CLA #8

SOUTH-SOUTH COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMME

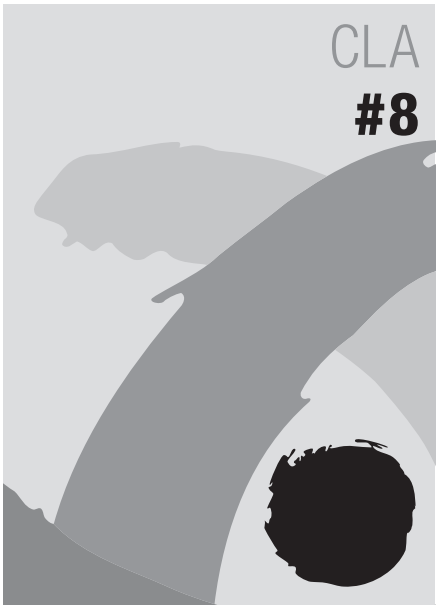
OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES

Nigerian Video Films as Counter-Hegemonic? Some Exploratory Ideas on Video Films in the Context of African Cinema

Gairoonisa Paleker

APISA
CLACSO
CODESRIA

CLACSO
Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales - Conselho Latino-americano de Ciências Sociais
Av. Callao 875 | piso 5º "J" [recepción] | C1023AAB | Buenos Aires | Argentina
Tel [54 11] 4811 6588 | Fax [54 11] 4812 8459
e-mail <clacso@clacso.edu.ar> | web <www.clacso.org>



Nigerian Video Films as Counter-Hegemonic? Some Exploratory Ideas on Video Films in the Context of African Cinema

Gairoonisa Paleker

This paper was originally presented to the Summer Institute on "International Hegemony and the South: A Tricontinental Perspective", Havana, Cuba, 2005. The event was organized by "The Africa, Asia and Latin America Scholarly Collaborative Program", supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

International hegemony and the south
ISBN: 978-987-1183-88-3

Patrocinado por
Asdi
Agencia Sueca de Desarrollo Internacional

Nigerian video films, which constitute an industry that has become known as Nollywood, have taken not only Nigeria, but the African continent and the world by storm. Their phenomenal success and reach are remarkable given the context of origin and the poor technical and narrative qualities of the videos. The aim of this paper is not to discuss the reasons for this success, but rather to raise some ideas regarding the counter-hegemonic possibilities of video films as a preliminary for further research and debate.

The paucity of scholarly work on Nigerian video films is indicative of the rapid pace at which this industry has grown and continues to expand. The most comprehensive work is a collection of essays ranging in discussion from video antecedents in Yoruba popular theater, culture and art in Hausa video films to ethnicity, class and gender. (Haynes, 2000). Other significant contributions include those by Ukadike (2003), Lawuyi (1997), Adejunmobi (2002) and Larkin (2004). Haynes and Onokome (2000) and Larkin (2004) in particular touch on aspects of the subversive tendencies and potentialities of video films but provide little focused discussion on the precise manner in which video films offer a counter-hegemonic potential.

Hegemony as understood in Gramscian terms implies not only dominance (political, economic, cultural) of one social class over another, but importantly also, the potential for struggle and conflict. This potential for struggle is embedded in the idea that hegemony operates on the basis of consent by the dominated class. A characteristic of hegemony is that dominant ideologies are packaged as being natural or 'common sense' and therefore unquestionably right. The result of this is consensus and consent. But this consent has to be negotiated at all times because disparities in conditions of material existence between the dominant and dominated classes are too transparent for long term silence and acquiescence, hence the need to negotiate consent.

This paper suggests some ideas about the counter-hegemonic potential of Nigerian video films. In suggesting this counter-hegemonic potential, the paper is not only arguing for a local context but also for a more global context in which cinematic production and consumption is determined by the monopolistic cinemas of both the West and East.

African Cinema

Political independence for large parts of Africa did not entail either economic or cultural independence with regard to film production. Deterrents to the establishment of a functional and viable film industry in large parts of Africa came in the form of lack of finances, inadequately trained technicians, foreign control of production facilities, exhibition and distribution and the deployment of cinematic language and techniques that were Euro-centric and thus largely alien to local African audiences.

The question of an authentic African cinema has been a problematic one since the earliest days of *independent* cinema in Africa. African filmmakers and theorists such as Med Hondo, Sembene Ousmane, Souleymane Cisse, Djibril Diop Mambety, etc have often condemned the influence of the western world in the development of a genuine African cinema. This involvement has been at a number of levels; technical, financial, market-related and, most importantly for these filmmakers, at the level of cinematic language and aesthetics, as it impacts on cultural forms. One of the early concerns of filmmakers such as Sembene was the issue of filmmakers being trained and educated in metropolitan centers such as Paris and London, in languages and cinematic traditions which alienated them from indigenous languages and cultural and traditional practices. And the expressed aims of many of these filmmakers was to produce films which could be relevant to local audiences, addressing issues of both local and national significance in post-independence Africa.

But as Murphy (2000) argues, questions of what is authentically African (and authentically western also) are fraught with problems. The debate around authenticity, he argues, has to do with questions of "cultural identity and critical subjectivity" (Murphy, 2000). But cultural identities on the continent are many and varied and representations of these in film present not one unified African world view but a multiplicity of world views. The concern of African filmmakers as expressed at the second FEPACI meeting in Algiers in 1975 centered on the question of Africans filming Africa from an African perspective and eschewing cinematic codes of commercial, western cinema. The greatest challenge for filmmakers in Africa, however, has been the question of mass support. While most of these early filmmakers have consciously geared their conceptions of an African cinema as well as their films to an African mass audience, African audiences have not responded in like measure. African cinema has therefore never been a product of the African people, not in the same way as Nigerian video films are very expressly of the Nigerian masses.

Defining African cinema has been a preoccupation not only of African filmmakers, theorists and critics, but significantly also, a task that has been undertaken by western theorists and critics. Historically, western conceptions of African cinema have centered on the didactic messages contained in early post-independence films. African film is viewed as African because it reflects on African conditions following independence. This conception of African cinema is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, it places early African cinema on a continuum with colonial film, especially in Anglophone Africa[1]. Secondly, as argued by Mhando, it has focused attention on content rather than form, thus negating any possibility for the development of auteurism along the lines of development in European and, to a lesser extent, Hollywood cinema (Mahndo, 2005). Thirdly, it fails to recognize the validity of an African aesthetics and form of cinematic expression.

Conceptions of African cinema are problematic for another reason -the totalizing nature of the label itself. Defining and categorizing all cinematic productions from Africa as examples of African cinema ignores the particularities of national, cultural and linguistic significance. It renders invisible the significant differences in worldviews, social formations and cultural flows represented in films from different regions of Africa, thus perpetuating the stereotype of Africa as one landmass and Africans as one people without any distinguishing particularities.

The debate on aesthetics, content, form and style continues to fuel contemporary African cinema, which Mbye Cham (2002) believes is beginning to

1 Colonial film policy towards Africans was expressly framed for a didactic purpose. See for example: Rosaleen Smyth (1979) and David Kerr (1993).

display a greater "diversality". In other words, some of the contemporary African films exhibit a tendency towards greater variety of stories, styles, techniques and themes. "Some filmmakers are pushed toward stories presumed to be universal either in content, reference, inference or implication, while others opt for the local and the particular" (Cham, 2002:3). Furthermore, there is a greater degree of cooperation and collaboration between filmmakers across the continent which could herald the beginning of African national film industries with the potential to coalesce into a continent-wide industry, no longer entirely dependent on foreign funding.

How valid is this distinction between diversality and universality in cinematic content, code and style, given the global nature of the contemporary world? The philosophy of a global village, argues Mhando, is a western one brought about by military and political conquest and maintained now through communication and technological influence (Mahndo, 2005:4). Within this globalized condition, there is very little that remains specific and local, or even unique to any culture and society.

If the economy, markets and finance capital are the engine of globalization, then according to Fredric Jameson, postmodernism is the cultural logic of this form of "late capitalism" and is thus the "final and complete incorporation of culture into the commodity system." According to Homer, Jameson understood postmodernism as a purer form of capitalism which intensified the logic and commodification of prior forms of capitalism. It marks the final colonization of the "last enclaves of resistance to commodification: the Third World, the Unconscious and the aesthetics" (Homer, 2005).

Postmodernism as a periodizing concept signals the shift from what Lyotard has identified as *grand universalizing narratives* to a focus on the more parochial and local, creating space for Cham's *diversality*. But the paradox of postmodernism, according to Stuart Hall, is that the global now locates itself at the local and, in doing so, takes the local to the global while simultaneously fostering an intensification of ethnic and national identities. In the search for more global markets, multinational and finance capital packages itself by appropriating the identities and cultural mores of the specific society or country which it wants to penetrate. This in turn leads to combative measures from specific national companies and societies which emphasize local and regional identities. But these identities do not remain regional as they become packaged to be sold on the world market. It is within this context of global finance and the universalizing of cultural diversity that one has to locate the phenomenon of Nigerian video films in order to understand its counter-hegemonic possibilities, if any.

Ukadike (2003) argues strongly for an understanding of Nigerian (and Ghanaian) video films as comprising a *real first cinema* which can compete with the "First Cinema" of the western world on its own terms. He cites a number of reasons, the most important being that video films have been successful in cultivating a domestic and diasporic African audience which has enabled and assured its economic viability.

The SAP and Conditions of Crisis

This economic viability has come about despite, or if one accepts Ukadike's argument, because of the economic failure of measures such as the International Monetary Funds (IMF) imposition of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which sought to *regenerate* the economies of countries such as Ghana and Nigeria. Ukadike believes that with the colossal devaluation of the Ghanaian cedis and the Nigerian naira, filmmakers in these countries were denied access to hard currency with which to purchase film equipment, raw filmstock, etcetera. And that given these exigencies, video film, as a cheaper alternative, was a natural outlet for creative frustrations. Ukadike is correct to a certain point

in that the SAP seems to have laid the basis for the emergence of the video film. But his argument can be taken further in that it was not only established filmmakers who turned to video as a result of the devalued naira, but that the conditions introduced by the SAP were conducive to the formation of a parallel, non-official economy based on private ownership. Video films are a staple of this parallel economy and have been the means for the entrepreneurial enterprises of small and medium businesses and individuals who would otherwise not have had access to ownership of any forms of media.

The oil boom of the Seventies pushed Nigeria into the world capitalist oil economy, leading to concomitant changes in the domestic economy and society. Oil production in Nigeria began in the early Sixties and by 1970 it was one of the major oil producers in the world. In 1971, the Nigerian National Oil Corporation was formed within the broader national project of indigenization of the Nigerian economy and industry (Beveridge, 1999:319). Between1972-1990, the Nigerian government embarked on a process of indigenization in an effort to take control of the economy and control private foreign investment. This process enabled the compulsory transfer in ownership of certain industries and economic practices from private foreign ownership to a mixed state and private indigenous ownership. The aim of indigenization was not to eliminate foreign investment but to limit it on the one hand, and on the other to increase the participation of Nigerians in the economy.

Section Four of the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree (NEPD), 1972 listed advertising, media, gambling and retailing, among other economic activities as wholly for Nigerians. In addition to these activities, the NEPD of 1977 made further additions such as film distribution, newspapers, radio and television as economic activities wholly reserved for Nigerians (Beveridge, 1999:309-314). Indigenization, however, takes place within a political context of a military regime following two coup attempts and a civil war. The impact of this political instability was that indigenization was not successful in transforming the economic landscape of Nigeria. Economic activity and successful transfer of ownership did not go much beyond the Nigerian elites and associates of political and military leaders.

This, coupled with the depression of oil prices in the world market in the Eigthies, saw a complete reversal of the indigenization process as more foreign investment was sought to offset this recession. Talks with the IMF in early 1983 failed due to a lack of consensus on key conditions such as the devaluation of the naira, trade liberalization and the removal of subsidies on fuel and other commodities (Lewis, 2005:82). A comprehensive Structural Adjustment Programme was introduced in Nigeria in 1986, a year after General Ibrahim Babangida's assumption of power in August 1985. The SAP incorporated the key policies of the World Bank and IMF and resulted in a 66% devaluation of the naira (Lewis, 2005:82). Following an agreement with the World Bank in 1989, many activities formerly reserved for Nigerians were opened up to foreign investment and ownership. Thus, while formal SAP ended in mid-1988, the Nigerian government continued its commitment to key policies.

The devaluation of the naira as a direct consequence of the SAP impacted on the film industry in a number of ways. The opening up of the market to global finance capital and increasing levels of privatization led to entrepreneurs buying up movie houses and converting these into warehouses, churches or other places of business, thus shrinking exhibition opportunities not only for local but also for foreign films. At a more direct level, the devalued naira was not a strong enough currency with which to purchase equipment such as cameras, raw film stock, hire huge crews or budget for lavish productions.

Filmmakers in other parts of Africa faced with similar conditions began to look for alternatives. One redress action was the reinvigoration of the Panafrican Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI) into a more active body and lobby for

African cinema. Other initiatives included the establishment of the Union des Createurs et Entrepreneurs Culturels de l'Afrique (UCECAO), events such as the Southern African Film Festival (Zimbabwe), and the Southern African Film and Television Market (Sithengi, in South Africa) (Cham, 2002:2). These initiatives have been aimed at increasing inter-continental collaboration and cooperation between filmmakers, exhibitors and distributors and have been made possible due to the political changes in various parts of Africa. The demise of apartheid in South Africa and the end of Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and the civil war in Angola have contributed to greater flows and exchanges on the continent.

Nigerian filmmakers and entrepreneurs have, however, followed a different trajectory and the prohibitive costs on conventional filmmaking have resulted in filmmakers, businessmen and entrepreneurs turning to an alternative and cheaper technology: video films.

Nollywood

Nollywood, as this booming development in Nigerian cinema has come to be identified, is worth approximately $45 million annually. Budgets for video production can be as little as $4,000 and production time can be between ten days and two weeks. A successful title can sell over 100 thousand copies, thus reaping a profit of well over 1000%. Videos and VCD discs can sell for between 300 and 400 naira and there are a large proportion of stalls devoted to the sale of this commodity[2]. That video films are big business in Nigeria is evident from Lawuyi's study of video marketing in Ogbomoso, a town in Kwara State, Nigeria. Of the young students interviewed about future employment plans, 12% said that they wished to follow trade in radio and television repair which included a side business of renting and selling video films (Lawuyi, 1997:480). Fifteen per cent said they wished to further their education in the university, while 25% said they wished to follow careers in fashion design, and 40% wished to follow trade in textiles.

The ambition of the 12% interested in the television and video business was to own a camera and eventually make movies. These movies would be both fictionalized, filmed dramas as well as filmed social and cultural events. In this instance, video production goes beyond any notions of cinema and assumes a more popular usage as recorders of significant social and cultural events such as weddings, funerals, naming ceremonies, etc (Barber, 1997: 359). This form of popular usage of the video film is emblematic of what Lawuyi refers to as the 'big man' syndrome, where the bigger and wealthier the patron of the social or cultural event, the greater the number of video camera men filming the event (Lawuyi, 1997:480-481). The number of cameras present may also depend on the number of wives the *big man* has, as each wife would want the ceremony recorded from her perspective with greater screen time to her relatives and friends.

Lawuyi argues that video production and significantly ownership of video cameras contains the potential for social and political mobility, for *big-manism* especially for those young Nigerians that come from poor backgrounds. The tension in Nigerian youth, argues Lawuyi, is between achieving big-manism and achieving social and political transformation. Nigerian students and youth have been at the forefront of demonstrations in key moments since independence in 1960[3]. Videos, in both the consumption and production process, are seen as one aspect of political conscientization.

2 From: African and Caribbean Film Festival site.

3 See Beveridge and Lewis for discussion of student protests against the SAP.

At another and more important level, video technology is a tool for political and economic empowerment at both the national and international levels. Larkin (2000) argues that the rise of a video culture in Nigeria has been facilitated by Nigeria's integration into the world market as a result of the oil boom. This has resulted in Nigeria's inclusion in the global movement of finance capital, technologies, people and the cross-flows of cultural and other ideas and practices. And following IMF and World Bank dictates, it has also resulted in a highly privatized public sphere, especially as regards the ownership of media. According to Larkin, this has resulted in a *radically new public sphere of media* which is defined by the privatization and diversification of ownership and access to media (Larkin, 2000:218). In this new public sphere, the state begins to play a minimal role in both the ownership and consequently in the policy, content and ideological decisions of the mass media such as radio, television and film.

Significantly also, this privatization of media has created new patterns of production and consumption best exemplified by the video film phenomenon. For Larkin at least, "[….] the social importance of the electronic media (including video film), the publics they create, the social worlds they make meaningful to Nigerian audiences, the spaces of political and religious communication they foster, are being formed in arenas outside state intervention" (Larkin, 2000:211). This highly privatized and decentralized ownership of small media such as video film lends itself to expressions of opposition to hegemonic control, in other words, video films contain the potential for counter-hegemonic expressions. This potential, however, is denied by African filmmakers, theorists and political activists who criticize video films for pandering to and promoting mass consumerism and generally failing in the task of political conscientization.

Haynes (2000) identifies Nigerian video films as part of the popular arts or popular culture. As a heuristic tool, this identification of Nigerian video films as a form of popular culture or the popular arts facilitates analysis which, he argues, has been disconnected from classical African film theory and criticism. The converse of this of course is that African film has not been considered a popular art primarily due to its failure to capture the African mass market. Some of the inhibiting factors (which limit the access of African masses to both the production and consumption processes) are the same historical factors decried by people like Sembene. These include external funding and distribution monopolies and technical and aesthetic knowledge not readily available to the African masses.

For Haynes, identifying video films as a popular art form allows for an interdisciplinary approach to their study and analysis, bringing together social history, cultural studies, anthropology and literary criticism. African popular arts, they argue, is a broad category of cultural forms that occupy the interstices between the traditional and the *modern-elite*. Culturally syncretic, they function as "brokers between the rural-traditional and the wider world from which modernity has been imported" (Haynes, 2000:13).

Okome (2001) argues that video films in Africa can be defined as occupying an indeterminate place between television and cinema. Video films for him are an example of Africa's involvement in a "dubious modernity". It is a "pedestrian art" carried out by small entrepreneurial businessmen (Okome, 2001). Okome's definitions imply a negative position for video films and are thus consonant with much of the criticism emanating from African cinema practitioners who deride video films for their lack of artistic, technical and narrative merit. While some of these views and criticisms may in themselves have merit, it is undeniable that the reach and success of Nigerian video films commands a revaluation on the lines suggested by Haynes.

The versatility in the use of video technology has contributed to the collapse of any distinctions between high and low art. Historically, African cinema has been conceived, distributed and exhibited as *art* films and thus limited to

the international festival circuit, *art-house* movie patrons and very few African audiences in Africa. This has been due to a number of factors, some of which such as funding, content, and language and the conception of film with a didactic purpose have been discussed earlier. This 'art-house' conception has removed much of African cinema from the marketplace.

In contrast, Nigerian video films are of the marketplace and for the marketplace. The video film industry is intended for and financed (through sales) by a local and diasporic Nigerian mass market. Nigerian filmmakers, according to filmmaker Chief Eddie Ugbomha, are "free agents" (Ukadike, 2005). They are independent of both big financiers as well as the state, and thus have the creative license to raise any issue that will sell on the marketplace. Ugbomah believes that film is important because of its enormous impact on society, especially given the huge and varied changes affecting societies in contemporary times. He sees himself as a social commentator as his films "deal with current events and are a statement about societal issues" (Ukadike, 2005).

It is this social relevance which has contributed in large measure to the enormous appeal these video productions have among Nigerians. McCall (2005) identifies it as a "largely grassroots phenomenon", a "folk cinema" which is entirely distinct from any other cinematic productions either of African or foreign origin. With the Yoruba domination of video production, it would not be wrong to think of these video films as derivatives of Yoruba popular theater. According to Ugbomah, "the Yoruba have been able to lift the stage onto celluloid" (Ukadike, 2005:156).

This mass, popular appeal of Nigerian video films persists despite the low quality of the product. Production values, the speed with which the films are produced and the technology (video technology cannot compare by any means to celluloid in terms of image quality) are factors in the low quality of the productions. Their popular success, therefore, has to be the result of something other than production quality. Perhaps the answer lies in the thematic and narrative content of the films or the stars that have emerged, or the generic conventions that video films employ, or any number of combinations of these and other factors. The biggest consumers of Nigerian video films are housewives who are wealthy enough to own either a video or DVD player. The poorer of the society watch these films in "video theaters, originally little more than a spare room in someone's house" with video projection facilities[4].

The widespread and successful reach of Nigerian video films is largely due to media piracy which, Larkin argues, is part of the "organizational architecture of globalization", providing an infrastructure which permits media goods to circulate (Larkin, 2004:289). For Larkin, video films would not exist without what he calls the infrastructure of piracy. Piracy has facilitated the existence and ensured the reach of video films in two distinct ways. Firstly, "piracy operates as a corruption of the communication infrastructure", thus allowing Nigerians with no access to the formal economy to create and operate a non-formal, parallel economy with global links to parallel economies in places such as Singapore and Dubai (Larkin, 2004:295). This has led to a proliferation of media products such as films, music and religious sermons (local and international) which can be duplicated on video and audio cassettes and distributed through formal channels, such as established outlets, as well as informal channels, such as travelling salesmen who take these products to much of rural Africa.

Nigeria, Larkin argues, is the largest market for pirate goods in Africa, with estimates suggesting that up to 70% of the current gross domestic product (GDP) is being derived from this non-formal economy. But rather than disempowering

4 African and Caribbean Film Festival site.

the state, this has instead reconfigured not only the state as he suggests, but also traditional power structures at both the local and global levels. The decentralized ownership of media (as evidenced in video production) is taken a step further within this shadow economy with the scale of distribution that piracy is able to stimulate. If modern technology was part of the colonial mission to civilize, then the introduction of video technology in post-colonial Nigeria especially, has enabled Nigerians to become dominant media practitioners at a global level.

Secondly, piracy has stimulated and sustained the video boom at the level of the technical and aesthetic quality of films. Piracy of both western and Indian films in large numbers on video machines that degenerate the image and sound quality of the film has in a sense paved the way for low technical and aesthetic value in even non-pirated media. Larkin's argument is that "piracy standardized a particular quality of production" which is borne out by the seeming agreement of Nigerian producers and distributors that Nigerian audiences would not necessarily pay higher prices for better sound and image quality (Larkin, 2004:303).

This is largely due to a *culture of breakdown and repair* where technology as a culture is experienced in very distinct ways in Nigeria. Larkin's contention that technology (in the form of televisions, VCRs, telephones and even energy supplies) often comes to a grinding halt due to breakdown is borne out by Lawuyi's study discussed earlier, where the television and video repair business was the occupation of choice for at least twelve percent of youth surveyed. As a consequence of the devalued naira and economic disarray, Nigeria is the recipient of second-hand, used technology originating from Europe. Breakdowns, expiration of parts, and consequent innovations in repairs and parts all contribute to a cycle of breakdown and repair ultimately creating a culture of technology that is informed by the limits and utility of technology itself. As Larkin argues, this is a condition of both poverty and innovation (Larkin, 2004:305-306).

This innovation at the level of technology has however not replicated itself at the narrative level of the video films that are produced. Nigerian video films are a broad category that includes Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, pidgin and English language films that are largely grounded in the ethnic communities from which they originate. Films in English have the greatest prestige and receive the widest distribution outside Nigeria. Films are in most cases identifiable on the basis of thematic and narrative content. Romance dramas dominate Hausa film production, while melodramas are distinctly Yoruba and Igbo, and English language films are predominantly action packed (Larkin, 1997).

Thematic trends very often pit tradition and modernity in an antagonistic duality of the classic good and bad. Tradition in romance dramas is linked to obedience to family wishes in respect of marriage partners while modernity is evil incarnated in individualism and independence. Linked to this tradition/modernity dichotomy is the rural/urban divide where once again the urban center is representative of the evils of modernity; greed, power, lust.

A strong component of most Nigerian video films is a preoccupation with the occult. Adejunmobi links this occult preoccupation with a quest for wealth. The occult is very often consulted and deployed in the search for wealth, power and/or fame, and though characters may enjoy the fruits of their pursuit for wealth, in many instances they come to a bad end in the film. This, argues Adejunmobi, points to a contradiction characteristic of contemporary Nigerian society; the veneration of wealth and excessive consumption as well as the notion that wealth corrupts and retribution will be dealt to the corrupt (Adejunmobi, 2002).

But whether through the use of occult forces or not, wealth and consumption are a stock feature of most Nigerian videos and not only those in the English language, as Adejunmobi argues. Nigerian video films are manifestly about aspirations, most frequently aspirations for wealth and a lavish lifestyle (big-manism as discussed earlier), but also for love and happiness that finds a

suitable balance between family and community injunctions and a conception of individualism and independence of thought and action.

The progression towards *big-manism*, argues Barber, is a process of self-creation through real and imagined (viewed) displays of wealth and consumption. According to her, Nigerian video dramas conceive the audience as a "horizon of consumption where what is consumed is the spectacle of others' more conspicuous consumption (Barber, 1997:353). *Home* videos in their recording of social and cultural events, are similarly *spectacles of consumption*.

For Haynes and Okome, images of lavish lifestyles and indiscriminate wealth contain two possibilities. These are viewed firstly as expressions of a middle-class vision of itself and secondly, as a "turbulent dream by and for the masses" (Haynes, 2000:79) It is possible that they believe this because the Nigerian society is less rigid in class formation and identity as compared to European societies. This once again appears to be a consequence of the oil boom of the seventies and the economic collapse and widespread poverty of the eighties and nineties. This has created the potential for any Nigerian to aspire to and attain enormous wealth, power and privilege.

Some Concluding Remarks

In this paper I have wanted to argue that Nigerian video films do contain and realize the potential for a counter-hegemonic cinema that is rooted in a very specific society and culture. They are counter-hegemonic, not because they may have broken with western hegemonizing cinematic codes, nor because they display any creative genius in terms of an *authentic* African film aesthetics, but rather because they operate outside the *market*, i.e., the global market dominated by finance capital.

Nigerian video films are an entirely independent entity. They are not financed either by private investors or the government. They are not bought by monopoly capital for the purpose of global distribution and exhibition. But despite this, they are an economically viable product. The industry is sustained by domestic sales. It has a global cinematic reach despite the lack of interest from multinational distribution and exhibition companies. This reach is due to the widely scattered diaspora who take these video films with them and who appear to replicate the local marketing and exhibition conditions that prevail within Nigeria.

Bibliography

Adejunmobi, Moradewun 2002 "English and the Audience of a African Popular Culture: The Case of Nigerian Video Films" in *Cultural Critique*, Nº 50.

Barber, Karin 1997 "Preliminary Notes on Audiences in Africa" in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* (Edinburgh University Press) Nº 67, 3. Accessed: <www.jstor.org>, 17 November 2005.

Beveridge, Fiona C. 1999 "Taking Control of Foreign Investment: A Case Study of Indigenisation in Nigeria" in *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* (London), Nº 40, 2. Accessed: <www.jstor.org>, 17 November 2005.

Cham, Mbye 2002 "African Cinema in the Nineties" in *African Studies Quarterly* (Florida).

Haynes, J & Onookome Okome 2000 "Evolving Popular Media: Nigerian Video Films", in Haynes (ed.) *Nigerian Video Films* (Athens: Ohio University Press).

Homer, Sean "Fredric Jameson and the Limits of Postmodern Theory". Accessed: <www.shef.ac.uk/uni/academic>, 17 November 2005.

Larkin, Brian 2000 "Hausa Dramas and the Rise of Video Culture in Nigeria" in Haynes, Jonathan (ed.) *Nigerian Video Films* (Ohio).

Larkin, Brian 2004 “Degraded Images, Distorted Sounds: Nigerian Video and the Infrastructure of Piracy” in *Public Culture* (New York) Nº 16, 2.

Lawuyi, Olatunde B. 1997 “The Political Economy of Video Marketing in Ogbomoso, Nigeria” im *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* (Edinburgh University Press) Nº 67, 3. Accessed: <www.jstor.org> 17 November 2005.

Lewis, Peter 1996 “From Prebendalism to Predation: The Political Economy of Decline in Nigeria” in *The Journal of Modern African Studies* (Cambridge), 34, 1. Accessed: <www.jstor.org>, 17 November 2005.

McCall, John C, 2004 “Juju and Justice at the Movies: Vigilantes in Nigerian Popular Video” in *African Studies Review* (Amherst), Nº 47, 3, December. Accessed: <www.jstor.org>, 13 November 2005.

Mhando, Martin, “Approaches to African Cinema Study”. Accessed: <www.sensesofcinema.com, 15 November 2005.

Murphy, David 2000 “Africans Filming Africa: Questioning Theories of an Authentic African Cinema” in *Journal of African Cultural Studies* (London) Nº 13, V. 2. Accessed: <www.jstor.org>, 17 November 2005.

Okome, Onokoome 2001 “The Popular Art of African Video Film” in *NYFA Quarterly* (New York). Accessed: <www.nyfa.org/archive>, 22 December 2005.

Ukadike, N. Frank 2003 “Toward an African Cinema: An Interview with Chief Eddie Ugbomah, Nigerian Filmmaker” in Transition, Nº 63, accessed: <www.jstor.org>, 13 November 2005