

Review

Which change, what change? Glamourising social misfits in selected Nigerian home movies

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Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation with a vibrant emerging theatre culture; the home movies. Currently, Nigeria is ranked the second largest producer of films in the world. Nollywood, as the home movies industry is called, has produced films in their thousands reflecting various aspects of the Nigerian culture and tradition. Prominent amongst such pre-occupations of directors and producers of Nollywood is the presentation of a class of wealthy citizens in the society who determines what happens to people in their environment. Because of this get-rich quick mania, characters are portrayed in a number of Nollywood movies that tend to encourage even the lazy to do odd jobs, including most often, ritual sacrifices to get to the socio-economic class of people in the society. This paper attempts to look at three of such movies, their effects on, not only the Nigerian viewer (Nollywood's immediate target audience), but the globe where Nollywood currently ravages.

Key words: Change, glamourising, social misfits, Nigerian home movies.

INTRODUCTION

Of all the forms of art, that which is most long lasting in the minds of its consumers are the audio-visuals. When we read works of art, we can only visualise the characters in action; but when we are exposed to stage performances of the same literary texts, because of the practical excitements that we do not just imagine but see, its effect on the viewing audience is by far deeper than the reading audience. For stage productions, such effects can only be remembered after the productions. This is quite different when such a production is recorded, or when it is via the medium of film. Unlike the stage

productions, in film or movies, the viewer has the advantage of multiple viewing and the opportunity to analyse, critique and digest the contents of the film. In addition to this is the comfort of the place of viewing movies. While you must be in the theatre for a stage production, for movies, you have a choice of going to the cinema halls or view such in the absolute comfort of your home, devoid of distractions that other viewers in open theatres may experience. When one therefore, assesses movies within the confinement of the said comfort, most likely, one's attention is more focused, directional and

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critical. Because of societal norms, weather challenges and the like, in some countries of the world, children can hardly go for either stage productions or cinema. Such children find solace in the homes where those same movies can be viewed. This way, because of the high patronage at home and public centres, its effect on the adults and the adolescence in the society is great.

Of all the forms of entertainment, the screen has but one language; the language of images. That is why in film, thought and image exist; but image is primary. On the screen, one extracts the thought from the image, in literature, the image from the thought. The task which the motion picture tries to achieve is, by the power of the moving image, to make the audience hear, see and feel. It is above all, to make the audience understand. This total experience of the audio – visual medium is based primarily on the image, and the ability to match image to image, and image to sound (Ekwuazi, 1991:7). We are so concerned with the dynamic power of this medium and its influence on the audience from of old till date. It was in such assessment that Baburo Petal documents *The Influence of Hollywood on Indian Consumers*. According to Petal, in Miller (2005:78) Hollywood undertook this cultural insemination of millions of people, their most powerful weapon in the world – the movies.

Pictures after pictures were sent to India during the two World Wars- pictures that taught us to dance rhumbas and sandas; pictures that thought us to coo and woo; pictures that thought us to utter “Hi” and “Gee”, pictures (of) devilry and divorce and pictures that took us to jinks and drinks. Hollywood has vitiated our food, water, air, arts, music, culture, costumes, philosophy, life and human relations. Whatever Hollywood touched was contaminated. A thousand American sins became as many Indian fashions. That is how Hollywood thought us the American way of life through entertainment.

Petal’s observation here is not limited to Hollywood’s global onslaught. Even the Indian populace he defends here later exported their culture to other parts of the world through their films. Same for the Chinese films as one can argue for any film that transcends the immediate geographical configuration of its viewership. It is because of this potent influence that the movie industry can wield and is capable of sustaining that producers of movies need to be cautious of what messages they pass across in their works.

THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

Following the exposure of Nigeria to the Western life via colonial administration and post-colonial experience, we were introduced to foreign media and means of entertainment. Hollywood, Bollywood and the Chinese films for instance, flooded the open and ready market of Nigeria. As people got excited with their contact with these alien cultures, little did they know that they were

rather unknowingly getting influenced by these foreign cultures forgetting or neglecting their indigenous cultures and forms of entertainment for an almost unending time. As this influx mounted day by day, the major television outfit of the government, the Nigerian Television Authority took over by screening foreign soaps. Asiegbu, cited by Nwogu (2007:8) states that at this particular point, most of the television programmes were foreign soaps, especially, the Mexican soaps because we did not have our own indigenous programmes. This got some Nigerians edgy to create alternative local forms of entrainment. As a result of this zeal “Mirror in the Sun”, came up which, according to Igwe (2007:10) was the first soap opera produced by an independent producer on the television. This gingered other private individuals to write and submit proposals to the Nigerian Television Authority. Consequently, they came up with “Behind the Clouds”, and then Zeb Ejiro and Amaka Igwe came up with “Ripples” and “Checkmate” respectively. These made huge successes and encouraged others who came with a lot of ideas but they could not make serious headway, because the Nigerian Television Authority had a problem with sponsorship of play productions. Subsequently, then came the economic austerity measures, (the Structural Adjustment Programme, SAP) that made sponsorship of such productions impossible. Quite a lot of the television houses’ technical staff, film units of the Ministry of Information and audio – visual sections of similar parastatals were laid off (Idegu, 2004: 169). Because these technical staff needed to put food on the table for their families, they began to use video cameras for the home movies.

It should be noted that because of the way these trained technical staff were relieved of their jobs with the Nigerian Television stations, their plunge into home movie making may after all, have some protest aesthetics. The preponderance of ritual sacrifices, witchcraft and the like as the only selling stories as always claimed by the producers leaves much to be desired. Their protest was to get means of livelihood, at all cost, the content of the movies notwithstanding, so far as they could lay their hands on indigenous materials which they rarely used in context. Okome and Haynes (1997:92) document that:

...the structural pattern of popular indigenous films must be seen and discussed in the framework of the society where its practice is situated, as well as in its unique relationship to its audience. The social framework includes the social and ritual roots of the theatre practice which produced the movies. Indigenous films making is a very pragmatic enterprise. Themes may be universal in appeal, but the social landscape is usually situated in recognizable cultural history - the history of traditional society of art cinema, formulated for an authentic frame of an indigenous theatre practice and forged by a crude zeal to satisfy the audience’s glamour for its own face and cultural avatars, filmmakers in this cinema explore

the culture of its audience.

We do not have any contrasting view about movies evolving from the culture of the people that produce it. We are however, appalled with rather the nonchalance and obvious misrepresentation of the people's culture(s). At the early commencement of the Nigerian home movies, the producers gave an impression that they were "rebellious" against foreign films with our alien cultures. ZebEjiro, an unmistakable experienced producer of the Nigerian movies, and in fact one of those who birthed it once confessed in an interview with Nwogu (February 14th 2007) that:

Before home video movies we watched foreign movies in our homes. Because of the vacuum created by the non – existence of an indigenous entertainment, the foreign movies took over the market- 90% of what Nigerians watched were foreign movies. But when Nigerian home videos came, we fought the battle and the reverse is the case. Now more than 90% of Nigerians watch Nigerian home movies, while only less than 10% are foreign movies. Even people in Hollywood are looking up to Nigerians for stories. There was a conference held some time ago on Nigeria home movies. They cannot understand how we make our movies. There was a full page write up in the New York Times on the Nigerian home movies. This is a plus. We are using our indigenous materials to battle the global entertainment upsurge (emphasis mine)".

The impression here has some nationalistic motif, sounding as if the entertainment industry of Nigeria that was over dominated by foreign film dealing deadly blows to our indigenous culture was being countered by local movies. It looked like the Nigerian home movies were out to change that ugly incursion of foreign cultures. But over the years, it has remained a puzzle as to what change and which change they are really after. Questioning their direction, Haynes (2000:208) submits that if Nigerian film production was supposed to take up the challenge posed by the influx of foreign cultures through foreign films, then films have responded poorly. Art without cultural base is meaningless. But it must be art in the first place, aesthetically fulfilling. It is only then that art can effectively promote and propagate cultures. Anything short of this will be counter-productive and debasing.

The focus of most Nigerian home movie producers is far from laundering the battered image of Nigeria at home and abroad. It is far from cultural promotion. It is never close to finding commensurate alternative to counter the deleterious effects of foreign films on our indigenous cultures. Simply put, it is a change geared towards advancing their means of livelihood and they give no consideration to the negative effects of their misapplication of Nigerian tradition, falling guilty of the same offence, they all along, accused foreign films of

doing. Because their major motivational force is money making, it brings to the forefront the fact that commercial films do not serve culture or go out to decisively encourage morality. If anything, they break norms and show a culture that is more of their own creation, and after their own likeness; a culture that the supposed owners themselves frown at and reject. This point is advanced by the way a number of the actors go into obvious anti Nigerian cultural antics just because they want to make money. David Ajiboye's comment in *The Nigerian Tribune* newspaper of June 15th, 2005 about Bisi, one of Nigerian female actors is a great pointer. According to the report "Bisi doesn't see anything wrong in facing the camera nude so far as the pay is justifiable and the message it is intended will be of immense value to the society" How can such an act be said to be Nigerian? No doubt, within the confines of a ritual/festival performance, you can have a glimpse of such exposure, sometimes during the initiation into womanhood rites. But to pose in front of a camera and show the whole world the contours of one's nudity, not for any sacred/ritual benefit, but for money, exemplifies the obvious disadvantages inherent in quite a number of the Nigerian home movies. What other message can be intended in such an act but a complete rehearsal for blue film that the typical Nigerian culture does not permit. If foreign films have such unholy elements of pornography that the Nigerian government frowns at, then Bisi, and quite a number of the Bisis in the Nigerian home movies should be cut to size in their penchant to ape Western filmic style.

This alien cultural behaviours in the home movies may after all have arisen from even the name, Nollywood, which we dare say came out of Hollywood. There is no originality in that AT ALL. So from that perspective, virtually everything that has to do with the Nigerianisation of foreign films will definitely and expectedly be as problematic as their name. The choice of Nollywood as a name is, without doubt a reflection of their uncritical, uncreative inverted ingenuity which breeds the likes of Bisi in our movie industry. Are they in search of global acceptance? Does such acceptance lie with a copied name or the originality of our narratives? With that almost plagiarized name, what has the name given to us positively that a typical indigenous name would not have given us?

Because of the way former technical staff with the Nigerian Television Authority (the Federal Television houses) were hounded out of job because of the Structural Adjustment Programme of the Federal Government, they granted to themselves the leverage as it were, to launch what can be assessed as the culture of protest aesthetics. The content, style, and focus of the home movies, most often than not confirm this. John Kani of the Market Theatre, South Africa, talking about the South African experience during the inglorious apartheid regime observes thus:

Our great artists created images in wood, stone, caves and on canvas that reflected our culture with great pride. The songs and dances were about who we are, where we come from and where we are going. But once the intentions of the colonials became clear the culture of resistance was born. Poems and songs and stories spoke of our suffering and the evil of the oppressor. Sculptures and paintings bore the pain and indignity of our people. The voice of defiance grew from a whisper to a deafening roar in the ears of the oppressor. It was then that the artist had to find, ingeniously, other means of expressing the anger, the joys, the frustrations, the hopes and the aspirations of our people (emphasis mine). <http://www.africanchorus.org/literary%20papers/JK1.htm>

How else can one explain the almost total abuse of professional ethics and disregard for cultural aesthetics and sensibilities of Nigerians by quiet a number of the Nigerian home movie producers except that they are protesting against the vestiges of colonialism and Western civilization.

Because of the way these home movie producers began to churn out Nigerian culture-based films, they were easily accepted by the immediate audience long starved of a form of entertainment that they can call their own. Again because of the protest aesthetics, the use of the people's culture and traditional practices was used as baits on the gullible audience by the producers to make quick money that the Nigerian Television Authority denied them by their sack. So much of rituals permeated every fabric of the movies that, to some Nigerians, as one may argue for the audience outside of Nigeria, Nigeria was a country of ritual killings and voodooism. No doubt, in our Nigerian societies, the supernatural appears in virtually every aspect of our lives. Some Nigerians even patronise indigenous magic when under stress and confrontations to which these melodramatic films routinely subject some of their characters. We also agree that witchcraft is a common weapon in a number of domestic or neighbourly antagonisms. So invariably, we are not saying that these acts do not take place, but our concern is that they are blown out of proportion. Ake (2002:61) agrees that it is true that we have violence with us and various armed robberies and assassinations. But our goal as the mirror of the society is not to encourage these negative aspects by reflecting them too much on screen without redress.

There is no country in the world that does not practice witchcraft, rituals, voodooos and the like. How much of such do we see its overdose in Hollywood, Bollywood and all the other Woods of the globe? How much of this past, and sometimes harmful past, do the other film producers in the world emphasis on, just because they want to make money by playing on the seeming ability of the audience to take in anything? But because Nigerians advertise their hunger at alarming and exaggerated rates, producers do this to catch in some cash, and this they are doing very well at the detriment of the essence of our

national being and cultural sacredness and relevance. The venture into film products has, however, brought more dreadful consequences than cultural pollution. It is difficult to say whether the poor showering of Nigerian films on creative works of art is the result of an overemphasis on the call to use the medium as a tool for the promotion and propagation of culture or the result simply of the inability of the directors, who are fascinated in the medium but do not have the discipline to grapple first with its forms and technicalities. Both means are to be blamed for the poor artistic quality of Nigerian films. Cultural didacticism and cultural confusion account for much of the problem (Haynes, 2000:202).

CASE STUDIES

Today, Nigeria is the second largest producer of movies in the world, second to India. This puts every message portrayed in our movies under global watch and criticism. Nigeria is therefore, exporting her rich culture to other parts of the world, even as Hollywood and Bollywood fore fronted. However, as the agitation to curb the excesses of these foreign films can be said to have contributed to the birth of the Nigerian home movies, a look at the movies show that we are already more guilty of cultural misadventures than our professional forebears.

Open Secret

The author prefers Open Secret in his analysis of voodoo-based Nigerian movies because of the abounding evidence that in this movie is encapsulated all similar Nigerian movies with this kind of focus and thematic preoccupation. At the beginning of the movie, we see Olisemeka as a poor man, incapable of feeding his wife. So poor that he eventually returns his wife to the village, declaring the union over. He comes back to town and consults a shrine, "Ogugu" on how to break even. He is told what to do, what to abstain from, what sacrifices to make. He obliges and suddenly becomes rich. With his leap from poverty to wealth, he marries another woman, donates millions of naira (Nigerian currency) to his church and community. In fact, in recognition of his contributions, the king of his village and the council of chiefs, appreciate Olisemeka with a chieftaincy title. Chief Olisemeka regularly makes ritual and human sacrifices to "Ogugu" and by this, his wealth, affluence and popularity grow astronomically. He introduces Uwakwe, his business friend whose business is collapsing to "Ogugu". Uwakwe is ordered to exchange the senses of his two children, sleep with his daughter often and never call his children by their names. His wife notices the great breakthrough of her husband's wealth, but she is sad that the health of her children deteriorates as her husband's wealth increases. She visits a spiritualist who uncovers the deal.

She returns home to her husband who feigns ignorance, but she challenges him to call his children by their names. Chief Olisemeka refuses. Later in the evening, she stumbles into the room to see her husband making love with their daughter, Amuche. Unable to endure this, she runs to the village to report. By the time they return to the town, chief Uwakwe is dead on the bed, bloated with money all over the place. He dies because the secret of his wealth is discovered by his wife. As for chief Olisemeka, his son Ronald returns from abroad at the age of twenty. His father talks him into initiation to "Ogugu" in accordance with chief Olisemeka's oath with "Ogugu". Ronald refuses. His father eventually bundles him into the "Ogugu" shrine, ready to be sacrificed when the youths of the village get wind of it, storm the shrine, free Ronald and give chief Olisemeka a cut on his head. He is dragged to the village as the villagers are alarmed at the turn of events. Then the movie ends.

This is first and foremost, a product of a bad script, which according to Derek Musa, in Omatsola (1998:73) is regarded as padding. According to him, it is like a fake pregnancy – all clothes and no baby. In his opinion the flaw of "padding" is easily committed when worthless scripts are paraded for production". Unlike the way this movie and several others present the issue of ritual murder, it is a grievous offence in Nigeria. In this movie, businessman Uwakwe who inverts the senses of his children and sleeps with his daughter (incest by all Nigerian cultural values) for money ends up dying rather cheaply without any form of reprimand AT ALL. He dies just because the secret of his wealth is known by his wife. So what becomes of the brutalised abused daughter? What becomes of the inverted senses of his innocent children? What lesson(s) is the movie passing to those who want to make money by such dirty means? That they can make money this way, "enjoy" themselves for as long as they keep to the rules of the rituals and be ready one day to die, quietly without any form of punishment? As for chief Olisemeka, in spite of all the atrocities he commits, he ends up only with a cut on the head and a public disgrace. That is all. Is there no possibility that chief Olisemeka will use his same ill-gotten wealth to eventually buy back his fame, respect and regard since the movie ends rather open ended without any punishment meted on chief Olisemeka?

Dons in Abuja

In this movie are a group of friends, Chief Okaomee, Nwoko, Onwa and a few others who are members of a dreaded cult, the Venerable Circle. Members here are the people that matter in the economic and political affairs of the city. They are portrayed as the envy of those in search of fulfilment and accomplishment to the point of societal acclamation, acceptance and adoration. Whatever they say is law and there is hardly any law of the land that does not bow where they are involved. The

news of their affluence is in every nook and cranny of the town so much that it spreads to all surrounding towns and villages. David who works in town and pursues the legitimate and civil way to feed himself and send whatever he can afford to his parents, visits his parents one day to the almost uncontrollable fury of his father. His father is so angry with David for working in town and not being able to make money like others do. Adequately humiliated, David returns to town and with the aid of a friend, he is introduced to the Venerable Circle and he is eventually initiated. To become like the other members and burst forth with wealth, David is told to sacrifice his mother, and he agrees. Then he becomes rich overnight. Onwa, one of the members of the cult goes home often to pick young boys to the city, promising to send them abroad. Gullible parents, who are also made to believe that there is plenty of money abroad, release their children to Onwa with gratitude. Onwa, however, uses them for ritual sacrifice in the Venerable Circle to fortify his membership and bloat his wealth. Later in the movie, Nwoko intercepts a parcel belonging to his friend and cult mate, chief Okaomee. To hit him back, chief Okaomee kidnaps Nwoko's only daughter. Onwa sells four boys to Nwoko for sacrifice but one of the boys is rejected by the cult spirits and he escapes to break the secret in the village. Unknown to Onwa, he comes to the village to pick more boys with his usual pretence of sending them abroad for greener pastures. The village clamps down on him and he is arrested by the law enforcement agents, the police.

Like *Open Secret*, this is yet another instance of glamourising social miscreants in Nigerian movies. The only slight difference here is that the police apprehend Onwa at the end of the film. Then a lot of questions. What becomes of all other members of the Venerable Circle who are not caught? Will they continue in their ritual escapades and "enjoy" themselves full blast without remorse? Will they fly out of the country, like most of their likes do, long before the arms of the law attempts to grab them? Will Onwa in the police net break the secret that he took an oath never to disclose? Will Onwa himself not go to court, use his money to fight the case for prove of his membership of any secret cult, win the case and even claim damages? As laudable as handing him over to the police is, the film should have advanced its plot to show how decisively Onwa and the entire Venerable Circle are dealt with to the deterrent of others. Most often, like in *Dons in Abuja*, punishments, when they are meted out at all, are far from commensurate with the crimes committed. When this happens, the movies do not only promote these misfits and bad examples, but they encourage others to be like them and stock enough money to fight their way if they are ever caught.

Super Hero

Super Hero is set in an imaginary town called Amalu. It is

a typical Nigerian Igbo village with regard for traditional worship in their god, Okrika. At the beginning of the movie, the village is ruled by a powerful, people-oriented and dynamic king, *Igwe*, but whose first “son”, prince Obika is nothing but a tyrant and a bully. He goes about committing all sorts of oppression, disregarding the office of his father, the *Igwe*. In spite of the observation of the council of chiefs, the *Igwe* does not seem to understand. Obina, the “second” son of the *Igwe* is the complete opposite of Obika. He is humble, well behaved, respectful and loved by the people. One day, Obika arrests a man into the bush and assaults him with the help of his assistants. Obika demands the man’s farm, a case that the *Igwe* earlier settled in the villager’s favour, but which Obika will not let go. As he arrests the man from his farm in the most humiliating way into a jungle for assault, the man’s son runs to the *Igwe* for his intervention. The *Igwe*, in the company of his chiefs locates the bush where Obika is brutalising the villager. Enraged, the *Igwe* openly denounces Obika’s behaviour warning him that he was heading for destruction. He announces that based on his records of misbehaviour and continued refusal to change, when he the *Igwe* eventually joins his ancestors, Obika will not ascend the throne, but a more befitting son, which is obviously Obina. The *Igwe* orders the villager free and returns to the palace very disappointed with Obika. As the *Igwe* goes back to the palace, Obika grumbles loud and clear, rather rudely that unlike his father’s disapproval of his behaviours, he Obika was heading for greatness. Chief Udemba, all the while angry with the *Igwe* for reprimanding him over taking a fellow chief’s wife, meets Obika to pledge loyalty and remind him of the weight of the *Igwe*’s declaration that after his death, Obika was not qualified to be the *Igwe*. Later, Obika stabs his father, the *Igwe* to death in his sleep. He remains undiscovered and therefore, against the laid down traditional due process, Obika mounts the throne and takes over as the *Igwe*. Neither his own mother, the chief priest nor the chiefs, except chief Udemba recognise him as *Igwe*. Obika terrorises the entire village with arrests, killings and tyranny. Dissatisfied with her son’s tyranny, the Queen reveals to Obika his true father. On her marriage to the *Igwe*, she experienced delayed child birth. *Igwe* threatened to take another wife. She visited diviner who recommends that she sleeps with a nonentity in the village after which her womb will be opened by the gods. Not happy about this, but deter-mined to secure her place as the Queen, she agrees and that union resulted to Obika. By this, he is not qualified for the throne as stated by the late *Igwe* who dies unaware of this secret. Obika slaughters his mother there and then. He proceeds to arrest all the chiefs, takes them to the bush, ties them at stake and kills all of them. Obina his brother runs away to take refuge in Mbiaka, his mother’s village. Ukadike, the chief wrestler and head warrior of Amalu, backed up by the slain chiefs, organises the warriors for a battle against Obika. From Mbiaka, Obina is supported with warriors to fight Obika by his mother’s kinsmen that Obika wants to

invade if they do not release him. In the battle, Obika dies a very simple death while Ukadike is only injured. Obina is crowned *Igwe* by the chief priest and peace returns to the land which Obina renames Ukadike in honour of his friend and chief warrior. The movie ends.

Who then is the super hero in the movie? The *Igwe* who rules according to the dictates and mores of the people? Ukadike who fights and kills the notorious Obika? Obina who eventually takes over his father’s throne or the tyrant himself, Obika? For any movie interested in sending a straight message on socially accepted behaviours, there should be no ambiguity in its hero. Come to think of it, why should such a terrible haughty Obika be allowed to rule for such a period of time, causing untold hardships to the people and land and die, again without any form of punishment as deterrent to his likes? Why will the Queen keep the secret of Obika’s fatherhood to herself until Obika kills every real or imagined enemy including herself? Are we saying that the society should accommodate the likes of Obika for such a long period of time of avoidable calamities, just waiting for the day he will die almost without pains? Is there no way such Obikas can be cut to size long before they destroy the fabrics of the society that will take longer time to rehabilitate? Such a movie may be quietly encouraging tyranny, oppression and terrorism for as long as the illegitimate person in power has access to the apparatus of government.

On a political scene, the film captures, to an extent, the political misbehaviour of the ruling classes in a number of African countries where elections hardly take place, yet with staggering results of voters that the powers that be and they alone can fathom. Countries where political leaders, who themselves know they never won elections, nevertheless, occupy offices for several years. But the point is, there should be a difference between these socio-political realities and the presentation of these realities in movies. As the voice of the people, theatre should be seen to go beyond the realities by offering solutions to the problems that bedevil the people. Anything short of this, the movies will be condoning and giving a stamp of approval to these social misdeeds.

Conclusion

The three selected movies used in this paper are just reflections of some aspects of the totality of Nigerian movies. We want to agree with Ekwuazi (1991:51) that all art is traditional; is cultural: the discrete units of every art from like the entire art for itself derive from specific cultural and traditional realities. But the case is that such traditional realities should be presented in such a way that they drive home lessons to move the society forward than far back to the ancient times with all the shortcomings. Citing Uzoukwu, Linda (2007:52) agrees that the bulk of the Nigerian movie makers:

... have failed woefully in the sense that they are not

reproducing art as art should be. Life is art and art is life. If you are going to tell me a story of my town, tell it to me the way it was so that if I didn't exist in that period or era, I could learn something and say yes, this was how my people used to be, dress and did their things. But they have managed to scratch it on the surface because they are too much in a hurry to make money.

It is amazing how, in the twenty first century; a group of people will take the entire Nigerian nation and her cultural sensibilities for a ride this long. There is virtually no aspect of these excesses that is welcome and applauded in Nigeria, as most producers will want us to believe. Okome and Haynes (1997:108) laments about this unchecked misbehaviour when he opines that unlike European and American film cultures, it is not the studio which controls this ordering of structure. It is the movie maker, who is himself part of the audience, very rooted in the audience's cultural and social behaviour. He/she is part of the making of a new urban culture. For this reasons, this film making practice does not only remain popular, it also narrates a vibrant part of a new social meaning. A social meaning that is, to say the least, personal money-making motivated and very misleading.

To be modest, in nearly all the movies, the central attraction is how to make speedy financial returns and break even. The analysis of Merton's theory of anomie founded on the extreme egoism and materialisms of the American culture is relevant here. Ends and means are harmoniously joined in a well-integrated culture. The culture provides goals and sufficient means for attaining such goals. Both the goals and the means are available to the majority of the people and are generally accepted to them. A state of anomie results when there is a conflict between the ends and the means-when the means of attaining the culturally set goals are either not generally available or are not acceptable. The disproportionate emphasis on wealth (in the movies), on monetary success, is characteristic of this state of anomie. Money becomes the definitive status symbol; it guarantees the possession of other status symbols, and the whole situation encourages conspicuous consumption. The movies present us with a motley collection of characters while adopting the goals of success as defined by their society, react against the unavailability of the means by allowing such goals by devising means of their own (Haynes, 2000: 137).

Part of the craze for money at all cost is said to be rooted in the misapplication of some cultures, and cultural values. Some of the characters embrace the permissiveness of urban life because something in them, something inherent in their culture, predisposes them to such permissions. Let us consider one of the three major cultures in Nigeria for example:

The Igbo culture, for instance, reveres achievement as much as it reveres age. An Igbo proverb encapsulates

this very well that if a child washed his hand clean, he can eat with elders. In the pre-colonial days, the nature of this achievement could be valour in war or some such feat that would ultimately redound to the credit or benefit of the entire community. But in a culture that privileges the individual over the community, this achievement becomes purely for individual aggrandizement. Consequently, the urge for achievement, irrespective of the particular manner in which it is manifested, becomes in these films, the ultimate expression of individuality. Such urges are socially defined; they are not rooted in human nature. If they become excessive, it is merely because they have not come under adequate social control. Haynes (2000: 137).

In Nigeria, untrained individuals and groups of people can wake up and begin to produce movies with little or no respite. The Nigerian film industry can boast of no production code- except, perhaps, as is contained in the Censorship Act, or the National Films and Videos Censors Board. In the operation of this Censorship, hardly, if ever, is the overall quality of films or their thematic horizons censored (Ekwuazi, 1991:12). There is of course a federal government legally backed regulatory organ set up to handle to the barest minimum, all these issues that give the nation and its people bad image. Section 373 subsection 1 item ii of Decree No 85 of 1993 establishing the Board stipulates that movies should not expose the people of Africa and their heritage to ridicule or condemnation. The same section 373, sub-section 2, paragraph a-c state that the film committee shall not approve a film which, in its opinion, and by its sane judgment, depicts amongst other vices, (a) indecent, obscene or likely to be injurious to morality or (b), likely to incite or encourage public disorder or crime or (c) undesirable in the public interest. The record of the National Film and Video Censors Board Report, as documented by Idegue (2004:185) states that any movie production that;

...undermines national security, encourages or glorifies the use of violence, exposes the people of African heritage to ridicule or contempt, indecent, obscene or likely to be injurious to morality, promotes cultism/cults, witchcraft, voodooism, glamourises sex, rape, bloody scenes, gun violence...will not be approved by the Censors Board. It is rather unimaginable, that with such an enabling law in existence since 1993, the producers of the horrible Nigerian home movies have been left to fragrantly disobey the rules of the game, rather repulsively and more so, without adequate sanctions. This tells a lot of volume on the sincerity of the Nigerian government and other stakeholders to repositioning Nigeria for global relevance in this century.

Our position include, but not limited to the fact that we ought to have transcended the obvious setbacks in some of our inherited heritages, that to conceptualise movies

around ritual and ritual aesthetics to the negative, may most likely be a way of perpetuating a tradition that is antithetical to development and a way of recognizing and adoring obvious social vices that can misinform, mislead and encourage the perpetuation of such vices not only on the Nigerian viewers but on the global consumers. Those who have not learned that cultural identities are fluid composites will perpetuate for us all the sad, gruesome and detestable glamourisation of archaic, obsolete and barbaric inheritance in this globalised 21st century. Cultural identities are not fixed and rigid; so also cultural inheritances that make up those identities are equally not fixed. Every culture is never rigid but dynamic hence our members should rather use the non – rigidity of those cultural abnormalities to the advantage of the present rather than lure us into some depth of harmful inherited practices.

In an interview granted on February 14th 2007 cited by Nwogu (2007:91) Rotimi Vonn, Chairman Lagos state office of the National Film and Videos Censors Board laments;

I cannot comprehend why most producers have chosen to represent Nigeria the way they do. Nigerians are loving people, they are kind and they are benevolent. Nigerians are very helpful and can also pray. They believe in God so much and He changes their situations. Nigerians are peaceful and tolerant; if not, we would not have been together as a nation up till today. These are good values that can uplift a nation. I advise our film and movie makers to venture in this direction and the results will be pleasing at all levels

At a point in our immediate past, the Nigerian government launched a campaign spear-headed by the Information Minister tagged "Rebranding Nigeria". The greatest culprit of the exportation of our cultures and values massively negatively is the Nigerian home movie industry. A country that has rules that are openly violated by the people with little or no reprimand, a country that has little or no respect for the role of the entertainment industry in the exportation of our cultures negatively cannot be serious about rebranding anything. Rebranding what; rebranding who? How do you rebrand the Nigerian home movies when for over a decade, the government, at all levels, left the industry in the hands of those who are either untrained, or though trained, are financial gains propelled

at the expense of national image. That the Nigerian home movie industry, currently ranking second largest in the world, yet never winning global awards in film/movie production as due summarises the quality of what we produce. There is the need for a change and an overhaul of the entire system. Then and only then, we can begin to talk about a change that is positive, focused and sustainable development-driven. Thereafter, the exportation of the Nigerian rich cultures relevant to our immediate and universal contemporary realities can start on a clean and positively rewarding slate.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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