

Inevitability of Rituals and Sacrifices in Yoruba Culture: An Overview of Tunde Kelani's *Arugba* and Kunle Afolayan's *Irapada* Films

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Article DOI:
10.48028/ijprds/ijdshtmss.v14.i1.07

Keywords:
Rituals, Sacrifices,
Films, Portrayals,
Yoruba Culture.

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Abstract

Film productions in their various genres have become one of the most patronized entertainment exhibitions in Mass Communication. They portray the happenings in their environment with, at times, specific references to individual's behavioural patterns. Yoruba films in particular are purveyors of the Yoruba people's cultural norms and values. Hence, this study examined these portrayal as contextualised in Tunde Kelani's *Arugba* and Kunle Afolayan's *Irapada* films. The study adopted content analysis and focus group discussions (FGD) to gather qualitative data. The two (2) films were purposively selected because the variables of this study, rituals and sacrifices were explicitly exhibited. Findings revealed that in *Arugba*, ritualistic process in sacrificing was used by the Osogbo people to appease the Osun River goddess for peace and help ward off bad omen, such as diseases and so on. It was also established by the findings in *Irapada* that until the necessary sacrifice was carried out that the misfortune which befell Dewunmi did ward off. Findings showed the extent to which rituals and sacrifices were of great necessity in Yoruba culture, while in *Arugba*, It was mandatory for the carrier of the sacrifice to be a virgin which was ensured through a ritualistic process by the Ifa priest. These portrayals by the two (2) films were succinctly corroborated in the submissions of the FGDs. The study concluded that ritualistic process and sacrificing were to a greater extent meant to ward off bad omen and misfortune generally in the individual's lives and the society at large. Based on the findings of this study, It was recommended that the practice of Yoruba culture in order to bring succour to the individuals and the society generally should be encouraged and promoted by all means rather than looking at the negative tendencies.

Background to the Study

The complex nature and characteristics of culture have been part of the researches conducted by scholars in Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Communication and particularly Mass Communication. They have given various submissions underpinning the dynamism of culture with the attending influence between tradition and modernity. The latter which daily tends to override and put into question the existence of tradition and custom due to the unending technological advancement and breakthrough in sophistication. The sophistication has become greatly wonderful that the human existence in terms of further recognising the longstanding local traditional cultural norms and values are threatened. These practices and held-on belief are the ilk of an average African society in which Yoruba people of the South Western Nigeria are no exception. The Yoruba filmmakers in their escapades have showcased the richness of Yoruba culture in forms of arts, crafts, drums, sculpture, religion, belief, tradition, customs, family settings, to mention but few in their various films. They have most times exhibited little of good tidings but more misgivings (adversaries) in their film's portrayals of occultism, rituals for blood-making wealth, lust in power, rape, family/ in-law rancours, kidnapping, sacrifices and outright exposure of fetish activities to mention but a few. All of these are made to be the lifestyle of the Yoruba people in particular and Nigeria in general.

It is against this background, that some scholars and critics of the Nigerian film industry (Nollywood) have expressed their dismay that the portrayals in Yoruba films particularly, do not represent the reality on the ground. They are of the opinion that the film makers are doing this in order to make profit and perhaps wanting to be popular. Whereas other critics underscore their arguments on the fact that films mirror the society. Hence, succinctly, they concluded that the Yoruba people(culture) necessarily build their norms, values and lifestyles generally on occultism, ritualistic activities especially, sacrifices in order to achieve wealth and power generally. In drawing a balance from these arguments, submissions and opinions, this study then brings to fore, the two renowned Yoruba film makers, Tunde Kelani and Kunle Afolayan, who have contributed immensely to the Nigerian film industry. The duo have won various awards for promoting the Nigerian indigenous culture particularly the Yoruba people's cultural norms, values, language and tradition both at home and at international film festivals. The film *Arugba* by Tunde Kelani and *Irapada* by Kunle Afolayan become relevant to this study. They are purposively selected because of their portrayals and depicting this as one of the bedrocks and inevitable occurrences in the lifestyle of the Yoruba people.

Thus, one of such values is the traditional rites of performing sacrifice(s) in order to ward off evils or find solutions to problems. It is sufficient to say here that, the act of sacrificing dated back to the existence of man on earth. In Genesis 4:3-6 Cain and Abel made sacrifice of their harvest to God, Genesis 22:1-14 revealed how God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac to him and its version in the Qur'an, Suratu Soffat 37:100-111. These examples have become the norms of human existence that is now accepted in all the religions, Christianity, Islam and Traditional. That mere praying is a ritualistic process of

sacrificing to God in quest for a favour. Hence as observed by Akintoye (2010) that the Yoruba's knowledge about herbs interplays with their religion, ritual/ sacrifice practices and mysteries of Ifa and divination. Historically, the Yoruba people's belief(s) is cemented in those practices perhaps taking cue(s) from the Bible and the Quran.

Statement of the Problem

Film productions and what they portray have always become controversial issues all over the world. Be it Hollywood, Bollywood or the Nigerian Nollywood, portrayals as their contents or messages are seen from the different perspectives of their audience, the society at large and particularly researchers and critics. The aspect of Yoruba Nollywood films comes to bear at this juncture. Some of the critics and researchers (foreign and Nigerians) are convinced that the contents of the films portray the lifestyles of the Yoruba people. This is because as they argue, films portray the happenings in the society of which very little is close in promoting positively the Yoruba cultural norms and values in terms of arts, crafts, dress code, language and so on. Rather the aspect of negativities such as occultism, rituals/sacrifices, lust for wealth and power using human blood and so on, are more exhibited. Other critics conclude that the film makers overblow and overplay those negativities which every society parades including foreign (as of Hollywood, Bollywood and others) perhaps to make profits and curry cheap popularity for themselves.

This study caught between the two submissions or opinions, seek to find out the inevitability of ritual in the process of sacrifice in the Yoruba culture, the extent by which this is used and for what purpose. Hence, the two renowned Yoruba film makers, Tunde Kelani and Kunle Afolayan become relevant here. The duo has won various awards at home and at international film festivals for promoting Yoruba culture in particular and Nigeria in general. Their films *Arugba* by Tunde Kelani and *Irapada* by Kunle Afolayan become very pertinent to this study and are so purposively based on the necessity of sacrifices and rituals as germane in Yoruba culture and survival of its people.

Research Objectives

These are aimed to:

1. Find out the necessity of rituals and sacrifices in Tunde Kelani's film *Arugba* and Kunle Afolayan's *Irapada*.
2. Determine the extent to which the performance of rituals and sacrifices as portrayed in the film did what they were meant for.
3. Perception of the audience (focus group discussants) about the inevitability of sacrifice in Yoruba culture as portrayed in *Arugba* and *Irapada* by Tunde Kelani and Kunle Afolayan respectively.

Research Questions

1. What is the necessity of sacrifice in Tunde Kelani's film *Arugba* and Kunle Afolayan's film *Irapada*?
2. What is the extent by which the performance of the rituals and sacrifices did what

- they were meant for as portrayed in the two films?
3. What is the perception of the audience (FGD) about the inevitability of rituals and sacrifices in Yoruba culture as portrayed in *Arugba* and *Irapada* by Tunde Kelani and Kunle Afolayan respectively.

Scope of the Study

This study was solely concerned with the inevitability of rituals and sacrifices in Yoruba culture. It is a content analysis of Tunde Kulani's *Arugba* and Kunle Afolayan's *Irapada* films. Focus group discussions were used as instrument to complement the qualitative analysis.

Conceptual Review

Rituals and Sacrifices

These two words rituals and sacrifices are seen here as phenomenal in nature and likened to a double _ edged sword. As innocent and simple in meanings as it were and regarded as inevitable in everyone's life, they can be used as practices of good and evil machinations. The simplicity in meanings come from for instance, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2007,1422) thus, ritual- a ceremony that is always performed in the same way in order to mark an important religious or social occasion or something that you do regularly in the same way each time. while sacrifice (pg-1447_1448). is " the act of offering something to a god, especially in the past, by killing an animal or person in a religious ceremony- They made sacrifices to ensure a good harvest or to willingly stop having something you want or doing something you like in order to get something more important. These meanings underscore the position and submissions of this study. It is in the stream of arguements of the phenomenal and philosophical nature of ritual and sacrifice, that Alawode and Fatonji (2013) posit, that they are mostly used in Yorubaland to ward off evils and bring forth good omen. As also observed by Oluwole (2017), reiterating that Yoruba Ifa diviner Orunmila, who says the refusal to make sacrifice bring about calamities while performing it breeds blessings and success.

The Nigerian Film Industry

Over the years the Nigerian video and film industry has carved for itself, that fame and popularity which attracted everyone in the environment. From historical records, the Nigerian oral tradition, theatre and eventual tradition as observed by scholars, are different from the classical nature of Hollywood, the Indian Bollywood and Telenovela from the Latin America. The latter ones are tagged with thrillers, love, melodrama and soap opera. As observed by Alanu (2010), the Nigerian films are not classified with genres but into ethnic groups such as Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo and so on. Nigerian film Industry (Nollywood) as it has taken its name from Hollywood and Bollywood perhaps, has nearness of cinematic culture and style of filmmaking in their engagements too. (Haynes, 2007) Experience has however shown, that the Nigerian video films particularly Yoruba, are those of cinematic mythologies formed in traditional engagement, folktales and folk media (oramedia) generally. These exhibit the socialisation process and those of the average Nigerian society. The myths as observed by

Barthes (2000) cited in Zajc (2009:60) are the contents of the Nigerian video cultures. This he further asserts,

The African using the myths of the colonizers, from pop music hits to the popular film series, in particular Bollywood musicals and Hollywood horror movies as a material from which they create their own myths. Instead of poor, monotonous, unimedia myths of the oppressed, their films are rich, colourful metaphones.

Hence, this has redefined and redirected African cinema cultures to the contemporary African situation. Nollywood has a huge audience, employee of mass skilled/unskilled labour and the large monetary value with productions turnovers, it is yet to be taken as 'cinema' by cinema scholars (Lobato, 2009:6). On the contrary, according to Kuhn and Westwell (2012: 6) "An aesthetic of cinema involves first of all, accepting that film is a legitimate art form, and then that cinema does more than simply copy of what is 'out there' in the real world....." The Yoruba ones in particular, have been observed by critics and scholars to have exhibited aesthetics in their films. This has always resulted into value judgement on the side of the audience with regard to enjoyment and pleasure moreso, that they see the films mirroring their environment.

Yoruba Films Contents

Content creation like other media-types has become the underscoring element of film productions. Yoruba films like other genres have had their contents and themes borne out of the experiences of marketers who sponsor the films, producers who own the ideas or provide the scripts/ storylines about the happenings around. As viewed by Tomaselli and Eke (1995), the problem which cinema, video, photography, television and their allied have is the inability of the audience to discern and interpret rightly in line with the perception and understanding of the audience. The film's title and themes are usually interwoven and not until one knows the contents. Their storylines span from different socio-economic, political, cultural to portrayals of individuals' behavioural patterns. Titles are based on HIV/AIDS, Islam, Christianity, witchcraft, traditional religion, prostitution, marital engagements, battle between good and evil, money/wealth rituals to mention but a few.

The list is unend according to Haynes (2007), Agba (2014), Larkin (2004), Zajc (2009) and many other scholars and critics who, however, submit that as interesting, exciting and monotonous some of the storylines may be, the films serve as learning, tutelage about life experience most especially the features (fictions) and at times the supposedly true stories/ non-fictions. Some of the films produced and acted by Adekola Odunlade are Dr Oyenusi, and Mufu Olorisa Oko (Yoruba films). Likewise, Haynes (2007) and Akande (2012) observed that Tunde Kelani, through his style of adopting Yoruba literary works for the film stories which have been shown in various international festivals, promotes Yoruba people's cultural norms and values and indeed Africa. Amongst such literary works adopted as films by Kelani are, O le ku (1997) and Koseegbe (1995) written by

Akinwunmi Isola, Thunderbolt (Magun) (2001) by Adebayo Faleti, Bayo Adebowale's The Virgin adopted to Narrow Path (2006). Maami (2011) adopted from Femi Oshifisan's story, Sidi Ilujinle (2017) from Wole Soyinka's Lion of the Jewels.

Likewise with regard to Kunle Afolayan, Orubo (2017) as cited in Odetoyinbo (2019), is known for his skilfulness in altering between thinkers, romantic and comedies. Afolayan has to his credit, Figurine (Araromire) (2009), Phone Swap (2011), Oct. 1st (2014) and CEO (2016) to mention but few. As observed by Lawa (2016), further cited in Odetoyinbo (2019: 32) "His involvement in film making has changed the way some Nigerians experience movies".

From observation to a greater extent according to Osakure (2009) the portrayals in these films are predicated upon the stories somehow which have happened to them and readily to identify with. As corroborated by Hayes (2007), themes of films exhibit desires, values and fear in dramatically, emotionally, morally, politically and spiritually as they appear in visual forms. Hence, there is that symbolic convergence of reality of events, in the fantasy themes of the films which have influence on as it were, for instance, Yoruba people's perception about their cultural norms and values. This to a greater extent have been the underpinning interactive engagements among Yoruba people which this study tends to explore.

Yoruba people culture, literature and film Making

The Yoruba people majorly occupy the fourth western part of Nigeria, when they also spread to many places like United States, Haiti, Brazil, Cuba, Trinidad and of course all over Nigeria and Africa. They are also said to have migrated Eastern part of Africa and have similarities with Egyptian work of arts and other traditional activities. (Johnson 1950) He further revealed that the Yoruba people later scattered in Ile-Ife in Nigeria with Oduduwa as their leader from Mecca (East) to establish other Yoruba kingdoms. According to Fadipe (1991) Oduduwa as the first Ooni of Ife was accepted by the Oyo-Yoruba whose descendant leader was the Alaafin. Early Yoruba people as revealed by Akintoye engaged in iron melting, use of tools hence fascinated by Ogun as a deity and god of iron. He further says that discovery of crops and eventually agriculture gave credence to blacksmithing and other social activities. Yoruba people then started to embrace sentiments, traditions, folklore, folktales, legends, security, peace and stability. As a result of all these Yoruba became farmers, hunters, wood worker, sculptors, traders and so on.

Culture by its various definitions has to a greater extent determine the nature and characteristics of the Yoruba people. As observed by Jones (2011) culture says who we are, it shapes people's identity, behaviour, defines who they understand the world their portion and it governs thought. Jones (2011:16) further explains thus:

Culture exists prior to the people who learn it. At birth humans are confronted by a social world already in existence. Joining this world involves "how things are done" in it. Only by learning the cultural

rules of a society can a human interacts with other humans. Because they have been similarly socialised, different individuals will behave similarly.

Hence, it is in line with this that Schaefer (2012: 53) opines that culture is "the ability of learned, socially transmitted customs, knowledge, materials objects and behaviour..... the ideas, values.

and artefacts of the groups of people". This is succinctly transparent in the cultural norms and values of the Yoruba people. They have conversed overtime, their language, norms, values, belief, technology, semiotics and symbols to mention but a few which have formed their symbolic interaction(s) they are known for both locally and internationally.

Portrayals of Yoruba Culture in Films

The early contacts of the Yoruba people as disclosed by Akintoye (2010) gave impetus to many of their early university graduates to have written literacy works to complement as it were the oral African literature at that time till perhaps today. The indigenous literary works generally as noted by Owomoyela (2009) contained oral artistry presented in memory and performed or recited. These in manner epitomise proverbs and riddles in order to make speeches effective and connotative (Sotunde, 2009). As revealed by Owomoyela (2009) and corroborated by Odigie and Aina (2021), literature contains written forms, poetry, fictions, drama and so on. They exemplify instances and lessons as regards legendary, gallantry, heroine, honesty, and respect for elders to mention but a few. Many of these virtues which are formed to be part of folktales, folklores, symbolographs signs and so on are the ilks of what are regarded as oramedia. Oramedia therefore, as given by Omu (1978) cited in Osho (2010: 149-150) thus;

Traditional media oramedia are the oral communication or informal transference media and organized communication or formal transference media such as family visiting, death and burial ceremonies, town or villages festivals, marriage and circumcision and trials, propitiatory assemblies and disputes and several other aggregatory events and state messengers like town criers, intelligence officers (Ilati) which characterized the African way of life to disseminate information.

Hence, the situations and culture elements sohave forged for the Yoruba people their identity. As observed by Hall (1987) identity becomes movable feast which depends on the way the people are represented or addressed in the cultural system. He further explains that identity is historical rather than biological (Hall 1992). Thus, the issue and challenges posed by cultural identity admists the influence of western education, colonism, modernity and localisation affected the early theatre practitioners (Yoruba travelling theatre) and the filmic profession. Likewise comes the challenges of cross-cultural influences and modernity with the advent and emergence of the internet and its resilient effects (positive/negative). These were the challenges faced by early theatre

practitioners such as Hubert Ogunde, Moses Olaiya, Afolayan, Muideen Aromire, Isola Ogunzola and Francis Ladele to mention but a few.

The early Yoruba theatre practitioners and film makers have given a lead way to others in their class. Today, the cinematic culture and theme(s) which have been embedded in localisation and original 'Yoruba' cultural norms and values specifically expressing the fundamentals belief and religion of the people. This is in tandem with the perception of Onuzulike (2007: 7) who outright asserts that:

.....Africans are very religious. The misconception of African Traditional Religion has led it to be called derogatory names such as animism and fetish amongst others. African are at a crossroad. Due to the fact that religion is embedded in Africans to be fully devoted to Christianity without partaking in some African Traditional Religion activities.

This tends to confirm Akintoye's (2010: 33) comment that:

.....the Ifa divination becomes the "complex of Yoruba beliefs and religion" As also observed by Fadipe (1999) supporting Akintoye that Ifa which is Orisa on its own way is expected to be met up with all the requests of the devotees. Hence Ifa is consulted for all important issues private and public. This is the bedrock of the babalawo's life who often consult Ifa for healing or any herbal preparation.

These sets of beliefs and their extent of usage form the fundamental religious and social existence of not only their devotees but have become symbolic convergence and interactions among the Yoruba people at large not minding any other religions they practice. Thus, the Ifa diviner in his quest to find solutions to problems of any sorts was revealed by Alawode and Fatonji in their study of 2013, that ritualism seen as neither good nor bad, it was carried out a greater extent to ward off bad rather than for negative purpose. This is establishably revealed by Oluwole (2017: 60) citing some verses in the Ifa divination thus:

Ifa we pray you accept our sacrifices: Approve our sacrifice. Please make our sacrifice reach the heavens; How shall we know this would be so? Because that exactly in the essence of Ifa worship (Eji-Ogbe-Odu). Sacrifice pays; its neglect does nobody any good. very soon, not; long after sacrifice, comes lots of good fortune. Immediately after offering sacrifice comes the celebration of immense wealth. (Okanran Meji).

In corroborating this inevitability of rituals and sacrificing by the Yoruba people from time memorial, Sorunde (2009: 356) says;

Ifa is the Yoruba oracle of divination. it is the basic spiritual hand tool for ordering life of the traditional Yoruba society - as

community, classic, families, individuals, group, institutions - every aspect of good life. It is used to run, influence, guide, and dominate the individual's existence. It is the divine instrument of Olodumare for ordering human life.

He concluded that it was believed and held in high esteem that they say "Ifa kii paro, Ifa kii seke" (Ifa does not lie, Ifa does no prevaricate). Their trust in the vatic power of Ifa was total. (Sotunde, 2003: 356). As observed by Ugboaja (1982: 214) which gives assertion to the Yoruba and practice says;

There is a popular proverb among the Yoruba of Nigeria: "Imale o pe kawa ma soro" The fact that we are Muslims does not forbid us from worshipping the traditional gods or performing rituals". A man can be a Christian and might still perform traditional rituals. He might still consult the priest of the Ifa oracle to tell him whether it is safe to go on a journey or not. He might still turn to Oshun the god of fertility.....

Thus, found to be important to the Yoruba people ritual and sacrifices according to Nsude and Isika (2016) catalogue them as part of the traditional communication system of which festivals religion, farming, cropping seasons, among others are used for development and mass mobilisation in Nigeria. Hence, these submissions not only give credence to the Yoruba people in their religion and socialisation but to the filmmakers who in their quests and explorations in film making portray and reveal all these for their audiences' education, knowledge, uses, entertainment, gratification and eventual profit and above all making their names and personalities popular.

Theoretical Framework

The unending and wonderful inventions and innovations in the world of electronic mechanism process has enhanced and uplifted the standard of filmmaking and the resultant distributing technological avenues. (Odetoyinbo, 2017) Outputs of films have moved away gradually from compact cassettes, CDs and DVDs usually meant for home video services to online media with streaming galore of all not only films but documentaries and particularly musicals. This challenging situations to both filmmakers and especially the marketers have made relevance the theories of this study namely. Cultivation and Symbolic Convergence theories.

Cultivation Theory

The theory is predicated upon the reasoning that the impact of television broadcasting on cultural attitudes and attitudes formation. According to Watson and Hillm (2015: 166), "it is a process identified by Gerbner called mainstreaming, whereby television creates a coming-together a convergence of attitude among viewers". In support of this, Baran (2012) refers to the theory's belief as cultivation analysis of symbolic interaction and social construction of reality. He further argues that the reality may be "possibly inaccurate, becomes meaningful because people believe it to be true"(Baran, 2012: 376).

This theory also presupposes the circumstances of both filmmaking and watching. Apart from film being audio-visual, it tends to be more popular than television nowadays and of course, carry along more audiences both on television itself and online streaming websites and platforms. Therefore, based on interactive process between messages and the audience(s), portrayals in film tends to possibly and perhaps in most cases be believed, inculcated and practiced by the audience.

As observed by MC Quails (2010: 497), he argues that:

However plausible the theory, it is almost impossible to deal convincingly with the complexity of posited relationships between symbolic structures, audience behaviour and audience views, given the many intervening variables. It is also hard to separate process of cultivation from general socialization.

Thus, ritualistic process and sacrifices as portrayed in films and as the issue were, are out rightly symbolic structures which are the underpinning practice and bond of the Yoruba people by heritage. They tend to build upon the symbolic convergence of the Yoruba people's socialisation process for survival no matter which 'imported' religions befall them. Hence, according to Akinkoya, Odetoyinbo and Olaniran (2012: 141), "the social and cultural influence of the media cannot be underestimated in era of media convergence enhanced by digitalization.

Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT)

A theory developed by Bormann, Gragan and Shields in 1985 and according to Watson (2012: 312) it is about 'shared fantasies' "which provide group members with comprehensive forms of explaining the past and thinking about the future - a basis for communal and group consciousness. The theory also, has to do with the reason behind individual's choice of the use of certain messages over the other and tries to analyse some societal shared symbols, the extent of their meaningfulness and at the end persuade or motivate to action. The communication trend is based on narrative process which according to Watson et al (2012) is referred to homo narrans. Just as the Yoruba proverb which says "Ti omode ko ba baa itan , a ba aroba, aroba, baba itan" meaning "If a child is eluded of history, he will get narratives for narratives are the godfather of history".

Overtime narratives have become social realities of the Yoruba people. Fantasies of myths, legendary, heroin and gallantry paraded by folktales, proverbs and so on, have become the Yoruba people's realities. They have shaped their socialisation process, forward individual's personalities and group consciousness (Onuzulike, 2007) It is also against this background that Terblanche (2012) says that fantastic stories at various times attract individual's attention and sometimes large crowds. Fantasies in their characteristics tend to be accepted or discarded. Therefore, if cinema is regarded as a mirror reflecting the totality of the peculiar and the audience at large, then it is not out of place to see what the audience are exposed to in Yoruba films. It then becomes obvious and contentious that scholars, critics and researchers of Yoruba Nollywood films have not realized this fact yet.

As revealed by Akintoye (2010: 35) those who are referred to as 'Adahunse' have mastered the Yoruba people's knowledge about herbs which interplays with their religion, ritual practices and mysteries of Ifa and divination, witchcraft and the occult. Akintoye further asserts of the Adahunse's mastery that;

his real focus was on the occult employment of herbs and other materials from nature, as well as well as use of incantations, curses, charms and amulets, to enable his clients to accomplish state of social purposes-good purposes such as success and wealth, evil purposes such as hostile occult interference in the lives and affairs of other persons or power purposes such as protection from certain weapons, or ability to de-materialize, or the ability to engage in out-of-body actions. (Akintoye, 2010: 25-36).

Hence in relations to SCT, as many times portrayed in Yoruba films especially. Akpabio (2007) observes, that this mastery of actions the audience not only enjoy but since reflecting their environment, and as individuals tends to govern the psyche and consciousness of an average Yoruba persons. Experience has shown that while some filmmakers use Pentecostal (Christian) bridge to fight against such powers in most films as observed by Haynes, 2007, Becker, 2011; Osakwe, 2009 and others, some involve the three religions traditional, Islam and Christianity in order to strike a balance. Haynes (2007: 146) citing Barber (1987) submits that "..... the films seen like pieces of mosaic rather than contradictory or competing representatives, the popular imagination from which they spring its synergy". Film therefore can be seen as a mixgreel of fantasies and realities. It actually depends on the literary educational and exposure level of the audience in the ability to discern and interpret the message. This is the thrust of uses and gratification with regard to value judgement in media effectiveness.

Methodology

The research design for this study was content analysis and focus group discussion (FGD) Qualitative (descriptive) analysis was adopted for the content analysis whereby some of the scenes in the two films (*Arugba and Irapada*) purposively selected and which pointed to the areas or issues of the necessity or need for ritual sacrifices and the extent were explicitly described. Hence, the focus group discussants were relevant. They were five (5) in number between the age bracket of 20-40 comprised three (3) males and two (2) females. They were made to pre-view the two films *Arugba and Irapada* and there they made their perceptions known through their comments on the focus of this study.

Content analysis was used in this study, in line with the observation of Lasswell, Lerner and Poo (1952) as contained in Owens-Ibie and Ademosu (2017: 433) that, "..... content analysis functions from the perspective that verbal behaviour as part of human behaviour, and that the flow of symbols is an aspect of events, and that communication process is definitely an historical process."

Study Sample

Arugba, a film by Tunde Kelani and *Irapada* by Kunle Afolayan were purposively selected among the catalogues of their films. This was because the two films storylines hinged on ritualistic process and as a pointer to sacrifice as a necessity or inevitable rite in Yoruba culture not minding other religions (Christianity and Islam).

Analysis and Interpretation

This study focussed on two films, *Arugba* and *Irapada* by Tunde Kelani and Kunle Afolayan respectively, which were purposively selected because apart from being produced the same year 2016, but they portrayed the aspect of rituals and sacrifices in the existence and survival of the Yoruba people.

Objective One: To find out the necessity of rituals and sacrifices in Tunde Kelani's film *Arugba* and Kunle Afolayan's *Irapada*.

Arugba depicts the ritualistic process in sacrificing to the Osun River in quest for supplications for the town and for all and sundry. The film opened with a documentary on the *Arugba* girl of the Osun Osogbo festival as witnessed by Tunde Kelani in 1995. Ten (10) years later, the film *Arugba* was made and made a correlation, sameness and inter-relationship among the three (3) religions in Yoruba land namely Christianity, Islam and the traditional which *Arugba* ritual represents.

The importance of Ifa divination which always precedes any ritual in sacrifice was brought to the fore from scenes 10 and 12 in order to find out who stole one of the king's wives' gold necklaces and only a virgin should help to detect this. Other girls who were the king's daughters failed but Tutu a visitor to the palace at that time passed the test, and being a virgin anyway later became the *Arugba* (carrier of the sacrifice).

Scenes 59 and 64 in the film portrayed the Ifa divination ritualistic process in choosing a virgin to be *Arugba* with all the process of testing some girls and confirming their fitness. Only Tutu was found to be qualified.

Then afterwards the Ifa priest in this scene (59) said in Yoruba thus:

Ifa ni ka ki gbogbo wa ka
Ku orire o. Ifa ni ka so
fun *Arugba* wipe ki o ma
beru, ko si ma foya kankan
Ifa ni irinajo wa odun yi
a dara o. Ase.

This in English Language is interpreted thus:

Ifa says we should greet all of you.
for the good omen. Ifa says we
should tell *Arugba* not to be afraid.
at all. Ifa says the escapade into the ceremony will be successful. Amen

The Ifa priest went further to warn *Arugba* thus:

Ifa ni k'oma turaka, ko
si ma ma binu pupo, nitori
agbara ti olodumare fun o.
Ifa ni ki o ma ko awon
odo, papa julo awon
obinrin mora fun
ilosiwaju. *Arugba* a ru re,
Arugbaa soo re o. Ase.

The English language version warning the *Arugba* thus:

Ifa says you should be free
You should do away with
excessive annoyance because
the great power GOD has given
you. Ifa says, you should mobilise
the youth especially the females
for the progress of the town.
(He then prays)- *Arugba* will have
a safe journey to and fro. Amen.

Hence in the scenes 68, 70, 72, 74, 75 and 76, the portrayals of the ritualistic ceremony and the sacrifice with prayers for good omen, funfair, dancing and singing, the crowd ushered the *Arugba* towards the river where the sacrifice was let into the river.

The portrayals were consistent with the observation of a male FGD (32years old) thus:

.....that is the value of virginity..... *Arugba*, is a film that
parents and children should watch together so that they can
take control of them (sic). (FGSD male 32years old).

Another female FGD (33years old) supported her colleague in relation to Yoruba culture, that

..... is emotional that we should promote culture based
on virginity that they are trying to point out, that a woman
should be decent in mode of promoting our culture that a lady
particularly they talked more about a woman that must be
protected when we talk of mixing or mingling with
men.....(Sic).

With regard to Kunle Afolayan's *Irapada* the inevitability of consulting an Ifa priest when Yoruba people generally are in dilemma or troubled. This the filmmaker exhibited in the early scenes of 5 and 6 when Dewunmui's foster mother consulted the Ifa priest narrating her dream about the imminent danger for Dewunmi. The advice was that a sacrifice be made in earnest. The Ifa priest said in (Yoruba language):

E pe wa le, ka lee ribi wa
se etutu. t'ori etu Iya wa oroyi
koja ala l'asan be si ni, a lee se
nkan si laiye pe a ri eniti oro na kan.
E pe wale ka le ri bi wa se etutu.

Interpretation in English language thus:

Invite him home, for us to wade
off the bad omen with a sacrifice
Woman, the issue surpasses
ordinary dream. We cannot do
anything to it, unless we see the
person concerned. Invite him home
so that the sacrifice can be carried out.

In scene 18, Dewunmi's foster mother who had travelled upon Northern Nigeria to inform him of the dream and the need for a sacrifice was rebuffed by Dewunmi while in scenes 26 and 27 after the eventual accident of the mother while returning from the trip. Dewunmi visited the village over the death of his mother was advised by the Ifa priest to offer a sacrifice which he vehemently condemned.

In scene 79, Dewunmi agreed to go home and do the sacrifice. This was after his business had crumpled, had problems with the bank, his wife deserted and one of his workers was shot dead at the venue of his construction work.

Scenes 80 and 81 portrayed the proper ritual process and sacrifice with his foster father and Ifa priest in attendance. While the ritual was going on, the Ifa priest recited the incantation thus: in (Yoruba language) over Dewunmi washing his head with a sponge and to be done three times into a hole.

Ori ni ngbe ni. Igbati
Ori ngbeni, nibo lori
sa wa?
Awede werisa, weri re o
Awede werisa (3 ce)

Translation in English language thus:

The head is to give support
when the head was to give
support where was the head
cleanser god, cleanse
your head (3 ce)

While this ritualist process of sacrificing was going on, Moji, Dewunmi's wife (scene 88) who has been rushed to the hospital earlier, regained her consciousness. The Ifa priest advised that Dewunmi should find his biological father. Eventually in company of his foster father found him. He prays for him after he narrated his ordeal. He then, told him of the death of his biological mother. He went back to the Northern part of Nigeria, met his wife in good condition and his contract was renewed and the bank loan was restored.

Objective Two: The extent to which the performance of rituals and sacrifices as portrayed in the films did what it was meant for.

This issue of the necessity of rituals and sacrifices in finding solutions to problems in Yoruba culture made a female FGD (38years old) to remark thus:

I would say they are promoting the culture, the Yoruba culture, most especially in the positive way because when we look at this new generation, if care is not taken, most of the people in the new generation would not have idea of how it is being done or how they have been doing it; but looking through those films, you can see the dressing, the symbols, the hairstyle and some other thing. They projected it from old fashions (Sic).

Likewise, a male FGD (22 years old) in appreciation of the two filmmakers' work said
.....I am going to say these films that I have watched, they don't produce the normal films we see on the Table. They tried to project what we called the new culture in our films. They produce different kinds of films(Sic).

In support of this view, a female FGD (28years old) commented that:

Among the filmmakers, they have been doing well. I wouldn't be surprised seeing them being given any award for standing out, because these two filmmakers they have shown that they have what it takes to be able to project African culture to the rest of the world and Nigeria as well.

Objective Three: The Perception of the audience (focus group discussants) about the inevitability of rituals and sacrifices in Yoruba culture as portrayed in *Arugba* and *Irapada*.

Therefore, considering the results of the discussions of the FGDs, it was apparent that their observations and the perceptions so formed were in consistent with one another. These also, went in tandem with the content analysis of the two films, that they have portrayed the Yoruba people's general believe in going through ritualistic process of sacrificing in order to find solutions to any problem as exhibited in scenes 10, 59, 64, 70, 72, 74, 75 and 76 in *Arugba* and also in scenes 5, 6, 18, 26, 80 and 81 in *Irapada*.

As observed by Oluwole (2017: 60) which confirms the inevitability of rituals and sacrifices by Yoruba people as succinctly posited by this study says citing some verses in the Ifa divination, thus

Ifa we pray to accept our sacrifices:

Approve our sacrifices.
Please make our sacrifice
reach the heavens!
How shall we know this would be so?
Because that exactly in the
essence of Ifa worship (Eji-Ogbe-Odu)

Sacrifice pays, its neglect does nobody and good. Very soon,
not long after sacrifice, comes lots of good fortune.
Immediately after sacrifice, comes its celebration of
immense wealth (Okanran Meji).

This was reflected in *Irapada* meaning redemption. While *Arugba* means a carrier of calabash containing the ingredients as sacrifice in order to appease the goddess of river Osun for succour in the town (Osogbo) amongst prayers with funfair by the people.

Conclusion

The Yoruba people overtime have based the cultural norms and values on the sacrifice of making rituals/sacrifices to GOD via their various gods/goddesses in their quest to find favour with them as intermediaries. Some scholars and critics of Nollywood films especially the Yoruba once have in their submissions condemned the portrayals of these rituals and sacrifices which were usually occultic in nature towards negativities such as lust for power/wealth, bloodletting and some others which Blier (2002) referred to as fetish. While on the contrary, Alawode and Fatunji (2013) observe in their study that majority of the sacrifices were directed towards (positivities) finding a solution to a problem rather than to cause evil acts.

It is in the same frame of this understanding and knowledge of the Yoruba cultural belief that many Yoruba cultural belief that many of the Yoruba filmmakers make rituals/sacrifice the underscoring theme of their storylines. This critics like Haynes (2007), Becker (2007), Ogwo et al (2015) and Akpabio (2007) to mention but a few have seen as the reality or been overplayed. Hence, this study sought to find out the true situation by the content analysis of Tunde Kelani and Kunle Afolayan both renowned filmmakers and who have won laurels at home and international film festivals. Their films *Arugba* and *Irapada* which were both produced in (2006) were purposively selected because, the issue of the Yoruba people's belief in ritualistic process of sacrifice was the thematic style.

This study in its content and contextual analysis of the films and various views of the FGDs, established its findings that the two films *Arugba* and *Irapada* actually concluded

that sacrificing in order to find solutions to a problem be it health, wealth, success and generally the good omen to ward off evil is inevitable. This is because as was discovered by this study and is consistent with Akintoye (2010), Johnson (1950), Alawode et al (2013) rituals and sacrificing have become the cultural/religious belief of the Yoruba people from its existence and this has been seen to be the practice of other religions in whatever forms or ways. Hence, based on these submissions predicated upon the study findings, it hereby recommends that people should be allowed to practise their religions in whatever forms, once it does not result into the dehumanisation of man rather to find solutions to their problems.

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