

THE LOGIC OF TIV FILM COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing demand for the reinforcement of minority rights against the empty rhetoric of patriotism and unity in diversity within the framework of the Nigerian nation state. It has become obvious that transnational encounters within Nigeria has created various forms of superiorities and dominance-cultural, democracy-wise, ethnic, media, communication, economic, political-and be-wigged to alienate and subvert minority rights, privileges and heritage thus creating

complicated consequences which severally call for self assertion, even aggression and crisis. Communication, and particularly the film media, has been one of such centre and periphery monopolistic practices that appropriate a majority culture and number within the notion of Nigerian culture and democracy thereby broadening boundaries of majority cultures and numbers which often clash at some bitter point with minority cultures and numbers, values and visions. This paper examines the complicated network of cultural control and subjugation, mass entertainment and

popular culture deploying majority culture as the national one with the consumerism status vested on the minorities as it forsake minority identities and culture and the socio-economic disadvantages thereof using **Nollywood**, a majority cinema, as the basis of binary discourse. This paper calls for a new engagement, one that expressly asserts and appropriates minority rights to deploying film and multimedia for cultural, linguistic, artistic, economic, social and political growth and development. The paper finally calls for theoretical constructs that will accommodate minority rights and projections in communication, film and multimedia for sustainable development

keywords: minority rights, majority rights, film, cultural control, Nigerian culture, democracy.

INTRODUCTION

Three major developments reflecting on the emerging trends of communication, freedom of information, media and the rights of minorities or centre-periphery discourse are essential to this current fledgling subject of elaborate discursive relationship between the centre and the peripheral contestations within a complicated but interlocking multilingual nation state like Nigeria. First was the global information and communication order which reduced certain limitations of interaction and information dissemination and which has gradually replaced the primary form of sharing information in its oral, symbolic or visual style. The new order was technically different and had emerged as a result of physical and mental

exertions in creative, political, economic, scientific and technological investments and advancements. The second was one envisaged by MacBride who celebrated for the termination of barriers in communication for which the world, to him became a 'global village.' The MacBride Commission Report of 1980 was carried out from December 1977-1980 courtesy of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, and arm of UNESCO, and among other issues examined communication and society, communication today, problems and issues of common concern, the institutional and professional framework and an insightful communication tomorrow as major parts. MacBride et al (1980). Culture and social ecology were aligned to technological, scientific, economic and political matrixes and debunked some myths like the cultural neutrality to communication. The developments preceding the Sean MacBride Commission Report such as the expansion of information dissemination across cultures and nations and the obvious social, entertainment, economic and political benefits accruing from the wider reach of information and knowledge led to the third development. And the third development is the seeming surge of ubiquitous electronic devices and technology in the nomenclature of multimedia which could turn clockwise and anticlockwise, in various creative forms and aesthetic dimensions, narratives, convert or combine text, graphic, audio, sound, art, animation and video to dynamic dimensions of usage thereby making cultural materials and such other materials no longer time-bound, culture-bound, audience fixed and static in

structure providing the user to determine time and pace of delivery but most importantly to this research, allowing the producer to regulate which content or culture is aseptic to be branded a national one. With these developments, the battlefield of national discourse and recognition has shifted from geographical to economic and political space with interest vested on communication, media and information flow which is a means to stamping linguistic and cultural control. Communication now has become a cultural social, political and economic process with the influencing and dominating triad of production, content and consequences. Ethnic sovereignty and dominance, economic dominance, cultural value assertion (even if alien), individual and intellectual popularity and dominance constitute this media relationship.

THE CULTURAL CONCEPT OF CENTRE TO PERIPHERY.

The burning issue of cultural centre and periphery backwaters has continued to generate heated debates especially now that democracy, a game revolving around numbers, economic, political and media mediations stamped minority numbers, economy, political maneuvers and media control. Those at the centre or core are the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo who in their cultural identity building and cultural number dominance engage in periphrasis mechanisms. Those at the periphery are the minority groups who are liable to layers of socio-economic and political imbalances, are fragile to capital technology because their number, in democratic terms, is less, and therefore a

downgrading of their socio-cultural materials. It is however fair to state also that even in peripheralism, there exist multiple layers, softer peripheries and spillover forms which are monopolistic but which could be radically reduced by checking gross injustice, economic and political imbalances. Galtung (1980:66) Senghaas (1955:3-34).

Ullamaija Kivikuru (1996:62) States that:

In cultural processes, locality is predominantly a mental component: the history of peripheralisation, based originally on crude economic factors, includes several examples of non – physical forms of locality. Territorial consciousness is, undauntedly, one component affecting the formation of semi-colonial and neocolonial relationship in brief, the choice of cultural metropolis.

Ullamaija however, stresses that ‘cultural cohesion’ and a more established... peripheral society’ guarantee a less obvious ‘fragility’ in class, historical and situational stratus (62). Communication is expressed by the use of language and the core culture deploys language to draw distinctive lines from the periphery culture thereby restricting their wider expression and preservation of uniqueness. To this end, minority languages need to be developed with a strong written, spoken and visual literature to be able to react to attempts at converting core languages as Nigeria’s national languages and making

the core languages as subject and that of the periphery as object. Due to technological advancements, languages, cultures and peoples are becoming increasingly interdependent, a phenomenon which makes the periphery constantly a receiver and hardly a giver with little or no options and 'real possibility of choice,' and therefore, compelling them to adjust to the linguistic and cultural, ethnical and moral provisions and innovations from the centre. Obviously, linguistic and cultural dominance creates adoptions of received communication, imbalance between the core and the periphery and possibilities for cultural decay and value neglect. Since communication processes generate linguistic, cultural, environmental, health, economic, political and social development. It is vital that the periphery or minorities be accorded due operational space in communicating in their linguistic terms the relevant narrative and performance aspects of their values for cultural continuity, economic prosperity, freedom of information, media interactivity and relationship to the environment (Wang Dissanayake (1984:4), Innis (1959:132-140) Reciprocity, balanced cultural exchange and bilateral charters are some emancipator forms of capturing minority rights even in the jerky and bitter western democratic form, a form which places boundaries for numbers, a game which may turn ethnic, regional, class and economic. The rhetoric of democracy, even if western inspired and introduced, and the idea of 'national culture' is unifying and symbolic but "admittedly, they also discriminate, divide, and place social groups in hierarchies of power or evaluation" Ullamaija (70). And

when hierarchies are firmly situated, there is the tendency for the minority to copy alien cultures and values and circulate them as the mainstream knowledge model for emulation by their youths because there is an obvious scarcity of resources, a dominance of other culture and identity and an ideological, economic and infrastructural dominance from the core which create the scarcity and spillover dependence of the periphery.

The disparity in the core versus periphery is timeless and purposeful dominance in communication of information and media relations and can be symbolically captured in the report on a Canadian sport, 'keep-away', as narrated by Adams (1987:177-8):

The central purpose of 'keep away', a game extremely popular with all ages, was to keep a small rubber ball away from others. Beyond this central purpose, the only other understood rule was that it was not proper to hurt someone while attempting to get the ball... the game was observed played with as few as two, and as many as fifty participants. No great concern was ever shown if teams happened to be unbalanced in terms of number of players... while some would become enthusiastically involved chasing the ball or tackling opponents others were just as likely to stand by idly

chatting, only to make a mad scramble for the ball when it came nearer... a player with the ball was (once) chased about the community by a second player for almost a half hour. Throughout the time these two were spontaneously creating their own game of 'chase' the others variously amused themselves, only to resume the original game when the pair returned with the ball. Obviously, rules were not a central feature of this activity.

At the moment, a top-down, dominant economy, ideology and embryonic democracy is the model, a legitimate national framework that compels the adaptation and assimilation of the established majority order, content, form, shape, language and values by the technologically incapacitated, media receiver, culturally dominated, economically limited, democratically outnumbered and institutionally controlled appendage to national scheme of priority and identity, the periphery. To the minority who engage in the freedom to voice opinion of disquiet based on their research and comparative knowledge may be vitiated by doubts from the metropolis. The complementary multidisciplinary approaches ranging from political, economic, cultural, linguistic and core versus periphery conceptualization are essential to the complex layers of dominance versus freedom bearing the effects of imitation and modeling,

influence and impact of the game of numbers called democracy against a dialogic provision, reordering of national priorities in the face of multilingualism, and the climates of opinion from the periphery which create complicated consequences of aggression and self assertion that may threaten national unity and cohesion.

THE MEDIA, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND THE FLAWS

The invention of the printing press and, in recent times, a multitude of scientific and technological communication forms have widened the scope, reach and stimulated activities not only in the field of communication but also in economic, political, sociological, scientific, cultural, linguistic and other fields of human activity. In spite of the proliferation of ubiquitous means of communication, MacBride et al (1980:62) stress that "anxieties (still) arise about cultural domination and threats to cultural identity." To them:

All sorts of technological innovations... opened the doors to larger audiences, expanded sources and resources for information and entertainment and supported important cultural and social changes.... (Yet) fundamental research in all countries should provide the framework for future development of communication (62).

The video film format of communication is one in the multitude where ‘anxieties arise’ as a result of ‘cultural domination and threats to cultural identity’. Film has risen to become one of the most potent weapons for the expression of linguistic and cultural values and the attainment of human goals and visions which is why Lenin (1958:2) describes the film as the “most important instrument of all the arts”, for the construction and maintenance of socialism. Much as the emergence of film and other forms of media and their advancement is heralded with pomp, it has become, for the ideologically dominant, economically ‘upper dog’ and the democratically outnumbering, and instrument for the setting and imposition of agenda, determining streams of beguiling thought, outlining majority cultures as national ones, standardizing oversized alien values as postmodern values and generally creating exogenous domination in communication, culture, language, economy, politics, freedom of information and multimedia, a dangerous precedence for the emancipation of language and culture through communication and media spheres.

Stating the obvious place of video film to global political economy, marketing of culture, language, values, diplomacy and image making, Ayakoroma (2011:23) reiterates that:

Video films act as very potent socialization medium that shapes ideas, styles, attitudes and cultures of nations, in the sense that it is a giant mirror which reflects the values and

ideals of a given society.... Videos have the potential of positively influencing and moulding end-users to cultures, ideas, and values.

As film is gradually being institutionalized in the Nigerian communication landscape, there is need to deploy cultural ecology and integrate the traditional and modern forms for the localization of linguistic and multilingual interactions, synchronization of periphery values and ethos and for cultural and cross-cultural connectivity. As has been stated elsewhere, the national film industry tagged Nollywood is running low on representation in human, material and content aspects to fix itself firmly as a truly national film industry. The motion narrative space of other linguistic groups, especially the minority groups are made passive observers, the major linguistic groups having carved out formats for themselves (Ikyer 2012:2-8). There is therefore the urgent need to fill the communication space, even in areas seemingly occupied, by charting an identity discourse citing non-inclusion, core control and the transposition of contrary values as the national values. The Tiv film typology is one such attempt to wrestle minority values, languages and culture from being subsumed under the superstructure of monopolistic and democratically outnumbering groups.

The oral art forms in performance and narratives of the distinct minority groups are capable of dispelling notions of inferiority and the blurring of frontiers of cultural and linguistic gradation, allegations used to reinforce vested political, economic, social, cultural,

linguistic and communication interests of the core groups. MacBride (81) states that:

Examples abound where song, drama, dance groups and the like are used to

promote campaigns against social evil.... Or for advances in farming, health,

nutrition and family welfare, agricultural reforms, national integration and

similar national goals.

Conceptual declarations such as ‘freedom of information,’ ‘balanced flow of information,’ ‘free access to the media’ and ‘free flow of information’ are at the behest of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that “Every one has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” However, models developed as the national ones do not include those from the periphery, the reasons traced to economic, political, socio-cultural, and number dominance and defector monopolies. It is obvious that:

Obstacles to freedom and distortions of democracy are dangerous symptoms in every society. It is sometimes argued that such criticisms constitute an interference in the legal or political affairs of nations, or in the natural processes

of private enterprises, but such abuses of state power or monopolistic practices are still serious impediments to the free flow of information. Certainly, there is a margin in almost all systems to improve the existing situation and decrease restrictive measures... to overcome and eliminate restrictions on the freedom of information MacBride et al(141).

This top to down, downward flow of information constitutes a flaw, but what is desired is a:

Trend towards broader horizontal exchanges (which) would liberate many more voices for communication and open up diverse new sources... increased participation by more people in communication activities should be accelerated to advance the trends toward democratization of the communication process and expansion of multidirectional information flows-from multitude of sources (Mac Bride et al (151)

Logic to eradicating information flaws, negating the periphery and the espousal of the notion of technological and communication transformation of oral art materials is in the dynamics of pervasive

multimedia interface. By multimedia, we are referring to the use and or combination of interactive processes of text, audio, still and moving images and computer texture and synchronization of materials to arrive at a new form, a mass distribution and consumption and a postmodern fashion of accepting traditional forms of information.

Multimedia is surely one way of advancing minority rights when they are clear, minority conscious stake holders in the production, distribution and commoditization of the materials on offer in the open market. Since the youths are addicted to western tastes, multimedia has fashioned out new ways of integrating cultural materials in bits to various forms of media at timeless pace of delivery. It is therefore a vicarious pleasure and experience when, via the doorstep of multimedia, one reassembles some bits and detail of a culture thought as extinct. Multimedia is open ended and closely tied to traditional oral counterparts with a vision to shape or revitalize local content and reconnect one to the community in softer and technical ways. With an economic base, it turns one from being not only the consumer but also a contractive producer with multiple outcomes. History, language, culture and experience are revived and could be made to exist in any geographical period or time frame to bridge ancient and modern cultures and expressions.

Ironically, the monopolistic tendencies of the core, the dominant, the democratically outnumbering, the more economically equipped, the cosmetically accommodating, the culturally and linguistically dominant and the core model

setters have spread their dominant and outnumbering machinations and superior economic tentacles on the very products of the periphery, the under dog, the polarized, the receiver, the object, the culturally dominated and the declining layer of national consciousness via multimedia communication by arresting the spectrum of plagiarized and infringed copyright production and distribution of minority cultural materials for extensive use in the virtual media. The processes create fragmentation of the material, debasement of quality and a functional downgrading of artistic or cultural productions, consciousness and value systems. An example can be found in the Tiv film, **Gbenda Awambe** subtitled in English **Bloody is the Way**, directed and produced by Jikeme Emmanuel and marketed and distributed by Princess of Heaven International Christian Centre, Gboko. This film is a parody of Tiv cultural ecology, indeed a Christian view re examination of a Tiv legend, and an egalitarian nature, in which Takuruku, the progenitor of Tiv, bequeath the Tiv, the fortune of farming, invariably food basket of the nation, and disparages sorcery and witchcraft for which the culprit is excommunicated in society. The film is shot in Igbo camera consciousness, the costume of '**Ashe A Uter Asev**,' (The Eye Of Our Forefathers) the fluting, the diction, value orientation, manner of expression and some other scenes are of the culturally dominant majority chain forcibly transfixed in Tiv socio-cultural ecology. There are unauthorized production and distribution of oral art forms and materials, some with undue synchronization and investment of alien instruments and orientation, many of

which are forced on the youth already desperate for alien values, leading further to multiple monopolistic relationships. Intellectual property rights are denied the minority group's poets, singers, narrators and performers and the cultural history blessed with rich materials, deployed by the economically dominant groups to dominate and exploit the peripheries. The history of the core or the dominant group infringing on the rights of the minorities is itself traced to history. Innis (1977:132) believes history constitute the major chain of dominant cultures as the majority group build up or defend favourable concepts, including democracy, and establish models which serve as bridge head in the domination relationship. It however, takes resistance, mediation, a new engagement, the maintenance of information and cultural hegemony, a communication culture and the creation of mental structural, infrastructural and institutional potential to fit into this unbalanced binary of majority or minority rights. As A Financial Times Survey (1980:107) insists, "there is a real sense in which... minority peoples can now determine the political line-up in the country as a whole." Minority influence and minority agitations are gradually creating spaces which are sure to relocate them to the right human strata in Nigeria and, in various layers, gradually demolish the transcript of majority monopolies and dominance.

CONCLUSION

The paper examined communication as being core to all forms of human interaction, highlighted the concept of centre and the periphery, probes into freedom of information and its attendant

flaws, the liberating logic in active engagement in minority language films as weapons of cultural exploration and exploitation and touched on multimedia as one of the distinct forms of determining minority information flow for growth and development. The paper noted that issues of communication, freedom of information and media rights of minorities rest on ideological, economic, political and class rhetoric which, rather than create minority consciousness and value, enshrine majority consciousness and values, even alien ones, as the national ones. It has been the view of this paper too that the nomenclature, democracy, of western inclination, has come to diminish minority rights to proper representation, assertion of rights and freedom of appropriate information. The paper therefore calls for a new engagement, a localized or interpreted framework, one which may accommodate minority rights and aspirations even with the term democracy still in place. Since minority rights is a dicey debate involving depths and layers of cultural clashes and interests with majority rights, the paper calls for more conceptual and theoretical constructs that will accommodate minority projections in communication for sustainable development.

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