

Nigerian Theatre Journal

A Journal of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA)

Vol. 13, No. 1

Editor

Ameh Dennis Akoh

Assistant Editor

Biodun Layiwola

Copyright © 2013 Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA)

Nigerian Theatre Journal (NTJ) is published by the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists, c/o The Editor, *NTJ*, Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Osun State University, Ikire Campus, Nigeria

ISSN 0189-9562

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Professor S. E. Ododo – Chairman

Dr A. D. Akoh – Editor

Dr Biodun Layiwola – Assistant Editor

Professor Charles Nwadigwe – Member

Dr Ted Anyebe – Member

EDITORIAL ADVISERS

Professor Femi Osofisan – Nigeria

Professor John S. Illah – Nigeria

Professor Tess Onwueme – USA

Professor Don Rubin – Canada

Professor Olu Obafemi – Nigeria

Professor Osita Okagbue – UK

Professor Sam Ukala – Nigeria

Professor Saint Gbilekaa – Nigeria

Professor L. O. Bamidele – Nigeria

Copyright © 2013 – Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA)

All Right Reserved

Nigerian Theatre Journal (ISSN 0189-9562) is published annually by the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). Because the leadership of the Society changes every two to four years, it is encouraged that enquires about the Journal should be addressed to the current President of SONTA.

Paper Subscription: Libraries and other institutions, U.S \$100.00; individuals, U.S. \$70.00; association members, U.S. \$50.00; Students, \$25.00. Journal orders and remittances should be sent to SONTA EDITOR.

Manuscripts: Articles submitted for publication should be mailed to the Editor via: sontaeditor@gmail.com. Manuscripts should meet the criteria outlined in the Instructions for Contributors.

Copyright © 2013 – Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). All Right Reserved. Article copying exclusively for personal or internal or academic use, is permitted provided the copy user or producer gets appropriate permission from the SONTA Editor through writing.

Contents

1. Practice Imperative for Transformation and Quality Enhancement in Theatre Education in Nigeria – Ofonime Inyang & Patrick Ebewo
2. Quality Assurance: Confronting the Odds in Nollywood Films – John Iwuh
3. Quality Assurance and Stand Up Comedy in Nigeria – Williams Sunday Onogu
4. Quality And The Vernacular Film: Imperatives For Igbo Language Filmmaking – Francisca A. Nwadiuwe
5. Matching Quantitative Growth and Development with Quality in Nigerian Video Film Industry – Hameed Olutoba Lawal & Olatunji Aikomo
6. Costume and Makeup Designs and Productions: Their Quintessence in Theatrical Productions – Felix U. Egwuda-Ugbeda & Maryisabella Ada Ezeh
7. Quality Assurance in Dance and Choreography: Personal Experiences from the Lecture Hall to Praxis as Case Studies – Arnold Udoka
8. Ensuring the Quality of Films and Videos Exposed in Nigeria: An Examination of the Role of the Nigeria Film and Video Censorship Board – Regina Ode
9. Quality Assurance in Playwriting and Production at National Theatrical Events: An Overview of Drama Entries at National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST), 2011 – Denja Abdullahi
10. Reconstruction and Reflections on the Social Responsibilities of Drama and Theatre – Adefolaju Eben Adeseke

11. Quality Assurance in Theatre Audience Engineering and Marketing – Osedebamen David Oamen & V. O. Diakpomrere
12. Integrating Health Issues through the Tiv Kwagh-hir – Dennis Teghtegh
13. Quality Assurance in Costuming Theatrical Performance in Nigeria: A Study of Selected Nollywood Films – Ephraim Aga Shimsenge & Richard Gbilekaa
14. Exploring “Dialectical Text Consciousness” in Acting for Quality Assurance – Olabode Wale Ojoniyi,

PRACTICE IMPERATIVE FOR TRANSFORMATION AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT IN THEATRE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Ofonime Inyang & Patrick Ebewo

Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, SA

Abstract

Nigerian theatre training has put in more than forty years in tertiary education since the inaugural drama training at the University of Ibadan in the 1950s. The significant role of theatre scholarship and practice is already established in national consciousness with monumental evidence of successful practitioners, scholars, teachers, theoreticians, researchers, artists who also command widespread international recognition and respect. While celebrating this giant achievement, the critical imperative of reassessing the training of theatre artists in Nigerian universities in particular and the need to draw from global best practices appear imminent. Apart from pointing ways to better throughput in the field, quality check is also critical in all industries and the success of the creative enterprise in Nigeria where theatre is a significant player rests on this. This paper aims to re-examine the current context of theatre training in Nigeria and proposes increased interaction between drama schools and the industry. The objective is to foster quality enhancement in theatre training in the twenty-first century while also positioning the country for global competitiveness in the field.

Introduction

Nigeria remains a nation of great potentialities and parades a diversity of talents, cultures and people who have braved the social, political and economic challenges at various times to register the name of the nation in bold prints on the artistic and creative map of the world. The cultural diversity of Nigeria projects a rich outlay of different characteristics and attributes that constitute the way of life and expression of the various tribes that make up Nigeria (Obidi, 2005). Nigeria is thus globally acknowledged as a citadel of rich cultures, traditions, arts, entertainment, philosophy, thought, ensemble and vocations that enliven the human spirit, educate, entertain and act as a medium of information dissemination (Falola, 2001; Inyang, 2013). Theatre has been part of Nigerian national life for many years. The various tribes of Nigeria parade material contents that have been identified by various

scholars as representing their theatre and dramatic tradition (Adediji, 1981; Ebong, 1990; Doki, 2006). Nigerian communities, even up to present times, celebrate various seasonal festivals and observances that constitute theatrical enactments in their own right and that clearly express the worldview and knowledge systems that have sustained those societies for ages. The modern expression of theatre or drama as a distinct discipline in Nigerian education system has been traced by various scholars to the colonial times where European operatic performances, concerts and cantatas dominated the cultural landscape of the era (Gbilekaa, 1997; Yerima, 2001).

Sufficient scholarly attention has been given to establish the significance and function of the three streams of dramatic activity in the areas of traditional or indigenous theatre, popular or trado-modern theatre and literary or conventional theatre and how each complements each other and contributes to the growth of the theatrical field in the country (Ogunbiyi, 1981; Ebong. 1990; Adediji and Ekwuazi, 1998; Gbilekaa, 1997; Obafemi, 2001; Yerima, 2005). The history of the development of modern theatre and drama in Nigeria and the introduction of drama and theatre training into higher education in Nigeria is traced to October, 1963 when the School of Drama began training students at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria's premier university, at that time, a college of the University of London (Yerima 25). The University of Ibadan remained the prime institution for the training of artists and dramatists in the theatre discipline for many years until when some of her former students graduated and moved to other parts of the country to take up jobs in the cultural centres, schools and tertiary colleges. This development soon led to increased requirements for manpower in the theatre and cultural fields, leading to the establishment of theatre programmes in tertiary institutions in other parts of the country. That development has produced more than fifteen departments offering programmes in dramatic, theatre, performing, creative, media arts in Nigerian tertiary institutions currently (Adeyemi 152; Daramola 259). This number has grown far beyond this today.

The Current Situation of Theatre Training in Nigeria

Formal theatre training in Nigeria is largely concentrated in the universities, located in the different parts of the country. The Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) is responsible for regulating tertiary education and ensuring “quality assurance of all academic programmes offered in Nigerian universities” (www.nuc.edu.ng). The NUC's Minimum Academic Bench Mark for Arts Programmes (194) states the expected outcomes for theatre and performing arts graduates as follows:

Graduates of theatre arts/performing arts can fit into any sphere of endeavour. The knowledge acquired in the study of Theatre Arts/Performing Arts makes the graduate of the course stand out in the portrayal of contemporary social realities using performance. These graduates are entrepreneurs, express the arts with grace and integrity and are codifiers of the cultural traditions of Nigeria.

The benchmark cited above is also considered a *quality assessment* template for measuring productivity in theatre programmes in the country. Whether the benchmark has produced expected outcomes is certainly a subject for another investigation. Also, some tertiary institutions such as polytechnics and colleges of education also offer training in dramatic arts and educational theatre programmes. There are also a few private universities such as Redeemer's University, Ogun State, Adeleke University, Osun State, Obong University, Akwa Ibom State that also offer theatre or Media Arts programmes (NUC, 2007). In addition to these formal institutions, private groups and indigenous theatre troupes also train artists using an apprenticeship system that is traced to many generations of practitioners especially in the Yoruba Travelling Theatre tradition (Adedeji, 1981). Other parts of the country also parade indigenous troupes that rely on apprenticeship in training artists and successor-managers of such troupes. Theatre training generally in Nigeria is also beginning to expand with the advent of Nollywood film industry where graduates and non-graduates of theatre arts receive location-specific instructions and training that does not follow formal curriculum designed in the mould of that obtained in the tertiary institutions. In this system, aspirant movie or film enthusiasts acquire hands-on experience from close partnership and work with established film makers and graduates to become actors, directors, script writers, makeup artists and other areas of technical competence including cinematography. Though this system is the prevalent structure of operation in the Nollywood industry, however, watchers of the film industry in Nigeria and scholars and researchers in the field have also traced the craft and technical drawbacks of the film industry in Nigeria to this informal and rudimentary training that is almost bereft of supervision or serious intellectual input but which many current practitioners in Nollywood leaned on to rise to their "stardom" (Shaka, 2004; Ebewo, 2007).

The various criticisms of this informal training system notwithstanding, many scholars in theatre and film in Nigeria are also vehement in their assertion that the rise of the Nigerian video film industry also called Nollywood has also

contributed significantly to the development of the theatre industry and scholarship in the country (Balogun, 1987; Okome and Haynes, 1995; Adesanya, 1997; Ayakoroma, 2012; Akwang and Inyang, 2013). Ayakoroma (2012) for instance, is of the opinion that “Theatre has become an interesting area of study in Nigeria, due largely to developments in Nollywood” (<http://www.nico.gov.ng/features.html>). Nollywood therefore represents a new performance platform for the development and expansion of the ideas and processes handed down from formal stagecraft training in Nigerian universities. As a massive cultural medium that centre-stages the dissemination of stories sourced from folk narratives, contemporary Nigerian life and the dynamics of modern living, Nollywood has successfully drawn global attention to the dynamism of the local theatre training in Nigeria as well as built a fresh platform of activity, productivity and employment for the teeming population of Nigerian youth trained in theatre and drama in the various universities in the country.

Quality Enhancement and Transformation and the Implication for Theatre Education in Nigeria

Quality enhancement is a critical component of industrial operation in different parts of the world. The need for quality enhancement is to ensure that an industry stays in top reckoning and its product continuously attracts patronage as safety and the highest levels of quality is assured (Manghani, 2011). As a concept, “Quality Assurance has its roots in large-scale manufacturing” and “keeping track of production quality became increasingly important during the second half of the twentieth century. At that time a whole profession emerged around the idea of “quality” as well as related systems, processes and organisations” (Allais 9-10). To link quality assurance or enhancement with the Nigerian theatre education and training is in keeping with the increased acceptance of best practices in business and education where quality assurance is new “but has rapidly become very important” (Allais 9). Also, other definitions of quality enhancement or assurance by experts in the field indicate that: “It is a system of measures and controls established within an organisation to try and manage the quality of the goods or services being provided.” (www.independentqualityservices.com). Pitt (1) underpins this in his definition of quality assurance with implication on higher education. According to him, quality assurance is “an outflow of a commitment to representative and participatory processes and structures in which a variety of views, thinking, practice and

experiences are brought to bear” on the output and performance of a product or service.

The World Health Organisation (WHO), in its wide-ranging investigations and research in quality enhancement in medicine, adds that “Quality assurance is a wide-ranging concept covering all matters that individually or collectively influence the quality of a product.” Researchers such as Kis (2005), Zoqaqi (2011), Cremonini, Epping, Westerhijden and Vogelsang (2012) have aligned quality assurance to higher education in much the same way as applied in a company or organisation's activities and operations and arrived at the conclusion that the aim of every quality assessment is to be able to predict properly the quality route that an institution takes and how that affects the product they offer to their consumers or the public. The process is likened to an audit or “a review of activities against descriptions of how the processes should operate in attempts to identify where the opportunity for improvement exists” (Allais 11). This therefore means that quality enhancement aims towards the creation of “opportunity for improvement” according to the researchers above. Again, researchers in the field warn that notwithstanding the measuring tools used, an effective quality control depends on the accurate management of processes and the implementation to achieve improvements.

A Qualitative Inquiry

While noting the centrality of “measuring tools” in a purely scientific environment and in an industrial context, however the focus of our proposed quality enhancement for theatre education in Nigeria shall not pretend to be equipped to follow the same route. Our focus is on practice imperatives that can enhance the quality of theatre training in Nigeria and which we are emboldened to suggest based on years of practice, teaching and observation as theatre teachers in and outside Nigeria. The quality of theatre education in Nigeria, from the perspective of our observation needs improvement. As much as we applaud the tireless contributions of generations of practitioners and scholars who have devoted their energy into training students and future practitioners almost with “bare hands,” we can also venture to say that a lot more can be done to improve the current situation. In saying this, let it be stated clearly that, we do not aim to employ “statistical processes” in examining the state of health of theatre education in Nigeria or proffer solutions using quantitative data analysis. However, we are adopting a qualitative methodology in gathering data

through interviews, observations as well as drawing from existing scholarly opinion in the literature base of theatre scholarship in Nigeria.

Does Theatre Education in Nigeria Require any Improvement?

The question of theatre training's need for improvement whether in Nigeria or elsewhere is self-explanatory. Many scholars and researchers on Nigerian theatre have consistently voiced concerns about the state of theatre training in the industry in the country and the need to do something urgently to redress the various imbalances in the system to enhance quality and competitiveness in an increasingly globalised world for years (Abati, 2001; Adesokan, 2004; Adeoye, 2009). While reviewing the theatre scene in Nigeria, in his significant capacity as a foremost culture commentator and newspaper columnist before he became government's spokesperson, Abati (2001) raised concerns about the “dearth of dramatists” and the “poverty of dramatic productions” and blamed the universities for not doing enough to correct the imbalance. His position is amplified in Adeyemi's (152-153) rather terse observation that “Very often, university theatre graduates[in Nigeria] go through a very traumatic experience as they are ill-equipped for the challenges posed by the practice of their theatre calling where artistry is measured by the degree of pragmatic involvement.” He adds that:

In a society like Nigeria where the professional theatres have become more popular, in view of their providing entertainment for more people throughout the country, the academic discourse and debate of the university dramatists are often regarded as philosophical trite with little or nothing to contribute to the sustenance and enrichment of the artistic and cultural lives of the people. This, of course, often generates a kind of antagonism between the academic and professional dramatists.

The obvious deficits in theatre education and training in Nigeria or the lack of integrative training that prepares the theatre graduate for the baseline requirement of the industry and the absence of strategic connection between the academia and the industry unfortunately remains to this day. There is no limit to positions and opinions which boldly indicate that something is wrong about the present state of theatre training in Nigeria. Adeoye (92), for example, asserts that Nigerian theatre thrives on a “copycat mentality”. Adesokan (189) provides proof for Adeoye's observation in

describing the video film industry in Nigeria as a “reckless stitching together of extensive references to local and global events, personalities, images...” These critiques of theatre practice in Nigeria point in no small measure to the gaps in theatre education and training in the country and can be taken very serious because some of the critics are scholars and practitioners who wear the shoes and truly know where it pinches. The true picture of the practice of theatre in the country couldn't therefore have come from better sources and the urgent need for improvement and quality enhancement could not also have come at a better time than the twenty-first century where repositioning and quality enhancement are massively orchestrated in all fields.

Every industry needs improvement and so must constantly assess its operation to see if it meets the quality demands of the field. Some universities in different parts of the world have re-imagined their operational philosophy; courses have been merged and new ones introduced. New routes of learning and scientific inquiry have emerged with the promise of better results. Interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary study is gaining ground and researchers are crossing disciplinary boundaries to realise their aims in collaboration with colleagues in fields and areas formerly considered strange disciplinary bed fellows (Perrin, 2010; Yan, 2011). Individuals and societies think of repositioning as *repositioning* and *rebranding* lately emerge as the new buzz words of industrialisation. It commands a lot of attention (Yan, 2011). It necessarily should command the attention of every discernible people and professional groups in the twenty-first century. The theatre field in Nigeria needs to move with the rest of the world as it is clearly observed that the field has been slow in transformation to meet with the challenges of the modern world.

Suggested Areas of Transformation in Theatre Education in Nigeria

Transformation and quality enhancement in theatre training in Nigeria from our perspective is based on best practices in other parts of the world. This is not to say that local efforts are not producing results that have also commanded the admiration of other parts of the world in some areas. We are not also claiming superior competence in any way to warrant making these suggestions nor overlook the challenges that theatre departments face in an environment where little or no premium is paid by the different sectors of the economy in the country to the demands of running a capital-intensive programme like theatre education. However, with this background in mind, we suggest that quality enhancement and transformative repositioning should be considered in the areas of curriculum review, corporate identity modification and rebranding, multi-disciplinary research focus, increased collaboration between the

academia and the industry, internal and external academic exchanges, integration of business, entrepreneurship, marketing communication, event management into theatre and arts management training, emphasis on tourism development and industrial theatre, applied theatre focus, facility enhancement and maintenance, emphasis on practice as complement to theory, re-activation of future development channels, re-introduction of internship and industrial experience (where it is not available), introductory training in copyright and intellectual property law and many other issues that could best be left for future engagement. We shall therefore endeavour to explain these issues but will limit our focus only to key areas of concern.

Curriculum Review

The Nigerian theatre training curriculum needs to be reviewed and positioned to meet the needs of the current digital environment of the twenty-first century. The truth is that the existing curriculum for theatre training in Nigeria does not satisfy the demands of a fast changing and developing society such as the one we find ourselves currently. The theatre curriculum in Nigerian university system, with the exception of some of the universities that have embarked on review recently, is notably so old and out of touch with modern reality. If the theatre profession is to compete effectively with its peers in the other parts of the world, reviewing the curriculum is a necessity and is trusted to enhance the quality of training on offer. The crisis of the theatre business in Nigeria is that the training given to graduates does not depict the reality in the industry.

So there is need to change the curriculum and inject new courses in the areas of information communication technology, business management, development studies, social research, new media, journalism, entertainment technology and other subjects that will help position the practitioners in the current new society that is ruled by business, globalisation and digital technology. Julius-Adeoye (129) strongly advocates for awareness in the theatre scholarship community, a position that enjoys our support, about what he describes as “the ever-growing need of events and artists management courses in Nigerian academic theatre curriculum” to enable “theatre remain relevant in an age of information communication technology (ICT).” ICT training should not just be an adjunct course done to fulfil the General Studies content but should be an inbuilt part of the curriculum in theatre training. Theatre has gone beyond the stage to admit new vistas of manifestations in a more technological form. The context of today's existence cannot rule out the influence of technology in the education field and especially in the performance arena.

Corporate Rebranding

The theatre programmes of some Nigerian universities are yet to come to terms with the need for corporate name change or rebranding even when a recent study indicates that it has a lot to do with the marketability of a programme or project (Yan, 2011). To suggest a change of nomenclature or identity in Nigerian theatre departments is not to suggest something that is out of place. It is what has been done to good benefits in the other parts of the world. The present century is a media-oriented time and people are naturally comfortable with names that will command attention, create niche and market their products. A quick sample of current theatre arts students and graduates of theatre arts across the country indicates that those from departments where “communication” or “media” is reflected in their certificates have brighter chances of being employed in the media field or in jobs where media and communication expertise is required than those with just “theatre arts” or “performing arts.” This is not to claim that the addition of the appellation “media” or “communication” is a substitute for competence and demonstration of brilliance expected of every proper graduate of a university. The emphasis here is on creating a corporate identity that is commensurate with the demands of contemporary times and which also truly affirms the nature and quality of our training.

We are therefore not going to lose anything by responding to the needs of the time but there is every indication that our profession will gain from a rebranding effort. Currently, employment opportunities for graduates of the humanities are lean all over the world (Novick, 2011). The need to review our offerings, to create brighter opportunities for our students on graduation, while also positioning our course as a significant contributor to solutions to present-day problems is imminent. While acknowledging the good example of some Theatre Arts departments in Nigerian universities, which have shifted to adopt names and corporate identity that clearly indicate their engagement in the training of manpower in the fields of applied media and communication, it is pertinent to encourage others to do the same for the benefit of our profession. Again, though it is our trade to explore the artistic medium to reflect societal realities, it is noteworthy to say that we do this as communication and media practitioners and this should rightly reflect in our corporate identity.

Multi-disciplinarity and Intercollegial Collaboration

The need for collaboration between other disciplines in the arts with theatre scholars and between theatre scholars and colleagues in the different fields of specialisation will work to the advantage of our students. Theatre departments in the various parts

of the country should increase effort in identifying areas of collaboration and work together to achieve better results. The current practice where some departments only concentrate in their business in complete exclusivity or with minimal linkage to “departments and colleagues in their catchment areas” (Ikiddeh 5) is not helping the growth of the field. Current global emphasis is on intellectual pursuits of multi-disciplinary engagement. Theatre training has to embrace this new wave of thought if it desires to be relevant in the current era.

Linking Academia with the Industry

There is a longstanding practice by theatre/drama programmes in the various universities in South Africa, for example, of inviting industry professionals every year to audition and interact with graduating students. In Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, it is tagged “Auditions for Industry” (Brochure, 2012). It is a very well-thought out, dutifully planned, supervised and significant event that the entire department devotes a whole day to. The various casting directors and artist's agencies are invited officially and given ample opportunity to sit and interact, audition and sign contract with graduates they identify as good materials for the professional arena. This is a practice that promotes strong relationship between the academic environment with the industry and which builds a platform for graduates to fit in easily into the professional world.

The practice of sending theatre students to have industrial experience with culture, theatre, media organisations should be emphasised again in Nigerian universities as this will also act as some form of “auditions for industry” for the students. Theatre departments that have sustained the tradition of internship for their students should do more to create innovative avenues of exposing their products to institutions and industrial organisations outside the traditional “theatre or culture circuit” to gain experience as job markets increasingly demands for non-traditional skills in the corporate sector. This is because the work environment in the twenty first century has changed dramatically and employers now look out for competent, innovative, intelligent and creative people to contribute to their growth from any field, irrespective of what they studied in the university (Perrin *et al* 2).

Need for Entrepreneurship, Marketing and Management in Theatre Curriculum

While acknowledging that our various theatre or creative arts departments produce very brilliant actors, directors, writers, choreographers and technicians for the country, however the knowledge these practitioners take to the actual practice

environment is bereft of business acumen and skills. A recent study has indicated this as a source of hindrance to successful practices at the professional private level (Novick 3). Most theatre artists in the country know very little about business proposal writing, marketing communication and survey, core ingredients of business operations and success in a modern world. Many of our former students go into the real world with very brilliant production or project ideas but are hampered by inadequacy of the skills required to articulate them effectively to potential sponsors because they lack skills in business proposal writing. Sometimes, we find that it is professionals from other fields (for example, Wole Oguntokun), a lawyer, that control the niche market in private theatre practice supported by the elite organisations. Why? The answer may be traced to the issue mentioned above.

Facility Enhancement

Theatre education in a conventional sense depends on good facilitation all over the world. The business of the stage and screen advances as technology also improves. Theatre houses are made functional by the availability of adequate lighting, sound, scenery and costume/make-up equipment (Ododo and Oni, 2006). There is no talk of theatre training without the provision of the necessary equipment to back up the system. That is the practice all over the world. Many theatre schools have acquired new equipment to meet up with changes in digital technology. New theatres, rehearsal spaces and dance studios have been built to satisfy modern taste. However, the situation in Nigeria is different. Not only is there an utter lack of improvement in the conditions of the existing theatre training facilities in our universities (in some since the very foundation of the programme), the absence of the will to acquire modern theatre equipment keeps the country's theatre education years behind its peers in the other parts of the world.

A recent interaction with a technical theatre teacher in one of the universities in Nigeria painted a picture of utter hopelessness in this direction. When asked to comment on his personal experience as a specialist in the field of theatre technology, he lamented that the condition is so bad that he feels guilty each time he enters the classroom to tell students about things they cannot “see or touch” in the environment of the twenty-first century. His position is amplified in Adegbite (1) who studied the Nigerian university theatres and “observes that in the Nigerian theatre, whenever some modern theatre lighting effects equipment are mentioned, “fear” usually grips most young and prospective designers.” This fear according to him is “because many of them are neither exposed to nor are familiar with these modern facilities yet” (1).

The problem stated here is compounded by the absence of proper facilities that could be called theatres in Nigerian campuses and the “lack of replenishment and maintenance” (Enendu 40-46) where they even exist. While agreeing with Enendu that “theatrical design and technology is the growth area of theatre practice in the 21st Century,” the corresponding need to turn attention to this field in Nigerian theatre education through the provision of adequate facilities to enhance effective training of students is a commitment that all the stakeholders in the field, private organisations, foreign donor agencies and the government must work together to accomplish.

Conclusion

This paper centres on generating thought on the practice imperative that can possibly enhance the quality of theatre training in Nigeria to enhance global competitiveness as well as reposition it for the task of fostering the entrepreneurial dreams of the nation as indicated in the NUC Benchmark for courses in theatre/performing arts. The paper has succeeded in examining the foundational context of formal training in theatre in the country, identifying key indicators of benefits and outcomes in the field in the past years as well as pointing out the critical benchmark that can be derived from global best practices to enhance the quality of theatre scholarship and professionalization in the country. It is also the position of the paper that significant and strategic future development channels such as the NUTASA/NUTAF which acted as a grooming field for the future leaders of the profession should be re-visited, re-energised and aided to become functional.

Also, the theatre industry in Nigeria should tap into the global upsurge in tourism as a major revenue earning stream for emerging economies in the developing world by integrating tourism and hospitality training into the curriculum of theatre studies. The government should support theatre arts departments that are already heading in this direction. Nigeria has all the resources to develop into a key tourism location but the entertainment and creative enterprise where theatre belongs should be positioned as a key player in that process as noted in countries where tourism and hospitality flourishes. There is also the need to expose theatre students to training in intellectual property law to enable them fit into a trade environment dominated by copyright issues and other best practices in the global environment.

Works Cited

- Abati, Reuben. "ANA and the Challenges of the Writing in the 21st Century." *The Guardian on Sunday* 6 Nov. 2001: 30.
- Adedeji, Joel Adeyinka. and Hyginus Ekwuazi. *Nigerian Theatre: The Dynamics of a Movement*. Ibadan: Caltop Publications, 1998.
- Adedeji, Joel. Adeyinka. "Alarinjo: The Traditional Yoruba Travelling Theatre." *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1981. 221-248.
- Adegbite, Adesina "Inadequate technical Facilitation in the Nigerian University Theatre: Bane of the Development of Technical Aesthetics." 2006. Available at: <http://www.unilorin.edu.ng/publications/adesina.htm>. Accessed: 5 May 2013.
- Adeoye, Abdul Rasheed Abiodun. "On Theatre Scholarship and Controversy: The Case of the Director in the African Theatre." *Parnassus: University of Uyo Journal of Cultural Research* 5 (2009):92-106.
- Adeyemi, Taiwo. "Towards Bridging the Gap Between the Academic and Professional Theatres in Nigeria." *Cross-currents in African Theatre*. Ed. Austin Asagba. Ibadan: Kraft, 2001.161-167
- Adesanya, Afolabi. "From Video to Film." *Nigerian Video Films*. Ed. Jonathan Haynes. Jos: Nigerian Film Corporation, 1997. 13-20
- Adesokan, Akin. "How they see It: The Politics and Aesthetics of Nigerian Video Films." *African Drama and Performance*. Eds. John Conteh-Morgan and Tejumola Olaniyan. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004.189-197.
- Akwang, E. and Idaresit Inyang. "Kinship Taboos and Royalty in Nigeria's Video Films: A Study of *My Darling Princess*." *Africa and Beyond: Arts and Sustainable Development*. Eds. Patrick Ebewo, Nzo Sirayi and Ingrid Stevens. London: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013. 390-404.
- Allais, Stephanie Matseleng. *Quality Assurance in Education*. Braamfontein: Centre for Education Policy Development, 2009.
- Ayakoroma, Foubiri Barclays. "Theatre Practice in Nigeria: To be or not to be?" 2012.

Available at: <http://www.nico.gov.ng/features.html>. Accessed: 20 April 2013.

Balogun, Françoise. *The Nigeria Cinema*. Enugu: Delta Publications, 1987.

Cremonini, Leon, *et al.* *Impact of Quality Assurance on Cross-border Higher Education*. Enschede: Centre for Education Policy Studies, 2012.

Daramola, Adeyemi. "The Quintessential Oni: Language as Theatre and Theatre as Language in Nigeria." *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 4.2 (2012): 258-266.

Department of Drama and Film. *Auditions for Industry: Programme of Activity and Artists*

Profile Brochure. Faculty of the Arts, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa, 2012.

Doki, Ama Gowon. *Traditional Theatre in Perspective: Signs and Signification in Igbe, Girinya and Kwagh-hir*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2006.

Ebewo, Patrick. "The Emerging Video Film Industry in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects." *Journal of Film and Video* 57.3 (2007): 46-57.

Ebong, Inih Akpan. "Drama and Theatre among the Ibibio of South Eastern Nigeria: A Case Study of Utuekpe or Ekoon Drama." Unpublished PhD thesis, Institute of West African Studies, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, UK, 1990.

Enendu, Molinta. "Development of Technical Theatre in Nigeria: The Role of Duro Oni." *The Guardian* 23 Sept. 2012: 40-46.

Falola, Toyin. *Culture and Customs of Nigeria*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001.

Gbilekaa, Saint. *Radical Theatre in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Caltop, 1997.

Ikiddeh, Imeh. "Nigerian Oral Literature: The Prospects and Challenges of Growth in the 21st Century." Unpublished paper presented during the Literary Roundtable of the Association of Nigerian Authors, Akwa Ibom State Branch at the Little Play House, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, 2005.

Inyang, Ofonime. *The Performing Arts in South-South Nigeria: Interventions and Participatory Development Perspectives*. Lagos: Bezel Publishing Company,

2013. IQS. "What is Quality Assurance?"
[http://www.independentqualityservice.com/page/what is quality assurance](http://www.independentqualityservice.com/page/what-is-quality-assurance).
Accessed: 24 April 2013.

Julius-Adeoye, 'Rantimi. Nigerian Theatre Arts Curriculum and Events Management. 2011. Available at:
http://www.academia.edu/667991/Nigerian_theatre_arts_curriculum_and_event_management. Accessed: 30 April 2013.

Kis, Viktoria. "Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review on Potential Effect." 2005 Available at:
<http://www.oecd.org/edu/tertiary/review>. Accessed: 10 April 2013.

Manghani, Kishu. "Quality Assurance: Importance of Systems and Standard Operating Procedures." *Perspectives on Clinical Research* 2.1 (2011): 34-37.

National Universities Commission. "Bench Mark Minimum Academic Standards for Undergraduate Programmes in Nigerian Universities-Arts." 2007. Available at:
<http://www.nuc.edu.ng>. Accessed: 19 April 2013.

Novick, Rebecca. "Please, don't start a Theatre Company! Next Generation Arts Institutions and Alternative Career Paths." *GIA Reader* 22.1 (2011):1-20.

Obidi, Samuel Shanu. *Culture and Education in Nigeria: A Historical Analysis*. Ibadan: University Press, 2005.

Ododo, Sunday and Oni, Duro, eds. *Technical Theatre Practice in Nigeria: Trends and Issues*. Lagos: CBAAC, 2006.

Ogunbiyi, Yemi. *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Nigerian Magazine, 1981.

Okome, Onookome. *Cinema and Social Change in West Africa*. Jos: Nigerian Film Corporation, 1995.

Obafemi, Olu. *Contemporary Nigerian Theatre: Cultural Heritage and Social Vision*. Lagos: CBAAC, 2001.

Perrin, Craig, et al. *Developing the 21st Century Leader: A Multi-level Analysis of Global Trends in Leadership Challenges and Practices*. Florida: Achieve Global Publishing, 2010.

- Pitt, John H. "Quality Assurance in Education and Training in a South African Context." *Higher Education Quality Enhancement in South Africa: Processes and Challenges*. Pretoria: Van Schaick Publishers, 2010.56-67.
- Shaka, Femi Okiremuete. *Modernity and the African Cinema: A Study in Colonialist Discourse, Postcoloniality and Modern African Identities*. Trenton/Asmara: Africa World Press, 2004.
- Yan, Jack. "Social Media in Branding: Fulfilling a Need." *Journal of Brand Management* 18.9 (2011): 68-96.
- Yerima, Ahmed. *Modern Nigerian Theatre: The Geoffrey Axworthy Years, 1956-1967*. Ibadan: Kraft, 2005.
- _____. "Colonialism and the Development of Drama in Nigeria." *Cross-currents in African Theatre*. Ed. Austin Asagba. Ibadan: Kraft, 2001. 31-45.
- Zoqaqi, Parsa. *Impact of Quality Assurance on Higher Education: Regulating and Improving Impact*. 2011. Available at: http://www.anqahe.org/files/abu_dhabi_2011/fullpaper.pdf. Accessed: 10 April 2013.

QUALITY ASSURANCE: CONFRONTING THE ODDS IN NOLLYWOOD FILMS

John Iwuh

Redeemer's University, Mowe

Abstract

Quality assurance is not in the rubberstamp appended on a product, it is a statement of quality given when it successfully passes the rigorous gateways meant to guarantee standard. The standard could be set by a company or, as guided by policy, a regulatory body for an industry. In Nigeria, there is a censor's board for the "regulation" of Nollywood films. However, the body has served more as a gateway for numerical checks and financial gain than for quality assurance. The demand for Nollywood films has continued to soar not because of high production quality compared to international films but rather due to its recognizable cultural content and socio-cultural reality. Functionality in the areas of local content aesthetics and cultural affinity drive the interest for Nollywood films as pastime habit rather than critical viewing for quality and personal archiving for posterity. The time has come to consider quality as a service to Nollywood film consumers. The areas requiring urgent attention include weak story line, declamatory acting and verbose dialogue, star-syndrome in casting and rushed production process. In the midst of these odds, using awards (recognition) as a parameter for quality, this paper sampled a few successes within the Nollywood brand like Chineze Anyaeze's Ije and Kunle Afolayan's Phone Swap along with other award winners which have skipped the "local standard" barrier as cases in the process of self-cleansing for quality assurance. Finding shows that these films had careful consideration of the six items identified above to merit their high rating among Nollywood films for export. The paper concludes that these feats are not insurmountable by other Nollywood film producers.

Introduction

I think Nigerian movies are getting better and better every day. This is an industry that is about 20 years old and it has recorded remarkable progress in the time frame. I think, with more training for actors, producers, directors and structure put in place, the industry has the ability to make more progress in future. For instance, we need agents and managers who will deal with contracts so that artistes don't have to be

bogged down by these things. – Tayo Elesin

For everything in Nollywood is cheap to the point of excess. In plain terms, and as far as I am aware in well documented comparative profiles of the national film traditions of the planet, Nollywood leads the rest of the world in how cheaply, how quickly and how effortlessly films are produced and released – Biodun Jeyifo.

Hollywood, the headquarters of American film industry, has produced some major influences in terms of nomenclature; having begotten two extra “woods” in the Indian Bollywood and the Nigerian Nollywood. Nevertheless, the three film traditions are significantly different. However, technology and many years of experience put the Americans ahead in the various areas of film classification and production techniques. The Indians have also patiently and painstakingly gone through stages of development, imbibing the celluloid style of filmmaking before releasing their films into video and digital formats. Nollywood refers to Nigerian films and its industry. Although films in English have been shot by Nigerians (Edie Ugboma, Ola Balogun, etc.), and the Yoruba film tradition was already in existence, the term “Nollywood” is not known to have existed before 1992 when Kenneth Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* created a resurgence in the packaging of Nigerian socio-domestic stories into VHS tapes. Nollywood film as a trademark, in large part, has retained the kind of stories that launched it into outstanding success until recently. As Nollywood reputation continues to soar in its low budget films, the overall technical quality of the films has not enjoyed corresponding rise in the growing industry twenty years on. Many critics have written about these shortcomings some of which shall be discussed here.

For condemning Nollywood's lack of creative depth, predictable story line and petty domestic issues and rituals, Alamu's “Narrative and Style in Nigerian (Nollywood) Films” quarrels with Nollywood's critics like Akande, Balogun and Iroh describing their views as “personal preferences rather than an objective evaluation of the industry” (164). According to him, “cultural realism, didacticism, originality and the coherence of plots” (164) should be the focus. Unfortunately, Alamu's theoretical angle of *mise-en-scene* and other technical approaches also becomes subjective, and academically too pure for a Nollywood producer, whose economic motive precludes the quality considerations of filmmaking techniques. Besides, culture and technical quality have little or no correlation. In other words, the high quality of films from Hollywood and Bollywood has not in any way denied them of their cultural origins

whether the thematic content is trite or not. Alamu, having agreed that “who pays the piper dictates the tune” (169), concludes the argument that the source of fund and the need to break even in low budget films in an environment battling against piracy defeat the technical and cultural argument in defence of Nollywood against earlier critics.

In the area of plot and conflict in Nollywood films, Ebewo is less kind but frank to point out that these two items are marred by premature tensions that are “constructed around repetitive, nonsensical plots which result in situations and contentions that are generally audacious” (qtd. Krings and Okome 57). Frankly, some of the audacity of these films could be in the imaginative concoctions of our screen writers regarding the personalities and powers of the “Igwe” in Igbo land, the degree of his powers, and if indeed the Igwe is a king or the semantic outcome of praise or salutation. Thus often, the difference between an Eze, Ozo or Igwe is often not clear.

In general, critical arguments have taken the swinging curve of a pendulum; gliding between the critics I would call the protectionists (who argue for improved quality and customer protection, and seeking to correct the impression held by many that Nollywood thrives on cheap, inferior and low production concept), the economists (who give tremendous credit to Nollywood that started from nothing, empowered the unemployed, contributed to GDP, and still holds prospect for millions regardless of quality), and the culturalists (who contend that Nollywood has become the most visible cultural ambassador no matter how contentious or audacious the content of these movies may be). Ayo Akinwale (2013) chronicles that much and believes that there is no better instrument for cultural diplomacy than Nollywood while Onookome Okome (1995) contends that social change in the African sub-region cannot be separated from the political dimensions of the thematic content of its cinemas. However, opinions from more experienced backgrounds where film traditions have endured for over a hundred years are more concerned with documentation rather than the immediate economic concern no matter the attendant problems. In other words, recognizing the little beginnings of Nollywood despite the poor quality of these films is important for building and developing an information database necessary for critical assessment. In this regard, it is important to appreciate the passion with which Jonathan Haynes laments, in “Literature Review: Nigerian and Ghanaian Videos”, the inadequate publications on Nigeria and Ghana videos, as well as the insufficient consultations by researchers of the existing ones. Consequently, publications have been more of enthusiasm-driven research. Thus what appear to be new are ideas and rehashes of what already exists.

According to Haynes, “scholars tend to make few references to others working in the field, debates have been rare, and there has been a great deal of repetition” (105). Haynes' fury hinges on the fact that videos (documentaries or dramatic performances designed for outreach into rural areas) impact nearly all fields, ranging from ecology and health to language and yet little reference is made to the originators. He notes, nonetheless, that the many years which the film industry remained comatose also stunted academic literature on film from evolving in visual and performing arts departments.

The rejuvenation of home videos in Ghana and Nigeria truly justifies Haynes' observation. As the qualities of these videos improve, the market widens, stakeholders get return on investments while the many broad areas of literature on these films will assume a natural course of development. There is no doubt that the quality of films produced in Nigeria since 1992 after Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* has witnessed great improvement, the same manner it has for the economic wellbeing of the stakeholders. But building the film industry through academic literary appreciation requires greater attention to the art of filmmaking in order to withstand the arguments in comparative film literature. Thus explaining what is meant by “the many broad areas of literature on these films”, it is difficult for critics to develop interest in Nigerian film criticism or be overtly sympathetic with it if there is little creativity in the areas of story, acting, directorial vision, cinematography, editing and general technical quality. However, the establishment of international film awards as a buffer to the local ones is beginning to generate not only the interest but also the awareness of what separates the chaff from the wheat. These awards should be able to challenge the films shot in Nigeria by Nigerian producers to look in the direction of increased budget for their films in order to compete with the more exposed film makers like Chineze Anyaeze, Kunle Afolayan and other Nigerian filmmakers living abroad.

Despite the many categories of awards established by award institutions wanting to outdo one another, the feature films of Nollywood fall into three major categories. These are: traditional (including epics), ritual and the modern domestic films. The traditional could refer to the stories domiciled in the culture terrain where the traditional/cultural dictates preclude the events around the characters and their personalities from modern influence. Often, the stories showcase the efficacy of traditional ideology as pivots and true values necessary for a pure society. This is the stronghold of the well-established Yoruba film makers like Tunde Kelani, a cinematographer who, according to Shaibu Hussein in *Moviedom...Nollywood*

Narratives, has been in the “forefront of the production of culture-based films using contemporary themes to explain cultural myths and traditions” (25). He is the toast of Nigerian screenwriters in that category for the production of a robust list of successful titles like *Koseegbe* (1995), *Agogo Eewo*(2002) and *Thunderbolt* (2000) among many others. As successful as these films were, they were shot on good quality video. Home video category for the local market has been its main target.

The success of the Yoruba film genre hinges on familiar traditional myths whose legendary figures left prints and signs as pointers and references to their presence. The stories import the past to interlace with the present, using appropriate symbols by tacit pronouncements from the priests to register the irreversible canons of ancient institutions which modern socio-political systems aim to bastardize. It continues along its strong ritualistic tradition as the mainstay of the belief system. These are the strong points of *Saworoide* (1999) and *Agogo Eewo*. The story lines are well situated in the people's culture and worldview; although they cling a bit on magical reality for effect, the scenery depends less on the falsehood of the ultra-rich of the society. The Yoruba movie genre remains the most consistent among its counterparts in the other geopolitical zones due to an enduring theatre tradition. While the Igbo/English and Hausa language film traditions existed mostly for television, the Yoruba film had graced the public cinemas in Lagos and other states of the federation especially with the films of Hubert Ogunde.

Ritual as cultural practice has always stood between the traditional and the modern domestic feature films. For one reason, ritual provides the most effective parameters preferred by diabolic minds for the administration of evil. While 1992 may not be the origin of Nigerian film or the mytho-cultural or diabolic content, the revival of what metamorphosed into Nollywood stood on this distasteful identifiable “popular culture” in Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* to drive its story as the most popular explanation to quick wealth in Nigeria. The films that followed this first effort toed the witchcraft occult line even after Nnebue rode on the concept of “Uptown Girl” for his *Glamour Girls* (1994). Even though the stories and production qualities of these films were more or less of the television standard, the reception was high because for once, Nigerians saw the modern domestic Nigerian story in their living rooms.

Without doubt, improvement in Nollywood films started almost immediately, especially in the number of films churned out. A slight difference started becoming obvious from the post mid-1990s, precisely from year 2000 onward when much better achievements were recorded in screen writing, acting and production quality. But the improvement was not broad-based enough to insulate

later Nollywood entries like *Ijele* (1999) and *My Idol* (2008) from negative criticism. However, there have been more accolades than vituperations. It is important to note that austere budget and shortcut approach in Nollywood film have not gone down well with acclaimed filmmakers like Ola Balogun and Eddie Ugboma while critics like Afolabi Adesanya, Abiodun Olayiwola and Patrick Ebewo have condemned the artistic mediocrity in Nigerian film industry as earlier cited. It thus appears that critics in favour of Nollywood are more driven by patriotic pride to heap accolades on the infant film industry with hasty conclusions. Despite listing a myriad of shortcomings in *African Theatre Aesthetics*, Ogunsuyi still asserts in 2007 that the film industry in Nigeria has matured (19). The Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists may also have adopted a sympathetic editorial policy to shield the growing film industry from excessive vituperations. The passion for praise must have remained strong up to 2011 when the second edition of the *Nigerian Theatre Journal (NTJ)* for 2009 was published without Iwuh's "Nollywood, How will I Fare in Hollywood" after a good peer review. The article was anything but praises for the Nigerian movie enterprise. However, scholars who misconstrue such strong views as negative may well consult Biodun Jeyifo's Lecture, "What is Right and What is Wrong with Nollywood" delivered at Redeemer's University International Lecture Series in 2013.

Twenty years after, some brilliant mentions notwithstanding, Nollywood is still beset with many lingering odds. It no doubt will continue to occur because even Hollywood has records of awful films that are not worth their cost. In assessing the strides in any development, certain significant achievements would normally stand as milestones. For instance, from the invention of the movie camera to the silent movie era of the 1890s, and it took series of experimentations before sound was finally synchronized with vision about the 1930s. With technology in place at the time Nollywood took off, and with examples of films that make international box office hits, the number of bad films in Nollywood should not outnumber the good ones. This view appears to be the position of hard-line critics.

One fact is undisputed about Nollywood; it has created jobs for many in a country with high unemployment rate. It has created entrepreneurs in the many areas of film business. Apart from the artistic angle, equipment leasing and part-time participation, many cute personal houses, clubs and hotel spaces are known to have been used as film locations at a cost. Rebecca Moudio of *African Renewal* singles out Jason Njoku listed by Forbes Magazine as "one of the top ten young African millionaires to watch". With \$8m proceeds from film sales in three years, 71 employees in three continents, Njoku is an example of the lucrative nature of

Nollywood and the many it has empowered economically. Finally, millions of job prospects await the industry if institutional funding becomes a reality.

The Need to Accommodate Criticism

The little controversy about criticism is that it makes bold to confront a situation the way it is, but no matter the degree of objectivity, a somewhat subjective angle emerges, often with a multiplier effect. In other words, it creates a victim each time it identifies the weaknesses of a piece of work. The point must be made however, that “awards” which every artist strives to get is a form of criticism. It then means that any work entered for an award which does not emerge as a winner is not good enough. If it is good, then it is not as good as those listed ahead of it. In other words, it is not as good as the winner. But this would not be taken kindly if said or printed on the pages of books. In 2008, over fifteen works were listed for ANA/Gabriel Okara Prize for Playwriting, none of them was found good enough for the prize. The fact that the books are published and on sale in bookshops and bookstands do not mean that they met standards expected of them. From this standpoint, it can be said that a movie title is not different. Unlike the playwright, the feature film project is mostly driven by commercial intention. And in the absence of a strong legal framework for the assurance of standard and quality control, the consumer is lured into purchasing a worthless film based on its title. Often, the consumer spends the money before realizing how bad it is. In this regard, some consumer-oriented considerations should guide both the producer and the regulatory authority.

Film criticism is as broad as the many different aspects that constitute the film art (story through editing, etc.), and critics also draw from existing works to determine current practice. This is important in order to give direction and focus to a film industry like Nollywood grappling through a developmental phase. There are those who retell the stories as they have been dramatized; they neither add nor remove. Many newspaper art columns adopt this style, but their reviews provide veritable information to academic researchers especially if such reviews are accompanied by the opinion of experts who watched the performance. There are those who chronicle partakers as they come and leave the industry. It presents a well-made portrait of an artist; faults are rarely highlighted. Some actually critique the works looking at the good and the bad sides; an approach which aims at balancing views (performance criticism). Some critics stand technical knowledge to reveal deliberate abandonment of professional of knowledge in a rush to beat a deadline. Such critics vent their fury on compromised standard which betray the commercial

intent of the producer who, in Ogunsuyi's words capitalizes on the “environmental conduciveness” to the consumer's disadvantage. Again, I refer to the two papers earlier mentioned. A film like Finomas produced *Queen of the Coast* (parts 1-8 up to 2012 and perhaps still counting) is one of the many of its type designed to impress the religious bigots who believe that Nigeria is in the strong grips of the occult kingdom, but particularly to brandish the perceived potency of Nigerian pastors to cast out demons. The resolution of the film is the parallel of the American “Western Television Serial” where the hero brings down a dozen armed attackers with his pistol. The story lines are not only predictable but cropped to winnow the religious penchant of Nigerians.

There are many reasons why Nollywood critics bother to make Nollywood films their business. One of them is that “universal rating knows the standard of a good movie using the talents and technologies available in the industry at the time Nollywood took off and the improvements on productions thereafter” (Iwuh 153). On this basis, Biodun Jeyifo took up his critique of Nollywood twenty years after, a reasonably safe time for a fast growing industry with developed apparatus for its business to have made a quantum leap from where it started. A few films no doubt can indeed attest to the fact that progress has been made. Films like Kunle Afolayan's *Figurine* (2009) and *Phone Swap* (2011), Obi Emelonye's *Mirror Boy* (2011) and Chineze Anyaene's *Ije* (2010) make the list.

Hussein's *Moviedom...* presents the Nigerian movie industry as all-success-no-failure. A valuable document no doubt, it is a citation manual for the hall-of-fame gallery. Hussein's style of contribution is definitely not a critique but a profile and roll call of Nollywood personalities who have navigated between acting, directing and producing Nollywood enough to rank among the two popular world film traditions, the Hollywood and Bollywood. In sandwiching between these strong film traditions, little consideration is accorded the quality gap between Nollywood and the other two traditions whose trades are founded on celluloid and not television. Nollywood has had less ambitious producers wishing to cross this barrier but for Afolayan, Emelonye, Anyaeze and a countable few.

The Nigerian Film Corporation in *Motion Picture Industry* sieved through a five-year guided essays that see Nollywood as the desired cultural ambassador and social image corrector, the much needed rebranding orator, the long-awaited miracle worker of a slumbering tourism industry and the illusive integrative tool haunting Nigeria's unity. Despite glowing accolades, not much emphasis was given to the fact that film makers need adequate protection for more confidence to invest, redirect

marketing strategies for better return and rid the industry of quacks through an active censor board. An active censor board as proposed is still a necessity.

In the forward to Brendan Shehu's *No...Not Hollywood*, Ekwuazi has noted in the same year that film in Nigeria began a new phase through the home video, that even though Nigeria has more film facilities, produces more feature films than other African countries put together, "Nigerian filmmakers...are grossly underexposed. .. The reason for this is only too obvious: the Nigerian film culture is seriously under-published" (xvi). On this ground, Ekwuazi shares the same page with Haynes. That situation really has not changed much, given the surge in which films are released in Nigeria. *No...Not Hollywood* is Shehu's insistence on how Nollywood should grow and differ from Hollywood. It should be totally African. On this ground also Tayo Elesin stays on the page with an old veteran. The name "Nollywood", no doubt shows how the private commercial intentions goes at variance with that of the government which gives out more stringent policies but less funding to reduce the pains of practitioners operating in a harsh working environment. On this account, the cultural policy remains a sleeping and dormant document waiting to be stirred into action.

Perhaps, one of the finest published works on film in Nigerian to date is *Making the Transition from Video to Celluloid* which directly tackles film procedure from the rubrics to achieve the highest cinematic experience and socializing pinnacle – the celluloid. Most current film practitioners do not appear to crave appetite for reading to improve; they are too busy shooting the next work at the standard of the previous one. *Making the Transition...* is the most articulate corrective mission by twenty of Nigeria's best film experts who combine practice with intellect. The vision behind this contribution is to guide the educator of the future film makers who observe the current shortcomings to make a bold step into the big screen with an eye for quality that can match international standard. The book is a good example of what government corporations should do. The Nigerian film corporation got it right, but again, it took the collaboration of UNESCO to make it happen. There is need for many more of such collaboration.

Shaka's "Rethinking the Nigerian Film Industry" remains relevant ten years on when he observed that the rush to make film in Nigeria is spurred by the fascination that a simple handy cam could capture images at the click of a button with little regard to composition and continuity, a tradition not too different from the attention given to social function (45-47). His observation hinges on the fact that a film is tailored towards catharsis and meaningful resolution in other to make artistic

impact. Given the number of films that hit the shelf annually, the practice still persists. There is no statistics of the approximate ratio of good to bad films of Nollywood but the scale may likely tilt toward the negative if assumption is permitted at the stage.

The Role of Awards

An award acts as an energizer; it raises confidence. Awards are rewards for commitment; they instil pride, open new phases in careers if given early. Awards also bring fulfilment when one is recognized to have made significant contribution to uplift people's standard of living. The artist in Nigeria should be appreciated for working so hard with very little institutional support. Investors should be recognized for daring into film venture in an environment like Nigeria where corporate bodies are yet to discover the goldmine locked in the movie industry. Notwithstanding, what is worth doing at all is worth doing well.

No doubt, one of the parameters of judging the quality of Nigerian films is by pitching them against films from other countries for a pride of place. For all intents and purposes, the size of a country is least considered when judging what makes a good film. Every nominated film must go through the litmus test set by the panel of judges. The question is which aspect of theatrical art is least important in film production criteria: directing, acting, lighting, sound, costume, makeup, set, or could it be the story or post production? If any, then it would be all hard work that still falls short of one-step to paradise. That which we think less important reveals our ignorance of the importance of that aspect so looked down upon. I have created a table from the list of award winners for 2012 and 2013 showing the winning entries and their countries of origin for quick reference and comparison. AMAA (Africa Movie Academy Awards), Africa's most prestigious award reveals that best films are characterized by the parameters listed below.

Table 1: Compiled from Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) website.

NOMINEES	NIGERIA		GHANA		SOUTH AFRICA		KENYA	
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
Best Short Film	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
Best Documentary	2	1	1		1	2	1	2
Best Animation	1	2	1	-	-	2	3	-
Best Film by Africans Living Abroad	4	5	-		-		-	
Best Production Design*	2		1		2		-	
Best Costume Design*	1		1		1		1	
Best Make up Design*	1		1		-		2	
Best Sound Track*	2		1		2		-	
Best Visual Design*	1	2			1		1	
Best Sound*	-	2	-		5		-	
Best Cinematography*	1		1		3		1	
Best Editing*	2	2			4		-	
Best Screenplay*	4	2	1		2		-	
Best(Director)*	2	2						
Best Film		2	-	-	1	1		1

The table above attempts to compare the efforts of the filmmakers from the East, West and South of Africa as the most active countries with some degree of theatre culture which also robs off on their film industry. It is significant to note that the size of Nigeria and its thousands of films produced annually has not produced any significant advantage over the countries with less than twenty films per annum. It means that if one film is a well-made film, it is enough to displace thousands of poorly made films despite the size of its country of origin. The onus lies on producers to understand the criteria for quality films.

However, it was wise for the award committee to have created a special category for Nigeria considering its domineering position in terms of volume to compete against its own best. Interestingly, if anyone had very low rating of Nigerian films, each of the films nominated for the best Nigerian films for 2012 and 2013 respectively also got nominated in the various categories at the continental level (Table 2). This category directly or indirectly also helps to give international assessment of Nigerian films using international (African) criteria thereby eliminating preconceived prejudice held at the local level.

Table 2: Nigerian Film Category

AMAA BEST NIGERIAN FILM NOMINATION	
2012	2013
1. <i>Unwanted Guest</i> 2. <i>Family on Fire</i> 3. <i>Alero's Symphony</i> *** 4. <i>Adesuwa</i> (Winner)** 5. <i>Phone Swap</i> * Winning: **Two categories, ***Three Categories	1. <i>Blood And Henna</i> * 2. <i>Heroes And Zeroes</i> *** 3. <i>The Meeting</i> 4. <i>Confusion Na Wa</i> (winner)** 5. <i>The Twin Sword</i> 6. <i>Kokomma</i> 7. <i>Okoro the Prince</i>

It is worthy to note that South Africa leads in the technical areas of best cinematography, best sound and best editing. These, of course, are the bedrocks that treat the story of a film. There is no doubt that an outstanding work in film would have considered the quality of cast, crew and post-production efforts to deliver good acting, good directing, picture quality and careful editing. In most cases, a wonderful work will be outstanding in more than one category (as indicated by the asterisks above).

'Film by Africans Living Abroad Category' underscores the need to recognize the creativity of the Nigerian artist and his/her ability to excel if given the right environment and infrastructure. In this category, there appears to be no contest against Nigeria according to the table below.

Table 3: By Africans Living Abroad

1. <i>Mystery of Birds</i> – USA / Nigeria 2. <i>Housemates</i> – United Kingdom / Nigeria 3. <i>Ben Kross</i> – Italy / Nigeria 4. <i>Paparezzi Eye in the Dark</i> – USA / Nigeria / Ghana	1. <i>Turning Point</i> : United States / Nigeria 2. <i>Assassins Practice</i> : United Kingdom / Nigeria 3. <i>Last Flight to Abuja</i> : United Kingdom / Nigeria 4. <i>Bianca</i> : United States / Nigeria 5. <i>Woolwich Boys</i> : United Kingdom / Nigeria
---	---

Nigerian film makers are not the only Africans involved in filmmaking abroad, but living outside Nigeria also encouraged them to discard the many pressing factors. They were not under pressure by any Idumota-based producer/marketer. The factors

behind their success story will be discussed under Anyaeze's *Ije*.

Towards Quality Assurance

A feature film is like stage drama irrespective of the screen format. It is a story in action about something, with a beginning, middle and end. In other words, a film should have a good plot structure, uniquely different from another one. It derives its stamp of quality and appeal from these organs that govern well-made stories, which is in turn delivered with the technicalities of the studio. How best the content of a film is mastered and edited will determine its life cycle. While institutional regulations may guide a producer to meet and comply with minimum standard, quality assurance should be a producer's personal drive to achieve a product of outstanding quality. In this manner and over time, a discerning consumer would come to believe a brand name like Mainframe or Kunle Afolayan or an Anyaeze film as a product to trust. In the opinion of this paper, and from the perspective of story/screenplay, the observations below make Afolayan's *Phone Swap* a good film.

Story Line: The storyline of *Phone Swap* capitalizes on two businesses that have made great impact on the economic lives of Nigerians in the last ten years. One is the expanding fashion market in Nigeria, utilizing local fabrics to create patterns that catch the admiration of all classes. The other is the GSM system of communication, both combined to make statement on emerging small scale entrepreneurs. Fashion is the creative enterprise while the phone is the enhancer. Alex(is) is the trade name; founder and chief executive who takes credit for all work from the outfit through outsourcing. Alexis “caters for the high in society...”and “has a reputation to uphold” that belief in her clients by giving the impression that her dresses are made by her highbrow fashion factory with automated sewing and embroidery machines. But in reality, the brand “Alexis” is created using local dress construction talents like Mary. So unlike the Alex(is), owner of the brand who is not a tailor, Mary(tailor) is “a fashion designer that can actually sew”.

Language/Dialogue: *Phone Swap* does not go for the fake-English-accent-craze of today's entertainment industry but rather, it capitalizes on the rich aesthetic potpourri of African languages which has self-entertaining values, depending on the context and temperament of the actor. For instance, there is a mix of Igbo-English between Mary and her father, Yoruba-English between Akin and his mother, and fante-English when Akin's Ghanian girlfriend gets into a fit of frenzy. Language is

effective, purposeful and functional. Dialogue is not thrown away as water being bailed from a flooded room.

Culture: Tradition and moral are kept in view with moderate contrast while love is given a simple treatment. For instance, when we meet Mary and her boyfriend for the first time over lunch in her shop, there is a display of love, rustic courtesy and mutual respect while deception waits for Mary. In the language of the film, love is not composed from the elite aristocratic perspective of the multimillionaire class as we see Mary go through the momentary heartbreak of a naïve low class, trusting and obedient daughter of a village farmer.

Circumstance: Perhaps, the most beautiful circumstance to explain destiny for two people who just relieved themselves of incompatible relationships is the collision between Mary and Akin at the departure lounge of the Airport. This accident sets the scene for all that follows in the lives of two strangers who swapped their phones in a most brilliant directorial touch of everyday occurrence.

Coincidence/Suspense: A play on two names, Alex (the fashion company and Alex, Akin's Personal Assistant), creates the unity and trust both Mary and Akin require from their contacts via short text messages to proceed to their mismatched destinations. This coincidence creates a kind of suspense that the viewer looks forward to being resolved.

Consistency: The concept of “phone swap” continues through name-swap (Alex/Alexis), house swap (both staying in the homes of the other), lifestyle-swap (both struggling to fit into ways of life completely strange to them), fight-swap (ex-lovers of both actors attacked for snatching their love), etc. But while Mary receives a five-star treatment, Akin battles and sandwiches through a crowded house to find a place to sleep at night, learns to farm while Mary meets an elite crowd through Akin's mother that is to define future clientele for her own outfit.

Class/Acceptance: *Phone Swap* merely gives a peep into the silent or unspoken attraction that later develops between Akin and Mary and the viewer expectantly looks forward to how the class difference will not only escalate and define the emotional aspect of the story. *Phone Swap* maintains complete silence on two major

issues; ethnic origin between Mary and Akin, and social class difference between the two. The story concentrates on Mary's tailoring skill and Akin's expertise in product marketing, development and territorial consumer prediction. There is no attempt to harp on class differences that normally lead to family opposition in marriages. Both families freely accept their visitors as a most desired occurrence in the lives of their wards, and the best hospitality accorded within their capacities to exercise.

Resolution: *Phone Swap* avoids the unnecessary repetition of already given message. For instance, Mary and Akin do not have to tell each other their brutal experiences following the attacks by their ex-lovers. We do not have to see Mary and Akin wed at the altar or in a lavish, time-wasting celebration in order to understand that they end up as husband and wife. The expectant, cordial second meeting at the airport on their return is enough to establish a mission accomplished of their separate engagements despite the coincidence of their meeting. We may safely predict marriage for them to satisfy our imagination.

Afolayan and Anyaeze belong to a new generation of filmmakers set to abandon the multipart commercial trick that Nollywood is known for and adopt the 90-105 minute boundary common with American and European films. Combining the commendable features of Afolayan's *Phone Swap* and the conscious departures noticed in Anyaeze's *Ije* (as a near template for Nigerian movie makers in English), the following analysis should serve as recommendation for Nollywood films.

Both films have a good combination of both celebrity actors in the right proportions. Even though *Ije* depends on Genevieve and Omotola to play the leads, *Phone Swap*, except for Joke Silva, shuns the superstar syndrome imposed by Idumota producers/marketers to pick on humble, less known faces as talents for its lead. By this action, *Phone Swap* has conquered the fear that only the faces of celebrity actors can make a film sell in Nigeria. Again, it proves that the more Nollywood films move away from Idumota marketers for funding, the more independence Nollywood films would have.

Both films exhibit the need to distinguish and separate the films serving the religiously soaked psyche of Nigerians from the art of good screen writing; thus the need to develop quality stories that are independent of 'cut and paste' bible passages that are grafted from the miracle peddling Nigerian brand of religious trade. They prove that there is no need for more gospel and prayer sessions in feature films than the expected imaginative poesy that make them good works of art. Without doubt, *Ije* and *Phone Swap* stand out clear from the gospel movies from the production houses

of Mount Zion Ministries and Zion Stone which include substantial bible passages in their stories. The fact that the movies of these two ministries are not straight sermons but dramatized stories for evangelism does not preclude them from quality assessment since financial return from the public guarantees the mainstay of their mission. Therefore, the public deserves top quality drama from this category of movies as do its American counterpart like *Touched by an Angel* (also serialized on television) or the deeply spiritual film *The Exorcist* (1973).

Ije and *Phone Swap* avoid the kill-joy type of suspense arising from weak concept, contradictory plot structure and premature suspense. This situation brings about the conspiracy of multipart stories for a film that can hardly survive a 90-minute duration. A little education is still required for many of Nollywood producers that a feature film is different from a television serial. At a Round Table Conference of the International Association of Theatre Critics held in 2013 at Redeemer's University, producers observed that the Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) has not functioned beyond the classification of films at a fee. There should be a body empowered to check this wanton numerical piling of stories that tell nothing after the first tape since the law establishing the NFVCB does not entrust it with the power to address production quality. It is share pillage; the consumer deserves some protection where the producer lacks the integrity to do so. *Ije* avoids the trick of unwarranted doubling of titles through pace and tempo. It also eliminates prolonged scenes which abound in Nollywood films via short and meaningful dialogues.

Ije and *Phone Swap* are able to establish that it is possible to discard the despicable adoption of fake accents by fake and genuine been-tos alike. It is an unholy belief which consciously tries to sell the idea to the youths that mimicking the poorly educated American ghetto-accent places them within the crème de la crème of Nigerian society, a belief which the Nigerian music industry has become completely brainwashed with. In it, they peddle and brandish the worst of English language in any English speaking country.

Phone Swap and *Ije* are able to prove that materials for a good work of art exist locally and within. We may do well to limit the duplication of Hollywood titles in a badly conceptualized adaptation or mutilation of well-made stories by professional film makers of Hollywood. It is ridiculous and objectionable to revel in titles coined from celebrities or issues trending on the internet. Titles like *Ben 10*, *Rehana*, *BlackBerry Babes*, *Facebook Babes* in the Nollywood brand call for urgent education of a section of Nollywood filmmakers on the need to be original.

There is the need to look inward to seek out personalities that abound in Nigeria if the producers can spend some time and money on research. With reference to “Discovering National Consciousness through Iconic Imaging” (Iwuh 1), stories of the nationalists and activists who envisioned a Nigeria for all are yet to be told. On this ground, Tayo Elesin, a British-Nigerian born actress of good profile attests to this, especially in her advocacy for a film about Nigeria's minister of finance and coordinating minister of the Nigerian economy.

***Ije*: A Near Template for Nigerian Movie Makers in English**

Whenever the portraits of Nigerian movie celebrities are read, their performance credits run between 100 and 500 films. Genevieve and Omotola could merit being on this list. While these are impressive numbers, one outstanding attempt provides a glaring exceptionality that could help to redefine the difference between a quality profile and a participation list. *Ije* features two popular Nollywood faces, Genevieve Nnaji and Omotola Jolade-Ekeinde. Given their CVs, *Ije* has gone places not because both actresses are featured but because the producer went for standard. After all, both artists did not win the best actress award from their participation in the film. Truly, Nigerians have seen these actresses in their countless roles, directed by Nollywood directors in their numerous acronyms. This observation does not in any way deny the highly rated actresses of their positions in the movie world of Nollywood. Let the truth be told, Cheneze Anyaeze decided to make a good film of outstanding quality, and frankly many Nollywood directors we know would have decimated Anyaeze's script.

For walking the opposite direction of Nollywood, *Ije* won the following prizes and awards: Best Feature Film category of the Arizona Black Film Showcase, Golden Age Award of the Las Vegas International Film Festival, Silver Palm Award by Mexico International Film Festival, Excellence in Filmmaking Award by Canada International Film Festival and got various other ground-breaking recognitions. The feat did not come without conscious efforts to make a difference. The following are some observations which Nollywood producers should pay attention to:

1. Devote the right time that a film requires. No two films are the same. Some require more time while some may require much less. A television serial like “Everyday People” shot in a single location cannot be compared to a film of six locations involving different states of Nigeria. Time must be given to materials which are not locally available while directors and their production

designers must seek and pay for locations which cannot be achieved by construction if time is limited. Patience is required. For instance, it took one and a half years to shoot *The Exorcist. Ije* accomplished this rule.

2. Proper management of the popular culture influence. One position is that the level of loquacity in our movies is characteristic of the reaction of Africans to shout. The view that Nigerians are noisy, culturally loud and extravagant in gestural portraiture received further grounding in Peter Enahoro's *How to be a Nigerian*. Characters in our films need to speak in a more controlled manner (Iwuh 150). Dialogue should be excused from narrating what the camera can capture and portray better. Emotion is what we all feel. "For instance, the sad posture of a bereaved woman with her eyes red and face streaming with tears conveys more pain than barrels of shout" (Iwuh 150). This is the approach of most good movies and *Ije* adopted it.
3. A good film requires fund, time, patience, energy and expertise (Powell 350). These situations cannot be different if a work of outstanding quality is desired in Nigeria. Eddie Ugboma in an interview with *The Sun Newspaper* had said that there is no reason why *Ijele* and *My Idol* should not have hit international mark if only the right attitude and funding was applied (25). Also, Jeyifo in his lecture earlier cited, observes that:

Everything in Nollywood is cheap to the point of excess. In plain terms, and as far as I am aware in well documented comparative profiles of the national film traditions of the planet, Nollywood leads the rest of the world in how cheaply, how quickly and how effortlessly films are produced and released (3).

4. Marketing. The time has come to dismantle the marketing cabal of Nollywood for the benefit of all stakeholders and the survival of the industry. Nollywood should move beyond the era of one-week-one-movie by every producer. Comparison with Hollywood and Bollywood should extend to the marketing aspect of both film traditions. Hollywood and Bollywood are:

For the most part run by big, corporate studios with multi-billion-dollar budgets... Both Hollywood and Bollywood have evolved to incorporate the technologies and economics of the digital revolution into their production and distribution processes, but have fundamentally retained

what they brought from their pasts in big, mechanical and analogue reproduction. By contrast, the shakers and movers in Nollywood are for the most part producers and marketers who neither have a past in big screen, big budget filmmaking and distribution, nor a sophisticated understanding of the new digital information and entertainment technologies (Jeyifo 4-5).

5. Bank on the professional. This demands the engagement of professionals in all aspects of the film art. There are very good and experienced directors in Nigeria who are not screen celebrities but who have the required training in film with strong foundation and years of experience in stage directing. Niji Akani who won the best AMAA director for 2013 stands tall and the list is long. Interpretation of role is an agreement between two artists; one is the actor, director is the other. A good director would pick one from out of ten ways a particular role can be interpreted and that judgment could hardly be faulted. Stereotypes are good directors' worst enemies. For instance, Ebewo (2013) pedantically agrees with Patrick Tucker on such conservative argument that good stage actors are not good screen actors due to poor vocal level management, contending that they are "too theatrical" owing to their training of speaking to large audience rather than the boom microphone. On the contrary, let it be known that a good stage actor is flexible and a bad film director is the one who lacks the confidence and interpretive depth to handle actors like Nkem Owoh, Sam Loco Efe and other celebrities of their status who are known to be incorrigible stereotypes. Nollywood directors should stop hero-worship and expand their interpretive apertures; kick out a stiff actor or pig-headed know-it-all.

Conclusion

This paper believes that expertise would begin to emerge in the different areas of film business with the right amount of funding alongside training. For instance, set building and set décor, props making, sound mastering and lighting should receive professional treatment. A growth in the professional integrity of production management in Nollywood would also encourage institutional funding of our films. The way a film budget is structured will reveal whether it is technically or artistically weighted. In Nollywood, producers groan under the weight of artists fees. Lancelot Imasuen revealed at the IATC Roundtable Conference that the budget of filmmaking

in Nigeria is in the ratio of 85%-15% between artist and production fees. Thus, the industry looks forward to a time that individual investors will begin to buy rights in Nollywood films. That is the trend that will indeed reverse the current ratio in favour of technical input if quality assurance stamp is desired in our films. Lastly, confidence in business investment is about the ability to recoup the sum invested and this cannot happen unless a new marketing system is designed, embraced and respected.

Regardless of the contending issues, if indeed, the customer is king, one can only agree with Ekwuazi that “until Nigerians ask for better films, Nollywood will remain the same” (Nigerianfilms.com). This paper concludes with Jeyifo's observation and strong belief that quality can be assured in Nollywood films if there emerges an:

Independent filmmaking that is free of both the pernicious dominance of exploitative, money-minded producers and marketers and the mediocrity of many technical crew who have never bothered to aspire to mastery of, and dexterity in the cinematographic equipment of the medium (Jeyifo 7).

For now, only the African filmmakers living abroad appear to have this consciousness. Nollywood filmmakers must key into this conscience with less prodding by government policy.

Work Cited

Akinwale, Ayo. *Nollywood as an Instrument for Nigeria's Cultural Diplomacy: Reflections of a Cultural Administrator*. Abuja: Institute for Cultural Orientation, 2013.

Alamu, Olagoke. “Narrative and Style in Nigerian (Nollywood) Films.” *African Study Monographs* 31.4 (Dec. 2010): 163-171.

Amaa Awards. 2013. AMAA.com <http://www.ama-awards.com/gallery/amaa-nominations-malawi>

Ebewo, Patrick. “The Nigeria Video Film Industry: Problems and Prospects”.

R e t r i e v e d 3 D e c e m b e r , 2 0 1 3 .

<http://ugowrite.blogspot.com/search/label/Literary%20Essays>

Ekwuazi, Hyginus. "Until Nigerians ask for Better Films, Nollywood will Remain the Same". Retrieved 4 December, 2013. <http://www.nigeriafilms.com/content.asp?contentid=4260&ContentTypeID=12>

Ekwuazi, Hyginus, J. Skomba and Onyero Mgbejume, Eds. *Making the Transition from Video to Celluloid*. Jos: Nigerian Film Institute, 2001.

Ekwuazi, Hyginus and Yakubu Nasidi, Eds. *No...Not Hollywood: Essays and Speeches of Brendan Shehu*. Jos, Nigeria: Nigerian Film Corp., 1992.

Etuk, Brian. *Motion Picture Industry*. Jos: Nigerian Film Corporation, 2012.

Haynes, Jonathan. "A Literature Review: Nigerian and Ghanaian Videos". *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 22.1 (2010): 105-120.

Hussein, Shaibu. *Moviedom...the Nollywood Narratives*. Lagos: African Film Academy, 2010.

Iwuh, John. "Nollywood, How will I Fair in Hollywood?" *Oye: Ogun Journal of Arts* xviii (2012): 141-61.

Jeyifo, Biodun. "What is Right and What is Wrong with Nollywood?" Redeemer's University International Lecture Series, 2013.

Krings, Matthias and Okome, Onookome. Ed. *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry*. New York: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Moudio, Rebecca. "Nigeria's Film Industry: A Goldmine?" retrieved 2 December, 2013. <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/may-2013/nigeria%E2%80%99s-film-industry-potential-gold-mine>

Njoku, Benjamin. "Why I hate Nollywood". <http://t.co/fkt6ezxeg0> accessed 22 June 2013, 1:45 AM. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201306241062.html> Interview with Tayo Elesin.

Ogunsuyi, Steve. *African Theatre Aesthetics*. Abuja: Root Books, 2007.

Okome, Onookome and Jonathan Haynes. *Cinema and Social Change in West Africa*.

Jos: Nigeria Film Corporation, 1995.

Shaka, Femi. "Rethinking the Nigerian Video Film Industry: Technological Fascination and the Domestication Game". *African Video Film Today*. Ed. Foluke Ogunleye. Manzini, Swaziland: Academic Publishers, 2003. 41-50.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND STAND UP COMEDY IN NIGERIA

William Sunday Onogu
Kogi State University, Anyigba

Abstract

The entertainment industry in Nigeria has assumed a phenomenal dimension which has attracted global attention. The prevailing socio-political and economic situation in Nigeria is a fertile ground for the entertainment industry. Economic hardship and bad leadership coupled with high rate of unemployment have created opportunities and encouraged people to explore and exploit other means of livelihood. Stand-up comedy as an aspect of the entertainment industry is seen as a soft landing ground for every Dick and Harry in Nigeria in recent times. This development explains the reason for the increase in substandard performances in stand-up comedy. Thus, for proper quality assurance in stand-up comedy, the paper argues that there is need for institutionalizing stand-up comedy training which should be included in the curriculum of Theatre Arts programme. The paper uses interview, discussion and literature review methods within a combination of qualitative and quantitative instrument for this research. The paper conclusively emphasizes the issues of funding and regulatory body for assuring quality in stand-up comedy in Nigeria.

Introduction

The entertainment space in the world today is delivering diverse leisure/recreational services to people of various cultural backgrounds with increasing patronage on a large market scale. One principal factor that is sustaining the entertainment market in the world today is its creativity in providing entertainment forms that appeal to diverse people around the world. Specifically, the Nigerian entertainment industry has assumed a phenomenal dimension that is progressively enjoying worldwide patronage. This is because of its growing diversity in entertainment forms that appeal to both local and international audiences. These include home video, music and stand-up comedy, which are extensively attracting international market against the background of emerging talents. This development in the entertainment industry is largely spurred by the appalling state of unemployment in Nigeria. For this reason,

the emerging generations have taken the bull by the horn to seek alternative means of livelihood in the creative market space. In this context, stand-up comedy, which seems to be an 'easy' way out from the unemployment quagmire, has now become a means of job and wealth creation for unemployed youths in Nigeria. This is an art form that lays emphasis on tension and stress relief, and it is usually performed by talented and skillful comedians who are creatively eloquent in funny speech art. Explaining stand-up comedy from the point of view of personal experience, Bernard Manning, a European stand-up comedian wrote in the *Whealtappers and Shunters Social Club Paper* that:

Comedy is simple but complex. Its complexities are of life but not of life's tragic issues. The one I do (stand-up comedy), is alive and happening just as comedy should ordinarily be. I don't wish to make jokes that communicate tragedy because of the inherent complexities of comedy, but of comedy because comedy must not be tragedy...(17).

Manning's position is a pointer to the fact that stand-up comedy is not an 'easy' entertainment venture for anybody to take up as a means of livelihood. No wonder, Will Ferrell, a comic actor is of the view that stand-up comedy is "hard, lonely and vicious" (2). Okabo also notes that "stand-up comedy is a product of the individual artist's creativity that is usually enriched by the audience response. It's a task that involves creative exploration of present and past events" (215).

In the light of this background, observation shows that the quality of stand-up comic arts in Nigeria is gradually ebbing away in the direction of inferiority complex. What is common today in Nigeria are stand-up comedians who have failed to familiarize with the pros and cons of jest art. Therefore, it is imminent that the high level of patronage or what one can call the renaissance of stand-up comedy in Nigeria through electronic media will soon decline. To assess the issue properly, this paper undertakes to research the standard of stand-up comedy in Nigeria, and to suggest a way forward on how to improve on the quality.

The Concept of Quality Assurance

Quality is a term that has been defined in various contexts to mean "standard". It could mean standard of training, education, entrepreneurship, business, manufactured goods and services. A definition that seems appropriate here for quality assurance is that of the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. It

defines it as “the practice of checking the quality of goods or services that a company sells, so that the standard continues to be good” (1340). This normative definition of quality assurance agrees with commitment to quality improvement and continual responsive approach to production of goods and services in general and artistic production in particular. It also agrees with regulatory demand for maintaining standard product and services at the institutional and entrepreneurial levels of producing goods and services, especially when it has to do with creative and performing arts enterprise. This is why at the institutional level, the *National Universities Commission* (NUC) regulation states that “Quality assurance is a key component of successful internationalization; a mechanism for building institutional reputation in the competitive local and global arena and a necessary foundation for consumer protection”. In agreement, Mosha states that quality assurance at the institutional level is “measured by the extent to which the training received from an institution enables the recipient to think clearly, independently and analytically to solve relevant societal problems in any given environment” (113). This has implication on the artistic training in tertiary institutions where Theatre Arts studies are offered as academic programmes in curricular activities. Professionally, quality assurance in the context of stand-up comedy in Nigeria deals with the level of standard amongst stand-up comedians. Quality in stand-up comedy is heavily dependent on originality, application of comic devices and the ability to verbalize extemporaneously. The capacity to maintain and sustain these comic speech art elements demand intensive training that is not acquired on informal schooling alone, but capacity building should be formalized in academic environment where theatre arts discipline exist as curricular programme. In this context, professionalism in the business of jest speech performing art will give rise to not just quality assurance, but quality control.

The Concept of Stand-up Comedy

Stand-up comedy is an art form that is concerned with making people laugh at the instance of a joke 'cracked' by the stand-up comedian. Unlike theatrical comedy which creates comedy within the structure of a play with funny characters and situations built in the play, stand-up comedy requires the congregated audience to laugh instantly just as jokes are made by the comedian on-the-spot.

Stand-up comedy started during the 18th and 19th centuries in music halls in the United Kingdom. However, the art is believed to be as old as man. It is one of the oldest art forms because of its fluidity wherever people are gathered for a particular

occasion. Thus, jest speech art has a long standing history among cultures all over the world. Its patronage in urban setting increased at the end of the Second World War. Many members of the armed forces had developed a taste for stand-up comedy in war time concerts as a source of tension relief. It has been confirmed that the rise of the post-war comedians coincided with the rise of television and radio. As a result, the live musical halls in Europe and elsewhere where stand-up comics performed suffered greatly. Farrel confirms that “whereas a music hall performance could work for years using just one act, television exposure created a constant demand for new material...” (68). This development put more demand for new material on the comedian because it had grown from its simple live indoor performance routine to a more sophisticated one with the use of the electronic media.

In Nigeria, the art of jest speech making has its roots in indigenous cultures amongst the diverse ethnic groups of the country. For example, during funeral ceremonies, there are jesters who are talented in making people laugh when the situation is moody. Even during discussions, occasions or events, a funny section is usually inserted in such serious situations for the purpose of comic relief. At the urban areas, stand-up comedy witnessed the likes of Yibo Koko who kept millions of Nigerians rocking with laughter in the 1980s. Ali Baba, Alam Blow, Muhammed Damjuma are Koko's contemporaries that helped keep the comedy scenes in Nigeria alive. Koko is believed to have originated the art of mixing comedy with music initially. He had set out to use comedy as a tool for social re-orientation when he posited that:

I did not just say jokes; I send messages through them. I use my jokes as a vehicle for social re-orientation. I link the social problem with comedy so if you are at my jokes and you are at the helm of affairs, you are laughing at yourself... (9).

This idea of stand-up comedy which Koko initiated during his days of practice has undoubtedly paved way for the evolution of stand-up comedy in Nigeria today. Its popularity in the media age of the twenty-first century has made it possible for people who are unable to watch live shows at comedy halls to buy recorded copies at home video vendors on the streets around the country.

Functions of Stand-up Comedy

The function of stand-up comedy is not merely to entertain but to inform, educate

and very importantly, sensitize its audience towards identifying with topical issues in society. In Nigeria today, stand-up comedy has been able to address a number of issues from domestic matters, to politics, education and social life generally. Key functions of stand-up comedy that will be highlighted here are its economic, entertainment and moral factors.

1. **Economic function:** Stand-up comedy has a function to improve the standard of living of many Nigerians. The art is lucrative for self-employment. Many youths can now comfortably make a living from it. Internationally, stand-up comedy has helped to bring artists to limelight who travelled abroad to sell their art on various occasions. African countries like Ghana and South Africa relentlessly patronize Nigerian comedy films. Economically, stand-up comedy is enabling comedians to pay their bills and equally put food on their table.
2. **Entertainment Function:** Of course, stand-up comedy is entertaining. In fact, it is what most people see in it than every other function it possesses. It gives an opportunity for relaxation. Audiences are usually at the height of excitement and tension relief under a typical stand-up comedy show. Laughter is usually ceaseless as the hall continually echoes with a thousand laughs from the audience watching a stand-up comedy show.
3. **Moral Function:** Another function of stand-up comedy is that it teaches morals. Comedians have used the avenue of cracking jokes to communicate moral values to their audiences. Their subject matter has always revolved round peace, financial transparency, leadership and corruption, and above all behaviour change. On this score, Canolly writes that “a stand-up comedian must perceive himself a vanguard of transformation, reformation and change in the society where he has found himself. He must address every issue that presses the society into 'deformity'...” (88).

By implication, Canolly suggests that stand-up comedy is not just a laugh station, but a moral station. He emphasizes on the need for the stand-up the comedian to see himself as a moral teacher saddled with the responsibility to put right moral decadence in society.

These functions are critical in assessing the quality of stand-up comedy and the stand-up comedian capacity to deliver a theatrical performance that is of standard. Thus, assuring quality in stand-up comedy will inevitably require a combination of all these mentioned functions and more to ensure the desired

delivery of standard performance.

Stand-up Comedy and Assuring Quality in Creativity

As discussed earlier, Ferrel describes stand-up comedy in the context of creativity as hard, lonely and vicious. This suggests the intricate artistic technicalities involved in the art of making funny speeches. The stand-up comedian is here saddled with the responsibility of being creative as much as possible, since the success of his art cannot be divorced from creativity. The place of creativity in the business of stand-up comedy is highly significant. According to Wood:

The stand-up comedian is an artist that creates. His creativity, unlike the 'other' artist is limitless. He must be the observer, the listener, the actor, the dancer, the musician, the painter... He must also skillfully do the job of the craftsman to aesthetically deliver his art to the world (13).

There is no gainsaying that stand-up comedy can stand without being creatively cooked. Every art must be creatively designed. Theatrical performing arts such as dance, music and drama must employ creativity to be able to deliver quality in both form and content. The same thing applies to stand-up comedy. Stand-up comedians usually go into the repertoire of imaginative creativity to manufacture jokes for their audience, as well as tapping materials from past events. They exaggerate them and make them funny and witty in a creative manner during performance in order to spice the occasion with fresh and lively jokes.

However, in Nigeria today, the factor of quality in the creation of the jokes which requires commitment to standard in artistic production has been relegated to the background. Every Dick, Tom and Harry goes into the trade simply because they believe they can make people laugh. Therefore, because of their perception of the simplicity of making people laugh, they are only concerned about the economic aspect rather than the creative and instructive quality of their work.

Reasons for Poor Quality Performances in Stand-Up Comedy

Stand-up comedy in Nigeria is facing a lot of challenges as a result of the increasing demand for fresh jokes by patrons of comic art. According to Yibo Koko in an interview with *Life and Beat* "comedians are left to do everything. They organize the show, plan logistics, write the jokes, and perform them. Normally the comedian is a brand. He is meant to have a manager sort out all his problems" (3).

This is a major challenge and also limits quality delivery when an artist lacks commitment. A comedian cannot do all of this and still deliver quality jokes. His duty is to unburden people by making laughter. This means that he (the stand-up comedian) needs all the relaxation to think accurately and critically. There is no deception in the assertion that one cannot adequately make another happy when he is sad himself. The pressure the organization of the show can put on the comedian produces poor performance on his part. Ali Baba, a renowned Nigerian stand-up comedian states that “the government has failed to see that the entertainment industry is like the oil and gas sector. It is waiting to explode...”(33). He adds that if the government invests in entertainment rightly, all stakeholders could be involved in making sure that the entertainment industry strives on quality artistic products. He bitterly complains about the mere pumping of a certain amount of money by government into the industry as a waste. Many have argued and condemned his assertions and position on this, but the sense in it is elaborate, because governments need to put structures and mechanisms in place that will maintain, regulate and sustain the entertainment industry in Nigeria.

Stand-up comedy in Nigeria lacks a registered guild with written rules and regulations guiding the practice. Today the lazy upcoming stand-up comedy artistes select jokes of the professional comedians, perform and record the performance on CDs and DVDs and put claim to copyright of such pirated product. This is why stand-up comedy is losing originality with the speed of light in Nigeria. The comedian is a critical thinker who reasons and thinks deeply in his attempt to create artistically. The bulk of comedians on the stages and scenes of entertainment are not thinking creatively and innovatively. They are more interested in plagiarism, a crime which allows lazy comedians to purchase comedy CDs, listen to the creatively manufactured jokes and go out to shows to perform them. This has caused a major problem in the trade. Audience gets to view/listen to the same jokes at different shows. This makes the audience lose interest and instead of entertaining them, the show becomes boring. For this reason, they can only be successful in delivering poor quality material, which are often ripped from external sources outside the country in their stand-up comedy acts. For example, a discussant argues online about a popular Nigerian celebrity in stand-up comedy business:

... The whole point is Basketmouth is supposed to be funny and create his own material, he doesn't, that means he's one of the worst; at least those ones repeating jokes are using their own materials. He is ripping off

anyone that pays to go to his shows and the comedians he is stealing material from. Yes Chris Rock and Co. (www.nairaland.com/celebs).

Another reason why there is poor performance in stand-up comedy in Nigeria is the issue of language devices for comedy. Majority of comedians do not understand the use of language devices for comedy. Comedy is about metaphors, puns, etc. Most stand-up comedians do not understand these artistic intricacies in comic art. As a result, they are often prone to delivering “dry” jokes during performance. A “dry” joke in a comedy hall is always accompanied by boos, a sound of disapproval from the audience.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This discourse on stand-up comedy in Nigeria is tailored towards quality assurance in the entertainment industry at present, which is largely bedevilled by artistic products of inferior standard. Particularly, the paper emphasizes the need for creativity, standard assurance and formal training in the business of stand-up comedy in the light of upcoming young talents. It is in the light of the overall assumption of the paper that the following suggestions are made for quality enhancement in stand-up comedy:

- The issue of funding is important to quality assurance in stand-up comedy. There is need for adequate funding in the art. The government of Nigeria should explore opportunities in the trade and be able to invest heavily on the products of the growing comedy market place.
- The need for a regulatory agency to control the activities of the practitioners of the art throughout the country is essential. This will help reduce, if not eradicate the problems of plagiarism, fake and poor performances in stand-up comedy.
- To also ease the stress of the stand-up comedian, it is suggested that comedians in Nigeria should deploy the services of comedy writers as is done in other climes. The comedian only needs to pick which comedy he thinks is good, work on it and deliver it. It will definitely take the strain of a comedian and would also help the industry to grow.
- Above all, for more quality assurance in professional stand-up comedy, there is need for proper formal training. Stand-up comedy should be included as a core course in the academic programme of Theatre Arts curriculum in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The performing comic art form lacks official

academic training in Nigeria at present. This will go a long way in enhancing quality service delivery in stand-up comedy industry in Nigeria.

Works Cited

Cutlip, S. *Effective Public Relations*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994.

Ferrel, Will. *The Comedy of Theatre*. Denver: Mike Thompson Papers, 2002.

Fisher, J. and Tomny Cooper. *Always Leave Them Laughing*. New York: OUP, 1989.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (New Edition). England: Pearson Educational Limited, 2007.

Manning, Bernard. "Echoes of Laughter." *The Comic Man of Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club*. Ed. Brandon Jones. London: London Publishers, 1972.

Maslow, Lawrence E. *Make Em Laugh: The Funny Business of America*. Chicago: Illinois Pens, 2003.

Mosha, H. J. "The Role of African University in National Development: A critical Analysis." *Higher Education* 15 (1986): 113-34.

Okabo, J. M. "The Place of Comedy in Entertainment Business." *Journal of Creative Arts* 1.1 (2010): 214-217.

Olonilua, Ademola. *Pillars of Stand-up Comedy*. Lagos: NBF Topics, 2011.

Universities. Nigerian University System 12(1):2, 2004.

Wilmot, R. and Rosengard, P. *Didn't You Kill My Mother-in-Law: The Story of Alternative Comedy in Britain*. Norfolk: Biddles Ltd, 2001.

"Your Best and Worst Nigerian Comedian?" -*Celebrities(6)-Nairaland* . .

QUALITY AND THE VERNACULAR FILM: IMPERATIVES FOR IGBO LANGUAGE FILMMAKING

Francisca A. Nwadigwe
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Abstract

The issue of quality remains a challenge to the viability of Nigerian films and cultural productions. This has become a recurrent problem in many vernacular language films made in Nigeria. The Nigerian Cultural Policy stipulates that film shall be used as a resource for promoting the indigenous cultures of Nigeria. The Policy also encourages the promotion of these cultural values through artistic productions such as “theatre, film, video and audio tapes and in written form, and popularise them by producing them in Nigerian languages” (8). The authorities try to enforce these provisions through some agencies such as the Censors Board which discourages or bans films that are considered injurious to Nigeria's linguistic and cultural values. But the Cultural Policy is only a guiding document to encourage quality and creativity. It cannot make films for the indigenous cultures and does not dictate the language of the films to be produced. Each ethnic nationality will take up the challenge of not only making films in the local vernacular but ensuring that its quality is standardized enough to attract patronage within and beyond their cultural boundaries. This study explores the problem of quality assurance in the indigenous Nigerian language film using the Igbo film as a paradigm. It adopts the observation method of research and examines the challenges militating against quality assurance in the sector. The study finds that quality is mainly compromised in the sector by lack of professionalism and the quest to make profit. It suggests quality control mechanisms to be applied in various sections of the Igbo film industry from scripting to postproduction.

Background

The Nigerian video-film phenomenon has assumed a considerable status in the annals of transnational culture industry. Apart from its global rating on the economic index as a veritable source of livelihood to many people engaged in its core industrial operations and subsidiary service providers, the medium represents a significant force in the calculation of Nigeria's direct and indirect cultural diplomacy across the

globe. Similarly, some observers believe that Nigeria has virtually “colonized” the Sub-Saharan African region through the instrumentality of her video-film industry known as Nollywood. In fact, Krings and Okome contend that “Nollywood, the Nigerian video film industry, has become the most visible form of cultural machine on the African continent” (1). Therefore, with the vital position occupied by the Nigerian video-film, the importance of quality assurance in the industry cannot be overemphasized.

Nevertheless, one of the commonest and most biting criticisms of the Nigerian video-film industry concerns the technical quality of production, in both its narrative and visual aspects (Maja-Pearce 2). In the same vein, Frank Ukadike categorizes the early Nigerian video-film practice into three; “those produced in the North reflecting the Hausa, Islamic and other cultures of the northern states; the Igbo films which utilise the tradition of Igbo theatre practices; and the Yoruba films which, like the others, mirror the ethnic tradition of the Yoruba travelling theatre” (254). Within this categorization, Ukadike argues that “the most prolific and most developed are the Igbo and Yoruba video practices. But Ukadike berates the quality of the films and argues that “the Nigerian video scene is dominated by people who suddenly emerged as 'emergency' (typical Nigerian terminology) directors and producers, whose singular agenda is simply to make money” (254).

Furthermore, some film critics have attributed the decline in the fortunes of the industry to frequent neglect of professional quality by operators in pursuit of economic success. Hence:

In the past ten to fifteen years, the Nigerian video industry has grown exponentially. According to a UNESCO report released in 2009, it is now the second-largest film industry in the world in terms of the sheer number of films produced . . . After an initial decade of prosperity, the immense popularity of Nollywood began to waver. The market became saturated, generating a negative spiral, which brought the industry to a critical impasse” (Jedlowski 25).

Therefore, following the market saturation caused mainly by production glut, the Nigerian video-film industry suffered a crisis of global acceptance because it featured a “proliferation of ideas, and quantity but not quality of video-films, especially during the early years” (Ukadike 254-5). The issue of artistic and technical quality even made some critics such as Adewale Maja-Pearce and Olaf Möller to dismiss the Nollywood

as mere commoditization of amateurish video dramas (Maja-Pearce 2); which is targeted at “crass materialism” and ultimately “dedicated to making money hand over fist” (Möller 1).

It is therefore pertinent that any policy, investment and professional initiatives geared towards the sustenance of the vernacular film genre in Nigeria must take cognizance of quality assurance in the industry. This is more relevant in the Igbo film subsector that played a pioneering role in the rise of the Nollywood industry but later descended into insignificance having been overtaken and submerged by the English language video-film.

Research Objective and Method

The promotion of indigenous languages has been recognized by cultural workers as one of the key resources of preserving indigenous cultural values. This ideal has been pursued and expressed through indigenous language films but the lack of quality control often prevents these films from gaining wide acceptance and making the intended impact among the target audience. As an economic investment, poor quality of production also wreaks a negative effect on the market potential of the vernacular films. Such market failure amounts to financial loss that is likely to discourage future investment in the industry.

The objective of this study is to investigate the problem of quality and its impact in the Igbo film industry. It seeks to explore the dynamics and ingredients of quality assurance in the sector. The study adopts the survey approach, specifically, it uses the observation method in its participant and non-participant dimensions to investigate the challenges militating against the entrenchment of quality standards and factors contributing to the decline in the quality of the Igbo video-film. The collected data will be analysed critically using the descriptive and interpretative approaches. In addition to contributing to the bulk of knowledge and enriching the available literature on Igbo film, the findings and generalizable conclusions are expected to be relevant and beneficial to the development of indigenous language films in Nigeria and the continent in general.

Theoretical Framework: Quality and Visual Pleasure

Aesthetic taste is closely related to quality because audience taste is a key factor in the assessment of artistic standards. Thus, quality assurance in the indigenous language video-film cannot be divorced from the aesthetic judgment of the target audience. Since the classical postulations of Plato, Aristotle and Immanuel Kant, some concepts

have been advanced in recent times to explain the link between aesthetic taste, quality and artistic patronage. Some of these ideas have been applied in the visual art of cinema. For instance, Nicholas Mirzoeff in his theory of visual pleasure postulates that “there is a gap between the wealth of visual experience in postmodern culture and the ability to analyze that observation” (3). This gap ostensibly emanates from the diversity of visual literacy among audiences of screen productions, the subjectivism that characterizes the definition of aesthetic quality and what Mirzoeff refers to as “visual pleasure”.

From all indications, it can be inferred that one determinant factor in the evaluation of films and allied visual arts is quality. This embraces both the artistic and technical aspects of production and influences even the meanings that may be gathered from such works of art. It has been argued that the world has become overwhelmed by the trend known as “visual culture”. This is “concerned with visual events in which information, meaning, or pleasure is sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology” (Mirzoeff 3). Since many people across the globe seem to be having access and watching the screens in various media such as film, television, the Internet, Ipad and smart phones, the need for quality in visual productions becomes more essential. This reality has been described as “extraordinary proliferation of images” and “the crisis of information and visual overload in everyday life” (Mirzoeff 8).

Consequently, “visual Power” and “visual pleasure” though heightened by “the global popularity of television, videotape and film” are not expressly determined by the content (whether seen as decent or debased) but by the quality of the visual output as reflected in the filmic narrative and its visual interpretation (Mirzoeff 8). This subjective definition of taste and quality as applicable in Nollywood films, is what Jedlowski refers to as the “localism of aesthetics” which needs “to be taken into account by those who are analysing the video phenomenon and its most recent developments” (Jedlowski 41).

Invariably, quality is an index of value in film appreciation. According to Throsby, in his analysis of the economics of quality in cultural productions, “a basic concept that underlies consideration of policy in any area of public concern is that of value” (17). Film is a public commodity offered to consumers by the industrial operators. Since “the consumption behaviour of individuals is motivated by the value they attach to the goods and services they consume”, it is only logical that films of high quality are attached with high value and attract higher patronage from individuals, institutions and society. Furthermore, “the production of value is the *modus operandi*

of business firms, and value to society at large guides (or should guide) the decisions of government (Throsby 17). In essence, quality assurance in the vernacular film industry is indispensable to heighten visual pleasure, attract value as a business enterprise and the interest and policy of government as a regulatory partner.

Quality Assurance in Igbo Language Film

The Igbo film played a ground-breaking role in the evolution of the Nollywood industry. But the commercial success, excitement and expectations created by early Igbo video-films such as *Living in Bondage*, *Circle of Doom*, *Ikuku* and others seem to have faded quickly because the producers could not sustain quality in the production. As more video-films were produced in Nigeria, especially in the English language, the audiences became exposed to better picture and narrative quality which the subsequent Igbo films could not match.

One reason adduced for this quality downgrade in the Igbo film is that the early directors and producers migrated to the English language video-film with their talents and funding while their successors in the Igbo language film were either inexperienced or too hasty in churning out their products due to inordinate commercial interest. It appears that the Igbo film producers seem to have migrated without bequeathing any administrative structure, technical infrastructure and artistic legacy to their successors (some of whom were production assistants and crewmembers under them) to guarantee quality assurance in the Igbo language video-film.

Despite a reflection of some Igbo cultural norms and values in the numerous video-films produced by the Igbo filmmakers, the language aspect seems to be the most neglected. The quality of many recent Igbo language films is nothing when compared to the English language films made by filmmakers of Igbo extraction as well. Ejiofor considers this trend as a reflection of cultural decay that has become a big challenge and even constituting a source of embarrassment to Ndigbo whom, according to him, are noted for the vibrancy of their arts and cultural productions over the years (35). Ukadike notes with optimism that “with video movies, Igbo drama . . . is transcending its community status to become a vibrant cultural art in Nigeria” (256). It was hoped by cultural promoters that the new video-film popularized by the Igbo filmmakers and businessmen would help arrest the Igbo linguistic decline but this has not happened yet because the quality of subsequent Igbo films were considerably poor.

Indeed, in its heyday, the Igbo language film was so popular that it became

synonymous with Nollywood itself. Adamu affirms that “Nollywood films” are generally “referred to as Igbo films in the North”. Based on their quality and popularity, northern producers often engage in “transgressing boundaries” by frequently “appropriating and reworking” some of these films “to make them more appealing to Muslim audiences in northern Nigeria” (287). This attraction of the Igbo film beyond its presumed cultural boundaries is in some way a testimony of its qualitative profile. It equally affirms the argument by some observers of vernacular African film that “choosing French or English, a move which is often justified by the concern to use a lingua franca to break out of the narrow linguistic boundaries of most African languages, can mean that you don't reach your audience” (Barlet 199).

In the African film industry, collaboration is one avenue for promoting quality assurance because “the effects of collaboration are generally rewarding for all concerned as it means pooling experience, teaching each other new skills and discovering Africa” (Barlet 223). But as the popularity of the Igbo film diminishes with dwindling quality of production (and revenue as well), many producers choose to migrate to other filmic genres and formats to continue their tradition of individualistic business mentality rather than seeking collaboration with others to shore up quality and guarantee increased patronage.

The audience reach for the vernacular film has been a critical challenge in Africa due to the dilemma of language on the continent where “a single national territory often covers several major language areas” (Barlet 199). This heterogeneity encourages the use of the lingua franca in cinematic expressions as producers aim to reach a wider audience market. In Nigeria, the implication is that investors often channel resources to the foreign language (English) film and neglect the indigenous language productions such as the Igbo film. Lack of funds to acquire needed equipment and hire trained personnel ultimately results in poor quality output in contemporary Igbo films. The economic consideration has forced most video-film producers, who are predominantly Igbo businessmen, to concentrate on using the English language to enable them market the films across Nigeria, Ghana, Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Ironically, research studies found that English language Nigerian video-films are still appreciated and patronized along the West and Central African coasts which are predominantly French speaking countries. From a study of Nollywood in Congo, Pype observes the dominant “influence of Nigerian video films on Kinshasa's public culture and media production” and this dominance “offers interesting insights into the ways public cultures are reconfigured” beyond linguistic boundaries (201). This confirms that language need not be a barrier to the Igbo film

since a production of high quality will capture its audience.

Two options for bridging the language gap in the Igbo film is through dubbing and subtitling. But dubbing is a complex and expensive project that requires high expertise and meticulous artistry to deal with the problem of synchronization of dialogue, gestures and lip movement. Poor dubbing often mars the quality and audience acceptance of foreign language films. Barlet affirms that “if the costs were not so high, the dubbing of films into the main African languages (dominant in each region) would greatly facilitate distribution” (202). Hence the Igbo film relies more on subtitling but this has been found to be poorly done in many of the films. Poor translation of sentences, proverbs and idioms are common including grammatical blunders, typographic mistakes, orthographic inaccuracy and allied semantic and syntactic errors can be found in the films' subtitles. Beyond these shortcomings, Barlet observes further that “a major contradiction” in African cinema and the crisis of language is that “Africa has many languages, but Africans do not read subtitles” (195). This could be partly attributed to the low literacy level on the continent as some viewers often complain of being torn between watching the images and reading the text on the screen. But if properly handled, subtitling is supposed to contribute to the overall quality of the vernacular language film. Indeed:

As a result of subtitling, cinema is free of linguistic artifice required by theatre. Each person speaks his or her own language, and this has a realistic ring to it. The problem is that whereas subtitles are no discouragement at all in the art cinemas of Europe, the African audience does not read them (Barlet 196-7).

Apart from the traditional disinterest in subtitles, the quality of the work has made it a liability rather than an asset in Igbo film. The poor quality of subtitles noticeable in Igbo film stems from the fact that many of the jobs are done by film editors (some of whom are semi-literate) without script editors' input. Film editors often concentrate on the images and background sound but script editors focus on language, diction and textual aspects of the production. Good quality subtitling must involve a collaboration of competent translators, script editors and the film editor but this working partnership is largely lacking in the Igbo video-film industry as few persons often handle all the postproduction work ostensibly to save cost.

Quality assurance in the Igbo language video-film is therefore central to the issue of standardization. In this vein, Ukadike argues that “the quest for standard” has

become a yardstick for measuring the global acceptance of African video-films (253). Furthermore, Ukadike hints at some of the factors or elements that determine the originality and global quality expected in the African video-film to include the use of those “ingenious techniques African people have devised to cope with obstacles and hardships as they have moved into the industrial age”. In addition, a “film’s educational quality – teaching without being overtly didactic, entertaining without trivializing” are some of the dividends of qualitative “narrative structure and ingenious scripting and direction” that constitute the hallmark of quality which brings wider acceptance to an African video-film production (Ukadike 254).

One common misconception about the Igbo film is that the producers often presume that the production is exclusively for an Igbo-speaking audience. Hence, they tend to measure their productions with local rather than global standards. This is a fallacy that needs to be debunked in order to redefine the concept of standards and quality assurance in Igbo filmmaking. Film is visual art and can be viewed, understood and enjoyed by a heterogeneous audience despite their linguistic backgrounds. In his discourse on quality, audience and audio-visual cultural production, Tan argues that quality has become a globalized universal in cultural “commodity entertainment” because local systems and tastes are being “replaced by a global audience” that has both “complex and cosmopolitan genealogies”. Therefore, “since patronage is now that of global capital”, the definition of quality has become “dictated by the demands of capital-driven entertainment” (49-50). To improve its quality level therefore, the Igbo film needs to aim at a global audience and strive to meet global standards using local resources. One way the Igbo film can link into such global quality assurance mechanism is for producers to participate and submit entries in the vernacular film categories of international film festivals.

This is quite imperative because, although quality in the Nigerian video-film has improved in the last decade, the subject of quality remains crucial in the global evaluation of the country’s movie industry. A recognition of this reality is pertinent in the Nigerian vernacular films which have been variously criticized for relative lack of originality, over-flogging of “the fantastical and supernatural dimensions” of ethnic cosmology, poor handling of the “conventions of the folktale and traditional storytelling techniques” and unsuccessful attempts to “replicate the themes of romance, love, song and dance reminiscent of the Indian musical romance melodramas” (Ukadike 255).

The foundation of originality and quality assurance in the Igbo film begins from the story or script. Over the years, Igbo film scriptwriters and producers have

been adapting tales from traditional folklore to weave their plots. But this textual style of adapting legends has been poorly handled in many cases. The stories are largely unscripted, sketchy and lacking textual details thereby creating a narrative vacuum that is open to divergent conceptual interpretations by various artistes since improvisation is the guiding principle. This often compromises the narrative quality and cultural authenticity of the film. The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) recognizes folklore as a vital element of every nation's cultural heritage. However, "the complaint is that folkloric creations, belonging to developing countries and indigenous communities are often distorted or mutilated in order to adapt them to the needs of western markets" (Morolong 49). These "distortions" and "mutilations", (regarded by WIPO as "illicit exploitation"), driven by commercial interest, significantly affect the quality of the production and frequently misrepresent the people's cultural heritage and identity (Morolong 62).

Besides creating good and original storylines, the Igbo film needs to use good artistes to execute the artistic and technical aspects of production. This is not necessarily the hire of "stars" but engagement of dedicated, trained and talented cast and crew. Although finding good artistes is a leeway to quality assurance, it remains a major challenge in the Igbo and other vernacular films. For instance, Mohammad affirms that lack of good artistes is "a peculiar problem of the Hausa film" since "most Hausa artistes are artistes of the unscripted drama" who often find it hard to follow strict dialogues of scripted and plotted film (195). Similarly, popular Igbo artistes often demand exorbitant fees while many experienced actors lack fluency in reading and speaking Igbo language. Nevertheless, there are many other Igbo artistes of good quality that can take up such roles. The producers need to de-emphasize the quest to use "superstars" to help them "sell" the films or settling for mediocre artistes to save cost. Whereas the inexperienced artistes bring down the quality of production, the casting of "star actors" or "popular faces" does not automatically translate to high quality in the film since quality is a composite variable that must be contributed by every department and artiste in the production.

Conclusion

Despite its humble beginnings, the Nigerian video-film has improved astronomically, defying geographical, technological and language barriers to become a leading cultural commodity on the continent and the African Diaspora markets. Basically "shot on video, edited on personal computers, and copied onto cassettes and discs", the Nigerian video-film, facilitated by "satellite television, the

Internet, and piracy” has spread “across linguistic, cultural, and national boundaries” (Krings and Okome 1). Currently, Indian films still have a strong audience followership in Nigeria and most of these films are made in the indigenous language with painstaking attention to quality in the artistic and technical details. Similarly, many Asian producers such as the Chinese and Indians resort to dubbing and subtitling to retain their linguistic trademark on their films which have made commercial success in Africa. These success stories should inspire the Igbo film producers to create productions of high quality and rise above their linguistic boundaries and narrow economic calculations.

From the above experiences, it is apparent that when promoted beyond its national borders, film becomes a potent vehicle for cultural diplomacy. Indeed, in pursuing cultural diplomacy, a strong case has been made for the sustained and systematic promotion of Nigerian artistic and cultural heritage “across border communities”. Hence, it was suggested that:

Yoruba language should be actively promoted in Benin Republic and Togo; Hausa languages in Niger, Benin, Chad and Cameroun; while Igbo, Efik and Ibibio languages should be encouraged across borders into Equatorial guinea, Cameroun and Central African Republic (Olusola 210)

A powerful medium for such cultural diplomacy and linguistic expansionism is the Nigerian vernacular film which must be of high quality, distributed and viewed in these countries.

Critics have equally argued that the African indigenous language film holds a high potential for more effective communication because it rises above the artificiality and technical challenges of the borrowed or imposed foreign language. Thus, “with the aid of actors speaking the language of their own culture, the fit between word and action guarantees lively dialogue, natural attitudes and truth of emotion (Barlet 200). This reality should motivate the Igbo film producers. In addition, with the considerable size of Igbo-speaking population at home and the Diaspora as well as non-Igbo viewers that can be reached through subtitling and dubbing of the films, the Igbo film producers need not worry about the market for their products as long as the quality is assured. In fact, Barlet asserts that even without foreign patronage, “the Nigerian market is big enough for films in the vernacular language to be profitable” (199). Similarly, Balogun even argues that films

in Yoruba language enjoy considerable success when compared to Nigerian films in English which experience difficulty in drawing audiences to the cinema. (46).

Indeed, a veteran film distributor and marketer in Nigeria, Ali Chami, submits that quality is the ultimate factor. Hence, in making films of artistic and economic values, “the aim, invariably is to offer to the Nigerian viewer, good quality entertainment, at least of the standard available in other Sub Saharan African countries” (260). To guarantee quality assurance and viability, the Igbo film must maintain high standards in all its industrial stages – preproduction, production, postproduction and distribution. From scripting to the acting, camera work to production designs, editing to packaging, publicity to marketing, the Igbo film producers should apply standardized procedures, use experienced personnel and follow professional ethics to ensure high quality.

Poor quality films cannot attract serious investors into the vernacular film industry. Without significant investments by producers, high quality vernacular film production cannot be sustainable. The storyline and screenplay must be fully scripted; actors should rehearse adequately; designers should have sufficient time to create the needed designs; and shooting must not be rushed. The director should be available during editing and script editors should participate in the subtitling before the final cut of the film is released. With quality assurance, the success of the Igbo film as an economic investment, cultural resource, political tool and aesthetic phenomenon is also assured.

Works Cited

- Adamu, Abdalla U. “Transgressing Boundaries: Reinterpretations of Nollywood Films in Muslim Northern Nigeria.” *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry*. Eds. Matthias Krings and Onookome Okome. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013. 287-305.
- Balogun, Françoise. *Le Cinema au Nigeria*. Paris: OCIC-L'Harmattan, 1984.
- Barlet, Olivier. *African Cinemas: Decolonizing the Gaze*. Chris Turner Transl. London and New York: Zed Books, 2000.
- Chami, Ali. “Marketing/Distributing, Exhibiting the Cine Film.” *Making the Transition from Video to Celluloid*. Eds. Hyginus Ekwuazi, Mercy Sokomba and

- Onyero Mgbejume. Jos: National Film Institute, 2001. 257-262.
- Cultural Policy For Nigeria*, Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1988.
- Ejiofor, Pita. *Ibeku Ndi Igbo Maka Asusu Igbo*. Awka: Valid Publishing Company, 2010.
- Jedlowski, Alessandro. "From Nollywood to Nollywood: Processes of Transnationalization in the Nigerian Video Film Industry." *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry*. Eds. Matthias Krings and Onookome Okome. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013. 25-45.
- Krings, Matthias and Okome, Onookome. "Nollywood and its Diaspora: An Introduction." *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry*. Eds. Matthias Krings and Onookome Okome. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013. 1-22.
- Mohammed, Bala. "The Hausa Film: A Study of Slow Growth, Problems and Prospects." *Operative Principles of the Film Industry: Towards a Film Policy for Nigeria*. Eds. Hyginus Ekwuazi and Yakubu Nasidi. Jos: Nigerian Film Corporation, 1992. 179-204.
- Morolong, Siamisang. "Protecting Folklore Under Modern Intellectual Property Regimes: Limitations and Alternative Regimes for Protection." *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Intellectual Property in the Twenty-First Century*. Eds. Isaac Mazonde and Pradip Thomas. Dakar: CODESRIA, 2007. 48-65.
- Maja-Pearce, Adewale. "Onitsha Home Movies.' *London Review of Books* 23.9 May 10, 2001 <http://www.londonreviewofbooks/films/Onitsha> Accessed 25 July 2011.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas. *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Möller, Olaf. "Nigerian Video-film Culture. *Film Comment* March/April, 2004. Lincoln: Film Society of Lincoln Center. <http://www.lincolncenter/filmcomment>. Accessed 25 September, 2010.
- Olusola, Segun. "Cultural Dimensions of Nigerian Foreign Policy." *Perspectives in*

Nigeria's Cultural Diplomacy. Abuja: NICO, 2006. 200-212.

Pype, Katrien. "Religion, Migration, and Media Aesthetics: Notes on the Circulation and Reception of Nigerian Films in Kinshasa." *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry*. Eds. Matthias Krings and Onookome Okome. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013. 199-222.

Tan, Marcus C. "Between Sound and Sight: Framing the Exotic in Roystic Abel's *The Manganiyar Seduction*." *Theatre Research International* 38.1 (2013): 47-61.

Ukadike, Frank N. "Images of the 'Reel' Thing: African Video-Films and the Emergence of a New Cultural Art." *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* 6: 3 (2000): 243-61.

Throsby, David. *The Economics of Cultural Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

RE-NEGOTIATING QUALITY IN THE NIGERIAN VIDEO FILM INDUSTRY: A DEVELOPMENT-CENTRED APPROACH

Hameed Olutoba Lawal & Olatunji Aikomo

Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo

Abstract

For the past twenty years, the Nigerian video film industry christened 'Nollywood' has witnessed massive growth and development. This is evidenced in methods of production, distribution and exhibition of the video films. The flurry of productions in Yoruba, English and Hausa segments of the industry over the years has earned it appellation and recognition both nationally and internationally. This has gone a long way in justifying the rating as the second in the world after Bollywood (India). Side by side with this quantitative growth in the rate of production is the increase in tempo of activities of regulatory agencies as typified in Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) and National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB). Equally relevant in this regulatory role are the guilds and associations that have emerged to enhance professionalism in different aspects of film production. The mindboggling question is still: To what extent have the regulatory agencies, guilds and associations ensured quality assurance in production, distribution and exhibition of films? It is against this background that this paper examines the potentials of these regulatory bodies in inculcating quality assurance in the industry.

Introduction

There is no doubt that the Nigerian Video Film Industry christened 'Nollywood' has come of age. In the last twenty years, it has witnessed a lot of transformation in production, distribution and exhibition of its finished products. The patronage of Nigerian Video Films and recognition of Nigerian actors and actresses are now global. This justifies its advancement in rating from third to second position in the world. A global cinema survey conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics in 2009 named Nigeria as the second largest producer of film in the world. Though the survey did the ranking according to the number of films, that is the quantity, nevertheless, Nigeria has edged out the United States (Hollywood) which before now was second to India

(Alamu 3).

It is against this background that, stakeholders in the industry have resolved to celebrate the twenty years of massive growth with pomp and pageantry in 2013. In production, films in English, Yoruba and Hausa languages are released on a weekly basis. The deluge of releases has given birth to many retail outlets and rental clubs to reach the target audience. While new talents are being discovered on a daily basis, the talents of upcoming theatre artists are being honed. The fame and fortune of star actors and actresses have made acting and other segments of film production an all-comers' affair. The need to regulate activities in the industry gave birth to the Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB). The large number of films being released and the attendant high rate of piracy has stepped up the security roles of the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) in protecting intellectual properties.

In furtherance of the need for checks and balances, guilds and associations equally sprang up to enhance professionalism and protect the interest of stakeholders in the industry. An added advantage to this developmental trend in Nigerian video film industry is the emergence of cable television and gradual resuscitation of cinema culture to expand the outlets for exhibition. In spite of this massive growth in human and material resources of the industry, the thought-provoking question is still: To what extent has it made impact on creativity of artists, technical crew, thematic focus, marketing and exhibition? It is this massive growth without structures to sustain standard for development that made Roseline Odeh to conclude that:

We are the largest home video producers in the world. There has been massive growth without development. So efforts will now be concentrated on development in the production of good films that will not traumatise the nation psychologically especially impressionable youths of this country or portray us negatively to the outside world (45).

The contention here is that the content of the films should edify on norms and values other than issues that can corrupt the minds of the young ones. Some producers portray Nigerians as crude and vulgar people full of rituals and violence. While the National Film and Video Censors Board frowns at such films, other producers in their desperate bid to make money indoctrinate gullible young girls to strip for pornographic scenes.

The Concept of Quality and Quality Assurance

Quality is a slippery concept, which implies different things to different people (Pfeffer and Coote qtd. Oladipo, Adeosun & Oni 3). It is that which best satisfies and exceeds customers' needs and wants. Quality can be said to lie in the eyes of the beholder. This is because the consumer who makes the judgement on quality does this by reference to the best comparable performance.

Quality refers to standard of a phenomenon when it is compared to other things like it, how good or bad something is that is, to be good / poor / top quality or of high standard (Oladipo, Adeosun and Oni 3). In this context, when applied to video films, it encompasses quality of acting, directing, editing, camera work, design and technical aspects. Distribution, on the other hand, entails the effectiveness of the marketing strategies and outlets to reach the target audience. Exhibition which is the final stage has to do with the quality of the medium of exhibiting the film to the audience. These are namely through the cinema, terrestrial television and cable television.

Quality assurance, on the other hand, is about consistently meeting product specification or getting things right first time, every time (Oladipo Adeosu and Oni 4). Quality assurance in Nigerian video film industry is to meet the standards set by the regulatory agencies and expectations of the target audience in production, distribution and exhibition of films. Equally, it can be said to be the ability of the film makers to meet the criteria of film production process in terms of scripts, theme, acting, directing, editing, camera work, design and lighting. Adequacy of these inputs into production process in terms of quality and quantity, determines the quality in content and technical output.

When defined from the perspective of the mechanism put in place to ensure quality in Nigerian video film industry, it could be described as the potency of the regulatory agencies in the industry; that is, to what extent are the regulatory agencies equipped to perform the function of quality control and assurance.

Quality Assurance Mechanism in Nigerian Video Film Industry

The rapid growth of the Nigerian video film industry in the past twenty years has given birth to mechanisms of internal and external control and regulation to ensure quality and standard. This is typified in guilds, associations, Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) and the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC). While some of the associations have been in existence before the golden years of video film production, guilds and the censor board are recent developments.

The guilds which cut across all the segments of video film production are to ensure professionalism and standard in productions. They are, namely Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN), Directors Guild of Nigeria (DGN), Screen Writers Guild of Nigeria (SWG), Association of Movie Producers (AMP), Nigerian Society of Editors (NSE), Association of Movie Marketers (AMM), Creative Designers Association of Nigeria (CDAN) and Video Club Owners Association of Nigeria (VCOAN).

Even though artistes in the Nigerian video film industry append to their names the acronyms of the guilds, the regulation of practice leaves much to be desired. For instance, while the guild for actors exists, actors and actresses are still poorly remunerated. The only exceptions are star actors and actresses who through their self-attained power of negotiation had smiled and are still smiling to the banks. Criteria for membership of the guilds are also not clear. As actors and actresses are not graded, fame and fortunes of some new generation actors and actresses have made them swollen-headed that they do not see the need for training and re-training to update skills.

The associations include Association of Theatre Arts Practitioners (ANTP) which was formed in 1971 with Hubert Ogunde as pioneer president (Ogundeji 10), National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP) formed in 1990 and Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA) formed in Benin in 1982. While, according to Akomolafe (425), the purpose of forming ANTP is to meet and deliberate on theatrical professional issues and also to share ideas of common interest, it has not been able to effectively regulate the practice of theatre in Nigeria. Its activities do not extend beyond being a rallying point for the Yoruba theatre troupes as evidenced in periodic meetings, periodic collective festivals and funeral of colleagues. The last memorable instance of such occasions was the funeral of Duro Ladipo in 1978 and that of Ojo Ladipo in 1979 (Jeyifo 68). The more recent ones are those of Isola Durojaiye (aka Alasari) and Bisi Komolafe. There was also the collaboration with Hubert Ogunde to produce the film *Aiye* in 1980 without artist fees.

While the membership of ANTP comprises Yoruba actors and actresses most of whom were trained through apprenticeship, the emergence of many university-trained theatre artists in Nigerian theatre industry gave birth to the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP) out of the merger of two associations clamouring for national spread and representation of artistes. The activities of the association aimed at quality and standard in theatre practice include:

bringing all Nigerian theatre artists together under one protective production and symposia and taking part in international theatre and film festivals (Sotimirin 217).

Although these activities which were aimed at achieving the objectives of NANTAP are laudable, the implementation has not been consistent due to lack of commitment by members, most of whom are not into full theatre practice but freelancers. This nonchalant attitude gives ANTP an edge over NANTAP in terms of impact. The SONTA which would have collaborated with ANTP and NANTAP to regulate theatre practice in Nigeria draws its membership from lecturers of Theatre Arts in Universities and Colleges of Education. The activities of the Society are too academic to make any impact on the practice of Theatre in Nigeria. This is typified in its Annual General Meeting and conference to present papers for academic purposes.

Going by what is expected of a union, none of the associations, societies and guilds that are prevalent in Nigerian theatre industry meet the criteria as Chukwura (2009), a veteran actress in an interview posits:

A union is not formed for the purpose of agitation only. Under the union, issues like actors fee, minimum fee for an extra can be fixed and that of a lead character can have a minimum tag. There can be issues of creative content and who becomes an actor. Things like the background you need before you become an actor can be set and adhered to. The issue of piracy and condition of work can be handled. The issue of marketer exploiting actors can also be addressed.

Other major obstacles to formation of a central body that could set standards for quality assurance in the industry are polarisation of associations along tribal lines and too many guilds within the industry. For instance, while the ANTP is peopled by Yoruba actors and actresses, membership of the guilds is drawn from artists in the English segment of the industry. In a similar vein, membership of NANTAP and SONTA comprises mostly university-trained theatre artists and theatre scholars. With this scenario, harmonization of interests for advancement of practice is a herculean task.

In thematic focus, content and marketing of video films in Nigeria, the body saddled with the regulatory function of ensuring quality assurance is the NFVCB. The NFVCB was set up under Decree No. 85 of 1993, but never began operation until late December, 1994 (*Tell*, 2003). As specified under the decree, the functions of the NFVCB include censorship and classification of video works, licensing a person or premises to exhibit films and video works, regulating and prescribing safety

precautions to be observed in licenced premises, registration of films, video works, exhibition premises, video production studios, video clubs, professional exhibitors, distributors and marketers and keeping records of video producers in the country. To ensure that video films with corrupting influence and those poorly packaged do not get to the public; the board screens and classifies them before they are released. The board has over the years sensitised movie makers on the need to explore diverse ideas and themes which are open to film medium rather than concentrate entirely on producing violent, cultic and voodooist films.

While the orientation and sensitisation of the board has inspired video films with thematic focus on politics, family values, insecurity, religious bigotry, culture, child abuse, etc., there are still video films with weak story lines, mechanical acting, pornographic tendencies and poor technical outputs. Added to this are unlicensed retail outlets in the nooks and crannies of Nigeria and makeshift exhibition centres with poor ventilation.

Major obstacles to the quality assurance functions of the board are recalcitrant producers and slow or lack of enforcement of the law to punish offenders. When a producer is sanctioned for flaws discovered in the content of his film in terms of expected standard, he resorts to blackmail to whip up sentiments. On the other hand, prosecution of offenders is always slow because of the legal process which entails many adjournments and legal technicalities of proving the offence beyond reasonable doubt. This explains why sub-standard production and piracy still thrive in the industry. The introduction of internet technology has also brought with it tough challenges in film censorship. Films with pornographic exposure can be accessed on the internet.

Another quality assurance mechanism aimed at making players in the Nigerian video film industry reap the fruit of their labour resides in the regulatory function of NCC. While the commission has stepped up its activities to stem the tide of piracy in Nigeria, the pirates are devising on a daily basis methods to outsmart the commission's detective team. It is thus a cat and mouse game in the raiding of video marketing outlets for pirated copies.

How Quality can be assured in Nigerian Video Film Industry

Having given an insight into mechanisms of effecting quality assurance and the challenges militating against them, it is pertinent to proffer ways of making internal and external mechanisms of quality control more functional.

- (a) Associations like ANTP and NANTAP need to extend their activities beyond periodic meetings and being a rallying point to celebrate successes and sharing sorrow to setting standards that should guide theatre arts practitioners in Nigeria.
- (b) SONTA should device a means of accessing the impact of theoretical and practical knowledge being inculcated in theatre artists in the Universities and Colleges of Education. This could start with agitation for better equipping of the departments with facilities for quality video film production. A film production competition can then be organised to pick the best like it is done in the now comatose Nigerian Universities Theatre Arts Students Festival (NUTAF).
- (c) There is the need for a central body that would comprise the associations, societies and guilds regardless of the training, language and segment of the industry an artist belongs. This would enable the stakeholders to speak with one voice on issues of common interest.
- (d) Activities of the guilds within the industry should extend beyond status symbol of popular practitioners to that of setting standard for best practices in terms of entry qualification to be a member and grading for better remuneration.
- (e) The tentacles of NFVCB which happens to be a major means of regulating contents, distribution and exhibition should be spread to the nooks and crannies of the country. This can be achieved with increased manpower and establishment of regional offices in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.
- (f) The ongoing collaboration between the stakeholders and the NCC in the war against piracy should be intensified for good return on investment by the film producers.
- (g) Aside the checks and balances by the associations, societies, guilds and government agencies, there should be a compromise on the number of video films to be released in a year. The unbridled release of films on a weekly basis pave way for mediocrity as every Dick, Tom and Harry produces film without following the procedure. To checkmate piracy, there is the need to revert to the format of first exhibiting the films in the cinema and television before releasing them into market as home video.

Conclusion

This paper traces the modest beginning of the Nigerian video film industry and the massive growth that shot it into international prominence. It also identifies the mechanisms of regulation for standard practice and quality assurance. Obstacles to effectiveness of the regulatory bodies and agencies are highlighted. It is against this backdrop that suggestions are offered to enhance the regulatory functions of associations, societies, guilds and government agencies. In conclusion, it can be stated without fear of contradiction that the Nigerian video film industry has a bright future. Going by the indices of development in the industry in terms of fame and fortune of star actors and actresses, discovery of new talents in different segments of production, and international recognition in patronage, it is a potential revenue earner if well harnessed. The veritable means of exploring the potentials of the industry in employment provision and generation of revenue is proper regulation of practice by the stakeholders through the bodies and agencies saddled with the responsibility.

Works Cited

- Oladipo, O., A. Adeosun, and A. Oni. "Quality Assurance and Sustainable University Education in Nigeria." *Educational Research and Review* 6:2 (2011):147-151.
- Akomolafe, Olu. "Theatre Management in Nigeria: Appraisal and Challenges." *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1981. 425-432.
- Alamu, O. O. *Aesthetics of Yoruba Film*. Osaka: Research Institute for World Languages, Osaka University, 2010.
- Chukwura, Clarion. Interview. *Sunday Sun*, February 1, 2009: 17-19.
- Odeh, Roseline. "Focus on the National Film and Video Censor Board." *Tell* October 2003: 45-47.
- Ogundeji, Philip Adedotun. "Trends and Issues in Ogunde Dramatic Traditions." A Paper Presented at the Departmental Seminar of Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, University of Ibadan, 1985.
- Sotimirin, Tunji. "Towards Professional Theatre in Nigeria: The Role of National Associations." *Nigerian Theatre Journal* 8:1 (2005): 217-226.

COSTUME AND MAKE-UP DESIGNS AND PRODUCTIONS: THEIR QUINTESSENCE IN THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS

Felix U. Egwuda-Ugbeda & Maryisabella Ada Ezeh

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

Costume is anything worn on stage. Costume and make-up are to some extent very indispensable in both traditional and contemporary performances as in stage, film and screen plays. It is often asserted that, "clothes make man". To understand a person's nature, there are three factors: appearance, tone of voice and what the person says. Costume and make-up give the interpretation of the production concept, exhibit a unity of style, and provide visual information about the world of the play including locale, period, season, time of day, culture, as well as the play's socio-economic, religious and political environment. The crux of this paper therefore, is to enunciate the effective use of costume and make-up in theatre and establish a new approach to making costume and make-up indispensable in both stage and film productions. This may be made plausible by harnessing the study of costume and make-up from the ancient theatre to the present time as this may provide us with the impetus to develop a new concept.

Introduction

In everyday life situation, costume and make-up are used dependent of each other. People put on costume and apply make-up for various reasons. Both men and women make use of costume and make-up. No woman particularly will ever move out of her room in the morning without putting up an appropriate costume and applying make-up to match. Women apply street make-up in order to enhance or accentuate their beauty. Stage performance, screen play and film production are parts and parcel of human endeavours. In each of these performances, the use of costume and application of make-up are indispensable. Costume is designed, produced and worn in order to enhance the performance, that is, costume does not only enhance the performance but accentuates the cultural and physical setting of the production and also. It also delineates character on stage.

There are different types of make-up such as the character make-up, straightforward make-up and fantastic make-up. Each of these types of make-ups has

its several functions: character make-up is meant to transform one's character from one age level to the other. For instance a man or woman of twenty years could be transformed into ninety years old if well applied. The straightforward make-up has the capacity to accentuate the beauty of a character while fantastic make-up creates a grotesque, fearsome and fantastic appearance of a character in a particular production.

In a nutshell, both costume and make-up are indispensable in both stage, screen and film productions, but in order to create a greater effect, they must be designed, produced and applied by experts who understand the rudiments of these art works.

Costume Design

For an effective costume design, the costumier must bear in mind the underlying factors or concepts: the nature of costume design; the general consideration for costume design; organizational paperwork; visual presentation of the costume design, etc. Speaking on costume design, Gillette observes as follows:

There may be some truth to the adage that, "cloth makes the man"(...) during the first four minutes contact with a stranger our understanding of that person's nature and personality will be based on three primary, but unequal, factors: appearance; 55 per cent; tone of voice, 38 per cent; and what the person is saying, 7 per cent. (400)

In essence, the appearance in this case constitutes comportment and dignity; these two components are accentuated by one's carriage and the types of dresses one puts on. Giannetti and Leach are of the view that:

The effect of an actor's performance also depends on the work of costume designers and make-up artists. Costumes and make-up aren't merely frills added to enhance an illusion, but aspects of character and theme. Their style can reveal class, self-image, even psychological states. Depending on their cut, texture, and bulk, certain costumes can suggest agitation, fastidiousness, delicacy, and so on. (300 - 301)

To be effective, costume design must reflect the entire production design as interpreted to be the production concept. There must be an exhibition of unity of style among all the costume designs for that specific production. There must be the provision of a visual reflection of the personality and the nature of each character cast for a particular production, including a visual information based on such premises as

locale, period, season, time of day, culture, as well as the play's socio-economic, religious and political setting. With the above instruments in place, the costume designer must be imbued with some essential skills, that is, the costume designer must understand the personality who a specific costume is designed for, such as, the character's gender, social and economic class, climate as well as stylistic qualities. The costume designer must be prolific in interpreting colours, understanding the nature of fabrics; indeed, the costume designer must acquire all the knowledge of a visual artist. The designer must have at his/her fingertips the social and cultural history of a particular setting where the play evolves. Character analysis is one of the fundamental principles which the costume designer must fortify himself with, that is, in term of each role's significant traits, motivations, feelings and functions within the theatrical action. In a sound note, a costume designer must understand that costume for any play production must have a visual appeal if the intellectual and emotional quality of a performance must be enhanced. According to Albright, Halstead and Mitchell:

Style is the externalization of the spirit of the play: the sobriety or flippancy of its attitude towards life and the dignity or triviality of its theme, and, on occasion, the period of its composition. Style is expressed in certain qualities of costume: silhouette; in texture; in accent; and finally in the relationship of individual costumes are to another within the ensemble (69)

Costume is never seen as a phenomenon because of its supposed commonness; commonness in the sense that everybody wears costume including the young and the old; male and female, the rich and the poor; the sane and the insane, and even corpses. Whichever category of costume that is won by any class of person, the costume designer is armed with his/her objectives which should be achieved after a successful costume design. The objectives as enunciated by Wilson are as follows:

The style of production would have been enhanced; the historical period of a play and its locale would have been indicated, the nature of individual characters, or groups, their stations in life, their occupations and personalities would have been indicated; the relationships among characters, the separation of major characters from minor characters and contrasting one group with another would have been effectively

enhanced; the needs of individual performers would have been made plausible and bringing together all other visual elements at par with the costumes (363).

The costume designer has his/her process of costume design such as, first of all making sketches which will indicate the shape, fabric, and colours. The design process also entails the commitment, analysis, research, incubation, selection, implementation and the evaluation of the design work. Brockett and Ball have written on the work of costume designer and the scene designer thus:

The costume designer is concerned primarily with the visual appearance of characters. Whereas the scene designer characterizes the stage environment within which the action develops, the costume designer characterizes the players who function within the environment... (383).

The costume designer's work encapsulates intellectual, psychological, social, cultural, technological and artistic endeavours.

Costume Production

Production according to *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language* (Encyclopedic edition) is, among other things, "the act or process of producing for use, (...) that which is produced or made; any tangible result of industrial, artistic or literary labor". Costume production is an offshoot of costume design. It is an artistic endeavour which works in partnership with costume design. Costume design is a combination of mental and artistic input, whereas, costume production is enhanced by artistic acumen and physical manifestation. A costume producer has a close resemblance with home sewing or a tailor who makes every day dress but there are remarkable differences in their jobs. A tailor will simply collect a material from the customer, take the measurement, and inquire from the customer the style he/she prefers, cuts the materials and makes them together according to the dictate or taste of the customer. But the theatrical costume producer has a more complex job and an uphill task. The costume producer as an artist, first of all, interprets the work of the costume designer which is made in sketches. Then, he studies the performance process, understands the objectives of the performance, the setting, the period, the silhouette, the nature of the actors and actresses, their personalities, their physical built, the mood of the performance, the nature of fabric,

the appropriate colour, etc.

Costumes for play productions must stand the test of time as they are used for vigorous activities on stage. On this premise, Gillette explains that:

Building a costume isn't simply a matter of going down to the fabric store, buying a pattern and some fabric, and then going home and making a dress. The process of making costume is much more complex.... Costumes need to be more durable than street clothes. Drama deals with heightened emotions. While maintaining a period Silhouette, costumes also must accommodate the range of emotion and rigors imposed by the physicalization of those heightened emotions – running, jumping, leaping, falling, rolling, fighting, dancing... (424)

Unlike the costume designer, the costume producer is saddled with the responsibilities or the processes of making materials and techniques in vogue in costume making. Such knowledge covers the type of fabrics, techniques of making the materials, the pattern designs, sewing, painting, dyeing, etc.

In costume production or construction as the case may be, a wide variety of materials is used and different types of tools and basic equipment such as: cutting tables, dress forms, fabric storage, washing machine and drier, dye vat, hot plate, stove irons, ironing boards, steamers, sink, mirror, racks, tables and chairs, sewing machines, measuring devices, hand needles, machine needles, thread, thimbles, straight pins, safety pins, tracing wheels, tracing paper, tailor's chalk, shears and scissors, seam rippers, snaps, hooks and eyes, zippers, Velcro, hot glue gum, seam – binding tape and natural fibres are all of necessities. In an ideal situation, it is most encouraging for the permanent theatre organizations to make their own costumes and maintain their own wardrobe. Costumes can be reused in several productions. It is ideal reusing costumes from own wardrobe than renting from outside shops.

Costume design and production/construction require a high measure of professionalism. The costume designer and producer must be strongly armed with the knowledge of art and technology. The knowledge of technical drawing, textile, tailoring, types and nature of tools, fabric, colour and colour cycle, light effects, history of costuming, silhouette, human nature, form and character, accurate interpretation of the play productions, among other things are paramount. According to Giannetti and Leach:

...costumes are designed for the performers who will be wearing them. The costumier must always be conscious of the actor's body type – whether he or she is thin, overweight, tall short, etc – to compensate for any deficiency.... If a performer is famous for a given trait...the costumier will often design the actor's clothes to highlight (the) attractions (302).

Whichever aspect of the theatre a costumier is working for (stage performance, film and television production), the costume artist must articulate his role effectively as any little mistake can mar the entire production. Different characters in a particular production have their peculiar costume as one of the basic functions of costume is character delineation. Royalty is usually associated with splendour which accounts for his/her dignity and power. The issue of leitmotif in costume design and production can never be compromised being a representative theme used to indicate a certain person, attribute or idea in a performance.

Make-up

Make-up in the performing arts, film or television can easily be defined as the practice of painting, enhancing or altering the face, hair or body of the actors with cosmetics, plastic materials and other substances, as an aid in taking on the appearance appropriate to the character being represented. Like costume, make-up passes through the processes of design, production and application. According to Gillette:

Stage make up enhances the illusion that the actor has become the character. In almost every production some of the actors...do not facially resemble the characters they are playing. Make up can help solve this challenge by providing actors with the means to change their appearance... (451).

Make-up can be applied on the face or the body through a process of painting, and it can be won by means of plastic construction. Whichever form it takes, its essence, among others, are to delineate characters or to characterize, as it can indicate age, health, ethnicity, profession, physical and cultural setting, and above all, to enhance a performance. In everyday situation, make-up is indispensable particularly to the female gender. To the female gender, the application of make-up and the use of

costume are sine qua non to their existence. This makes it obvious that whatever one lacks in one's physical build-up is enhanced through the application of make-up. In this regard, Owuamalam's illustration is apt:

A preacher once told his congregation, that people make up when they feel deficient in an aspect in life. He claims that to make up means, an agreement that one lacks something that another thing is capable of providing. He concluded by asserting that make up helps the individual to be what she is not but aspires to be. The preacher believes that the aspiration is role model oriented and a ploy to disguise the natural look of people in society (184).

The make-up applied daily by the female gender is street make up and the essence is to enhance or accentuate beauty. Such make-up is not permanent as it is easily washed off and fresh one applied the next day. Facial marks as employed by many cultures the world over are forms of make-up. They are permanent designs on the face or body. This form of make-up serves largely as identification of one's cultural setting, and in some cases, it accentuates beauty and in other cases, it imbues sacredness on some personalities in a given society. Tattoo which has become quite popular among youths (male and female) in this age is another form of make-up. Tattoo is body design of different patterns; it may be permanent or temporal designs.

The stage make up has a characteristic of non-permanence if it is painted design, but permanent if it is plastic construction; of course, like costume, the plastic make-up can be reused. Stage make up can be classified as: Character make up, Straight make up and fantastic make up. Character make up is that type of make-up that characterizes, even though all make-ups characterize. It has the capacity to transform the character from one age level to the other. For instance, a fifteen year old character can be made up and will transform into a ninety-year old. Straight forward make-up is meant to accentuate beauty. If a particular pretty character is needed, straightforward make-up can add more to the character's beauty. Fantastic make-up creates a fearsome and grotesque appearance of a character. If we should create the character of a ghost or the dead, the character is expected to appear fearsome and grotesque.

Make Up Design and Application

Designing make-up for application is a serious endeavour. It takes a series of plans

and study to make a good design for make-up. The make-up artist should understand the content of the production, that is, the cultural and physical settings, the period of the play, the background of the actor/actress – status, sex, role, complexion, etc. Discussing make-up plot, Brockett is of the view that:

When make-up is designed and supervised by one person, a plot and sketches are normally used. A chart is made indicating basic information about the make-up of each actor: the base, liners, eye shadow and powder; any plastic features such as beard; any changes to be made during the play. It serves both as a guide for applying make-up and as a check on how the make-up of each actor relates to that of all the others (572).

There are features of the design process to make up design such as commitment, analysis, research, incubation, selection implementation and evaluation. Furthermore, make up drawings and understanding the materials necessary for the application of make-up like cake make-up, crème make up, liquid make up, dry make up, grease paint, rubber-mask grease paint and make up removers, are quintessential.

The application of make-up on actors or actresses requires a very sound knowledge of visual art. Such a make-up artist is required to know the background of the play, the background of the character and the features of the character particularly the face. In essence, the artist must study the human face in order to ascertain the low and highlights, the areas where shadows and wrinkles can be created, whether nose putty should be added to the nose and the type of colour to use. Several application techniques can be used with all types of make-up. These include: highlights and shadows, highlight and shadow colours, stippling, corrective make up, nose putty, derma wax, gelatine, latex, prosthetics, beards and moustaches.

In most of the universities in Nigeria, the use of costume and application of make-up in performances are taken for granted. In most cases, there is a dearth of well-trained or groomed costume and make-up artists. Costume and make-up in theatrical productions are usually pushed aside as fiddlesticks. In view of this, most of our universities' departments of Theatre/Performing/Dramatic Arts do not have costume and make-up designers who would prepare a good ground for the costume and make-up artists. There are hardly costume wardrobes and make-up kits. In most of the productions in our universities, it is the night when performances are supposed to take place that the so-called costumiers and make-up artists will begin to grind

chalk and charcoal and other manoeuvres in the name of make-up. In most cases, the relevance of costume and make-up to the actors and actresses as well as the performance can hardly be ascertained. Costume and make-up design, application, construction/production are hardly seen as artistic endeavours as the assumption is that any theatre artist who indulges in these areas is not good enough and therefore redundant. But this assumption is erroneous, because the art of the theatre is a synthesis of directing, acting, designing, construction and application.

Conclusion

The world we live in is sophisticatedly costumed and made up. The animals, birds, insects, fish, mountain, ocean, river, plants, etc., are sufficiently costumed and made up by nature, hence, the array of beauty attached to these elements. For theatre to assume its critical place in the entertainment industry, be it stage performance, media and film, costume and make-up must be standardized in every production. Every segment of theatre production has the same impact factor. If the script is good, with good director, good actors and actresses, good stage designer, good props constructors, good lighting designers, good costume and make-up artists, good stage manager, good stage hands and even good audience, the success of such a production will be unlimited. Finally, for a quality assurance in costume and make-up designs and productions, the costume and make-up artists must obtain prerequisite qualifications and have a sound knowledge of the job.

Works Cited

- Albright, H. D., W. P. Halstead, and L. Mitchell. *Principles of Theatre Art* 2nd Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968.
- Brockett, Oscar G. *The Theatre: An Introduction*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974
- Brockett, Oscar G., and Robert J. Ball. *The Essential Theatre* 8th Ed. New York: Thomson Wadsworth, 2004.
- Corson, Richard. *Stage Makeup*. 6th Ed. New York: Prentice Hall, 1981.
- Emery, Joseph.S. *Stage Costume Technique*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1981.

Gianetti, Louis and Jim Leach. *Understanding Movies*. 2nd Ed. Canada: Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data, 2001.

Gianetti, Michael J. *Theatrical Design and Production*. 5th Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005.

Izenour, George. *Theatre Design*. New York: McGraw-Hall, 1977.

Owuamalam, Emma-Owums. *Film and Screen Directing*. Owerri: Top Class Agencies; 2007.

Wilson, Edwin. *The Theatre Experience*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004.

_____. and Alvin Goldfarb. *Living Theater: A History*. New York: McGraw-Hall, 1994.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN DANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY: CASE STUDIES FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE LECTURE HALL TO PRAXIS

Arnold Udoka

National Troupe of Nigeria, Lagos

Abstract

This paper starts out by reviewing the discernable trends that have precipitated what may be considered as the limiting impetus of colonialism, in sustaining quality assurance in dance and choreography in Nigeria and the personal inputs at solving pedagogical problems in the teaching of dance and choreography in Nigerian universities. The paper also contextualizes the profound difference in parameters that determine quality assurance in the world of professional dance and choreography as opposed to educational theatre. The paper concludes by acknowledging the profound contributions of universities - at home and abroad - in the development of a formidable and committed population of intellectuals in dance and choreography and advocates a synergy between the lecture hall and praxis to elevate, sustain and ensure quality assurance in dance and choreography in Nigeria.

Introduction

This paper makes it clear from the onset that it concerns itself with a personal account. This means that it might not be completely correct to make a sweeping assumption that there is a recognisable corpus of knowledge known as dance and choreography in Nigerian Universities. Since there has been no harmonization of the subjects as to ensure benchmarks in all the universities, at best what might be in existence are opinions of lecturers modelled as courses. The question begging the answer is: what philosophies inform the curriculums of dance and choreography? It is only when this question is answered that it might be possible to resolve whether or not it is possible to guarantee quality assurance of any sort in any dance and choreography subjects in the country.

We must admit that the philosophies that informed the performances of our forebears are not available to us in this space and time and no matter how this generation strives to capture the past, it will always be partial in comprehension and

tainted since such records only exist in the memory of the elders and could be manipulated or misrepresented. What is left these days are some of the dances and spatial arrangements. We have lost the milieu which provided the corporeal and subjective spectacles to aid full comprehension. We can only, to a great extent, depend on history because even the old dances we witness these days have acquired new repertoire of aesthetics to enrich themselves which we might not be conscious of. While we share in the patrimony of our ancient dances as we have met them, what parameters, therefore, inform the aesthetic framework upon which quality assurance can be tested these days? The title of this paper presupposes that there is something problematic about quality assurance in dance and choreography and that it requires the recounting of efforts and attempts at creating a basis to serve as standard through research. On the other hand, legislation has somehow demanded what quality assurance might be presumed to be in the absence of referential indices.

Colonial Interference as Violation of Quality Assurance

There is no doubt that colonialism was a major turning point in the history of the cultures of present day Nigeria. Whether it was Arabic or European, none was ready to accommodate the existing cultures it met. To establish themselves, theocratic Islam and political British rule banished the dances native to the cultures and interestingly supplanted them with those supported by their religious faith and political leanings. "... between the Muslim North and the increasingly Christian South, Islam banned all theatrical activities outright, while Christians demanded that...converts renounce all secret societies and rituals, including dancing" (Gumucio-Dagron 75). Directly, these policies were not only to change the dance forms, but also targeted at the annihilation of the craftsmen of dance – the choreographers. Where there is no dance craftsman, there can be no social dance. Where such were still in existence, their arts had fossilised and frozen in historical space. The implication of this is that it froze philosophical thoughts and re-directed them at reflecting on emancipation, self-determination and freedom; issues which were not self-generated, but distractions from the colonial forces to which survival was pre-eminent. Such traumatic experience in many ways disconnected the psyche of the indigenous Nigerian and degraded his or her self-worth. The social structures that were to ensure stability in the societies were abused and confused thus debasing the principle of relationships. According to Kim Il Sung, "The destiny of man, a social being, is shaped only through his establishment of social relations inside the collective which is called society and through mutual cooperation" (41). Needless to

say such destinies, of both individuals and communities in Nigeria, were badly battered with impunity to the extent that survival required total surrender to the new social order. Did that social order prepare to shape the peoples and communities socially? Was dance a major ingredient in that arrangement? To both questions, the answer is that the art of movement was not considered a partner in social engineering.

Dance is the phenomenon experienced in performance and choreography is the craft that creates the dance. While the dance is experienced in the public space, the choreographic art is prepared in seclusion away from public view of where thought, imagery and kinesis are translated into meaningful images. In indigenous Nigerian communities, dance and choreography constitute very complex relationships of things. Indeed, indigenous dance and choreography are the mediums where the ideational, intellectual, religious, social, ethnic, linguistic and aesthetic modes are transformed into images that are both corporeal and subjective and upon which cognition is based. The measured dance steps and durations of performances signify the deliberate calculations of space, time, rhythm and image to edify man and reconcile him or her with society and the cosmos. The aesthetic metalangue deployed and engaged guarantee quality assurance of self-discovery, renewal of mind-body and futuristic trajectory through the dance. This is why to dance is to *become*.

Without any iota of doubt, colonialism – both Arabic and European – is the major culprit in the case of the lowering of the tradition of excellence in dance and choreography in Nigeria. The tragic conditions the diverse cultures found themselves as a result of these unending onslaughts saw citizens taken into slavery, others dispersing into unknown destinations, some were killed because of the truculence to retain their traditions and others stayed alive to be forcefully incorporated into new religions and governmental systems. These conquering forces debased the structures of the traditional thought processes of indigenous Nigerians and this would lead to the need for solving pedagogical problems first by re-inventing the philosophy upon which dance and choreographic thoughts and education must be based.

Case Study 1: The Lecture Hall Intervention

In the 1980s into the 1990s, the pedagogical challenge of dance and choreography needed to be resolved in the lecture hall where research and analysis would lead to distilling the scholastic properties of concepts, principles, elements, techniques and theories. The result of this arduous task did not disappoint the purpose for which it was intended to solve. To cast a cursory appraisal, it was common in my time as an

undergraduate student that some of the expatriate staff were conscious of the dangers of exhausting the syllabus in dance and choreography on an indigenous student. It therefore required an intellectually curious and knowledge-hungry student to break the barriers to seek ways and means of immersing himself or herself in the search for the proverbial golden fleece. It, therefore, meant to me that the burden was on me to prepare the grounds for the future Nigerian student interested in studying dance or choreography at the University of Calabar. It implied that such a student would require a sound intellectual basis for the understanding of these subjects. In my mind, these were the first and only requirements I needed to provide to establish a standard and quality assurance to generations of dance and choreography scholars from the University of Calabar. Neither the search nor the results came easy or cheap.

In the absence of textbooks on the subjects, and being assigned to lecture in six dance courses in one year namely, Introduction to Dance, Basic Choreography and kinaesthetics, Advance Dance I, Advance Dance II, Formalism in Dance, and Operatic Forms, I had to devise a way of meeting the students' needs and imparting knowledge in the subjects. At that time, I had just returned from the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance at the University of London Goldsmiths' College, London, armed with a three-dimensional Master's degree in Choreography, Dance History and Sociology of Dance. I had to devise the course contents for the six courses and to give the three young final year students (Emem Olutoke [Nee Obonguko], now lecturer in dance at the University of Abuja; Emem Isong, now an award-winning movie producer who also has attempted the first Nigerian dance movie; and Ojo Rasaki Bakare, now Professor and Dean of Arts at the Federal University, Oye, Ekiti, Ekiti State) who were eager to major in dance and hitherto had no dance lecturer. I had to develop a series which came to be known as Professional Dance Monographs, apart from extensive class notes and practical dance classes to get them grounded in the theory and practice of dance and choreography within one year. They had never received dance training in their undergraduate years in the university until then. A great deal of the effort I made to ensure quality assurance of the dance academic is encapsulated in Bakare, Ojo Rasaki's *Rudiments of Choreography Part I* published in 1994 and dedicated to "... Hubert Ogunde, Jimoh Aliu and Arnold Benjamin Udoka, in whose artistic hands I was moulded". Ojo was my student from 1989-1990 and was keen on becoming a dancer and a choreographer. I would say, without any fear of contradiction that the combination of the dance monographs and the class notes have made Bakare's little book a must-read and has filled the lacuna which had existed before our Calabar meeting. I am most humbled by his claim on the blurb of the very

first edition of the book that, “He studied under the foremost Nigerian Choreographer – Arnold Udoka”. Again, his autograph in a copy of the book to me reads, “For you my Master – Arnold Benjamin Udoka. Without you, there wouldn't have been anything like this. You provided the knowledge and the courage. I love you. With cheers from Bakare O Rasaki (Sign) 29/3/94”.

Through this little book, I have fathered many intellectual grand and great-grand-children because this little book seems to be used by most dance students in Nigeria. Others are still using the Professional Dance Monographs and the class notes for lecture and teaching purposes. Very soon, my definitive books, *The Arts and Science of Dance – An Introduction* to support theory and practice of the dance and *Introduction to Basic Choreography* would be on the shelves for the use of students and lecturers of dance and choreography. I can say that I have contributed some effort at solving a pedagogical problem and strengthening the area of dance and choreography at the tertiary education level and have no doubt that it has been significant in quality assurance development from the scholastic perspective and stand not to fly in the air if properly and effectively delivered and improved upon. I must, however, admit that there seems to be more emphasis on theory than practice these days in our universities because the dance graduates are bereft of technique. The problem might be more of the absence of facility than personnel.

Case Study 11: The Praxis – National Troupe of Nigeria

The National Troupe of Nigeria was established by decree 47 of 1991 now Act No. 47 of 1991 (Supplement to Official Gazette Extraordinary No. 64, Vol. 78), as the apex theatre organisation and a parastatal of the Federal Government of Nigeria. Dance is one of the four performative arms of the Troupe. The others are drama, music and children's theatre. The establishment provides the platform for praxis, but it requires the experience and expansive exposure of the choreographer with a view to ensuring best global practice driven by professionalism. With Bronze gong at Nafest'88 in Dance interpretation category; Bronze gong in Nafest'88 in Improvisation (group) category; Bronze gong in Nafest'88 Dance Drama category; Silver gong in NAFEST '74 in contemporary dance category; Silver gong in NAFEST '88 in Traditional dance category; Silver gong in NAFEST '88 in Modern dance solo category; Gold gong in NAFEST '88 in Dance drama on video category; Gold gong in NAFEST '88 in Musical video category, there were eight (8) national awards in my pool, the National Troupe of Nigeria offered the next challenge; this time it was for the practical application of research on a national scale and within a professional context.

The National Troupe of Nigeria as a matter of policy carries out a stage by stage assessment of all processes of its dance department – from employment of the dance personnel to productions. It is naturally so because the first and third objectives of the National Troupe of Nigeria are “To encourage creativity in order to achieve excellence in the performing arts” and, “To achieve high artistic productions specifically designed for National and International Tours” (Supplement to Official Gazette Extraordinary No. 64, Vol. 78). For these objectives to be justified, therefore, mechanisms must be instituted and approved by the entire management of the Troupe to ensure full compliance with these objectives because they are so legislated by the Act establishing the Troupe.

The Role of Auditioning Dance Artistes into the National Troupe of Nigeria

The role of auditioning dance artistes into the National Troupe of Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. This is the primary step taken after such artistes have been selected and presented to the National Troupe as the representatives of the states. It should be noted that after the state-by-state national auditions into the National Troupe carried out by Hubert Ogunde which led to the assembly of artistes on September 11, 1989 in Ososa, Ogun State, no such activity has taken place again due to the expensive nature of the process. The new policy has seen states engage in the primary selection and then sending such dance artistes for the final auditions into Lagos. It is not uncommon to realise that some states would rather send in those dancers who are not so good and holding back their best materials. That is the human factor, but it denies such a state an opportunity of training, exposure and experience which those artistes with already established records of flair would have benefitted and brought to bear upon their return to the states or in their careers.

Audition, therefore, becomes the method to confirm and decide on the abilities, capacities, technique range and memory speed of the dance artiste. Many who have not met the criteria demanded by the National Troupe have been sent back to their sponsoring states and requests for some others to be selected and presented are made. The whole idea is centred on the quality of dance personnel the National Troupe is most likely prepared to accept to work with.

Medicals as Quality Assurance of the Personnel (Raw Materials)

The raw materials for choreography are human bodies and in our case, dancers. The auditioning process continues as the dance artistes report to camp. Even though he or she is documented based on the letter of appointment indicating training,

secondment or contract, the National Troupe must take the dance artiste through medicals. This phase is where, in spite of the certificate of medical examinations presented by the dance artiste upon request, the National Troupe of Nigeria's retainer hospital or clinic must carry out a full check to confirm the cardiovascular, orthopaedic and blood statuses and other vital checks of the new in-takes. Failure to meet all the medical requirements for the dance artiste means a return journey to his or her home state. The role of the audition of dance artistes into the National Troupe of Nigeria is first and foremost to establish the fact that quality assurance in the physical, intellectual and aesthetic aspects of the personnel as raw materials for the dance productions, are not in doubt and shall not affect productions adversely.

Post-Medicals Auditions and Training to Ensure Quality Assurance

The call-up letter to the camp and medicals do not guarantee final placement in the National Troupe of Nigeria. While awaiting the medical reports from the retainer hospital, the dance artistes are taken through a procedure of daily training for two weeks. During such trainings the National Troupe usually invites dance scholars and practitioners to engage the new in-takes in workshops that include subjects from the intellectual to the physical. It is during this period that it is possible to weed out those who are not physically disposed as well as those who may be harbouring health conditions that might put the candidates in serious danger and terminal conditions. In this respect, the Troupe always seeks the opinions of some dance experts – both theorists and practitioners – outside of its employ to support the assessments of the in-house experts to ensure the quality of its human raw material capital.

Assessment of Production Concepts for Quality Assurance

From pre-production to post-production, there are mechanisms to ensure quality. At the point of revealing the production concepts, experts in other areas of the productions make inputs to the planned production before auditions. Suggestions garnered during such sessions can be very helpful. The concept design is the kernel of a production and must from the onset be reviewed in such a manner that structural faults are detected and excluded. The inputs from other professional colleagues during the assessment make the design development phase clearer with possibilities, improvements, functionality and delimitations. For the choreographer, these two stages of design considerations are essential as these constitute the creative modules to arriving at a successful dance production. The production team saddled with the responsibility of bringing to life whatever story or script is focussed on delivering has

arrived at the working design based on the successful articulation of the first two phases of design concept and design development. Aware that the coherence or otherwise of the production rests on its combined professionalism, the production crew itself goes for quality control by daily assessing the aesthetic metalangue deployed to realise the project. This is what could be termed the production team's internal quality assurance. The choreographer accepts nothing less and if there is any aesthetic element that is untoward in assisting the work, it is immediately agreed to expunge and/or substitute. If that fails, the dictatorial authority of the choreographer might take the front seat to ensure a near-perfect and high quality production as demanded by the establishment with safety of all personnel at the centre of all considerations.

The Management Team Internal Mechanism for Quality Assurance

Although the management of the National Troupe has approved a production, domiciled it under the dance department and under a choreographer working with a production crew, its oversight functions include a preview of the finished production intended for the public. This internal mechanism has always been the deciding factor if the entire effort put in so far shall see the light of day. This is the most dreaded session for a choreographer (stage director or music director) within the National Troupe. Here, all aspects of the production are taken up by different experts and even non-experts as to how they would have liked the scene or scenes to be played and even how the entire production should be projected if the production is to meet the objectives which are more of legislations demanding compliance in what the Troupe serves the public whether national or international.

This session as can be imagined, is capable of drawing out disagreements between the crew and management, but careful and logical defences and the capacity to listen and adjust to the views of this 'first audience' always prove helpful and enhance the depth, texture and aesthetics of the production at the end. This is the National Troupe of Nigeria's management team's internal mechanism for quality assurance.

Press Preview as Quality Assurance

The most traumatic session for a theatre producer of any kind is during the press preview. Unaware of whether or not the press has been eavesdropping on your rehearsal plans and challenges or even familiar with the script or storyline you have devised for the stage, the choreographer is at the mercy of an appreciative or caustic

press at the preview. The irony is that it is the National Troupe Management that invites the press to the preview, but that notwithstanding, it is impossible to control their write-ups since these are men and women whose opinions have the character of assisting the general public form notions about the productions. Aware that journalists are not dancers at first, it is always exhilarating to hear them commend a choreographic work for its content, message and spectacle. It is also noteworthy that is not always such a smooth sail when barrage of questions to underpin their perceptions ensue. As the conduit to the public, the press as critics are essential in assisting the choreographer in quality assurance. The readership of newspapers depends on the press and each critic desires to be seen and accepted as an opinion guide to the readership. In that wise, the contribution of the critic during the press preview ensures quality assurance for the choreographic work and the intended audience. All the National Troupe of Nigeria's dance productions have benefitted immensely from press preview sessions as they have helped in counter-balancing the aesthetic metalogue and even the structure of productions.

Criticism as Quality Assurance

The channel of public discourse of dance between the creators and consumers rest solely with the critics.... The role of the critic must be emphasized as the agent for the development and sustenance for a healthy theatre culture. It is the critic's responsibility to sell or otherwise, the products of the choreographer through his appreciation of the aesthetics deployed to realize the work (Udoka 9).

The National Troupe of Nigeria respects the opinions of the press and both have grown and worked together as partners in the interest of the public. It is, therefore, important to realise that criticism from the press is in itself, part and parcel of the mechanisms for the purposes of quality of what the Choreographer at the National Troupe of Nigeria serves to the public.

Corporate Sponsorship as Affirmation of Quality Assurance

All over the world, corporate sponsorship of dance works are equated with how the sponsoring organization can have leverage on the class, quality and popularity of the dance work it so desires to associate with. The National Troupe of Nigeria's dance products have severally been the bride of corporate organizations simply because of the ability of the Troupe to meet the demands of works commissioned by such blue

chip companies. As a hallmark of its quality assurance, the brief on National Troupe of Nigeria for its brochures since 2007 announces that, "... a number of corporate bodies like the Chevron, NLNG, Texaco, Celtel, MTN have relied on Troupe's exhibited competence in packaging high artistic productions to multinational audiences" (National Troupe of Nigeria Brochure). Apart from the NLNG, the rest of the productions were dance works. To be added to this long list are Elf Producing and Coca-Cola Nigeria. Corporate sponsorship therefore is an affirmation of quality assurance as the success or otherwise of the productions would promote or impinge on the corporate image of the sponsoring organizations.

Long and Short Notice Production Requests by Government as Proof of Integrity of Quality Assurance

In professional practice request for productions, even commissioned productions at short notice must be expected; more so being a dance agency in the public sector. The speed at which decisions are reached may be slow and sometimes fast, very fast. If it is slow or plans are on the medium or long term lanes, dance production components are coordinated at slow tempo aware of the timeline of the expected occasion. For example, in 2003, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and the 8th All-Africa Games dance performance components had long periods of planning. For the CHOGM event, national auditions were carried out for a month and artistes were camped and I took them through the creative process and rehearsal for five weeks. The performance was no doubt outstanding. The head of the commonwealth, Queen Elizabeth II could not hold back her impression of the performance when she said off the cuff, "This is indeed, an African CHOGM". But that was the result of long term planning that ensured quality assurance of the production.

The 8th All-Africa Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies had twenty-five months of planning and execution. Although the release of funds was late into 2003, the groundwork had been done and the excellent outcomes went viral. In a sarcastic comment on the success of the Opening Ceremony of the games, Bisi Lawrence in his column Sports Biz wrote,

They thumped their chests about the splendour of the stadium, for instance, as though Adamu was the architect or the builder. They continued to suck from the sweetness of the opening ceremony without once allowing the name of Wole Soyinka to escape from their lips. What

does Adamu or his men know about choreography or production for instance? (*Vanguard Newspaper*, 27/10/2003).

Although Soyinka was not directly in-charge of the choreography of the 600 dancers – I was – he superintended over all the affairs of the theatrical components of the opening and closing ceremonies which were developed based on his ideas and which propelled these aspects of the games to great successes.

The effectiveness of the opening ceremony drew comments too from other imminent global figures. According to Ikeddy Isiguzo, “Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), has described the opening ceremony of the 8th All Africa Games as fantastic” (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200310070777.html>). This comment also resonated in Nairaland Forum that, “Rogge commended Nigeria's hosting of the 8th All Africa Games, saying the facilities put in place were of high standard while the opening ceremonies were "simply fantastic.” (<http://www.nairaland.com/44204/nigeria-bid-2018-fifa-world>). These were endorsements of quality assurance at the global level. Soyinka himself must be commended for his choice of personnel who collaborated in the creative process to deliver a high quality opening and closing ceremonies during the games.

What if the dance production is at short notice? The speed at which government decisions are reached is such that if any of the performing arts is in the public sector, its managers must be ready to mobilise human and material resources as and when demanded. Several times, the Troupe has been called upon at short notice to represent the nation and at no time did it not live up to expectation. The federal government reposes its confidence in the National Troupe of Nigeria based on proven quality assurance even at short notice. This is a mark of professionalism and provides an opportunity to consider what the results could be if there was a synergy between the lecture halls and the professional dance world in Nigeria.

The Rehearsal Strategy as the Ultimate Quality Assurance

Of all the mechanisms related above, rehearsal stands out as the strategy to ensure the quality of production. What then is rehearsal to dance? This strategy involves a lot of things ranging from technique training, character development, composition, choreographic structuring, costume trials to production planning. Since dance is eternally a nonverbal communication medium that depends on strict adherence to accepted movement rules to convey meanings, I, as a matter of principle, insist on good technique training to ensure excellent biomechanics and injury-free dancers.

The abilities of the dancers themselves are measured and assessed from the point of technique and skill in delivering the required 'rhythmised' kinetic messages of which failure will subvert the desired communication. In all, rehearsal accounts for the psychological and physical preparedness of the dancer and the creative process for the choreographer. Rehearsal guarantees the physical safety of the performer and is responsible for the confidence of the dancer and the choreographer. It is impossible to achieve a production of any quality without rehearsal as the bedrock strategy to achieve it. Rehearsal is where the dance production is designed, packaged, tested and guaranteed.

Conclusion

While there is a growing and committed population of scholars and practitioners, what at the present is predominating quality assurance in dance and choreography is the inaccessibility of the standards being used by different teachers and practitioners in these subject areas. The reason is that dance scholars and practitioners have received their trainings from different sources – abroad and home – and have not reached a consensus on the basis of forging a common curriculum or a benchmark for the teaching and practice of dance and choreography. There must be common purpose and objective on the part of especially dance scholars to ensure that theories are translated into practice for concrete application in the daily lives of the dancers. The absence of technique among majority of dancers in the country has opened the doors to anyone who can make any move to misrepresent the true reason, purpose and meaning of dance as a human activity.

For the professional dance and choreography to grow, the training grounds must prepare both the practitioners and scholars for life outside of the studios and classrooms – the market place. There is a great difference between the two. The exposure and experience of the students to the requirements of the profession to ensure quality assurance from the classroom cannot be overemphasised. The expectations outside of the classroom would meet with disappointment simply because the student missed the virtues of perseverance, hard work, professional ethics, discipline, respect, and social responsibility. There must be a synergy between the dance lecture halls, studios and the professional dance world. Theory must guide practice and practice must inform theory. Since the genuine concern of dance and choreography is to communicate human experience within the social relations of a society it therefore suggests that there is a social responsibility attached to its function and this must be delivered on the platform of quality assurance to earn acceptance,

appreciation and consumption as needful human products.

Works Cited

Bakare, Ojo Rasaki. *Rudiments of Choreography Part I*. Zaria: Space 2000 Publishers, 1994.

Gumucio-Dagron, Alfonso. *Popular Theatre*. Lagos: UNCEF, 1994.

Ikeddy Isiguzo "Jacques Rogge Praises Coja.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200310070777.html>. Retrieved May 1, 2013.

IL Sung, Kim. *The Juche Idea and Man's Destiny*. Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1989.

Lawrence, Bisi. "Coja – What We Dare Say." *Vanguard Newspaper*, 27, November, 2003.

National Troupe of Nigeria Brochure of "Long Walk to a Dream," 2010

Nairaland Forum. <http://www.nairaland.com/44204/nigeria-bid-2018-fifa-world>. Retrieved May 1, 2013.

Supplement to Official Gazette Extraordinary No. 64, Vol. 78, 19th November, 1991 – Part A- National Theatre and National Troupe of Nigeria Board Decree, 1991.

Udoka, Arnold. "Dance in Contemporary Nigeria: Change, Continuity and Relevance". A Conference Paper Presented at The French Cultural Centre and Alliance Francaise, Maison de France, Ikoyi, Lagos, May 22, 1996.

ENSURING THE QUALITY OF FILMS AND VIDEOS IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN FILM AND VIDEO CENSORS BOARD

Regina Ode

Benue State University, Makurdi

Abstract

The Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board, established in 1993 by an Act CAP.N40 LFN 2004, was charged with the responsibility of licensing films and premises of exhibiting films, censorship and classification of films/video works among other functions. In response to the general responsibility of the Board, it evolved the Regulations of August 15th, 2008. The Regulations were derived from the enabling laws and these have remained the laws guiding the operations of the Board till date. A close study of these laws, as they stand today, clearly shows that there is an urgent need for a review. The various categories of offenses stated in the law/regulations and the corresponding punishments which usually take the forms of payment of different sums of money, depending on the offence, are not in consonance with the economic capabilities of the trade. Nollywood is the fastest growing industry in Nigeria, generating as high as between 250 and 300 million dollars annually. Against the backdrop of its economic strength and more importantly, the strong influence of film on the human mind, any violation of any part of the law should not only be treated with utmost concern but commensurate punishment should be meted out on offenders. This paper holds that the laws of the Board need urgent review and possible amendment to address the issues raised and to also curtail the activities of non-professionals who venture into the business for the sole purpose of making money at the expense of other societal responsibilities owned by their trade.

Introduction

When the Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) was established in 1993, many wondered why there was a need to establish such a body to exist side by side with Nigeria Film Corporation. As time went on, it became clear that, although the word 'film' appears in the names of both government agencies, the job description is different. The Nigeria Film Corporation (NFC), according to Chikwendu, was established to cover such functions as:

The production of film for domestic consumption and for export; the establishment and maintenance of facilities for film production; to encourage Nigerians financially and otherwise to produce films; to encourage the development of cinematography theatres by Nigerians by way of financial and other forms of assistance (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/filmcensorship>).

Chikwendu goes further to state that other functions of the NFC include the acquisition and distribution of films, the establishment and maintenance of national film archives, the provision of facilities for training and advancing the skills and talents of persons employed in the Nigerian film industry and the conduct of research on matters pertaining to film production and the film industry as a whole and finally, to carry out other activities as may be conferred on it in the discharge of the corporate responsibilities. The NFVCB, which is the focus of this study, has the functions of licensing film and video works as well as the premises for the exposure of films and video works, censoring of films and video works and regulating and controlling cinematographic exhibitions.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the responsibilities of the two agencies differ significantly. Our interest, however, is not to point out these differences but to examine to what extent the NFVCB has fulfilled its mandate. To enable the Board work, it came up with a set of regulations. We shall be examining these regulations especially those areas that directly relate to censorship but first, let us take a brief look at why it is important for a nation to censor films that it exposes to its citizens and particularly why Nigeria needs to censor its films.

Issues in Censorship

A censor, literally, is a person (in this case, a body) charged with the responsibility of suppressing publications or examining any matter in them thought to be immoral, seditious or otherwise undesirable. Censorship is also defined by a Wikipedia source as “the suppression of speech or other public communication which may be considered objectionable, harmful, sensitive or inconvenient as determined by a government, media outlet or other controlling body” (Wikipedia). The same source goes further to say that censorship can be done by government, private organizations or by individuals who engage in self-censorship. Furthermore, it is said to occur in a variety of different contexts including speech, books, music, films and other arts, the press, radio, television and the internet for a variety of reasons including national

security, to control obscenity, child pornography and hate speech, to protect children, to promote or restrict political or religious views and to prevent slander and libel. From the foregoing, it is clear that censorship is applied in order that information which may be offensive, damaging, harmful or capable of causing social disorder is kept away from the unsuspecting public. Censorship can be applied within different spheres of life. From the moral perspective, censorship is applied to remove materials that are obscene or otherwise considered morally questionable. Under this classification of censorship, child pornography is a good example. The military applies censorship to protect military intelligence as a means of enforcing counter espionage. The best example of this is the refusal of the military to tell Nigerians the real story behind the recent Bama (Borno State) killings. In politics, censorship occurs when government holds back information from its citizens. This is often done to exert control over the populace and prevent free expression that might cause rebellion. Examples are the conflicting stories that made the rounds when President Yar'Adua was hospitalized and later died as well as the current debate around the past amnesty for the Niger Delta Militia and the current agitation for amnesty for members of the Boko Haram sect. Censorship also occurs within religious circles when issues considered to be objectionable by a certain faith are removed. Within the corporate world, censorship occurs in the form of editors intervening to disrupt the publishing of information that portray their business or business partners in negative light. The closest example is the reluctance or outright refusal of some media houses to publish news stories which are adverse to government.

In the film or video world, censorship would entail the examination of the content of the film or video work to determine the age group and target audience to whom such a film or video work should be exposed. The reason is that film can have very strong psychological, sociological and moral impact on its viewers. In a paper presented on behalf of the Director General/ Chief Executive of Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Dr. Joseph I. Odumodu MFR by Paul T. Angya, it was observed that the entertainment industry, be it theatre, music or movie, can influence human thinking and behaviour. Angya who elaborated on the above using a court decision of 1952 in the case of *Burstyn v. Wilson*, quoted the Supreme court of Nigeria which held that “the motion is a significant medium of communication of ideas” (5). Furthermore, Angya quotes Ben Stein who says:

The people in the White House think they have power. That's wrong. The people who make these (pictures) have power...they can get inside your

head. They can completely take control of everything you see and do, change the way you feel, everything that happens to you, and (sic) that's power (5).

Angya again quotes Joseph Stalin, a communist leader and philosopher who says “if we could control the medium of the American Motion Picture, I would need nothing else to convert the entire world to communism”. The above citations lend credence to the power of film on the human mind. Most often, the individual is not even at liberty to choose what he/ she gets exposed to. By the time one begins to wonder about the values of some films to society, a substantial part of that film would already have been viewed. This accounts for why government and other corporate bodies, the size notwithstanding, support the making of films or advertisements which they believe can enable them reach the minds of the people that they want to control. Ekwuazi and Nasidi are in complete agreement with this when they assert that:

With over a hundred and fifty countries spread around the globe, often with competitive and conflicting goals, nation states have come to realize that one of the best means of achieving maximum economic and political goals lies in their ability to systematically affect the minds, emotions and actions of people and other nations. Arguably, the most important instrument to achieve this is one which can combine sound and vision and film (*as well as home video advertisement* [addition, mine]) is the most prominent (51).

As a result of the profound impact that film has on the human mind, it becomes necessary to censor all films whether local or foreign before they are released for public consumption. Okoye holds that:

Various cases have risen (sic) in the past and present on what should be the primary content of movies. Most of the movies produced in Nigeria only go a long way to deposit in youth minds the act of wooing a lady, sexual appeals, violent attacks and most times the use of vulgar languages which most children have stored up in their memories for future use (<http://nigeriafilms.com>).

A close examination of Ekwuazi and Nasidi's position, quoted above, against the

backdrop of the lasting effect of some films on the human mind especially, the young adult will leave us in no doubt but to agree that there is need for censorship of films. To further buttress the above, we also take a look at Ogunleye who, leaning on Gene Youngblood (1979), believes that films expand the audiences' consciousness. She asserts that: “the audience through watching of films comes to understand their society more and it stils them up to participate in issues concerning their society” (9). Again, we see in Ogunleye's position the influence of film on the human mind. The above position underscores the employment of the film medium by the colonial masters to brainwash Africans (Nigerians) to believe that they were performing well as the colonial masters. To quell the agitations of Nigerians, Ekwuazi records that they showed films which “portray the fact that they were fulfilling their obligations to the people' ... films were also shown to Africans and indeed Nigerians to 'convince the Nigerian populace that they had a common enemy in the Germans and therefore had a stake in their defeat”(52).

Convinced by this brainwashing exercise, Nigerians were conscripted to fight in a war (the Hitler war of 1945), which they neither knew anything about nor had any stake in. Many advertisement and other enlightenment campaigns have depended on the film and video media to achieve their objectives. The point being made here is that if films or videos can exert that much control on the human mind, then it follows that there must be a certain level of control over what is exposed to that mind. These are the positions that must have informed the decision of censorship. Censorship of films in Nigeria became necessary in order:

- (1) to protect minors from unsuitable/harmful film contents while allowing the adult audience a wider range of films dealing with the realities of the adult world;
- (2) to preserve ethnic, racial and religious harmony;
- (3) to control or totally eradicate materials in film and videos that are capable of inciting civil strife (NFVCB 1).

Censorship of films is practised in different parts of the world but in different forms. We will mention just a few. In Australia, according to a Wikipedia source, the body called Australia Classification Board (ACB), formerly known as the Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC) uses the Commonwealth Classification Act of 1995 as a guide for the majority of the censorship activities within the country. The source further reveals that, every state or territory is free to make additional

legislation on censorship of films. It must be noted that Australia is regarded by many to be the most restrictive on film ratings of all western democratic countries.

In Canada, the source reveals that only films containing prohibited materials (such as child pornography) or under court order (such as libel or copyright infringement) are banned. In Iraq, all films depicting anything deemed contrary to Islamic morals are banned outright. The source also reveals that all German films were banned between 1956 and 1972. No reasons were advanced for the massive ban. The Wikipedia source goes further to say that film censorship depended on a list called the 'Infamous Video List' which was created in 1982. The list was to protect the populace against any obscenity contained in the films. Films on the list were banned and the distributors of those films were liable to be prosecuted. Around the mid-1980s, the list had banned 74 films but this was later trimmed down. The same Wikipedia source records that the United States has no federal agency charged with the responsibility of either permitting or restricting the exhibition of motion pictures. Most instances of film being banned according to the source are via ordinance or proclamations of state governments. Some are instances of films being judicially found to be of obscene nature and subject to specific law against such material (for example, pornography). The source chronicles a series of attempts at censorship between 1897 and 1966, a period which marked the intervention of several bodies like the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association, which later became Motion Picture Association of America, under the control of such people like Will H. Hays. Sometime later, the Production Code (which essentially was a list of dos and don'ts of film making) emerged through the efforts of Martin Quigley and an amendment of the Code resulted in the emergence of the Production Code Administration headed by Joseph I. Breen. Within that period, several films were banned but the ban came out of either a law suit or an application of "the formula" in the days of Hays and the "production code" in the days of Breen. What needs to be noted with respect to the case of censorship in the United States is the fact that there was no government body charged with the function of censoring films; censorship was between lawsuits and private bodies, but there were certain forms of censorship all the same. It must also be noted that the USA, a purely capitalist economy, would also naturally tilt towards the commercial advantages of all situations and therefore, the private censorship bodies emerged out of a need to prevent the government from edging its way into censorship matters. The USA also prides itself as the most liberal country in the world and it tries to project this notion into all that it does including censorship of films, yet there is a measure of censorship.

The above goes to show that for a growing economy like Nigeria, with its numerous ethnic groups, diverse cultural inclinations coupled with political instability resulting into poor economy, national insecurity and religious intolerance, the need for censorship of films cannot be overstated. Similarly, the need to protect children from being exposed to violence, pornography and sex or abusive language in films further justifies censorship. This, to our mind, informed the establishment of the NFVCB. Our position here is that the Censors Board is in a way lacking in its assigned responsibilities especially with particular reference to the issue of censorship. The reason is largely traceable to the regulations guiding censorship issues as contained in the NFVCB Enabling Law Act, 1993 CAP N40LFN 2004, and Regulations 2008 book, Abuja, August, 2008. The next part of this study will therefore focus on the enabling laws of the Board with special interest in the censorship section.

Censorship of Films and Videos by the Censors Board: The Gaps

The Nigerian film industry “Nollywood” is growing in leaps and bounds. It has been acknowledged widely that Nollywood or the Nigerian film industry is the fastest growing economic venture in Nigeria with its monetary worth placed at approximately 300 million dollars per annum. It is second to Bollywood (the Indian film industry) in the world. Most of the Videos of Nollywood tell the stories of Nigerians to Nigerians which makes them very attractive and most often money spinners. This is what Ode means when she says;

Again, as a result of the fact that, producers, executive producers and other financiers are all rolled into one and as a result of the awareness that certain faces sell films, the producers, most often in total disregard for professionalism insist on the usage of the faces they believe will sell their films (208).

It is obvious that such a fast growing and money making industry which has direct impact on people needs close watching. As stated in the Act, the NFVCB was therefore established to:

- (a). License:
 - (i). A person to exhibit films and video works
 - (ii). A premises for the purpose of exhibiting films and video works
- (b). Censor films and video works
- (c) Regulate and prescribe safety precautions to be observed in licensed premises

- (d) Regulate and control cinematographic exhibitions and
- (e) Perform such other functions as are necessary or expedient for the full discharge of all or any of the functions conferred on it by this Act (1).

The above shows five major areas of operation of the Censors Board but the part that is of most interest to us is the item (b), named “censor films and video works”. However, since the NFVCB is one institution, our discussion may touch the other areas briefly. So we shall now highlight the regulations that guide censorship. The Censors Board booklet containing the enabling law and regulations guiding the proceedings of the Board dedicates 15 pages (pp. 16 – 30) to the issue of censorship of films and videos. The major issues include: (i) the guidelines for the censorship of films and (2) the guidelines for the censorship of video works. The book stipulates the conditions for setting up censorship committees at the zonal levels. The committee is called Zonal Film Censors Committee and membership of that committee is made up of representatives from states of the federation within the zone. Only the members of the committee can be present when a film is being shown for the purpose of censorship. The following conditions, according to the booklet, guide the censorship exercise. The film under censorship should:

- (a) Have an educational or entertainment value, apart from promoting the Nigerian culture, unity and interest.
- (b) Not undermine national security or have the capability of reinforcing the corruption of private or public morality.
- (c) Not encourage or glorify the use of violence
- (d) Not expose the people of African heritage to ridicule or contempt.
- (e) Not encourage illegal or criminal acts
- (f) Not encourage racial, religious or ethnic discrimination or conflict
- (g) Not be blasphemous or obscene in content (19).

The committee cannot also approve films which project indecency, obscenity or other issues likely to be injurious to morality; films that incite or encourage public disorder or strife and films which are deemed undesirable in the public interest.

The law stipulates that “no person shall exhibit, cause or allow to be exhibited a film without a censorship certificate issued by the board for exhibition”. A violation of this law attracts a fine of five thousand naira (N5,000.00) only or a term of one year imprisonment. This law excludes documentary films imported or issued by the directive of the state or federal government, the United Nations (UN) or any such

organisation or a regional or global organisation. The censors committee at the end of its exercise can approve, disapprove or give conditional approval to a film and is also expected to indicate their decision on the film by the use of some letters. Any person who exhibits an unapproved film is liable to a fine of ten thousand naira (N10,000.00) or a term of five years imprisonment. The indication on the film clearly shows the type of audience it should be exposed to; either general, children, not recommended for children, adults above 18 years, and children between the ages of 12 and 18 years or restricted exhibition. To enforce this, the board needs the help of the police which is to ensure that a film which has being assigned restricted exhibition is not exposed to a general audience. The board is at liberty to remove peacefully or otherwise persons not within the age bracket of the film being exhibited and where it is suspected that the person has lied, he/she can be requested to present a 'satisfactory evidence of age'. If a film classified for restrictive exhibition and the rules guarding the exhibition of that film is not followed (i.e. observation of the ages of the viewers) the exhibitor is liable to a fine of one thousand naira (N1,000.00) only. An exhibitor must also project on the screen the certificate of censorship approved by the Board for the film and this projection must be visible throughout the registered premises. Failure to do so attracts a fine of five thousand naira (5,000.00) only. A film which is being submitted for censorship is expected to be accompanied by the films poster, photograph, sketch, slide, programme, advertisement, written or printed matter in the nature of an advertisement with respect to the film or extract from a film whether published, distributed or exhibited in a newspaper and these must comply with such other requirements as may be prescribed by the Board. These shall be registered alongside with the film and will also go through censorship. Once censorship exercise has been concluded and the decision has been made, no person is allowed to make any other alterations in the film again. A violation of this law attracts a fine of two thousand naira (N2,000.00) only in the first instance and three thousand naira (N3000.00) only for subsequent offenses. The person who makes false declaration in the course of the entire process of censorship is liable to a fine of five thousand naira (N5000.00) only.

With respect to video works, the process is very similar to the censorship of films. The main area of difference is the fact that video works are mainly for private use. The law therefore stipulates that no one is allowed to possess a video recording which contains video work that does not have classification certificate. No person is also allowed to supply a classified video work to any people which the classification does not cover. Any violation of the above attracts a fine of two thousand naira (N2,000.00) only. This does not include video works of private functions, ceremonies

or educational materials. The law also spells other conditions that guide the supply and exhibition of video works, which to my thinking are almost unenforceable.

An examination of the process of censorship and the various violations as well as their punishments would show clearly that there is a big gap. The first gap to be noticed lies in the various sums (ranging from N1,000 – N10,000) to be paid by offenders, depending on the offence. The question that quickly arises is why the Board would put a whole committee together to spend time, energy and money on an exercise which we can say has little or no value. Why would the Board go through the whole process of prosecuting offenders just to have them pay paltry sums of between N1,000.00 and N10,000.00 only.

The second gap to be noticed is that some of the tasks the Board has set for itself cannot be effectively pursued. For instance, how feasible is it for agents to go to Cinema Halls at Silver Bird or Cedi Plaza (all in Abuja) to fish out under-aged viewers or, worse still, demand for evidence of age. Are they going to stand at the gates or go into the dimly-lit cinema halls? Again, it may be almost impossible to detect at a glance any alterations to pictures or posters and a glance is the highest attention most people pay to film posters. I imagine that this would require that people are employed strictly for these areas but how feasible is this in the face of financial constraints for even government agencies. The poverty level in Nigeria today has made people to become very creative at wealth generation. The proliferation of Video Rental shops is a testimony to that. The Video Rental Owners are certainly more interested in taking in their fifty naira per film multiplied by any number of films that they can rent out a day than giving any thought to the age of the person who would have come to rent the film.

It must be noted again that an exhibitor can petition the decisions of the censorship committee to a higher body called the Review Committee headed by the chairman of the Board of NFVCB. While the zonal censorship committee has 30 days to complete the process, the Review Committee has 60 days to complete its review based on the protest. One would wonder why a very rich corporate body would put itself through the stress of appeal if all that is required of it is to pay a paltry sum of ten thousand naira (N10,000.00) only.

Against the backdrop of the rapid growth of the film industry in Nigeria, coupled with the commensurate turn-over in financial terms, we dare say that the various charges for the offenses are grossly inadequate. Although we are not discussing licensing fees, a cursory look at the fees will also tell you that they fall far below the financial value of the films that are being produced in Nigeria today, the

length notwithstanding.

The way forward

The NFVCB as a matter of urgency needs to revisit its laws and regulations. It must review, sharply, upward the various charges for the various offences. Punishments for offences are supposed to serve as deterrent and not just for the sake of punishment. Going by the volume of finances involved in film business, it is a huge joke to charge film makers such sums as N1,000.00, N5,000.00 and, N10,000.00 which in this case happens to be the highest amount charged for violations. Apart from being the money paid as punishment, it could also be a revenue base for the Board. We also want to suggest that obscenity, violence or pornography in Nigerian films should attract heavier punishment or charges. This is because, unlike the developed world that we seem to be copying from, Nigeria does not have the capacity to contain or curtail the result of the exposure of our youths to films that have the mentioned elements. Furthermore, the projection of the female gender as prostitutes, witches, sorcerers or manipulative wives in Nigerian films is an issue that the NFVCB must take into serious consideration. This may require the enactment of some laws. Ode opines that:

Such law(s) would enable the Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board to censor movies that are adverse to the image of women or at least ensure that women are not subjected to certain conditions to make films, e.g. using uncomplimentary costumes or fulfilling some demands of film directors and/or film producers (278).

The NFVCB may need to engage more hands, if it is serious about enforcing the film classification part of censorship. This also goes for the video works. It will also need to give lots of incentives to workers to elicit commitment on the part of those who will be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the film classification is observed in public film exhibition premises. The Board may wish to liaise with the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps and other necessary agencies for this purpose.

The NFVCB also needs to revisit its core goals. An internet source identifies some of the core goals of NFVCB as follows:

1. To provide an enabling environment for the growth of the film industry through its activities.
2. To manage the classification system to time, cost and quality standards.

3. To provide policy advice and services to government
4. To enhance confidence in (and utilisation of) the NFVCB classification system among existing and potential clients, etc. (<http://www.nfvcb.gov.ng/pages.asp>; Accessed on March 25th, 2013).

An examination of these core goals shows clearly that the issue of censorship has not been given adequate attention. The point being made here is that, the Board itself needs to internalize and project the issue of censorship as one of its core goals so as to design the discharge of their responsibilities with respect to censorship effectiveness. Left in this state, the issue of censorship seems to be secondary to other preoccupations of the Board, yet the exercises of classification and registration are to enable censorship.

Conclusion

This essay has discussed the issue of censorship starting from the definition to the survey of censorship as it relates to film in other countries. We have also taken a very close look at censorship with respect to NFVCB after which we identified the gaps in the process of censorship of films and videos in Nigeria. We then made some suggestions which we believe will improve the censorship issue. In the course of this study, we also observed that USA does not have any government agency charged with the responsibility of censorship, but that is not totally shocking knowing that the USA is not only the most liberal nation in the world but a perfect example of capitalism which places so much emphasis on market competition and monopoly. Most often, decisions are made to support the system. For them, almost everything that makes money is allowed but even then there have been several litigations. Nigeria, however, cannot adopt the USA style simply because our system cannot support it. The Censorship Board is, therefore, a necessity but it must be made more effective through a review of some of its regulations and laws. The reason is that the Board is supposed to be regulating a business body that is growing very fast in terms of its revenue base and which has enormous capacity to influence the minds of Nigerians. This point is made against the backdrop of the realization that there is a high tendency for a total disregard for the rule of law, especially where huge monetary gains are involved.

Works Cited

- Angya, Paul T. M. "Quality Assurance, Theatre and the Creative Enterprise." A paper presented at the 26th Annual Conference and AGM of the Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA), held at the Benue State University, Makurdi, 4-7 June, 2003.
- Censorship and Classification Guidelines* A Publication of the Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board, Abuja, Nigeria, 2006.
- Okoye, Chinyere. <http://nigeriafilms.com> Accessed May 2, 2013.
- Oguleye, Foluke. "Towards the Dissolution of the Female Stereotype in and through the Nigerian Video Films: A Challenge for the New Millennium." *Nigeria Theatre Journal* 5.1 (1999): 9-18.
- <http://www.nvfcg.gov.ng/pages.asp> (Accessed on May 2nd, 2013).
- Ekwuazi, Hyginus and Yakubu Nasidi. eds. *No...Not Hollywood: Essays and Speeches of Brendan Shehu*. Jos: Nigeria Film Corporation, 1992.
- Madu Chikwendu. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/film_censorship; (assessed on May 2nd 2013)
- Nigeria Film and Videos Censors Board Enabling Law Act, 1993 CAP N40 LFN 2004 and Regulations*, 2008
- Regina Ode, "Women Empowerment and the Nigerian Film Industry: A Study of *White Hunters* by Afam Okereke and *Women in Power* by Adim Williams." *African Journal of Economy and Society* 11.2 (2012): 265-280.
- Wikipedia*, the free encyclopaedia. Accessed on May 2nd, 2013.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PLAYWRITING AND PRODUCTION AT THE NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE (NAFEST), 2011

Denja Abdullahi

National Council for Arts and Culture, Abuja FCT

Abstract

The National Council for Arts and Culture has, since its establishment in 1975, been the organiser of the annual National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST) in which drama sometimes feature as a competitive event among the participating states. Participation at the drama event at the Festival has always been overwhelming with States of the Federation showcasing their theatrical prowess as governed by the theme of the Festival in a particular year. It has often been noted that states display highly disparate levels of quality and competence in terms of scripting and eventual production of their pieces at the Festival, necessitating our present concern at looking at the factors behind this reality. In our paper, selected plays from the drama entries at NAFEST 2011 which held in Calabar, Cross River State will be reviewed with a view to unravel the factors governing the quality of performances as well as making suggestions towards how performances could be enhanced at future national festivals and other national theatrical events.

Introduction

The National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) was established by Decree No. 3 of 1975, as amended by Decree No 5 of 1987, to coordinate cultural activities across the country. It is the Federal Government's organ charged amongst others with the responsibility of coordination, development, preservation and promotion of the living arts and culture of Nigeria at national and international fora (NCAC Handbook 2). Through its flagship programme, the annual National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST), which began as National Festival of Arts in 1970, NCAC has been able to encourage and keep a tab on theatrical activities in the country as espoused by the various States Councils for Arts and Cultures who are the primary participants at the yearly festival. At NAFEST, whenever drama is one of the competitive events (as it has in recent editions of the festival in the years 2002, 2003,

2004, 2007 and 2011, participating states are normally expected to present a 20-minute play, realized through any theatrical form of their choice, but with strict adherence to the theme of the particular festival. Through such drama competitions at NAFEST, the various States Councils for Arts and Culture have been forced to develop their dramatic potentials as well as research into their indigenous theatre traditions rather than just maintaining standing dance troupes awaiting command performances at State occasions. The drama competition at NAFEST over the years has always been a veritable crowd puller, revealing budding talents, involving stakeholders in the field and unearthing the innate creativity of the populace and can be used to assess the competence and quality of the various states in the area of theatrical accomplishment.

However, in recent times, and in the aforementioned years in which drama was one of the competitive events at NAFEST, a noticeable pattern has gradually emerged with regards to the quality of presentations at the Festival. Most of the theatrical performances put up by the states at NAFEST in the aforementioned years were often exercises in display of elaborate costumes (where enough money has been mercifully provided). Conflicts were not well expressed, with dance and music employed to plug apparent loopholes; and most noticeably, one form of celebration or the other comes at the end of every play, regardless of the ensuing conflict in such a play. In some performances, one could see an apparent disconnect between the players and the indigenous theatre traditions of their originating localities. The conclusion one reached in watching some of those plays was that in their preparations, States did not conduct relevant researches on how to best express the theme of the Festival in their dramas, foregrounded by the absence of aspects of their indigenous theatre traditions. States in the South- South, South-West and South-East put up seemingly good plays by drawing from the vestiges of the indigenous theatre traditions that had been rescued from extinction by the works of forbearing practitioners and popular culture. States in the North-West, North- East and a few in the North-Central often put up shoddy pieces reinforcing the erroneous impression that theatre is not one of the strong indigenous cultural traditions in Northern Nigeria. The background to this is that in the Northern part of the country(particularly in the North West and the North East), it is common to perceive theatre artistes as never-do-wells and immoral, a by-product of classical Islamic dogmas which consider actors and entertainers as immoral people and their art as something not to be encouraged by the society(Abdullahi 39).The case of enriching theatrical performance by using the indigenous theatre forms, which a forum such as

NAFEST should advocate, is not helped by the language of the performances which is mainly English. Studying the scripts of some of the presentations of states from the Northern geo-political zones reveals that they were written by Youth Corps members that have been posted to the States for their mandatory national service. While such Corps members could script or direct such presentations, one wondered the amount of indigenous cultural information available to them that will enable an adequate projection of the cultural mood surrounding such plays. The exception to the average dramatic enactments by states at NAFEST could be seen in the efforts of states where a consummate theatre artist, playwright or director held sway at the Arts Councils. Some states were also able to elevate their performances above the average by engaging theatre consultants, who had some cultural affinity by origin or practice to package their presentations and that resulted in some of them coming tops at the drama event at NAFEST. Even in some cases where states researched into their localities to enrich their presentations, they often engaged in selection politics (of men and materials), especially in states that are not ethnically or culturally homogenous. In such states, the ultimate decision of what to include or exclude is usually taken to the disfavour of the minority ethnic groups, regardless of innate qualities of the cultural materials that are so discarded.

In the face of all the foregoing regarding the quality of theatrical presentations of states at NAFEST, this paper will dwell on the prevailing circumstances governing the display of competence or incompetence by the states; the measures put in place by the Festival organizer to ensure quality and suggest ways in which better quality could be assured at the drama event at future festivals. This would be done by using six selected plays, one from each of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria, as case studies, from the most recent edition of the Festival with drama as a competitive event; which is NAFEST 2011.

Formatting for Quality Assurance: Preparation towards the Festival

In the build-up towards any edition of the NAFEST, the organizer, the National Council for Arts and Culture, always convene a Bi-Annual Meeting of the Chief Executives of Culture of the Federation (CEC), attended by the Chief Executives of Cultures and heads of the Council for Arts and Culture of the thirty-six states of the federation and the FCT, from where the competitors at the Festival are always sourced (NCAC Information Handbook 25-26). At these meetings, among other deliberations, a syllabus for each year's edition of the Festival is presented, debated, fine-tuned and finally adopted to govern all the competitive and non-competitive

events of the Festival. The syllabus is packaged to set the benchmark and guiding principle for the events of the Festival and to give assurance of a basic expectation of quality of the eventual presentations at the Festival. The syllabus is usually drawn by in-house experts of the particular events in view who are professional staff of the organizing agency (NCAC) and subjected to review and eventual adoption at the aforesaid meetings.

However, the technical interpretation of the syllabus into the expected dramatic enactments, in the case of the drama event at the Festival, is left for the states to grapple with, as this is seen as in-built in the competitive nature of the event. Whatever the participating states do at their own level to put on stage the bare statements of expectation in the syllabus are based entirely on their own discretions as the Festival organizers do not monitor the preparations of states with regards to the contents of their presentations; since the idea of competition is involved.

With regards to the NAFEST held in Calabar, Cross River State, between 22nd – 29th October, 2011, with the overall theme, “Nigerian Traditional Music: A Vehicle for Economic Transformation and Unity,” it will be necessary to at this point quote the entire guidelines in the syllabus for the drama event, which is the subject of our study:

Drama is an art of communication which promotes awareness. Drama enlightens, mobilizes and educates the general public on significant occurrences within the society and the world at large. It also serves as a medium through which the government can communicate or pass messages to the public. Hence, Drama is a tool for educating and achieving the aim of NAFEST 2011. The focus of the Drama event at NAFEST 2011 is to be on the sub-theme: **Culture as an Instrument of Peace and National Unity**”

Aims and Objectives

- i. To provide a forum for meaningful communication using drama as a vehicle for promoting the transformation agenda.
- ii. To draw attention to aspects of our culture that promote peace.
- iii. To provide a platform for the discovery of new talents and engagement of existing ones for economic empowerment.

- iv. To prepare our artistes for a healthy competition, collaborative participation and the understanding of the uniqueness of the various people of Nigeria for peaceful co-existence.

Criteria for Participation

The criteria for participation are outlined below:

- i. States and the FCT are to use English language for the presentation of their plays but can build in Nigerian languages at intervals. The synopsis to be sent to the Festival Secretariat must be in English.
- ii. Participants in each performance shall not exceed 25 on stage, musicians inclusive.
- iii. Time allowed measured from Entry to Exit is 20mins.
- iv. All synopses submitted must be original plays from states and not an already published work. All synopses must be submitted before 30th of September, 2011.
- v. Drama presentation must revolve round the sub-theme “**Culture as an Instrument of Peace and National Unity**”
- vi. Six (6) copies of the script is to be submitted to the Festival Secretariat at the point of registration.
- vii. The festival committee shall provide only a bare illuminated stage and sound equipment.

Adjudication Criteria

- 1.Originality/Scripting
 - 2.Directing
 - 3.Acting
 - 4.Technical Presentation(costumes, props, lighting etc.)
 - 5.Thematic Relevance
- (NAFEST 2011 Syllabus 8-10)

From the excerpt from the syllabus given above, one can make some deductions on the quality benchmarks expected from the states which are:

- a good script or an attempt at scripting or playwriting since it is the penchant of government-controlled theatre troupe to work out play scenarios through improvisation or workshop method which ensures what I call the “anonymity of authorship” in consonance with the public service denial of voices if it is not that of the ultimate superior.
- originality of dramatic vision in line with contemporary realities (as reflected in the given theme) since published pieces with known authorship and ascribed quality are not allowed.
- Allowance for the infusion of local colour and indigenous theatrical elements as long as the essentials of the message of the play is available to the audience and the judges in English.
- Total freedom for the states to enrich their presentations with appropriate technical inputs as the organizers only provide the bare stage and basic supporting technical equipment.

Analysis of Six Selected Plays from NAFEST 2011 (Scripting and Production)

Six plays from NAFEST 2011, selected to reflect the contemporary theatrical realities and accomplishments of the states as representatives of the six geo-political zones of the country will be briefly analysed here from the scripting and production perspectives to establish the perceived varying levels of quality.

- a. **Akwa –Ibom State:** The state entered a play entitled “The Shadow Within” which explores the theme of selfishness, unity and harmonious co-existence among a particular community enmeshed in the struggle for leadership which led to the losers in the struggle scheming to destabilize the community by fomenting crises. In the end, the fifth columnists making the community restless and creating dissension are cleverly exposed and brought to justice. The play of about fourteen characters with speaking roles (apart from the warriors, dancers and youths) is set entirely in an imaginary community of Idung Nnyin, in the culturally specific South-South region of Nigeria. The script, in six short situations, reveals an economy of language and action dialogues that give life to the conflict in the play. The production itself at NAFEST was well realized and interspersed with songs, dances, costumes

and scenic props that all together created the cultural atmosphere of the state.

- b. Benue State:** The state scripted a highly allegorical play entitled “Shegh and the Parable of the Beads” to weave a story of the selfish ethnic contentions in the country that militate against the cause of unity and togetherness. The dramatic world is premised on two main characters, a blind man and a woman, who tell a parable about a musical instrument, known as “Shegh” by the Tiv and common to most other ethnic groups in Nigeria, to teach on the beauty and strength of unity in diversity. The script itself is remarkable in its proverbial language and in the employment of a parable to narrate the conflicts in the play with appropriate flashbacks and stories within stories. The production benefited from the good scripting with the conflict well established and resolved with appropriate characterization to reflect the multicultural concern of the play.
- c. Borno State:** The play from Borno State entitled “That We May Be One” dwells on the crisis that emanates on the contemplation of an inter-ethnic marriage, which is often surmounted if the primary parties (man and woman) to the sought union truly love each other. Beyond the not quite imaginative central symbolism of the play which resorts to that common tool used to preach unity in the country (inter-ethnic marriages), the conflict of the play is greatly helped by the succinct and terse dialogues that sharpens the actions of the characters. In the script and in the production itself, the prologue appears out of place and does not contribute in any way in advancing or setting the tone for the actions of the play.
- d. Imo State:** Imo State's play “The Lies in Us” is woven around the issue of pestilence in the land brought about by the diabolic usurpation of the rightful successor to the community's throne. The source of the land's trouble is eventually traced and things return to their normal state. The production was suffused with heavy costuming and elaborate scenic background with most of the actions happening at the Eze's palace.
- e. Oyo State:** The play “Tiger by the Tail” by Oyo State explores a family dispute between two brothers over the landed property and the widow of their late elder brother. The matter goes to court but is not resolved until it is put before

the elders who finally end the conflict with the widow agreeing to marry one of the brothers. In bringing about the resolution of the conflict, there is a flashback scene to the spectacle of warring gods (Sango and Ogun) in the Yoruba mythology, which is used as a dramatic parallel to the story of the warring brothers.

- f. **Sokoto State:** Sokoto State's play "I Speak Peace", through an attempt at urban comedy, showcases the problem of religious intolerance in the society and its bridging through a love affair between two individuals of different religious persuasion that resulted in a marriage. The script itself is a one-act long affair with no effective characterization and a mishmash of actions that end in a hardly believable resolution of the thrown-up conflict. The production itself was a slapstick affair that looked uncoordinated.

General Notes on the Quality of the Six Plays

The six plays briefly analysed above are of varying levels of quality, which were measured at NAFEST 2011 by the panel of judges made up of theatre scholars and practitioners drawn from the universities and the field, and based on the adjudication criteria in the Festival syllabus. The presentations from Benue, Borno and Akwa-Ibom States were in that order adjudged the best three of the event at NAFEST 2011. These plays were the judges' and the audience's favourites because of their careful balance of theme and mode of presentation. While we may not be able to guess the exact pre-production factors responsible for the average success of these three plays, we can make some generalizations here. Benue State, from North-Central Nigeria, has a repertoire of unique cultural and theatrical attributes that can always be handy to be woven into any theatrical piece by a good playwright and director. The same goes for Akwa-Ibom State. Borno State may seem a little bit odd here considering the generalized perception that drama is not one of the highly developed arts in far northern tip of Nigeria where Islam predominates. However, Borno's play may have benefitted from the expertise of a trained playwright and director for it to have come out fulfilling and without the verbosity common to dramatic enactments in those parts. Imo and Oyo States' plays were average performances with no remarkable enactments, though the cultural environments of the two states are steeped in vestiges of once flourishing traditional festival theatres. The outcome of an average performance by both states may still be attributable to the lack of capacity in the area of playwriting and directing. Sokoto State's play conformed blandly to the

stereotypical expectation of dramatic presentations from extreme Northern Nigeria in its verbosity, lack of clear directorial approach and poor attempt at eliciting laughter through slapstick comedy. Drama is the least developed of artistic forms in this part of the country and it has been allowed to remain so as it is yet to overcome societal indifference and censorship.

On the whole, the plays with varying levels of competence, address the sub-theme given for the drama event, which is “Culture as an Instrument of Peace and National Unity” but what gave some states an edge over others in the technical interpretation as seen in the presentations. The idea of NAFEST being a festival steeped in the revival and promotion of our cultural heritage also informed the presentations of most states as they all in their dramatic modes ensured the infusion of aspects of traditional cultures peculiar to their environment, with nearly all the plays, no matter the conflicts, ending in a celebrative atmosphere reminiscent of African traditional festival theatre. There was no attempt in most of the plays in telling the story through a contemporary theatre form devoid of the total theatre format most of the state councils are used to, as seen in the large cast, crowd scenes, songs, dances, proverbial dialogues, parables, etc.

Quality Assurance of Drama Presentations at State Councils for Arts and Culture

This present study has not been extended to assessing or reviewing the staff components of the artists the various states bring to NAFEST to compete at the drama event. It is assumed that the bulk of the artists are not trained theatre artists but are mostly experienced practitioners. Some states do employ trained theatre artists, as in those who are graduates of Theatre Arts, but after employment, many are for years not sent for further training or re-training. The preparation regimen when a production is at hand is also what this study has not monitored but it is general knowledge that some states go on camping and even engage the use of consultants (experts from the universities and the field) to help in the technical interpretation of the syllabus and the packaging of the productions. States that have the facilities to engage in the hiring of these consultants have always come out with commendable productions that sometimes top the Festival winners chart. The organizers of the Festival, NCAC, at the earlier mentioned meetings of Chief Executives of Culture of the Federation (CEC) held in the past have had cause to observe the poor presentations of some states at particular events at NAFEST and advised on more qualitative preparations and the search for technical assistance from the outside, if an in-house alternative is not available.

Factors for the Enhancement of the Quality of Drama Presentation at Future NAFEST and other National Events

· Provision of Basic Theatre Infrastructure Across the Country

Most state capitals in the country cannot boast of a befitting theatre complex where even the state-owned theatre outfit can rehearse and put in very good performances or encourage theatre-going culture among the people. Most state Councils for Arts and Culture operate from decrepit buildings, some inherited from the colonial era; little wonder no high art can be nurtured in such an environment. As state governments across the country commission projects upon projects, one searches in vain for cultural edifices among such projects. Therefore, to encourage the growth of theatre in the society and enhance the presentations by state troupes at national events, the various governments need to focus on building theatre infrastructures across the country and at all levels of government as prescribed at least even in the extant National Cultural Policy of 1988.

· Revival of the Celebration of Community Festivals

The various community festivals are the repositories of the indigenous theatre traditions of the people from which the state Councils for Arts and Culture can borrow vital performance resources to enhance their presentations at national and international events. The present revival in the celebrations of festivals across the country which started with the tourism-friendly policy of the Olusegun Obasanjo government of 1999-2007, and supported largely by the newfound interest of the corporate world, particularly the telecommunication agencies, should not be seen only from the tourism prism. The celebration of festivals should rather be considered as avenues to re-discover our cultural essence and rescue materials, tangible and intangible, that can be used to achieve current developmental objectives in the theatre world and beyond. State drama troupes should endeavour to participate in the various community festivals as researchers with a view to unearthing theatrical forms and concepts they can use for future performances.

· Resuscitation of the Centres for Nigerian Cultural Studies and Institute of African Cultural Studies in Nigerian Universities

In the 1960s to the early 1980s, the Centres for Nigerian Cultural Studies in our universities and Institutes of African Cultural Studies, many of which have gone

defunct or prostrate, contributed greatly to the development of our theatre and cultural traditions by their in-depth study and extension of their research findings to the end users in the culture sector. They were also training grounds for cultural officers and practitioners of those days. Some of the ills presently in existence in the culture sector can be traceable to the lack of knowledge that could emanate from such specialized institutions for the study of Nigerian cultures. This study therefore advocates for the re-introduction of the Centre for Nigerian Cultural Studies in selected higher institutions in the six geo-political zones of the nation. Where such centres presently exist, they should be revitalized and structured to train targeted cultural workers across the country and embark on collaborative projects with governmental and non-governmental cultural institutions. Most importantly, department of Theatre Arts, Performing Arts and Cultural Studies should be established in universities in Northern Nigeria where such does not presently exist as that would encourage more people from that part of the country to specialize in this area which would eventually enhance theatrical performances to emanate from the region.

· **Encouraging Collaborations between SONTA and State Councils for Arts and Culture**

The Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), made up of teachers and trainers of the theatre discipline in our higher institutions should formalize their present professional interactions with State Councils for Arts and Culture by devising and proposing short training programmes that the said group can benefit from. This will enhance the capacities of such State Councils to deliver commendably at their various presentations during national theatrical events.

Conclusion

This study has been able to generally review the factors and indices governing the quality of presentations put up by participating states at the drama event of the annual NAFEST, with particular reference to six selected plays entered for the drama competitive event of the 25th edition of the Festival which held in 2011. The submission reached is that the quality of presentations were very disparate, attributable to the cultural peculiarities of the states and the inherently different levels of theatrical competence of the cast and crew of the respective states. In view of this, measures are then suggested to be taken for the enhancement of the average quality of drama presentations by States at future national competitions, events or festivals.

Works Cited

Abdullahi, Denja. "Religion, the Arts and Creative Imagination." *ANA Review* 2000.

Cultural Policy for Nigeria, 1988. 3-20.

NAFEST 2011 Syllabus, 2011 (unpublished).

NAFEST 2011 Drama DVD (electronic)

NCAC Compilation of Drama Entry Scripts of NAFEST, 2011 (unpublished).

NCAC Information *Handbook*, Abuja: NCAC, 2011.

THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF DRAMA AND THEATRE: AN EXAMINATION OF THREE NIGERIAN DRAMATISTS

Adefolaju Eben Adeseke
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

Abstract

One of the numerous roles of drama and theatre is to reflect and reconstruct life. This is achieved within the ambience of the culture of a particular society. This paper examines the Nigerian theatre traditions as they evolved within the context of their roles in reflecting the Nigerian society and reconstructing societal values. Playwrights' works are used as points of reference to assess how competently they have reflected and reconstructed their society within the world view portrayed in their works. It also dwells briefly on why such reflections have not made the needed impact. At the end, suggestions are made that will render drama and theatre as dutiful phenomenon for reflection and reconstruction targeted at making the society a better place.

Introduction

For the playwright to be effective in the society, for him to be people's teacher, and to produce works that are socially relevant, he has to portray and interpret the historical, sociological, political, economical and cultural issues of his time (Akorede 54).

The committed writer is the conscience of society and it falls on him or her to make the audience aware of the social, economic and political problems and the cause and possible cure of such problem (Akinyemi and Falola 5).

The above sets the tone for our discussion of the social responsibility of a playwright in the reflection and reconstruction of social realities of his society. It shows that the playwright or dramatist is saddled with the responsibility of mirroring his society's realities, laying bare social issues that have stunted the socio-economic and political growth of the society, thereby providing in-roads by way of suggestion on how to get

such society back on the right track. The responsibility therefore, is of two folds: commitment to the portrayal of the realities of his time and more importantly, provision of the needed suggestions on how to cure such ills. This is in line with the Marxist philosophy that literature, in our case drama and theatre, should be aimed at transforming the society. It should be regarded as “the eye through which the world is seen at a particular point in time” (Akorede 55). The gap between the oppressor and the oppressed is the basis of Marxist discussions; making the predicaments of the poor masses – the themes of their discourse. They employ the theatre as “an instrument in the hands of the greater number of our people in their struggle for better working conditions, for more right... indeed for better lives” (Ogunbiyi 43).

Playwrights with Marxist leaning or not should have such inclination and create drama that have such outlook if they want to be relevant and make necessary impact.

Conceptual Analysis

Drama and theatre have always been used interchangeably, not minding the finite difference between the two concepts, etymologically speaking. The word drama is derived from the Greek word 'Dra' which is translated as 'to do', 'action' or 'deed'. Theatre is also derived from the Greek word “Theatron”, meaning a place where people go to see spectacle. Drama is defined as a play for the theatre and theatre as, “plays considered as entertainment” (Hornby 352, 1239).

Agoro sees theatre as “an art form in which a series of events, usually a written play, is acted by performers who impersonate characters and it generally takes place in an auditorium before an audience” (1, 2). Agoro also defines drama as “the script of a play, the written work that is used as the basis for theatrical performances” (2).

With these definitions, one could deduce that drama refers to plays or texts in book form while theatre goes a step further by taking into consideration play performance or stage productions. This is in consonance with the truism that a play is not yet a play until it is performed on the stage.

Art, of which drama is a part, is designed to mirror life which further shows the link between drama and society. Therefore, reflection is a major social responsibility; a dimension through which drama's social duty is discharged. Reflection in our context differs from the plekhaonovite view which sees it in terms of always portraying the Marxist reality of a proletariat triumph, outside which any other form becomes decadent (Sim 447). Rather, for our purpose, reflection generally refers to drama's ability to mirror its world in the same sense in which

Baldwin and Baldwin posit that: “Art is important and the only reason it is important is because life is important. It leads you back to reality again. If it can make you see... then you can change it” (3).

The second dimension in which drama discharges its social responsibility or duty is through reconstruction or reengineering. Reconstruction in this sense hinges on the evolutionary potential of drama in educating its audience towards the actualization of a desirable change either targeting the individual or the society at large. Having stated clearly the reflective and reconstruction duties of drama we want to examine how these have manifested on the Nigerian dramatic scene over the ages.

Drama's Social Responsibility down the Ages

In discussing the social responsibility of Nigerian drama over the ages, the classifications by Akinwale (1993) and Obafemi (2001) will be very useful here. Akinwale (“Theatrical Traditions” 14) categorizes the Nigerian theatre into three broad categories, namely: the indigenous theatre tradition, the traveling theatre and the theatre of English expression. Obafemi combines the indigenous drama and the traveling theatre under the Yoruba operatic theatre, while the theatre of English is split into two; the older playwrights in English and the second generation playwright. For clarity, we will employ Obafemi's categorization.

The Yoruba operatic theatre ranges widely between the serious historical mythological dramas of the late Duro Ladipo, through late Hubert Ogunde's political satires and morality plays, the late Kola Ogunmola's comic fantasies and comedy and the comedy theatre of Moses Olaiya. The Drama of this period has “dual heritage of combining themes, materials and the form of traditional drama with Western dramatic experience” ((Akinwale “Theatrical Elements” 13).

Drama then, was largely itinerant and relied so much on improvisation and an active involvement of the audience in the process of performance. Their themes were drawn from oral traditions and rituals, the story telling art and festivals geared towards upholding tradition and maintaining the status quo as a means of maintaining societal equilibrium. A good example is the folktale tradition which is largely didactic with every tale ending with moral lessons which set to ground or aimed at inculcating in the children the socio-cultural ethos of the community.

Next to the popular theatre tradition, though existing contemporaneously is the literary theatre in English in Nigeria. The representatives of this dramatic tradition are Soyinka, Rotimi, and Clark who developed their dramaturgy from “the fusion of western dramatic models and traditional African dramatic heritage”

(Obafemi 67). The theatrical espionage encouraged tenaciously the African mythology; giving attention to tradition, mores, rituals and myths, thereby subsuming their works in metaphysical and individualist theatrical tradition. Though some of the playwrights of this period, specifically Soyinka and Rotimi later “became more reflexive and more humanists in their dialectical materialist stories” (Obafemi 13) and more or less embraced socialist or realist paradigm, they were not as potent as that of the second generation playwrights.

The second generation dramatists include Femi Osofisan, Tunde Fatunde, Bode Sowande, Tess Onwueme, Ben Tomolaju, Kola Omotoso and others. These playwrights are more political and confrontational in outlook. They are more committed to revolutionary aesthetics with the preoccupation of functional art. Their dramatic oeuvres reflect their commitment that even when the primary aim is to entertain, they do not forget the most crucial, vital and onerous task of social transformation. The effervescent aura and temper with which they go about their all-important assignment is described by Osofisan in the preface to his collection of essays titled *The Nostalgic Drum: Essays on Literature, Drama and Culture* thus: “The tones of those exuberant... and I am struck by their daring and optimism, their polemic annoyance” (vi). To Osofisan and his colleagues, drama and theatre have a responsibility which must not be whisked aside, even in the face of opposition and persecution.

The dictum “teach by entertaining” which pervades the works of Aristophanes, Racine, Synge, Oscar Wilde and all African and Nigerian dramatists, the era they belong notwithstanding, “is what underlines the raconteur's praxis in black Africa” ((Osofisan *Insidious Treason* 87) This is strongly buttressed by Osofisan when he reiterates that, “the belief that literature has a purpose in society richer than mere purpose is to help lead its reader or consumer to a more felicitous, more fulfilled life” (*Nostalgic Drum* vi). This point is further accentuated by Osundare (12) thus:

The writer contributed to this input by the strength and variety of vision, his power of perpetrated projection, his social apprehension of reality. That vision doubles him to **chart** the terrain of the future with a compass sensitive to both present reality and their past antecedents, a future of **possibilities** and **alternatives**... to transcend quotidian reality, has a duty to relate not only how things are (critical realists)... but how they could or should be (socialist realist) (Emphasis and addition in brackets mine).

With the above, Osundare posits that the writer, has a tall assignment of charting the course for the future to the readers or consumers by providing them alternatives and possibilities that enable them see life the way it should be. Therefore, nobody is left in ignorance. He further shows his complete rejection for Negritudist writers who romance with the past to the extent of getting hypnotized by it. But he feels that history should not be cast exactly the way it was, but recast for the benefit of the present and future generations. Therefore, “history for these writers (Osofisan's class), is not a faithful reproduction of the past, but a progressive recreation of it, not a parrot-like narrative but an imaginative interpretation” (Osundare 31).

The ingenuity of the art for life's sake, as always, has been the posture of Chinua Achebe since he started out as a writer. He felt that the writer is under obligation towards his people. He posits that the writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re-education and re-generation that must be done. In fact, he should march right in front. To Achebe:

Literature seems to ... be in its subversive potential, that explosive charge lies hidden behind the façade of entertainment and which must be controlled and made to explode for the use of our people of mankind. Literature must be used to play its role in the advancement of our society in the urgent struggle against neoclassicism and the insidious spread of fascism (105).

The above shows that the writer would not rest on his oars after providing the needed re-education but he must also lead in the change process or the protest that will lead to proper reconstruction of our ideals for a better and healthier living.

Having established the imperativeness of the writer's reflection of the society and reconstruction for the establishment of the ideals, let us consider the works of Femi Osofisan, Uko Atai and Ola Rotimi, and see how accurately they have done this.

Femi Osofisan's *Midnight Hotel*

During the Shagari Regime in Nigeria (Oct. 1, 1979 – Dec. 31, 1983), the country experienced the oil boom which would have been judiciously used to improve the economy, the polity, education, health services and other cardinal aspects of Nigerian life. Instead, the leaders embezzled the money for personal aggrandizement and got involved in a spending spree on materialism, and more ashamedly on women with extra-marital affairs. This is what the song titled “Song of the Lagos Woman” suggests

in the third and last stanza thus:

Lagos Woman, she knows
Oh she knows,
She knows where the oil boom goes
But she'll never tell, oh no,
She'll never tell, she'll never tell.

But she'll never tell, oh no,
That the price was paid, you know
For this superb parade
In a little escapade
At Midnight Hotel
For that is where the oil boom goes (p. 14)

A major character, Awero, who is a member of the parliament takes Pastor Suuru to a hotel to “sample” him before helping him to win a contract in the 'grey revolution'. *Midnight Hotel* symbolizes all hotels where such acts of misdemeanour take place. Contracts are offered not on merits but on the readiness of the opposite sex to accept the 'sampling the goods' ideology. This is clearly evident in the ensuing dialogue between Awero and Suuru:

Awero: I'm giving you a big chance by bringing you here.
As the only female member of capital projects
Committee in the House of Assembly, I'm giving
you an unfair advantage over other competitors.
And here you are, trembling, when I am not.

Suuru: Well... you know, Honourable, it's just that... that.

Awero: For Christ's sake, what's wrong with you? I'm telling
you it's regular practice in parliament. All the male MPs
are doing it, even to their own nieces and cousins! Everyone
in our Contracts and Awards Committee is taking some
member of the opposite sex somewhere or the other before jobs
are given out. They call it 'Sampling the goods'. So why should

I be different? Listen, we even have a story about it. (p. 21).

The above shows that Nigeria has a long history of mismanagement of resources, deceitful leadership and higher level of promiscuity among the leaders. People's expectation before the election was that it would usher in a country of their dreams with the hope of panel-beating all the dents of bad governance and corruption. But it ends with more colossal and more 'refined' patterns of embezzlement and impoverishment. This has gone on unabated and raised the name of some African countries to an 'enviable' position of the most corrupt nations in the world.

Quoting Osofisan's assessment of Shagari's regime and subsequent ones, both military and civilian, has been an invitation to a greater suffering and squalor:

Those slogan days were only a prelude to something far more sinister, to a season of immense pain. The soldiers came back to power, and since then it has been a steady descent into hell. Life has become precarious, death, and violence stalk our every step. Hunger and squalor, disease and agony are everywhere on the street. It has become a veritable struggle to stay alive, and remain human (*Midnight Hotel* 4)

Those words are more alive today than when they were written in 1998. Hunger, squalor, disease and agony are everywhere and embezzlement has not stopped. But even in this seemingly hopeless situation we have found ourselves, we must “develop and nurture the courage to be free” (*Midnight Hotel* 4). This positive outlook is important because the oppressed who are more in number than their oppressors have the art as their ally thereby, having a better prospect of overcoming their present precarious predicament. This is the import of Ngugi's statement that “art is more powerful when working as an ally of the powerless than it is when allied to repression, for its essential nature is freedom while that of the state is the restriction and regulation of freedom” (32).

Uko Atai's *Back Stage*

Uko Atai's *Back Stage* is a play that can be regarded as a play for the green actors, where some of the technicalities of acting, and playwriting are raised. The playwright touches on salient societal issues such as gross professional indiscipline that is found in our hospitals, banks, governmental parastatals and ministries, the universities, the

police and in military establishments. He further touches on topical issues of how employers sack their employees at will because it is a “free enterprise”. The play equally discusses the issue of embezzlement and fraud, a disease that has debilitated all forms of development in developing countries, especially Nigeria. Materialistic outlook of our society is another issue raised in the play, where an accountant who embezzles the money belonging to a local government council becomes an instant hero and is honoured with a chieftaincy title, after which he throws a lavish party. This is Nigerian society in perspective.

There is still the issue of infidelity, a major societal issue which the play sarcastically blames persistently on the devil as PLAYWRIGHT DIRECTOR says: “No, no, no... forgive me, Helen... believe me it's the devil” (56). It also touches on the refusal of military and civilian governments and political appointees to declare their assets.

All the above is a true reflection of the Nigerian society. Despite raising these topical issues, the play still pays attention to the theatre profession. Exercise before rehearsal and the important aspect of deconstruction and construction of role which Atai taught so well in some of his classes when this researcher was still an undergraduate and which is also a prominent acting theory found in Athol Fugard's play, *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* (1973), is an integral part of the play.

Ola Rotimi's *Man Talk Woman Talk*

Ola Rotimi's *Man Talk, Woman Talk* is a play that satirizes the differences between the man and the woman. It is geared towards exposing “behavioural lapses within a community and at the same time offers the spectator's emotional release through laughter” (Rotimi 55). The play, which is set in a jury, promises ample opportunities to Girl and Boy who represent the women folk, and men folk respectively to press charges against each other in an attempt to protect each other's prestige.

The play, among other things, raises the issue of prostitution. Boy accuses the womenfolk of prostitution, provocative dressing, bleaching of skin, excessive make-up, incessant search for fun, while Girl accuses the menfolk of being obsessed with sex, opening the buttons of their shirts to expose their jungle hair, that men are liars who seduce inexperienced girls and of 'bloated ego' of moral superiority. All these vices are common in secondary schools and importantly, universities. The play puts the blame on both men and women and suggests that either side should be ready to make more sacrifices. The play suggests that the relationship between man and woman can only survive the travail or storm, if it is based on mutual respect.

According to Girl, men should treat women with CATT. Girl gives the meaning of CATT as follows:

Girl: ...in order to share our love in order to be a treasure part of our being,
All we ask is FOUR basic responses from our menfolk.
FOUR. No more. Now, what are they? Put together, the letters of the FOUR responses from the word 'cat', spelt, CATT. C for Caring; A for Attention; T for Tolerance; and the last T, for Trust. (p.92)

Taciturn, the Girl believes that if they are treated as such, they (womenfolk) will in return “smother you with caring, with self-sacrifice, with mutual growth. But as playboys? We say: go to hell!” (p. 73.)

Since the jury's mandate is to declare the winner of the debate or court case, it shelves that responsibility to the bigger jury, the audience. This is more like the Brechtian theatre and the situation in Osofisan's *Once Upon Four Robbers*. At the end, there is no victor, no vanquished.

Conclusion

One may wonder why people have plunged themselves into all forms of vices with impunity even when literature has in all ways condemned all such ignoble activities. Some reasons may be adduced for this. One, the reading culture of Nigerians is appalling and there is no encouragement from the stakeholders (the government, the teachers, the parents and the students) to redress this dangerous trend. Two, the vacuum between the populace and the stage has not been filled. Stage performances are expected to make the audience see themselves in the picture of the issues being dramatized, thereby helping them see grey and dim areas of life. State governments should be made to fund theatre and collaborate with the practitioners. The government should properly fund arts and equally patronize art as audience and be ready to lead by example in all areas of life. Lip service should not be paid to punishing offenders or those who have stalled the development of the country in any sphere. Giving these areas the needed and corporeal attention will not only help drama and theatre perform their duties but will make the society to be more lively, peaceful, enjoyable and habitable in the face of the twenty-first century crisis.

Works Cited

- Achebe, Chinua. "The Novelist as Teacher." *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. Ed. Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. 103-106.
- Agoro, S. N. A. *Theatre and Drama in Education*. Ibadan: Caltop, 2001.
- Akinwale, Ayo. "Theatrical Traditions and Political Culture in Post-Independence Nigeria." *Theatre and Politics in Nigeria*. Ed. Jide Malomo and Saint Gbilekaa. Ibadan: Caltop Publications Limited, 1993. 12-18.
- Akinwale, Ayo O. "Theatrical Elements and the Plays of Femi Osofisan." *Nigerian Theatre Journal* 6.1 (2001): 10-16.
- Akinyemi, Tunde and Falola Toyin, eds. *Emerging Perspectives on Femi Osofisan*. Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2009.
- Atai, Uko. *Back Stage*. Ibadan: Caltop, 2007.
- Baldwin, John D and Baldwin, Janice I. *Behaviour Principles in Everyday Life*. 2nd Ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986.
- Obafemi, Olu. *Contemporary Nigerian Theatre: Cultural Heritage and Social Vision*. Lagos: CBAAC, 2001.
- Osofisan, Femi. *Midnight Hotel* Ibadan: Sam Bookman, 1998.
- Osofisan, Femi. *The Nostalgic Drum: Essays on Literature, Drama and Culture*. Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2001.
- Osofisan, Femi. *Insidious Treason: Drama in a Postcolonial State (Essays)* Ibadan: Opon Ifa Readers, 2001.
- Osundare, Niyi. *The Writer as Righter*: Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2007.
- Rotimi, Ola. "Man Talk. Woman Talk" in *Four One-Act Plays*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 2006.
- Sim, Stuart. *Post Marxism: An Intellectual History*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Wa Thiong'o, Ngugi. *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams: Towards a Critical Theory of the Arts and the State in Africa*, New York: OUP, 1998

EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND MARKETING FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN NIGERIAN THEATRE

Osedebamen David Oamen

Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma,

&

V. O. Diakpomrere

University of Benin, Benin City

Abstract

This study is aimed at resolving the problem of quality assurance in theatre audience engineering and marketing. It examines the processes through which quality assurance in theatre audience engineering and marketing are provided. It responds to the quality assurance need of the audience without which theatre is incomplete. It pontificates the need for theatre audience engineering to satisfy entertainment desire of the third realm of the theatre, which seems to be the most important because of value exchange; money for theatrical performances and products. It observes that one of the best ways to engineer theatre audience is through aggressive marketing, which include advertising, direct mailing, retail and corporate marketing. It stresses the essence of fulfilling promises made in the process of marketing, in addition to other production factors that will enhance quality production. The findings of this study reveal that the sustenance of good theatre business ethics in every facet of theatre practice is the bane of quality assurance in theatre audience engineering and marketing in Nigeria. It further reveals that marketing is an essential process of audience engineering, which should enjoy reasonable budget so as to engineer capable buying audience that constitute the soul of theatre business. The paper recommends that quality assurance in theatre audience engineering and marketing must be built on effective theatre business management, planning, controlling, direction, organisation, and coordination of men, money and materials towards the satisfaction of cast and crew, who will in turn satisfy the audience. It implies effective marketing of target audience, audience motivation, employment of capable professional hands and keeping to marketing promises.

Introduction

There is the need to plan for effective quality assurance in Nigerian theatre audience engineering and marketing at this time of economic strengthening strategies. This becomes necessary due to the increasing awareness and need for theatre patrons to get quality entertainment either in product or performance. In this regard quality assurance means consistent quality theatrical performance for patrons, while engineering and marketing means motivation and information for patrons' participation. This justifies the need for quality product or performance which must be the focus of theatre managers who engage cast and crew in theatre production. It has been acknowledged that the audience is very important as a viable arm of the theatre. This fact has been established before now by those who developed the theatrical theories and philosophies on which theatre arts flourishes. Over time, modernity has made both negative and positive impact on theatre, and this has mostly affected the audience especially in developing countries where theatre audience engineering and marketing had been almost non-existent until recent times.

The failure of theatre managers to achieve reasonable strides in the area of theatre audience engineering and marketing is traceable to lack of value placement on the audience, whose gate fees serve as the life line of the theatre. Now that it has become important in the face of competition, there is the need for quality assurance to regenerate audience interest as well as motivate and sustain it through marketing efforts and techniques. Assuring theatre audience implies improved production quality and keeping to promises made during marketing. These are reliable ways of assuring the audience of value for their money.

Market Segmentation and Types of Theatre Audiences

Theatre arts is a very broad area, therefore, its audience varies. They are:

- (a) The reading audience
- (b) The live performance audience
- (c) The television and home video audience or home audience

Reading audience: This is the audience that reads drama texts. Through reading they visualize the scenes, movement of the actors and actresses in relation to the dialogue, and come to terms with the lessons inherent in appreciation of the drama text. This drives the reader to look up to stage performance for practical appreciation.

Live performance audience: This is a live audience watching live theatre performance where actors and actresses perform for the audience at a fee in a theatre over a period of time. The live performance audience seems to enjoy theatre most because they watch the interpreted script by characters on stage live. It is very much unlike the reading audience and the home video and television audiences who watch recorded materials.

The television and home video audience: The television and home video audience are those who buy home video or film products and watch on their television set at home. The television audience does watch television drama series of different genres.

The need for market segmentation in theatre audience marketing and engineering is to identify the different audiences for the theatre. This provides a good ground for aggressive marketing in accordance with the requirements for making these products acceptable to the buyer and the seller towards making profit.

Generally, theatre audience is divided into two groups: home audience and the live theatre audience. It takes the same audience engineering and marketing tasks to satisfy them. In other words, the products for which audience engineering and marketing becomes relevant are performance and recorded materials.

Importance of Quality Assurance in Theatre Audience Engineering

In spite of all the arguments for and against, it is obvious that the audience, from the inception of theatre practice has been part of it, and the audience remains part of it and shall continue to be part of it irrespective of the type of production, whether live performance or recorded. It is on this note that Malomo has observed that:

only when the public experiences what the artist wishes to communicate is the creative process complete. For artistic, social and economic reasons, the audience is therefore a vital element in a theatrical production, and hardly can any attract an audience (89).

The importance of the audience began with the origin of the theatre in pre-historic era. There has never been performance in isolation of the audience. However, quality service rendering challenges indicated the need to manage the audience. Bruch quoting Singh observes that “ultimately, audience members, like the tornados, the earthquake, the hurricane, are forces of nature beyond anyone's control (2). This is one of the reasons for the management of theatre audience. The audience

comes next after the performers in order of importance. The relationship between the audience and performance is unique; hence “modern audiences crave intimacy” (1). Hawkes observed that “in the past... a decline in the attendance of theatre audience becomes almost predictable... going to the theatre is a communal activity. In the modern world a large segment of the community has cut itself off from that activity.” (227). Why do they cut themselves off from the theatre and what could be done to bring them back? This is where theatre audience engineering and marketing comes to its right place.

That the audience is a factor in theatre practice has been established. Therefore, every aspect of the theatre has been harnessed over time to attract the audience. Attracting the audience is very important, but sustaining the audience is much more important. The audience, in recent times, no doubt, deserves good customer service attention because it constitutes the “blood” on which live or recorded theatre live its own life. Theatre audiences are conscious of this fact, hence consciously and unconsciously they demand the best. In the absence of the best there is bound to be a drift of the audience attention in search of the best. Bearing in mind that what the theatre has for sale are intangible there is the need to understand the buyer and work for his or her satisfaction. This is where it is important to identify the content of our products with a view to tackling it to meet the taste of the consumer or customers. The National Theatre of Nigeria is a closer example of a theatre requiring cultural policy covering finance, security and censorship which are required for effective audience engineering. The National Theatre of Nigeria is located within one of the busiest cities in Africa, Lagos Nigeria, where over fifty percent are youths who are prospective theatre patrons. If there is an enabling policy covering finance, security and even-handed censorship, it will encourage patronage that will go a long way to meet the annual budget challenges of the theatre and ease government appropriation in that direction. This implies that it could financially sustain itself through high traffic patronage.

For instance, Theatre Arts has two major components as a product. They are information and entertainment, which could be collectively referred to as “infotainment”. This presupposes that whatever the genre of theatre arts, it is basically to entertain, inform, or both, the latter is often the ideal. The audience is aware of the content of theatre but they may not be aware of the process of packaging it. However, when it is not properly packaged, it will certainly lack the aesthetic which is to the audience what the nectar is to the bees. When a production does not meet audiences' expectations, it rebuffs the audience, and this brings apathy which fuel lack of

patronage. “And let us realize that the responsibility for losing these customers rest squarely on our shoulders... This was the direct result of our actions. We chased those people away by producing what (sic) made them feel stupid...” (*Theatre Audience* 1). This necessitates audience engineering, which is a process of centralizing customers and their satisfaction in the heart of our planning for a theatre production in a manner that will sustain the customer to repeat his or her business calls again and again. Thus, audience engineering is a factor to be acknowledged in effective planning.

In every business, planning is a very important aspect that must be properly articulated. Therefore, audience engineering in theatre must be part of the total planning process of a production. This is one of the ways quality assurance in audience engineering will be achieved. That implies, in this context, the whole essence of planning will be tailored to quality personnel, finance, materials, and technicalities. In addition, the house must be organized in such a manner that the comfort of the audience is emphasized. That is if it is a live performance, the same goes when theatre is taken into homes. The packaged product of the theatre must also be packaged in a manner that it will meet the “infotainment” taste of the 'home audience'. Unlike the live theatre where you can interact with either cast or crew about what was done well and what was not, and where personal contact that adds value to theatre experience comes to bear, the home packaged product is not. This is unlike the home audience that can only interact with the cast or crew through phone or email if any, or if by chance he or she was at the shooting location. Hence, in “home audience” product, recorded materials should be given the right dose of quality assurance that can also sustain the “home audience” and encourage them for a repeat business. Therefore, theatre production planning is a means to achieving quality assurance which is intended for audience engineering for a rewarding theatre for the audience and the producer.

Marketing as an Instrument of Quality Assurance in Theatre Audience Engineering

Quality assurance in theatre arts practices could be achieved in different ways. One of such ways is marketing. The marketing of theatre arts products and services is different from the marketing of other products and services. This is because theatre arts services come in form of professionally-packaged live performance or its product, which is recorded material, either in cassettes or compact disks are unique in their own rights as artistic expressions. Therefore, in marketing such products,

there is the need for market segmentation. This is important so as to locate the exact prospective buyers within the large market that needs such products or services. Identification of the exact segment of the market with a particular need is an attempt to tailor intending product or service to meet the expectations of the buyers. Meeting expectation of the buyers is a profound quality assurance strategy.

There are elements of marketing that are instruments of quality assurances in theatre arts business. These are advertising, publicity and public relations. These are important elements of marketing with the potency to strengthen theatre marketing. To put it plainly, marketing can be defined as a process of motivating people to buy a product or service. However, this process is more complex than simply defined, especially in the marketing of intangible products like theatre performance or a tangible product like the delicate recorded materials, for example, the cassette or compact disk. Basically, marketing and its elements are primarily geared towards motivating the audience to do business with and in the theatre. Bardi acknowledges it thus:

the aim of every well-managed theatre is to draw the audience to the theatre, and there are various means through which this can be achieved. Some of the most prominent means of achieving a “full house” in theatre is through advertising, publicity and public relations (65).

It is important to note that in the process of marketing and application of its elements, promises are made and they must be kept if the patronage of customers is to be sustained. Essentially, in a competitive environment, marketing is very important as it explores all possible areas that can enable the product and service marketed to gain advantage. These include the application of the “5Ps”: product, people, price, place and promotion. This will lead the marketer to engage in activities that will further make impact on their products to satisfy their customers. Some of these activities, according to Paley, include: conducting an external and internal analysis, developing a competitive intelligence system, employing marketing research and organizing all the data you have gathered into a strategic marketing plan (53).

This process in its totality is aimed at bringing about quality service, and its sustenance is an assurance to the audience because of the satisfaction they would receive, which constitutes value for the money spent. The audience is the heart of theatre business, as well as important in multiple ways. According to Malomo:

From the economic point of view, the audience is consumer in relation to

the producer. For it is the audience that pays directly by buying tickets and indirectly paying taxes which at times subsidize a numbers of performances. It is also the audience that applauds or boos a production and therefore represents society in general and the public opinion in particular. No theatre can hope to achieve its objectives if it cannot attract an audience. For these reasons it is generally agreed that the audience gives the theatre, as an art form, its meaning and *raison d'être* (*Theatre Audience* 1).

However, achieving quality is better still dependent on cost effective analysis, that is, evaluating the effectiveness of project investment where output can be identified, estimated and measured in qualitative terms, though this flows to express monetary terms of quality product and service that assure the customer's patronage. The purpose of cost effective analysis towards qualitative product or service provision is to determine how to best employ resources in a given theatre so as to assure patrons of quality product or service. Another fact that encourages quality assurance is public policy in theatre arts and its marketing. In recent times, the three critical issues confronting quality assurance in theatre practice, particularly live theatre, are finance, security and censorship. Each of these critical areas is expected to be covered by public policy. If the public policy so initiated to determine or regulate activities in these areas are not favourable it will affect quality service. For instance, if public policy does not favour the spending of public fund on theatrical activities, that means such projects will not be executed, but if it favours spending of public fund on theatricals, that means such projects will be executed, especially if they are projects that are financially weighty for individuals to execute.

Security is another major challenge which public policy must support so as to directly or indirectly encourage the quality of live theatre performance, which usually runs into late nights. It also covers author's copyrights. Censorship is another aspect that encourages quality service in theatre practice. That means censorship must be even-handed because if it tilts towards the people to an extreme it will accommodate offensive materials. When it does same towards the government to an extreme, it may also infringe on human rights. However, even-handed censorship will engage a balance in the discharge of duties by producers and government in a way that it will benefit the government and the people. Quality assurance in theatre audience engineering and marketing is a continuous process of providing quality theatrical performances to patrons in fulfilment of marketing promises. However, it can only be

achieved when other necessary theatrical factors enable it.

Recommendations

Achieving success in audience engineering is not just the provision of house infrastructure, it includes the total planning process of both performance and recorded theatre products. It is therefore recommended that effective planning that is all encompassing is one of the most viable ways of assuring quality in audience engineering. This also includes aggressive marketing of performance or recorded products of the theatre with the deployment of all the available marketing elements.

Importantly too, there is need for a favourable public policy that will favour quality service rendering, performance and recorded products. This is because no amount of planning, cost effective analysis and marketing would assure quality service without a favourable public policy. Theatre performance, whether for live theatre audience or home audience, should be tailored to satisfying the entertainment desire of the audience. This is one of the means to effectively engineer the audience and retain their patronage.

Conclusion

Quality assurance in theatre audience engineering and marketing is not limited to what the director, theatre manager, actors and actresses would do but what is contained in the total planning of the internal and external inputs of the theatre. These must be grossly supported by the public policy of the administrative office controlling that area of theatre. No doubt, quality assurance in audience engineering is dependent on a lot of factors, paramount among which are: planning, vigorous marketing, quality professionals, materials and money. It also includes cost effective analysis and a favourable public policy. All these factors are expected to meet audience satisfaction, which must be sustained. It is only then that the audience will be assured of quality performance or recorded products for a repeat business visit.

Works Cited

Audience Engineering retrieved from <http://www.erasmatazz.com/the/library/>

JCGD/jcgdv6/Audience Engineering/Audience Engineering.html. retrieved 25 April 2013.

Bardi, J. N. "The Role of Advertising, Publicity and Public Relations in

Theatre

Management.” *Ekpoma Journal of Theatre and Media Arts* 2.1 & 2 (2008): 62-68.

Bruch, D. *A Guide to Studying the Relationship between Engineering and Theatre*. Retrieved from <http://dbrunch.hypermart.netengineering/index.html> on 24/11/2013

Cuhyer, A. J. *Economic Policies and Social Goals Aspect of Public Choice*. London: McGraw-Hill, 1974.

Hawkes, T. *Shakespeare's Talking Animals: Language and Drama in Society*. London: Edward Arnold, 1973

Hisschey, M. *Managerial Economics*. Nashville, TN: South-Western Publishing, 2003

Lehmann, D. R. “Control and Collaboration: Paradoxes of Governance.” *The Academy of Management Review* 28.3 (2003): 8-16.

Malomo, Jide. *The Theatre Audience in Nigeria: A Survey of Audience Attendance at the National Arts Theatre*. Lagos. Ibadan: Stirling-Holden, 2002.

Malomo, T. O. “Theatre and Audience Research.” *Arts Administration in Contemporary Nigeria*. Ed. R. A. Adedokun. Lagos: CBAAC, 2004. 89-112.

Paley, N. *The Manager's Guide to Competitive Marketing Strategies* 3rd Ed. Delhi: Thorogood, 2006.

Thompson, A. A. Jr and A. J. Strickland. *Strategic Management Concept and Cases*. London: McGraw-Hill, 2001.

INTEGRATING HEALTH ISSUES THROUGH THE TIV KWAGH-HIR

Dennis Teghtegh

Beue State University, Makurdi

Abstract

Traditional African performances serve as platforms for engaging the community in various ways. The functionality of the performance is not only embedded in the entertainment forms but in the message sent out during performances. The source for materials to be performed comes from observations of prevailing trends or natural or historical experiences. In the case of the Tiv people of Benue State in Nigeria, their performing arts are derived from various experiences and this is translated into something the community remembers. For instance in this paper, several issues bothering on health, politics and other economic aspects of life have informed the thematic considerations of most Kwagh-Hir performances. The paper thus identifies traditional performances as viable means of projecting and ensuring quality control by using their indigenous talents. The paper treats the experience of the Kwagh-Hir performance in communicating health issues. The paper, thus, suggests the need to go back to traditional performances for reinvigorated pursuit of quality control in society.

Introduction

Over time, the human society experiences changes of both positive and negative dimensions. In order for people to come to terms with these changes, different media are used. Most African societies use dance, songs and other creative forms to communicate these changes. Therefore, through conscious means, society utilizes its performance arts to engage itself. While the performance itself serves as entertainment, it also exhibits the identified challenges for members of the community to change. The process of selecting a predominant theme to perform is dependent on the prevalence of the issue in the community. The case of Kwagh-hir as a traditional performance for quality control can be seen in the observation made by Tar Tsaaior that “this unique theatrical tradition was conceived in the womb of politics and delivered through the throes or pangs of political resistance against the colonialists” (qtd. Teghtegh 206). The implication of the Kwagh-hir performance as an art form is based on its concern to represent the consciousness of the Tiv people in

every aspect of life. The subject matter of the performance is a reflection of the happenings in the community which is captured artistically. This creates an ambience of ecstasy and at the same time provides food for thought for the audience.

The trajectory between arts and the larger society in ensuring quality control of all human endeavour transcends man's imagination. No singular claim can establish at what point man's society was devoid of the arts. It then follows that society and the arts have this symbiotic experience which enables one to be used as a measure to control events in the society. This is the case being stated in this paper, that traditional performances have the pungent ability of ensuring quality in terms of behaviour and morals which translate into greater benefits for society and humanity at large. It is pertinent to note that traditional performances are no longer given the adequate value that they should be accorded; consequently, several foreign ideologies and social behaviours have arisen and several negative behaviours are currently the bane of society. In a bid to redefine moral, ethical, and social behaviour, a recent concept has been projected through the media known as value reorientation. The thrust of value reorientation is to drive attitudinal change by redefining African (and Nigerian) values. The concept of value reorientation as it is currently propagated in Nigeria may not achieve the expected outcome. This is because value orientation must begin at the rural level where the individual begins to interact with life generally. To concentrate on the media, especially radio and television may prove to be just too much for an average rural person who does not own any of these. This obviously relegates the average rural and urban person from being affected by the intended messages. What this suggests is continuous corrosion of our values. It is based on the fact that quality control must be indigenized to factor in both nationwide and rural climes that we have chosen the Tiv Kwagh-hir theatre to explain the efficacy of traditional performances. One of the cardinal questions to ask would be: How can the Kwagh-hir performance be viewed as an instrument for quality control? This and other questions would be discussed as pointers towards the efficacy of traditional performances in ensuring an expected way forward in the quest for quality control in our society.

Conceptualizing Kwagh-hir Performance Yesterday and Today

There have been diverse opinions on the concept of the Kwagh-hir by different authors especially on the functionality of Kwagh-hir performance. Perhaps, the first to have extensively researched on Kwagh-hir performance is Iyorwuese Hagher who identifies Kwagh-hir performance as a popular theatre for the masses which are not

necessarily works of literature produced by the elites but the popular creation of the mass artists themselves in collective creativity with each contributing a part to the whole wherein the peoples world views are given expression (Doki 128). Although Doki acknowledges the contributions of Hagher in his work, he adds up to the efficacy of the kwagh-hir performance when he states thus:

The traditional genre of what we see today of Kwagh-hir had its roots from the story telling practice of the Tiv people. Several expressions in Tiv are used interchangeably, yet they reflect the central idea. Expressions such as “kwagh-u-Alom” “kwagh-u-Adzov” and “kwagh-hir” all entail the same thing. Kwagh-u – Alom literarily means a “thing of the hare,” kwagh-u-Adzov means a “thing of the fairies” and kwagh-hir means “magical or mystical thing” respectively (130).

The point to note concerning Doki's views above is his concern with the literary meanings of the evolutions of Kwagh-hir performance which is driven from oral traditions of the Tiv people. This in itself does not pointedly identify the functionality of the art form except that Doki further enlarges the scope of the Kwagh-hir performance stating its efficacious nature when he states that “in spite of the diversity of the Kwagh-hir and Kwagh-Alom themes, one common feature about them is that they attack societal ills, lampoon unscrupulous personalities and in more recent times captures contemporary happenings around Tivland” (131). This paper agrees with the above views totally especially given the role of the Kwagh-hir in striving to achieve attitudinal changes and making commentaries that affect the society positively. Indeed the above premise enunciated by Doki forms the theoretical bedrock upon which this paper is based.

However, other views exist concerning the concept of Kwagh-hir which go beyond the story telling evolution pointedly captured by Doki. Such views talk about the political angle to which Kwagh-hir emerged as a veritable tool to protest a draconian decree by the colonialists aimed at stripping the Tiv of their unique identity. These views are succinctly captured in Tsaaior's position thus:

In a significant manner, Haakaa, which was a political expedition by the British colonialists and missionaries to emasculate Tivland of its cultural heirloom and distinct identity underscored Tiv political consciousness and resistance. This inevitably culminated in the dramatic emergence the

kwagh-hir theatre... (206).

The above indicates deeper significations of the Kwagh-hir than necessarily meets the eye and suggests that the Kwagh-hir performance is symbolic and can be understood vividly when one takes into account the political events which gave birth to it. In a similar vein, Harding seems to agree with the opinion of Tsaaior when she observes that “in the affirmation of a pan-Tiv identity in relation to both colonial and national ideologies, performance allowed the Tiv to “explore” or rehearse different forms of response but always moving within an encompassing Tiv system of belief” (205).

Harding's opinion coagulates with Tar's view thus affirming the position of this paper that Kwagh-hir performance possesses the potency for ensuring quality control in Tivland especially that it explores diverse ways of maintaining the *status quo* of the people. The efficacy of the Kwagh-hir in ensuring quality control is best seen in the performance structure and content, especially of the songs accompanying the various performance items. In Kwagh-hir performance the songs represent dialogue in Western drama. During a performance the piece to be performed is introduced to the audience and a song ushers in the performance. The content of the song explains the physical performance and engages the audience at the moment to take in the sight. As members of the audience watch the performance they become aware of the danger of behaving like the character on stage. This creates an avenue to redefine their lifestyles. For instance, the first performance of “Dan-Zaria”, which was the Kwagh-hir item to sensitize the people on the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS on an individual, brought a chilling effect on the audience. Several reactions were noted as the audience aptly condemned loose behaviour and vowed to become more careful. Therefore, through the change in behaviour the quality of life became more controlled. The potency of traditional performance is based more on the effects of such a performance on the society itself.

In another vein a further insight is given by Adeiyongo who succinctly extrapolates the possible structural affinities upon which Kwagh-hir performance is predicated, when he states:

In pre-colonial times and during the early contact with Europeans, there arose several cults and revolts in Tivland whose cardinal aims were to resist the evils of *Mbastav* in order to pave way for justice and bliss for justice in Tiv society. Hagher cites the *Hoyo* revolt, *Ijov* cult movement, *Haakaa* and *Myambuan* revolts as abundant testimonies of the Tiv

people's determination to fight against evil. In other words these cults and revolts which took place about two and a half decades before the emergence of Kwagh-hir are memorable illustrations of the Tiv people's resistance to oppression (241).

The crucial addition to the already stated frameworks identified in this paper would be the issue of specific haranguing of witchcraft through the performance which made it at that time content specific – a fight against Tsav. However, the most interesting contribution of Adeiyongo happens to have been his postulation on the fact that” kwagh-hir theatre offers visual metaphors for unravelling conflicts in Tiv social order” (241).

What is known as the Kwagh-hir in contemporary times has transmogrified into an avenue which has been used to chronicle important events and make relevant comments about social behaviour, health issues, economic issues and other relevant human endeavours. One watching a recent Kwagh-hir performance is likely to be pleasantly surprised to see a display of their popular football teams like Chelsea or Barcelona. These are the changing forms of Kwagh-hir performance, and this is an indication of the sign of dynamism which is associated with art forms that are prolific in nature. It then follows that the performance is flexible and does an excursion into contemporary issues that are capable of ensuring quality control in this case in terms of behavioural change as is today being advocated in all human visages.

Understanding Quality Assurance and Performance

Quality assurance is associated with the definition given by Kokemuller who states that:

Quality assurance and quality improvement are closely related concepts having to do with quality management of a manufacturing production process. Quality assurance is related to overseeing of the existing quality control processes whereas quality improvement is about improving upon production process and results(http://www.ehow.com/info_8693386_difference-quality-assurance-quality-improvement.html).

As presented above, understanding quality assurance is steeped in the identification that society exists and has expected yardsticks of measuring specific benchmarks for both material and nonmaterial products. Therefore, the value of a particular product

is gauged by the premium placed on it and any shortfall from the set standard depletes the quality and may be seen as inferior. It is pertinent to pointedly state that quality assurance generally involves control of natural things which necessarily must be standardized, control of man-made products, for example, what we eat, drink, utilize just to mention a few. Given the massive nature of human endeavours, it becomes apt to state that several philosophers have argued differently about the need for quality assurance in all human engagements. The cardinal thrust of quality assurance is progressiveness through diligence and ensuring value to everything under the earth. Therefore, to ensure quality especially in performance there is the need to inspect the product and also to ensure the maintenance of a high standard. What then does quality assurance posit to performance and indeed society? In seeking to objectify crucial issues that affect society man has utilized diverse forms and performance has been one very relevant means.

Every society has one art form or another and the functionality of the art form depends largely on the culture of the people which is understood and decoded by the society. What this entails is that performance becomes a means of evaluation and provides valuable feedback systems for the society or community to ensure quality control in the micro or macro issues affecting the community generally. Although the overarching vent of a performance may not just be for quality control but the performance itself becomes an agent for quality control due to its strict insistence on the performance standards set by the group which ensures the relevance of the performers and performance by themselves and others. In this paper, quality control systems of the traditional performance is under review and the Kwagh-hir performance is specifically treated as a performance that goes beyond mere storytelling, transcends magical renditions from the sacred to the mundane world but to a tangible experience with real life situations dramatized through the visionary eyes of the *Adzov* and *Anyam* which characterize the performance.

It then follows that for one to understand quality assurance in performance, issues of standard must be identified and the reasons for the performance also become necessary. Like in the case of Kwagh-hir performance, the cardinal thing to always remember is that an existing folk culture which was to develop the entire personality of an individual was transferred from a passive state to an active performance equipped with the potentialities of making comments that investigate society and ensure quality assurance using its performance structure. This position will be clearly enunciated as this paper progresses.

Kwagh-hir Performance and Quality Assurance

The Kwagh-hir performance has several strands which signify laudable performance when watched. The artistry of the narrator who heralds the coming of the various items on stage cannot be overlooked. This dramatic character claims to be the only person who goes into the spirit world to communicate with the spirits and informs the material world on what to expect. The narrator indeed sets the stage for the next performance and also serves as a cue to the dancers on stage who in turn observe the entrance of the item through songs and dance. This linkage is very vital and where the narrator fails to give the right cues the performance can be jettisoned. This character must be versatile as his role needs flexibility and wit to coordinate all performances.

The next characters that continuously perform to the view of the audience are the dancers who characteristically echo the arrival of the next performing item. They add pep to the performer who is guided and gingered by their praises and the song, so much so that the heightening of the dancers' voices through songs ignites a burst of energy in the performer which is palpable to all. The point to note here is the functionality of African dance and song to the performance itself which signifies dialogue for the performer.

In Kwagh-hir performance, messages are passed to the audience through the various marionettes (Adjov), the performance at the boxlike platform and the animals with different colours. These various performance forms have been used in promoting quality assurance in Tiv society and life. For instance, during the early 1980s issues of maternal mortality rate were on the increase and women were dying. The reason for the increase in maternal deaths was women's refusal to go to the hospital. In a bid to encourage healthy health practices the performance of *ortwev* (a medical doctor delivering a woman of a baby) was created. The success of the performance gave the audience confidence in attending medical hospitals when sick. It is in this aspect of Kwagh-hir performance that one sees how quality control in traditional performance can transmogrify into quality assurance.

Also, the content of Kwagh-hir performances is such that they touch on existing problems in the society. At the earliest performance of the Kwagh-hir, the emasculation of the Tiv by colonial rulers paved way for the defence of the fatherland as such performance themes bothered on resistance of all forms of marginalization and anything that would disenfranchise the Tiv man of his cultural identity. The performances at this time were directed to build into the Tiv man the need to fight off every impending danger occasioned by the religious pogroms variously identified as *Haakaa*, *Nyiambuam* and so on. Therefore, as the issues were performed they left an

indelible mark in consciousness of the Tiv man. As the Tiv people became conscious of their society new standards were set for their political life. These standards create confidence in the people and ensure formidable means of handling their challenges. This is where the issue of quality assurance was visible. However, as events and times changed Kwagh-hir performance has also mutated and what one watches these days is a reflection of the changing times and the attendant issues on hand.

Therefore, like every living art which is dynamic kwagh-hir currently makes comments on issues of health, education, politics, economics and other social pastimes like sports. However in this paper the issue of quality control and assurance in Kwagh-hir performance will be limited to health and economy. In almost every Kwagh-hir performance, issues of health are topical; firstly, there is a popular *Jov* known as *Nguveren* – she is a beautiful performer with a baby on her back, one child by her side, and she is still pregnant. This picture suggests a lady that has failed to observe family planning and the song explains her ordeal; thus, she is chided for her condition and derided for allowing herself to have several children. The clear message here is that, there is a need to have quality control over family issues in order to have quality assurance over financial matters. Current trends in Tiv land suggest the proliferation of poverty occasioned by lack of family planning among rural families. This has generated so much tension in most homes. Therefore, the performance suggests that for the future to be brighter, families must control the birth and conception which seems to be responsible in part for the present economic predicament witnessed among the people.

In another bid to situate a health issue a performance known as *Danzaria* – a famished and blood sunken-eyed *Jov* whose ribs are countable at a great distance – comes into the arena. The song identifies this performer as one who was promiscuous and as a result has been infected by the dreaded HIV/AIDS virus. The grotesque and monstrous look on this *Jov* makes the message clear abstain or get reduced to this pitiable sight. Again through the songs the action on stage is embalmed and the picture leaves an indelible picture on the mind of the audience. The point to note here is the manner with which this performance weaves in the campaign against being infected by the HIV/AIDS virus through this now popular performance and the shock and apprehension seen on the faces of the audience. Here again the standard of living has been presented for enquiry and the resolve is to fight against indecent living. This is the thrust of quality assurance which is preached in this performance. There are other health issues like abortion and qualitative dressing which are also commented upon; however, this paper will move ahead to the other aspect which has

to do with economy.

Kwagh-hir performance also talks about quality control and assurance in the area of economy. Here indigenous ways of making a living are performed as a challenge to those who are lazy and may not have something to do; for instance, the performance on the platform features some women grilling cassava and making cassava chips and other by-products from them. The song also eulogises these women and encourages others to emulate them. Through this means the message seems to cut across all areas of human endeavour to inculcate hard work which, is believed, will translate into money. Other performances also encourage traditional means of making money through performance and other time-honoured traditional forms like hunting. The salient and potent mission of the performance here is to control the people towards living decent lives and being engaged positively to be dignified in the society.

Conclusion

In the effigy of what Kwagh-hir is on the surface, one can erroneously see it as being a sentimental performance where laughter and fear may be emitted but in the content of the performance is a trajectory of control system which has been used to ensure quality control. These quality controls have in the final analysis become measures for quality assurances which essentially sustain the Tiv society in part. If there must be quality in learning, in economy, in political leadership and the entirety of human existence then, we must all fall back on our indigenous performances with their time-honoured strategies of quality control and assurance. This paper is an ongoing comment on reviving traditional performances towards ensuring quality control of society, social groups and cultural linkages. Kwagh-hir performance is used here as a paradigm for justifying the fact that, other traditional performances can be used in actualizing the nascent call for quality assurance.

Works Cited

- Adeiyongo, Akosu. "The Tiv Kwagh-hir: A Popular Nigerian Puppet." *Theatre, Politics and Social Consciousness in Nigeria*. Ed. Egwugwu Illah. Jos : Leadership Production, 2002. 241.
- Doki. Gowon Ama. *Traditional Theatre in Perspective: Signs and Signification in Igbe, Girinya and Kwagh-hir*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2006.

Harding, Frances. "Fifteen Years between Benue and Katsina Workshops in Nigeria." *African Theatre in Development*. Eds. Martin Banham, James Gibbs and Femi Osofisan. Oxford: James Currey, 1999. 205. 99-112.

Teghtegh, Dennis. "Popular Culture as metaphor for Resistance: The Tiv Kwagh-hir Theatre Experience." *ManDyeng: Journal of Central Nigeria Studies Harmattan* (2008): 200-211.

Kokemuller, Neil. "Difference Between Quality Assurance & Quality Improvement". eHow. 1999-2014. http://www.ehow.com/info_8693386_difference-quality-assurance-quality-improvement.html.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN COSTUMING AND MAKE-UP: A STUDY OF SELECTED NOLLYWOOD FILMS

Ephraim Aga Shimsenge & Richard Gbilekaa

College of Education, Katsina-Ala

Abstract

Competence and standard are what every true professional strives to achieve in their area of endeavour. The theatre profession in the recent times is infested with unprofessional artists who may feel are gifted with one skill or the other and, therefore, need no training. Costume and make up are, no doubt, the most battered of all the arts of the theatre, attracting all comers. This paper discusses the deployment of costume and make-up in Nigerian video film with a view to exploring their effectiveness and how they can help the Nigerian youths to embrace and respect their cultural identities.

Introduction

Costume and make-up are two of the oldest elements of theatrical design that enhance the physical and general transformation of characters. Costume and make-up are paramount among the elements used in relating human experiences to an audience. The theatrical art is an expression of human experiences and for this reason, the history of costume and make up, like the history of theatre, must start from the ancient period in traditional societies, long before the Western conception of the origin of theatre. Theatre as an art form is generally conceived in Western culture to have begun with the Greeks. A part of the reason for this general view is informed by the fact that “it is from ancient Greece that we inherited the first written down scripts” (Shuaib 1). This claim, however, has come under contention following more recent historical findings. To this end, early man in his attempt to meet up with his basic needs like food and shelter was forced to disguise himself to look like the animals he hunted. Using costumes and make-up, he was able to overcome and capture the animals he used for his meals.

Consequently, the art of costume and make-up developed alongside the art of drama. From the pre-literary period to the ancient Egyptian period, down to Greek period in theatre history, to the twentieth century and beyond, costume and make-up

have developed and evolved to become paramount tools in the arts of the theatre as well as film production. In a sense, the use of costume and make-up in theatre productions dates back to the ancient times. The ancient practice of costume and make-up therefore informed their present day usage in movies.

Traditionally, costume and make-up play vital roles in both stage and movie productions. According to Utoh-Ezeajugh:

Costume and make-up are elements of play production which complement other elements to enhance a production. The story of any play could be easily told through the costume and make-up design, because one of the aims of costume is to characterize the wearer, such that the audience could easily understand the kind of person that the action of the play is going to unfold. Make-up design on the other hand consolidates costume by giving a physiognomic classification to a character and as such could be considered an extension of costume (131).

The above epigram clearly demonstrates that costume and make-up are very vital in theatre and movie productions because of their capability in effecting believable character portrayal. This is because in live theatre and movie productions, appearance plays very crucial roles in identifying character, social status, historical times, date/period, locale and setting and other happenings that help to narrate the story for the understanding of the audience.

Anyebe rightly observes that “in this way, appearance is presumed to speak louder than words. By appearance, we are referring to interpretation subsumed in costuming and make-up” (38). Costume delineates character. It is through this that the audience appreciates the social class as well as background of the character. Against this back drop, Buchman asserts that:

The vital link between the artist and the audience is stage make-up, this final tool, when properly used allows the performer to utilize his face to project his role to the audience. Without this skill, all other aspects of his training are badly undermined (132).

In a similar vein, Utoh-Ezeajugh citing Russel, seeks to accentuate the dramatic relevance of costumes thus:

Costumes are the moving scenery of a production, and when worn by the actors, who are the centre of all dramatic action, they are the strongest element of the visual scene: they project personality and individual emotion and obtain the strongest audience focus (102).

In a production, costume and make-up are expected to express the personality of the character, revealing his status, socially and otherwise. It should help the audiences' understanding of the character's relationship to other characters and to the entire production. Looking at costume and make-up from a cultural background, Utoh-Ezeajugh further posits that costume and make-up will aid the understanding of a play or movie production as they establish the locale/setting of a production by highlighting whether it is set in a city or in the village, within a particular ethnic group or nation; North, South, East or West of a particular continent or country (32).

The foregoing justifies importance of costume and make-up in both stage and movie productions which is not just role interpretation in the theatre. To this end, Oklobia and Bakare submit that: "costume and make-up have been very essential in the art of stage and movie productions as they can point out the time of the day and thereby clarify the nature of the occasion taking place, such as an informal meeting, dinner party" (106). Costume and make-up can establish the age of a character since certain clothes are appropriate only to old people, while others to young people. They help to clarify character relationship by tying together members of a family group through identifying elements of ornament, line and colour. By this thinking, for effective use of costume and make-up in movie production, appearance must resemble the character and the character should strive to be in harmony with the technical details enshrined.

Scholarly opinions on the emergence of film in Nigeria are of the view that: "The structure of the film industry was evolved from three crucial socio-economic stages: the colonial and pre-independence and the post indigenization decree period" (Ekwuazi 1). Accenting to the colonial origin of film in Nigeria, Shaka enthuses: "A medium of mass communication and entertainment is essentially a colonial inheritance, this is because film series produced in the colonial period were documentaries used to promote colonial government policies on agriculture, infrastructural development, etc." (2). A colonial film unit set up during the outbreak of the Second World War spearheaded the establishment of a sub-colonial film unit in Nigeria which later became a full unit in 1945 and re-christened The Federal Film

Unit (FFU). In 1947, with N. F. Spur as the first Film Officer, some Nigerians were sent to Ghana to study in Accra Film Training School. They include: Adamu Halilu, Fajemisin, A, J Atigba and Madam Yakubu Aina. Back home with the knowledge of film, they acquired there, they only utilized it for propagating and promoting the policies of the colonial government. The actual advent of Nigerian indigenous films were spearheaded by Francis Oladele, Ola Balogun and Hurbert Ogunde who picked up from Ezekiel Mphahlele's *Freedom*, a film wholly shot in Alake's palace in Abeokuta-Nigeria in 1957 and made good use of Nigerian costumes. The images of Oladele, Balogun and Ogunde at the scene of film-making steered the federal government's interest in film making in the 1960s.

According to Ekwuazi, "by the end of 1960, the structure of the film Industry in the country completely altered. The structure placed the Federal Government on top of the ladder" (114). By the end of the 1970s, filmmakers like Ola Balogun, Eddy Ugboma, Francis Oladele, Sanya Dosumu and Jab Adu emerged, yet its development was still at the embryonic stage. Nwafor thus rightly contends that:

In Nigerian Film Industry, 1975 marks a significant turning point in the history of Nigeria because it was when truly indigenous full-length Feature films emerged which was Ola Balogun's *Amadi* (1975) in Igbo and Dosumu's *Dinner With the Devil* 1975 (115).

In spite of the popularity of these films, subsequent continuity was hampered because of the expensive nature of productions. The promulgation of decree No.16 of 1979 established a statutory corporate body, the Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC). Ekwuazi's account shows that, when the national currency depreciated, it became impossible to shoot on celluloid or sustain the theatres. Cinema practitioners, thus, caught the wind as change was triggered by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Between 1980 and 1983, the infrastructure for a robust home movie tradition had been laid. At this time, every state had a television station, some states had even more than one broadcast station under the National Party of Nigeria (NPN)-led Federal Government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. Some States that were led by opposition parties established parallel stations that aired their party's ideologies and propagandas. Much of these propagandas were channelled through television drama.

The Nigerian video film industry, popularly called, Nollywood, according to Ayakoroma:

...has become a phenomenon projecting the Nigerian culture and indeed, the African continent to the outside world. What the western world see on screens as reflections of the cultural heritage of Nigeria are not mere wrapped impressions hurriedly presented by foreigners, but what is projected by Nigerians. Not many people now think of watching Indian or Chinese films, as was the case in the 70s and 80s (143).

Historically, the year 1992, marked a significant turning point in the history of Nigerian film. To this contention, Ayakoroma posits:

It all started in 1992, when Kenneth Nnebue experimented the production of Yoruba video films. He was originally involved in the distribution of audio types and later came up with the idea of putting on Igbo drama on tape for domestic consumption. The outcome was *Living in Bandage* directed by Chris Obi-Raph, which was an instant success (143).

It is interesting to note that Nollywood has gone to an advanced stage as the films are watched by a good percentage of Nigerians, other West African countries and by Europeans and Americans.

Creating a Realistic Image through Costume and Make-Up in Movie Productions

Professionally, every organization has ethics and laid down procedures that guide their operations. But most recently the desire to make ends meet brought about quacks in most professions in Nigeria. The worst hit is the home movie industry which is infested with unprofessional or unskilled personnel who feel they possess the talent without training. Therefore, most recently the trade is practised without laid down standards. This development raises the question of whether theatrical or movie productions have yardsticks with which they can be measured or not.

Costume and make-up are referred to as the moving scenery of a production and when worn by actors and actresses, who are the centre of all dramatic actions, they are the strongest elements of the visual scene. They project personality and individual emotions and obtain the strongest audience focus. Costume and make-up serve the purpose of developing and ending a movie's dramatic action through the fusion of appearance and reality. Through costumes and make-up, characters involved are portrayed in motion pictures. According to Anyebe:

Home movies largely make use of costume and make-up to add value to the character. This is achieved by the collaboration of screen and the picture frame and between the illusions created in the scene and the reality outside the screen. To a great extent, Nigerian movies employ costume and make-up to create and reaffirm characters through theatrical commutation and builds upon these in dialogue amongst characters in a movie (42).

Costume and make-up have a language that communicates with the audience. Oftentimes, they create a sense of focus and impression as they establish the nuance between the character in motion and members of the audience. Citing Omaney and Seharken, Anyebe maintains that “the investing of apparels and mask for production is to highlight and differentiate the actors and actresses by setting them apart from the analysis and by distinguishing one from other” (42). Therefore, in order to harness costume and make-up to suit the objective for which it is made, they must be applied in a proper perspective so that the audience watching a movie will have a full understanding of the role of each dramatic personae.

Despite the fact that the movie industry in Nigeria is infested with unskilled personnel, the place and role of costume should not be undermined in any circumstance. Therefore, if an actor or actress is not dressed in a proper costume, then the message will be completely lost. The import of every movie or theatrical production is to send a message to a diverse audience. A good performance should be able to avail the audience appropriate costume and make-up that will project or enhance the intended message. Hence, the more the audience understands the language of costume and make-up, the more they understand the movie without seeking explanations because of the appearance of the actors and actresses.

Thus, a look at the definition of quality assurance (QA) with regard to costume and make-up in Nigerian home video agrees or reflects their true image in home video because of the infiltration of untrained persons that have little or no knowledge about costume and make-up. This lack of professionalism has hampered the development and growth of Nigerian home video as some people are often reluctant to watch home movies on the pretext that it is not giving them the desired message.

Evidences from the foregoing indicate that the situation in the film industry in Nigeria as regards costume and make-up is an unethical one because of the level of

ignorance exhibited by non-professionals in the media. Lack of professionalism remains the major yardstick that often gives birth to poor production. Professionalism in any area of specialization has to do with some ethical considerations that may guide the operations of the field. Costuming, like any other area of Theatre studies should have its ethics. According to Igbonekwu:

Professionalism has some general attributes that may be common place knowledge, that which include the following: highly designed staff structure and adherence specialization as the prime structure of the machinery of the organization; discipline and highly defined observance of standards in training and in practice, consistency in use of technical terminologies, which it economizes and sharpens profession communication and well as contributing to formality and universality of expression; bias in conventional equipment and environment and their proper application (147).

The above implies that professionalism in the art of costuming a film must be backed up with training of costumiers, and subsequent provision of the necessary machineries for effective and efficient costuming of actors and actresses. Costuming and make-up in Nollywood therefore should be practised with cognizance to the ethics of these areas of theatre practice. What is obtainable in the industry, presently, is nothing but unethical practice. In terms of characterization and role interpretation, the costume and make-up designer aims at sending a message to the audience with the hope that the audience, even the one that has no knowledge of the art of the theatre, can decode the role an actor/actress plays in a movie, through creative and meticulous use of costumes and make-up.

It is so disappointing that in the Nollywood industry any person jumps from any area of specialization and joins the industry to become a star in it. Indeed, the Nigerian audience which fancies anything romance, most especially where women appear half nude in any movie is considered adequate as possessing modern dress code. However, this ethically negates the provisions of some cultures in Nigeria. For instance, most of the Igbo movies depict women to resemble South African or Zulu women. In this regards Dandaura and Obi, criticizing the costume and make-up in Igbo films, posit:

Often, the visual impact of costumes is underestimated. Indeed most of

what one finds in these films are more of dresses than carefully designed costumes to project characterization. The general concept of village maidens dressed in three quarter wrappers with exposed shoulders and the men dress in jute bags or sack cloth are culturally alien to Igbo societies. Indeed most of what one sees often in these Igbo epic films...are costumes reminiscent of the Zulu warriors and Zulu women of South Africa than Igboland (122).

The current practice in Nollywood as far as costume and make-up are concerned is that of misrepresentation of Nigerian cultural identities. As earlier noted about Igbo films, most other minorities' films in Nigeria are copying the adulterated cultural standard from Igbo films. This is evident in *Adam Wade Kohol Ga*, a film directed and produced by William World which misrepresents the Tiv numerous classical costumes with sackcloth. Furthering their comments on the negativity of role character presentation, Dandaura and Obi contend that:

it is obvious that core Igbo values and some vital cultural practices have been so bastardised, grossly misrepresented, distorted and misapplied. Indeed, if the younger generation of Nigeria were to relay on these films to understand the Igbo world view in terms of their dress sense...that generation will most likely end up disoriented as a result of the conflicting cultural codes used by producers of various films (123).

The implication of the negative representation of culture of Nigerian societies by film producers is that it will annihilate cultures so presented. Unskilled costume and make-up designers in Nollywood have totally toyed with Nigerian cultural dress codes by not reflecting the true identities of such cultures through the characters and the social background they depict in the films.

Until this unwholesome or negative application of costumes and make-up in Nollywood industry is readdressed, Nigerian cultures will totally be unheard of in the future. Researchers in the area of movie production should go back to the board and readdress the eroding cultural identities of Nigerian societies. This is one of the ways that costume and make-up can take its rightful place in movies.

Lack of Professionalism

This particular problem is relatively more pronounced in home video industry than the live theatre medium. According to Ododo:

majority of the people seen as costume and make-up artists on location are largely fashion designers cum untrained make-up artists who just took up the profession to make ends meet without requisite training in the ethics modality of operation of these two physical appurtenances of the theatre (95).

In this regard, professionalism is substituted for commercialization, judging from the standard performance of costume and make-up designs in some productions like *The Magic Soap*, *Orkura Boji*, *Oraerga*, *Suicide Mission*, *False Alarm*, *War in the Palace 1* and *2*, and *Glamour Girls 2*, where one would find actors and actresses appear in costumes and make-up that do not adequately befit their roles and production styles. In a similar vein, Haynes also decries the triumph of glamour in over ethical standard in most Nigerian home movies by highlighting that the lifestyle of home video producers, directors, marketers and stars is gradually acquiring the glamour commonly associated with show-biz and the glitter of tinsel town. Aesthetically, this is regrettably a *subject* of home video movies *dictating* costumes to be used in shows, anything outside that is scorned upon as inferior. Ethically, costume and make-up are to be designed by a professional designer. Among his consideration for designing costume and make-up include the type or style of movie, the era of the movie, the cultural background of the locale of setting of the movie, the ages of the characters, the sex of the characters, the mood of the characters, the social stratification of the characters, the taste or fashion of the period, etc. Heightening the unethical application of the element of movies in Nigeria, Haynes posits: “the story line and acting are more often overwhelmed by the projection of glamour over substance, a gaudy visual style that robs the production of memorable pathos and artistry” (19). Professional ethics must therefore be adhered to if movies are to be costumed or made up appropriately.

Cultural Influences

Culture is a dynamic phenomenon that is open to external influences while reinventing from time to time. Interestingly, most Nigerian theatrical performances are culture-based but are often given to negative portraiture of some aspects of our culture due to undue emphasis and misinterpretation of Western cultural values. There is indeed an outright bastardization of our exquisite and once glorified culture in series of live theatre performances and home video productions that are evident in vulgar and obscene costume and make-up designs. These are reflected in the following home movies *Sex in the Screen*, *The Adultery*, *The Prostitute*, *Out Kast 1 and 2*, *Glamour Girls II* which star actors like Bimbo Akintola, Omotola Ekeinde, Sandra Achum, Shan George and Lilian Bach in very skimpy and sexy costumes and make-up.

Therefore, to ensure cultural rejuvenation, costume and make-up designs in Nollywood movie productions must be in conformity with Nigerian cultural dictates; that is, the design should be sufficiently guided by the rich moral and ethical values in the Nigerian people, basically to tally with the locality it derives from. Costume and make-up designs in plays and films based on an alien culture of violence and sexual concept should be downplayed in our theatrical performances for the betterment of the costume and make-up industry. It should rather be replaced with our befitting and relevant cultural attires that complement such roles.

Critiquing Costumes in Nigerian Home Movies

This section of the presentation borrows from *False Alarm*, a film directed and produced by Teco Benson in 2011, *The Magic Soap*, a film produced by Felyx Adzegetor in 2009, *Oraerga*, a film produced by Jethro Moor in 2012, and *Orkura Boji (Kura Kasev)*, a film produced by Godwin Aondowase Gbera in 2013, all in Katsina-Ala town of Benue State in Nigeria.

The movie, *False Alarm*, presents Chief D. K. Donko as a vibrant and focused entrepreneur has just a son, called Dan. Chief Donko dies when his son is still a teenager. His brother Mr. Luga takes over Chief Donko's business as well as the family's welfare according to tradition, though Chief Donko was a philanthropist and left behind many assets to be handed over to his son, Dan, when he clocks eighteen years old. Barrister Anderson, the company's solicitor-general and personal legal aid to the late Chief Donko is saddled with the responsibility of administering the handover. Meanwhile, Chief Donko's brother Luga is unfaithful, jealous, extravagant

and wicked. Out of jealousy and wickedness, Luga denies the little Dan Western education despite the huge assets and funds left behind by his father for him. Luga subjects the little Dan to extreme hardship in order to eliminate him and in turn inherit the company's assets. Dan's neglect and dehumanizing predicament is alleviated at the return of Barrister Anderson on a trip from Europe. Anderson employs the assistance of the domestic servants to apprehend Luga and sends him to life imprisonment, thereby leaving his wicked plans unaccomplished.

The costume designed for Chief Donko fails in the interpretation of his role. As a multi-millionaire, his costumes are flamboyant but his physical stature and natural outlooks make fun of him. Consequently, the costumes are ill-fitted for his role and rather make him look mirthless. The effects of the costume blur the aesthetic perceptions of the movie.

After two months of managing Late Chief Donko's assets, Mr. Luga still looks haggard yet he spends money lavishly on women. One would expect him to change or improve in his appearance. In a scene where he negotiates with assassins, Luga is expected to appear in more flamboyant costumes than in the agbada he wears. After the scene with Barrister Anderson in his office, Mr. Luga returns home, to appear in an ordinary costume, a lace material. He would have been in a lace costume that befits his new status as an overseer of his late brother's assets. Also, one would expect that Dan's make-up should have clearly depicted a younger age than he appears.

In the movie, *The Magic Soap*, Zaki Tor Abenga is always seen wearing royal and ceremonial Tiv costumes. This presents his noble status as displayed in his expensive costumes. Even during his leisure hours in his palace, he is dressed from top to toe, still in royal attires. There is the ultimate need for a king too to have leisurely attires to complement his royal regalia, at least during his jolly hours with his family, even though they are still traditional wears. Still in *The Magic Soap*, the costume for the medicine man does not portray a Tiv setup whatsoever. The Tiv people of North Central Nigeria have no code of dress for medicine men like the Igbo who are mostly costumed in red clothes and feathered caps. Alternatively, Tiv traditional medicine men costume themselves in their day to day wears. It is their shrines that rather tell their professions. However, the costumier of *The Magic Soap* makes red regalia and feathered cap as a code of dress for the medicine man, contrary to Tiv culture.

Oraerga is a Nigerian movie with Tiv background and portrays the jealous nature of a human being. Abuur Igo Dondo, a jealous pivotal character in the movie is mostly depicted as more buoyant than his brother, Faga Ahura, whom he oppresses

and frustrates. It is expected that at a catastrophic turn-over of his life, Abuur Igo Dondo should experience a reversal in life such that his costumes too should portray his tragedy as well. We should see him in less serious attires escaping to Taraba on asylum.

Orkura Boji (Kura Kasev) is also a Tiv-based film reflecting the Nigerian culture where men have overzealous control on women most especially on matters relating to freedom of movement and association. Okura Boji, the pivotal character of the film is more or less seen in knickers and vest. Very seldom is he seen in elegant wears just to have total control on his two wives, Mbasen and Mtuna. He is seen at work or asleep with wrapper fastened round his waist. One should expect that the rough hunt in which he hunts for hoe handles in the bush should be costumed with jungle kits or enduring attires that will surely protect his skin from scratches, while the house attires are his knickers, and the sleeping/night costumes are wrappers.

The critique above is based on the factors that contribute to costuming a show, among which Shimsenge states:

Availability of the materials...cost of the materials...fashion of the period... the matching pairs i.e accessories...sex of the characters, age of the characters, profession or the station in life of the characters, mood of the character, the type of play, the culture in which a Play is set, colour of the material, etc. (16-17).

Costuming a show, therefore, should be taken very serious by costumiers in order not to suck down the spectacular aspect of a character in a film. If overlooked, it will murder the physical appearance of artists in any film to be produced.

Conclusion

Costume and make-up have played such significant roles in the theatre and movie productions that their indispensability can no longer be contested. Therefore, in order to reduce high level of quacks in the profession, it is our submission that there is the need to establish professional theatre Skill Training and Acquisition (STA) where people who are not privileged to attend higher institutions can go and acquire some level of training before venturing into the practice of costume and make-up in the Nigerian theatre. In this regard, the centre to a great extent would reduce the problem of unprofessional conduct that is paramount among costume and make-up practitioners within the Nigerian theatre. The Nigerian Film Corporation should be a

mandatory training ground for all costume and make-up designers for film in Nigeria to be licensed for such practice.

The reality is that, while the video industry has come to stay, the benefits when properly harnessed can generate revenue for the country. It can promote tourism. It is also an avenue for preserving and exporting our rich culture heritage. While all hands must be on deck in all quarters to make it work, the practitioners must also stand up to meet the challenges of the industry and have the foresightedness of projecting the future.

It is imperative that professionals or stakeholders in Nollywood understand the values of costume and make-up and the potentials of film medium to help to build a positive image of the country. It is therefore mandatory for producers, directors and costumiers of a movie production to always ensure that they research into costume and make-up adequately before embarking on production. The essence is to ensure that professional ethics are well observed.

There is every need to accentuate professionalism in order to create illusion of reality that will project the profile of Nigerian home movie. We therefore urge talented and genuinely interested students, scholars and practitioners to start exploring the suggestions proposed in this study in order to sail the ship of costume and make-up in Nigeria to a productive shore. Our contention on this is that, as far as we continue in our drive to improve standard and quality that will produce the desired result, there will be a very bright prospect for Nollywood on a journey to the future.

Works Cited

Adakole, Oklobia and Lilian Bakare. "Costume and Make-Up in Theatre Practice: An Appraisal." *The Creative Artist. A Journal of Theatre and Media Studies*. 3.1 (2009): 100-111.

Anyebe, Ted. "Costume, Make-up and Character Interpretation in Nigerian Home Video." *Makurdi Journal of Arts and Culture* 10. 1 (2012): 37-47.

Ayakorama, Barclays Foubiri. "Epic Video Films as Signposts of Contemporary Nigerian Realities: A Critical Reading of Igodo: Land of the Living Dead". *Theatre and Minority Right: Perspective on Niger Delta*. Ed. Austine Ovigwe Asagba. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd.142-160.

- Ekwuazi, Hyginus. "Nigeria Film Industry: The Journey so Far." 2003. www.naijarules.com/artman/public/article26slitm1. Retrieved 6 Dec. 2005.
- Hayness, Jonathan. *Nigerian Video Films*. Jos: Nigeria Film Cooperation, 1997.
- Igbonekwu, Obinwa John. "Theatre Professionalism and Audience Response in Nigeria: Analysis and Propositions for the New Millennium." *Anyigba Journal of Theatre, Film and Communication Arts* 1.1 (2012): 145-157.
- Nnafor, Friday. "The Igbo Ethnic Nationality: Key Players in the Nigerian Video Film Industry." *The Creative Artist: Journal of Theatre and Media Studies*. 3. 1 (2009): 112-121.
- Ododo, Essien. "The Make-Up Artists and the Nigerian Theatre." *Journal of General Studies* 4.1. (nd): 220-232.
- Russel, D. *Stage Costume and Design: Theory, Technique and Style*. New York: Appleton Century Crafts, 1973.
- Shaka, Femi. "History, Genres and Text of the Emergent Video Film Industry in Nigeria." *Kiabara: Journal of Humanities*. 8.1 (2002): 11-30.
- Shimsenge, Aga Ephraim. *Essentials of Theatre Methodology 2*. Katsina-Ala: Mossvi Graphics/Publishers, 2011.
- Shuaib, Olapeju. "Costume and Make-up Practice As Indispensable Arts in Theatre Practice: A Historical Survey." Retrieved on 28 March, 2013. <http://www.ajol.info/./67075>
- Shuaib, Sadiat Olapeju. "Costume and Make-up Practice in Contemporary Nigerian Theatre". Retrieved on 28 March, 2013. <http://www.unilorin.edu.ng/publications/ol>
- Utoh-Ezeajugh, Tracie. "Promoting Minority Culture through Costume and Make-Up: Sam Ukala's *Break a Boil* in Production." *Theatre and Minority Rights: Perspective on the Niger Delta*. Ed. Austin Asaba. Ibadan: Kraft Books, 2010. 129-141.

Films Cited

False Alarm. Dir./Producer: Teco Benson. Soulmate Productions Global Services Ltd, 2001.

Oraerga. Dir. Jethro Moor. Abuur Igo Dondo and Ahura. Holy Dove Entertainments, Stevonyizine Ventures and Character systems, 2012.

Orkura Boji (kura kasev) Dir. Godwin Aondowase Gbera. Okura Boji, Mbasen ,Mtuna. Famous Global Acadataeak and Fimdasink Productions, 2013.

The Magic Soap. Dir, Felyx Adzegtor. Tor Abenga and Medicine man. Goldlinks Productions, 2010.

EXPLORING “DIALECTICAL TEXT CONSCIOUSNESS” IN ACTING FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Olabode Wale Ojoniyi

Osun State University,

Abstract

This paper explores grounds for the appropriation of the theory of dialectical text consciousness to acting. If, as Sartre claims that, all conscious acts have intentionality (McCulloch 5-7), underscoring the activeness of consciousness as the base of the prompt for all human actions, then consciousness should be able to provoke/prompt the act of acting from pre-rehearsal activities to performance. After a critical application of the theory to analysis of characters, the paper proposes consciousness acting theory. The theory has two aspects which function simultaneously to foreground requisite skills needed in the training of artists as a learning process and as an inborn gift. The paper theorises intuitive and reflective styles of acting. The intuitive model is built around the unconscious conditioning of the artists' minds while the reflective aspect of it is built on his/her circumstantial experiences. The intuitive aspect is like a kind of a substructure in the motivation of the artists, while the reflective aspect is the superstructure. In the process, the training of the artists and the resulting acting from the artists become generative and transformational. The paper concludes that dialectical text consciousness theory of acting has merit than the existing models of artists' training.

Introduction

One of the age-old definitions of drama that is appropriated to define and explain acting is Aristotle's definition of drama in his classic on dramatic criticism, *The Poetics*. In the book, he defines tragedy, by extension, drama, as an imitation of action. This definition conceptualises drama as the putting up of an action that is ignorantly presumed not original to self. However, mimetic theory in drama transcends copying things that exist; it involves predicting universal possible actions. The theory is also a universal educational theory – for we know that the child learns most immediate things through imitation. What is however profound in the whole process of this very humble beginning of trying to copy someone, is seen in how the child, the learner, is

transformed beyond the imagination (often the limitation of) the one he/she tries to imitate as he/she moves to showing possible actions.

The rapture of the transformation that takes place in the child, like the 'hypocrite', the initial imitator, is so enigmatic that many are the artists that are now known by the stage name and the features/characteristics of characters or roles they have played in the past. In essence, the initial imitators have a way of being totally altered that we often cannot tell the difference between them, the artists, and the characters they represent in performances. And, as this is frequently the case, we are immediately confronted with two realities that are essentially blurring and enchanting: that there is a dramatic reality as against an everyday reality. To Nietzsche, the dramatic reality is the Dionysian reality in which there is a momentary suspension of everyday reality – for the Dionysian chorist, a chorus of transformed characters, is seen as the timeless servants of the god who live outside the sphere of the society (Nietzsche 322-326). In the dramatic art and acting, therefore, the acceptance of this implausible magical transformation or metamorphosis that makes the artists to become a new being in his/her ever present and constant self must have certain consciousness or intentionality.

The consciousness or intentionality behind this artistic proto-phenomenon, the power “to see oneself transformed before one's own eyes and begin to act as if one had actually entered into another body, another character...” a state of “...a surrendered individuality and a way of entering into another character” (Nietzsche 323) is to attain the vision of a humanity that is at peace with self through the purgation of irrational emotions in order to bring about the rejuvenation of a new self that is in fusion with the prima being. It is a desire for a kind of redemption through a dramatic vision. To achieve this dramatic miraculous transformation or fusion with the prima essence, and to remain in a perpetual union with the transcendental world through substitution has over the years been developed and standardised through different forms and techniques. These forms and techniques are now discussed as styles of acting.

Styles of Acting

Following from the discussion above, two things are clear and they are that: acting is not just an imitation of existing action or character (cf. Effiong 13-33) but rather a kind of rapturous generative and transformational act. Also, acting is directed at a goal or a purpose which on its own is aimed at redeeming humanity from self-destructive tendencies. In essence, acting is an act and an art, and as an act and art, it

has approaches or styles. Some of the age long approaches and styles are psychological realism, technical or formalistic acting, personality acting, character acting, representation acting, presentation acting, realistic acting, mirror exercise, emotional recall, use of internal resources and external resources, and the elaborate Stanislavski's "the method" or "system" incorporating the now popular enchanting "magic if" and "emotion memory" and the Brechtian theatre of reasoning known as the "Epic Theatre" style of presentation (Stanley 9-14, 40-49; Ubong 35-59; Inegbe 109-127). However, one of the main issues for me in this paper is that, whichever one proposes or adopts out of these approaches and styles is essentially based on certain intentionality or consciousness and it is this claim that I intend to now pursue from the understanding of phenomenological analysis – for acting itself is nothing but a confluence of different phenomena.

From Phenomenology to Intentionality as Performance Aesthetics

Phenomenology is simply the study of the activities of the deep structure of the human consciousness or mode of apprehension. According to Eagleton (55-6 cited in Ogunjimi 107) "phenomenology offers itself as nothing less than a science of human consciousness conceived not just as the empirical experience of particular people, but as the very deep structures of the mind itself". Talking about consciousness, its etymology is traced to the Latin "conscientia" which primarily means moral or knowledge (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/consciousness>). Consciousness is seen as a type of mental state, a way of perceiving, particularly, the perception of a relationship between self and others. It is also defined as a point of view (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/consciousness>). Reisberg (511) defines it as a state of awareness of sensations or ideas, such that we can reflect on the sensation and ideas, know what it "feels like" to experience these sensations and ideas, and can, in many cases, report to others that we are aware of the sensation and ideas'.

In the case of intentionality it means "aboutness", that is to say, what a character is thinking about which is the object in his/her consciousness. The "something" or object in consciousness is known as its intentionality (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/phenomenology>). Etymologically, intentionality is from the word "intendere" which means "stretching out' towards its object". In essence, whatever consciousness is directed at is its intentionality. Sartre (39) sees intentionality as that which is the concrete and real retentions of past consciousness making it possible for consciousness to refer perpetually to itself. To be "aware of" an object is to be conscious of it or to apprehend it. However, the self-conscious or self-

apprehended dramatic character must appropriate his or her awareness of the object in consciousness by taking a decision in response to the purpose and implication of the apprehended object.

In Sartre's existential phenomenology therefore, there is a claim that man can attain existential freedom through the power of “reflective intuition and reflective withdrawal” from cosmic phenomena. Unfortunately, he does not make provision for intuitive reflection and intuitive withdrawal in the claim. Again, his claim of freedom contradicts his thesis of the interdependence of the actions of his identified three modes of being (cited in McCulloch 4). So, to enhance the exploration of the dualistic mode of consciousness as it is reflected in the externalisation of characters' experiences, actions and inactions I have made provision for the exploration of the interactions between reflective intuition and intuitive reflection as representing the dualistic mode of consciousness. This is considered against the conditioning power of culture, tradition, religion and stories or myths. In our analysis, culture, tradition, religion and the peoples' myths constitute what we see as the texts for the characters' reflection and intuition. Individual character encounters, interprets and attempts to appropriate his/her interpretation of the texts in relations to certain circumstances which in turn determine whether he or she takes action or refuses to take action. Elsewhere, I have captured these modes of existential consciousness understanding of the consciousness of each character diagrammatically in three headings:

1. Natural/Physical World: Seasons, Floods, Earthquakes, Tsunami, Famine, etc.
2. Hereditary Traits: DNA (Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid: A substance carrying genetic information) as it affects personality theory.
3. Circumstantial to Humanity: Poverty, Wealth, Education, Physical location, Birth, Sickness, Ambition, Dreams or Desires. (Ojoniyi “A journey” 106).

Now, most of the issues or events under the natural or the physical world and the ones under circumstantial to humanity are the ingredients for the formulation of myths, cultures, traditions and religious beliefs. They constitute the materials used by the playwrights, the directors and the artists for their texts. One can presume that the interpretation of the texts is also directly linked with the apprehension of the transcendental nature of phenomena, constituting a form of intentionality as individuals involved in play-making plot lines of actions to take or not to take. This process, that is, the process of thinking through phenomena to take action or to refrain from taking action, involves a kind of existential or structuralist binary

opposition, the using of difference to privilege an action above the other actions and thereby eliminating the underprivileged actions. The process of this elimination of an action for another action in the consciousness of a character is based on certain intentionality which operates in form of a crisis of consciousness. This crisis exists, and is sustained in the consciousness of the characters in a form of antithetical consciousness, and for us this is represented in a kind of the dualistic binary opposition of the linguistic signs in the characters minds.

Although the intentionality of consciousness is supposed to be a reflected action from a self-apprehended character, it is however rooted in his/her intuitive reflection and reflective intuition. A reflected action is to lead to self-retrieval and total explication of the character from the influence of cosmic phenomena. A spontaneous or a reflective intuitive actions can generate an immediate spontaneous or a reflective intuitive reactions and, as noted above, it is a kind of crisis involving deconstructionist binary opposition, privileging, difference marking and elimination (Derrida 107-123).

So, dialectical text consciousness analysis of plays re-echoes Wolfgang's (212) view of the phenomenological theory of art as that, which "lays full stress on the idea that, in considering a literary work, one must take into account not only the actual text but also, and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to that text". As we can see, it speaks of looking at the work of art with the aim of, not just reading and understanding it, and in fact, there cannot really be an understanding until we are able to participate in the experience of the characters. We can probably participate in such experience by adopting the thoughts and consciousness of the characters in relation to their actions, juxtaposing it with what would be our actions giving the circumstance and reality of the characters in relation to other characters and cosmic phenomena. It is a whole process aimed at a total realisation of the world of the characters through a mutual participatory experience.

The participatory experience is that which is called performance. If we bring up the understanding of phenomenological analysis as it concerns itself with the study of the "very deep structures of the mind itself" (Eagleton 55-56 cited in Ogunjimi 107), we would see that, it is concerned about bringing to light the hidden intentionality of the actions of the characters in a play text in a concrete form. Therefore, a dialectical text consciousness approach to the performing art can be seen as a concretisation process of the workings of the consciousness on the object under investigation in the theatre, and as we have noted above, the theory is an outgrowth of the theory of existential phenomenology.

The concretisation reaches its full manifestation when “the convergence of the text and the reader brings the literary work into existence...” (Wolfgang 212). In essence, the convergence of the text, here, the director, the actors and the audience in the theatre provides the arena in which mutual participation in the “game of imagination” is accomplished temporarily in time in a performance. We dare not speak of this accomplished participatory game of imagination as a closed experience; it is always an ever living and present experience in the consciousness of all the participants. For, years after all the participants in this game of imagination have departed from the theatre or the performance arena, the “game” continues to play out in their consciousness, influencing, modifying and even informing their subsequent actions and inactions through binary opposition, arbitrariness, difference marking, privileging and signs elimination (Derrida 107-123).

The convergence of all that make up the texts – cultures, traditions, religion and myths – takes place in the human consciousness, in the consciousness of the playwrights, the directors, the actors and the audience. At the point of this convergence in artists consciousness there cannot but be a provocation to take actions. Characterisation, part of the concretisation of the texts by the playwright is therefore an action after such provocations. Playwriting, directing and acting are therefore acts provoked by certain consciousness. With this supposition, we need to appreciate the fact that action, decision or inaction as choices are not free from the totality of the texts. Even freedom is conditioned by the texts. And, consciousness, both spontaneous and reflective, represents the totality of human experience. At the very centre of an intuitive spontaneous action, a reflective intuitive experience of a similar or near similar spontaneous action in the past, now recalled, can halt the character's present action. This is the privilege the living has over the dead. One can capture the fact here by paraphrasing the words of T.S Eliot that, one is not likely to know what is to be done or how to respond to events and circumstances unless he lives, not merely in the present, but in the present moment of the past, unless one is conscious, not of what is perceived or said to be dead, but of what has lived and is yet living (Eliot 410).

In a dialectical text consciousness analysis, therefore, whether superficial or deeply contemplative, consciousness is in bondage to cosmic phenomena because every act or intentionality of consciousness is reflected either intuitively or reflectively. However, the moment a phenomenon or an idea leaves the realm of the pre-conscious, unconscious or subconscious into consciousness, it loses, so it appears, its spontaneity or intuitiveness. It then seems that, no matter how facile it might be, any

action taken on the intentionality in consciousness is a reflected action. But, the challenge of consciousness remains in that the intentionality in consciousness is in bondage to the characters' understanding, interpretation and appropriation of the meaning and the importance of the texts in their consciousness. So, no action or inaction by a character is free from the influence of the historical texts. The actions in intentionality in relation to the level of contemplation in the characters consciousness can be captured diagrammatically as shown in the chat below:

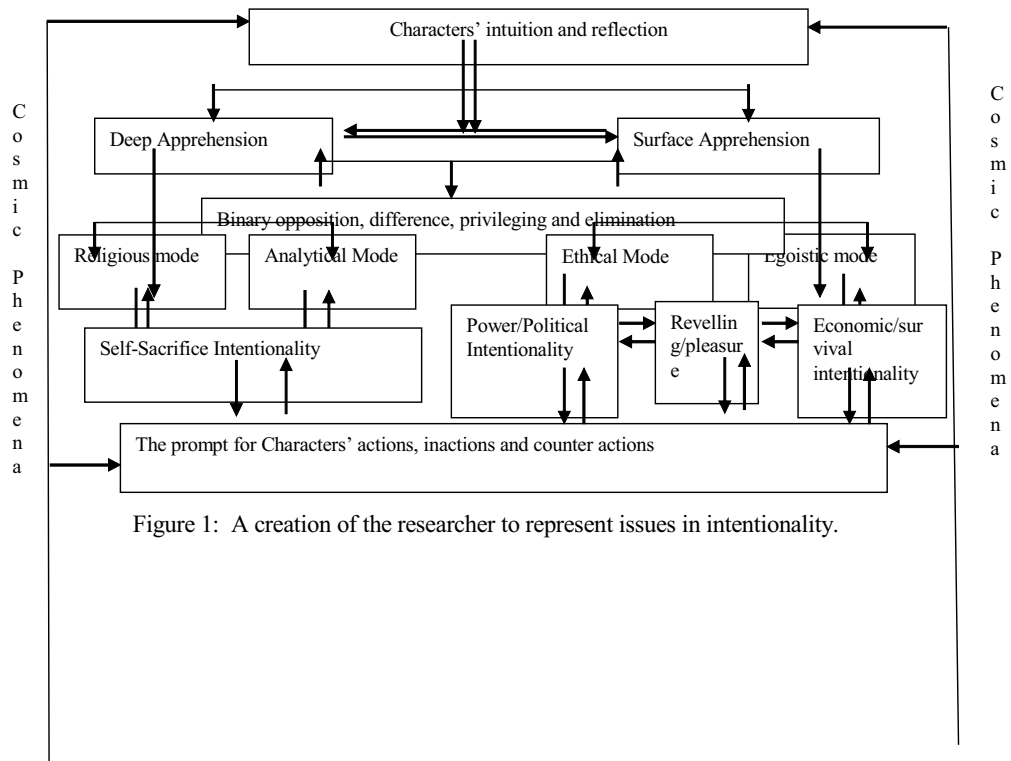


Figure 1: A creation of the researcher to represent issues in intentionality.

From intuition and reflection, the consciousness processes the “texts”, interpreting and appropriating the interpretation to arrive at the prompt for actions or inactions. Processing the “texts” through interpretation and the appropriation of the interpretation to take action or refrain from taking action as shown in the intentionality chart above could be based on deep or superficial apprehensions. When an eventual action or inaction of a character is based on the deep apprehension of the circumstances, the character would be said to be an analytical or a religious character. But when the action or the inaction is based on a superficial reflection, the

character would be said to be an egoistic or an ethical character. The processing of the “texts” through interpretation and appropriation of the interpretation to take action or to refrain from taking action, as we have seen, involves binary opposition, difference forming, privileging and the eventual elimination of certain actions for the privileged actions.

The superficial apprehension is the basic primitive mode of apprehension that is common to every race at the very beginning of development. At the egoistic level, the primary needs of human being are food, sex, cloth, shelter and festival which are said to be basic primitive needs of man (Brocket 5-7). Man at this stage is a reveller. In essence, this stage of existence shares the features of Kierkegaardian aesthetic traits (cited in Rhode 9, 87), Nietzschean Dionysian trait (Brinton 39), and Soyinka's Ogunnian trait (140-1), a state where the quest for pleasure is the ultimate drive of a character's action and desire. The manifestations or the features of egoistic mode of apprehension are consciousness traits rooted in the universal consciousness of fear, anxiety and the survival instinct.

Now, the superficial reflective consciousness of fear, anxiety and survival also leads to a kind of the need to create responsibility. The responsibility is to escape reality through revelling or pleasure which constitute a form of alternative to reality. This is done in order to escape the reality of consciousness. It is at such a stage that we move to the ethical apprehension stage. Man at the ethical stage of existence creates festivals, customs and taboos to shift the burden of existence on his consciousness to external phenomena. It is easy to claim that existential crisis or conflict arises because a taboo or a custom is broken or that the festival is not observed. For instance, in Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods* (Sofola 1972), Adigwu, as far as Odibei is concerned, died because Ogwoma has broken the taboo surrounding her marriage vows to be faithful to her husband.

At the ethical level, when responsibility is shifted, the other persons, circumstances or the gods are always responsible for human problems and crisis. We know that being aware of an ethical code is not the same thing as obeying it. And it is easy to create a moral code, custom and norm that will privilege us above others. This is what the privileged primitive man did. For instance, the culture that gives the man the power to use his daughter as a source of wealth to make money as seen in the action of Ibekwe (Sofola 9) is one of such a creation. The culture that gives or assigns nobility, kingship and ruler-ship or leadership to birth in *Ameh Oboni the Great* (Yerima 2005) and *Dry Leaves on Ukan Trees* (Yerima 2001) is a product of a privileged primitive man. The culture that equates the kings to the gods or at worse,

the representative or the oracle of the gods is a product of the privileged primitive man. The culture that gives man the grace to marry more than two wives but forbids the woman from same is a privileged culture. So, at such stage of existence, the moral codes were just for the underprivileged. The privileged (the customs and taboo makers) often live above the laws.

In essence, our ethical apprehension is just an awareness of societal moral codes and not necessarily an acceptance or obedience of them. To be aware of them and loathe them is based on certain intentionality. The characters obey ethical codes not necessarily because of their universality and good. As seen in the actions of Ogwoma and Uloko (Sofola 1972), they obey them for the fear and anxiety of punishment or disgrace. The characters that find themselves at this level of crisis at any moment are, at such moment, operating within what I have termed ethical level of apprehension.

The deep apprehension is divided into two parts. They are: analytical apprehension and spiritual apprehension. The analytical level is the immediate level a character attains after leaving the moral level of apprehension. At this level of apprehension, the character has developed a contemplative mind to absorb and internalise existential crisis. Why he or she is not entirely free from the anxiety and the dread of existence, his or her fear or anxiety manifest in a different mode. His or her fear is not in what the gods or circumstances will do, but in what the characters at the superficial level of existence are capable of doing based on their own mode of apprehension. The tension in his or her consciousness is in the level of terror, the characters at the superficial level of existence can unleash on humanity as witness in the recent *Boko-Haram* saga in Nigeria. The characters at this level are often regarded as the liberal, the atheists, the philosophers or the scholars. Their allegiance is to humanity and not to the gods or any transcendental existence. These characters are not lawless. They subscribe to a kind of universal law of equal rights, equal opportunity and freedom of worship or belief. However, as we shall see, they also remain victims of others' mode of apprehension as far as their existence is concerned. So, the characters at this level of apprehension are basically not free from the conflicts in consciousness. They themselves recognise this very well and this recognition constitute a challenge to them in their consciousness.

At the spiritual level of apprehension, we have characters that are both analytical and at the same time retain their faith in the existence of the gods. This is a point where a character embraces a selfless life and a life of commitment to the cause of his community not minding the personal cost. Here, the character is ready to pay

the ultimate price. This level of apprehension or existence is similar to Kierkegaardian religious existence where the character takes “a leap of faith in the dark” (Rohde 9, 90). This level of apprehension presupposes self-sacrifice in the cause in which a character believes. This is the reflective level Olunde and Emman attain to in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* and *The Strong Breed* respectively. They attain this level through an analytical contemplation of the purpose of life and essence, believing that they are on the mission to fulfil such a purpose. In essence, to fulfil the purpose of life is to live a life of purpose. This, the marriage of the purpose of life and the life of purpose, is what Elesin Oba fails to achieve in *Death and the King's Horseman*. The crisis of consciousness at this level of existence exists in the struggle to attain this leapt of faith in the dark. In spite of the faith in the demands of the gods at this level, the characters at this level do not subscribe to killing others for the gods. They would rather sacrifice themselves for their faith.

All the levels of reflective intentionality discussed above have an odd mode of apprehension that cannot be divorced from the influence of cosmic phenomena of culture, tradition, myth, history and religion. The process that produces intentionality is often induced by fear, anxiety and dread, and as a result of this, the consequent actions or choices of the characters are often desperate and arbitrary. Such desperate and arbitrary actions build dramatic conflict and crisis. And, as we have seen, the gap between intuitive and reflective intentionality is absolutely fluid, leaving the characters in eternal existential conflict of consciousness. The strength of this form of character analysis lies in that the:

1. Theory does provide the needed theoretical frame-work for the analysis of the intentionality of the dramatic characters as it explores the place of the external world and matters on the spontaneity or intuitiveness of intentionality of consciousness and the consequent human actions.
2. In essence, it provides the theoretical and practical basis for the exploration of the potentiality of binary opposition and its numerous dimensions in the human consciousness as possible grounds for the clash of the representative signs of evil and of good. Therefore, it establishes binary opposition as a possible ground for crisis, conflicts, murder, suicide and other vices in characters analysis.
3. It helps us to see that existential crises transcend individual personality. Such crises or conflicts are universal conflicts whose roots could be found in universal consciousness of fear of cosmic phenomena as characters (being for-itself) try to interact with other characters.
4. It also provides the ground for the exploration and analysis of cultures,

traditions and myths as bricolage with the potentiality to serve as conditioning or programming tools in the hand of the society or the bricoleur.

5. It helps us to perceive that the basic instinct for every human drives resides in the intentionality and the consciousness of survival and not to fail.

Most of the modes of existential consciousness analysis as discussed above are borrowed from existential philosophy which itself, as also noted above is an outgrowth of the theory of phenomenology that it appears to merely rehearse the characteristic of existential philosophy and phenomenology. However, its main departure and strong point is in its rejection of the lack of provision for intuitive reflective actions and counter actions as an alternative possibility to reflective intuitive actions and counter actions. It is this provision for the other side of reflective intuitive actions and counter actions that is the main strength of dialectical text consciousness theory as applied in this paper.

Towards Intuitive/Spontaneous and Reflective Acting Techniques

My primary interest here is to apply what I have identified as the working of the intentionality of consciousness as the source of dramatic conflict, its developing processes, and how it influences characters' actions and inactions to the performance or acting of any play. I am also interested in the extent to which the intentionality of the characters is free from the intentionality of the actors and actresses. The argument is that, that which may be termed either a conservative intentionality or a radical and a revolutionary intentionality, could be traced to a kind of a preferred response, on the part of artists based on their fears and apprehensions, on the one hand and on the other hand, that of every dramatic characters based on their fears and apprehensions of cosmic phenomena.

The contention is that since, acting or performance – a process by which every artists externalise their inner intuitions and reflections or that of the characters they represent – cannot be separated from the influence of the circumstances in which the artists find themselves, the influence of their cultures and traditions, the interpretations and appropriations of the interpretations of such cultures, traditions and myths, their externalised bricolage (myth or story) and performance cannot be separated from their apprehensions (Musa 46; Malomo 1; Adeoti 28-34). These apprehensions, the prompt for different intentionalities, are the motivations and the basis for whatever have been termed or regarded as conservative intentionality or revolutionary intentionality (Ojoniyi “Consciousness” 211-220).

In essence, what I have done is to appreciate the process of acting,

characterisation, conflict development and preferred form of the resolution of the conflict in every dramatic piece as representing a kind of intentionality in the consciousness of not just the playwrights or the directors, but of the performers. The issue is akin to the conflict of the processes of the struggle of signs against other signs in a kind of eternal chains of binary oppositions, privileging, difference and elimination in the consciousness of men as they strive to make meaning out of life; that is, out of dramatic actions and inactions and the attending consequences of such actions or inactions.

In other words, the concerned primarily lies in the pattern of the processes of decision making as intentionality and its necessary prompt, first, in the minds of the dramatic characters and, second, in the minds of the artists. To establish this process and pattern, I went through the crisis in the minds of the dramatic characters as analysed above to make deductions about the pattern of intentionality in the minds of the artists.

Through a critical analysis of the characters' pre, spontaneous and reflective intentionalities, I was able to also project into the circumstances, that is, the likely intentionalities behind the creation of the pre, spontaneous and reflective intentionalities of the characters. I was also able to establish the fact that intentionality has purposes. The characters' purposes are often to escape existential fears and apprehensions of both the seen and the unseen cosmic phenomena like death, sickness, famine, poverty, war, flood, and the demands of cultures, traditions and the gods as internalised by them.

One can also see that, often the characters apprehensions are conditioned by circumstances, locations, and other factors like education – through myths, ethics, histories, literatures, sciences and religions – and other biological factors like hereditary. As a result of the influence of the factors mentioned above on the characters' consciousness, their intentionalities may be based on superficial mode of reflection or deep mode of reflection. On whatever mode the intentionalities of the characters is based, intentionalities are not entirely free from the conditioning power of cosmic phenomena in human consciousness.

By this, intentionality is in a kind of vicious circle, rotating within the axis of characters or individuals' apprehension, interpretation and appropriation of the interpretation of the totality of cosmic phenomena in order to take actions or refrain from taking actions. Whether an action is taken or a refrain is exercised by the characters, there is always a price to pay. As I have shown, the apprehensions of the indispensability and constant consequences of the characters' actions or inactions

constitute a kind of dialectical intentionality in their consciousness. So, as the existentialists like Kierkegaard (Rohde 1963), Heidegger (Unah 1996), Sartre (1957) and others would say, the proof of the characters' existence is that they have to act. The crisis of consciousness in having to act as existential characters is that, to act “is like a leapt of faith in the dark” (Rhode 9, 90), while not to act is like being dump into the Atlantic Ocean.

Since, existential fears are at the heart of the characters intentionalities, their intuitions are pre-intentionally conditioned based on their internalised sub-conscious and unconscious experiences, while their reflections are post-pre-intentionally conditioned based on the same factors and progressive events. However, as I have explained above, every dramatic action (leading to dramatic conflict) is a combination of intuition and reflection. So, it is restrictive to speak of a mere “reflective intuition” and “reflective withdrawal” as suggested by Sartre (McCulloch 40). Though, reflective intuition is at the centre of a progressive intentionality where the characters' actions and inactions become generative on the spur of the moment, yet, I perceive that there are also the inherent possibilities of simultaneous intuitive reflective generative actions or inactions at the same moment. Therefore, as I observe above, the dividing line between intuitive reflective action and inaction and the reflective intuitive action and inaction tins out at such moment because, it is always balanced on the plane of the inherent desire of self-explication or privileging of certain self-interests based on circumstantial apprehension.

My analysis of the progressive actions and inactions in consciousness, when externalised, represents a kind of the sociology of the plays, and this establishes the concepts of “home-comrades” in a “lifeworld” as it relates to Sartre's being-for itself, being-in itself and being-for others (McCulloch 4). These concepts helped me to explore the dimensionality of the inherent existential relational challenges and influences of the choices of the characters and performers on the choices of one another. I was able, I think, to then establish the fact that the choices of the characters and performers are inherently relational and counter-relational.

Relational and counter-relational choices and experiences are capable of generating further relational conflicts and counter-relational conflicts as would be seen in the play texts, both intuitively and reflectively. The characters and performers' responses to relational and counter-relational challenges through the progressive generative mode of intentionalities are shrouded in a replica, that is, a model of deconstructionists' chain of events and counter-events. Therefore, the natural deconstructionists' processes of binary oppositions, difference marking, privileging

and eliminations of actions or choices for other actions and choices progressively take place in the consciousness of the dramatic characters and the performers who are going to perform the plays. These chains of events and counter events underscore the same progressive chains of events and counter-events in the consciousness of the playwrights or the directors as they strive to present their narratives through characterisations, dramatic conflicts and the resolutions of the conflicts which are intended to be prototypes of their intended solutions to the societal crises and conflicts.

In essence, I discover two dimensional intentionality of consciousness. On the one hand, that of the playwrights/directors as they respond to cosmic phenomena of the pervasive texts in their consciousness, interpreting them and appropriating their interpretation to privilege certain actions or choices while eliminating others. These are the processes that earn them the tag of conservatism or liberalism. On the other hand, the crisis of consciousness of the dramatic characters and the performers in the plays as they also go through the same processes of interpretations of the texts and the appropriation of the interpretations of the texts to take or refrain from taking actions. However, the crisis of consciousness of the dramatic characters and the performers proceeds from the crafting of the playwrights or the directors.

The crafting have been subtly conditioned historically by the totality of the texts – cultures, traditions, myths, folklores, and religious beliefs, the foundations of every ideology rooted in the consciousness of the playwrights, the director, the dramatic characters and the artists. In essence, there is no dramatic character whose apprehension of self is devoid of privileging and elimination. Apprehensions and interpretations are unavoidably essentially but subjective. Also, since apprehensions are tied to existential inherent fears in the characters' consciousness, the possibilities of arbitrary actions, as the characters struggle to privilege themselves and their interests above others, are almost definitely inevitable.

For the reasons above, it is evident that intentionalities are necessarily a crisis of sort in the characters' consciousness. The crisis also seems to represent the apprehensions in the minds of the playwrights, directors and the performers. So, all actions and inactions seem to be products of dialectical interaction of the mind. Intentionalities are, therefore, prompts for choices and they are choices in apprehensions. This claim underlines my contention that major act of the theatre – playwrighting, directing, costuming, making-up, lighting, characterisation, acting and the others – are essentially located in dialectical intentionalities.

One can then propose a kind of theory of dramatic conflict based on the

principles of opposition, difference making, privileging and elimination. I perceive that, underlining every relational and counter relational conflict is a sort of opposition or clash of interests. The interests are somehow essentially to guarantee the characters' survival. In fact, primary to every character is the quest for survival and to survive. Whatever would threaten a character's survival would then stand in a kind of opposition to his or her inherent desire and primary human instinct. So, in a replica of binary opposition and the process of categorisation of the linguistics signs into signs representing either the evil or the good, conflict or opposition is intuitively and reflectively called up in the character's consciousness.

Once the basis of the opposition is established, the next action in consciousness is difference marking. Through the calling up, also intuitively and reflectively, of numerous experiences of the past with their attending existential apprehensions, the character begins the consciousness process of difference marking. This is the process that finally groups and concludes that an action is evil while another option or line of action is good.

As the process above is on, privileging begins to take place unconsciously. In fact, it is the privileging of the seeming good action or sign over the seeming evil action or sign that concludes or seals the fate of the underprivileged action. The underprivileged action or sign is the evil one. The evil action or sign is then marked for elimination. Whist the time the whole process is on, the consciousness goes through serious and intense pressure and stress to arrive at the intentionality, the prompt, to take the final action that has been concluded in consciousness. This is perhaps the reason an accused person is charged in the Law Court with the "intention" to kill or murder as the case may be. The conflicts in all plays or dramas could be seen to have followed this pattern.

Conclusion

Whatever action, style or technique will raise the acting or the performance of an artist represents the binary good while whatever lowers it represents the evil. The focus of every performer is always towards a sublime performance. So, whether it is psychological realism, the use of internal resources or external resources, representational or presentation acting, mirror exercise, emotional recall, the totality of Stanislavski's "the method" or the Brechtian Epic Theatre form, acting or performance is essentially intentionality from its conception to its realisation. It is therefore essential for each artist to understand the functionality of his/her consciousness and in particular, intentionality, as the prompt for every human action

or inaction.

Properly employed and applied, the place of the understanding of intentionality within the dialectics of the theory of dialectical texts consciousness in ensuring standardised play texts and performance analysis cannot be overemphasised. In essence, it is possible to use such theory as this to ensure quality assurance and control in the teaching of actors and actresses as it encompasses their understanding of their act and art from its very origin, that is the intentionality of the playwright through the intentionality of the director and theirs' to that of the audience they want to perform for. And, of course, the instructor, knowing his/her intentionality (which is captured in educational theory as the aim and objectives of instruction) can easily assess the success of the teaching-learning situation by the evaluation of such intentionality against the motivation and the performance (the actions and the inactions) of the student artists in training.

Works Cited

Adeoti, Gbemisola. *Voices Offstage: Nigerian Dramatists on Drama and Politics*. Ibadan: Kraft Books, 2010.

Aristotle. "Poetics." *Criticism: Major Statements*. Eds. Charles Kaplan and Williams Davis Anderson Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2000.18-46.

Brinton, Crane. *Nietzsche*. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

Brockett, G. Oscar. *History of the Theatre*. Boston: A Simon and Schuster Company, 1995.

"Consciousness." Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/consciousness>, 2008.
Reisberg, Daniel, ed. *Cognition: Exploring the Science of the Mind*. New York: W.W Norton and Company, 2006.

Derrida, Jacques. "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences." *Modern Criticism and Theory: A reader*. Ed. David Lodge London: Longman, 1988. 107-123.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.

Effiong, Johnson. "Acting: The myth, the Reality." *The Art of Acting: A Student-friendly*

- Anthology*. Ed. Effiong Johnson. Lagos: Concept Publications, 2005. 12-33.
- Eliot, Thomas Stearns. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." *Criticism: Major Statements*.
Ed. Charles Kaplan. New York: Bedford St. Martin's, 2000. 404-410.
- Inegbe, Stephen. "Acting: Schools and Registers." *The Art of Acting: A Student-friendly Anthology*. Ed. Effiong Johnson. Lagos: Concept Publications, 2005. 109-127.
- Malomo, Jide. *The theatre audience in Nigeria: A survey of Audience Attendance at The National Arts Theatre*. Lagos. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers, 2002.
- McCulloch, Gregory. *Using Sartre: An Analytical Introduction to Early Sartrean Themes*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Musa, Rasheed Abiodun. "Sustaining Nigeria's Nascent Democracy: Playwrights and the Need for Content Reappraisal." *Theatre and Democracy in Nigeria*. Eds. Ahmed Yerima and Ayo Akinwale. Ibadan: Kraft Books, 2002. 43-52.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. "The Birth of Tragedy." *Criticism: Major Statements*. Ed. Charles Kaplan and William Davis Anderson. Boston: Bedford St. Martin's. 2000. 319-332.
- Ogunjimi, Bayo. "Hermeneutics and Critical Discourse of Soyinka's Writing." *Wole Soyinka: The African Literary Muse*. Ed. B. Ogunjimi. Ilorin: Unilorin Press, 1994. 107-121.
- Ojoniyi, Bode. "A journey in the Dark Recesses of Intentionality of Hard Choices in Ododo's *Hard Choice*." *A Gazelle of the Savannah: Sunday Ododo and the Framing of Techno-cultural Performance in Nigeria*. Eds. Osakue Omoera, Sola Adeyemi and B. Binebai. Rochester: Alpha Crownes Publishers, 2012. 102-115.
- Ojoniyi, Bode. "A Comparative Study of Crisis of Consciousness in Selected Plays of Zulu Sofola and Ahmed Yerima." Ilorin: Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Department of the performing Arts, University of Ilorin, 2013.
- "Phenomenology." Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/phenomenology>. 2008.
- Rohde, Peter. *Soren Kierkegaard: An Introduction to His Life and Philosophy*. London:

- George Allen and Unwind, 1963.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialists Theory of Consciousness*. Trans. W. Forrest and K. Robert. New York: The Noonday Press, 1957.
- Sofola, Zulu. *Wedlock of the Gods*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers, 2007.
- Soyinka, Wole. *Myth, Literature and the African World*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Stanley, Kahan. *Introduction to Acting*. 2nd Ed. Boston: Allyn and Baccon, 1962.
- Ubong, Nda. "Acting: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." *The Art of Acting: A Student-friendly Anthology*. Ed. Effiong Johnson. Lagos: Concept Publications, 2005. 35-59.
- Unah, John. *Heidegger's Existentialism :An Essay on Applied Ontology*. Lagos: P a n a f Publishing, 1996.
- Wolfgang, Iser. "The Reading Process; A Phenomenological Approach". *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. Ed. David Lodge. London: Longman, 1988. 211-228.
- Yerima, Ahmed. *Dry Leaves on Ukan Trees*. Ibadan: Kraft Books, 2001.
- Yerima, Ahmed. *Ameh Oboni the Great*. Ibadan: Kraft Books, 2005.

Instructions to Contributors

The following are instructions to help contributors to *Nigerian Theatre Journal (NTJ)*:

Style: The Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists has adopted as its official guide the *Publication Manual of the Modern Language Association*, Sixth Edition. Consequently, all manuscripts must be in conformity with this MLA referencing style. Paper(s) should be typed, single-spaced, on white A4 paper, with wide margin. The submitted paper should be emailed to SONTA email address: sontaeditor@gmail.com. An abstract of not more than two hundred and fifty words summarizing the main points of the article, should accompany the manuscript. *NTJ* encourages that each paper submitted should deal with the methodology used in addressing the subject in proficient detail relating to the place of data within the proper methodological settings and all. In case of illustrations, it must be submitted with the final draft and must be of professional quality, and executed on white paper, in colour ink, with clear, medium weight, black lines and figures. Typewritten lettering should not appear in illustrations. Such should be numbered appropriately. Authors should use Microsoft Office Word Format of 16 font size for the title and name of the author, 12 font size for the body of the article, and 10 font size for indented paragraphs and a reference list format to list Works Cited (All in Times New Romans font style).

Manuscript Length: Manuscripts averaging 15-20 pages of single-spaced type scripts are preferred, but the editors will consider longer papers on topics requiring a fuller treatment. *NTJ* will reject papers submitted that are less than 4,500 words.

Review Process: Authors are requested to submit their names, professional position, and institution on a removable cover sheet. Authors must not submit the manuscript of any article that is still under consideration by another publisher.

Editorial Reaction: Papers will not be returned to authors if they fail to meet by a wide margin the basic criteria for selection. Otherwise, authors may expect to receive some notification before the next edition of the SONTA Conference. If an article is accepted, the authors are meant to respond by mailing a letter of acceptance and acknowledgment.

Criteria for Selection: Papers are evaluated on the following points: form, writing style and readability, logical development, appropriate length, appropriateness of author's stated objectives to treatment as defined below. Content: significance of *NTJ* readers. Additional criteria are based upon the following manuscript orientations: as a research paper, as a professional practice paper, as a literature review, and as a policy paper. It should be emphasized that the editors respond most favourably to manuscripts that evidence both a freshness of vision and vitality that may be informed by, but certainly go beyond, methodological qualities, and that are in congruence with our publishing goals and directions. The most effective approach in learning about our interest is to read previous issues of the journal. We expect that authors, the journal, and the field will develop through the publication process.