CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Study

This study aims to explore the prevalent stereotypes in the Nigerian movie industry Nollywood. Specifically, it focuses on gender, religious, and socio-cultural stereotypes perpetuated in selected Nollywood movies. By examining these stereotypes, the study aims to identify these stereotypes as to highlight their recurrence in Nollywood movies.

1.2 Scope of Study

This study examines ten Nollywood movies, namely: *Glamour Girls, Desperate Housegirls, King of Boys, Chief Daddy, Sugar Rush, End of the Wicked, Karishika, Living in Bondage: Breaking Free, Blood Money and Arusi-Iyi.* These movies were selected because they portray related instances of stereotype needed for this topic. Instances of gender, religious, and socio-cultural stereotypes are identified in these movies selected, to highlight their level of recurrence in Nollywood movies and how they may suggest the structure of the Nigerian society.

1.3 Research Methodology

For this study, a qualitative research methodology is employed to analyze and identify how Nigerian films portray gender, religious and socio-cultural stereotypes.

The data collection process involves the selection of movies that have gained popularity due to their content and impact. These films were watched closely ensuring a comprehensive exploration of these stereotypes portrayed in Nollywood cinema.

Data analysis will entail a holistic examination of each selected film to identify how these stereotypes are manifested throughout the narrative, characters, dialogue, visual elements and plotlines. The focus is on understanding how the films construct and perpetuate gender, religious, and socio-cultural stereotypes.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theory used to explore this topic is the archetypal theory. The archetypal theory is an offshoot of the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud, propounded by Carl Gustav Jung, a disciple of Sigmund Freud. However, both theories are significantly different as while psychoanalysis is fixated on the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, and the inherent psychological motivations behind human actions, the archetypal theory dovetails into broader concerns like the experiences of individuals in a social group, shared images and symbols derive from antique times reflected in the myths and takes passed down across generations within cultures. (Gormez and Gorunus, 348)

Drawing from its root in psychoanalysis, Carl Jung considers archetypes as collective or personal unconscious, where the mind is a battlefield of personal, collective and contradictory psychic forces that are reflected in beliefs, repetitive images found in every culture, symbols, and how they are presented by an artist or storyteller (58). Archetypes are a depiction of something that has existed in primal times since cerebral humans existed and the archetypal motifs are represented as characters in stories. This gives credence to the etymological meaning of the word, derived from two Greek words, *arche* meaning "beginning" and *type* meaning "imprint" (Gijo and George, 54). This could then be explained as the earliest beliefs and mental pictures and forms imprinted in the minds of all humans before they are brought out into the world as ideas, in the form of stories and myths. It could be referred to as the "first mark". Therefore, archetypal criticism explores these

mental forms, symbols and motifs of a culture represented in a story, pointing to the recurring patterns in a cultural psyche. The motif, symbol, or image should be recurrent in history for it to be considered an archetype (Gijo and George, 55). The words of Carl Jung as quoted by Muhammad Sadiq further sums up archetypal criticism in detail:

> Archetypes are the mysterious prototypes of all things and represent the inborn tendencies and dispositions in human psychology. They are the unconscious images that are projected onto the world, and they form the basic patterns of our dreams, myths, religious symbols, and ways of thinking. (42)

M.H Abrams quoting Jung notes that archetypes are "primordial images, the psychic residue of repeated patterns of experience in our very ancient ancestors which, he maintained, survive in the "collective unconscious" of the human race and are expressed in myths, religion, dreams, and private fantasies, as well as in works of literature" (233). For Jung, archetypes are not just symbols, but inherent unreal patterns within the human psyche that influence our perception of the world and that manifests in the cultural symbols seen in the real world across society. Therefore archetypes are first mental before they are formed and are reflected in how humans think and address challenges. Archetypal situations can range from the longing for a father figure to the rivalry between brothers, while archetypal images could include lions, eagles, serpents, ox, etcetera, and its subjects and themes include birth, war, love, longing, redemption, death. (Gijo and George, 55)

Carl Jung further distinguished between different archetypes. Stephen Walker in his book Jung and Jungians on Myths states that Carl Jung identified eight archetypes in his work on psychology and mythology. Some of the most well-known archetypes identified by Jung include the self, the

shadow, the anima/animus, the mother, the father, and the hero (31). Stephen Walker further explains the implications of the eight archetypes according to Jung:

> The self represents the unity and integration of all aspects of the psyche and represents the central core of the personality. The shadow represents the unconscious and repressed aspects of the personality and includes negative or taboo desires and impulses. The anima/animus represents the unconscious feminine or masculine aspects of the personality, respectively. The mother represents the nurturer, caretaker, and protector. The father represents authority, structure, and protection. The hero represents the archetypal figure who embarks on a journey of self-discovery and overcomes obstacles and challenges. The trickster represents the archetype that challenges social norms and acts as a catalyst for change and transformation and the innocent represents the archetype of purity, innocence, and simplicity. (31)

Furthermore, concerning literary criticism, archetypal criticism identifies these universal themes and symbols recurrent in works of literature and interrogates how they reflect the human condition. It also examines the relationship between individuals and the larger cultural context from which the work of art or literature was birthed. (Sadiq, 43)

Additionally, the Canadian literary critic, Northrop Frye is famed for expounding on the theory of Archetypal literary criticism. In his words:

> Archetypal criticism is a form of cultural criticism which explores the symbolic patterns and universal themes that pervade literature and other cultural expressions across time and place. (23)

For Frye, archetypal criticism looks at cultural expressions and the artistic works and literature that seek to identify the underlying patterns and universal themes prevalent in such expressions. He adds that every literary creation or art is a product of the author or producers, inherent private mythology of symbols and they take their place in the works of the authors. He buttresses that social conditions and cultural demands produce works of art in a particular genre. The social and cultural milieu gives birth to a text or a work. These cultural patterns are based on myths, rituals, social groups and nations (Gijo and George, 56). The mythology which Northrop Frye refers to as the underlying structures that can be discerned in stories would help a reader critique an author's literary work objectively without the prejudices that come along with his artistic creation (23). He refers to these prejudices as ideologies that come along with mythologies, and the ideological infiltration and its desire to be the absolute can result in intolerance and persecution (31). Fyre gives higher credence to mythology over ideology because for him, while ideologies develop and dissipate over time, archetypal myths remain. He emphasizes the superiority of archetypal myths over ideologies thus:

> The principle involved is that there is flexibility in the story that its ideological reference does not permit. To paraphrase an axiom of D.H. Lawrence, we should trust no writer's beliefs or attitudes, but concentrate on his [sic] myth, which is infinitely wiser than he is, and is the only element that can survive when the ideology attached to it fades. (60)

For him, ideologies are less likely to be flexible but archetypes are flexible and these archetypes are embedded in deep cultural and anthropological history and roots. For him, as much as ideologies are not useless, they must take a back seat for literature to blossom as there is the tendency of political infiltration and selfish interests in ideologies. For him, literature and its

related arts should be dealt with within the confines of its own mythical and metaphorical structures. (Dobson, 4)

However, the criticism of Fyre's Archetypal literary criticism is that it does not acknowledge the relevance of Jung's collective unconscious and the bold claims that mythology transcends ideology do not rest in any foundation and basis that is undisputable (Dobson, 8). Archetypal literary criticism however continues to thrive on the fact that many literary works despite their differences in genre, plot, setting and characters have one common similar structure that gives literature a universalistic approach, and these similarities in structure and patterns are examined in detail. (Kostova et al., 63)

The use of Archetypal literary criticism in exploring stereotypes in Nigerian movies becomes integral because it interrogates the stories of the movies and their root in culture and history. As a toll of literary criticism, the archetypal literary theory becomes instrumental as it investigates the different symbols, myths and rituals embedded in Nigerian movies to ascertain if they are mere ideologies that vie for the reality of the true culture of the people. The theory also examines the devouring motifs and themes in these Nigerian movies as a mirror of the reality and experiences of the Nigerian people presented again in drama.

Furthermore, the stereotypes that reoccur in this movies are examined to understand the unconscious motivation of producers and the mental pictures that dwells within the minds of the creators of the movies incubating and as figments of the imagination, and mythic creativity seeking an outlet of expression that may not necessarily tell the full story of the cultural, religious, ritual and traditional realities of the Nigerian society.

1.4.2 Stereotypes

The word "stereotype" refers to something related to a fixed and recurrent pattern. The Merriam-Webster dictionary further defined it as a standardized mental picture held in common by members of a group that represents prejudiced and uncritical judgment and an oversimplified opinion.

Despite the notable successes of the Nigerian movie industry, the industry is tainted by stereotypes and repeated and recycled themes that cast a shadow on the successes and progress of the industry. This ranges from gender stereotypes that represent women in a negative light consistently to religious and cultural stereotypes that misrepresent African reality. These stereotypes includes the constant portrayal of women as dependent on men and usually wicked. This is seen in wicked stepmother motifs and other patriarchal representations of women in society as lower and helpless, in need of male intervention. Providing insight into the nature and level of gender stereotypes in Nigerian movies, Adedayo Abah notes that:

> Most of the videos portray the ideal African woman as the one with a husband and children and is submissive to the man. An economically, socially, or politically independent woman is dangerous in these movies because she would not make a good wife. According to these video films, success is intoxicating for women and makes them insubordinate. An independent woman is also dangerous because she might be independent in her sexuality, and there is nothing worse for society than an untamed, hypersexual woman. (339)

Other aspects of the Igbo society depicted as a place where voodoo, charms and the occult hold sway are not a proper representation of the society. Although colonisation and the Western religion almost completely wiped out all that is left of the African traditional religion and the African person's system of communicating with his God, there exists residues and vestiges of the religion

in the homes and environment of ardent believers in the African traditional religion. Misrepresenting some of these traditional rituals as voodoo, occult and charm does not do justice to the truth of the African culture in a multicultural and multi-religious society like Nigeria. Bernerad Eze-Orji laments this reality unequivocally:

> In the near two scores of its existence, the Igbo film culture has more often than not presented the Igbo as a nation of voodoos, occultists, dupes, witches, sorcerers, ritualists and prostitutes, thereby undermining their cultural diplomacy and importance. While it controls and enjoys the largest network of viewership and market returns, it has deliberately and heavily misrepresented its primary constituents: the Igbo. Video films usually x-ray a particular culture and within the visuals, content and aesthetics, an aggregate of the people's social attitudes is formed. We can say that the Igbo image in the Nigerian movie industry is replete with misrepresentations and casts doubts about the sincerity of their business successes and general lifestyle, and this is invariably a result of misconceptions from Nigerians about the Igbo cultural matrix and more. This paper re-visits the image myth currently surrounding the Igbos in their films vis-à-vis the Igbo reality. It concludes that placing too high a premium on financial gains, the inability to conduct credible research, the impatience to allot time to a particular film project, the lack of professionalism that is associated with the video format, and the lack of creative and critical borrowings from foreign film cultures have masterminded the ignoble trend that characterizes the Igbo film culture and has conversely cast doubts on the true image of the Igbo. (1)

Cultural misrepresentation remains a lingering stereotype in Nigerian movies that questions the morality and reality of an African society. The videos are no longer interested in maintaining cultural integrity, but pay attention to the marriage of the African culture with the West as the

African culture continues to SBB gradually away to enthrone foreign Western ideals. Adedayo Abah laments this grim reality thus:

> Generally, these videos are less concerned about maintaining cultural integrity but are more focused on the lived outcomes of the engagement of the current African society with other cultural values, both Western and otherwise. They seem more concerned about the impact of these engagements on social groups, governments, and everyday Africans. The intended audience of these videos would tend to be the urban, cosmopolitan African even when the story is set in a rural location. In this sense, they can be regarded as neo–postcolonial in themes. (23)

All of these are projections from the minds of the producers of these stories, which Jung refers to as the mental pictures and images formed from the primal mythological mind of the producer of the art. These stereotypes tell a story of the lived experiences and imagination of the people, creating motifs and archetypes of reality, that could be subject to subjective ideological alterations that tell a false story of the Nigerian culture and tradition from antiquity. The archetypal theory becomes relevant again in this regard to uncover these stereotypes and interrogate the movie productions to realize what is truly cultural and Nigerian in a fecund society with a rich cultural history evolving with the times.

1.5 Review of Related Literature.

1.5.1 The Nigerian Movie Industry

It is important to review the literature on the Nigerian movie industry (Nollywood) and the concept of stereotypes in these movies to have an idea of the holistic concerns of this study. The history of the Nigerian movies industry can be divided into four parts: the colonial period (1930-1960), the

independent period, (1960-1972) the indigenization decree period, (1972-1992) the Nollywood period (1992 to date) (Onuzulike, 25). The colonial period began with the exhibition of film in Nigeria for the first time in August1903 at the Glover Memorial Hall Lagos, and grew until 1992 when the Nollywood period came from the movie *Living in Bondage* portrays a man signing a pact with the devil to get rich, a movie that birthed the *juju* genre (Onuzulike, 25). However, according to Haynes, the name Nollywood was invented by a foreigner, Matt Steinglass in the New York Times in the year 2002 (Onuzulike, 25). During the oil boom of the 1970s, Nigeria began to make movies on their own. Ironically, Nollywood took off in the 1990s during the economic collapse in the country. The industry started marketing to an African audience from Lagos with video cassette production. Commenting on the Nigerian movie industry, Onwuzulike notes:

> The Nigerian film industry addresses social conscience and contributes to world culture. It is my firm conviction that the film industry of any country should promote the well-being of humanity, which is an issue that is increasingly critical given how movies play an ever-greater and more important role in society. Films in Nigeria are produced on comparatively low budgets but are extremely popular and have a huge influence and impact on popular opinion and culture there. (26)

As of 2009, the Nigerian movie industry produced 2,000 movies a year which made it rank third on the global film circuit just behind Hollywood (America) and Bollywood India (Evuleotia, 407; Gray, 1). The industry grew in leaps and bounds in the 21st century becoming the second-highest revenue earner in the same year with a total of 9 billion naira (the equivalent of an interbank rate of $72 million at the time). It has grown to be a multi-million dollar industry today (Madichie, 626). The advancement in digital filming can be attributed to the great leap in the industry today.

In her review of the Nigerian film industry, Elizabeth Giwa comments on the storyline and themes of the Nigerian movie industry thus:

> For many years, Nigerian films have been based on storylines showing –constant tragedy, romance, drama and comedy that arouse the viewers' minds. Whether the main character is going through constant tragedy to end up triumphant or the characters are caught in a love triangle, there are always high-drama plots to keep the audience interested. Within these themes, many of the films include multiple storylines combined into one film. (4)

Further studies have been done on the Nigerian movie industry. In an essay by Patrick Ebewo published in 2007 titled "The Emerging Video Film Industry in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects", the challenges faced by the industry were examined. The plots of the movies are considered to be highly repetitive and unrealistic while others consider them positive enough as they represent the African culture. (47)

Furthermore, Jonathan Haynes and Onokome Okome in their review notes that the Nigerian movie industry has evolved and risen to popular culture and relatable movies have influenced the lifestyle of the people in the society significantly (106). Elizabeth Giwa further adds that filmmakers for the most part self-conscious artists motivated by political and social interests that influence their movies (5).

Santorini Chamley examines how Nollywood movies stand out globally for their excellence and rapid growth which has brought a positive outlook to the direction of Nollywood and its direction for the future (23). The industry continues to spread its tentacles to other parts of the world like the United States of America as more movies are distributed overseas from Nigeria. Additionally,

Elizabeth Giwa reviews the transition of motion pictures from celluloid to video films and how it has positively impacted the industry thus:

> The transition of the motion picture industry in Nigeria from celluloid films to video films is a topic that has been researched in the past. Olayiwola (2007) states this in the article, "From Celluloid to Video: The Tragedy of the Nigeria Film Industry", video films were able to recapture the film audience with the new wave of dramatic television productions. According to Olayiwola, convenience and affordability influenced the replacement of celluloid. Video films have revolutionized entertainment on a cinematic level for many Nollywood film watchers. The rise of video films contributed to the continued advancements in the Nigerian film business. The convenience of conversion to DVD has made it easier for film viewers to have access to films where they can watch them in the convenience of their homes. The transition to video films also gave way to the online platform. (11)

1.6 Thesis Statement

This essay focuses on selected Nollywood movies that reveal the prevalence of gender, religious and socio-cultural stereotypes in the Nigerian society.

CHAPTER TWO

GENDER STEREOTYPES IN NIGERIAN MOVIES (NOLLYWOOD)

2.1 Introduction

The Nigerian movie industry, Nollywood, has captivated audiences worldwide with its captivating stories, diverse characters, and unique blend of social commentary and entertainment. However, beneath the captivating surface lies a complex interplay of tradition and modernity, reflected in the portrayal of gender roles. This chapter delves into the prevalent gender stereotypes in Nollywood movies, focusing on how these ingrained societal expectations are presented and reinforced through narratives.

Nollywood films, reaching a vast Nigerian audience and an expanding global diaspora, play a significant role in influencing how gender roles are understood. This analysis examines how Nollywood films depict women, particularly the prevalence of stereotypes that confine them to specific roles and behaviors.

This analysis focuses on five films: *Glamour Girls (1994), Desperate Housegirls (2013), King of Boys (2018), Chief Daddy (2018), and Sugar Rush (2019).* These films represent a range of genres and commercial successes, offering a comprehensive perspective on how gender stereotypes are perpetuated within Nollywood. By examining these portrayals, we aim to understand the underlying messages about womanhood conveyed through these films.

Each case study explores the chosen film's narrative, and the key gender stereotypes and archetypes it employs. It delves into how these portrayals are presented, focusing on the recurring themes and characteristics associated with female characters. This analysis highlights the prevalence of these stereotypes and how they shape the audience's perception of women within the narratives. While

the project acknowledges the possibility of subversion within these portrayals, the primary focus remains on how Nollywood films reinforce existing gender norms.

2.2 Case Study: *Glamour Girls (1994)*

2.2.1 Movie Overview

Glamour Girls (1994) is a two-part Nollywood film directed by Chima Onukwufor. This movie breaks ground by centering the stories of Sandra, Jane, and Helen, three independent single women in Nigeria. Facing a patriarchal society with limited options for financial security, they choose a controversial path – becoming escorts for wealthy men. The film explores the complexities of their choices, the societal judgments they face, and the emotional consequences that follow.

2.2.2 Gender Stereotypes and Archetypes

Glamour Girls (1994) is a landmark film in Nollywood for its daring exploration of female agency and sexuality within a patriarchal Nigerian society. However, this exploration is not without its complexities. The film weaves a tapestry of gender stereotypes and archetypes, both challenging and reinforcing them in a way that invites critical analysis. Here, we will delve into five key portrayals that illuminate the film's multifaceted approach to gender representation:

- **The "Dependent Woman" Stereotype:** Initially Sandra, Jane, and Helen defy the traditional archetype of the Nigerian woman dependent on a husband for financial stability. Instead, they actively strive for financial independence in a world predominantly controlled by men. During her first encounter with Esiri, Sandra sets clear boundaries, demonstrating her professional assertiveness. However, their chosen profession as escorts to wealthy men can be interpreted as perpetuating the stereotype of women using their sexuality for

financial gain. This dichotomy raises important questions for viewers: Does the movie empower women through their independence, or does it objectify them through their profession?

- **The "Damsel in Distress" Archetype:** While the characters face hardship, they are not passive victims. Sandra, a single mother, actively seeks to provide for her son. Jane, facing a controlling family, desires financial freedom to escape. Helen grapples with societal pressure to marry. Theirs are not simply narratives of waiting to be rescued. They are stories of women taking charge of their situations, even if their chosen path is unconventional. This redefines the "damsel in distress" archetype by showcasing agency and a proactive approach to overcoming challenges.

- **The "Gold Digger" Stereotype:** The depiction of escorting in the film inherently involves financial transactions, which has the potential to reinforce the unfortunate stereotype of women as "gold diggers." The glamorous lifestyle portrayed in the film raises questions about its underlying message regarding female empowerment. However, *Glamour Girls* avoids a simplistic portrayal and instead delves into the characters' struggles with loneliness, fear, and the quest for authentic connection. They also confront exploitation within their profession, which adds layers of depth and complexity to their motivations beyond mere financial gain.

- **The "Care-giver" Archetype:** The film portrays the immense societal pressure on women to conform to the "family woman" stereotype – focusing on marriage, child-rearing, and dependence on a husband. Scenes depicting family disapproval and societal judgment reinforce these expectations. Sandra, Jane, and Helen defy this by prioritizing their own

needs and aspirations over societal norms. This challenges the traditional definition of womanhood in Nigerian society and highlights the limitations placed on women who choose alternative path.

Glamour Girls intricately explores gender stereotypes within Nigerian society. The characters are multidimensional, navigating a landscape of societal constraints and opportunities. Through analysis, the film prompts discussions on female agency, societal expectations, and the complexities faced by Nigerian women. It both challenges and reinforces stereotypes, shedding light on the evolving gender dynamics in Nollywood cinema and Nigerian culture.

2.3: Case Study: *Desperate Housegirls (2013)*

2.3.1 Movie Overview

Desperate Housegirls (2013) is a Nollywood romantic comedy directed by Desmond Elliot that injects a dose of social commentary into its lighthearted narrative. The story centers around Ekemini (Ini Edo), Victoria (Tamara Eteimo), and Ivie (Mary Lazarus), three friends living a hand-to-mouth existence in Lagos. Feeling frustrated with their limited opportunities, they hatch a daring plan: to become housemaids for wealthy families with the ulterior motive of using their positions to elevate their social standing.

Ekemini, the most ambitious of the trio, harbors a particularly audacious goal. She sets her sights on charming her employer ("Oga" in the film) and ultimately taking control of his household, perhaps even his wealth. Victoria, on the other hand, leans towards a more traditional approach, aiming to pilfer valuables from her employer's home. Ivie, the newcomer to the scheme, remains relatively undefined in terms of her specific agenda.

The film unfolds as the housegirls navigate their new roles, juggling their domestic duties with their personal schemes. As they encounter the realities of working for the wealthy elite, the movie explores themes of social class, gender roles, and the desperation that can fuel unorthodox ambition. Despite their individual motivations, the narrative emphasizes their bond of friendship and their shared desire for a better life.

Desperate Housegirls takes a comedic approach to its subject matter. Humorous situations arise from the clash between the women's street smarts and the often-entitled world of their employers. However, beneath the lighthearted exterior lies a subtle critique of social inequality and the limited options available to women from disadvantaged backgrounds.

2.3.2 Gender Stereotypes and Archetypes

Desperate Housegirls (2013) treads a delicate line between perpetuating and subverting gender stereotypes in Nollywood. While the film presents a refreshing portrayal of female domestic workers as central characters, it also flirts with archetypes that reinforce traditional gender roles. Let's delve into some key examples:

- **The "Seducer" Archetype:** Ekemini's primary motivation, seducing her employer for financial gain, aligns with the "gold-digger" archetype. Scenes depicting her calculated attempts to charm him, like strategically placed compliments or feigned helplessness, reinforce this stereotype. This portrayal raises questions about the film's message regarding female ambition. Does it simply reinforce the notion that women use their sexuality for financial gain, or is there a deeper commentary on the limited avenues for upward mobility available to them?

- **The "Care-giver" Archetype:** The film initially reinforces the "domestic worker" stereotype by portraying the three protagonists primarily through the lens of their household duties. Scenes showcasing their cleaning, cooking, and childcare responsibilities paint a familiar picture. However, the narrative subverts this stereotype as the film progresses. As the women pursue their individual agendas, the focus shifts beyond their domestic tasks, revealing their agency and resourcefulness.

- **The "Resilient Woman" Stereotype:** The characters of Ekemini, Victoria, and Ivie all exhibit elements of the "strong Black woman" archetype. They are resourceful, resilient, and determined to overcome their circumstances. We see this in their decision to leave their dead-end jobs and their unwavering support for each other. However, it's important to acknowledge that this archetype can sometimes lead to the oversimplification of Black female characters.

- **The "Ruler" Archetype**: The portrayal of male characters in the film, particularly the employers, are portrayed as authoritative figures. The male characters assert power and control over the female characters, particularly the housegirls. They are presented as stereotypical figures of authority who expect unquestioning obedience from the housegirls.

Through a critical examination of the gender stereotypes depicted in *Desperate Housegirls*, we can better comprehend the portrayal of female characters in the Nigerian societal context. The film presents an intriguing viewpoint on domestic workers and their ambitions, shedding light on their aspirations within the Nigerian household framework.

2.4: Case Study: *King of Boys (2018)*

2.4.1 Movie Overview

King of Boys (2018) transcends the typical Nollywood genre by weaving together elements of crime, politics, and social commentary. Directed by the acclaimed Kemi Adetiba, the film centers around the enigmatic Alhaja Eniola Salami, played by the powerhouse actress Sola Sobowale. Eniola is a complex and contradictory figure. On the surface, she is a successful businesswoman and philanthropist, revered for her generosity and community work. However, beneath the veneer of respectability lies a hidden past steeped in the criminal underworld.

The film delves into Eniola's meteoric rise to power, showcasing her ruthless business dealings and her involvement in a network of powerful individuals. As Eniola sets her sights on the ultimate prize – the governorship of Lagos State – the film explores the brutal realities of Nigerian politics. She confronts a web of corruption, navigates treacherous alliances, and faces relentless attacks from both old and new enemies.

King of Boys is not just a thrilling crime story; it's a poignant commentary on the societal challenges women face in a patriarchal society. The film portrays Eniola's constant struggle to be taken seriously in a world dominated by men. We witness her fight against prejudice, navigate the complexities of balancing power and motherhood, and grapple with the weight of her past. Through Eniola's journey, the film raises questions about ambition, morality, and the true meaning of power.

2.4.2 Gender Stereotypes and Archetypes

While *King of Boys (2018)* breaks ground by featuring a powerful female lead, Eniola Salami, a closer examination reveals a more complex interplay of gender stereotypes and archetypes. The film both challenges and reinforces traditional gender portrayals, offering a microcosm of the ongoing struggle for gender equality in Nigerian society.

- **The Resilient Woman Stereotype:** Eniola embodies the "Strong Black Woman" stereotype. Throughout the film, she demonstrates unwavering strength, resourcefulness, and the ability to navigate a dangerous world. We see her ruthlessly handle business deals, strategically maneuver political alliances, and fiercely protect her family. This portrayal challenges the stereotype of the weak or submissive female character often seen in Nollywood films. Although, it can also be argued that it limits the exploration of her vulnerability and emotional depth. However while Eniola defies stereotypes, some supporting female characters fall into more traditional roles. Jumoke, the First Lady, is primarily concerned with social events and maintaining appearances. This reinforces the stereotype of women being less suited for the complexities of politics, focusing on superficiality rather than substance.

- **The Villain Archetype:** Despite Eniola's strength, the film reinforces the stereotype of a male-dominated power structure. As she pursues her political ambitions, she constantly faces resistance and threats from men in positions of authority. Governors, politicians, and even her own advisors underestimate her capabilities and attempt to manipulate her. While Eniola eventually navigates this system, the film highlights the significant obstacles women face in achieving political power. Furthermore, several male characters embody

the "hypermasculine antagonist" stereotype. These men, such as Makanaki and Odogwu Malay, rely on violence, intimidation, and displays of physical dominance to exert power. Their opposition to Eniola reinforces the notion that masculinity is synonymous with aggression and brutality.

- **The Care-giver Archetype:** Eniola's struggle to balance motherhood with her ruthless business dealings evokes the "sacrificing motherhood" stereotype. We see glimpses of her vulnerability and regret as she grapples with the impact of her choices on her son. This portrayal reinforces the societal expectation that women prioritize motherhood, even in the face of professional ambition.

2.5: Case Study: *Chief Daddy (2018)*

2.5.1 Movie Overview

Chief Daddy is a 2018 Nigerian comedy-drama film directed by Niyi Akinmolayan. The story centers around the wealthy Chief Beecroft and his extended family. Following his sudden death, the film explores the chaos that erupts as his relatives, staff, and mistresses scramble to understand his will and secure their inheritance.

The plot delves into the lives of various characters, including Chief Beecroft's rebellious daughter Teni, his loyal driver Tega, his estranged first wife Hauwa, his socialite second wife Chinyere, his mistress Jumoke, and his son Segun. Each character plays a crucial role in navigating the complexities of the will and uncovering Chief Beecroft's past.

2.5.2 Gender Stereotypes and Archetypes

Chief Daddy presents a microcosm of Nigerian society, offering fertile ground to analyze the portrayal of gender stereotypes and archetypes within Nollywood films. The film unfolds through the perspectives of various characters, each embodying specific societal expectations and limitations. Some of these key instances includes:

- **The Ruler Archetype:** Chief Beecroft himself embodies the archetype of the powerful businessman. He wields absolute control over his family through wealth and authority, with his wives and children expected to defer to his every decision. His sudden death disrupts the established family order, forcing the characters to confront the consequences of this dominant male stereotype.

- **The Care-giver Archetype:** The film features several female characters employed as domestic staff within Chief Beecroft's household. These characters often embody the stereotype of the loyal and invisible "help," expected to cater to the needs of the family without voicing their own desires or opinions.

- **The Temptress Archetype:** Jumoke, Chief Beecroft's mistress, is introduced as a young woman solely defined by her physical attractiveness and her sexual relationship with the wealthy patriarch. This portrayal reinforces the stereotype of the mistress as a manipulative temptress who threatens the stability of the family unit.

- **The Conflicted Wives:** The film presents two contrasting portrayals of wives in Chief Beecroft's life. Hauwa, the first wife, might initially be seen as the dutiful yet potentially neglected wife, overshadowed by the flamboyant second wife Chinyere. However, a closer

look reveals her strength and resilience as she navigates the complexities of the situation. Chinyere, on the other hand, embodies the stereotype of the glamorous socialite, seemingly more concerned with appearances and material possessions than emotional connection.

- **The Ambitious Career Woman:** Teni, Chief Beecroft's rebellious daughter, disrupts traditional gender roles by prioritizing her career over societal expectations for women. She is independent, outspoken, and driven to succeed in a male-dominated field. The film later reveals the challenges Teni faces which includes societal repercussions and familial disapproval for defying the stereotype of the domesticated woman.

2.6 Case Study: *Sugar Rush (2019)*

2.6.1 Movie Overview

Sugar Rush (2019) is a Nigerian crime action comedy film directed by Kayode Kasum. The story centers on the Sugar sisters - Susie, Sola, and Bola - who stumble upon a large sum of money. This discovery throws them into a whirlwind of comedic and action-packed situations as they race against time. The sisters navigate encounters with the financial crimes commission, other claimants to the money, and forge unlikely alliances along the way.

The cast boasts prominent Nollywood actors like Adesua Etomi-Wellington, Bimbo Ademoye, Bisola Aiyeola, and Banky W. Despite mixed reviews, the film achieved box office success, becoming the fourth highest-grossing Nigerian film at the time.

2.6.2 Gender Stereotypes and Archetypes

While *Sugar Rush (2019)* boasts a female-driven narrative, a closer examination reveals portrayals that align with some prevalent gender stereotypes and archetypes in Nollywood films. Here, we analyze five key examples:

- **The Damsel in Distress Archetype:** Despite the Sugar sisters' resourcefulness and determination, the film occasionally falls back on the "damsel in distress" trope. During action sequences, particularly car chases or physical confrontations, the sisters might require assistance from male characters like Knight or Andy. For instance, in a scene where the sisters are pursued by goons, Knight intervenes with his fighting skills, potentially reinforcing the notion that women ultimately need male protection in dangerous situations.

- **The Contrasting Femininity Stereotype:** The film employs contrasting personality traits among the sisters to depict different facets of femininity. Susie, the middle sister, might embody the "girly girl" stereotype, focusing on fashion and appearances. On the other hand, Bola, the youngest, could be portrayed as more career-driven and practical. This reinforces traditional gendered expectations that women should be either nurturing and domestic, or ambitious and career-oriented.

- **The Hero Archetype:** The introduction of Knight, a charming security guard, introduces the "male savior" stereotype. Despite the sisters' initial resistance, Knight becomes their confidante and protector. His presence, particularly in action scenes, could overshadow the sisters' own agency and problem-solving skills, suggesting they require a male figure to navigate challenges.

- **The Seducer Archetype:** The portrayal of Gina, the antagonist, flirts with the "hypersexualized female" stereotype. Dressed provocatively and using her sexuality to manipulate men, Gina deviates from the film's focus on female empowerment. This portrayal reinforces the association of female sexuality with villainy and manipulation.

Sugar Rush presents a nuanced exploration of gender representation within the framework of Nigerian society. While it introduces a refreshing emphasis on narratives centered around female characters, the film simultaneously reinforces entrenched stereotypes. By scrutinizing these portrayals, we can initiate a discourse on the evolving dynamics of gender roles within the Nigerian cinematic landscape.

2.7 Conclusion

Our exploration of these selected Nollywood films reveals a landscape rife with ingrained gender stereotypes. Across the diverse genres and narratives, a consistent portrayal of masculinity and femininity emerges, often defined by societal expectations and limitations.

Glamour Girls (1994) presents ambitious young women, yet reinforces the "gold digger" stereotype, while simultaneously depicting men navigating the pressures of wealth and social status. *Desperate Housegirls (2013)* and *Sugar Rush (2019)* rely on familiar tropes of competition and materialism, often placing both male and female characters within these frameworks. Even films like *King of Boys (2018)*, featuring a powerful female lead, highlight the challenges faced by both women and men in navigating a complex social hierarchy. *Chief Daddy* (2018) explores the dynamics within a polygamous family, showcasing the limitations placed on both wives and the central male figure.

These portrayals serve as a window into the ongoing social transformations within Nigeria. Nollywood films, while not always agents of progressive change, reflect the complexities of a society grappling with tradition and modernity. The prevalence of stereotypes like the "strong Black woman" and the "philandering husband," for instance, while potentially limiting character development, can also be seen as reflections of societal realities. However, it's crucial to acknowledge the potential drawbacks of such portrayals. By solely emphasizing strength and stoicism in women, or infidelity in men, the films might unintentionally neglect the full spectrum of human experiences.

The impact of these stereotypes extends far beyond the cinematic realm. The constant reinforcement of specific gender roles through popular culture influences societal expectations. It shapes how men and women are perceived in professional settings, family structures, and everyday interactions. When Nollywood films perpetuate stereotypes that limit agency, they can hinder progress towards gender equality. Both men confined by notions of masculinity and women restricted by expectations of femininity struggle to break free from societal constraints.

This project acknowledges the limitations of focusing on a specific set of films and a limited timeframe. A wider exploration of Nollywood's vast filmography, encompassing various genres and eras, would provide a more nuanced understanding of how gender stereotypes have evolved over time. Additionally, delving into audience reception and its influence on filmmaking practices within Nollywood would offer valuable insights.

Ultimately, dismantling gender stereotypes in Nollywood is crucial for fostering a more equitable Nigerian society. As Nollywood continues to evolve, its storytellers have the potential to become agents of social change. By moving beyond tired tropes and embracing diverse narratives that

portray both men and women with greater depth and complexity, Nollywood can empower individuals and celebrate their multifaceted identities. A shift towards such portrayals would not only enrich the storytelling but also inspire a future where gender roles are more fluid and inclusive. Nollywood's influence on Nigerian society is undeniable, and with it comes the responsibility to challenge outdated stereotypes and promote a future where both men and women are valued for their full potential.

CHAPTER THREE

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL STEREOTYPES IN NIGERIAN MOVIES

(NOLLYWOOD)

3.1 Introduction

Nigerian cinema stands as a rich tapestry of cultural expression, offering a nuanced lens through which socio-cultural and religious dynamics are explored. Within this vibrant cinematic landscape, films such as *End of the Wicked, Karishika, Living in Bondage: Breaking Free, Blood Money: The Vulture Men, and Arusi-Iyi* serve as captivating case studies, unraveling the intricate web of stereotypes that shape Nigerian societal narratives.

These films, produced across different decades and directed by notable filmmakers, encapsulate various facets of Nigerian life, from the pervasive influence of religion to the socio-economic disparities entrenched within the society. Each narrative serves as a canvas upon which religious beliefs, cultural norms, and societal tensions are vividly portrayed, offering audiences a glimpse into the complexities of Nigerian identity and belief systems.

Our endeavor here is to delve deep into the religious and socio-cultural stereotypes depicted in these films, dissecting their manifestations across narrative arcs, character portrayals, and thematic elements. Through a meticulous examination, we aim to unearth the underlying cultural motifs and societal beliefs embedded within these cinematic narratives. By unraveling these stereotypes and placing them within their sociocultural contexts, we endeavor to illuminate the complex interplay between tradition, modernity, and identity in Nigerian cinema.

3.2 Case Study: *End of the Wicked (1999)*

3.2.1 Movie Overview

End of the Wicked (1999) emerged as a significant entry in Nigerian horror cinema, directed by Teco Benson and written and produced by Helen Ukpabio. Set against the backdrop of religious fervor and superstition in Nigeria, the film immerses viewers in a chilling tale of terror and spiritual warfare.

The narrative unfolds around a Christian family besieged by a malevolent coven of witches, delving into themes of supernatural horror, demonic possession, and the battle between good and evil. The plot is punctuated by shocking events, including instances of witchcraft, curses, and demon summoning, which plunge the protagonists into a nightmarish spiral of despair and chaos.

As the family grapples with the sinister forces arrayed against them, they confront dark truths about their faith and the nature of evil. From inexplicable deaths to grotesque transformations, the film's narrative unfolds relentlessly.

End of the Wicked is characterized by its visceral imagery, unsettling atmosphere, and provocative content, which push the boundaries of horror cinema in Nollywood. Through its harrowing depiction of supernatural terror and moral ambiguity, the film challenges viewers to confront their deepest fears and question the nature of divine justice.

3.2.2 Religious Stereotypes

In *End of the Wicked (1999)* religious stereotypes play a significant role in shaping the characters' beliefs and actions in the face of witchcraft.

- **Divine Intervention:** The movie portrays a stereotype that emphasizes divine intervention as a means of overcoming witchcraft and evil forces. Characters in the movie rely on divine intervention to protect them from witchcraft, as seen with Alex Usifo Omiagbo's character. He embarks on a spiritual journey, seeking enlightenment and redemption through their faith in God. For example, when faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges posed by witchcraft, this character draws strength from his belief in divine protection, portraying a stereotype that emphasizes the power of faith to overcome adversity. This stereotype aligns with archetypes of the hero's journey, where individuals embark on a quest for spiritual enlightenment and redemption through their faith in God.

- **Demonization of Traditional Beliefs:** Additionally, the film perpetuates stereotypes that demonize traditional African beliefs and practices, portraying them as primitive and dangerous. Characters like Patience Oseni confront the stigma associated with indigenous spiritual beliefs, highlighting the clash between traditional and Christian worldviews. This stereotype taps into archetypes of cultural conflict and assimilation, where traditional practices are marginalized in favor of dominant religious ideologies.

As characters navigate this cultural conflict, they are forced to confront the pervasive influence of dominant religious ideologies, which often marginalize traditional practices.

- **Fear of the Unknown:** *End Of The Wicked* explores the pervasive fear of the unknown and the supernatural that grips the characters and their communities. As they grapple with the terror of confronting forces beyond their comprehension, paranoia and hysteria spread like wildfire. This stereotype resonates with archetypes of the shadow self and the collective unconscious, where primal fears manifest in the form of supernatural threats. Characters' reactions to these perceived threats reflect the deep-seated anxieties inherent in

confronting the unknown, fueling a sense of dread and apprehension throughout the narrative.

- **Religious Salvation:** *End Of The Wicked* also explores stereotypes surrounding religious salvation and spiritual warfare. Characters seek refuge in religious leaders and rituals to combat the perceived threat of witchcraft, reflecting the prevalent belief in spiritual protection within Nigerian society. This stereotype echoes that of faith and divine intervention, as characters navigate the spiritual realm in search of deliverance from dark forces. Through their struggles and triumphs, they embody the enduring hope and resilience fostered by religious faith in the face of adversity.

3.2.3 Socio-cultural Stereotypes

In *End Of The Wicked*, Nigerian cinema perpetuates socio-cultural stereotypes surrounding witchcraft and its portrayal in society.

- **Witchcraft Stereotype:** Within the narrative, Charles Okafor's character confronts the ominous presence of witchcraft, portraying it as a menacing force that looms over their lives. This stereotype delves into the pervasive fear and superstition surrounding witchcraft, tapping into archetypes of darkness and malevolence. As characters navigate the sinister influence of witchcraft, they embody the struggle against an unseen enemy, reflecting the broader societal belief in the dangers of occult practices.
- **Scapegoating of Children:** Another stereotype portrayed in the movie is the scapegoating of children as witches. The narrative explores how children are often blamed for misfortunes within their communities, leading to witch-hunting and persecution. Characters like Hilda Dokubo's character confront the harsh reality of being accused of

witchcraft, highlighting the vulnerability of children in such contexts. This stereotype aligns with archetypes of innocence and victimization, where children become targets of societal fears and prejudices.

End Of The Wicked serves as a compelling exploration of socio-cultural and religious stereotypes within the Nigerian context. Through the lens of traditional archetypes, the film sheds light on the complexities of witchcraft beliefs and their impact on individual and collective identities. By critically analyzing these stereotypes, we gain insight into the cultural dynamics and spiritual landscape of Nigerian society, highlighting the enduring influence of traditional beliefs and the quest for spiritual salvation in the face of adversity.

3.3 Case Study: *Karishika (1998)*

3.3.1 Movie Overview

Karishika, a 1998 Nigerian horror film directed by Teco Benson, immerses viewers in a gripping tale that blurs the lines between the natural and the supernatural. Set against the bustling backdrop of Lagos, Nigeria, the movie offers a captivating exploration of the human psyche and the forces that seek to manipulate it.

The story revolves around the enigmatic figure of Karishika, portrayed by Becky Okorie, whose presence looms ominously over the narrative. As a demonic entity hell-bent on sowing discord and corruption, Karishika embodies the darkest aspects of human temptation and desire. Her insidious influence extends beyond the physical realm, reaching into the hearts and minds of unsuspecting victims.

At the heart of Karishika lies a profound examination of the age-old battle between good and evil. Through a series of interconnected vignettes, the film delves into the lives of ordinary individuals who find themselves ensnared in Karishika's web of deceit. From the devout pastor struggling to protect his flock to the impressionable youth tempted by promises of power, each character grapples with moral dilemmas that test their faith and resilience.

The film's narrative is punctuated by themes of spiritual warfare, moral ambiguity, and the eternal struggle between good and evil. It explores the complexities of faith and temptation, shedding light on the fragility of human morality and the enduring power of divine intervention.

Karishika is characterized by its visceral imagery, eerie atmosphere, and haunting soundtrack, which heighten the sense of dread and suspense throughout the film. From Karishika's chilling shapeshifting abilities to the intense exorcism sequences, each scene is crafted to immerse the audience in a world of supernatural terror and existential dread.

Despite its horror elements, *Karishika* is more than a mere scare-fest; it serves as a mirror reflecting the socio-cultural anxieties and religious fervor of its time. Through its allegorical storytelling and rich symbolism, the film delves into the complexities of Nigerian identity, spirituality, and the battle for the soul of a nation.

3.3.2 Religious Stereotypes

In *Karishika*, religious stereotypes intertwine with the characters' journeys, presenting a multifaceted exploration of faith, redemption, and the eternal battle between light and darkness.

- **Divine Intervention:** The movie portrays the stereotype of divine intervention through the character of Pastor Evarist, embodied by Bob-Manuel Udokwu. As the spiritual leader of

his congregation, Pastor Evarist becomes a beacon of hope in the face of supernatural threats. He represents the archetype of the righteous warrior, invoking prayers and performing exorcisms to combat the malevolent influence of Karishika. His unwavering faith and connection to the divine exemplify the belief in divine protection and intervention against evil forces, resonating with Jungian archetypes of the Savior and the Hero.

- **Spiritual Warfare:** *Karishika* delves into the stereotype of spiritual warfare, depicting a cosmic struggle between good and evil. Characters like Pastor Gideon, portrayed by Joseph Okechukwu, symbolize the resilience of the human spirit in the face of demonic oppression. Through acts of courage and steadfast devotion, they engage in spiritual battles to thwart the sinister agenda of Lucifer and his minions. This stereotype underscores the Nigerians belief in the existence of supernatural realms and the eternal conflict between heavenly and demonic forces, aligning with Jungian archetypes of the Hero and the Warrior.

- **Religious Symbols and Rituals:** Throughout the film, religious symbols and rituals play a significant role in confronting evil. From the recitation of biblical verses to the performance of exorcisms, characters employ religious practices as a means of protection and purification. These symbols, such as the cross and holy water, serve as potent weapons against demonic entities, reflecting a deep-rooted belief in the power of faith and spiritual authority. This stereotype resonates with Jungian archetypes of the Sage and the Priest, who serve as intermediaries between the earthly and divine realms, guiding others on the path to spiritual enlightenment and salvation.

3.3.3 Socio-cultural Stereotypes

In the movie *Karishika*, socio-cultural stereotypes intersect with the characters' journeys, illuminating themes of moral erosion and spiritual conflict prevalent in Nigerian society.

- **Seduction and Corruption:** Within the narrative, the character Karishika epitomizes the stereotype of seduction and corruption, employing her dark allure to manipulate and ensnare unsuspecting individuals. Through her seductive tactics, she preys upon the vulnerabilities of characters like Divine, promising power and pleasure in exchange for allegiance to darkness. This stereotype resonates with the Jungian archetypes of the Temptress and the Trickster, representing the pervasive allure of temptation and the moral ambiguity inherent in succumbing to it.

- **Influence of Evil:** *Karishika* confronts the stereotype of the insidious influence of evil within society, depicted through demonic possession and societal decay. As demonic agents infiltrate Lagos, they sow seeds of chaos and destruction, disrupting the lives of ordinary citizens. Through encounters with these malevolent forces, characters grapple with the reality of spiritual warfare, symbolizing the eternal struggle between forces of light and darkness. This stereotype aligns with Jungian archetypes of the Shadow and the Adversary, representing the externalized manifestations of humanity's inner turmoil and moral conflict.

Karishika serves as a compelling exploration of socio-cultural and religious stereotypes within the Nigerian context. Through its vivid portrayal of supernatural conflict and moral dilemmas, the movie sheds light on the enduring struggle between good and evil. By confronting societal taboos

and spiritual truths, *Karishika* invites audiences to ponder the complexities of human nature and the eternal quest for redemption amidst darkness.

3.4 Case Study: *LIVING IN BONDAGE: BREAKING FREE (2019)*

3.4.1 Movie Overview

LIVING IN BONDAGE: BREAKING FREE a 2019 Nigerian supernatural thriller and sequel to the 1992 classic "Living in Bondage," explores the repercussions of past choices and the allure of power and wealth. Directed by Ramsey Nouah and executive produced by Charles Okpaleke, the film features a stellar cast including Kenneth Okonkwo, Kanayo O. Kanayo, Enyinna Nwigwe, Muna Abii, and Swanky JKA in a breakout role.

Set twenty-five years after the original film, *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free* follows Andy Okeke, now an ordained man-of-God, as he navigates the resurgence of the secret cult, Brotherhood of the Six. With the Brotherhood's expansion into an international organization and its involvement in sinister rituals, Andy finds himself confronting his past and protecting his family from its dark influence.

Meanwhile, Nnamdi Okeke, Andy's secret son, seeks wealth and success at any cost. His ambition leads him into the orbit of powerful figures like Chief Omego and billionaire tycoon Richard Williams, unaware of their ties to the Brotherhood. As Nnamdi rises to prominence, he faces moral dilemmas and the consequences of his choices, ultimately grappling with the seductive allure of power and the price of redemption.

3.4.2 Socio-cultural Stereotypes

In *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free*, Nigerian cinema perpetuates socio-cultural stereotypes, notably the belief in the "blood money" phenomenon.

- **Blood Money Stereotype:** The film portrays the notion that immense riches can be acquired through nefarious means, often involving human sacrifices. This stereotype is exemplified through characters like Chief Omego, who resorts to dark rituals and sacrifices to maintain his wealth and political power. Nnamdi's pursuit of success also reflects this stereotype, as he becomes entangled with individuals willing to sacrifice morality for financial gain. This stereotype taps into Jungian archetypes such as the Trickster, represented by characters like Chief Omego, who embody the temptation of easy wealth and the moral ambiguity inherent in pursuing it.

- **Power and Influence tied to Occult Practices:** Additionally, the movie explores the stereotype of power and influence tied to occult practices. Characters like Chief Omego and Richard Williams wield dark magic and manipulate others for personal gain. Chief Omego, for instance, uses occult rituals to maintain his status as a political figure, while Richard Williams manipulates Nnamdi into joining the Brotherhood of the Six for his own sinister purposes. This stereotype echoes the traditional archetype of the Sorcerer, where individuals seek control and mastery over the supernatural to achieve their goals. Chief Omego and Richard Williams embody this archetype, showcasing the thirst for power and dominance inherent in occult practices.

- **Socio-Economic Disparities:** *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free* explores socio-economic stereotypes, particularly the vast disparities between the wealthy elite and the struggling masses. Characters like Chief Omego and Richard Williams represent the affluent class,

showcasing extravagant lifestyles and wielding power over others. In contrast, characters like Nnamdi Okeke and his family depict the challenges faced by ordinary Nigerians striving for success amidst economic hardship. This stereotype aligns with the traditional archetype of the Ruler, where individuals in positions of authority exploit their power for personal gain, perpetuating social inequalities.

- **Cultural and Religious Syncretism:** The film also delves into stereotypes surrounding cultural and religious syncretism, highlighting the blending of traditional African beliefs with Christianity. Characters like Andy Okeke embody this syncretism, as he navigates between his Christian faith and the dark legacy of the Brotherhood of the Six. The presence of occult rituals alongside Christian symbolism reflects the complex spiritual landscape of Nigerian society. This stereotype resonates with the archetype of the Sage, where individuals serve as mediators between different belief systems, seeking harmony and understanding amidst cultural diversity.

3.4.3 Religious Stereotypes

In *LIVING IN BONDAGE: BREAKING FREE*, religious stereotypes play a significant role in shaping the characters' beliefs, actions, and the overall narrative arc. Through archetypal analysis, we delve into the portrayal of these stereotypes, examining how they intersect with the characters' journeys and the broader themes of faith, redemption, and moral ambiguity.

- **Dependence on Religious Figures for Redemption:** The movie portrays a stereotype where individuals, particularly those facing adversity or consequences for their actions, turn to religious figures, such as pastors or priests, for redemption and salvation. Characters like Nnamdi Okeke seek solace and guidance from figures of spiritual authority, hoping

for absolution from their sins or deliverance from their troubles. This stereotype aligns with the archetype of the Savior, where religious leaders serve as intermediaries between individuals and the divine, offering a path to spiritual renewal and forgiveness. In *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free,* this stereotype underscores the pervasive influence of Christianity in Nigerian society and the belief in divine intervention as a means of overcoming challenges and finding redemption.

- **Salvation Through Christianity:** The film perpetuates a stereotype that Christianity is the sole pathway to salvation and divine protection, particularly in the face of supernatural threats or moral dilemmas. Characters like Andy Okeke exemplify unwavering faith in Christian doctrine, relying on prayer and divine intervention to confront the dark forces threatening their lives. This stereotype aligns with the archetype of the Hero, where individuals embark on a journey of spiritual enlightenment and moral courage, guided by their faith in God. In *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free*, Christianity serves as a beacon of hope and resilience against the forces of evil, emphasizing the transformative power of faith in overcoming adversity and reclaiming one's destiny.

- **Consequences of Moral Transgressions:** The movie highlights a stereotype that individuals who deviate from Christian principles or engage in immoral behavior inevitably face karmic consequences or divine retribution. Characters like Nnamdi Okeke experience inner turmoil and existential crisis as they grapple with the consequences of their actions, seeking redemption and atonement for their sins. This stereotype aligns with the archetype of the Fallen Hero, where individuals confront the consequences of their moral failings and strive for redemption through acts of contrition and self-reflection. Here, the narrative

explores themes of guilt, repentance, and moral redemption, illustrating the transformative journey from darkness to light through the lens of religious faith and spiritual awakening.

Living in Bondage: Breaking Free serves as a compelling exploration of socio-cultural and religious stereotypes within the Nigerian context. Through the lens of traditional archetypes, we have examined how the film portrays these stereotypes, revealing their impact on the character's journeys and the broader narrative. From the perpetuation of socio-economic myths to the portrayal of religious salvation through Christianity, the movie reflects and reinforces prevalent beliefs and societal norms. By critically analyzing these stereotypes, we gain insight into the complexities of Nigerian society, its cultural fabric, and the enduring influence of traditional beliefs in shaping individual and collective identities.

3.5 Case Study: *Blood Money: The Vulture Men (1997)*

3.5.1 Movie Overview

Blood Money: The Vulture Men, also known as *Blood Money*, is a gripping 1997 Nigerian occult film directed by Chico Ejiro. Featuring a stellar cast including Kanayo O. Kanayo, Zack Orji, Francis Agu, Steve Eboh, Francis Duru, Sam Dede, and Ejike Asiegbu, the movie immerses viewers in a world where supernatural beliefs intersect with human desires.

The plot centers around Mike (played by Zack Orji), a bank manager who falls victim to a scam. Reconnecting with his former schoolmate Collins (Kanayo O. Kanayo), now a wealthy police chief involved in organ trade, Mike is lured into joining the secret cult known as the Vulture Men. Promised instant wealth by a mysterious entity known as the "Great Vulture," Mike becomes ensnared in a web of dark rituals and forbidden desires.

As Mike's greed grows, he is coerced into kidnapping a child imbued with moneymaking abilities, unknowingly targeting Collins' own son. This act sparks a bitter feud between the two men, leading to a series of tragic events and moral compromises. Desperate to maintain his newfound riches, Mike is forced to make increasingly sinister sacrifices, ultimately descending into a world of violence and corruption.

Meanwhile, Collins grapples with the consequences of his own actions, torn between his loyalty to the Vulture Men and his paternal instincts. As the boundaries between good and evil blur, the characters are forced to confront their inner demons and reckon with the true cost of their ambitions.

3.5.2 Socio-cultural Stereotypes

This movie delves into socio-cultural stereotypes prevalent in Nigerian society, particularly the belief in supernatural forces and their influence on human affairs.

- **Blood Money Stereotype:** The film portrays the prevalent belief that immense wealth can be attained through occult practices and ritual sacrifices. Through characters like Chief Collins and Mike, who succumb to the allure of instant riches promised by the Vulture Men, the movie reinforces the stereotype of "blood money" and its consequences. This stereotype taps into Jungian archetypes such as the Tempter, represented by characters like Collins, who entice others with the promise of wealth and power, leading them down a path of moral corruption and spiritual decay.

- **Exploitation of Vulnerability:** Another stereotype depicted in the film is the exploitation of vulnerability for personal gain. Characters like Mike, a bank manager who falls prey to scams, and Collins, who capitalizes on his position of authority to profit from illegal

activities, highlight the societal tendency to prey on the weak for financial advancement. This stereotype aligns with the archetype of the Predator, where individuals exploit others' weaknesses for their own benefit, perpetuating a cycle of exploitation and suffering.

- **Cult of Materialism:** *Blood Money* also explores the stereotype of the cult of materialism, where individuals prioritize wealth and possessions above all else. Characters like Mike, driven by greed and ambition, prioritize financial gain over ethical considerations, leading to their moral downfall. This stereotype reflects the pervasive influence of materialistic values in Nigerian society and the detrimental effects of prioritizing wealth accumulation above spiritual and moral principles. It resonates with the archetype of the Greedy, where individuals are consumed by their desire for material wealth, losing sight of their humanity in the pursuit of riches.

3.5.3 Religious Stereotypes

Religious stereotypes play a significant role in shaping the narrative of Blood Money: The Vulture Men, reflecting the complex interplay between traditional beliefs and Christian doctrine in Nigerian culture.

- **Syncretism of Beliefs:** The film portrays the syncretism of traditional African beliefs with Christian practices, highlighting the cultural and spiritual diversity of Nigerian society. Characters like Chief Collins and Mike navigate between the worlds of ancient rituals and Christian faith, blending elements of both in their quest for power and prosperity. This stereotype aligns with the archetype of the Syncretist, where individuals reconcile conflicting belief systems to create a unique spiritual identity, reflecting the cultural hybridity of Nigerian spirituality.

- **Divine Retribution:** *Blood Money* also perpetuates the stereotype of divine retribution for moral transgressions, particularly in the context of supernatural beliefs. Characters like Mike, who engage in acts of violence and sacrilege, ultimately face karmic consequences for their actions, as the vengeful spirits of their victims exact justice. This stereotype underscores the belief in cosmic justice and the consequences of defying moral and spiritual laws. It resonates with the archetype of the Avenger, where divine forces intervene to punish those who violate ethical principles, restoring balance and order to the universe.

- **Dichotomy of Good and Evil:** The film explores the dichotomy of good and evil within the context of religious beliefs, presenting a moral universe where characters must choose between righteousness and sin. Characters like Mike and Collins grapple with their inner demons and face moral dilemmas that test their faith and integrity. This stereotype reflects the pervasive influence of Christian morality in Nigerian society and the eternal struggle between light and darkness. It aligns with the archetype of the Fallen, where individuals are tempted by evil forces but ultimately strive for redemption through acts of repentance and self-sacrifice.

Blood Money: The Vulture Men offers a captivating exploration of socio-cultural and religious stereotypes within the Nigerian context. Through its compelling narrative and well-developed characters, the film delves into themes of greed, corruption, and the eternal struggle between good and evil. By examining prevalent stereotypes such as the belief in blood money and the exploitation of vulnerability, the movie sheds light on the darker aspects of Nigerian society, while also highlighting the syncretism of traditional beliefs with Christian doctrine.

3.6 Case Study: *Arusi-Iyi (1998)*

3.6.1 Movie Overview

Arusi-Iyi is a poignant Nigerian drama film released in 1998, directed by the talented filmmaker Fred Amata. Set against the backdrop of rural Nigeria, the narrative intricately weaves together the lives of two central characters, Fred and Danco, whose fates become intertwined amidst themes of societal inequality, moral dilemmas, and traditional spirituality.

Fred, portrayed with emotional depth by the seasoned actor Peter Eneh, is a humble and hardworking man struggling to make ends meet in a society rife with economic disparity. He toils tirelessly as an employee for the affluent and powerful Danco, essayed by the versatile Kenneth Okonkwo. However, Fred's labor is exploited and his dignity disregarded when Danco callously dismisses him without compensation for three months of arduous work.

The film delves into the depths of Fred's despair as he grapples with the injustice he faces, compounded by personal tragedy as his son falls gravely ill. Despite pleading for assistance from Danco, his pleas are met with disdain, leaving Fred shattered and desperate. In a poignant turn of events, Fred's anguish drives him to seek solace and justice from the village deity, Arusi-iyi, portrayed with enigmatic mystique by Ignis Ekwe.

As Fred navigates the labyrinth of traditional beliefs and societal norms, the audience is drawn into a captivating exploration of morality and retribution. The tension escalates when Danco, ensnared in his own web of hubris and greed, faces the wrath of divine justice unleashed by Arusi-iyi. The film skillfully navigates the complexities of faith, fate, and human frailty, offering a compelling narrative that resonates with audiences long after the credits roll.

3.6.2 Socio-cultural Stereotypes

In *Arusi-Iyi*, the movie delves into socio-cultural stereotypes, particularly focusing on themes of exploitation and justice.

- **Exploitation of the Poor:** The film portrays the stereotype of the exploitation of the poor by the wealthy elite. Fred, a hardworking but impoverished man, is unjustly fired by his employer, Danco, without receiving his owed wages. Despite pleading for his salary, Fred is callously dismissed, highlighting the vulnerability of the working class in the face of economic disparity. This stereotype resonates with the archetype of the Innocent, where individuals like Fred are subjected to exploitation and injustice due to their socio-economic status, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality.

- **Quest for Justice:** Another stereotype depicted in the movie is the pursuit of justice through traditional means. After experiencing injustice at the hands of Danco, Fred seeks recourse from the village deity, Arusi-Iyi, to obtain retribution for his mistreatment. The invocation of traditional beliefs reflects the community's reliance on indigenous systems of justice when confronted with societal inequities. This stereotype aligns with the archetype of the Avenger, where individuals seek redress for wrongs committed against them through unconventional channels, challenging prevailing power structures and asserting their agency.

3.6.3 Religious Stereotypes

Religious stereotypes are also prevalent in *Arusi-Iyi*, underscoring the intersection of traditional beliefs with Christian morality.

- **Clash of Belief Systems:** The film explores the clash between traditional beliefs and Christian values within the context of Fred's quest for justice. Despite being raised in a Christian household, Fred turns to the village deity, Arusi-Iyi, to mete out punishment to his oppressor, Danco. This juxtaposition reflects the complex syncretism between indigenous spirituality and Christianity in Nigerian society, where individuals navigate between traditional and modern belief systems. The stereotype of conflicting belief systems underscores the cultural diversity and spiritual plurality inherent in Nigerian religious practices, challenging monolithic narratives of faith and identity.

- **Divine Retribution:** Additionally, *Arusi-Iyi* portrays the stereotype of divine retribution, wherein individuals face consequences for their actions through supernatural intervention. Danco's refusal to heed the summons of Arusi-Iyi ultimately leads to his demise, highlighting the belief in karma and cosmic justice prevalent in traditional African religions. This stereotype aligns with the archetype of the Avenger, where individuals face punishment for their transgressions, whether moral or societal, underscoring the moral order and accountability inherent in indigenous belief systems.

Arusi-Iyi serves as a compelling exploration of socio-cultural and religious stereotypes within Nigerian cinema, offering insights into the complexities of societal injustice and spiritual beliefs. Through the portrayal of characters like Fred and Danco, the film highlights the enduring themes of exploitation, justice, and divine retribution, reflecting the socio-economic realities and cultural diversity of Nigerian society. By critically analyzing these stereotypes, we gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of Nigerian culture and the enduring legacy of traditional beliefs in shaping individual and collective identities.

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of religious and socio-cultural stereotypes in Nigerian cinema reveals a multifaceted tapestry of cultural expression and societal reflection. Through the lens of films such as *End of the Wicked, Karishika, Living in Bondage: Breaking Free, Blood Money: The Vulture Men, and Arusi-Iyi* we have traversed the intricate landscapes of Nigerian identity, belief systems, and societal dynamics.

These films serve as poignant reflections of the diverse religious and cultural landscape of Nigeria, offering insights into the complexities of faith, tradition, and modernity. From the portrayal of divine intervention and spiritual warfare to the exploration of socio-economic disparities and the clash of belief systems, each narrative thread weaves together a compelling tapestry of Nigerian life and thought, portraying the African traditional beliefs as diabolical and the Western religion as pure and superior.

By critically analyzing the religious and socio-cultural stereotypes embedded within these cinematic narratives, we have gained a deeper understanding of the societal norms, cultural values, and historical legacies that shape Nigerian identity. These stereotypes not only reflect prevailing beliefs and attitudes but also serve as vehicles for cultural transmission and societal critique.

As Nigerian cinema continues to evolve and diversify, it remains a powerful medium for exploring, challenging, and reimagining the narratives that define Nigerian society. Through ongoing engagement with these cinematic texts, scholars, filmmakers, and audiences alike can contribute to a richer understanding of Nigerian culture, identity, and the ever-evolving dynamics of religious and socio-cultural discourse.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive analysis conducted in this study, spanning gender, religious, and socio-cultural stereotypes in Nollywood cinema, has provided a rich tapestry of insights into the intricate layers of Nigerian society as depicted on the silver screen. By closely examining ten seminal films across various genres and decades, we have gained a profound understanding of the recurring motifs, archetypes, and narratives that shape the portrayal of identity, belief systems, and societal dynamics in Nigerian cinema.

Beginning with the exploration of gender stereotypes in films like *Glamour Girls, Desperate Housegirls, King of Boys, Chief Daddy, and Sugar Rush,* we have shed light on the pervasive influence of patriarchal norms and societal expectations on the portrayal of women in Nollywood. These narratives offer a spectrum of representations, from challenging traditional gender roles with ambitious, independent female protagonists to reinforcing stereotypes of the submissive or seductive woman. Such portrayals not only reflect existing societal realities but also hold the potential to shape and perpetuate gender norms within Nigerian society, thus warranting critical examination and discourse.

Similarly, the analysis of religious and socio-cultural stereotypes in films such as *End of the Wicked, Karishika, Living in Bondage: Breaking Free, and Blood Money: The Vulture Men* has unraveled the complexities of faith, spirituality, and the interplay between tradition and modernity. Through vivid depictions of divine intervention, spiritual warfare, and the consequences of moral transgressions, these films reflect the enduring influence of religious beliefs within Nigerian society. However, they also present instances where traditional African belief systems are

oversimplified or demonized, perpetuating a distorted narrative of indigenous spirituality that demands nuanced interrogation and interpretation.

Furthermore, the examination of socio-cultural stereotypes in films like *Arusi-Iyi and Blood Money: The Vulture Men* has illuminated the representation of societal inequalities, exploitation, and the pursuit of justice through unconventional means. These narratives delve into the complexities of socio-economic disparities, the allure of wealth and power, and the consequences of moral compromises, providing valuable insights into the cultural underpinnings and societal dynamics of Nigerian identity.

While Nollywood cinema has undoubtedly evolved and diversified over the years, the prevalence of stereotypes prompts critical reflection on their impact on Nigerian society and the broader African diaspora. Popular culture exerts significant influence in shaping perceptions and reinforcing societal norms, underscoring the importance of active engagement and discourse among filmmakers, scholars, and audiences to challenge and deconstruct these stereotypes.

By embracing narratives that celebrate the multifaceted identities and experiences of Nigerians, Nollywood has the potential to contribute to a more nuanced and inclusive representation of Nigerian society. This necessitates a departure from tired tropes and one-dimensional portrayals, advocating instead for diverse storytelling that authentically reflects the rich tapestry of Nigerian culture, religion, and societal dynamics.

Moreover, fostering greater collaboration between filmmakers, cultural experts, and community stakeholders can ensure that narratives resonate with authenticity and respect for cultural traditions. By prioritizing cultural sensitivity and incorporating diverse perspectives, Nollywood

can transcend stereotypes and become a catalyst for promoting understanding, empathy, and societal progress.

As we gaze toward the future, it is imperative to recognize the transformative power of cinema in shaping narratives, challenging biases, and inspiring positive change. By confronting stereotypes head-on and celebrating the complexities of Nigerian identity, Nollywood can continue to captivate audiences worldwide while contributing to a more equitable and inclusive society that embraces diversity and fosters empathy and understanding across cultural boundaries.

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