

Visual Storytelling through Costume Aesthetics: Comparing Coming 2 America and Living in Bondage: Breaking Free

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Abstract

Costume is an element of film production, which compliments other elements to enhance a production. Costumes in films take an important role as it is the medium that the designer uses as a narrative and present it in visuals to tell the audience the story of the characters. The story of any film would easily be told through the costume, because one of the aims of costume is to characterize the wearer such that the audience could easily understand the kind of person that the action of the film is going to unfold, for instance, that period the character is in? What class division the character is in? The gender of the character, the occupation of the character, the characters age and so on. The definition of character using costume lies with the designer who must combine both artistic and intellectual creativity with common sense in order to find and help create the inner spirit of the character within the production. With the use of tools and techniques of make-up, accessories, fabric, color and line in costuming, the designer reveals the character role through their physical appearance. Costumes are the most visual aspect of the performing art, as they are the clothing that the character or actors wear to portray their roles. This paper explores the effective

use of costume and also its beauty in coming 2 America and Living in bondage (breaking free). Aestheticism and Semiotic theories are used to investigate into how meaning is created and meaning is communicated through the use of costume. At the end of this work we will see the effective use of costumes from the two movies and how film makers, theatre practioners and playwrights should take the role of costuming seriously because they are information givers and the speak accurately to the viewer's more than dialogue itself. And also, recommends that film makers should pay more attention to costume being a vital aspect of film making.

Keywords: *Communicating, Costume, Aesthetics, Film, Visual*

Introduction.

One of the major Aesthetics of film is the colorful costumes worn by the beautiful actors on set. Costumes alone tells a lot which dialogue alone can not express, it complements the actions and the actors. Costumes in movie alongside other accessories such as hand bangles, necklaces, walking stick, etc enhances the images which excite the sight of the viewer. The story of any film would easily be understood through the costume, because one of the aims of costume is to characterize the wearer such that the audience could easily understand the kind of person that the action of the film is going to unfold, for instance, that period of the story, the class division of the character, the gender of the character, the occupation of the character, the characters age and so on.

The definition of character using costume lies with the designer who must combine both artistic and intellectual creativity with common sense in other to find and help create the inner spirit of the character within the production. With the use of tools and techniques of make-up, accessories, fabric, color and line in costuming, the designer reveals the character role through their physical appearance.

The designer's job therefore starts with an analysis and visualization of the script, in the course of which they conceptualize the costume design and the production. Costume plays an important role in the actualization of the characters in film as they are seen as the non-verbal elements of the performance and the also communicate hidden messages to the audience it is well depicted or handled that is why our notion of costume will also be on the submission of Douglas that says:

costumes include all accessories, he (the actor) carries as a part of his character, all the related to his hair, dressing and everything associated to his face, body, makeup, including mask if they are

substitutes for facial makeup (Douglas 1993:p9)

As we all know, costume, makeup and accessories are inseparable because they work hand in hand and complement each other. A beautiful costume without the right accessories and makeup will not really communicate meaning to the audience. Imagine a soldier dressed in his soldier uniform without his boot, belt and rank. He will definitely look unserious, or imagine a queen dressed in her beautiful costume without her hair-do, make-up, and the right accessories she will look casual and not fit for a queen.

Generally, humans are bound to wear some clothing for protection and decency, every costume has its meaning some people dress to depict class and status in the society, others dress for professional reasons and yet others dress for spiritual reasons. Adelugba is of the opinion that:

clothes are as means of magical protection against evil spirit, for sexual attraction by both sexes, for reasons of decency, for occupational reasons and for functional reason of protection against heat, cold, dirt (Adelugba 1987:p19).

In African culture, it is believed that, the white color signifies purity or fertility, red signifies danger, and black signifies death or funeral or the mood of mourning. Hair covering of Muslims women also signifies decency; a newly wedded bride dressed in her transparent night gown also signifies that she wants to attract her groom sexually. So all these colors and costumes are worn to serve the purpose of the occasions.

Costumes are the most personal aspect of the visual element, to the members of the audience, an actor and his costumes are perceived as one, they merge in to a single image in the film production. Hence, costumes must be seen as an inevitable elements of film production that possess the strength to inform and communicate aesthetic.

The study will examine the effective use of costumes in terms of mood, characterization and theme on the performance of characters in the film coming 2 America directed by Craig Brewer and Living in bondage (breaking free) Directed by Ramsey Nouah.

BRIEF HISTORY OF COSTUME.

Humans have worn clothing of some sort for thousands of years. One reason for this is that humans unlike other animals lack a thick fur or tough skin and clothing is needed to protect the body from the weather, so costume developed alongside the art of theatre and indeed one can safely say that:

Theatre in human society has been a part of man's community existence since long before recorded history (Vera Robert 1974:p4)

The instrument of design existed in traditional performance and aided performance to interpret their roles. They (costumes) were also an essential part of the peoples way of life, and it was evident in their festivals, where the performers were decorated in elaborate and colorful attires that were made from animal skin and feathers, and also in their wars where they made their weapons from woods and mask that are from copper, bronze and tortoise shell and many others. The masks almost without exception covered the entire head of the performer. Costume occupied such an important position in the traditional theatre that they become the first visual element of design to develop alongside art.

Through few of the primitive tribes had special theatre or setting, none ever lacked costume and make-up. In all cases, they function not only as a disguise but also as an aid to the wearer in assuming identity of the character he is impersonating (Vera Robert 1974: p6).

Costume design becomes an art, its basic theory being that each individual costume must bear a relationship, not only to the time and place of the play, but to the characters function in the play structure and his psychological orientation as well. To examine costume historical perspective, one must know that it was in the 20th century that the principle of careful and accurate costuming in the theatre became a universally accepted practice, where designers tend

to aim at dressing a character, not only as benefits his character, but also as best suit his person depending on the total concept of the play.

An overview of Film.

Film is a form of entertainment that enacts a story by sound and a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement. Film is an audio-visual medium just like theatre, but the only difference between the two is that in theatre, actions are live while in film, camera shots and pictures are joined in to a whole through continuity editing during the post-production process. The process of film making requires a high level of creativity since it is a knowledge making process itself: according to Uka:

Creativity is the ability of facility to actually produce, make or express something that at least is part originated from oneself. Creativity requires faith, it begins in darkness like human life itself. (Uka 2008; p32)

The art of film making is very demanding and for it to stand out amongst others, it will require a lot of creative, artistic and intellectual thinking. Film production is constituted into five parts which are: development stage, pre-production stage, production stage, post-production stage, and distribution stage, but for the benefit of this discuss, we will be discussing only the three most prominent stages namely: the pre-production, production and post-production.

The pre-production stage is the stage that requires a lot of creative thinking and imagination. It is the period of gestation was ideas are expressed or conceived in to story then to synopsis and later the script.

The production stage is the stage where you give life to the script; it requires good cast and crew members, good location, good make-up, suitable costumes, appropriate props and good cameras.

Port-production stage is the stage where you merge the voices, rushes and images to the sound effects and also to have good marketing. All these and more are necessary to produce a film.

The evolution of film costume is towards its ultimate purpose to create in costumes an image which clearly enhances the delineation of a character. Film is a major instrument in educating people about culture of a particular people for example, Nigerian films have help to advance the fortune of the Nigerian languages where the Nollywood produces films that are of the Igbo expression, Yoriwood produces films that are of the Yoruba expressions and Kannywood produces films that are of Hausa expression, they use these mediums to showcase their culture and way of life.

Film is a valid reflection of a people's culture and costumes design for a film is an important tool used in showcasing the people's costumes which in turn put the essence of costumes as essential and indispensable elements of communicating aesthetics in film production. As a valid reflection of people's culture costumes are observed to tell who a person is, what they are like, how they feel or what they would like to be. A look at someone's clothing determines to a great deal the first impression they make: according to Brain:

When you choose the clothes you are going to wear and how you groom yourself; you make a personal statement to the world. You tell others what you think of yourself and you signal to others how they evaluate you (Brain 2005; p25).

Statistic have shown that 70% of those in the Nollywood industry are not skilled and as such film making is now money making venture and the technicality behind film making has been tossed aside (www.thedayonline February 2009 edition).

Based on numerous previewed films, most of the Nollywood costumiers do not usually do to a critical script analysis or breakdown as to know the character been created by the playwright. They just believe that costume is basically about clothing the character on set not minding if the fabric color and texture are interpreting a different meaning to the audience and screen writers.

THEORETICAL DISCOURSE.

Semiotics as a theory.

The Oxford Learners Dictionary defines semiotics as the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation.

Semiotics is an investigation into how meaning is created and meaning is communicated. Its origin lies in the academic study of how signs and symbols (visual and linguistic) create meaning. Our actions and thoughts, what we do automatically are often governed by a complex set of cultural messages and conventions and dependent upon our ability to interpret them instinctively and instantly.

The Semiotics theories are not definite but constantly being reviewed, extended and developed to become more precise and improve the significance of the information gathered when these theories are applied to work of art. Visual art consumers have become highly sophisticated readers of signs and signals, decoding subconsciously art work compositions. Everything surrounding us human beings today, including our own identities are all molded and manipulated by signs, words, images and our visual language.

The language of dress has its own principles of beauty that are dependent of simple reasoning. An effect is produced, an idea is expressed, people are given away by dress, more often than they themselves realize. The type of clothes they choose sometimes reveal what they dare not put into words". (Brody Johansen 1950:p30).

Costumes like the study of signs and symbols are information givers, they give or communicate hidden meanings very fast and accurate more than words can do. Costumes tells more story of a character in film than even his dialogue, it is the only visual part of the performing art that tells the character's age, gender, relationships, status, religion, occupation and so on without a word.

Ultimately, a film costume must enhance the performer to emphasize his personality so the designer's primary aim is to conceive and create a believable costume.

Clearly delineates character; so that this character is revealed as much by the costume as by the dialogue

of the script and performance of the actor. (Motley 1964:p139).

Costume is a very important element in a dramatic production, but also a performer should not be dominated or over powered by the costume, but wear a creation which reinforces the character and ideas of presentation as a whole. Because most costumes are symbolic and representative.

Each era in the past had a defining outline that link the character and personality to its costume, and when in a play, a define historical period is combined with some well-known personage(s) within that period, this matter of presenting the right silhouette becomes even more important because the audience must be helped to identify themselves with the period and to recognize the character wearing the costume(s) (Motley 1964:p142).

Portraying of character in film costume necessarily require balance between over-dressing and under-dressing. If a costume is right, it can serve the purpose of which it is design for, but if on the other hand it deviates too far, the character will be forced to work or performed against the costume. Also, the historical and cultural background that is present in the script must not be left out and its presentation within the costume will also communicate and aid the audience understanding of the film.

Note also that costumes are not independent of the action and the actors to make meaning and cannot independently give adequate information about the actions and the characters. Hence, costume must be viewed as projected by Lyndersay;

Costumes and make-up must not be seen as independent or arresting element in themselves; they must be an integral part of the whole design, harmonizing the chosen concept style, mood and atmosphere of the particular presentation. They can become emotionally charge through the subtle and

careful use of color, line, texture and sound suggesting a multitude of sensation, thereby putting the viewing audience in the appropriate mood for the action of the event.(Lyndersay 2011; p46)

Costumes are part of the stereograph which is essential audio-visual element in which film cannot do without in the enactment and reflection of the society and the stereograph basically established the environment in which the action is played. So the costumes must match with the place of the action, the mood of the character, the time of the day and also the period and style of the script so that it can function effectively.

Costumes in terms of been symbolic and representational will be discussed fully in the cause of this research with pictures of selected characters from coming 2 America and Sugar Rush respectively

Aestheticism as a theory.

Aesthetics, or esthetics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of beauty and taste, as well as the, Philosophy of art (its own area of philosophy that comes out of aesthetics). It examines aesthetic values, often expressed through judgements of taste. Aesthetics covers both natural and artificial sources of aesthetic experience and judgement. It considers what happens in our mind when we engage with aesthetic objects or environments such as viewing visual art, listening to music, reading poetry, experiencing a play, or exploring nature. The philosophy of art specifically studies how artists imagine, create, and perform works of art, as well as how people use, enjoy, and criticize art. Aesthetics considers why people like some works of art and not others, as well as how art can affect moods or even our beliefs. Both aesthetics and the philosophy of art ask questions like "What is art?" "What is a work of art?," "what is beauty?", and "What makes good art?"

Scholars in the field have defined aesthetics as "critical reflection on art, culture and nature". In modern English, the term "aesthetic" can also refer to a set of principles underlying the works of a particular art movement or theory (one speaks, for example, of a Renaissance aesthetic). Aestheticism (also the Aesthetic Movement) was an art movement in the late 19th century which privileged the aesthetic value of literature, music and the arts over their socio-

political functions. According to Aestheticism, art should be produced to be beautiful, rather than to serve a moral, allegorical, or other didactic purpose, a sentiment exemplified by the slogan "art for art's sake." Aestheticism originated in 1860s England with a radical group of artists and designers, including William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. It flourished in the 1870s and 1880s, gaining prominence and the support of notable writers such as Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde.

Aesthetics examines affective domain response to an object or phenomenon. Judgments of aesthetic value rely on the ability to discriminate at a sensory level. However, aesthetic judgments usually go beyond sensory discrimination. For David Hume, delicacy of taste is not merely "the ability to detect all the ingredients in a composition", but also the sensitivity "to pains as well as pleasures, which escape the rest of mankind." Thus, the sensory discrimination is linked to capacity for pleasure. For Immanuel Kant (*Critique of Judgment*, 1790), "enjoyment" is the result when pleasure arises from sensation, but judging something to be "beautiful" has a third requirement: sensation must give rise to pleasure by engaging reflective contemplation. Judgments of beauty are sensory, emotional and intellectual all at once. Kant (1790) observed of a man "If he says that canary wine is agreeable he is quite content if someone else corrects his terms and reminds him to say instead: It is agreeable to me," because "Everyone has his own (sense of) taste". The case of "beauty" is different from mere "agreeableness" because, "If he proclaims something to be beautiful, then he requires the same liking from others; he then judges not just for himself but for everyone, and speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things."

Viewer interpretations of beauty may on occasion be observed to possess two concepts of value: aesthetics and taste. Aesthetics is the philosophical notion of beauty. Taste is a result of an education process and awareness of elite cultural values learned through exposure to mass culture. Bourdieu examined how the elite in society define the aesthetic values like taste and how varying levels of exposure to these values can result in variations by class, cultural background, and education. According to Kant, beauty is subjective and universal; thus certain things are beautiful to everyone. In the opinion of Władysław Tatarkiewicz, there are six conditions for the presentation of art: beauty, form, representation, reproduction of reality, artistic expression and innovation. However, one may not be able to pin down these qualities in a work of art.

The question whether there are facts about aesthetic judgments belongs to the branch of Meta philosophy known as meta-aesthetics.

Costumier's Role

Another importance or exciting career in film production is the costume designer. He or she is the person who plans or designs the costumes to be worn by the actors and actresses in a film production. The costume designer must be a respectable or respected member of the whole production. In other words, they must be identified and hired as the case may be, by the first production meeting. Their role must be part and parcel of the production team, not an afterthought that is incorporated half way through rehearsals. Too often, a costume designer is seen solely as a costumer, a wardrobe mistress, a tailor or the supplier of items to be worn by the performers as dictated by the director or producer. This is in opposition to a person who has a sound knowledge of the history of costume theory, technique and style. Someone who can add to the production's artistic living. The task is a tedious one because of the processes involved. If these processes are followed correctly, the production comes out well, visually adding to the aesthetics and interpretation of the script and screenplay. To gain success in this, the designer(s) must understand that their role is multi-dimensional, they are researchers, creative thinkers and designer(s) working within the confines of the script, vision and concept of the director or producer.

The creation of costumes for any production is guided by the available script and the concept of the director and other designers like scene and lighting designers. Dani Lyndersay says:

Costume is subordinate to the character and the idea of the presentation as a whole, even though, it is an important element in a production. The created costume should not in any way tamper the mobility of the character it is created for (Lyndersay 2011:p16)

Kwaghkondo Ayber notes that there are lots of problem in the use of costume and make up in modern Nollywood films, it is either they are wrongly used or they are misapplied. There

should always be a balance between under-dressing and over-dressing so that the costume will really look symbolic and representational and to also serve the purpose of which it is designed for.

There are reasons for costuming a film and there are also factors that should be considered before designing the costume for a production. The designer must have a basic knowledge and understanding of the following:

- Anatomy
- Draftsmanship
- Cutting and building three dimensional items (using known and imaginative craft techniques).
- Qualities of dyes and paints
- The use of weight, height, mass and padding in dress.
- The language of specialized artisans.
- The adaptability of materials.
- The constraints of financial backing.
- Time and concepts.
- The physical dimensions and varieties of performing space.
- The needs and idiosyncrasies of performers.
- The aesthetics, cultural and emotional preference of the audience, and in addition be one who can eloquently and professionally justify, adapt and produce in order to be a valuable team player within the whole production.
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The costume designer's role is therefore all encompassing both artistically and intellectually in order to find and help create the inner spirit of the character within the production, because the costume is expected to transform an individual into the character he is expected to play. Suppose a slim actor is expected to play a fat character, how do you achieve this? The use of padding is employed, hair and large clothes to conceal the padding and it can be achieved.

According to Lyndersay;

A realistic cotton shape constructed from a well-fitting canvas, heavy will, or larger of gray baft or calico staffed with cotton butting or for rubber and secured to the actors body with ties, elastic or zippers, to simulate big bellies, pregnancy, well-built pictorial muscles saying or large breast, humped shoulder or back and worn as a body garment under the outer clothing.

(Lyndersay (2011:p515).

All these are supplements that are added to the body of the character for effects. To add the size of the mussels, breast, shoulder, back and even pregnancy. In doing this, the location and the background of the film must be considered and also the kind of camera shots will determine the details of the costume. If the character is given a close or extreme shot, the costume must be accurate in texture.

Costume designers must be well grounded in social and cultural history which includes the visual arts, dance and the theatre of the historical period. This is because clothing reflects most standard of beauty and the stylistic preference of a period and place. The more designers know about daily lives, occupations, class structure and favorite pass-time of a society, the better prepared they will be to design costumes that reflects the status and function of the character within a specific culture. Because most of our information about clothing of the past comes from painting and other visual arts, so knowledge of history will be helpful.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE MOVIES AND FILMOGRAPHY OF EACH OF THE MOVIE

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE MOVIE: LIVING IN BONDAGE (BREAKING FREE)

Twenty-five years after the events of the original movie, Andy Okeke (Kenneth Okonkwo) has become an ordained man-of-God, renouncing his allegiance to the secret cult now known as Brotherhood of the Six. The sect has expanded into an international organization, with most Nigerian members who survived the 1996 Otokoto riots fleeing the country apart from Chief Omego (Kanayo O. Kanayo) now an Imo state governorship aspirant and Mike Ekejimbe (Bob-Manuel Udokwu). The film opens with Omego's son Obinna (Enyinna Nwigwe) murdering his young daughter Kosi (Charlene Chisom Ignatus) in a forest as part of a money-making ritual. In a nod to the original story, her spirit torments her father throughout the movie, leading to his sudden death towards the end.

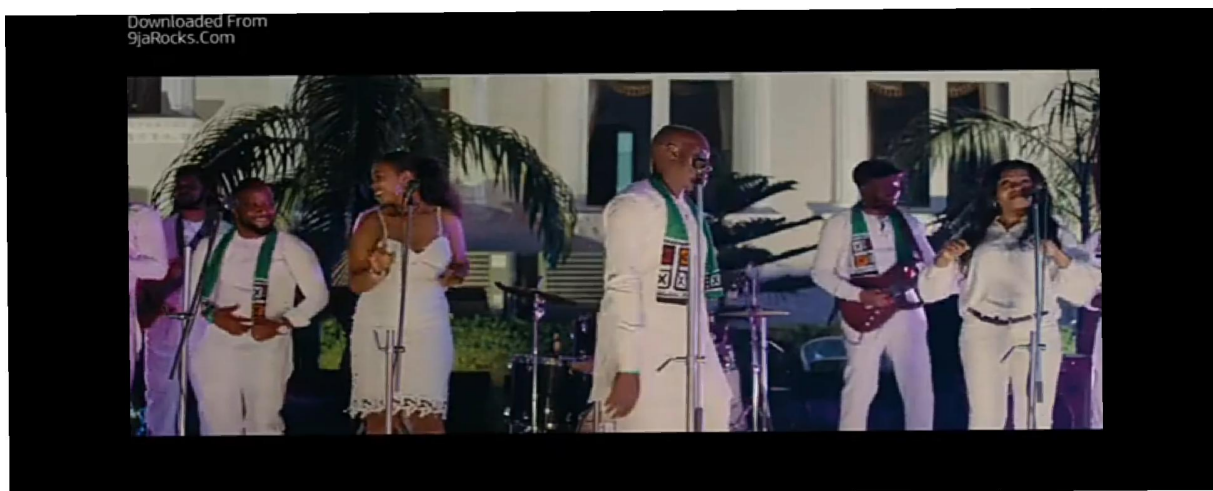
Nnamdi Okeke (Swanky JKA) Andy's secret son by his late second wife Ego has been raised by maternal relatives Pascal Nworie (Zulu Adigwe) and his wife Eunice (Ebele Okaro), and shares a close bond with their son Toby (Shawn Faqua). Highly ambitious but largely unlucky, Nnamdi is unable to maintain a stable career as an advertising executive five years after graduation. Despite the disapproval of his uncle who is aware of Omego's occultic background, Nnamdi, who yearns for a luxurious lifestyle by any means possible, becomes acquainted with Omego's wife Nneka (Ndidi Obi) and Obinna who both offer to help him establish connections within the advertising industry.

During an office presentation where Nnamdi pitches his campaign for an upcoming rail network, billionaire tycoon Richard Williams (Ramsey Nouah) is impressed by his ingenuity. He mentors Nnamdi professionally, and the latter is catapulted into high society status, acquiring vast wealth and recognition, but his new life comes at a price. Unbeknownst to Nnamdi, Richard is the new leader of The Six, and on a mission to lure him into their cult. Due to Andy's past, the Okeke lineage is eternally bound to the dark side.

Investigative journalist and blogger Uzoma (David Jones) grows suspicious of notable billionaires associated with mysterious murders, particularly after his sister and her daughter Kosi die in mysterious circumstances, and pays Andy a visit in search of answers. Having experienced cultism himself, Andy attempts to warn his son after Uzoma informs him of Nnamdi's existence and save him from The Six before time runs out. Richard eventually initiates Nnamdi, but fails to persuade Andy back into the fold after the latter refuses. Nnamdi later regrets joining The Six, especially after falling for Kelly (Munachi Abii) whom he meets at

Obinna's wedding when the latter remarries seven months after his wife's death. Richard and Omego have commanded him to present her as a sacrifice, and Nnamdi is torn between appeasing the cult and sparing Kelly's life.

Toby visits the depressed Nnamdi to get to the bottom of the latter's melancholy demeanor and passes the night at his place, but Richard possesses Nnamdi, commanding him to stab his sleeping cousin in lieu of Kelly. Unable to resist, Nnamdi resorts to stabbing himself instead and is rushed to hospital where he survives and reconciles with his biological father Andy whom he had previously rejected. Members of The Six are arrested after a recording Obinna sent Uzoma before his suicide is used as evidence. However, Richard is able to dodge indictment, and is seen on his private jet before the ending credits roll.



The white party at Richard Williams house, the touch of green on the musicians costumes looks beautiful.



The invited guest and grooms men at Obinna's traditional wedding.



Nnamdi Okeke and his girlfriend Kelly on a date, the ankara costume she is wearing fits the occasion and is African. The colour combination of what Nnamdi is wearing is also beautiful especially with the accessory and the cap.



Nnamdi and Kelly at the beach, their costume shows that they are dressed for leisure.



The scene of Obinnas traditional wedding, they costumes they are wearing alongside the accessories reflects the Igbo culture.



The initiation scene of Nnamdi and other new members of the secret cult of the six, they are dressed in black and red.



This is the office scene where Nnamdi is given appointment to start working for Richard, they are all dressed corporately



Andy Okeke is a pastor and he is costumed as that.

CAST

1. Ramsey Nouah as Richard Williams
2. Jidekene Achufusi as Nnamdi Okeke
3. Kenneth Okonkwo as Andy Okeke
4. Enyinna Nwigwe as Obinna Omego
5. Munachi Abii as Kelly Nwankwo
6. Shawn Faqua as Toby Nworie
7. David Jones as Uzoma Adibe
8. Ebele Okaro as Eunice Nworie
9. Zulu Adigwe as Pascal Nworie
10. Kanayo O. Kanayo as Chief Emeka Omego
11. Ndidi Obi as Nneka Omego
12. Bob-Manuel Udokwu as Mike Ekejimbe
13. Nancy Isime as Stella
14. Charlene Chisom Ignatus as Kosi Omego
15. Chamberlain Usuh as Himself

FILMOGRAPHY

1. Director: Ramsey Nouah
2. Producers: Steve Gukas, Dotun Olakunri and Charles Okpaleke
3. Editor: Anthony Ribeiro
4. Costumier: Olohigbe Nwagwu
5. Music by: George Kallis.

SUMMARY OF THE MOVIE COMING 2 AMERICA

Coming 2 America is a 2021 American romantic comedy film that serves as a sequel to the 1988 film *Coming to America* starring Eddie Murphy. On the 30th anniversary of his wedding with Lisa McDowell, Prince Akeem of Zamunda is summoned before his dying father, King Jaffe Joffer. Jaffe and his shaman Baba (Native doctor) reveal to a baffled Akeem that he had sired a son during his first visit in Queens, New York, after his aide Semmi had enticed two women into spending the night with them while Akeem was still searching for his future queen. One of them inadvertently drugged Akeem, resulting in a tryst he did not remember. As Zamundian tradition demands that only a male successor can inherit the throne, and Akeem has fathered only daughters, Akeem is forced to travel back to Queens to retrieve his son. If not, Zamunda could face a hostile takeover by Zamunda's militaristic neighbor nation Nexdoria, whose dictator, General Izzi (the brother of Imani, Akeem's original arranged bride-to-be, who continues to bark like a dog and hop on one leg), has been pushing for Akeem's eldest daughter Meeka into marrying his foppish son, Idi.

Following King Jaffe's funeral and Akeem's ascension to Throne, he and Semmi travel back to Queens to find his illegitimate son. During a lighthearted reunion with the barbershop gang they bonded with, head barber Mr. Clarence informs them that the son in question is Lavelle Junson, a ticket scalper who hustles outside of Madison Square Garden. After an awkward reunion with Lavelle's mother Mary, Akeem takes them back to Zamunda, much to his family's displeasure. When General Izzi learns of this, he drops by to introduce his daughter Bopoto to Lavelle as a last shot at laying claim to the throne of Zamunda, but in order to qualify as a royal prince, Lavelle first has to pass a series of traditional - and hazardous - tests.

Lavelle is at first highly reluctant to place himself in danger, but then bonds with Mirembe, a royal groomer, who tells him of Akeem's quest to find his queen and encourages him to follow his own path. Lavelle then invites his uncle Reem, Mary's streetwise brother, to Zamunda who coaches him on how to blend his urban upbringing with his new royal status. Lavelle gradually develops an understanding with Akeem's family and, using his wits and some forced courage, he passes and is made Prince of Zamunda. However, at his accession party, Lavelle overhears a conversation between Akeem and Izzi which makes him believe that Akeem is just exploiting him, and he, Mirembe, Mary and Reem go back to New York. Upset at losing Mary, whom she has befriended, Lisa locks Akeem out of their bedroom. After a pep talk from his father-in-law Cleo, who reminds him of late Queen Aoleon's progressive mind, Akeem flies back to the States, while Semmi is left to stall Izzi, who intends to return the next day to either see Bopoto marry Lavelle or declare war.

Returning to Queens, Akeem finds that Lavelle and Mirembe are about to get married. Confronted by Lavelle and reminded of his own life story, he gives them his blessing and releases Lavelle from his marriage to Bopoto. When Mirembe expresses reluctance in the couple cutting all of their ties to Zamunda, Akeem offers to fly Mary's family back for a proper wedding. In the meantime, Semmi and the princesses, all trained staff fighters, fight off and subdue General Izzi when he invades the palace, forcing him to try a more diplomatic approach. Upon his return home, Akeem changes the royal succession by allowing his daughter Meeka to ascend to the throne upon his death, while Lavelle is made an ambassador to the United States, and General Izzi has opened Nexdoria for a peaceful political and trading relationship, to which Akeem releases Imani from her 'dog curse.' The film concludes with a grand party at the royal

palace to celebrate Lavelle and Mirembé's marriage, including the barbers from Queens as special guests and a performance of the song "We Are Family" from Sexual Chocolate, and a performance from Davido.

CAST

1. Eddie Murphy reprises his role as Prince / King Akeem Joffer, who is crowned king of Zamunda

Murphy also reprises his other roles from the first film: Randy Watson, the lead vocalist of the soul band Sexual Chocolate, as well as Mr. Clarence, the local barber, and Saul, the Jewish barbershop customer.

2. Arsenio Hall reprises his role of Semmi, Akeem's best friend and aide.
Hall also plays Reverend Brown, a pastor of the church; as well as Mr. Clarence's right hand barber, Morris; and Baba, a witch doctor. He also reappears his role of Extremely Ugly Girl from the first film through archival footage.
3. Jermaine Fowler as Lavelle Junson, Akeem's and Mary's son
4. Leslie Jones as Mary Junson, Lavelle's mother
5. Tracy Morgan as Reem Junson, Lavelle's uncle and Mary's brother. He is referred to in the film as "Uncle Reems", and was Lavelle's father figure growing up.
6. KiKi Layne as Princess Meeka Joffer, Akeem's and Lisa's first daughter. She is ineligible to take over the throne of Zamunda since Zamundan law requires the nation's ruler to be male, and Akeem is reluctant to break with centuries of tradition.
7. Shari Headley reprises her role of Queen Lisa Joffer, Akeem's American-born wife with whom he fell in love in the first film.
8. Wesley Snipes as General Izzi, Imani's older brother and leader of Nexdoria
9. Teyana Taylor as Bopoto Izzi, General Izzi's daughter
10. James Earl Jones reprises as King Jaffe Joffer, Akeem's ailing father and the King of Zamunda.
11. Bella Murphy (Eddie Murphy's real daughter) as Princess Omma Joffer, Akeem's and Lisa's second daughter.
12. Akiley Love as Princess Tinashe Joffer, Akeem's and Lisa's third daughter.
13. Paul Bates reprises his role as Oha, a longtime royal servant.
14. John Amos reprises his role of Cleo McDowell, Akeem's former employer and father-in-law and Lisa's father.
15. Louie Anderson reprises his role of Maurice, a longtime McDowell's employee, now the manager of the Zamunda McDowell's restaurant.
16. Rotimi as Idi Izzi, General Izzi's son and the Prince of Nexdoria.
17. Vanessa Bell Calloway reprises as Imani Izzi, General Izzi's younger sister and Akeem's former intended bride.
18. Nomzamo Mbatha as Mirembé, a royal groomer and Lavelle's love interest
19. Clint Smith reprises his role of Sweets, a barber.

20. Kevin T. DeWitt as Nice Man, a barbershop patron.
21. Luenell as Livia, Lavelle's aunt.
22. Michael Blackson as Izzi's Lieutenant.
23. Garcelle Beauvais reprises her role of Grace, a royal rose bearer.
24. Trevor Noah as Totatsi Bibinyana, a Zamunda News Network anchor.
25. Colin Jost as Mr. Duke, a descendant of the Duke Brothers from the 1983 film Trading Places.
26. Morgan Freeman as himself.
27. Davido as himself.
28. En Vogue as themselves.
29. Salt-N-Pepa as themselves.
30. Gladys Knight as herself.
31. Dikembe Mutombo as himself.
32. Rick Ross as General Izzi's Soldier.
33. John Legend appears in a mid-credits scene singing "She's Your Queen to Be", which was sung by Paul Bates in the first film.

FILMOGRAPHY

1. Director: Craig Brewer
2. Producers: Kevin Misher and Eddie Murphy
3. Cinematographer: Joe Williams
4. Costumier: Ruth Carter
5. Editors: David S. Clark and Billy Fox
6. Music By: Jermaine Stegall

ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CHARACTERS AND THEIR COSTUMES FROM THE MOVIE COMING 2 AMERICA

Given the leap into the future, *Coming 2 America* had to reimagine the original film's celebrated costumes. In the '80s, Deborah Landis did wardrobe for the fictitious African kingdom, but this time filmmakers tapped legendary costume designer and Oscar winner Ruth E. Carter to create the modern incarnation, which she completed right before the pandemic hit.



Cleo Mc Dowell, Akeem's former employer and father in law in his restaurant where Akeem and his family when to celebrate their 30th anniversary. The suit he is wearing with the touch of ankara looks beautiful



Princess and King Akeem Practicing fight, the colour of her costume is the same with the Zamundan flag, that is to say she is practicing to defend her nation



Semmi, Princess Omma and Princess Tinashe fighting General Izzi and his soldiers to defend their territory.



Prince Lavelle and Bopoto on their arranged wedding day.
They shiny Gold costume she is wearing along
side the crown tells that she is royalty.



King Akeem and Queen Lisa on Prince Lavelle wedding day.



The Wedding ceremony of the crown Prince of Zamunda, lavelle.
The Bide's red and long flowing gown captures everyone's
attention at the wedding



Grace, Lavelle and Mary Lavelle's mother on his engagement ceremony with Bopoto her stylish ankara gown with the crown-like head ban looks beautiful



Prince Lavelle on his arranged wedding with Bopoto General Izzi's daughter. His costume is strictly African with the accessories giving it colour



Queen Lisa's red dress with the touch of gold looks really beautiful and also the jewelry to compliment it. Her maids are also dressed in red long flowing gown and are accompanying her to spray flowers to welcome the departing king Jaffe Jaffer



Zamuda Choir singing at the funeral ceremony of King Jaffe Jaffer. The ankara long flowing costumes they are wearing fits the occasion and is also beautiful especially with the accessories to match the costumes.



King Jaffe Jaffer in his casket on his funeral day, we can say the white on his costume is celebrating his passage to the other world and also the celebration of life. This is a common belief in Africa



Queen Lisa's red dress with the touch of gold looks really beautiful and also the jewelry to compliment it.
 Her maids are also dressed in red long flowing gown and are accompanying her to spray flowers to welcome the departing king Jaffe Jaffer



Zamuda Choir singing at the funeral ceremony of King Jaffe Jaffer. The ankara long flowing costumes they are wearing fits the occasion and is also beautiful especially with the accessories to match the costumes.



The Scene of the arranged wedding between prince lavelle and Bopoto.
General Izzi's costumes depicts the military person that he is,
and also very colourful with the accessories on them



General Izzi in his military costume alongside his soldiers.



Grace, Lavelle and Mary Lavelle's mother on his engagement ceremony with Bopoto her stylish ankara gown with the crown-like head ban looks beautiful



Prince Lavelle on his arranged wedding with Bopoto General Izzi's daughter. His costume is strictly African with the accessories giving it colour

Costumes just like semiotics which is the study of signs and symbols are information givers, they give or communicate very accurate information about the wearer. Costumes are the only visual part of the performing art that tells the character's age, gender, relationships, status, religion, occupation and so on without the character saying a word.

The evolution of film costume is towards its ultimate purpose to create in costumes an image which will clearly tell or give information about the actors and actresses wearing them. And film is a measure instrument in educating people about other people's culture. For example, Nigerian films have helped in advancing the fortune of the Nigerian languages. So costume designers must be well grounded in social cultural history to be able to design costumes that are believable, because visually actors and their costumes are perceived as one because they merge into a single image on screen. The paper recommends the following recommendations to the readers:

- The creation of costumes for any production is guided by the available script and the concept of the director, so the costume designer must do a proper research to be able to interpret the character by what they are wearing.
- Most times, costume designers are of the opinion that costuming of film characters basically just require clothing the actor on set, not paying attention to the colour, texture and fabric whether it will suit or fit the role and personality of the wearer.
- As earlier mentioned, the role of the costume designer goes beyond just clothing the character, it involves clothing the film character, the mind of the director and most importantly the mind of the targeted viewers, it is for the director to see the blue print of what the costumier has in mind is in line with what he wants to bring to life through visuals.
- Finally, from these findings it is clear that costume is the key channel for character presentation for easier interpretation. This paper recommends that film makers should pay more attention to costume being a vital aspect of film making.

In conclusion, the importance of this study is to find out how costume being a vital medium in the interpretation of characterization can be of help to costume designers in enabling them follow a step by step process of the script breakdown. It is explained in this study that

costumes serves as effective tool to fasten the interpretation of character by the viewers, that is to say the role of the costumier is as important as the role of the movie director and producer.

In assessing the evolving fashion and trends of the developed film industry, the rate of change and improvement in the aspect of costuming is alarming, so without proper research the costumier might be left behind.

Therefore, the costumier's role is all encompassing both artistically and intellectually in order to find and help create the inner spirit of the character within the production, because the costume is expected to transform an individual into the character he is expected to play.

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