

## Representing “Tradition,” Confusing “Modernity”

### *Love and Mental Illness in Yoruba (Nigerian) Video Films*

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Prominent scholars, notably Jonathan Hayes, Onookome Okome, and Foluke Ogunleye, have carried out critical study of Nigerian societies through home video rendition of post-colonial identity; political critiques and challenges of nation building; witchcraft and fetishism; crime and violence; power, agency and self-fashioning. However, they have largely under-researched the representation of mental illness and love in the highly influential medium of popular culture.<sup>1</sup> As a result, and drawing evidence from a spectrum of scholarly work on mental illness and popular culture, I set out to uncover the multitudinous interpretations given to the intersection of love and mental illness among the Yoruba, one of the numerous ethno-cultural cleavages in Nigeria.<sup>2</sup> These genres of data complement the representation of mental illness in Nigerian video films called Nollywood – the second largest home video industry in the world, and the most influential and representative of mainstream Nigerian popular culture.<sup>3</sup>

A theme that threads through this chapter is the resilience and adaptation of traditional ideas about epidemiology of mental illness and the reconfiguration of masculinity and femininity in post-colonial Yoruba society. While recognizing the significance of exotic ideas and knowledge in human development, the Yoruba, like most African peoples, are able to creatively and selectively deploy indigenous and foreign ideas in interpreting and solving some of the challenges and realities of everyday life. I argue that the video

films, more than any other forms of artistic production, effectively (though inadvertently) capture the contradiction accentuated by the desire and struggle to reconcile tradition with modernity.<sup>4</sup> For critical analysis, I select two films, namely *Ayo Ni Mo Fe* (I Want Joy) and *Iyawo Were* (Madman's Wife) from among several others because they best illuminate the intersection between mental illness and love on the one hand, and on the other, what Hayes appropriately termed "contradictory modernity" arising from the inability of video production to fully capture tradition and/or modernity in its fullest extent.<sup>5</sup>

A brief discussion of the Yoruba and their culture will serve this chapter well and help lay the context of several conjectures that we are about to engage. The Yoruba are the second most populous ethnic groups in Nigeria, with an estimated population of 30 to 40 million. Although their original home is the southwestern parts of Nigeria, they have considerable cultural and physical diasporic presence all over Africa and beyond. Their presence in the Atlantic World before the 20th century is largely attributable to the infamous trans-Atlantic slave trade which the people actively participated in during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> The survival of Yoruba custom permeates the cultural landscape of modern Haiti, Cuba, and Brazil where Yoruba gods and goddesses were syncretized into Catholicism and other extra-African religious faith. Religious syncretism contributed imponderably in helping Yoruba culture to stand the test of time in the highly repressive slave culture of the Western hemisphere.<sup>7</sup> Representative religions such as *Candomble*, now widely practiced in the Caribbean, South and North America, is of Yoruba root.<sup>8</sup> Voluntary migration of Yoruba people to the Western hemisphere and Europe took place in the 20th century, reaching its peak in the 1980s, when African countries began to witness enormous economic crisis that forced their citizens to seek better livelihood in these developed parts of the world.<sup>9</sup> This new diaspora of Africans are principally responsible for globalizing contemporary Yoruba ideas in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The Yoruba, like most other African ethnicities, came under European colonial rule from the 19th century. Colonialism created significant social and economic change as European-styled education, culture, and values were introduced to supplant indigenous ones. As devastating the eroding force of colonial culture is, pre-colonial norms and ideas, philosophy and cosmology, survived into the 21st century. In fact, 21st-century Yoruba society showcases a tripartite identity of the traditional/pre-colonial, the modern/colonial, and the hybrid — a combination of both the modern and the traditional. Although scholars have recognized the complexity of establishing rigid binaries of the "modernity" and "tradition" on imperial sites, in the case of the Yoruba this categories is relevant for understanding the social structure and transformative process since the late 19th century. For our purpose in this chapter, we shall

be dealing with the traditional and modern culture, along with contradictions or identity crises that emerge due to the inability to reconcile the difference between these compelling forces of social change.

### Mental Illness in Yoruba Films and Culture

Scholars have established the significance of popular culture in understanding African experience across time, space, and place. In his seminal work *The Popular Yoruba Traveling Theatre of Nigeria*, Biodun Jeyifo establishes the traveling theater as an important aspect of artistic and cultural creation, and should be called “popular” not “folks” as they are usually designated, because the troupes played to the public, not a privileged few or members of the aristocracy.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the traveling theater plays represent and embody the viewpoint of the masses and their engagement with the realities of social existence. Jeyifo and Karin Barber’s highly influential scholarship charts multiple discursive terrains as they effectively capture Yoruba history, culture, and society using plays and oral recitation as entry points.<sup>11</sup>

Recently, scholars, especially Hayes, Ogunleye, and Okome, among others, have begun to show that in order to fully come to terms with the varied definitions of cultural codes in post-colonial Africa, the challenges of nation-building, and the making of a “new” Nigerian identity, attention should be given to emerging forms of popular culture like the home video production known as Nollywood, which emerged in the early 1990s from the relic of the celluloid and traveling theater culture of the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>12</sup> Nollywood currently releases an estimated 1000 new films each year and is a major employer of labor, especially in the eastern and southwestern regions of the country.<sup>13</sup> With budgets as low as 800,000 naira (about 5,000 dollars) and films shot sometimes within a fortnight, the home video industry feeds a growing Nigerian and international market, creating the opportunity for ambitious Nigerians to showcase their artistic talents.<sup>14</sup> The diasporic presence of Nigerians in Europe and North America is responsible for globalizing the films outside the African littoral,<sup>15</sup> while the poor quality of a good number of them in terms of editing, technology, and directing reflect (in part) the technological backwardness of the country and lack of governmental or institutionalized support.

Although Nollywood movies touch on nearly all areas of the Nigerian society, the aspects of evil and witchcraft feature prominently because an average Yoruba, and Nigerian in general, recognizes the existence of spiritual and metaphysical power.<sup>16</sup> If success is interpreted as the product of hard work and triumph over the militating forces of the spiritual enemies, failure is

viewed as the inability to manipulate and suppress the evil powers (*aje, aye, oso*).<sup>17</sup> The causation of sickness, including mental illness, is mainly coded spiritually, not scientifically. In addition, mental illness is perceived as a state of metaphysical existence controlled by the "spirit of madness" (*aunjonu were*).<sup>18</sup> For the Yoruba, evil or bad conduct is the main causation of mental illness; a witch or "evil doer" could run mad after losing a spiritual battle with a superior/good power.<sup>19</sup> Yet, Yoruba cosmology, which the Nollywood films interpret, also recognizes that a promising individual could be inflicted with the spirit of madness by "wicked" people operating under the cover of nightly and unfathomable power.<sup>20</sup> Hence, a mentally ill person, both in the films and in real life, is represented and perceived either as a witch or victim of witchcraft.<sup>21</sup> Even when people develop mental illness due to observable and verifiable causes such as drug abuse and sudden change in lifestyle (as we shall shortly see), the Yoruba would still render a metaphysical explanation because of the notion that "nothing happens without a reason" (*bio ba ni 'di obinrin kii ke Kumolu*).

Native psychiatrists are usually highly revered traditional elites who derive their professional credentials and legitimacy from the ability to manipulate or deploy unseen forces and herbs in healing.<sup>22</sup> Although the native doctor/psychiatrist is primarily responsible for caring for the mentally ill, therapy is facilitated by the serene and friendly environment of rural communities where most of the asylums are located. Indeed, the Yoruba village as a therapeutic community helps the mentally ill to recover through everyday practice of oral recitation, music, and dance. Native psychiatry practice is guided by a number of complex customary laws. For instance, they are not expected to charge money for healing a mentally sick individual, but could receive gifts, which in theory and reality are not considered as a medical bill. In sum, the survival of pre-colonial cultural ideas about mental illness and therapy into the 21st century is attributable to the accessibility of native medical practitioners and the cardinal position that religion and spirituality occupy in the Yoruba people's worldview. In addition, the inability of biomedicine introduced through colonialism to adequately cater to the medical well-being of the people and the crisis of underdevelopment which engulfed the African states inhibit accessibility to the so-called superior Western alternatives.

### Ayo Ni Mo Fe: Deceit, Heartbreak, and Mental Illness

Dedicated to Tai Solarin, a revered social crusader and "all those dedicated to the cause of the mentally ill" and directed by Tunde Kelani, whose name is almost synonymous with the best culturally grounded Yoruba movies,

*Ayo Ni Mo Fe* renders the crisis of legitimacy between Western and African ideas about marriage, love, the epidemiology of mental illness, and the perception of the mentally ill from two different but closely overlapping angles.<sup>23</sup> First, it explicates the gendered character of modern Yoruba society and the reconfiguration of traditional gender roles, a product of colonial implantation. The realignment of gender as a historical and social construction represents a paradox: on the one hand, it empowered men and women, and on the other it introduces new forms of tension which saw women losing the power and status accorded to them in traditional societies. Second, *Ayo Ni Mo Fe* reproduces a complex but widely accepted knowledge of the mentally ill's power (through spiritual means) to remedy barrenness. It is not unusual in big and small Yoruba towns to see mentally ill nursing or pregnant women, roving the streets with their infant children or toddlers. The public knowledge is that they are impregnated by men who were advised by native doctors to have sex with the mentally ill in order to help their wife/wives to conceive and have children. The popular saying *Olorun ni wo omo were* (it is God that nurses the child of the mentally ill) is rooted in the identity of the mentally ill woman and the accompanying miseries of her survival. Although the community, not the government, tends to give alms to mentally ill women, the fact that they are able to nurse their children (mostly without any help) constitutes what the Yoruba calls miracle (*iyanu*). In Yoruba daily life, reference (through proverbs and sayings as seen above) is regularly made to the personality of a mentally ill, the power of motherhood and mothering, and possibilities in the face of difficult situation.

The main characters of *Ayo Ni Mo Fe* are Bola Obot (as Jumoke) and Yomi Ogunmola (as Ayo), college-educated lovers who plan to get married. Other important characters include Lere Paimo (as Chief Adeleke), a rich, uneducated Muslim polygamist who seeks Jumoke's hand in marriage, and Karem Adepoju (as Chief Tomobi), another rich polygamist whose family is confronting a protracted problem of barrenness. The movie starts with a vivid description of romance between Ayo and Jumoke, and Adeleke's relentless persuasiveness to add the latter to his harem of wives. Although Chief Adeleke is not contravening any known Yoruba norm by wanting to marry Jumoke, the spinster found excuse in her status as an educated single who would prefer to start a new family with a young and educated man (Ayo). While Chief Adeleke is influenced by traditional Yoruba culture that endorses polygamy, Jumoke's stance found solace in the "new" or "modern" culture of an influential (but small) class of educated Yoruba that embraces the British-styled monogamous type of marriage.

When Jumoke discovers that the cheating Ayo impregnates Adunni, the teenage daughter of Police Commissioner Dabiri, and subsequently marries

her secretly, she develops mental illness and is admitted into the local asylum run by a fake native psychiatrist, who gives a spiritual explanation for her illness. When the native doctor tries to rape her, she runs away, becomes homeless and roves the town, while her family searches for her. It is during this period that her path crosses with Chief Tomobi, who, as previously mentioned, could not get his wives pregnant. After numerous consultations with the oracles, Chief Tomobi finally receives the oracular revelation that he was cursed by a man his mother humiliated while attempting to have sex with a mentally ill woman; and would have to impregnate a mentally ill woman in order to neutralize this dangerous curse (*egun*). He finds the homeless Jumoke and impregnates her.

Eventually, Adeleke, who has become an important element in the struggle to save Jumoke, finds and takes her to a Western-styled psychiatric hospital. While the fake native psychiatrist diagnoses Jumoke's illness as spiritually induced, the psychiatrist trained in Western medicine reviews her life story and rightly concludes that her sickness is caused by the heartbreak occasioned by Ayo's wedding to another woman. The Western remedy proves effective, as Jumoke recovers from her illness and marries Adeleke, who stood by her during the period of tribulation. Her professional life takes a positive stride as she becomes the head of Adeleke's business empire. But her happiness is short-lived: she relapses when a jealous co-wife tries to kill her infant child and later recovers for the second time.

Ayo's marriage to Adunni is marred with total chaos, in part because they were forced to marry by Adunni's parents, who feared the public stigma associated with her being a single mother. Ayo's decision to "be a man" by making Adunni cook and perform house chores she is not accustomed to because she is *ajeбота* (stereotype name for children of well-to-do or educated families) landed him in trouble. Adunni's parents drove Ayo out of the apartment they gave the couple as a wedding gift; he loses his jobs and becomes homeless when he can no longer cope with the new reality of life. He soon adapts well in his new life, becoming the "captain" of homeless thugs (known as area boys). Events take a good turn when Adunni's father, Police Commissioner Dabiri, is killed by armed thieves and Adunni decides to reunite with her estranged husband. This phase in Ayo and Adunni's life sees them traveling to the U.S. to pursue a doctorate and masters degree respectively.

*Ayo Ni Mo Fe* firmly establishes the Yoruba idea of binary complementarity as regards the order or circle of occurrences — i.e., good and bad; success and failure; happiness and sadness; living and dying. In Yoruba cosmology, individuals are expected to witness crisis at some point in their lives, but must see the light at the end of the long tunnel. While a basic sense of human judgment and Western scientific psychiatry would blame Ayo for causing Jumoke's

mental illness, the Yoruba, in addition to apportioning blame, would plainly interpret the entire situation as “the work of destiny” (*kadara or ayanmo*). So, when Ayo shows up at Jumoke’s magnificent office to apologize for all his wrongs, he blames destiny for directing the course of his life. The Yoruba believe that destiny, as the most important component of human existence, cannot be altered or modified. It was permanently engrained by God (*Olorun* or *Olodumare*) during the process of creation. To modify or change destiny, an individual would have to revisit the process of his or her creation — a task that is impossible. Love as well as success in marriage, family, and career is predominantly interpreted as destiny. Although Ayo and Jumoke’s destiny took them through the agony of mental illness and homelessness, the end was good: Jumoke runs a big firm and enjoys her marriage; Ayo and Adunni reconcile and head to the U.S. for graduate education. In the end, Jumoke and Ayo both agree that they are not destined to be husband and wife and that they would not have achieved enormous professional and material success if they had married.

*Ayo Ni Mo Fe* offers some counter-narratives to established ideas about the superiority of African over Western psychiatry. The Yoruba promote native remedies over Western-styled psychiatry because they believe mental illness to be a spiritual problem that is best treated by native psychiatrists who are trained to deploy metaphysical power in fighting the “dangerous spirit” that causes mental illness. *Ayo Ni Mo Fe* not only establishes the efficacy of the Western-styled psychiatric hospital over the native asylum, but paints the latter as fake, violent, and retrogressive. In another vein, it reinforces the public idea that sex with mentally ill women could help solve the problem of barrenness, as seen in the case of Adeleke, whose wives later become pregnant.

### Iyawo Were: Becoming a Victim of Love

*Iyawo Were* is a story of both love and hate coexisting in an atmosphere of competition for financial success and social mobility. The main character of the movie is Toyin Afolayan (as Busayo), who is dating Segun, a college student reputed for cheating on his lovers and dumping them. After seeing Segun publicly breaking up with and humiliating two of his ex-girlfriends, Busayo feels highly insecure and envisions that Segun would soon break up with her. Busayo expresses her concern to her sister, who encourages her to consult a native doctor for love medicine/charm (*ogun ife*). Of the numerous types of love charms presented by the native doctor, Busayo picks the most potent one, “mad love” (*ife were*), which would permanently seal Segun’s affection for her. But like most, if not all Yoruba medicine, the love charm comes



with a condition: Busayo must not leave Segun for another man, or else he (Segun) would develop mental illness. Faced with this possibility, Busayo decides never to leave the relationship.

However, life takes a new turn when Busayo's ex-boyfriend, based in the U.S., returns home, not only with "tons of dollars," but with a marriage proposal. Busayo becomes confused, contacts her sister and begins to deliberate about deserting Segun. She defies the native doctor's warning that Segun will become mad if she leaves the relationship and elopes with her U.S. based lover. Segun, after learning of Busayo's departure to the U.S., develops mental illness, roves the streets, causing public disorder. When the mentally ill Segun harasses a female resident, the angry community attacks and kills him. Convinced that his son's mental illness, which eventually led to his death, was spiritually induced, Segun's mother goes to his graveside, curses his murderers and commands his spirit to avenge. This part of the film effectively portrays the Yoruba tradition of "making the spirit to fight" (*oku riro*), which entails commanding the ghost of the murdered to avenge by killing the murderer. The practice of seeking metaphysical redress or intervention in solving crime remains relevant in 21st-century Nigeria, which is characterized by poor policing, underdevelopment of forensic science, and corruption of the criminal justice system. In addition, Yoruba custom, as correctly rendered in the film, differentiates between spiritual death (like mental illness or state of dysfunctionality) and physical death (real death). In its larger and more complex application, death metaphorically represents a state of existence or situation that contravenes established values. Hence, Segun was dead spiritually (*iku aye*) before being put to death physically (*iku orun*). And his real murderer is Busayo, who caused his spiritual death, not the community that attacks and kills him physically.

More than twenty years after his demise, Segun's ghost begins to torment Busayo's apparently successful and happy family, causing her first child to be brutally murdered on her wedding day. Shortly afterwards, Busayo's second child suddenly develops mental illness on his 25th birthday and dies in circumstances similar to Segun's. The third child, while looking after their depressed mother in the hospital, begins to exhibit symptoms of mental illness and is immediately hospitalized. Busayo's family's search for the causes of their troubles takes them through several metaphysical terrains—the only means of explaining multiple crises of mental illness and death during important ceremonies like weddings and birthdays. In Yoruba cosmology, death during significant ceremonies such as a wedding or birthday is interpreted as the handiwork of witches or evil apparitional forces, which need to be appeased in order to put a halt to incessant misfortune. After several consultations with the native doctors who have the power to uncover the past and decode unseen



narratives, Busayo is taken back to the days of her youth and reminded that the ghost of Segun which she disappointed is responsible for her misfortune.

*Iyawo Were* unveils a number of interesting ideas about love and loving and the causation of mental illness. In the first instance, it effectively narrates Yoruba belief that love or affection can be initiated and induced with the help of supernatural powers. Although Busayo is a “modern” lady influenced by Western culture, she sought a traditional solution to a problem that threatened her source of happiness by consulting a native doctor for love charm. Contemporary Yoruba still believe in the efficacy of charms in securing and sustaining love and relationship—especially in cases where one of the partners appears insecure.<sup>24</sup> In another movie, titled *Bolajoko (Sit with Wealth)*, Omobola (female) who would later become mentally ill, is charmed in order for her to marry the U.S.-based Adekele. The rhetoric of securing financial mobility by marrying a U.S.- or Europe-based Nigerian features prominently in Nollywood’s narrative about the place of Western societies as sites of “wealth” and “splendor.” The Yoruba perceive themselves both as a member of a global system and their immediate ethnic and geographic enclave.

*Iyawo Were* also highlights the preeminent belief in *esan* (retribution) for “wickedness” or “evil” behavior. Busayo as an “evil” person reaps the fruit of her wickedness when misfortune befalls her family; likewise Chief Tomobi in *Ayo Ni Mo Fe*, whose wives suffer barrenness because his mother humiliated a man who wants to have sex with a mentally ill individual. Overall, the constant practice of depicting retribution in Nollywood films represent one of the goals of Yoruba movie artistes to use films to pass along the message of good conduct or behavior (*iwapete*) in a society under the siege of violence, greed, institutionalized corruption, and obsession with power.<sup>25</sup>

## Conclusion

Although the major focus of this chapter is the representation of mental illness and love in several Yoruba video films, it is obvious that we have engaged a number of complex and broader issues about Yoruba culture and society. Indeed, it is not accidental that our discussion borders such themes as tradition, spirituality, and cosmology, because the Yoruba, like most Africans, mainly interpret mental illness as a spiritual problem. The systemic nature of Yoruba society means that one aspect of an individual’s existence is capable of influencing the other and initiating a vicious process. This explains why Chief Tomobi encounters barrenness when his mother publicly humiliated someone who wanted to have sex with a mad woman, and why Segun developed mental illness when his girlfriend eloped with another man. Perceptions

and attitudes toward the mentally ill unveil an important perspective for viewing the interrelatedness of violence and mental illness. Chief Tomobi committed sexual violence and rape because the oracle asked him to have sex with a mentally ill woman, and Segun is put to death by a hostile community. In both cases, spirituality influenced the attitude of people toward the causation of mental illness. The mentally ill in popular video films as well as in the real world unveil and reveal anti-social sentiments and are either brutalized or killed. The poor state of institutionalized medical facilities and social services, illiteracy, and poverty all combine to put the faith of the mentally ill in the hands of the public who would either feed and clothe them, or assault them. As interpreters of Yoruba popular culture, Nollywood movies continue to depict the contradiction associated with the new forces of modernity and globalism. They present the clash of ideas about metaphysical and scientific interpretation of epidemiology of mental illness and the interrelatedness of love and emotions.

### NOTES

1. Jonathan Haynes, "Political Critique in Nigerian Video Films," *African Affairs* 105, no. 421 (2006): 511–533; John C. McCall, "Madness, Money, and Movies: Watching a Nigerian Popular Video with the Guidance of a Native Doctor," *Africa Today* 49, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 79–94; Foluke Ogunleye, ed., *Africa through the Eye of the Video Camera* (Manzini, Swaziland: Academic Publishers, 2008); Foluke Ogunleye, ed., *African Video Film Today* (Manzini, Swaziland: Academic Publishers, 2003); Onookome Okome, "Nollywood and Its Critics: The Anxiety of the Local," in *Viewing African Cinema: FESPACO Art Films and the Nollywood Video Revolution*, eds. Mahir Saul and Ralph A. Austen (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 26–39; Onookome Okome ed., *Special Issue on Nollywood—Africa at the Movies: West African Video Film Postcolonial Text*, March 1, 2007; Jenkeri Zakari Okwori, "A Dramatized Society: Representing Rituals of Human Sacrifice as Efficacious Action in Nigerian Home Video Movies," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 16, n0.1 (2003): 7–23; John C. McCall, "Juju and Justice at the Movies: Vigilantes in Nigerian Popular Videos," *African Studies Review* 47, no. 3 (2004): 51–67; Akin Adesokan, "Practicing 'Democracy' in Nigerian Films," *African Affairs* 108, no. 433 (2009): 599–619; Brian Larkin, "Indian Films and Nigerian Lovers: Media and the Creation of Parallel Modernities," *Africa* 67, no. 3 (1997): 406–440; Paul Ushang Ugor, "Youth Culture and the Struggle for Social Space: The Nigerian Video Films" (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 2009).

2. The Yoruba are one of the most researched ethnic groups in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Their geographical location along the fringes of the West African coastal water coupled with the socio-cultural and economic development that followed the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade laid the foundation for the emergence of a class of highly educated Africans and their descendants who spearheaded literary, intellectual and academic writing about the Yoruba. For more on the academic and historical writing about the Yoruba and the major authors, see Toyin Falola and Saheed Aderinto, *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010), chapters 8–10.

3. A recent book-length work on Nollywood is Mahir Saul and Ralph A. Austen, eds., *Viewing African Cinema: FESPACO Art Films and the Nollywood Video Revolution* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010).

4. Hayes takes on the subject of modernity and tradition in Yoruba film in his foundation work on Nigerian Video Films. See Jonathan Hayes, "Introduction," in *Nigerian Video Films*, ed. Jonathan Hayes (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 200), 13–16. A new book *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa* is unable to identify popular culture within the matrix of Western imperialism and identity formation. See Olufemi Taiwo, *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

5. *Ayo Ni Mo Fe*, VCD, directed by Tunde Kelani, 1996 (Lagos, Nigeria: Mainframe Productions, 1996) and *Iyawo Were*, VCD, directed by Segun Ogungbe, 2008 (Lagos, Nigeria: Das Motion Picture, 2008). For more on contradictory modernity, see Hayes, "Introduction," in *Nigerian Video Films*, ed. Hayes, 32–34.

6. See the following works: Robin Law, *The Oyo Empire c. 1600–1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of Atlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977); and Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760–1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

7. For more on Yoruba diaspora and culture, see James Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Solimar Otero, *Afro-Cuban Diasporas in the Atlantic World* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010); and Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, ed., *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

8. Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, *Afro-Caribbean Religions: An Introduction to Their Historical, Cultural, and Sacred Traditions* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

9. A good book on the new African Diaspora is Isidore Okpewho and Nkiru Nzegwu, eds., *The New African Diaspora* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2009).

10. Biodun Jeyofe, *The Yoruba Popular Traveling Theatre of Nigeria* (Lagos, Nigeria: Nigerian Magazine, 1984), Chapter 1.

11. Karin Barber, *The Generation of Plays: Yoruba Popular Life in Theater* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

12. A foundational work on the history of Nigerian Video film is Jonathan Hayes, ed., *Nigerian Video Films*. For an exhaustive literature review of Nigerian home video, see Jonathan Hayes, "Nigerian and Ghanaian Videos: A Literature Review," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 22, no.1 (2010): 105–120.

13. Duro Oni, *Lighting Beyond Illumination: Inaugural Lecture* (Lagos: University of Lagos, 2010), 39.

14. Pierre Barrot, *Nollywood: The Video Phenomenon in Nigeria* (Oxford: James Currey, 2008).

15. See Akin Adesokan, "Excess Luggage: Nigerian Films and the World of Immigrants," in *The New African Diaspora*, eds. Isidore Okpewho and Nkiru Nzegwu, 401–421.

16. Foluke Ogunleye, "'That We May Serve Him Without Fear': Nigerian Christian Video Film and Battle Against Cultism," *International Journal of Humanistic Studies*, no. 2 (2003): 16–27.

17. For multiple representation of the power of *Aje* both as evil and forces of blessing see Teresa Washington, *Our Mothers, Our Powers, Our Texts: Manifestation of Aje in African Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

18. Academic research on mental illness among the Yoruba has taken a multidisciplinary approach and featured scholars from the humanities, social sciences and medicine. The following list is not exhaustive but shows the wide range of approaches adopted in studying mental illness: Ayodele Samuel Jegede, "The Notion of 'Were' in Yoruba Conception of Mental Illness," *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 14, no. 1 (2005): 117–126; A.O. Odejide et. al. "Traditional Healers and Mental Illness in the City of Ibadan," *Journal of*

*Black Studies* 9 no. 2 (1978): 195–205; O.A. Erinsho, "Belief-System and the Concept of Mental Illness among Medical Students in a Developing Country: A Nigerian Example," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 33, no. 2 (1977): 158–166; Raymond H. Prince, "The Problem of 'Spirit Possession' as Treatment for Psychiatric Disorder," *Ethos* 2, no. 4 (1974): 315–333; Jane M. Murphy, "Sociocultural Change and Psychiatric Disorder among Rural Yorubas of Nigeria," *Ethos* 1 no. 2 (1973): 239–262; Robert B. Edgerton, "A Traditional African Psychiatrist," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 27 no. 3 (1971): 259–278; Edward L. Margaret, "Traditional Yoruba Healers in Nigeria," *Man* 65 (1965): 115–118; Supo Laosebikan, "Mental Health in Nigeria: The Promise of a Behavioural Approach in Treatment and Rehabilitation," *Journal of Black Studies* 4, no. 2 (1973): 221–228; Leigh Bienen, "The Determination of Criminal Insanity in Western Nigeria," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 14 no. 2 (1976): 219–245.

19. *Baluwe*, directed by Afeez Abiodun, 2010 (Lagos, Nigeria: Time Pictures Nigeria Limited, 2010), VCD.

20. *Bolajoko*, directed by Abiodun Olanrewaju, 2008 (Lagos, Nigeria: High Level Digital Studio, 2008). VCD.

21. *Baluwe*.

22. The rendition of native doctor as *onisegun* and *adehunse* is not absolute because the nature and methods of practices vary widely. Some *babalawos* (Ifa priest) also heal through divination. For more on Yoruba medicine, see Olufunmilayo Adekson, *The Yoruba Traditional Healers of Nigeria* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

23. Email correspondence between the author and director Tunde Kelani, January 21, 2011. Solarin, the founder of the famous Mayflower School is reputed for his critique of government's ineptitude towards the delivery of social welfare and service. He would pick dead bodies of homeless people who were likely to be mentally ill and deposit them at the doorstep of appropriate government officers.

24. See *Bolajoko*.

25. For more on this see, B. Hallen, *The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful: Discourse about Values in Yoruba Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

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