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CHAPTER SIX

FILM AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: AN ANALYSIS OF PRAISE ABRAHAM'S TARTOR WASE

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INTRODUCTION

Since the return of the country to democratic rule in 1999, Nigerian politicians have evolved a political culture that is characterized by the politics of godfatherism, corruption and misappropriation of public funds and electoral malpractices in order to control state power against the popular will of the masses among several other ill practices (see Ugwu, 2008, Nnedum, Oludayo and Onyaegbunam, 2015, Philip, Samson and Ogwu 2014). This political culture has given rise to a chaotic political order, occasioned by tension and wide scale violence at the political front, the resultant effect of which is gross underdevelopment, lack of good governance and the enthronement of a political class that lacks the ability to drive home to the masses, the dividends of democracy.

As one would rightly expect, the media are supposed to breathe sanity into the system. This expectation is in sync with the surveillance role of the mass media. Surveillance ascribes to the mass media the responsibility of watch dogs of the society, i.e. holding the key actors in the society accountable to the people. Here, the media situates the behaviour of stakeholders in the society within the framework of acceptable standard, hence those who are found wanting are exposed for a better society (see Nwabueze, 2014, Sambe, 2008).

To a large extent, the Nigerian media deserves kudos in this regard. Since the return of the country to democracy in 1999, they have championed the course of keeping an eagle eye on political actors in particular, and the political system in general, celebrated Salisu Buhari's exposure which is a good case to refer to here, and not forgetting the vibrancy with which the mass media attacked former president Olusegun Obasanjo's infamous third term bid and ensured that it ended up a stillborn idea.

The practice of the mass media spearheading the entrenchment of a healthy political order has gained serious momentum and impetus with the emergence of new media and its numerous potentials on the political communication front. There are, however, matters arising, as certain forces have weakened this all important power of the mass media in a democratic setup. Economic consideration happens to be one of the biggest hurdles in this regard, as Idiong (2013) rightly puts while conceptualizing the Zanist theoretical perspective to political communication. In his words:

Zanism as a political communication construct refers to the practice, common in many developing countries, whereby the media become mere clowns or stooges of the political elite, who themselves are often epitomes of political absurdity and tend to be so as a result of or perhaps in spite of their socio-political milieu. The media are important in this zany melee for they supply the symbolic, meditational and pejorative means for the sustenance of the status quo and its concomitant absurdities. Consequently, journalists become boot-licking lapdogs of the political class; practicing what Akpan & Idiong (2012:17) have called “begging-bowl journalism”. This mendicant brand of journalism constrains news writers to conjure ridiculous superlatives in a bid to flatter their puppeteers and present a rosy picture of the state of affairs. It is a form of political journalism that consists of hackneyed phrases and clichéd news bulletins. Soon, the citizenry becomes blasé to its repetitive formula and its invariable, irritating sycophancy (p.16).

This has, in explicit terms, captured the phenomenon with the Nigerian media practice as it pertains to political communication, thereby, creating a big gap which needs to be filled with regards to telling the political actors the truth. Perhaps, movies have the potentials of filling this gap (see Kurfi 2017). By constantly packaging and presenting to the audience, messages about the rotten nature of the political landscape in the country, there is the possibility that movies will help to foster a good political culture. This essay sets to probe this hunch. It is a textual assessment of a Tiv movie- *Tartor Wase*. This is in a bid to ascertain how well the movie has packaged and presented the political realities of Nigeria with the intention of causing the political actors to amend their ways. Though limited by language barrier, it is perceived that the film is of great impact to those who understand the Tiv language, given its huge thematic embodiment as we will reveal in the subsequent sections.

Statement of the problem

President Muhammadu Buhari's maxim: “I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody” that gave his presidential inauguration speech an overwhelming popularity raised a fundamental issue that has sabotaged good governance and development in the country since the return to democracy in 1999, namely: godfatherism. It is a phenomenon that has held the welfare of the masses to ransom in the name of serving the interest of political godfathers by political godsons. These godsons are anointed by their godfathers, thereby, rendering them mere stooges of their bosses. In most cases, attempts of resistance on the part of the godsons lead to serious political crises between the godsons and their godfathers as exemplified by former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and his godson Goodluck Jonathan.

Tartor Wase depicts this reality in a vivid manner. Through this, it has presented the picture of the ugly nature of Nigerian politics that is characterized by godfatherism, illegal/forceful acquisition of power, gross abuse of power, serving the interest of the political class using public resources at the expense of the masses and how power corrupts and intoxicates sane minds to forget their

campaign promises after acquiring the mandate to rule. The manner and approach with which the producer packages and presents this reality to his audience is commendable: nemesis has caught up with the perpetrators of these political evils at the end! It is in this light that this essay uses the movie as a point of reference to portray the unique role and potential of movies to promote good governance and development. Had Nigerian films lived up to their expectations as models of an ideal political culture, perhaps there would have been sanity and order in the political environment, and hence, more chances of good governance, accountability and development to prosper, or perhaps, a better political team to pilot the affairs of the polity. Who knows?

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to highlight the themes embedded in the film- *Tartor Wase* from the standpoint of the political realities of contemporary Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives include:

1. To explore the thematic embodiment of the film- *Tartor Wase*;
2. To synergize the themes of the film- *Tartor Wase* with the political realities of Nigeria;
3. To demonstrate how film can be used as a tool to nurture a healthy political culture, using *Tartor Wase* as a point of reference.

Film and good governance in Nigeria: a conceptual discussion

Film as a medium of communication is reputed as a mirror of the society. It is a medium that reflects the daily life of society, by packaging and projecting to the audience, content that is reflective of day-to-day events. Nwabueze (2014) defines film as motion picture production for audience entertainment or information dissemination. It could be in form of movies involving interesting plots for audience entertainment, or documentary films aimed at enlightening the audience on specific themes, subjects or issues. Quite often, the terms- film, movie and motion picture are used interchangeably, but the main idea that runs through them is that they contain a series of still photographs, projected in rapid succession onto a screen by means of light.

Right from the early days of the evolution of mass communication as a discipline, the role of film in shaping social reality has continued to generate the interest of scholars. Canadian philosopher and communication sage, Marshall McLuhan is one of such scholars, as contained in his magnum opus- *Understanding media: the extensions of man*. Indeed, the role of film in depicting social reality constituted the focus of attention of the famous Frankfurt School, a critical school that championed the study of cultural dynamics from the 1930s to the 1970s. Their conception of television and film as the culture industry is in tandem with the unique role of film in shaping the culture of people (see Littlejohn and Foss 2009). Jacobs (n.d:1) succinctly describes the role of film in society thus: "Movies are entertainment. Movies are documents of their time and place. Movies are artistic forms of self-expression. Movies we see at theatres, on television or home video are typically narrative films. They tell stories about characters going through experiences...". From this assertion, it could be deduced that films are forms of entertainment media that package and present to the society, the realities of human existence, where the various characters act out the issue at stake for the audience.

The concept of good governance is rather vague and difficult to define in precise terms. At best, one can attempt a description of what it connotes, and such a description can only be relevant within a given socio-political cum economic context. Reason? The yearnings and aspirations of the masses differ from one society to another, hence, arriving at a universally accepted definition of good governance becomes quite challenging a task. One thing, however, helps to evaluate the prevalence of good governance within a political system, namely: a presence of government that is responsive, and yields to the yearnings of the people. In democratic parlance, good governance

can be described as the kind of governance that 'bears fruits', and delivers to the masses, the dividends of democracy (Jega 2010). Military regimes dominated the political terrain of post-independence Nigeria, and, given the nature of their reign which was characterized by dictatorship, treasury looting and gross human rights abuse, the quest to entrench democratic rule that is reputed for offering good governance to the masses dominated the agenda of civil society groups and human right activists.

After three futile attempts to consolidate democratic rule, the fourth republican attempt seem to have come to stay. 18 years down the line, however, the question of good governance remains unaddressed. Jega (2010) enumerates some of the most pressing challenges that constitute cogs in the wheel of democratic consolidation and good governance in the country to include a weak electoral system marred by malpractices, pervasive existence of prebendalism and patrimonialism, or what is termed as politics of godfatherism, endemic corruption, politics of exclusion that limits popular participation, poor infrastructural development, weak and porous judiciary and heavy concentration of power and state resources at the centre among a myriad of many other obstacles that keep the cub democracy in a deadlock, thereby preventing it from bearing good fruits. His position is a summation of the most topical issues that have continued to sabotage efforts towards democratic consolidation and good governance in the country (see Isma'ila and Othman 2016, Abdullahi and Tunde 2013, Olarinmoye 2008, Eke and Osaghae 2016). It is with this in mind that the current study uses *Tartor Wase* to interrogate the role of film towards the realization of good governance and accountability in the country.

Literature review

Several researches have been conducted to relate the potentials of films as forms of communication to the course of transformation in the society. Adesokan's (2009) study is one of such endeavours. Titled: "practising 'democracy' in Nigerian films", the study discusses the response of Nollywood to the transformation of Nigeria's social structure through the economic and political regimes of global neo-liberalism and Nigeria's military rule, and the aesthetic possibilities enabled by video and digital technologies. The study employs qualitative content analysis to espouse the thematic endowment of two Nigerian films- *Akobi Gomina* (The Governor's Heir) and *Agogo Eewo* (The Sacred Gong). Emerging themes from the study indicate that the Nigerian film industry is alive to the challenge of mirroring a decent political culture.

The study contends that in these "works of explicit and oblique political commentary", which present intimations of the genre of 'democracy films', the idea of a public receptive to mutually recognized cultural or personal symbols is used to develop new aesthetic modes in films. The study discovers that: "these film-making practices also circumscribe the possibilities of an ideologically progressive cinematic practice" (p.599). The rich thematic endowment discovered in the films in relation to the country's push to realize a complete and fruitful democracy after prolonged military regimes that were mostly dictatorial in nature leads the study to conclude that:

The genre of democracy films in Nigeria confronts localized political questions in ways that demonstrate the responsiveness of the artistic medium to its social setting. This has become even more pronounced since the return to democratic rule in the late 1990s, when film makers, partly inspired by the example of pro-democracy activists and 'guerrilla journalists', turned their attention toward themes that might have occasioned political persecution under the military regime. But, as shown in this article, these engagements are uneven: the treatment of political

themes reflects a basic concern with good governance and ethical conduct in civil matters, which is then assimilated to the ideological orientation of didacticism (p.617).

In a related endeavor, Atanda (2016) examines the ability of artists to mirror reality in such a way that will push home didactic and moral lessons. His study titled: “playwright as a communicator: an artist's intervention in a socio-politically dysfunctional state” explores the thematic embodiment of the play *Scapegoats and Sacred Cows*, written by Olu Obafemi. The study which he hinges on George Lucas' Marxist Sociological Theory adopts a combination of both analytical and critical methods to x-ray the themes of the play in relation to the Nigerian socio-political terrain. A critical examination of the play in the study reveals how the playwright depicts the culture of oppression using the prison setting, and revolutionary struggles to resist the oppression by the inmates. This the study perceives to be a satire of the brutal military regimes that were pervasive at the period the play was written. The crux of the play, therefore, was to showcase the “current realities of individualized and collectivized struggle and resistance to forces of dictatorship” (p.178).

Likening this thematic focus to realities in the political terrain, the study notes, that: “this picture reminds us of the culture of organized killings on the streets of Lagos, or silent elimination through 'scientific methods' in the draconian era of General Sani Abacha in Nigeria” (p. 178). The study discovers that the play uses animals as characters to satirize this oppression effectively, a discovery that leads to its conclusion, that: “... a playwright is a communicator who intervenes in the course of justice for his society...also, a playwright like Olu Obafemi is a conscience of his society” (p.183). In what appears to be the recommendation of the study, the author notes, that: “writers are expected to in tune with time and the concerns of their people, hence, people become the fulcrum of their creative import” (p.183).

Kurfi (2017) in his study: “film and conflict resolution in multi-cultural Nigeria” explores the dominant themes in two films- *Sometimes in April* and *Hotel Rwanda*. The study which relies chiefly on secondary sources of information from documents and information from the two films finds a positive correlation between films and conflict resolution. The major argument of the study is that as a tradition with films, conflict is always generated at the beginning and resolved at the end, the approach which could be relevant in resolving conflicts in real life situations. In its submission, the study argues: that: “films are vital in conflict resolution, especially in a multi-cultural society such as Nigeria” (p.343). Given the rich moral lessons of the films such as love/respect for humanity, tolerance, perseverance, the study concludes that films are important tools that can be used to provide symbols, myths and resources through which peace, unity and tolerance could be achieved.

This way, the study recommends that film producers, government and civil society organizations should concentrate on producing films that can educate and entertain the populace on unity and peaceful coexistence in the country. Indeed, several other studies have examined in various ways, how the potentials of films and other literary works such as novels, plays and poems can be harnessed to champion the course of transformation in the society (see Katu-Ogundimu 2013, Owens-Ibie and Ademosu 2017, and Makokha 2014). It is in furtherance of this effort that the current study explores the thematic embodiment of the movie- *Tartor Wase* vis-a-vis the all-important question of good governance in Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

This study is hinged on the hermeneutic theory. Considered as the theory of knowledge, hermeneutic helps to understand the meanings embedded in texts, and shares a lot in common with the theories of rhetoric and ontology (Littlejohn and Foss 2009). Hermeneutic theory passes through stages of refinements to reach its present stage as a broad theoretical and methodological premise in the study of communication, most especially as it relates to the meanings contained in the various forms of communication. Although attempts have been made to liken hermeneutic to semiotics, the latter is however narrower in scope, as hermeneutic has over the years risen in status to become the “science of meaning” (Littleton and Foss 2009). Although the origin of hermeneutic remains largely obscure, Littlejohn and Foss (2009:471) traces its roots to the early Church, before the protestant movements, thus:

Among the earliest and most significant (accounts of its evolution) are the extraordinary exegetical traditions of Hebrew Scriptures. The Gemara, for instance, was a transcription of interpretive dialogues between rabbi and congregation over the meaning of the Mishnah (itself an interpretation of scripture), and these exegetical exercises became in turn a part of scriptural law. Canons of interpretive practice were embedded in Roman rhetorical teaching from Cicero and Quintilian to the Church Fathers, most famously in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*. It was in this rhetorical environment that the principle of the *hermeneutic circle* gained prominence the idea that textual meaning has a mutually reciprocal relation to its context.

In the study of mass communication, hermeneutics have been employed to understand both latent and manifest meanings of texts, particularly written texts. However, its expanded adoption in media criticism has witnessed its application in the study of meanings inherent in all forms of communication such as films, TV shows, documentaries etc. For instance, Katu-Ogundimu (2013) employs the critical hermeneutic approach to study *Jenifa*, a film produced by the popular Nollywood actress Funke Akindele. The endeavour reveals a lot of themes from the movie that are connected to intrinsic cultural realities prevalent in the society. It is against this backdrop that this study also relies on the hermeneutic theory to explore the thematic embodiment of *Tartor Wase* vis-à-vis the political realities of the Nigerian state.

The film *Tartor Wase*

Tartor Wase, a film belonging to the genre which Adesokan (2009) describes as “democracy films” is a story of political power and how it is acquired and exercised in Ayoko Local Government Area. The Ayoko local government chairmanship position is contested by popular Chief Kuje (who enjoys the popularity of the masses) and Hon. Kigbe (who is neither popular to the masses, nor can afford the money to print even his campaign posters). Chief Kuje, (the ideal candidate) fails to recognize the most influential stakeholder of the land, Chief Bawa. Irked by this neglect, Chief Bawa endorses and anoints the unpopular opponent Hon. Kigbe on grounds that the latter will be loyal to him and do just what he wishes if given the mandate. Thus, a deal is reached between Chief Bawa and Hon. Kigbe.

Eventually, Chief Bawa employs the services of thugs who snatch ballot boxes and rig the election in favour of his anointed godson. As one would expect, the first few months witness a good romance between the Chief and his boy, who promptly remits a lion share of the monthly subvention to his boss as agreed. Expectedly, too, the romance did not last though, and is soon over following counsels and experience which the chairman gathered. He thus, dumps and forsakes his godfather and instead, employs thugs to safeguard him. This development did not

augur well with the embittered godfather who sets out to frustrate his boy, and possibly, ensure he returns to being loyal to him.

Ayoko local government under Hon. Kigbe is characterized by reckless exhibition of power, creation of irrelevant offices (such as the office of Chair Mother), corruption and embezzlement of funds among other grievous evils. In the midst of all the anomalies, the chairman takes advantage of the feud between Chief Kuje and Chief Bawa to assassinate Chief Kuje; just so, he could clear his way towards actualizing his dream of being the next member, state house of assembly from the Local government area. Chief Bawa becomes the prime suspect of the murder, given his previous disposition with the victim.

Events however take a U-turn, as charges of corruption and embezzlement of funds are levelled against the chairman, who is taken away by security operatives and anti-graft agencies. While away, pictures of the assassination incident are discovered in his office by Chief Bawa, who uses them to blackmail the Chairman and strike a new deal with him. The looted funds are later recovered in the Chairman's house, sealed in a big metal container. This discovery landed the chairman into a deep dark ditch, putting an end to his reign of impunity.

Method

This study employs thematic analysis to discuss the thematic embodiment of the movie- *Tartor Wase*. Data in the study derives primarily from the movie, and are discussed in depth under the various themes where they belong. Other secondary sources such as books and journal articles have been consulted to ascertain the most pressing challenges confronting democracy in the country, given the experience from 1999 to date. The resultant data have been discussed under five distinct themes- godfatherism, electoral malpractice, economic corruption and embezzlement of public funds, gross abuse of power by associates and family members of politicians and public office holders; and “buying” the consent of religious leaders by politicians seeking favour/endorsement.

Findings

Findings of the study reveal that *Tartor Wase* is a movie with huge thematic endowment. A classic example of a political movie, it has themes that address the political realities of contemporary Nigeria. This section discusses the various themes in the movie in some details with the view to achieving the overall objectives of the study as follows:

Godfatherism

The phenomenon of godfatherism is not novel to politics. It has always been associated with politics but its negative tendencies and impact on Nigerian politics has made it rather incompatible to the politics of the day (Ugwu, 2008). *Tartor Wase* depicts the endemic nature of godfatherism in Nigerian politics. It clearly buttresses the fact that a politician with an influential godfather, even without the support of the masses, has an upper hand over his opponents. This is unfortunate. Clearly, Chief Kuje is the man of the people. His campaign rallies justify this. As a matter of fact, Hon. Kigbe who eventually 'won' the election never campaigned in the movie.

The question here is this: if godfatherism is a universal ally of politics, what then is the difference between the Nigerian godfatherism practice, and godfatherism at the global level? The difference is very clear: in developed countries, influential people (godfathers) have the goodwill of the masses and hence, their endorsement of a candidate goes a long way to earn such a candidate the goodwill of the masses. In Nigeria, however, godfathers most often rely not on

the goodwill they enjoy from the masses, but their power (often autocratic and dictatorial in nature) and wealth to impose candidates on the masses. Put in simple terms, once you have the support of your powerful godfather in Nigeria, you have everything come what may. Whether these godfathers command the goodwill of the masses or not is a different issue altogether. In Nigeria today, virtually every state has people who dictate their course. From T.Y. Danjuma in Taraba state to George Akume in Benue state, Bola Tinibu in Lagos among a host of others, the Nigerian polity is a beehive of political godfathers, both at local, state and national levels.

Critically, the Nigerian style of political godfatherism has the tendency to nurture political crises. Once the godson gets experienced or “grow horns” and wants to reduce the loyalty accorded his godfather at the initial stage of the deal, a political crisis is imminent. This is also, aptly captured in the movie under review. The fallout between Chief Bawa and his godson, when the romance eventually faded away presents a good instance. A serious political crisis arises, which is a representation of reality in the Nigerian landscape. Real life examples of this in history include the face-off between former governors Suswam and his boss Akume of Benue state, former presidents Obasanjo and Jonathan and a host of other examples where political godsons turn to be the arch rivals, or even enemies of their godfathers.

In summary, politics of godfatherism is not rooted in the potentials of candidates or what benefits godfathers perceive they can offer to the masses, but based on finding a soft person, a clown and a stooge who can be easily manipulated for selfish gains. This has the tendency of breeding political crisis among the political class as soon as power corrupts the hitherto, naïve stooge. This reality is clearly depicted in the movie under review.

Electoral malpractice

Another theme highlighted in the film is electoral malpractice. Electoral malpractice is one of the biggest hurdles of Nigerian politics. Free and fair election is a good ingredient of democracy which the Nigerian brand of democracy unfortunately lacks. This is, however, not a surprise as Nigerian elites feel power is too precious to be left in the hands of the masses, hence, find it justifiable to thwart any effort aimed at conducting a free, fair and credible election. This enables them to insert their candidates for selfish gains. *Tartor Wase* depicts this reality in an explicit manner. Chief Bawa confronts the popular candidate in the campaign, Chief Kuje to strike a deal. Finding out Chief Kuje is too rigid to be manipulated; he opts for the naïve, poor and less popular Hon. Kigbe. Thus, the electoral process which was smooth and peaceful was abruptly truncated by thugs who carted away the ballot boxes, manipulated the results which returned Hon. Kigbe elected. It is axiomatic that Hon. Kigbe would not have won the election if the masses were allowed to decide. What transpires here is just a screen version of the electoral process/conduct in Nigeria since the country's return to civil rule in 1999. Although recently, we are beginning to experience some form of free and fair elections.

Economic corruption and embezzlement of public funds

Corruption is without doubt, a canker worm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian politics. Most of the woes bedeviling the Nigerian state, ranging from poor infrastructural development to abject and wide-scale poverty, and weak educational institutions among others are blamed on corruption. It has become a monster, in the words of Egwemi (2012) that requires immediate tackling. Given its endemic nature in the Nigerian political landscape, many scholars have decried its devastating effects; with some saying that it is a scourge that defies solution (see Aderonmu, 2011, Sowunmi, Ruafu, Aketokun, Salako and Usifoh, 2010, Tella, n.d., and Ukase, 2015).

Politicians seek power to enrich themselves which is reflected in the almost primitive accumulation of illegal wealth which cuts across most of the prominent political actors in the country. *Tartor Wase* does not spare this scourge. It has addressed it extensively, from how it is being perpetrated by politicians and the climax i.e. life behind bars. Hon. Kigbe loots Ayoko Local Government dry. The joy of the viewer here is that the movie ends with him in chains behind bars. This has been the fate of many Nigerian politicians ever since the country returned to democratic rule in 1999. Sock-away toilets and big containers in homes of politicians have become harbours for looted wealth. It is then possible to infer that Hon. Kigbe as portrayed in the movie is a pseudonym for the likes of former governors Alamaisiye, Ibori, Suswam and Lamido, former minister of petroleum resources Diezani Alison-Madueke and former NSA Sambo Dasuki among a host of other politicians who have one issue or the other with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and are standing trail for corruption related charges.

Gross abuse of power by associates and family members of politicians and public office holders

Abuse of political power is another ugly trait of Nigerian politics. Politicians and people closely related to them use their positions to harass, cow and intimidate others unjustly. This is represented in *Tartor Wase* by the manhandling of Miss Sewe, Hon. Chairman's mistress by the First Lady. Had the mother-in-law not intervened on time, only God knows what would have become of the lady? The mother-in-law herself is a victim of this theme. Her infamous office of the Chair-mother is a reflection of how power is grossly abused in Nigeria. Not only abuse of power, state resources are wasted to set up offices that are not only unnecessary, but also irrelevant and unconstitutional. Eventually, the office of the Chair-mother which has no place in any constitution becomes the most functional office in Ayoko Local Government secretariat. Sadly, too, this primitive trait is typical of Nigerian politics. The case of Mamman Daura in Aso Rock, who is, allegedly, one of the most powerful persons in Aso Villa, can be likened to the office of the Chair-mother in *Tartor Wase*.

“Buying” the consent of religious leaders by politicians

Ironically, Nigerian corrupt politicians are the Godliest politicians on earth! They frequent places of worship, lavish religious leaders with money and material wealth to earn prayers, intercession, prophecies endorsements and the goodwill of the religious faithful. They are happy to be identified with “men of God”. This is one of the issues addressed in *Tartor Wase*. However, the practice meets a stumbling block. Hon. Kigbe having been imposed on the people as Chairman of Ayoko Local Government approaches a pastor and offers to furnish the church. Surprisingly, the pastor declines the offer and tasks him to repent first, and change his ways before thinking of offering a sacrifice to God, if at all, it will be accepted. The pastor bluntly likens Mr. Chairman to a dirty and un-kept vessel that is being used to pack children's faeces; hence, food served in him cannot be consumed by anyone. Stunned beyond words, the Chairman walks away.

At the risk of sounding critical, the pastor in this movie presents a direct opposite of the “praise singers” that we have today as religious leaders who can't tell politicians the gospel truth. He tells the Chairman the truth, in fact, the bitter truth about the calamity that awaits him which, eventually, comes to pass. Can we now equate this pastor with the Rev. Fr. Ejike Mbaka and Sheik Ahmed Gumi who were not cowed by former President Jonathan's wealth and status, but told him the bitter truth as well? Food for thought.

Towards harnessing the potentials of movies for the purpose of enhancing good governance, accountability and transparency: lessons from *Tartor Wase*

The above excursion into the thematic endowment of *Tartor Wase* has helped to address the first two objectives of the study, and, partly, the third objective. However, to fully achieve the third objective, i.e. to demonstrate how movies can be used as tools to nurture a healthy political culture, with *Tartor Wase* as a case study, this section is pertinent. As discussed earlier, good movies reflect reality. This reasoning owes justification to the fact that “broadcasting as an art is mimetic in nature” (Asemah and Yarrosan, 2008:2). Mimetic in the sense that its messages mimic what happens in society. Movies as arms of the broadcast media are fond of replicating reality, albeit, in a manner that the society can learn lessons from the projected reality.

As a convention, a good movie is expected to demonstrate the fact that society rewards good deeds with positive reinforcement, and dubious deeds with negative reinforcement. This is where the concept of nemesis comes in. Where social evils are packaged and presented in a way that makes the masses desist from perpetrating them is the peak of achievement of any movie. Dubious acts are not supposed to be glorified in movies but presented in a way that serves as a deterrent to others. This way, viewers are encouraged to abhor dubious acts and live a righteous life in their daily endeavours for a better society.

Tartor Wase is rich in this regard. As a matter of fact, almost all the dubious deeds are punished at the end of the movie. Victims are reduced to objects of pity, such that at the end, a viewer who never enjoyed the prevailing endemic mediocrity is impressed to mutter “serves them right”. Of course, this impression goes with a deeper reflection that engraves the message on the memory of the viewer. Nigerian movies are good in this regard. *Tartor Wase* is just one of such movies that exposes the rotten political culture of the country. Other movies such as *The Tyrant*, *State of Emergency*, and *Isakaba* among others project the rotten nature of society in such a way that viewers make amends. The peak of argument here is that the screen should be used as an instrument to demonstrate the damaging effects of bad political practices to the society, as well as the bitter cup that awaits those found wanting. This way, a good crop of politicians can be bred, to deliver to the masses the dividends of democracy.

Contending arguments

The Nigerian movie industry has come under serious criticisms in recent times for projecting a negative image of the county to the world. Critics argue that it tells the world that Nigeria is a country where voodooism, *juju*, cultism, sexual immorality, unstable family institutions, terrorism, political instability and endemic poverty among a myriad of other unfortunate occurrences prevail (see Enna, Idakwo and Akpovye, 2015, Ebekue and Arinze-Umobi, nd). This essay agrees with this school of thought but takes a diversion and argues that movies are (or should be) reflections of what obtains in society. The question to ask at this point is this: are the vices projected in the movies prevalent in the Nigerian society? The answer to this question of course, is a capital YES in the affirmative. If so, then presenting them for people to see and make amends is not a bad idea. There is no need white coating the nation's realities.

To this end, this study argues that critics of the Nigerian movie industry should be more concerned with charging the masses to pick and imbibe the lessons from the projected reality, instead of unjustly attacking the industry. If the messages projected on the screen are decoded and utilized by viewers as expected, it is no doubt then, that movies will serve as good instruments of socio-political change in the country. Atanda (2016:172) holds a similar opinion. His argument is that “a writer must be ready to act, not only as an interventionist, but (also) as the

conscience of his people as he engages his reader and audience". To this end, he extols the artistic works of authors such as Olu obafemi, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and their cohorts who use their works to satirize the rotten political culture in the country with the view to charting a course for a more decent political order.

Concluding remarks

Tartor Wase is a movie that has vehemently addressed the political realities of contemporary Nigeria. It is, indeed, a screen version of the primitive political practices in the country. On this note, the producer and his production crew deserve kudos. The onus rests on viewers to make the best out of the movie, that is learn the lessons embedded and put them to use for the betterment of society. The fact is that no one is comfortable with the status quo in the Nigerian political arena. Therefore, action should be taken to address the anomalies that hamper good governance and accountability which are essential to delivering to the masses the dividends of democracy. *Tartor Wase* is a bold step in this direction.

The producer adopts a subtle artistic approach to satirize Nigerian politics in the movie. This approach is perceived to be effective in educating the masses, and indeed, the political class about the ills of the shoddy deals they engage in; hence, other producers are enjoined to do same. We argue that the approach is a fruitful effort towards addressing the question of good governance in Nigeria; therefore, producers should not bow to the pressure of critics and cover the bleeding wound with a white handkerchief! That will be the most ridiculous and futile effort ever. As a reputation management drive, rebranding Nigeria is not about gimmick and/or propaganda given the endemic and damaging nature of pervasive corruption and other evils. It is about evolving a decent and healthy political culture that will deliver to the masses, the good fruits of democracy. Until this is done, producers should continue to deploy their arsenal- the screen to relay to the viewers the truth, with the view to correcting the status quo. Then and only then shall film be seen as an instrument of true political change that will help to forestall accountability and good governance in the country.

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