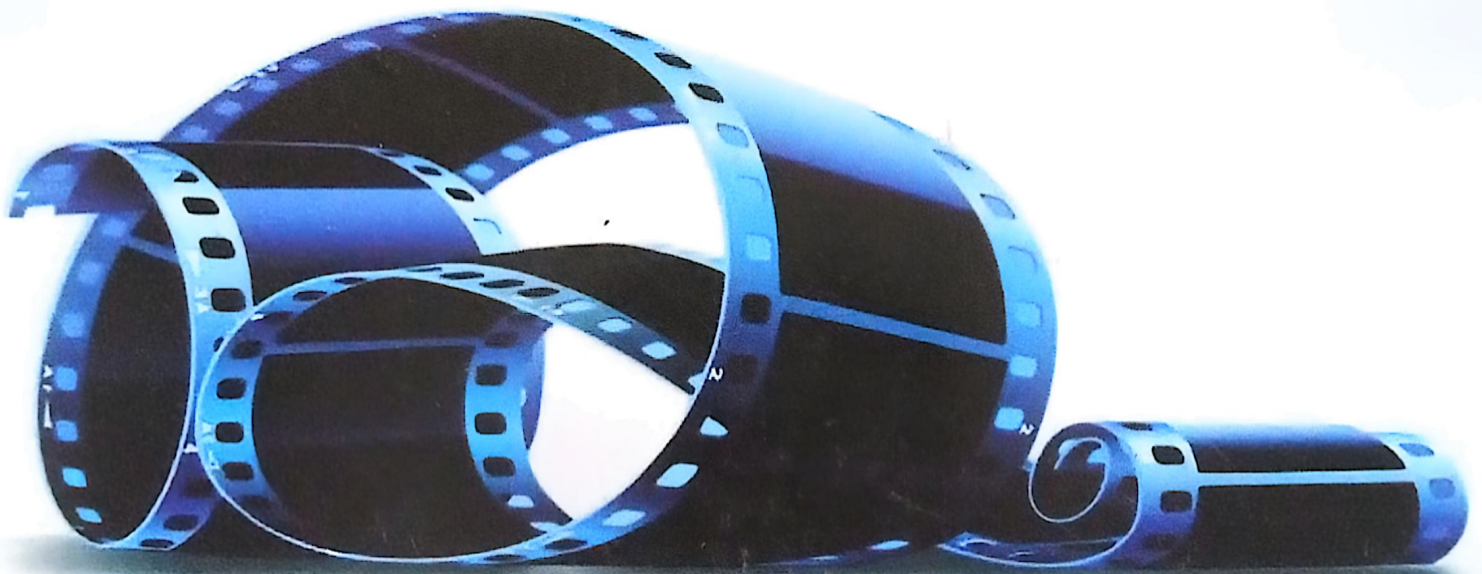


Inside Nollywood

(Issues and perspectives on Nigerian Cinema)



Edited By
SOLA FOSUDO
TUNJI AZEEZ

INSIDE NOLLYWOOD

Issues and Perspectives on Nigerian Cinema

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Issues and Perspectives on Nigerian Cinema

**Edited by
Sola Fosudo Ph.D.
Tunji Azeez Ph.D.**

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Dedication

For

Francis Oladele, Brendan Shehu, Ola Balogun, Eddie Ugboma, Ladi Ladebo,
Saddiq Balewa and Afolabi Adesanya.
Pioneers of Indigenous Nigerian Cinema

And

Muyideen Alade Aromire and Kenneth Nnebue
Progenitors of the Nollywood evolution

Acknowledgements

The idea of publishing a book on Nigerian Cinema appears facially fascinating, because the Nigerian film industry or Nollywood as it is now known has attracted enormous attention by researchers, scholars, practitioners, governments, investors, funding organizations and other stake holders in the last twenty years; and also because the impact of the industry economically, socially, politically and culturally has been remarkably compelling.

Although, a good number of published works already exist on the Nigerian film and cinema, no one has focused on the richness of its diversity by discussing issues with critical perspectives on Nollywood traditions and sub-traditions and also by examining the realities and contradictions in the industry. This perhaps explains the reason why the response to the call for papers was spontaneous. Contributors felt the pressing need to fill the gap existing from earlier publications and the promising potential of the book as a significant reference material in scholarly circles. We therefore wish to express our gratitude to all our contributors for their timely and insightful submissions and their patience. We appreciate, in a special way, the Professors who sent in papers to validate the editorial integrity and value of this book. In addition, we wish to thank Professor Femi Osofisan for going through the manuscript and agreeing to write the foreword to the book even at short notice. Also, we hereby acknowledge the valued secretarial assistance offered by Mrs Taiwo Adejuwon and Mrs Grace Samuel.

We sincerely thank our families who held forth during the period of putting this work together. Finally, we wish to thank the Almighty God through whom all things are made possible, for the inspiration and successful publication of this book.

Sola Fosudo and Tunji Azeez

August 2017

Foreword

The Nigerian film industry, Nollywood, has become one of the most important cinematic traditions in the world. That an experiment that began a little over a decade ago, first by Muyideen Alade Aromire and later given prominence by the Igbo businessman, Kenneth Nnebue with the production of *Living in Bondage* and *Glamour Girls* is today celebrated worldwide gives credence to the sheer industry, dedication and resilience of the Nigerian spirit, a spirit that seems able to make water gush out of a rock. Today, when movie traditions are mentioned, Nigerian films rank among the three most popular traditions the world over. It is also fascinating to underscore the importance of this movie culture in political, economic and cultural development of Nigeria as the films are a reflection of the myriad of problems and aspirations of the Nigerian people both on the African continent and in the African Diaspora. While the sheer number of films produced in Nigeria is staggering, coming an enviable second only to India's Bollywood, the thematic relevance and technical quality of these films have become a source of debate for both scholars and practitioners. This debate has, interestingly led to the schism among practitioners over the classification 'Nollywood' to describe all movies produced in Nigeria. For instance, while many scholars are content to classify all the movies produced in Nigeria as Nollywood movies, some other practitioners are rejecting that classification and opting to be classified along ethnic divides such as Yoruwod for the Yoruba movie makers, Kannywood for those practitioners who operate in the Hausa language and many other lesser accepted 'woods' such as films produced in Igbo, Ibibio, Efik and a few other Nigerian indigenous languages.

Despite the popularity of Nigerian movies, however, it must be noted that the literatures on this movies tradition is scant and its critics, just a handful. A critical look at those who have actually done substantial work on this cinematic culture attests to this; Femi Shaka, Hygenius Ekwuazi, Onokome Okome, Jonathan Haynes and a few others. This list reveals that theory and criticism of Nollywood in its various manifestations needs to be undertaken by more scholars for without this, the Nigerian film cannot truly grow to compete with older traditions that it borrowed significantly from namely, America's Hollywood and India's Bollywood.

It is based on the above that the present effort by two scholar-practitioners, Sola Fosudo and Tunji Azeez becomes an important contribution to the growing literature on the Nigerian movie. This present work is also unique in several ways; 1. The editors are grounded in both theory and practice of film as Sola Fosudo is a pioneer actor and film producer of this cinematic tradition so is Tunji Azeez, a known figure in scriptwriting and a long standing member of

one of the largest film award schemes on the continent , the African Movies Academy Award (AMAA). 2. Both editors have done considerable theoretical and critical work on Nigerian cinema. 3. The book as aptly titled, contains essays from academics and practitioners thereby fulfilling the desire of letting the gown to interact with the town. This third point is a major strength of this book.

I am also enthused by the array of contributors to this volume. The essays reveal a favourable blend of old and tested film critics such as Hyginus Ekwuazi, the pioneer Director of the Nigerian Film Institute and a world celebrated film personality and Femi Shaka, one of the earliest scholars of film studies to younger scholars who are very in tune with the changing and growing cinematic discourse. The book has thirty chapters which cover a wide range of issues from thematic concerns to technical quality; set, light, costume, special effect and many more. The essays in *Inside Nollywood*, reflect the fact that the Nigerian film has come of age and that there is urgent need for more film scholars and practitioners to document, critique and re-examine these film traditions to improve their quality and thematic relevance in a fast changing world. The book, therefore, will no doubt be of significant use to anyone who wants to have a good understanding of the Nigerian cinema from its earliest beginnings to the present.

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Nigeria.
August, 2017.

Introduction

The idea of a book on Nollywood began as a discussion between the editors to contribute to the emerging debate on this film culture. As scholars cum practitioners, we felt a need to contribute to the debate in order to point out the real state of affairs in an industry that many would agree is functioning on its own rules which are different from those of other film cultures like Hollywood and Bollywood of America and India respectively. As a starting point, we noted the birth or growth of this film culture from the rich itinerant theatrical tradition of the *alarinjo* traveling theatre among the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria and its evolution to the television genre in the 70s and 80s to the first experiment of film production by indigenous theatre practitioners led by Hubert Ogunde, the unquestionable doyen of Nigerian theatre, and his collaboration with one of the pioneers of Nigerian cinema, Ola Balogun, together with the significant efforts of another Nigerian, Chief Eddie Ugbomah, amongst others.

This historical development, though recorded by other scholars before us, needed to be re-examined against the backdrop of the argument that these early films do not qualify as Nollywood but rather as Nigerian films! What, then, is Nollywood and how does it operate? What are the classificatory paradigms of Nollywood movies? Why are some filmmakers such as Tunde Kelani, Tade Ogidan, Jimi Odumosu, Niji Akanni and Kunle Afolayan refusing to be called Nollywood filmmakers despite the fact that they operate in Nigeria? What is the appeal that Nollywood films have on the Nigerian society to make it a household item outside the shores of the country and the continent? How well has Nollywood projected the Nigerian image to the outside world? Who, indeed, is the pioneer of this movie tradition between Muyideen Alade Aromire, the filmmaker who first shot his film in the video film format, and Kenneth Nnebue, the businessman who saw great potential in the new genre and invested heavily in it when many were skeptical of doing so? These and many more led to our deciding to edit a book instead of writing one. Our belief is that the aggregation of opinions of scholars and practitioners of film would be a rich harvest that will impact on this enigmatic cinematic culture. Therefore, the essays in this book reflect the opinions of a wide crop of people: film scholars, film practitioners, film journalists, investors and others. With the diversity and quality of the essays in this book, our yearnings have been satisfied.

In chapter one, Sola Fosudo examines Nollywood by asking the basic question of what constitutes a film industry. His essay, 'Nollywood: the Realities and Illusions of a Film Industry in Transition', reveals the contradictions inherent in calling Nigerian films 'Nollywood' when there is actually no wood to show for it. His paper highlights the unstructured and porous state of the industry,

an industry built by illiterate men who are driven by passion and commerce but who lack the basic knowledge of film production and distribution. The paper discusses the realities of the concept of Nollywood, as well as its activities and operations, by examining the current situation of the industry vis-a-vis the mode of production and consumption of the films produced and the attendant challenges, including critical issues such as professional training, infrastructure, ethics, regulation, censorship, classification, etc. In a way, as an opening paper, it opens the issues that are explored in other chapters of the book.

Sola Fosudo's paper is followed by that of Tunji Azeez. Azeez's paper, 'Nigerian Film and Drama: A Tortuous Journey to a Glorious Present', traces the growth of the Nigerian film from its humble beginning in the *egungun* cult and later the *alarinjo* theatre of the Yoruba to the present. In this chapter, Azeez examines the historical beginnings of drama and theatre up to the present where the theatre manifests in such other media as television, film, home video, radio drama and even a new genre called stand-up comedy. The paper submits that from a tortuous beginning where almost every work is mainly seen as reflecting an ethnic sensibility, there are more conscious efforts by playwrights and other practitioners, Nigerian filmmakers in particular, to go beyond ethnic considerations to create works which can be regarded as "Nigerian" despite their ethnic bases. The paper captures, succinctly, the evolution of Nollywood and points the way to the future.

In chapter three, Femi Shaka continues Azeez's argument by providing more insights into the birth of this film industry. Shaka reconstructs existing knowledge and opens new vistas to examine Nollywood. As a leading voice in film studies in Nigeria and beyond, Shaka builds on the works of other film scholars such as Jonathan Haynes, Onookome Okome and Hygenius Ekwuazi by placing emphasis on reconstructing the historical and sociocultural contexts within which the industry emerged and evolved, the nature of Nigerian culture projected through the early video films that were released, critical remarks on the products of the industry in terms of what the industry has done right or wrong and the way forward. In chapter four, Tunde Onikoyi, in his essay 'A cursory Explication of the Sociology and Aesthetics of Nigerian Film and Literature: Viewership and Readership', examines the aesthetic potentials that feature in nonliterary texts, which constitute a large body of Nollywood productions, and argues that these can best be suitably imposed upon the Nigerian literary works in order that such books can lend themselves to expert filmmakers for filming.

In chapter five, Benedict Binebai's paper critically examines the impact of Nollywood and globalisation on Nigerian culture. In this essay, Binebai

becomes the voice of millions of Nigerian film audience who are dissatisfied with the negative projection of Nigerian (African) cultures and peoples in a globalised world. He contends that the film is a potent tool that should be used consciously for the positive promotion of Nigerian culture. He insists, through a study of a representative film, on the promotion of what he calls 'the true African cultural identity' to compete favourably with more powerful and superior cultures in the global arena with the vision to meet up with the challenges of globalisation. One may, however, ask what constitutes 'the true African Identity' in a multicultural setting like Nigeria.

Cornelius Onyekaba's paper in chapter six examines a Nollywood film, *Check Point*, to reveal how the print media is of advantage to the filmmaker. He opens with the argument that it is necessary to compare in some related ways the 'lived' and media-reported police and the film-created police using the 'discourse approach' as the basis of his analysis. His study of the film reveals the heinous crimes committed daily by the Nigeria police through their various checkpoints. The major strength of the paper is its depth of analysis and graphic portrayal of the Nigerian police as one in dire need of re-invention. Chapter seven features Hameed Olutoba Lawal's paper, 'Towards Decolonisation of the Nigerian Film Industry: Contributions of Yoruba Dramatists'. In this paper, the writer highlights the contributions of Yoruba dramatists to the Nigerian film industry. The paper traces the contributions of Yoruba dramatists to the expansion of the Nigerian theatrical space and the metamorphosis of same into what is today known as Nollywood. He argues, and very convincingly too, that the pioneering work of the late Hubert Ogunde and others of his generation cleared the path for later entrants such as Muyideen Alade Aromire of the Yotomi Television fame and his pioneering production of the first Nigerian home video film as the trailblazer of the Nigerian video film industry.

Emmanuel Adedun and Cornelius Onyekaba, in chapter eight, trace the growth of the industry from Nollywood to New Nollywood. The paper is an interesting contribution to the debate on nomenclature and classification. Beginning with earlier works produced by untrained filmmakers, he submits that Nollywood has indeed defied all odds to emerge as a major force in the *cine* world. However, this paper fails to recognise the argument in some earlier chapters about the contribution of Muyideen Aromire as the first filmmaker to produce film in the video format by giving the credit to Kenneth Nnebue, another major and pioneering figure, with his collaboration with some Nigerian actors in the production of the popular film, *Aje Ni Iya Mi* (*My Mother is a Witch*). Alade Aromire, it must be said, was the first filmmaker to shoot a commercial film using a video camera in 1986, long before Nnebue's collaboration and his later production of *Living in Bondage* in 1992 and Tunde Kelani's *Ti Oluwa ni Ile* in 1993. Perhaps, the debate about the actual pioneer of the Nigerian video film

industry will continue for some time. One thing that cannot be denied, however, is that the history of this enigmatic industry will be incomplete without these two personalities.

In chapter nine, Benard Eze Orji examines a sub-genre of Nollywood films, the Igbo film industry. Using a number of films to support his argument, Orji submits that, in the near two scores of its existence, the Igbo film culture has more often than not presented the Igbo as a nation of voodoo practitioners, occultists, dupes, witches, sorcerers, ritualists and prostitutes. Yemi Atanda and Azeez Akinwumi Sesan, in chapter ten, anchor their paper on Yoruba history by examining a historical film, *Afonja*, and its recreation of the life of one of the most important figures in Yoruba history, Afonja, the generalissimo of the Oyo (Yoruba) army in the 19th century. The paper raises some fundamental questions such as the suitability of the film medium to teach history to present and coming generations and its ability to satisfy the historian as a valid historical document when its concern is actually fiction. The paper concludes that with the form and content of historical films produced by Yoruba filmmakers, the film will do injustice to recorded history. One may ask, however, how reliable is written history? It is also important to understand that just as historical films are subjective rather than objective, so is written and oral history. One thing stands out, however: history has been a fount for all artists and the Nigerian film artist is no exemption.

Gowon Ama Doki's paper in chapter eleven, 'Political Control: Nigerian Politics and Politicians on Screen', is a thorough examination of the bane of Nigeria's development – the Nigerian political class and their brand of politics – as a viable concern for Nigerian filmmakers. The paper argues that the film medium is a potent site for critical assessment of the society. It shows, using the movie *Political Control*, to what extent the Nigerian political class and Nigeria's political system are corrupted and in need of corrective surgery and re-direction. Gowon concludes that rather than being seen as mere fiction the film should be seen as mediated reality, since it aptly captures the Nigerian political reality. Chapter twelve features Osedebamen David Oamen's essay, 'Creative Human Capital Management: A Necessity for Quality Film Production in Nigeria'. In this paper, the issue of quality in Nollywood movies is again brought to the fore. The writer submits that for the Nigerian film industry to compete with its international counterparts there is a need for artists to be trained. A major recommendation of Osedebamen's paper is that the Actors' Guild of Nigeria or the Ministry of Culture should establish a professional school or programmes in an existing higher institution that will retrain casts and crews, and grade them according to foundation training, experience and talent.

In chapter thirteen, Sola Fosudo's second contribution critically examines the portrayal of Nigerian culture by Nollywood moviemakers. He posits that since the film industry anchors its works on the portrayal, reflection and representation of cultural identity/identities, it is important to critically study and evaluate the portraiture and representations of Nigerian culture in the movies vis-à-vis popular culture and trends in the global entertainment industry. Therefore, using selected Nollywood movies, Fosudo examines and interrogates the place and influence of culture, as well as its identification and representation, in Nigerian artistic and cultural works. Fosudo's essay is followed by Nkemakonam Aniukwu's 'Interrogating the True Identity of Africans: Selected Nollywood and Hollywood Films as Paradigms'. In this essay, the author compares two cine cultures, Nigeria's Nollywood and America's Hollywood, and their portrayal of the African in their movies. Through this comparative study, the writer concludes that not all Africans in the Diaspora portray their culture in negative light and that Nigerian films are a source of knowing the authentic African identity. There seems to be a problematic in this submission, as many Nigerians and Africans will argue that Nollywood films have unfairly represented the Nigerian identity just like Hollywood films, which he says negatively portray the true African identity.

The concern of Uche Nnadozie in chapter fifteen is the conception of film, a moving image, as a form of visual art. This essay from a curator of fine arts takes us back to the debate on the quality of Nollywood films, which many have seen as too wordy, being dialogue-driven, rather than being what it is for millennia – a series of moving images. The writer attempts to link the emergence of the technique (film) to art production (genre) through a historical perspective and to identify some local and foreign visual artists who are associated with this trend, thus revealing the ever-increasing synergies between visual and performing art, plastic and motion arts, as well as between material and immaterial exhibition of cultural heritage and creative endeavours. Professor Hygynius Ekwuazi's very insightful and interesting paper, 'If Nollywood isn't moving television in Nigeria towards social centrality, what is M-Net/Multichoice doing with the Nigerian Film?', gives an insight into the role of television, particularly the content provided by M-Net and Multichoice, in the development of Nollywood. In this essay, Ekwuazi, a major voice in Nigerian and African film practice and scholarship, argues that the rise of Nollywood has made it possible for television in Nigeria to move, concertedly, towards the very centre of the Nigerian society. Ekwuazi argues that the shift of television towards the centre was accelerated by the astonishing rate of urbanisation that characterised the post-civil war era. The post-civil war boom (symbolised by the Udoji salary award of 1975) flooded the country with television sets and placed electric generating plants within the economic reach of communities and individuals. Ekwuazi notes that, more than at any other

time, television has become the primal source of entertainment and that Nollywood is responsible for this centrality.

In chapter seventeen, Oloruntola and Hussein map the growth and development of Nollywood strictly from the point of view of its evolution from 'the Nigerian film industry' to 'Nollywood'. This paper from a film journalist/critic and a scholar details the development of Nollywood by pointing at landmarks in its evolution. The paper traces the evolution of the industry from the 80's – a period that was described as the glory period of Nigerian cinema – to the 90's when the economy completely collapsed and filmmakers were forced to make films on less expensive formats. The writers argue, as we do in chapters one and two, that the involvement of the Yoruba travelling theatre practitioners in motion picture production, and not the production of *Living in Bondage* by Kenneth Nnebue or his earlier collaboration with some Yoruba actors, represents the most auspicious single factor in the evolution of an indigenous home video industry in Nigeria. In chapter eighteen Paulina Adekoya-Oduntan shifts the focus from thematic and historical concerns of Nollywood movies to x-ray two important elements in film production – costume and makeup. The writer reflects on the conformity of these basic elements to the overall interpretation and understanding of messages in productions as well as a means of expressing national identity in the pool of universal democracy and creativity. Rooted in the study of Nollywood movies in English, Adekoya-Oduntan examines the appropriateness of the use of costume and makeup and recommends training for artists in these departments of movie production.

Sola Fosudo and Yeside Dosumu-Lawal reflect the core focus of the book, which is the examination of Nollywood by both practitioners and film scholars by directly interviewing a major player in the industry, Kunle Afolayan. This chapter takes us into the problems and prospects of the industry. As an accomplished moviemaker, Afolayan's perspectives on sundry issues affecting the industry, such as piracy, funding, distribution, as well as technical and thematic quality, provide insights into what practitioners face in the course of making movies in a country like Nigeria. In chapter twenty, Grace Uchechukwu Adinku and Francis Gbomittah contribute to discussions on the role of proper and effective makeup and costuming in movie productions. In this chapter, the authors explore the essence of make-up and costume in dramatic expression as well as their significance in the Nigerian home-video industry with reference to two classic Nigerian home videos, *Savaroide* and *Agogo Eewo*. They assert that although makeup and costume have mostly been less than professionally handled in Nigerian movies, they were actually well deployed in the two movies used as case studies.

In chapter twenty-one, Adebola Ademeso delves into the dynamics of watching a movie both by the critic and the layman. In this paper, he presents a proposal that might help an average Nigerian film producer to gun for good films through quality assurance rather than aiming at the number of films produced in a year; he also suggests tools that could aid the screening of films within the Nigerian cultural landscape. Ademeso's essay foreshadows Christopher Ihidero's paper in chapter twenty-two. Ihidero's concern is to examine what constitutes the basic reason why Nollywood movies are so attractive to audiences worldwide. The essay breaks with those critics who are for-and-against Nollywood. It argues, instead, that the ultimate critic of a movie is (or ought to be) the paying audience, through their purchase of DVDs, payment of subscription fees to satellite television platforms, buying tickets at the cinema, as well as online subscriptions and purchases. He concludes, however, that the real state of mind and motivations of the Nollywood audience remain one of Nollywood's greatest unknowns.

In chapter twenty-three, Tunji Azeez engages with the major problem of quality for which Nollywood has been severely criticised. In his essay titled 'Interrogating the Nexus between Ideology, Training and Quality of Nigerian Films: A Study of Niji Akanni's *Heroes and Zeroes*', the writer argues that apart from funding which many have adduced for the poor quality of most Nollywood movies, lack of training, crass mercantilism and ideological poverty of most Nigerian moviemakers also account for the poor quality of the films. To support this position, Azeez examines the work of a trained and ideologically conscious moviemaker, Niji Akanni's *Heroes and Zeroes*, and concludes that for Nigerian films to compare with those from other climes, moviemakers need to be trained and be ideologically conscious of the power of film in social re-engineering in their pursuit of profit. Chapter twenty-four is Charles Effiong's "Nollywood and the Morality Question: Dismantling the Grotesque from Aesthetics". Drawing on Kantian philosophy, Effiong argues that Nollywood productions ought to teach sound moral lessons while entertaining the audience such that only the more sublime and noble aspects of Nigerian culture and tradition are propagated to the world. Consequently, Effiong is critical of works like *Domitila* and *Glamour Girls* but approves of works like *October 1* and *Submission*, basing his logic on the moral message passed in the latter.

Alex Asigbo and Kosy Okafor are particularly keen-eyed critics in chapter twenty-five, with their paper "Costuming in Nigerian Video Films: A Case for Effective Character Portrayal". Drawing on screen shots from the movies *Cry of a Maiden*, *Cat in the Palace*, *Home with Enemy* and *Egwonga: The Deadly god*, the authors first attempt a detailed critique of the role of costuming in film before zeroing in on how effectively or otherwise it was used in the films in question. The authors advocate a more active role for costumiers in Nollywood. Chapter

twenty-six is "Film, Language and Society in the Digital Age", where Ezekiel Bolaji, Nkemdirim Adedina and Jeleel Ojuade utilise qualitative and quantitative approaches to study the impact of digital technology, via film, on the culture and language of the Yoruba as seen in lexical and cultural loans, structural hybridisation, and lexical loss.

In chapter twenty-seven, Teddy Hanmakyugh plays the role of cultural advocate when he writes about the real-life efficacy of the Yoruba 'magun' charm with which women suspected of adultery are usually laced. With close reference to Tunde Kelani's *Thunderbolt*, Hanmakyugh is mainly concerned to show that synergy can be achieved between traditional African medicine and Western medicine, and that the African pre-colonial past deserves to be viewed with respect in terms of the wisdom of the ancients. In chapter twenty-eight, Femi Adedina and Victor Taiwo contribute a short theoretical paper in which they propose a model of the film production process in Nollywood. In the next chapter, Femi Adedina and Oluwatoyin Olokodana draw on dance theory to highlight the need for Nollywood productions to make dance films an independent genre in the industry, rather than just a complement to acting. The paper focuses on both the themes and theatrics of two films structured around dance, *Save the Last Dance* and *Ijo*. In chapter thirty, Sunday Ododo and Uwaoma Uwazue offer rich insights into the place of virtuoso directing in successful films, with a focus on Lancelot Imasuen's *Behind Closed Doors*, which is considered an accomplished directorial effort considering the industry's relatively limited level of development when it was shot. Finally, in Chapter Thirty-One, Ajibolu Taiwo Balofin focused on the understanding of film production and piracy as the Rhetorical Tradition of communication theory, which studies communication as an art which is an expression of film qualities and skills, showing of talents and gift embedded in creativity and practice with the piracy as a challenge. Despite its reference to technical details, the paper will be found very readable by both experts and non-experts.

While this book does not claim to cover all the areas that need critical attention with regard to the industry, it does open new vistas towards the assessment of the movies, the practitioners and the industry in general.

Sola Fosudo and Tunji Azeez - August 2017

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CHAPTER TWENTY- SIX

Film, Language and Society in a Digital Age

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Abstract

The digital age has brought with it a linguistic and cultural revolution, never before witnessed in the history of civilization and colonized nations. Through films, the digital age has greatly contributed to the growth of society, bringing to people's attention and door steps what goes on elsewhere in the world and how similar situations have been successfully handled by different people and nations. In Africa for example, indigenous films have, at times, served as the link between traditionalism and modernity, preserving traditions and advocating the potency of traditional wisdom. However, In Nigeria as it is in other African countries, the digital age has often, through the film lenses, fuse culture, truncate tradition and has been used as a potent agent of imperialism – linguistically and culturally. This chapter will therefore examine the extent to which the digital age has affected the language and culture of the Yoruba, a language group in Nigeria, through the eye of Nigerian film (NHV) referred to as 'Nollywood'. Among the results of the digital age in Nigeria, with special reference to Nigeria Home Video have been lexical loans and cultural loans, structural hybridization, and lexical loss. The paper has three major aims. First, it is to analyse the content (linguistic and cultural) of Nigerian Films. Second is to highlight the effect of the film art on society's culture, values mores, traditions and conventions, in order to see the extent of imperialism involved. Third, and most importantly, it is the aim of the paper to point out the implications of the situation on Nigerian languages and culture, especially with reference to the young ones in society.

Introduction

The digital age has affected societal language and culture in Nigeria, through Nigerian Films (NF, henceforth) or NHV¹ popularly known as Nollywood, a semantic double talk, used interchangeably in this write up. Among the results of the digital age in Nigeria are loans or borrowing, hybridization and lexical

¹ In this paper, Nigerian Film (NF) and NHV have been used interchangeably as a semantic double talk, for films produced, especially by Nigerians, about Nigeria. Such films are expected to be representative of the culture and tradition of the people, and at the same time, serve as the mirror through which society with the goings-on in it is showcased and measured, in order to see whether there has been any deviation or adulteration; and whether the past is shaping the present, and the present is defining the future

loss, which are expected to have been a potent means of promoting cultural and linguistic imperialism. To be sure, many scholars (Alamu, 1991, Ogunyemi, 1996, Oloruntoba-Oju, 1999, Larkin, 2002, Adeleke, 2003 Ekwuazi, 2003, Abubakar, Ayakuroma, 2008, Stefanson, 2009, Omoera, 2009, Fadirepo, 2011, Ojeyemi and Sesan, 2011) have researched into films in Africa and Nigeria.

In contemporary Africa one of the greatest pastimes is the video film. It has become a newfound love for the African mind. This is largely due to its accessibility to huge audience, including children and adolescents as compared with an older form of media production like the cinema. Omoera (2009:193)

It has varying themes that are relevant to the different categories mentioned. African video films refer to the rise of filmmaking in Nigeria and Ghana that is shot straight on video, but still referred to locally as "films". Larkin (2002) points out that

In 1999 over 50...video films were produced in Ghana and over 500 in Nigeria. This mean that, in this one year alone; more video films were produced than in the entire history of feature film production in these countries. From almost nothing 10 years ago, video films have blossomed to become perhaps the most vibrant new form of media production in Africa (2002).

In the same light, Ekwuazi (2003) informs that

...the Nigerian home video has spawned an industry that: turns out 1000 films every year, generates 300,000 jobs every year, has a turnover of well over N5Billion yearly: with a growth rate of some 06%, the industry is bursting at the seams.

These films are not the art cinema more usually seen in Africa film festivals, but truly popular, meaning not only that they command huge African audience, but also that their production and financing is dependent entirely on how well they perform in the market place. The Nigerian video film industry has grown tremendously in recent times. It has received international acceptance and accolades; especially in being tagged 'Nollywood' by the New York Time Magazine due to its prowess of being able to replicate the glamour and glitz associated with Hollywood and Bollywood in West Africa and indeed the whole of Africa. Many other African countries like Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Republic of Benin, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Togo and a host of others are

part of the huge audiences that have welcomed the Nigerian video films with open arms. Without doubt, Nigeria video films have developed a huge followership in terms of audience reception within and outside the shores of Nigeria. Today, apart from the African continent, Nigerian video films, especially those produced in English; enjoy considerable patronage in United Kingdom (UK), United States (U.S), Italy and all over Europe. (Omoera: 2009)

Nollywood: Origins and History

NF dates back to the economic recession of the late 1980s, making the production of celluloid films in the country prohibitive. Consequent upon increase in violence and insecurity in the country, streets become danger zones, especially at night (Haynes:1997). Something soothing and therapeutic was needed. In addition, NF came to the rescue. First, to take the bull by the horn were artists from the Yoruba traveling theater who 'had been working on television for decades and had produced scores of celluloid films in the 1970s and '80s' (Haynes 1997: 1). Equipped with video projectors, they were able to screen their works in the informal venues that they had been hiring for film shows. Unfortunately, the Yoruba were not fast enough to produce any video film, and perhaps because of economic implications of film production; someone else did. About him, Ojeyomi and Sesan (2011:208) say: 'Video film was inaugurated by a business man in the art of video film production, Kenneth Nnebue.'. Corroborating the words of Ojeyomi & Sesan, Haynes 1997:1) explains that

Kenneth Nnebue, an Igbo businessman who had been dealing in electronic goods and imported video cassettes, had the idea of selling films on cassette rather than charging admission for screenings. He began by producing several films with Yoruba traveling theater artists, in Yoruba, but then in 1992 he wrote and produced an Igbo-language film, *Living in Bondage*

He had been dealing in electronic goods and imported video cassettes had the idea of selling films on cassette rather than charging admission for screenings. This is the beginning of the journey of an industry which has promoted, showcased, documented but which has also helped in supplanting, subjugating and corrupting Nigerian indigenous languages and cultures – the Nollywood! Today, NF is a multilingual and multimillion industry with two main languages dominating the scene, English and Yoruba. In recent times, Hausa, Igbo and Efik languages has been added. Abubakar (2007: 472) assures 'home

video in...Hausa society, as many people believe, has come to stay'. There are also a couple of films in Igbo language. It can therefore be said that in term of production frequency, the Yoruba are most productive, followed by the Hausa and the Igbo are least productive. This is diagrammed below:

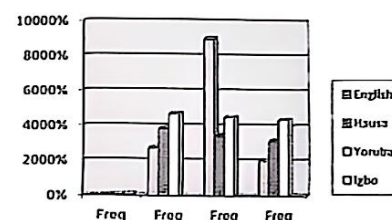


Figure 1: NF: Dominant Languages, Frequency/Percentage of Production

The chart above indicates, in descending order, that the percentage and frequency of film production in the colonial language, the English language is the highest, followed by those in the Yoruba language, Hausa language and the least used language is the Igbo language, despite the fact that an Igbo man blazed the trail in video production, in earliest days. It appears from the chart that English dominates NF production on Nollywood². Using Yoruba films, this will be demonstrated in this paper, the imperial role of English, even in the choice of language for film production.

Linguistic Imperialism

Linguistic Imperialism as used in this work is a cover term for the dominant, dominating and the dominated (former colonial or periphery-English countries, such as Nigeria and India, where English is used as a second language) languages on the one hand, and the cultures of the dominant, dominating and the dominated countries on the other hand. Phillipson's (1997:238) explanation of Linguistic Imperialism posits it as

a theoretical construct, devised to account for linguistic hierarchisation, to address issues of why some languages come to be used more and others less, what structures and ideologies facilitate such processes and the role of language professionals".

² The Yoruba films used in this paper are as follows (1) *Furapamo1* Produced by Ochotade movies (2008). and (2) *London Tailor*. Produced by Small World productions (2009) Both films are subtitled in English.

Hence, Linguistic Imperialism contends that in a linguistic context, where two languages are used with one dominating the other, there will be 'linguistic hierarchisation'. He continues:

Linguistic imperialism is a subtype of linguicism, a term which Tove Skutnabb-Kangas coined (1988) to draw parallels between hierarchisation on the basis of 'race' or ethnicity (racism, ethnicism), gender (sexism) and language (linguicism). Just as racism studies were revitalised in the 1970s by Black scholars speaking from a Black perspective, linguicism studies attempt to put the sociology of language and education into a form which furthers scrutiny of how language contributes to unequal access to societal power and how linguistic hierarchies operate and are legitimated. Drawing on the perspective of minorities, of speakers of dominated languages, is important, since somehow speakers of dominant languages such as English and French tend to see the expanded use of their languages as unproblematical

From the above, one can say that Linguistic imperialism is a case of dominant, dominating and dominated languages. Phillipson (2003:162) clarifies matters when he says, "Linguistic imperialism builds on an assumption that one language is preferable to others, and its dominance is structurally entrenched through the allocation of more resource". What Phillipson is saying is that in this imbalanced situation, the imperial language is the dominant or the dominating language and the language of the subservient nation is the dominated language. This has some implication for the culture of those nations whose language has been dominated. Bisong(1995:127) rightly concludes that

Since language is the means by which the culture of a people is disseminated. The imposition of English on the Periphery has also meant the imposition of the culture which the language bears. This has resulted in the wholesale adoption of Centre values by the Periphery.

Linguistic Imperialism is tantamount to Cultural Imperialism. This is evident in Nigeria where the dominance of English has translated into the 'imposition' of the Anglo-Saxon culture resulting in reduced 'privileges' linguistic rights for indigenous cultures. It can be rightly concluded that since language is the means by which the culture of a people is disseminated the imposition of English on the Periphery has also meant the imposition of the culture, which the language bears. This has often meant the relegation of indigenous language to the extent that today, there is hardly any film produced in any Nigerian

local language without a recourse to English; especially through subtitling. Skutnabb-Kangas (2003) is of the view that all official languages are "killer languages" as long as they are taught subtractively, that is making them replacements for mother tongues and not as additional languages. To him, they are responsible for the extinction of many minority languages, and we say, especially in Africa. On this list, English is the biggest "killer language" of all. All of this has been part of the results of the digital age.

Methodology

In order to gather the data for this study, twelve NFs were watched. The twelve films were divided into two unequal parts. The first part comprises ten films. Our interest in the ten films was to see the extent to which they serve as instruments of cultural imperialism. We briefly consider the content of each of the ten films and juxtapose it with Nigerian cultural tradition in order to weigh the level deviation from the Nigerian traditional cultural norms. This we do through the rating scale, using a table. The other two films are Yoruba films. Yoruba films were selected because of our observation that they have the heaviest cases of code alternation. The intention was to find out the amount of indigenous language used in the films compared with the amount of code alternation done in the films. Code switching was analysed based on lexical (single lexeme) insertion in the case of intra-sentential codeswitching and phrasal insertion in the case of inter-sentential. This was to find out which strategy seemed to be frequent and more productive. Our division of code alternation into intra- and inter-sentential codeswitching is done following MacSwan (1999:1) and Myers-Scotton & Jake (1995). Intersentential, according to these scholars refer to switching at sentential boundaries, where one clause or sentence is in one language and the next clause or sentence is in the other. Intra-sentential code switching, on the other hand takes place within the clause boundary.

Nigerian Films versus Nigerian Culture

The films analysed under this section are ten. We are interested in the extent to which the digital age has affected Nigerian culture and the nature of the impact, that is, how such impact could be characterized, when juxtaposed with the Nigerian culture and tradition. Nigeria has a peaceful culture, where all citizens are brothers and elders are treated with respect. A Nigerian proverb puts it this way, 'one who wishes to be old someday does not deprive the aged of his staff'.

In addition, the country is known for its aversion for prostitution. Traditionally, a maiden is expected to be met a virgin, whenever she gets married. Anything contrary to that attracts serious sanctions. In addition, there is no place for armed robbery, considering the stigma is carries, not only on the perpetrator but also on his family. To this effect there is a saying that, 'when a person guilty of stealing once, put on an expensive gab; he is putting on a stolen gab'. The table that follows presents the ten films used for the study, and, using a rating scale, decides which one of them qualifies as a promoter of Nigerian culture and tradition.

NF Rating Scale³

FILM TITLE	CATEGORY	CONTENTS	T-C D		RECOMMENDED
			W	S	
The Prostitute	Prostitution/Ghetto Life	Shameful sexual gratification	Yes	No	No
Edidi Ife	Prostitution/Ghetto Life	Shameful sexual gratification	Yes	No	No

³ Key

Category= how the film's contents may be classified

Contents= what the film talks about

T-C D= Traditional-Cultural Description

W= Weak Traditional-Cultural Description

S=Strong Traditional-Cultural Description

Recommended= whether the film is recommended or not as promoter and representative of Nigerian culture or not

Forbidden Fruit	Prostitution/Ghetto Life	Shameful sexual gratification	Yes	No	No
Omotara Johnson	Prostitution/Ghetto Life	Shameful sexual gratification	Yes	No	No
Broad Daylight	Crime/Gangster	Violence, bloody gangsterism	Yes	No	No
Aki Nakwa	Crime/Delinquency	Delinquent, downright disrespectful, spiteful characters	Yes	No	No
Koto Orun	Tradition/Culture	Shooting, maiming, occultism	Yes	No	No
Saworo Ide	Tradition/Culture	Respect for tradition/punishment for violators of respected tradition and culture	No	Yes	Yes
Thunder Bolt	Tradition/Culture	Respect for tradition/punishment for violators of respected tradition/culture	No	Yes	Yes

Ori	Respect for tradition/culture	Justice and punishment for wickedness	No	Yes	Yes
Camouflage	Sexual negotiation and seduction	Shameful sexual gratification	Yes	No	No

In the table above, among the ten films analysed, only three, Saworo Ide, Thunderbolt and Ori qualify as promoters of the Nigerian culture and tradition. The other seven are disqualified from being traditionally and culturally descriptively adequate. This shows that the majority of NF displays foreign culture and tradition, relegating the tradition and culture of the country they claim to promoting and the people they claim to be representing to the background. Besides, they misrepresent the country before other international observers. Whether they are aware of it or not, films such as these, have contributed in no small measure to the increase in crime and security problems in the country; they serve as the training tools for those bent of moral decadence and savagery in the country. In addition, a regular dose of films such as those above can desensitize the conscience and inspire violent crimes and other menace. Media violence contributes to a crime-filled society; perhaps this explains why motor cycle (Okada) armed robbery, bank robbery, kidnapping, child labour & child trafficking in recent times have soared in Nigeria (Bolaji and Akinuli (2015)The situation is truly pathetic. About the contents of NFs, Adeleke (2003:53) in Bolaji and Akinuli (2015) observes that

Most of the semi-professional film producers sell emotional films full of violence and bawdy-house literature to their audience largely made up of teenagers. Many of the production presents offensive scores such as murder, pornography, love and horror... the film contents portrays excessive sorcery, witchcraft and caustic expressions.

NFs: The Linguistic Aspect

This section focuses on linguistic aspects of Yoruba films. There is hardly any Yoruba film that is not subtitled in English. The diagramme below clarifies this.

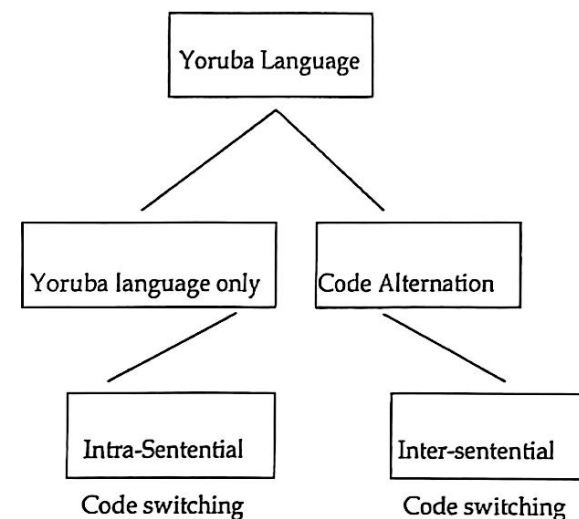
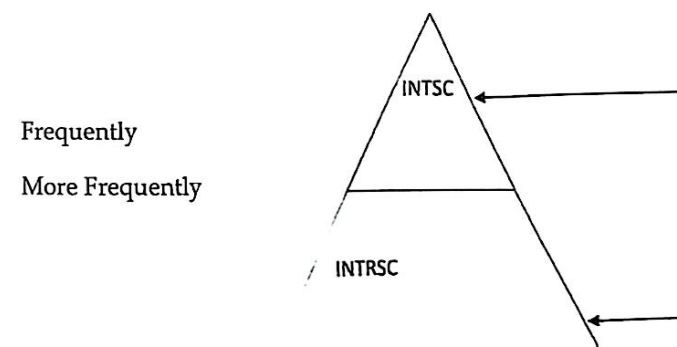


Fig 2: Linguistic Aspect of Yoruba Films

From the diagram above, it is observed that the film language is one of the indigenous languages in Nigeria, Yoruba. Also, observed is the fact that the film has three linguistic strands, viz the 'Yoruba only' strand, and the 'code alternation' strand subdivided into intra-sentential code switching and inter-sentential codes witching. The diagram below indicates further that in the division of labour, the Yoruba language takes the largest part of the linguistic aspect of Yoruba films. However, there is code alternation. At that level, intra-sentential codes witching is more frequent than inter-sentential code switching.



Most Frequently

Fig. 1 Language and division of labour in Yoruba films

The following presents case watching texts where the division of labour highlighted above is clearly demonstrated. Examples will be given with some analysis so as to see the elements of structure of Yoruba bilingual films. The Yoruba films used in this paper as indicated earlier in the footnote are *Faragbamol* produced by Alunade movies (AYM) and *London Tailor* produced by Small World productions (AYW). Both films are subtitled in English.

Mo lo tawo gilailel

I PART go use money accept (PART) hotel

I have booked a hotel

Mo se wedding kankan

I NEG do wedding any

I do not want to do any wedding

Awan daddy gan bawu

How?L daddy ADV angry

Even dad was angry

A to se investigation

Pl -IST has do -PART

E make sure pe e bawu to avobanu

PL make sure COMP PL 3RD help me remove Avobanu

Release Avobanu

O ni gunption

SING 2ND DO-NEG have gunption

You den (have the gunption

Pl do have e

Pl do have it

I ye ba ni a month a gba

qN (ART) Al l -IST al a month a gba

He called me a month ago

As pointed out earlier, intra-ethnic culturalising dominates the embedded language part of the code-switching process. Most of the inserted lexical items from the embedded language are common words such as *NEEDS AND WANTS*. This agrees in part with the categorisation of *AYEMOYO* (AYE) who says that the grammatical class of such words or lexical items is always a noun. (It should be found that the words are not always nouns as *AYEMOYO* has predicted).

Conclusion

NIF has gradually overtaken the once popularity of the pre-war film. Apparently, the demand for the former is linked on its adequacy for entertaining the teenage masses who now prefer to enjoy motion picture presentations in the warmth of their homes. However, after the initial frenzy of this innovation, the Nigerian Film audience have become very critical of the vast number of films on sale or on television. Therefore, many critical issues are being raised and have come into public domain for discussion in various circles. One of such is film language which has been the focus of this study. The issue of Linguistic Imperialism in NF is both at the socio-cultural and linguistic levels. At the cultural level, NIFs do not always live up to the expectations of the descriptive name, 'Nigeria', as modifier. The culture often paraded is foreign, not Nigerian. Producers, writers, directors, actors and all others involved in film making now constantly ape foreign cultures to the detriment of Nigerian culture. The traditional norms and practices are now seen as 'obsolete, old school or not in vogue'. Except for a few film practitioners, Nigerian culture would have been totally eradicated or eroded from NIF.

Also, at the linguistic level, a lot of adulteration is observed. The implication of this is twofold. First, it could lead to inter-language and second, the interlanguage could override the original form of the Yoruba language. This could mean that Yoruba as it was originally spoken would eventually recede to

a position of diagnostic function as a language of a purely cultural and religious purpose. This will then posit Nigerian Languages as truly endangered and bring to fulfillment the prediction that many African languages will go into extinction in years to come. There is now the urgent need to revitalise the NF industry as an agent of change and crusader of traditions as upheld by the Nigerian culture. This can be achieved only when film makers are deeply rooted in understanding and practice of the rich cultures they portray in films.

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