Behind the glitter and the rape

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Behind the glitter and the rape  
  
By Olatunji Ololade  
  
Modern entertainment is a rebuke to moral nature, an escape from the province of responsibility with its restraining womb walls and bowels.  
  
Like most entertainment channels, the digital satellite television feeds anti-moral miasma, creating a world of fluid caprices, amid its carnage of incarnations.  
  
The big pervert reality show, for instance, refutes the reality of northeast terrorism, armed banditry in the northwest, the farmer-herder crisis in the southwest, and secessionist terrors in the southeast.  
  
In The Emperor’s Tomb, Joseph Roth chronicles such netherworld in his depiction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, writing that at the very end of the empire, even the street-lights longed for dawn so that they could be extinguished.  
  
The undercurrent of modern Nigeria, where people are reduced to objects, where values erode and nationhood dreams collapse, incites a similar yearning for annihilation and what Hedges calls a moral decline into hedonism and giddy, communal madness.  
  
Understandably Nigerians seek escape from their daily miseries. They crave distraction from the narratives of pain and desolation triggered by terrorism, armed banditry, farmer-herder crisis, and secessionist mayhem. In response, many seek comfort in spectacle and pseudo-events, like the big pervert reality show. I will not state the actual name of the muck-fest lest it resounds as yet another free advertorial for its sickness.  
  
The show constructs symbolic psychology that’s very much pedestrian yet perplexing to its host society. One of its basic patterns is to incite warring contraries among the citizenry thus stratifying them into an extreme left, a complacent middle, and immoderate right.  
  
An overarching theme of the show, however, is its incitement of bitter confrontations and perverse bonding between male and female participants, ethicists, and corruptible divides among citizenry segments.  
  
In the show, immoderate lust and sex are weaponised as themes of competitive power relations, towards which Nigeria takes a moralist stance while spotting an erection for its torrid dross.  
  
The country’s broadcast regulator, forever sterile in thought, and dubious in candour, issues cowardly ripostes to critics of the show’s insolent attacks on Nigeria’s cultural structures. To those who scoff, “What cultural structures?”, I say, “Don’t be silly.”  
  
It was hitherto unthinkable that the National Assembly and a government presided over by supposed moral exemplars would leave Nigeria beholden to merchants of filth. But then they are only Nigeria’s elected leaders, and they are powerless in the face of rights arguments and the show’s decadent hordes.  
  
To those claiming that it’s all in the interest of fostering a conducive business environment, China has outlawed the show alongside every TV programming that ridicules Chinese traditions and “defiles the classics” including those that promote “overnight fame, wealth parade or hedonism, selfishness, and intrigue.”  
  
Despite its media censorship, China appreciates in repute as a global super power and economic giant. Yet morality and rights hypocrites would flay China for its media censorship and conveniently ignore Nigeria’s newfound love for Chinese loans, media, and economic imperialism.  
  
The incumbent government is curiously beholden to the show’s producers thus its cowardly preachment that the muck-fest is restricted to a satellite TV channel, and that there is no compulsion to view it. This is evidently airheaded.  
  
The show desensitizes its teeming viewers to wanton amorality, sexual harassment as perpetrated by the show’s inmates, physical and psychological rape.  
  
Yet government and regulatory authorities turn a blind eye to its vampiric plotting even as teenagers, young adults, and the elderly are psychologically exploited and manipulated on one front by the show’s producers for profit; on another front, the show serves as a powerful distraction, diverting the citizenry’s attention from more crucial public concerns of comatose industry, treasury looting, non-existent infrastructure, terrorism, substandard schools, and health facilities.  
  
Large fractions of the country’s productive labour force and the youthful electorate momentarily lost interest in the country’s affairs to bicker and canvass support for their favourite participant in the depravity.  
  
Many said they would rather obsess about the show than engage in more constructive quests at self-actualisation and nation-building.  
  
Not a few youths “tapped from the grace” of the eventual winner of the show, enthusing that if he could get selected after multiple failed attempts, and emerge, overall winner, there is yet hope for every youth seeking participation in the show.  
  
They are evidently smitten with a show that glorifies as its core message, an innate claim that we’d all like to be porn stars at one point in our life or another.  
  
In Nigeria, porn has won the culture war by fusing with the commercial mainstream. Nudity, promiscuity, and random sex are mainstream chic, no thanks to the big pervert reality show.  
  
Modern Nigerian fashion takes its cues from porn. Music videos mime porn scenes, presenting women as porn-rats, or video vixens if you like. Everybody exploits porn for shock value including the producers of the big pervert reality show.  
  
The show targets the youths and severs their mental connection with moral roots. The so-called leaders of tomorrow are thus lured backward, away from menarche into the womb of regression.  
  
Operatively, the inmates are enclosed in a zone of morbid ecstasy. They are untouchable carriers of charisma kept under quarantine, till they emerge as bearers of dirt.  
  
All of the show’s participants, irrespective of gender, are non-persons, subject to mass cheering and shunning. The eventual winner, like other participants in the show, emerges blinded by celebrity and severely crippled to function as a normal constituent of a humane society.  
  
As participants in the show, their imagination is loosened, but their bodies are bound by ritual restriction. They are daemonic tools, sacrificial totems maddened by intoxicants: alcohol and human milk, fluid of slovenly genitals. And some are richer for it.  
  
The heated debate over their sexual indulgences is familiarly rife with sentiments as societal segments engage in a clash of obscenities in defense or condemnation of goings-on, on the show.  
  
Viewers’ morality is seduced and conquered as the producers render sensuality aglow in gothic gloom. The big pervert reality show thus legitimises carnal depravity and brokers pornography via its bedchamber of rank and malodorous sex.  
  
Any critic of the show is, however, deemed ‘hypocrite,’ a disgruntled visionary who feels too deeply and sees too much, and is tortured by his own vision.  
  
According to the organisers of the show, the 2021 edition recorded a total of over one billion votes across all platforms, the highest since the inception of the show. They also announced that more than 300 million votes were cast in the grand finale week.  
  
Shall we seek import, still, in a social media post by a certain Shakeerah S. It goes thus: In 2018, the total number of votes on the show was 170 million. In sharp contrast, the total number of votes cast at the 2019 general election was 27 million.  
  
Then she writes: “A practical reality of who we are as a people and where our priority lies as citizens. The funny side in all of these; we still go to bed, have a good sleep, and wake up with the hope to meet a Nigeria we didn’t create.”  
  
This brings us to the Nigeria of our dreams vs the Nigeria of our reality. Do we deserve Nigeria as it is? Yes, we do.  
  
Nonetheless, the country’s youth clamour for change. They want a revolution and a radical improvement on the status quo. But how can they exact change while they are perceptually enslaved?