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## Challenges of Directing Nigerian Epic Film: A Study of Eagle's Bride

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### Abstract

Epic Film is a simple long film that portrays an old heroic deeds and adventure covering an extended period of time. The term Epic film refers to movies that have large scope, often set during a time of war, or other conflict and sometimes taking place over a considerable period of time. This research topic uses qualitative method in providing a better understanding of what Epic film is, who is a Director, Directing, Responsibilities of a Director, Challenges of directing an Epic film and offer few solutions to the challenges. This research choose an Epic film because it is one of the oldest film genre. It is often accredited to their ability to appeal to a wide range of audience and several of the highest grossing film of all time have been Epic films.

**Key Words:** Director, Directing, Responsibilities, Epic Films, Challenges.

## Introduction

Since the Introduction of Epic film in 1922, many researchers apart from knowing the characteristics of Epic films and its role in the society still nurse the interest of knowing the systems and challenges of producing epic films. Critically analysing the factors militating against the production of Epic films (challenges of Directing an Epic films) has become an area of paramount interest by numerous researchers with regards to the solutions to these challenges. Epic films in its uniqueness has occupied better position in various movie industries in the world. To this extent one is poised to investigate the challenges faced in the production of Epic films especially concerning directing and its possible remedies.

The purpose of this study is therefore to investigate the various challenges faced in putting up all these knowledge into production of Epic films with an aim of identifying who a director is, directing roles. Challenges of the director of Nigerian Epic film \_ The Eagle's bride, and why a film can be regarded as epic.

## Director:

### Who is a film Director?

A film director is a person who controls a film's artistic and dramatic aspects and visualizes the screenplay (or script) while

guiding the film crew and actors in the fulfilment of that vision. The director has a key role in choosing the cast members, production design and all the creative aspects of filmmaking.

## Directing:

Directing sets in motion the action of people because planning, organizing, and staffing are the mere preparations for doing the work. Directing is an aspect of management that deals directly with influencing, guiding, supervising, and motivating staff for the achievement of organizational goals.

In directing Nigeria Epic Film, a director is responsible for the creative interpretation of the script from start to finish. In doing this, he has different responsibilities during preproduction, during production, and during post production.

## Responsibilities

Some of the key responsibilities of a film director include:

- Reviewing and adjusting scripts and selecting which ones to turn into films
- Monitoring and approving film production budgets
- Watching auditions, selecting actors, and directing actors

- Overseeing all aspects of the production process, both on and off the set
- Working with the sound and music departments
- Working with editors to produce the final version of the film
- Ensuring that the film stays within its budget and on its timeline

### **What Roles Does A Director Play Throughout The Filmmaking Process?**

The director is heavily involved in all stages of filmmaking, from the very start of the project to the final cut. However, their role in each stage can be varied. For example, before even stepping foot on a film set, a director is heavily involved behind the scenes. Take a look at the different roles a director plays throughout the filmmaking process.

#### **Development Phase**

Developing the story and the script often takes place before pre-production begins, and the director won't usually become involved in the project until the pre-production phase. However, if a director has written the script, they would be involved earlier in the project. Directors who are more hands-on may also make comments or changes to the script during the development phase.

#### **Pre-Production Phase**

A director must take a practical approach during the pre-production phase, as their vision will be constrained by the project's budget and script. The first step in pre-production is working with others who will be involved in the production process to create a game plan.

The director can request revisions to the script during this phase, often working closely with the writers responsible for the story. Directors also review the tone of the film and communicate their vision to the heads of the other departments before production begins.

Another step in pre-production is listing shots and creating storyboards. This phase also includes auditioning and casting actors to find the right people to fill the roles and bring the story to life.

#### **Production Phase**

The next phase in the process is production, which happens on the film set. During this phase, the director will watch the actors rehearse and make important decisions regarding the look of the film and its overall direction.

The most important role of a film director during the production phase is directing the actors and the camera to get the right angles, shots, and results. The director must

get to know the actors and understand how they like to do their jobs, and then they can adjust their directing to bring out the best possible performance.

Directors work with the actors during rehearsals to ensure that their vision for the storyline and the finished product is taken into account. The filming process also relies heavily on the director, as they must be happy with the takes before moving onto the next scene in the story.

### **Post-Production Phase**

The final phase of a film is post-production, which may take place on or off the set. This is when all of the parts come together to create a final product, and the director will be heavily involved to ensure that the film turns out the way they envisioned.

During this phase, they work closely with the film's editors and produce a director's cut as well as the final cut. They also work with music and sound departments to make sure their vision is reflected in the final cut, which will include sound effects, background noise, and music to set each scene.

### **Director Versus Producer**

Directors and producers are both influential professionals who provide guidance on developing a film, but their jobs differ significantly. Creating a film, tv show or

play is a complex process that requires cooperation between everyone involved in its production.

The primary difference between a film director vs. producer is that the director oversees the creative process of making a film, while producers handle the logistics related to this process. This means that their skill sets and job responsibilities differ. Here is a brief overview of each of these types of media professionals:

#### **Who is a producer?**

A producer finds and launches a project. They arrange the financing for a film, hire the screenwriters and oversee all the other production elements until its release. Most producers work actively on the film set, where they oversee the production logistics from start to finish and collaborate closely with the director. Some producers hold the title in name only, in exchange for ceding rights to the story, for example, or contributing financing to the film.

#### **Who is a director?**

Directors determine the creative vision of films, plays, productions or television shows. They have complete artistic control over these projects. Directors spend most of their time guiding the practical aspects of filming and editing.

## Becoming a Film Director

You must have a creative eye to succeed as a director. You need to be able to visualize a finished project and see it through to completion while working with a wide range of moving parts. Most directors and aspiring directors spend a lot of their time watching films to figure out what works and understand what went into making each scene.

## What Training Does A Director Need?

Many film directors have undergraduate degrees in film or related fields. However, college is not a prerequisite for a director — experience is highly valued in the movie industry. In other to become a professional it is pertinent you go to school. Ikechukwu Onyeka in his words

Narrating, he said “I have never shot a film I think I really like. Though I have done a lot of jobs people applauded, I still feel unfulfilled. There are lots of things I think needed to be done in Nollywood, especially in the area of sound and lighting. Last year, I made up my mind to go back to school in order to update my knowledge.”

Onyeka disclosed that he was inspired to go back to the classroom because of his insatiable desire to acquire high knowledge in his chosen profession.

He became a student of cinematography at Colorado Film School in 2003.

A notable like Ikechukwu said, after his eight years sojourn as a director in the industry, he felt unfulfilled and needed to grow more than he was, a situation which prompted his decision to travel to the United States in search of fulfilment and high knowledge.

## Qualifications

While a degree isn't necessarily required, you do have to sell yourself as a director and convince producers and financiers to take you on to work on their projects. It is crucial to gain experience and build your skills to show that you are worth taking a chance on to produce films that will interest and appeal to audiences.

## Skills

To be a successful director, you need the following skills:

- Creativity
- Confidence
- Ability to motivate
- Sharp eye for detail
- Communication skills to give directions to actors
- Organization

- Ability to stick to budgets and timelines

### **Professional Development and Progression**

Join professional organizations such as the American Society of Cinematographers and the Motion Picture Editors Guild to help with networking and progressing as a director

### **Epic Films**

Epic films are a style of filmmaking with large scale, sweeping scope, and spectacle. The usage of the term has shifted over time, sometimes designating a film genre and at other times simply synonymous with big-budget filmmaking. Like epics in the classical literary sense, it is often focused on a heroic character.

But if we go back to the roots of the word “epic”, we find that its origins are very different from its current meaning. The word “epic” comes from the Ancient Greek word *epos*, which simply means “word, narrative, or song”.

So, how did the word “epic” evolve from something that basically just meant “words” to a blanket adjective for “intensity” or “extremeness”?

The answer lies in the history of literature!

If we look at its earliest use, *epos* is just what it says: words, narrative, and songs. The earliest “epics” were poems that told a story and that were performed out loud. Of course, the earliest epics, like Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* survive today because they were written down, but they circulated as orally performed poems – maybe for hundreds of years – before being copied. In fact, the author known as “Homer” probably never existed – he’s a catch-all name we give to the many generations of performers who told, retold, and shaped the stories of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* over time.

These early Homeric “epics” had some qualities in common beyond the fact that they were orally-performed stories.

First, they were about people whose personal qualities were considered “exemplary” in their culture, civilization, or country: in other words, **heroes**, like Achilles and Odysseus.

Second, they took place in **settings** that are “universal” in one way or another: either the narrative takes place over a wide range of places and times, involves a lot of travel, or used a single place, like the Walls of Troy, to explore ideas and themes that range widely over human experience.

Third, these early epics also invoked deities or the supernatural (Athena, Zeus, Ares, and the like)

Finally, an epic is often used or read as a foundational cultural text. This last quality is incredibly important. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* – which were long poems about heroes doing heroic deeds and helped or hindered by the gods – ultimately came to “represent” something about a culture to itself: they were the ideals that people wanted to live up to or rebelled against by rejecting.

Today, we apply the word “epic” to all sorts of *long* works of literature – often ancient ones – that encapsulate our sense of the values of a given society. So not just the Greek *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are epics, but so too is the Latin *Aeneid*, the Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Sanskrit *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, and the Old English *Beowulf*. Even Milton’s *Paradise Lost* is sometimes classified as an epic. Today, an *epic* is an *epic* if it’s a long story about a hero that serves as an organizing point of cultural or social identity. It might be used to describe any creative media that has a broad scope, that speaks broadly to the human condition, that is long or large, and that is ambitious in its artistic goals. So we can think of *EAGLE’S BRIDE* as Epic film.

Epic film is a genre that takes historical events and people and interprets them in a larger scale. Historical accuracy is not the main focus in Epics, but rather the telling of a grandiose story. The drama of an Epic film is often accentuated by a sweeping musical score, lavish costumes, and

### **Most Outstanding Features of the Epic**

#### **It may be written in verse or prose**

The structure of the epics is usually prose or verses hexameters, which consist of six feet (unit of Greek verse containing between two and four long and short syllables).

Epics often carry extensive comparative images and epithets, and language is often elaborated.

In its beginnings, the epics were written exclusively in verse. When writing was invented, the verse form was retained but the prose structure was added as another way of counting epics.

#### **It can be based on real events or fiction**

The stories narrated in the epics may have been drawn from reality, or have been created by the writer.

However, in either case, the narrative of the facts is characterized by being exaggerated. That is, facts are always exalted, whether real or imaginary.

**It narrates the exploits of a hero**

The characteristic plots of the epics revolve around a character, who must go through a series of circumstances and obstacles to achieve a task.

The values of this main character are exalted and, in his work of hero, tries to highlight the virtues and principles that are of great relevance for a specific society. The hero of the story always overcomes all obstacles and is victorious.

**Usually surrounded by supernatural elements**

Since the plot of the epic is often exaggerated and idealized, the hero's actions usually take place in a supernatural context. In epics it is usual for the hero to interact with gods and other mythological characters.

These supernatural actors actively intervene in the story, hinder the hero's action or help him fulfil his mission.

**It is part of the tradition of a people**

Whether the story told through the epic comes from a real fact or as a product of fantasy, these plots refer to the most important moments, the most representative characters and the values and virtues most relevant to a particular society.

For this reason, they are part of the historical testimony of a people. In addition, they often describe specific aspects of the life of that town: customs, religious traditions or even cultural expressions.

**It makes didactic sense**

The function of the epic, beyond its recreational character, is deeply didactic. This literary subgenre is intended to illustrate the actions of importance to a group of people, and to ensure that this information transcends in time and is available to future generations.

Within the fabric of an epic may exist philosophical propositions that have probably laid the moral foundations of a generation. Through the epics, it is possible to teach these values.

The values that are most emphasized in the epics are fidelity, honor, honesty, strength, love, intelligence and perseverance, among other virtues.

And, in addition to values, the epics were a way of publicizing the manifestations associated with a society. Through these literary constructions, it was possible to spread their cultural expressions from one generation to the next.



### **The plot usually deals with wars and travels**

As we have seen, the main character of the epic is the hero, and a hero needs situations that certify him as an idol.

For this reason, epics often tell stories that have to do with an epic crusade of a person (or a group of people), who must travel through lands, win wars and overcome obstacles in order to be considered the bravest.

### **Omniscient narrator**

Who tells the story in the epic is an omniscient narrator; That is, it narrates events in the third person.

The narrator does not participate in the adventures in the present time, but tells the story in a chronic way: the structure is conceived so that the narrator implies that the story he shares with the reader corresponds to something that he himself lived.

The language used suggests that the narrator is sharing his experience as an observer.

### **Large extension**

The epics are long. The reason for this wide extension is that the narration is quite detailed.

Emphasis is on describing in detail the characteristics of the characters, the scenarios, the exploits and all the situations faced by the protagonists of the epic.

### **Originally oral transmission**

Initially, the epics were narrated orally. The Middle Ages were the historical era with the greatest rise of the epic, and in that period were the minstrels who were in charge of transmitting these epic stories through their songs.

Since the length of the epics has always been long, storytellers orally used sentence formulas that helped them remember the whole story and keep the metrics in the structure of the epic.

Subsequently, these stories were transcribed, which allowed this manifestation to transcend in time.

### **Biography of the Director of the Film *Eagle's Bride*.**

Ikechukwu Onyeka is the director of the film *Eagle's Bride*. He was born on 25<sup>th</sup> December, a Christian and is happily married. Onyeka is from Umuoji, Idemili North local government in Anambra State. In 2012, he enrolled at Colorado Film School to study cinematography. He highlighted his quest to get optimal knowledge in film-making as his reason for taking a break to return to school.

Prior to film-making, Onyeka was an okada rider. Between 1998 and 2006, he directed 70 films and produced thirteen. Onyeka ventured into Nollywood as a property manager, before becoming a production manager, producer, the assistant director then director. According to him, he didn't like acting because of the publicity that comes along with it. He has also founded his production company, Lykon pictures. Onyeka is described as one of the "most accomplished directors" in Nollywood. In 2010, during an interview in New York, he stated that having worked with most big names in the industry, Genevieve Nnaji is arguably the "only star in Nollywood", he cited her professionalism as a reason for this. He explained that other actors were popular, but not stars. He also described Mercy Johnson as the most popular face in the film industry.

#### **Other of his popular films includes:**

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- Unforeseen
  - Eagle's Bride
  - Slave To Lust
  - Warrior's Heart
  - The Captain
  - Corporate Maid
  - Intimidation

- Reloaded
- A Private Storm
- Mr and Mrs
- The Grave Dust
- Forgetting June
- Brother's Keeper

#### **Brief Summary of the Film**

Ikoku, the king's brother, is desperate to sit on the throne even if it means assassinating the king's sole heir.

Ikoku, the king's brother is a dishonest man. He is known for his treachery, dirty business and bloodshed. His strive to be the king seems glaring.

The way of the gods are mysterious as Princess was kidnapped according to his plan for her not to marry. He planned her kidnap to sell her into slavery while his own daughter marries the Princess husband to be. The Prince vehemently refused to marry his own daughter, and as fate could have it. His plot was revealed, king's daughter was found, and the will of God happened.

Tyranny is taken to fresh heights in this violent family drama, which focuses on the oppressive activities of the younger brother of the King of a Community. *Eagles Bride 1,2,3* is a Traditional African Movie full of betrayal of the highest order, a hint of the Slave Trade and victory for the innocent .

## Challenges

A challenge can be defined as a stimulating task or problem.

**New or difficult task that tests someone's ability and skill:** Director therefore faces some new task and problems in directing An Epic film. This article uses the film Eagle's bride to showcase some challenges the director faced while directing the Epic film.. Some of these challenges.

**Sound:** Having and paying a good sound manager to handle interfering sounds from the locations may be one directors challenges.

**Large cast:** Managing the last cast was a bit challenging because he had to use the actors he brought to the location.

**Sourcing of appropriate props costumes and makeup artists, as well as bringing them to locations.**

Other challenges he acknowledged as a director includes

Challenges of funding, distribution ,piracy.

Challenge of funding d best actors to fit in major roles. He buttressed that these days, everyone want to earn money and make name, without first investing and educating one's self. The ones that have invested on themselves and have made

name fame which makes films to sell charges exorbitantly.

## Solutions.

However, in directing An Epic film which usually requires large number of characters in some scenes, a director should try the following in handling the last cast without confusing his audience.

1. Spacing out character's introduction: The director should space out their introduction and introduce them through action, without lumping all the characters together too quickly.
2. Handling similar characters: A director may face this challenge, but its important he brings these similar characters as a group ,while appointing a spokesman.
3. Multiple Character conversations: A director can help audience avoid this confusion by judiciously using dialogue tags and action beats without confusing the audience.
4. The director should keep a firm grasp on which character is protagonist: This is very challenging to the director, taking a firm look to the climax and other climatic moments will help him say who protagonist is.

5. The director may also have a challenge of avoiding repetition: The director should make sure that each character influence and comment upon the thematic arguments, avoiding repetition.
6. The should also strick a good balance in terms of money to fund to source for the best props characters, logistics etc.

Despite these challenges, large casts brings depth and heft to an Epic film, if a director uses his expertise in managing them.

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