

Conceptualising and Mapping of the New Testament Climate of Christianity

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Introduction

The New Testament is the most interesting history about a movement which began with Jesus and his disciples. This movement, launched about two thousand years ago by Jesus during the days of his earthly ministry in Palestine, is being propagated by his disciples since after his physical demise on earth. The only authentic and lasting record of this historic movement is the New Testament, the most acclaimed meaningful book in all human literature (Hester 1981).

The twenty-seven writings or books of the New Testament were produced two thousand years ago in an environment entirely different from ours. The question that is often asked about the New Testament has remained: Why should these writings be the object of serious study and remain relevant even in the twenty-first country? It should be noted here that such questions are neither purely academic nor irrelevant to any generation. In an attempt to answer this question about why we study the New Testament, it is evident that the narrative contained in the New Testament is well known to more people than any other narrative ever written. While we accept that more than half of the world population know something of this story, it is also a fact that our entire knowledge of it is often fragmented and probably incomplete. Therefore, to obtain accurate knowledge of all the facts in the record of this New Testament may require some elaborate and diligent study. Moreover, to comprehend the inexhaustible meaning of the truths inherent in this story is an accomplishment which no individual in all human history could claim. Rather, every new generation continues to discover new truth undiscovered and no human mind will ever outreach the realities incorporated in it (Hester, 1981). This attests to the mystery of its divine

origin and should therefore inspire readers or students to study these writings with enthusiasm.

Burney (1990) recalled that the earliest recipient community was convinced that God had revealed himself in an ultimate sense in Jesus of Nazareth, consequent upon which he brings the fullness of his purpose for the redemption of mankind. To this community, Jesus became God's living word to His people. Since the New Testament scriptures were a response to that living word, they were viewed also by the church as the written word of God just in the same sense that the Old Testament scriptures were considered the word of God. The church came to the conviction that the Holy Spirit spoke through the New Testament scriptures in a real and adequate sense. Hence, this became the major reason for the church's acceptance of these writings as authentic and authoritative scriptures. It is also the reason for the church's continuing study of the New Testament through the centuries as the word of God to his people and the attempt to understand this word.

The New Testament forms the second part of the Bible, but has only one-third of first part, the Old Testament. It should be noted that the title "Old Testament" and "New Testament" are Christian designations, not Jewish, since the Jews accepted only the Old Testament as scripture. However, the New Testament which covered only one century (first century A.D), formed the crucial period during which according to Christian belief, the fulfillment of messianic prophecy began. It was in this time, according to Gundry (1994), that the divine outworking of human salvation history reached a climax in the coming of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and the new people of God (the church) came into existence all on the basis of the new covenant, under which God forgives the sins of believers in Jesus by virtue of his death and resurrection.

The New Testament means "New Covenant" in contrast to the Old Testament (Old Covenant) under which God provisionally forgave sins by virtue of animal sacrifices which only anticipated the adequate self-sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 9:11-14; 10:1-18). The self-sacrificial death of Christ inaugurated the new covenant and guaranteed a full and total remission of sins (1Cor. 11:25; Heb. 9:15-17).

Principles of Interpretation

It has been said earlier in this work that the New Testament contains the record of the word of God for the church. As such, for one to arrive at a proper understanding of this word, certain principles should be followed in its interpretation. Two basic principles should be followed in this regard namely; the historical principle and the principle of application. It is believed that every other procedure in the interpretation process of the scriptures, especially the New Testament, are expressions of one or the other which will be briefly discussed here.

The Historical Principle

The writings that are now called the New Testament have existed for a long period of time. The time gap between the modern reader and the period in which these writings originated shows that cultural milieu of the first recipients of these writings were radically, different from our own culture. This difference in world-view must of a necessity, be put into consideration in any attempt to understand the New Testament writings. These writings were occasional writings composed by specific persons in specific situations, to meet particular needs or to answer specific questions of a given situation and age which is quite different from the needs and situation of the contemporary period. The historical principle here is based on the genuine conviction that, for one to understand the meaning of scripture for today, he must first understand its meaning for the original readers.

To Burney (1990), the historical principle begins with the question; “What was the writer attempting to communicate to those to whom he was writing? This attempt can as well give one the insight into the original situation and needs as the context of a given writing. This can also imply that the interpreter of the New Testament must be an historian if he aspires to be an effective interpreter of the scriptures. As part of the historical situation, there are two situations which must be constantly kept in view in the process of interpretation. The first is called the “context situation”. One of the dangers in the process of interpretation is that of taking a given passage or writing out of the context of the author’s message. There are also three elements in the contextual situation of scriptures under review, namely; there must be the purpose of the writer;

secondly, there should be the discovery of the place of the particular passage in the writing as a whole; and finally, there is the position in the immediate context.

The second situation to be considered is the “Linguistic situation”. This calls the interpreter into a constant cognizance of the fact that the New Testament was written in a language entirely different from his own. The language in which the New Testament was written was the *Hellenistic or Koine* Greek. In view of this, it should be remembered that no language translates adequately into another. For instance, each language has her peculiarities-particular idioms which often defy translations. Moreover, linguistic differences often involve differences in thought patterns. For these reasons, it becomes pertinent that the interpretation of the New Testament involves some understanding of the language in which it was written. It then means that any effective interpreter must of necessity, be a student of biblical history, a student of Biblical language and a student of the New Testament scriptures.

The Principle of Application

The second major step in the process of the interpretation of the New Testament is the application of the original meaning to the situation faced by the modern reader. This further involves two additional steps:

- a. The discovery of the universal principle standing behind the original concrete meaning of the passage.
- b. The application of this universal principle of the situation faced by the believer at the present time.

As it is, this volume follows a historical approach beginning with the historical, political and the religious background as the setting of the entire New Testament writing in general and the Gospels in particular.

The Historical Background of the New Testament

The history of the New Testament which is as well the history of Christianity was born in a world that was already old and saturated with the rise and fall of great empires. It is also appropriate to say that the history of the New Testament is consequent upon the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, an itinerant Jewish Rabbi. According to R.S Burney

(1990) on whose evidence this topic is predominantly based, several background and factors prepared the way for the New Testament.

Christianity as a matter of fact, developed out of Judaism - the official religion of the Jewish people. Its historical backgrounds are therefore to be found in the political and religious history of the Jewish people. Thus the Old Testament scriptures form part of the historical background to the New Testament. Also the New Testament cannot be read as if it were merely a continuation of the Old Testament. Such an approach tends to ignore many political, socio-cultural, and religious undertones even among the Jews during the almost four hundred years between the close of the Old Testament period and the beginning of the New Testament period. This is why an adequate interpretation of the New Testament scriptures should be done with an appropriate framework--some knowledge of these changes and the situations out of which they originated.

This background goes to the history of the Jews during the inter-biblical period (*Inter-testamental* period or the *silent* period) which goes back as far as the kingdom of David and Solomon his son. Hence, this background includes the survey of the materials available for a study of historical background of the New Testament.

Sources for the study of this period are somewhat limited. For the Jews themselves, the primary sources for their history are the writings of the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, who was born in ^{ca}AD 37 and died after AD 100. Among his major works are **The wars of the Jews** (AD 73) and **the Antiquities of the Jews** (^{ca}AD 93). Before Josephus, was a historical survey from the reigns of Antiochus IV (175-163BC) to the years immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Although the works of Josephus may be used with some critical caution, but at the same time they are extremely important, since the inter-biblical period.

The account in first Maccabees was another historical document of the inter-testamental period. It was written in honour of the leaders of the Maccabean revolt, and furnished a trustworthy account of the history of the Jews from the years immediately preceding the Maccabean revolt to the death of Simon Maccabees in 134 B.C. There also exist some available sources for the study of the history of the nations with whom the

Jews came in contact during the said intertestament period. Prominent among these sources were the works of the Greek historian, Polybuis, Heroditus, and the Egyptian historian, Meanetho, as well as the annals of the neo-Babylonian and Persian kings. A brief attention should be reserved here to explain the constant reference thus far on the word-“inter-testamental period”. Other designations for this word are: the *inter-biblical period*, *silent period*, *between the testaments*. This is the eventful period of four hundred years between the old and the New Testaments. It was a transition period between the Old Testament and the New Testament in which no prophet prophesied as a transition in preparation for the coming of Christ on earth. According to Hester (1981), we have no records of the events of this period in our Bible. This period also recorded a far-reaching changes in the political, economic, social and religious life of the Jewish people which took place in such a way that one who is not well acquainted with these events is wholly unprepared to understand the New testament. For instance, the student who finishes the reading of Malachi and turns immediately to Matthew will eventually find himself in a “new world”. The Jews, while living in Palestine, were under a new regime. New officials and new institutions, political and religious scene had arisen, making life in every aspect very different.

However, there are sources available for the study of the religious developments among the Jews during these four hundred years otherwise called the inter-tesatmental period. The first of these is the Rabbinic literature, consisting of the oral interpretation of the Torah (Torah was the term applied by the Jews to the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures – Genesis to Deuteronomy). Although the word is commonly translated “Law”, its basic meaning was “instruction”, and as such it was applied to the entire contents of these books. These five books consist from the time of Ezra until the sixth century of the Christian era, as codified and written down in the *Talmud*. The second source consists of the books of *Apocrypha* and *Pseudepigrapha*- the religious and semi-religious writings produced between 200BC and AD100. There are also the sectarian writings produced by the monastic community living at Qumran, on the shores of the Dead Sea, during the last century BC and the first century AD., commonly called *the Dead Sea Scrolls*.

Hester (1981:20-21) opined that the history of Persia, Greece and Rome supplied a great deal of insight to this period. The eminent Jewish historian, Josephus as we said earlier, (while not always reliable) gives full consideration to the history of the Jewish people during this period. He finally listed the fourteen books of Jewish writings of this period popularly called the Apocryphal (Secret or hidden books) as I Esdras, II Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Esther (Greek Esther), the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the songs of the three Holy children, Susana, History of the Destruction of Bel and Dragon, the prayer of Manasseh, I Maccabees and II Maccabees. However, this history between the Testaments is made up of four distinct divisions to which we shall consider in their proper order, namely; the Persian period (538-332 BC.), Greek Period (332-167 BC), the Hebrew independence (167-63BC), and the Roman period (63BC-70 AD).

The Persian Period (538-332BC)

We do not intend here to give the details of the story of Persian's control over the Jews by their conquest of Babylon in 538BC, but to state how the Jews as Babylonian captives, naturally became the subjects of Cyrus the Great of Persia. The Persian period as it relates to the Jews, began with the conquest of the neo-Babylonian empire by King Cyrus the great in 538 BC. Although the origin of Cyrus is obscure in history but it was said that he inherited the small kingdom of *Anshan* (called Persia) in 559, which was tributary to the Median Kingdom of Astyages (Burney, 1990:19). Between 550/540 BC, Cyrus successfully rebelled against his Median superiors which led to the beginning of the Medo-Persian Empire here referred to as the Persian empire.

The conquest of Media by Cyrus left him with three great powers in the Near East namely; Lydia, Neo-Babylonia and Egypt. As it were, while Cyrus conquered Lydia and Neo-Babylonia, his son Cambyses conquered Egypt. It was after several years of active battle that added more territories to his credit in the east, that he then turned his focus to Babylon. As the Persian forces advanced to take control of Babylonia, two major battles were fought along the Tigris River and this led to the collapse of the Babylonian resistance and the flight of king Nabonidus. In

October 13, 538 BC, Cyrus army headed by Gobryas, took over Babylonia and asserted Cyrus as the ruler over Babylon.

The reign of Cyrus and his successors was very significant to the history of the Jewish people. As the deportation policies of the Assyrians and Babylonians proliferated the empire with discontented people, Cyrus reversed the policies on the basis of a sound conviction that a contented people would be more willing to remain loyal subjects. Moreover, since the national feelings of the ancient world were centered on “land” and “religion”, Cyrus further initiated a policy of allowing captive nations and tribes to return to their native lands in order to re-establish their respective native religions. This was the policy that led to the promulgation of the decree of 537 BC that allowed the Jews to return to Judea. The first official return was in 535 BC and the number of Jews that returned at this stage was relatively small. Most Jews refused to return because they had already established in economic, social and even political activities in Babylon.

However, they were rather, willing to contribute financially to the project at home (in Palestine). This is to say that under Cyrus and his succeeding rulers, the Jews were given many privileges and were accorded many favours. Cyrus did not only permit them to return but gave them great assistance in these undertakings such as protection in travel and special monetary grant. It was on record that the Jews were fairly treated by the Persian rulers, both in Persian territory and in Palestine. Although they were not politically free, but so long as they recognized the supremacy of Persia and observed the laws governing them, they were not molested or abused by their overlords (Hester, 1981 ed:21).

Burney (1990) observed that after the failure of the first attempt to rebuild the temple, the encouragement of prophets Haggi and Zechariah renewed the project in 520BC. The building was completed and dedicated in 516 BC, the seventh year of Darius (hystapis), who succeeded his father Cyrus. From the Jewish historical view point, the most outstanding significance of Darius was his assistance in the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. But from world history, his achievement was his complete re-organization of the Persian Empire undertaken as a result of his own weakness in establishing his authority. Not until 578BC when he

was firmly in control that he organized the empire in provinces, called Satrapies, with a civil governor (Satrap) over each, who was directly responsible to the king. The military leader in each Satrap was also directly responsible to the king. This arrangement made organized revolt more difficult, made succession of power easy and brought some stability in the Persian government. However, this empire lasted over two hundred years, in spite of the corrupting influence of oriental luxury.

Xerxes I (486-465BC) succeeded Darius I, and during his reign, the house of Darius remained strong and wealthy. Like his father, Xerxes attempted to bring the Greek under Persian control but encountered failures. After Xerxes came Artaxerxes I (465-424BC) on Persian throne. It was during Artaxerxes reign that the ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah occurred. Ezra greatly influenced the development of Jewish exclusiveness that had already begun before this time. The Jewish Diaspora from exile considered themselves to be the “pure” people of God in contrast to what they called the “unclean” remnant left in the land during the exile. This exclusivist spirit was encouraged by Ezra’s ban on marriage between the diaspora Jews and the Jew of the land. Ezra also gave further impetus to the development of legalistic Judaism. This legalism means the codification and interpretation of the Torah as the centre of Jewish life. However, the reign of Artaxerxes I marked the beginning of the decline in Persian power and empire which finally collapsed in 331BC.

It is of great interest in this study to identify the religious developments among the Jews during the Persian period. Foremost among this was that monotheism became prominent among the Jews during this period. During the exile, the Jews came to view their captivity as a punishment for their unfaithfulness to Yahweh, their covenant God. Secondly, the new emphasis on the study of the Torah led to a change in the function of the scribes. Instead of their original function as the copiers of the scriptures, the scribes became the interpreters of the scriptures (the Torah) as well, and even the real religious leaders of the Jews. Subsequently, in their attempt to interpret the Torah correctly, they produced an oral tradition (guide) which was later to be incorporated into the Talmud. The Synagogue also came to have increasing significance for the life of the people-as might be expected, synagogue worship developed

around the study of the Torah. Furthermore, the office of high priest was not left out as it also underwent changes during this Persian period. The high priest office was originally limited to the jurisdiction of religious matters; but now it came to have a political and social influence as well because of his mediatory role between the Jews and the colonial ruling power. This secular power assumed by the priest gave way to selfish exploitation of the priestly office. It was the religious developments of this Persian period that paved the way for Judaism.

When the Old Testament closed in about 400 B.C, the Jewish people (nation) in Judah were still the subjects of Persia. This continued without any official resentment until the Persian power/empire began to wane and finally crumbled with the conquests of Alexander the Great of Greece.

Alexander the Great

As Persian power went through a gradual decline, Greek power kept increasing and the Persians found it increasingly difficult to maintain the geographical territories of the empire. At last Persian empires did not end in the hands of the Greeks themselves per-se; but at the hands of Alexander, son of Philip II of Macedon (359-336 BC). Philip was able to unite all the Greek city-states under himself; and at the congress of Corinth in 337 BC, he had assumed the title of commander in-chief of all Greek forces with the self-assigned task of invading Asia Minor in order to free the Greek cities there. Unfortunately, Philip was assassinated in 336 BC before he would launch the attack and as a result, his kingdom fell to his twenty-year-old son, Alexander.

Alexander, a man destined to affect the lives of millions of people and scores of nations began his career in a very gallant fashion after his ascension to power in 335-340 BC. After putting down the revolt that followed his father's death, Alexander planned to launch an attack against the Persian Empire, which had dominated Near Eastern politics for two hundred years. Crossing the Hellespont, he defeated the Persians at the Granicus River, near the traditional site of ancient Troy, in 334 BC. Within a year, Asia Minor was in his hands. Passing through the Cilician Gates in 333 BC, Alexander defeated the Persians at Issus, on the Gulf of Alexandretta, opening the way through Syria to Egypt. Although Sidon yielded willingly, Tyre held out for seven months and Gaza for two

(Burney,1990:23). As Egypt surrendered without struggle in 332 BC, Alexander moved eastward and it was at this time that the Jews recognized the sovereignty of Alexander. The great contribution of Alexander was the spread of Greek culture (Hellenism). Having possessed his father's aggressiveness and military genius and having acquired a great love for all things Greek from his tutor- Aristotle, Alexander became an ardent apostle of the Greek way of life. In all the territories he conquered, he established colonies that were fashioned after the Greek city-state. These in turn became the vanguards of the Greek culture as well. When his kingdom was divided between his generals after his death in 332BC, the subsequent kingdoms; the Ptolemaic and the Seleucid kingdoms became Greek kingdoms. The dominant cultural force in the Mediterranean world remained Hellenism for the next several centuries, and greatly influenced the development of Judaism.

The Jews under the Ptolemies (320-198BC)

Alexander had failed to make adequate provision for his succession, and it was agreed that the unborn child of Alexander's Bactrian wife, Roxanne-should the child prove to be a son-would share the throne with Alexander's half-brother, Philip, and Perdicas as regent. However, Alexander's generals, who were in charge of the various satrapies, soon began to organize against Perdicas, who was finally killed in a battle with Ptolemy Lagi in 321 BC. For the next twenty years, there was a continuing conflict between the successors of Alexander. By 301 B.C., however, Ptolemy Lagi was in control of Egypt, Seleuccus was in control of Babylon, Syria, and the greater part of Asia Minor while the descendents of Antigonus were in control of Macedonia. From 310 BC onward, Ptolemy controlled Palestine and Phoenicia, as well as Egypt.

Palestine remained under Egyptian control until 198 BC. It appears that the Jews lived in peace during the greater part of the Ptolemaic rule. The Ptolemies governed through the high priest, and as long as the taxes were paid, the Jews were, for the most part, left alone. From the Jewish viewpoint, the most important Ptolemaic ruler was Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 BC), during whose reign the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek was begun.

The Jews under the Seleucids (198-167 BC)

The peace enjoyed by the Jews under the ptolemies came to an abrupt end under the Seleucids. The Seleucids were militant apostles of Hellenism, and strongly encouraged the adoption of the Greek language and customs throughout their realm. The attempt to impose Hellenism in Judea led to grave repercussions. The Seleucid ruler, Antiochus III was able to gain control of Palestine in 198 B.C. From then until the outbreak of the Maccabean revolt, the Jews were under the control of the Seleucid (Syrian) dynasty, and technically they were under Syrian control during the reign of the Hasmoneans.

During the early years of Syrian control, the attempt to introduce Hellenism into Judea resulted in two quite different reactions. Many of the wealthier Jews, together with many from the priestly party, supported the Hellenistic movement. Those Jews representing the more conservative elements, on the other hand, resisted all Hellenizing tendencies. From 198 to 167 BC, there was a continuing struggle between the two groups. Matters reached a climax during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, (175-163 BC). Antiochus was determined to Hellenize his kingdom as a means of unifying his realm. When Joshua (Jason), the brother of Onias III, the reigning high priest, offered a bribe of four hundred talents for the privilege of being high priest, Antiochus saw in him a means of implementing his plans in Judea when Jason became Antiochus high priest in 175/174 BC, he immediately set about the task of implementing the Hellenizing policies of Antiochus. In 171 BC, Menelaus offered a higher bribe than Jason and was installed as high priest, although he was not a member of the priestly family and as a result, Jason was forced to flee for his life.

In 170 BC, while Antiochus was engaged in a campaign against Egypt, he learned that Jason, believing him to be dead, had invaded Judea and was on the point of deposing Menelaus. Antiochus returned to Judea, suppressed the revolt, and with the concurrence of Menelaus, confiscated the temple treasury. In 168 B.C., while on a second campaign against Egypt, Antiochus was turned back by the Romans, and in anger, he determined to stamp out Judaism. Attacking Jerusalem on the Sabbath, Appolonius, Antiochus's general, met little of opposition. Many were

killed, and a large number of the inhabitants of the city were sold into slavery. The walls of the city were destroyed, and a fortress was built and occupied by a Syrian garrison.

The temple was plundered of its treasures and dedicated to the worship of Zeus. A sow (a female pig) was offered on the altar. Further sacrifice to Yahweh was prohibited, and the people were compelled to sacrifice to the Greek deities. Sabbath laws were abrogated, and the passions of the Torah and the practice of circumcision were made capital offences. Had the requirements of Antiochus been carried out, Judaism would have ceased to exist.

The Maccabean Period (167-63 BC)

There were those who preferred to die rather than submit to Hellenism. Among these was an aged priest named Mattathias, from Modein, a village northwest of Jerusalem. A pagan altar had been set up in Modein in accordance with the decree of Antiochus, and Mattathias was encouraged to lead in the required worship. When he refused, an apostate Jew, fearing for the safety of the people, agreed to lead the worship. Mattathias killed him with the official, sent to enforce the decree and fled to the hills with his sons and others who were opposed to Hellenism. Thus began the Maccabean revolt in the year 167 BC.

Mattathias died in 166BC, leaving his son Judas in charge of the rebel forces, with another son, Simon, as chief counselor. Judas was a great military leader, and his military skills enabled him to win battles in which the odds were decidedly against him. He was aided in the beginning by the fact that the Syrians refused to take him seriously, completely underestimating both his strength and his ability. Judas made effective use of guerrilla methods of warfare in his conflict with the Syrians. Coming out of the mountains, he attacked suddenly and unexpectedly, making a hasty retreat before the enemy was able to re-organize. Judas was quite successful in the earlier days of the conflict. In 164 B.C., following a victory over a superior Syrian force, he was able to capture Jerusalem (with the exception of the fortress, Akra). He cleansed and re-dedicated the temple, in the twenty-fifth of the month of Chislev (December). This day is still commemorated in the Jewish festival of *Hannukuh* (Dedication).

Antiochus died in 163 BC, leaving his kingdom to his nine-year old son, Eupator. When a dispute arose between Lysias and Philip - two of Antiochus generals - over the custody of the young king, Judas took advantage of the dispute to wage campaign in the surrounding territories, particularly in Idumea and Philistia. He even decided he was strong enough to capture the Akra in Jerusalem. Faced with the greater problem of Philip, Lysias decided he had just enough time to deal with Judas once for all. Driving Judas back into Jerusalem, he laid siege to the city (162BC). During the siege, when things were going badly for Judas, Lysias learned that Philip was marching to Antioch with an army. Faced with the necessity of dealing with Philip immediately, Lysias made an offer of peace to Judas, on terms far better than the latter had any right to expect. Lysias agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Jews and granted them religious liberty. Alcimus, a member of the Aaronic line, replaced Menelaus as high priest. When Alcimus had some of the Hasidims killed, however, civil war broke out again, and this time Judas was killed in a battle with a superior Syrian force.

Jonathan, who now became leader of the Jews, was tired of the war with Syria and sought other means for gaining his desired ends. The Syrian realm was now in the process of rapid disintegration, and Jonathan played one faction against another in order to gain concessions for the Jews. So he helped Tryphon defeat Demetrius II in 144 BC, but Tryphon turned against him and killed him, having exacted a ransom from Simon, the last surviving son of Mattathias.

Simon now gave his full support to Demetrius who was thus able to defeat Tryphon. In appreciation, Demetrius recognized Simon as high priest and ruler of the Jews, remitting all claims to tribute, customs, and taxes. These grants amounted to virtual independence for the Jews in 143 BC. It was during the reign of Simon that the legitimacy of the Macabean priesthood was recognized. The representatives of the Aaromic line has fled to Egypt, thus forfeiting their claim to the high priesthood. In recognition of his wise rule, the leaders of the people named Simon 'leader and high priest forever, until there should arise a faithful prophet' (I Maccabees 14:25-29).

The Hasmonean Dynasty (134-104 BC)

In 134 BC, Simon and two of his sons were murdered by his in-law. A third son, John Hyrcanus, escaped and followed his father as ruler of the Jews. Hyrcanus and his successors were known as Hasmoneans. The term 'Hasmonean' is derived from the family name of Mattathias - *Hasmon*. Ordinarily the term 'Maccabee' is used to designate the sons of Mattathias, while the term 'Hasmonean' is reserved for John Hyrcanus and his descendants, under whom the Jews enjoyed almost seventy years of virtual independence.

During the reign of John Hyrcanus (134-104 BC), further disintegration in the Syrian kingdom allowed Hyrcanus to expand his territory. He conquered the territories east of the Jordan River, Samaria, and Idumea; forcing Judaism on the Idumeans. This last act was to have serious repercussions for the Jews at a later time. Hyrcanus also destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, further alienating the Samaritans. Hyrcanus cultivated friendship with Rome, and was the first Jewish prince to have his name on Roman coins. His sons took Roman names.

By the time of John Hyrcanus, the breach within Judaism had resulted in two distinct parties- the Pharisees and the Sadducees. At first siding with the Pharisees, Hyrcanus later aligned himself with the Sadducees, due primarily to the Pharisaic demand that he give up the high priesthood. Hyrcanus was succeeded by his son, Aristobulus I (104-103 BC). Even though Hyrcanus had left the political power in the hands of his wife, Aristobulus usurped the power, imprisoning his mother and three of his brothers and allowing his mother to starve to death. At his death his wife, Alexandra Salome, released one of his brothers, Alexander Jannaeus, married him and placed him on the throne.

Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BC) expanded his territory to include Moab, Gilead, Amon, and Petrea. Under him, the Jewish state reached a size comparable to the kingdom of David and Solomon. It reached from Lake Hulah in the north to the borders of Egypt to the south and included all of Palestine and some adjacent territory. The rift between the Pharisees and the Hasmoneans reached its climax during the reign of Jannaeus. Open rebellion broke out during a feast of Tabernacles, when Jannaeus poured a water libation on the ground instead of on the altar, as Pharisaic

custom dictated. The people were so enraged that they pelted him with citron, and he was forced to call out the army in order to restore order. As a result, hundreds of people were killed.

In the civil war that followed, the Pharisees called on the Syrians for aid. When they arrived, the Pharisees had second thoughts, fearing that the Syrians would retake the country. Thousands deserted the Syrians and went back to Jannaeus, with the result that the Syrians were defeated and Jannaeus was restored. Nevertheless, he is said to have crucified 800 Pharisees in retaliation for the revolt. Tradition suggests that he advised his wife to make peace with the Pharisees after his death.

Alexandra Salome (76-67 BC) followed her husband as ruler of the Jews. She placed her elder son Hyrcanus II_ the legitimate heir- in the high priesthood and hastened to make peace with the Pharisees. Displeased with her actions, a second son, Aristobulus II- became the champion of the deposed Sadducees. In contrast to the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, the reign of Alexandra Salome was quite peaceful. Her reign was also prosperous, and it is sometime called the golden age of Judaism.

At the death of Alexandra Salome in 67 BC, the Pharisees placed Hyrcanus II on the throne. Aristobulus declared war on Hyrcanus, contesting the latter's right to rule. Lacking any real ambition, Hyrcanus relinquished both the high priesthood and political power to his brother and retired to private life. One person, however was not lacking in ambition-Antipater, an Idumean general of Alexandra. Antipater saw in Hyrcanus the means of gaining power for himself. He therefore persuaded Hyrcanus to seek aid from Aretus, king of the Nabatean Arabs, in driving Aristobulus from the throne.

At this time, the Roman consul, Pompey was in the east, ridding the Mediterranean of pirates and making of what remained of the Syrian kingdom into the Roman province of Syria. Hearing of the civil strife in Judea, he decided to intervene, sending Scourus to investigate. Scourus decided in favour of Aristobulus, but Pompey soon became suspicious of Aristobulus and attacked Jerusalem. Aristobulus fortified the temple yet the temple fell, and the Jewish state came under the control of Rome in 63BC. Gabinus, the Roman legate of Syrian was given oversight in Palestine. Hyrcanus was once again placed in the high priesthood and was given the title 'Ethnarch'. His territory included Judea, Galilee, Idumea,

and Perea. In the eyes of the Romans, however, Antipater was the one in charge.

Hellenism Among the Jews During the Maccabean Period

When Alexander conquered the Near East, the Jews came under direct influence of Greek thought and customs. During the Ptolemaic and Syrian periods they were under the domination of Hellenistic states. From the very beginning there were two quite different reactions to Hellenistic influence. There were those who were completely open to Hellenism and those who were in opposition to Hellenistic influences. These two groups became quite delineated when the Syrian ruler, in particular, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, made concerted efforts to impose Hellenism on the Jews. It was this division within Judaism that led to the Macabean revolt.

Although the Macabean revolt began as a reaction to Hellenization, the Macabean rulers themselves were greatly attracted to Hellenism and under them the Jewish state was to a certain extent Hellenistic. This was the situation when the Romans took over, and Hellenistic influence continued through the Roman period. Throughout this New Testament period there was a Hellenistic and a Hebraistic stain in Judaism, both in the *diaspora* (Dispersion) and in the very centre of Judaism, Judea itself. Thus Hellenism influenced the development of both Judaism and Christianity.

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Towards Effective Marketing of Theatrical Performances Through New Media in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper seeks to advocate a synergy between theatre and new media in effectively marketing theatrical products such as drama, dance, masquerades, puppetry, music and songs in Nigeria. This is informed by the decline in the patronage of live theatre performances which has made our theatres to be left deserted and almost empty in many parts of the country due to insecurity, poor artist remuneration, the effects of technology, political and religious factors. However, stage performances have their place in all societies of the world and the tradition must be sustained. If theatrical performances are not patronised, the where-withal to fund the performances will not be there, thereby bringing them to extinction. This situation can be avoided by creating awareness through new media on the place of stage performances and the need to optimally patronise them. Most importantly, these performances can be advertised using new media handles for the audience to patronize. Also, they can be uploaded on new media platforms for viewers to download and watch thereby attracting funds to the theatre. This paper therefore submits that, Nollywood should not be allowed to take the place of stage performances as this trend portends danger on the extinction of the culture and arts of the people generally. Consequently, it recommends a synergy between theatre and new media in promoting and marketing stage performances for effective functioning and survival in Nigeria.

Key Words: New media, theatrical performances, theatre technology, marketing and live theatre.

Introduction

Right from time immemorial, the theatre as a performing art has been known for gathering people in the evening in one venue for sharing

experiences through storytelling and theatre performances. This tradition in all the eras of theatre history accommodated people from all walks of life as time for the performances was convenient for families to gather together in relaxation and communion. This is why Bernard Beckerman holds that, “theatre occurs when one or more persons, isolated in time and or space, present themselves to another or others” (2). This suggests that, theatre is a collaborative art form which requires the coming together of different constituents in order to achieve the objective of reasoning together for the growth of humanity and the society at large. This explains why Shakespeare cited in Yerima asserts that, “theatre is a mirror for highlighting man’s humanity and also a tool for understanding why man also finds it so easy to transgress that same humanity” (84). These performances have always been carried out for a variety of purposes and largely satisfy the needs of humanity.

Man has over time sought to express his concern for himself and environment and one of the strongest platforms for such expressions has been the theatre. Performances like dance, music, songs, storytelling, and masquerades have been strong artistic devices through which Africans have demonstrated their culture and concerns. The history and welfare of a people is also adequately captured through theatrical performances. This practice has been with man right from the ancient times and has continued till date. This is why theatre is also alive not just to its cardinal functions of entertainment, education and information but also an instrument of cultural presentation, preservation and promotion.

In Nigeria, theatrical performances are pivoted basically by private and government owned theatres, educational institutions and the church for different purposes. One of the main reasons for these performances is for money. The theatre has provided occupation and served as a source of livelihood to many people beginning from the classical Greek dramatists who performed at the Dionysian festival as aptly captured by Brockett and Ball thus:

Extending over several days near the end of March, it was one of the most important occasions of the year and a major showcase for Athenian wealth and power. The festival was both religious and civic celebration under the supervision of the principal state official. Theatrical

performances were viewed in a radically different light than they are today. They were offerings of the city to a god. At a time, they were expressions of civic pride – indications of the cultural superiority of Athens over the other Greek states, which only later developed their own festivals (58).

This explains why Elizabeth Sweeting asserts that, “Whether the theatre is small or large, it must break even” (7). This implies, the theatre should operate at a profit. As such, it should be capable of providing livelihood to its own; its practitioners.

In spite of the fact many theatres operate without necessarily doing so for money or many performances are staged not just for commercial reasons, the theatre needs money in one way or the other to be able to operate and function effectively. This is so because of what it takes to be able to put up a theatrical performance. Beginning with the performers who give life to the creative idea; to costumes and makeup materials in order to enable a realistic depiction of the characters; to the sets and all the paraphernalia of the theatre, money is involved. This explains why in one way or the other, the theatre finds its way around looking for money. Consequently, the theatre deserves some patronage as art for art sake syndrome is detrimental to artistic productivity.

Unfortunately, the theatre has suffered very low patronage in Nigeria especially at the turn of the 21st century as live performances are negated due to security, religious restrictions and the like. According to Toyin Ogundeji, “Many factors attributed to the decline of what used to pull people from all strata of the society together in theatres, town halls, school halls and in palaces such as, poverty, ill-funding, television, home video films and safety of lives and properties. These problems are all swathed in security as an issue” (238).

No doubt, the theatre is key to the survival of all societies of the world. This is predicted on the fact that it reflects life thereby correcting erring practices in order to enhance a better society. However, according to Sola Fosudo, “A major challenge facing Nigerian theatre and entertainment producing organisations is the marketing of their productions and offering. This usually results in poor patronage and non-

viability of the production outfits” (23). If the theatre is not patronised by the people, it is therefore expedient of it to explore other measures that will attract the people to it thereby getting the where-withal to be able to carry out performances and earn a living. One of the surest ways of generating patronage for the theatre is by synergizing with new media in order to attract the people and possibly sell theatrical products to them using new media platforms such as: social networks (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), media sharing networks (**Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube**), social shopping networks (**Polyvore, Etsy and Fancy**), and sharing economy networks (Airbnb, Uber and Taskrabbit). This as a matter of fact is the crux of this paper.

Conceptual Framework

For the avoidance of ambiguity, the concepts of theatrical performances and new media have been explained within the context of this paper below.

Theatrical Performances

In discussing theatre performances, it is necessary to conceptualise the word theatre as well. According to Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma, the word theatre, “is a derivation from the Greek word theatron, which means, a seeing place. In ancient Greece, the word, theatre, depicted a structural setting, usually in the open air, used for the presentation of dramatic spectacles and plays. But then, by the 17th Century, the term had come to connote the arts, as a whole, of which the building is an integral part. Thus, theatre is that art, which the public viewed, and still view today, as a basic nature of man’s means of expressing his internal perceptions of life. Perhaps it is necessary to stress here that it is generally speculated in theatre history, and believed more especially in Western culture, that theatre as an art form originated in ancient Greece. Little wonder then that even original African theatrical presentations are very often related to Greek conventions, simply as a result of the fact that these had been documented long before now” (3). Theatre is life, cut it away from the people and you cut off their being thereby exterminating them. Because of its concise reflection of life, Brockett posits that it is “the most objective of the arts, since characteristically it presents both

outer and inner experience through speech and action. As in life, it is through listening and watching that we come to know individuals both externally and internally” (3).

According to Ayakoroma, “Despite the fact that the word, theatre, has been given several definitions by different people, there are certain features that are basic (or essential) for any event to qualify as theatre. These are referred to as the elements of theatre, and they could be delineated as follows:

What is performed: This could be a script, a scenario, or a musical. In other word, this is the “what,” or first “W” in the elements of theatre. The performers: This includes all the processes involved in the preparation and final presentation. This is the “who,” or the second “W” in the elements of theatre. The venue: It could be a stage, an open arena, village square, a forest, or even a river. This is the “where,” or the third “W” in the elements of theatre. The audience: This is the other or better half of the theatre that comes to share in the theatrical experience. This is the “whom,” or the fourth “W” in the elements of theatre” (4)

Furthermore, Ayakoroma posits that, “For any theatrical performance to take place, there must definitely be an idea, which could be documented in the form of a script, a scenario, a musical score, or dance pattern. Even where an improvisation leads to a performance, it is the interplay of all the elements of theatre that leads to the end product. But suffice to state that theatre cannot be said to have taken place unless there is a performance that is enacted before a given audience. Let us take the example of a lecturer teaching in a class, where there are no students. Passers-by will say such a lecturer is a mental case.” (5). This underpins the position of Brockett that, “the performer exists only when an audience exists, for the performer’s entire purpose is to arouse recognition and wonder in the on-looker” (8).

Consequently, theatrical performances are that which are done before the audience. They could be plays, storytelling, masquerades, puppetry, mimes, songs, music and dance. They are the raw materials that

are processed and presented to a live audience for their consumption. They constitute the cockpit of the theatre

New Media

According to Archan Mitra, “New media cannot be defined on black and white or compartmentalized in a very small domain because it is a conception arising from various other fields which added together produce a humongous domain. Thus new media is nothing but the amalgamation of all types of media into one new form, all the conceptions, ideas and theories of the original media are embedded into the new form” (2). The definition of New media can be divided into three distinct aspects as follows: -Technological aspect, Cultural & social aspect and Environmental Aspect.

Technological aspect

New Media is both techno-based and techno-bias as it is techno-based it can be defined from the technological point of view as new media is nothing but a new technology which helps in sustainable development in the field of communication. New Media is not without the blessings of the technological advancements in fields of communication (Information Communication Technology), computer technology (Silicon Chip), Physics (Quantum & nano-Technology) this new advancement has brought about new media.

Cultural and Social Aspect

New Media is also Techno-bias. There has to be biasness because of the fact that everyone cannot use the technology only the one capable of doing so has the upper hand over the others and hence he/she tries to monopolize the new form of media and control the developmental process in the developing nations. One basic fact is that technology is developed by human beings for a reason and the reason is development. But the question is, what kind of development? And the answer to that is social development. Only mere technology does not possess the power to induce developmental change in the society so one can define new media as a new technological advancement to induce socio and cultural change

in the developing society. This is more so because communication is the vehicle for development.

Environmental Aspect

When we hire new technology or think of social change we tend to look towards the pros side of new media while uncontrolled development of technology brings about the dark side where advancement of technology like adaptation of non-renewable power energy source has wounded the environment greatly and threatens our existence. So we can define new media as a media which works not only for technological, social or cultural development but also for sustainable environmental development (Archan Mitra, 2250-2251).

In a nut shell, new media is a new technological advancement not only for the field of social or cultural aspect but also working hand in hand with environment for sustainable development. It can be described as a profoundly intelligent computerized innovation. To a reasonable extent, new media can be seen as a social procedure that reflects societal qualities and change. According to Creativesip, the accompanying five sorts of new media show the advancement of new media. They include:

Blog: Blogs are a mainstream type of New Media. In spite of the fact that online journals are an early type of new media, they are as yet pertinent and offer a few attributes of the latest new media sorts. Data in online journals is effortlessly gotten to and hunt down, and everything is regularly sorted out normally. For example, blog entries are frequently settled under classifications, and clients can explore posts by a particular class or tag or by means of a hunt. What's more, as different types of new media where substance is posted—, for example, online daily papers and some web-based social networking stages—sections frequently contain blended media, for example, photographs and video to oblige the content. Sites can likewise be intelligent, in spite of some fluctuation. For example, the most famous sort of news scope for web journals is overwhelmingly governmental issues and outside occasions, as indicated by the Pew Research Center. However, in spite of political bloggers, “most writers are looking to remain watchmen even in this exceedingly intuitive and participatory configuration,” a review in Journalism found.

Virtual Reality: Virtual reality advances and recreates a situation alongside the client's physical nearness and tactile experience. Usually, the client encounters virtual reality through an uncommon headset or on a PC screen. Apparently boundless applications for virtual reality exist. In virtual reality, clients can push through the Himalayas, consider acquiring land that hasn't been constructed yet, see a 360-degree film or prepare as a sharpshooter. All virtual reality conveys a very intuitive, immersive experience that places the client in a similar or anecdotal condition. Some say that virtual reality's unrivaled level of submersion qualifies it as "a definitive medium" in new media, as indicated by educators Özhan Tingöy and Barbaros Bostan. Virtual reality might be ready to wind up noticeably the eventual fate of new media. Media and stimulation organizations are putting resources into virtual reality and getting ready for it to end up plainly the following excitement stage, The New York Times says. Virtual reality can change news coverage and the way groups of on-lookers view and draw in with news from around the globe, Tech Republic depicts.

Social Media: Web-based social networking focuses on making, sharing and trading data, thoughts and substance in online systems and groups. Profoundly intuitive, online networking is a type of new media that depends intensely on the support of clients to offer some incentive. Instead of types of new media like virtual reality, web-based social networking is ordinary. The normal online client burns through 1.72 hours for every day on social stages, a study of 170,000 Internet clients by Global Web Index found. Informal organizations devour around 28 percent of all online movement. The fate of online networking is likely attached to different types of new media. For example, Inc. magazine sees advances, for example, increased and virtual reality, live video and the joining of photographs and narrating as a feature of online networking's fleeting future.

Online Newspapers: Online daily papers are viewed as new media for huge numbers of an indistinguishable reasons from sites. Online daily papers mix numerous sorts of media and are effectively gotten to and sought. Clients can likewise cooperate with some online daily papers by

means of a remark include. Online daily papers—alongside web-based social networking and different types of new media—are a noteworthy piece of why conventional daily papers are moving to computerized frame. Just 56 percent of daily paper readership happens only in print, as indicated by the Pew Research Center. Daily paper advertisement income from print dropped to \$16.4 billion in 2014 from \$44.9 billion in 2003, while computerized promotion income expanded to \$3.5 billion in 2014 from \$1.2 billion in 2003.

Computerized Games: Computerized recreations are a piece of ordinary media culture and a one of a kind sort of new media. “Advanced recreations and diversion universes open up social spaces themselves, and, not at all like other new media and virtual situations, these spaces are confined as “lively” from the beginning” (Johannes Fromme and Alexander Unger write in the book *Computer Games and New Media Cultures*). Advanced recreations are likewise vital for how they fabricate collaboration and group. “The business is delivering a constant flow of recreations that keep on expanding their tendency and effect—they can be aesthetic, social and shared, with many permitting gigantic quantities of individuals from everywhere throughout the world to take an interest at the same time.” The New Media Consortium’s 2014 K–12 Horizon Report says. The greater part of the most continuous gamers play with others, and around half feel that computer games help them interface with companions and invest energy with family, as indicated by the Entertainment Software Association (Creativesip).

Factors Responsible for Decline in Audience Participation in Live Theatre Performances

It is hard to find any commentary on live performance that does not subscribe to the power of the phenomenological lived experience of the event, as opposed to its “representational” or symbolic intentions (Melissa Trimmingham, 66)

Generally, live theatre is any theatrical performance presented on a stage to a seating and or standing audience. Many spectators have consented to

the fact that, there is a measurable difference in the pleasure and excitement derived in watching a live performance as compared to screening of a movie, either in a cinema hall or as a home video film. It thrills the audience to see the drama unfold around them and it creates a sense of belonging or sharing with the actors on stage. Borev (256-257) believes that an important feature of the theatre is that, the creative act (the creation of the image by the actor) takes place before the eyes of the spectators and that gives the theatre tremendous influence on the minds of the audience. In the cinema however, the spectator sees the result of the creative process while in the theatre, he sees the process itself. This goes a long way to explain the fascination of the theatre. There is ‘dynamics of blending that involves attention, memory, empathy and heightened emotions’ (McConachie, 19).

Similarly, Peter Brook, the renowned English theatre and film director, equally stated that performance brings together two worlds of the stage and auditorium in an exquisite union as it produces an experience of vital immediacy between the performers and the audience. He sees theatre as a live performance of ‘here and now’, while Montassier (122) who defines live theatre as “what happens at that precise moment when you perform, that moment at which the world of the actors and the world of the audience meet”, champions the existential moment that is forged between audience and performer. He maintains that the audience co-creates the play with the actors by an active participation in the event through the suspension of belief, and this makes it a ‘communal experience’ that is heightened by the fact that both audience and players are physically in the same space (Shores, 20).

Furthermore, Shughnessy (39) posits that, such performances are ever present and they require us to be in the here (space of performance) and now (time). The essence and beauty of the ‘now’ is what enthralls in watching a performance live. It soothes and moves the inner being towards the actions on stage. Spectators experience the materiality of a live performance as an ephemeral event, rather than interpreting it as a static or mediated work of art created by autonomous artists. There is therefore, the ability of the performance to generate heightened energy by sight, sounds, smells, and spatial arrangement as they are encountered (Fischer-Lichte, 495). This experience presents an audience-performers and

performers-audience relationship unlike the orchestrated acting and reaction gotten in other forms of theatrical media.

Regrettably, live theatre is going extinct in many communities in Nigeria due to several factors. For the purpose of this paper, only a few of the factors will be explored namely: insecurity, poor artist remuneration, the effects of technology, political and religious factors.

Insecurity: Insecurity is the lack or absence of protection of human life and property in a society. It is a condition where human lives and property are prone to danger, attack, destruction and possible extinction. It is a dreadful trait in a society as it raises tension thereby affecting productivity. In Nigeria, insecurity is a serious challenge that affects different states and communities in different ways. In one way or the other, many lives and property are lost on a daily basis on account of insecurity as the security architecture of the country is porous and treacherous. Consequently, many people resolve to staying in their houses in the evening instead of visiting the theatre for a live performance in order to avoid being trapped by hoodlums. This has militated against audience patronage of live theatre in many parts of Nigeria especially in the Northern part of the country.

Poor Remuneration of Artistes: Given that live theatre is not well patronised in many parts of the country, artistes hardly get reward for their work and their wages are not certain in most cases. As such, their source of livelihood is not secured thereby, posing a threat to their life. Thus, artistes instead of concentrating to carry out standard performances for their audience, have to contend with their survival at the detriment of their artistic work. As a result, live performances suffer on the altar of survival arising from poor remuneration.

The Effects of Technology: All societies of the world need technology to advance and attain developmental heights. As such, governments strive to advance in their technological base in order to develop their economy and other aspects of their national life. Technically, technological advancement has shifted the focus of the theatre to the screen. Though there are many advantages for the theatre in a technologically advanced

space, at the same time, it has some negative effects that have deeply affected the root of theatrical performances. This is seen in the emergence of film, home video and Television productions as people are more inclined to digitally oriented productions. Today, home video productions have seriously threatened the survival of live theatre and this is majorly due to the effects of technology.

Political and Religious Factors: Political and religious factors play key roles in the decline of audience patronage of live theatre performances in Nigeria. Politics in the country is usually characterised by violence which constitutes a security threat to the audience. Most of the time, religion is employed to ignite political acrimony and destabilize the society for selfish gains. Besides, because of religious fanaticism, live theatrical performances are negated and viewed as a taboo thereby constituting a stumbling block to live theatre performances.

In all of these, it is important to note that live theatre has its place in the society and it should not be disbanded for any reason. Theatre practitioners must ensure that live theatre performances are brought to the people and serve as a check on the society.

Theatre & Technology

Right from the classical era to the contemporary times, theatre has employed technology in enhancing aesthetics and the illusion of believability of performances by audience. According to Kockelkoren, “Historically, theatre has always embraced new technologies, from the *deus ex machina* of Greek theatre to the revolutionary introduction of electric light in the 1800s and today’s high-tech multimedia extravaganzas. Artists across all disciplines have contributed through their work to the assimilation of new technologies and mediations into everyday life” (20). The area of the theatre that has imbibed technology so much is in technical and costume design as well as instrumentation. To put it more succinctly, technology in the theatre is more visible in the use of modern sets, lighting, costuming and musical instruments for achieving different effects. Depending on the style of the production, technology can be used to achieve various objectives without hampering the originality of the theatricality.

According to Vinay Kumar, “Technology has been used in theatre for a very long time but with the recent boom in technology in society, there has been a knock-on effect to its use in theatre. It is making audiences passive and responding to theatre like it's film. It is affecting the liveness of theatre performance and straightening its fuzzy edges” (7). Contrary to Kumar’s view, the use of technology in the theatre has rather enhanced audience participation in terms of responding to performance on stage.

Digital media and information technologies are on their way very fast into the theatre with creative experiments, discovering insights in areas such as computer-mediated communication and social interaction and the impact of technology on human life. In the 21st century, what the theatre needs is, “a new renaissance in the creation, distribution and sharing of information, knowledge and creative work” and a “move from industrial content production towards community-based intercreativity [that] holds the potential for severe and controversial disruptions to the established status quo” (Bruns, 16-17). This way, theatre can be in a better position to interrogate societal issues dispassionately and accommodate a wider audience especially those who are technology driven.

New Media Platforms and Marketing Theatrical Performances

Social Networks: Examples of some of the social networks include: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. People use these networks to connect with others (and brands) online. These networks benefit the people in many ways such as: market research, brand awareness, lead generation, relationship building, customer service and the like. Social networks sometimes called “relationship networks” help people and organisations connect online to share information and ideas. Though these networks are not the oldest types of social media, they certainly define it now. These channels started as relatively simple services-for example, Twitter was the place to find out what one was doing and Facebook was where to find a friend and or check the relationship status of one. Now, and especially since the rise of the mobile internet, these networks have become hubs that transform nearly every aspect of modern life-from reading news to sharing vacation photos to finding a new job-into a social experience.

Media Sharing Networks: Examples of media sharing networks include: Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube. People use these networks to find and share photos, live videos, and other media online. These networks benefit the people in their business in many ways such as: brand awareness, lead generation, audience engagement, and most of their other social marketing goals. Media sharing networks give people and brands a place to find and share media online, including photos, videos, and live videos. The lines between media sharing networks and social networks are blurring these days as social relationship networks like Facebook and Twitter add live videos, augmented reality, and other multimedia services to their platforms. However, what distinguishes media sharing networks is that, the sharing of media is their primary and defining purpose. While the majority of posts on relationship networks contain texts, posts on networks like Instagram and Snapchat start with an image or video, to which users may decide to add content like captions, mentions of other users, or filters that make you look like a bunny. Similarly, on sites such as YouTube and Vimeo video is the primary mode of communication. When determining whether or not your business needs to establish a presence on a media sharing network, it is important to consider your available resources. If there is one thing that most successful brands on platforms like YouTube or Instagram have in common, it is a thoroughly planned mission and carefully designed media assets, usually following a specific theme.

Social Shopping Networks: Examples of social shopping networks include: Polyvore, Etsy and Fancy. People use these networks to spot trends, follow brands, share great findings and make purchases. These networks enhance business, in the sense that, brands can build awareness, increase engagement, and sell products via new channels. Social shopping networks make e-commerce engaging by adding a social element. Basically, elements of e-commerce appear in many other types of social networks-for example, Pinterest features Buyable Pins, and Instagram provides call-to-action tools in the form of “shop now” and “install now” buttons. Social Shopping networks take it one step further by building their site around a focused integration between the social experience and the shopping experience. Services like Etsy allow small

businesses and individual crafters to sell their products without an existing brick-and-mortar location, and networks such as Polyvore aggregate from different retailers in a single online marketplace, and Polyvore is one of the largest social style communities on the internet, and it is a good example of a network designed to integrate the social experience with the buying experience. Most of the content is gathered by users, who choose products they like, create collages, publish them as a set, and then share sets with other users.

Sharing Economy Networks: Examples of sharing economy networks include: Airbnb, Uber and Taskrabbit. People use these networks to advertise, find, share, buy, sell, and trade products and services between peers. If you happen to offer the kind of products or services traded here, these networks can be another channel for bringing in business (for example, if you operate a bed-and-breakfast, Airbnb could help you find customers). Sharing economy networks also called “collaborative economy networks” connects people online for the purpose of advertising, finding sharing, buying, selling, and trading products and services. And while you are probably already familiar with big-name networks like Airbnb and Uber, there are a growing number of niches networks you can use to find a dog sitter, a parking spot, a home-cooked meal, and more.

Undoubtedly, the theatre as an art form can synergize with new media to advertise and market its products effectively using the above new media platforms. This is predicated on the fact that, the contemporary world is technology driven and new media has taken a central position in the communication industry arising from its ease, accessibility and availability to the people. As a result, stage performances can be advertised to prospective audience who are the majority on these social media handles to be aware and possibly patronize the theatre. On the other hand, these stage performances can be uploaded and sold on these new media networks such as YouTube and Vimeo. All that is required is to record these stage performances, upload and protect them on the new media platforms for download by prospective viewers after payment of a fee. Given that the performances are original in nature; the patronage which conventional theatre has lost will be restored

geometrically because this is the new world order. This is however not to suggest a replacement of live theatre performances but its synergy with new media for more audience patronage.

As a matter of fact, this online model for peer commerce has become viable and popular in recent years as people started trusting online reviews and feeling comfortable using them to gauge the reputation and reliability of sellers and service providers. According to a report by digital research firm Vision Critical, “The collaborative economy today works because trust can be verified electronically through social networks... social media lets the collaborative economy run smoothly”. While most marketers will find these networks too specifically targeted or restrictive, if you happen to provide the kind of product or service that’s traded on a particular network, you might want to look into it as another channel to generate leads and sales. Consequently, the theatre can package original performances that are thematically relevant and are capable of presenting, promoting and preserving the culture of the Nigerian people for sale at these new media platforms as there is nothing to be afraid about particularly that the authenticity of these networks can be verified. In doing this, the effect of an ‘empty theatre’ will not be felt much as the window from new media will make up and even enable to the theatre to operate at a profit. If this happens, theatre artists will be more enthusiastic to carry out performances knowing fully well that their work is patronised and profiting too.

Marketing Theatre Productions

Generally, marketing a product entails presenting it to its potential buyer in a manner that is appealing and worth patronizing. In this way, the product is acquired because of its prospects of adding value to its consumers. In the light of this, Olusola Fosudo posits that, “The theatre is more than a mere service and should not be seen as a mere show. This is because, it can be packaged and commoditised. No doubt, the theatre will continue to serve the functions of cultural preservation and social mobilization by civilizing and entertaining the citizenry” (28-29). This can only be made possible due to the direct link of the theatre to the traditions and cultures of the people. Consequently, the arts and culture

should become good cannons of commercialization. However, marketing activities in the theatre are operated as regards funds and audiences. Fosudo further identifies the following marketing strategies as necessary for effective funds generation, audience development and profitable business in the theatre. They include:

(i.) Commoditising and branding of theatre products. (ii.) Adopting a special pricing strategy (iii.) Developing effective promotion techniques. (iv.) Developing effective promotion techniques (v.) Exploiting ancillary income generation ideas (29).

Commoditisation in the theatre is a method whereby artistic concepts are conceived, developed and packaged as specific products or commodities with name labels that are distinctive and capable of attracting good patronage. In other words, the theatre performances should be conceived with the ambience of certain ideologies uniquely identified with the theatre practitioners, the audience or the environment captured in a manner that will attract attention.

On the other hand, a theatre product brand is a production idea or a theatre commodity conceived and offered in the market as a regular feature where its name and conceptual characteristics are retained for a long time. Basically, this is a seasonal or regular show that has a trademark and can always be identified with the theatre organisation or company. This becomes the unifying factor that attracts audience to the theatre.

Furthermore, pricing strategy in the theatre is that which the theatre company or organisation determines acceptable ticket price level for performances. In doing this, they assess the experience and value the audience place on their previous performances. The audience on their part will have some preconceived views but can only judge the value gained for their money at the end of the performance. Theatre practitioners should consider the objectives of the performance, nature of the market, time of the performance, subscription, discounting and group/sales bookings (3).

Also, exploiting ancillary revenue generation activities refers to entertainment activities that theatre organisation can carryout to generate revenue. These could be the provision of a snack bar, tea shop, souvenir

store, newspaper stand and others in and around the building. These can be run directly by the management of the theatre.

Lastly, developing effective promotion techniques is very necessary for attracting people to the theatre. This is because, the only way to inform the public about events is to publicize and promote such events in the various media available. For the promotion to be effective and achieved its desired results however, it must be specifically targeted at an audience. This means that, the potential target audience needs to be identified for every project to be embarked upon by the organisation. Then the most suitable media for selling to each potential audience must be chosen. Different media may make sense for different target group. For instance, e-messages or bulk SMS is a new way of reaching customers while direct mail is recommended as a central part of most marketing plans, but less so far young audiences. Furthermore, telesales and advertising could be very effective especially for group brokers and lapsed attenders. Also, radio advertising can be an effective way to reach younger markets. The print must be used imaginatively. The challenge is to find fresh ways of presenting information about a production through words and imagines in a way it will convey accurate and appealing sense of what a production is about (Fosudo,35-36).

Conclusion

The marketing of theatre products is very useful and essential to the survival of the theatre be it profit-making or not. This is because, the theatre needs to be massively patronised for it to be financially viable in order to be relevant and remain in business. The application of several principles including: marketing variables, products, price, place and promotion must be in place in developing effective marketing strategies in the theatre.

Indeed, the idea of theatre business must go beyond the show and be seen as a total commercial enterprise package. Practitioners of theatre must now be more conscious than ever of the nature of their business, the market-place, and the need to break even and make profit in their operations. This is particularly so because without profit, no business organisation can thrive or be a necessary endeavour. It is therefore consequent upon the theatre to synergize with new media in order to take

the advertising and marketing of its products to the next level for the desired patronage.

Recommendations

In line with the thoughts expressed in this paper, the following recommendations are made.

- i. Theatre organisations developing on the locale should adopt new methods of commoditising and branding their offerings. This is a concept of developing specific profit or brand names for their production in an attractive and enduring way, targeting specific audience.
- ii. Theatre production companies should be more adventurous in working outside the box to package live performances such as concerts, pageants, and the like for commercial performances.
- iii. The theatre should synergize with new media platforms such as: social networks (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), media sharing networks (**Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube**), social shopping networks (**Polyvore, Etsy and Fancy**), and sharing economy networks (Airbnb, Uber and Taskrabit) in order to advertise and adequately market theatrical productions for fiscal benefits.
- iv. Theatre artists should not be deterred of the low patronage of live theatre performances. Instead, they should work hard and invent more ways of attracting the people to the theatre.

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