

SATIRICAL THEMES IN GENRES OF LITERATURE: IMPLICATION FOR EDUCATION AND SOCIETY; TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

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Abstract

Satire is a literary device which an artiste uses for social criticism by showcasing contemporary ills in the society thereby wishing them corrected. One of the problems identified was Constant conspicuous societal decay in spite of the numerous satirical follies in literary genres. This study examined side by side the purported vices exposed by satirical themes and the vices plaguing the society. The study x-rayed the role of education and society in curbing these menaces. The study was based on library research and observations made from various contributions. It was discovered that the satirical themes were not artificial but reflection of a typical Nigerian society. It was concluded that if education and society synergistically get rid of societal vices; there will be a tremendous transformation of the global economy. It was recommended that the Nigerian society needs a radical change of attitude; Institutions strengthened with stiff penalties for offenders.

Key words: Satire, themes, genres, education, society.

The world, Nigeria in particular is seriously infested with series of societal vices which have plagued the corporate existence and hindered economic progress. These malignances range from corruption to materialism, religious hypocrisy, and marginalization to mention but four. Satire is defined by Collins English Dictionary (2009) as a work of literature to show foolishness or maladies in humans, organizations or government with a view to effect political or social change or to prevent it. Unfortunately, in spite of the numerous satirical themes in plays, poems and novels, these maladies remain unabated resulting in insecurity of lives and properties occasioned by different insurgent groups: Boko Haram in the North-East,

Odua People's Congress (OPC) in the South-West, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the South-East, Sea pirates, kidnappers and vandals of pipelines in the South-South, in addition to child theft and child trafficking, rape cases, ritual killers among others. All these societal ills had hindered prospective investors, economic advancements, inventions and productivity thereby slowing down transformation of the global economy.

There are many satirical themes in Nigerian literary works these include: corruption, materialism, marginalization, and religious decadence to mention but four.

The Theme of Corruption

In *'Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again'*, Ola Rotimi satirizes corrupt political leaders in the person of Lejoka Brown, who sees politics as the only means of survival: the in- thing now in Nigeria, to be famous you need politics, to enjoy life it is politics, to have a big share of the national cake you need politics. Rotimi satirizes the immorality of Nigerian political leaders in the person of Lejoka Brown, people of dubious and unscrupulous characters who cannot organize their families well but want to rule others. In the play *'Holding Talks'* Rotimi satirizes how man's energies are spent on discussion, talks and dialogue even in a situation requiring action; In this play nothing really gets done, things get really close to being done but nothing gets really done because there is always some justifiable rationalization for that which really needs to be done not to be done.

Soyinka in *'the Trials of Brother Jero'* lashes at the ambitious immature Member of Parliament who wants to achieve political position by basking on the prophet. In the *'Swamp Dwellers'* Soyinka has shown a rural Nigerian community which is disintegrating because of corrupt leadership style. In *'The Interpreters'* Soyinka takes a critical look at the human situation in modern Nigeria: a judge pronounces an oracular sentence from the bench but waits behind pillars for a briber, the nameless managing director portrays an inefficient empty corrupt leader sailing aimlessly all over the world at his country's expense.

Theme of Materialism

In *'the Trials of Brother Jero'*, this trait is pungent in Chume and his wife Amope. Chume's materialism is summed up in his prayers by calling on the 'Lord' to assist those who are messengers today to be promoted to senior civil servants tomorrow, those who are riding bicycles let them have cars tomorrow. Amope is no less ambitious and materialistic than her husband and others, she is also insatiable, and her husband's bicycle does no longer impress her likes. Amope prefers to sleep on double foam and silver bed rather than the mat, she and her husband can afford. *'The trials of brother Jero'* portrays the way of life of certain people in Nigeria: the

Member of Parliament and other characters who patronize Jeroboam represent the Nigerian public, the many evangelist and other religious fanatics who flourish and make money from the gullible.

In *'The Lion and the Jewel'* Soyinka dwells on the human conditions in contemporary Nigeria emphasizing the bizarre quantity of life of a people who are in many ways are under developed and are caught in the ungainly dance of transition. In *'Our Husband has Gone Mad Again'* Ola satirizes Nigerian quickest means to achieve their goals and aspirations; Lejoka Brown wants to use 'surprise' and 'attack' to win elections so that he can embezzle money, convert public fund to his private pulse, build mansions for himself. Like false prophets, Jero in 'the trials of brother Jero' keeps his customers in suspense so that he can keep them to himself and make more money from them.

Theme of Marginalization

A cursory look at most satirical text exposes the self servicing activities of politicians and multinational companies which lead to terrible degradation of environment and quality of human lives. In 'yellow-yellow', Agary using the first person point of view reveals the exploitation of the masses. In tale of Harmattan' by veteran poet, Ojaide vividly creates man's inhumanity to man, he paints the picture of the pains of human degradation occasioned by senseless depletion of environment by the avaricious predators ;the cast of local and foreign predators in an oil producing community. In 'the tears in a basket' the poet Sophia Obi reveals the horror of the oppression meted out to the masses by the Nigerian political elite, especially those from the Niger Delta to transform the desert of their region into lush greeneries sustaining the affluence of the rulers perceived as local colonialist in the text. In 'OMPADEC' it reveals a jungle which features is 'belated, token justice delayed, given and withdrawn at will, dangled and banned of whim. People's properties are owned by others.

Theme of Religious Hypocrisy

In *'The Trials of Brother Jero'*, Soyinka unveils the evils of the religious sets that have proliferated the social system, Jero as a representative of that class is a man of commercialism and money making; According to Jero he is in a trade, the business of prophesy as he displays his mentor the old prophet who taught him his art of divination. Jero lacks moral discipline, like many prophets, Jero shows great weakness for women; he has lust at the sight of a woman half exposed thigh. Soyinka in 'the Trials of Brother Jero' ridicules certain people, the rich in Nigeria, who go to church only on weekends just because they want to attain a high position in the society, as shown of a man who firmly believes that he is going to be the first prime minister of the new-north-east state when created.

Soyinka in 'the man died' satirizes the activities of the man who keeps silent in the face of tyrannical religious leaders. Soyinka satirizes the forced system of making sacrifices to the gods of the land, he mocks at the way some gods demand certain things but these things are not taken to them rather kadiye and his priests consume all.' Sonny Oti satirizes religious practices in Abonkwo clan, he mocks at the way Christian religion is being practiced alongside pagan religion, Evangelist Jeremiah an exemplified instructor of divine will of God, in his house is a juju room, idols of all sorts; Evangelist Jeremiah is worshipping his secret idols.

Societal Vices as Viewed by Teachers of Literature

The researcher discovered that majority are of the opinion that the ills of the society are being exposed via satire. The contemporary Nigerian is ambitious, materialistic and insatiable. Soyinka has demonstrated the false prophets of our time represented by brother Jeroboam. 'Our husband has gone mad again' exposes the hypocrisy and unscrupulous behavior of our Nigerian political leaders in the person of Lejoka Brown. It satirizes the greedy Nigerian political leaders, how people who cannot rule themselves want to rule others, how people represented by Okonkwo are afraid to err out their views for fear of being victimized.

Marginalization is a household word in Nigeria; there is much exploitation of the masses by the political elites and the multinationals who drill the oil of the Niger Delta without much compensation; the result of which has created degradation of environment and degradation of lives. There is complete denial of social amenities, the rural areas are the most hit, as such the youth drift to the cities in search for a better living, this epidemic of search for better life and wealth had brought untold hazards to our youths who met their untimely death in the process of vandalizing pipelines, scooping fuel, kidnapping, armed robbery among others.

Societal Vices as Viewed by Literary Scholars

This group is of the opinion that Satire is right to mock at the folly of the false prophets, corruption by political leaders, materialism, and religious bigotry among others in Nigerian society. The Brother Jeros of this world are not completely prophets, they are caricatures of their original self neither prophets nor true followers of Christ. The Lejoka Browns are true Nigerian quixotic politicians who bred political corruption of: bribery, cronyism, electoral fraud, nepotism, slush fund, plutocracy, political scandal among others. Political leaders fail to display concern for the public interest or fail to set example of integrity, thus they vandalized and looted the treasury and left the land with hunger, thirst and fear. The helpless poor are being marginalized, as a result the poor seek refuge in the churches where they meet the brother Jeros of this world, who further milk them dry by collecting tithes, deceiving them into sowing seeds or parting with their valuables.

Chume following brother Jero sheepishly reminds scholars of Nigerian political power holders and their followers, who exhibit Jombi like behavior so that they can get something to eat from their masters. When the Member of Parliament condescends so low to the plague of prophet Jero, it reminds scholars of Nigerian politicians who consult oracles for spiritual powers in order to win elections. It is a known fact that some of these customers or converts who come to pray with Jero or found in the churches do not come for spiritual purpose but to attain supernatural powers, to attain worldly ambition for their heart desire; to them the Christian ‘God’ is very generous and a lover of sycophants. A man so much debased as Jeroboam in ‘the Trials of Brother Jero’ has no claim to the name and work of a prophet; these self made prophets have no believe whatsoever in what they preach. Students therefore agree that if members of the society live a life untainted by sin and evil there will be no need for members of the society to be duped by religious charlatans.

Societal Vices as Viewed from Journals, Newspapers and Magazines

It is a well known fact that the society is infested with many vices. Mojtabal (2006) posited that political corruption is found everywhere; politicians sell themselves to corporate interest thereby infiltrating corruption in the civil service which further leads to vast continental poverty. Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe in his 90th birth day (APRIL 10, 2014) lashed at Nigeria for corrupt practices. In October (2006), the then president of World Bank, Paul Wolfowitz reported that Nigerian officials had stolen more than\$300 billion of their nation’s wealth over the last forty years. Cold (2011), in his article the gospel of materialism- Nigerian Pentecostalism and hypocrisy sees churches as economic empire than religious organization where they preach prosperity messages which translate into wealth and health gospels; where gospel of materialism-Pentecostalism emphasizes the acquisition of wealth as part of spiritual salvation.

Fela Anikulapo kuti lashed Nigerian leadership and followers for hiding under the cloak of religion to perpetrate more evil than Satan; they loot and spent Nigerian monies with impunity (Daily Independent of April 9, 2014). The leadership newspaper (March 9,2014) reported that the then governor (Sanusi) of central bank of Nigeria raised an alarm over \$ 20 billion missing in NNPC account. Daily Sun, 21th April, 2014 posited that Bamidele condemns the neglect of Ekiti rural dwellers. Bayelsa youths spit fire over neglect by shell (Daily Sun, April 21th, 2014). Cleric says that Nigerians are the most religious but are not Godly, (24th April, 2014). Serious corruption exists in the power sector said Nnaji (Daily Sun 24th April, 2014).

Implications for Education

Arthur (2014) posited that literature projects action, how to govern oneself which is studied through fiction, biography, poetry and drama. It is a study that

teaches children to be responsible, to think for themselves, to adopt a critical with attitude reference to mental health, maturity adjustment, the whole man, self development, work ethics, and probity. Teachers should provide ideals and powerful models which the learner can emulate to considerable advantage. Language teachers have to teach learners national ethics through the various satirical themes by situating these vices to the Nigerian context and juxtaposing the vices with those actions found in the society. Teachers should focus on ethical principles, about the laws of the land, about personal and social standards and values. Teach the children the use and misuse of authority, tolerance, sportsmanship and the problems associated with materialism.

Engage the child in role plays where they experience attitude towards self: growing from self love to self respect, acceptance of self, realization of one's own worth, let them examine concepts of integrity and honesty, responsibility and service, morality, right and wrong as part of a way of life for the individual and the community, to this end educational lessons should be tailored towards the study of famous people, the life of individuals worthy of admiration whose pedigree and credibility have beneficial influence on the young people.

School should reinvigorate extra- curricular activities, students should form clubs: young farmers clubs, pottery club, ceramic club, flower club among others; make students work with their hands by gathering and assembling things, make them sell the products and the proceeds given to motherless babies homes by so doing they imbibe the spirit of hard work, cooperation, and selflessness to the nation. Expose students to sports and games where they discover their skills, imbibe the spirit of competitiveness, tolerance and sportsmanship. Let students embark on excursion to prisons, motherless babies home, let them see the state of things; these will provoke thought and make them to reframe from evil intention.

Education acquisition should be geared towards observation, experimentation and sustained critical scrutiny, it should explain events in terms of mechanical principles of cause and effects, teach students to adopt a critical attitude towards beliefs, theories and customs by reflective and critical thinking thereby changing thinking mentality of prejudice, misconception, superstition by disabusing uniformity and conformity because uniformity and conformity inhibit intuition, stiffen imaginations, threaten creativity and encourage sycophancy by working on the individual life pattern which is the emotional adjustment and control which is crucial to personal development and mental health, the school must assist the child to proper habits of diet, exercises, rest and development, the school should apply the processes of conditioning, training and disciplining to produce emotional reactions which can be learned or unlearned (Educational ideals 2009).

The school must re-orient the children by guidance and counseling so that the youths can imbibe the values of high moral standard and then practice them. The school should redefine values to usher in social control; no nation can hold claim to civilization when personal gains and aggression replace the respect for the rights of her citizens; if society is to maintain the level of social control that is essential for fostering the highest level of individuality then the society must approach the study of crime and social deviance in a broader context. School can help young people to understand the facets of crime as springboard towards developing accurate concept concerning social control in a democracy. Education should strive to eliminate the barrier of man's ethnic group as a determining factor affecting the participation in the society (Akinseye, 1987)

Science should be taught by inquiry and discovery activities alone because through investigation, gathering and processing information, thinking is being challenged and bad traditional beliefs are washed away. Teach science so that learning can promote critical thinking and problem solving and application of knowledge to new situations by processing information through building divergent views for problem solving in innovation and critical ways. By so doing Education will enthrone scientific knowledge as opposed to religious mystical knowledge; school must propagate scientific method and a search for the truth through the introduction of scientific subjects in all segment of primary, secondary and tertiary educational system (kosemani 1993).

Implications for Society

It is worthy to note at this juncture that what the school is teaching is at variance with what is happening in the society. The school environment provides rules and regulations, good conduct, morals and disciplinary measures to mould the child as good citizen for the society; but the child comes out of school to join a porous system that condoles a lot of ills; a decadence society where crime pays: kidnapers, sea pirates and vandals are granted amnesty with a huge monthly pay. A system where mediocre and criminals are waxing strongly financially. A system where the highly educated bows for the school drop-out and never do well in the society in the name of politics. A system where general overseers of churches are living in affluence while their followers are walloping in ardent poverty. A system where an individual with a known mean income becomes a millionaire over night without being questioned.

The society must get rid of these canker worm that have plagued the developmental strives by having a change of attitude. People must change their thinking and mindset. Leaders should be seen as role models, leading by examples, shunning corruption. A good leader should realize that wealth and power are transitory; the good name you leave behind speaks volumes than riches; so

achievement should be based on pragmatic changes that will have an indelible impact on the lives of the people. The society must stop holding people who become rich overnight by dubious means in high esteem and giving red carpet recognition in social gatherings and functions order wise the youths will emulate them. The youths should imbibe good morals of honesty,, integrity, humility, loyalty, patriotism, selflessness as a way of life in addition to respect for their elders as the Holy Bible commands- honour your mother and father that your days may be long in the land I will give unto you (Exodus 20:8).

Parents should train and mentor their children to imbibe sound moral values of integrity, honesty, diligence, truthfulness which are in line with the scriptures ‘train up the child the way he should go and when he grows old he will not depart from it’ (Proverbs22:6). The society must shun vices by strengthening its institutions; (Transparency International, 2005) posited that agencies like Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent corrupt practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) saddled with the responsibilities of overseeing corruption, protecting national and foreign investments in the country in addition to identifying illegally acquired wealth and confiscating it, should redouble their effort, prosecute and jail offenders, allowing no sacred cows, everybody should be equal before the law. Nigeria should draft a sound constitution that will spell out good conduct and stiff penalties for offenders.

Findings

Satire is interested in hidden lives of human beings, their fears and hopes, their loves and hates and how the very tension in their hearts affect their daily contact with others and how the emotional stream of the man within interact with social reality. Satire has helped to expose the constant conspicuous societal vices of corrupt political leadership, religious hypocrisy, marginalization, materialism, etc. the significance of satirical themes in genres of Nigerian literature therefore lies in the exposition of these social ills which have plagued the society and the extent to which these ills are apt to change through Education and Society.

The satiric treatments of the themes are shown in the picture of both female and male characterization. The persons who have been paraded before Nigerians in genres of literature are not artificial, they are practical human beings who are found in the streets everyday, characters like brother Jero can be found in the cities who parade themselves as religious fanatics but turn around to deceive their gullible followers, people like Chume who are gullible and can be easily deceived follow their lashes without questioning the source of authority. Lejoka Brown is a fake political leader who is out to ruin the masses. These characters as apt in the genres have been used for a purpose to expose the weaknesses which are prevalent in the contemporary Nigerian society.

The researcher visited some institutions of higher learning where the people are strongly of the opinion that satire can be regarded as a social campaigner that engages in the holy crusade by total cleansing of the society. The satirical themes are based on experiences which will virtually help to shape the history of Nigeria; the various satirical themes reveal the monumental decay in the society.

Much as one agrees that the society needs to effect a change, one will want to say that change is farfetched because the school as an agent of socialization has a porous system that lays emphasis on paper qualification rather than skills; the society has a system that encourages mediocrity rather than merit. A system that is insensitive to the yearnings and aspirations of her citizens, a system that brews corruption, nepotism, and criminality, a system that has traded values for inadequacies.

Conclusion

It was concluded that if education and society synergistically get rid of societal vices: corruption, materialism, and marginalization, religious decadence among others, there will be a tremendous transformation of the global economy. Satire therefore is regarded as a social campaigner that engages in the holy crusade by total cleansing of the society.

Recommendations

What goes on in the school must be closely related to what goes on out of it, no school can operate successfully if it is isolated from its socio-cultural surroundings; therefore the school must develop appropriate motor skills and good habits.

It is recommended that the Nigerian society needs a radical change in ethnical ways of life. Indeed, Nigeria needs a re-orientation of her moral values through education so that she can continue to exist as a corporate entity. Truly we live in a world where things are changing at a tremendous speed, each day we witness new inventions and innovations, to cope with these trend they need to overhaul the educational system and make it functional. The society must strengthen institutions. Provide a sound constitution that will spell out a sound conduct and stiff penalties for offenders. Culprits must face the music; the society should borrow a leaf from other countries like Israel, Egypt and Italy who jail their past leaders (Presidents) for corrupt practices.

Corruption should be treated as an act of sedition against the state. The society should shun material things and embrace substance; people with proven integrity should be given positions and leadership roles.

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