

## METAMORPHOSIS OF PERFORMANCE ORAL HERITAGE AND MEDIAL TRANSFORMATION IN KANYWOOD VIDEO FILMS

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Kanywood video film is a variant of the Nigerian video films. The label Kanywood is maintained in the article as the label coined for the industry in 1999 by Sanusi Shehu Daneji.

However, "Kannywood" with the consonant cluster as in Hollywood, Bollywood and Nollywood is a variant label, which some scholars have adopted. It is produced mainly in Kano, northern Nigeria, hence the label Kanywood. Kanywood video films' plotlines are in Hausa, a dominant language in northern Nigeria. When this film industry started producing films in the 1990s, the filmmakers first engaged in an imitation of established films, such as Bollywood and Hollywood. The scenario of the imitation based on contact between actor and actress attracted criticism by viewers, particularly the Islamic clerics, on the grounds of what they saw as "cultural pollution". Considering the criticism, the dissertation has classified Kanywood video films, and among the categories, the oral performance based video films, which are rarely discussed - as a genre based on oral heritage such as folktale. In my dissertation, I set out to examine the metamorphosis of oral performance arts in Hausa culture through the shift to the new medium of film.

The dissertation is divided into ten chapters. The introduction foregrounds oral performance and the nature of Hausa cultural transformations, substantially when orality is transported to the filmic medium, as research direction for the thesis. Chapter two, the literature review, assesses previous works, and finds as state of the art that scholars have related Kanywood to Bollywood and Nollywood, in terms of storylines and style. In contrast, this dissertation shows that a considerable part of Kanywood films are based on oral tradition, and therefore, a shift from traditional oral to the audio-visual medium film. While chapter three discusses the theoretical framework based on performance studies, chapter four describes the methodology of film analysis used in undertaking the dissertation. Chapter five analyzes the forms of the Hausa oral performances and how the performances are adapted to the cinematic form, and chapter six examines theatre and drama groups and their

transition to film production. Chapter seven classifies Kanywood video films by using a more detailed and intricate categorization of the video films such as comedy, melodrama, performance based video films, *Kanywood Look Bollywood* and *Shari'a Compliant* video films. Chapter eight analyzes selected video films in the category of performance based video films, for example, *Ruwan Bagaja* (2008).

The analysis reveals the far-reaching and thorough transformation of Hausa culture by way of the performances which formed the bases of the storylines of the films in the corpus. It also shows that the dispelling of traditional practices like bori (Hausa animism) proves that culture is not static. Chapter nine examines the discourses about Kanywood video films, the censorship board and how the fans of Kanywood mediate between the official censors, actors and the filmmakers, such as Hamisu Lamido Iyantama.

With regard to the issue of imitation, the dissertation considers the adaptation of circulating artistic forms as a global phenomenon grounded in intertextuality. As the dissertation shows, "imitation" in Kanywood can mean both, influences from other cultures (such as Bollywood and Nollywood), but also of the traditional performative Hausa culture. Considering the question of 'cultural pollution' from this perspective, the dissertation contradicts this view and expounds that culture is not fixed but dynamic. Therefore, the dissertation concludes that it is more appropriate to look at the video films and the filmmakers through the paradigm of cultural hybridity and modernization which enhance cultural shift, transformation and change in this era of globalization.

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