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What do Ancestral Rights, Prison, and NYSC have in common? Seyi Bioku lets you know in his review of Tade Ogidan's film *Gold Statue*.

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BEYOND THE SINGLE: BALANCING THE SCALE IN INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL COLLABORATIONS



BEYOND THE SINGLE: BALANCING THE SCALE IN INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL COLLABORATIONS

WRITTEN BY: FEYISOPE KOYA

In July 2019, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter (“Beyoncé”) effectively broke Twitter¹ by releasing a surprise album, titled *The Lion King²: The Gift* (“*The Gift*”). Beyoncé was cast as the voice of Nala in the live action adaption of Disney’s 1994 animated classic *The Lion King*. The album’s most commercially successful single, *Brown Skin Girl*, features Nigerian music artist, WizKid. Since its release, the song has been dubbed by many as a culturally relevant “Bop”³ that celebrates darker-hued women and girls⁴. Amongst other collaborations with industry hitmakers, Pharrell Williams and Kendrick Lamar⁵, *The Gift* also features many other talented African musical artists including Tiwa Savage, Yemi Alade, Tekno, Burnaboy (Nigeria), Moonchild Sanelly (South Africa), Salatiel (Cameroon) and Shatta Wale (Ghana)⁶. Heavily influenced by African⁷ rhythm, percussion, and feel, Beyoncé described the album as “a love letter to Africa” and stated that “I wanted to make sure we found the best talent from Africa and not just use some of the sound or my own interpretation of it.”⁸



Beyoncé is not the first artist to intentionally seek out Africa’s distinct and diverse sound. Canadian-born rapper, Drake, famously merged flows with WizKid in 2016’s *One Dance*⁹, American artist, Chris Brown joined forces with Nigeria’s Davido for this year’s single *Blow My Mind*, and there are reports that Barbadian singer and business-mogul, Rihanna, may collaborate with South African maskandi artist Mbuzeni Mkhize¹⁰.

From a purely simplistic view, it may appear that the African Artists who have the opportunity to work with hugely popular international acts like Beyoncé, should feel honored by the selection and should downplay their own needs in the name of gratitude.

It is an honor, but it is also a business and “the best talent from Africa” should not let their respect or reverence for any artist make them forget about the value that exists in their own craft. In the last decade, article¹¹ after article¹² has been written about the world’s new-found appreciation for African music or at the least the widely consumable sub-genre, dubbed *Afrobeats*.

¹HipHopWired, D.L. Chandler, Beyoncé’s ‘The Lion King: The Gift’ Features Jay-Z, Blue Ivy, Kendrick Lamar & More #TheGiftAlbum, <https://hiphopwired.com/playlist/beyonce-the-lion-king-the-gift-album/>

²Variety, Hear Beyonce as Nala in New ‘Lion King’ Trailer, <https://variety.com/2019/film/news/lion-king-trailer-beyonce-nala-1203231794/>

³Urban Dictionary, “Bop”, “used to reference a good song; to say that a song is really good”.

⁴PopSugar, Brea Cubit, Beyoncé’s “Brown Skin Girl” Is a Love Letter to Black Women Everywhere — and We Deserve It, <https://www.popsugar.com/entertainment/Why-Message-Beyonc%C3%A9s-Brown-Skin-Girl-Important-46399274>

⁵HipHopWired, D.L. Chandler, Beyoncé’s ‘The Lion King: The Gift’ Features Jay-Z, Blue Ivy, Kendrick Lamar & More #TheGiftAlbum, <https://hiphopwired.com/playlist/beyonce-the-lion-king-the-gift-album/>

⁶USA Today, Maeve McDermott. Beyoncé debuts ‘Spirit’ music video, calls new ‘Lion King’ album ‘a love letter to Africa’, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/music/2019/07/16/beyonce-lion-king-album-a-love-letter-africa/1742539001/>

⁷USA Today, Maeve McDermott. Beyoncé debuts ‘Spirit’ music video, calls new ‘Lion King’ album ‘a love letter to Africa’, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/music/2019/07/16/beyonce-lion-king-album-a-love-letter-africa/1742539001/>

⁸CNN Entertainment, Aisha Salaudeen, Beyonce sends ‘love letter to Africa’ with new Lion King album, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/07/17/entertainment/beyonce-lion-king-album-intl/index.html>

⁹SoundCityTv, ‘One Dance’ And Now ‘Brown Skin Girl,’ Wizkid Hits The Billboard 100 Again, <https://soundcity.tv/news/one-dance-and-now-brown-skin-girl-wizkid-hits-the-billboard-100-again/>

¹⁰Okay Africa, Sabelo Mkhabelo, Rihanna Reached Out to South African Maskandi Artist Mbuzeni For a Collaboration After He Performed A Remix to ‘Diamonds’, <https://www.okayafrica.com/rihanna-reaches-out-to-mbuzeni/>

¹¹Prime Loops, The Rise of Afrobeats, <https://primeloops.com/blog/blog/post/slug/the-rise-of-afrobeats/>

Consumers are streaming and demanding “Shaku Shaku”¹³. Yemi Alade's single, *Johnny*, has raked in over 100 million views on YouTube¹⁴. Warner Music Group inked a partnership deal with Nigerian music label, Chocolate City Entertainment¹⁵. BurnaBoy performed a set at Coachella¹⁶. Musically, Africa is on the world's radar and international acts want a piece of the cake. It is important to emphasize this point as Africans are almost always depicted as the dependent party¹⁷ while their own value-adds are generally underwritten¹⁸.

Without a doubt, there is potential for African artists to reap seismic gains from these types of collaborations; however, they should be viewed as a mutually symbiotic partnerships that, with the right investment and forethought, can translate into long-lasting advancements and disrupt the notion that African artists can only reach limited heights. In turn, international acts, who are genuinely interested in helping to create avenues for greater African representation in the music industry, must be open to broadening the scope of their commitment and must challenge themselves to view these collaborations as more than a notch in their credibility belts or an opportunity to trend. If properly executed, these sorts of collaborations can transform into powerful relationships, that can generate more impact than one single ever could.

To make this sort of impact, it is imperative that collaborators chart strategies to maximize the collaboration beyond just

airplay. Below, are some considerations towards ensuring that African interests are also prioritized.

AN IMAGE IS WORTH A THOUSAND DOLLARS

Never before have images had the ability to reach more people than in our modern age. Far from being relegated to the four corners of music magazines or forever affixed to the bedroom walls of young fans, artist images can now be effortlessly shared, re-tweeted, pinned, commented under...the list goes on. Thus, promotional images serve an important function and widely introduce audiences to the artist's look and style in a relatively inexpensive manner due to the global reach and influence of social media.

Due to the lack of historical African representation on the global music scene, much of Beyoncé's international audience probably know little about *The Gift's* African talent and are probably even less attuned to what they look like. This is evidenced by the crop of “guide” style write-ups released shortly after the release of the album by some international outlets designed to briefly inform their readers of those featured on the album.^{19, 20}

As a tribute to *The Lion King*, *The Gift's* cover art utilized the image of two golden lions to underscore the film. In fairness, there is some logic behind that choice however the general lack of visual promotion of the actual human artists featured does little to enhance their profiles and detracts from the overall value and impact of the collaboration. Collaborators should compromise on strategies that fairly promote the artists as well as the song.

It must be noted that in September 2019, Beyoncé released a special on American broadcast station ABC, titled *Beyoncé Presents: The Making of the Gift*, where she showcased the process of making the album and briefly featured many of the African contributors²¹. Though this documentary did topically focus on Africa and its talent, it was also another commercial for

¹²HuffPost, Jasmine Dotiwala, Afrobeats Continues To Fly High With Top International Collaborations, Inc Alexandra Burke, <https://bit.ly/2Nx0leb>

¹³The Guardian, Chiagoziem Onyekwena, *Shaku Shaku: The origin and enablers of the viral street dance*, <https://guardian.ng/saturday-magazine/shaku-shaku-the-origin-and-enablers-of-the-viral-street-dance/>

¹⁴Konboni, Damilola Animashaun, *Yemi Alade's 'Johnny' Has Now Reached 100 Million Views On YouTube*, <https://www.konbini.com/ng/entertainment/music/yemi-alades-johnny-now-reached-100-million-views-youtube/>

¹⁵Quartz Africa, Yinka Adegoke, *Warner Music is the latest major record label group to bet on Afrobeats*, <https://qz.com/africa/1582570/warner-music-bets-on-afrobeats-nigeria-label-chocolate-city/>

¹⁶Pulse, Motolani Alake, *Burna Boy delivers colorful performance at Coachella 2019*, <https://www.pulse.ng/entertainment/music/burna-boy-performs-at-coachella-2019/xd1h05t>

¹⁷Pambazuka News, Selome Araya, *The Misrepresentation of Africa*, <https://www.pambazuka.org/governance/misrepresentation-africa>

¹⁸World Economic Forum, *Africa is establishing itself as Global Player in research but it's going unnoticed*, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/african-scientists-are-changing-the-world-but-its-going-unnoticed>, “...Nigeria has established a number of research institutes that focus on a range of agricultural challenges. Research is also being undertaken in the important area of oceanography.”

¹⁹Esquire, Gabrielle Bruney, *A Guide to All the African Artists Who Appear on Beyoncé's Lion King Album*, <https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/a28450438/beyonce-lion-king-the-gift-album-artists/>

²⁰Essence, *From Burna Boy To Tiwa Savage: The African Artists Featured On Beyoncé's 'The Lion King: The Gift'*, <https://www.essence.com/entertainment/from-burna-boy-to-tiwa-savage-the-african-artists-featured-on-beyonces-the-lion-king-the-gift/>



The Lion King and largely focused on Beyoncé's representation of Africa with her narrative about the continent as the centerpiece. Despite this, it represents more than a lot of other artists have done to profile the continent and at least she made an effort. However, this documentary was released about three months after the album and may have been more impactful if be distributed at the time of release.

ENSURE A COMMITMENT TO PERFORMANCE

Performance of the single should become a standard negotiation point in collaboration discussions. Beyoncé and WizKid have not performed *Brown Skin Girl* together on any platform since its release. Reportedly, Beyoncé is going on tour in 2020²² and the probability of her performing *Brown Skin Girl* is quite high due to its popularity and the song's alignment to her female empowerment brand. Instead of allowing her mega, diverse audiences to enjoy WizKid's melodic flow only through a backing track, Beyoncé should invite him to at least a few performances in strategic tour destinations. Drake did so by inviting WizKid to perform with him at the O2 Arena in London²³.

A live performance will allow international audiences to get a sense not just of WizKid's sound but also his performance style, dance ability, and on-stage persona. Additionally, videos and images from the performance will be widely shared on global platforms. These actions would equalize the playing field and

signal to the world that Africa is worth investing in long-term not just in the moment.

SECURE THE VID

Due to its relative success, it is rather stunning that *Brown Skin Girl* was not followed up with an official music video (there is a video titled "Brown Skin Girl" on Beyoncé's VEVO page but it appears to be a mashup of clips from her personal home videos, many of them seen before, and none of them featuring WizKid). Visual story-telling and on-point aesthetics can memorialize a single into the society's consciousness, extend its shelf life, and help to solidify the artists' overall impact. Before African artists collaborate with an influential international artist, their team should engage in frank discussions relating to the promotion plan and estimated marketing budget and advocate for an official video to accompany the single.

TO AFRICA, WITH LOVE

While some global artists have toured the continent²⁴, Africa remains largely a no-go area for many. Though much of Beyoncé's performance style, costumes, imagery and even personal life have been inspired by a distinctly African aesthetic, she has been criticized for performing in Africa infrequently. A commitment to tour in Africa, would not only delight the hearts of her millions of African-based fans, but the spotlight of a huge international tour would draw global eyes and investors towards continent's creativity and raw talent. During discussions, African attorneys and promoters should highlight this discrepancy and negotiate for at least a few performances with the collaborator on home soil.

YOUR TEAM, YOUR ADVOCATES

One of the byproducts of colonization is that at times Africans can be blind to the beauty, originality and excellence existing within themselves and those who look like them. It is difficult to

²¹CNN, Toyin Owoseje, Beyoncé takes fans behind the scenes with 'Making The Gift' documentary, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/09/16/entertainment/beyonce-documentary-the-gift-lion-king/index.html>

²²The Daily Mail, Eve Buckland, Beyoncé 'planning epic world tour for 2020 which will start in London'... after huge success of *Homecoming: The Live Album* and documentary, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-6941477/Beyonce-planning-epic-world-tour-2020-start-London.html>

²³Vanguard, Tolulope Abereojie, Wizkid, Drake lit up O2 Arena stage, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/04/wizkid-drake-lit-up-o2-arena-stage/>

²⁴SA People, Justin Bieber Plays Pranks in SA and Says: "South Africa is Incredible", <https://www.sapeople.com/2017/05/17/justin-bieber-plays-pranks-sa-says-south-africa-incredible/>

²⁵The Atlanta Black Star, African Culture in Style Only? Two Experts Explain Why Some Major Black Artists Haven't Stepped Foot on the Continent for a World Tour, <https://atlantablackstar.com/2016/06/15/african-culture-in-style-only-two-experts-explain-why-some-major-black-artists-havent-stepped-foot-on-the-continent-for-a-world-tour/>

²⁶Okay Africa, Here Are 10 Times Beyoncé's Work Has Drawn From African Culture, <https://www.okayafrika.com/here-are-10-times-beyonces-work-has-drawn-from-african-culture-on-the-run-tour/>

²⁷Quartz Africa, Lynsey Chutel, Jay-Z and Beyoncé may be inspired by Africa, but they won't perform here, <https://qz.com/africa/1316877/jay-z-and-beyonce-on-the-run-ii-tour-skips-african-cities/>

demand for what you do not believe in. A commitment to the above stated considerations, will yield no real measurable impact if African attorneys, promoters, agents, managers, PR consultants, media and the like do not rate what the artists intrinsically bring to the table and easily capitulate to the interests of others. African Artists need to be represented by teams who view them as the biggest stars in the room and are not afraid to advocate for what they are worth.

SMART GIRL COLLABORATION: LESSONS FROM *HOT GIRL SUMMER*

The August 2019 release of the single *Hot Girl Summer* serves as an apt example of collaborators who are making the most of their venture. After upcoming Houston-based rapper, Megan Thee Stallion coined the phrase “Hot Girl Summer”, the three-word combo went viral and the climate became ripe for her to release a single²⁸. Leveraging on social media, Thee Stallion entered into an Instagram Live session with veteran rapper Nicki Minaj and fans of both camps could literally watch the two artists agree to collaborate on the song^{29,30}. Minaj then reportedly³¹ crafted her verse and sent it to Thee Stallion and the song was available for streaming soon after, accompanied by engaging cover art featuring both artists and another Instagram Live session featuring both Minaj and Thee Stallion reportedly on the video shoot for *Hot Girl Summer*³³ [Ty Dolla \$ign, an American singer, is also featured on the single]. Due to the media force backing the song, *Hot Girl Summer* accumulated over 17 million streams in a one-week period and

reached Number 1 on the iTunes charts.^{34,35} Minaj and Thee Stallion leveraged on anticipation, intentional promotion, social media, fan engagement, memorable images featuring both artists, and the promise of an official video featuring both artists to cement the song.

The evolution of *Hot Girl Summer* highlights the merits of utilizing an equitable, “I scratch your back, you scratch mine” approach to collaborations. Minaj, an industry titan, gets to be associated with a highly anticipated song and is seen as a supporter of burgeoning talent instead of as a competitor. In turn, Thee Stallion receives the implicit endorsement of a veteran, chart-topping black female rapper which signals to the industry that she is a force to be reckoned with. Both parties gain. African Artists and those representing them should bring this mentality to their collaborations and should also play to win.



²⁸Variety, Audrey Cleo Yap, *Megan Thee Stallion Breaks Down the Rules of Hot Girl Summer*, <https://variety.com/2019/music/news/megan-thee-stallion-hot-girl-summer-nicki-minaj-1203299840/>

²⁹HotNewHipHop, Nicki Minaj Wrote “Hot Girl Summer” Verse Quickly, Says “None Of That Was Planned”, <https://www.hotnewhiphop.com/nicki-minaj-wrote-hot-girl-summer-verse-immediately-after-ig-session-with-megan-thee-stallion-news.87479.html>

³⁰Revolt, Dayna Haffenden, *Megan Thee Stallion and Nicki Minaj make history with “Hot Girl Summer” track*, <https://www.revolt.tv/2019/8/9/20839317/megan-thee-stallion-and-nicki-minaj-make-history-with-hot-girl-summer-track>

³¹Revolt, Dayna Haffenden, *Megan Thee Stallion and Nicki Minaj make history with “Hot Girl Summer” track*, <https://www.revolt.tv/2019/8/9/20839317/megan-thee-stallion-and-nicki-minaj-make-history-with-hot-girl-summer-track>

³²Slate, Heather Schwedel, *Megan Thee Stallion's Tongue, Nicki Minaj's Hair, “Driving the Boat”*, <https://slate.com/culture/2019/08/hot-girl-summer-cover-artist-nicki-minaj-megan-thee-stallion.html>

³³Billboard, Bonnie Steinberg, *Megan Thee Stallion and Nicki Minaj Tease ‘Hot Girl Summer’ Video On Instagram Live: Watch*, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/8527097/megan-thee-stallion-and-nicki-minaj-tease-hot-girl-summer-video-on-instagram>

³⁴RollingStone, *RS Charts: Megan Thee Stallion's ‘Hot Girl Summer’ Charges to Number One*, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/rs-charts-top-100-megan-thee-stallion-nicki-minaj-873072/>

³⁵ThatGrapeJuice.Net, *Megan Thee Stallion & Nicki Minaj's ‘Hot Girl Summer’ Storms To #1 On iTunes*, <https://thatgrapejuice.net/2019/08/megan-thee-stallion-nicki-minajs-hot-girl-summer-storms-1-itunes/>

A REVIEW OF TADE OGIDAN'S GOLD STATUE

WRITTEN BY: SEYI BIOKU



Tade Ogidan definitely deserves all the accolades for his most recently released movie, *Gold Statue*. The film definitely makes my list of top 3 Nigerian movies released in 2019.

Gold Statue is a comedy and thriller that follows the adventure of two young men, Wale (Gabriel Afolayan), the lead actor and Chike (Kunle Remi), his friend in search of a 'Gold Statue' believed to have been a deity inherited by their generation. The movie is also a social commentary, touching on some of the issues that bedevil the Nigerian society ranging from the loopholes in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to the deep-rooted corruption within the civil service. In the *Gold Statue*, what started as a treasure hunt devolves into a prison break by a set of prisoners and later escalates into an elaborate scheme of national trickery.

Wale (Gabriel Afolayan) played the role of Adewale Esho, the son of Richard Mofe Damijo (RMD) (Akintade Esho) and the celebrated screen goddess, Sola Shobowale (Grace Esho). They were the typical above middle-class family based in Lagos. During one of Wale's lecture sessions in the higher institution, he learnt about a huge gold statue in the city of Ilesha, which happened to be his country home. From his findings, it was part of his ancestral rights resources. Through some wit and trickery, he got his Grandfather to reveal more information about the statue and with the aid of a friend who deployed technological devices, he was able to get the location of the statue. This was the beginning of his adventure to unravel the goldmine.

Being a recent graduate, Wale departed Lagos on the premise of going for his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Adamawa State but he made his way to Ilesha where he deliberately engaged in criminal activities that caused him to be lynched and eventually landed him in jail. In a bid to hide his real identity and probably with an intention not to be found, Wale changed his identity to Samuel Okon such that the police and judicial authorities knew him by the name. However, on one of the days he was scheduled for a court session, a lawyer in court who happened to be a friend to his parents recognised him and notified his parents.

This act almost tore the family apart, his mother relocated to the family house in Ilesha just to ensure that he was fine and regularly supplied food enough to cater for him and his co-inmates. Eventually, Samuel Okon gained some prominence in prison as the mastermind and whiz kid for a major escape plan. In the same pattern Wale, now Samuel Okon used to trick his grandfather, he was able to secure the commitment of his co-inmates to dig an underground tunnel under the guise that they were digging an escape route. He however did not reveal to them the real intention which was to find the gold statue. Eventually the statue was found in such a manner that also involved national trickery. The following are my major highlights from the movie:

- **Corruption always wins in Nigeria (Most times):** From the special prisons for the children of the high and mighty in the society to the smuggling of food and drinks into prison for Okon by his somewhat influential parents and the role played by senior prisons officers; Ali Baba and Segun Arinze, in conniving with Okon by presenting to the Government of Nigeria, a fake statute and sharing in the proceeds of the gold statue worth a billion dollars, conclusions can be drawn that corruption always wins. Nobert young, the diligent prisons officer who did not want to participate in the game or "play ball" was a big loser at the end of the day.

- **Poor Database/Almost unbelievable plot:** It is a known fact that there may not be a concrete database of citizens in Nigeria. However, the change of identity from Wale to Samuel Okon cannot justifiably be upheld for the duration of the entire movie. One would expect that upon being challenged by the family friend lawyer and his parents, the requisite authorities should have proceeded to verify his identity. This however was conveniently neglected.
- **Jungle justice is still a thing in Nigeria (And will remain so for a long time):** The typical instinct when Nigerians apprehend a thief is to scream Ole!!! Or Thief!!! The next thing is boom!!!! The mob lynches the thief. This was depicted at the two scenes where Okon attempted to steal in order to get arrested, tried and sentenced to prison. This reflects the frustrated Nigerian community where the government isn't doing enough and there is no trust in the legal system. The pent-up anger and frustration coupled with the high poverty rate and low level of literacy in the country will explain the reason why a thief that is caught will be grateful to escape death or be alive with limbs in place.
- **The A-list actors in the movie are numerous** – RMD, Sola Sobowale, Gabriel Afolayan, Alli Baba, Norbert Young; Woli Arole; Segun Arinze, Kevin Ikeduba, Rycardo Agbor, Kunle Remi, Bisola Aiyeloa from the Big brother House 2017, Etinosa Idemudia, Yvonne Jegede, Adeniyi Johnson amongst others. They definitely showed that they were worth their salt.
- **Switch from Wale to Okon:** How Wale, a Yoruba boy with Yoruba lineage is able to speak fluently in a Calabar tongue is somewhat unexplained. I think the transition is too smooth for comfort without actually giving some explanation or laying a foundation for it. Though amusing and probably tailored to suit the intended outcome of the movie, the viewers could have been made to understand why and how. Though the false personality is compelling and comical, we may not just easily accept that easy transition.
- **Illiterate Okon/Expert Analyst:** Common sense ordinarily should somehow have exposed Okon to the co-inmates. A pidgin speaking Okon who did not portray himself to the inmates as literate should have been questioned as to his technical knowledge on the operations of the gadgets used for their escape. It is almost impossible that the viewers were expected to accept that part of the story just the way the inmates believed same.
- **Ilesha Prison:** We all know that when Wale said he was in front of Ilesha prisons during his call to his tech savvy friend, he was actually not in front of a real building and that was pretty much obvious and we expect that scene to have been played out better or edited in a way that the flaw is not easily noticed because quite frankly, that was easy to spot. One important question by the way is where did all the sand during those days of digging go without even one prison officer noticing.



Though there were a few issues, it was overall a fantastic movie that is extremely enjoyable to watch. Tade Ogidan once again proved himself to be the maestro in this space and will definitely have other film makers trying to improve their game. Kudos to Uncle Tade!!!

POEM: NATIONAL ISSUES

WRITTEN BY: EZEKIEL VINCENT ARCHIBONG



Unlike the good days of yore,
we roast like oxen on hot coal!
A man screams fire, fire!
We swing to action by setting up our cameras,
moving our fingers in rhythmic flick, clicks!
We are delightful news pioneers,
stacking up contents for our fans and blogs
rather than helping a distressing compatriot.
Our lives threatened by
callous licensed men of guns,
that plunged bullets into our lungs.
Maybe the sporadic shooting
is strategic - to shrink the plebeians.

The land groans of agony of a trapped rat
in scrambles for breath and survival.
Desperate youth wants to make quick money
and buy Benz,
hunting for femal underpants here and there.
Ritualists disguised as beggars,
as you offer your money free,
your manhood also flees.
Depressed souls cry out; "where is the hope"
In an intense loathe for life,
gulped down "sniper" into their stomachs
with a note next to their corpse and boom! they are in fame.
A fame of shame!

We have lost our script of joy as a people
and our staff of faith to walk upon.
We cannot sleep till
the paint of slumber fades from our eyes,
nor can we sleep with our two wretched eyes fold,
lest, the clock may be put on hold.
Our units of glory withers
like the declining leaves of autumn.
We don't live anymore, we strife to survive!

TECHNOLOGY DISRUPTION IN THE ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA INDUSTRY

WRITTEN BY: AYOOLUWA ODERINDE

"A raft of changes in technology, user behaviour and business models have opened up a gap between how consumers want to experience and pay for E&M offerings, and how companies produce and distribute them. The right user experience bridges this gap. To deliver it, companies must pursue two related strategies. First, build businesses and brands anchored by active, high-value communities of fans, united by shared passions, values, and interests. And second, capitalize on emerging technologies to delight users in new ways and provide superior user experiences."

-Femi Osinubi

*Technology, Information, Communications and Entertainment
(TICE) Industry Leader at PwC Nigeria.*

At the heart of all industry growth is consumer experience-the Entertainment and Media industry is no exception. The combination of great consumer experience reporting, application of technology and data usage will create a cycle –through which increasing consumer engagement will lead to the capture of more data and ultimately insights to generate better consumer experience in aiding the growth of the industry. It is commonplace knowledge that there is a wave of technology disruption across all sectors of the economy and is escalating exponentially across all industries. Thanks to an increase in computing power, technology adoption and information sharing. These global shifts have made markets more efficient, given companies access to a broader pool of talent and resources and expanded competition to a global scale. The resulting changes and pressures are challenging virtually to all sectors of the Economy and creates the need to assess the effect of this disruption on various sector. This Article analyses the impact of technology on the Entertainment and Media industry and its possible adaptability.



Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is creating Current in the Entertainment and media sector as it is in all other sectors of the economy. One of the first examples of AI influence in the media and entertainment industry is *TiVo*¹, a cable service that made personalized recommendations based on the user's watching habits.

New content creation has become far more efficient for businesses publications and online content creators. *Bertie*, Forbes' bot recommends article topics for contributors based on their previous output, headlines based on the sentiment of their pieces and images too²

Similarly, AI is being used to quickly create new ads and movie trailers, comedy trailers, music snippets and to streamline pre-and post-production processes, making all steps involved more cohesive, less costly and faster.

¹<https://business.tivo.com/>

²<https://digiday.com/media/forbes-built-a-robot-to-pre-write-articles-for-its-contributors/>

³Jim O'Neill, "Making virtual a reality in broadcast," NewscastStudio, September 19, 2019, <https://www.newscaststudio.com/2018/08/14/making-virtual-a-reality-in-broadcast/>

.Virtual and augmented reality (VR & AR)

While the explosion in the use of VR and AR in media and entertainment industry is relatively new, the technologies are already captivating consumers and making businesses money. Media companies are increasingly investing in the AR/VR space. The past two years have seen a series of investments as large and small players alike rush into the AR/VR space³. An example is the marriage of blockchain and augmented to create new user experiences and enhance the old ones, in which consumers interact with brands in new and entertaining ways⁴. Similar to the operational model of *Captive*, *Pokémon GO* operates in a way that registered users can acquire virtual coins that can then be used to buy real goods in the marketplace. This way businesses encourage shoppers to visit their brick-and-mortar locations by rewarding users with tokens in exchange for visiting the business. Disney has a similar model. The Play Disney Parks app provides games that users can play while they are waiting in line at Disney theme parks⁵. The entire system uses Bluetooth beacons which helps Disney tracks where players are located in



⁴<https://captiveapp.com/>

⁵<https://disneyworld.disney.go.com/guest-services/play-app/>

⁶<https://www.goodworklabs.com/ar-vr-in-media-news-industry/>
<https://www.adlucent.com/blog/2016/71-of-consumers-prefer-personalized-ads>

real time and then asks players to search for markers near their locations. Players can also use the app to trigger real-world events. Example: While standing in line near Peter Pan's Flight ride, players can make Tinkerbell appear inside a lantern.

The underestimated market for AR & VR technology in the entertainment and media industry has been predicted to hit \$5 billion in content revenue by 2020⁶.

Personalized advertisements

Imagine, for instance, a commercial using your name, or referencing a specific behavior that you took. Due to the increased personalization made possible by AI, it's likely that generalized, traditional advertisements and product placements will soon be phased out. These methods will be replaced with more targeted, personalized content. Interestingly 71% of consumers prefer personalized ads, it is no surprise that marketers are tilting towards that method⁷. It's only a matter of time until ads become so personalized (with the use of AI, behavioral data, and even facial recognition) that every ad out there is directed at a specific buyer persona and, eventually, a specific person.

E-Sports

This new spectacle is multiplayer video-game competitions much typical sports competition like the Olympics, sometimes involving professional players, is filling arenas and boosting bottom lines for game publishers and marketers. It is estimated that by 2020, the global e-sports market will generate \$1.5 billion in annual revenues, primarily from sponsorships and advertising to an estimated global audience of 600 million fans. Marketers bestowed more than 600 brand sponsorships on e-sport titles and events in 2017 alone⁸. *Overwatch* is an example of this new spectacle. In July 2018, the *Overwatch* League's Grand Finals sold out New York's Barclays Center. The *Overwatch* games were also televised over ESPN⁹.

⁷Chris Arkenberg, Doug Van Dyke, J. D. Tengberg, and Nathan Baltuskonis, "eSports graduates to the big leagues," Deloitte Insights, September 18, 2019, <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/industry/telecommunications/capitalizing-on-growth-of-esports-industry.html>.

⁸Kellie Ell, "Esports are booming and some investors are growing more bullish," CNBC, September 18, 2019, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/07/31/as-esports-booms-someinvestors-are-growing-more-bullish.html>.

Blockchain

Blockchain is another element that has the potential to radically change the entertainment industry. One of the sector's primary problems is that creators are often financially robbed by distributors and labels. But Blockchain has the potential to remove the middle man from entertainment and media distribution, thereby creating a measure of transparency.

ENX Coin, is one of the first examples of a decentralized streaming platform through which creators, producers and consumers can take part in a more equitable system. ENX aims to decentralize and bring efficiency to the distribution space. The platform offers access to streaming services and live events for music, movies and TV. ENX coin specifically uses blockchain to create a forgery-resistant currency also removes the middleman by going directly to consumers. This provides transparency for all involved.

What does this all mean for the industry stakeholder? While it may be too early to determine to great degree of certainty due to the fact that the technology evolution is vast and still ongoing, there will be steady changes to the way media is made and distributed. And here increased personalization is key, just as it is in the marketing world. This means increased personalization in both viewing choices and advertising.

"The steady march of digital technology has ushered in a more direct-to-consumer environment characterized by greater choice and user control. Amid an ever-greater supply of media, businesses that are fan-centric will find themselves with audiences that are more engaged, more loyal, and spend more per capita. To thrive in the experience-driven marketplace characterized by this year's Outlook, companies need to attract and harness the economic, social, and emotional power of fans."

Osere Alakhume,
Partner and TICE Industry leader for PwC West

FLASHBACK TO SUMMER 2019

WRITTEN BY: OLUWADOLAPO OSOBU



23, 2019 at Eko Hotels & Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos. It was hosted by Otolorin Kehinde aka 'KennyBlaq' a Nigerian comedian, who mixes stand-up comedy with music & dance. Over the past three years, he has been able to entertain audiences with his enchanting voice and unique sense of humour, and in the process, has become one of the biggest assets to the Nigerian Comedy Industry. The event featured guest performances from singers Davido, CDQ and Small Doctor and comedians Josh2funny, Bello Kreb and Oluwa Dolarz.

INAGBE GRAND BEACH RESORT 2019 HANGOUT

Inagbe Resort is one of the most refreshing places to unwind and hang out with friends and families. The Resort hosted a hangout on August 31, 2019 which drew a huge crowd. The guests engaged in indoor games such as Table Tennis, Snooker, video games, Board games, Ludo, Monopoly, Kid's game, outdoor games, Lawn tennis, Volleyball, basketball, football, Karaoke, yoga dance Aerobic and also featured a live band and DJ who kept the vibe of the hangout at a 100.

SEYILAW FAST & FUNNY 2019

This year's edition of comedian's Seyi Law's show "Blacker Than Ever" was held on August 11, 2019 at Eko Hotel and Suites. The event featured comedians, musicians and DJ's from across Africa.

2019 NBA ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE "UnBARed 3.0 Concert"

It is the general belief that lawyers do not know how to have fun but, we tell you that was not the case at the 2019 NBA Annual General Conference (NBAAGC). The NBAAGC had series of programmes during the conference but the event with most attendance and fireworks was undoubtedly the *UnBARed 3.0 Concert*. The Concert was held on August 28, 2019 at the Eko hotel Convention Centre and showcased performers such as: Wande Cole, Teni the Entertainer, Peruzzi and other live bands. Literally, lawyers threw away their suits and wore their party shoes.

Hello Readers, sadly we all know that September signals Summer's official end and since we aren't quite ready to say goodbye, we decided to recap some of Nigeria's best summer events.

This Summer specifically experienced a lot of events such as comedy shows, beach parties and block parties held across the country.

OXYMORON OF KENNY BLAQ 2019

The third edition of the highly-anticipated comedy event, *THE OXYMORON OF KENNYBLAQ III THIRD TERM*, was held on July

SHORT STORY: ONE POT OF BEANS, A HUNDRED AND ONE DEATHS

WRITTEN BY: SEYI BIOKU

1
A man uninvited, perceived the aroma of beans prepared for 100 soldiers. This smells good, it must definitely taste good, he said to himself as he went in to the house uninvited and on seeing no one, began to consume with all might, strength and speed the beans prepared for 100 soldiers.

For the death of the greedy man who was murdered by a single blow from 100 soldiers, Okonkwo my adorable and bosom friend was arrested and charged with the murder. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to death. How on earth could Okonkwo do this to himself or allow this to be done to him? Had he been wishing to die and considered this an opportunity? At this point, my thoughts and yours do not matter, because as I write, Okonkwo has already been executed. My heart bleeds. What a tragedy!



2
100 soldiers returning from the battlefield, hungry and later to be angry after a really tough battle and an eventual conquest as usual came in to meet this man uninvited, eating the beans prepared for 100 soldiers who went to war and had just returned hungry and ready to devour anything. What insolence!! Who the hell is this man to think he could eat the food prepared for 100 soldiers who are hungry and now visibly very livid? Out of anger, 100 soldiers dealt this man a single blow that rendered his body lifeless on the ground! Now because of 100 soldiers with an unquenchable kind of anger, a greedy man with an insatiable appetite has been killed. A single blow from 100 soldiers sent him to his grave.

3

4
Okonkwo until the incidents that led to his death was a strong and brave man, a warrior with a reputation that made other warriors shiver to their spine. It was once said of him that he wrestled and killed a bear with his bare hands. It was also said that in Okonkwo's prime, he singlehandedly fought and defeated an army of 100 soldiers. This feat earned him the name "100 soldiers" by which he had come to be known to all and sundry; a name he took so much

pride in. I am certain that Okonkwo or 100 soldiers; whichever you choose to call him would be deeply sorry in his grave and probably wished he had exercised a bit of self-control.

Now over a single pot of beans, a hundred and one men have lost their lives.

THE END.

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ABOUT ECP

Our Entertainment & Creative Practice (ECP) is a diversified and dynamic full-service entertainment practice which represents a wide array of high-profile and upcoming clients in Film and Television, Performing Arts, Animation, Music, Digital Media, Visual Arts, and Design.

Our ECP Team is experienced in the full spectrum of intellectual property and regulatory issues and maintains an extensive portfolio of services which include: corporate advisory, contract review and documentation, image and commercial rights, and dispute management, amongst others. ECP focuses on ensuring that our Clients meet audience and financier expectations, whilst also empowering them to transform their imaginative content into enduring artistic and creative works with long-lasting cultural relevance and global impact.

ABOUT AINA BLANKSON

At Aina Blankson, we consider everything you do on a global scale. Whether we are advising multinational corporations engaged in high-stake transactions, negotiating a high-profile entertainment transaction, advising on the implications of new regulations or facilitating the effective implementation of government policies and programmatic initiatives, we work closely with our clients to apply innovative solutions towards the achievement of their legal and commercial goals.



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