

Nollywood as a Repository of Yoruba Historical and Cultural Identity: A Study of Tunde Kelani's *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile*

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Abstract

This paper examined the intricate relationship between historical culture, Nollywood (with specific reference to the Yoruba movie industry), and Yoruba identity. It explored how Yoruba films serve as repositories of Yoruba cultural heritage, language, and traditions. Specifically, this study analyses Tunde Kelani's 1991 movie *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* to provide insight into Yoruba life and worldviews as reflected through cinema. The research discusses the film's portrayal of Yoruba customs, traditions, language, and elements of mythology, while also addressing the criticisms and challenges surrounding cultural representation in Nollywood. Using a qualitative approach anchored in historical analysis, the study interpreted how *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* functions as an archive of Yoruba values such as respect for elders, integrity, and the virtue of hard work—principles that define Yoruba identity. The paper concluded by emphasizing the film's significance to younger generations in an increasingly globalized world. For many, it offers a lens through which to reconnect with their cultural past and better understand the moral and communal values that underpin Yoruba life.

Keywords: Culture, media, Nollywood, repository, Yoruba identity

Introduction

Over time, scholars have investigated and reconstructed the histories of various societies to gain a deeper understanding of their identities, environments, and ways of life. History remains fundamental to self-understanding and to explaining the actions, habits, and value systems that shape communities. This aligns with the concept of *historical culture*, which he defines as “a

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wide range of activities in which images and information about the past are produced, mediated, and used, as well as how historical consciousness is socially constructed and expressed in different societies.” Kortti’s perspective underscores how history is not merely studied but lived and performed in diverse cultural contexts, particularly through media such as film. In this context, Yoruba cinema, led by filmmakers like Tunde Kelani, plays a crucial role in preserving and transmitting Yoruba culture. Movies such as *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* reflect societal norms, moral frameworks, and collective memory, embodying historical culture in motion (Kortti, 2019).

To contextualize historical culture, it is essential first to establish the meaning of *culture*. Professor J. F. Ade Ajayi, one of Nigeria’s foremost historians, defines culture as “the totality of ways through which people organize themselves socially for living” (Ajayi & Crowder, 1971). He further explains that “culture provides man with frameworks, intellectual constructs or paradigms, whose functions are essentially cognitive” (Ayodele & Ademakinwa, 2019). He cautions that examining individual aspects of culture in isolation, without acknowledging their interconnections, may result in an incomplete understanding or misinterpretation. This implies that to fully understand any society, its culture must be analysed through the continuum of its past, present, and anticipated future. Culture encompasses how societies interpret, transmit, and transform their realities. Historical culture, on the other hand, refers to the specific ways through which a society relates to and makes sense of its past (Sánchez Marcos, 2009). Fernando Sánchez Marcos, Professor Emeritus of Early Modern History, argues that while the past cannot always be accessed in its original or unaltered state, it can be reconstructed through an informed synthesis of historical knowledge and its interpretation in the present. Therefore, historical culture represents a social and communicative system through which historical interpretation, objectification, and collective memory are produced and shared, ultimately shaping individual and societal identity. It was observes, historical culture is not a fossilized or static representation of the past but a dynamic process of conversation, negotiation, and reinterpretation (Kansteiner, 2002).

Historically, it was accessed primarily through museums, archives, tourism, eyewitness accounts, and formal education curricula (Kortti, 2019). However, as media evolved from the printing press to the telegraph, cinema, television, and social media its function in encapsulating, mediating, and disseminating historical experiences also transformed significantly. Over the years, the media has become one of the most powerful tools for preserving history and ensuring its accessibility for future generations. Electronic media platforms such as documentaries and news programs provide immediate access to accounts of past events and their analyses. Beyond documentation, the media’s direct involvement in unfolding historical moments often as first responders has positioned journalists and broadcasters as critical agents in recording history. The initial reports they produce often influence how events are ultimately remembered and understood. This underscores the media’s central role in encoding, preserving,

and shaping historical narratives, which in turn, contribute to the construction of collective and cultural identities.

In this vein, it becomes imperative to examine the role of television in presenting public history and fostering historical consciousness. It defines historical consciousness as the mobilization of the past to aid comprehension of the present essentially, understanding “how we arrived in the here and now” (Kortti, 2019). Through audio visual representations, television makes it easier to communicate both explicit and subtle messages to diverse audiences by combining the realistic with the symbolic, the perceived with the researched, and possibilities with actualities. However, such representations also carry the potential to manipulate historical truth when used to frame particular interests or reinforce pre-determined narratives. Television programmes and movies play a crucial role in presenting and preserving history. Over time, the media has drawn heavily on historical events, personalities, and places to create engaging content for its audiences. This practice is not new; Shakespeare, for instance, set several of his plays—*Hamlet*, the *Henry Trilogy*, *King John*, and *Richard II*—against the backdrop of historical courts, events, and figures. Yet, in modern contexts, the media has surpassed literature in its ability to develop and sustain public history, collective memory, and cultural identity through mass dissemination (Kortti, 2019).

Hence, the theory of collective memory emphasizes that representations of historical events significantly shape how societies remember their past (Halbwachs, 1992). This is apparent in how portrayals of historical figures often become dominant visual references, as seen in the widespread use of actor Jim Caviezel’s portrayal of Jesus in *The Passion of the Christ* as an image of Christ in religious publications. Over time, such depictions become the default mental images of historical realities, regardless of their accuracy. In line with this term, the process by which the media transforms history into consumable cultural products as the “commodification of history.” (De Groot, 2000). While this phenomenon has expanded the accessibility and popular appeal of historical narratives, it also risks generating false collective memories and misrepresentations of the past, thereby blurring the boundaries between authentic history and mediated fiction. In depicting history through film, the artist or filmmaker assumes the role of the historian, as the representation of events is largely filtered through personal interpretation (Burke, 2001). However, filmmakers do not share the same ethical obligations as professional historians to ensure factual accuracy or maintain chronological coherence in storytelling. This becomes especially significant in societies that rely predominantly on oral traditions for transmitting history. The fluidity of oral memory makes it vulnerable to distortions over time, through subtle suggestions, reinterpretations, or deliberate alterations of narratives. The functions and responsibilities of the historian and the filmmaker have long been subjects of debate. While historians rely on written texts, documentation, and verifiable evidence, filmmakers work primarily through creative expression. Historical scholarship emphasizes accuracy, factual verification, and accountability—usually reinforced through extensive citations

and endnotes. Filmmakers, on the other hand, often claim to pursue what calls “bigger truths,” prioritizing emotional and thematic authenticity over empirical precision (Laville, 2016).

As film and television become increasingly central in shaping public understanding of the past, concerns about authenticity and accuracy intensify. This phenomenon is described as the rise of “mediated memories,” in which activities and objects are produced or appropriated through media technologies to construct and reconstruct a shared sense of the past, present, and future (Van Dijck, 2007). This process gives the media immense power to shape collective memory and cultural narratives, transforming historical consciousness into mediated experience. Because memory is dynamic and context-dependent, such mediated representations can redefine how societies perceive their heritage.

Similarly, it introduces the notion of “new memories,” in which historical details are not recalled but rather *manufactured*—often containing only fragments of truth. This trend poses challenges for both audiences and cultural custodians, as fabricated narratives can distort authentic historical understanding for aesthetic or commercial gain (Hoskins, 2001). It maintains that historical culture can often be examined in relation to its functions—whether it strengthens group identity, fosters social cohesion, or legitimizes individual or institutional authority. From this theoretical perspective, the analysis of cultural artifacts such as films provides critical insight into how societies construct and preserve their sense of self through mediated forms of historical expression (Sánchez Marcos, 2009). Accordingly, this paper examines *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* as a cinematic representation of Yoruba historical culture and identity. It explores whether the film functions as a repository of Yoruba tradition by assessing how it reflects and preserves the cultural values, belief systems, and historical consciousness of the Yoruba people.

Depiction of History in Movies — Preservation, Entertainment, or Pure Imagination?

How, then, is history depicted in movies? Some films seek to preserve historical events, creating visual archives that can be referenced by future generations. These may take the form of documentaries, biographical films, or dramatized re-enactments of real-life experiences. Notably, many people now find it easier to engage with history through visual storytelling. Educators have discovered that using films in classrooms increases students’ interest and helps them comprehend complex historical actions, decisions, and events more vividly (Day-Lewis, 2017). Studies also indicate that historical films improve factual retention when their narratives align with verified historical readings but generate confusion and misinformation when they contradict source materials (Day-Lewis, 2017).

Beyond classroom instruction, films can serve as tools for addressing historical misunderstandings. Visual depictions of the events that shape cultural behaviours often promote empathy, allowing viewers to grasp the roots of stereotypes and social tensions. In this sense, historical movies can function as unifying mediums that foster intercultural understanding. However, this same potential opens the door for films to perpetuate prejudices and misrepresentations. To mitigate such risks, several nations maintain regulatory frameworks to

prevent the use of film as an instrument for instigating ethnic, racial, or religious divisions. While movies can indeed preserve history and promote cultural identity, it remains difficult to depict multiple historical figures, intertwined events, or distinct time periods with perfect accuracy. Inevitably, a degree of imagination and artistic license enters the storytelling process. In the study titled, *The Burden of Historical Representation*, argue that in pursuit of broad audience appeal, filmmakers often adapt historical narratives to fit popular genres. This tendency simplifies complex stories and sometimes marginalizes underrepresented groups (Stoddard and Marcus, 2006). Consequently, only selective portions of history can be authentically preserved in a single film, leaving viewers responsible for discerning which scenes stem from factual reconstruction and which from creative interpretation.

Nollywood and Yoruba Historical Culture

Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry, ranks as the third largest in the world—after Hollywood and Bollywood (Mbamara, 2005). It produces films in English and Nigerian languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. The term *Nollywood* was first coined in an article by Matt Steinglass in *The New York Times* (Haynes, 2005). The industry's influence extends beyond Nigeria: audiences across Africa often find its stories relatable; members of the African diaspora regard it as a means to reconnect with their roots; and non-African viewers engage with its films to gain insights into African life and culture (Gray, 2003).

Nollywood's contribution to the preservation and promotion of Yoruba culture is significant. Through films grounded in traditional customs, rituals, and values, it sustains the dynamism of Yoruba heritage. The production of Yoruba-language films has also fostered linguistic preservation by encouraging native speakers and learners alike to engage with the language. Additionally, the industry showcases Yoruba fashion and crafts—such as *aso-oke*, *adire*, hand woven bags, slippers, and jewellery ensuring their continued visibility in contemporary culture. For students of history and cultural studies, Nollywood films serve as valuable visual texts that document Yoruba worldviews and traditions.

Nevertheless, critics have raised concerns about the industry's negative portrayals. Ekeanyanwu (2010) avers that early Nollywood films often relied on stereotypes that painted Nigerian culture as violent, superstitious, and cult ridden. Alarmingly, while Christianity and Islam are typically depicted in a positive light, traditional African religions are frequently associated with evil or backwardness. Over time, this skewed portrayal fosters subconscious bias against indigenous belief systems, perpetuating the notion that all things traditional are inherently malevolent.

Furthermore, critics such as Ekeanyanwu (2009) and Uba (2007) trace this trend to Nollywood's commercial roots. Emerging initially as a profit driven enterprise dominated by investors and traders, the industry prioritized financial gain over cultural authenticity. This economic focus shaped early production processes—some films were completed within three days, emphasizing rapid turnover rather than narrative depth, artistic merit, or cultural

responsibility (Uba, 2007). Consequently, while Nollywood has succeeded in amplifying Yoruba visibility, it also bears the responsibility of correcting its own historical misrepresentations.

Reframing Yoruba Identity through Film: Tunde Kelani's Cultural Intervention

As Nollywood evolved, certain filmmakers began intentionally countering early negative portrayals of Nigerian societies by presenting the rich and positive aspects of local cultures. One of the foremost in this movement is Tunde Kelani, founder of Mainframe Films and Television Productions (established in 1991). Mainframe's productions, including *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* and *Oleku*, stand out not only for their technical quality and strong storytelling but also for their deliberate and realistic portrayal of Yoruba culture—its language, customs, fashion, and value systems.

Content Analysis and Summary of *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile*

This study employed content analysis as the primary research method for gathering and interpreting data. The film *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* (1993) was selected for analysis because it ranks among the first ten bestselling Yoruba films (Ogundipe, 2004). The movie was carefully observed to identify salient cultural elements, including language use, traditional practices, fashion, and moral themes. Additionally, audience comments posted on the official YouTube upload were analysed to assess public reception and cultural interpretation.

Ti Oluwa Ni Ile, a Yoruba expression meaning “The land belongs to God,” is a common proverb that underscores the belief that divine authority (God, in this context—not the pantheon of Yoruba *orisa*) ultimately owns all the earth and everything upon it. Produced in 1993 by Tunde Kelani's Mainframe Films and Productions (*Opomulero*), the film is a political drama exploring corruption, greed, and moral decay within a traditional community. The story centres on a powerful and morally compromised chief, the *Otun* of Ajeigbe Kingdom. In alliance with two land speculators, Sanya and JB, he conspires to sell the community's ancestral land to a businessman. Unbeknownst to him, he receives only a fraction of the total payment—one eighth of the agreed price. When the buyer attempts to take possession of the land to construct a petrol station, the community learns of the sale, which had taken place without consultation or the ruler's consent. A court case follows, during which Chief Otun feigns loyalty to the community but delivers false testimony favoring the speculators. Claiming oral knowledge of lineage history, he fabricates a story that Sanya's ancestor, *Iya Eleji Ogbe*, had received the land as a reward from the first king. His statement—“*Ti Oluwa ni ile, ati awon ti o mo itan e*, the land belongs to God and to those who know its story”—reveals the film's central tension between truth and manipulation. The false narrative triumphs in court, exposing the fragility of oral tradition when corrupted by greed (Abioye, 2023).

The film then takes a moral turn. The land in question was once consecrated for ancestral worship, and divine retribution soon follows: Sanya and JB die mysteriously after the land's sale. Realizing the pattern, Otun consults a traditional priest, who warns that the third conspirator

will die once JB is buried unless the burial is indefinitely delayed. Driven by fear, Otun resorts to desperate measures to prevent the funeral—seeking royal decrees, hiding the corpse, and disrupting rites. Ironically, the cost of embalming the body for ten years equals his share of the fraudulent proceeds, symbolizing poetic justice.

Ultimately, Otun's obstinate behavior exposes his guilt. Summoned before the king, he confesses to his crimes and pleads for mercy. The king, bound by moral duty, refuses to intervene in the burial. Accepting his inevitable fate, Otun flees his homeland in a final act of cowardice. Through this narrative, *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* transcends entertainment to deliver profound moral lessons about greed, deceit, and the desecration of sacred trust. It reinforces Yoruba values of integrity, communal ownership, and respect for divine and ancestral heritage—affirming film's role as both a mirror and preserver of cultural identity. *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* follows the travails of Otun as he battles recurring nightmares about death and faces a series of unfortunate events—ranging from a boat accident to wrongful police arrest and brutal assault in detention. Although he is rescued by a compassionate young widow, Otun soon reverts to his old habits of arrogance and pride (Ogunleye, 2024). Also, he loses the widow's trust after being framed by her domestic staff and is forced to return to his hometown, where he has long been presumed dead. Upon his return, Otun attempts to reclaim his chieftaincy title, forgetting that he was disgracefully removed from office and that his survival was granted only as a divine reprieve. In the end, he loses both his position and his life when the spirits of his dead co-conspirators return to exact vengeance, completing the moral arc of retribution.

Presentation of Elements of Yoruba Historical Culture in the Movie

Language: *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* is set in what appears to be the late 1980s and early 1990s, consistent with its production period. Evidence supporting this setting includes details such as clothing styles, the use of motor vehicles typical of that era, and references to modern institutions like the judiciary and the police. However, the narrative environment is still deeply rooted in traditional Yoruba socio-political structures, featuring a ruling king, titled chiefs, and community elders, thereby merging modernity with tradition—a hallmark of transitional Yoruba society in that decade (Falola, 2021).

The movie's language is predominantly Yoruba, showcasing the richness of its oral tradition through proverbs, idioms, and puns. English expressions appear occasionally, reflecting Nigeria's bilingual reality, but Yoruba remains the primary mode of expression. The film demonstrates mastery of Yoruba language forms used for prayer, incantation, insult, and persuasion, as well as in *odu Ifa* recitations that unravel the metaphysical dimensions of events. Nearly every scene features a proverb or euphemism used to advance the plot or reinforce thematic messages. This linguistic pattern offers multiple benefits. For native Yoruba speakers, it deepens cultural immersion and interpretive understanding. For learners or non-Yoruba speakers, it serves as an authentic resource for studying contextual language use, functioning as an invaluable audio visual archive that preserves Yoruba linguistic heritage for posterity.

Costume: The film vividly depicts Yoruba fashion and social codes through costume. Fabrics such as *aso oke* and *adire* are styled in culturally appropriate ways—men in *buba* and *sokoto*, women in *iro* and *buba* with head ties. Beads, earrings, bangles, and anklets further emphasize identity and status. As a high chief, Otun is resplendently dressed throughout the film, befitting his position as one of the king's closest aides. His wardrobe includes grand ensembles such as *agbada*, *danciki*, *kembe*, and *gbariye* (wide-mouthed trousers paired with a voluminous *buba*), all of which convey wealth and authority. By showing these attires not merely at ceremonial events but in everyday life, the film situates Yoruba clothing within its living context rather than reducing it to mere costume.

Messages and Themes: The film underscores the Yoruba moral belief that greed and deception lead to self-destruction. Otun's downfall exemplifies the opposite of the Yoruba ideal of *omoluabi*—a person of integrity, humility, and good character. His pride, manipulation, and disregard for communal values bring calamity upon him, reinforcing the cultural warnings against selfishness and abuse of power. The recurring phrase, “*Ti Oluwa ni ile, ati awon ti o mo itan e*,” meaning “The land belongs to God and to those who know its story,” introduces an additional layer of meaning. It exposes how oral histories can be altered or exploited to justify personal or political ambition. The statement aligns with Andrew Hoskins' (2001) concern about “manufactured” rather than “remembered” histories, illustrating the fragility of collective memory when divorced from truth.

Songs and Symbolism: Music plays a symbolic role in the film, especially during moments of supplication and despair. Otun sings to the king, pleading for mercy and divine intervention. His plea—“*Kabiyesi, forijimi, e wa nkan se*,” meaning “My King, forgive me and intervene”—reflects the Yoruba belief in the *oba* (king) as *aláç' èkejì òrìçà* (“the deputy of the gods”) (Adejunmobi, 2020). The expression emphasizes the traditional view that Yoruba monarchs are spiritual representatives who can act as mediators between humans and deities. Whether the king's pardon influences Otun's temporary escape from death is left to the audience's imagination. Yet the plea itself reaffirms a Yoruba worldview in which secular authority and divine order are inextricably linked—a motif that reinforces the film's dual function as both moral lesson and cultural documentation. In the second instance of musical expression, Otun's dirge laments the series of misfortunes that follow his disgraceful exile. He sings, “*Ki la o ti ce yi si o, ki la o ti ce yi si?*,” meaning “How shall we categorise these incidents?” Through this melancholic refrain, he protests his unjust suffering while proclaiming innocence. Among the Yoruba, songs carry deep communicative power, often conveying layered meanings—both overt and hidden. In this scene, Otun's lament draws public attention, prompting sympathy and eventual intervention. The film thereby underscores music's central place in Yoruba culture as a tool for storytelling, emotional release, and communal engagement.

Religion: *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* presents Ifa divination as a cornerstone of Yoruba religious life and a respected instrument of decision making within the traditional political system. The film reflects a period when traditional Yoruba spirituality coexisted—and often contended—with

imported religions such as Christianity and Islam. Despite the growing influence of globalization at the time, the movie demonstrates that traditional religion remained influential, guiding both private and communal affairs. This portrayal reinforces the continuity of indigenous belief systems as key markers of Yoruba identity and historical consciousness.

Communal Life and Names: The film vividly captures the Yoruba worldview that values collective responsibility and communal ties. A notable example occurs when Sanya, one of the fraudulent land speculators, introduces the businessman to the king. Upon hearing Sanya's father's name, the king immediately identifies his ancestry and community. This moment dramatizes how Yoruba naming conventions serve as cultural identifiers. In Yoruba society, names reveal lineage, status, geography, and even spirituality. Hence expressions such as "*the bídèpò of Egbaland*" or "*the Onabanjo of Ijebuland*" are not merely social references but genealogical markers that locate individuals within broader family and regional histories. Through this detail, the film educates the viewer on Yoruba communal organization—where identity and belonging extend far beyond the individual.

Parties and Social Life: One of the subtle but telling elements through which *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* captures Yoruba life in the 1980s and early 1990s is its depiction of neighborhood parties. The film features two night-time party scenes, typical of that era, when celebrations were held in open spaces or in front of residential houses. Streets were temporarily barricaded with tents and canopies, and multiple parties could occur simultaneously on the same street—each vibrant with food, music, and dancing that lasted well into the night.

Historically, such gatherings were so commonplace that the military regime of General Muhammadu Buhari (1984–1985) sought to regulate them by banning road closures for social events. The scenes in the movie authentically mirror this social reality, emphasizing how leisure and festivity formed part of the Yoruba communal fabric. Over time, however, Nigerian party culture has evolved. Contemporary celebrations tend to occur in event halls or open fields, with "after parties" replacing the once dominant all night street festivities. The film thus preserves a snapshot of pre modern urban Yoruba life and serves as an ethnographic record of everyday social rituals (Olayiwola, 2022).

Reception and Contemporary Nostalgia: Upon its original release, *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* was among the most successful Yoruba movies of its era (Ogundipe, 2004). The film's setting—reflecting Yoruba sociocultural realities of the 1980s and 1990s—continues to resonate as a point of collective memory and nostalgia. When the film was uploaded to YouTube in late 2022, it quickly introduced a new generation of viewers to Kelani's work. As of June 2023, the three parts of the film had collectively garnered over 121,000 views. Viewer reactions reflect both emotional connection and cultural reflection.

Six other responses echoed this sentiment, agreeing particularly about the haunting death scenes—especially the dream sequence in which Otun's spirit is drawn toward a river. In Yoruba cosmology, crossing a river symbolizes entering the realm of the dead. However, when Otun is later pulled through a door—a metaphor for irreversible transition—it signifies

the finality of death, contrasting the river's liminality. This remark demonstrates the film's continuing relevance, as its social critique remains applicable to contemporary Nigerian moral and political realities.

New Exposure and Audience Reach: The film's digital presence has also attracted first time viewers who were previously unaware of its legacy. Although demographic data are unavailable, it is reasonable to infer, given the accessibility of the internet and the use of English subtitles, that the movie now reaches a diverse global audience. Despite its relatively dated production quality, *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* continues to garner viewership and scholarly interest, largely due to its moral message, linguistic authenticity, and historical significance within Yoruba film culture.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* vividly captures and preserves key elements of Yoruba culture as they existed in the 1980s and 1990s. Beyond serving as entertainment, the film demonstrates the expressive capacity of the Yoruba language to communicate complex ideas across diverse contexts—spiritual, political, and social. It functions as an invaluable audio visual record of native speakers, providing useful material for language teaching, research, and linguistic preservation. Through the film's costume design, viewers also gain insight into Yoruba fashion aesthetics and class identity. While the movie features traditional fabrics such as *aso oke* and *adire*, it equally depicts imported materials like jacquard and lace, favoured by the elite class. Consequently, *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* stands as a rich source for scholars studying indigenous fashion, textile adaptation, and social stratification during the late twentieth century. Ifa divination emerges as another central pillar of cultural representation in the film. The narrative portrays Ifa not merely as a religious institution but as an intellectual and historical archive—offering wisdom, moral guidance, and philosophical reflection. Both at the political level, where the king and his council seek divine direction, and at the personal level, where Otun consults the oracle in times of distress, the film underscores the depth of Yoruba cosmology. Nonetheless, it also exposes the potential corruption of sacred knowledge, as seen when Otun manipulates the oracle's message for selfish ends.

The social depictions in the film—community gatherings, kinship structures, and public celebrations—offer authentic portrayals of Yoruba life, providing historians and anthropologists with a comparative lens for analyzing social evolution in southwestern Nigeria. Thus, the movie functions as both a repository and a mirror, preserving key aspects of Yoruba identity while offering moral critique. It condemns greed, deceit, and moral decline, reaffirming the Yoruba *omoluabi* ethos of honesty, humility, and communal respect. Even decades after its release, *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* remains culturally and morally relevant. For older audiences, it inspires nostalgia and reflection; for newer generations, it serves as an educational and cultural resource. Produced by Tunde Kelani's Mainframe Films a company known for its meticulous attention to cultural authenticity the film reflects an ethos similar to that found in other global

cinematic traditions such as Hollywood and Bollywood, where certain productions consciously aim to preserve heritage while others prioritize commercial appeal.

Unfortunately, not all Yoruba films maintain this level of authenticity. Some productions distort aspects of Yoruba culture through excessive use of vulgar language, misrepresentation of customs, or biased religious imagery. It has become common for traditional beliefs to be portrayed as sinister, while Christianity and Islam are cast as liberating forces. Such dichotomies reflect lingering Eurocentric biases and the influence of globalization, which encourage producers to shape their narratives for broader international acceptance. Nevertheless, a growing number of filmmakers remain committed to cultural preservation. Their works, much like *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile*, embody the true spirit of Yoruba cinema as a repository of tradition, language, and collective memory. As a recommendation, films that depict cultural or historical narratives could consider including disclaimers clarifying the degree of factual or artistic interpretation involved for instance, “The cultural representations in this movie are historically grounded,” or “The cultural depictions in this film are dramatized interpretations.” Such transparency would not only safeguard the integrity of Yoruba cultural heritage but also guide future audiences and scholars in contextualizing what they see on screen.

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