PART 3:

CIRCULATION, CONSUMPTION AND STATE CONTROL

CHAPTER TEN

THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF FILM FESTIVALS IN AFRICA

IMRUH BAKARI

Abstract

The history of the international film festivals in Africa that are dedicated to films made by Africans, is essentially bound to the idea of an "African cinema". From this premise, the significance of specific events, from Carthage to the present-day, are discussed noting, in particular, FESPACO in Ouagadougou, ZIFF in Zanzibar, the Durban International Film Festival (South Africa) and Abuja International Film Festival (Nigeria). The intention is to offer a critical perspective on the role of each of these festivals in their particular national context. The first African festivals at Carthage (Tunisia) and FESPACO are discussed in terms of their relationship to and with filmmakers, and the ideals of Pan-African solidarity and the anti-imperialist politics that defined their institutional foundation in the 1960s and 70s. The impact of subsequent developments in film production and cinema culture are noted, along with the institutional frameworks within which African film festivals have come to exist. The question is asked: what has been the role and function of each of these festivals in the contemporary post-colonial and globalised world? With the emergence of a significant wave of film festivals from the 1990s onwards, the changing discourse that has framed "African cinema" over the decades is considered. The underlying argument is for a formal institutionalized film industry at the national, regional and Pan-African levels, as the means to a sustainable basis for film festivals in Africa that are dedicated to African cinema.

Keywords: African film festivals, Nollywood, FESPACO, ZIFF, African cinema, post-colonial

Introduction

Between the establishment of the Carthage Film Festival in 1966 and the present day, there have been attempts to establish a number of film festivals in a variety of African countries. Particularly from the 1990s, it is now possible to make a significant list, among other festivals showcasing and providing fora for the continent's arts. Over the decades, many festivals have been irregular and some have had short histories, while others continue to demonstrate the precarious nature of their existence. An example of this is the cancellation of the 8th annual *Dockanema*, due to a lack of adequate financial support. This documentary festival in Mozambique had existed since 2006. Its cancellation in 2013 occurred in spite of expressions of a strong desire that the festival should not be allowed to die. The "financial crisis," acknowledged by the festival's organiser, prompted an institutional review of the entire festival.

In the context of my discussion, this situation is symptomatic of the wider issues of the role and function of film festivals in Africa. My central concerns are, firstly, the institutional frameworks within which African film festivals have come to exist. This foregrounds the relationships between these events and filmmakers and their needs. It also incorporates the importance, or not, of having a viable film industry. The second concern is around the idea of African cinema itself, as a body of ideas, and as a diversity of practices operating in the contemporary post-colonial and globalised world.

As current studies note (Turan 2003, Porton 2009, Archibald and Miller 2011, Wong 2011), film festivals were until more recent times, regarded as just events providing material for journalists and critics with specialist film interests, or those concerned with film personalities, or perhaps the latest industry headlines. As a national or international event, the film festival served to provide a meeting place for aficionados, filmmakers and, in some cases, the business entities of various film industries. The subject of the "film festival," as a new area of academic study, now coincides with a new moment in "development" thinking, when the relevance of culture and the economic significance of the creative industries are being acknowledged, and are being written into national policies. There is also an awareness of the need to address the marginalisation of African films and filmmakers within the "global circuit" (Dovey 2015).

In the context of the various practices and ideas that may be grouped together as "African cinema", a consideration of the role and function of

film festivals in Africa thus asks questions about the reasons for the existence of any such event. Where these festivals exist, there are specific contexts – both historical and ideological. In order to provide a starting point from which to demarcate these contexts, I refer to the core idea of an African cinema, as it emerged in all its diversity, in the work of those who are now regarded as the "pioneers" of African cinema. Here, we find a defined foundation that was concerned with the task outlined by Mbye Cham as:

> …constructing and promoting an alternative popular cinema, one that corrects the distortions and stereotypes propagated by dominant Western cinemas and that is more in sync with the realities, experiences, priorities and desires of their respective societies. (Cham 2004, in Pfaff, 49)

Historical Context

As the historical accounts clearly establish, the ideological role of film making by African filmmakers was shaped by the shared and comparative experiences of colonialism and imperialism, with all the cultural ramifications being considered. Included here are the first images produced as the "cinema reached Africa with colonialism" (Armes 2006, 21). Quoting Ferid Boughedir, Armes elaborates on the cinema's "principal role (being) to supply a cultural and ideological justification for political and economic exploitation". In the service of this role, institutional models were established for a cinema culture that was deemed suitable for colonial societies, as part of "a duty to civilize Africans" and to promote imperialist ideologies.

Most notorious among these was the *Bantu Education Kinema Experiment* (BEKE), which existed from 1935-37 to produce films for East and Central Africa. Within the English-speaking territories, including South Africa, this project and its subsequent "Colonial Film Units" provided a model for both apartheid cinema and the first audio-visual institutions established in various African states. It was these institutions, and the *status quo* of the colonial societies, that the Pan-Africanist movement for national independence and African unity set out to challenge and overthrow. It is also within this context that FESPACO founds its iconic location.

Following the achievement of political "independence" and the formation of the OAU in 1963 (transformed into the African Union (AU) in 2001), the re-conquering of Africa's cultural and economic space was still to be

realised and had to be achieved. The year 1966 was therefore a watershed year. In cinema, Ousmane Sembène's *La Noire de.../Black Girl* introduced a new "voice" into world cinema. This year also saw the establishment of the first international film festival in Africa, *Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage* (JCC) in Tunisia. Retrospectively, the paradox of "independence" can also be found unfolding on the "uncertain ground" of 1960s optimism, as Davidson (1992, 198) has termed it. Writing decades later, Amuwo (2002) observes, as part of a critique of Africa's post-independence policies, that African leaders would discover a "disorderly and anarchical" world "order". They would also find "a global system where ethics and morality were—and still are—routinely neglected in favour of *real-politik…"* Importantly, the new states were confronted by:

> …a globe dominated by highly industrialized, rich and powerful nations that jealously protect their markets, industries and privileges whilst states that do little more than produce raw materials and sell primary goods, by virtue of an amoral 'international division of labor', have to play second fiddle. (Amuwo 2002, 69)

The resulting post-colonial relationships therefore have provided a terrain on which "international aid" can thrive by means of an asymmetrical relationship between national governments and the "donor community". It was within the formation of this global environment that the re-conquering of Africa's cultural and economic space still had to be realised, and had to be achieved; and, most distinctly, against the monopolies and conglomerates in cinema (Armes 1987; Boughedir 1992; Diawara 1992). The founder of JCC, Tahar Chériaa (1978), indicates that a set of shared objectives existed amongst African filmmakers. These were to be achieved by a "tri-axial strategy" at the "national level", "on the double national and inter-African level", and on the "continental level, to create (with whatever means available) events which would enable film-makers to meet regularly and to submit their films to audiences and critics…" (Chériaa in Bakari and Cham 1996, 42-4). Chériaa however, concludes:

> Basically, if the film-makers who militated most energetically for this strategy made a mistake, it was because of their excessiveness: they placed excessive trust in state powers' alleged desire to support their struggle to develop a national cinema; and they were excessively optimistic in their confidence in their own ability to overcome the foreign, head-shrinking monopolies which condemn African cinema to be heads without bodies.

FESPACO Foundations

Importantly, JCC in Tunisia had opened a strategic space for "collective reflection" and provided the impetus for the first "Pan-African Film Festival of Ouagadougou" (or *La Semaine du Cinéma*) in 1969, the forerunner to the bi-annual FESPACO. As an initiative of African filmmakers, through their organisation the Pan-African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI), FESPACO aimed to establish a platform for a *Pan-African* agenda in cinema. The significance and the recognised achievements of the event over the decades cannot be fully appreciated unless its origins and its context are noted. Not only is it an initiative of African filmmakers, but its coming into being is the result of these filmmakers negotiating the contending forces of "imperialism", their own Pan-African aspirations, and the limitations of the post-independence nation-state.

In the process, and by virtue of its overall pivotal role in foregrounding a radical cultural agenda, FEPACI gained its status as "the most significant organization to have influenced governments and international associations in the development of African film" (Diawara 1992, 36).

> The following year saw the setting up of the "Pan African Federation of Filmmakers" (FEPACI) which brought together 33 countries in the continent whose creed, like that of the two festivals, was that it should be an instrument for urging African governments to take the protectionist measures which were imperative for the survival of their new-born cinema. (Boughedir 1992, 13)

Correspondingly, FESPACO, reinforced, for example, by the symbolic meaning of the festival's awards, *Étalon de Yennenga* (the Stallion of Yennenga), the Oumarou Ganda Prize, and the Paul Robeson Prize, has in its programmes striven to maintain a diversity that reflects the continent and the core Pan-African aspirations. It is therefore of credit to Burkina Faso that following the festival's seminal period, FESPACO was enshrined as a state institution by a government decree of 1972. This has undoubtedly helped to establish FESPACO as arguably "the most important and culturally unifying event in Africa, despite the ideological contradictions and linguistic differences between some African countries" (Diawara 1992, 129).

Post-Colonial Trends

In contrast to the 1960s, however, the production of films by African filmmakers now occurs within the ideological and cultural parameters of a new global politics, a pervasive "neo-liberal" corporate ideology, and donor agencies with their own competing development agendas. Ultimately, any discussion on film festivals in Africa is now obliged to consider the impact of the current global environment and its cultural politics. Most importantly, we might consider how the acknowledged "unifying" function of FESPACO, for example, might now be rendered fragile as it struggles to meet the new challenges of the twenty-first century. Equally, as film festivals continue to be organised, the roles and functions of these events require some scrutiny, particularly in terms of how, as part of a contemporary creative economy, they may challenge or reinforce the practices and the institutional apparatus that sustain the underdevelopment and the "unequal development" of African societies.

Since its phenomenal emergence in the years between 1990 and 2010, the "video film" industry of Nigeria, which is known as "Nollywood," has established itself as one of the major success stories of the "digital age". Ken Nnebue's *Living in* Bondage (1992) is widely accepted as marking a new and transformative presence that has undoubtedly introduced new issues to the critical debates and theories on "African cinema" (Haynes 2000, Haynes et al. 2012, Şaul and Austen 2010). Indeed, as contestable as it may be, a dichotomy has now been set up between "FESPACO and Nollywood film," which is premised on the notion of "two distinct African cinemas" (Şaul and Austen 2010).

Interestingly, these named and distinct cinemas are regarded as being exclusive and are differentiated by the imperialist demarcations: "French-speaking" – FESPACO, and "English-speaking" – Nollywood. Absurd as this may be, there is no doubt that the populist appeal of "Nollywood" has, for many, underscored the idea of the redundancy, or at least the limited significance of, the "film festival". Despite this, the desire to establish film festivals remains, whether in the service of specialist interests, such as environmentalism or gender activism, or in relation to aspirations for a national film industry, as in the case of the Abuja International Film Festival, which was founded in 2004, or alternatively, in the modified form of an "awards" events, such as the African Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) and the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards.

Myths and Memories

On the 9th July, 1998, I arrived in Zanzibar on a twilight evening to attend the first Zanzibar International Film Festival (11-18 July). Among the many obvious features of the occasion was the organisational chaos of the event. The festival's catalogue provided further evidence of the prevailingly unfocused state of affairs. The festival was to be opened by the then President of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa. Among the listed invitees was Rashid Mfaume Kawawa, who was noted in the 1998 catalogue as being the "Father of Tanzania Cinema". This was ironic, because Kawawa's films, in which his principal role was as an actor, had not been seen for years, and were not being screened at the festival, and are still not seen up today.

As is well known, Rashid Kawawa is one of the heroes, along with Julius Nyerere, of Tanzanian nationhood. He was an activist and mobiliser in the labour movement, who effectively served two terms as Prime Minister between 1962 and 1977, and was Minister of Defence and National Service, 1977 to 1980. His films, in which he tended to play comic characters, have generally been understood to be under a kind of unofficial ban, ostensibly because certain "powers" feared they might serve to undermine his political status as a national hero. Rashid Kawawa's films were, however, listed in the ZIFF catalogue (1998) as being part of a "Tanzania Cinema Profile". This profile summarised an uncritical history of cinema in Tanzania from the infamous *Bantu Education Kinema Experiment* (BEKE) of the 1930s, to the ZIFF festival in 1998. The intention was to make an appeal to the government to support film production and the idea of a film industry in Tanzania, which in actuality had never existed; but which had been assumed to exist through the work of colonial film production units (involving Rashid Kawawa, for example) and government parastatals.

In Zanzibar, where a vibrant cinema culture had existed that had been served by at least four cinemas since the early 1920s (Reinwald 2006), there was only one functioning cinema in 1998, and its condition was abysmal, to say the least. Although it did serve as a festival venue, the opening, and most of the screenings, took place in makeshift spaces, mainly using unreliable film projectors. The films listed were screened on 35mm, with a few 16mm, and some video – Umatic or VHS. No digital formats existed at that time.

My own active involvement with ZIFF began with my being co-opted on to the festival jury. As a result of being a member of the first ZIFF Jury, I participated in writing the "First Jury Report". This report has since gained the status of being the first coherent ZIFF policy document. The report recognised the history that had shaped African cinema until then, and went on to indicate the parameters for the role of culture and the arts in relation to the festival, with recommendations for its development. Significantly, it articulated the ethical and artistic focus of the festival, which was inclusive of the diverse characteristics of Zanzibar's history and society. The term "Dhow culture" was adopted to signify both Zanzibar's definitive cosmopolitanism and its strategic geographical location in East Africa. As the report stated:

> The Dhow as the icon of the festival is the symbol of a long history of communication, migration and interaction, which has produced a cosmopolitan culture as the manifestation of the human experience and expression of the region… (Alloo 2007, 22).

Fifteen years later, at ZIFF 2013, there is no functioning cinema in Zanzibar, and the festival still has no adequate screening facilities.

Reading through the account of a "Tanzania value chain study" (Mhando and Kipeja 2010), there is a glaring ambiguity about ZIFF and its place within the "Tanzanian film market". Among the "participants", the study identifies certain sector players, including an "eclectic group" of "independent film producers," on one hand, and a group of "independents," on the other. Both are differentiated from those subsumed within a dominant "private productions" monopoly. All of these manifest themselves in an international donor dependent economy, where the informality of "local filmmakers and producers" is considered to be a marker of exclusive authenticity and national identity. The critical issue here is that, if as one of the reasons for its existence, the film festival makes "cultural capital concrete" (Wong 2011), then where can ZIFF be located in a "value chain" within Tanzanian film culture? This question pivots on prevailing perceptions of culture and the implementation of cultural policy.

Within the discourse of the donor economy, "culture" has long been regarded as a vehicle, or tool, to be used in the service of "development" and its issues. It is from this perspective that much support for, and participation at, ZIFF has been rationalised. It therefore becomes easy, and, indeed, ironic, for the "cultural capital" that is the product of the

festival's interactions, exchanges and accolades, to be overlooked in the value chain of the national "industry".

The donor-influenced culture that has developed around ZIFF is also implicated in the skewed international profile of the festival, as signified by the information that is widely accessible on *Film Festival World* (www.filmfestivalworld.com), for example. Here, ZIFF is credited with an attendance figure of three hundred thousand. This is the highest film festival attendance figure in Africa, with only the Marrakech International Film Festival (which this paper has not discussed) coming close, with one hundred thousand attendees. FESPACO is credited with about five thousand, while Durban and Abuja each average about twenty thousand. By comparison, at Cannes the figure is about thirty thousand. However these figures are calculated, the ZIFF figures do not represent accredited or paying attendees at the festival's main programme venues. Instead, the figures indicate the eyeballs reached through selective outreach programmes of "development films" principally determined by the participation and interests of the "donor community".

As determined by wider global media developments, ZIFF secured a ten-year sponsorship deal with a newly established regional pay-TV broadcaster in 2012. This seemed to fit into a new thinking on "culture" and "creative industries" in what is now termed "sustainable development". As the publicity stated, the intention was to help "create employment opportunities for filmmakers, producers and actors throughout the region" (*Screen Africa*, 15 May 2012). Indications now are that the reality is very different, as the corporate body confronts a pervasive donor culture, on one hand, and an adopted Nollywood model, on the other, that is at best a subsistence economy involving hand-to-mouth activity. Rather than the operation of a viable film industry, there exist a set of opportunistic entrepreneurial practices and limited production knowledge and skills that are inadequate for both a sustainable film industry and the aspirations of a profit driven broadcaster. The need for infrastructure and all-year support for the film industry returns to beg questions about the existence of appropriate polices and the required institutional provision that would not simply prolong "the demise of ZIFF" (Dovey 2015, 151), but establish a basis for sustainability.

It is a very seldom acknowledged fact that the formative idea of ZIFF was inspired by FESPACO, and encouraged and supported by FEPACI. The "First" ZIFF jury report, in essence, reflected the ideals shared by both FESPACO and FEPACI. The intention being articulated was to develop

ZIFF as a catalyst for Tanzanian and East African film production. In this regard, Pan-African co-operation, whether regional, continental or global, has always been a core principle. This was already fully ingrained in the formative relationship between FESPACO and Carthage, and, most significantly, MOGPAFIS, the Mogadishu Pan-African Film Symposium that was organised in 1981, 1987 and 1989, as a forum for critical and theoretical reflection.

MOGPAFIS, as a complementary institutional component, was conceived as being integral to the role and function of the film festival in Africa. As such, it was an important programme in the development of an African cinema economy. Engaging wide international participation, MOGPAFIS existed at a time when "film studies," worldwide, was still a relatively new subject. The fate of MOGPAFIS was, however, sealed by the political crisis and disintegration of Somalia. Tragically, in totality, the inherited legacy of this seminal period is a general absence of complementary institutions for film education and professional training in Africa. In much the same mould, a stillborn film industry has been handed down, due in part to the economy of the technology that is available until at least the 1990s; and, arguably, the structures of imperialism that continue to hinder Pan-African cooperation.

Film and Festival Cultures in Southern Africa

The irony of the situation typified by *Dockanema* in Mozambique is that more than in any other country in Africa, establishing the foundation for a sustainable film industry was a committed post-independence policy. Shifts in political priorities later ensured the discontinuance of the efforts that are exemplified by the National Cinema Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Cinema*) and its *Kuxa Kenema* (Birth of the Image) ideas. Mozambique had, at the time, never established a film festival, but was actively engaged with regional efforts to establish not only a festival, but also co-operation that would facilitate film distribution linked to regional economic structures. These were among the anticipated outcomes of the *Maputo Conference on African Cinema Co-Operation* (Mozambique, 1977). In the wake of the failure to pursue the envisaged initiatives, a critical question becomes apparent. To what extent has the status of cinema (and by inference, the status of the arts in general), within the culture of the economic communities of Africa, been a determinant in the current state of the various film industries? This is no doubt part of the work for the further study of film festivals, and the "creative economy" in Africa.

The African Creative Economy Conference (ACEC) has been organised annually (since 2010) by the Arterial Network, but is, however, a prime example of the momentum being developed across the continent to bring the "creative industries", including the "film industry", to the forefront of policies and development strategies. The relatively new focus on "the cultural dimension of development" (UNESCO, *Culture & Development*, 2013), acknowledges the centrality of "culture" in meeting the challenges of urgently finding routes to sustainable development. At ACEC 2013, held in Cape Town, the sentiments of the *Brussels Declaration by Artists and Cultural Professionals and Entrepreneurs* (UNESCO 2009) were evoked. Among its proclamations, the Declaration states:

> It is time to act. In order to do this, we are making proposals that are based on the Cotonou Agreement, the Dakar Action Plan and the Santo Domingo Resolution (ACP), the Action Plan on 'Cultural Industries for the development of Africa' (AU), the African Renaissance Charter, the Cultural Cooperation Protocol of the Economic Partnership Agreement between Cariforum States and the European Union, the Pacific Plan (Pacific Islands Forum), the International Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO) and the European Agenda for Culture (EU). These proposals arise from the analysis of barriers and opportunities which will enable us to increase the contribution of culture in development of ACP countries.

The African "policy guidelines and policy actions" that are listed in various African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) documents (Chifunyise 2013), can be recognised as being part of the backdrop to the deliberations at ACEC 2013, which highlighted the role of culture in "a post-2015 development agenda" (van Graan 2013). Over the decades, as Chifunyise (2013) notes, in addition to those mentioned in the Brussels document, cultural statements and action plans have existed since "the significant articulation of the concept of cultural industries and their importance in the economic development of African nations" in the *African Cultural Charter* (1976). However, as Chifunyise also observes with reference to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, the knowledge base of these documents had,

> …either not been brought to the attention of state actors in the cultural sector, cultural operators, leaders of creative civil society and cultural institutions in the Community or was never taken on board as a critical guideline in the development of cultural industries.

This is indicative of a critical weakness that has helped to disadvantage Africa within the prevailing context of globalisation, where development thinking has been framed (for example) around "Millennium Development Goals", UNESCO conventions on "Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" (2003) and the "Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions" (2005), and, currently, around "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs).

A deficiency in cultural policy thinking (which is also exemplified by the Arterial Network, *South African Civil Society Report*, 2012) is further illustrated by the initiative proposed as a vision for an "African Arts Festival Network". In effect, this network is designed to rationalise the competition among the many African festivals "dependent on international aid" (*ARTerial and ZIFF Symposium on African Festivals*, 2010, African Festivals Network Report, 3). In the same document, reference is also made to "the African festival industry" (*ARTerial and ZIFF Symposium on African Festivals*, 7) as part of a new donor driven agenda for Africa. What does this all mean for Africa? What does it all mean if, as a field of study, the film festival, according to Wong (2011, 1), "allows us to understand complex global relationships of film cultures through the historical development and contested hierarchy of films, filmmakers, film languages, themes, and places"? Needless to say, at the root of this are the production, distribution and the circulation of films; and the filmmaker. Essentially, this is the business of a "film industry" and implicates the particular circumstances that frame film festivals in Africa, as they exist in the contemporary global economy.

Some preliminary observations can be made in relation to Chifunyise's (2013) account of the SADC region, when in 1991,

> …the SADC Culture and Information Sector was established by the SADC Summit. Some of the very positive results of this action were the production and adoption of the SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport and the creation of the SADC Arts and Culture Festivals positioned as a driver of culture sector development in general and of cultural industries in particular.

Chifunyise observes that, "It is now almost ten years since the last SADC Arts and Culture Festival"; and significantly, among the respondents who formed the research base for his discussion, there was little or no awareness of "the SADC Arts and Culture Festivals, what it achieved and what has cause it to disappear". This, in my view, is indicative of a general

institutional amnesia that works to detrimental effect across Africa, and with chronic results for the film industry.

What has prevailed, in Southern Africa at least, are a number of film festivals that link in one way or another to the anti-apartheid struggle. Here can be found the region's longest running film festival, the Durban International Film Festival, which was started in 1979. Durban's origins are more liberal than radical, and are distinctly cultural, as opposed to the Sithengi market and festival, a post-apartheid initiative (which was started in 1995) which was very much rooted in the South African film industry and its connections to the international film industry. As the current state of each of these two suggests, it is Durban that has been abler to negotiate the politics of the new South Africa.

To the credit of post-apartheid South Africa, the policies for the national film industry were foregrounded in terms that are comparable to any other sector of the national economy. With the establishment of the National Film & Video Foundation (NFVF), particularly since 1999, a process has been in place to support and promote a sustainable film industry. The NFVF is part of a wider cultural industries' strategy that recognises the need to take the film and television industry, as well as other creative industries, seriously, and with an awareness of their social, political and economic significance.

In this regard, the Durban International Film Festival has been transformed into the region's premier film festival, and it has become an integral and influential component in the new "national" cinema economy. Institutionally, the festival exists in an industry supported by national policies, international trade agreements, production partnership agreements, investment and funding initiatives. As well as about eight other film festivals, there is a national distribution and exhibition network; and three major film and television industry hubs around Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. Durban International Film Festival can now be seen to play a critical role in providing an international platform for South African filmmakers. Its importance as a forum for "Pan-African cinema" is developing with its own individual identity, and it is complementary to FESPACO. The festival's importance is also being defined by its role within the international network of film festivals and global cinema.

Nollywood: New Horizons

In comparing South Africa with Nigeria, it is clear that within each individual context, the transformation from the predominant use of celluloid to predominantly digital production has had very different consequences. The “Nollywood” phenomenon is well documented. What remains in question is the ways in which the practices of this phenomenon are theorised, and the extent to which “Nollywood” can be offered as a replicable model for a film industry. Current thinking in the Nigerian film industry reflects a concern with the limitations of the “informal” economy of “Nollywood”; and there is an evident urgency for a transformation that will better ensure the cinema economy’s sustainability.

The widely expressed idea of “Taking Nollywood to the next level” implies moving beyond the current predicament and establishing a new set of institutional relationships whereby the potential economic power can be more efficiently harnessed and mobilised. This, of necessity, will include appropriate policies, investment in content development and greater concern with production values and support for new talent. It is within this situation that we can begin to locate the Abuja International Film Festival (founded in 2004) and its institutional function. Current discussions suggest that the work of negotiating this future has already begun (Adesokan 2012, McCall 2012). Implicitly, this involves the need for a re-engagement with Nigeria’s “cinematic culture and national aspiration”, and to reconcile “Nollywood” with the often ignored legacy of Nigerian film practices and critical ideas about a “national cinema” which pre-date the “video film” era.

In conclusion, what exists as “two African cinemas” is essentially the ongoing process of establishing national cinemas and a viable Pan-African film economy, which, in totality, will equate with the ideal ‘African cinema’. In fact, while these cinemas may be apparently “locked in a painful contradiction” (Haynes 2011), the fundamental differences between the political intentions of Ousmane Sembène and other “pioneers” (Barlet 1996), including filmmakers from the so-called English-speaking Africa, e.g., Lionel Ngakane, Kwaw Ansah, Ola Balogun, and others; and those of Kenneth Nnebue, or any “Nollywood” producer, may be more productively regarded as being intrinsic to a dynamic cinema culture. In both tendencies, the intentions were and are to make films for African audiences with the greatest possible autonomy. The fundamental difference lies in the historical location of each in

relation to the available technology and their respective cinema economies and institutions.

It is against this background that I therefore suggest that if these histories are not reconciled the current weaknesses of FESPACO (Diawara 2010) will be amplified. In addition, the viability of ZIFF may continue to be elusive; and Durban may well be seen to be nothing other than an isolated national story. Equally, a festival such as the Abuja International Film Festival may arguably be unable to fulfil its potential, either nationally or as a significant event in international cinema. None of this can be good for the idea of African cinema, which, in my view and by virtue of its foundation, is a "Pan-African" project that requires diversity in both production and audiences, and a strategic place within the global economy. All the evidence indicates that a formal and institutionalised film industry at the national, regional and Pan-African levels is the means for a viable existence for film festivals in Africa.

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