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Close-Up: Nollywood—A Worldly Creative Practice

“New Nollywood”: Kunle Afolayan

JONATHAN HAYNES

Abstract

“New Nollywood” is a phrase being used to describe a recent strategy by some Nigerian filmmakers to make films with higher budgets, to screen them in cinemas both in Nigeria and abroad, and to enter them in international film festivals. This is a major structural shift in the Nollywood model of film production and distribution. Kunle Afolayan exemplifies this trend: his restless experimentation as a director and producer reveals the current structure of opportunities, and his situation as a filmmaker informs his films culturally and thematically. There are practical limits to the current possibilities of New Nollywood, and there is less to its apparent convergence with the rest of African (celluloid) cinema than meets the eye, but New Nollywood is likely to prove to be an invaluable preparation for coming transformations in the Nigerian film industry as Internet streaming and the construction of movie theaters in Nigeria displace the sale of films on discs as the central mode of Nollywood distribution.

Around 2010 the phrase “New Nollywood” began buzzing in Lagos and other places where people talk about Nollywood.¹ The phrase describes an attempt by independent producer/directors to “take Nollywood to the next level” by making better films with bigger budgets, films that can survive the aesthetic and technical challenge of being projected in cinemas rather than being released immediately as VCDs (video compact discs, the standard medium for movies in Nigeria) or DVDs for home viewing. The economic basis for this strategy depends on theatrical release in the Nigerian multiplex movie theaters that have been built in recent years and on transnational distribution circuits including both African diasporic audiences and international film festivals.

Nollywood emerged twenty years ago out of a general economic, political, and social crisis that, among other things, put an end to celluloid film production and closed the cinema houses.² New Nollywood comes out of

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another crisis, this one restricted to Nollywood itself. By 2007 Nollywood was in a crisis of overproduction.³ The market was so saturated, it was difficult for any film to turn a decent profit. Piracy has always been a major structuring factor in Nollywood: video is inherently vulnerable to unauthorized reproduction and, as Brian Larkin has argued, Nigerian video film production was built on an infrastructure created for the purpose of making money from pirated American, Indian, and Chinese films.⁴ Piracy has only gotten more aggressive over time: the director Tunde Kelani estimates that there are now five or ten pirated copies of films in the market for every legitimate one.⁵ The government has never been interested in taking the problem seriously. The marketers, who themselves do much or most of the pirating, have real money, which buys them political protection: politicians now go to them for funds at election time and so will not do anything to interfere with their activities.

New technologies have created new competition for sales and eroded markets. Nollywood films are constantly broadcast on television in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa, which reduces the incentive to buy them. The “Africa Magic” satellite channels of the South African media company M-Net, broadcast all over Africa, are the biggest problem. One channel shows English-language Nollywood and Ghanaian films; another shows Yoruba films, and a third, Hausa ones. M-Net will not publicly discuss how much they pay for the rights to broadcast films, but filmmakers complain bitterly: they say they were getting a mere \$700 per film until recently, when payments increased somewhat. Another threat is “combo” discs from China that carry twenty or even forty films compressed onto a single disc; these discs sell in Nigeria for the same price as a single Nollywood film, and while at first they contained pirated films from elsewhere, now there are combo discs of Nigerian films, too. And the markets for Nigerian DVDs in the United States and the United Kingdom have been severely eroded by Internet streaming.⁶ The biggest player in this game is Iroko Partners, which runs the twin Internet channels NollywoodLove.com (via YouTube) and iROKOTv.com. Streaming the films is free (there is also a premium channel of iROKOTv for which one pays); the company’s profits come from the accompanying ads. By 2012 these channels had some 4,000 Nollywood titles. The company claims it pays \$3,000 each for the rights to stream the films for three years, but people around the industry say actual payments are usually far less. The business model is to acquire titles in bulk, aiming at films that have already had their run on the VCD market and not bothering with filmmakers who want more money for a superior film. So, as with television broadcasting of films in Nigeria, the result is that the environment is flooded with free films, while the money from these sources does not compensate for lost revenues from depressed sales of VCDs or DVDs.

Meanwhile, in 2007 the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) introduced a "New Framework" for film distribution, an attempt to formalize this notoriously informal business by force.⁷ Distributors are now required to be licensed by the NFVCB, and the conditions for getting the license include that distributors demonstrate a certain level of capitalization, keep books that can be audited, and have legal representation. The idea was to encourage new investors from the formal sector to get into the business, but unfortunately the initiative came at the moment of the global financial crisis, which dampened the adventurousness of those who still had some capital to invest. In any case, almost no one from the formal sector turned out to have the necessary knowledge and nerve to enter the rough and tumble of the Nigerian video film market. Meanwhile, the existing marketers saw the New Framework as an attempt to put them out of business by imposing a foreign business model on them and encouraging powerful new competitors to displace them. Conscious of having built the huge Nollywood film industry on their own with no help from the government, they were filled with righteous indignation.

The result was a disorganization of the business side of Nollywood and a protracted standoff between the authorities and the people who have built and still run and mostly finance the business of Nollywood, which led to a sharp downturn in film production. Filmmaking did not rebound to pre-crisis levels until 2011. In mid-2012, according to several marketers I spoke to, about fifty English-language films were being released every two weeks, for an annualized rate of about 1,250 films. Yoruba films were coming out at a somewhat lower rate. The bad relations between marketers and the NFVCB means that it is harder than ever to come by reliable statistics about the industry. Budgets also returned to about where they were, averaging 10 million Naira (about \$65,000). But profits are way down, and Nollywood remains glum. Everyone complains that the general run of films is uninspired. Scriptwriters are being paid less, more scripts are coming from amateurs, and the general quality of scripts is poor, according to Chike Bryan, president of the Screenwriters Guild, an assessment generally shared among those in the industry.⁸ The artistic quality of the films is relatively autonomous from their economic basis, but, as Marx said, social being determines consciousness, and a lot of people in the industry are conscious of being stuck in a rut.

We might pause to notice the disjunction between this crisis in the industry itself and the cultural impact of Nollywood, which is as great as ever or greater as it settles into its hegemony over Nigeria and diffuses around the globe. The situation is parallel to that of U.S. newspapers: people have lost none of their interest in consuming journalism but want to do it for free online, so newspapers fold or retrench in the absence of a viable business model. The satellite and Internet channels contentedly digested the glut of

Nollywood films from 2007 during the lull in production, the way a python slowly digests a goat before hunting again.

So the pioneers of “New Nollywood” have even stronger reasons than before to want an alternative to the old Nollywood. But there is nothing new about independent Nollywood producer/directors trying to escape from the market for VCDs as it has existed, with its structural requirement that production be geared to working cheaply and quickly and its domination by a cabal of marketers perceived as narrow-minded and arrogant. Independent producer/directors have been restlessly experimenting with alternatives since the beginning.⁹ And public screenings of films are also not novel: premiering films in the fanciest venue possible and carrying them around for screening before likely audiences—on university campuses or in diasporic communities, for example—have always been common practices, inherited from the days of Nigerian celluloid filmmaking.

What is new are the theaters. In the general crisis of the early 1990s, all the movie theaters in Nigeria closed except for a few in the North. These now show Hausa films as well as imported ones, but they are outside any circuit people in southern Nigeria think about. Since 2004, nine new multiplex theaters have opened, located in upscale shopping malls in affluent neighborhoods of Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Enugu, and Uyo. Ticket prices are very high by Nigerian standards (N1,000 or, on weekends, N1,500—about \$10; N2,500 for 3-D), restricting the clientele to the elite. The locations themselves would discourage most of the population.

New Nollywood filmmakers aim to open their films in these theaters, perhaps after a gala premiere somewhere else, and try to move from the circuit of these multiplexes to London or vice versa. Since 2006 the London Odeon chain has been carefully cultivating an African diasporic audience with a series of glitzy premiers of Nollywood films.¹⁰ In May 2012 Mahmood Ali-Balogun signed a deal for his film *Tango with Me* (2010)¹¹ to be shown in multiple Odeon cinemas across the United Kingdom.¹² Filmmakers also try to arrange screenings before diasporic audiences in the United States and elsewhere on an ad hoc basis. In the United States, there is no such dependable theatrical venue as the Odeon chain, but on the other hand the market for DVD distribution of Nollywood films is better (though far from perfectly) organized. U.S. distributors pay \$5,000 to \$10,000 per film for the North American rights,¹³ a paltry amount but still a significant percentage of the budget of an average project. The UK market for DVDs is in the hands of pirates and normally returns nothing to filmmakers.

In some cases, New Nollywood films are entered in international film festivals—not a source of income but a source of valuable prestige that is featured in publicity.

Once all these options have been exploited, the films finally come onto the Nigerian DVD/VCD market, where they are often quickly pirated. The

long delay before the films become available to a mass Nigerian audience is something of a tease—the audience may have been hearing about the film for two years—but it also gives the pirates time to ready themselves to pounce. The films' broadcast rights will also be sold somewhere along the line.

The filmmakers composing New Nollywood are a diverse lot. The New Nollywood strategy is essentially what Tunde Kelani has been doing all along—Nigeria's most respected director, he has always distanced himself from both the Yoruba film industry and Nollywood, while providing inspiration for both and drawing on the former as he casts his films. Lately, for example, as at the Brown University Africana Film Festival in April 2012, Kelani has begun referring to himself as "the other Nollywood," unable to resist entirely the power of the brand, having been invited all over the world to represent Nollywood even as he quietly maintained he had nothing to do with it. The director Lancelot Imasuen and the writer/producer Emem Isong are as central in the old Nollywood as anyone can be but are also pursuing New Nollywood strategies and, at the same moment that they are inserting themselves into elite and transnational circuits they are also establishing hyper-local markets for films in their native languages, Bini and Ibibio. Their restless, creative experimentation in the face of harsh conditions is exemplary of the Nollywood spirit. The aging enfant terrible of Nollywood, Jeta Amata, scion of the formidable Amata dynasty of Nollywood actors and directors, has not only turned to theatrical screenings as a central strategy but led a return to making films on 35mm celluloid with *The Amazing Grace* (2006), a Nigerian-British coproduction, followed by *Black Gold* (2011), a Nigerian-American coproduction studded with Hollywood stars, including Mickey Rourke, Tom Sizemore, Vivica Fox, and Hakeem Kae-Kazim. Mahmood Ali-Balogun—a veteran filmmaker who has spent most of his career making documentaries and advertisements rather than Nollywood productions—also shot his aforementioned feature *Tango with Me* on 35mm. Chineze Anyaene's *Ije, the Journey* (2010) and Lucky Ejim's *The Tenant* (2009) (both on 35mm) were made by Nigerians who studied filmmaking in the US and Canada, where the films are largely set. Stephanie Okereke began as a model and Nollywood actor, went to study directing at the New York Film Academy, and entered New Nollywood with her film *Through the Glass* (2007), shot in Los Angeles with a mixed cast of Americans and Nigerians. *The Mirror Boy* (2011), made by Obi Emelonye, a Nigerian living in London, and featuring some major Nollywood stars, was shot in England and Gambia.¹⁴

The most important New Nollywood figure is Kunle Afolayan. He is the one who gives the phenomenon the sense of being about fresh talent, a generational event.

There are points of convergence between New Nollywood and the rest of African cinema:¹⁵ larger budgets, slower production schedules, the possibility

of shooting and/or releasing films on celluloid, scripts that go through many drafts over a period of years, international coproduction, revenues from foreign distribution built into financial calculations, international training, rubbing shoulders at international film festivals. Ali-Balogun's *Tango with Me* had a British director of photography and was edited in Bulgaria. Ali-Balogun wants to make a big-budget biopic of the Nigerian independence-era political leader Obafemi Awolowo, but the filmmaker must look to the former colonizer for help because the budget he has in mind is beyond local resources, as are the practical issues involved in shooting a period film. This is the sort of irony that has always surrounded French-sponsored African cinema but that Nollywood has been free from, though its self-sufficiency condemned it to poverty and the short leash of immediate commercial returns.

There is less to this apparent convergence than meets the eye. In the first place, the sources of funding for New Nollywood and the rest of African cinema are utterly different. The New Nollywood films do not get money from European ministries or NGOs or arts television networks.¹⁶ Their scripts do not go through the kind of vetting process that would get them such money. They may however get sponsorship from corporations: *Tango with Me* was rescued by a large grant from the South African telecommunications company MTN, and Kunle Afolayan's *Phone Swap* (2012) was rescued by the Nigerian telecommunications company Globacom. The Nigerian films are always commercial calculations: if they do not make their money back, it is a disaster for the filmmakers, something that has not been true for much or most African cinema which, as originally structured by the French government, was noncommercial and grant-based. The foreign audiences for New Nollywood films are primarily Nigerians and other Africans already deeply connected to Nollywood, who will come out for a premier because the stars Ramsey Nouah or Genevieve Nnaji will be there, not art house audiences who have just seen films by Lars van Trier and Zhang Ke Zia. Ali-Balogun had difficulty interesting foreign film programmers and festival scouts in *Tango with Me*, probably because of its cultural politics. It is a story about a woman deciding, for religious reasons, to keep a pregnancy that resulted from a rape in spite of the strains this decision places on her marriage. The issue is handled with sophistication—there are repeated scenes of the couple with a marriage counselor, and no Bible-wielding priest appears as he likely would in Nollywood Christian films—but still, its position on the abortion issue would be anathema to most of the liberal gatekeepers of the international institutions of African cinema (European and American festival organizers, distributors, governmental or nongovernmental cultural administrators, arts journalists, and academics). This kind of problem would probably have been avoided if the film had had a foreign coproducer from

the beginning. The Odeon took it because the film fit with the audience of African expatriates it had been cultivating.

There are, I believe, two fundamental problems with New Nollywood. The first is that the numbers do not add up.¹⁷ Multiplexes are being built rapidly, but in 2012 there were still only nine of them in this nation of 170 million; only twenty Nigerian films were screened in them in 2011.¹⁸ The multiplexes have slowly increased the number of Nigerian films they show but—as the filmmakers bitterly complain—they are given only two slots per day, often at inconvenient times, while foreign films get more. The filmmakers are even more bitter about the money: Silverbird (the largest chain of multiplexes) splits the first week's take fifty-fifty, but then the management takes progressively larger shares until it is claiming 65 percent. The filmmakers must pay 20 percent in taxes on their share, plus 10 percent to the distribution company they must use as an intermediary. Funke Akindele's *Return of Jenifa* (2011)¹⁹ broke all Nigerian box office records, but rumor has it that of the N40 million take Akindele ended up with only N5 million. There simply are not enough screens, and the return for the few films that get onto them is too small for New Nollywood to grow beyond very modest dimensions. Ali-Balogun says he invested N80 million of his own money making *Tango with Me* (the total budget was N100 million, if savings from "good will" were figured in) and claims the film made N30 million from screenings. (Some around the industry disbelieve this, calculating that such a return is impossible—as usual in Nollywood, it is hard to come by reliable figures.) Even with the N30 million subvention from MTN partway through the production, Ali-Balogun would have fallen far short of making his investment back had the Odeon deal not come through. This is not a game for the fainthearted.

The second problem with New Nollywood has to do with the potential size and character of the audience. The commercial premise of New Nollywood films is that they will—they must—appeal to the people who can afford the luxury of a ticket that costs ten dollars, in a country where 70 percent of the population lives on less than two dollars a day. The films should also appeal to Nigerian diasporic audiences, whose tastes overlap with Nigerian domestic audiences but are also somewhat distinct—the diasporic audiences are better educated, more cosmopolitan, more concerned with the specific issues that come with transnational lives. Nollywood has always sought glamour, and filmmakers have made concerted efforts to appeal to an elite audience since the mid-1990s. But this was in the context of the industry's general firm rootedness in a broad popular audience.

Lately there has been an unprecedented segmentation of the audience, which precedes and extends beyond the New Nollywood phenomenon. As I have argued elsewhere, the genre of campus films, whose roots go far back in Nollywood history but that began to flourish around 2004, illustrates the

new prominence of a younger generation, relatively affluent and with different tastes and cultural orientation than their parents.²⁰ From the beginning of her career in 1996, Emem Isong has targeted an audience of affluent urban young people steeped in American romantic comedies and dramas. For a long time she was almost the only person in Nollywood doing so, but now she and her kind of film are very much on the rise, capturing a vast swath of the Nollywood imagination. Her regular actors—Ini Edo, Tonto Dikeh, Mercy Johnson—also dominate the campus film genre, and the Royal Arts Academy, a partnership of filmmakers of which she is part, is exceptionally prolific. New Nollywood, because of its economic basis, furthers this segmentation, though it is not precisely congruent with the campus and romantic films just described, which tend to be low-budget productions cranked out in the usual old Nollywood style. Segmentation is not necessarily bad in itself—in fact it is arguably overdue in the case of Nollywood. But there are questions about whether the segment that patronizes the multiplexes can and will sustain a robust level of production, and about whether the necessity to chase after this elite patronage may not limit and distort the character of Nigerian film culture if this one segment becomes unduly important.

Kunle Afolayan

Kunle Afolayan is the obvious figure on whom to focus in order to get a deeper sense of New Nollywood: he is the leading figure associated with it, his prominence is based solidly on superior talent and charisma, and his situation and the evolution of his strategies are inscribed in his films. The stories around Afolayan's career, as he experiments, illustrate possibilities and constraints, not inevitabilities. Filmmaking in Nollywood is an obstacle course, but the funding of Nollywood films has been largely routinized, if often in brutal fashion. New Nollywood producer/directors are in a situation more like that of celluloid filmmakers from the rest of Africa, in which the financing of each project is a unique, long-drawn-out, frequently picaresque adventure. In fact the Nigerian case is more radical in that New Nollywood filmmakers do not have the familiar set of European funding sources with which to begin their campaign to raise money.

When Afolayan made his entrance as a filmmaker, he already had an extraordinarily, uniquely rich heritage and training, none of it related to Nollywood. He is the son of Adeyemi "Ade Love" Afolayan, a Yoruba traveling theater actor who became one of the most charismatic stars of the Yoruba celluloid films, directing several himself. He discouraged his son from an acting career, however, involving him in the handling of money from his

films and pushing him toward a career in banking that he pursued for seven years. When Kunle Afolayan wanted to act, Tunde Kelani—who had worked as director of photography on several films with Ade Love—cast him (appropriately) as the young prince Arese in *Saworoide* (1999) and its sequel *Agogo Eewo* (2002).²¹ When Afolayan decided to become a director, he studied digital filmmaking at the New York Film Academy for a year, which gave him a level of sophisticated training few Nollywood directors have. Nollywood is fundamentally a marketing system and a system of production geared to it; the face it turns to the public is its star system. From the beginning, Afolayan has worked outside these systems: his films have been made slowly and deliberately, with a careful attention to craft permitted by relatively large budgets. All this is very much in the manner of his mentor Tunde Kelani.

Afolayan's first film, *Irapada / Redemption* (2007),²² is in Yoruba and springs directly from a Yoruba tradition as passed from the traveling theater through celluloid film to video.²³ Dewunmi, played by Afolayan himself, is a successful young building contractor living in northern Nigeria. His mother comes from their Yoruba village because she has been having ominous prophetic dreams and warns him to perform a traditional redemption rite against the impending misfortune. He refuses because he does not believe in such things. When she leaves, hurt and disappointed, her vehicle crashes and she is killed. Dewunmi's life falls apart in every dimension: his business is destroyed when he is betrayed in a major building project, and his marriage suffers because he won't tell his wife what is going on. He returns to the village for his mother's burial and discovers she was not his real mother—another shock. His real mother died, neglected, as she passed through the village on a truck with her baby, and he was taken in by his foster parents. With the help of a diviner, Dewunmi begins a double quest: to perform the redemption rite and to find his biological father. Cross-editing links these quests with his wife's difficulties in childbirth far away in Kaduna, implying that only the twin spiritual and emotional resolutions, as he finds his father and his father prays on his behalf, can save his wife from a Caesarean section or perhaps losing the baby.

Irapada is full of classic melodramatic elements—floods of tears, painful misunderstandings, secrets kept too long with the consequent need to beg for forgiveness, lost parents and children, and twists of fate. Its narrative form, punctuated by visions, ranging across generations, displaying a fine disregard for the Aristotelean unities of time, place, and persons, is clearly rooted in African soil. The spiritual framework, in which the mysteries of fate can be discerned through dreams and divination, and problems in the spiritual realm can be addressed through ritual sacrifices, is ubiquitous in Nigerian film culture and particularly prominent in Yoruba films. This film's ec-

umenicalism reflects a deep value in African culture, now under assault by fundamentalist versions of Christianity and Islam; the Yoruba are perhaps exceptionally ecumenical, it being common to find Christians, Muslims, and adherents of indigenous religious practices in the same families. Afolayan's films radiate the broad-mindedness, warmth, humanism, and moralism that are so characteristic of Yoruba culture.

Dewunmi at first rejects the diviner of his mother's Yoruba culture with asperity; it is not clear whether this is because he is a Christian or because he is a modern, educated man or some mixture of the two. In any case, he learns his lesson. Later, as he is performing the sacrifice under the *babalawo's* (diviner's) direction, his Hausa friend Shehu offers Muslim prayers in Dewunmi's wife's hospital room, into which her Igbo friend Amaka brings her Christian pastors.

These friendships are central to the film. Nothing is more fundamental in the Nigerian national imagination than the trio of the Hausa, the Igbo, and the Yoruba—stereotypes genially engrained in conversation as well as stage drama, television, and films. *Irapada* has an Awolowist, Wazobian²⁴ politics that is integral to its structure rather than something preached or joked about. The strongest, apparently unbreakable, least threatened relationships in the film are the friendships across ethnic lines, and the Hausa and Igbo friends of the Yoruba couple fall in love with one another as they minister to their troubled friends. Code switching is constant, though there are also a couple of scenes that play around strong linguistic barriers, as if to draw attention to the problem that is normally overcome without apparent effort. The scene shifts back and forth from southwestern Nigeria—Yorubaland—to Kaduna, looking lovely and green after the rains, with little or no hint of the communal violence that had torn Kaduna apart shortly before the film was made. (Perhaps the Hausa businessman's treachery and violence toward a Yoruba contractor—Dewunmi himself—can be read as such a hint.)

The film is designed, in the earnest and straightforward manner of the Yoruba popular arts, to illustrate basic human lessons: be humble in the face of fate; trust your friends; listen to your mother; don't let masculine pride keep you from discussing important things with your wife—a point so important it is central to the protagonist Dewunmi's father's story as well as his own.

Irapada won prizes for best picture at the African Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) and Zuma Film Festivals in Nigeria and was screened at the London Film Festival, the Pan African Film Festival of Los Angeles, and the Iyalode Film Festival in Atlanta. After making these rounds and having a run in the multiplex cinemas, the film was finally released on DVD; the packaging lines up these honors above the logos of corporate sponsors. The

back cover draws attention to the associated website—a first for a Yoruba film—and to the additional special features on the bonus disc.

Araromire / The Figurine (2009),²⁵ in English with bits of Pidgin and Yoruba, is a bigger, slicker, more cosmopolitan and ambitious movie, Afolayan's breakout film. In the manner of Kelani, Afolayan puts a wide ambit of Nigerian culture on display and makes resonant casting decisions. As Kelani has always drawn on actors from several traditions, not only for their individual talents but also to suggest an artistic blending, a broad cultural alliance, in *The Figurine* Afolayan casts stars with backgrounds and personae as different as Ramsey Nouah—the reigning Nollywood romantic male lead—and Jide Kosoko, a mainstay of Yoruba filmmaking who not infrequently crosses over into English productions. He has the avant-garde jazz musician Lág-bájá provide the voice-over narration, and he gives a small but iconic role, like those Kelani likes to give the writers Akinwumi Ishola and Adebayo Faleti, to Muraina Oyelami, who, as a founding member of both the Oshogbo Art School and Duro Ladipo's theater company as well as a distinguished academic, is a walking synecdoche for the modern arts in Nigeria. Oyelami's paintings and posters are a crucial visual presence in the film, and the Obafemi Awolowo University museum of archaeology and modern art is a recurrent point of reference. Afolayan expresses his own generation's urban culture in the edgy fashion designs, interior decorating, architecture, and soundtrack music in *The Figurine*. The film sets itself outside and beyond the glitzy, self-contained culture of Nollywood, which habitually showcases what money can buy but usually without the taste or sophistication on display here. *The Figurine* can be seen as a return to the tradition of celluloid films like Moses Olaiya Adejumo's *Mosebolan* (1986, directed by Ade Love and shot by Tunde Kelani) and *Orun Mooru* (1982, also shot by Kelani and directed by Ola Balogun),²⁶ which featured a performance by the juju music star King Sunny Adé and Suzanne Wenger's sculptures in the Grove of Osun in Oshogbo. Large budgets—Afolayan spent \$350,000 on *The Figurine*, financed through personal savings and bank loans—are required for this kind of cultural engagement and ambition, of course, but so is an engaged and ambitious imagination.

A sepia prologue to the film, set in 1908, tells us the "old folktale" of the goddess Araromire, whose priest carves a figurine of her when she wants to come to Earth in the community of the same name. She brings her worshippers seven years of good fortune—flourishing children, bumper crops—followed by seven years of plague, misery, and death. The villagers revolt against a deity who would kill her own priest, and they burn down her shrine.

The main story turns on a love triangle. Sola (Afolayan) and Femi (Ramsey Nouah) are both in love with Mona (Omoni Oboli). When the film begins,

the three have just graduated from university as archaeology majors and are beginning their obligatory year in the National Youth Service Corps. Mona was the star student, like a daughter to their professor (Oyelami). Sola is a genially corrupt slacker and womanizer, but he gets the girl, while bespectacled, asthmatic Femi longs for her. Nouah had explored similar contrasting characters in his bravura double role in Tade Ogidan's *Dangerous Twins* (2004).²⁷ On a hike, Femi and Sola discover an abandoned shrine with the figurine of Araromire inside, and Sola carries it off with him. That night, around a bonfire, Mona informs Femi that she is pregnant by Sola and they are getting married.

Seven years later, they have all prospered spectacularly. Femi returns from abroad, now handsome, dapper, and speaking British-inflected English, and glides into a high-level position in finance. He resumes his friendship with Sola, who has become wealthy in business, and Mona, who is expecting their second child. Femi's younger sister Lara (Tosin Sibò) is living with them, helping out pregnant Mona while Mona helps Lara with her thesis—in archaeology, of course. Mona sets Femi up with her best friend Linda (Funlola Aofiyebi-Raimi), a fashion designer. The statue of Araromire sits on a shelf above Sola's computer. Mona goes to the university and talks with the professor about the statue; he tells her the story about the good luck followed by the devastating bad luck—adding, when she looks distressed, that it is only a fairy tale, folklore. She shares the story, and her anxieties, with Femi.

Things begin to go wrong. Femi's asthma is back. Mona tells Lara to throw out the figurine, but it miraculously reappears on the shelf. When Mona herself tries to throw it into the ocean (they live in a luxurious beach house on an island in commuting distance of Lagos), she collapses, bleeding. Femi's father, an artist and sculptor whose cancer had mysteriously gone into remission for seven years, suddenly dies. Sola is accused of tax evasion and his company's stock crashes, while Femi is fired. Mona is now fully, hysterically convinced the statue is an evil presence in her house. Sola, outraged when she brings in Christians to pray over it, takes the statue outside, pours gasoline on it, and sets it on fire. Their son, distressed at the commotion, falls from a window to his death. The statue still sits, unharmed, on the sand. We are now definitely in a horror film. Mona is devastated and sedated with injections. Linda blames Femi's sister Lara for the boy's death and tells her to leave the house. Femi and Sola return to the village of Araromire to return the statue to its shrine, but there, in the remote forest, in the rain, Femi clubs Sola to death. Intercut with this sequence, Lara's suitcase spills open as she is leaving and two more figurines of Araromire fall out. When Femi returns, Linda confronts him and he confesses, laughing demonically: because he knew Mona believed in the power of the figurine, Femi had had his father sculpt multiple copies of it and forced Lara to plant them in order to scare

Mona and Sola into breaking up, so he could at last have his true love. But what about the run of misfortunes? she asks. "I wish I could say the whole thing was orchestrated by me, but the truth is, it's all coincidence. You know, like they say, shit happens." He clubs Linda with a copy of the figurine and goes upstairs, where he expires from an asthma attack at the bedside of comatose Mona, while Lara calls the police. A title ends the film, asking "What do you believe?"

This is a question about how the audience read the puzzle of the movie, meant to jump-start the audience's conversations as they leave the theater. But the movie is carefully constructed so it can be read either way, as an example of supernatural agency by the goddess Araromire or as a tormented and finally psychotic lover's plot that exploits superstition. The alternative interpretations spiral ironically around one another. (The screenplay is by Kemi Adesoye, from an original concept by Jovi Babs.) So the question becomes, "What is your system of belief?" The movie's refusal to answer the question appears to be a bicultural strategy—a strategy to appeal simultaneously to two different audiences, one of which believes implicitly in the power of indigenous deities or at least is thoroughly used to accepting such power as a premise of the films they watch, and another audience, perhaps better educated, living abroad, or foreign, that might enjoy playing with the notion of exotic spiritual forces but would distance itself from actual belief. The strategy could also be bicultural in aiming at an audience of bicultural people, who are themselves in an unclear relationship to this polarized choice, such issues of belief being, after all, very complicated matters, especially in the dark of a cinema where we are invited to suspend disbelief in the interest of pleasure.²⁸

But what is at stake in the difference between the two interpretations? If you believe this is a story of human agency, then it is just the logic of melodrama that curls around everything, subsuming the supernatural: love and betrayal of intimates are the strongest forces in the world. If you believe this is a story of the supernatural power of the goddess Araromire, then what sort of deity is she? Some Nigerians note that they have never heard of a Yoruba deity that behaves as she does, and even within the film, both the voice-over narration at the beginning and the professor call the story of Araromire "folklore" or "a fairy tale"—dismissive terms not normally applied to the Yoruba pantheon. Araromire is not a guardian of ancestral land or morality, as in other Yoruba films, but a kind of principle of melodrama, the presiding deity of Nollywood: you have really good luck for a while, and then really bad luck—a fate that is meaningless in itself but whose consequences are an occasion for displaying a full range of strong emotions and each individual's moral and spiritual balance or lack of balance. As in *Irapada*, where the protagonist is unambiguously the plaything of an unseen dimension, Afolayan's

attention in *The Figurine* is all on the bewildered suffering caused by this unseen dimension, rather than on that dimension itself, and indeed both films seem deliberately to resist giving it determinate form. It hardly matters if the supernatural dimension is now a question rather than clearly determining, if it is perhaps merely an artifact of a culture, perhaps just a device. The young men Kunle Afolayan plays with his slow, quiet magnetism are settled, married, enmeshed early and deliberately in the full web of life, fully equipped to plumb the depths of loss. As a filmmaker he is a poet of fate and affliction, his plotting full of twists and turns, his attention centered on the betrayals and loyalties of intimate relationships.

Irapada is swept along in the main current of the great Nigerian river of melodrama, wide and as central as the Niger. *The Figurine* also builds to a melodramatic climax, in this case of love and jealousy exacerbated to madness and murder, catatonic grief, cowering subjection, and raw fear. But while the ending of *Irapada*, with its flood of tears, is ragged and rough as a piece of dramatic construction, in a manner characteristic of Yoruba films, *The Figurine's* ending is intricately worked and is clearly formed, stylistically and generically, by the conventions of the horror film. I have argued elsewhere that it is usually a mistake to use the Western category of horror to describe Nigerian films in which the occult appears.²⁹ As Carol J. Clover illustrates, the Western horror genre turns around a struggle between Black Magic and White Science, with much of the plots devoted to the gradual, reluctant admission by the protagonist that the occult exists at all.³⁰ Some protagonists in Nigerian films go through such a process—indeed, Dewunmi in *Irapada* does so. But for the most part, Nigerian protagonists, like Nigerian audiences, already assume the existence of the supernatural and assume that portals to it are easy to find. (For most of the population, finding a “native doctor” who practices divination as well as herbalism is easier and more affordable than finding a doctor trained in Western medicine.) The generic shift toward the Western horror genre is another sign of accommodation to a transnational audience.

I do not want to exaggerate this point. If *Irapada* embodies the aesthetic and the horizon of the Yoruba branch of Nollywood filmmaking while incorporating a strong national dimension, *The Figurine* is both national and transnational. The two films share the national term, and Afolayan is seriously committed to it. *The Figurine* recovers the aspirations of the high-water mark of Nigerian postcolonial culture of the 1970s and '80s—the moment of FESTAC, the Second World African Festival of Arts and Culture, with its proud displays of Nigerian culture³¹—as it inserts itself into contemporary world cinema culture. We end up in a luxurious, exclusive Lagos waterfront world (a new development, and one associated with the return of successful Nigerians from abroad—the Lagos elite had not been turned to the sea in

this way before), but in spite of this, lots of Nigerian life gets into the film. It is no accident that *The Figurine* begins in the setting of the National Youth Service Corps, an institution designed to give university graduates a sense of national identity and purpose.

The Figurine was an official selection at the Rotterdam International Film Festival, the African Film Festival of New York, the Pan-African Film Festival of Los Angeles, and at FESPACO, and it swept the awards at the most prestigious Nigerian festival, the AMAA. It had a big opening at the Odeon in London and showed in numerous other places abroad. *Irapada* was quickly pirated when it came into the market around the same time, and so the film never cleared its costs, but Afolayan was riding high, moving into bigger offices and turning into a celebrity. One evening while channel surfing, I came across him on the Nigerian *Dancing with the Stars*, doing the cha-cha. Nigerian private investors offered him \$1.5 million to make his next three films,³² the budget for two dozen normal Nollywood films. This seemed an amazing development, but on reflection, perhaps not so surprising. Many formal-sector investors have been trying to figure out a way to get into the Nigerian film industry, and what better prospect could there be than investing in Kunle Afolayan, himself a former banker? This prospect gave Afolayan perhaps more artistic freedom than any African filmmaker has ever enjoyed. He wore it well. He planned to make what he called a light romantic comedy, *Phone Swap*, before embarking on the project closest to his heart, whose working title is *Dead Alive*, the story of a man killed in a car crash as the film opens who thereafter divides his time between earth, where he is a ghost, and another world—not any specific traditional African conception of the afterlife but a made-up world rendered through CGI and perhaps involving an invented language à la *Avatar* (2009). Afolayan hopes to cast Danny Glover in it. He described the opening sequences to me in detail: obviously they were vivid in his mind.

Then things fell apart. The promised investment never materialized and he had to scramble to finish *Phone Swap*—adventures detailed in Andrew Rice's profile of Afolayan in the *New York Times Magazine*.³³ The production was ambitiously conceived, undertaking kinds of things never attempted in Nigerian filmmaking before because of their trouble and expense. He told Christopher Vourlias the film cost \$437,000 to make, of which 40 percent came from corporate sponsorship, 40 percent from personal bank loans, and the rest from his own pocket.³⁴ A set of the interior of an airplane was constructed in a warehouse, and Afolayan went looking for a real pilot to voice the in-flight announcements; he paid to shoot inside the Lagos airport, flooding it with light and extras at midnight. The whole look of the film is very carefully controlled. Rice's article emphasizes how crucial Pat Nebo, the artistic director and set designer, was to the production; the credits also list two

directors of photography—Yinka Edward and Alfred Chia—a colorist, Jason Moffat, and a visual effects supervisor, Mike-Steve Adeleye. Mobile phones are at the center of the film as a plot device and thematically, as an illustration of how Nigerians live. They also became a desperate strategy for getting the film made—BlackBerries dance around the credits (RIM, the company that makes BlackBerries, did not respond with sponsorship as Afolayan hoped); the Nigerian telecommunications company Globacom, as noted, eventually financed the production; and Afolayan himself puts in a cameo appearance selling Glo recharge cards to the protagonist, wearing the fluorescent green vest of a street vendor.

*Phone Swap*³⁵ is a nicely turned, airy entertainment. Akin (Wale Ojo) and Mary (Nse Ikpe-Etim) are opposites. He is Yoruba, a successful businessman from an elite family, uptight and friendless, with a reputation at work for being a backstabber. Mary is Igbo and is scattered, warm, and enmeshed in ordinary social and family life, making a modest living as a dressmaker and designer. They run into one another, literally, in the Lagos airport, the collision sending their identical BlackBerries skittering across the floor. They end up with one another's phones and end up, after the phones lead them to board planes to one another's destinations, perforce carrying out one another's missions: Mary poses as Akin's personal assistant at a company retreat as part of his plot to take control, while he mediates in a family dispute caused by her ferocious sister, a police officer, who has done violence to her husband's "man thing." He is comically discomfited by the spicy food, communal sleeping arrangements, and mosquitoes of ordinary Nigerian life in her village outside of Owerri. She stays with his alcoholic mother (Joke Silva) in her Abuja mansion, the two women charming one another. Mary has just sacked her boyfriend, having discovered he was already married, and Akin has just thrown out his girlfriend, not because she is crude, mercenary, and drunken but because she unforgivably rearranged his furniture without his permission. Akin and Mary fall for one another in the course of their phone conversations and then have to fight off these rivals.

Lockstep dramatic design and cross-cutting emphasize the comic symmetries and social and psychological contrasts, but as these reach a slapstick climax the film artfully pivots to affecting emotional depth as Akin and his mother reconcile, with some prompting from Mary. Like the scripting—story and screenplay are by Kemi Adesoye, who wrote *The Figurine*—the acting is stylized, professional, and polished, intending predictable pleasures and the pleasures of predictability, which are delivered with élan and assurance. The themes of Afolayan's other films—the dislocations of fate, the containment of ethnic and social diversity in a full, familiar national reality—reappear in minor, but not brittle, form. The film aims at light comedy and achieves it, the lightness itself being a sign of maturity.

The response to *Phone Swap* has been gratifying. When I visited his Lagos office in May 2012, Afolayan showed me, on his phone, the running tally of tickets sold at the multiplex in the sprawling upscale shopping mall that stands at the entrance to the luxury enclave of the Lekki Peninsula. He complained, as filmmakers all do, about the deal he was getting from the cinema, but at least he had solid ticket numbers to look at. *The Figurine*, on the other hand, had been pirated in spite of his best efforts. He kept the film out of the DVD market for a long time while organizing a massive release as an imported, encrypted DVD with bonus features, selling at a premium price. But, he said, before he began selling the DVD, university students all across the country already had the film on their computers. What they have is a not quite finished version—Afolayan suspects someone who worked on the editing leaked it.

Afolayan was in despair. He had sworn to live and die in Nigeria, making his career there, but he was about to get on a plane to the Cannes Film Festival to pitch *Dead Alive*, looking for a French or British coproducer—perhaps an American one, too. To demonstrate the depths of his despair, he said he would even consider a South African deal, in spite of the rivalry between Nigeria and South Africa over the domination of the continent's media future and his resentment at the arrogance of M-Net, the South African company whose largest subscriber base for its direct satellite television channels is in Nigeria. He said they had offered \$50,000 for *The Mirror Boy*, because it originated in London, whereas they would give him only \$10,000 for *Dead Alive*, simply because he was a Nigerian based in Nigeria. In any case, *Dead Alive* was to have a high-tech, science fiction dimension, and he wanted to be working with people with experience in this area. And he knew the full international distribution he aims at would be much more likely if the project had foreign producers with a stake in it from the beginning. But it rankled that his own country would not allow him to make back his investments.

Prognostications

Afolayan's story illustrates the serious questions about whether New Nollywood, as currently structured, is actually viable or sustainable except as a minor practice and perhaps as a feeder for a few directors to integrate themselves into the international circuits of African cinema. I believe New Nollywood's real sense and meaning are in relation to, as a preparation for, future transformations of Nollywood.

Making predictions about Nollywood is foolish, but one thing is certain: undersea fiber-optic cables are being laid into Nigeria, and by 2015 or so there will be enough bandwidth to permit films to be streamed for the first time.³⁶

We do not know what the consequences of this will be for Nollywood. Nigerians like to stare at their smartphones at least as much as anyone else, and some people in the industry have visions of them watching films on them, but no one seems to know how many phones there are that are capable of streaming films or how many people could afford the downloads on a regular basis. Laptops with wireless modems are common middle-class possessions but it is not obvious how far they would displace satellite television as a medium for watching films. NollywoodLove/iROKOTv now does more business in Malaysia than it does in Nigeria; this will doubtless change overnight. The effect of Internet streaming on the Nollywood domestic market is liable to be no different—no more positive—than its effect on the export market. In general, broadband should increase demand for content. It could encourage niche markets. It is liable to increase the relative importance of the relatively small portion of the Nollywood audience that will have access to it.

The other coming transformation is the construction of many more movie theaters—not just more fancy multiplexes to compete with the few existing high-end cinemas, but smaller, humbler “community cinemas” catering to the masses. Security problems were in large part responsible for the closing of all the cinemas in southern Nigeria in the years when Nollywood was being born, but the security situation is now much better in most places. The timing of this development is not clear, but it seems like an idea whose time has come. In 2012, everyone in and around Nollywood was talking about it. Part of the beauty of the idea is that the formal sector actors—government, banks, business investors—who have been circling around Nollywood without figuring out how to engage with it would have something clear and simple to do: investing in real estate, cinder blocks, and equipment is easier and far more reliable than coping with the notorious business practices of the Alaba and Idumota film marketers or making loans directly to filmmakers. Andy Amenechi, president of the Directors Guild of Nigeria, points out that the 2006 revision to the Federal Government’s Film Policy—never implemented—calls for the construction of a community cinema in each Local Government Area, of which there are 774. This would be almost a hundred times more theaters than exist now, but still an exceedingly modest number for a nation of 175 million people. Obviously many Local Government Areas, especially urban ones, could support far more than one theater. Cinemas should be an attractive proposition for government on all levels as a source of tax revenue and employment, each one surrounded by a little economy of food and drink catering, perhaps a video arcade, and so on.³⁷ If any state governor supported the establishment of a chain of cinemas, the thinking goes, their success would immediately be imitated everywhere. And there are plenty of private investors with the capital to set up individual theaters or chains.

Even a partial realization of this dream would utterly transform Nollywood, and all for the better. Vastly greater and more dependable revenues, freed from the threat of piracy, would permit larger budgets, and technical and artistic quality would rise accordingly, spurred also by the need to expand to fill the big screens. The process of segmentation of the industry would continue, as it should, but the primacy of the broad popular domestic audience would be restored, and with it, an essentially healthy cultural situation.

Bond Emeruwa, director, immediate past president of the Directors Guild of Nigeria, and Interim Chair of the Coalition of Nigerian Guilds and Associations, thinks the industry will sort itself out into three or so levels. At the top, films by people like Afolayan and Kelani will open their runs at the fancier theaters before moving down the chain. Emeruwa estimates some forty or fifty films a year could be released at this level. On the next level, Emeruwa continues, perhaps two or three hundred films a year, or more as theater construction took hold, would be released initially in the community cinemas, then through new media, and finally sold as DVDs with additional features—not as VCDs, the current standard. Below that, the old Nollywood would continue as it has done, releasing new films straight onto VCDs, serving the mass of the population that cannot afford anything else.³⁸

Abruptly, the artistic situation would be reversed—instead of struggling to produce decent films on tiny budgets and in a treacherous business environment, the challenge would be to produce enough high-quality work to fill the upper reaches of the market. We shall see.

Notes

1. Christopher Vourlias, "Nigerian Helmer Leads 'New Nollywood': Afolayan's 'The Figurine' Gets Critical Kudos and Strong B.O.," *Variety* 5 (June 2010), <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118020218?refCatId=13>; Mike Ekunno, "Nollywood and the New Cinema," *FindingNollywood.com* (blog), January 2, 2011, <http://findingnollywood.com/2011/01/03/234next-nollywood-and-the-new-cinema>.

2. Jonathan Haynes, "Nigerian Cinema: Structural Adjustments," *Research in African Literatures* 26, no. 3 (1995): 97–119; Jonathan Haynes, ed. *Nigerian Video Films*, rev. and expanded ed. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000).

3. Some 2,700 films were said to have been released in Nigeria that year, though more than half of them were in Hausa or Yoruba and so are not strictly "Nollywood," a term that refers in the first place to English-language productions but is sometimes used loosely as a brand name for the whole Nigerian film industry.

4. Brian Larkin, "Degraded Images, Distorted Sounds: Nigerian Video and the Infrastructure of Piracy," *Public Culture* 16, no. 2 (2004): 289–314.

5. Personal communication, November 2011.

6. Alessandro Jedlowski, "From Nollywood to Nollywood: Processes of Transna-

tionalization in the Nigerian Video Film Industry,” in *Global Nollywood and Beyond: Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry*, ed. Matthias Krings and Onookome Okome (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 25–45.

7. National Film and Video Censors Board, “Comprehensive Document on the Distribution, Exhibition and Marketing of Films and Video Works in Nigeria” (Abuja, Nigeria: National Film and Video Censors Board, 2007); Ikechukwu Obiaya, “Restructuring the Nigerian video film industry,” (Universidad de Navarra, 2012).

8. Personal communication, May 2012.

9. Such attempts have included, for instance, schemes to distribute individual films using banks and petrol stations as points of sale. The most ambitious project was the short-lived Filmmakers Cooperative of Nigeria, an association of independent producers that attempted to set up its own distribution system, opening the Nigerian Film Market in Surulere in 2003.

10. Jedlowski, “From Nollywood to Nollywood.”

11. *Tango with Me*, 35mm, directed by Mahmood Ali-Balogun (Mahmood Ali-Balogun, 2010).

12. Personal communication, May 2012.

13. Emem Isong, personal communication, May 2012.

14. *The Amazing Grace*, 35mm, directed by Jeta Amata (Jeta Amata Concepts and Amazing Grace Films, 2006); *Black Gold: Struggle for the Niger Delta*, 35mm, directed by Jeta Amata (Jeta Amata Concepts and Rock City Entertainment, 2011); *Ijé, the Journey*, 35mm, directed by Chineze Anyaene (Xandria Productions, 2010); *Through the Glass*, DVD, directed by Stephanie Okereke (Next Page/Social Movies, 2007); *The Tenant*, 35mm, directed by Lucky Ejim (Broken Manacles Entertainment, 2009); *The Mirror Boy*, digital video, directed by Obi Emelonye (OH Films, 2011). Carmela Garritano points out (personal communication) that there is a parallel set of “new” Ghanaian producers like Shirley Frimpong-Manso, Leila Djansi, and Francis Gbormittah.

15. For observations on the relationship of Nollywood with the rest of African cinema, see Jonathan Haynes, “Introduction,” in *Nigerian Video Films*, ed. Jonathan Haynes (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000); Jonathan Haynes, “African Cinema and Nollywood: Contradictions,” *Situations* 4, no. 1 (2011).

16. There are exceptions to every rule. Ali-Balogun has begun talking to the British Film Institute. The Paris-based Nigerian filmmakers Nelson Aduaka (*Ezra*, 35mm, directed by Nelson I. Aduaka [Amour Fou Filmproduktion and Cinefacto, 2007]) and Andy Amadi Okoroafor (*Relentless*, 35mm, directed by Andy Amadi Okoroafor [Clam Films, 2010]) received support from the usual kinds of European sources, but they have almost nothing to do with Nollywood, new or old. They have passed over a vaguely-defined threshold into a realm inhabited by other expatriate Nigerian but certainly non-Nollywood filmmakers including such diverse figures as Zina Saro-Wiwa and Vigil Chime.

17. This point has been made by Moradewun Adejunmobi in “Nollywood and New Templates for Minor Transnational Film,” presented at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference, Boston, 2012.

18. Christopher Vourlias, “Nigerian Directors Target Bigscreen: Biz Shifting from Low-Budget to Competitive Pics,” *Variety* (2012), <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118053553?refcatid=1278>.

19. *Return of Jenifa*, VCD, directed by Muyhdeen S. Ayinde (Olasco Films, 2011).

20. Jonathan Haynes, “Reading Nollywood: Class character and the campus film,”

in *Reading and Producing Nollywood: An International Symposium* (Lagos: University of Lagos, 2011).

21. *Saworoide / Brass Bells*, VCD, directed by Tunde Kelani (Mainframe, 1999); *Agogo Ewo / Taboo Gong*, VCD, directed by Tunde Kelani (Mainframe, 2002).

22. *Irapada / Redemption*, DVD, directed by Kunle Afolayan and Biodun Aleja (Golden Effects, 2007).

23. On this tradition as it has passed through various media, see especially Biodun Jeyifo, *The Yoruba Popular Travelling Theatre of Nigeria* (Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1984); Eburn Clark, *Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); Karin Barber, "Popular Arts in Africa," *African Studies Review* 30, no. 3 (1987); Karin Barber, *The Generation of Plays: Yoruba Popular Life in Theater* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Alain Ricard, "Du theater au cinema Yoruba: Le cas Nigérian," *CinémAction* 26 (1983).

24. Awolowo, mentioned earlier as a hero of the independence era, crystallized an enlightened politics and cultural politics that was at once proudly Yoruba and Nigerian nationalist, with no sense of contradiction. He is by no means the only figure taking such a position, which sank deeply into the Yoruba popular arts: see Barber, "Popular Arts in Africa." "Wazobia" combines the words for "come" in Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo.

25. *Aromire / The Figurine*, DVD, directed by Kunle Afolayan (Golden Effects, 2010).

26. *Mosebolatan*, 35mm, directed by Adeyemi Afolayan (Alawada Movies, 1986); *Orun Mooru / Heaven Is Hot*, 35mm, directed by Ola Balogun (Alawada Movies, 1982).

27. *Dangerous Twins 1, 2 & 3*, directed by Tade Ogidan (Paulo International Concepts and OGD Pictures, 2004), VCD.

28. Perhaps it is worth noting that the film's English and Yoruba titles are not translations of one another: "Aromire" is the name of the deity and her village, suggesting her power and an indigenous locality; "The Figurine" points to the representation of the deity, which can be transported, duplicated, and falsified.

29. Jonathan Haynes, "What Is to Be Done? Film Studies and Nigerian and Ghanaian Videos," in *Viewing African Cinema in the Twenty-First Century: Art films and the Nollywood Video Revolution*, ed. Mahir Saul and Ralph A. Austen (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 11–25.

30. Carol J. Clover, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

31. Andrew Apter, *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

32. Personal communication, March 2011.

33. Andrew Rice, "A Scorsese in Lagos," *New York Times Magazine*, February 26, 2012.

34. Christopher Vourlias, "Helmer is Hot, in More Ways than One: Former Banker Afolayan Shakes up Nigerian Pic Biz," *Variety* (2012), <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118054917?refcatid=3762>.

35. *Phone Swap*, digital video, directed by Kunle Afolayan (Golden Effects, 2012).

36. In 2013, Afolayan made *Irapada* and *The Figurine* available for streaming on IbakaTV.com, one of the several sites now competing with iROKOTv for diasporic Nigerian audiences that now mostly watch films on their computers.

37. Andy Amenechi, personal communication, May 2012.

38. Bond Emeruwa, personal communication, May 2012.