In the continuing development of Nigerian screen media studies, Matthew H. Brown's *Indirect Subjects: Nollywood’s Local Address* presents a perceptive study on the development of Nigerian state television, and later Nollywood, in the wake of British colonialism. His book investigates how the lingering effects of the United Kingdom’s imposition of liberal capitalism created a false sense of liberalism (here referred to as “periliberalism”), where Nigeria was situated squarely within liberal capital and development of the liberal world order, and yet practically distanced from its progressive ideals. Moreover, Brown considers how Nigeria can be contextualized as an “indirect subject” of liberalism and how this greatly informs its screen media, from the “golden age” of Nigerian television to contemporary Nollywood films.

In *Indirect Subjects*, Brown observes indirect subjectivity in three major terms: ancillary thematic concerns, perceived spectators, and an idea of “free indirect subjectivity” wherein first- and third-person subjectivity wavers, providing a measure of indirect, subjective narration. He also posits the notion of periliberalism, where nations are both peripheral and constitutive to a liberal world order—while also being held at arm’s length from its benefits. In response to conceptions of neoliberalism (which typically emphasizes subjectivity), values apparent in periliberal subjects are more connected to their locality, in this case, Nollywood’s local address.

*Indirect Subjects* contains six chapters across two major sections. Part 1 begins by highlighting early British documentary films, which exoticized Nigerian culture while also endeavoring to frame it as a prosperous urban market under the colonial auspices of the United Kingdom. Skipping ahead to the mid-century (following Nigeria’s independence in October of 1960), Brown discusses currents of early popular state television through the early 1990s, which helped to solidify popular Nigerian screen media while also reflecting its inheritance of a certain posture of early colonial cinema. Part 2 interrogates different modalities of state television within the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the emergence of Nollywood video films by discussing conceptions of free, indirect subjectivity through an array of television serials and video films. Chapters 3 to 6 each focus on a specific mode of address through which to examine periliberalism and indirect subjects present throughout Nigerian screen media. Subsequent
topics of feminine melodrama, masculine melodrama, and gothic and comic modes of address typify each of the final four chapters.

In part 1, Brown’s opening chapter details some of the cinematic origins in Nigeria, as depicted from the obscured, colonial lens of Norman and Vincent Greville. The documentary shorts filmed by the Greville brothers endeavored to present the African colony as a thriving urban market under the perceived liberal patronage of the United Kingdom. Their exhibition of short films at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition in Wembley also sought to garner domestic support from British citizens for the continuing developmentalist agenda in Nigeria and later sought to employ cinema markets in the name of imperial trade, in response to the United States’ dominant influence on the global cinema market.

Chapter 2 involves a more detailed study of Nigerian state television by examining Olusegun Olusola’s seminal series *The Village Headmaster* (1968-88). Over the course of its two-decade run, Olusola’s program provided a cultural prism of periliberalism as Nigeria struggled to reconcile its traditional sense of selfhood and the effects of Western modernity in the wake of its independence. Brown understands the emblematic roadside village in *The Village Headmaster* as a clear metaphor for periliberalism. The setting for this culturally significant Nigerian program centers around a village fixed alongside a promised motorway, which implies mobility and industry access. However, the community often remains distant from the practical, institutional benefits of these modern forces, even though its inhabitants helped to construct this major road. The eponymous headmaster often embodies many social and political contradictions, as he represents aspects of Western education and a liberal world order, which prove to be simultaneously oppressive and liberating for the village community. Brown writes: “He is designed to highlight the postcolonial entanglements of the village-like nation and the paradoxes of modernity, but he is also meant to somehow rise above them all” (pp. 76-77). Thus, Olusola’s long-standing narrative generates an opportunity for its viewers to negotiate the present realities of their gatekeeper developmentalist state.

Part 2 of *Indirect Subjects* begins with Brown’s study of soap operas and melodramatic modes of Nigerian screen media as fixtures of the golden age of Nigerian television and its subsequent influence on Nollywood. During this time in the mid-1980s, Nigerian television programming also experienced an industrial shift, where the NTA began “purchasing content from independent producers,” and this change “initiated a shift in aesthetic practices” by focusing on social conceptions of the male breadwinner as a measure of both masculinity and feminine desire (pp. 26-27). Chapter 3 looks to these dramatic modes in Amaka Igwe’s *Checkmate* (1991-94), as Brown assesses how melodrama is consistently employed to address themes of female suffering, which seem to be a fixture in Nigerian popular storytelling.

In response to the previous chapter’s attention to femininity and breadwinning, chapter 4 turns to a masculine mode of address that focuses on occult themes and imagery, to examine feminine modalities of melodramas, soap operas, and other Nollywood video films. In this section, Brown addresses three important Nollywood films that each observe crises of masculinity, temptations of money, magic and the occult, and the inherent disjunction between modern ideologies of liberalism and lived experiences in Nigeria: *Living in Bondage* (Chris Obi Rapu, 1992), *Ashes to Ashes* (Andy Amenechi, 2001), and *Billionaires Club* (Afam Okereke, 2003). While the feminine melodramatic mode seems to suggest a celebration of the breadwinner ideal as an entry into the liberal world order, here, the masculine melodramatic mode scrutinizes that ideal, where the breadwinner fantasy proves antisocial in its literal, functional presence in contemporary Nigerian culture.
Thus, the notion of divided gender norms in service of liberal breadwinner normality is resisted through Nollywood melodramas, which otherwise appear to promote gendered collaboration as an alternative familial and social ideal that eclipses impositions of periliberalism.

In chapter 5, Brown discusses the “epic” genre of Nollywood films, which are often fantastically imagined and set in a precolonial past. In examining the NTA’s 1986 adaptation of Things Fall Apart (David Orere) and other epic Nollywood films at the turn of the new millennium, Brown situates these films in a gothic mode of address. In this mode, Nollywood epics frequently employed an imagined past where sovereignty, and its complex relationship with the present, was also chaotic and complicated, but nevertheless enjoyed by imagined spectators. This intricate entanglement of fantasy and ideology can be further gauged through Jacques Derrida’s concept of hauntology, where modernity is “haunted” by futures that never manifested, and which contend with specters of a difficult sociocultural history (p. 218).

Brown begins his final chapter by surveying different theoretical conceptions of screen media as an ideological mirror to the selfhood of its viewers. In looking at the outstanding theories of Joan Copjec, Jacques Lacan, Christian Metz, and Laura Mulvey, Brown determines that instead of representing a total reflection of the self, “screen media offers us the opportunity to gain indirect access to the desires from which we are constituted” (p. 224). Chapter 6 turns to a comic mode of address, focusing on literal mirrors commonly utilized in Nigerian comedy serials, where such mirrors signify a “conspiratorial secondary narrator, an indirect subjectivity that complements and amplifies” the satirical voice of the primary perspective (p. 225). Brown’s final case studies in this book include the series Basi and Company (Ken Saro-Wiwa, 1986-90) and films Osuofia in London (Kingsley Ogoro, 2003) and Amenechi’s The Master (2004). These comedies draw spectat-
New Nollywood, that invite productive measures of globalization at the expense of “Old Nollywood” and state television's moralizing address about inequities within and beyond Nigerian borders?

While the movement from Old to New Nollywood might cue a productive reshaping of Nigeria's cultural and economic inclusion on a global stage, the ethos that shaped the very foundations of Nigerian state television and the emergence of video films may very well be challenged, denying the inequities of liberalism that have persisted and manifested in Nigerian screen culture. We can only hope that these changes augur beneficial liberalism for Nigerian people, remain locally addressed, and avoid embodying new manifestations of indirect subjection. As for its place in Nigerian screen media scholarship, Matthew H. Brown's *Indirect Subjects: Nollywood's Local Address* charts the general scope of television and cinema history in Nigeria, adding favorably to its ongoing scholarship and advocating for the saliency of Nigerian media in the context of global television and cinema studies.

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