

Sociological Analysis of Money Rituals as a Recurrent Theme in Yoruba Films

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Abstract

The film, though a relatively modern innovation, is rooted in the age-long human tradition of telling stories. Today, the film has transcended being a tool for ‘twilight enjoyment’. Globally, it is being used to highlight the state of nations folklorically or contemporaneously; portraying their struggles, worldviews, hopes, aspirations and economic, political and social experiences. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has rated Nollywood (the Nigerian film industry) as the second largest producer of films in the world, with Hollywood (America) and Bollywood (India) being in the first and third positions respectively. The loudest criticism of the Nollywood films however, is that of overt and undue emphasis on the supernatural. The apparent downward trend in the socio-economic conditions of the average Nigerian, has led to increase in the number of people using occult practices to come to terms with contemporary socio-economic demands. The focus of this paper therefore is to critically analyze the recurrence of money ritual as a theme in Yoruba films. Pivoting the theoretical framework of the study on Marxism and drawing upon the works of Max Weber; to the effect that many groups apart from class stratification, can be in conflict for the scarce resources in the society. The paper concludes that money rituals’ recurrence as a theme indicates the signs of times. Apart from this, it is a form of voice-lending to demands for a more positive, meaningful and people-focused egalitarian governance. The punishment/negative aftermath of the vice is didactically used as deterrence to portray the ritual as illusionary.

Keywords: Economy, Poverty, Social Honour, Governance, Ritual

Introduction

To the Yoruba; predominantly found in the South Western part of Nigeria¹, religion is life and life is religion, for it (religion) is the bedrock of their culture. Like other Africans, religion is the determining principle of their lives. It is involved in all aspects of their existence, giving meaning and significance to their lives here and now, and even beyond. This can be noticed when they are eating, farming, drinking, travelling, getting married, during funerals, foundation laying or hunting. Adisa (2005:2-5) agrees with the views of earlier scholars that “in all things, the Yoruba are religious”. Their religion is monotheistic – the belief in (the supremacy of) one God; *Olódùmarè*, who is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. *Olódùmarè* however, has as “His”² channels, divinities like *Şàngó*, *Qbàtálá*, *Ògún*, *Orúnmlà*, *Èşù* and *Òşun*, who act as intermediaries between Him and man (McKenzie, 2014).

The general belief of the Yoruba about man is that he is a combination of material (biological/physical) and immaterial (spiritual) substances. His material aspect is mortal or perishable, while the spiritual (soul) is immortal. They also believe in, and recognize the existence of mystical forces (*emi àìrì*) in the world. These forces to them, can be made use of by those who have (esoteric) knowledge about them, and have the ability to do so. Some of these forces they believe, manifest as witchcraft, sorcery and magic. The forces are accepted to have divine origin which compels man’s submission and awe. Some of these forces according to Opoku (1978:147-148), man tries to control and make use of for personal needs, in order to bring about his own desired needs. To achieve these, he uses spells, incantations, ceremonies, sacrifices and rites. These steps are taken so that the wills of man are served. However, wills can be for beneficial or injurious purposes, depending on the intention of the user.

The focus of this paper is to analyze the *raison d’être*, content and effects of money ritual (a religious phenomenon) in its recurrence as major and sub-themes of Yoruba films. The theoretical framework is pivoted around Marxism, drawing upon the works of Max Weber (in Haralambos, Holborn and Head 2008); to the effect that many groups apart from class stratification, can be in conflict for the scarce resources in the society. The methodology employed for the study is the reading and analysis of randomly selected Yoruba films on money rituals.

Social, Economic and Political Indices

Literary works produced in a particular society reflects the sociology of such society economically, politically and religiously. This is because literature mirrors the aggregate of the society. Examining the works of Lukas and Goldman, Bamidele (2000:3) is right in his opinion that:

...literature as an art is primarily an activity of the mind, a creation and self-conscious enterprise, one that is socially formed in the sense that the writer is part of the current human thought; the writer share in the language, attitude, tone and voice of his fellows and he expresses values that come from discernible context in society, in a nation and at a period.

In pre-colonial times, the Yoruba; an agrarian people, lived very simple country-styled but purposeful live patterns. Basically, they practiced (and still practice) non-mechanised subsistence and commercial farming. They also engage in other commercial enterprises like drumming, wood and stone carvings, smithing, tanning and leather works, music, medicine, hair braiding and barbing and other vocational jobs. Their needs and wants were simple and easily achieved. The basic being the general ones of food, shelter and clothing. To them, ‘*Bi ebi bá ti kùrò nínú iṣẹ, iṣẹ bùṣẹ*’ (when hunger is taken care of, virtually, there is no more poverty). Then, virtues were upheld and vices frowned at communally. There were few rich people in accordance to the standard of living then no doubt, hardwork, virtuous living, military intelligence and co-operative attitudes are some of the parameters by which an *Ọmọlúàbí* (a good and dependable person, who stands above board at all times) is recognized. Meeting urgent financial obligations and needs then was done by borrowing from relations or through the socially recognized *iwofà* system – taking a loan and servicing it in lieu of interest by labour until the debt is defrayed. Dzurgba (2014) is therefore right in his view that:

...ethical ideas have been in Yoruba society since earliest times... There was a need for planning, organising, co-ordinating, managing and controlling the affairs... There existed physical dangers material scarcity and competitive aspirations; that is was necessary for the Yoruba people to recognize the importance of honesty, truth, fairness, justice, tolerance, courage and disciplines.

Colonial period, despite its indirect rule system in Nigeria, brought Western education and religion, and drastic changes in the social life pattern of the *Yorùbá*. There was improved lifestyle no doubt, especially where health is concerned. Harmful (religious) practices like (communal) human sacrifice were curbed, but communal living and identification, awe and respect for indigenous ethics, values and respect for constituted (native) authority, are virtually gone. This is because European ‘ideals’ as they relate to individuals’ rights under the law are entrenched in colonial administration, including judiciary and other spheres.

Though renaissance steps were taken through Pan-African movements among (West) African states after most of them gained independence; to return to modified forms of the negritude identity³, but the harm had been done. Few years into self-rule financial mismanagement, greed, crime and threats, political instability, mass unemployment and national history are being experienced, in Nigeria particularly. The natural resources with which Nigeria has fortunately been blessed especially the crude oil, have spelt doom rather than being a unifying force for all her federating states. “All these have generally interfered with, slowed down and distorted efforts at socio-economic development and progress” (Akintoye 2010: 452).

When examining the economy of a nation, terms such as ‘poverty’ and ‘social exclusion’ imply undesirable conditions. They indicate that individuals or groups are suffering from lack and they need to be helped in order that their lots can be changed or at least improved. In present times, many civilized societies are putting in place institutions designed to deal with such social problems. They are referred to as *welfare states* (Haralambos et al.2008:23). This is why Briggs (2000: 18) says of a welfare state to be:

... a state in which organized power is deliberately used (through politics and administration) in an effort to modify the play of market forces.

It is important to define *poverty* because its definition will determine how much poverty there is believed to be, and ways to ameliorate it. Scholars have argued on whether poverty should be measured in *absolute* or *relative* terms. Absolute poverty is usually based on the idea of subsistence. That is, people having no means to own resources by which human life can be maintained. Relative poverty on the other hand means using the affluency of a society to measure degree of poverty. In recent studies, sociologists favour ‘*social exclusion*’ to refer to a situation in which multiple deprivation prevents individuals from participating in important areas of society’s activities. These results to mass unemployment, unavailability of health schemes and services, formal education, housing schemes, absence of leisure activities and (full) participation in politics-beyond voting (Haralambos et al, 2008:213-214).

What observes in Nigeria is best measured as poverty; for most Nigerians experience what United Nations (1995) describe (object) poverty to be:

...a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services.⁴

The World Bank recently released a statistics which put the number of Nigerians living below poverty level at 55.9 million (33.1 percent of the nation’s population which currently stands at 169 million). This in

essence means that most Nigerians are virtually living in destitution. However, the combination of Nigeria's new released GDP and the country's poverty estimate clearly depict a country of contrasts. Nigeria has the irony of wealth and a revolting and unacceptable poverty.⁵

Successive governments in Nigeria have impoverished the masses through their selfish political styles and ideologies. They thereafter capitalize on the people's poverty, flaunt their greed through ostentations living and thereby psychologically push their (the weak's) endurance beyond bearable limits. Thus forcing them to go into formally unimaginable extents, to repel their social exclusion. This is manifested in prostitution, cyber crimes, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery and ritual killings. For instance, armed youths invaded a tiles factory in Osubi near Warri, Delta State, carted away thirteen million naira (#13,000,000) and destroyed property worth over forty-eight million naira (#48,000,000) as reported by *Compass* of 11th October, 2010. The same newspaper reported the case of Dim Maxwell Obiajulu; the owner of Obilink Petroleum Station, Asaba, to have been kidnapped and the sum of seventy million naira (#70,000,000) was demanded for his release. Just like 27 year old Kingston Asiegbu, a teacher at Imperial International School, Molipa, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, kidnapped Dolapo and Tolu his pupils, took them to Ebonyi State before demanding #250,000 from their parents (*Sunday Sun*, August 10, 2014). *Sunday Sun* of 30th July, 2014, also reported the case of Oruma who stabbed his 20 year old friend, Frederick Eze to death, following a fight over a debt of twenty naira (#20).

Kazeem Abiodun, a member of an armed robbery gang caught by the police when trying to sell a RAV4 Toyota Jeep for #270,000 and a Toyota Camry Saloon Car for #750,000 said:

I am an NCE holder from Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Ijanikin, Lagos.
I graduated in the year 2011 and it was when I couldn't get a job that I ventured into armed robbery...Rafiu Ojelowo and I used to snatch handbags at Agbara Bus Stop...day and night... (*Sunday Sun*, 6th July, 2014).

There abound several cases of ritual killings for the purpose of getting money. An example is that of 41 year old Onwuzuruike Nwakaogwu and other members of "De Well" cult, who were arrested for being in possession of a human skull and the murder of many innocent citizens in Umuniweyi, Umuma Village, Portharcourt (*Sunday Sun*, 13th July, 2014). *Crime World* edition of May 2014 also tells the story of "Booming Business of Human Parts" wherein one Madam Sikiratu Salami and her cohorts sell "human skulls...for #10,000 each, liver, intestines....for #1,000, depending on freshness". Another member of the syndicate, Waheed Ibrahim said:

My job is to exhume and dismember the corpses and sell them in parts. I dig out graves of dead bodies, without caskets and those that have stayed 4-5 years...At the end I will be paid #3,000...

All these instances of socio-economic debilities which have resulted in (some) Nigerians using both physical and supernatural means to come to terms with them, are essentially what informs money ritual as a theme that has been recurrent in Yoruba films industry in recent times, often as communal metafiction (Adagbada, 2005:210). Though there have been few films such as *Bíwọ̀n tí n ẹ̀ Lọ̀run* (what observes in heaven) (2000), *Ètọ̀ Mì* (my right) (2001), *Àbẹ̀kẹ̀ Alámàlà* (Àbẹ̀kẹ̀ the yam flour-meal seller) in 2002 and *Owónikókó* (Money is the most essential) also in 2002, which have money ritual as their major and sub-themes, the present political dispensation in Nigeria, has witnessed several productions of money ritual films such that one out of every ten randomly picked Yoruba films is most probably themed on money ritual.

Money Rituals

'Ritual' as a religious term means a ceremony which involves communication with some external forces. It embodies a belief/beliefs and it is done with seriousness and solemnity. Adisa (2005:4) opines that rituals belong to the realm of the sacred, involving sacrifices, essentially. Adisa goes on to identify the sacred and the non-sacred as the typology of rituals. The sacred can be positive or negative. They involve sacrifices for life crises, death rites and customs and rituals of initiations. Non-sacred rituals on the other hand are the imitative types, signifying re-enactment. Under the sacred type of rituals, the positive ones are usually concerned with consecrating or renewing a religious object. In the film, *Àromòdomo* (Generations) for instance "Èrùgàlè" the ancestral divinity, is brought out from its sanctuary to the open once yearly. A goat is slaughtered and its blood poured on the 'Èrùgàlè' carvings, symbolizing its being washed anew for another year, amidst drumming, dancing and feasting.

Another ritual classified as 'sacred' is the sacrificial ritual described by the French sociologist Henry Hubert and Marcel Mauss (Adisa, 2005:11). The two sociologists' attempt to differentiate between sacrifices and rituals of oblation, offering and consecration. In their view, the distinct feature of sacrificial ritual is the destruction of the sacrificial victim which may be animal, human or plant, either partially or totally (through burning, dismembering or eating). In *Onígbá Ajé* (she who bears the calabash of wealth) for instance, Tùndùn is not slaughtered by Ọ̀túnbaheer husband, her soul is 'merely' confined into a coffin in Ọ̀túnba's special room,

wherein he goes, recites incantation and come out with wads of currency. The same thing observes in *Asiri Iya Eko* (Lagos woman's secret) and *Arewà Òru* (beautiful night-owl). These are unlike the outright immolation of the twenty one members of Adémolá's social club, who are caused to die in a motor accident on their way from a ceremony in *Àbèlà Pupa* (Red Candle).

The idea that a human being or other living things may be sacrificed to procure wealth may not be proved empirically, and it may sound strange and imaginary to a non-African, who may wave it aside as figments of imagination. The fact remains that the phenomenon is real, it is magic. Many (Yorùbá) Africans, lettered or not, believe in its possibility. The Encyclopedia Britannica (6) 1974:483) defines magic as:

...a ritual performance or activity believed to influence human or natural events through access to an external mystical force beyond the ordinary human sphere...

The principle of magic has two underlying principles; homeopathy and contiguity. Homeopathically speaking, 'like produces like or that an effect resembles its cause'. Contagious magic on the other hand operates on the principle that things which have once been in contact with each other will continue to interact even when the contact is broken' (Opoku, 1978:148). These are the 'exoteric' energy which a man (in his limitations) who has esoteric knowledge may tap to, so that his will may be served (Opoku, 1978:47; Awolalu, 1979:75). This is the exact thing that Wole in *Ogidan* (leopard) means when he says "*Èni tiò mọ̀àsírí ayé yíi, ko le mọ̀na atilà...*"

The Yoruba are generally not cannibals. Sacrificial victims like animals and plants may be consumed, definitely humans are not. One wonders then, what criminals found in possession of corpses, skeletons and dismembered parts of human beings do with them if not rituals, particularly money rituals. The sacrifice of human beings among the Yoruba in distant past (before animals like cow, horse or goat came to be used as replacement) was communally done for atonement or supplication. Few of the instances wherein human victims were offered are that of the *Agemo* shrine in Ijèbú-Imọ̀sàn, whereby the immolated victims are left to rot away, Tele; the 'scapegoat' who bear away sins, impurities, diseases and death from the land during *Edí* festival in Ilé-Ife and the voluntary self-sacrifice of Elégurù in Ijèbú-Òde when *Ọ̀sà* (the lagoon) was threatening to overflow and submerge Ijèbú-Òde (Awolalu, 1979, 179-180).

The selfish and wicked nature of using fellow human beings for money ritual has not been studied (widely) before now because of its cultic, criminal, desperate, extreme and daring nature and essentially because it is not scientifically provable. However, Pa Olúyomádé Awóyemi⁶ has this to say about money ritual:

Ta ló sọ pé kò sí ò̀ògun owó? Ò̀ògun owó wà dàadàa! Gbogbo wa la mọ̀ pé ó wà, a kii fẹ̀ sọ ọ̀ ní gbangba ni. Ídí ni pé nnkan burúkú ni. È ọ̀ gbọ̀ tí wọ̀n n wí pé 'Ọ̀dájú ló bí owó, itijú ló bí gbèsè'. Ọ̀dájú àti ikà èniyàn ló n sẹ̀ ò̀ògun owó...Èni tí kò lè ní sùúrù de ohun tí Ọ̀lọ̀run máa sẹ̀. Èni tí kò ní itẹ̀lọ̀rùn, tí ó n wo aago aláago síşẹ̀ ní ó lè sẹ̀ oşó...Èmi èni tí wọ̀n lò yẹ̀n ni yoo máa lo síşẹ̀ tí yóò pèsè fún èni tí ó bá lò ó...

(Who said there is nothing like money ritual? Of course there is. We all know that, but people do not discuss it openly. The reason for this is that it is a bad venture. Have you not heard of the maxim 'wickedness is the mother money, while debt is given birth to by timidity'. Only the wicked and the hard-hearted will go into money rituals...An impatient person, who cannot wait on God's providence. A greedy person who has no personal focus, but must strive to achieve success like others at all costs, is the one who will go into rituals for money. It is the soul of the victim that will go and labour to provide money for the ritualist...)

Pa Awóyemi went on to say there are other 'better' ways of sourcing for money from the ethers. Some of these according to him are *Awúre ojà títà* (charms to maximize sales) *Awúre àsírí bíbò* (charms for easy financial lifestyle) *Èyọ̀nú àgbà* (receiving elder's benevolence) and *Ànábọ̀* (charmed coin or currency that returns to the spender with ordinary ones it comes into contact with after being spent). Aside from these, there are also mild forms of money rituals wherein plants and animals are used. This he referred to as *Oşóle*. He however said caution must be exercised concerning *Oşóle* because some money rituals involving eventual sacrifice of humans may be initially disguised with the use of animals. This is exactly what happens to Adéwolé in *Owó Tútù* (Easy Wealth) when his animal-object of sacrifice stops yielding money after the initial libation of pigeons' blood once in every thirteen days. The priest tells him that it is only the blood of the person he loves most that can revive the ritual, *Àbáke*, Adéwolé's mother is thus used. Ajísáfẹ̀ is aware of this in *Èyọ̀nú àgbà*, for he tells the priest *Oşóle to ba le ju ni mo fẹ̀ se, èyi to le gan-an. Erú ebo ati atukesu to ba yẹ̀ ni kẹ̀ sọ...*

The plausible rationale behind using human beings as sacrificial objects for money ritual is the belief of the (Yoruba) Africans in *àkúnleyàn* (primordial horoscope), whereby each person unconsciously chooses his/her lot (whether good or bad) in 'heaven' life before being born. (As such, even a fetus can be the sacrificial victim of money ritual as it happens in *Ánú omọ* and *Şikàşikà*). What is chosen will then materialize in an individual person's life on earth. It means in essence then that a person (x)'s good luck in life can be borrowed, ceased,

delayed or transferred to or be replaced with that of another person(y), if x or his/her aids have the esoteric knowledge to do so. This possibility is evident in an Ifa corpus verse for *Awure-gbigba-teni-eleni* (charm used to attract another person's good lot to oneself) which goes thus:

<i>A-kéré mojà òde Ègbá</i>	<i>A-kere moja from Egba city</i>
<i>I-pin-hin awo òde Ijẹṣà</i>	<i>I-pin-hin the initiate from Ijesa city</i>
<i>È lọ rẹ̀è kowo òde ilẹ̀ yìi fún mí wá...⁷</i>	<i>Go and bring me all the money in this town</i>

In *Omo Eḷemọṣo*, Èrò's presence in Olóyè (chief)'s house is a mascot for the household because of her positive *àkúnlẹ̀yàn*. In *Naira Meḷdógún* (Fifteen Naira), Tade's glory in life is delayed by his step-mother's friend, Mojinyinlólá, who when about to die, passes Tádé's glory to Sẹ̀gilólá her daughter. This Sẹ̀gilólá sells to Lálónpé for fifteen naira. Lálónpé takes the glory to her grave when she dies and it takes the spiritual intervention of Tádé's grandmother to take the glory back from Lálónpé's ghost. In order to swap bad destinies for good ones through human sacrifice for wealth, Bùnmi in *Oláníyonu* (it is tasking be wealthy) uses Ènitàn her daughter. Àlàní uses Bídèmi in *Bẹ̀bẹ̀tò* (too hasty) and Jùwọ̀n uses his mother in *Aṣòróṣo* (difficult to divulge). In *Àlàmu Sẹ̀niyàn* (Àlàmu is pleasant), Fadérea; Àlàmu, Oláiywólá and Mojísolá's mother, transfers wealthy Mojísolá and Oláiywólá's *sakúnlẹ̀yàn* to wretched Àlàmu, by the use of the siblings headgears. Àlàmu, the mother's dearest child, thus becomes stinkily rich and his siblings become paupers.

It must be noted however that the Yorùbá believe that some human beings are naturally fortified or can be fortified by themselves or relations, such that their *akúnlẹ̀yàn* will not be harmed or have their positive lot in life tampered with. In *Bẹ̀bẹ̀tò* for instance, Démiládé escapes being used for rituals by Àlàní, just like Owólábi's attempt to use his landlord's wife for money rituals turns futile in *Owónikókó*.

Rituals as Last Resort and its Didactics

One important trend in Yorùbá films themed on money rituals is that only few greedy characters like Dàpọ in *Iná Èṣìṣì* (sting from thistles) and Káyodé in *Ejẹ̀ fún Ejẹ̀* (Blood for blood) go into human sacrifice for rituals to make themselves exceedingly wealthy. More often than not, it is as a result of abject poverty resulting from failed business ventures, unemployment, lack of technical know-how, ignorance, helplessness, being victims of preventable disasters and the likes, that culminates into the social exclusion being experienced by many Nigerians today. These make the generally dreaded money rituals appealing to them albeit as last resorts. Olátúnjí and Folakẹ̀ his wife for instance, decide to use Folakẹ̀' s womb for money ritual as a result of Olátúnjí's termination of appointment in his place of work and the hunger they experienced afterwards in *Şikáşiká* (the wicked). The same goes for Yómí in *Àlejò Mẹ̀ta* (three visitors). In *Aṣòróṣo* (difficult to say), Bímbo and Jùwọ̀n are unemployed graduates who are fed by their mother who is a petty trader. Jùwọ̀n, the younger one becomes frustrated and uses his mother for money rituals like Lánre, Kazeem, Ayo, and Tunde in *Olọwọ̀ Ajẹ̀* (mascot for wealth) who use their girlfriends.

The unimaginable level of poverty and ridicule experienced by Oláwuyi and his wife as a result of Oláwuyi's failed business, forces Abímboólá his wife into using her own positive destiny to assist her husband. She uses herself as an object of partial immolation whereby she has an ulceric sore, infested with several large maggots on her head in *Oyín Orọ̀* (pregnant silence). In another instance, Àbáyomí in *Ilẹ̀ Ayé* (wicked world) is not allowed to marry Bọ̀la his pregnant heartthrob because of his low social status. Out of desperation, he joins the Billionaire Club, a cult that specializes in donating the lives of their relations for money rituals.

Money ritual as a last resort after the characters has tried all other dignifying and legal means of livelihood, point to some salient facts. First and foremost, these ritualists know that taking another person's life is immoral and retributive apart from being criminal, but lack, resulting in obvious social exclusion, block their conscience and reasoning. This makes them vulnerable and ready to try anything that can alleviate the suffering and ridicule, even if it is for a while. This is obvious from Alani's statement in *Bẹ̀bẹ̀tò* that:

Tí èyàn bá wà tí ò bá lówó nílẹ̀ ayé yìi, kò lẹ̀ wọ̀ àlujánnà...Olọrun gan an kíi bóloṣi rin... À ní bó tilẹ̀ ṣe ọdún kan pére! A! iyà yìi pojù jàre...

(A pauper can never enter the paradise...Even God does not fraternize with a wretch...Even if it just for a year! No! This suffering is most unbearable...)

Another important fact is that cultic money making ventures, whatever its type, usually have one or more taboos to be observed by the ritualist, in order to avoid eventualities. Pa Awóyemi (check overleaf) for instance said for *Awúre ọjà títa* (charms to maximize sales), the person for whom it is done must avoid getting annoyed easily and must not lend money to anyone. For an *Oṣólẹ̀* that an animal like a cock is used, the ritualist must never eat chicken in the course and must make sure that the live cock (whose feather must have been removed) is not allowed to forage out of the ritualist's compound.

As rightly observed by Maccabe (1992) that:

By the criteria of one of the best realist critics, Andre Bazin, for a film to be

realistic, it must locate its characters and action in a determinate social and historical setting...not just a rendering of reality but the rendering of a reality made more real by the use of aesthetic device.

The producers of these Yoruba films under study, capitalize on the taboos thus attached to the efficacy and longevity of money rituals, for didactic purposes. They ensure that the ritualists in the films inevitably accidentally/incidentally break the taboo, such that they come to a bad end. In anti-climax, the ritualist becomes insane and confesses, dies or at few times goes back to being a pauper.

In *Onígba Ajé*, Otúnba is warned that Túndún his wife, whom he uses for money ritual, must never, set eyes on her soul-form laid in a coffin in Otúnba's special room. Providence comes into Túndún's rescue when one day Otúnba forgets to take his bunch of keys along to the office. Out of curiosity, Túndún picks the bunch of keys and goes to open the special room which she is earlier warned not to open as "it houses very important business documents". Therein, Túndún is shocked to see 'herself', wrapped in red loin cloth inside a coffin. The charm is thus desecrated. She faints and while still in stupor, the apparition enters into her physical body and she becomes revived. Otúnba remembers his keys, returns home and finds Túndún with her bags and baggage, getting ready to run away. He confesses and turns mad immediately he sets eyes on her. In the same vein, Abeke in *Abeke Alámàlá* turns mad when Bòdé her son returns from America while she is away and her cooks break the taboo attached to her source of wealth, by serving some of the food prepared in Abeke's restaurant to Bòdé to eat.

In *Oyún Oro*, Oláwuyi incidentally sees his wife in her room when she is invoking his soul form and later feeds it with maggots coming out of the large sore on her head. This results into the wife's confession and death, it also mark the end of Oláwuyi's mysterious wealth. Lánre, Kazeem, Ayọ and Tunde's case in *Olowo Ajé* is similar to the ones discussed above. The four young unemployed undergraduates are engaged in money rituals. They die one after the other when Tundé gets drunk and breaks the taboo for the ritual by sleeping with the girl (his ritual victim) who brings money to him in the midnight. This is an exact replica of what happens to the young male ritualists in *Arẹwà Òru*.

To make viewers learn further and be enduring during these hard times, some film scripts are written in such a way that in total desperation evident by impatience, some money ritualists do not bother to know the taboos that are observable for the rituals they engage in. They are made to pay dearly for this. In *Kògbẹbe* (Irredeemable) for instance, Fáfunke, an indigent undergraduate daughter of Alámú the Ifá priest, with the assistance of her mother, steals her father's documented charm file. With her two friends, she buys the materials for money ritual as stated in the file and they become very rich from receiving huge sums of money from men who begin to find them irresistibly attractive. Fáfunke unknowingly date Lánre – a classmate and captain Kanmi, Lánre's (erstwhile) father simultaneously. This leads to Fáfunke's death because as her father explains, the taboo observable for the ritual is that the ritualist must never have intercourse with two blood relations.

Conclusion

In this study, we have examined what money ritual is, and we have explained it as phenomenon which is recognized among the (Yoruba) Africans. It is magical in nature, where esoteric forces tapped from nature are used by the initiate to send the soul of the sacrificial victim to a supra-physical realm, wherein it labour to bring wealth to the ritualist.

Since the fictional/non-fictional Yorùbá films are based on incidents that occur in the society where they are produced like other literary genres, money ritual themed films reflect what is going on in Nigeria, as perceived by (Yorùbá) film producers – immorality and wickedness in their highest orders, resulting from attempt by some Nigerians to come to terms with the socio-economic hardship being experienced in present times. The bane of Nigeria's economic development remains poor leadership and corruption in high places. Majority of Nigerians ought not to have anything to do with poverty if our government at all levels judicially manage the abundant resources of our nation.

It will be unrealistic for literary artists to make the socio-religio-cultural lifestyle of another society to have (too much) bearing on, or be the yardstick way by which that of the society from which a literary piece produced, is measured. If done, literature then ceases to serve its natural purpose of re-creating the social world of man's relation with other members of his society, with politics and with the state, in its economic or religious constructs. This is because the social task of art and the artist is to make life bearable by providing the society with an image of reconciliation in the light of the challenges facing it, for the function of the artist is consequent upon the society he operates from.

What is produced by Nollywood is essentially what the people actually believe, practice and say, not what they are supposed to believe, practice or say by using the world-view of 'other people' as parameters. The Yoruba (Africans) have their own indigenous value system, with its own pattern, historical inheritances and traditions from the past. There is no doubt that Nollywood has its dark areas, which need to be examined. Some of which are un-objective portrayal of culture such as violence and nudity, untapped explorative values of the film genre as a medium for generating public debate and creation of awareness on topical issues, among other

things.

We are of the opinion that by the time good governance beings to operate in Nigeria, which will usher in employment of graduates and school leavers, housing schemes, well-assisted small and medium scale enterprises, meaningful health facilities and properly funded public schools, colleges and universities, equal opportunities for all and all others facilities that make living meaningful, the focus of our film producers will experience paradigm shifts, not only from money rituals, but generally. This will no doubt have effect on the general evolution of culture; a dynamic phenomenon. This is because as a society changes, new roles and attitudes become the assignment of the artist and of art itself.

Notes

1. In Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti and Kwara States. They are also found along West African coasts in Togo, Republic of Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Liberia and across the Atlantic in Cuba, Trinidad, Tobago, Haiti, Jamaica, Brazil and America.
2. The Yoruba like many other tribes, refer to God in male terms. Many religious / sacred books however state that God is a 'divine spirit' 'formless' but living. See Nabofa (2014).
3. See Babalola, A. (2002:1 – 54)
4. See Haralambos et. al. (2008:214)
5. *Sunday Sun*, July 2, 2014, p.11.
6. In an oral interview with the seventy-four (74) year old man at his residence; 7A Abobi Street, Ibipe Quarters, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, on 23rd September, 2014.
7. See Dopamu, P.A. (2000:74)

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