) and black- oriented networks such as Black Entertainment Television (B.E.T) that tend to poorly represent the cultural and physical imagery of African Americans throughout the 1990s and even today are the music videos” (Bailey, pg. 90). Bailey goes on to discuss how music videos contain stereotypical images of black women. He explains:

First, the videos emphasize black women’s bodies. Second, they construct a one-dimensional black womanhood. Finally, the presence of male sponsors in the videos and a focus on themes of conspicuous consumption and romance further exhibit the types of social constraints faced by young black women. (p. 90)

All of this results in the negative depiction of African American women in music videos. Having the male rappers stand in front of the (usually half naked) women further illustrates how men, whether Black or any other race, are still in control of women.

Since men are in control they have a say so on how women will be portrayed. Bailey (2008) explains that in contemporary entertainment, African American women

generally appear as one of eight stereotypical characters. They include the Diva, Gold Digger, Freak, Dyke, Gangster, Sister Savior, Earth Mother, and Baby Mama. Bailey goes on to explain that each caricature has its own unique characteristics:

The Diva- Projects a woman who has sex to enhance her social status, even though she may already be financially independent and middle class or above.

Gold Digger- Illustrates a woman who intentionally has sex for money or material goods.

Freak- Portrayed as a woman desiring and engaging in “wild and kinky” sex with a multitude of partners for her own gratification.

Dyke- Projects a self-sufficient and “hard” woman who has rejected sex with men and may have adopted masculine postures.

Gangster- A “street tough” woman who has sex to demonstrate solidarity with, or to help, her man; she may also be involved in gangs or gang culture.

Sister Savior- A pious woman who rejects all but marital, procreative sex for religious reasons.

Earth Mother- Portrays a woman who has sex for spiritual or nationalistic reasons to show her support for “the race” or the “the nation.

Baby Mama- A woman who has had a child by a man but is no longer his partner. She has sex to maintain a financial or emotional connection with the man through the child (p. 91).

The aforementioned images permeate contemporary films, TV, programs, and music videos. Some good examples of women depicting the “baby mama” image are in TV reality show *Tiny and Toya* (2009-2010) and in the film *Baby Boy* (2001).

There were so many images that black women portrayed in American entertainment in the past and present. These images brought up many issues such as females being demeaned as sexual objects, the lighter skin tone controversy and others.

Some of these same issues and images that Black American women portray are influencing Nigerian's representation of women in their entertainment industry. This will be seen later on, in the textual analysis of this paper.

The Nollywood Industry and Defining American Culture

As previously stated, Nollywood is the Nigerian Film Industry. In "The Emerging Video Film Industry in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects," Ebewo (2007) explains that Nollywood began in the early 1990s, with the release of Chris Obi Rapu's *Living in Bondage* (1992) which tells the story of a businessman who joins a cult, and attains power and wealth by murdering his wife. *Bondage* was successful after its release prompting the Nollywood industry to release ensuing films such as *Circle of Doom* (1993), *Glamour Girls* (1994), *Nneka the Pretty Serpent* (1994), *Ikuku* (1995), and *Rattle Snake* (1995). With the exception of *Glamour Girls*, all the films featured Igbo dialogue; however, they also included English subtitles.

In "Nollywood Films and the Cultural Imperialism Hypothesis," Akpabio & Kayode Mustapha-Lambe (2008) discusses the high production costs associated with creating a Nollywood film. According to Akpabio & Kayode Mustapha-Lambe, due to the expensiveness of film stock and other aspects of production, Nollywood features are shot on videotape. As a result, filmmakers are able to make more films more quickly. By the year 2001, they had already recorded 3,381 Nollywood films. Today, the Nollywood industry creates about 50 movies a week and grosses (before any deductions and taxes are taken out) approximately 200 million dollars yearly (Ebewo, 2007). It recently surpassed Hollywood as the world's second largest film producer. More specifically, in 2009

“Nollywood released 872 productions – all in video format – while the United States produced 485 major films” (“Nigeria Surpasses Hollywood”, 2009).

The quick releases and high demand of Nollywood films increases the popularity of the films. Ebewo (2007) asserts that the increase in Nollywood films being watched in homes may also be due to the Nollywood stories being created to relate to issues the audience faces. In the Nollywood films there are usually typical storylines that the creators of these films focus on. Ebewo explains that typical themes in Nollywood films include, poverty, voodoo, religion, witchcraft, violence, prostitution, “money worship,” and over exaggerated dramatic behaviors.

In addition to discussing Nigerian cinema’s most prevalent themes, Ebewo also discusses the representation of women, explaining that they are objectified and portrayed negatively. Specifically, women are constructed to appeal to the “male dominated audience.” Most women are depicted as prostitutes and witches or free lovers (Ebewo, 2007). In “Nollywood: The Influence of the Nigerian Movie Industry on African Culture,” Onuzulike (2007) in conjunction with Ebewo, also discussed on some of the reoccurring themes and storylines presented in Nollywood films. Onuzulike mentioned that the themes of the Nollywood films include: witchcraft (aka juju), violence, drama, horror, love and romance. However, Nollywood having some outrageous scenes and storylines does not stop its growing popularity among people all over the world.

The Nollywood industry is growing and people in all of Africa (including Ghana, Kenya, Congo, Namibia, etc.) and in the U.S. are watching the films (Akpabio & Kayode Mustapha-Lambe, 2008). Today, actors and actresses in the films usually speak the

English language, which allows for everyone regardless of race to be able to understand the storylines and parts of the Nigerian culture.

There are many criteria that make up the word culture. Each race and ethnicity has their own culture. In *Race and Ideology: language, symbolism, and popular culture*, Spears (1999) states that American Hegemonic Culture can be defined as “Those aspects of culture that are promoted by the state and capitalist interests, and are shared across ethnic, racial, and class lines in the United States” (p. 131). Thus, American culture is a unified way of living that everyone living in America can generally relate to. Culture is what makes us American and helps us differentiate ourselves from the rest of the world. However, because of cultural imperialism the American culture is being shared amongst many other countries.

The American culture could be the main dominant culture for many other races and ethnicities. In “The impact of American Culture on other cultures: Language and cultural identity,” Cismas (2010) stated the following:

The American culture is a diverse, uncommon melting pot... people from Asia, Africa and North America also contributed to the new emerging civilization, influencing popular tastes in daily life. As a result, the American culture possesses an unusual mixture of patterns and forms forged from among its diverse populations, and its complexity has created a society... that produces a uniquely casual personal style that identifies Americans everywhere. (p. 388)

American culture is shared among people and countries all over the world. There are many ways in which people identify with the American culture. For example, in many countries especially in Nigeria, (the American) English is the main language spoken in

films, and in music. Language helps us understand one another's culture. In *Cultural Theory, The Key Concepts*, Edgar & Sedgwick (2002) state that "The two most important or general elements of culture may be the ability of human beings to construct and to build, and the ability to use language (understood most broadly, to embrace all forms of sign system)" (p. 241). Being able to speak American English is one way that helps a person identify with the American culture.

Along with language are shared beliefs and ideas about one another that help us identify with a culture. Sometimes those beliefs can be stereotypical, negative and false beliefs that have been passed down for years. The media sometimes enhances these negative beliefs by focusing on what is portrayed on TV. Black American females depicted on TV, film, and in music videos since the 1900s is a good example of these negative beliefs.

The Method: Textual Analysis

There are divided viewpoints on whether there is influence of American culture, specifically representations of women, in Nigerian entertainment. Some authors feel that the Nollywood industry is becoming more Americanized in portraying their women similar to how women are portrayed in the U.S. films. Others feel that the Nollywood film industry is still incorporating traditional African cultures and values into its films and the women roles have not become negative or have changed over the years.

The Nollywood films and Nigerian music videos that will be analyzed will show how women are represented negatively, similarly to the way that women have been and are still currently being portrayed in Black American entertainment. In addition to that, from what was explained earlier about the different images in which women have been

and are represented in Black American entertainment, the representation of women in Nigerian entertainment can now be analyzed. I will examine the following 3 categories.

The categories are:

1. *Titles and Storylines*- Are the titles offensive against women? What is the storyline?
2. *Dress forms*- What are the women wearing and does it match with the lyrics or storyline? Are the clothes too revealing?
3. *Sex/ violence (IN THE FILMS)*- Are there any issues of intimacy? Are the love/sex scenes explicit? How are the women being portrayed overall?

Representation of Nigerian Women Today and the Results of the Method

The two Nollywood films that I have chosen to analyze are *Beautiful Faces* (2004) and *Love Games* (2008). *Beautiful Faces* was directed by Kabat Esosa Egbon and it stars Padita Agu, Ini Edo, Stephanie Okereke, Uche Iwuji, Muna Obiekwe, and Oge Okoye. The film deals with issues of gangs on a college campus. One of the leading actress in the movie, Stephanie Okereke, is the leader of a gang and she is also a lesbian (homosexuality is a new issue in Nigerian movies and would definitely not have been incorporated in a Nollywood storyline a few years ago). The issue of homosexuality has never been seen in older films because of it being taboo even today in Nigeria. However, when the filmmakers do portray homosexuality in Nollywood films, just as it was in *Beautiful Faces* it is only dealing with women to women relationships.

Beautiful Faces deals with the gangs battling for power and domination of the campus. Along with gang issues, the themes of the film included infidelity and abuse in a relationship. There was one particular scene where the dark skinned wife Doris (Uche

Iwuji) confronts her husband Mike (Bob-Manuel Udokwu) and the mistress Vicki (Oge Okoye), who Mike is having an affair with. The mistress Vicki happens to be the pretty light skinned girl with lighter eyes. Both Doris and Vicki begin to argue in the middle of the streets where Doris accuses Mike of cheating on her and abusing her in the past. Doris calls Vicki a prostitute, a gold digger, and other degrading words several times during that scene. There was also another scene where Vicki and her two girlfriends are talking in the dining room table. Vicki begins to discuss her relationship with the married man Mike. She goes on to brag to her friends about how much money Mike gives her and spends on her. Vicki describes Mike to her girlfriends as just one of her three sugar daddies, but the best one. In this film, there was more violence shown than sexual acts towards women. As far as attire, the women wore clothing based on their roles, for example, if they were pretending to be a promiscuous girl they would wear more revealing clothing

Love Games was directed by Moses Inwang and is starring Richard Bezuidenhout, Ini Edo, Jackie Appiah, Uche Jombo, Adaora Ukoh and Meryl Shikwambane. This film, just like *Beautiful Faces*, also dealt with issues of infidelity. The film is a romantic drama. It is about a man named "Slow" (Richard Bezuidenhout) that is engaged with a woman named BiBi (Ini Edo). Bibi happens to have four sisters. The couple is madly in love, but Slow's promiscuous past comes to haunt him because he has slept with all four of his fiancé's sisters. Everyone knows about this except for Bibi. Throughout the film some of the sisters started catching and reminiscing on the romantic feelings they each had for Slow. In this film there was one specific instance when one of BiBi's sisters Kemi (Meryl Shikwambane) portrayed the role of "seductress". Slow and Kemi were in

the living room already on the couch kissing, Slow wanted to stop but Kemi insisted that they continue and have sex. Slow then begins to call Kemi some degrading words but that does not offend or change anything. In addition to being called the degrading words, Kemi did not care that Slow was her sister's fiancé all she wanted and cared about at that moment was having sex with him. Although it is obvious that Slow was a promiscuous guy for sleeping with all of BiBi's sisters in the past, all four sisters still portrayed the role of the seductress. Kemi in addition, portrayed the role of the "always sexually available Black woman" because just like Slow she was very promiscuous. Uche Jombo who played BiBi's older sister Chelsea, in the film was also the seductress toward Slow but portrayed the matriarch with her younger sisters. There were several times in the film where she gave advice to her younger sisters. Chelsea told them that they should all agree to stop having sex with Slow, including herself, because BiBi was their sister and they should not hurt her. This film has a lot of sex in it. There was not that much violence during the film just towards the end of the film. None of the women were really dressed inappropriately only during the times when they wanted to seduce Slow or use their sex to gain something that they wanted.

The three Nigerian music videos that I have chosen to examine are P-Square's "E No Easy" (2009), D'Banj's "Tongolo" (2005), and H2O's "Naira" (2008). P-Square is a musical group comprised of twin brothers, Peter and Paul Okoye. P-Square's music video "E No Easy" (2009) featuring J Martins was directed by Jude "Engees" Okoye, which is the twins' older brother. This song and lyrics were based on the idea that God should be praised and thanked for all that he has blessed us with in the past and present. This song is saying that it is not easy to be successful in this world and that it takes a lot

of hard work. It is saying that sometimes a person may fail but he or she should keep working hard. Also, when a person does become successful he or she must thank God. And the song lyrics are also saying that even if you do not get money; do not complain because that is God's way. That is how he wanted it to be. The message of praising God would have been made more effective if they would have taken out the 15 or so women that were in the video wearing club/nightlife clothing, dancing, and flashing money. The women all have on high heel shoes, short dresses and skirts, and lots of makeup. Some of the women are revealing their legs, breasts, and navels, but yet based on the lyrics this song is supposed to be about spirituality and faith. It is obvious that the music video has no correlation to the actual song. The women never have any lines. They never seem to have any purpose in the video besides to show off their body, booty and/ or beauty. The majority of the women in "E No Easy" are light skinned or fair in complexion. It was interesting that these women are all considered attractive and beautiful women. In "Effects", Stephens and Few (2007) state the following about African American's preferences, specifically male preferences, when it comes to beauty:

African American body types, skin color, and hair texture clearly served as identifying racial markers of beauty. Overall... boys gave more value to Westernized standards of beauty than the girls did by selecting those sexual images that embodied such traits as long hair and lighter skin as more attractive. Those sexual images that embody these traits (e.g., long hair, shapely yet slender build, lighter skin) were generally viewed as the most attractive. (p. 259)

These traits represented exactly how the video girls in “E No Easy” looked, and might be the reason why the lighter skinned women are chosen (over other skin tones) in this music video and are valued in Nigeria and among Black Americans.

In addition to their physical appearances, the video girls in “E No Easy” demonstrated the gold digger characteristics throughout the video. There were even a few instances where the video girls would continuously open different brief cases full of money. In the video luxury cars such as the Lamborghini and the limousine are shown several times in “E No Easy” and placed in conjunction to the video girls. The video girls are either inside of these forms of vehicles or sitting on top of them, while of course fanning themselves with large amounts of cash and dancing. All of the women in this music video represented the gold digger image. By what the lyrics of this song suggests, it seems as if the true success of a man is measured by materialistic items. The amount of money and luxury cars he has, the expensive Champaign he is drinking, and of course having a beautiful women by his side (whether they are there for love or just for the money) were things that were valued in this video. According to the lyrics these three things is what is “supposed to” make a man happy, successful and make him praise God. In a way these women, “video girls”, are included in the list of materialistic items that a man obtains when he is considered successful and has made it in life. Women are portraying the role of materialistic objects. In reality they are the gold diggers and sexualized images and objects of this music video.

Women being depicted as sexual objects can also be seen in D’Banj’s “Tongolo”. D’Banj is a Nigerian artist originally from Lagos, Nigeria and London. D’Banj’s “Tongolo” music video is directed by Mo’Hits Records. In “Tongolo”, just as in P-

Square's "E No Easy" music video there were many video girls and no one looked more important than the other. However, in this video, the video girls' faces were barely ever shown and there was a huge focus on their body parts. All the video girls wore shorts and had the words "Tongolo" written on the back of their pants. The words being repeatedly shown on their shorts and having the camera men show those words, made the image of the women's behind appear on screen several times. In the African culture, just like in the Black American culture, bigger body parts are more desirable especially bigger behinds. Bailey (2008) states that:

...researchers found that African American men indicated a preference for *larger* body images in African American women than did white men for white women. In general, the researchers state that their findings support earlier studies in special populations, suggesting that a social norm may exist on a community-wide level that enables the acceptance of larger body images in African American women. (p. 32)

This is true and can be most seen on Dbanj's "Tongolo" and in more recent music videos, along with other long term stereotypes and portrayals from the older generation of Black films and TV. Black Americans and Nigerians having an appreciation for larger body parts are due to them viewing body image in a different way than other cultures such as European Americans do (Bailey, 2008, p. 13). There were several times throughout the music video where the male rapper would be sitting in between two females and the women would be slightly touching the man and both whispering things in the man's ear. Once again in these examples, both women portrayed the role of the seductress, using their sex appeal to seduce the man.

Unlike the other two musical groups, H2O is a little different because they are a male rap group of about 4 men and they are also new up and coming artists who do not have as many hits as P-Square and D'Banj. "Naira", directed by Hcode Multimedia, is also the currency used in Nigeria. In H2O's music video "Naira" each person in the group takes turns rapping about having money and what they would do with their money. I noticed that with each man having money came a "pretty girl" sitting or dancing near them in the video. In this video, just like the other two music videos, there were more than one video girl and once again no one woman looked more important than the other. In fact, besides a few differences in facial features and hairstyle it was a bit hard to tell the women apart. It just looked like they were carefully placed in the positions that they were in. The women looked a bit as props in this video. This music video sends out the message that if you're a man, having a lot of money would help you get a pretty girl and other nice things. Basically you can buy the love of a woman. The video girls wore regular everyday clothes, not too revealing. However, some of these women throughout the video would shake certain parts of their body like their breasts and would bat their eyes in front of the camera, looking vulnerable. While the women are doing all this, the men would be flashing the actual cash in front of the women and the camera. From what we now know and understand with Black American television and films, H2O's "Naira" music video was definitely an example of women again portraying the gold digger image. These women portray images of using their good looks and sex appeal in order to seduce a man into getting what they want, which is money. Throughout the video the men were also rapping to the camera and to the video girls. According to *Getting Our Groove On*, Campbell (2005) refers back to Thomas Kochman's ethnographic work in Chicago.

Based on the work Kochman states that there were three kinds of rapping identified, the second kind stated that “Rapping (sweet talking) to a honey when you’re on the make....Rapping to a woman is a colorful way of ‘asking for some [sex]” (p. 36). Based on what was just stated about the purpose of rapping, it is assumed that the men in the “Naira” video were rapping about how much money they are earning and how much they are worth and therefore they should be given sex from the “video girls” because of their money.

Thus, the two films portrayed women as sexual objects. The images that the women in these films portrayed were examples of what we now know about how woman have been portrayed in media in the past. In *Beautiful Faces*, the mistress was playing the role of a “gold digger” (in that she used the married man for money), in that same film “the strong Black woman” was played by the lesbian and leader of the gang. In *Love Games*, all four sisters played the role of the “seductress” but two of the sisters portrayed additional roles, Kemi as “the always sexually available woman” and Chelsea “the matriarch”. It was interesting being able to connect these films into the images that were described by these authors.

Although the women in all three music videos were depicted in different ways, they were all also used as props. We see this a lot in American music videos, especially with Black American music videos. It is interesting how other cultures are adopting these same ideas, images and representations and bringing them into their own culture, such as how Nigeria did with the Black American culture.

In these music videos and many others that were not discussed about in here such as Olu Maintain’s *Yahoozee* (2007) and Wande Coal’s *Bumper to Bumper* (2008) the

common themes are starting to include pretty women (and lots of them), preferably light skinned with nice figures and big booty's. In addition to the women, the music videos usually include Champaign, luxury cars, and money flashing.

Findings and Conclusion

This is an important topic of study and for people to understand and be aware of. Since both Nollywood and (Black) American Hollywood films are being distributed and shown all over the world, discussing this topic allows people to understand how women both Black American and Nigerian women are negatively being represented, portrayed, and viewed in other people's eyes. I chose to do this research topic because I felt that the American culture is being incorporated into both Nollywood films and the Nigerian music videos. I wanted to show how the American culture is being brought into countries like Nigeria, in all forms of media (film, music, TV shows etc).

In addition, analyzing the representation of women in Nigerian music videos and Nollywood films also allowed us to analyze how men are negatively portrayed and represented in these same forms of media. From my observations and based on what the history have told us about how Black Americans were described to be portrayed in the media, I have noticed that all the men in the music videos represented this player or pimp (type of man) that uses his money in order to get women and exploit them. The men all had a certain type of girl that they preferred. If it wasn't the pretty long haired light skinned girl, then it was the voluptuous girl with the big behind. I have noticed that many of the Nigerian music videos and Nollywood films are starting to depict women these days as nothing but gold diggers and seducers that uses there body or pretty faces in order to get what they want from men. None of them are portrayed as being independent

or having healthy relationships with their mates, it seems as if the women are all materialistic.

Will all these changes help the Nollywood industry or hurt it making it look more like the way Black American females are portrayed in America? Will older Nigerians or other Africans be able to still relate to these characters in the future? Although this was only two films and three music videos that I analyzed, these were just a few examples of how Nigeria is borrowing ideas from Black American entertainment and media. Just from looking at the three films it seems as if actors and actresses in the recent films are dressing, speaking, and behaving more American. It also seems as if they are adopting more of the Black American music, values, culture and lifestyle.

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