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Women in African Cinema: An Annotated Bibliography

This bibliography is designed to serve as a guide for research on topics related to women in African cinema. On beginning this project, I did extensive bibliographic research and found no single bibliography devoted to women in African cinema. Moreover, although in most fields today CD-ROM technology has made it easy to access literature for research, the indexes available on CD-ROM do not provide many references on this topic. Instead, the researcher has to consult a wide range of sources, including monographic bibliographies, journals, books and newspapers. The general omission of African women in works devoted to African cinema, women in general, Third World women, and women’s studies led me to conclude that either experts in these areas are not aware of the available literature, or they do not consider issues concerning African women important enough to include in their scholarship. Since we are dealing with a visual medium, one cannot ignore the fact that women play focal rôles in most African films. By African films, one should understand films directed and produced by an African about Africa in or outside Africa.

Although this bibliography is by no means comprehensive, it attempts to pull together a representative selection of recent research focusing on the themes of portrayal of African women in African films, and the rôle of women in African filmmaking. Of particular interest in it are works on the question of representation of women in African films. It includes books, periodical articles and periodicals published from 1970 to 1995. It is divided into such topics as:

- actresses
- approaches

• awards
• catalogues and listings
• costume designers
• directories
• distribution
• education
• festivals
• filmmakers
• filmographies
• guides
• make-up artists
• reception
• reviews
• treatment of women.

Items which were available for my perusal are annotated. Some items are listed under more than one section depending on their relevance to the respective sections.

It is hoped that this bibliography will stimulate widespread use of the films and the scholarship that are available on, by, and about women in African cinema. It is also hoped that it will contribute to research promoting women from their marginal position to a central one in a way that is commensurate with their presence on screen.

**Actresses**

**AGEH, JUANITA (Nigeria)**


Discusses the rôle of women in African cinema through the work of actress Juanita Ageh (Nigerian-Caribbean), director Anne Mungai (Kenyan, whose film – *Saikati* – won two awards at the 1993 FESPACO) and Ngozi Onwurah (Nigerian). Looks at the way these three professionals approach the issues of "women." Comments on the stereotypical portrayal of African women in film. Mentions "Twende: African Professional Women in Cinema," a conference organized by the Africa Centre, London, and the British film Institute.