

From Nollywood to Nollywood: The Cosmopolitan Aura of the New Nigerian Cinema

Alessandro Jedlowski¹

¹University of Naples , Naples, Italy

alessandro.jedlowski@gmail.com

The Nigerian video industry, after experiencing an incredible growth in the first ten/fifteen years of its existence, is today traversing a deep crisis which is radically transforming its face. Within this context, a growing number of young Nigerian directors, mainly based in the diaspora, is contributing in giving birth to what might be called a new wave in Nigerian cinema. Most of the film produced by this new generation of Nigerian directors have an international setting, are the result of transnational co-productions, and focus on issues related to migration.

This paper suggests that the reason behind the popular success of these films is mainly related to the specific “cosmopolitan aura” that young Nigerian directors have tried to establish and whose aim is to captivate both Nigerian and international audiences. As a synthetic overview of the recent Nigerian releases can show, the kind of cosmopolitanism transmitted by these films is related to specific aesthetic, narrative and marketing choices that present elements of both continuity and rupture toward the mainstream production of Nollywood’s golden era.

The main aim of this paper is therefore to describe the main attributes of new releases’ aesthetics, narrative and marketing choices putting them in relations with those that characterized mainstream productions. This comparison will highlight the way cosmopolitanism in Nigerian films has transformed over the years, progressively becoming an explicit aesthetic and marketing strategy.