

# DRAMATIC ENGAGEMENT OF NIGERIA'S POSTCOLONIALITY IN YORUBA CLASSICAL MOVIES: A CASE STUDY OF ŞAWOROIDE (BRASS BELL)

By

**ADEGBOYEGA ADEYEMI AMOS**

*School of Postgraduate Studies  
Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai*

## **Abstract**

*Classical theatrical performances as opposed to what obtains in contemporary Nigeria are complex cultural products influenced by the dynamism and complexities of their immediate society. They do not just passively entertain but actively engages the society, thus fulfilling the ultimate aim of championing utopianism in line with global best practices. They are products of history and they remain relevant for posterity. In Nigeria, Yoruba classical theatrical performances and movies play a leading role in this respect. These performances do not only capture history but polemicizes the society against a repetition of similar historical pitfalls. This is the crux of this research in which dramatic engagement of Nigeria's postcoloniality is in focus. The paper argues that these classical theatrical cum dramatic endeavors which inter alia are aimed at a revaluation of the past take their bearings from history in a bid to adequately understand and address contemporary challenges of nationhood in Nigeria. It concludes that these classics champion the discourse towards an eventual realization of the much desired utopianism in Nigeria as against prevailing subtopian and neocolonial tendencies. This is the focus that contemporary filmic endeavors must key into if this aspect of literature will remain relevant in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Dramatic Engagement, Nigeria, Postcoloniality, Yoruba Classical Movies, Şaworoidę (Brass Bell).

## **Introduction**

No doubt, Yoruba classical dramas, movies and theatrical performances as different from what obtains in contemporary times deeply engaged the state. As pioneer and forerunner in African dramatic and theatrical endeavors, with great practical exploits by people such as Herbert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola and Duro Ladipo, these dramas foreground issues that *ipso facto* have become the *modus operandi* of the socio-political atmosphere and have militated against democratic development in Nigeria. Disappointedly, these dramas that were anchored *ad nauseam* topical national issues in Nigeria have been forgotten while the problems which they engaged in an attempt to proffer solutions still persist. Because they do not only reflect but interact with and engage the postcolonial situation in Nigeria, in the bid to make a case for an eventual reorientation of the geometrically declining societal values, there is a need for recourse to these dramas as will be done in this study. It is from this background that this research strongly avers that the symbiotic relationship between history and theatrical performances in Nigeria can not be overemphasized. This in the view of this research is in a bid to understand that the dissident yearnings and aspirations for an ideal Nigerian society through the performing arts have been on for a longtime and that the Yoruba classical drama has played a leading role in this respect. Yoruba classical movies in times past were more concerned with the welfare of the state, the entrenchment of democratic system of governance in Nigeria and the attitudes of both the leaders and the led to statecraft in Nigeria. One of such classical movies is *Şaworoidę* (Brass Bell).

This movie, *Şaworoidę* (Brass Bell) portrays and engages the unstable nationhood in Nigeria. Topically, this issue – unstable nationhood – is a major issue that has characterized postcoloniality in Nigeria. Since independence in 1960, Nigeria as it were is a nation bedeviled by the instability in her political administrations and a myopic leadership style. In essence, the reality that successive political administrations in the country since 1960 has been a ding dong affair between the military and the civilian, occasioned by the long military interregnums that started in the late sixties has not only jinxed Nigeria but also made her a nation still struggling to get her foothold. The contemporary inability of Nigerians to understand or at least be at ease with the task of nation-building is a clear indication that as a postcolony, Nigeria and Nigerians *inter alia* are yet to understand the task of developing a nation, and transforming her as a postcolony beyond her colonial pedigree. Aside the perennial leadership failure that has attended to the nation from the dawn of her political independence, Arthur Nwankwo avers that ‘the main causes of Nigeria’s post – independence crises – nepotism, tribalism, intolerance, chauvinistic myths and corruption – still exists today [...]’ (8).

This in the view of Claude Ake (cited in Idris Shaaba Jimada) is such that ‘[...] nearly four decades into independence, we are in a mess, bewildered and demoralized and deeply worried. We are desperate for others to save us from ourselves [...] there is no indication yet that we understand the need to develop ourselves or care enough about development’ (216). A crucial addition to this is that in point of fact, Nigeria as a postcolony is not yet a nation or better still is a stillborn. This is because she is yet to fulfill the yearnings and aspirations for her political independence. The nationalists who later became the political elite after independence and their contemporary political successors are yet to honor and fulfill the pact between them and the nation. As political kings they are yet to make any positive impact over the community they rule. It is on this premise that Yoruba classical script writers, film actors and movie producers based their theatrical preoccupations. In the words of Tunde Onikoyi these movies although ‘[...] steeped in the Yoruba cultural matrix, are geared towards postulating an agenda in the creation of an ideal society; top on the agenda of all third cinemamakers’ (45). Among other issues, stakeholders in the Yoruba movie industry have devoted a lot of their theatrical endeavours to address the different political and social problems that bedevils Nigeria. This is the crux of this research in which the focus will be on how the theatrical and performing arts have engaged the failure of Nigeria as a post-colony. This will be done through a critical dissection of a Yoruba classical movie, *Şaworoidę* (Brass Bell).

### **Problematic**

Classical dramatic endeavors in Nigeria do not only capture and record the history of the society but also, they polemicize the society against repeating similar historical pitfalls and thus, they remain ever relevant for posterity. However, the neglect that they have suffered coupled with contemporary socio-political situations prevalent in the country are all indications that the postcolonial lessons dramatized by these classical dramas are yet to be absorbed into the psyche of the society. There is therefore a need for a revisionist study. This is the crux of this research in which an attempt will be made to demonstrate the postcolonial situation in Nigeria as portrayed in the Yoruba classical movie, *Şaworoidę* (Brass Bell).

### **Theoretical Construct**

Two theories are adopted for this research. They are Apparatus Theory and Postcolonialism. The adoption of these two in the view of this research is to allow for a critical analysis and interpretation of the selected movie as both a theatrical performance and as a postcolonial fallout in Nigeria.

## Apparatus Theory

Apparatus Theory is a foremost film theory in cinema studies which draw insights from Marxist film theory, psychoanalysis and semiotics. Popular during the 1970s, it aims at achieving true representation and idealism in performing arts. Adherents to this theory maintain that theatrical performances in general and films in particular are ideological representations drawn from the society. In point of fact, these films are creations of the film producers to represent the realities around them. Jean Louis Baudry, a foremost theorist in this regards puts it forward that there is no much difference between the cinema world and the real world. This is because spectators or viewers who are already predisposed to the motif of the film strongly become swayable to it. They encounter the film in the reality of their experiences whether past or present.

Although this theory believes in and follows the traditional theatrical model of spectatorship, it brings the spectators into the theatrical performances. Christian Metz a leading film theorist submits that 'more than other forms of arts the cinema involves us'. By this, the viewers or spectators of a film or theatrical performance sees the story as a reproduction of reality not considering whatever means though which it is transmitted. Summarily, practitioners, theorists and theatrics along this line of thought views the cinema as an ideological organ of the society through which the reality is unveiled, related, illustrated and represented mechanically through means and devices such as camera, lighting, editing and scripting.

## Post-colonialism

Post-colonialism as a literary theory characterizes concerns in different fields of human endeavors; politics, sociology, anthropology and the likes. Though it is a relatively new field in literary criticism, post-colonialism has gained a wide acceptance and discussions on prevalent issues especially among scholars in countries outside Europe. The postcolonial society is thus the crux of postcolonialism. In its theoretical postulations, there are shifts in-between the pre-colonial, colonial and the postcolonial era. It continues to study the postcolonial state which has unequivocally been characterized after the political independence by attendant disillusionments. These disillusionments have tended to destabilize the state even in the contemporary times. This suggests a continued relevance of this field of enquiry as a continued process of reconstructing the society. Theorists and scholars inclined to this line of thought examine artistic vigor and creations as a body of the larger culture that produces it.

Frantz Fanon a leading postcolonialist sees the development of new elite in a postcolony as the greatest self-undoing of the postcolonial state. In his words, the elite become 'aider and abettor of the young bourgeoisie which is plunging into the mire of corruption and pleasure' (156). As such, the same independence gave rise within the people to catastrophic events. The intellectual laziness of the elite even compounds the problems. Their inability to look inward and correct the anomalies and the rather persistent fall back to the mother country for succor indicates lack of determination and focus. This situation is not that different from what obtains in Nigeria.

Immediately after independence, the reality that the country slumped into military dictatorship with its attendant brutality and disrespect for fundamental human rights, occasioned by the failure of the civilian ruling elite gave rise to contemporary post-independent disillusionments experienced in the country up to the contemporary times. Issues surrounding the political wellbeing of the nation therefore became the subject of discourse adapted by filmmakers for the screen. These films engaged in the discourse of revolution to champion agitations towards a rejuvenation of the socio-political polity in Nigeria. They become advocates and frontiers for a change in the polity by engaging and tackling 'corruption, the empty rhetoric of political sloganeering, the manipulation of the mass media to legitimize dictatorship and the cult of personality' (Kerr 93) by the political elite. An indelible example of such is *Saworoidę* (Brass Bell).

## Synopsis of the Movie

*Saworoidε* (Brass Bell) is a classical movie which fictionally represents the postcolonial Nigeria characterized with the instability in the polity as a result of the selfish and avaricious attitudes of the ruling elite. The elite collaborate with foreign powers to siphon the resources of the state; they live in pleasant luxury and the society rots in abject poverty. Produced in 1999, by Mainframe Television *Opomulero*, the movie came at a critical transition period of the nation from military to democratic rule. With subtitle in English, *Saworoidε* cautions the state against a repetition of similar historical pitfalls occasioned by the selfish attitude of the indigenous leaders who took over the reigns of power from the colonial masters.

The movie opens with the death of an aged monarch of an ancient community, *Jogbo*. Prior to his death, he had established a tradition, a pact between the town of *Jogbo* and the kings that will rule over it. His instructions from the Oracle were to fashion a brass crown, a small brass container, a traditional talking drum and drum jingle bells to be fastened to the drum. The Oracle further instructs that prescribed leaves be gathered into a pot, burnt and turned into the brass container. The burnt leaves will henceforth be rubbed on the traditional incision marks to be made both on *Ayangalu*, the one entitled by lineage to play the traditional talking drum, and on all future kings of *Jogbo*. These incisions become an oath that binds on the king, the drummer and the community. Aside that it makes the king invincible to attacks from enemies of the throne, he is also forbidden from amissuse of the community's wealth and resources. He is as such held accountable to the community, *Jogbo*.

This tradition however soon became abandoned by his successor, *Lapite*. *Lapite* refused to allow for traditional incision marks on his body. This on the one hand is because he is not entitled to the stool and on the other hand is to allow him gratify his selfish desires on the throne. This refusal becomes his self undoing. The impending danger of this singular act is that as the king, if *Lapite* wears the brass crown and incidentally or deliberately listens to *Ayangalu* playing the traditional talking drum with the jingle bells, he will die of chronic headache. Aware of this, he makes moves to eliminate the drummer, and all other people entitled to the throne. He achieved little success in the regards. He sent assassins after *Adebomi*, his wife *Adedigba* and his father, *Ayangalu*. They succeed in eliminating *Adebomi* and *Adedigba* but failed on *Ayangalu* who got a tip and left the town before the assassins arrived. *Ayangalu* left with the traditional talking drum, and his grandson, *Adebisi* (later to be known as *Aresejabata*) who providentially escaped being killed alongside his parents *Adebomi* and *Adedigba*.

Having ascended the throne, *Lapite* did not only become dictatorial but together with his chiefs siphon the resources of the community in collaboration with the foreign investors in timber business, a major source of foreign trade in the community. With the passage of time, while the king lived in peasant luxury, the community became disillusioned, stricken by poverty and ravaged by hardship. His reign as monarch was characterized not just by poverty and hardship but also abuse of human rights, environmental degradation as a result of the unchecked excesses of the foreign companies in *Jogbo*, and a high level of treasury looting by the king and his chiefs. Dissatisfied with the prevailing situations, the youths with the support from well meaning individuals of the community organized and eventually stole the traditional brass crown which must not leave the palace for *itadogun* (seventeen days). This is in a bid to forcefully unseat *Lapite* from the throne as he will cease to be king after seventeen days if the crown does not return to the palace. To save his face, he invites the military to assist in the search for the crown.

The military led by *Lagata* succeeds in bringing back the crown and this changed the course of events for ever. *Lagata* became jealous and wants to wear the crown by all means which originally is not a prerogative of the military. Hiding under the umbrella of the prevailing non-palatable situations in *Jogbo*, he kills *Lapite* at a civic reception to celebrate the return of the crown to the palace. Since *Lapite* had shunned the incisions that would have made him invincible

to all forms of attacks, he becomes a prey and he died. *Lagata* forcefully snatches the crown neglecting the traditional incisions to make him accountable to the community and invincible to the enemies of the throne. He banks heavily on his military might to silence every form of opposition and perpetuate himself on the throne. Aware of this, well meaning youths again tactfully sneaks the traditional ancestral talking drum into *Jogbo* to prevent *Lagata* from wearing the brass crown. This plan to save *Jogbo* from the brutal hands of military dictatorship was almost truncated when *Ayangalu* was discovered and arrested to prevent him from playing the traditional talking drum. Just then, providence ushered *Ayanniyi*, *Ayangalu's* son back to *Jogbo*. Just like his father, he left *Jogbo* as a result of the clampdown on their lives by *Lapite*.

Eventually, on the day of *Lagata's* coronation as the paramount monarch and ruler of *Jogbo*, *Ayanniyi* plays the ancestral talking drum and everything went haywire. Because he had no incisions and dares to wear the brass crown while the ancestral talking drum is being played, he tumbled and died instantly from chronic headache. The tradition prevailed over the man. His avaricious desires led him to his early grave. With *Lagata's* death *Jogbo's* stool again became vacant, all political prisoners were released and the process of choosing a successor to the throne who will follow the laid down rules, norms and traditions of the land begins. This is the end of a beginning and the beginning of a new end. This new end in the case of Nigeria is still unknown.

### ***Saworoidε*, Engaging Nigeria's Postcoloniality**

*Saworoidε*, the story of 'the pact between an ancient community and the kings that ruled over it' aptly engages the postcolonial situation in Nigeria. The very first postcolonial impression a viewer gets from the movie is in its ability to navigate between the past and the present. This present goes beyond 1999, the time when the movie was first released to contemporary Nigerian society. This aptly captures the essence of postcolonialism in which the past is summoned in litigations against the present to foster a better future in the postcolony. As at the time of its production in 1999, *Saworoidε* entirely portrays and critically engages the postcolonial situation in Nigeria; the past, the present and what must be done if the much desired utopian future in Nigeria will be achieved.

Spanning from the early postcolonial days to the prevailing circumstances surrounding the nation at the period of its production in 1999, the movie represents the early post-independent Nigeria, the tragedy of a nation that failed under self rule, the negative experiences of a nation that slipped into the brutal hands of military dictators and ultimately makes a clarion nationalist call at the critical period of transiting from military to democratic rule in 1999. This call is to caution the electorates to be careful in their search for new democratic leaders. They must avoid similar historical pitfalls, elect leaders that will be true leaders, accountable to and truly ready to serve the interest of the state. This is because the postcolonial condition as portrayed in *Saworoidε* strongly indicates that although the colonial masters (who refused to totally leave the country after independence) have a hand in the postcolonial /post-independence disillusionments in the country, the indigenous and self-appointed leaders are not just the architects but major stakeholders in the estate of the failed state in postcolonial Nigeria. *Lapite*, his chiefs and later *Lagata* represent this category of selfish, avaricious, myopic and self aggrandizing leaders. After these leaders attain political power, they care less about the state, care more for themselves and their families and stack away the state's treasury in foreign bank accounts while the state and her populace wallow in abject poverty.

The reign of *Lapite* until his death fifteen years after represents the first phase of domestic and indigenous politics in Nigeria after independence in 1960, the first republic. Scholars and students of history in Nigeria agree on the truth that most of the problems rocking contemporary Nigeria today started in this era. Tekena Nitonye Tamuno puts it forward that

*Nigerian rulers since independence conducted the affairs of the state without conviction and confidence of the people they governed and whose affair they constantly mismanaged and often damaged [...] Where the general welfare of the people governed did not assume its rightful priority, among policies and practices, the Stability of the State was so jeopardized that coup d'états and counter-coups, by senior military officers and other ranks occurred during 1966–1993 (19).*

Politicians at the expense of the state freely helped themselves with the state's resources, they were never bothered with the welfare of the citizens, and they saw politics as a means to an end to become wealthy, untouchable by the rather weak hands of the law, and they leave the citizens to suffer. In the character of *Lapite* and his chiefs, first republic politicians in Nigeria were vehemently opposed to any form of opposition, became collaborators with foreign companies to loot the state and they forget the pact between them as kings and the state that they rule over. They enjoyed life at the expense of the citizens, broke the edge, renegade in their commitment to the state and were unprepared and vulnerable in 1966/67 when the military struck. Like *Lapite* and his chiefs they were architects and later victims of their own undoing. Chinua Achebe writes in this regards that,

*The political class, oblivious of the growing disenchantment permeating literally every strata of Nigerian society, was consumed with individual and ethnic pursuits, and with the accumulation of material and other resources. Corruption was widespread, and those in power were using every means at their disposal, including bribery, intimidation, and blackmail to cling power. (72).*

The characters, attitudes and dispositions of *Lapite* to different issues capture the attitudes of politicians of that era. Disappointedly, this negative attitude to the welfare of the state has continued unabated to the contemporary time. In their bid to continually remain in power, contemporary politicians in Nigeria usually attempt to silence the opposition using the different agencies of the state at their disposal.

This avaricious desire to remain in power is born out of the fact that *ab-initio* their arrival to political power is a result of different manipulations and malpractices. *Lapite* did same. He bought his way through to the throne at the expense of *Adebomi* the rightful heir. Coming to the throne with this mindset, he will not allow himself be tied down, checked and censored by the ancient tradition of prudence, transparency and accountability to *Jogbo* which will only be binding on him through the traditional incision marks. This explains his outright rejection of the incisions, and by extension the oath of office as *Oni Jogbo of Jogbo*. With this, he did not only obtain the license to misbehave on throne but he also became vulnerable to all forms of attacks and antagonism by the enemies of the throne. Having clinched the throne illegally and rejected the traditional fortification rites, *Lapite* lived in constant and perpetual fear of loosing the crown while the traditional talking drum plays and by extension loosing the throne. This fear prompts his first murder. He sends assassins after *Adebomi* the legal heir apparent and his wife. He also went after *Ayangalu* in a bid to silence the traditional talking drum from playing for eternity. He fails in this last attempt.

With the passage of time and on the fifteenth year of *Lapite's* reign, the brass crown is hijacked. His whole world came crumbling before his own very eyes. Should the crown not be found in *itadogun* (seventeen days), he must commit suicide or secretly elope from the community. Either way, he must abdicate the throne. His worst night is gradually coming to reality. He hurriedly, un-kingly and un-consultatively invites the military to the scene, to help in search for the brass crown. The civilians have failed the state and willingly, unprofessionally and

against the ethics of the widely professed democratic system invited the military to intervene in the affairs of the state. Chief Nmandi Azikiwe deliberately invited the military to the Nigerian political scene in 1944 when other democratic and civilian avenues should have been explored to handle the situation. Chinua Achebe writes that,

*In the first six years of its post-independence existence Nigeria found itself (sic) calling on the armed forces to quell two Tiv riots in the Middle Belt, crash the 1964 general strike, and reestablish order following regional elections in the Western Region in 1965. In hindsight, it seems as though Azikiwe may have been aware of the sand shifting beneath the political class, and he tried to gain the support of the military class during the constitutional crisis following the 1964 federal general election. The failure of Azikiwe's attempt perhaps should have been the first sign to many of us that trouble lay (sic) ahead for our young nation (72).*

This singular act prepared the fertile ground for and became invariably the gateway for military incursion into the politics of Nigeria barely six years after her political independence. The military arrived in the wake of 1966 with the intention of getting the barely six year old British child that have been bedridden by corruption, social malaise, ethnic tension and bigotry tendencies as well as needless political tussle and violence back on track of development. They arrived as idealists, technocrats and virgins who only want things to be done the right way. However, having tasted power, they become worst than their civilian forebears. They jealously held on to the political control of the country which in the first instance is not a prerogative of the military and they refuse to hand over the political control of the country back to the civilians. It is in the light of this that Okpeh Ochayi Okpeh avers that 'the military emerged on the corridors of power a virgin and ended up a political prostitute'. Worst of it all is that '[b]esides legitimizing violence as an instrument for changing government, its prolonged stay in power undermined the growth of democracy in postcolonial Nigeria' (561-562). A quick recourse to Nigeria's political history will reveal that for complete twenty years since 1960, the military have piloted the affairs of the nation. Their usual claim on the intention of protecting national unity, averting political crises and put the nation back on the course of socio-economic development which is as a result of the gross mismanagement, indiscipline and corruption of the political class, totally contradicts the behavioral tendencies that they exhibit in power.

The personality, character and disposition of *Lagata* illustrate this. Although his original assignment was to recover the brass crown, hand it over and leave the scene, his greed having tasted wealth and power under a loosed democratic system led by *Lapite* pushes him to covet the crown. Expectedly, his professed mission was to save *Jogbo* from the decay and rot that have become her hallmarks. However ensuing situations contradicts this as he did not only forcefully snatched the crown from *Lapite*, he murdered him in process and takes deliberate steps to perpetuate himself on the throne as the paramount ruler of *Jogbo*. The murder of *Lapite* appears as a bloody coup, the bloody coup of January 1966 led by Major Nzeogwu and some other military officers which ousted the first republic leaders in Nigeria and ushered in military despondency.

*Lagata's* training as a military officer and not a politician makes him totally unfit for political leadership. This is a replica of the different military leaders in Nigeria and it indicates strongly that the military can not handle political affairs in the country as they have not been trained for that. They eventually turn democratic governance into a battle of guns, boots, and batons. This explains Alexander Madiębo's submission that 'a military government is a major set back for any nation and should be avoided at all costs'. This according to him is for no other reason other than the fact that 'military men are unqualified for the task of government and either lean too heavily on advice which may not always be in the interest of their people or worst still, attempt to rule without it' (386). Nigeria is a testimony to this. As a result of this, they become worst than the

civilians that they overthrown. This is because the country became a ceaseless pool of corruption, a haven of maladministration, abuses of human rights, extra-judicial killings and the prisons were filled with political prisoners.

Aware of the impending danger as he (*Lagata*) is not fortified by the traditional incisions to wear the brass crown, he takes decisive means to avert whatsoever danger that looms over his head. He sends spies after *Ayangalu* who has remained in his hideout after *Lapite's* attempt on his life, brought him back to *Jogbo* and left him to rot in jail. He is able to achieve this through his civilian collaborators in the traditional ruling council, the chiefs. Providence however played a fast one on him and he died on the day of his coronation. Everything worked against his anti-state agendas. Providence ushered *Ayanniyi*, the son of *Ayangalu* who is also fortified to play the traditional talking drum back to *Jogbo* after many years. He had eloped from *Jogbo* at the same time as his father but had gone to stay with his wife's kindred while his father took abode in a forest. He plays the traditional talking drum on the day of *Lagata's* coronation and the deed was done. *Lagata* died of chronic headache.

This sudden death of *Lagata* closely relates to the sudden death of the last military dictator in Nigeria, General Sani Abacha. This sudden death just as it appeared in *Şaworoidę* threw the military into disarray. The tussle for succession brought in General Abdulsalami Abubakar, but this is not to last for a very long time as it is now clear that the junta boys are not fit for governance and the populace is wearied by the continued degradation of the state by the military rulers. The unending national yearnings and aspirations for the return back to the democratic system of governance forced the Abdulsalami's administration within a very short time to set machineries in motion, in preparation to conduct democratic elections and hand over the political control of the country to democratically elected civilian government.

The dilemma at that time as portrayed in *Şaworoidę* is such that the country is faced with making the right choices in election of leaders to avoid similar historical pitfalls where those who get to leadership positions are selfish and not selfless, ethnic bigots and not nationalists and have crippled the nation with their avaricious interests. Leaders that should be chosen at that period as advocated in *Şaworoidę* should be selfless and dedicated democrats, leaders that will put the interests of the state first as well as value and see statecraft as strictly to be beneficial to the state and not the runners of the state's affairs.

This is the dilemma of the Nigerian state in 1999 when *Şaworoidę* was produced. Although it came in 1999, thirty nine years after Nigeria's political independence, the movie no doubt adequately captures, explains and engages the postcolonial historical past in relation to contemporary present in Nigeria. This is in fulfillment of the paramount function of literature, of which theater and performing arts is a part, which is to mirror the society and stand in corrective gap as vanguard against a repetition of similar historical pitfalls that have hampered and militated against national development in Nigeria as a postcolonial state. The irony of this postcolonial situation is such that the much desired utopianism under self rule which was the most paramount drive in the agitations for independence in 1960 has remained a mirage. By this, the submission of this research is that the desired utopianism will not be achieved until Nigerians both leaders and led change their attitude towards statecraft to not only ensure but also guarantee political, social and economic development and true independence in Nigeria. All hands must therefore be on deck if the country will be admitted into the comity of developed nations as development in a nation is not measured by its colonial but postcolonial advancements.

## Conclusion

The foregoing arguments from a postcolonial perspective avers that as a form of art, theatrical performances and in this case classical movies aside their entertainment function deeply engages the state in a bid to champion the discourse and an eventual realization of the much



desired utopianism in Nigeria as against the prevailing subtopian and neocolonial tendencies. The classical movie case studied in this research is a strong reference point in this respect. *Şaworoidę* does not only take its roots in the postcolonial situation in Nigeria but it also translates the desires of the script writer, the characters and other film crew towards enhancing statecraft in Nigeria. The continual reference to and usage of the word classical in this research is to reinforce the message that contemporary theatrical endeavors in Nigeria have lost focus of their forebears in the movie industry. Contemporary movie efforts are now preoccupied with trivial issues of love and love making, sex and sexuality. Most of these movies lack substance and at the expense of the state paradoxically promote moral decadence and social vices instead of engaging the state in a bid to heal her of her numerous postcolonial aches. The clarion call now is for the 21st century movie industry in Nigeria to go back to the drawing board and brace up for a redirection of the theatrical arts towards fulfilling the enlightenment role of literature (theater arts) as against the trending perception of the same as a means of effervescent laughter and euphoria.

### Works Cited

- Achebe, Chinua. *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*. London: Penguin Books, 2012. Print.
- Alexander, Madiebo A. *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980. Print.
- Okpeh, Ochayi Okpeh. 'The Postcolonial State, Leadership Challenges and the Governance Process in Nigeria'. *Nigeria At Fifty: Issues and Challenges in Governance 1960-2010*. Ed. Bawuro, Barkindo M., Ifamose, Folashade and Philip Akpen, Markurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2011, 553-574. Print.
- Olanrewaju, John. Shola. "Understanding Nigerian Development Crisis." *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 6. 1. (2015): 1-16. Print.
- Onikoyi, Tunde. "Film and Literature: Connections and Disconnections." M.A Thesis, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2006. Print.
- ... "Dancing out a Nation's State of Pity and Amusement: Kelani's retelling of Ogunde's Yoruba Ronu." *EJOTMAS: Ekpoma Journal of Theatre and Media Arts* (42-56). Web. <<http://Dx.Doi.Org/10.4314/Ejotmas.V5i1-2.3>> Filmography
- Kelani, Tunde. (Director). *Şaworoidę*. Lagos: Mainframe Films and Television Production, 1999. DVD.