

Casey, Conerly, Rochester Institute of Technology, United States

Vigilant Attunements: Danger and the 'Magic-art' of Global Media

In 1995, more than 600 Muslim secondary school girls in northern Nigeria developed the classic signs of spirit possession—eyes rolling back, foaming at the mouth, crying, shouting, and most remarkably, dancing “like they do in Indian film.” Reformist *Qur'anic* scholars forbid Indian film suggesting the girls’ mimetic apprehensions and renderings of *masala* music and dance drew spirits to them, endangering the community. A decade later, Muslim Nigerian video filmmakers, insisting that song-and-dance sequences enhanced their films' marketability, proclaimed the moral legitimacy of their films by depicting them works of preaching. The uneasy juxtaposition of spirit attracting song-and-dance with condemnatory reformist teachings exposed viewers to powerful word-sound rituals of evocation and expulsion, embodiment and disembodiment. Musical language (aural, kinesthetic and tactile), combined with the imagery and the advertising languages of religious orthodoxies and the market, drew consumers into danger and deliverance—an “aesthetics” mapped onto, and amplifying the sensoria of (post) colonial, global violence.