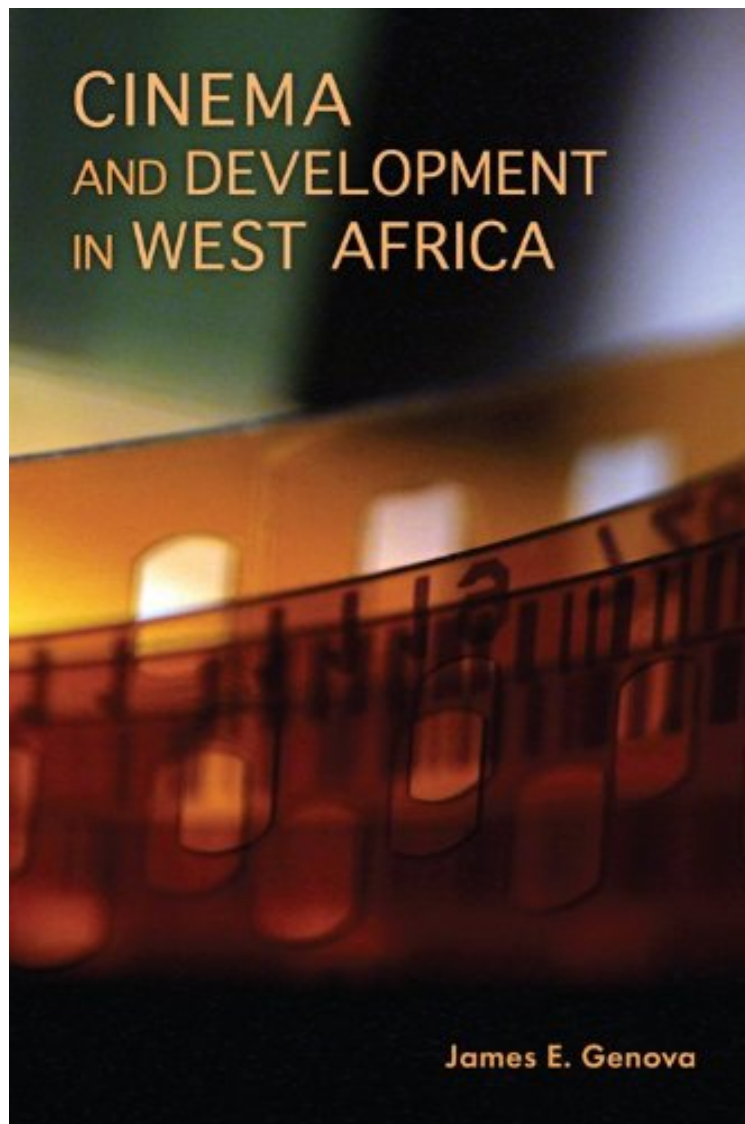


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Cinema and Development in West Africa: Film as a Vehicle for Liberation

James E. Genova

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Cinema and Development in West Africa shows how the film industry in Francophone West African countries played an important role in executing strategies of nation building during the transition from French rule to the early postcolonial period. James E. Genova sees the construction of African identities and economic development as the major themes in the political literature and cultural production of the time. Focusing on film both as industry and aesthetic genre, he demonstrates its unique place in economic development and provides a comprehensive history of filmmaking in the region during the transition from colonies to sovereign states.

Cinema and Development in West Africa achieves the important task of reminding readers that the economic structures of neocolonialism possessed deep tendrils that broadly impacted postcolonial life and politics. Moreover, it clarifies what the political stakes of African cinema were for colonists, nationalists and intellectuals. The descriptions of the hopes, aspirations and political agendas of the pioneering cohort of French West African cinastes cogently presented by Genova will be of interest to specialists, with prose appropriate for advanced undergraduate classrooms.

(Interventions) Overall, Cinema and Development in West Africa is a welcome addition to cinema scholarship. . . . [Genova's] historical approach illuminates the enduring importance of political and economic dynamics not yet fully explored in the study of African cinema. Genova's book is a useful contribution to the vast and growing field of African cinema. (Africa) 6.3 Sept. 2014 (Journal of African Media Studies) Focusing on film both as industry and aesthetic genre, the book demonstrates [cinema's] unique place in economic development and provides a comprehensive history of filmmaking in the region during the transition from colonies to sovereign nationhood. May 2014 (Journal of Pan African Studies) Genova . . . offers a brisk and instructive overview of the history of cinema in the former French colonies of West Africa . . . Genova's attention to the material conditions of cinematic production is salutary. . . . Recommended. (Choice) Genova's book not only asserts a fundamental relationship between European colonial and African post-colonial cinema, it asserts that it is precisely because the first generation of African filmmakers knew and understood colonial cinema, and its place in colonial doctrine and practice that they sought to bring their revolutionary ideology and poetics to cinema. (International Journal of African Historical Studies) [T]his is a useful study of French West African cinema pioneers and their times. It illuminates the institutional and structural obstacles that stood between the filmmakers' vision of a new cinematic art and their intended audiences. It also highlights their resistance to pressure from colonial and postcolonial governments to put their artistic skills at the service of venal political regimes. As such, it will prove of value to historians and film scholars interested in this crucial period in the history of African cinema. (American Historical) This is an authoritative book on the history of filmmaking in colonial and postcolonial Francophone West Africa. It is a detailed historical analysis of the politics, aesthetics, and economics of cinema emphasizing the critical role of French colonial administrators, African film pioneers, and the custodians of West Africa's postcolonial states. (Olufemi Vaughan Bowdoin College) About the Author James E. Genova is Associate Professor of History at the Ohio State University-Marion. He is author of Colonial Ambivalence, Cultural Authenticity, and the Limitations of Mimicry in French-Ruled West Africa, 1914-1956.