

## Cinematographic Analysis and Authorship of Nollywood Contemporary Films in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This paper examines the cinematographic techniques and directorial authorship in contemporary Nollywood films, exploring how visual storytelling, lighting, camera work, and editing define the industry's unique cinematic language. The study also evaluates the influence of individual directors in shaping the artistic and narrative structure of Nigerian films. The study investigates key trends, challenges, and the evolution of Nollywood's cinematic identity in the global film landscape. The paper argues that Nollywood, Nigeria's prolific film industry, has grown into one of the largest film-producing sectors in the world. Initially characterized by low-budget productions and direct-to-video releases, contemporary Nollywood has embraced high production values, sophisticated storytelling, and technical advancements. The paper points out that the concept of the Nollywood auteur is defined by the unique styles and recurring themes observed in the works of certain directors. Some Nollywood directors have developed a signature style, often seen in their recurrent themes, cinematographic choices, and narrative structures. Directors such as Kunle Afolayan, Perpetua Ogechi, Kemi Adetiba, and Niyi Akinmolayan are known for their distinctive storytelling and technical finesse. Despite advancements, Nollywood still faces challenges such as limited funding, infrastructural deficits, and constraints in distribution networks. However, the rise of streaming platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video provides new opportunities for global visibility and increased production standards. The paper concludes that the evolution of cinematographic techniques and the emergence of auteur directors have significantly shaped contemporary Nollywood films.*

### Keywords

Analysis, Authorship, Cinematographic, Contemporary, Films, and Nollywood



### I. Introduction

Viewers are made more sensitive to narrative experiments that convey a director's sense of life through auteurism. Additionally, it educated audiences to read stylistic elements as the director's subjective commentary on the action. Auteur reviewers were particularly on the lookout for any ambiguities that might be seen as the director's interpretation of a theme or issue. Interpreting signs and symbols, usually through metaphors and parallels to inanimate things and characters in a movie, is known as semiotic analysis. Writers frequently have to decide what a specific symbol signifies in the movie and in a larger cultural or historical context because symbols can have multiple meanings (Uwah & Bature-Uzor, 2023).

The answer to the question of who can serve as a director in any country or civilization is that both sexes can, yet it is still true that there are more men than women in this position. This is seen in other video film businesses worldwide as well as in Nollywood. Erin Hill-Parks, who contributed to a different perspective on auteurism that emphasizes the recognition of outside influences on filmmaking and, inevitably, the director's work, noted that while auteur ideology has its roots in structural and modern theories, it can be developed and applied to modern film studies through the use of post-structural and postmodern concepts. The abstraction of an author and the recognition that a physical person exists who is also impacted by social and cultural variables are made possible by shifting the way that the auteur is thought of into postmodern concerns. The conditions of production must take culture and, in this case, film into account (Amadi, 2017; Amonyeze et al., 2023).

This viewpoint shows a rapid departure from the auteurism's original tenets, offering a new interpretation of the theory in line with the evolving reality of contemporary cinema. Thomas Dorey further argues that modern auteurist scholars, like Brian Michael Goss in his 2014 analysis of Steven Soderbergh's *The Limey*, have resorted to a modified form of auteurism that departs greatly from Sarris' subjectivity by focusing on the auteur while acknowledging the significance and influence of other production factors outside of the director or writer in order to create a coherent study. The auteurism of Hill-Park and Dorey broadens the scope of criticism of the auteur's work to include all elements that influence the production's outcome, whether directly or indirectly affecting the director, rather than only his own stylistic influence.

## II. Review of Literatures

The paper employed the Formative Theory. The initial wave of theoretical thought about cinema was sparked by the rejection of the moving image, the term used in the early days of cinema to refer to what we now call a movie or film, by many members of the elite of the time. They saw it as a pointless recording. They asserted that the subject documented was the only thing of any consequence. On the other hand, the first film theorists contended that cinema was a brand-new art form, or the sixth art as French writers dubbed it at the start of the 20th century (Sabin, 2023).

They pointed out similarities between the traditional arts and movies, drawing comparisons between the two. This process of positive comparison did not apply to theater, where writers went to great lengths to list the distinctions between the two mediums in response to the charge that movies were, at most, canned entertainment. Furthermore, some theorists proposed that the qualities of the older art forms were synthesized into the concept of cinema. For example, a painting is a composition of visual elements, and one of the primary components of music is rhythm. Nevertheless, a film combines aspects of art and music to produce a unique aesthetic through movement within the frame and the rhythm of cutting from shot to shot.

Furthermore, by enumerating every way a cinematic image (at the time) diverged from its topic, the early theorists contested the notion that a film was merely a recording, a mechanical replication of reality. For example, a real-life event that was color, three-dimensional, and included sound was portrayed in a movie as being quiet, two-dimensional, and black and white. Instead of being a straightforward mechanical replication of whatever transpired or was acted out in front of the formative theorists and

the camera showed how the cinematic process changed, transformed, and controlled the raw material.

For example, Rudolph Arnheim emphasized how the filmmaker's decisions in lighting, camera position, and frame might have a transforming effect. However, numerous other theorists mentioned different aspects of cinematography and *mise-en-scene* (the general construction of the visual image within the frame), which were under the filmmaker's control. As a result, editing procedures began to dominate early theoretical thought (Thieme & Fry, 2023). Prior to the invention of film technology, this was the era of silent cinema, therefore editing simply involved placing shots next to each other. Since editing was unique many thinkers at the time thought that editing was the essential component of cinema as it was unique to the new medium and had no equivalent in the traditional arts, and because it generated more meaning than any other instrument in the filmmaker's toolbox.

Though they focused on different topics, cinema theorists from the turn of the century to the 1930s all emphasized how the filmmaker's use of the cinematic equipment, including cameras and their lenses, editing software, and printers, may be transformative. In other words, formative theory primarily examines the technical elements of film, including shoots, editing, lighting, and sound. Formalists are therefore interested in how these components affect the viewer, or fail to do so. To put it simply, formalism places a lot of emphasis on how a production's style conveys its intended meaning.

Formative theory, in its broadest definition, studies the synthesis, or lack thereof of the several elements of filmmaking, as well as the intellectual and emotional effects of the synthesis and the individual elements. For example, think about the single element of editing. A formalist might look at how typical Hollywood "continuity editing" creates a more comforting effect, while non-continuity or jump cut editing could become more unpredictable or frightening. Alternately, one might consider integrating several elements, like as editing, shot composition, and music. The shootout at the end of Sergio Leone's *Spaghetti Western Dollars Trilogy* is a notable example of how these elements come together to make an impression: The images get shorter, the music gets louder, and the choice of shots changes from being very broad to being very close and tense as the sequence draws to a close. When these elements cooperate rather than operate independently, tension is created (Thieme & Fry, 2023).

Film noir and classic Hollywood cinema are two instances of ideological interpretations associated with formalism. The style of classic Hollywood films, sometimes referred to distinct from the institutional type of representation. In order to maximize the watching experience, it incorporates dissolves, three-point lighting, continuity editing, "mood" music, and copious coverage. This is explained by socioeconomic ideology, which holds that Hollywood aims to maximize profits and attract as many ticket buyers as possible.

Nino Frank coined the term "film noir," which is characterized through location filming, poorer lighting, darker images, poorer production quality, and overall nihilism. The reason for this, we are told, is that throughout the war and the years following it, both filmmakers and moviegoers were generally gloomier. Furthermore, emigrant German Expressionists like Fritz Lang (who was not an expressionist as is frequently believed) brought their stylized lighting effects and their disillusionment with the war to the United States (Sabin, 2023). According to this viewpoint, whether or not the filmmakers themselves are conscious of it, social, economic, and political forces have a direct impact on the style or "language" of these movies. This area of critique has produced a number of

categories, such as the American independent movement, the new gay cinema, the French, German, and Czech new waves, and the classic Hollywood film.

This school of thinking for Cahier du Cinema was founded by Francois Truffaut and other young film critics for two reasons. Its original purpose was to revive the craft of filmmaking. By asserting that movies had auteurs, or writers, Truffaut sought to raise films (and their filmmakers) to the level of other widely accepted art forms like literature, music, and painting. The author of a novel (not their editor or type-setter, for instance), the composer of a piece of music (though sometimes the performers are given credence, like actors in modern films), or the painter of a fresco (not their assistants who mix the colors or frequently do some of the painting themselves) are the only creative forces that are the focus of these art forms and their criticism. Instead of the scriptwriter, the director was accorded the same prestige as authors, composers, or painters in order to debunk the widespread notion that film is a poor art form that falls somewhere between theater and literature (Sabin, 2023).

Its second goal was to save certain filmmakers who were hated by mainstream criticism. It presented the argument that genre filmmakers and low-budget B-movies were just as important as, if not more so than, the prestige films that are usually given more respect and attention in the US and France. From Truffaut's perspective, auteurs use their style to add their own unique touch to material that was below their skill level, such as a romance, a pulpy action movie, or a thriller. In this regard, the theory and the research on the social construction of the South-South Nigerian ethnocentrism and Nollywood movies are connected.

### **III. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Narratives of Nollywood Films**

Despite American and European cultural influences, Nollywood has managed to maintain its distinctiveness. The industry is not comparable with foreign traditions in terms of personnel, administrative organization, production processes, and story aspects, according to Haynes in (Ebekue and Utoh-Ezeajugh, 2020). Nigerians define and maintain the industry. Nigerian films' narrative, which the public finds captivating and consistent with their expectations, are the main source of their commercial success and appeal. Alamu claims in Ajiwe et al. (2023) that the tastes of its audience greatly influence Nollywood's thematic and aesthetic choices. Infidelity, betrayal, desire, hypocrisy, armed robbery, marital issues, murder, cultism and occultism, witchcraft, polygamy, and other topics constitute the basis for these themes. Indeed, the topics are wide-ranging and reflect Nigerian society. Nigeria is thus seen by the filmmakers as a narrative entity, and their films serve as the agents in this narrative act.

The author also identifies narrative and stylistics as two related organizing elements that function in movies (Simon, 2023). Nigerian film narratives are distinctive because they are rooted in the African viewpoint, which is the foundation of storytelling. Despite American and European cultural influences, Nollywood has managed to maintain its distinctiveness. The industry is not comparable with foreign traditions in terms of personnel, administrative organization, production methods, and narrative components. Nigeria defines and maintains the industry. Nigerian films' narrative, which the public finds captivating and consistent with their expectations, are the main source of their commercial success and appeal. Ajiwe et al. (2023) claim that the preferences of its audience greatly influence Nollywood's thematic and artistic decisions. Infidelity, betrayal, desire, hypocrisy, armed robbery, marital issues, murder, cultism and occultism,

witchcraft, polygamy, and other topics constitute the basis for these themes. Every story is essentially made up of a collection of narrative components (Obasi & Msughter, 2023).

In order to tell their tale in a way that engages the audience's intellect and emotions in a favorable way with the film's underlying vision or message, filmmakers are obliged to take into account a variety of film methods and cinematic choices (Obasi et al., 2023). Nigerian films have long been considered national cultural exports, but the government's lack of interest in the sector has prevented it from being recognized as a foreign exchange cultural currency that benefits our nation. Nollywood has also drawn a lot of criticism. These critiques, which focus on professionalism, quality, and production methods, demonstrate how much value is placed on the sector. Others have decided that Nigeria cannot yet claim to have a professional film industry because it predominantly uses a video format for production, despite the fact that many critics have questioned the stories' content.

### 3.2 Narrative and Style in Nollywood Films

The unique qualities of Nigerian films are examined in this section in connection to their narratives and aesthetics. Nollywood maintains its core distinctiveness despite incorporating numerous cultural influences, both international and domestic (Ajiwe et al., 2023). Nollywood is not comparable to other cultures in terms of its workforce, production methods, organizational structure, and story components. Instead, Nigerians define and maintain the country's film industry (Vitalis et al., 2023). Nigerian films' tales, which the public finds captivating and consistent with their expectations, are the main source of their popularity and financial success. The recurrent themes in these films are ones with wide appeal because Nollywood's aesthetic and thematic decisions are heavily influenced by the tastes of its viewers (Akande, 2022).

The artistic potential of cinema technology, therefore, allows Nigerian films to respond to the transformative requirements of Nigerian society. While several recurring motifs, like witchcraft and the spread of black magic, have been denounced by critics as being disgusting, it is also true that these concepts have their origins in popular mythology (Vitalis et al., 2025). Furthermore, the main didactic goal of such motifs is to demonstrate that good always triumphs over evil. The cultural and moral beliefs of the Nigerian people are somewhat reflected in the didactic parts of Nigerian films. This analogy aligns with Parson's structural-functionalism theory of sociology, which focuses on cultural systems and the general integration of societies (Akande, 2022). The main idea of Parson's thesis is that values and norms that are established within a society's cultural system influence both culture and the social behaviors of individuals that lead to social institutions.

Nigerian films have focused on issues related to the connection between husband and wife, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, children, stepsons and stepdaughters, and so forth. Nigerian films highlight significant modern social issues such cultism and ritual slaughter, armed robbery, HIV and AIDS, and, more lately, kidnapping, in addition to the family. For example, movies like *Jenifa* and *Goodbye Tomorrow* center on the HIV epidemic. These movies warn teenagers against having multiple sexual partners and non-marital, unprotected sex in order to prevent this terrible disease, which is destroying our nation's youth and having a devastating impact on the socioeconomic status of the entire country.

The problem of prostitution, which has caused severe health issues for numerous young men and women, is linked to AIDS. Two movies that address this topic are *Domitilla* and *Prostitution*. Films like *Blood Money*, *Living in Bondage*, *Rituals*, and *Abuja Boys* have also harshly criticized the twin problems of cultism and ritual murders.

These occurrences are extra wickednesses that have permeated Nigerian society deeply. Because of Nigeria's high rate of corruption and the "hero" worship and acclaim given to the "wealthy," many young people have been led to believe that the only way to stay relevant is to get wealthy by any means. Therefore, cultist murder has become a common occurrence in modern-day Nigeria (Vitalis et al., 2025). By disparaging the cultists and their "cult of celebrity," the aforementioned movies have denounced this vile activity. The movies typically depict the veneration of dubious or illegal wealth a practice that many young Nigerians engage in as abhorrent.

Additionally, the issue of armed robbery is not disregarded. Filmmakers portray armed robbery as a threat that fuels the nation's ongoing general insecurity. Thus, armed robbery was positioned at the heart of criminality in movies like *Rattlesnake*, *Owo Blow*, and *Outkast*. The films' criminal characters damaged their civilizations and killed innocent people, even though they were eventually caught, killed, or punished (Endong, 2023; Saint et al., 2024). Therefore, movies about rituals and armed robbery depict a devastating storm of violence in Nigerian society and offer solutions for dealing with these threats. Despite Nollywood's longstanding definition of entertainment, the industry has also depended on current events to gain popularity and achieve financial success.

As long as the topics of the stories are real, important, and presented in an engaging narrative style, the audience will react favorably to captivating topical stories. Films that have adapted topical materials include *August Meeting* and *Issakaba*. *August Meeting* focuses on the propensity of Igbo women to act flamboyantly and flaunt their wealth during their annual summer meeting, while *Issakaba* focuses on the reign of the infamous Bakassi Boys, a vigilante group that was formed as a spontaneous reaction to armed robberies in Southeast Nigeria in the late 1990s. This movie makes an effort to denounce the corruption that results from this mindset (Akinola, 2023).

But there haven't been many compelling political topics in Nigerian movies. There isn't a strong heritage of political filmmaking in the industry. Given that the producers have made little to no attempt to address these issues, one could claim that modern Nigerian films have no interest in influencing the political discourse and circumstances of the day (Oreoluwa et al., 2024). One would have anticipated filmmakers to produce political satires that mock the Nigerian political class's poor governance, given the country's nascent democracy and the political class's evident inability to establish long-lasting, high-quality rule. In fact, a national critical film movement that aims to impact the political agenda is desperately needed. Such a move would inspire a younger antiestablishment audience that is already growing weary of traditional films and indicate a departure from the efflorescence of well-known tales. Literary critics have addressed the topic of dedication and art (Onyejelem et al., 2024).

According to Nwoga in Akinola (2023), artistic commitment has generally been seen as an orientation issue, where the artist perceives sociopolitical realities and uses these perceptions in his work to either critique and change existing social norms and values or to advance understanding and preservation of them. Like authors, filmmakers who utilize their work to advance political causes can demonstrate their dedication by the topics they choose and the attention they give to pertinent concerns. Nigerian filmmakers should embrace commitment if art enhances it or vice versa in a way that makes life in a particular society more fulfilling and meaningful. Additionally, Nigeria is full of literary and political satires, some of which filmmakers must adapt for the screen.



### 3.3 Perspectives on Film Form and Style

The function of film form and style in connection to narrative tactics is reviewed in this section. A film's shape can be defined as the way its different components work together to make a whole. As I mentioned previously, stylistics and narrative are two connected organizing principles that function in film. The portrayal of the tale and the way the viewer experiences it is known as narrative, whereas stylistics is concerned with the different film methods including mise-en-scene, editing, camera movement, color patterns, noises, music, and so forth. Each story has a collection of narrative components that serve as its representation (Msughter et al., 2023). Form is the entirety of a movie or the arrangement of the narrative it tells. In order to convey his or her tale, captivate the audience's attention, and fulfill the film's underlying goal, the producer must take into account a variety of cinematic approaches and choices. A completed film can be considered to exhibit unique patterns of choices because it is based on the preferences of the director (Adedeji-Olona, 2023).

These patterns are known as style, in the sense that the term is used to describe the linguistic patterns found in a poem or novel. Therefore, the utilization of techniques selected by the filmmaker or visual artist to create an impressionistic work is considered its style, while the interaction between various portions of a film to form a whole can be referred to as its form. Bowsward (2023) bolster this argument by asserting that the style also functions as a system since it mobilizes elements, specific manifestations of cinematic processes, in accordance with organizational principles. Style only refers to the film's methodical application of cinematic techniques. Thus, style is entirely a component of the medium (Maiwada et al., 2025).

From the aforementioned, it can be inferred that form and style are essential to film narration and that a film engages us moment by moment because of these elements. Movies appeal to our emotions, thoughts, and vision. Taking advantage of the medium's ability to depict the world and reality, many producers craft structured experiences that captivate us and occasionally alter our thoughts or emotions about our lives or the objects in our surroundings. Film, as an art form, provides experiences with specific meanings and valances that might be joyful, provocative, or perplexing (Aondover et al., 2024). The film's emotional function also teaches viewers how to modify their emotional reactions and responses to specific social situations. The story's progression is presented in a way that is both harmonic and introduces us to a new experience. The greatest way to understand a film's form is to consider the audience, sometimes known as the spectator.

Bowsward (2023) asserts that because people are constantly on the lookout for important elements of the natural world and their immediate surroundings, perception is an activity that takes place throughout all stages of life. Film relies on this dynamic aspect of the human mind and pays attention to creating an emotional reaction from the human environment since the human mind is always looking for order to create meaning. Similar to a novel, a film leaves something to the imagination. The idea of originality in film is called into question by the claim that all movies use plot devices and ideas from other films and other artistic mediums. Given that aesthetic form has not been described as a pure activity that is isolated from other experiences, we often conclude that directors use recognized norms of form and technique when we see similar patterns in different films (Aondover & Aondover, 2023).

Since art is a human product and the artist is a part of history and society, it is inevitable that the artist will relate his or her work in some manner to earlier works as well as to broader facets of the society in which they live. Therefore, a number of distinct films will share a tradition, a dominating style, a popular form, and some common

characteristics, commonly referred to as conventions. A filmmaker who aspires to be unique may only hope to establish new standards that will define a very inventive piece of work. Because of their prior experiences, the audience may initially find such an uncommon or extraordinary style that deviates from normal conventions strange and criticize it. Once new norms and expectations have been established, they can subsequently learn to acknowledge and react to the production of an unconventional work as clever.

### **3.4 Narrative Analysis of Nollywood Contemporary Films: Aesthetic and Cultural Considerations**

The study of tale components, such as plot, character, and narrative structure, is known as narrative analysis. This kind of analysis takes into account the entire movie and the narrative it aims to convey (Aondover et al., 2025). Due in large part to the popularity of the dramatic narrative conventions that the industry has honed, Nollywood has expanded over the last 20 years to become the second largest film business in the world, behind Bollywood in India and ahead of Hollywood in the US. Nollywood filmmakers are currently making films that can be divided into two categories: the low-budget traditional direct-to-video culture melodrama and the new theatrical picture that aims to mimic the technological techniques of a high-budget production while preserving Nigerian narrative patterns (Enyindah & Donli, 2023).

When the term is separated from the prevalent "westernized" idea that defines a blockbuster as a feature produced on a large scale with a multi-million-dollar budget, high production value, well-known actresses and actors, and the newest special effects and digital advancements, these two well-known categories of Nigerian films can be regarded as Nollywood blockbusters. It is stated here that in order to carefully and thoroughly study the two types of films now produced in Nigeria, a new definition of blockbuster that prioritizes storyline over production gimmicks is required.

Nigerian films do depend on the star power of well-known actresses and actors like Mercy Johnson, Jim Iyke, and Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde, but the hallmark of a Nollywood blockbuster is its narrative spectacle, or hyper-dramatic plotlines that depict the social pathologies and lived conditions of the Nigerian people. A more complex socioeconomic, cultural, historical, and political interpretation of the fictional dream scapes portrayed in Nollywood movies and its impact on audiences is made possible by this new description (Aondover et al., 2025). In order to interpret and place the various kinds of Nollywood blockbusters, the affective spectacles in their stories, and how they represent Nigerian culture and society at the early 1990s and in the present, this study examines Kenneth Nnebue's 1992 film *Living in Bondage* and Obi Emelonye's 2012 film *Last Flight to Abuja*. In the end, these movies show what makes a blockbuster in a stunning and promising developing country still suffering from the consequences of British colonialism, post-independence political unrest, and ongoing economic instability brought on by corruption and World Bank/International Monetary Fund structural adjustment programs in the 1980s all come to mind.

Nigerian audiences would find it hard to ignore or contest messages about money, tradition, sex, religion, and the occult. In order to give spectators, the impression that they have witnessed something essentially positive, the films are filled with evocative scenes that are intended to arouse feelings of terror, contempt, pity, rage, sadness, joy, love, and/or understanding. These hits represent syncretism, which is a layering of affective reactions to the spiritual, sexual, economic, and civic predicament of the post-colonial Nigerian subject seeking personal agency. Because the narrative spectacles address the cultural and emotional paradigms that viewers must inhabit and navigate on a daily basis,



viewers quickly accept them and find enjoyment in them. Since Nollywood's inception, spectacular plotlines have persisted, establishing a national style of melodrama and affect that permeates the business today (Aondover et al., 2024).

A Nollywood blockbuster's (although veiled) commentary on the country's socio-cultural and socio-economic problems is its second distinctive feature. A useful tool for examining how Nollywood's affective spectacles which may be seen as exaggerations of Nigerian life—reflect society is John Markert's explanation of reflection theory. He contends that "a slice of the familiar world is reflected in what is depicted in the book or on the screen." Many Nollywood films depict a familiar world of financial instability and the need to find a way to survive after the country's economic collapse. Nigeria experienced a noticeable phase of growth and expansion in the late 1970s and early 1980s; the country's burgeoning petroleum market contributed to significant economic success (Ben-Iheanacho et al., 2023). The prosperity was short-lived. According to McCall, Nigerians saw how fleeting affluence could be when the oil boom faded and official corruption spread. The coup-plotters stated that the lack of public opposition to the ensuing military coup was a confirmation of the country's rejection of electoral democracy.

The country was further destabilized by a string of anarchic military dictatorships by the middle to late 1980s. The military government of Major General Muhammadu Buhari was overthrown in 1985 by Major General Ibrahim Babangida. In 1986, Babangida was in charge of launching the IMF's Structural Adjustment Program in Nigeria. The SAP was created to reduce economic regulation and settle foreign debt. However, the SAP resulted in a decline in productivity, a depreciated currency, and high inflation rates; for the majority of the country's population, the program led to widespread unemployment and the inability to pay for basic needs including clothing, food, shelter, fuel, education, and health care. According to former UN Economic Commission for Africa Executive Secretary Adebayo Adedeji, the country suffered more damage during the SAP than from all the colonial eras combined. During Babangida's dictatorship and in the midst of increasing corruption, many Nigerians who couldn't maintain themselves thought the SAP had drained them empty. Early Nollywood films mirrored these economic concerns (Abdulsalam, 2023).

The country was under Babangida's rule when Kenneth Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* was published in 1992; poverty rates were high and wages were low. The movie perfectly captures how Nigerians dealt with the political and socioeconomic upheavals that were plaguing their country at the time. Igbo electronics trader and film promoter Nnebue is said to have produced *Living in Bondage* after collaborating with Yoruba producers to videotape theater shows in Yoruba and after observing a wholesaler's attempts to sell a sizable inventory of videocassettes he had purchased from Taiwan. According to Jonathan Haynes and Onookome Okome, Nnebue recognized the potential of the Nigerian market for videocassette films. Following the production of multiple Yoruba films, Nnebue collaborated with filmmaker Chris Obi Rapu to shoot the film on VHS and used VCRs for editing. It is estimated that more than 750,000 copies of *Living in Bondage*, the redemptive tale of a depressed businessman who sacrifices his wife in an occult ceremony to get money, have been sold. The movie established the benchmark for all subsequent Nollywood productions (Abdulsalam, 2023; Aondover & Akin-Odukoya, 2025).

Finding a single film or example of when filmmakers began utilizing more technology to tell tales is difficult. Olivier Barlet claims that a new film genre and filmmaker emerged in the late 2000s, raising doubts about the viability of the low-budget melodrama. Femi Lasode, Zeb Ejero, Mahmood Ali Balogun, and Tunde Kelani are filmmakers and producers who "stand out above all for their cinematic approach," he says.

"A desire to raise public awareness of a variety of social issues (prostitution, AIDS, corruption, urban violence, etc.) and the desire not to alienate their audiences are combined in the incorporation of action scenes, special effects, and celebrities," Barlet said. Their films fall somewhere in the middle of the auteur and popular film categories. Barlet discusses the films from Nigeria that are shown at international film festivals. Affective spectacle, a reflection of socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions, and the technological tricks of a "western" blockbuster film are all examples of the modern Nollywood blockbuster, or the blockbuster that further syncretizes the Nollywood feature. Examples of such films include *Phone Swap*, *Tango with Me*.

#### IV. Conclusion

The evolution of cinematographic techniques and the emergence of auteur directors have significantly shaped contemporary Nollywood films. As Nigerian cinema continues to gain global recognition, understanding the role of cinematography and directorial authorship is essential in appreciating the artistic and technical strides of the industry. In this context, future research should explore how Nollywood can further refine its cinematic language and expand its influence in global cinema.

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