

Portraits of Nudity and Sexual Images in Nollywood's Cinematic Films

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Abstract

The way in which nudity and sexual images are being depicted in Nollywood film narratives shows influence of foreign culture and misinterpretation of African ideological world view. Therefore, this research explores the portrayal of nude and sexual images in Nollywood movies, thereby highlighting the way in which explicit content are being depicted in Nollywood films. This research is anchored on the framework of voyeurism theory and adopts the qualitative research design to investigate the visual pleasure of the representation of nudity and sexual images in Demeji Ajibola's *Shantytown*. Findings in this study contributes to our understanding of how portrayal of sexual images influences can shape the portrayal of images in African cinema. This research sheds light on the depiction of nudity and sexual images which emphasizes the need for a deeper examination of cultural influences in the film industry.

Keywords: *Cinematic films, Nollywood, Nudity, Representation, Sexual images*

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Background to the Study

There has been an increase in the portrayal of nudity and sexual images in Nollywood's Cinematic narratives. This phenomenon has raised concerns among viewers and critics regarding the impact it may have on societal norms, cultural values, and the overall perception of Nigerian cinema. The problem at hand lies in understanding the extent, implications, and ethical considerations associated with the portrayal of nudity and sexual content. Nigerian cinema, referred to as Nollywood industry captures the essence of Nigerian culture through its narrative images. Within this context, the portrayal of nudity and sexual images is a topic that requires a deep understanding of cultural dynamics, artistic expression, and social responsibility. In this regard, Kenneth Clark (1956) suggests that

“Artistic representation – high art – has the ability to render the naked as nude, as if 'nude' is another form or style of clothing, leaving behind 'naked' as the truly disrobed. Treating the naked body in this way ignores how it is always already represented and constrained by codes of behaviour, contexts, differentiation from the clothed body, loose significations and cultural rituals. Although nakedness is most often performed during, with or alongside practices of sexuality, it appears in frames that connote otherwise”.

On the other hand, sexual images encompass a spectrum of visuals that evoke or allude to sexual themes, desires, or acts. These images serve as a creative expression of human intimacy, engaging with the complexities of sensuality, desire, and the multifaceted nature of human relationships. Although sexual content is highly prevalent, it is not uniform, and evidence indicates that some types of sexual content are more prevalent than others. More specifically, findings indicate that sexual talk is more prevalent than depictions of sexual activity (Kunkel et al., 2005). Also, when sexual behavior is depicted, it tends to be mainly kissing and flirting. For example, of the eight sexual behaviors coded by Fisher et al. (2004), physical flirting was in 49.5% of programs, kissing or touching in 48.6%, implied intercourse in 10.5%, and depicted intercourse in 3.9%. This implies that in films, kissing and flirting is perceived as a form of social intimacy whereas sexual intercourse is observed as a romantic and emotional connection. While both nudity and sexual images can be controversial or contentious in certain contexts, their inclusion within the realm of Nollywood films seeks to explore and challenge societal norms, promote dialogue around important social issues, and contribute to the evolution and enrichment of the film industry by portraying the human experience in its diverse forms and dimensions.

Nollywood is known for its prolific output and popularity throughout Africa. Over the years, there has been a significant evolution in the portrayal of nudity and sexual content in Nollywood films. Albeit, nudity is portrayed within cultural background of narrative messages which connotes certain background of ideological standpoint as well as create certain emotional and sexual urges with intent to replicate real life scenario. At the same time arouse audience feeling who either questions such representations or resonate with the image. While it is true that nudity and sexual images have historically been less prevalent in Nollywood compared to Western film industries, recent years have witnessed a growing

exploration and inclusion of these themes as many Nollywood films venture into intimate scenes, whereby characters engage in sensual interactions that are meant to highlight the complexities and dynamics of human relationships, exploring themes of love, desire, and intrigue. Such scenes are often presented tastefully, focusing on the emotional connection and chemistry between characters rather than solely relying on explicit visuals. The presence of nudity and sexual images in Nollywood reflects the industry's evolving nature, the exploration of new creative territories, and the desire to authentically depict the complexities of human experiences. While striking a balance between artistic expression and cultural expectations can sometimes be challenging, Nollywood continues to grow, adapt, and challenge societal norms, making an indelible mark on the global film landscape.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of voyeurism is a psychological concept that suggests that people have a natural curiosity to observe others, even when they know it's wrong or inappropriate. This can be driven by a number of different motivations, including curiosity, sexual interest, or even a desire for power or control. Voyeurism is defined as “the act of peeping in windows for the purpose of watching unsuspecting persons (usually women) who are undressing, already naked, or who are engaging in sexual acts” (William, Marshall 67). The theory of voyeurism suggests that people might feel compelled to watch others, even if it makes them feel uncomfortable. According to Tudor Popa and Cristian Delcea “Voyeurism - involves the act of looking at individuals who do not realize that they are, as a rule, strangers, who are naked, in the process of stripping or engaged in sexual activity” (53). Voyeurism is often called Scopophilia which entails the act of observing the sexual activity of others which can affect sexual arousal. This behavior has been related to individuals who have a paranormal sexual behavior. This behavior is concealed and acted upon in private areas most of the time. Sometimes, “they are often caught on the fact or by the victim or more often by passersby” (Tudor and Cristian 53).

The idea of Voyeurism was first coined by Sigmund Freud. Freud believed that voyeurism was a symptom of a more general mental disorder called Scopophilia, or the love of looking. He thought that voyeurism was a way for people to deal with unconscious feelings of anxiety or desire. He also believed that it was closely related to exhibitionism, or the desire to be watched. Freud's ideas about voyeurism were very influential, and they helped shape the way that voyeurism is understood today. His work has been critiqued and expanded upon. For example, later theorists like Jacques Lacan argued that voyeurism was about more than just looking at others. He said that it was about trying to understand the world through the eyes of another person. This idea suggests that voyeurism is less about sexual or violent impulses, and more about understanding and exploring the world. The application of voyeuristic theory to portraits of nudity and sexual images in Nollywood's cinematic films interrogates the industry's ability to navigate complex cultural terrains. While these depictions often cater to voyeuristic desires, they also challenge societal norms, explore themes of power and agency, and create spaces for critical reflection. By balancing voyeurism with narrative depth, Nollywood continues to evolve as a medium for both entertainment and socio-cultural

discourse. The gaze, far from being passive, becomes a tool for engaging with the multifaceted realities of Nigerian society.

Representation of Nudity and Sexual Images in Nollywood.

The representation of nudity and sexual content in Nollywood films has been controversial. Some argue that it reflects the realities of Nigerian society, while others argue that it is exploitative and promotes stereotypes about Nigeria. To Paolo Euron argues that

The representation of a nude body is not enough to qualify a movie as pornographic. For example, in Kim Ki-duk's Birdcage Inn2 the main character, a young prostitute working in the inn, is often shown naked. Her attractive and sensuous body entices desire. At the same time, when it is presented, it becomes remarkable and allows other meanings and experiences. The audience feels that her body unconcealed, cannot express all aspects and facets of the character and her existence. It becomes an object of desire but also an object of trade, power, love, wonder amazement, embarrassment, and fear. (22-23)

Paulo Euron's statement above highlights the complexity of nudity in cinema, distinguishing between its artistic and pornographic representations. Euron argues that nudity alone does not render a film pornographic; its meaning depends on how it is contextualized and the layers of interpretation it evokes. Paolo does not see the exposure of nudity in films as problematic or having the possibility of igniting Voyeuristic attributes, but as ...an object of systems of social coercion, legal inscription, and sexual and economic exchange. The body is regarded as the political, social, and cultural object par excellence, not a product of a raw, passive nature which is civilized; not a precultural, presocial, or prelinguistic pure body but a body as social and discursive object, a body bound up in the order of desire, signification, and power (23). Paolo's statement reframes nudity in films as a layered and dynamic phenomenon, where the body serves as a site for exploring power, culture, and social constructs. It shifts the focus from nudity as a potential source of voyeurism to its role as a medium for critical commentary on societal systems. By doing so, it elevates the representation of the body from mere physicality to a rich tapestry of political, cultural, and symbolic meanings.

There have been growing calls for stricter regulation of nudity and sexual content in Nollywood films, prompting some filmmakers to explore alternative storytelling approaches. However, the popularity of these films has also contributed positively to the Nigerian economy and culture. They have boosted tourism, created employment opportunities, and fostered creativity within the industry. This highlights the dual nature of the issue, with both positive and negative effects associated with the representation of nudity and sexual content in Nollywood films. It is a complex and nuanced matter with no straightforward solutions. Additionally, it is worth noting that women are sometimes misrepresented in these films, further complicating the discourse. In this regard, Endong Patrick notes that:

On too many occasions, the media have been taxed with misrepresenting and negatively stereotyping women. This is in tandem with the fact that media

images about women most often endorse or validate chauvinistic social myths and societal fixations which systematically debase women and relegate them to inferior status. Such media (mis)representations and stereotyping of women tend to equate women with beings who are valued not for their potential in socio-cultural development and politico-economic advancement but for the simple fact that they are (sexually) desirable to the men. (58)

Due to this, women are represented in films as seductive objects who have a large dependence on the desires of men and their sexual gratification. It also presents women as weak and objects of pleasure. By the objectivity of directors, most especially men, who frame their films from the male gaze, female actors are “often made to act roles that tend to debase, degrade or denigrate them, roles that somehow implicitly re-enforce the myths of the woman viewed as sex object, wayward nymph and masculine pride (a cheap trophy for the men). Most cinematic portrayals of women are extremely and consistently oppressive and repressive” (59). It's important to consider the impact of these films on individuals, as well. Some have argued that they have a negative influence on how people perceive themselves and others. For example, some have said that the portrayal of women as sexual objects and the glorification of violence in these films can lead to harmful stereotypes and unhealthy behaviors. Others have also argued that these films can be empowering for individuals, by giving them a voice and a platform to share their stories.

It is worth noting that nudity in Nollywood films can be seen in two ways: first, as part of a long tradition of representing the human body in art and film; and second, as a reflection of the changing values and social norms in Nigerian society. It is also important to consider the cultural context of nudity in Nigeria, where it can be seen as a form of self-expression or as a source of shame. One example is the movie *Half of a Yellow Sun*, which is based on the novel by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The film includes a scene in which a character, Olanna, bares her breasts. Some have argued that this scene is necessary to show the character's vulnerability and humanity, while others have argued that it is gratuitous and unnecessary. Another example is the movie *Fifty*, which has been criticized for its portrayal of sexuality and nudity. Some felt that the film is empowering, while others felt it is objectifying the female body. These examples show how the representation of nudity in Nollywood films is complex and multifaceted with different meanings embedded within.

Another thing to consider is the role of gender in these representations. Nudity in Nollywood films is often more common for female characters than for male characters. This can be seen as a reflection of gender roles and expectations in Nigerian society, where women are often objectified and sexualized. At the same time, some have argued that the representation of nudity can be empowering for women, by challenging traditional gender roles and giving them a control over their bodies. Furthermore, nudity is often only shown in relation to certain types of characters or situations. For example, nudity is often associated with sex workers or with scenes of violence. This can be seen as problematic, as it reinforces stereotypes about certain groups of people. To the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film,

“The persistence of women's objectification in the cinema partly rests on female actors' passivity, complicity and lack of initiatives. Such passivity and complicity are made manifest in the fact that some actresses view nothing wrong in playing dehumanizing roles in films, particularly scenes where they are treated as sex objects and asked to produce gratuitous soft porn in the form of acting nude or sex encounters. (19)”

In view of this remark, feminists posit that women objectification in films should be reduced to its minimum form or even eradicated and redressed if women reject roles which debase their identity and foster their presentation as objects in the world of film. However, some have argued that it is also important to represent these characters and situations, in order to highlight the realities of life in Nigeria. Beyond this, other feminist onlookers blame other frames beyond films such as pornography, pop culture and mass media as facilitators of the objectification of women. This debate is one that is still in different segments of discussion as more films are being released.

Synopsis of Dimeji Ajibola's *Shanty Town* (2023)

Shanty Town is a series which tells the story of a leader of a group known as “Scar”. He is into a lot of dirty street business and is locally known as the “King of Shanty Town”. The film also develops along with a group of sex workers under Scar trying to work their way to freedom sex slavery. This seems however, almost impossible. Shalewa borrows money and bought her freedom from Scar, but as she tries settling her debt, Scar gives her a more detailed account of what her debt looks like. She then gets frustrated and stranded about her situation. Inem who was one of the sex workers in prison is back and trying to get back into Shanty Town. A position which is presently occupied by Ene. Scar apart from his dirty business runs errands for Chief Fernandez, who due to his campaign for governorship in the state promised to shut down some illegal places in the state, which would inevitably affect Scars business. Consequently, Dame Dakota surfaces and informs scar of her plans for the future. The coming events in the film are unexpected as it reveals that Inem is a twin and is dead only to be represented by her long-lost sister who is a police detective on a mission to take down chief Fernandez and Scar and convict them for their crimes against humanity.

Critical Reading of *Shanty Town*

In the critical evaluation of the film *Shanty Town*, it is evident that the film uses nudity and sexuality in a way that is relevant to the story and its themes. The characters' experiences with sex work, violence, and exploitation are central to the narrative, and the film does not shy away from exploring these topics in an honest and raw way. At the same time, the film does not sensationalize or objectify nudity and sexuality. In other words, it strikes a good balance between realism and sensitivity. Another key point of analysis is in the consideration of the portrayal of nudity and sexuality in relation to gender. For example, does the film present a notable view of female sexuality, or does it fall into stereotypical tropes? This is a question that emerges in this discussion. The film does a good job of exploring the complexities of female sexuality in a way that is respectful and thought-provoking to a certain degree because in some scenes, their depiction of sex and its related activities is in the view of the audience.



Plate 1: This is an angle shoulder medium shot of Scar silhouette enjoying sexual action of a young girl while young nude men packaging narcotics are seen



Plate 2: This is an angle medium shot that shows the nudity of both women and men as work aids in scooping narcotic drugs into a pack.



Plate 3: This is a reverse shot of the nude ladies and who are packaging narcotics

From a voyeuristic perspective, plate 1, 2, and 3 here shows nude scenes in the opening sequence of *Shanty Town* which serves as a powerful narrative device to convey themes of control, objectification, and the dehumanizing nature of the illegal drug trade. The visual representation of both male and female nudity in this context aligns with the voyeuristic theorist's lens, which highlights the audience's engagement in gazing at the characters and their environment from a position of detached observer. Thus, the medium shows Chief's accounting officer inspecting the business ledger, set against the background of the den ruled by Scar, juxtaposes authority and subjugation. The nudity of the workers, both men and women emphasize their vulnerability and exploitation. It strips them, quite literally, of individuality and agency, reducing them to mere tools in the production and packaging of narcotics. This visual detail creates a stark contrast with Chief's clothed and composed appearance, reinforcing the power dynamic and hierarchy within the illicit operation. Nudity, in this instance, transcends mere physical exposure and becomes symbolic of how the workers are stripped of dignity and autonomy, objectified as instruments of production. It also serves as a narrative device to reflect the grittiness and moral decay of Scar's domain, drawing the viewer into a voyeuristic exploration of an underworld rife with exploitation. The scene not only shocks but also implicates the audience, forcing them to confront their own complicity as passive observers.

Furthermore, the voyeuristic angle allows for a layered critique of societal norms and power structures. The camera's unflinching gaze at the naked workers does not seek to sexualize but to underscore their subjugation, blurring the line between titillation and critique. This creates an unsettling tension, where the audience is drawn into the scene while being forced to reckon with its moral implications.



Plate 4: A scene where nudity is openly depicted without censorship

Nudity can be divided into two categories: explicit nudity and implicit nudity. Explicit nudity is nudity that is shown clearly and is intended to be provocative. Implicit nudity is nudity that is suggested or implied without being explicitly shown. *Shanty Town* falls into the category of explicit nudity. Although there are some scenes that involve nudity, it is not shown explicitly or in a way that is meant to be shocking or titillating. Instead, the nudity is used to reflect the

characters' experiences and to advance the plot. For example, the main character's experiences with sex work are an important part of the story, and the film uses nudity to explore this topic in a thoughtful and understandable way. The sent-forth party scene in *Shanty Town* provides a striking portrayal of nudity and sexual imagery through its focus on female dancers in skimpy outfits, slow-motion cinematography, and suggestive choreography. From a voyeuristic standpoint, this scene exemplifies the intersection of objectification, power dynamics, and societal critique, enclosed within Nollywood's evolving narrative and visual style.

As an erotic display to attract male gaze, the scene is designed to appeal to the voyeuristic gaze, particularly through the slow-motion cinematography that lingers on the dancers' bodies. The use of skimpy shorts, bras that accentuate cleavage, and sensual dance moves positions the female characters as objects of desire, catering primarily to a male-dominated audience. This framing aligns with Laura Mulvey's concept of the "male gaze," where women are depicted as passive objects for visual pleasure, their bodies fragmented and sexualized by the camera's perspective. The slow-motion effect intensifies this voyeuristic appeal by elongating moments of eroticism, compelling the audience to focus on the sensuality of the scene. This technique transforms the female characters into spectacles, prioritizing their aesthetic and sexual appeal over their individuality or humanity.

As a show of power dynamics and objectification of females, the sent-forth party setting symbolizes a space where power is deeply gendered, with female dancers occupying roles of submission and performance for the entertainment of male patrons, such as Scar and his associates. The erotic choreography and revealing outfits are not mere acts of self-expression but serve to reinforce the dynamics of male dominance and female objectification. The dancers, like Shalewa, are portrayed as commodities within a system that prioritizes male pleasure and control, reflecting broader societal inequalities. This representation aligns with voyeuristic theory by implicating the audience in these power dynamics. The act of watching, facilitated by the camera's focus, positions viewers as participants in the objectification, reinforcing the themes of control and dominance inherent in the scene.

Furthermore, nudity can be seen as a cultural and narrative commentary. While the nudity and sexual imagery in this scene cater to voyeuristic pleasure, they also carry deeper narrative significance. The revealing outfits and sensual dances symbolize the commodification of the female body within the world of *Shanty Town*, a microcosm of societal exploitation and corruption. The scene critiques how women are often reduced to their sexual value in environments dominated by crime, power, and survival. Shalewa's participation in the dance further highlights the complexity of her character. Her seductive movements and revealing attire may initially appear as submission to the male gaze, but they also signify her agency within the limited options available to her in the patriarchal and exploitative system of *Shanty Town*. This duality challenges the audience to question whether she is entirely powerless or wielding her sexuality as a tool for survival.

Finally, the scene is marked by voyeuristic guilt which also implicates the audience. The portrayal of nudity and sexual imagery in this scene implicates the audience in the act of voyeurism. By presenting the female dancers through a lens that emphasizes their erotic appeal, the film forces viewers to confront their own gaze. Are they passive consumers of objectification, or are they critical observers of the societal conditions that necessitate such performances? This tension reflects the ethical complexity of voyeuristic theory, where pleasure and critique coexist uneasily. The slow-motion shots and intimate framing also create a sense of voyeuristic guilt, as the audience becomes acutely aware of their role in perpetuating the objectification of the characters. This self-awareness is a powerful narrative tool, compelling viewers to reflect on the broader implications of gender, power, and exploitation within Nollywood and Nigerian society. The sent-forth party scene in *Shanty Town* exemplifies the application of voyeuristic theory in Nollywood cinema, blending eroticism, critique, and narrative depth. While the portrayal of nudity and sexual images caters to the male gaze and reinforces traditional power dynamics, it also serves as a vehicle for social commentary, exposing the systemic exploitation of women in patriarchal and criminal contexts. By implicating the audience in the act of voyeurism, the scene challenges viewers to critically engage with their own perceptions and the socio-cultural realities reflected in the film. This layered representation showcases Nollywood's growing sophistication in addressing complex themes through visual storytelling.



Plate 5: Shalewa having sexual intimacy with the son of Chief Fernandez in his car during one of her sex work escapades.

The image of Shalewa engaging in sexual intimacy with Chief Fernandez's son in his car during one of her sex work escapades highlights themes of surveillance, objectification, power, and societal judgment. This scene invites a deeper critique of the dynamics of the gaze, the commodification of Shalewa's body, and the interplay of power and vulnerability within the confined, voyeuristic space of the car. Thus, Voyeurism as a psychoanalytic and cinematic concept, thrives on the idea of deriving pleasure or power from observing intimate or private moments. In this scene, the car becomes a metaphorical "frame," isolating Shalewa and Chief Fernandez's son in an enclosed, performative space. This setting invites an implied or actual

audience (including viewers or external onlookers) to observe their intimacy, reinforcing the dynamic of voyeuristic surveillance. In this regard, Shalewa's position as a sex worker makes her body the focal point of this voyeuristic act. Her intimacy is not just a private act but also a commodified one, subject to observation and judgment. This dynamic aligns with the male gaze, where her body is not viewed as a site of agency but as an object of sexual performance for male pleasure, whether it be Chief Fernandez's son or the external viewer. While the act of sexual intimacy might seem consensual within the narrative, the underlying power structures complicate the interpretation. Chief Fernandez's son, by virtue of his social and economic privilege, wields power over Shalewa, whose position as a sex worker places her in a vulnerable and transactional role. The confined space of the car heightens this power imbalance, transforming the act into a scene where Shalewa's agency is overshadowed by her role as an object of both physical and voyeuristic consumption. The car also serves as a liminal space—neither entirely public nor private. This ambiguity amplifies the voyeuristic tension, as their act becomes susceptible to intrusion or observation. The potential for an external gaze reinforces Shalewa's vulnerability, positioning her body as an object of both intimate and societal scrutiny.

Furthermore, from a voyeuristic perspective, the act of sexual intimacy is not merely about physical pleasure but also about the commodification of Shalewa's body. As a sex worker, her body is already positioned within a transactional framework, where her worth is tied to her ability to perform and satisfy. This commodification is further emphasized by the setting—a car, a space often associated with fleeting, transactional encounters. The voyeuristic lens thus underscores the reduction of Shalewa's identity to her sexual utility, erasing her individuality and agency. Looking at the scene which was a juxtaposition of intense sexual performance with Scar's kill of Shalewa's friend from an African cultural and social point of view, this scene also critiques societal attitudes toward morality, sexuality, and class. Shalewa's role as a sex worker places her on the fringes of societal acceptance, making her a subject of both desire and moral judgment. The voyeuristic depiction of her intimacy with Chief Fernandez's son serves to amplify these tensions, as it exposes the hypocrisy of a society that simultaneously exploits and condemns women in her position. The car, as a symbol of privilege and power, further complicates this dynamic. While it offers a space for intimacy, it also becomes a site of entrapment, where Shalewa's vulnerability and transactional role are starkly highlighted. The voyeuristic perspective forces the audience to confront their complicity in this dynamic, as they become passive observers of her commodified intimacy. It is worthy to note that some films use nudity as a plot device, while others use it to add realism or to make a statement about gender or sexuality. There is also the concept of "sexploitation," which is when nudity is used in a way that is exploitative or objectifying. It is true that the film does depict nudity in a way that could be seen as exploitative. For example, the main character's experiences with sex work are shown in a way that could be seen as objectifying or degrading. However, it's important to consider the larger context of the film. In this case, the nudity is used to explore the character's experiences and to make a statement about gender and sexuality. It's not just used for shock value or to entertain the audience. With that in mind, there is a better possibility of understanding the psychosocial effects of nudity and sexuality in films. One potential effect is the desensitization of the audience. In other words, people who are exposed to nudity and sexuality in films may become less sensitive to these topics in real life.

Another psychosocial effect of nudity and sexuality in films is the impact on attitudes and behaviour. Research has shown that exposure to nudity and sexuality in films can influence people's attitudes about gender roles and sexuality. It can also influence their behavior, such as their sexual attitudes and practices. One way that nudity and sexuality in films can influence attitudes is through the concept of "social learning." This is the idea that people learn by observing and imitating the behavior of others. When people see nudity and sexuality in films, they may learn to imitate this behavior in their own lives. They may also learn to accept this behavior as normal or acceptable. This can have a profound effect on people's attitudes and behavior. Another way that nudity and sexuality in films can influence people is through the concept of "priming." This is the idea that seeing nudity and sexuality in films can trigger certain thoughts or emotions in the viewer. For example, seeing nudity may trigger sexual thoughts or emotions, even if the viewer does not consciously intend to have these thoughts or emotions.

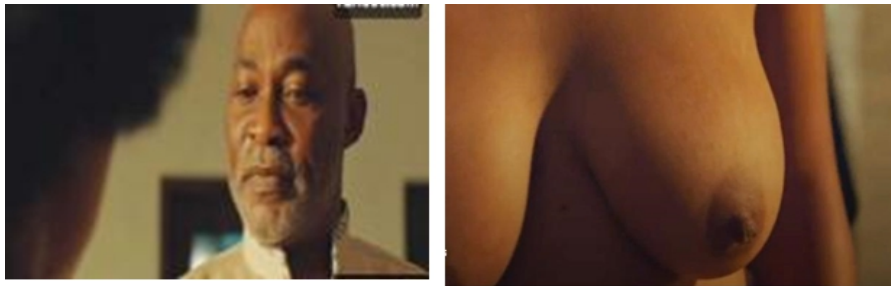


Plate 6: A Sex worker Being Objectified by the Father of Her Client.

In this scene, Chief Fernandez assumes the role of the voyeur, positioning Shalew's nude body as an object of erotic spectacle. His gaze is not merely passive but is amplified by his physical actions of touching her breast and nipples, which further reinforces his control and dominance over her body. From a cinematic or literary perspective, this gaze could symbolize the patriarchal tendency to reduce women to objects of visual and physical pleasure, stripping them of agency and individuality. Though the image of Chief Fernandez gazing at the nude body of the sex worker Shalewa, and engaging in actions for his pleasure, reveals a dynamic rooted in the objectification and surveillance of the female body for male gratification. It should be noted that Voyeurism, as a psychoanalytic concept, refers to the act of deriving pleasure from observing someone who is unaware of being watched or is in a vulnerable, exposed state. It often involves a power imbalance, where the observer (the voyeur) exerts dominance over the subject being watched. This implies that Chief Fernandez's role as the observer places him in a position of dominance, while Shalew's nude body becomes a passive subject, stripped of agency and autonomy. Her vulnerability, both as a woman and as a sex worker, amplifies this imbalance. In this context, her nudity symbolizes not only physical exposure but also the societal perception of her as an object available for consumption, rather than a person with intrinsic worth and agency.

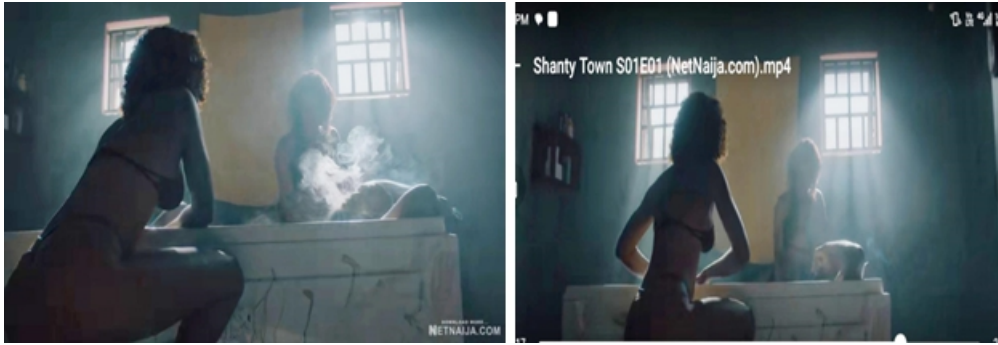


Plate 7a and b: Is silhouette nude images of two ladies in their black undies bathing Scar which was used in depicting his lifestyle as well as intensify the tempo of his preparation to go for a dangerous mission



Plate 7c: More Pictures from the Scene Depicting the Objectification of Women

A good example of projecting the notion of Objectification of women by men could be seen in the scene where the main character is working as a prostitute. In this scene, the film shows her being exploited and objectified by her clients.

Conclusion

In Shanty Town, nudity and sexual images are represented as tools to critique the dynamics of power, objectification, and societal hypocrisy through a voyeuristic lens. The depiction of Shalewa's intimacy transforms her body into both a site of pleasure and a spectacle, subjected to surveillance and commodification. Spaces like the car amplify her vulnerability, turning private acts into performances for external scrutiny. These representations expose the exploitative structures surrounding sex work while challenging viewers to reflect on the societal systems that perpetuate voyeurism, objectification, and moral double standards. The director took great care to show the main character's emotions and experiences in a realistic and empathetic way. This is a great example of how nudity and sexuality in films can be handled with sensitivity and care. The director did an excellent job of balancing the need to show nudity and sexuality in a realistic way, while also being sensitive to the audience's needs. I think the director struck the right balance between showing enough to convey the story,

without showing too much or being gratuitous. Nudity and sexuality can be used to advance the plot, to show character development, and to create emotional connections with the audience.

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