

THE NIGERIAN FILM INDUSTRY AND CULTURE RELOCATION: A TRANSLATION OF THE MODES AND FORMS IN MUSIC AND DANCE CULTURE

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***Abstract:** The Nigerian film industry, encompassing both Nollywood secular and Evangelical film divisions, has long showcased the historical and contemporary culture of Nigeria, reflecting cultural transitions while preserving the socio-cultural realities of its people. This study examines how the industry navigates these transitions, maintaining its connection to diverse worldviews and global integration through music (signature tunes and soundtracks) and dance practices. Focusing on films from 1980 to 2020, including *Koto Aye* (1989), *Koto Orun* (1990), *The Gods Are Dead* (2000), *The Land of Fury* (2015), *Lionheart* (2018), and *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free* (2019), the study explores themes of secularity and spirituality. Using the framework of Afrocentrism, it analyzes how music and dance in Nigerian cinema serve to preserve cultural identity, while also adapting to global media flows and cultural transformations.*

Key Words: Afrocentrism, Culture Relocation, Cultural Transitions, Film Industry Nigeria, Worldview.

Introduction

The Nigerian film industry, often referred to as Nollywood, has emerged as one of the largest and most influential film industries in the world, offering a unique lens through which to view the socio-cultural evolution of Nigeria. Encompassing both secular films and evangelical (Christian-based) cinema, Nollywood has become a critical space for the exploration and projection of Nigerian culture, values, and identity. Through the power of storytelling, the industry reflects not only the country's historical transitions but also its ongoing negotiations with tradition, modernity, and global influences.

One key element that makes Nigerian cinema stand out is its deep engagement with music and dance. Music and dance are not mere embellishments, but rather integral to the expression of cultural

identity, spiritual beliefs, and social dynamics. From traditional rhythms and melodies to contemporary musical influences, the use of music and soundtracks in Nigerian films plays a crucial role in reinforcing thematic concerns, creating emotional resonance, and mediating the cultural shifts that define the nation. Dance, too, holds a similar significance, with various forms of movement accompanying music to express narratives that are deeply embedded in local cultural practices.

This study seeks to examine how music and dance in Nigerian films have evolved and adapted to the changing socio-cultural and spiritual landscapes of the country, particularly concerning the dichotomy between secular and evangelical film genres. The period between 1980 and 2020 presents a dynamic span of films that showcase the evolving nature of Nigerian cultural expression, reflecting the transformation of musical styles, dance forms, and their interaction with shifting worldviews. The selected films—*Koto Aye* (1989), *Koto Orun* (1990), *The Gods Are Dead* (2000), *The Land of Fury* (2015), *Lionheart* (2018), and *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free* (2019) serve as focal points for exploring these shifts.

This paper employs an Afrocentric approach to understanding these cultural transitions. Afrocentrism, with its focus on African perspectives, histories, and ideologies, offers a framework to interrogate how the Nigerian film industry has navigated the tension between local traditions and global influences. By exploring the role of music and dance in these films, this study aims to reveal how they serve not only as aesthetic devices but as cultural signifiers that articulate identity, spirituality, and social change in a rapidly globalising world.

Furthermore, the paper addresses several key questions: How have music and dance been used in Nollywood films to negotiate cultural identity? In what ways do secular and evangelical films differ in their use of music and dance to reflect Nigerian socio-cultural and spiritual realities? How do these practices interact with the global flow of media, and what role do they play in the preservation or transformation of Nigerian cultural expressions? By answering these questions, this paper aims to contribute to a deeper

understanding of the dynamic relationship between music, dance, and film in the context of Nigerian cultural and spiritual evolution.

Dance, Themes, and Cultural Relocation in Select Nigerian Films

The centrality and uniqueness of African culture are vividly expressed through its cinematic representations, which have transformed over time, mirroring the various phases of African cultural evolution and the lived experiences of its people. Beyond entertainment, the thematic visions articulated by filmmakers often aim to preserve and promote African values, contributing to a broader understanding and appreciation of the continent's rich cultural heritage.

This section of the paper explores the intersection of African dance culture, thematic narratives, and cultural transitions in selected Nigerian films from 1980 to 2020. It examines how dance forms and the evolving themes in these films both reflect and contribute to the cultural relocation and transformation occurring during this period. Six films serve as case studies: *Koto Aye* (1989), *Koto Orun* (1990), *The Gods Are Dead* (2000), *The Land of Fury* (2015), *Lionheart* (2018), and *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free* (2019). These films span the two major categories of Nigerian cinema: mainstream (secular) and spiritual (evangelical), providing a comprehensive lens for examining the representation of African culture and its interaction with the concept of cultural relocation.

The concept of 'cultural relocation' is pivotal to this discussion. Traditionally understood as the adoption of new cultural practices, traditions, and ideologies due to migration or exposure, it takes on a broader meaning in this context. Here, cultural relocation also signifies the transition of cultural knowledge, practices, and philosophies across different temporal, ideological, or philosophical spaces. Through dance and thematic elements, these films illustrate how African culture navigates and adapts to the influences of modernity, reshaping identity while preserving core values.

This process underscores the dynamic interplay between tradition and change, showcasing how Nigerian films serve as both custodians of cultural heritage and platforms for negotiating contemporary realities. By examining these transitions, the paper highlights the evolving narrative of African culture within the cinematic landscape, emphasising

its resilience and adaptability in a rapidly changing world. This presupposes that the process of translating these identified aspects of Nigerian reality into filmic components is integral to this study, as is the appraisal of the new thematic and artistic contributions over time. Most importantly, the changes that have occurred within the forty years (1980 to 2020) are critically evaluated and discussed to deepen our understanding of Nigerian socio-cultural realities. This analysis is limited to the six selected films.

The manifestation and practice of witchcraft (*Aje*) in Africa is widely regarded as an ancient phenomenon; many societies believe that witches and wizards influence human affairs, even to the extent of altering or destroying destinies. Although their powers and actions are not physically visible, their effects are often described as profound and devastating. African scholars have noted that witchcraft has deep cultural roots, with its practices being passed down through generations, transcending urban and rural settings as well as social strata.¹ Regardless of whether these metaphysical powers are used for good or ill, the negative connotations associated with witchcraft have largely overshadowed its existence. These negative perceptions have not only threatened the legitimacy of witchcraft practices but have also contributed to the ostracism of individuals believed to be initiated.²

This belief in witchcraft constituted a dominant thematic focus in the early years of Nigerian filmmaking. While the nascent Nigerian film industry explored a variety of themes, witchcraft emerged as one of the most popular, reflecting societal beliefs and anxieties about its existence and consequences. The fascination with the mysterious and fearsome nature of witchcraft made it a compelling topic for filmmakers, who documented its practices and rituals while often portraying witches as figures of reverence and fear.

¹ Dirk Kohnert, "Magic and Witchcraft: Implications for Democratization and Poverty-Alleviating Aid in Africa," *World Development* 24, no. 8 (1996): 1347-1355; [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X\(96\)00045-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(96)00045-9); M. S. Jayeola-Omoyeni, Eunice M. Oyetade and J. O. Omoyeni, "Witchcraft in the 20 and 21 Centuries in Nigeria: An Analysis," *European Scientific Journal* 11, no. 28 (2015): 361-373.

² Omosade Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites* (London: Longman, 1979); Maryse Raynal, *Justice traditionelle, justice moderne. Le devin, le juge et le sorcier* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994).

Koto Aye (1989) and *Koto Orun* (1990), produced by Alhaji Yekini Ajileye, exemplify this thematic focus on witchcraft and its influence within African societies. The thematic thrusts of these films emphasize the dominance of metaphysical forces, known among the Yoruba people of Southwest Nigeria as *Agbara Aje* ('The Power of Witches'). These themes were prevalent in early Nigerian films because they depicted the darker aspects of African culture, reflecting societal perceptions during the period under review. Both films suggest that humans are often powerless in the face of supernatural forces and that such forces can only be countered by greater powers through traditional means. This narrative aligns with the belief that virtue and traditional knowledge possess greater strength than vice.

The thematic components of *Koto Aye* and *Koto Orun* are further accentuated by their integration of movement, dance, and music, which connect the narratives to the cultural roots of traditional African dance. While the dance choreography in these films reflects the cultural heritage of the Yoruba people, it is challenging to attribute the dance sequences to any specific geographical region or ethnic group within Nigeria. The lyrical content of the songs used in the films communicates cultural meanings that align with the Yoruba tradition, underscoring their cultural background and affinities.

The dance choreography, accompanied by singing, serves as a cultural embellishment within the films, particularly in the scenes depicting witch covens. These sequences signify unity and power, enhancing the thematic and aesthetic impact of the narratives. Notably, the dance routines in the films exhibit both originality and versatility, showcasing the cultural depth and artistic significance of traditional Yoruba practices. Through their integration of dance and music, these films effectively highlight the interplay between culture and the supernatural, reinforcing their thematic resonance with audiences.

With the emergence of Christian Evangelical films in Nigeria, spearheaded by the Mount Zion Faith Ministry through the vision of Mike and Gloria Bamiloye, the thematic concerns of filmmaking shifted to a new paradigm, emphasising the spiritual essence of

humanity. This era marked a heightened portrayal of the conflict between good and evil forces. The movie, *The Gods Are Dead*, produced in 2000, introduced a significant transformation in Nigerian filmmaking, offering a fresh lens through which African religious realities were explored. This film highlighted the abandonment of traditional religion in favour of Christian ideals, underscoring a form of cultural evolution tied to modern civilization.

The narrative of *The Gods Are Dead* condemns traditional religious practices while glorifying Christian values. It recounts the journey of a divine emissary sent from the city to a remote village steeped in idol worship. Unlike earlier narratives where traditional practices were seen as a means to counter supernatural forces, this film presented Christianity as a superior spiritual solution. The Christian faith, represented through Jesus Christ as the saviour, is depicted as the ultimate force capable of subduing darkness. This thematic focus marked a cultural relocation in Nigerian filmmaking, from traditional narratives to those reflecting Christian spiritual supremacy. The evangelical films of this period—and continuing to day—emphasized a soul-searching message, calling for redemption from traditional religious practices and adherence to Christian doctrine.

However, the choreographic elements in *The Gods Are Dead* did not entirely relocate from their traditional roots. Yoruba traditional dance forms were prominently featured, serving not merely as decorative art but as a reinforcement of Yoruba cultural aesthetics. Dance in this context was used both for entertainment and as a reassertion of cultural identity within traditional worship settings. Ritualistic movements, such as those accompanying offerings to the gods, reflect the cultural heritage of the time, even though these practices are considered outdated or unacceptable in contemporary society. This evolution symbolises a relocation to what is perceived as a more ‘rational’ or ‘saner’ cultural framework.

The thematic and cultural transitions evident in Nigerian films between the 1980s and 2015, exemplified by *The Land of Fury*, demonstrate a significant shift not only in narrative content but also in the aesthetic dimensions of performative elements. This film captures the societal realities of insecurity, particularly the rise of

terrorism and kidnapping in northern Nigeria, with the emergence of groups such as Boko Haram leading to widespread violence. *The Land of Fury* portrays the harrowing experience of students kidnapped during an excursion, with their release contingent upon ransom payments. This narrative serves as both a reflection of the socio-political turmoil of the period and a reaffirmation of religious faith as a means of survival in a world fraught with conflict.

Unlike earlier evangelical films that focused primarily on preaching the gospel, *The Land of Fury* integrates contemporary issues into its religious themes, offering a modern take on Christian resilience. This thematic evolution reflects a transition to a postmodern era in Nigerian cinema, where traditional narratives are interwoven with present-day realities, enhancing their cultural and spiritual relevance.

Lionheart, produced by Chinny Onwugbenu and directed by Genevieve Nnaji, marks a significant milestone in Nigerian cinema as Genevieve's directorial debut. The film delves into the dynamics of power play and the repositioning of women in Nigerian society, challenging entrenched stereotypes about femininity. Focusing on the character 'Adaeze Obiagu' (portrayed by Genevieve Nnaji), the daughter of Chief Ernest Obiagu, a business magnate, the thematic essence of the film highlights the cultural and societal shifts towards new realities of gender equality and the redefinition of women's roles in Nigeria.

In contemporary Nigerian and African society, efforts to redefine perceptions of women as 'weaker vessels' have gained momentum. Historically, while African women have played pivotal roles within families and communities, their contributions have often been deemed complementary, relegating them to secondary positions. The film *Lionheart* not only critiques this outdated orientation but also presents a strong case for acknowledging women's agency and achievements in professional and societal spheres. The thematic thrust of the film underscores that women should not merely be granted a token position but recognised for their substantial contributions, particularly in leadership and the workplace, irrespective of gender biases.

The film's choreography and movement reflect its modern setting, seamlessly integrating traditional and contemporary forms. Two distinct categories of dance are evident in the movie. The first is the traditional Artilogue dance of Southeast Nigeria, performed as entertainment during Chief Ernest Obiagu's retirement celebration. The second is the freestyle, individualistic movements of the party's guests, indicative of modern celebratory styles. These dance forms, paired with contemporary Igbo music, symbolise the fusion of tradition and modernity, aligning with the film's broader aesthetic and cultural context.

In contrast, *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free*, a modern classic produced in 2019 by Charles Okpaleke and directed by Ramsey Nouah, further exemplifies the cultural relocation towards a post-modern sensibility. Dance and choreography are key elements of this transition, serving as both cultural signifiers and reflections of contemporary Nigerian urban life. In the movie, clubbing and dance are portrayed as integral aspects of Nigerian society, with young men and women frequenting nightclubs and pubs to relax after work. These social activities, depicted through vibrant dance sequences, encapsulate the modern Nigerian penchant for entertainment and merry-making while also setting the stage for exploring deeper societal issues.

The film's narrative interweaves themes of familial bonds, blood covenants, corruption, love, betrayal, and, most prominently, ritual killings. This latter theme addresses a grave reality within Nigerian and broader African societies. Historically, human sacrifices were practised as acts of communal significance, often tied to traditional religious rituals. In the modern context, however, such acts are driven by personal greed, particularly the pursuit of wealth through money rituals. The film captures this disturbing trend, portraying young Nigerians who resort to occult practices to achieve material success, often at the expense of their humanity. Through its thematic depth and cinematic portrayal, *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free* serves as both a mirror and critique of contemporary societal issues, effectively translating the realities of Nigeria's urban and rural dynamics into a compelling filmic narrative.

The Role of Music in Nigerian Cinema

Redner insightfully observed that while movies are primarily visual, sound—including music—remains an essential yet often overlooked component of film culture.³ The phrase, “We go to see a movie; we don’t go to hear one,” encapsulates the general perception of film as a predominantly visual medium. However, even in silent films, music has been integral from the beginning, serving as an emotional guide, narrative enhancer, and bridge to fill in psychological and emotional gaps in storytelling.

Music’s power in cinema lies in its ability to elevate the audience’s emotional and intellectual engagement, as well as its capacity to salvage scenes that may otherwise fall flat. Scientific studies support this notion, as Hevner revealed attempts to decode the specific features of music that communicate emotions.⁴ Gabriellsson and Lindström later identified musical elements like mode, tempo, dynamics, articulation, timbre, and phrasing as critical in evoking emotional responses.⁵ For example, happiness is often conveyed through faster tempos, major modes, and higher pitch ranges, while sadness is expressed using slower tempos, minor modes, and lower pitch ranges.⁶

Musical Elements and Emotional Expression

Eerola emphasised that music can convey emotions effectively when key elements such as timbre—a critical feature also studied in emotional speech expression are utilized.⁷ The analysis of

³ G. Redner, *Deleuze and Film Music Building. A Methodological Bridge between Film Theory and Music* (London: ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, 2011).

⁴ K. Hevner, “Experimental Studies of the Elements of Expression in Music,” *The American Journal of Psychology* 48, no. 2 (1936): 246-268.

⁵ A. Gabriellsson and E. Lindström, “The influence of Musical Structure on Emotional Expression,” in *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research and Applications*, ed. P. N. Juslin and J. A. Sloboda (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 223-248.

⁶ L. Wedin, “A Multidimensional Study of Perceptual-emotional Qualities in Music,” *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 13, no. 4 (1972): 241-257.

⁷ T. Eerola, “Are the Emotions Expressed in Music Genre-specific? An Audio-based Evaluation of Datasets Spanning Classical, Film, Pop and Mixed Genres,” *Journal of New Music Research* 40, no. 4 (2011): 349-366; DOI: 10.1080/09298215.2011.602195. Also see, R. Banse, and K. R. Scherer, “Acoustic Profiles in Vocal Emotion Expression,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 70, no. 3 (1996): 614-636; P. N. Juslin and P. Laukka, “Communication of Emotions in Vocal Expression and Music Performance: Different Channels, Same Code?” *Psychological Bulletin* 129, no. 5 (2003): 770-814.

Nigerian films revealed genre-specific musical characteristics that align with distinct thematic concerns. Although genre remains a broad label used to organize musical content, this study acknowledges the unique musical fingerprints of each film genre.

In the early films such as *Koto Aye* and *Koto Orun*, traditional Yoruba music, featuring instruments like talking drums and bata, created an atmosphere steeped in metaphysical and cultural narratives. The rhythmic and tonal qualities underscored themes of witchcraft, spirituality, and communal cohesion. These soundtracks not only enhanced the visual elements but also grounded the stories in their cultural contexts. With evangelical films such as *The Gods Are Dead*, music shifted focus to Christian hymns and gospel sounds, aligning with the spiritual themes of salvation and the triumph of good over evil. The music served as both a narrative and emotional anchor, reflecting the relocation of cultural identity from traditional to Christian values.

In contrast, *Lionheart* and *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free* employed a blend of contemporary Afrobeat and modern orchestration. These soundtracks reflected the urbanization of Nigerian society and the thematic concerns of gender equity, familial bonds, and the moral dilemmas of the modern age. For instance, *Lionheart* utilized Igbo traditional music during ceremonial scenes, juxtaposed with contemporary melodies in professional and urban settings, signifying the duality of tradition and modernity.

Unsurprisingly, most respondents in this study emphasised the profound emotional impact of film music. A word cloud representation of their feedback highlighted terms such as ‘engagement,’ ‘emotion,’ ‘identity,’ ‘authenticity,’ and ‘narrative cohesion.’ As Austin et al. note, “Film music carries a significant impact on the audience while also interpreting the original intent and style of the directors.”⁸ Music profoundly shapes the viewer’s experience, influencing perceptions of narrative and emotional tone. Among other roles, music often signals forthcoming actions, serves as a signature tune (a melody linked to a particular performer or

⁸ A. Austin, E. Moore, U. Gupta and P. Chordia, “Characterization of Movie Genre Based on Music Ccore,” *2010 IEEE International Conference on Acoustics, Speech and Signal Processing* (Dallas, TX: 2010), 421-424.

program, typically played at the beginning or end of a broadcast), and plays a key part in soundtracks, which encompass the full range of a film's musical composition.

These findings underscore that music in Nigerian films goes beyond mere aesthetic value, serving as a narrative and cultural bridge that enhances the thematic depth and delivery of the films. Redner's⁹ reflections on Eisenstein's analysis provide further insights, suggesting that film music should be understood not just through traditional theoretical lenses but as part of an intricate dialogue with visual and kinetic elements.

This perspective underscores the importance of analyzing music scores alongside cinematic elements to fully appreciate their contribution to storytelling in film. It can be argued that, in the enjoyment and experience of films, music plays an essential and irreplaceable role in shaping the narrative and emotional depth. Film music varies across genres to elicit specific emotional responses from viewers, underscoring the centrality of emotions in the study of music in cinema. Gorbman observes that "music in film acts as a signifier of emotions while providing referential and narrative cues."¹⁰ Rodman (2017) further asserts that these cues may be perceived either subtly or overtly, contributing to the depth and complexity of the cinematic experience.¹¹

The practices of music and dance in Nigerian films, as explored in the context of this study, are deeply intertwined with the global flow of media, both preserving and transforming Nigerian cultural expressions. The interaction between these practices and global media flows is discussed in the next section.

Evolution of Nigerian Films

This section explores the dynamic interplay between globalisation, cultural hybridisation, and the evolution of Nigerian cinema, with a particular focus on the role of music and dance. As Nigerian

⁹ Redner, *Film Music Building*.

¹⁰ C. Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

¹¹ R. Rodman, "The Popular Song as Leitmotif in 1990s Film," in *Changing Tunes: The Use of Pre-existing Music in Film*, ed. Phil Powrie (London: Routledge, 2017).

films, especially those within Nollywood, increasingly interact with global media flows, they reflect a fusion of traditional cultural practices and contemporary global influences. Music and dance, as integral components of these films, serve not only to preserve indigenous traditions but also to adapt and resonate with wider international audiences. By examining how Nigerian filmmakers blend local rhythms, dance forms, and storytelling techniques with global trends, this section highlights how music and dance act as both a cultural bridge and a transformative force in the ongoing evolution of Nigerian film. Five key areas were identified in this study.

Globalisation and Cultural Hybridisation

The Nigerian film industry, particularly Nollywood, is part of the broader global media landscape, which has facilitated the exchange of cultural forms and practices. As Nigerian films reach international audiences, they often incorporate elements of global media trends, technology, and storytelling methods. However, these films also retain a strong connection to local traditions, particularly in the use of music and dance, which serves as a medium for cultural expression. This creates a hybridization effect, where global influences shape the presentation of traditional Nigerian music and dance, while these practices maintain a distinct cultural identity. For example, the integration of indigenous rhythms with modern cinematic techniques or the inclusion of traditional African instruments in film soundtracks allows Nigerian culture to be both preserved and transformed in response to global media flows.

Cultural Preservation through Film Music and Dance

Nigerian film music and dance play a crucial role in the preservation of cultural heritage. By incorporating traditional music forms, rhythms, and dance movements, filmmakers provide a platform for showcasing indigenous cultural expressions to both local and global audiences. Films such as *Koto Aye* (1989) and *Koto Orun* (1990) prominently feature traditional music and rituals, which serve not only as entertainment but also as a form of cultural documentation. Through these films, older generations are reminded of their heritage, and younger generations are exposed to cultural practices they may not experience firsthand. This preservation is

especially significant in the context of rapid societal change, where modernity and globalization sometimes threaten to overshadow indigenous traditions.

Transformation and Adaptation to Global Contexts

While Nigerian films are rooted in local cultural practices, they also adapt to and interact with the global media landscape. Music and dance in films are not only reflections of Nigerian culture but also dynamic expressions that evolve to engage with broader, often global, themes. This transformation occurs through the blending of traditional music with Western genres, the incorporation of global storytelling techniques, and the use of digital technologies. For example, in films like *Lionheart* (2018), contemporary Nigerian music and popular culture are woven into the storyline, creating a more universal appeal while maintaining a strong sense of Nigerian identity. In this way, Nigerian films contribute to the globalization of African culture, presenting African stories and traditions in a way that resonates with international audiences, especially as the diaspora becomes more visible in global media.

Negotiating Cultural Identity

As Nigerian films navigate the global flow of media, they often address themes of cultural identity, the tension between tradition and modernity, and the negotiation of Nigerian identity in a globalized world. Music and dance play a central role in these thematic explorations, serving as symbolic tools for the filmmakers to communicate issues of cultural continuity and change. In films such as *The Gods Are Dead* (2000) and *The Land of Fury* (2015), music and dance are not just artistic choices but cultural statements that reflect the complexities of Nigerian identity, spirituality, and social issues. These films use music to interrogate the tensions between traditional African values and the encroaching influence of global culture, creating a space for critical reflection on the preservation of Nigerian cultural expressions in a rapidly changing world.

Media Technologies in Cultural Transformation

The advent of new media technologies has significantly impacted the way music and dance are used in Nigerian films. The global

digital media landscape allows for the widespread dissemination of Nigerian films, which can now be accessed by a global audience through platforms like Netflix, YouTube, and other streaming services. This access contributes to the transformation of Nigerian cultural expressions by exposing them to a diverse range of influences. Filmmakers can now draw inspiration from global music trends, cinematic styles, and cultural narratives while still staying rooted in their traditions. This transformation is not necessarily a loss of cultural identity but rather an adaptation that allows Nigerian culture to resonate with a broader audience while maintaining its uniqueness.

Cultural Exchange and Influence

The global flow of media also facilitates cultural exchange, where Nigerian filmmakers, musicians, and dancers can share their work with the world and simultaneously draw inspiration from global media. For example, the incorporation of African rhythms into global pop music or the use of African dance styles in Western films represents a two-way exchange of cultural practices. Nigerian filmmakers, by incorporating global music trends and dance moves into their films, create a space for African culture to influence and be influenced by the global media landscape. This interaction leads to a dynamic process of cultural transformation, where Nigerian cultural expressions evolve while still retaining their roots.

Conclusion

The selected films substantiate the idea that the Nigerian film industry serves as both a reflection and translation of cultural realities, capturing the transitions between generations through its cinematic compositions. As highlighted in the discussions, music, particularly signature tunes and soundtracks, plays a significant role in conveying emotional and cultural nuances, while also connecting contemporary worldviews. The identification of cultural variables such as ‘secularity’ and ‘spirituality’ further underscores the importance of music and dance in representing these shifting values. From the 1980s to 2020, the films analyzed in this study reveal how different filmmakers have explored the thematic currents of their time, using dance and movement to document and express the

cultural practices of their respective eras. Through this, the study shows that the movement between cultures, assimilation, and transformation may be subtle, but these relocations become more apparent when examined through the lens of cultural expressions in film.

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