



**Research Paper**

## **The Global Reconciliation and Security through Culture: The Nigerian Example**

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### **Abstract**

*This presentation aims to establish the fact that the cultural industry embodied in the theatre is a veritable source for Global Reconciliation considering its numerous contributions to national development and sustenance. The various ways in which the theatre is used for global reconciliation are analyzed especially as they concern Nigeria. From this approach, it is revealed that the theatre through its different expressive forms such as drama, film, dance, music, recitals and songs can indeed serve as a reliable source in reconciling Nigeria's current economic and social crisis in relation to economic empowerment, employment and peaceful co-existence. Additionally, the study notes that bad leadership, corruption, mismanagement, tribalism and religious intolerance are the bane of Nigeria's underdevelopment. Therefore, it is recommended that responsible leaders should be elected through a democratic process to manage the business of the Nigerian state. The study also recommends that government, corporate organisations and individuals should diversify their investments in the non-oil sectors. Government should provide monetary support and facilities as well as enabling environment which encourages investment.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The contradictions, absurdities and cruelty witnessed on the global scene have necessitated the need for a rethink and thus reconciliation. The above phenomena are some of the indices associated with the realities of our contemporary existence often referred to as globalization as an ideology coined by the western world. It seems many of us in Africa do not understand the essence of globalization, its implications and what it portends for us as a people to be globalized by the inventors of the ideology. From which ever perspective one pegs the tent, it is clear that man is confronting serious security challenges ranging from political disagreements and manipulations, economic imbalance, religious intolerance, ignorance, racism, gender bias, hunger and poverty, greed, corruption, rape, armed robbery and kidnapping. These have threatened human existence and man has continued to struggle to find solutions or at least reduce their occurrences. Indeed, contradictions exist or how can we explain the fact that some countries which pioneer the cause for peace are the ones that are selling arms to the many troubled regions of the world. Some countries are too rich to the point that they are stopping many of their farmers from producing food yet some have little or no food for their citizens. How do we look at those who throw bombs at innocent citizens in the churches, mosques and in the market at those doing their legitimate business? These are contradictions which require investigation and then reconciliation by the global community.

It is no longer rumours of wars and earthquakes, we have seen them; we have seen young ladies blowing themselves up in suicide bomb attacks directed at innocent citizens who never understood their cause. We have also seen women paid for abandoning their babies at baby factories and one man paid for impregnating hundreds of women. Thus, child traffickers are having boom days as they deliver their babies to ritualists, slave masters and sexual escapists. It is indeed the moment of global reconciliation and we must take the lead through cultural rejuvenation- orientation.

However, before proceeding further, it is important to clarify some of the concepts such as global, reconciliation and culture which form the bedrock of this presentation. According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English global is affecting or including the whole world- universal. It includes considering all the parts of a problem or situation together (743). This implies that the issue of reconciliation affects the entire world to the point that every country should work together to tackle common problems in order to bring about lasting

peace to the people. Reconciliation implies abandoning a particular life style which works against the rules of the society and accepting new one with positive attributes leading to progress. From every indication, there is need for re-evaluation, re-orientation and re-organization of the society to make the citizenry conscious of their responsibilities. It is in this regard that Julie Umukoro postulates that:

The national re-orientation must therefore begin with the re-engineering of the system by which people are managed. Once an efficacious system is put in place, it would in turn prompt and provide the guide for necessary positive attitudes, behaviours and responses for the individuals. (123)

The essence of the above is that the people and governments should pioneer the evolution of a functional society by providing the basic structure to guide the people.

Reconciliation according to Charles Villa Vincencio is the creation of time and space in which to find new ways of dealing with past grievances (21). There is need for policy makers of our current situation to look inward and reflect the past where necessary so as to be the spring board for the realization of the future. In her own approach, Cynthia Cohen describes reconciliation as:

A set of deep process designed to transform relationships of hatred and mistrust into relationships of trust and trustworthiness. These process involve former enemies acknowledging each other's humanity, empathizing with each other's suffering, addressing and redressing past injustice and sometimes expressing remorse, granting forgiveness and offering reparations. Reconciliation reflects a shift in attention away from blaming the other to taking responsibility for the attitudes and actions of one's self and one's own community (Hutt & Hosking:4).

The emphasis of the above is the acknowledgement of guilt or wrongdoing or the mistakes of the past and the willingness to amend in order to live a better life. Reconciliation involves an individual or group taking responsibility for an action and the ability to manage crisis situation in order to move forward as well as work conscientiously for a better future. Therefore, the task of this presentation is to show how culture for example as typified in our theatre can be used as a source of reconciliation for Nigeria as it has been utilized in other countries like India and America. It then becomes necessary at this juncture to define culture within the context to aid our understanding and appreciation of its value as agent for global reconciliation and security. Culture is a way of life which a given community or an individual is identified with. In the words of Edward Taylor Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (3). This implies that culture is the embodiment of what makes the individual unique in a gathering of peoples from different backgrounds. Culture is a universal phenomenon which attributes are discernable in every human community and is not restricted to any particular endeavour or to an aspect of activities expressed by man in his earthly explorations. Let us examine the various ways through which culture could be used as means of achieving global reconciliation and security as it affects Nigerian nation.

### **Cultural Orientation**

Our common experience so far in Nigeria has shown that there is indeed urgent need for reconciliation, reorientation and reorganization of the state of the Nigerian nation to pave way for sustainable development. First, most Nigerians who do not know should be made to understand that culture is not all about drama and theatre or the creative arts, but the totality of what makes their existence meaningful and enjoyable as distinct people. This situation calls for reorientation to educate us on who we are and where we are supposed to be going as a nation. This made Mohammed Kuna to insist that:

The situation of profound anomie facing the country presently calls for nothing less than a radical overhauling or reorientation of the thought patterns of the leaders so that they would always act in accordance as an experience is limited to the creative arts. This is why, when culture is mentioned in most places, people think of dance, drama, painting, sculpture, literary works, indigenous films and storytelling. No attempt has been made to enlighten the citizenry on the definition of culture and the importance of culture in national development (110-111)

The above shows that many do not understand the actual meaning of culture and its relevance in the society. For every country identifies a peculiar way of life which suits her environment and works hard to develop along that peculiarities especially in areas where there are advantages.

From the above, it becomes clear that Nigeria needs to embark on a well structured reorientation programme driven towards what Anene Okoro refers to as vision of "mind restructuring" which in his view is a kind of behavioural modification of the citizens in order to arrest pervasive decay. (Umukoro:122). Continuing further in her contribution towards a new beginning for Nigeria Julie Umukoro proposes that:

As a matter of fact, the new drive towards the proposed national reorientation and the building of a virile nation is the re-engineering of our policies on management at all levels...once efficacious systems is put in place prompt and provide the guide for necessary positive attitudes, behaviours and responses of the individuals. Such overhauling or reinvention of the management process should empower government agencies,

corporate bodies, institutions and civil society groups in Nigeria toward adopting a more pragmatic approach in reorienting individuals and groups towards the building of a virile Nigerian society (123)

It follows from the ongoing that when the people are conscious of their responsibilities and operate in an ideal society where there is equity, justice and fairness, the country will sustain developmental initiatives which are anchored on citizens with proven integrity.

### **Corruption**

A drawback in our country that should be tackled from every ramification is corruption which unfortunately has become synonymous and obstructive to her national development efforts. Corruption has reached the point that every segment of society is negatively affected even at international circles. Corruption has stunted the growth of Nigeria's economy and tainted her image locally and internationally. Therefore, government, organizations and individuals should work in cooperation to eradicate it in our national life. The monumental level of corruption in Nigeria prompted Adedokun and Otaki to posit that:

The pervasiveness of corruption is so endemic that there is hardly any institution that is immune to it, the government bureaucracy, the military, the educational sector, the private business sector, professional associations, religious organizations, traditional rulership and so on. The situation is such that many Nigerians now believe that they hardly obtain something without financial inducement. Nigerians from different geopolitical, ethnic and religious backgrounds easily unite and become comrades in lootocracy and other forms of corruption. In the involvement in corruption no section of Nigeria is marginalized. (61-62)

This shows that government and the citizens have not made sustained efforts aimed at eradicating corruption in our national life. Since it has been proven that corruption hinders the progress of any nation, every effort should be made to eliminate it so as to pave way for sustainable development in line with global reconciliation.

Therefore, we should change our cultural attitude to work against corruption and reconcile with the reality that corruption has not yielded any positive result for Nigeria. According to Mohammed Kuna corruption has continued to be one of the significant symptoms and cause of Nigeria's underdevelopment (23). Corruption has reached an alarming level that some Nigerians are more interested in acquiring wealth from any source against national development. Nigerians of this category will struggle to do everything possible including armed robbery, kidnapping, child trafficking and assassination in an effort to get rich. Even in our religious domain the situation gets worse as many command God to give them instant miracles and riches.

Many have developed the lure for "sharp" "sharp" ideology in which everything must happen instantly without delay. Ikey Ekeh also observes that we have not only imbibed the culture of "chop I chop", we also developed a "now...now" culture, where we want everything and most things to happen immediately. It is believed in some quarters that we borrowed this from the military's "with immediate effect" Cliché (101). In this circumstance, everything must happen in "quick" "quick" succession in our usual fire brigade manner. Barclays Ayakoroma had also harped on this in his lecture when he pointed the fact that:

Nigerians have developed instamatic culture which permeates every strata of the society. Once you are in public office, it is expected that you have to make money as soon as possible (asap). If you do not, you are vilified... If a pastor prays for you and you do not receive an instant miracle, then he is not good enough. We cannot wait for the yam or beans to be cooked; and so it has to be instant noodles (Ekeh:104)

The culture of instamatic attitude should change for a more enduring one of hardwork and perseverance as the best means of achieving success and security by the citizens.

### **Political Ideology**

In a bid to negotiate as well as reconcile the contemporary realities of our world, every effort should be made to change our political culture. This will be done through reorientation, education and political ideology which will reposition our leaders, office holders and representatives to become responsible, accountable and transparent in the discharge of their duties. This will make it possible for them to consult the people they represent before taking decisions on their behalf to ensure the common interest is projected. A new political ideology which focuses on the projection of national interest and anchored on the people should be adopted. Non implementation of a steady political ideology in Nigeria prompted Mohammed Kuna to submit that:

No nation ever developed without developing a historical sense of its worth, without its people believing in it; without these people developing a common basis for forging ahead without developing "a political community", however marginal that is distinct from and takes precedence over all the forms of communities and identities. Without these, China, Cuba, North Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia and other countries that today are far ahead of us would not have advanced as they did. (24)

So, there should be a national ideology as a guiding principle on which every leader bases his political activities to ensure security. It is through this arrangement that our political leaders become more responsible and accountable in terms of project execution and distribution of amenities. Indeed, there is need for a new

programme of action for the people by the politicians which will bring about reconciliation and security in the society. According to Maduagwu, the way out is that:

There must be a new beginning; there must be a complete change of attitude by the Nigerian political class despite what has happened. For no matter how excellent the constitution or other instruments for ensuring accountability and checking corruption in the country might be, all will come to naught unless there is a political will to abide by them and enforce them on the part of the politicians (Tomolu : 48).

The foregoing shows that the politicians are responsible for implementation of policies in a country and should be diligent in their duties. There is need to reform the current political structure which creates “sit in leaders” who loot the nation’s treasury with impunity and create abject poverty for the masses

#### Investment in Cultural Industries

The current Nigeria’s ailing economy can be put on steady course of recovery and revitalization through the activities of our various cultural industries. This is the area where the government, individuals and organizations can invest their resources to develop them to the point of becoming the main economic base for the country. The cultural industries have been neglected for long and this affects our economy negatively because the contributions and gains they could have made to the economy are lost. Effiong Johnson calls attention to this ugly situation and argues that:

Cultural industries as significant key words...gives the perspective that just like there are sports industries, oil industries, gas industries, paper industries...there are or should necessarily be cultural industries engaged in the manufacturing of cultural products for economic gains among others (5)

This shows that Nigerian cultural industries seen in theatre-video film as exemplified in Nollywood, dance, music, tourism and craft are potential sources of generating financial support for the economy which should be encouraged by the government. Tourism industry when properly harnessed could serve as a means of generating additional revenue for the economy. This is achieved through organized visits to designated tourist sites such as game reserves, monuments, ranches and water falls. Others include festivals such as the National Festival of Arts and Culture, Abuja and Calabar carnivals which when properly organized have the potentials of attracting visitors who will bring foreign exchange that will add to the growth of the economy. The concept of cultural rejuvenation is also emphasized by Effiong Johnson when he avers that:

Tourism could be developed to be one of the highest foreign exchange earners in our vast and potentials, capacitated nation...Nigeria has the singular quantity and quality in tourism aesthetics for and beyond near preponderance in any country of Africa. Yet they lie fallow, uncultured and uncultivated. Yet upon re-activations, they could have provided responses to unemployment challenges, tourism gains, and inter-cultural exchanges of social, political, economic, and cultural counts (21-21).

The above is a pointer to the potentials of tourism industry and a call on Nigeria to harness these resources to great advantage in terms of providing employment opportunities, financial gains and cultural promotion.

The theatre is known for its vital role in the global reconciliation efforts as they relate to Nigeria. It has been established that the theatre through various performance forms such as drama, dance, songs, music, recitals, and video film contribute to economic development and societal harmony. The sale of video films from Nollywood is a source of income for Nigeria both locally and internationally. The film industry has provided employment opportunities for many and has also served as source of cultural preservation. The situation prompted Ifeyinwa Ozondu to emphasize that:

Every production process of a given movie, engage at least 85% of Nigerian youths; from the technical crew to actors, marketers, producers and other crew members. The industry has reduced the unemployment in the country by engaging the youths usefully in the process of film production. The most fascinating thing about most Nigerian movies is that the stories link to either our culture or the situation of the country (576)

This shows the extent Nollywood has influenced life in Nigeria. Consequently, Nigeria can utilize the abundant resources in the theatre as exemplified in Nollywood to reconcile her economic and social crisis as a recovery strategy by investing in the film industry since it has the proven potentials capable of providing the needed financial support for the economy and employment to boost security. Again, Ifeyinwa Ozondu goes further to state that:

There is no gainsaying the fact that no sector has played conspicuous role next to oil and gas in the economy of Nigeria than Nollywood industry...Nollywood movies have been accepted globally and generate funds over 286 million per year notwithstanding the fact it has been managed by individuals and groups. One can equivocally state that investing in Nollywood industry enhance the country’s economy towards achieving vision 20:2020 (576).

Based on the above, it becomes crucial that every effort should be made to encourage the growth of the film industry and theatre generally as a contributory factor in the struggle to reduce unemployment and the alleviation of poverty.

Additionally, the theatre can still play a vital role in the struggle for global reconciliation and security through creation of awareness and education. It could also be deployed in the reorientation of the masses by making them conscious of their responsibilities as citizens to their country. It has been used as instrument of mobilization for the masses in bringing about positive changes in the society. This vital role of the theatre in mobilization made Sylvanus Dangoji to state that:

Various accounts have it that the popular theatre practice that had taken roots in the theatre curriculum of higher institutions like the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, the University of Jos, and the College of Education, Katsina Ala, Benue State was used by MANSER under the leadership of Jerry Ghana in different parts of the country. This is an acknowledgment of the role of theatre in playing mobilization and stabilization functions in a political dispensation like the one being experienced by Nigeria (213)

This goes to show that theatre has the capacity to motivate the people to take a particular action as desired by government, individuals or organization and should be involved in development initiatives.

## II. CONCLUSION

The struggle for global reconciliation and security becomes necessary due to many problems confronting humanity. However, reconciliation will be more useful when it is directed at bringing people together to work for a common interest, which benefits the society and restores hope. In a bid to negotiate and reconcile with the realities of the contemporary world through culture every effort should be made to position our leaders, office holders and representatives to be accountable and responsible to the people. This will make it possible for them to consult the people before taking decisions on their behalf to ensure that the common interest is projected. It is through this arrangement that the leaders will become more responsive to the aspiration of their people and accountable to them in relation to project execution and distribution of amenities. An enabling environment should be created to empower the people to elect responsible leaders who will represent them effectively to ensure development. Therefore, government, organizations, and individuals should invest in the cultural industry especially the video film and tourism by providing financial support and facilities to the artists. This will create employment opportunities for the people which will in turn reduces security challenges as many will be productively engaged in contributing to the development of the nation.

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