

Original Research Article

Marriage Proposals in Nollywood: Cinematic Representation of Men Kneeling and Cultural Power Plays

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Abstract: This study examined how marriage proposals are depicted in Nollywood films, particularly focusing on the cultural significance of men kneeling and the related gender power dynamics. It studied select popular Nollywood romantic dramas and comedies released between 2010 and 2024, and the research investigated how the act of kneeling during proposals was portrayed, challenged, or accepted within Nigerian cultural narratives. It used content analysis, grounded in postcolonial theory and gender performativity. The findings indicated that Nollywood served as both a mirror and a mold for societal attitudes, where the kneeling man was both celebrated and mocked, showcasing a conflict between traditional African patriarchal values and Western ideals of love and expression. In some films, kneeling was depicted as a modern performative act, suggesting emotional openness and gender equality among men. Conversely, in others, it was viewed as emasculating, tapping into cultural narratives that saw men as the dominant decision-makers in marriage. The paper argued that these portrayals go beyond mere dramatic elements; they represent cinematic negotiations of a shifting Nigerian identity within a global media landscape. This study adds to the ongoing discussions about gender, media, and cultural hybridity by illustrating how Nollywood shapes evolving views on masculinity, romance, and cultural authenticity. It also prompts important questions about who gets to define modernity in African cinema and whose perspective dictates what constitutes acceptable romantic behaviour.

Keywords: Nollywood, Marriage Proposals, Gender Performativity, Postcolonial Identity, Cultural Hybridity.

Introduction

In today's African societies, marriage continues to be a vital institution for preserving culture, maintaining social order, and shaping identity. In this context, marriage proposals represent more than just personal promises; they also reflect larger discussions about gender roles, cultural values, and the influence of modernity. Nollywood, Africa's most vibrant film industry and a powerful cultural voice, plays a crucial role in shaping how these rituals are perceived, performed, and challenged. As Haynes (2016) points out, "Nollywood films have become a site of cultural conversation where social norms are continually questioned, affirmed, or reconstructed." This makes the visual and performative act of men kneeling to propose, often viewed as a Western romantic tradition, a significant cinematic moment that deserves careful scrutiny.

The image of a man kneeling to present an engagement ring, largely borrowed from Euro-American media, has become increasingly prominent in Nollywood films. Yet, in many African cultures, kneeling carries deep-rooted meanings tied to respect and hierarchy, often linked to notions of subordination and deference (Adeoti, 2009). The clash of these differing interpretations within Nollywood's portrayals creates a complex tension between cultural authenticity and contemporary romantic ideals.

Even though the kneeling gesture has gained popularity in Nollywood proposals, there's been surprisingly little academic focus on how it challenges or reinforces established gender hierarchies and cultural norms. We still need to better understand how Nollywood navigates these changes in romantic behavior and identity through its storytelling and visual techniques. This study is important because it adds to the wider conversation about African cinema, gender identity, and cultural globalisation. By examining a common yet symbolically rich act, the research highlights how Nollywood serves as a cultural battleground where meanings are negotiated and expressed. As Ebewo (2017) notes, "Nollywood is not just entertainment; it is a tool for ideological expression and cultural affirmation." This research also offers valuable insights for filmmakers, cultural critics, and gender advocates on the implications of popular media in shaping social behaviour and expectations in romantic relationships.

This study focuses on a selection of Nollywood films released between 2010 and 2024, specifically honing in on the romantic drama and comedy genres. It doesn't delve into how audiences received these films or what the producers intended, but it does touch on the implications for cultural perception. The cultural analysis is primarily rooted in Nigerian viewpoints, while also recognising the broader intersections within African culture.

This study aims to examine the cinematic representation of marriage proposals in Nollywood, focusing on the symbolic act of men kneeling and the embedded cultural power plays surrounding gender and modernity. It sets the following objectives:

1. Analyse how Nollywood films portray the act of men kneeling during marriage proposals.

2. Investigate the gender dynamics associated with kneeling in the proposal scenes.
3. Explore the cultural and symbolic meanings attached to kneeling within Nigerian contexts.
4. Examine how Nollywood mediates the tension between Western romantic ideals and traditional African values.

Research Questions

1. How are the acts of kneeling portrayed during marriage proposals in Nollywood films?
2. What gendered implications are embedded in these portrayals?
3. What cultural interpretations are evoked by the gesture of kneeling in the Nigerian context?
4. In what ways does Nollywood navigate or resolve the clash between traditional norms and modern romantic scripts?

Theoretical framework

Postcolonial Theory: This theory serves as a lens for examining how colonial histories and global cultural exchanges continue to influence modern African identities, practices, and aesthetics. In the realm of Nollywood, the image of men kneeling to propose, often inspired by Western cinematic traditions, can be seen as a point of cultural hybridity and tension. As Bhabha (1994) suggests, the postcolonial subject often exists in a '*third space*' where conflicting cultural codes are negotiated and redefined. Thus, the kneeling proposal symbolises a cultural negotiation, challenging traditional notions of masculinity and hierarchy with Western romantic ideals. This framework allows the study to delve into how Nollywood either reflects or resists cultural imperialism while redefining African modernity through the lens of romantic performance.

Gender Performativity Theory: Judith Butler's (1990) concept of gender performativity argues that gender is not a fixed identity but rather a series of repeated performances shaped by societal expectations. In Nollywood's portrayal of marriage proposals, the act of kneeling transforms into a performative gesture that reshapes masculine identity. Whether it's shown as a sincere emotional display or an act of emasculating submission, kneeling becomes a cultural performance that either reinforces or challenges traditional gender roles. This perspective aids in exploring how cinematic representations construct, uphold, or disrupt prevailing gender ideologies within Nigerian society. These theories facilitate a deeper understanding of how Nollywood navigates the interplay between inherited cultural values and modern social changes in its portrayal of love, gender, and identity.

Review of Related Literature

Marriage Proposal as a Cultural Rite

A marriage proposal goes beyond just a romantic act; it's a significant rite steeped in cultural scripts and expectations. Traditionally, African courtship has emphasised the involvement of the community and family rather than just individual romantic gestures (Ayoade, 1987). In contrast, Western culture often highlights personal agency, typically

showcased through surprise proposals where a man kneels with a ring. Nollywood's portrayal of this proposal ritual illustrates both the convergence and the tension between these two cultural narratives. As Shaka (2013) notes, marriage rituals in African cinema serve as cultural metaphors through which societies navigate change and continuity. Proposals thus become pivotal moments where modernity, tradition, and gender identities intersect.

Kneeling: Symbol of Submission or Romantic Expression

The act of kneeling carries different meanings across cultures. In many African traditions, kneeling signifies respect and submission, often expected from women or those in subordinate positions (Nfah-Abbenyi, 2005). However, in Western romantic culture, a man kneeling to propose is a sign of humility, reverence, and emotional openness. This clash of symbolism creates a fascinating interpretive tension in Nigerian films. Shaka (2013) points out that the semiotics of kneeling in African filmic language reflect both the reverence of the sacred and the challenge of patriarchal inversion. So, when we see male characters kneeling in Nollywood, it often marks a moment of cultural negotiation.

Masculinity and Gender Performativity

Masculinity isn't something we're born with; it's a social construct that we perform. Judith Butler (1990) argues that gender is something we enact through repeated performances that either align with or push back against societal norms. In Nollywood films, when male characters kneel to propose, they're not just engaging in a romantic gesture; they're also showcasing a version of masculinity that can come off as modern, sensitive, or even a bit rebellious. Lindsay and Miescher (2003) describe African masculinities as flexible, contested, and subject to shifting socio-political influences. In this light, kneeling during proposals challenges the typical portrayals of stoic and authoritarian masculinity that often dominate African cultural narratives.

Cultural Performance in Film

Building on Victor Turner's (1982) idea of cultural performance, we can view marriage proposals in film as symbolic acts that highlight cultural values. Nollywood serves as a narrative platform that stages these performances for both reflection and sometimes satire. The proposal scene transforms into a theatrical space for social commentary on gender roles, tradition, and modernity. Shaka (2013) highlights that, in African cinematic storytelling, symbolic gestures like kneeling serve as dramatic punctuation marks that reflect both ideological change and societal discomfort.

Cinematic Representation and Visual Semiotics

Cinematic representation is all about how films use visual, narrative, and symbolic elements to depict reality. In Nollywood, marriage proposals are often crafted with intentional cinematography think slow motion, emotional music, and audience reactions, to enhance or complicate the act of kneeling. The camera's gaze becomes a cultural interpreter, framing kneeling as either noble, comic, or controversial. According to Ukadike (1994), African cinema should be read not merely as narrative but as a socio-political

canvas of visual expression. In Nollywood, kneeling takes on a dual role, serving as both a personal choice and a cultural spectacle, where cinematic artistry meets social performance.

Nollywood and the Representation of Romance

Nollywood has emerged as a significant cultural force, shaping and reflecting the romantic dreams of modern African audiences. Scholars like Haynes (2016) and Ebewo (2017) highlight that Nollywood acts not just as entertainment but also as a medium for cultural and ideological storytelling. Ebewo (2017) points out that Nollywood films project themes of aspiration, morality, and modernity, often using romance as a site of social commentary.

The romantic plots in Nollywood often dramatise the clash between tradition and modernity, using courtship rituals like marriage proposals to underscore these tensions. Adejunmobi (2015) observes that this genre has played a crucial role in reshaping the norms of romantic behavior in Nigeria, introducing audiences to new emotional expressions such as public displays of affection and kneeling proposals, actions that were once seen as foreign or taboo.

Gender Performativity and African Masculinities

Judith Butler's (1990) idea of gender performativity has found its way into African media studies, helping us understand that gender roles are not fixed but are performed through repeated actions and social rituals. In Nollywood, a man kneeling during a proposal becomes a powerful act that challenges traditional notions of masculinity. Oha (2007) notes that while Nigerian films often uphold patriarchal ideals, there are noticeable shifts where male characters display tenderness and vulnerability. This aligns with Lindsay and Miescher's (2003) view that African masculinities are fluid and context-dependent. In many Nollywood proposal scenes, the kneeling man represents a "modern masculinity" that harmonises emotional openness with the traditional expectations of responsibility and respect.

Postcolonial Identity and Cultural Hybridity

The clash between local traditions and global influences in Nollywood really comes to life when we look at it through the lens of postcolonial theory, particularly Bhabha's (1994) idea of cultural hybridity. In many Nollywood romantic dramas, we see characters navigating what Bhabha calls the '*third space*', a unique cultural area where identities are fluid, and cultural meanings are in flux. Take films like '*Namaste Wahala and Isoken*', for example; they highlight intercultural or diasporic relationships, blending Western romantic customs like kneeling proposals with African family and cultural expectations. As Nfah-Abbenyi (2005) points out, the postcolonial figure in African cinema often finds themselves in a state of 'becoming,' trying to balance inherited traditions with the pressures of global modernity.

When it comes to Visual Culture and Symbolism in African Cinema, film is inherently a visual art form, and a lot of its cultural messages come through symbols, aesthetics, and *mise-en-scène*. Scholars like Diawara (1992) and Ukadike (1994) stress the

importance of looking at African films not just for their stories but also for their visual and cinematic language. For instance, the kneeling gesture in proposal scenes is often paired with specific cinematographic choices such as lighting, close-up shots, and background music that frame the act as noble, comedic, or even controversial. As Okome (2010) notes, Nollywood's visual style is not just aesthetic; it is ideological. These visual elements carry deeper meanings about respect, love, submission, and modernity.

While there's a growing amount of research on Nollywood and its social and cultural effects, there's still a lack of studies that focus specifically on the act of kneeling during marriage proposals and what it means for gender, culture, and identity. This study aims to bridge that gap by building on and expanding the work of scholars in media studies, postcolonial theory, and gender studies. The existing literature offers a solid theoretical base for exploring the symbolic negotiations involved in what might seem like a simple act of kneeling to propose in Nollywood films.

The researchers considered some empirical studies that offer valuable insights and data-driven observations that are pertinent to our exploration of kneeling, masculinity, and romantic proposals within Nigerian screen culture.

Okoye (2016), in "Masculinity in Nollywood Romantic Comedies", it used content analysis of 25 Nollywood romantic comedies released between 2008 and 2015. Okoye discovered that male characters often display hybrid masculinities. While traditional male dominance is evident in dialogue and decision-making, many leading men also engage in modern performative acts, such as kneeling during proposals or making public declarations of love. The study suggests that this duality mirrors a broader societal negotiation between cultural traditions and global modernity. Okoye (2016, p.88) observed that "the rise of kneeling proposals by male protagonists reflects an imported romantic ideal, yet its presence in film indicates a shifting gender consciousness among Nigerian audiences".

Edewor and Omoera (2019) studied "Gender Dynamics in Nigerian Visual Culture" through a semiotic analysis of selected Nollywood films. Edewor and Omoera explored how visual elements shape gender expectations. Their study concentrated on body positioning, props (such as rings and flowers), and soundtracks during romantic scenes. The findings reveal that kneeling often symbolises not just submission but also serves as a cinematic tool to evoke audience empathy and emotional resolution. "Kneeling in Nollywood does not automatically imply emasculation; it functions as a symbolic gesture within a broader narrative of emotional transformation" (Edewor & Omoera, 2019, p. 134).

Another study by Nwachukwu (2021), "Audience Reception of Male Kneeling in Proposals", a survey conducted with 300 Nigerian viewers aged 18–40, examined their perceptions of kneeling during proposals. More than 60% of respondents viewed it as a positive shift in gender roles, while 25% saw it as un-African. Nwachukwu points out that how audiences interpret gestures can really differ depending on their generation and where they come from, noting that urban youth tend to be more open to the act of kneeling. The study maintained that "Nollywood's portrayal of kneeling has played a significant role in

normalising this gesture among city dwellers, especially where media influence meets evolving gender norms" (Nwachukwu, 2021, p. 45).

In a comparative study titled "Romantic Symbolism in Yoruba and Igbo Cinema," Adepoju (2022) explored the romantic rituals depicted in Yoruba and Igbo Nollywood films, examining how various cultural traditions are either preserved or altered. While Yoruba films often highlight the importance of family consent over personal gestures, Igbo narratives tend to showcase kneeling proposals more frequently. The research observed a gradual blending of romantic symbols across Nigeria. It expressed that "Nollywood, as a commercial venture, frequently emphasises audience fantasy over rigid cultural authenticity, resulting in mixed portrayals of gender rituals" (Adepoju, 2022, p. 99).

Chukwu & Bello (2023) conducted another empirical study titled "The Politics of Proposal Scenes in Nollywood," using discourse analysis on 15 Nollywood films released between 2015 and 2022. They discovered that the way proposals are scripted and staged often reflects social class, Western influences, and the filmmakers' ideological perspectives. Characters from wealthier backgrounds were more likely to kneel, often in extravagant settings, indicating a class-based adoption of this gesture. (Chukwu & Bello, 2023, p. 123) argued that "Proposal scenes in Nollywood are far from neutral, they serve as ideological spaces where gender, class, and postcolonial aesthetics intersect".

From the studies reviewed, a clear theme emerges: the kneeling proposal in Nollywood films acts as both a performative symbol and a platform for cultural negotiation. The evidence shows that there's an increasing presence of kneeling scenes, particularly after 2010, with audiences interpreting the act through various generational, regional, and ideological lenses. Additionally, filmmakers often use kneeling to evoke emotional responses and highlight male vulnerability, and cinematic choices reflect ongoing tension between African tradition and global cultural flows.

These empirical insights underscore the symbolic and societal stakes of what appears, on the surface, to be a simple romantic gesture.

Methodology

This study was a qualitative approach, focused on textual and visual content analysis to explore how marriage proposals, especially the iconic moment of men kneeling, are depicted in a selection of Nollywood films. The research utilised a typical purposive sampling technique to choose ten Nollywood films released between 2010 and 2024. These films were selected from the romantic drama and romantic comedy genres, where proposal scenes are often front and center. The criteria for selection include: the presence of marriage proposal scenes, the depiction of the kneeling gesture during the proposal, the films' popularity and cultural significance as indicated by viewership, online reviews, or awards, and their availability on official streaming platforms like Netflix, IROKOtv, and YouTube. Some examples of these films might be *'The Wedding Party'*, *'Isoken'*, *'Namaste Wahala'*, *'King of Boys'*, *'The Return of the King'*, and *'Before 30'*, among others. Data were gathered through careful viewing and manual coding of the selected scenes. Each

proposal scene was transcribed and analysed, paying attention to: Cinematographic elements (such as camera angles, body language, music, and mise-en-scène), dialogue and narrative context, the reactions of other characters, and the cultural and gender cues present in the scene.

The data were examined using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) model to pinpoint recurring themes, symbols, and discursive patterns. These themes were interpreted through the lenses of Postcolonial Theory and Gender Performativity Theory to reveal deeper ideological messages and cultural negotiations found in the portrayals. The study employed triangulation achieved by comparing portrayals across various films and genres, ensuring thematic consistency. All films analysed were publicly available and used solely for academic purposes.

Data Presentation:

Table 1: Nollywood Films (2010–2024) Featuring Kneeling in Marriage Proposals

S/ N	Film Title	Year	Genre	Director	Proposal Scene Description
1	<i>The Wedding Party</i>	2016	Romantic Comedy	Kemi Adetiba	The groom kneels publicly at a family event to propose, reinforcing modern ideals of romance within tradition.
2	<i>Isoken</i>	2017	Romantic Drama	Jade Osiberu	A British-Nigerian man proposes to a Nigerian woman in public; kneeling sparks cultural disapproval from family.
3	<i>Namaste Wahala</i>	2020	Intercultural Romance	Hamisha Daryani Ahuja	The Indian male lead kneels to propose, symbolising cultural convergence; met with comic confusion by Nigerians.
4	<i>Before 30 (TV Series)</i>	2015	Romantic Drama	Bodunrin Sasore	Multiple male characters propose; some kneel while others don't revealing varying ideals of masculinity.
5	<i>Kambili: The Whole 30 Yards</i>	2020	Romantic Comedy	Kayode Kasum	The male lead kneels in a lavish setting, but the woman rejects him, subverting typical romantic expectations.
6	<i>Fine Wine</i>	2021	Romantic Drama	Seyi Babatope	An older man proposes to a younger woman; the kneeling gesture is used to bridge generational and romantic gaps.
7	<i>Smart Money Woman (TV)</i>	2020	Drama/Romantic Comedy	Bunmi Ajakaiye	Proposal scenes depict kneeling as both sincere and performative one accepted, another mocked by friends.
8	<i>A Sunday Affair</i>	2023	Romantic Drama	Walter Taylaur	Love triangle ends with a dramatic kneeling proposal, highlighting the clash of loyalty, passion, and culture.
9	<i>The One for Sarah</i>	2022	Romantic Drama	Lyndsey Esejuku	A kneeling proposal is presented as an emotional climax, with symbolic lighting and slow motion emphasising it.

10	<i>Finding Hubby</i>	2020	Romantic Comedy	Femi Ogunsanwo	A man kneels to propose in a restaurant; the woman walks away, challenging social pressure to accept public love.
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Analysis of Findings

Romantic Idealisation vs. Cultural Resistance

In movies like *'The Wedding Party (2016)'*, *Fine Wine (2021)'*, and *Namaste Wahala (2020)'*, kneeling is portrayed as a powerful symbol of emotional commitment and an idealised version of romance. These films present the act as something noble and desirable, aligning with global romantic standards. The camera often zooms in on the kneeling gesture, capturing close-ups of the ring, tearful faces, and uplifting music. However, this romantic vision is challenged in films such as *'Isoken (2017)'* and *'Finding Hubby (2020)'*, where kneeling takes on a more complex meaning. In *Isoken*, the protagonist's family reacts with unease, drawing on cultural beliefs that view male kneeling as a sign of weakness.

Similarly, in *'Finding Hubby'*, the proposal is turned down, illustrating that kneeling doesn't always lead to emotional success and can even backfire when it clashes with societal expectations. As Bhabha (1994) points out, postcolonial identities are often negotiated within "ambivalent cultural spaces." These films highlight how Nollywood navigates the tension between traditional values and modern romance, where kneeling is both celebrated and contested.

Gendered Performance of Emotion and Power

Kneeling proposals in *'Before 30 (2015)'*, *'Smart Money Woman (2020)'*, and *'The One for Sarah (2022)'* shine a light on evolving gender roles and expectations. In these stories, kneeling transcends mere romance; it becomes a performance of masculinity that challenges the traditional image of African men as stoic and emotionally detached. The men reveal their emotional sides, often in the presence of friends or family who either cheer them on or mock them. Butler's (1990) concept of gender performativity is key here: kneeling is a physical act that shapes a "softer" masculinity, one that emphasizes partnership over dominance. Yet, this performance is delicate, and social approval is essential for it to be deemed acceptable; without it, the man risks being seen as weak or foolish.

Visual Semiotics and Cultural Symbolism

Nollywood films cleverly use visual elements like lighting, costumes, body language, and music to frame the kneeling gesture in either a celebratory or conflicted light. Take *Kambili: The Whole 30 Yards (2020)*, for instance, set in a lavish environment with candlelight and soft melodies, the proposal is made, only for the woman to turn it down. This carefully crafted mise-en-scène amplifies the shock and challenges the notion that a grand romantic display guarantees a happy ending. In *The One for Sarah*, the use of slow motion and emotional close-ups transforms the kneeling gesture into a pivotal moment in

the story. These visual techniques infuse the act with deeper significance, allowing viewers to see kneeling not merely as a ritual but as a climactic point in the narrative.

Cultural Hybridity and Postcolonial Modernity

Films like *'Namaste Wahala'* and *A Sunday Affair* showcase hybrid identities, where characters navigate the complexities of multicultural expectations in love. In *'Namaste Wahala'*, the kneeling act performed by an Indian man for a Nigerian woman is portrayed as both heartfelt and a bit awkward, sparking laughter and discussion among the characters. This cultural interplay highlights Nigeria's role in a global cultural landscape, where Western romantic ideals often clash with African social norms. As Nollywood broadens its global influence, its romantic narratives increasingly embody postcolonial modernity, a fusion of traditional values and contemporary aesthetics. Yet, this hybridisation isn't without its challenges; it reveals what Mbembe (2001) describes as the "postcolony's longing for modernity," all while wrestling with the burdens of tradition.

Throughout the ten films examined, the act of men kneeling during marriage proposals emerges as a significant cinematic space where love, gender, and culture intersect. Nollywood doesn't simply embrace or reject this gesture; instead, it invites a range of interpretations based on the character, context, and narrative outcome. By weaving together postcolonial critique and gender performativity theory, this analysis illustrates how Nollywood employs the kneeling proposal as both a romantic spectacle and a platform for discourse. It questions rigid gender binaries and invites reflection on what it means to be African, modern, and in love in an age of cultural fluidity.

Discussion

The act of kneeling during marriage proposals in Nollywood films opens up a fascinating space for exploring changes in cultural identity, gender roles, and the way romance is portrayed in modern times. By using Postcolonial Theory and Gender Performativity as a lens, this study reveals how Nollywood finds a balance between traditional customs and contemporary influences.

In films like *The Wedding Party* (2016) and *Fine Wine* (2021), kneeling is often portrayed in a romantic light, showcasing Nollywood's embrace of Western ideals of love and emotional openness. These scenes celebrate men expressing their feelings, pushing back against the rigid masculinity typically linked to traditional African courtship. On the flip side, other films such as *Finding Hubby* (2020), *Isoken* (2017), and *Kambili: The Whole 30 Yards* (2020) challenge or even dismiss the act of kneeling, indicating that some audiences or character situations might see it as inappropriate or undermining masculinity. This tension mirrors the ambivalence Bhabha (1994) describes in postcolonial identity, where cultural symbols navigate the tricky waters of imitation and resistance.

Judith Butler's (1990) idea of performativity sheds light on how kneeling serves as a gendered act that can either reinforce or challenge dominant notions of masculinity. When men kneel, they're not just making a proposal; they're embodying modernity, romance, and humility qualities that aren't typically associated with traditional African male figures. The

varied reactions shown in these films highlight a societal struggle to navigate what is deemed acceptable in terms of gender performance as cultural norms evolve.

Additionally, the public setting of many of these proposals brings in the scrutiny of society, represented by family, friends, or even strangers, which can either validate or undermine the act. So, while kneeling is a personal gesture, it transforms into a performative spectacle where the lines of culture, gender, and power are actively challenged and redefined.

Findings

Cultural Ambivalence: Nollywood films showcase a fascinating cultural ambivalence towards kneeling proposals. Some view it as a romantic gesture, while others see it as un-African or even emasculating.

Gender Fluidity: This gesture pushes against traditional gender norms by portraying men as emotionally vulnerable, which reshapes the expectations of masculinity in Nigerian cinema.

Visual Performance: Cinematic techniques like *mise-en-scène*, camera angles, and music are intentionally employed to either elevate or question the significance of kneeling, transforming it into a dramatic and ideological statement.

Cultural Hybridity: Proposal scenes frequently illustrate hybrid cultural settings, particularly in films that feature diasporic or intercultural relationships, highlighting Nollywood's role in balancing global and local values.

Public Legitimation: The audience within the film, friends and family, often acts as a gauge for cultural acceptability, framing kneeling as a societal spectacle rather than just a private moment.

Conclusions

This study concludes that marriage proposals in Nollywood, especially those featuring kneeling men, are anything but trivial romantic clichés. They serve as platforms for cultural dialogue where conflicting ideologies of love, gender, and tradition are debated. Through the act of kneeling, Nollywood dramatises the intricate relationship between Western romantic influences and African patriarchal traditions, reflecting Nigeria's postcolonial quest for identity and modern expression.

The act of kneeling emerges as a symbolic negotiation, a choice filled with implications for how love is expressed, who gets to show emotional vulnerability, and what behaviors are deemed culturally acceptable in an increasingly globalised African society.

Recommendations

1. Nollywood producers and directors should keep delving into nuanced portrayals of romantic rituals, especially in ways that encourage cultural reflection rather than merely.

2. It's important for educators and social commentators to leverage these portrayals to spark conversations about changing gender roles, emotional expression, and what it means to be culturally authentic.
3. Future research could dive into how different age groups, regions, and gender identities respond to kneeling proposals, helping us gain a clearer picture of their cultural significance.
4. We should encourage Nollywood audiences and critics to engage with film representations in a more critical way, seeing themselves as active participants in shaping cultural values instead of just passive viewers.

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