

#### **Reflection 4**

The narrative of African film, perhaps one that is not as commonly explored outside the continent, has a long history. Initially the African Film scene was tied closely to European filmmaking and was characterized by auteur cinema, often with a francophone bias. Auteur cinema's search for the 'African aesthetic' as Saul and Austen mention, involved attempting to 'contribute to universal art' as well as 'reach the local audience'. Despite this, few 'respected' film makers pursued the commercial route of film, perhaps both due to the 'low critical appeal' as well as the narrow region-based markets, both of which created unfavorable financial circumstances. This style of cinema is often contrasted to Nollywood, a type of filmmaking that has been revolutionary in its 'transnationality' as Krings and Okome mention. Nollywood is presented by its critics as everything African auteur cinema is not, the latter aiming to re-define the image of Africa, the former re-affirming stereotypes. Despite this, not even critics can deny its overwhelming international popularity as well as its recognizable Africanness. Additionally, towards the end of the Krings and Okome piece, he brings forward how even highly critiqued Nollywood movies, namely *Osuofia in London*, can be read a variety of different ways and can offer a place for Africans to reinvent and debate their Africanness. This aim, held by the makers of African auteur cinema as well, was perhaps really achieved continent-wide by Nollywood films. Despite this, these two styles of filmmaking remain separate and often each style is 'proud' to be defined as the counter of other. The question I personally find interesting is that of the African stereotype and Globality. Is it fair to critique exploiting the African stereotype? Or is

the critique towards Nollywood yet a further relic of African exclusion, in that African art cannot escape the baggage of African stereotypes. The famous filmmaker, Ousmane Sembene, remarked in the Saul piece, '*Rubbish for rubbish, let's make African rubbish*' but the real questions as global Africans is, 'Can we afford to?'

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