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RESEARCH ARTICLE

MIRRORING NIGERIA'S PAST THROUGH FILMS: A FOCUS ON IMPERIALISM, MILITARY RULE, ETHNICITY AND RELIGION IN THE MOVIES 'OCTOBER 1' AND '76'

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Abstract

Film can communicate, educate, inform and entertain. These are the major functions of mass media. But more than any form of the mass media, film possesses the strength both in audio-visual and duration, to be adopted for societal change and crusade of any cause. Adopting film in Nigeria for political change amidst the country's historic crises evident in imperialism, military rule, ethnicity and religion, the researchers set out to mirror the country's past through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of two historic Nigerian films, October 1 and 76 and a Key Informant Interview (KII) of ten persons chosen based on their relevance to the issues under discourse. The study employed Post Colonial and Technological Determinism theories. The researchers discovered that the aforementioned issues were what have held the country down for so many years and that the informants still remembered each event vividly. The findings showed that ethno-religious crises in the country were offshoots of manipulations by leaders of those groups or their followers. Also, the military rule to an extent was because of bad governance, ethnic underpinnings and craze for power. The findings also showed that the coming of whites to the country was a blessing as well as a curse for the country. As such, the researchers recommended that government should brace up and correct these activities from the past and create policies that could make the law supreme and free from influence from ethnic and religious leaders.

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Introduction:-

The independence of 1960 ushered in Nigeria as a sovereign nation. Nigeria got its name in 1914 through the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates by Fredrick Lord Lugard. Mohammed (2016) asserted though that the amalgamation which merged the two protectorates that have been British protectorates since 1901 was not to foster unity, the very essence of Nationalism, rather, it was made to ease the economic exploitation of the amalgamated communities by the colonial masters. Throwing together people of diverse culture to form a nation resulted in people whose different views, heritage and beliefs clashed; thus not surprising that years after colonialism, these states remained lowly integrated (Nwosu, 1999) resulting in Nigeria's civil war and a prolonged military rule.

The present day Nigeria still suffers from issues of imperialism, military rule, ethnicity and religion which result in ethno-religious killings and bad governance. Numerous studies have examined these issues and other studies have

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proffered solutions. Some of these solutions have been considered and implemented but evidence still shows till date that either the root cause has not been found or the best means of tackling these issues has not been adopted. On this basis then, the researchers adopted film as a means of addressing these issues by mirroring them through films. This is because, as noted by Keirstead (2002), film has the upper hand in achieving the goal of presenting the past to the present audience with its ability to serve up living images of past events. Film is the link, also, between all the aspects or forms of literature and therefore, it can be utilized to play important roles in the development of any group of people, ethnicity and race as a nation or country (Adenuga, 2008). Against this backdrop, this study set out to examine the imperialistic, military, ethnic and religious issues in Nigeria's past that have affected the nation through the movies 'October 1' and '76.

Statement of the Problem:

During Nigeria's colonial days, the differences between the two regions (Northern and Southern) were a major source of political disagreements and suspicions. These two regions contained ethnic and religious minorities that harboured grievances against the majorities. Such grievances till date have extended and are being expressed through bitter political complaints, sectarian crises and violent insurgencies. As posited by Emelobe (2009) that the power of film is in its ability to either improve or destroy perception..., film would have been one of the best tools to retell Nigeria's past by Nigerian filmmakers. However, Okome (1995) pointed out that unlike the significant role played by the print medium, the film medium did not help in Nigeria's independence and are not contributing to the political history of the country. According to him, their films are characterized by mere glamourization of aspects of Nigerian culture and uncritical portrayal of some dim Nigerian past. More than a decade after Anyakoroma (2017) still maintained that the political genre in Nigeria has not received serious attention by film producers.

Nigerian filmmakers have not adopted film to retell stories about the nation's past, neither have they produced films that could portray imperialism, military rule, ethnicity and religion in such a factual manner different from what some people believe. Majority of films about Nigeria and her history were produced by foreign filmmakers. There is, therefore, a need to revisit Nigeria's past to see how films can be utilized in solving these issues as well as draw lessons from other nations who have taken up such cause in Nigeria's search for unity and identify the possible solutions to them.

Objectives of the Study:

The specific objectives for this study were as follows:

1. To examine how the issue of imperialism in Nigeria was represented in the movies October 1 and 76.
2. To ascertain how the movies showcased the issue of ethnicity in Nigeria.
3. To identify how the movies presented the influence of military rule in Nigeria.
4. To determine how religion and politics in Nigeria were portrayed in the movies.

Review of Related Literature:-

Filming the Past:

Since the earliest days of cinema, filmmakers have looked to the past as well as the present to produce stories of the screen. A film can capture a feeling of a time. It can create a mood and a picture of the past which with further historical research and examination of other contemporary art forms (drama, literature, painting, music, etc), can make that world come to life. History is not just about the past, it is also about our present. It is a repetition that finds itself happening even now and cinema is usually the most vivid way to start a journey into a particular historical life and relate it to the present day with its present audience. Though one can say that biblical epics, westerns, biographies of great figure, war movies, newsreel, costume dramas, adaptations of classic novels and plays and swashbucklers all portray our past and present history from a number of different perspectives, for Kirkup (2003) in *Representing History*, these films RE-present history. To him, what we are seeing did not actually happen, but is a version of what happened, given to us via researchers, a script, director, actors, special effects and editors. In other words, what we view as historic films are fabrics of what actually happened at that point in time based now on the captivating minds of the script writers, directors and producers. This agrees with what was earlier posited by Rosenstone (1995) that however literal the image on the screen may seem, however literal its world, film can never provide a literal rendition of events that took place in the past. It can never be an exact replica of what happened. It creates one through its recounting exercises.

The nature of historical representation in film has been the focus of much scholarly work over the last two decades. The historical film has been analyzed for its mobilization of the past for propaganda, for its role in the emergence of national cinemas and for its contested place in 'fast wars' between the views of middle-brow critics on the one hand and the popular preferences of cinema audiences on the other (Harper, 1994). Writers such as Rosenstone (1995), Landy (1996) and Sobchack (1997) were interested in the way in which film constructs its own historical world or to put it another way, how film writes history. From his already upheld position, Rosenstone (1995) developed an interest in what he termed 'the New History Film'. The New History Film is one that finds the space to contest history, to interrogate either the meta-narratives that structure historical knowledge, or smaller historical truths, received notions and conventional images. His *Revisioning History* (1995) featured case studies of films that could be included in this category: *Hiroshima, mon amour* (directed by Alain Renais, 1959), *Memories of Underdevelopment* (directed by Tomas Gutierrez Alea, 1968), *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (directed by Han-Jurgen Syderberg, 1977) and *Walker* (directed by Alex Cox, 1987). These films that exist outside the mainstream tend to be the work of directors with self-conscious highly formalist style and use historical motifs and signifiers in a symbolic, allegorical way. Such films as these are easily labelled 'postmodernist'.

When films tend towards dramatizing some set of concerns which are depicted as broadly representative of the conditions of their historical moments or societal issues, such films are termed social problem films, social consciousness films or message movies. These films which may share similar features with other genres such as science fiction, satirical comedy, revisionist westerners, historical pictures and biopics, are distinct in that they typically have settings roughly contemporaneous with their moment of release and usually employ a serious tone and realistic mode of representation in engaging with their subject matter (Doles, 2015). Many films that could be classified as social problem films have received attention in film studies not through their generic status but in studies of representation of race, class, disability, politics or other subjects. These films which may overlap with the earlier-mentioned genres especially historical and biopics are easily identified by the particular societal ill they are championing. This in essence does not stop them from having the particular format they choose but in identifying them as a catalyst for societal change (MacCann, 1964). Therefore, a film such as *October 1 and 76* under study, can be historical (the very format/genre of the movie) or any other genre (just as with the earlier mentioned movies in this section) and still be social problem films adopted as catalysts for societal change.

Ethnicity through the Lenses of Nollywood:

Ethnic conflicts according to Omuabor (2000) pit against each other people whose values are in conflict, who want different things and who do not understand each other resulting in distrust and destructive rivalry. This distrust is usually depicted in Nollywood films especially in inter-tribal marriages. Typical of such films were *Tribal War* (2014) and *The Wedding Party* (2016). The closest Nollywood had been with tribal wars/conflicts was depiction of an intra-tribal conflict in movies like *Oduduwa: King of the Edos* (2013) showing a historical rift between Edo and Yoruba in a clash for kingship as well as *Irin Ajo* Jos portraying the Jos crisis and the results from such crisis. Films that depict inter-tribal conflicts between two different tribes in Nigeria may exist but was not found by the researchers after a rigorous search. Therefore, there is possibility that films on inter-tribal conflicts probably showing causes of such conflicts in history and possible solutions for coexistence, do not exist. Close to it though have been Nollywood's depictions of minority groups' agitations. Though not an intra or inter tribal clash, these films exhibited issues like lack of resources, negligence of a minority group in favour of other majority group(s) and usurping of available resources for the betterment of other groups.

Military Rule, Nigerian Politics and Films:

The military rule in Nigeria started with the collapse of the first republic on January, 1966, less than six years of her independence. The independence was surrounded by many controversies and some unresolved issues. Though the nationalists came together in the quest for independence, the system of rule and governance handed over to them by the departing colonialists brought back the differences in their political values and traditions. These issues that emanated after the independence, according to Sa'ad (2008), included unbalanced federation with a weak socio-political structure, minority question, ethnic politics, regionalism, etc.

We are made to understand collateral damage of war, its profanity or its conversations about American imperialism through *Generation Kill* (2008). On the other hand, movies set in Africa like: *A Sunday of Kilgali*, *Kinyarwanda*, *The New Sudan*, *The Silent Army*, *War Witch*, *Sometimes in April*, *Our President is Back*, *The President*, *Love in Military Zone*, *War Dance*, *Punishment Park*, *Ross Kemp Extreme World: DR Congo*, *The Goodlie*, *The Supreme Price* and *76*, make one understand what happens in war in an impressive detail or what becomes of a nation that has

undergone war or had the presence and activities of the military. Such effects are what most African countries that have experienced war are facing, especially for a country as Nigeria that had a longer period of military presence.

Film, Religion and Politics in Nigeria:

Nollywood uses films as a meta-narrative to explore the religious identity of Africans. As discovered by Uwah (2017), religion in Nollywood is used to maintain cohesion in communalistic society and is usually expressed via rituals. These include the following:

1. The usage of rituals by human beings to communicate with the 'living dead' and other supernatural beings including God and other minor deities in the community.
2. The belief in a kind of power communication (vital force) between the 'Spirit World' and the 'human world' whereby activities in one realm affects those in other realm.
3. The use of sacrifice by human beings as homage to the supernatural powers or even to obtain something from them or appease them in their anger against the people of their community.

In other words, Nollywood's depiction of religion usually comes from the African Traditional Religion's angle and other times, from the modern Christian form of worship. Most of these depictions are always featuring the interactions of two worlds, the physical and the spiritual (Onwubiko, 1991). Such is expressed in films like *Things Fall Apart* (1986) where there is the constant tendency to consult the oracles (spirits) before taking up communal obligations. However, for Ehusani (2004), the actual practice of religion in Nigeria is not the reason for the conflicts because Nigerians have hardly had to fight over the practice of religion; it is the politics of religion that has brought the so much trouble in the country. Nollywood films have not taken up this stance of religion/politics production.

Imperialism in Filmic Representation:

Over the years, the filmic representation of imperialism in African has been termed marginalized and subjective by scholars. Representation affects the ways in which actual individuals are perceived. Such representation as enumerated by these scholars place Africa at a one-dimensional stereotype based on their preconceived notions. Achebe (1958) stated that these notions have been "age-long attitude" [that] has fostered and continues to foster in the world. Ojo (2003) expressed the need for a painstaking research about the characterization, setting and narrative structure when such a framing is familiar and comforting to audiences who are used to seeing the dehumanization of Africa and Africans and have formed viewpoints about them based on what was shown to them. In the attempt to project a true image to rediscover lost or submerged identities and cultures, postcolonial resistance writing has been on course from inception with the writings of Tutuola, Achebe, Soyinka, Nwapa, Sutherland, Osofisan, Sembene and many others. Textual resistances according to Emelobe (2009) to colonialist misrepresentation have taken many forms: from the revolt era led by Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks* (1952) to a contemporary practice of counter-colonial discourse initiated by Bill Ashcroft and Helen Triffin in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post Colonial Literature* (1989).

Empirical Review:

Using film as a medium to study social life allows us to utilize our sociological imaginations in a way that is easily accessible and relevant. By connecting to our personal lives, film can help us make sense of the world in which we live. Ajiwe, Okwuosa and Chukwu-Okoronkwo (2015) in their critical appraisal of *Fola-Toro* in Nigerian Video Film as Effective Tool for Social Transformation are of the view that film as an essential means to societal transformation can readily volunteer itself as a platform for the investigation of human conflicts that recur in various societies. With questions like how is the modern Nigeria depicted with recent developments and expansions in Video-film industry, they discovered that video films function in a larger political programme for social change and can be adopted to reach a significant audience.

In a critical reading of the movie *The Senator*, Ayakoroma (2017) argued that reinventing the electoral process in Nigeria cannot be achieved with printed literatures alone and that feature films can be used to engender positive development in the country's political landscape. This call for the use of film for positive development was borne out of his findings using the Critical Discourse Analysis. The results showed that the type of politics portrayed in the film is built on character assassination, blackmail and elimination of opponents amongst other vices. Ayakoroma surmised after the reading of the film that the kind of politics featured in the film is not salutary to national development since there was no retributive justice for all the crimes the aspiring Senator committed.

Providing a probable reason to why such films that circumvent serious political issues in the country exist, Agina (2015) in a study of Nigerian filmmakers and their construction of a political past (1967 – 1998) as an attempt to question the motivations, narrative techniques, underlying ideologies and reception of video films that construct Nigeria's political past, found out that historicizing an ethnically-diverse postcolonial state such as Nigeria through the agency of film is fraught with potential dangers, most of which cannot be mitigated by the filmmakers. Each stage of the production/consumption process, according to her, is compounded by societal factors including filmmaker's background, finance, audience and censorship. Also evident from the findings is that popular Nigerian videos sustain and subvert the dominant narratives on popular arts to gain economic advantage. Agina (2015) also found out that some filmmakers endorse politicians' practices while others subvert authoritarian regimes through metaphoric filmic codes (negotiated images) intelligible to audiences and deployed by the producers in order to circumvent censorship.

Theoretical Framework:

Postcolonial Theory:

Postcolonial theory is a literal theory or critical approach that deals with literature produced in countries that were once, or are now, colonies of other countries. Clelland-Stokes (2002) posited that 'postcolonial' refers to a discourse of resistance and reaction to colonialism. Post-colonialism to her, is 'post' in the sense that colonialism is a 'pre-requisite' for a postcolonial discourse, but it is not 'post' in the sense that colonialism or its effects must necessarily be over before post-colonial voices can emerge. Postcolonial theory became part of the critical toolbox in the 1970s and many practitioners credit Edward Said's (1978) book 'Orientalism' as being the founding work. Postcolonial theory focuses particularly on the way in which literature by the colonizing culture distorts the experience and realities and inscribes the inferiority of the colonized people on literature by colonized people which attempts to articulate their identity and reclaim their past in the face of the past's inevitable otherness.

According to O'Regan (1979) as quoted in Jan Mohammed (1983), films and filmic representations not only tell a viewer something about the society (or individual) that created the film, but a film can also have a political effect by offering new alternatives and ways of imagining the society and the cultural identities within it. Nigeria's image has been under siege which gets worsened when such are hypnotized by the Western films. Cinematic representations are then always political in that they operate from within a particular discourse or social understanding and either reaffirm or are resistant to, what Jameson (1981) calls, the "political unconsciousness" p.263. Media representations create myths that render certain points of view as common sense and through this process 'myth transforms history into nature: dominant historical processes are made to appear 'natural' and 'inevitable' even 'God-given' (Tomaselli, 1996). So, if since the 19th century the West have adopted a particular version of filmic representation of the Third World and made it appear 'natural'. 'inevitable' and 'God-given', it becomes imperative also to adopt same film in an analysis from the Third World (Nigeria in particular) and offer a re-presentation and writing back to express the effects of colonialism and post-colonialism in the country which are evident in issues such as Ethnicity, Religion, Military Rule and Imperialism under study and which have been mis-represented through filmic representation by the West.

Technological Determinism:

Technological determinism is a reductionist theory that assumes that a society's technology determines the development of its social structure and cultural values. The term is believed to have originated from Torstein Veblen (1857 – 1929), an American sociologist and economist. It seeks to show technical development, media or technology as a whole, as the key mover in history and social change (Kunz, 2006). According to Williams (1990), it changes the way people think and how they interact with others and can be described as... a three-word logical proposition: 'Technology determines history'. This 'idea of progress' or 'doctrine of progress' is centralized around the idea that social problems can be solved by technological advancement which is the way that society moves forward. This theory was later popularized by Marshall McLuhan in 1964. He explained that all technology is communication, an extension of ourselves that allows us to reach further through time and/or space and that "every new technology necessities a new war".

Technology determinism is of the belief that technology is the main driver of social change. As early as the days of silent pictures, people would pay just a fee to view a series of short silent scenes of everyday life. And by the time producers discovered new adaptations of the new invention of the pictures as moving pictures (a fast play of the pictures) alongside sound and a playback, story-telling was created and round the world, filmmakers adopted the technology of film in telling actual life stories and passing well-intended messages. Then films began to inform,

misinform and influence depending on the very human hand it finds itself. In the sophisticated nature of today's film technology, in the very hand of the West who were the inventors and first producers as well as colonizers, the African colony (Nigeria not an exception) has been misinformed and projected to the world in a particular light. This has influenced both the citizens and the world in their perceptions about the countries) and colony.

Methodology:-

Research Design:

This research employed a qualitative research method, particularly Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Key Informant Interview (KII) to mirror Nigeria's past through the issues of imperialism, ethnicity, religion and military rule in the movies *October 1* and *76*.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):

Critical discourse analysts are said to go beyond the immediate, serious or pressing issues of the day in order to gain insight into some of the more "long-term analyses of fundamental causes and consequences of (social) issues" (van Dijk, 1993, 253). CDA wants to know what structures, strategies or other properties of text, talk, verbal interaction or communicative events play a role in the (dominant) modes of reproduction... that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality (ibid, 250). As opposed to textual analysis where research is solely focused on the text, discourse analysis allows researchers to consider the context – social, political and cultural – in which the text was produced. Because the researchers were attempting to ascertain some thematic areas in Nigeria's history, CDA comes handy as a suitable method for a deep reading of these themes in the movies. It availed the researchers the opportunity to describe (by reading the spoken and visual texts), interpret (locating the themes in the movies) and explain (relating the themes to the general society).

Key Informant Interviews (KII):

These are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community. The purpose of key informant interview is to collect information from a wide range of people – including community leaders, professionals or residents – who have firsthand knowledge about the community. Since 'a film is not only a sequence of moving images but also an organized mixture of images, words, texts, music and noises that are characterized by a constant displacement and circulation of meaning' (Jensen, 2002, 134), this study investigated meanings in films by critically analyzing filmic representations of salient issues of ethnicity, imperialism, religion and military rule. Believing with Lull (1990, 21) that 'naturally occurring conversations conserve as a means for seeing the subtle ways that ideology is woven into normative interaction by examining audience members', this study used key informant questions to corroborate the Critical Discourse Analysis. The informants' responses with their knowledge, background and experience complemented the data generated through CDA. Ordinarily, random respondents could have been used but due to the nature of the study, specific set of people were needed to offer, possibly, their firsthand experience on the issues.

Sample and Sampling Technique:

A large sample size according to Potter and Wetherell (1987) for qualitative study may just make the analytic task unmanageable rather than adding to the analytic outcomes. Therefore, purposive sampling technique was used in this study. Two historic movies, *'October 1'* and *'76'* were purposively chosen as they were the only historic movies about Nigeria produced in Nigeria by Nigerian filmmakers. The key informants were also purposively selected based on the variables under study: ethnicity, religion, imperialism and military rule. They were Nigerians living in the country who have lived a considerable age as Nigerians. Four informants were selected to represent the three major ethnic groups (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) and one from a minority group to complete them four to represent ethnicity. Three clergies; African Traditional Religion, Christian and Muslim clergies were selected to represent religion. One military personnel was selected to represent the military rule. A political scientist was chosen to offer views on imperialistic rule and the effects of war during the war and even afterwards. A film analyst was chosen to give professional answers on the film and the issues under study. This gave a sample size of ten (10) persons for KII.

These informants had seen the movies and were also shown excerpts from the movies by the researchers before the interview to refresh their memories of the films. The researchers selected the informants from the six geopolitical zones in the country. The four informants based on ethnicity were selected from any of the states classified as belonging to the tribes of the informants on ethnicity. The rest of the informants were selected in consideration of the theme the informant would speak on and the geopolitical zone that best suited the theme. No specific sex was set

out to be adopted. The researchers found Nigerians who were above 18 years (the official recognized age of maturity by Nigerian constitution) and who were grounded in Nigeria's politics and history.

None of the informants was selected from the same state. Even when the themes to be studied warranted more than one informant to come from a geopolitical zone, other states in the zone were chosen. Six informants were first chosen from the six geopolitical zones; the remaining four informants were chosen from Southeast (where there is agitation for secession), Southsouth (where there is militancy) and Northeast (where there is Bokoharam insurgency). To choose these informants, due to their nature, the snowball sampling technique was adopted. As such, each informant attracted the next informant who could be friend, associate or colleague but from another or even same geopolitical zone.

Discussion of Findings:-

This study had four objectives developed to address the research problems through qualitative research method. From the first objective, the researchers discovered that the white man's main motive of coming to the colonies was to explore the nations and control their resources. However, the white man's involvement in the political affairs of Nigeria became the bane of the nation. In 76, it was only implied that there was foreign involvement in the then national leader's affairs before he was assassinated. In October 1, the white man occupied every affair of the nation and caused majority of the problems for the nation. What this implies is that the nation has not really become free from the reins of the white men which was why the word 'imperialism' came to fore to show that there is an ongoing presence of the whites in their former colonies years after they have allowed these nations to be independent. Invariably, the whites left physically but never did economically, politically, religiously and otherwise, same way these nations become independent by mere words of it but were never independent in decision making and taking. This finding agreed with submissions of most postcolonial writers like Talbot (2000) that the reasons for Africa's backwardness lies in the centuries of foreign domination it suffered back to the time of the slave trade. This helped to fuel the development of capitalism in Europe but deprived Africa of millions of able-bodied people and fomented predatory war that disrupted its economy.

In ascertaining how the movies viewed the issue of ethnicity in Nigeria, the researchers discovered that 76 showed ethnicity in terms of inter-tribal marriage and the refusal of parents to accept such marriage while October 1 portrayed ethnicity as distrust and hatred among ethnic groups in Nigeria. Such viewing of ethnicity as shown in 76 coincided with a part of literature on ethnic issues in the country. To this school of thought, movies like Across the Niger (2004), Tribal War (2014) and The Wedding Party (2016) portrayed people in the country that can associate with each other but not to the extent of marrying among themselves. The implication of this is that parents and relatives of intended couples tend to remember what one tribe did to their tribe in the past and dissuade their children from marrying from that tribe to avoid a repetition. However, such ethnic disassociation is strong. Though personal, it really reflects on national issues. The kind that breeds ethnic crises that seem to be holding the nation down is the kind displayed by October 1. Though the fight did not really escalate in the movie, but the level of animosity harboured by the three major ethnic groups, came to fore when an Igbo girl was killed in a Yoruba land and an Hausa man happened to be the investigator as well as the suspect. Everyone seemed to forget the matter at hand and only remembered what was done to them in the past. There were threats by the aggrieved and an actual counter-killing creating a scenario where an Igbo girl was killed by a Yoruba man while an Hausa man was apprehended because he was seen at the crime scene and later killed by the Igbo father of the deceased girl.

The common ground noticed by the researchers among the informants used in the study was that ethnic crisis is something that has eaten deep into the nation creating a situation where none of the tribes see eye to eye with each other, just as the movies showed. However, the informants pointed out that these tribes co-existed peacefully before the coming of the whites but seem not to co-exist any longer when they were first amalgamated into one nation and further divided through state creation, thus necessitating marginalization. Their submissions agreed with Aghamelu & Aghamelu (2016) that over the years, the blessing of diverse ethnic groups has turned to a wound eating deep into the flesh of the national unity of the country which might be said that the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates by the colonial administration is the root cause of the ethnic conflicts experienced all over the country till this day.

In identifying how the movies presented the influence of military rule in Nigeria, the researchers found out that military rule was only portrayed in 76. In 76, military rule was shown from the era of the 1976 coup in the country. It highlighted the woes of coups and what soldiers' wives and acquaintances go through. While the informants

believed that the over thirty years of military rule in Nigeria made the average Nigerian to be so used to the military style of leadership to the extent that the set of civilian leaders afterwards found it difficult to adapt to democratic civil style of running the affairs of the state; they however, preferred the military era to the current dispensation of democracy. According to them, the fear of coups and counter coups made leaders in the military era to perform better while those in the democratic setting do not have such fear and thus, performed worse. Their submissions somehow agree with that of Huntington (1968) who thought that military is a puritanical organization and that the training which men receive in this institution and subsequent military experience imbues them with austere attitudes and a high sense of discipline and responsibility.

In determining how religion and politics in Nigeria were portrayed in the movies, the researchers found out that religion was only highlighted in *October 1*. The movie tried to portray religion in two settings; an angle of Christianity brought by the coming of the whites and an angle of African Traditional Religion as an already existing religion of the people before the coming of the whites. In the movie, each performed on its own with its followers without any conflict. Such portrayal aligned with the submissions of scholars like Along (2011) who believed that the problem with religion in the country had started with the advent of Islam in the later part of the 14th century and the settlement of Christianity in the middle of the 18th century. Both have met African Traditional Religion in existence and up until today have not had squabbles with the former religion except with themselves. The movie did not set religion as a conflict between Islam and Christianity nor African Traditional Religion, rather it showed it as conflict emanating within the Christian fold which existed in the country due to the coming of the whites. Although the movie pictured the paedophile activities of the white priest in charge of the local church, even though it led to some psychological destruction for those affected, it was not such portrayal that causes religious crisis in the country. Each religious crisis that had taken place in the country has been between Muslims and Christians.

The theories used for this study were postcolonial and technological determinism theories. Postcolonial theory posited that individuals in current or former colonies have taken up the cause of writing or production to rewrite or reproduce representations of their past and present in the hands of their former colonists. In relation to that, *October 1* and *76* could be said to be works of postcolonial filmmakers as both films like Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1989) said addressed all aspects of the colonial process from the beginning of colonial contact; involving colonization, decolonization and neocolonization. As was with one of the weaknesses of the theory, the dominant language of both films was English language, though within intervals, native languages were spoken and subtitled. It could be argued that due to the fact that the filmmakers may be targeting an international audience and recognition, the English language was dominant. Although this goes against Sembene's (2004) interview as quoted by Messier (2011) where he cautioned that postcolonial films from Africa should create a situation where Africa becomes the audience while the West and the 'rest' are targeted as 'marketers'. Nevertheless, the language issue as obtained in the movies could also be coupled with the fact that Nigeria does not have a universal native language.

On the other hand, adopting film as the best technology to showcase Nigeria's past, as seen with the movies understudy, served its purpose. However, acknowledging the fact that both movies were in line with the theories earlier posited for this study would not make much sense when the researchers discovered that both movies were only viewed in cinemas (with the exception of *October 1* being sold in the market for sometime) and bought off to be viewed only on an international movie distribution platform, Netflix. What this implies is that the purpose of postcolonial theory may have not been totally achieved as viewership by the movies' country of origin would be minimal as a good number of the population may not have seen the movies. It may be said that at the end, the West became the market, but then like Sembene (2004) said, Nigeria (Africa) should have first been the audience before pushing to the market.

Conclusion:-

This study set out to mirror Nigeria's past through films while focusing on imperialism, military rule, ethnicity and religion in the movies *October 1* and *76*. Literature reviewed revealed a pattern that all events of the past especially those that constituted the variables for this study were off-shoots of the coming of the white. Carrying out the study, the researchers discovered that the whites could be blamed from the onset for the creation of the country and formation of type of leadership, but the deteriorating nature of the country after they left became the responsibility of Nigerians and the leaders they elected. These leaders also offered freehand to the whites to influence decisions in the country. It could be said that film still stands as the veritable tool to use in handling them only when they are made readily available to the public unlike what the researchers discovered during the study. Although the movies

were top notch and spoke to Nigerians about their past, they were not available in the market to be purchased by average Nigerians who would be properly educated about their past and how to handle their present and their future.

Recommendations:-

Therefore, the researchers recommended that:

1. Proper channels of distribution should be adopted for good historic movies since their basic function is to serve as history lessons to younger generations.
2. Filmmakers should make films that will show the crises in the nation and proffer ways they can be resolved.
3. Though filmmaking can be termed private business, social conscious movies or historical movies could be said to be more beneficial to the nation than to the filmmakers as they tend to appeal to the citizens. Therefore, government should set out agencies that could assist filmmakers who want to create nation building movies as well as provide funds to assist the funding of such films.
4. There is a good part of the nation's history yet to be told through films. Government can partner with film organizations in the country and as well grant access to the nation's archive and historical places to filmmakers.
5. Government can make policies that disintegrate religion and ethnicity from politics and political decisions like Federal character, quota system and state of origin in national identification.
6. Government should create policies that could make the law supreme and free from influence from ethno-religious leaders.
7. Government should brace up and correct these activities from the past by making viable policies and executions that will uplift the nation.

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