

## The 'Hero' in Selected Nollywood Videos

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### **Abstract**

*Scholarly attention on Nollywood has focused majorly on thematic and cultural adaptations while the angle of heroism in contemporary Nigerian society has received less critical attention. Discourses on heroism which have dominated the literary sphere have focused on interrogating the heroic essence that characterises the sociological frames of classical societies as well as his (the hero's) variations through several literary eras in western civilisation. With the unfolding realities of the Modern era and its attendant events, there exist disparaging notions as to what constitute not just the existence of man but the place of heroism within modern discourse, thus the emergence of the tragic hero and the antihero. The study has examined the concept of heroism in two contemporary Nollywood videos; National crisis and Mama Africa and has further explored the nature and the dimensions of the hero within the Nigerian society portrayed in the Nollywood videos using Roland Barthes' Semiotic Approach from the Social Constructionist Theory of Representation. It argued that there exists several dynamics within the micro- society that influence the hero in the contemporary Nigerian society. Therefore, an adequate knowledge of these ideologies and cultural themes provided insights into the substance that informed and regulated the behaviour of the characters, thereby sensitising the populace and government of their roles in ensuring a peaceful co-existence among individuals in the larger society.*

**Keywords:** Heroism, Nollywood, Ideology, Contemporary, Society.

### **Introduction**

The notion of heroism varies with culture, each defining the nature of the hero. It is perceived as a system of mentorship, a form of military intervention or a risk one is willing to undergo for a vision or a purpose, especially when it involves threat to one's life. Offering a psychological perspective of the term, Becker and Eagley consider heroism an act of service performed by a person whose actions coincide with creating a reputation for himself in the society (Franco, Blau & Zimbardo 2011). Heroism, thus, becomes a personal pursuit towards a noble cause

where the welfare of others is principal in the scheme of activities, together with the willingness to be held accountable for the outcome whatever the cost.

Over the ages, however, the concept of heroism has transformed from the communal to the personal. Contemporary conceptions of the subject include being a source of provider to a person or group of people, sticking out one's head for a personal cause or a cause that may not be of benefit to the individual in question but that he considers humane enough. Others include being a source of inspiration as is common among celebrities, politicians, football stars or religious representatives. In today's world, physical heroism as conceived in the classical era is far less prominent. Therefore, this study explores the nature and dimension of the hero within the Nigerian society as portrayed in the contemporary Nollywood videos. Within the course of investigating the nature of the hero, it becomes germane to provide the framework through which the notion of heroism is established from the two Nollywood videos *National Crisis* (Pascal Amanfo, 2015) and *Mama Africa* (Joe Brown Ubaka, 2014). The video film has become essential for this study because the Nigerian movie industry has become a major channel through which the social images, values and cultural ideologies of the Nigerians are preserved and disseminated for broad viewing by both local and international audiences. Indeed, increasing digitalisation now implies the further dissemination of Nigerian culture and tradition through audio-visual media such as videos, computers, live streaming or internet broadcast and satellite broadcasting. Consequently, written texts are no longer the sole means of propagating Nigerian culture.

The discourse on heroism has spanned several eons before the existence of western civilisation. However, recurrent traits that characterise the hero in classical societies are the hero's prowess, physical feats and his love for warfare emphasised by his semi-divine nature, all of which often culminate in the deification of such heroes by the entire society even after their death (Miller 2000; Okpewho 1979; Bowra 1952). This is buttressed by Chukwuma Azuonye's description of the hero as a "selfless lamb of sacrifice who submits to suffering or laying down his life in the pursuit of a common cause" (2002).

Given the transitional nature of the hero across several literary epochs, the events of the 1850s such as the Suez Canal Crisis and the World War II discomfited and baffled humankind, as existing conventions could neither fathom nor adequately explicate the overwhelming impact of these global crises that had taken a toll on

the society at large. The modern era critically probed the conventions that characterised as well as defined the existence of man. One of such includes questioning the social frameworks that attributed the term 'tragic hero' to aristocrats which culminates with Arthur Miller in an essay entitled "Tragedy and the Common Man" (1949) affirming that in an era dominated by loss of faith in existing institutions and the uncertainties that scientific explanations cannot accurately account for, the common man is an apt target for tragedy in the modern world just as the noble class was in the classical era because they are both entwined within similar emotional state so that we identify with the tragic struggles that emanate from their contentions against the forces that overwhelm them (Miller, 1949).

Studies over the years reveal that the notion of heroism remains fickle given the transitory variations with which he has been represented across geographical and historical epochs in western literature. The problem that arises from the complexities of the contemporary society stems from the ambivalent realities associated with the discourse of heroism. Yet unanswered are the questions of who qualifies as the hero and whether this character type is relevant in contemporary society? This study will proffer adequate explanations to the underlying issues within popular discourse. The choice of the videos is hinged on their comprehensive depictions of contemporary issues (religious and sociopolitical stances) that bedevil the present Nigerian state, thus, buttressing the role of the media (video) in the artistic representation of contemporary social issues.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

This section reveals critical works that address the representations of several character types, motifs and literary techniques that span through the Nigerian Video Industry, thus, exposing its relevance to scholarship. For instance, while examining the manner in which the police images are portrayed in Nollywood videos, Cornelius Oyekaba (2015) observes a similitude between the imagined Nigerian Police and the real Nigerian Police as their representations in the video films are not far-fetched from their status in the 'lived' or 'real' world. Shared characteristics that accompany both portraits include contempt for constituted police regulations and procedures, bureaucracies that characterise public institutions to mention a few. An unprejudiced evaluation of these fictionalised images by the Nigerian Police Force is the first response towards ensuring that these pitfalls are avoided in order to ensure qualitative service delivery.

Delving into the comic genre, Ajah (2014) examines the comic character ‘Chief Zebrudaya’ in the television series *The New Masquerade*, an archetype of the molieresque persona who adopts humour as a satirical tool to explore the socio-economic, political and cultural decadence that pervades the post-colonial Nigerian state. Identifying themes ranging from cultural hybridity to corruption, political domination among nationals, financial misappropriation, religious enslavement, economic stratification are caricatures of the evident political and economic instability in the Nigerian socio-political system. The hybridised English Language and the grotesque costuming emphasise the element of humour and, thus, symbolic references to the characters’ social class (Okome 2013). Within the discourse of pop culture, the non-standard English serves as a recurrent tool employed within the Nigerian comic genre across. In the Nollywood video film, *Osuofia in London*, the eponymous comic character “Osuofia” employs these humour aesthetics to rebut the hegemonic western notion of perceiving Africans as a race incapable of rational and sound value judgement. Through techniques such as language coinage, costume and setting, he addresses the post-colonial subject of western hegemony with a view to reinforcing African ethos with Osuofia representing African value while Samantha the West. The ‘bush English’ adopting Onookome Okome’s phrase enhances the comic effect, thus, creating a transition from the context of proper linguistic usage to one recreated as a tool for social critique (Okome 2013). Closely linked to the comic character is the trickster figure within the virtual world, whose transposable form underscores his pedagogical role within the contemporary Nigerian society. The cyber space in contemporary Nigeria is an evolving medium through which creative writers explore, engage and reach a wider cyber audience, thus, creating a participatory platform through which the silent and lone voices of several “depoliticized and passive consumers [are] empowered to broadcast their identities ... by inserting individual agency and creative capacity into digital spaces of representations” (Yeku, 2015, p. 7).

Still within the framework of character representation, the portrait of femininity within the context of Nigerian video films remains an albatross for scholars. In “The Self-Sacrificing Image as a Genre in Nigerian Video Films” Emily Godpresence insists that the continuous representations of women as anguished and marginalised personae at the hands of their in-laws, husbands or children capture motherhood as synonymous to toiling, misery, burden bearing and abuse often culminating in death, thus, portraying women as mere objects of ridicule and

the means through which fame and wealth are achieved, a case in point is the role of Merit Okeke, Andy's wife in the video film *Living in Bondage* (Shaka 2002). Agatha Ukata maintains that such absurd representations pungently contradict the feminine image in the reality thus creating a disconnection between verisimilitude and creativity (2010). The disconnection is further accentuated through the agency of songs and voice-over, where songs aid to "... create several underlining meanings which serves to give more explicit meaning to the story ... [by] breaking down the objective explicitness of certain picture where there is a need to redefine them" (Burt 1994).

Abenia Busia further identifies the recurrent motifs- food and car- which dominate video films and have facilitated the clear distinctions of gender roles over the years among cultural groups in Nigeria. Food, on one hand, symbolises moral maturity, social value and acceptability of the woman by members of her immediate and extended family while the car, on the other hand, signifies a man's power (economic, social and psychological) and social status which is always directly proportional to the economic worth of his cars and vice versa. A reversal in these stereotypes signifies an anathema within the structured framework of the society. The therapeutic approach to these stereotypes in Jane Bryce's view is a deconstructive reading of the visible signs, a strategy the film scholar, Kenneth Harrow refers to as a "revolution" in African film criticism which negates the old, tired practices of film making which have not changed over time (Bryce 2012).

Exploring the influence of an urbanisation on the female gender, Tayo Adenuga (2017) examines the conception of the "Lagos Woman" through the developmental phases of Lagos State. With the Lagos woman attempting to situate herself within the metropolitan life-style of a burgeoning city, she advances through several socioeconomic class (low and high; literate and illiterate) to her post-millennia image as a famous and wealthy business woman superintending over businesses - a life that comes with much responsibility and determination in order to match up with the social realities of the cosmopolitan Lagos life often characterised with several misinterpretations by filmmakers. In order to mitigate these misrepresentations, scholars insist that women must begin to tell their own stories from their personal experiences and worldview or risk the continued contradictions which stems from a skewed patriarchal dominated video industry (Ogunleye, 2008; Adenuga, 2017). Though these critical works have highlighted recurring character types in Nollywood video films, this present study examines the notion of heroism and the attendant hero figures from a semiotic

approach deriving its data from the Nollywood videos, *National Crisis* and *Mama Africa*.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts Roland Barthes' semiotic approach from the Social Constructionist Theory of Representation to interpret the projections of the characters in the selected Nollywood video films. The Social Constructionist Theory of Representation focuses on the production of meaning or the interpretation of concepts through a shared language that represents or classifies the individuals within the same culture or social world. This study leverages on Roland Barthes' system of signification, which is an advancement of Ferdinand de Saussure's language system. As a prominent cultural theorist, Barthes elaborated on semiotics within the discourse of popular culture, one which involves reading visual images or objects as signs which function as language, since cultural objects and practices convey and depend on meaning (Hall, 1997). As science, semiotics studies the life of signs as reflected in the society, focusing on several substances and limits, images, gestures, musical sounds, objects and the complex association of all of these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment; these constitute if not language, at least systems of signification (Barthes 1968). This reveals that the nature of characters, narratives and visual images evident within the cultural practices of heroism are viable signs and invariably products for signification. A text, therefore, draws from a varied cultural stock capable of being influenced by several factors such as gender, age, race, generation, historical era and social environment thus emphasising the polysemous nature of signs (Storey, 2011). Barthes thus avers that several interpretations taken up by signs identified in the Nollywood video films are hinged on "a reading that closely depends on the culture as well as knowledge of the world" (Barthes, 1973).

### **Methodology**

To facilitate this study, data have been derived through the electronic media monitoring technique which involves critically examining the video films in order to identify, select and categorise the visible signs classified as non-verbal (images, objects, characters) and verbal signs (narrations and lexical statements) after the video texts have been transcribed. Recourse to secondary materials has been harnessed to facilitate this study. Barthes' process of signification accounts for the production and interpretation of objects or images situated within a cultural

network, thus, facilitating the creation of meaning through a system of shared concept and language. The video films constitute visual images, dialogues, songs, clothes, body movement which are all interwoven to form a whole. Since signs are polysemous in nature, several meanings are derived from the prevailing bourgeois norm or ideologies since these norms predominate the functioning of these signs. Myth embedded within these signs enhances our understanding of the norms that function within the social groups and as such imposes these norms on the society. The meaning attributed to these signs in the video films is dependent on the cultural, historical background as well as the location of the text at such a time within a particular period in history which will influence the perception as well as interpretation of the texts (video films).

With the media as a veritable means for conveying culturally stereotypic values in any society, semiotic analysis of the signs (verbal and non-verbal) that propagate the notions of heroism in the video films signifies or reveals the social relations and cultural values of the society. Therefore, the Nollywood video films are evaluated within the cultural frameworks that exist in the videos as the characters, narratives and images which capture the essence of heroism are examined because it is believed that they are marinated with several interpretations and meaning (Barthes, 1968). With respect to this study, the signs that portray heroism in the Nollywood videos will be identified and listed in order to show the embedded meanings and functioning ideologies that inform the conceptions of the hero figures represented in the videos which reflect the sociocultural and political dimensions.

### **Plot of *National Crisis***

A news report reveals the recent pandemonium that has just ravaged one of the states in the northern part of the country and the combative effort of the security forces as well as the Nigerian army to forestall and bring the situation to rest. Following this event, a suspect named Hajal Hubik Hassan, the head of the Butukukita clan and owner of a warehouse known to the public as a granary for storing harvested grain has been apprehended. During interrogation, Hajal Hubik Hassan reveals that several calamities are going to befall the country, one which will have an advance effect on the economy. Preparations are ongoing to ensure that the wreckages have multiplying effects on the nation. A recruit, who has just been indoctrinated on the goals and mission of the sect called Ramaboko, has been brought out to the public to fulfil the mission of this group. So, while concentration is focused on and security is biffed up for the International Youth

Forum in order to forestall any form of security threat, the recruit from the Ramaboko sect has been assigned to disrupt the award ceremony by ramming a vehicle filled with explosives into a school's award ceremony which has two of the country's vice-president's children as students and recipients of the awards in attendance.

The recruit converses with Nina, a prostitute given to him at the hotel, on the state of degeneration and venality of political leaders in the country, thus, attempting to overturn the doctrine and ideology with which he was trained. His leader having recorded the conversation between the recruit and Nina has assigned the new recruit to kill the girl because she has a different ideology and philosophy from that of the Ramaboko sect.

#### **Analysis of *National Crisis***

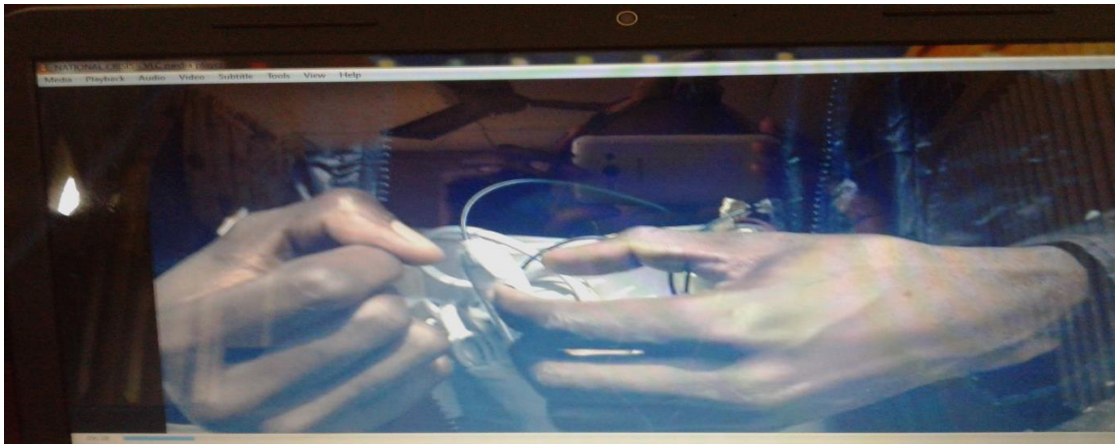
In the Nollywood video text, *National Crisis*, the images and characters are signs that accentuate the notion of heroism within the social context of the Salafi - the ideology that informs the actions of the Ramaboko group.





**Figures 1: Members of the Ramaboko group have apprehended the pastor of a church.**

From this image, we observe a tussle between two parties and the extermination of an individual. Symbolically, we observe a doctrinal contention between the party representing the Salafi (Muslims) and that of the infidels (non-Muslims) signifying the eradication of the faction that contradicts the purpose of the Salafi. The death of the pastor represents an end to the doctrine spread by perceived unbelievers/ infidels, thus revealing a society composed of two factions - the Salafi devotees and the unbelievers/ infidels.



**Figure 2: A member of the Ramaboko group ready to detonate a bomb with the acclamation “I do this in the name of the most high, Ramaboko”.**

This is symbolic of a true Muslim who through this selfless act seeks to attain the status of martyrdom before the ummah because of his willingness to lay down his life for a mission greater than his existence. In addition, the symbolic meaning of the statement “I do this in the name of the Most High” shows the propelling force that motivates the actions of the group to instigate the system of justice. Every action adopted by this group represents a defence and preservation of the Islamic doctrine as well as an affirmative reference to God while in the course of warfare. The act of fulfilling a suicide mission through the act of bombing becomes a system of honour attributed to God, one which becomes a valiant act especially because the actors or perpetrators lay down their lives for the fulfilment of this purpose, thus becoming martyrs. This is significant because it draws our focus to the status of martyrdom in the text - the climax of all heroic activities within the

context of the Salafi. Self sacrifice is the propelling force and suicide mission becomes the means through which jihad is entrenched. A recurrent term adopted by the group in the video is the word “Rama”, signifying a form of greeting that creates a sense of association and identity. Greeting is one of the ways the Ramaboko group derives its identity thus emphasising the compartmentalisation of the world into “we” and “others”.



**Figure 3: Members of the Ramaboko group besiege a community dominated by Christians.**

The image represents a form of identity that distinguishes men within the Salafi culture. The men signify the jihadists who employ guns as weapons of subjugation exerted upon defenceless dwellers, thus, inflicting death on members of the community. This pattern of dressing symbolises a means of identification, thus giving them a sense of recognition as individuals who seek to defend a course which is to deliver the ummah. We see an ardent desire to obliterate the posterity of the infidels thus annihilating any likelihood of having succeeding generations and in the long run promoting the goal of the Salafi which is the establishment an Islamic state.



**Figure 4: Death of residents of the Christian community including a foreign missionary from the United States of America.**

The death of the American missionary signifies the defeat of infidels and more specifically the deracination of the West and its ideologies- domination over the western world which remains the archenemy of the Ramaboko group.



**Figure 5: Corpses of children.**

The image in the figure above symbolises the elimination of the posterity of apostates and infidels, thereby leading to the expansion of Islam.

**Plot of *Mama Africa***

The political system of a country has been bedevilled by individuals (the political ruling class) whose system of governance thrives on corruption, mismanagement, nepotism and tribalism while its populace suffer from economic hardship in every sphere of the society. With the death of over one hundred children, whose demise was caused by using the expired vaccines bought by the ministry of health under the leadership of the minister of health, the staff of the hospital has been paid to conceal this news from the public. But with the persistent doggedness of Nathan, a famous human right activist, the press gains entrance into the premises of the hospital to broadcast the news. While the country struggles with this, the government decides to detain all the destitute found on the streets in a rehabilitation centre under the guidance of the military.

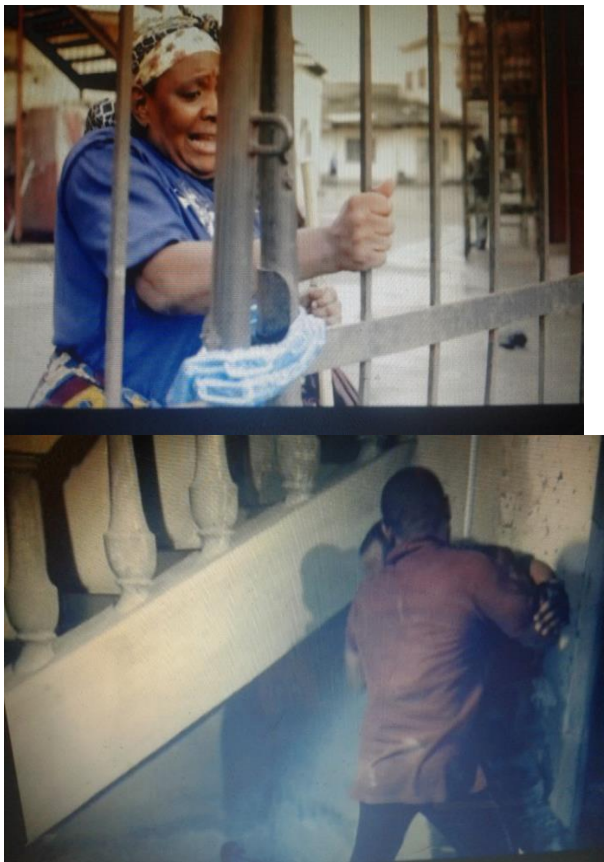
Nathan not only decries but speaks against the pains and burdens inflicted upon the citizenry by the amoral political system. As the country prepares to get into the period of election with campaigns on top gear, the populace clamour that Nathan, the human right activist, becomes the next president. This seems to be an auspicious move for the political ruling party to get Nathan to join the party with the hope of becoming the next president of the country. He sees it as an opportunity to influence as well as rescue the nation from the claws of the political ruling class. Correspondingly, the destitute oppressed by the army realise that the only panacea is to take the bull by the horn and fight for their freedom through the process of revolution. A refusal to take up this action or remain docile will result in death so why not just opt for the only available solution- a revolution. With Martha, who acts as an insider among the destitute after she has been lured to believe the wiles of Peter, a soldier who promised to liberate her, they are able to gather the guns and military weapons from the armoury, hand them over to Mama Vera for safe keeping while they wait for the appropriate time to strike.

The people exercise their franchise on the day of election, thus, making Nathan the president-elect of the country. As the populace are jubilant, the ruling party in a closed door session meets to celebrate as well as release the names of the ministers and their corresponding portfolios prepared beforehand without the knowledge of Nathan. Objecting to the party's *modus operandi*, Nathan is berated as he is informed that the order of things cannot suddenly change simply because he won the election. Nathan therefore ceases the opportunity at his disposal to end the treacherous rule of the political party by killing renowned members of the

ruling party. Simultaneously, the destitute decides to carry out their planned revolution thereby taking the army by surprise and dethroning every form of insanity in the system.

**Analysis of *Mama Africa***

From the Nollywood video, *Mama Africa*, we observe the existence of the two groups - the army and the destitute.



**Figure 6: A woman tenaciously shaking the gate and a man attacking a military officer.**

The image in figure 6 signifies the contention against the ruling class and the outcry of the destitute to be liberated from the clutches of the ruling class. The gate represents the forces and ideologies the ruling class instils in them, a false consciousness that doggedly restricts the masses. It unequivocally reveals that an individual is incapable of toppling the existing belief system or philosophy of the

ruling class. Very significant is the fact that the ruling party invariably influences the behaviours and actions of the army as they (army officers) are confined within the gate as captured in Figure 6 which represents the ideology or false consciousness that also enslaves the members of the army. Therefore, in a bid to control the destitute, they (the army) are engrossed and made captives to the ideology of the ruling party.



**Figure 7: The army attacking the man who attempted to fight a member of the force.**

The image symbolises a fight back by the army who serves as the agent or tool of the ruling party when a lone individual challenges, threatens and questions the authority or modus operandi in the camp, thus, emphasising that the war or struggle against the ruling class cannot be achieved on an individual level.



**Figure 8: The army conceal the true state of the destitute in the rehabilitation camp because of the visit of a presidential aspirant from the ruling party.**

From the figure above, we observe the false consciousness utilised by the ruling class which shrouds the mind of the masses – a subterfuge meant to create the impression that the ruling class is sympathetic to the plight of the destitute. This is an assumed perception that shrouds the destitute usually targeted at exhilarating them into believing that there is a working system that seeks to improve their welfare and living conditions, thus making the destitute live in falsity. This falsity is captured through signs ranging from chairs and tables, as against the bare floor on which the destitute are forced to sleep; and the pile of mattresses, beverages, breakable plates and water dispenser are just illusions.

The destitute must develop and strategise a modality to address the frequent injustice and suffering that pervade the social system within the camp. This strategic organisation of manpower must outnumber the army who serves as agents of the ruling party in order to achieve a revolution. This panacea supports self deliverance and taking up of arms to ensure freedom. This strategy overcomes the political philosophies of the ruling party and the armoury in the camp which symbolises the source of power for the army is subverted.



**Figure 10: The death of the camp commandant of the rehabilitation centre.**

The image symbolises the demise of the corrupt system represented by the army, the institution wielded by the political ruling class that breeds corruption, selfishness, competition and greed.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Very significant in this study is the fact that the notion of heroism as portrayed in the Nollywood video *National Crisis* is hinged on violence and this form of violence portrayed by members of the Ramaboko group is promoted through radical jihadism, an ideology which supports physical warfare against enemies of Islam.

In *National Crisis*, we observe that members of this Islamic group wilfully give up their lives, an act which many non-Salafi members describe as suicide usually accomplished through detonating explosives, thus leading to the wanton maiming or exterminating of children and adults. Violence is perpetrated in order to eliminate western influences that hinder the propagation and promotion of Islam. It is believed that Western culture (e.g. education, philosophy, religion, gender,



identification and sexual liberalism) is gradually eroding the teachings and principles of Islam as handed down by the Prophet. From the foregoing, it is observed that heroism, described as martyrdom within the Salafi culture, is demanded of all true Muslims since it is meant to honour God and reward them in the afterlife. Consequently, perpetrators of such carnage are wont to exclaim: “I do this in the name of Allah”. The discourse of heroism portrayed in *National Crisis* reveals that the values and philosophies of the characters are structured and regulated through the teachings of Islam in the Qur’n and Hadith as members of the Ramaboko group adopt Islamic dogmas and teachings to support and certify acts of violence directed at unarmed citizens.

The notion of identity is an integral part of every society. It serves as a means through which support groups - people with common interests usually those who perceive themselves as being ostracised or the few who absolutely rejects the status quo and mainstream thoughts - have a sense of association. The aim of any ideology is to distinguish its members or adherents from non-members (those who do not uphold the dogma of such group) through the use of several socially constructed paraphernalia ranging from philosophies, language, songs, anthems, iconography (El-Badawy, Comerford & Welby 2015; Fredholm 2012). According to Cole Bunzel, the identity of the Salafi jihadist is hinged on “an extremist and minoritarian reading of Islamic scripture that is textually rigorous, deeply rooted in a pre-modern theological tradition and extensively elaborated by a recognised cadre of religious authorities (2015, p.7).

In *Mama Africa*, a significant force that births the action of the destitute is the group which represents the ‘intellectuals’ made up of Bartholomew, Mama Vera, Faith, Peace, and Gordian. The strength of this group is ironically embedded on the basis that they are small in number. They devise a plan to subvert the authority of the army in the camp through utilising the army’s source of strength which is the gun. The ‘intellectuals’ strategically execute the mission by first tutoring and enlightening the despondent destitute because their mission can only be achieved if they maximise the concerted strength that accompanies the large number of destitute. This plan is timely because the masses (destitute) desire an end to the deprivation, intimidation and terror that characterise the administration of the military, but are ignorant of the modalities through which this can be achieved. The “surprise” technique of the ‘intellectuals’ aimed at achieving a revolution is unanimously accepted.

To ascertain the place of the hero in the video texts, it is germane to examine if the characters conform with or contravene the notion of heroism sustained by the social groups. In *National Crisis*, the members of the Ramaboko group act in accordance to the notion of heroism upheld by the Salafi culture by striving to defend the ummah and Islam from the pervasive influence of the West and its mode of governance for the governance guided by the rulings of the Sharia Law. They employ explosives, machetes and guns thus emphasising the violent undertones that characterise the philosophy of radicalism within the Salafi culture. Usually, the detonation of the bomb is strategically targeted at places which have people teeming in their numbers so as to achieve a colossal impact, thus acquainting the government and the populace of their existence and aim. The members of the Ramaboko group utter statements purportedly in honour of God, thereby affirming their acts as divinely oriented. Such references to God include: “I do this in the name of the most high God, Rama Boko”, “la ilaha ilallahu Muhammadun rasulullahi” (There is no God except Allah and Muhammad is His messenger), “I swear to you in God’s name”, thus emphasising a recurring thought that captures the psyche of the loyalists, who are described as ‘true Muslims’. The heroic ethos of the group revolves around members losing their lives as a wilful sacrifice in honour of God, thus entrenching the monotheistic principle that upholds the supremacy and worship of the only God, Allah.

In *Mama Africa*, the characters collaborate in attaining a heroic status. The collaborative effort of the destitute includes wilfully forfeiting the supposed benefits they derive from their deprived state for a greater future with hopeful conjectures. They forgo all form of gratification from the army adopted to lure and blindfold them (the destitute) as they conscientiously work as a team to subvert the unfair political order employed by the ruling party who manipulates the institutions and agencies of the state at their whims and caprices in order to promote their selfish desires. This concept of heroism promoted by Bartholomew, Mama Vera, Peace, Gordian and Faith advocates a classless society built on equality and equity – emancipation (social, political, physical, psychological and material), equal distribution of resources in order of priority of the needs of each individual and the means of production initially controlled by the ruling party.

## CONCLUSION

This paper examined the nature and dimensions of the hero figures within the Nigerian societies portrayed in the contemporary Nollywood videos. In the course of the study, it became germane to provide the frameworks for the discourse of

heroism within the social groups portrayed in the two contemporary Nollywood videos. In addition, the study aids our understanding of interdisciplinary discourse by enabling us to appreciate how the digital media has been adopted to promote the ideals of peace, coexistence and stability amid the unrest and turmoil that confront Nigeria. A level of stability and peace is imperative if various social groups in the nation must continue to remain interdependent in order to ensure unity and territorial sovereignty. Therefore, an adequate knowledge of the social ideologies and cultural themes of these social groups will help to provide insight into what informs and regulates the actions of the characters, thereby sensitising the government on her roles in ensuring peaceful co-existence among individuals in the larger society.

From this study, we are acquainted with the precepts upon which the subject of heroism is perceived in various microcosmic societies. It however reveals variations of the heroic figures that exist within the larger society, emphasising that the hero figure is a social construct across several groups. These premises thus give rise to the various multifaceted perceptions of the term “heroism”.

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