

Nigerian Theatre Journal

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

Vol. 13, No. 2

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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

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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.

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SOME KENYANS' PERCEPTIONS OF IMAGINING AND MOTIF IN NIGERIAN FILM AND HOME VIDEO PRODUCTIONS PEDAGOGY

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Abstract

It is not an overstatement that Nigerian movies of various cultures have taken over the whole world. This assertion is enhanced by the presence of the global network, African Magic. Nigerian movies have become the toast of many countries especially in Africa where, according to some scholars, productions have tended to shape social, artistic, architectural, and movie educational cultures of these countries. To determine the truism in this assertion, and bearing in mind that most of those who produce these films are graduates of Nigerian Universities who have received trainings in movie production, an inter-country study was carried out among the Kenyans to determine how far Nigerian movies can contribute to the formation or enhancement of theatre curriculum in that country. Using Kenyatta University as a case study, a survey was carried out among both the students and non-student members of the University community. Data gathering instrument was a set of questionnaire which consists of open-ended and close ended interviews and observations. One thousand copies of the questionnaire were distributed to randomly sampled respondents in the University. Variables of research was gender while the items sought information of how much of Nigerian movies the respondents have watched across English and subtitled local language movies. The seven-item instrument also sought information on the effect of some of these movies on their educational and social lives. Responses show that Nigerian movies to a great extent have overbearing effects on the curriculum of movie education in the country. This study concludes among others on the need to pay more attention to the issue of standard and norm in Theatre Arts and Performing Arts pedagogy in Nigeria.

Introduction

What is churned out as movies in Nigeria are the products of some Nigerians majority of whom are graduates of Nigerian Universities and other tertiary institutions that are directly or indirectly involved in training most of these

practitioners. To operate within the societal norm in gaze setting, the National Universities Commission (NUC) has set standards referred to as the Basic Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS). The BMAS is not only to determine programme implementation and enforcing conformity but to also ensure that national and citizens' development interests are not jeopardised. Thus, the BMAS is for all academic standards in the nation across disciplines. This paper looks at the application of BMAS in home video education and seeks to determine how well quality assurance is being met in the quality of graduates that feature as movie practitioners in Nigeria. The paper reviews the perception of Nigerian movies outside the nation, attempts to determine how well and efficient the curriculum has met national and citizens' development needs. Where shortfalls are identified, attempt to proffer how improvement on standards can be entrenched. The paper will therefore first attempt a review of the Theatre Arts and Performing Arts BMAS objectives, how well these have been attained, then it will look at the Nigerian home videos in the diaspora and then present the report of the study on the Kenyans' perception of theatre education in Nigeria and the influence of this on the practice in Kenya.

Theatre Pedagogy and Compliance Results

For education to create the total man and an enabling environment, and to achieve development goals, the process must be specifically and carefully spelt out in the teaching curriculum. Saddled with the task of maintaining standard in the educational sector for Nigeria to achieve her development objectives in the comity of nations, the NUC moderates and sets the basic minimum academic benchmark for all programmes run in all approved Nigerian universities. For Theatre Arts and Performing Arts to play effective roles in the manpower and economic development of the nation therefore, the philosophy of the programme declares that; because it concerns life and the expressions of realities surrounding it, it must serve as concrete medium of displaying cultures, traditions and other aspects of man's life (2:15.1).

Students are therefore expected to be trained in the main performance principles to achieve the above and also the arts of the stage and creative insights. The N.U.C understanding the import of this herculean task stresses the need to acquire minimum foundation results at secondary and diploma levels to be able to function effectively at the university level. These admission requirements are mindful of the contributions of the earlier itinerant and Alarinjo practitioners to the development of the profession to annex their raw talents with certificate and diploma programmes. The raw talents are meant to make it easy for those who enrol for the course to fit into

the degree and higher degree programmes in the industry.

The outcome of this is that Theatre Arts and Performing Arts graduates can be better grounded to fit in any sphere of endeavour (2:15.2), and be able to clearly and objectively portray contemporary social activities through performance. As entrepreneurs they are expected to be developed to operate within the norm in gaze setting. By the end of the programme therefore, in setting the gaze, they are expected to consider their roles as practitioners on the stage and screen, and thus the need to consider the intra-cinematic and extra-cinematic implications of the gaze they set.

The NUC specifically set out 8-point attained objective levels for these Performing Arts and Theatre Arts graduates and these form the crux of this study. These are:

- i. Good knowledge of performative indices
- ii. Ability to communicate fluently
- iii. Ability to analyse works in any medium of communication
- iv. Ability to write plays for any medium of communication
- v. Ability for collaborative work with groups and individuals
- vi. Ability to fit into global competitiveness
- vii. Ability to generate income and sustain livelihoods and
- viii. Competence in research for academic and general purposes.

Evaluation of Nigeria Films and Home Video at achieving some of the Objectives

To attest to the fact that most Universities have strived to meet the above objects is in the popularity and proliferation of film and home video productions in Nigeria today. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of 1986 introduced by the Babangida administration, apart from being a palliative measure to attract the Western powers like IMF and Britain and smoothen relationship, was an impetus for the Nigerians to display their ingenuity at technological adaptation. For instance, post-production of films that was formally done in UK was tried and perfected in the early 1990s by some Nigerians who felt that they were being exploited.

With the proliferation of home video productions, it became very paramount to be well trained to continue to be relevant in the scheme of things. Therefore, the first objective, to have "Good knowledge of performative indices" had to be achieved. Also, as local language video thrived, it was important to diversify into foreign language production. So English and also subtitling of movies enjoyed great prominence. Apart from this, some trained practitioners became advertising

practitioners and event managers. Thus the objective of item (iv); 'Ability to write plays for any medium of communication,' is being achieved.

And that African Magic and other global satellite media now beam Nigeria plays, and there are cross-cultural and international collaborative video productions, that is, a realisation of the "Ability for collaborative work with groups and individuals" (iii). And this feat has opened the door for most of the practitioners, '.... to fit into global competitiveness, (vi). The popularity of Nigerian home videos has earned it the American tutelage appellation, Nollywood, and some of the practitioners have attended global movie conferences and premiers outside Africa. This definitely is buttressed by item (viii), in the "Ability to generate income and sustain livelihood. A scholar describes this situation thus:

Before now, it was a disgrace and beggarly to be a dancer or an artist. But if the history of kidnapping is to be written in Nigeria, home video artists have had their own share. No one would ask ransom for a beggar (Onwuzulike 234).

The climax of the above exposé is the fact that Nigerian films are ranked second third in the whole world after India. This is a testimony to the fact that the Theatre Arts and Performing Arts Basic Minimum Academic Standard (BMAS) is indeed being achieved. Furthermore, as spelt out in item (viii), of the objectives Theatre and Performing Arts education students are expected to attain 'competence in research for academic and general purposes.' The justification of this is in the graduates' ability to produce movies that depict cultural, historical, social, economic and political realities of the society. This is the ability to research into the atmosphere and discover the needs of the society with the intent of not only informing the society but also setting agenda for the future development realities.

Impacts of Nigerian Home Videos at Global levels

The success of the objectives of the BMAS in these programmes is manifested in Nigerian home video movies which are shown across the globe. According to Onwuzulike (236), Nigerian movies have made impacts across the globe. These impacts as revealed by Onwuzulike has not only popularised the artistes beyond the shores of Nigeria and made buoyant the economy of Nigeria as a major foreign exchange earner but has also contributed to labour enhancement and the empowerment of youths in countries like Ghana, Cote D'voire, Senegal to Kenya in

East Africa, as well as creating more impetus for the Nigerian nation in the comity of nations. Movies produced in Nigeria which are exported to other countries apart from affecting the social life of these countries have contributed also to the variety of language, dialect and slang of some of these countries. For instance, such expressions as “oga o” (master), “Igwee” (your highness), “wahala dey o” (there is trouble), among others are common parlances among Kenyans (Bonface “Oral Interview”). Some architects and fashion designers in some parts of Africa have had to take recourse to Nigerian movies for latest fashions and architectural designs (Onwuzulike 236).

Much that is reported about Nigeria by other countries is mostly information from movies produced in Nigeria tagged Nollywood. It is popular because it is quite different from Hollywood and other conventional movies in the world. Nollywood films have brought such freshness and perspective lacking or somewhat ignored in Hollywood, Bollywood and other film industries (Mbamara 4). However, Mbamara reports that after many years of popularity, the industry needs to be injected with fresh ideas because of the development taking place across Africa as more countries join the league of movie makers. It becomes a great concern because many countries now compete with Nigeria on the winning of the popular AMAA and other awards.

Though Nigeria movies have bridged the cultural gap that existed between the Nigerians at home and in the diaspora, other countries are readily toeing the Nigerian movie standard, thereby not only threatening Nigerian's position in the world rating. The competition is becoming so stiff that there is the need to open up more areas of focus to determine how much the curriculum has been followed by the theatre educators and thus the need for more originality and ingenuity. The proliferation is made possible by the fact that safety has become a major problem in most countries. Going for live performance has become a problem across Africa and beyond. According to Faris (8), “...with cities plagued by armed robbers, few wanted to risk a nightmare outing just to see a movie.” This has made it mandatory for audiences to want to watch anything that comes in terms of movies, regardless of the continent. With the African Magic Cable Network therefore, Nigerian flicks were prone to diverse viewership.

Background to study

As stated earlier, the cable network and trans-border movie production collaboration has also exposed Nigerian films to other continents, and especially Africa, Ghana being the first feasible country. Because of the historical compatibility and semblance, Ghanaians and Nigerians like Siamese twins enjoy partnership on movie

entrepreneurship. Faris states that “Nigerian and Ghanaian cinemas are usually grouped together because of their common colonial history and because their industries developed in a somewhat similar manner” (10). Also, Ukadike (12) states that Ghana and Nigeria are identical twins and that in times of prosperity both countries have compared with each other, and thus worked together in promoting movie development too. In addition, Motiki (16), a Botswanaian, informs that many people love Nigerian video films, and find the movies irresistible because of the nature of their stories. He confessed that Nigerian movies are household names in the country. Though some said they may not know the names of the artistes, they confessed that they cannot stop watching the movies, because majority are packed with simple but dramatic story lines. However, some complained of bad production qualities and bad grammatical subtitling in the case of native language movies.

The audiences have come to conclude that Nigerian movies are products of the citizens and thus guided by the nation's educational policies. In essence, Nigerians are supernatural, hence the depiction in their movies; they are religious and believe in the divine, thus the concentration of these in most of the crafting that show the clash of the modern religion with traditional religions. According to Kwabena-Esem (5), most of the movies are largely psycho-medical, buttressed by the power of the supernatural, and this is why certain cultural elements are reflected in the movies. In essence, Nigerian movies; promoting to biotechnology, have infusions of cultural and traditional elements in the imagines. This diffusion of innovations has tended to make Nigerian movies very unique (Rogers 24).

One can argue that limited distribution network is no longer the problem to Nigerian movies but the need to grapple with the problem of piracy; as these movies somehow find their ways into pirated markets in other parts of the world apart from the problem in Nigeria. Hence, what is pirated and distributed most times are what have been produced by the Nigerian University trained practitioners.

Statement of the problem

Attempt has been made to show that the success recorded in the home video production is as a result of the quality of education that the BMAS engender. However, in Nigeria, there are reactions most times on the type of gaze often set in these home videos so much that the audiences have had to ask who actually determines the gaze. The core question has been: Is the gaze determined by the producer, the director, society or the artists themselves? There have been complaints over appropriate theory to guide in image formation when it was discovered that the

Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board seems not to be winning the game of cultural bastardisation and misrepresentation of Nigerians (Animasaun 22). The argument was that Hollywood standard should not be used for determining Nigerian home videos and films, even as this has been set as the basis for defining what comes out of Nigeria as films (Shehu 12). This problem becomes very worrisome because of the popularity of the genre outside Nigeria. Within Nigeria there have been reactions against desecration of culture, obscenity, ritual celebration and so on.

It is therefore very necessary to find out if the same complaints are raised outside the nation. To this end, this researcher in one of the visits to Kenya that took him over two weeks decided to do a survey among the students and staff of the Kenyatta University, Nairobi. Kenyatta University is the second largest and popular University in Kenya with a population of over thirty thousand students. The study was therefore to determine popularity and opinions of the Kenyans about Nigerian flicks.

Research design and methodology

Kenyatta University has a department of Theatre and Film Technology; hence it is believed that the University and the department would be the first place to justify the popularity of Nigerian flicks. And, to determine the truism in this assertion, the study was carried out among the Kenyans to determine how far Nigerian movies have contributed to the formation and enhancement of theatre curriculum in that country. Using Kenyatta University as a case study, a survey was carried out among both the students and non-student members of the University community.

For the purpose of the study, three research questions were formulated. These are:

1. How popular are Nigerian movies among the Kenyans?
2. In what areas are Nigerian movies likely to promote development in Kenya?
3. To what extent can Nigerian home videos be seen to be painting bad inscriptions about Nigeria?

Instrumentation Administration

Data gathering instrument for these questions was a set of questionnaire which consists of open-ended and close ended interviews and observations. The items contain information on the language of production of the films they have watched and, their views on the likely effects of these films. Seven (7) items were responded to.

Gender only was the variable of search. In essence, respondents were to fill in

the form their sex. Gender only is chosen because even though most of the home videos have viewing classification or restriction, audiences in most cases do not observe these. Also, it is constant that the viewer would either be a male or female.

One thousand (1000) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to randomly sampled respondents in the University. To distribute the questionnaire, the researcher wore a typical Yoruba attire, complete 'agbada'. The researcher then sought the help of some students who were attracted by the dress mode and after introduction offered to support, as style of dressing also tally with what they have watched in some Nigerian movies. Also, the Chairman, staff and the students of the Department of Theatre and Film Technology were very happy to respond and help circulate the instruments. The respondents were given the items to respond to, after which they returned them through the agents to the researcher.

Data analysis and discussions

The copies of the questionnaire were gathered and sorted out. Of the total of one thousand copies distributed, nine hundred and fifty (950) were used for this analysis. The remaining fifty (50) copies were badly completed and so were discarded while some respondents did not return theirs. Out of these 950 respondents, 530 were male while 420 were female.

Decisions on the focus of response were based on the arithmetical calculation of responses into percentages while some are based on negative or positive nature of responses. The highest percentages of responses were taken as basis for judgement while opinions were considered in analysis and interpretation of findings. The analysis of the data is presented below according to the variables.

Research Question One: How popular are Nigerian movies among the Kenyans?

This research question was to determine if Nigerian movies enjoy great viewership among the Kenyans. Data for this question were got from items 1-5 of the questionnaire. Item one required that the respondents give a rough estimate of the Nigerian films they have watched. The figures quoted were listed and average of numbers of movies viewed was found.

Findings show that 90% of the male respondents said they have watched about 150 titles while 10% said they have watched over 20. Also, 80% of the female respondents said they have watched over 300 titles while 20% said they have watched 25 titles. Though some of these figures look very outrageous and may result from the fact that they must have lost count, the fact remains that Nigerian films are very

popular among the Kenyans. As a follow-up, the respondents were given items 2-5 that sought information on whether English and subtitled indigenous language films are among the figures quoted above. The responses are presented in the table below.

Table showing movie viewing focus among some Kenyans Items 2-5

	English	Hausa	Igbo	Yoruba	Total for other languages
Male	100	20	20	60	100%
Female	100	15	20	65	100%

Analysis of the responses shows that all the male and female respondents said they have watched many Nigerian movies produced in English. Out of these, 60% of the males said they have watched subtitled Yoruba movies, while 20% each said they have watched both Igbo and Hausa movies that were subtitled. Also, 65% of the females said they have watched subtitled Yoruba movies while 20% said they have watched Igbo and 15% said they have watched Hausa movies that were subtitled.

The above responses confirmed the fact that Nigerian movies are not only popular in Kenya, indigenous language movies also enjoy high viewership. The findings also show that more Kenyan women than men watch Nigerian films. The implications of the above findings are that more Kenyans are likely to want to study Theatre Arts and Performing Arts to solve the problem of employment. The fact that more female than male watch these films means that these people are more likely to cultivate the cultures of some of these movies and possibly pass them on to others.

Research Question Two: In what areas are Nigerian movies likely to promote development in Kenya?

Data for this question were taken from item 6 of the questionnaire which states that: 'What aspects of Nigerian films would you like to replicate if you were to produce your own movie?' The inference here is that the respondents would indirectly be stating the ways that Nigerian films either have or can influence development in Kenya.

The opinions of both the male and female respondents were content analysed and code categorised (see Animasaun 2011, Wimmer and Domnick 1983). Analysis of the responses show that 40% of the male respondents saw cultural promotion as

the likely area, 30% said technological and academic development, 20% each said family living or romance and architectural influences while 10% said it is in the area of fashion. Also the female respondents gave 40% too for cultural projection, 20% each for architectural, economy and fashion areas. This means that Nigerian movies have greatly touch various aspects of the Kenyan life. The Chairman of the Department of Theatre and Film Technology even hinted that the University is always ready to take students from Nigeria who apply for undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Theatre and Performing Arts because of what the Department is likely to benefit from the experience of these applicants because they are Nigerians (Mugubi “Oral Interview”). The implication of this is that apart from projecting Nigerians as people to meet, the country herself is greatly being promoted as a place to visit. Some of the respondents specifically mentioned that Nigerian films demonstrate attributes like 'respect for culture, courage, intelligence, fashionable, original, honesty, wealthy, highly educated, social, kind, business minded, loving...' This means that though in some parts of the world, Nigerians are badly projected by some foreign media some Nigerian movies are trying to correct some of these misrepresentations or set agenda for how Nigerians should be read.

Research Question Three: To what extent can Nigerian home videos be seen to be painting bad inscriptions about Nigeria?

This question is intended to draw inference on how Theatre Arts and Performing Arts education in Nigeria as reflected in her movies can make impact on Kenyan education. In essence, since the respondents have identified what they admire about Nigerian films, which can likely be reflected in their curriculum, they are not likely to reflect what they hate about Nigerian movies in their education. In essence, if some Nigerian films are seen to be painting some bad inscriptions about Nigeria, they will not like such to be said about Kenya. Data for this question were drawn from item 7, where subjects were therefore asked: 'What aspects of Nigerian movies would you not like to replicate if you were to produce your own movie?'

Analysis of the responses as content analysed and code categorised shows that 30% each of the male respondents complained about negative depictions of some cultural practices and bad grammar. This includes also some subtitled movies and some movies produced in English. Among the complaints here is bad imitation of American intonations. 20% complained about poor production and application of technical devices, which includes poor acting, inappropriate application of stunts and props, poor lighting, and 10% complained of over-glamorisation of nudity,

obscenity and seduction. In the same vein, 40% of the female respondents have problems with negative cultural depictions, especially glamorisation of nudity, commodification of women, rituals and witchcraft, and 30% complained about poor acting, 20% of poor scripting and 10% poor deployment of technical devices. For instance, such expressions as, '...fake actions, repetition of story lines, loose plotting, poor cinematography, as in poor sound quality, poor production, like somebody dying before gun shots, witchcraft, excessive portrayal of women as sex objects and so on' were common among the reasons coded.

The meaning of the above findings is that even though Nigerian films enjoy international audience attention, professionalism has not been fully attained. The reason for these observed flaws is not unconnected with the producer factor. In Nigeria as is often recorded, the producer is the director, the lead character and probably the director of photography. This will affect production quality. Also, the quest for maximisation of profit often leads to the choice of artists. Apart from this, some faces are always recycled in films. What happens therefore is that some characters often jump from one location to another to meet shooting appointments. Rehearsals are always done on set with the script not properly digested and roles not properly internalised before the rolling of camera. Also, the producer is in a hurry to get to the market, even though pirates too are waiting to make nonsense of the production. All these contribute to the negative ratings.

Apart from the above, poor scripting occurs where scripts are produced on sentiments. This is a situation where impulsive scripting is done. This is when a script is hurriedly crafted to settle a score or to react to important political happenings. An example is the 'Oga at the top' scenario. The Civil Defence officer that committed a blunder on air had hardly been played on air before songs and movies were adapted from it. In Nigeria, some producers rush to produce a script that would ordinarily take six months to produce within three days.

Conclusion

Attempt has been made in this paper to justify whether or not Nigerian movies are really popular outside the nation. This is bearing in mind that these movies are supposed to be products of trained practitioners who have had to be guided by laid down rules as set by the NUC. However, a study conducted among Kenyans (though attempt to describe what the enterprise looks like has been displayed) shows from the findings that much still needs to be done. But, all the above findings amount to one thing: the need for educators to impart in their students the need to study good and

high quality movies and use this as the standard for what the BMAS is anticipating in the curriculum of the Theatre Arts and Performing Arts. This is when the impacts of Nigerian movies can be well appreciated the more.

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Interviews

Boniface, Shisia 40 years. Kenyatta University, Nairobi Kenya during a chat on the influence of Nigerian film on Kenya people on 10th June 2012.

Mugubi, John 48 years, Chairman, Theatre Arts and Film Technology Department, Kenyatta University, Nairobi Kenya during a chat on the influence of Nigerian film on Kenya people on 10th June 2012.

RE-ECHOING THE EMERGING TRENDS OF STAND-UP COMEDY AND THE DYNAMICS OF STRESS MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

One genre that is thriving unhindered in the entertainment industry in Nigeria today is stand-up comedy. This is in spite of the hard socio-political and economic conditions of the people. The art of stand-up comedy appears to have transcended the hitherto held view of mere entertainment value and assumed, in its flexible aesthetics, an independent status that showcases critical reflections of values, socio-cultural mobilization and the promotion of positive images and general consciousness. This paper observes that Nigerian comedians situate their society in their best comedy in such a manner that the creative responses emerging from the art are premised on the fact that the practitioners are irresistible satirists of their society as their lampooning spree draws their jokes from abnormal situations and seem to care less about whose ox is gored or how the jokes impinge on a highly placed personality in the society. The paper holds that the Nigerian stand-up comedian through his comics has already displayed both honest craftsmanship and real inventiveness of engaging his audience consciously or unconsciously into the nations' unending national debate. The paper concludes that the popularity and acceptability of this art can be measured through the practitioners' retelling decimal of contemporary decadence using exotic platforms – live performances and other newly accessible and popular media channels such as the internet, film, television, etc. In the end, stand-up comedy is an alternative psychotherapy for stress and high-blood pressure management, particularly with the assumption that a laughing person is liable to live long.

Introduction

Appalled by the denigrating poverty of Nigerians who are already depressed by their political marginalization and economic strangulation as well as the devastating state of insecurity on their fatherland, it becomes worrisome on the degree of impact that stand-up comedy can really foster in this regard. This becomes more critical particularly when one remembers that in spite of the qualitative and visionary

leadership qualities orchestrated by great men like Tafawa Balewa, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and Anthony Enahoro, Nigeria is still faced with numerous socio-political problems amongst which is the present security challenge. Nevertheless, anxious as it may seem to have a decent living condition and comfort, Nigerians are alleged to have surrendered their minds to hilarious jokes and other comic theatricalities that would rather ease tension for them and perhaps elongate lifespan. Today, Nigerians prefer to generally identify more with comedy as a genre than tragedy because they are already faced with enough tragic events in their society. Consequently, Organized comedy shows like a *Night of a thousand Laughs; Comedy made in Warri; Laughter on the Loose* by Opa Williams, Richard Mofe-Damijo, Agoma Awaritoma and a host of others featuring comedians like Gandoki, Basket Mouth, Omo Baba, Ali Baba, Klint the Drunk, Onome the Saint, Hafeez Ayetoro, etc., seem to have taken the front burner of the entertainment industry in Nigeria.

Many may have continuously viewed comedy as a mere entertainment tool but stand-up comedy has transcended mere entertainment value, hence it has exhibited the aesthetics of an independent art that showcases critical reflections of values, socio-cultural mobilization and the promotion of positive images and general consciousness. Bamidele's argument on the jester's art in relation to Osofisan's style and purpose in *Who's Afraid of Solarin?* cites Keith Thomas as he situates the comic art "as a means of social control – where humour is not merely for entertainment but as a militant social corrective" ("Humour" 71). This simply means that, apart from playing the role of an entertainer, the comedian must through his artistic creation, ridicule actions of men and societal ills in order to project truth. The essence of truth-telling even by a jester's art is captured by Obuh (87) citing a memorable quote which says "many a truth is total in jest". This presupposes that humour and laughter are essential to human existence. Using the Horatian tradition and the laughter as a phenomenon, Obuh goes further to posit how this is achieved "through the deliberate portrayal of facial, naive, idiotic and sometimes erratic personalities, in making us laugh not only at those ridiculous personalities, but also at their actions, deeds, ideas as wells as the society which they personify" (88). In spite of the present day socio-political and economic challenges and other belt-tightening policies adopted by the Nigerian government, stand-up comedy genre has achieved great popularity in using laughter as a means to an end in contemporary Nigeria through great theatrical effectiveness, carefully embellished with many colours and sensational elements.

It is only apt at a time like this when the entire nation is being ravaged by overwhelming mental, emotional and physical strain to provide a thought-provoking review of the expected function of stand-up comedy when the 'power-that-be' is striving to embark on ambitious and wide ranging policies to articulate its vision on the issue of national (in)security that threatens the corporate existence of the most populous nation in Africa. Owing, therefore, to the dynamic relationship that exists between the theatre and its audience, comedy, or rather stand-up comedy is used as a development strategy though contrary to its "unpopularity as an art medium" to galvanize rapid mutual growth that could foster agreement in action, opinion, feeling, etc., amongst its citizenry. It needful that, "the transformist in civil society, labour, patriotic and nationalistic private sector...the radical section of the media and other catalysts of change in Nigeria must organize to overcome the development challenges in Nigeria" (Igbuzor 16).

Essentially, the Nigerian stand-up comedian can fit into any of these categories with the view to mobilizing the potentials of the people for developmental purposes. As a matter of fact, comedy has a public dimension which concerns the fate and interest of the community. Its stylized fantasy is set against a deeper exploration of the psychological reality of our time. Accordingly, the higher topical issues raised by these stand-up comedians give one the impression that their intention is to use comedy as a personal satire to ambush not only the problems of national insecurity in Nigeria but also all its other teething problems confronting her as a growing nation. Looking at the early plays for example; "there is a similar exploration throughout the comedies, whose stories, fantastic in bare outline, Shakespeare uses as a means to probe human relations" (Leggatt 44). *Much Ado about Nothing* can be seen as a case in point here; where the characters of Beatrice and Benedick bring a new psychological depth to Shakespearian comedy. It is a question of man and his society to say the least.

If Nigerian stand-up comedians are taken to be characters in the plays of Shakespeare for instance, we will encounter attempts by them (comedians) to solve not only internal conflicts this time, but rather eternal ones. In other words, using an externalized playful imitation humorously will have a critical force on the part of the audience as they tend to see these comedians as characters providing comic intervals which could provoke the laughter in them. The assertion by Thomas Hobbes as cited by Ross (53) becomes relevant as he explains why people laugh and the consequences of their laughter. He claims that; "those who laugh are momentarily released from the awareness of their own lack of ability". It transforms into a presumptive ability for laughter in the midst of a tensed or serious situation.

As a fundamentally good-natured art form in its view towards humanity, comedy concentrates on ingenious humour to satirize and represent issues. The aim is to recreate life in a broader compatible perspective. In other words, the comic artists view life not from an irreconcilable position within and between geo-cultural enclaves, hence Warri stand-up comedians like I Go Die, Basket Mouth or Gordons who are from the south-south region freely coin jokes about people from the northern region using their mother tongue nuances without bias to demean the region so mimicked. Consequently, the exploits of the humorous aspect of a situation in the context of the Nigerian society cannot be wished away. Whether stand-up comedy has made an impact or not, the minority question remains valid as ever in the context of Nigerian cohesion through remarkable dramatic events. Their activity in our national gatherings indicates a vernacular of life enmeshed in national affairs. Comedians have explored the use of jokes as a vehicle to address the national security menace through criticisms, political education and economic analysis of the society.

Stand-Up Comedy and the Dynamics of Stress Management

Nigeria is growing more and more complex, insecure and large proportion of Nigerians are being removed from the protection of their simple and less complex traditional environments to complex heterogeneous and less protective moderns ones. For this reason, problems such as unemployment, economic and political instability, inflation, high cost of living, over-crowding, crime, divorce, broken homes, drug addiction, lack of adequate educational opportunities, abound (T. Lergo qtd. Maisamara 2).

The above are all indices of social disorganization which have significant implications of the ubiquitous malaise called stress. Albeit this trend is fast becoming a permanent phenomenon, the average Nigerian must still survive and make progress in life. Therefore, it is pertinent to provide a dynamic psychological approach characterized with intense larger-than-life impressiveness associated with drama and theatre to rescue the debilitating situation in the country.

With the powerful expressive voice of stand-up comedy and its dramatic tenor, a release to confront and consequently ameliorate the living conditions of Nigerians begins to receive attention. Albeit the stand-up comedian rebukes his society in order to bring about transformation, he still goes ahead in a subtle way to calm their nerves using the comic ethos within his disposal. Therefore, using a

spontaneous reflex activity of eliciting laughter through sordid depiction of human situations, the range of laughter provoking experiences becomes more enormous from physical tickling to mental titillations of the most varied kinds. Invariably, the stand-up comedian tells the story in such a way that he deliberately sets out to create a certain degree of tension in the listener, and then he employs the use of the punchy jibes which act as a verbal guillotine that cuts across the topical development of the story. The tension that was felt becomes suddenly redundant and it exploded in laughter. This ludicrous approach replaces automatically the malice and stress of the initial tragic situation of the listener.

Laughter in this sense disposes of emotional excitations that have become pointless and must somehow be worked off along psychological channels to at least act as momentary anaesthesia of the stressed heart. Therefore, laughter is simply invoked as a corrective punishment upon society. The comedian tries to find consolation by discovering that there is the beginning of an underlying order through which he will make a breakthrough with his humour. Packaging its performances adequately will no doubt serve as a motivation to overcome anxious feelings that makes natural relaxed behaviour impossible. Therefore, opportunities of picturing a world of fantasy as most times portrayed by stand-up comedy becomes an option or rather a defence mechanism to cushion pressure, tension, worries and other anxieties of life. It would be funny perhaps to imagine a society without the propensity for jokes and witticism. Such a society would no doubt be boring, unexciting, unendurable and perhaps intensely suffocating. It is perhaps in line with this that Gerow, Brothen and Newell tell us to “remember that to engage from time to time in fantasizing is a normal and acceptable response to stress” (542). No matter how ephemeral this may seem, it could still prompt new responses with which to rid ourselves of both physiological and psychological stress.

To this end, this seemingly new form of artistic expression in Nigeria whose aim is to provoke laughter through earthy and ribald sense, strives to maximize interpersonally the benefits of managing and coping with stress either consciously or unconsciously of a peoples' sensibility. Its focus therefore is premised upon a primary concern with man as a social being hence its function is frankly corrective in nature. After all “the comic artist's purpose is to hold a mirror up to society to reflect its follies and vices, in the hope that they will, as a result , be mended” (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2009). A French philosopher, Henri Bergson also shares this view of the corrective purpose of laughter; he specifically feels that laughter is intended to bring the comic character back to conformity with his society, whose logic and conventions

he abandons when “he slackens in the attention that is due to life”. Therefore, the business of laughter is to repress any tendency on the part of the individual to separate himself from society. There is a strong indication that stand-up comedy is an experience of profound simplicity in which patience under adversity, regretting past actions, and/or opting for change becomes a necessity. In fact, its profundity revolves around patience, repentance and forgiveness that are opposed to the viciously circular pattern of crime which begets vengeance, which begets more crime. It is a comedy that deals in vigorous and purposeful regeneration and rebirth of an overstressed society like Nigeria.

The Language of stand-up Comedy in Nigeria

It is no longer news that stand-up comedy strives to capture the various speech patterns of the linguistic background of the characters they play or represent. According to Gbilekaa and Ejue, “the actor through use of language can capture certain idiosyncratic speech mannerism of different ethnic nationalities which in itself could bring about an aesthetic value” (127). Invariably, stand-up comedians capture the linguistic cadences by imitating certain ethnic nationalities in their peculiar speech mannerism. Bamidele believes that “they over-accentuate certain aspects of human behaviour with a view to making us laugh. Jesters are prone to overstatement rather than understatement” (“Humour” 72). He must therefore be convincing in his use of body and voice. His tone of voice, rhythm stress, pitch and other attributes of good voice production should be employed. To a large extent, the language is most often indigenized with a lot of anecdotes, metaphor, homily, burlesque approach, etc. The comedians try to extricate themselves from the imprisonment that can be caused by language which some people see as a 'linguistic straightjacket'. Thus “the German nonsense poet, Christian Morgenstern, used this sort of image to claim that we are imprisoned by language and that this causes our unsatisfactory relationship with other people, the society and the world in general” (Ross 27).

In similar vein; C. Husband as cited by Adetugbo argues that:

The English language is an ethnocentric, racist language by symbolizing virtue as white and evil is black. What with such expression as black art, black list, black leg, blackmail, blackmail, black work, black day, black mass, black guard and black Maria (7).

Perhaps, no apologies to stand-up comedians on the bastardized 'pidgin' English which is the ultimate language of their business in Nigeria. We also encounter a manifestation of this sort in Soyinka's *The Road* in which the comic comes from an accumulation of grotesque wishes and pidgin. Here, "Samson is telling a story and pidgin is his natural language of expression" (Ricard 71).

Thus, Nigerian comedians employ wordplay and a lot of absurdist approaches upon which their creative ingenuity is build. In other words, indigenous verbal combinations of 'mother tongue' which tilt towards ignoring norms and conventions of English language become pertinent. It is in this combination of words and other different expressions of meanings which are absurd and/or incongruous that sometimes induces laughter in the audience. For example, the Rivers State-born James Emmanuel of Wazobia FM, popularly known as 'Expensive' started off his career in the entertainment industry as a stand-up comedian. He believes that pidgin is unique, if not anywhere, for the Nigerian audience. In an interview with *Garki Gazette*, he makes his position clear when he says:

English is a borrowed language. Government through our colonial masters has made a big blunder of enforcing English language on us... Through pidgin English today, comedians especially those of them from Warri are counting their financial blessings and naming them one by one (11).

According to Inegbe, this is an indication that in every human endeavours "the development of language in communication is one of indisputable vitality" (41). It is this "pidgin vitality" that Nigerian comedians seem to be employing. It is a language of easy accessibility, a peoples' language that presumably attracts and sustains their audiences' attention. The comedian's specific use of exaggeration, metaphor, satire, burlesque and aphorisms to provoke laughter creates the impression that "we are able to understand that mere stories can rescue us from the claws of death" (Inegbe 46). His humour is purported to be communicative and has a lot of influence on his audience considerably towards positive thoughts and action. Its content is oftentimes a critique on the misrule as reflected in most of the jokes exemplifying the various defiant attitudes of rulers and society through its language as an expression of current affairs.

Nigerian Stand-up comedians have demonstrated language outside its original environment; hence, its localization through the imposition of a *Nigerianized*

linguistic culture and background which is used to reflect all shades and types. African literature for instance carries this expansion both in character depiction and in narrative form... “indigenous expressions... transliterations and pidgin” (Oni and Eghagha 136). Oni and Eghagha believe that communication flows more easily in the Nigerian circle when we mix the different input wrested from the so called “Queens English”.

The imaginative experiment in the use of language by stand-up comedians in Nigeria remains a pedagogical reference point to critical literary appraisal. This prowess is also observable in the linguistic successes of most Nigerian playwrights. Momoh succinctly captures the same trend when he says that:

In the tradition of Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, and Ola Rotimi ...indigenizes English by using proverbs, metaphor, riddles and stories taken from the local environment to fashion out an English which is once universal and at the same time able to communicate their local experiences (119).

Consequently, the interposed ingenuity of Nigerian stand-up comedians has proven to emit an interesting dramatic expression that the audience is much more at home with. To a large extent, therefore, this style can be seen in a demystification of the complex nature of language as a means of communication through the distinct use of ordinary words and in the most simplistic manner of illicit humour. It is from this same viewpoint that Obafemi writes on Rotimi's use of “simple and clear language taken from the thought base and patterns of the familiar environment, coupled with a dynamic involvement of the audience through music, dance, spectacle and mime combine to make the dramatic idiom...” (89).

A stand-up comedian in Nigeria therefore owes a considerable portion of his comic art and/or power to the peculiarities of his utterances. It is this linguistic abnormality that most often evinces at least a modicum of comic pleasure, appealing as they do to our instinctive delight. This “simplicity of language” is seen by Johnson as the “aesthetics of characterizing the language” (86). Suffice to say that, like the comedy of old, the language of stand-up comedy in Nigeria is rather derisive and distinctly flavoured with scurrility.

Stand-up Comedy as Didactic Theatre

Didactic drama presents a series of loosely connected scenes that avoid illusion and often interrupt the storyline to address the audience, directly with analysis, argument, etc. Stand-up comedy uses episodic structure to instruct and advise its audience just like the dramatic antecedence of the Brechtian Epic theatre. As a result, stand-up comedy strives to appeal to its audience's intellect as it presents a moral problem and reflects contemporary socio/political and moral realities on the stage. We see these comedians exhibiting tendencies of using the alienation effects to cause the audience to rather think. For example, Gordons, a Nigerian stand-up comedian would break off to remind his audience that he is only making a joke. He says: "I beg na joke I dey joke ooo", "Pally must survive". In other words, he wants his listener to think objectively about what he would have said in order to reflect on it, and perhaps draw conclusions.

It becomes crystal, therefore, that these comedians keep a distance between themselves and the various characters they represent while on stage. They emphasize rather the stylized external actions as signs of social relationships. Their gestures, intonations and even facial expressions are artistically calculated to reveal the nature of one character towards another. Through its grotesque style of presentation, it strives to drive home its message in a strongly didactic and most capable manner with the view of provoking socio-cultural and political change. Hence, it is the theatre that appeals not to the audience's feeling but to his reasoning. Significantly, their approach is uncompromisingly that of presenting factual information, using a theatre of fact, a drama of ideas through the documenting of contemporary social issues as conceived to be relevant for society's consumption and growth. Comedians innovatively reconstruct events and interpret them accordingly in the most dramatic style. It is a style that creates believability of characterization through parody of recognizable personages in their societies even though they seem to be very innocuous in intension. In fact, just like the comedies of Aristophanes, Menander, Terrence, etc., some of these stand-up comedians in Nigerian aim at illustrating in the most humorous manner of buffoonery with a blend of bawdiness the implicit understanding of a deadly political or social issue.

Art and the role of the artist in a given society remains not only significant to such a society, but as an unavoidable catalyst that could propel positive societal growth. Most often than not, stand-up comedy reveals an ostentatious position of a 'teacher's mission of enlightening the world' of the dark and preposterous side of a given society. All artists whether as poets, dramatist, dancers, playwrights,

comedians, etc., engage in one artistic form or the other with the view to shaping and/or reshaping the socio/cultural and political consciousness of its citizenry. Bamidele's view on art and the artist in society reinforces the contention that, "some have conceived of their roles as that of vanguards in the revolution for a better society" (*Sociology* 26). It is this responsiveness of the artist that creates the ambiance for transmogrification of the comedian into a performer hence his audacious display of acting profundity reveals that his task is not just that of a mere passive actor before his audience; rather, his presence and role before an audience must smack of a certain measure of dramatic consequence. Suffice to say that he must painstakingly exude enough comicalness to make people laugh. To this end, Awaritoma reminds us that an ace comedian in Nigeria, Ali Baba, once remarked in an interview that, "acting funny is serious business" (1). This is however contrary to a certain extent where people see comedians as unserious people who are just there basically to make people laugh. In a similar vein, Okome, (222) examining the 'ritual' of acting using the children educational theatre as her reference point opines that play is more often used as a therapeutic medium. She believes that dramatic "activity brings the participants directly close to the situation". It becomes clear here that the comedian's direct style of engaging his audience with his distinct act can create a sense of belonging that could in turn foster reasonable sensitivity towards the issues raised, thereby, encouraging or stimulating change in audiences' attributes. In fact, this dramaturgy which depends almost entirely on a superb sense of stagecraft serves as an exposition in which all the relevant occurrences of the past are revealed to the audience. Simply put; stand-up comedy portrays current situations through interaction and at the same time, giving a clue to the missing link.

The point being made here is that comedy as a historical documentation has the capacity to reflect the (historical) reality of a people, perhaps to taunt or ridicule certain aspects of it. Assessing drama as a medium, Agoro (48) believes that "it can teach us more about the ways in which people lived in the past... Thus can help a group of participants to understand more about the way in which its own society functions". Plays like, *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*; *The Black Hermit*; *The Gods are not to Blame*; *The Sweet Trap*; *The Marriage of Anansewa*; *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, etc., are all documentations of not only the histories depicting particular periods but lessons to be learnt from the preceding events that characterized the period in which these plays were written.

Conclusion

Stand-up comedy as a performative genre has been portrayed as a “trump card” that needs adequate regenerating capacities upon which its theatrics could be classified as an antidote to stressed out societies. In this regards it is seen as a vehicle for mobilization through which comedians are able to massage the psychology of their audience through satirizing nepotism, cronyism, bribery and corruption as factors responsible for our lack of direction as a nation with the aim of reforming the individual mind towards embracing a better society. Thus, their comic storylines are carefully embellished with broad psychological, emotional, philosophical and spiritual implications to raise the moral level of their listeners or audience. As a movement for change, it presents issues deserving of serious reflection and urgent action. Its structure, organization and thematic preoccupation is passionately driven with a clear intent to guarantee stability and good governance in Nigeria, through its mirror-like style of presenting familiar images of bad leaders, sadists, rogues, political thugs, swindlers, religious frauds, gangsters, charlatans, etc. The comedian's resentments of the deplorable living conditions which has impeded development in all spheres of our national existence is simulated and tied to the fact that he (comedian) nurses great hopes of improvement in the socio-political life of the people even when he engages in parodying the situation through comic stories.

It has been observed that “these jokes hinge most times on patriotic feelings which are required to provoke developmental initiatives” (*The Guardian* 64) The jesting in more ways than one preaches moral rejuvenation towards steering Nigerians on to the path of upright rectitude. Fundamentally, therefore, it strives to congregate a stage full of unhappy people with the view to untangle all the stress and confusion in their heads. It is a vocal delivery of some sort of homily aimed at repositioning the individual's perception of his society. Without this humourist exposition, even a student of change might remain unyielding or perhaps sightless to the fullness of his society. Perhaps it is against this backdrop that Bamidele (*Sociology* 70) citing MacDowell makes demand of our intellect, particularly, on “how much of Greek social life we know if we do not read Aristophanes' comedies? The point is almost a matter of fact that Nigerian comedians situate their society in their best comedy. In other words, the creative responses emerging from stand-up comedy is premised on the fact that Nigerian comedians are irresistible satirists of their society as their lampooning spree draws their jokes from abnormal situations and seems to care less about whose ox is gored or how the jokes impinge on a highly placed personality in the society . To capture this point more succinctly, an Abuja based

comedian Agoma Awaritoma, submits that “the more topical an issue, the more relevant and necessary it is for the comedian to throw his searchlight in that direction. If it is news, then it is fit for use by the comedian” (6). Considerably, stand-up comedy and the immense creative knack of the comedians can to a certain degree make an audience laugh, think and of course ponder thereafter over the enormity of what had been said. This presupposes that a lot of the things that had gone wrong need to be put right. For example, Shakespeare's' *The Merchant of Venice* gives one the impression that, “the structure of comedy in itself means that it deals with problems with solutions: the riddle is answered, the parted lovers are united, the broken family is re-joined, the apparently dead return to life” Leggatt, (86). This motif can also be observed in the sequence of *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night*, *As You Like It*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, etc.

It is our view that the Nigerian stand-up comedian through his comics has already displayed both honest craftsmanship and real inventiveness of engaging his audience consciously or unconsciously into the nations' unending national debate. Indeed, its popularity and acceptability can be measured through their (comedians) retelling decimal of contemporary decadence using exotic platforms – live performances and other newly accessible and popular media channels such as the internet, film, television, etc. Nigerian comedians have shown optimism and sparks of commitment towards curbing tension as they continuously explore storylines that not only educe the thrills of living but also to spark off the desired interest on issues that make the rounds, and above all, still bring forth smiles and laughter from a people already disappointed in their nation. Stand-up comedy therefore is an alternative psychotherapy for stress and high-blood pressure management, particularly with the assumption that a laughing person is liable to live long.

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The Guardian Newspaper Wednesday, August 8, 2012.

MENTORSHIP AS AN ACADEMIC CULTURE: TOWARDS BETTER QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR THEATRE TEACHING AND PRACTICE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Mentorship is the art of imparting developmental learning on less knowledgeable and less experienced colleagues by more learned and experienced colleagues. Mentorship or mentoring in this context is seen as a developmental process where the senior academics, most especially in professorial boat impart knowledge to junior academics through team-teaching and team-research. This study is undertaken to ascertain the presence and practice of this mode of academic culture in the Nigerian university system, with the aim of proposing its application. The study, therefore, takes a survey of five universities in Southwest Nigeria: University of Ibadan (UI), Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Lagos State University (LASU) and Redeemer's University (RUN). The study observes that even though mentoring is practised in most of these universities, it is not an entrenched culture as it is in other climes. The study concludes that if mentorship can be adequately incorporated in the teaching and practice of theatre in Nigeria, it will go a long way to ensuring better quality in this field.

Introduction

Mentorship is a personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. However, true mentoring is more than just answering occasional questions or providing ad hoc help. It is about an on-going relationship of learning, dialogue, and challenge. The person in receipt of mentorship may be referred to as a protégé (male), a protégée (female), and an apprentice or, in recent years, a mentee.

"Mentoring" is a process that always involves communication and it is relationship based but its precise definition is elusive (Wikipedia). One definition of the many that have been proposed is that mentoring is:

a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé) (Bozeman & Feeney 736).

Knowledge production and production of thoroughbred scholars should be the main focus of Nigerian/African scholars in all academic disciplines. And this can be achieved easily in the practice of mentorship as an academic culture. It is only this academic engagement that can encourage and propel qualitative scholarship in Nigeria and Africa.

Mentorship needs to spread throughout all disciplines because of its progressive and constructive tenets that could assure quality in academic productivity generally. The practice of mentorship in theatre is not supposed to be seen as a necessity; rather it should be considered as a compulsory tool to improve the status of theatre scholarship and practice. Ordinarily, the nature of theatre as a discipline requires collaboration and teaching and practising it without incorporating the culture of mentorship will look as one pursues good dreams with wrong tools. As a field of learning and profession, theatre is in all its sense a collective duty or responsibility. An individual cannot successfully practise the profession all alone. Various departments in theatre such as arts administration and management, directing, playwriting, designing, lighting, theory and criticism, costume and make-up, among others, are brought together to achieve a success in stage or screen productions.

Theories of Mentorship

Hesse (2013) holds that psychologists and educators have developed various theories of mentoring based on academic research, one-on-one mentoring relationships and experiences in the classroom. However, the theory a mentor chooses can depend on

the needs of his mentee. Different mentees may respond to different approaches with varied levels of success. Two of such are readily discussed by Hesse, namely GROW and Self-Organized Learning (SOL).

GROW stands for Goal, Reality, Options, Wrap-Up. The GROW method of mentoring revolves around structured, in-person conversations in four parts. In the "goal" portion of the conversation, the mentor and mentee decide upon a few clear goals to achieve within the confines of the mentoring session. In the "reality" portion of the conversation, the mentor and mentee brainstorm together and come up with specific ideas about the topic at hand. In the "options" portion of the conversation, the mentor guides the mentee and creates a list of everything he/she thinks the mentee can achieve. In the "wrap-up" portion of the conversation, the mentee and mentor delineate the appropriate next actions and create a time-specific plan for the mentee to carry out those actions. The two also discuss how to overcome potential roadblocks along the way.

Self-Organized Learning: Hesse holds that professors at Brunel University's Centre for the Study of Human learning developed Self-Organized Learning (SOL), a theory focused on the process of learning itself rather than specific academic knowledge. The SOL theory of mentoring borrows elements of the Humanistic, Cognitive and Behavioural schools of Psychology. SOL mentors expect mentees to take an active role in their own growth process and assume that each mentee knows himself/herself and understands how he/she learns best. Mentees define their own goals, develop and execute strategies for success and evaluate their own performance. Mentors introduce Kelly's Repertory Grid as a method of identifying self-created limitations. SOL mentees sign a Personal Learning Contract (PLC) that includes a purpose, strategy, outcome, outcome measures and review. The PLC's scientific approach to learning has its roots in Behavioural Psychology.

Developmental Alliance Mentoring: The Developmental Alliance (DA) theory of mentoring frames mentorship as a process that involves three parties: the mentor, the mentee and the larger organization sponsoring mentorship. Because the sponsoring organization will benefit from the mentee's success, all three parties have the same goals and the emotional distance between them is equal. Critics of this theory warn that, should the mentee fail in his duties to the sponsoring organization -- be it an employer or a school -- that organization will no longer have the same interest in the

mentee's success. Likewise, if a mentor becomes too close to a mentee, he/she may act in the best's interests of the mentee alone instead of in the best interests of all three parties.

In their article entitled “Toward a Useful Theory of Mentoring”, Barry Bozeman and Mary K Feeney undertake a review and critique of mentoring theory and research, by identifying persistent problems in the development of mentoring theory. Their conceptual analysis highlights these problems with a “thought experiment” illustrating the inability of mentoring theory and research to resolve certain fundamental issues, the resolution of which is a prerequisite for the advancement of explanatory theory. They conclude with ideas about demarcating “mentoring” from the sometimes confounding concepts of “training” or “socialization.” In the same vein, in the medical profession, it is an entrenched culture. For instance, in “Becoming a Nurse Researcher: The Importance of Mentorship” by Carol Kostovich, Karen Saban and Eileen Collins, this trend is fully discussed. This column is concerned with the mechanics of transitioning from being a new doctoral graduate to being a researcher with a solid programme of study. To clarify these mechanics, the authors discuss the roles of being a research mentor, the expectations of being a mentee, and practical tips for sustaining a successful relationship.

A mentoring culture therefore, according to Zachary (2013) has eight hallmarks, namely: accountability, alignment, communication, value and visibility, demand, multiple mentoring opportunities, education and training, and safety nets. A mentoring culture is a vivid expression of an organization's vitality. Its presence enables an organization to augment learning, maximize time and effort, and better utilize its resources. Zachary contends further that the relationship skills learned through mentoring benefit relationships throughout the organization; as these relationships deepen, people feel more connected to the organization. Ultimately, the learning that results creates value for the entire organization.

Literature Review

The university is a factory: a production factory in its own right ... it is a factory with a difference ... it is a factory of ideas; an intellectual factory in which ideas are produced, processed and packaged for the use of the larger society (Umukoro *Scholarship* 136).

The Handbook of Mentoring at Work brings together a select group of scholars and practitioners for the purpose of developing the definitive reference book on mentoring relationships. Our vision is to offer a comprehensive volume that defines the current state of the field, offers fresh new theoretical perspectives, identifies the key debates and issues facing mentoring scholars and practitioners, and provides a theory-driven road map that guides future research and practice in the field of mentoring.

If the above assertion is true of what the university is, it is more imperative in Theatre Arts as a discipline or profession in the university than any other disciplines. This is truer because of the composite nature of theatre. Theatre Arts is the single discipline that no one of its departments is dispensable. Its productions call for the assembling of all the required arts. Umukoro comments on the nature of the Theatre Arts curriculum in these words:

The curriculum of our Department of Theatre Arts is designed to produce the balanced scholar or creative artist whose specialisation is guided by a lucid, informed perception of the broad scope of the discipline and the dynamic inter-relationship between component aspects (*Performing Artist* 118).

Umukoro further enumerates five main academic units that evolve in Theatre Arts which are: “Dramatic Arts, Music Arts, Dance Arts, Visual Arts and Media Arts” (118). Theatre as 'composite arts' requires bringing together all its component aspects to actualise successful production(s). It is on this note that we will draw the importance of mentorship in theatre as a tool for quality assurance in theatre teaching and practice in Nigeria. Apprenticeship of some sort existed in theatre long ago in the era of professional theatre in Nigeria. This could even be traced to the classical era where theatre practice was learnt from the 'Master' (playwright and sometimes director). Umukoro corroborates this point when he says that:

For the most part, therefore, the artists –the performing artists in particular- has had to depend on a combination of sheer intuition and imitative ingenuity plus, where possible, a bit of semi-formal apprenticeship (*Performing Artist* 115).

If this could be in the evolving process of Theatre Arts as a discipline it is incumbent on theatre professionals, most especially, the ones in academia to handle and look very keenly into mentorship as a tool to actualising quality assurance in the teaching and the practice of the profession. The senior ones, most especially, in the cadre of professorial status should acknowledge the fact that the mentorship responsibility in theatre is their sole contribution to the development of the discipline. The junior ones here, following the NUC BMAS, refer to those on Lecturer grade 1 and below.

Taking a cue from *Appraising Staff* by Ken Langdon and Christina Osborne, the two sides of theatre staff have a lot to learn from their pronouncements in relation to mentorship for productivity. The most senior colleagues in the academic theatre (most especially in professorial cadre) should see themselves as managers that they are in the real sense of it to manage their junior counterparts better for efficiency in teaching and practice. The managers in theatre have the responsibility to inculcate progressive and developmental ideas in their mentees. They should also avoid bias in the practice and teaching of the theatre. Teaching and practising theatre rooted in bias will eventually abort the good and lofty goals or objectives of the organisations, since the discipline is naturally collaborative.

In the teaching and practice of the theatre, apart from the courses that are practical-oriented, other courses that are theory-based should also be co-handled by the staff of the department. Two to three or more colleagues should always come together and handle courses, including the most senior ones (in the professorial cadre) that can truly invoke mentorship which can provide quality in theatre teaching. This practice is referred to as “team-teaching”. It is a kind of teaching style whereby deliberations and discussions are held by the staff in that team for effective and efficient teaching and practice. The presence of a professor should provide mentorship to his junior colleagues. In other words, the practice of team-teaching will automatically encourage mentorship and consequently mentoring the junior artists.

In the department where mentorship is taken seriously, there are two things the mentor (professor) in that team should watch out for and they are: “observing commitment and anticipating commitment”. The mentor needs to take this with all sense of commitment since the department has saddled him or her with this responsibility to develop the junior ones. Langdon and Osborne observe that:

It is important to observe the degree of enthusiasm and commitment the appraisee shows towards agreed objectives and performance levels throughout the appraisal. There are a number of signs that an appraisee is becoming committed to the task. If you know an appraisee, you will be able to anticipate their level of commitment more easily (44).

The junior colleagues (apprentices) should also be ready to work along with their mentors for their individual development which will eventually increase and improve productivity in the scholarship and practice in the chosen career. The junior colleague that fails and refuses mentorship does that at his/her peril. This aspect should be seen as education-in-education for efficiency.

On this part also, the senior ones who refuse to mentor the junior colleagues destroy their future with their own hands. They should put down the toga of hegemony and arrogance of being all alone in the prospect of their career. They should always remember that two good heads are after all better than one. There is an avalanche of progress if all of us are masters of what we are doing but there is unquantifiable destruction when one person is an expert in a discipline while others are still crawling for survival. The expert is there to make them stand on their feet. The retrogressive senior colleague, supposedly a professor, will be like the professor in Sonaiya's highly inspirational book, *A Trust to Earn*. The professor, after being all alone in the unrevealed department as a single professor for years, later came back to seek a year contract job in the same department after his retirement. The department turned his offer down abruptly. Sonaiya suspects what could be responsible for this is lack of mentorship when the man in question was in the system. Her words are better heard:

The major concern of the academic staff of the department was that this professor had not contributed much to their department's developments over the years, not caring to mentor his younger colleagues and even frequently opposing their advancement. Maybe his desire was to be the lone star in the entire department (94).

Research Questions

1. To what extent does the concept or practice of mentoring exist in the

academic discipline of Theatre studies in Nigerian universities?

2. What are the theoretical underpinnings upon which mentoring is based and in what specific areas of Theatre studies?
3. What mode does mentoring take in the academic department and what is its effectiveness?

Rationale/Objectives

On the global scene, studies by Kram (1985), and Ragins and Kram (2007) are two works that provide solid foundations and academic or theoretical discourse on the subject of mentoring. Though the latter work helps to fill the lacuna created by about two decades of significant developments, in that the essays (twenty-seven chapters) help in the extension, broadening, and development of new theoretical perspectives on mentoring relationships on this part of the globe, not much has been done in this direction. As Ragins and Kram are wont to agree with us, our witness to new technology, organizational transformations, and strategic redirections have massively altered employee-employer relationships and institutional growth. In our drive to conform to best practices, these factors undoubtedly also have a deep sense of meaning on our work and careers as well as the form, function, and context of work relationships in Nigerian universities. It is thus apposite for us to measure how the field of mentoring affects theoretical and professional directions.

Consequently, the present endeavour is targeted to achieve the following objectives:

- i) To discover the true practice of mentoring within the Nigerian university system with particular emphasis on Theatre teaching and practice.
- ii) To determine the form it takes where it exists as an established or inchoate culture.
- iii) To determine its effectiveness or otherwise in the scholarship and practice of the Theatre profession within the Nigerian university system.

Methodology

The study adopted the purposive sampling design. Consequently, the questionnaire method was applied as the survey instrument and was directed mainly at the actual target audience – academic staff of Theatre Arts departments. The questionnaire consists of eleven multiple choice questions intended to elicit information on the practice of mentorship: Does it exist in spoken or unspoken form? What is its format where it exists? What impact does it make or has it made since the inception of its

practice? A total of forty-eight (48) copies of the questionnaire were distributed during the course of the research among academic staff of University of Ibadan (UI), (OAU), Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Lagos State University (LASU) and Redeemer's University (RUN). Gladly, over ninety percent of the copies were retrieved.

The results of the survey are set in the tables below. The answers/responses to the questions are represented in the tables by frequencies and percentages.

Data Presentation

Descriptive Statistics Showing the Gender Composition of Lecturers in the Sampled Institutions

	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
	Male	21	80.8%
	Female	5	19.2%

The table above shows that there are more males in the sampled Nigerian universities than females. This therefore creates room for gender imbalance in the labour industry.

Descriptive Statistics on the Number of Higher Institutions Sampled for this Study

	Sampled Universities	Frequency	Percentage
	Obafemi Awolowo University, OAU, Ile-Ife	5	19.2%
	University of Ibadan, UI	7	26.9%
	Redeemers University	9	34.6%
	Olabisi Onabanjo University, OOU	5	19.2%

Descriptive Statistics Showing the Educational Qualification of Lecturers in the Institutions

	Highest Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
	Bachelor of Arts (B.A)	1	3.8%
	Master of Arts (M.A)	14	53.8%
	Ph.D.	11	42.3%

Descriptive Statistics Showing the Ranks of Lecturers in the Institutions

	Rank of Lecturers	Frequency	Percentage
	Graduate Assistant	1	3.8%
	Lecturer II	8	30.8%
	Lecturer I	4	15.4%
	Arts Fellow I	2	7.7%
	Senior Arts Fellow	3	11.5%
	Senior Lecturer	4	15.4%
	Reader	1	3.8%
	Professor	1	3.8%
	Assistant Lecturer	2	7.7%

Result and Discussion

Research Question One: To what extent does the concept or practice of mentoring exist in the academic discipline of theatre studies in Nigerian universities?

Table 1.1: Descriptive statistics on the extent at which the concept of mentoring is been practised in Nigerian universities.

q-l	Items	Yes	No	Mean	Std. D
1.	Do you practice mentorship in your department?	19 (73.1%)	7 (26.9%)	1.28	.458
2.	Have you been mentored before?	17 (65.4%)	9 (34.6%)	1.39	.499
3.	Are you being mentored now?	14 (53.8%)	12 (46.2%)	1.50	.511

Result from table 1.1 shows that the practice of mentorship does exist in the Theatre Arts departments in southwest Nigerian universities. The result reveals that 73.1% of the sampled academic staff in the universities did attest to the fact that the practice of mentorship is present in their department. It also shows that only 65.4% of the respondents have been mentored as mentees. However, 53.8% are still been mentored in their different fields/disciplines in the departments.

A content analysis was also done on the open-ended questions in the research instrument and it was found out that most of the academic staffs attest to the fact that

the practice of mentee-mentor in Nigerian universities is still an undergoing process. Lecturers and academic staff in the departments see mentoring as an ideal selfless practice that is commendable in all aspect of our life.

Research Question Two: What are the theoretical under-pinning's upon which mentoring is based and in what specific areas of Theatre studies?

Table 2.1:

q-l	Items	Yes	No	Mean	Std. D
1.	Is team teaching in practice in your university?	25 (96.2%)	1(3.8%)	1.04	.196

Table 2.2: Descriptive statistics showing the areas in which mentoring is evident in the department of Theatre Arts across the sampled universities

	Items	Frequency	Percentage
	Practical courses	2	7.7%
	Theory courses	1	3.8%
	Research/co-authorship of research	2	7.7%
	Not practicable in the department	4	15.4%
	It is practicable in all areas of the department	17	65.3%

Table 2.1 shows the result upon which mentoring is based in Theatre studies. The result shows that 96.2% of the respondents are of the opinion that team-teaching as a means of mentoring is in full practice in the Nigerian universities. This is attributable to the fact that team-teaching is seen as means of mentoring that leads to training on the job, informal grooming, academic guidance and also learning on the job by the mentees.

Result from table 2.2 also shows the level at which mentoring is based and in the different specific areas of Theatre studies. The table thus shows the theoretical underpinning that guides mentoring in the Theatre studies of these universities. It is revealed above that 65.3% of the respondents are of the opinion that mentoring is practicable in all aspects of teaching and learning in the Nigerian universities.

Research Question Three: What mode does mentoring take in the academic department and what is its effectiveness?

Table 3.1: Descriptive statistics showing the mode and effectiveness mentoring takes in the academic environment in the Nigerian universities.

q-l	Items	Yes	No	Mean	Std. D
1.	If you are a senior lecturer/professor, have you ever mentored or are currently mentoring any junior colleague?	14 (51.9%)	12 (48.1%)	1.46	.519
2.	Do you enjoy mentoring either as a benefactor or beneficiary?	20 (76.9%)	6 (23.1%)	1.25	.442
3.	Do mentors go with mentees to the lecture halls?	18 (69.2%)	8 (30.8%)	1.73	.550

Result from table 3.1 shows the mode and effectiveness of mentoring in the Nigerian universities. The table above reveals that 51.9% of the respondents from the sampled institutions have attested to the fact that they have either mentored or are currently mentoring a junior colleague. It also shows that 48.1% have not in any way mentored any colleague. This however, is due to reasons that cut across from the fact that the practice of mentoring in Nigerian universities is very poor or the concept is not applicable in the different departments. The result also shows that 76.9% of the sampled academic staff from the institutions have in one way or the other enjoyed mentoring as a benefactor or beneficiary. However, 69.2% mentees do attest to the fact that mentors do carry them along to the lecture halls and other places.

Discussion

The research was designed to ask three basic questions which are generic to the study: To what extent does the concept or practice of mentoring exist in the academic discipline of Theatre studies in Nigerian universities? What are the theoretical underpinnings upon which mentoring is based and in what specific areas of theatre studies? And what mode does mentoring take in the academic department and what is its effectiveness? In the analysis given earlier, the first question of the research has been responded to in the questions 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the questionnaire. And it shows that mentorship is in practice in our Theatre studies in Nigerian universities as represented by five universities in the South-western Nigeria. The percentage of those that are not mentored or not beneficiaries of mentorship is very low and negligible compared to the percentage of the people being mentored in the profession. In addition, those that agree that mentorship is in practice in their departments are far greater and higher than those who believe that it is an unpronounced practice. Sad enough, the percentage of the people that believe in the culture is mere 10.8% which is

greatly low. This means that most practitioners of the theatre in the academia as represented by five universities in Southwest Nigeria do not see mentorship as necessary and compulsory equipment in Theatre studies despite the nature of the theatre which is collaborative and apprenticeship. This ugly practice should be looked into by the people in the business in the academia in order to achieve quality in the discipline in Nigeria.

In the question two of the research, major respondents maintain that mentorship is practised in the culture of team-teaching which is one of the areas through which mentorship is practised in the academia. The lesser percentage of the respondents believe that it is done in practical courses only and it has a very low percentage of 9.7% respondents who said it exists in co-authorship of research works. The three groups of respondents attested to the fact of the existence of mentorship in the three major areas of theatre teaching and practice which are: team-teaching, workshop classes and co-authoring of research works. Still, the percentage of the groups is not encouraging at all, going by the tenets of mentorship. It is true that through team-teaching which exists in most universities of our target, the tradition is not all-practising and all-welcome. This situation should not be so because through team-teaching, we believe strongly that, the juniors learn from their seniors. And the practice will eventually broaden the scope of the two partners in progress. Theatre is no good academic dealing while the business is done all alone.

Good enough, most respondents agreed that we can derive maximum benefits if it is practiced. Then the question is: Why do we not formalise its practice as a culture in the practice and teaching of Theatre studies in Nigeria? Its entrenchment, we believe, will increase the percentage of people that will believe in the culture from its low level of 10.8% to a reasonable percentage of 90 and above.

The third question of the research which seeks to look into the mode and effectiveness of mentorship maintains that mentors usually do not monitor their mentees properly, for example, going to class with them. What the respondents argued was that mentees do not benefit and enjoy close monitoring from their mentors and this again will not encourage the culture of mentorship in the theatre teaching and practice. Mentors need to monitor their mentees to accomplish the rudiments of mentorship in the field and to achieve the aims and objectives of the culture of mentorship. The percentage of the mentors, according to the respondents that follow their mentees to class needs to rise higher. This is why the culture has not become a wholesome tradition in the practice of theatre in the academia. The failure of mentors not going to class with their mentees could be as a result of the fear

noticeable in mentees of being dominated by their mentors or the erroneous precept of mentees looking at their mentors as parading themselves as 'headmasters'. If a mentee is ready to be mentored, s/he should endeavour to present her/himself for the necessary processes that are enshrined in the culture of mentorship. The juniors (mentees) should see the attitude of their seniors following them to classes as an attempt to train them. Bamidele in "Theatre Studies and the Virtuoso Artist in an Age of Interdisciplinarity", describes a mentee who is not ready to be mentored thus:

... it is a poor misunderstanding of what mentorship is. If you pair yourself with anyone and he is now trying to say you want to be a headmaster. No, no, he is simply saying I am not ready to expand my knowledge and understanding... I want to say it should not be limited to theatre, even in all disciplines... This idea of being mentored by somebody helps a lot. It prepares you. You have confidence in yourself ... So that is how I see it, anyone who is not ready to do that kind of thing is not ready to be a scholar (615-616).

Conclusion

Mentorship is needed so much significantly in academics generally and in Theatre Arts studies as a discipline principally because of the natural compositeness of its component parts. Senior colleagues (mentors) should always be available to mentor their mentees (the junior colleagues) for advancement. There is always a danger of standing alone in a business like that of the theatre. After all, a Yoruba adage says that *ka rin ka po yiye nii ye eni* (moving together makes us honourable). Quality assurance in theatre teaching and practice is at our finger tips if mentorship is taken with ultimate seriousness and commitment.

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WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN NIGERIAN STAND-UP COMEDY: A REFLECTION ON I GO DIE'S PERFORMANCE

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Introduction

He thinks of his body as a direct and normal connection with the world, which he believes he apprehends objectively, where as he regards the body of the woman as a hindrance, a prison, weighed down by everything peculiar to it. The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities. We should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness (Thomas Aquinas, "Imperfect Man and Incidental Being" qtd. Young 439).

For many decades, various women groups have fought to change patriarchal order/thinking, which assumes the woman to be an "imperfect man and incidental being". In the course of the struggle as women slowly began to record victory, it was observed that institutionalized arts refuse to reflect the social changes that have occurred in advancement and favour of womanhood. It was soon pointed out that these institutions are patriarchal and seek to preserve patriarchal thinking. Thus, feminists in literature, painting, and media (print and electronic) began to question the reality said to be portrayed by the media. In film, feminist theorists like Laura Mulvey and Claire Johnston posit that women representation in cinema is narrow and shallow. To date, feminists/womanists and other researchers in women studies continue to study the representation of women in all media of communication and entertainment. In Nigeria, examples abound on the representation of women in literature especially where native female characters are portrayed in negative light while male characters are often portrayed as positive. However, feminist criticism of Nigerian literature has today recorded social realities of women's advancement and development. The once male-dominated Nigerian literature has since witnessed the rise and development of many female playwrights, novelists and poets. This has helped better the characterization of women in literature. Worth noting is the verity that many male creative writers have positive construction of female characters in

their works.

While feminists are counting their gains in the area of literature, Nollywood in particular is drawing the attention of women studies for its misrepresentation of women. At the moment Nollywood is getting so much deserved attention for negative and stereotyped portrayal of women, including other new media – stand-up comedy, musical video, etc. While Nigerian video musicals are filled with naked female body, stand-up comedy has become a site for narrative pornography.

The stand-up comedy industry is on a daily basis attracting considerable audience. Stand-up comedy is a mass culture that has since become a popular culture. In Nigeria, stand-up comedy can be traced way back; in fact, it has always been a part of the people's art. A typical example is the traditional court-jesters in the Hausa/Fulani kingdom of Nigeria, the Alawada in Yoruba kingdom down to the late Yoruba comedian Gbegan Adeboye and others. However, modern stand-up comedy became popular with the likes of Yibo Koko, Ali Baba (The Chief of Nigerian comedians), Alam Blow, late Muhammed Danjuma and became a popular culture with Opa William's "Nite of a thousand Laughs" (a live show) which made its entrance to the entertainment scene on October 1st 1995, and has since spread its tentacles round Nigeria with the C.D production of the show. This show saw to the growth and popularity of many Nigerian stand-up comedians: Basket Mouth, I Go Die, Gordons, Omo Baba, Holly Mallam, AY, Klint D Drunk, I Go Save, Gandoki, Okey Bakassi, Seyi Law, Princess, Mandy, Lepacious Bose, and Helen Paul (aka tatafo), etc.

The concern of this paper is the representation of women in the art of stand-up comedy. The basis of our concern centres around the power use by stand-up comedy as popular culture experience and object to create behavioural changes.¹ Our fear however is that some stand-up comic heightened the already existing moral panic in Nigeria.

Stan Cohen labels the 1970s subculture as moral panic when he posits that at a particular time in every society there is always a period of moral panic. Cohen explains that during this period (moral panic) "condition, episode, person or group of persons" emerge with contrary values to societal values and culture. He states further that this contrary move is often stereotypical and they are transported by the mass media. At a state of moral panic, stakeholders – spiritual leaders, writers, politicians and morally upright persons of such society fight to retain the society's values. If they – moralists – prevail such society is restored otherwise the society deteriorates. "Moral panic has real measurable effects in the form of individual behaviour, social behaviour, and governmental policy" (cf. Brien and Imre 80). It is

the negative effect of moral panic (packaged in popular culture object) on the society that births this paper. We panic because stand-up comedy, which we earlier established as a popular culture, is tending towards inducing negative behavioural changes with its morally bankrupt jokes.

On the parallel between consumption of morally bankrupt media and decadent behaviour, David Grossman, a U.S army lieutenant and psychologist in his book, *On killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*, draws our attention to the negative influence of videogame on youth. He narrates the story of a fourteen-year old boy in Paducah Kentucky who fired eight shots, hitting eight people in the head. When interrogated, the fourteen-year old who had never used a pistol before said he was an avid player of videogame (Brien and Imre 99). The example may be an extreme case even as Grossman noted but there are many subtle yet dangerous effects of violence the media has on youth and the community at large.

Yibo Koko, one of the foremost modern Nigerian standup comedians, speaks of the relevance of standup comedy: “I do not just say jokes; I send message through them. I use my jokes as a vehicle for social re-orientation” (Onogu 361). Yobo seems to have an understanding of himself as an artist with his social responsibility to the society. Sadly, many contemporary stand-up comedians seem to have no clue of their ability to represent a society. Most of the jokes of comedians today are filled with negative stereotypes that are capable of instigating violence ranging from ethnic to religious to gender. These stereotypes present themselves as quick punchlines for them. The thrust of this paper is a feminist reading of I Go Die's performance. We are concerned with the representation, rather than misrepresentation, of women in his performance.

Women Representation

Representation is not just a matter of mirrors, reflections, key-holes. Somebody is making them, and somebody is looking at them, through a complex array of means and conventions. Nor do representations simply exist on canvas, in books, on photographic paper or on screens: they have a genesis in material production. They are more 'real' than the reality they are said to represent or reflect. All of these factors somehow straddle the commonsense divide between fiction and fact, fantasy and reality (Kappeler 484).

Nelmes defines film as “re-presentation of images” (221). Feminist movement, aware of the ability of film to represent images, has long begun to query the image of women represented in film. It became conventional wisdom to regard mainstream media as the window to the world since its portrayal of the world is assumed to be true. However, in the 1970s feminism began to question the media of film in particular. They observed that the media is a tool in the hand of institutionalized patriarchy. Its portrayal of women is narrow and often negative. Through stereotypic representation of woman the media enforce patriarchal order. Women are generally presented as passive relying on their beauty while the men are allotted active roles and in-charge of the public sphere.

One can say that this discovery (stereotypic representation of women) birthed feminist film theory. Feminist film theorists were concerned that the misrepresentation of women in film will continue to limit societal expectation of women. Many films of that time restricted women to the private sphere (stay home mum) and presented as inferior to men while in reality a lot of women had joined the work force. Theorists began to study film from psychoanalytic perspective. And so the 'male gaze' was an angle to the study. The starting point for feminist film theorists was with the 'male gaze' which was used to explain how cinema and film represented women as docile. This concept explains that the male is the spectator while the female body is the spectacle.

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determine male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure which is styled accordingly .The structure of pleasure, looking and pleasure-in- looking are ones that are definitively male: male takes pleasure in looking, while women are those to- be – looked –at. The result of such a structure is that males assume an active role in process of looking and pleasure, while women assume a passive role: women are the objects of pleasure,; whose role in the structure is that of being looked at. .. It is as though women exist in order to satisfy the desires and pleasure of men (Rushton & Bettinson 71-72).

Laura Mulvey one the foremost feminist film theorists in a classical article titled “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (first published in 1975) posits that the male gaze is scopophilia (a word used in Freudian's psychoanalytic theory). Mulvey emphasises the need to evaluate patriarchal viewpoint in cinema that positions

women as the pleasure for men. This pleasure is what she calls scopophilia or 'male gaze'.

She further states that scopophilia can be identified in two areas: first, voyeurism – scopophilia derived from sexual attraction. It centres on the erotic and film seems to present itself as a perfect venue for this illicit act as the cinema encloses the audience in a dark room. The second scopophilia is from narcissistic – scopophilia from ego. Scopophilia, Mulvey argues, is always with the male who is the pivot of the film and often the hero; who is often presented as full of potentials audience looks up to and wants to be.

Mulvey stresses that the power of the cinema is so sturdy that it can serve as a momentary brainwash for its audience (Nelms 229). Since the woman is perpetually presented as an erotic icon the audience chances of viewing women in the society as such is a high possibility. Mulvey's study recognizes that women are “erotic object for the characters in the story and erotic object for spectator” (Nelms 230).

In her classical article on women representation titled “Women's Cinema as Counter Cinema” (1973), Claire Johnston argues that mainstream cinema portrays a very narrow perspective of women as often stereotypes where 'women' is spectacle and never portrayed as 'women as women'. She concludes by advancing for an alternative – a feminist film practice which will challenge traditional film making (cf. Nelms 229).

I Go Die's (IGD) Performance

We extracted three of IGD's jokes for analysis. These jokes under study were collected from the performances of IGD in *Nite of a Thousand Laughs* (volumes 5 and 10). For the purpose of our analysis we transliterate and translate the extracted jokes. We believe this will give readers a better grip on our discourse. For the sake of this analysis, his jokes are numbered joke1, 2 and 3. His jokes, like most of his contemporaries, are told in Nigerian Pidgin English. We also have to state that in the course of this analysis we will be quoting or making reference to the transliterated version.

Joke 1

Transliteration	Translation
<p>IGD: One girl don nearly kill me like that now, one time as I come back from Europe I go jam this girl for supermarket spend-spend I think say I go fit insert my Sim for phone as I carry the girl reach house for night as I dey try to play small na hem the girl say</p> <p>Girl: leave me alone.</p> <p>IGD: before I know anything she say ‘</p> <p>Girl: I need Fanta.</p> <p>IGD: Fanta! I know say na treaten, na hem I carry Fanta give am around two. One thing be say if u carry woman go house na two things dey your mind, is either you be civil defen ce you no dey quickly sleep especially that time wey you never insert your sim card. You go dey vigilant to dey observe w etin dey happen. You go just form as if u dey sleep, na lie! As the girl know say I don de dey too forward as a Warri boy nah him the girl enter another level.</p> <p>Girl: Queen of the coast am coming to the river now.</p> <p>IGD: For my mind I say ee! na me, a whole I Go Die na me person won catch Mugu, na my house you won start queen of the coast na in I vex tear her shirt bobi come out I put mouth. As she still de do queen of the coast my mouth never still com’mot dere</p> <p>Girl: Queen of the coast somebody is disturbing me I don’t know if you can carry the person along.</p> <p>IGD: Na him I come start my own, queen of the coast am coming, am already there..., am already there! Queen of the coast, I have one pirated member with me here, na hem the girl say</p> <p>Girl: what do you think you are doing? Na him I tell her say come on..., open the river make I enter.</p>	<p>IGD: One girl nearly got me into trouble once. On my return from Europe, I met this girl at the supermarket. I lavished a lot on her hoping to have sex with her. So I took her to my apartment and initiated foreplay. The girl replied</p> <p>Girl: Leave me alone</p> <p>IGD: Soon she requested for Fanta. I knew she was up to some pranks, so I gave her Fanta. The deal is this – when you take a woman home to spend the night, you are always alert especially when you have not had sex with her yet. One may pretend to sleep but it’s only pretence. So as this girl discovered I was insisting on sex, she decided to play smart. She called out:</p> <p>Girl: Queen of the coast I’m coming to the river now.</p> <p>IGD: I thought to myself, do you think you can outsmart me? I got angry and tore her shirt, her breast popped out and I placed my mouth on it. While she was still trying to invoke the spirit of the queen of the coast I still had my mouth on her breast. She continued to call out:</p> <p>Girl: Queen of the coast someone is disturbing me, should I come along with the person?</p> <p>IGD: I responded, queen of the coast I’m coming, I’m already there. The girl asked what I was up to. I ordered her to open the river and let me in.</p>

Joke 2

Transliteration	Translation
<p>IGD: If you be girl, you dey here, somebody buy ticket for you enter the show, since you dey drink Malta Guinness please, the bible says give and you be given unto. If you know say you no go follow the boy comm ot, before the show finish find hem money for here, make u refund. No be say when he don carry you reach house you go say you are not in the mood. ehn!</p> <p>Trust Warri boy, just say am not in the mood, after he don buy you Gordon spark, suya, chicken, everything. Na that time he go laugh dey go London ehn!</p> <p>Warri Boy : E go come repeat wetin you talk.</p> <p>IGD: talk.</p> <p>Warri Boy: I... am... not... in the mood..., when you dey chop suya you dey in the mood ehn, When u dey drink Gordon spark you dey in the mood ehn, if you no dey in the mood, I dey in the mood abeg.</p>	<p>Any girl here that got her ticket paid for by a boy, and he also has been paying for your drink, the bible says give and it shall be given unto you. If you know you will not go home with the boy after the show, please return his money or else be willing to go home with him tonight and you had better be ready to have sex with him. If you go home with him not willing to have sex you should be ready for trouble; especially if he hails from Warri. And had bought you drinks and roasted chicken, he will ensure you get in the mood.</p>

Joke 3

Transliteration	Translation
<p>IGD: One tin wey I don notice, all these our Nigerian ladies dey too dey do one tin wey they make me laugh. Recently our president wife go Ghana go dey educate ladies.</p> <p>First Lady: This is the time you have to fight for your right, you don't have to allow your husband controlling your house, this is the time you have to stand as a woman.</p> <p>IGD: she tell dem say as from today make all the women dem, dey control their husband make dey cook for dem ,make dem go market for dem, dey do everything. After one week everybody come give testimony, Ghanaian woman come out.</p> <p>Ghanaian: when I get home I told my husband he will be responsible for cooking in the house, doing everything. First day nothing happen, the second day nothing, but thank God on the third day my husband went to the market he cooked</p> <p>IGD: they hail am, the South Africa woman came out same thing. When Nigeria woman come out dey don bandage her hand, her eyes dem take bandage cover one, na hem she say.</p> <p>Nigerian: Na wa o! When I reach house, I tell my husband o! the first day nothing happen, the second day nothing happen, the third day as I say make I open my mouth na kpo! I hear when I open my eyes say make I ask. The Doctor say, e don reach a week wey them admit me for here</p>	<p>There is something I noticed about Nigerian ladies that amuses me. Recently the first lady went to Ghana to educate ladies “This is the time you have to fight for your right, you don't have to allow your husband controlling your house, this is the time you have to stand as a woman”. She told the women that it was time for them to start controlling their husbands – make them cook, go to the market and do every house chore. A week later the women gathered to give situation report. The Ghanaian woman was first: “When I got home I told my husband he will take up the responsibility of cooking and every other chore in the house. Two days after he did not respond but thank God on the third day my husband went to the market and he cooked” All the women applauded. It was the turn of the south Africa woman. She came out and gave similar report to that of the Ghanaian. When it was the turn of the Nigerian woman she came out with bandage all over her hand and eye. She narrated her ordeal: “I told my husband when I got home; the first day nothing happened, the second day nothing happened, the third day as I was about to speak he hit me so hard that I was unconscious and hospitalized for a week.</p>

Challenging Negative Representation

Sex or sexual practices do not just exist out there, waiting to be represented; rather, there is a dialectical relationship between representational practices which construct sexuality, and actually sexual practices, each informing the other (Kappeler 483).

Our discourse on negative representation of woman in IGD's performances revolves around scopophilia and stereotypes – for both concepts seem to corroborate the rationale behind our unfolding discourse. Nelmes explains stereotype as:

a quick and easy way of labeling or categorizing the world around us and making it understandable. Stereotypes are learned but are by no means fixed yet are often resistant to change. They tend to restrict our understanding of the world and perpetuate beliefs that are often untrue or narrow (227).

For instance, the idea that women talk a lot is questionable. Studies have shown that people that are sanguine tend to talk a lot regardless of their sex or gender.

Richard Dyer points out that, stereotypes are complex and can be contradictory, stereotypes involve power play. The dominant group presents and moulds their ideologies as reality. They also construct identity for the marginal group. Through stereotype they enforce and maintain their thought pattern (Nelmes 261). To sum up on stereotypes their limiting perceptions are often exaggerated and unreliable. Our second concept, scopophilia, is the sexual pleasure gained from looking. On the issue of stereotypes, IGD binds the male's identity around finance; his status is improved by his economic advantage. We can read jokes 1 and 2 at two levels: one, it gives phallus-power to the man. The phallus given to men in both cases is monetary while the women have none. In the first joke, he just returns from Europe – a sign of affluence and riches in Nigeria. To further build the male status he shops in a supermarket, which is another symbol of affluence (for in this part of the world it is believed that only the 'well-to-dos' shop in supermarkets; the masses use the 'open market'). So he meets this girl and lavished money on her and in return he gets to take the girl home. The implication of this status is that any economically disadvantaged male feels somehow less of a man. The general idea sold out here is this: a man's money should buy him sex.

On second reading, the stereotype that women are materialistic and can always be bought over by money is upheld. This stereotype is misleading and far from

reality. While there are ladies that trade their bodies for material gain, the ones we seem to come in contact with more regularly are professionals, traders and skilled women. So the question is: why is this reality not reflected in IGD's jokes? Or can't one humour his/her audience with realities? The only obvious factor responsible for this is stereotype.

From Joke 1 and 2 it is obvious that the comic believes that the female has to be financially incapacitated, thus depending on the male whose function is to generate money: "The one wey vex me na after I don spin one babe don spend-spend..." In his ideal of a relationship between the opposite sexes, it is the male role to provide resources to the female while the female should reciprocate by offering her body in exchange. In cases where the female would not oblige it is the man's role to enforce it on her. By implication, it is exclusively the male's right to determine when sexual intercourse should occur: "... I vex tear her shirt boobi come out I put mouth, as she still dey do queen of the coast my mouth never still com'mot dere, ...na him I tell her say come on open the river make I enter". This is a common phenomenon in the Nigerian culture. In traditional Nigerian setting it is the male's sacred role to initiate sexual advances in marriage relationship. But with modernity, casual sex has become rampant; unfortunately the contemporary male still transfers the traditional right of the husband-initiator of sex into the causal relation. Thus the male initiates sex and the female is expected to oblige; in cases where the female refuses it often leads to rape. IGD persistently presents the initiation of sex as the male's outright functions and in cases where the female will not oblige, he implies that she deserve to be rapes: "...No be say when he don carry you reach house you go say you are not in the mood eh! Trust Warri boys... if you no dey in the mood, I dey in the mood abeg".

In both jokes 1 and 2, IGD eventually rapes the ladies as they would not yield to his sexual advances. This is a true reflection of the Nigerian lady's dilemma: being in a relationship with a male implies readiness to have sexual intercourse at his bidding. Simone de Beauvoir in her book, *The Second Sex*, discusses this age-long misrepresentation of the female body: "thus she is called 'the sex', by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex – absolute sex, no less" (qtd. Young 439). Misrepresentation of the female body brings us to scopophilia-male gaze.

The female body, in jokes 1 and 2, is explicitly presented as sex, nothing but sex. She is doled out as a spectacle to the viewing pleasure of the male the spectator. Both jokes are driven by desire – erotic one and this desire is directed to the female. She thus serves as an erotic icon to the comic and the audience while the male is

presented as a hero on a mission (his mission is to have sexual intercourse) who eventually conquers – as he ends up being fulfilled. Stand-up comedy is then used as a platform for illicit voyeur. Although the erotic picture here is not visual, the brain is capable of translating the narrated into a visual form.

The structures of pleasure, looking and pleasure-in-looking are ones that are definitively male: male takes pleasure in looking, while women are those to-be-looked-at. The result of such a structure is that the male assumes an active role in the process of looking and pleasure while the woman assumes a passive role: women are the objects of pleasure; whose role in the structure is that of being looked at (Rushton and Bettinson 72). Mulvey's diagnosis of the cinema of the 1970s still finds relevance in contemporary discourse. The structure of pleasure whereby the male takes an active role looking while the female is the object looked at best describes what IGD does with his first two jokes. Not just the overt display of the woman's body but its presentation as spectacle. "I got angry and tore her shirt, her breast popped out and I placed my mouth on it. While she was still trying to invoke the spirit of the queen of the coast I still had my mouth on her breast". The structure of the relationship constructed between both sexes is strictly sexual. This is unhealthy as it builds audiences especially young viewers to believe that sex is the only value that can be derived from male-female relationship and this has grievous implication on the younger population as it can help form part of their philosophy of life.

Implication of Negative Representation

Joke 3 is either a calculated attempt to ridicule the female emancipation campaign or a sheer display of ignorance of the women's plight. At the centre of the various women emancipation campaigns is equality in treatment of male and female. Women over the years suffer from inequality in rights, access to social and economic resource, and leisure (Igube 6). All of the women's movements that have emerged over the years question the subordinate stance advocating for equality in access to the nation's resources by both sexes. IGD reduces this reasonable demand by the womenfolk to women seeking to oppress their husbands; he is not alone in this ignorance as it is a common misunderstanding within the Nigerian community. The media and clergies often fuel this ignorance as they present gender equality as women seeking to oppress men. This is a misrepresentation on two folds: one of the woman's movement, and of Nigeria men.

At the first level, he uses the first lady's voice as symbolic of women's movement. In his imagination, women's right is about women seeking to dominate

their husbands. Let's hear his construction of women movement ideology:

This is the time you have to fight for your right, you don't have to allow your husband controlling your house; this is the time you have to stand as a woman'. She tell dem say as from today make all the women dem dey control their husband make dem dey cook for dem, make them go market for dem de, do everything

A person hearing this is likely to mistake gender equality campaign as emancipation for the women and enslavement for the men. Misrepresentation of this nature is capable of discouraging women from joining the women's movement as they do not want to be labelled rebels; it can also incite violence in the home. IGD also succeeds in creating a gloomy future for gender equality in Nigeria as the Nigerian woman records failure unlike her counterparts in other climes who have emerged victorious. He scares the Nigerian woman from joining her voice with others of her contemporaries in the continent and the world in the fight against women's oppression. He implies that she will meet with violence and thereby presenting a disconsolate future for women emancipation in Nigeria.

When Nigeria woman come out they don bandage her hand. Her eyes dem take bandage cover one, na him she say, 'Na wa o! when I reach house I tell my husband o, the first day nothing happen, the second day nothing happen, the third day as I say make I open my eye na po I hear when I open my eyes say make I ask, the doctor says e don reach a week wey them admit me for here

At a second level, his construction of the Nigerian male is negative and monstrous. The Nigerian husband is the only one amongst the three (Ghanaian, South African and Nigerian) to hit his wife – even to unconsciousness. Tales like this send a wrong signal to a foreign audience about the nation at large. Manthia Diawara narrates his ordeal travelling to Nigerian by road; on his trip he got a lot of negative feedback about West African countries with Nigeria at the top of the chart. A boy in Togo told Diawara authoritatively that Nigeria is not for normal people like him; the boy recalled how his uncle told him that whenever he was coming to Nigeria he had to go nude pretending to be mad:

My uncle, he de go plenty of times. He told me over there, de robbers and de policemen, na de same people. They have knives and machine guns. When de catch a traveller, they take your suitcase, your money, your clothes and your shoes. They leave you naked in de forest, or kill you and leave your body for de animals for chop (Diawara 164).

Only then he said he can escape the hostility of Nigerians. The boy's story was supported by the corrupt Benin police officers at the border who claim that they are 'nicer' than the Nigerian officers at the border: "we are nice people here in Benin. We just ask you for something small; chop money for the family" (167). They told him that the Nigerian officers after extorting money from him will call their armed robber friends to seize his car and probably kill him. Diawara reminisces on all the Nollywood films he had watched and fear of all possibilities griped him. "Nollywood movies passed through my mind again and I imagined myself being dragged out of the car, like in the movies *Terrible Twins*...I was being blind folded, tied to a tree and shot dead, like one of the victims in films such as *Abuja Boys*, *Boiling Point* or *I want your Wife*" (168). This is the kind of influence arts in whatever media wield over the mind. Practitioners often lose consciousness of role in representing people. If IGD was aware of the power wielded by his acts he would probably have created a better image of the Nigerian man. It seems a conscious effort by the comic to reinforce the status quo and perpetuate gender inequality, thereby leading Nigerians (the woman in particular) to submitting to ignorance and fear.

Conclusion

Every artwork mirrors the society. The artist, through his or her work, presents their perceptions of societal happenings. Like most artists, the comedian gathers his material from daily happenings and makes jokes out of them. In support of this stance is the audience's reaction. As he tells his jokes, he attracts the audience's attention and consent. In stand-up comedy when a joke is unacceptable the audience heckles (although the audience may heckle not because the joke has no basis on their experience but because it was not humorously dished out). Laughter signifies that the audience understand the joke and can identify with the jokes. In our case, the laughter of IGD's audience to all of his jokes depicts an approval of his material; it is not considered offensive by his audience, thus he is applauded. Although some members of the audience may not agree with the content, they may not be able to resist the laughter stimulated by the humour. By extension, the general acceptance of

these jokes connotes the audience disposition towards gender imbalance. The creation of such gender insensitive jokes shows the level of awareness available to the comic as a Nigerian. The acceptance of these jokes is another sad reality of the existing gender gap among the Nigerian populace. This comedian uses his performance as a medium for perpetuating the already existing gender gap.

Like we discussed earlier, there is a tiny resemblance between IGD's female and the real female. We cannot deny the fact that a fraction of female exist out there that would trade themselves for material gain. Conversely, it is even more real that better percentage of female engages in productive labour to earn a living. Our argument, therefore, is that this representation of females is limiting, misleading and has its basis on stereotypes and one cannot base one's reasoning on stereotypes because they are often not true.

At another level is the scopophilia nature of the jokes which is capable of poisoning and distorting young minds. Some parents attend this show with their children; teenagers have free access to the live performance or the compact disc which is sold without restraint. IGD's overtly sexual theme can arouse the interest for casual sex on youth audience and viewers. In conclusion, we propose that researchers can help cob the moral poison. As scholars keep writing on negative and poor representation of women in literature, we notice a gradual and steady transformation. Negative female characters (the idle gossip, quarrelsome prostitute, etc.) are replaced with positive ones – visible, thinking, hardworking, peaceful female characters. This success recorded in literature can also be recorded in stand-up comedy if scholarly attention and energy is channelled towards this direction.

Note

¹As a popular culture experience, we refer to its live performance while as object we talk about the records in compact disc (CD).

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PRESENTATION OF FEMINIST ISSUES IN ONWUEME'S *THEN SHE SAID IT* AND UTOH-EZEAJUGH'S *NNEORA: AN AFRICAN DOLL'S HOUSE*

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Abstract

*The paper focuses on feminist issues raised and the manner of presentation in Tess Onwueme's *Then She Said It* and Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh's *Nneora: an African Doll's House*. The analysis of the plays reveals some traits that negate women's quest for emancipation exemplified in some actions of the female characters as they seek emancipation in Onwueme's *Then She Said It*. These include unethical and violent actions by women to achieve their objectives. However, Utoh-Ezeajugh's *Nneora* presents women's quest for justice without being against institutions which are of importance to women and the African society (motherhood and wifehood) while rejecting those which present socio-political inequities'. The paper recommends a balanced presentation of the two genders and avoidance of extreme actions in the works of female playwrights. There is certainly the need for quality assurance in literary works that seek female emancipation in order to achieve this balance.*

Introduction

In contemporary times, there has been a global quest for women emancipation due to the patriarchal nature of the human society which has always been largely oppressive of the female gender. The declaration of the United Nations Decade for Women from 1975 to 1985 played a great role in the explosion of interest in women related issues in Nigeria and many other parts of the world. Women have been playing active roles in the quest to occupy their rightful positions as the equal of men. One of the avenues women have been conspicuous is the literacy realm including dramatic works.

In Nigeria, radical female playwrights have focused much attention on various issues that have contributed to the oppression of the Nigerian woman and ways these can be overcome. Examples of such playwrights are Tess Onwueme, Julie Okoh, Stella Oyedepo, Irene Salami-Agunloye and Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh. However, in seeking the emancipation of women, some of the female playwrights have exhibited some weaknesses that need to be cautioned against so women do not repeat the same mistakes men have been accused of. There is certainly need for quality

assurance in literary works by playwrights seeking for female emancipation.

According to <http://www.gvardiannewsngr.com/quality>, assurance involves the systematic activities implemented in a creative work so that its significant benefit for the work would be fulfilled. Quality assurance is further measured by its benefit or purpose and acceptance by an individual, group and community. The implication of quality assurance in women's effort at emancipation through dramatic work includes not defeating its objectives by being able to carry along the audience/reader. Using an extreme position would work against this. The view of Adebayo, Oyenike and Adesoji (147-151) is that quality is that which best satisfies and exceeds customers' needs and wants. It refers to the standard of a phenomenon that when compared to others in its category reflects how good or bad the product is. This means that efforts must be made by female playwrights seeking women emancipation to produce works that are not lower in standards than other plays written for different purposes. Quality has also been defined as “that which makes or helps to make anything that it is: a distinguishing property: Characteristics: Attributes: Level of excellence: Product of high quality: Superiority moral characteristics...” (LWD 781).

To be able to attain this standard quality assurance implies enhancing and improving the process that is used to create the end result. It is therefore important that feminist dramatists listen to complaints made about their manner of presentation of feminist issues and improve on their works. If these dramatic works are meant to influence human thinking and behaviour and bring about pivotal changes in society's attitude towards women then there is need for adherence to standards which will satisfy the audience. This means that it is not everything that is acceptable in the quest for female emancipation through dramatic works.

The analysis below of *Then she said It* by Tess Onwueme and *Nneora: an African Doll's House* by Tracie Utoh-Ezaujugih brings to the fore some of the traits that negate women's quest for emancipation through dramatic works and others that have been helpful. The focus is feminist issues raised and the manner of presentation of these issues in both plays.

Then She Said It

The play focuses on the environmental degradation of the oil rich Niger-Delta communities of Nigeria particularly the effect on women and youths of the region. According to Ewwierhoma (159-160, 161-171), the play opens with a prologue at the market square, the haven of the disempowered, a scene of wounded women and youths, after a government sponsored raid against them. Tired of running they

decide to stand up for their rights. Movement one symbolically portrays a game of monopoly engaged in by the chief exploiters of the land: Atlantic, the white multinational, Kainji, the greedy traditional official and Ethiope the unfeeling and equally greedy traditional chief. The monopoly game symbolically portrays their attitude of depriving other people of the opportunity to benefit from the rich resources of the land. Oshun, the barmaid makes herself readily available to Atlantic as a pleasure tool. However, Oshun is actually an undercover agent for a group of women who have decided to stop the pollution of their land and of their bodies. They protest the environmental degradation and the fact that they are now reduced to begging in their own land.

The play exposes a litany of the atrocities perpetrated by multinationals towards issues that affect their host communities. Atlantic's cynicism and brazen haughtiness towards his Hungarian hosts is a case in point. He makes fun of his host community and proposes a toast to the Jesse Delta explosion (an actual event) in which more than two hundred and fifty persons were burnt to death (Odey 137)

Women lead the struggle to draw attention to the plight of the region. One of these problems is scarcity of petroleum products in a region where they are produced. Movement three in the play focuses on this point. A crowd queues up for kerosene and fuel at a petrol station that has the sign "No Fuel". The people are not convinced because of the usual practice of hoarding the commodities for sale at higher prices to affluent businessmen. They refuse to disperse even when the police come in and brutalize them. The situation is worsened as the fuel attendant attempts to sell fuel to a businessman who has bribed him. The women resist this and lead in looting the fuel products. Koko and Obida, the leaders of the unrest get arrested by the police. But they are later set free as a result of the police being bribed by the elderly women.

Another problem of the Niger Delta region highlighted in the play is that of environmental pollution. This is clearly seen in the following conversation among different characters in the play:

- Obida: And look around you. See? They're not even killing us alone. The trees too!
- Niger: Our farmlands!
- Benue: And rivers
- Niger: Polluting
- Niger: Polluting the land, the rivers, our entire environment...
- Women: All polluted

...

Obida: They've killed everything with their oil pollution and spillage. We cannot breathe clean air. Fishes die or get fried in the polluted simmering rivers. Water-water everywhere. But we have no clean water to drink. And now we lose the land too? (Onwueme 15)

The above conversation draws attention to the fact that oil exploration in the Niger-Delta region has a lot of negative effects on the people particularly in the aspect of environmental degradation. The playwright states that:

I am trying to create awareness, assert our rights in terms of our environment. I am creating a forum for dialogue among those in power for them to listen to the cries of the widow, the unemployed youths and the rural dwellers that are overburdened by the corrosive effect of pollution (qtd Odey 136).

The pollution of the environment in the play leads to loss of sources of income such as farmlands and rivers creating unemployment. Another effect is death of young people involved in riots meant to protest the exploitation of the people.

The play also focuses on the issue of unemployment. The situation is poignantly portrayed when a large crowd turns up armed with their credentials in response to a notice for the hiring of a security guard for the oil club. Atlantic, a Whiteman representative of the multinational forces reacts to the situation cynically:

Atlantic: My Gaaaaad! Look. The whole damned country is at the gate.
Waiting. Waiting for handouts! (Sighs).

Atlantic: Just one vacancy for a guard. And they're all here? The whole nation? One hundred and twenty million of them? Goooolie!
These people make me sick (Onwueme 58).

The crowd is made up mostly of young people but elderly women and men are also included. An example is a man of 65 years who laments that he had spent his entire youth serving the country. He had fought in India and then joined the railway company after the war. But since his retirement he was yet to get his pension.

One of the major problems of the youths in the play is that of unemployment. The youths who are among the crowd that turns up for the job of a security guard

attempt to burn their credentials which they regard as being useless due to their inability to get job. They cry that their education is worthless. Examples include a man, who states that he is thirty something years old and graduated from the university five years ago but he is still searching for a job. The major young female characters also have the same problem. Obida is a former teacher who got laid off. Koko got admission into the university to read law but could not afford the school fees. She laments the situation of the youths as follows:

Koko: ... five good years of my youth, I struggled, studied and suffered to get admitted into the university. What use is it now? What use? (Hysterical) all those thousands and millions of educated youths who struggled to gain the education and find jobs? Where are the youths? On the streets! (p.32).

Similarly, Oshun whose role also includes that of prostitution reveals to Atlantic's (one of her lovers) surprise that she has two certificates. But she complains that they are useless due to unemployment. She states:

If not for this condition we're in? No jobs ... no amenities ... no rights ... (sighs) just this permanent condition of joblessness. Ah! You think I'll be here hawking my precious body to earn a living? (p. 53).

The play also focuses on the activities of the chief exploiters of the people. These are Atlantic, the oil company expatriate chief, a government official and a local chief. These people defraud the country and pay little attention to the lives and needs of the people. Atlantic treats the people with disdain. He makes fun of his host community. In his opinion African life is cheap (pp. 5, 6). He even proposes a toast to the Jesse-Delta explosion. At the beginning of the play Atlantic is seen engaging in a game of monopoly with his local collaborators and playing amorously with Oshun while the people are preoccupied with the struggle for economic survival.

Later on in the play he suggests building a nursery day-care centre and clinics for their dogs while rejecting the idea of building industries to create jobs for the people and a general hospital. But he does not mind employing the people to work in the dogs' day-care centre. This clearly shows his condescending attitude towards his hosts. His major concern is to make huge profits for himself and his company no matter the costs on the people. Despite being in a position to bring about conditions

that will open doors to women and youths of the land to live useful lives, he misuses the position.

The local chief is depicted as a very greedy personality. He asks Atlantic to pay the money meant for compensation of his people directly to him rather than to the community. Later he demands that half of the money be paid to him and half to the community. He also indulges in women and child trafficking.

Kainji as the government official is equally corrupt. He suggests a deal with Atlantic as follows:

Kainji: Pump a million barrels or more a day. No records. Ships waiting at sea. Sale sealed. Paid in dollars or pound sterling overseas into your account and mine. No hassles. Just that we'll have to displace more villagers (p. 38).

Later on in the play he also agrees with Atlantic and the local chief to tax the people further. This is to be done by erecting a toll-gate on an expressway as a means of collecting tolls from the people.

However, the play majorly focuses on the world of women, their plights and actions they take to rise above their oppressions including confrontations of those in power. Women in the play are victims of the exploitation of the people and of the land in various ways. They get raped, killed, and spend much time queuing for kerosene and also get brutalized in the process. They beg for crusts to enable them perform their socially assigned roles of wives, mothers and daughters. Examples of these female victims include Obida who lost her parents due to the problems in the Niger Delta region. Her father got killed probably in a riot situation while the mother was a victim of oil pipeline blast. Obida herself is a victim of women trafficking as her uncle, the local chief gives her out to a white man in exchange for a range rover. The white man passes her over to his dog.

Koko another female victim gets raped in turns by soldiers, police, Atlantic and the government official as she goes about hawking fruits (p. 30). Later the chief also offers her to Atlantic in exchange for a land cruiser. As a result of these experiences and unemployment which have made her become a petty trader she states that she has become robbed of life and dignity. She decides to take to prostitution abroad. She declares:

I too I'm fixing my own price (Deliberately) I am going to Europe... to

Italy where the business is hot... and I too will sell like hotcake. He said it, the great thief... I mean the chief, our leader... (p. 31).

Oshun is another example of a young woman who takes to prostitution in order to survive though well educated. She is unemployed. She also uses her amorous relationship with Atlantic to obtain information that helps the women activists' cause. She has become so hardened due to the conditions that she is prepared to do anything to overcome their oppressors. Oshun displays the same kind of boldness and courage that Titubi exhibits in Osofisan's *Morountodun*.

The elderly women in the land such as Nigeria and Benue also have their tales of woes. They are also victims of rape:

Niger: (Frustrated) Are they never tired of ruining...

Obida: Killing us

Benue: At Odi?

Women: They raped and killed women!

Niger: in the land?

Women: the raped... tore up Aaaaaah!

Benue: And still ...

Women: They're raping, selling and killing us (p. 30).

Niger has more personal losses including the deaths of her husband and son. She narrates her experiences as follows:

Niger: My person, my name is Niger.

I am the leader of market women. I used to be strong, beautiful. See me now. See me now. See what I have become because of what they have done to me. To us. Abused. Mother raped. Daughter raped. And raped. Son slaughtered. Husband roasted. Alive (signs heavily) my body aches. My heart bleeds. But I'm not alone. Though we suffer together, each one of us here do have our own scars. Telling our own peculiar stories. (Silence) (Onwueme 112).

The play emphasises the plight of women in communities whose environment has become greatly polluted. It also underscores the treatment of women as sex objects. Women both young and old are raped by soldiers and some are also objects of women

trafficking. Sexual abuse is among the highest forms of violence against women. Nosike (58) believes that sexual harassment and sex stereotypes are possibly the most affective propaganda of the patriarchal status quo. They are among the most firmly entrenched obstacles to the elimination of discrimination and are largely responsible for the denigration of the role and potential of women in the society. Nosike also states that:

The degree of sexism is still high in our society. The implication is the systematic oppression of women and perpetration of violence against them because of their gender. In this system emphasis is placed on male privilege and power. Negative social messages about women prevail in popular culture and many women suffer low self-esteem as a result. Sexism is practiced not only through economic inequality but also through the perpetration and the threat of violence and sexually based abuse. Sexual abuse is a derogatory treatment of women. It also projects an attitude of men regarding women as being inferior to them (58).

Nneoma: an African Doll's House

The play focuses on Nneoma a woman who makes a lot of sacrifices for the success of her marriage. When she meets her husband, Ikenna, he is an unemployed graduate. She helps him get a job with a bank and when he later develops an illness that necessitates a surgery abroad she influences the bank manager to release the money needed for the operation. She also sells off her shop to enable her raise enough money for the surgery. Fortunately, the operation is successful and the husband becomes the sole bread winner in the family. However, Nneoma's benefactor, Osita who becomes Ikenna's boss, is a man she had an affair with before her marriage. He had helped to establish her as successful businesswomen and is also the one that approves the release of the money for Ikenna's surgery. Unfortunately; he gives the condition that Nneoma sleeps with him one more time for him to approve the release of the money. In desperation she agrees but without intention to keep to the bargain. However, Osita later blackmails her. He insists on the agreement being carried out otherwise he would expose their past relationship to Ikenna and lie that they are still carrying out an affair. Being a faithful wife, Nneoma refuses and Osita carries out his threat. Ikenna's believes him despite Nneoma's effort to make him understand the truth. This lack of trust greatly affects Nneoma's dignity as a wife and she decides to walk out of the marriage. She is also unhappy that Ikenna only agrees to have a change of mind when

he discovers that she's pregnant with twin boys after they had had four daughters. However, she leaves room for reconciliation if a miracle happens that Ikenna undergoes a change of attitude and becomes a different man.

Feminist Issues Raised in the Play

The play portrays Ikenna as a male chauvinist who does not show adequate appreciation to Nneora for all she has done for him neither does he accord her the respect she deserves. He treats her in a condescending manner almost throughout the play. In his opinion, he is her lord and master. For instance, he refers to the shop the wife owns before his ill-health as a shack compared to his position as an executive in a merchant bank. He also states:

Ikenna: And now I own you. You are solely mine; shop, body and soul. So honey, why are we arguing about something that belongs to me? (Utoh Ezeajugh 32)

Ikenna also refuses the wife to touch his car (a car he owns due to the job she enables him to get). His reason is that she drives like a typical woman and that cars were never meant for women (p.35).

Nneora is greatly hurt by the husband's lack of trust in her when she explains her relationship with her past lover, Osita, and the reason she had lied that she would sleep with him though married to Ikenna, particularly as Ikenna changes his mind about divorcing her because he finds out that she is pregnant with male twins. She decides to end the marriage. She declares that she would no longer force herself to stay in an institution which takes everything a woman has to offer and gives nothing in return. That she has really suffered in the home (pp.120-121).

Another negative attitude Ikenna has towards the female gender is his lack of appreciation of his four female children. When his wife reminds him of the need to pick the children from her sister's house where they had gone to spend some days, he suggests that they should be sent to the village and that their presence in the house could be distracting as he needs a quiet environment for his work. He refers to them as noisy girls who make the house unliveable. His wife comments that his attitude towards the children changed after Ikenna's uncle had paid them a visit. This attitude is contrary to what he states he would do if his wife gives birth to a boy as reflected in the following conversation with his wife:

Ikenna: I can't wait to know the sex of the baby. If the baby is a boy, I will throw an extravagant Christmas party. In fact, I will fly the whole family to Nicon Noga Hilton Hotel Abuja.

Nneora: Ikenna, I thought you said we should not waste money.

Ikenna: Any amount spent in celebrating my son's arrival is worth the price.

Another male in the play, who maltreats his wife leading to the breakdown of their marriage, is Osita. His wife, Linda, got pregnant for him when she was in form two in the secondary school. He was forced to marry her and later he felt he was below his level. He resorted to abusing her physically as well as bringing in other women to the house. At a point, Linda could no longer bear the maltreatment and therefore walks out of the marriage.

Generally, the area of emphasis in the play is women's subjugation in the marriage institution. This is a major aspect that women have been oppressed in the society, hence a common thematic pre-occupation of female writers. Examples of such dramatic works include: Zulu Sofola's *The Sweet Trap* Stella Oyedpo's *The Rebellion of the Bumpy Chested*, Julie Okoh's *The Mask* and *In the Fullness of Time* and Irene Salami-Agunloye's *Sweet Revenge*. There are also many prose works that focus on women's unhappiness in the marriage institution. Examples are the works of Nigeria's first Nigerian female writer, Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* and *Idu*, Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*, *The Joys of Motherhood* and *The Slave Girl*. Other examples are Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Ifeoma Chinwuba's *Waiting for Maria*.

The above literary works portray marriage as an institution that enslaves and debases women and hinders their progress in life. For instance, Oriaku's (84) view is that women in Emecheta's writings are seldom happy and their marriages are rarely successful. Even when they have a career, marriage remains a major constraint to their full realization. Similarly, Adebayo (46) asserts that African female characters in literary works especially self-realized women, hardly relate well to their men in marriages, the picture of the victim and the victimiser, of the oppressed and oppressor is all pervasive. These views project the need to create a conducive environment for women in the marriage institution, taking cognizance of the rights of women to be treated with dignity and their need for self-realization even in marriages.

A second issue focused on in *Nneora: An African Doll's House*, which is preference for the male child over the female, is also a common area of concern for

female writers. Families usually go an extra length to ensure that they have male children. Women who give birth to only female children are looked upon as barren. Okoh (63-64) states that the desperation for male children can be such that, at times, morally abominable practices like bloodshed, deceit, incest and baby trafficking are involved. Okoh further gives examples of plays that focus on the issue. They include Fred Agbeyegbe's *The King Must Dance Naked*, Sam-Ukala's *The Slave Wife* and Eyamazie Okpokam's *The Heritor*. The above works describe the anxiety of families to have male heirs. Okoh (64) also states that no matter the potentials of female children, no matter their educational or economic achievements they are still relegated to the background with preference given to the male children when it comes to taking serious decisions or performing certain tasks on behalf of the family.

The two plays analysed in this paper depict the fact that women's quest for emancipation is genuine and necessary for the progress of the society. This is contrary to Nwankwo's position (170-184) that female writers should focus attention on issues of humanity rather than feminist issues as one whose house is on fire does not pursue rats. Females are about half of the population of the Nigerian society. Issues that negate their progress have consequences on the society as a whole. Even in contemporary Nigeria, such issues abound in the cultural, religious and economic aspects of the society.

Manner of Presentation of Feminist Issues in *Then She Said It*

It is commendable that in Onwueme's *Then She Said It* women are not docile but lead even men to bring about positive changes in their situation. Women raise their voices to protest against the various injustices meted against the people of the Niger Delta region particularly as they affect the women. They also engage in various activities to overcome their plight. However, there are some extreme positions in the play which need to be cautioned against in order to bring about quality assurance in dramatic works depicting women's quest for emancipation. In the play, while women are role models in the aspect of taking actions to bring about positive changes in their situation some of their actions are unethical. For example, in their struggle the women engage in breaking of pipelines and setting them ablaze, and kidnapping of officials of oil companies. The negative implication of this is that the demand for justice in the Niger Delta region has been hijacked by criminal elements. They utilize their so-called struggle to enrich themselves as they usually demand huge sums of money for their kidnapped victims. Their victims include elderly men and women and innocent children who have nothing to do with oil exploration.

In addition, one of the leading women activists, Oshun, is a prostitute who works as a waitress at a club house. She utilizes her relationship with Atlantic (the oil company boss) and her regular presence at the clubhouse to collect information for the women activist. Though it may be argued that she and Obida resorted to prostitution due to oppression and exploitation they faced, the end does not justify the means and anti-social behaviours should not be encouraged as means for female emancipation.

Furthermore, women in the play are very militant. They agree with Oshun's suggestion to do something shocking and terrible to bring national and international attention to their cause. They carry this out by setting an oil pipeline ablaze and kidnapping the deputy director of the oil company, Atlantic and a government official. This projection has been critiqued by Angya (33) as follows:

Part of the problem female playwrights face is that of portraying their characters as extremely radical and in the end making them to appear excessively domineering, austere and almost Spartan (Tobrise 31) The effect sometimes makes the women appear as revolting against their femininity and advocating masculinity as the ultimate goal to achieving the much sought for equality.

Angya's view underscores the point that women can still achieve emancipation and still retain their feminist qualities. These feminist qualities are needed in the view of Ilesanmi (38) to make life meaningful and to follow for the natural continuity in the world created in pairs of several shades and colours. Ilesanmi further states that we cannot judge the nature of women to be otherwise without creating a discordant note in the music of life.

Another issue is that almost all the males are portrayed negatively. These include white oil company workers represented by Atlantic, a corrupt government official and a local chief. The view of Odey (142) is that these males are stereotypes of corrupt greedy and phallogocentric males who not only connive with multinationals to pollute the environment and violate their women, but also to siphon the nation's resources into personal coffers. Though this projection is done in order to depict female oppression in a male-dominated society, it amounts to the same fault women have accused men of in their plays. The opinion of Methuselah (42) is that women's reaction to sexist plays by men is the production of plays that completely obliterate anything good in their male characters choosing to make more of caricatures of them.

However, a critical consideration of these plays put up to 'combat' these false images of women are themselves questionable given their exaggerated content of the brutish, intolerant, insensitive and uncaring male and the overemphasis of the woman as a super perfect person.

Similar to the above view, Udumuku (148) states the implication of women's over-reaction:

The women's playwrights, in their attempt at subverting patriarchy, have ended up worse purveyors of this crime than men in this gender 'war' within the literary intellectual ferment. They have simply replaced (d) the abstraction woman as created by men with another abstraction woman (with a capital W) created by women.

It is necessary for feminist writers to project a more balanced view of the males as there are good men as well as there are bad men. Also, not all males are oppressors of women. Some men have contributed to the quest for female emancipation in ways such as positive portrayal of female issues in literary works.

However, in Onwueme's *Tell it to Women* there is a more balanced presentation of the two genders. In the play, there are good women such as the village women of Idu under the headship of Adaka and exploitative, mean and greedy women such as Ruth and Daisy. Also in the marriage of Okei and Daisy, the latter is the oppressor contrary to the usual portrayal of feminist plays where the husbands are the oppressors. Also in Onwueme's *The Reign of Wazobia* there are good men such as one of the chiefs and the chief priest of Ani who support Wazobia in her quest for a woman to be enthroned as a king.

Manner of Presentation of Feminist Issues in *Nneora: An African Doll's House*

In *Then She Said It* Nneora, though a very loving and patient wife, rebels at the end against maltreatment by her husband. She tells the husband:

Nneora: I will no longer force myself to stay in an institution which takes everything a woman has to offer a gives nothing in return.

Nneora had helped Ikenna to get a job in a bank, sold off her shop to support his medical treatment abroad and influenced the bank manager to make the bank approve money also for the husband's medical treatment and yet Ikenna doubts her

integrity and commitment to their marriage. Nneora strives to maintain her dignity and self-respect by walking out of the marriage until there is a change in her husband's attitude.

The two plays are a call for women not to remain docile in the face of oppression but to assert their rights. However, Utoh-Ezeajugh's presentation is through the womanist approach. Womanism as an offshoot of feminism rejects militant feminism that presents men and women as competitive individuals, women as being masculine and is opposed to marriage and motherhood. The heroine in *Nneora: an African Doll's House* is a virtuous wife and mother. She makes a lot of sacrifices for the success of her marriage as well as being a dutiful wife. For instance, she takes time to prepare her husband's favourite meal as well as messaging his body. Asigbo (269) describes Nneora as a study of the virtues of womanhood and that Utoh-Ezeajugh appears to be calling on women not to forget their feminine virtues but to see themselves as mothers of the world. Nwankwo (180) states that Utoh-Ezeajugh finds in motherhood a healing balm though motherhood has been roundly condemned by some women as a romanticizing of womanity which stagnates the women and not the men (Ogundipe-Leslie 50 qtd. Asigbo 265).

It is significant that though Nneora decides to walk out of her marriage, she leaves room for reconciliation. The play ends on a glimmer of hope as Ikenna repeats the wife's condition for reconciliation: "but... the greatest miracle of all...!" The condition is that both of them would be so changed that their life together could be a real marriage. Similarly, Linda who had been so maltreated by her husband that she leaves him, comes back to him with the children and they determine to make a success of their marriage.

The above attitude is contrary to the heroine of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, a play Utoh-Ezeajugh adapted. In this play, Nora's walks out of her marriage without any hope of reconciliation. On the whole, Utoh-Ezeajugh presents women's quest for justice without the women being masculinist, neither casting aside the men nor being against marriage and motherhood. This is in line with the womanist theory which values institutions that are of importance to women and the African society (motherhood and wifeness) and rejects those which present socio-political inequities.

Conclusion

The two plays analysed in this work depict the fact that there are still socio-cultural factors in the Nigerian society that are obstacles to the emancipation and progress of

the Nigerian women. These need to be resisted. However, the manner of doing this is important so that the objectives are not defeated and women do not mete out to men the same treatment they have complained about men. It is important for female writers to guide against extreme and unethical means of bringing about female emancipation. In addition, the projection of the male figures should not be such that present men and women as binary forces of opposition rather than that of complementarity. Men and women should complement and not made to outwit each other. This is in line with the concept of womanism which is about the need for men and women to cooperate and transform society.

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PARADIGM SHIFT IN CONTEMPORARY THEATRE PRACTICE IN NIGERIA: STAGE CHARACTERIZATION IN ONWUKWE'S COURTROOM OF CRAZY ELEMENTS

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Abstract

Teaching-learning is an educational task that involves several approaches, concepts, philosophies and methods to ensure learning outcomes. One of such methods is the use of drama to teach other subjects. This can be seen as educational theatre and it vivifies formalized learning, guarantees active participation and enhances the understanding of interdisciplinary learning of other subjects through the use of such elements as character and dialogue. These are agents of action that move a story forward. Through functional characterization, issues are raised and resolved. Hence, good characterization-helps the reader/audience to understand the issues, the conflicts and the resolution of an identified problem. This study therefore examines-how characterization as an element of drama helps to facilitate the understanding of abstract ideas and difficult concepts in the teaching and learning of inorganic Chemistry. It explores the characters in Onwukwe's Courtroom of Crazy Elements, a science drama that teaches inorganic Chemistry to young chemists. The study reveals that through characterization, difficult concepts can easily be explained and understood. The paper concludes that explicit characterization is an overt instructional material. However, the study recommends that play skits, improvisational materials and-texts with non-complicated characterization should be introduced as instructional materials to teach sciences and other subjects.

Introduction

Emerging trends in theatre practice in Nigeria tilts towards the use of drama and theatre to teach/treat other subjects and issues. Little wonder the adoption of dramatic performances by non-governmental agencies like USAID, NACA and UNESCO as a vehicle of orientation and information. This paradigm shift in theatre practice gives the artist the opportunity to expand her wares. Hence creativity is now tasked to evolve devices that will incorporate other strata of the society and explore the realm of the unexplored. Again, theatre ceases to be entertainment only,

especially as pertains to the mimetic nature of existence; it also underscores teaching and learning. According to Inegbe:

The typical African is bound to frown on theatre as entertainment because, to him, it transcends that. It is a medium through which he reaches out to, or better still, courts the supernatural world and certain enigmatic developments or phenomena of life in order to transcend them (1).

If in 1944 Ogunde's opera performance "The Garden of Eden and the Throne of God" was in aid of the Church building fund" (Clark 295), today theatre practice functions beyond fundraising but as catalyst for change and development in politics, education, socio-economic and cultural awareness and effectiveness. Formal theatre starts with the playwright (that is where there is a script to put into a performance) and "the question of commitment must arise, wittingly or unwittingly for the playwright" (Euba 381). Who is he writing for? For what purpose? And what does he want to achieve or "how does he use it as his medium of effectiveness?" (381). These are some of the considerations a playwright attends to in order to make his art a relevant tool in today's theatre practice. In essence, this has to inform the process, the style or the forms of the characterization employed in any play making.

Characterization as one of the elements of drama and theatre plays a dominant role in telling the story, explaining the ideas that are contained in it and in resolving the issues that are raised. Characterization helps to move the storyline forward. Its effective usage combined with dialogue, thought, plot, music and spectacle, help the reader/audience to understand the action and vivify the images that the playwright has weaved. Characterization on stage makes bold the stage pictures in visual and aural aesthetics to appeal to the sensibilities of the audience and register the messages in their memory. Theatre and drama in education is a strategy of teaching-learning in an exciting and entertaining manner. It allows the teacher and students to work as a team which ensures learning outcome. Drama and theatre as paradigm in teaching-learning raises students' interest in the topic and enhances easy understanding of the subject matter. Because this teaching method guarantees active participation, students are not passive but active participators who easily recall what has been taught through the power of mimesis. A character therefore, implies one who takes up a role in performance or acting-out in a classroom session. Characterization in the theatre enables the actor/student to take up the role of a

character, imitate and act as that individual. This model teaches empathy and helps the characters to understand each other and generally improve interpersonal skills.

Drama and theatre further illustrate in vivid pictures the theory/topic that the teacher has tried to impart. It is more like a laboratory where students learn in an atmosphere of laughter and excitement. This becomes effective because the student who has earlier listened to the teacher is fascinated watching and participating in a drama where she/he takes a role as character. By so doing, the student imitates the action, analyses it and lives it. Hence, by participation the images, idioms and expressions encoded in the play are easily understood. The signs and symbols used to signify images help to explain abstract and difficult concepts. The educational values of drama and theatre are explained by Duruaku in the following lines:

Theatre, by its nature and at the physical level, engages the visual and aural senses. At each point, one of these senses reinforces the other as the percipient is exposed to it on the two fronts. This makes learning experiences to be better appreciated (24).

The import of theatre and drama is to pass knowledge, create awareness and act as an intervention in human situations. Owusu observes that:

...Cultural setting, beliefs and practices, folklore and history, myths, legends and folk-tales, philosophy, ethics, language and linguistic expressions, gestures and facial expressions, music and dance, all these against the backdrop of communities with their architecture, landscape, costume and general lifestyle, make drama and theatre a most effective vehicle for the promotion of culture, especially in the educational realm (1)

The learner is more conversant with his or her environment. Hence, using cultural images and patterns to illustrate difficult concepts makes it easier for even a dull student to recall and understand what is taught. Another way that characterization can effectively become a teaching model is to allow students to simulate characters over time. Since children learn easily by imitation and by participation, when they are involved in role-playing, the student assumes a character that is not hers and by so doing becomes familiar with that character. Through character analysis, such a student learns about the composition of that character; why does the character say

and do the things she does? The dialogue of a character which helps the student to project the features of the characters contains the disposition, characteristics and composition of the subject matter/difficult concepts.

Moreover, characterization which is the heartbeat of drama exposes the student to the cultural and social values outside their world and therefore widens their knowledge of the plight and emotions of others. Thus, students are involved deeply as active participators in their education. By role -playing a character, -a student imbibes the mannerism of that character using the 'Magic If" technique to achieve the best out of the role. An experience of that magnitude teaches, inculcates, retains and is easily recalled. Drama open frontiers in other fields of endeavour because of its ability to simulate situations and characters, as characters are imitated, teaching is replicated in an entertaining atmosphere and the subject matter is better understood.

In Onwuke's *Courtroom of Crazy Elements*, characters such as Madam Aqua, Sodium N, Barrister Copper, Judge Gold and Barrister Argentum Silver are better understood even by a first timer/layman in Chemistry. A performance analysis of *Courtroom of crazy Elements* will further illustrate the potentialities of drama and theatre as an effective teaching method.

Characterization and Simulation

Characterization in drama refers to personages and can be described as personification and role-playing. The playwright uses characters to move his action forward. According to Brouckett, "character is the principle source for plot, for incidents can be developed mainly through the speech and behavior of dramatic personages" (29). Characterization is viewed from four levels which span from physical, social, psychological and moral levels. Characters in dramatic literature or performance are either typified or individualized and are revealed through such devices as stage directions, dialogues, notes or prefaces. However, Brouckett notes that:

Drama tells its story and presents its conflicts entirely through the speeches and actions of characters, who are themselves subjects to the drama and participants in its action. It, therefore, assumes the existence of the actor who will lend his body, his voice, his action, his very existence for the time needed to play out the drama (4)

This goes to say that the dramatist weaves his storyline around characters who carry the actions forward – teaching, informing, educating and entertaining. Adequate characterization aids assimilation and understanding. Stage characterization brings to the audience in visual and audio capacities the totality of the subject matter. It enhances comprehension and ensures memory recall. Therefore each character (actor) is a bundle of information, a clue to the action, an exposition and a carrier of hints to be studied in relation to other characters.

Thus, teaching with dramatization involves analogy as the actors and actresses deeply portray their character. Characters are vehicles of action and embody the key to the conflicts and resolutions in the play. Since drama offers cross-currents in learning, the cross sensory experience of the student facilitates learning outcomes. The environment of learning is another factor that hinders learning outcomes. The strictures of a classroom limit effective teaching-learning while drama ensures that:

Learners take on the role profiles of specific characters or organizations in a contrived setting. Role play is designed primarily to build first person experience in a safe and supportive environment. Role play is widely acknowledged as a powerful teaching technique in face-to-face teaching. (Wikipedia, 1)

Characterization aids teaching-learning effectiveness because of its concept of analysis. A student who role-plays, studies deeply the components of the character she is playing and this helps that student to understand the subject matter clearly and recall it anytime. Again as such a student interplays with other characters, she understands their components and relationship with each other in the world of play. This gives a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and concepts as embedded in the character and action. Role-playing ensures that the student is an active participator in a teaching-learning process. Characters are simulators whose repeated actions instruct, sometimes:

Events are put on for the benefit of the *players*, who take on roles called player characters (*PCs*) that the players may create themselves or be given by the game-masters. Players sometimes play the same character repeatedly at separate events, progressively developing the character and its relations with other characters and the setting. (Wikipedia, 3)

Again, Duruaku opines that:

Drama can reinforce the rest of the school curriculum. Since communication and empathy are central to drama, a student who has taken part in Dramatic Arts Education will be better able to understand ideas in History and current events. He will be able to put himself into the shoes of figures in history and literature and to understand how people interact. The link between Dramatic Arts and subjects such as English, History, Social Studies and related areas is obvious (17).

However, the playwright uses characters as vehicles of action through which he relays his plot, dialogue, thought, spectacle and music. Without characterization, arts of which drama and theatre are vital part would have been non-existent. Thus, man (character/role-play) is the vehicle of expression in drama and theatre. Drama which is a slice of life thrives on mimesis and moves on the pages of characterization/role playing.

Synopsis of *Courtroom of Crazy Elements**Courtroom of Crazy Elements* is about a court case where Madam Unisol W. Aqua sues Mr. N Sodium for rape and attempted murder. Her complaint is that Mr. N Sodium and Adonkia Kemmy came to her cool, refreshing house on December 23rd. She states that as she opened her door to receive her visitors, Mr. Sodium's presumably wilful body contact with hers attracted a "violent" and "vigorous" action which "invigorated" her. However, the only thing that Madam Aqua remembers is that she finds herself in the hospital, the result of which is a "massive boy" in the name of Sodium Hydroxide. Madam Aqua appeals to the court to grant her justice while Barrister Argentum Silver argues that Madam Aqua is, in fact, the seductress and that Mr. Adonkia Kemmy does not know-much about Mr. Sodium, hence he is ignorant of what Sodium's reaction will be at Madam Aqua's "cool, refreshing house". However, Barrister Copper, the counsel to Madam Aqua, accuses Mr. Adonkia Kemmy of conniving with Mr. Sodium to assault Madam Aqua because his "loose statement which says: as madam opened her door, I came in, says it all". Contrary to Madam Aqua's wish, Judge Gold's verdict favours Mr. N Sodium who is asked to go and live in the Island of Liquid Paraffin. Also Mr. Adonki Kemmy's certificate is withdrawn from him because he is incompetent and should be regarded as an alchemist.

Courtroom of Crazy Elements is a display of the relationship between metals

and compounds and how they react with each other, emphasizing their properties, uses and the consequences of human abuses of the substances.

Performance

During the performance of *Courtroom of Crazy Elements* on the 20th of June, 2011 at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri before the Chemistry Panel of Science Teachers Association of Nigeria, STAN, on the 18th of September, at Concorde Hotel Owerri, Imo State, with the Chemical Society of Nigeria in audience and at Abuja, on the 22nd of November, 2012 at the National Education Innovations Exhibition organized by the Federal Ministry of Education, with the then Honourable Minister of Education (Prof. Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufai) in attendance, there was active followership and audience participation. All audiences had reasonable percentages of the targeted audience (chemistry students and teachers). The performance was presented to them to assess the validity of our claim that drama can be used to teach the sciences.

In Owerri, the audiences consisted mainly of what could be described as “the owners of chemistry” – professors of chemistry, students at all levels of chemistry education, the press and other lay people. There were standing ovations, in-depth analysis and acceptance of the drama as a veritable means of conveying abstract concepts that chemistry is laden with. The performances led to further invitations by the organizations to perform the drama in other fora, even overseas.

At Abuja, policy makers in the education sector formed seventy percent of the audience. They were thrilled and followed each line and action of the play. The characters' lines and actions were familiar to the audience even when the drama text was new to them. But the storyline reminded the audience of their first course in Chemistry. The performance was a creative demonstration of how dramatists, directors and artistes can weave their storyline around topical issues, difficult and abstract concepts as well as curriculum centred subjects to teach and make positive impacts in the society.

However, the connotation theory which according to Daniel, is “determined primarily by the structure of the signifier” (64), describes the “how” and not the “what”, hence, the character and the properties of the characters in *Courtroom of Crazy Elements* are viewed from the perspective of connotation theory. Therefore, some of the abstract characters used in the play bear the following characteristics:

Judge Gold: Gold is the most stable element on the periodic table. Being a judge of the highest court in the land confers this superiority before the eyes of the students. A

stable element does not easily rust or tarnish, which is as a result of reaction with other elements or compounds in the environment. This explains the anger of the judge when Barr. Copper insinuated that the reason for not allowing Miss Oxygen to come to court was partly because the judge had a pipe. The judge retorted 'Have you ever heard that I am affected by the subversive activities of that arrogant and intrusive Miss Oxygen? Do I have a child called Gold oxide?' To teach students that chemical reactions depend on prevailing conditions Barrister Copper replies: "I must add that it depends on the prevailing conditions".

Barrister Silver and Copper: Members of the bar in the highest court in a land are also highly placed but definitely not as high as the judge. Even among the counsels, there are superiors. Among elements, superiority depends on stability. Silver is more stable than Copper. This can easily be seen from the more stable and polished behaviour of Barrister Silver, when compared to that of the more irritable and more physically active Barrister Copper. In the ionic state, copper ion can exist in two different states called copper I ion, (Cu^+) and copper II (Cu^{2+}). One of these ions is more active than the other. This duality of character can easily be seen in the behaviour of Barrister Copper in court: "Mostly awake but sometimes asleep". Despite these obvious differences between gold, silver and copper in stability and hence superiority, Barrister Copper manages to let the audience know that copper does not easily rust in the statement "...I have no sore on my legs" in answer to the question put to him by the judge: "Mr. Copper, I hope you are sound in health as you are in learning"?

Mr. Sodium: Sodium is a base metal, very reactive, attacking many non-metals and water. It is not durable at all and hence not a member of the royal family. Chemically speaking, the extreme reactivity with non-metals is in the bid to acquire a noble gas structure. These characteristics of sodium are made visible for students by both the nature of the case before the court and the physical appearance of Mr. Sodium – very masculine, aggressive and untrusting and even envious of the members of the bar and bench. His affinity for Miss Chlorine and the narration of his family's age-long friendship with the Halogens is a typical chemistry lesson delivered humorously. That every chemical reaction must produce a new kind of matter is depicted in the birth of Master Sodium Hydroxide. The mass to mole conversion as a legal explanation were typical calculations in chemistry delivered with humour.

Madam W. Aqua: The names and the narrations in the self-introduction of Madam Water use imagery and gesticulations to ingrain the importance and universality of water. Mr. Sodium's narration of what happened during his contact with Madam Water explains the internal chemistry of the reaction of reactive metals and water, chemistry, which students find difficult to comprehend ordinarily. For instance, that the pop sound heard when sodium reacts with water from a sudden reaction between released hydrogen gas and atmospheric oxygen and when this happens, new molecules of water are formed have never been easy for students to comprehend. This is captured in Mr. Sodium's agony as he explains: 'Explosions upon explosions, rearranging their madam as soon as she got spent'.

The performance was insightful and revealing through characterization because each character treats an aspect of Chemistry which makes it easy for the student to understand and recall what is taught. The performance opens with a Court Scene, the Court Clerk informs that:

Court Clerk: The second case is case no. P-STWA-2: Case of rape, assault and attempted murder brought against one Mr. Sodium Alkali by one Madam Unisol W Aqua. The complainant, Madam Unisol Aqua, is she present in court? (Onwukwe 7).

Through this exposition we learn of Madam Aqua as a “popular, universally accepted and friendly compound, eitch-two-oh” (p.8), and the meanings of her names are described by the character in the following lines:

Madam Aqua: I am the most widely distributed substance on earth – in the atmosphere as dew, part of the cloud, and as rain, on the earth surface I appear as rivers, lakes, or salty sea, under the ground I am there. I form more than 70% of living tissues. Well, one funny thing is that I am hardly pure... except if I am distilled. As for my names, Unisol is the short form of Universal Solvent. Aqua is the foreign form of my local name, Water which is the W. (p.12)

From the foregoing, we learn that Madam Aqua is a compound and the properties associated with water (her). Again, the play's progression reveals the relationship between Madam Aqua and other characters. Barrister Copper informs us that his “names are Barrister Cupperous Copper. I am here to defend Madam Unisol W

Aqua” (p.11), thus establishing that while Sodium N reacts violently with water, Copper does not. Madam Aqua describes Barrister Copper as “a dual personae in ionic solutions” (p.19). This is intended to make students to appreciate the double oxidation states of copper. Barrister Copper manages to let the audience know that copper does not easily rust: “I have no sore on my legs” in answer to the question put to him by judge Gold: “Mr. Copper, I hope you are sound in health as you are in learning?” (p.11).

As for the conflict of the play, Madam Aqua's side of the story reveals the relationship between metallic ion as the medium of their interactions. She tells her story thus:

Madam Aqua: ...I am an old lady. I told you I am hardly pure or alone. I am used to receiving visitors, and there are quite a number of them seeking solace in my refreshingly cool house, holding meetings in my banquet and conference halls...I was in the bathroom and of course, I am always wet. I rushed out to open the door for I do not like to disappoint my visitors...two men confronted me, I stepped aside to usher them in. Mr. Adonkia Kemmy came in, and I cannot recollect how it happened but as Mr. Sodium was coming in...our bodies touched in great proportions. The next thing I knew was his struggling with me, shouting, darting from side to side with a new fine face and at the same time acting upon me very vigorously. I knew nothing else until I woke up in the hospital (p.13).

As humorous as these lines are, Madam Aqua explains herself in court praying that Judge Gold should grant her justice against Mr. Sodium N. The above complaints establish the conflict in the play. Through the words of Madam Aqua, we understand that Adonkia Kemmy took Sodium to Madam Aqua's house and as Sodium informs us that he is a “highly respected and ambitious metal” (P.8), we learn that both are not compatible. From the performance, we understand clearly the polar attitudes and the relationships between Judge Gold and other elements and that of Madam Aqua, Chlorine, Oxygen, Hydrogen, Adokia Kemmy as different from the relationship Sodium N has with Barrister Argentum Silver and Chlorine.

In judgment, while Judge Gold acquits Mr. Sodium N he restricts him from living among other elements. He is to be taken to the Island of Liquid Paraffin. Mr. Adonkia Kemmy's certificate as a chemist is withdrawn from him (the only human

character in the play) and from practising because he is an incompetent chemist. The performance is layered in that it is both humorous and didactic.

Impact Factor in *Courtroom of Crazy Elements*

The playwright in this play weaves a tale around chemical elements in a courtroom. The play teaches Chemistry in simple and easy way. It is a courtroom theatre laden with spectacles, dramatic actions, educational information and instructions. The playwright chooses to use the play to address the theme of 'effective teaching-learning' of such an abstract subject like Chemistry. *Courtroom of Crazy Elements* is a challenge to “subject experts, theatre artists and the entertainment industry to produce more and better works in this area to keep our homes more academically stimulating”(Onwukwe 1). A positive change in the area of playwriting and improvisations is required since drama is a change agent; its concentration on topical and relevant issues is needed. The impact of the performance of *Courtroom of Crazy Elements* stems from the art of personifying these compounds and elements as key characters in the play by giving them human characteristics. On the effectiveness of drama and theatre as a teaching-learning method, Onwukwe explains that “through this play, the teacher...hopes to introduce to the students some elements and inorganic compounds – their physical and chemical properties, uses, as well as pointing out the dangers of their careless handling or misuse and abuse” (1). A first-timer in Chemistry class, watching the performance of *Courtroom of Crazy Elements*, will be introduced to the features, components and elements she is likely to encounter in the course of study. It is glaring that the impact of drama in the society and educational circles are enormous but functional drama needs to be factored into the genetic code of performance as this will aid socio-cultural, political and religious re-orientation towards qualitative education, social enlightenment and nation building.

The use of drama to teach the sciences, difficult concepts and to address relevant topical issues is vital. This is because to re-orient, impart, correct the ills of the society and enhance teaching-learning effectiveness, quality plays ought to be put into performance so as to mould the sensibilities of the audience and much more, affect positively the understanding and attitude of the learner. Paradigm shift in contemporary theatre practice in Nigeria aims at facilitating positive changes in the education sector, socio-cultural institutions and sanitizing the economic and political environment.

Findings and Recommendations

It was glaring during the performances that the effect of theatre on its target audience is enormous. The audience, made up of members of NERDC, policy makers, educationist, politicians, students at all levels of chemistry learning and ministerial personnel who unavoidably were a mixed bag of science and arts, dons and professors, followed the play from beginning to end. The applause was overwhelming as the play took them back memory lane, refreshing their mind to their secondary and post-secondary encounter with Chemistry as a subject. We therefore recommend that:

- Dramatists should write to address local issues bearing in mind the awareness of global concerns. Stage performances are to make positive impact on the targeted audience hence familiar metaphors are to be re-enforced.
- Performances should be taken to the streets by government and non-governmental agencies as a vehicle of orientation and non-formal education.
- Playwrights should use cultural elements to address topical and global concerns and not vice versa.
- Dramatists are to pay attention to using drama and theatre to teach other subjects/concepts.
- Since creative art/drama has been introduced into the curriculum of both primary and secondary schools, the churches and other non-governmental agencies should adopt drama and theatre as a tool of reorientation and reformation.
- Play skits, improvisational materials and play texts with non-complicated characterization should be introduced as instructional materials to teach the sciences and other subjects

Conclusion

Using drama and theatre to teach the sciences, difficult concepts, curriculum subjects and social change is part of the emerging trends in theatre practice in Nigeria. A crosscurrent in curriculum, education and other facets of the society is highly needed so as to effect the desirable change. Hence, Onwukwe's creative impetus of using abstract personification of compounds and elements as key communication agents in the play by giving them human characters shows that drama can be used to change situations; from ignorance to knowledge. Socio-culturally, theatre practice fosters cohesion and understanding through characterization and costume, make up, stage

design, songs and spectacles because through performance, we achieve cultural understanding, awareness and respect for each other. In conclusion, the paradigm shift in theatre practice brings creativity to every facet of human endeavour.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELEVANCE OF INDIGENOUS DANCE PERFORMANCE AND PACKAGING

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Abstract

Dance, generally, has been one of the earliest forms of passing information and ideas from one generation to the other. The use of dance in our traditional societies, especially in Nigeria is a force which reveals ideas about people's lifestyle and a device for maintaining group cohesion beside the creative use of movements for aesthetic activities. Apparently, in Nigeria, dance is experienced in virtually all stages and circles of life as a mode of expression. It is one of the ways humans have invented to express their essence. The world is in a continuous change and societies are in want of contributing to make things work thereby guaranteeing quality assurance in every sphere of human endeavour. Dance generally and indigenous dance in particular has a vital role to play in the world of theatre practice. This research is therefore necessary because of its proactive measure in finding ways through which indigenous dance can contribute to the socio-economic growth of the nation. The study also discusses some of the challenges to dance development in Nigeria and proffers the way forward. The paper concludes therefore that there is a need to subject dance to interpretation, reinterpretation and packaging so as to move it beyond entertainment to such that can raise funds and contribute to the economic wellbeing of the society in question.

Introduction

To say that dance is one of the earliest forms of communication is not an overstatement. Studies have shown that it is not certain to establish specific date when dance became part of human culture. In traditional African societies and beyond, dance has been a part of ceremonies, rituals, celebrations, etc. It is usually experienced during childbirth, puberty rites, marriages, death to mention a few. It is one unique way humans have devised to celebrate their essence. According to Primus, quoted in Asante (64) "dance rituals in Africa express the very heart-beat of communal living and is an accurate mirror of the psychology of the people". Continuing, she echoes that:

The true African dance is basic in subject matter: birth, death, puberty rites, marriage, hailing a new chief, discovering evil spirits, detecting criminals, praying for rain, sun, strong children, success in love, revenge, protection of the gods, honouring the ancestors... (Primus 15).

The above description by Primus summarizes the fact that dance is as old as man himself. In Africa generally, indigenous dance speaks volume and has become one important vehicle of education, information as well as entertainment. Carol Ann Lorenz, while writing the introduction to *Theories of Dance in Nigeria* by Ossie Enekwe, writes that:

Nigerian dance also participate in the world of religion, where its inclusion in festivals, ceremonies and masquerades heightens the religious experience for both the performer and audience. One of the most important aspects of Nigerian dance is that it is a form of communication – between dancers and musicians, between performers and audience, and ultimately between the community and the supernatural being... (6).

Dance, to the Nigerian man, is holistic in nature and content. It is an embodiment of the other arts such as music, drama, mime, and acrobatics to mention a few. This is why for an Igbo man, for instance, *egwu* can be used to mean dance or music. Dance is a part of life of the people because it offers them the opportunity to express themselves in various ceremonies, festivals and rituals. It also remains an essential part of man's existence. This has led to the belief that dance is as old as man. It is a means of communicating ethical values and norms of the society in question beyond its entertainment qualities. Enekwe is in support of Lorenz when he states that “dancing is as old as man and desire to express himself, to communicate his joys and sorrows, to celebrate and to mourn ...” (11). Suffice to state here that the instrument for dance is the human body. In asserting the period when dance became a part of human life, Anya opines that:

Dance has been called the oldest of arts, it is perhaps equally true that it is older than arts. The human body making patterns in time and space is what makes the dance unique among the arts and perhaps explains its antiquity (3).

Dance is a core performative art. This is because, its presence is usually felt even when other arts take place. During the earliest civilization, dance was used as a medium to pass down history from one generation to the other, that is, before men could learn to communicate in written form. Dance is a form of body language that encodes emotions, aspirations and goals of a people.

The role or relevance of our indigenous dances in contributing to the socio-economic status of any nation cannot be overemphasized. The performance of these dances if adequately packaged is a *sine qua non* to development especially in this period when nations are looking for other ways or means of revenue generation. This research shall look into the relevance of indigenous dance performance packaging in Nigeria, the reasons behind its underdevelopment, its implication to the dancer, the society and the government at large. Above all, the study shall examine the need for repackaging these dances through interpretation and reinterpretation for the purpose of contributing to the advancement of the nation. The dearth in indigenous dance practice in Nigeria is a matter of concern. As a nation in transition due to modernization, the influx and preference of foreign dance patterns to the indigenous ones has equally contributed to the dwindling fortune of dance in Nigeria. This study is therefore a wake-up call to all and sundry, especially those at the helm of affairs.

Dance Practice in Nigeria: An Overview

It is an acceptable fact that dance is as old as man himself. In Nigeria, even before the advent of colonialism, the people had different ways of celebrating both the living and the dead through dance performances. There were dances to celebrate the birth of a child, puberty, initiation into manhood or into different rites of passage; title taking, honouring a chief, war, peace, manual labour, death, etc. Corroborating an African view of dance, Rudell's Weblog online submits that "dance is the life of the African. It permeates all their social and ceremonial activities. To the African, dance is a way of thinking, living and communicating" (rudwell.wordpress.com). Furthermore, Yerima corroborates the above that:

Dance is as old as the Nigerian man or indeed, the African man, or better still man himself white or black. Dance starts with the notion of crawling as a child, or of walking as a man. For both activities, 'rhythm' is the keyword... (20).

Generally speaking, the dances of a people are embedded in the people's ideology –

the way the people speak, walk, think, what they believe, feel and what they see around or what they have around them, and above all, their myths and legends.

Nigeria is blessed with abundant dance movements and patterns, most of which range from the fast tempo beats to slow tempo. Put differently they can be classified as energetic and subtle. Dance is viewed as total performance because it has elements of other genres of the performing arts such as music – songs or beats that come from instruments such as drums (wooden or metal), clappers, flutes, maracas and other such instruments. Oftentimes, the performance is lyrical, performed melodiously or in chants and accompanied with beautifully articulated movements and patterns. In Nigeria, there are dances performed by the elderly men and women, there are others meant for the youths (males and or females). Each of these groups has its own peculiar dance style, movement and pattern. While the dances of the young ones – boys and maidens – are energetic and vigorous, that of the elderly are often subtle and slow. This is associated with the ages of these groups in question.

Etymologically, it is not easy to state for certainty how these dances were created and who created them. It is owned by the people, and as such, it is a communal inheritance. This gives credence to the use of such phrases as “Nkwa Umuagbogho of Afikpo”, “Iri Agha of Ohafia people”, “Atilogwu of Eziagu” to mention a few. Indigenous dance practices usually take a long period of apprenticeship, and they are perfected through constant rehearsals. Most of these dance groups are oftentimes invited to perform in different functions and occasions for both government and non-governmental institutions in the country. They also represent the country internationally during special events especially in the area of cultural exchange.

Dance has changed considerably in the area of development. It has become a profession capable of putting food on the table of its practitioners and the society at large. The history and development of dance in Nigeria cannot be complete without a mention of Hubert Ogunde, who today is described as the father of dance and founder of the National Troupe of Nigeria, the apex performing troupe in Nigeria. In the 1940s, Ogunde had published opportunities for dance recruitment in the country in a newspaper, inviting dancers to apply and get paid a certain amount of money. The second phase was that of the Second Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture held in Lagos, Nigeria that gave dance its breakthrough in the country. Yerima succinctly sums this up when he writes:

... it was in 1977 with Nigeria hosting the Second World Black and

African Festival of Arts and Culture that was the turning point for the Nigerian dancer and indeed, the Nigerian arts... The festival showed the traditional dancer the importance of dance to peoples of other countries (34-35).

One of the major reasons for this festival was to ensure the revival, resurgence, propagation and promotion of black and African culture and black cultural values and civilization (Yerima 35). The outcome of the festival also kick-started the need for cultural exchange, which consequently made it possible for Nigerian troupes to travel overseas for performances in a bid to showcasing the rich cultural heritage (dance) of the people of Nigeria. This festival also gave birth to some government parastatals and agencies such as the Centre for Black and African Civilization (CBAAC) and National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC). One major landmark of the NCAC was the establishment of Council for Arts and Culture in all the 36 states of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The Arts Councils have in no small measure contributed immensely to the development of dance and other related arts in the country. The third was the commissioning of Ogunde to establish a dance performing troupe in the country by the erstwhile Head of State, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, in the 1980s. This gave birth to the National Troupe of Nigeria, which then resided in Ososa in Ogun State the hometown of Chief Hubert Ogunde.

In Nigeria, each dance has a context, a story within the performance (Yerima 21). This was what informed Ogunde's choreographic philosophy. Because the society is in transition due to modernization, there is bound to be acculturation or infusion of other cultures into the dance movements and patterns of the people. This must be followed with caution and or discipline

Dance Performance and Packaging in Nigeria

Indigenous dances are expositions of the norms, values and aspirations of a people, packaged to communicate through body language, songs, instrumentation and drama to the admiration of all. According to Culturenet online:

It is a distinctive reflection of the historical, socio-economic and cultural particularities (sic) of specific regions. It plays an important social role given that any significant group or community gathering is accompanied by dancing in the course of which people get better acquainted and

connected (www.culturenet.hr)

As earlier stated, dance had its breakthrough in Nigeria during the time of Hubert Ogunde. He opened the way for dance by alerting the powers-that-be that dance is a potent venture. His experimental dance troupe toured some African countries and Europe and was able to convince the federal government of Nigeria on the need to have a troupe of dancers that are capable of representing the country and are also able to generate fund for the country. It afforded Ogunde the opportunity of travelling to virtually all the states of the federation to audition and select dance artistes in 1989. He recruited well over one hundred dancers (100+) to carry out this herculean task. His vision according to the dancers was to have three groups of dancers that will be based in three locations: Europe and America, the rest of Africa and the home base (Nigeria). For sure, he (Ogunde) did not just wish to take people abroad or wherever for a jamboree but for the sole purpose of contributing to socio-economic advancement of the country generally and human capital development in particular.

Today, dance is no longer performed in their lengthy and monotonous nature. Through training, the dancers are taught on how to manage time, space, and use of the body during performances. This is because performances are carried out in different venues especially buildings (theatre houses) outside their original surroundings and the dancers are expected to adjust to the new environment. Yerima captures this when he writes: “one good thing is that it forced the State Councils to choreograph and set the hitherto long and organized traditional dances into well-structured dances which respected the rule of time, venue, space of dance ... performances (34). There are also innovations in the area of movements and choreography. The arrangement of different indigenous dances owned by various societies/states in Nigeria is a force to reckon with. Nigerian choreographers such as Arnold Udoka, Peter Badejo (OBE), Ojo Rasaki Bakare, Chris Ugolo to mention a few are such great choreographers that have made great statements in the area of performance packaging using our indigenous dance movements and patterns. Udoka's *Nigeriana* is a point of reference here. The blending and knitting together of various dances in the country to create a piece remain a masterpiece until date.

The National Troupe of Nigeria and the State Councils for Arts and Culture are not left out in this wind of change as they are saddled with the responsibility of refining and bringing to acceptable standard, the beautiful dances of the states which must have been assembled together through ceaseless rehearsals. These performances are staged during official ceremonies in and outside the State for social,

political and economic reasons. Monyeh, writing on Dance and National Development, is of the view that “Dance serves religious, economic, political and social needs of a people” (106). This means therefore that dance generally, and indigenous dance in particular, has the capacity to contribute to the economic and social needs of the nation. This in most cases might not be possible if adequate attention is not paid to the meaning, interpretation and reinterpretation of our dances. It is apt that “a revolution needs to take place It is a revolution in movement styles and dance forms. And a revolution the style of presentation” (Ugolo 41). Knowing the meaning of each dance, interpreting the form and content of the dances will in no small measure afford both the dancer and audience ample opportunity to appreciate this beautiful work of art. There are two major reasons militating against this project.

The first reason that is identifiable is the influence of the electronic media. The influence of the home video and general film technology, the television screen and the computer technology especially in the area of internet must be a concern to all and sundry. The overdependence on these media to the detriment of the rich cultural heritage of the people is a major challenge to the advancement of dance in Nigeria which could contribute to socio-economic growth of the nation. Supporting this view, Shaka writes, “The New Millennium will be ruled completely by the screen in the form of film screen, television screen, computer screen and all sorts of digitalized screen based media of mass communication” (qtd. Ugolo 47). These media as itemized above are equally some of the means that could be used to reach out to the people; unfortunately, most indigenous dances do not run as programmes in these technologies, hence other programmes with foreign contents are becoming the people's choice. Arnold Udoka captures this when he asserts that:

Our indigenous dance forms have been overpowered by superior technological media such as radio, television and the newspapers. Other forms have taken the shine of the traditional forms as far as dance is concerned. These traditional forms have been banished by these technologies (Oral Interview 2008).

There is therefore the need to address and tackle this by allotting time for indigenous (tangible and intangible) cultural heritage especially in the area of dance through the electronic media. In this stead, the negligence and misconception of the art form (dance) will be averted.

The second impediment is government's negligence. It is a known fact that government is the highest employer of labour in the area of dance and performance in Nigeria. This is indeed a welcome development, for it makes room for job creation. Yet the government has been found wanting in meeting the demands as enshrined in the cultural policy of the nation by supporting these institutions in the area of funds. The Arts Councils struggle because of lack of fund that hampers their essence. It is near impossible to move to the nooks and crannies of a state to discover talents and tap the rich traditions of the people in question without fund. This will significantly take the dance performances of this people to the next level as it reduces the fear of monotony, and creates fresh ideas socially and economically. Furthermore, government has not seen the need to commit to the development of dance because, to them, dance is entertainment and nothing else. As Clark rightly observed:

Our progress as a country does not depend solely on the number of so-called enlightened politicians but on the development of as many aspects of our national life as possible. We must advance on all points – in politics, in education, in art and in poetry – if we are to prevent a lopsided development (30).

This is to say that other areas need to be paid attention to especially the arts with particular attention to dance which had hitherto been relegated to the background because of its nature. Rather than depend solely on petroleum and other infrastructural revenue generation, efforts should also be geared towards promoting dance for socio-economic purposes.

Socio-Economic Relevance of Indigenous Dance and Performance

This study shall discuss this segment under two separate headings: (a) the values of dance (b) prospects of dance.

The Values of Dance: Here, we shall be looking at how dance adds value to both the (i) individual and (ii) the Society. To an individual, dance provides an ideal means to attain self-awareness, self-development and self-fulfilment. This is because the dance involves the entire human body mechanisms with its attendant intellectual, emotional and physical functions. Again, physical stamina, energy and control are demanded to execute a dance movement; these things challenge the individual – to control weight, energy and coordination which in turn result in self-discipline.

Furthermore, dance helps to build creativity in an individual. Through improvisational workshops and rehearsals, dance provides an avenue for positive thinking. It also allows for imaginative thinking and tends to make an individual's expressions and communications a reality. Here, the individual may dance to express emotions such as joy, sorrow, anger and frustration to name a few. When an individual dances, he might have done so to celebrate every phase in his development from birth to death in the rites of passage. He or she may dance in honour of those who went before in the ancestral cult worships such as Okonko, Obon, Iri-Agha, ekpe and atu to name a few. Through the aesthetically framed enactments of past events and ancestral heroes, indigenous dances constitute a collective experience that extends through time, linking the living to their ancestors. To the society, dance is invaluable. First, dance is seen as a symbolic representation of the people's culture. By externalizing the internal, dance gains social dimension. It socializes and unifies a people, and makes them build a feeling of social identity and social unity. Such associations promote a greater understanding among the communities and societies in question. Dance reflects and expresses its particular age. This is because dance takes us back memory lane. It makes us acknowledge the efforts of our forefathers in making us have knowledge of our identity that would have been lost to time. The knowledge about one's culture and other cultures is made possible through dance. Dance therefore affords an opportunity to study a people. Without travelling to a particular community, one is able to identify the behaviour or the physical characteristics of the people through dance. This has made dance a catalogue of cultures in various societies. Again, dance has added value to itself because it encourages community effort which in turn brings about development. Dance groups and troupes in different communities can contribute meaningfully by assisting in building of civic centres, town halls, markets and shopping malls, etc.

Prospects of Dance: Apart from the social values of dance explained above, dance also has some economic potential for both the individual and society if it is adequately packaged. Countries of the world are in want today due to economic challenge (recession) which in most cases is ascribed to overdependence on a particular trade. There is the need to diversify and strategize for economic purposes. Among these potentials are revenue generation and health education.

Revenue Generation: If well packaged for audience consumption, dance will create wealth for both the individual and the society in general. Indigenous dance in Africa

is total performance and is an envy of the world. The appreciation and enthusiasm during such performances speaks volume of the rich culture of the people. Yerima captures this when he asserts that “dance art, therefore remain that art form which dance revolves into during that performance in which the vivid imagination of the audience is tampered with, such that they become both the appreciators and the co-performers” (211).

The focus here is not necessarily the mere artiste-audience relationship *per se* but the positive impact the audience has on the performer especially in the area of paying to watch a performance. Thus, if adequately packaged, dance can lead to dance tourism which can be achieved through the series of cultural festivals and carnivals. In the course of these festivals and carnivals, people troop in from different parts of the world and are accommodated in the hotels, buy products and stuff around this places, this will automatically lead to revenue generation. It is pertinent to note here that, when performances are good, people pay money to watch them at theatre houses. Such performances can even be contracted for ceremonies. At times, good and well-packaged performances can lead to massive contracts of video recording. This will yield revenue to both the government and the troupe owners. For instance, in 1990, the Imo State government sent the performing troupe of the Imo State Council for Arts and Culture on a performance tour of the United Kingdom to raise money for the construction of the Imo Airport. This programme latter collapsed because of government's reluctance to sustain the laudable project.

Health Education: This is another significant point to note in discussing the relevance of indigenous dance performance and packaging. Lack of orientation has actually moved people away from what the individual as a person in a society and the society in particular tends to gain when dance is developed and adequately packaged. The individual is kept healthy and alive because of the physical and mental nature of the art form. For instance, when one dances, enjoys and learns from what he or she is doing, the person is detoxifying the body. This is because the organs react, the hormones work in the body, they become stronger, the muscles react and the brains get more imaginative and creative. According to Udoka in an oral interview:

It is only in dance that you are able to support your cerebral cavity or faculties by combining the left brain and the tight brain at the same time. This is because creativity is the mixture of the imaginative and the rational.

This is to say that even during performances, dance does not only reward financially but also builds the person mentally and physically. It is on this premise that we have the adage: a healthy man is a healthy nation. Social stability can never be feasible if the people are not healthy. It is only when a man is healthy physically, mentally and spiritually that he/she can give back to the society, by contributing meaningfully to the social, economic and political spheres of the nation.

Another potential to be considered here is propaganda which can come in the form of economic, social or political. Dance Performance is capable of addressing some pertinent issues of national and international interest. This was one of the strong weapons of the military regimes in the country. The use of artistes (dancers) to paint the picture of 'all is well' cannot be forgotten because military rule was seen as an aberration. While these dancers perform, they wear smiles on their faces even if they are hungry or are passing through hard times. In 2006, the federal government of the People's Republic of Nigeria launched the 'Heart of African Project', which was meant to erase the erroneous impression given to the country by the 'West' in London (United Kingdom). Dance performance was the best vehicle used to pass this information and educate the people present through indigenous dance movements and patterns that Nigeria is a beautiful place to be; hence the slogan, "Nigeria – good people, great nation".

Conclusion

The potentials inherent in packaging indigenous dances are inexhaustible. From our discussion, it is certain that socially and economically, dance is a very significant factor of every society, and has much to benefit both the individual performer and the society that owns it. Internationally, indigenous dances of Africa are widely accepted and appreciated. Therefore, there is the need for individuals, government and non-governmental agencies, promoters, marketers and event managers to invest in dance and in the promotion and packaging of indigenous dances in particular.

There is the need to carry out in-depth studies on some of the indigenous dances of the people especially as it relates to form and content. This study will enable the performers and choreographers to repackage these dances for better comprehension and appreciation especially as it relates to the audience consumption both locally and internationally. The paper is a call to action, first to the performer and then the stakeholders to look into the performing arts generally and dance in particular as another means of generating revenue for the country. The position of this paper is that instead of allowing these dances to remain moribund, they should

be subjected to interpretation and reinterpretation and packaged in a way that it can contribute to the social stability of Nigeria as a nation generally and the dance profession in particular. By this, value and quality are assured.

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IMPROVING FILM QUALITY IN NOLLYWOOD THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF FILMMAKING STUDIES IN THEATRE ARTS DEPARTMENTS

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Abstract

The Nigerian movie industry popularly known as Nollywood overtime has grown into a robust one, and its prospects still continue to soar as more and more interest is put into it. But the world's second largest movie industry (behind India's Bollywood) is constantly being questioned in the aspect of quality. This question bothers on the quality of stories, directorial vision or concept, moral healthiness, individual and cultural identities presentation/representation (reality and artistic recreations), as well as the aspect of technical quality. The question that one asks is: How have the Theatre Arts departments come to the rescue of the industry considering the point that it is the mother of the performing arts? A look at Nollywood's most prolific actors/actresses, screenwriters, producers and directors reveals that few studied Theatre Arts; and even those that studied Theatre Arts cannot be said to be behind the making of the few internationally epoch-making movies made so far by the industry. This reveals that Theatre Arts departments in Nigeria (with exception of few) actually teach the art of filmmaking. Emphasis is placed on the stage art. But it will be understood that there is a gulf existing in this mother and daughter relationship that the live theatre and the screen (film specifically) share. This paper is a call for the introduction of filmmaking studies in the Theatre Arts departments of the nation's tertiary institutions. This way, quality will greatly be improved in the still growing Nigerian movie industry.

Introduction

The Nigerian film industry has been around for two decades and has now grown to

become a robust employer of labour in the Nigerian labour market stemming from its capacity to churn out an average of about 1000-1,200 movies a year, generating around \$200 million gross to the nation's economy. According to Dutheirs and Kermeliotics, the industry “is currently the third-largest producer of feature films in world, ranking behind only Hollywood in the U.S. and India's Bollywood revenue” (www.cnn.com/2012/08/23/showbiz/nollywood-nigeria-audience-popularity). The industry has today moved to being the second, only now to Bollywood. Chronicling Nollywood, Akande writes that:

One of the phenomenal potentials of the Nigerian economy, outside of oil and agriculture happened to rear its face nearly 20 years ago, when a few professional dramatists and businessmen, dealing in blank video cassettes, saw the need to record dramas for home viewing. This evolution has been traced to names like Alade Aromire with the film *Ekun* (1987) and Kenneth Nnebue who did *Living in Bondage* (1992). The latter's effort was followed by Gabriel Okoye's *Battle of Muzanga* and *Nnekka the Pretty Serpent*. And so, the wide acceptance of these flicks by movie buffs could be said to have opened the floodgate to the craze of direct-to-video production, thus, bringing about what today has come to be dubbed Nollywood (8).

However, there are other chronicles that somehow differ from Akande's. One of such is Akin Adesokan who posits that the first Nigerian films were made by filmmakers such as Ola Balogun and Hubert Ogunde in the 1960s, but they were frustrated by the high cost of film production. Concurring with this is the Nigeria Movie Network's *The History of Nollywood* which attests that “the list of documented films created for the duration of the 70 s era and transcending somewhat into the 80 s is simply astonishing and goes to demonstrate that the movie industry has been here for much longer, contrary to the '1992 perception syndrome' most are already injected with.” This then means that the industry actually started long ago, although in celluloid format, before expanding after the 1992 production of *Living in Bondage*, with the trending video format. Be that as it may, the industry has come to stay having garnered grounds within and without Nigeria. But with its growth also comes deeper and critical examination. So many issues have been, and still continue to be, raised especially as regards quality and standard.

Nollywood and the Question of Quality

The problem of quality in the industry has generated questions even from its viewers who are often found engrossed in discussions within the 'circle of critics' of the fast growing industry. From incongruous plots to the action by the actors – false and non-motivated actions, misfit soundtracks/background music, poor picture/audio quality and overtly poor packaging – the list seems inexhaustible. Tracing the factors responsible for this poor quality, poor finance and lack of professionalism are identified as the greatest challenges faced by the industry.

The issue of finance has indeed been a problem faced by the industry even since the times when seeds of filmmaking were to be broadcast in the days of Ogunde and Balogun; for they were 'frustrated by the high cost of film production'. Even when Nnebue was to make *Living in Bondage*, it was to be achieved with the use of excess number of imported video cassettes available to him; and early films were shot with analogue cameras using tapes which would then be transferred to VHS tapes for marketing (cheaper than the digital and celluloid production in the Western world). To enhance and improve the quality of Nigerian film productions (as regards finance), the country's president, Goodluck Jonathan, pledged in 2010 to create a \$200 million loan fund to help finance film projects. Thus the Nigerian Creative and Entertainment Industry Stimulation Loan Scheme (NCEILS) has been operational since the end of the year 2010 under administration by the Nigerian Export-Import (NEXIM) Bank. But since the time this intervention fund was made available, how many filmmakers have accessed the loan to improve the quality of their production? So far, there has been one notable film that is known to have utilized the fund – *Doctor Bello* – which in January 2013 made history as the first Nigerian film to be showing in the US cinemas. Tracing the reason for this, Williams and Bello report that:

The practitioners in the entertainment industry don't know how to put their ideas together which is a barrier to the process of administering the \$200 million entertainment industry funds, the managing director, Nigerian Import-Export Bank (NEXIM) Roberts Orya has said (*The Punch Newspaper*, 11 March, 2011).

This implies then that there can only be two other reasons why the bane of poor quality still plagues Nollywood: the invasion by 'go-for-the-money' movie makers, and that of lack of professionalism. In fact, these two can better be categorised and embedded in just one – professionalism, because professionalism covers the artistic,

the technical and even the commercial aspects of the film industry. Without sufficient funds, professionals still produce somewhat quality works as could be seen with works done at the beginning stages of the growth of Nollywood. Those home videos were very low budget works, and so, taking a critical look at them would pinpoint the low-key technological input, yet praises would be poured on them for their quality in the plot, artistry and directorial ingenuity. Even the acclaimed buoyant Hollywood makes low-budgeted movies. Downplaying this excuse of poor financing, Akande writes that: “it is not a crime to have a low budget production; because while the visual or audio quality may be poor in some cases, viewers at least desire to see an attempt at artistry in scripting, directing, acting etcetera” (10). One can then be right to say that the greatest challenge to a quality-rich Nollywood is the lack of professionalism.

As identified earlier, this factor of professionalism comes in two shapes: that of the invasion from the 'go-for-the-money'; and lack of well-trained professionals in the filmmaking art. In the first case, there came an invasion upon the growing industry in the early 2000s with a proliferation of movie productions. The business of movie making was hijacked from the then movie makers who were mostly trained in the art of video making through the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) by some money-minded persons who should have no business making movies. The marketers seized the whole of the art and turned it into mere trade; and since trade is done by the simplistic rule of profiteering (turn-over), the main art and its ethics were thrown away, sending the professionals on 'retirement'. Nnebue's name now gets mentioned when writing the history of Nollywood rather than on the titles and end credits of movies. The dominion of the Alaba and OMATA (Onitsha Market Traders' Association) dynasties stripped Nollywood naked of quality; leaving it with nothing but little strands of underwear quality with efforts from the likes of Tunde Kelani whose Mainframe Film and Television Production outfit never gave up on supplying quality works.

The grip by these dynasties is so strong that even the 'good hands' that made those early low budget but somewhat quality home movies attest to their quality-choking grip. Piracy has become a major issue as there seem to be no effective checks for the arrest of the trend. Akande documents the cries of prominent, early and longstanding movie makers like Teco Benson, Lancelot Imasuen, Emem Isong and Fidelis Duker. Imasuen describes the downturn as a crash “resulting from the entrance of charlatans to the industry” (13).

Isong is worried about multiple parts films, which she says defeats the essence of an articulate storytelling. She thinks the all-comers affair and sole commerce purpose orientation of most strange entrants has contributed to the low quality of Nollywood films today... for filmmaker Fidelis Duker, the story is not so different. Recession to him began in 2002 “when the industry was invaded by mediocrity. People who had no business with Nollywood saw film as a launch pad to fame and wealth at the expense of creativity and a proper business model. They came in and destroyed the industry with their ignorance” (Akande 13-14).

Agreeing to this is Obi Emelonye, screenwriter and the Director of the multiple award-winning film, *Mirror Boy*, who bares his mind thus: “I will tell you that good local producers don't get opportunities because they will always stand for the right thing and those ones who just want to make money will not listen to them” (Gbenga-Ogundare & Emelonye 34).

The second part of professionalism has to do with professionals in the art of filmmaking. When one looks at the industry today, a question that comes to mind is: How many professionally trained hands are there in the industry? Specifically, how many of the people in the industry are Theatre Arts graduates? And how much impact has their presence brought to the industry in terms of improving quality? This questions the theatre artist's capacity in making quality films, especially in areas other than acting.

The Nigerian Theatre Artist and Nollywood's Quality

The Theatre Arts departments of tertiary institutions, especially the universities in Nigeria would be known as the most structured places for the schooling of the artist in areas such as acting, writing, scenography, costumes, make-up, lighting and sound, etc. This is in the hope that the performing arts industry of the country ought to be shaped and steered by the products of these departments. Thus, in discussing the quality of works of Nollywood in broader terms, one must bring under examination the position of the Nigerian Theatre Arts graduate/practitioner and by extension, the institution that produced them. Will the graduates have the ability to produce quality films replicating the quality of their live stage productions? If not, will this inability be credited to the graduates' lack of creativity or their lack of knowledge and expertise in the art of filmmaking? Or will it be blamed on the institutions that produced them.

A look at the industry's past and present would reveal that on a large scale, except for western Nigeria (the Yorubas), the presence of theatre artists has affected the quality of the works as it ought to; with exception to acting where professional theatre artists like the late Sam Loco Efe, Olu Jacobs, Joke Silva Jacobs, Richard Mofe Damijo, Segun Arinze, Ayo Adesanya, Sam Dede, the late Justus Esiri, Rita Dominic, and recently top-notching Nse Ikpe Etim among others, have created landmarks. NTA-trained hands (most of whom never had any professional theatre training) almost totally laid the building blocks of the industry; from the TV drama productions of *Things Fall Apart*, *Village Headmaster*, *The Masquerade*, *Village Square*, and even the referential *Living in Bondage* – all building blocks of the industry the theatre artists never laid. Most attempts by the professional theatre artists would be qualified as not being of quality except, maybe for the somewhat wonderfully crafted plots. Charles Novia's works as a theatre artist (without prejudice) cannot be said to be outstanding considering his theatre background and his antecedents in the stage art. In the same vein, Sam Ukala's *Akpaka Land* which is an adaptation of his play of the same title cannot be judged as possessing the quality needed or expected from a professional theatre artist of his calibre. This can be understood when one appreciates some divergences existing between the stage medium and the film medium.

Differences between Stage and Screen

There are so many diverging points between the two media. The medium in itself is a difference; for each has its unique features and requirements, thus the consequent differences in expression. Among the differences are: the script format, the nature of acting, make-up, sound and lighting, the audience's eyes, and post-production. The nature of acting for instance varies from one medium to another. Where the stage presents a 'larger-than-life' picture, the screen presents a normal life; expressions that seem normal on stage will be overblown on screen, given the close capture by the camera. For the stage actor, the audience watch live without any instrument to view through. Even a member of the audience seated at the back of the theatre auditorium needs to see and hear him, thus, the need for the overblown image. This is not however the case with the screen actor who has the lenses of the camera as the eye of his audience. He simply leaves much of that 'seeing' job to be done by the camera. Where his stage counterpart is completely within view of the audience – from head to toe – and so needs to put the whole body to acting, he may not be required to put his entire body to acting especially during 'cut-away' takes. Whereas the make-up for

stage when put on for the screen would overtly appear overblown, one for the screen when put on the stage may not be sufficient.

Sound and audio in the live stage do not usually demand the treatment needed by the screen medium. As such, while shooting, the soundman records audio/sound with efforts made at curtailing ambient sounds that will affect quality, while his stage counterpart doesn't need all of that because his audience is receiving the audio first-hand. In like-manner, the lighting in stage, as close as it may seem to apply to the film medium, cannot be used for the film. The way the human eye sees light rays is different to some degree from the way the camera lenses see. Even the lights used vary in shape, intensity and even positioning. All these differences mentioned here are just given a peripheral study rather than the needed in-depth specialised study, even at undergraduate level, not just mention or studied in just one or two course unit(s).

The tables below are drawn from the curricula for the study of Theatre Arts and related courses from three universities: University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, and Benue State University (BSU), Makurdi. This is to provide a sampling of courses offered for the study of Theatre Arts in Nigerian universities. The sampling is limited to just these three universities based on the different titles the selected departments are designated: Theatre and Film Studies, Performing Arts, and Theatre Arts departments respectively.

Table 1: Major Courses for the Undergraduate programme in Theatre and Film Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

FIRST YEAR

Course Code	Course Title
TFS 101	Traditional African Festival Theatre
TFS103	Introduction to Drama and Theatre
TFS 121	Beginning Theatre Design and Technology
TFS 171	Introduction to Film, Radio and TV Drama
TFS 102	Practical Participation Orientation
TFS 104	History of Drama and Theatre: Beginning to Medieval
TFS 132	Basic Communication Theory
TFS 134	Basic Acting Skills

SECOND YEAR

TFS 201	African Drama and Theatre: The Colonial Era
TFS 211	Introduction to Dramatic Literature Theory and Criticism
TFS 221	Basic Lighting and Scene Design
TFS 223	Basic Costume and Make-up Studies
TFS 231	Intermediate Acting
TFS 233	Dance Drama
TFS 235	Speech and Voice Production
TFS 271	History of Film
TFS 202	History of Drama and Theatre: Renaissance to 19th Century
TFS 232	Basic Non- Verbal Communication
TFS 234	Basic Choreography and Kinaesthetic
TFS 252	Fundamentals of Playwriting
TFS 260	Children's Theatre
TFS 262	Introduction to Theatre for Development
TFS 270	Acting for Film, Radio and TV

THIRD YEAR

TFS 303	History of Drama and Theatre: The Modern Period
TFS 341	Introduction to Directing
TFS 343	Theatre Administration
TFS 363	Community Theatre Project
TFS 371	Scripting for the Media Theatre
TFS 373	Film Editing
TFS 381	Research Methods
TFS 302	Modern African Drama and Theatre
TFS 322	Advanced Scene Design
TFS 324	Costume Design and Production
TFS 330	Dance Theories and Practice
TFS 332	Advanced Acting
TFS 344	Stage Management
TFS 360	Theatre Workshop
TFS 370	Film Theories

FINAL YEAR

TFS 413	Theories of Dramatic Criticism
TFS 415	Shakespeare
TFS 423	Advanced Lighting and Sound Design
TFS 451	Major Nigerian Playwrights
TFS 455	Advanced Playwriting
TFS 475	Film Criticism
TFS 402	Topics in Theatre Studies
TFS 404	Oriental Theatre
TFS 412	Studies in Dramatic Literature
TFS 440	Advanced Play Production
TFS 476	Film, Radio and TV Drama Production
TFS 490	Project

(Source: Department of Theatre & Film Studies, UNN).

Table 2: Major Courses for the Undergraduate programme in Theatre & Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

S/N	Course Code	Course Title
(FIRST YEAR)		
1	THAP101	Introduction to Theatre I
2	THAP102	Introduction to Technical Theatre
3	THAP103	Theatre Workshop
4	THAP104	Introduction to Dramatic Text
5	THAP105	Intro. to Elements of Theatre and Performing Arts
6	THAP106	Basic Design
7	THAP108	Introduction to Play Creating
(SECOND YEAR)		
8	THAP201	Introduction to Theatre II
9	THAP202	Theory of African Performance
10	THAP203	Practical Workshop II
11	THAP204	Design and Technical Theatre
12	THAP205	Introduction to Dance and Movement

13	THAP206	Theatre and Society
14	THAP207	Introduction to Voice and Speech
15	THAP208	Mime and Non-Verbal Communication
16	THAP209	Intro. to Playwriting
17	THAP210	Introduction to Music
18	THAP211	Introduction to Computer and Theatre I
19	THAP212	Introduction to Computer and Theatre II
20	THAP213	Introduction to Acting
21	THAP214	Introduction to Directing

(THIRD YEAR)

22	THAP301	Forms of Drama
23	THAP302	Dramatic Transpositions
24	THAP303	Production Workshop I
25	THAP304	Children's Theatre
26	THAP305	Community Theatre
27	THAP306	Dramatic Aesthetics
28	THAP307	Asian and Oriental Theatre
29	THAP308	Practical Radio and Television Production
30	THAP309	Advertising and Image Making
31	THAP310	American and Caribbean Theatre
32	THAP311	Rudiments of Choreography
33	THAP312	Acting and Stagecraft
34	THAP313	Voice and Speech Development I
35	THAP314	Directing
36	THAP315	Puppetry and Animation
37	THAP316	Make-Up and Costume Design
38	THAP317	Introduction to Theatre Management
39	THAP318	Stage and Lighting Design
40	THAP319	Radio and TV Production
41	THAP320	Playwriting
42	THAP321	Sociology of Drama
43	THAP322	Research Methodology
44	THAP323	Drama for Special Purpose 1 & 2
45	THAP324	Voice and Speech Development II
46	THAP325	Music

(FINAL YEAR)

47	THAP401	Nigerian Drama
48	THAP402	African Drama
49	THAP403	Production Workshop II
50	THAP404	Modern Drama
51	THAP405	Dramatic Theories and Criticisms
52	THAP406	Educational Theatre
53	THAP407	Play and Production Criticism
54	THAP408	Project I & II
55	THAP409	Development Communication Theories
56	THAP410	Media Directing Technique
57	THAP411	Advanced Choreography
58	THAP412	Script Writing Technique and Media Arts
59	THAP413	Advanced Puppetry and Animation
60	THAP414	Advanced Directing
61	THAP415	Advanced Acting and Stage Craft
62	THAP416	Advanced Technical Theatre and Design
63	THAP417	Advance Theatre Management
64	THAP418	Advanced Make-Up and Costume Design
65	THAP419	Advanced Playwriting
66	THAP420	Advanced Development Communication
67	THAP421	Video and Television Criticism
68	THAP422	Theatre for Special Purpose

(Source: Dept. of Theatre & Performing Arts, ABU, Zaria).

Table 3: Major Courses for the Undergraduate programme in Theatre Arts, Benue State University, Makurdi.

FIRST YEAR

THA 101	Introduction to Drama and Theatre
THA 103	Beginning Theatre Design and Technology
THA 105	Participation Orientation
THA 107	Traditional African Festival Theatre
THA 109	History of Drama and Theatre: (Egypt, Greece & Rome)
THA 102	Introduction to Drama and Theatre 2

- THA 104 History of Drama and Theatre 2: Medieval
- THA 106 Participation Orientation 2
- THA 108 Basic Communication Theory
- THA 110 Introduction to Modeling and Fashion

SECOND YEAR

- THA 201 African Drama and Theatre 1: (from 1800-1960)
- THA 203 Introduction to Theatre and Health
- THA 205 Modern Theatre
- THA 207 Improvisation
- THA 209 Theatre and Society
- THA 211 Introduction to Television and Home Video
- THA 213 Basic Acting Skills & Speech Arts
- THA 215 Modeling and Fashion
- THA 217 Introduction to Theatre: Family and Ethics
- THA 219 History of Drama and Theatre 1: (Renaissance to 19th C)
- THA 202 African Drama and Theatre 2: (Since 1960)
- THA 204 History of Drama and Theatre 2: (19th- 20th Century)
- THA 206 Theatre Workshop
- THA 208 Introduction to Directing
- THA 210 Introduction to Theatre and Gender
- THA 214 Children's Theatre
- THA 216 Introduction to Dance and Music

THIRD YEAR

- THA 301 Theatre and Crime Management
- THA 303 Research Methodology
- THA 305 Basic Costume and Make up Design
- THA 307 Improvisation and Workshop
- THA 309 African Drama
- THA 311 Theatre and Good Governance
- THA 313 Community Theatre 1
- THA 315 Theatre Admin and Studio Management
- THA 302 Basic Scene Design and Stage Lighting
- THA 304 Non-Verbal Communication for the Actor
- THA 306 Introduction to Theatre in Education

- THA 308 Community Theatre 2
- THA 310 Introduction to Dramatic Literature and Criticism
- THA 312 Production Planning and Participation: (Radio/TV/Film)

FOURTH YEAR

- THA 401 Topics in Theatre Arts Studies
- THA 403 Theories of the Modern Theatre
- THA 407 Play Production and Directing 1
- THA 411 Playwriting
- THA 413 Dimensional Dramaturgy
- THA 451 Theatre, the Family and Ethics
- THA 455 Women in African Theatre
- THA 402 Comprehensives
- THA 404 Project
- THA 406 Theories of Dramatic Criticism
- THA 408 Comparative World Drama and Theatre
- THA 410 Studies in Dramatic Literature
- THA 448 Indigenous African Theatre

(Source: Department of Theatre Arts' Student Handbook, Benue State University, Makurdi).

The above is an indication of what constitutes training of the Nigerian theatre artist. It is obvious that they were designed to train the artist principally in the stage art, and little of the film and other media (as is the case with UNN). This bias that leaves the student with no choice of specialising in either the stage or the film leaves him studying the live stage, even when his passion lies in the film. When he leaves the four walls of the university and ventures into the industry, he becomes very much limited to what he can do that would be of quality, even though the society expect so much from him as a professional in the art. Being trained in the stage art without going beyond the basic peripheral theoretical aspects of the film gives the theatre artist little or no chance of achieving quality film works. The Nigerian Theatre Arts graduate is therefore not equipped to improve quality in the film industry on a large scale beyond the writing and acting when he should actually shape and polish the industry with quality. This calls for a review of the curricula of Theatre Arts departments and other theatre-offering tertiary institutions to accommodate in-depth filmmaking studies. Those whose curricula have introduced some courses that have to do with film

should go beyond the periphery of the studies and delve deep into the filmmaking art, especially the practical aspect. The other aspects of filmmaking – lights, sound, cinematography, editing – cannot be studied peripherally.

It will be noticed that Nollywood has started seeing some level of quality; although such works are often opened and limited to the cinema goers only. These films have begun putting Nollywood in the international cinemas having met international standards. Among such films are Afolayan's *Figurine*, Emelonye's *Mirror Boy* and *Last Flight to Abuja*, Abulu's *Doctor Bello*, Onyeka's *Mr. & Mrs.*, Ali Balogun's *Tango with Me*, Anyaene's *Ije*, Kelani's *Arugba* and a very few others. All these films are works of professionals trained specially in the art of filmmaking but at institutes overseas. For Kunle Afolayan who made *Figurine*, one would presume, both the theatre background under which he grew, being the son of the famous theatre and film director and producer, Ade Love, and training at the New York Film Academy (International Movie DataBase). Stephanie Okereke made a big contribution to bringing quality to Nollywood with her film *Through the Glass*. She also got filmmaking training at the same academy; so is U.S. based Chineze Anyaene (maker of *Ije: the journey*). Kelani, as earlier mentioned, is a product of the London International Film School; and Emelonye is UK-trained and based (IMDb). This points out then that some sense of quality presently springing in the industry is as a result of efforts from these foreign-trained professionals, and not Nigerian professional theatre artists.

Conclusion

Going by the number of Theatre Arts departments in Nigeria and the graduates they turn out every year, one would say that the quality of Nollywood films would improve, provided they are equipped for the filmmaking art. Lack of sufficient training in the art of filmmaking has seen their presence not being felt in the industry as they can only be found in the background when it comes to other aspects of the making. With the introduction of in-depth filmmaking studies, this problem of low quality that has plagued the industry would be laid to rest, or at least reduced to the barest manifestation.

One can also see that a blend of the stage training with the film always produces more firm and quality result-giving practitioners. For instance, the American Actors Studio which was based more on the stage art went beyond training artists for the stage into the filmic and cinematic art. One of the most accolade-

receiving films of all times, *The Godfather (1, 2 & 3)*, an adaptation of Mario Puzzo's novel of the same title has most of its major cast coming from the Actors Studio. The film was screen-played and directed by Francis Ford Coppola, with renowned actors and actresses: Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, Lee Strasberg, Robert de Niro, Robert Duvall, etc. A look at the list of Oscar Award Winners shows that those with foundation in the stage, who also developed or trained in the film outclass those who just started and are limited to the screen. These Oscar winners include Elia Kazan (Director: 1948, 1955, 1999); John Fords (Director: 1935, 1940, 1941, 1952); Al Pacino (Actor: 1993), Danny Boyle, (Director: 2009); Jack Nickolson (Actor: 1976, 1984, 1998), Robert de Niro (Actor: 1981); Denzel Washington (Actor: 2002); Julia Roberts (Actress: 2001); Nicolas Cage (Actor: 1994); Whoopi Goldberg (Actress: 1990); Daniel Day-Lewis (Actor: 2013); Geoffrey Rush (Actor: 1997); Morgan Freeman (Actor: 2005), among others. In Nigeria, we have seen Afolayan's blend of his live theatre experience with the film training produce *Figurine*; same applies for Jeta Amata producing *Amazing Grace*, Kelani producing quality works such as *The Narrow Path*, *Arugba*; and of course, Emem Isong's works can be said to be of such quality as a result of the stage training at Calabar and the Film training she got. All these would point to the necessity of the introduction of in-depth filmmaking studies into the curricula of the Theatre Arts departments of the Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Considering all these, even though one understands that the universities are meant to be theoretical based, one would seek the National Universities Commission and its sister commissions for Colleges of Education and Polytechnics to consider revising the curricula of Theatre Arts to inculcate practical-oriented filmmaking studies into their existing programmes. These courses should be considered core and not just electives, and also be made specialisation areas which students can opt for. Government too ought to make well-equipped filmmaking studios available to these departments. It should also not neglect to hire film professionals or retrain their staff who will teach the students. This way, these departments can produce better equipped graduates who will be capable of enhancing the quality of Nollywood.

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THE ECONOMICS OF QUALITY IN NIGERIAN THEATRE DESIGN: IMPERATIVES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

The interplay of the 21st century economic challenges and the need for professional excellence in Nigeria, within the context of theatre design, poses a challenge to young professionals. As members of the society, designers do not exist in isolation. Therefore, they are socially conscious and need to struggle for survival, but they do not merely struggle like any other person, though they share the same social problems with the other members of the society. The designers' approach to solving problems is the consequence of their membership of the society, but they have their unique mode of proffering tangible solutions to the social problems. Ensuring the quality required of the present day theatre designer consists in having all it takes to stand out in the competitive job market. The problem of this study consists in the gap between professionalism and economy. Using the participant observation method of research, core professional ethics and values are given qualitative analysis. The conclusion is that professional theatre designers can only overcome financial challenges by seeking quality in their productions.

Introduction

There are two templates of the survivalist orientation competing for the attention of the young professional. One is existential and the other, essential. The more sustainable must come first. There is the need for the Nigerian theatre designer to maintain an impeccable professional attitude, which must be evident in the quality of products. There is also the need to meet some financial needs, necessitated by the current global economic recession, so that life may not come to a standstill.

The existentialist theorist Jean-Paul Sartre has been criticised by Heidegger for launching anxiety and worthlessness into the natural world of existence (250). Existentialism, as a philosophical doctrine, views man as a lonely individual, responsible for his own fortune or misfortune in a vast and absurd world. Critics have claimed that the ideology and radicalism of existentialism are illusory. For instance,

in his “Letter on Humanism,” Heidegger criticises Sartre thus:

...Sartre expresses the basic tenet of existentialism in this way: Existence precedes essence. In this statement he is taking *existentia* and *essentia* according to their metaphysical meaning, which from Plato's time on has said that *essentia* precedes *existentia*. Sartre reverses this statement. But the reversal of a metaphysical statement remains a metaphysical statement. With it he stays with metaphysics in oblivion of the truth of being (250).

There is a puzzling interplay of the essential and the existential. There are some theatre designers, on the one hand, who may be interested in regaining the lost values of the profession but it truly takes a *living soul* to sustain *values*; employment is not automatic, even for the well-trained artist. Some cannot even afford tools and materials because of low patronage. On the other hand, if the products of theatre design lack good quality, patronage is not guaranteed and therefore, survival appears to be hinged too on value. Once the products lack good quality, they become unmarketable. It is, therefore, the survival of the fittest. These fundamental needs, interestingly paradoxical, constitute two opposing ideological paradigms yet necessarily interdependent hypothesis from the psychological and sociological worldviews.

This study is informed by the need to clarify the relationship between economic necessities and professional uprightness and their relevance to the twenty-first century Nigerian theatre designer with a view to suggesting a way-out. The world around the designers is so competitive that they need to be extraordinarily productive or prolific, as the case may be, in order to attain the standard of living required in the modern world. Perhaps this would aptly correspond with the question: “Why is craft intellectually inconvenient in modern and contemporary art?” (Dormer “Salon De Refuse?” 3). The question points to craft as being intellectually inconvenient. It also raises the issue of inconvenience possibly to indicate the negative influence of economic constraints on creativity. In other words, there is a separation between quality craftsmanship and good standard of living. The demands of quality are hard to meet and the designer of today wants to cut corners to survive. Thus, there is a loss in ethical tradition. De la Croix and Tansey liken this scenario to the general decadence in the old artistic tradition which, they suggest, has remained unimproved. Hence, “meanwhile the tradition has been dismantled. Has a

new one appeared? The triumph of modern art is at the same time in crisis. At the heart of the crisis is a paradox” (975). While implying that there has been a compromise of tradition, they also suggest that such a compromise portends a critical future for modern artistic practices.

Key Terms in Context

It becomes imperative, at this point, to attempt the definitions of some key words in order to provide an insight to the thematic context of this study. It is important to explore the definitions of such relevant terms as “quality”, “theatre” and “design,” respectively and in accordance with their application to this study.

Quality: An Ethical Point of View

The word “quality,” as a noun, could be viewed as the state, class, condition, worth, value or nature of a thing, place or phenomenon. For instance, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (sense “3”) defines it as “the degree to which something is good or bad” and “a high standard” (sense 4) (1155). The “sense ‘3’” definition is synonymous with the primary ethical point, position or equilibrium in which the phenomenon is placed. There is an imaginary balance here, either side of which a thing, person or phenomenon may fall. The word poses uncertainties here because “quality” may refer to either side of the ethical divide (good and bad). For instance, we talk of “good quality,” “poor quality,” “high quality,” “low quality” and “bad quality.” Therefore, this definition or sense of the word “quality,” which relates to “good” and “bad,” is neither satisfactory nor suitable for the thematic context of this research.

However, in the most frequent sense of the word, “quality,” as an adjective, attracts a positive ethical connotation. For instance, according to the Longman dictionary, it also means “very good.” Hence we talk of “quality products,” “quality design” or simply “quality” to refer to things in their highest ethical, aesthetic or technical state. This latter sense of the word is appropriate, suitable to the context of this study.

The challenge before the artist is enormous. It goes beyond merely “keeping body and soul together,” which literally translates to the “existence precedes essence” philosophy in the imagination of the average Nigerian theatre designer who is simultaneously suspended on the forked roads of desperate economic survival and fulfilment through professional excellence. If the former becomes an obsession, on the one hand, neither excellence nor financial survival is guaranteed, because

fundamental societal values become mutilated or completely lost. On the other hand, if the latter is strictly adhered to, value is maintained, quality is assured and that automatically translates to sustainable economy.

Theatre

The theatre is the mother and melting pot of all types of art, the practice of which is based on strict ethical principles. The theatre is the most potent tool for the sustenance of cultural values, and design being a strong element of theatre, controls and organises other elements of the theatre. The various external elements which come together to constitute the theatre, find coherence in performance as a result of the instrumentality of design. Therefore, as a theatre art, design occupies an important position in which discipline should not be compromised, because the quality of design can easily reflect in the other aspects of the theatre. Indeed:

The theatrical form is the communication of ideas between two groups: performers and audience. The assembly of audience and performers, or *performance*, is the presentation of ideas by the performers to the audience. These ideas may range from the ancient to the most topical, from the profound to the absurd, and at the same time be either sentimentally obvious or intellectually obscure. ... Good theatre, whatever it is, is about telling a story. The personality of the actors, the physical form of the space, and the dynamic of the audience itself all affect its success. The challenge is to tell the story in an exciting, intriguing and provocative way (Wolf and Block 3)

Design: Towards Holistic Excellence

The word “design” literally refers to a plan, scheme or arrangement preceding the execution of an object or phenomenon. It also refers to the compositional arrangement of pictorial elements for visual communication. However, there is a difference between the literal connotation of design and its theatrical perception. This is because it goes beyond execution of patterns on surfaces. Design, as it pertains to the theatre, is not limited to the organisation and appearance of the performance space, defining and characterising the space or arranging it to facilitate the movements of actors and using it to reinforce the concept of the production. It has to do with every aspect of the theatre coming together as one to make performance happen, from the level of planning to the final performance:

Robert Edmond Jones argues in his *Dramatic Imagination* (1941) that a stage setting has no independent life of its own. Its emphasis is directed towards the performance. In the absence of the actor, it does not exist... The actor adds the element that releases the hidden energy of the whole. Meanwhile, wanting the actor, the various elements which go to make up the setting remain suspended... in an indefinable tension. To create this suspense, this tension, is the essence of the problem of stage designing (Brockett 350).

This argument drives home the fact that the essence of design is holistic performance. The stage setting is not complete without the actor whereas the actor cannot act in a vacuum. All theatrical elements are coordinated through design and brought together in the performance space.

Ensuring Quality: The African Designer in Retrospect

The thin line between an artwork and any other commodity is craftsmanship. This is the penchant that the artist has for his art, the only value that he lives for and from which his fulfilment is derived. This invariably constitutes his sense of wealth. Indeed:

The status of being an artist is almost a tradable 'invisible' commodity within the art, craft and design world. Its value is kept high by protectionism. Being an 'artist' may not make you wealthy but it enables you to be considered for the more important exhibitions and public collections, as well as mainstream news media coverage and consideration by the critics (Dormer "Salon De Refuse" 6).

The good theatre designer, like any good artist, works for an ideal and is hardly attracted by material possessions. Adeoye agrees that "man has accepted art as the most exalted activity as it transcends pure materialistic valuation" (66). This is because the art profession is often governed by certain ethical codes, which, over the years, have gradually depleted. The drop in the value has generated an overarching influence on the receptivity of the social environment towards art. The artist and the art profession today appear to be two separate entities.

Perhaps, one should not blame the modern designers for their inherited predicament since the artist naturally forms an integral part of society which has

changed tremendously over the years. Art is a product of the society. It reflects of social attitudes and tendencies. As an inseparable part of man from the Palaeolithic age, primarily for social expression in symbolic interpersonal communication, spiritual (religious and ancestral) practices and aesthetic manifestation, art has grown and changed with man.

Colonialism brought a general bombardment on all facets of African culture especially the arts. Traditional artists considered it a taboo to exploit the members of their society who were their kinsmen and clients. They did not struggle to get clients because the excellent craftsmanship found in their work, which was attached to life, advocated for them. As a matter of fact they did not even consider their work as “art.” Ember and Ember hold the opinion, which points to the possibility of some societies carrying out the rich creative practice now known as “art” without necessarily having a word for it. The word “art” is thus a colonial heritage (291-303).

The designers in traditional Africa, with particular reference to Nigeria, occupied a respectable position in the society as the intermediary between the gods and mortal men. They engaged in totemic designs and depended strictly on the Divine for inspiration. Their immediate society constituted their clientele. In spite of long years of training in apprenticeship, they were satisfied that members of their society consulted them to carve totems, sculpt their ancestral symbols and design murals on the walls of palaces and courtyards of important chieftains. The traditional artists might have also been consulted as set designers, and though the palaces and public arenas that they sculpted, painted and decorated were not consciously intended as theatre, the use to which they might have been put could define them as being extremely theatrical. It has been confirmed that: “through most of its history, art has served a variety of purposes: honour the dead; to recall the appearance of rulers or relatives, to give visual forms to gods; to create sacred places to display wealth; to teach and to give pleasure” (Ogunmola 73). The fulfilment of the artists rested on the fact that their products were everywhere with direct effect on the people's lives, which has often accounted for the “art for life” hypothesis with which African art has often been associated.

The conceptual appreciation of the African artistic tradition is deeper than “art” in Western connotation. Art, in the African worldview, often depended on divine inspiration and thus was taken seriously. The reverse is now the case; because of overdependence on Western patronage the issue of quality in art is no longer taken seriously. Cultural imperialism, packaged as “modernity,” which excited traditional artists, partly influenced their practice. Patronage of the arts today depends partly on

the Western audience who still constitute a large part of the clientele. Africans are still largely influenced by Western capitalism under the auspice of “globalisation.” To this trend, Adepegba explains that:

The 19th and 20th centuries have brought immense changes to African life. More than any time before, Nigeria was exposed to various alien ideas. Early in the 19th century, Islam from within decisively wiped up traditional religions in the north and not long after, Christianity started to make inroads from the coast. Still later in the same century, commercial links between Europe and various Nigerian groups were established and above all, various indigenous states lost their freedom either through voluntary agreement or on battlefields. The cumulative effect of these events on was a new attitude developed by various Nigerians like other Africans towards their traditional ways and material culture (78).

There is the urgent need to borrow influences from the cultural principles which governed the practice of the art in traditional Africa. Marx as cited by Rosen affirms that “the fundamental idea is that an entity or agent gives rise to a product or expression that is distinct from but at the same time essential to itself” (7). This suggests that even though the current trend in design may not entirely reflect the traditional African culture in its purest form, essential cultural values should be borrowed and incorporated into modern designs.

Modern Tendencies in Theatre Design

Contemporary reactions to the practice of arts and design reveal uncoordinated struggles to regain the lost significance, natural patronage and spontaneous marketability that were once attendant to the arts. Adepegba affirms that “neither a concerted effort nor any sense of direction as to what to do or which way forward was readily available” (78). The crusade on regaining the lost glory of the art profession has been a weak one even in the Western world. The skills that were once associated with the extremely brilliant and divinely talented are now characterised by professional lassitude and unscrupulous practices, especially among the younger generation of professionals, because of their economic situations. Hence:

Modernity, created by the break with tradition has itself become a

tradition, we have seen that post-modernism is precisely a reaction against the tradition of modernism. Everything new becomes problematical: the purpose of art, the function of the artist, the nature of the media with which the artist works or should work, the artist's relationship with the patrons and public. (De la Croix and Tansey, 975)

Instead of mitigating the effects of economic constraints in the lives of the artists, the struggle against the negative trends has generated more problems than solutions. Such problems include the following:

i. **Job Seeking:**

Job seeking has increasingly continued to assault the art world over the years. Skilled designers are now found in such other fields as Guidance and Counselling, Accounting or Banking and Finance in search of what they consider to be "greener pastures." This attitude is the only explanation available for the wide gap between talent and creativity. There are many creative and talented people roaming the streets for salaried white collar jobs that are no where to be found, instead of searching inwards within their repertoire of artistic deposits.

ii. **Unemployable Graduates**

In spite of paper qualification, some applicants in the area of theatre design may still find it difficult to gain an employment. This is because many graduates of design are poorly equipped for the practical demands of the industry. What gives the applicant a place in the job market is not only certificate; it is a lot more than that. For instance, ingenuity and creative imagination are attributes that add value to the artist.

iii. **Scam**

From time immemorial, one of the greatest taboos in the art is material or pecuniary dishonesty. It is naturally repellent to the very spirit that accentuates the arts in man. The artist who perpetuates financial scam never comes to limelight. In spite of this fundamental principle, it still seems that some designers are not entirely upright.

iv. **Substandard products**

In the case of independent or self-employed designers, commitment to the required standard is a major issue. Many young designers find it difficult to do what is right. This is an indication that the clamour for indigenous

productivity and quality assurance has basically remained a matter of rhetoric whereas designers should know that lack of commitment and accountability can ruin their professional practice since design is capital-intensive.

v. **The Band-wagon Philosophy**

Another category of problems pertains to budding professionals who lack the moral strength to initiate original ideas. They are too professionally impotent to originate and overcome technically demanding tasks. This set of people only wait till a new method is carried out by others for them to know how to go about it. They merely “follow the bandwagon.” The most discreditable thing about the same set of practitioners is that even when they are to carry out a given task, they depend much on already established templates for approval.

Professional Ethics: Reappraising the Way Out

While it is quite agreeable that the designers in Nigeria today are victims of cultural circumstances in a rapidly decaying professional environment, the onus also rests on them to stand out as change-agents who inhabit the only vantage point from where social reform can be attained. A critical point has now been reached where rhetoric carries no value; the crusade must start with the artist who needs to constantly embark on the practice of self-understanding and resolutely insist on the culture of excellence. The desperate clamour for material possession, which has exasperated the twenty-first century artist, remains unrecognised by and unacceptable to the creative mentality and spirit that inspire, explain and empower art. The resulting moral clash signals a strong restriction or complete prohibition of comparison between the two tendencies. Consequently “Marx singles out what he calls the 'two-fold character of labour' as the most important point in his book. Labour, Marx claims, is both the source of value and, at the same time, under capitalism, a commodity itself” (Rosen 7).

There is an urgent need for the exploration of the “self,” the absence of which is evident in the average Nigerian theatre designers which justifies their being drowned in the flood of economic austerity. This is because excellence results from self-exploration; the artist who lacks the discipline required to look inwards loses touch with excellence and becomes bereft of intellectual creativity. Dormer explains that:

...when a craft is practised as a disciplined piece of knowledge, it is inevitably an activity of self-exploration in the sense that one learns about oneself through searching for excellence in the work. It has been said of Aristotle that he conceived a moral philosophy as an exercise in self-clarification on the part of individuals who seek to live excellently. There is a sense, which I will argue for, that the craftsman's determination to work excellently is an exercise in self-clarification and, in Aristotle's meaning, moral ("Practical Philosophy" 219).

In order to attain the desired level of excellence in the profession of theatre design particularly against the competition of economic realities of the twenty-first century, the following steps are inevitable:

Professionalism

This is the holistic and unconditional acceptance of a particular occupation as a lifelong vocation. The concerned professional agrees to being bound by the rules and regulations that govern such a vocation. The good artist is a thoroughbred professional who has discipline and courage, and operates in the manner that the work requires. This indicates that diligent mastery of the arts is a major ethical requirement for excellence especially in the theatre industry. In addition to this, true professionalism is characterised by certain qualities without which the value of the profession becomes compromised. They include:

- i. **The real professional artist never works for money:** This again is a paradox because it appears absurd. One might be tempted to ask; "how can anyone be a professional without working for money, after all, is the essence of working not to earn a living?" Then that would constitute the most unintelligent question to ask especially from an artist's viewpoint. This is because theatre designers as artists are unusual personalities whose impetus for doing something is often in that thing they do. The artist works for an ideal and has an ultimate focus which supersedes materialism. This is why artists are not often controlled by external circumstances; their motivation does not depend on external materialism. They are internally excited.
- ii. **The professional artist truly wants and welcomes challenges:** The meaning of art, if critically examined, is found in the application of special

skills to solve unusual problems. The only reason for respecting the artist is that he does what most people cannot do. The most apparent quality that sets an artwork apart from mere commodities is the distinctiveness of its craftsmanship. It is either a difficult task or it is not art. Whatever lacks challenges, either in the arduous process of its invention or in tasking its final connoisseurs, has absolutely nothing to do with art.

- iii. **The professional artist is never satisfied:** This explains the popular opinion that an artwork is never completed. The artist insists until the best becomes obtainable. The societal implication of this is that if practising artists are not phoney, they solely own the responsibility of changing the world.
- iv. **The designer has a perpetually positive mental attitude:** The implication of the professional artistic mentality is that once the artists actualise their dream they become fulfilled.
- v. **Unusual Creativity:** The designer as an artist requires exceptional creativity. This is because design has the capacity to unravel the mysteries of the most difficult economic situation. Creativity is natural to the arts. To achieve creativity, an artist explores the unusual, and sometimes the unimportant, not minding societal reactions. It takes creativity, for instance, to discover that there are six letters in the word “l-a-t-e-n-t” and that the same six letters also make the word “t-a-l-e-n-t.” The only difference is the arrangement and rearrangement of the alphabets. The lesson in this pun is that “if one is not creative enough to discover one's talent it remains latent.” With creativity, the latent becomes talent, without it talent is latent.

Flexibility and Versatility

The flexible, versatile and disciplined professional theatre designer is in demand anywhere in the world. One's background or economic status notwithstanding, once there is good training as evident in flexibility, versatility and self-reliance, one is armed with enough tools that would surmount any economic challenge. In a nutshell:

The path leading to a career of designing in the theatre are numerous and varied. Many come from within the theatre itself or elsewhere. Many a

would-be actor has discovered more excitement in the design; directors with a strong visual sense have become designers. Architects, fine artists and other trained visual artists equipped with the practical ability to draw and paint and who possess a strong desire to be in the theatre have forged careers as designers. (Parker, Wolf and Block, 2)

Flexibility is very important to theatre design. It is a major quality, especially, of the designer. This is because, as pointed out above, those who often become designers are from diverse backgrounds but have strong desires to be in the theatre. In addition to their desire to be in the theatre, they also see the need for vision and creativity.

Competition-mindedness

Equipped with flexibility and versatility, the designer must also add one thing: the confidence to compete with equals anywhere in the world. The good artist is one who would never give up in the face of the toughest of competitions. This value, if embraced, and properly utilised, the young theatre designers, would weather the storm of the twenty-first century economic imperative and thus quality is assured.

Innovative Thinking:

This is the most indispensable professional value, which could bring about an antidote for the modern-day economic constraints. Every industry desires innovative thinkers because they are out with what their neighbours have never achieved previously. The level of advancement in the communication, electronic and automobile technologies today are obvious attributes of innovation in design. Robert Farris Thompson points out:

Artistic development happens when an individual, after the mastery of the skills of his metier, surmounts this basic competence with continuous self-criticism and change. In a world of non-literate conservative bent, these innovations are perforce discreet, so as not to disturb a necessary illusion of the continuity of ethical truths in their abstract purity (qtd. Berzock and Frank 15).

Conclusion

The young theatre designers would achieve professional success if they respect the

ethics of their profession. It is wrong for the trained theatre designer to capitalise on the prevalence of economic imperatives as an excuse for losing touch with craftsmanship and professional excellence. The absence of core professional ethics and values would perpetuate poverty instead of alleviating it. Conversely, if the socioeconomic challenges are played down while emphasising ethical practices, the challenges would evaporate in the final analysis.

It is salient at this point to make some recommendations, particularly for urgent implementation by the Nigerian theatre designer to help surmount current socioeconomic challenges and attain the ultimate goal of ensuring professional quality. Young professionals should welcome challenges since opportunities that may bring success are usually hidden in difficult tasks. They must be innovative in their thinking thereby generating new ideas that could change their entire world.

Young theatre designers should reclaim the fundamental professional and societal values even in the face of tough socioeconomic competitions. They should be confident to stand for value regardless of environmental challenges. In order to achieve creativity, an artist should explore the unusual. Young professional theatre designers should have habitually positive mind-sets.

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THEATRE PRACTICE IN NIGERIA: PROMOTING QUALITY ASSURANCE THROUGH PROFESSIONALIZATION

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Abstract

With the emergence of Nollywood, theatre is now an interesting area where people flock to for studies and practice. Before now, many parents or guardians would not tolerate their children/wards to spend what they term 'valuable time' to study or practise how to sing, dance and act. Those who opted for the arts were largely regarded as wayward individuals, never-do-wells or the unserious types. Today, with the resounding success of the film industry, things have changed. Professionals from other disciplines are now opting for the arts of the theatre. Due to the tremendous influx into the study and practice of the theatre and its allied courses like film production, it is observed that many practitioners are not committed to quality output and professional ethics. This paper thus examines the challenges facing quality assurance in Nigerian theatre curriculum and practice and submits that government should adequately fund educational institutions to deliver their curricula so that would-be theatre practitioners can receive requisite training to ensure standards. The paper further suggests that in theatre practice, there should be one strong regulatory body that would ensure that practitioners in this field ply their trade according to prescribed ethics, and as well monitor productions in order to come up with quality films.

Introduction

Theatre practice in Nigeria has its origins in the cultural settings of the people. The theatre tradition, therefore, is a part of the social and ritual life of the people embracing the totality of their life, habits, attitudes and propensities. Theatrical activities before the advent of the Europeans on the African soil "comprise of a congeries of atavistic communal events in the forms of festivals, masquerading, puppetry, etc." (Ebong 12-13). Even with the arrival of Europeans, theatre practitioners, according to Adedeji (35), based their works on traditional resources. The established traveling theatres were more of family businesses where wives and

children played roles. Their productions were mostly in indigenous languages. Successful practitioners were found in the western part of Nigeria with Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, and Duro Ladipo being the leading proponents. The educational institutions on their part established schools of drama for training theatre artists along the lines of western tradition and used the English language as a medium of communication.

Theatre in Nigeria has, thus, developed from the traditional theatre to the stage and now it is at the level of digital theatre experiences that comprise the filmic, cinematic and home video (Suru 191). Owing to the glamour associated with the digital/electronic theatre, the practice of theatre in Nigeria is inundated with different shades of people. This has posed a serious challenge to theatre practice and calls for the need to ensure quality. This, we can achieve by examining the system that trains these practitioners. The polarization in theatre practice does not help matters either as practitioners operate in different unions, guilds, societies or associations. There is the need to operate under one umbrella. The polarization in theatre practice is not a healthy development for quality assurance. The paper also examines how quality assurance can be attained in Nigerian theatre practice through professionalization.

Conceptual Issue

Quality Assurance: The concept of quality assurance is one that has attracted a plethora of definitions. In other words, it does not lend itself to a single definition. Thus, many scholars have attempted a definition of it. To Ojerinde (18), "quality assurance is the degree of conformity of procedures of an organisation with sets standards". Another definition of quality assurance shows 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). The definition that attracts the writers most for the purpose of this writing, states thus:

Quality assurance refers to the systematic comparison with standard, monitoring of processes and associated feedback loop that confers error prevention. It also means a process-centered approach to ensuring that an organization is providing the best possible products or services (<http://en.wikipedia.org/performing arts>).

Going by the above, one can deduce that quality assurance is related to quality control which focuses on the end result. But specifically, quality assurance focuses on

enhancing and improving the process that is used to create the end result rather than focusing on the result itself. In its broadest sense, therefore, quality assurance is any action taken to prevent quality problems from occurring. In practice, it means devising systems for carrying out tasks which directly affects product quality. It is important to note here that, quality assurance does not apply only to products. Services and even non-production activities such as administration, and sales benefit from a quality assurance approach.

The above conceptual discussion delimits the scope of this paper which focuses on attaining quality assurance through professionalization. Before then, let us consider the general challenges facing quality assurance in Nigeria theatre practice. The major challenges that have dwarfed quality assurance in Nigerian theatre practice are discussed below.

Arbitrary Appointment of Art Administrators

People who have little or no knowledge of the arts are sometimes appointed to run art affairs. The policies that such people evolve and execute usually affect the arts negatively resulting in quality problems.

Underfunding of Educational Institutions

This is another challenge incapacitating quality assurance in Nigerian theatre. A cursory look at the facilities (studios, stage spaces) and working environment shows that they are usually inadequate, obsolete, uncared for and not replaced with new ones. This state of affairs is discouraging, frustrating and by extension affects the quality of the people we train as they are not trained with the necessary materials in the art and science of the performing arts. Such inadequacies, Nwadiwe (ctd. Nnamdi 137) argues, make educational establishments in Nigeria not to deliver their curricula effectively. Many higher institutions where theatre arts is offered lack the necessary facilities and allied materials to train would-be theatre practitioners. How can quality assurance be guaranteed in the face of deplorable facilities or lack of it occasioned by underfunding? Nwamuo (44) attests to this fact that, "a good number of theatres in Nigeria...have poor facilities." This hampers quality assurance because underfunding contributes immensely to poor output and thus, the quality of graduate skill is highly eroded.

Unfavourable government policies towards the arts also contribute to poor quality output. Drawing inspiration from some developing nations of the world, Nigeria's educational policies place greater premium on science and technology to

the detriment of the humanities. This is glaringly reflected in admissions and funding policies of the government. But this is not the case in even the advanced economies of the world. In Nigeria as government policies favour science and technology, more allocation is given to it while less attention is given to the arts. Science students hardly buy chemicals to carry out experiments but theatre arts students fund their productions.

Absence of a Regulatory Body

Nigeria's theatre landscape is full of practitioners but there is no coherent regulatory body to oversee its affairs. Majority of the people that practice theatre are the uninitiated who enter the field with a wrong and uninformed perspective that artistic performances are simple and everyone has the ability to execute them. Some of these people are everything in their production outfits (scriptwriters, directors, actor, executive procedures, etc.). The quality of work of such practitioners is most times shoddy in every aspect. The mass exodus into theatre practice that remains unchecked is thus a disturbing challenge.

Although there exist bodies like Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), Society of Movie Scholars (SoMS), National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP), Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) and Actors Guild of Nigeria, little or no concrete efforts have been put in place to regulate the practice and policies of the performing arts with regard to its practice, admission and licensing to protect the interest of qualified practitioners. Nnamdi decries this state of affairs when he laments that “the issue of welfare and insurance schemes for artistes as well as prosecuting unqualified and unregistered practitioners as it is done in other professions remains paramount yet neglected at the moment in theatre practice” (137). Suru attests to the above situation in the following words:

Like the biblical Tower of Babel, the theatre is full of practitioners; they (sic) have carved out different formations viz: societies, associations, unions, guilds and they are confused with every formation striving towards an existence separable from and “independent” of the collective trust... The polarization approach to theatre practice, we argue, if not well coordinated may become too costly for the theatre and the nation (191-92).

In line with the above one can state here that, the growth of the Nigerian theatre

practice and its quest for quality assurance calls for practitioners to be in one accord rather than promoting rivalry among themselves. If the issue of quality assurance will not remain a mirage, they should work towards having one regulatory body for a healthy artistic climate for theatre practice to flourish.

Inadequate Exposure to Practicals

Ugbari (650), lamenting on the low quality in our educational system, observes that "one of the major constraints facing the quality of teaching and learning in our schools is gross inadequate and very poor infrastructural facilities across board". In the same vein, Adegbite (283) in an interview with Ododo confirms that, "the main constraint to the effective teaching, learning, and practice of technical theatre is equipment and facilities". This affects quality assurance in the long run.

Even though the theatre arts graduate receives broad-based education to enable him ply his trade after graduation, there is still a sort of missing link between his training and practice. There is lack of Student's Industrial Work Experience (SIWES) in nearly all departments of Theatre Arts in Nigeria. Our students need to be exposed to SIWES as would-be practitioners need a period of practical attachment in established professional outfits to imbibe some ethics and other techniques not learnt in the classroom due to lack of relevant materials. Without this experience, some employees consider the graduates incompetent as they cannot be trusted with some equipment such as heavy digital cameras for recording. The SIWES programme is very essential for the theatre scholar because it enhances quality output and provides an avenue for students in higher institutions to acquire industrial skills and experience in their course of study. It further prepares students for the working situation they are likely to come across after graduation. Most importantly, it exposes students to work methods and techniques in handling equipment and machinery that may not be available in the educational institutions.

Theatre Practice: A Need for Professionalization

According to Moge kwu (42), there are two perspectives to professionalization. The first has to do with an orientation that impresses upon a member of an occupational group. It is an orientation that comes from a strong feeling of distinctiveness and not necessarily from any kind of special qualification or academic training. To this category of people, when one carries out a particular function over a protracted period of time, one sees oneself as a 'professional'. In effect, one sees his job as a career. We therefore hear of professional farmers, masons, drivers, vulcanizers, etc. In reality,

these are mere occupations.

The second perspective in Mogeke's reckoning is the one we are mainly concerned with in this paper. It means a preparation for life. This requires advanced education and training. It also involves intellectual skills. There is usually well laid down codes of conduct with sanctions for erring members. This is the kind of professionalization one thinks of in theatre practice, but this is not obtainable in our case as it is in medicine or law. This explains why in theatre practice different kinds of people enter its practice without any let or hindrance even when they do not have the required professional knowledge of the arts of the theatre. It is envisaged that professionalization of the theatre will solve most of our image problem and consequently go a long way in enhancing quality assurance. What we need now is a policy or an instrument backing up this. Professionalization of theatre practice in Nigeria is found crucial because theatre is a discipline that looks into other disciplines and reflects the society. Suru cites Jenks Okwori when he affirms that:

the performing arts....reflects and exhibits life...It represents a mirror image of Nigerian society for all Nigerians to see in various ways and decide whether the image they see in the reflections is the image they want to see of themselves and their nation (192).

Nigerian theatre practice has come a long way. The call for its professionalization is therefore not out of place. A legal instrument for it is imperative now. In the light of this, the following standards should be put in place:

- Acquisition of professional knowledge and expertise through long period of education and training by members.
- Attainment of self-autonomy and authority to control admission, recruitment, training, licensing, certification, standards of practice, and retention of members.
- Possessing professional code of ethics for regulating and controlling the conduct of its members.
- Ability of the professional to demonstrate competence through passing some prescribed professional examination organised by an approved body.

Approach to Professionalization

We were made to understand earlier in this paper that quality assurance specifically

focuses on improving the process that is used to create the end result. Against this backdrop, our discussion in this section of the paper will be tailored towards examining our teaching/learning process, that is, what we do and how we do it. This is because of the fact that we train the very people who go out to practice.

Today, there are many universities and tertiary institutions that offer theatre arts. The running of this course is a clear demonstration of formal education in this area of study and it is a bold step towards orientation and professionalization. However, a critical look into the curriculum content of theatre arts course indicates that there is a need to do more. In as much as our students are taught different aspects of the theatre, they are not exposed enough to the areas of theatre management, film making and sociology of the theatre. In the area of theatre management, it needs to be expanded to include events and artist management. As for film making, more courses should be introduced to cut across all levels of study during the programme. Sociology of the theatre, an area that has a direct bearing on the society is not well covered, even though this area emerged as far back as 1955 through the efforts of George Guvitch, but it is observed that there is no clear cut definition of what should constitute the scope of this area. Attendant to this, it is difficult to talk about the sociology of the theatre without dovetailing into the domains of other forms of sociological studies. Meanwhile, in a bid to teach sociology of the theatre in most drama departments, Sociology of the theatre is taught under “Theatre and Society.” What is being taught in the final analysis is mostly sociology of the drama. Theatre and its sociality is left well alone. To effectively cover sociology of the theatre, Shevtsora, cited in Ayo Akinwale (10) suggests the following subheadings: Theoretical bases, sociology of the actor/actress, director, designers, composers, playwright, finance and administration and dramatic genres. The theatre curriculum on sociology of the theatre should therefore, be designed to incorporate dynamism as it pertains social and economic realities evident in Nigerian Society.

Another area where our theatre curriculum needs improvement is exposure to practicals. Practicals are not being done enough in the areas of dance, technical theatre, film making, etc. The practicals carried out in school are not enough to guarantee the desired quality we expect of our graduates in the long run. The practicals they undertake merely fulfil the partial requirements to enable them complete their studies. When they face challenges in the real world of the industry, they are either here or there. This made Awuawerer to ponder thus:

....how many Nigerian theatre graduates can effectively operate a video

camera? The answer may not be affirmed because of lack of infrastructure which places the students in a theoretical knowledge of film related courses.... Most theatre Arts Departments offer this course without working studios that the students can learn film editing (149).

In the light of the above deficiency, our students have to be exposed to the student's Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). This programme is relevant in enhancing quality assurance because it exposes students to practical experiences and gets them to fit into their chosen careers. The importance and relevance of SIWES cannot therefore be overemphasized. The feedback from industrial work experience apart from helping these students to become perfect will also help in restructuring the academic curriculum, and bridge the gap between the school and industry.

Better still, theatre management too is another area that needs improvement. People have now retreated from live theatre performances to mediatized theatrical engagements and reality shows. In order to be pragmatic and contemporary reality sensitive, the area of theatre management should be broadened to include events and artists management. But the fear of Victor Dugga is that: "how many institutions actually teach art contract and artist management within their regular training? Yet these have become part of the realities in the world where their graduates have to operate" (14). It is to ameliorate this situation that Rantimi (129) finds it pertinent to recommend that:

In order for the theatre graduates to remain relevant in an age of information communication technology and star branded entertainment performances, there is need for repackaging of the theatre curriculum to accommodate the organization and management of theatrical events for the audience that are yearning for events.

Schools of drama should therefore train events managers who will be skilful in handling packaging of events, audience engineering, crowd control, venue management and publicity gimmick.

It is hoped if the above observations are taken care of, professionalism will have its way and quality assurance guaranteed.

The Way Forward

For the Nigerian Theatre to attain the desired quality assurance, the people saddled

with the responsibility of evolving and executing policies that have direct bearing on theatre practice must be people with a bias and technical-know-how of the arts of theatre. This is not the case as such people are not from the arts. Also, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA's) that oversees the affairs of the creative arts should be well funded monetarily and materially to carry out their responsibilities.

It is the writers contention that theatre arts should be placed under vocational and technical education. It has courses such as technical theatre, film production, etc that are technical oriented. On completion of studies, the would-be practitioner be made to proceed on industrial attachment to performing troupes, film production outfits, federal or state arts councils, radio stations, television houses, etc. This will provide the theatre graduate the opportunities to apply his/her knowledge in real work situation thereby bridging the gap between what he learnt in school and practical work. It is hoped, this will make the transition from school to the world of work easier and also enhanced students contacts for job placement later in life.

As for the practice, there is need for a council to be put in place to enact whose rules and regulations on entry, practice and behaviour of members. The council should also have an arm that will supervise academic programmes for the purpose of standardization and quality assurance. We therefore advocate for a one strong regulatory body as can be seen in professions like law, medicine, engineering, etc .

Last but not the least, Nigeria Theatre Arts curriculum should be enlarged to embrace the study of sociology of the theatre, events management, entrepreneurial skills and exposure to industrial attachment to enable theatre graduates, cope with contemporary realities.

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WALKING THROUGH QUALITATIVE PEDAGOGY OF COSTUME DESIGN TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A STUDY OF “PROJECT HEAD TO TOE” BY REDEEMER’S UNIVERSITY THEATRE DEPARTMENT

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Abstract

A study of theatre departments in some Nigerian Universities reveals the teaching of costume design both in theory and praxis as mainly an academic exercise, taught as part of the curriculum (the visual environment of the theatre) and not as vocation outside it. This trend seems inadequate when the number of educational or commercial theatres in Nigeria is considered. In this light, students rather specialize in the more employable and more glamorous areas of the theatre. However Redeemer's University is gradually introducing a new trend into the pedagogy of costume design by introducing 'Project Head to Toe', a fashion show which tasks the creative/innovative instincts of students. This, like 'Project Runway' assigns costume students to design several overall/unique looks for clients which are scored by a panel of examiners as they walk down the runway. Although, this trend may pose some questions like the relativity of fashion to costume design as well as its relevance to the academic content of the course, this paper examines costume design as a course vis-à-vis 'Project Head to Toe' and how it progressively facilitates creativity, innovation, vocation and entrepreneurship by unearthing talented designers among these students despite its shortfalls. The paper further reveals since one of the objectives of theatre in education is to empower students on leaving school, this development proves to effectively facilitate one or more of these objectives.

Introduction

Educational theatre in which this study is subsumed is that theatre which exists in an academic institution where theatre is taught as a course in the school curriculum. Although the environment in which it exists might make it seem less theatre in nature, it is not the environment in which theatre is taught that is an end in itself, but the content of the theatre taught therein. Before this time, Clifford (1973) in discussing educational theatre and theatre in education, reveals that every theatre

whether educational or commercial must aim at pleasing the public and attracting large audiences. He further states that anything short of good theatre is unacceptable in good theatre education. In view of this, educational theatre must entertain as well as educate students, but despite the emphasis on education, learning and entertainment, it should also prepare the ground for students who may be interested in learning the arts and crafts of quality theatre by furnishing them with the opportunity to earn a living and live worthy lives on leaving school. It is also important that the skills the educational theatre imparts in students thereafter open the individual to self-growth and accomplishments while contributing to the growth and harmonization of the organic society. But to do this, the learning environment must have prepared such an individual for vocations and entrepreneurship both in and outside his/her specialization.

Furthering Clifford's opinion, Parker and Wolf (1996) in discussing design artistry in the theatre, highlight the fear of uncertainty that even a student who is gifted in visual arts may be confronted with, stating that: standing at the threshold of training for a career in design for the theatre may puzzle over what the future holds. This feeling of despair may be catalytic of the scant number of students and professionals in some special areas of the theatre.

As studies (cf. Enendu, 1989; Ododo, 1994; Ukala, 2004; Shuaib, 2008) reveal, some areas in theatre education and practice in Nigeria's tertiary institutions suffer negligence, disregard and low specialization when compared with certain areas that are regarded as glamorous. This trend may not be due to lack of qualitative teaching of the procedural school curriculum but might be occasioned by lack of technicalities and innovative teaching method that may further enhance the interest of students as well as prepare them for earning a living after school. This is no idle speculation as the conservative method in teaching costume design may be likened to the conservative preacher of the gospel who practically forced God down the throats of his congregation by constantly reminding them of the burning intensity of hell while a more innovative and glamorous pedagogy of the course might be a reminder of the beauty and opulence of paradise as the reward for virtue. Of what relevance is this analogy, we may ask? The picture being painted here is the situation of some areas of the theatre that students hardly specialize in. Compared with areas like acting, dance, technical theatre and the media arts, the ration of students and professionals in costume design is considerably low. The question one may ask is: What is responsible for this?

Statement of the Problem

A survey of theatre departments in some educational and professional theatres in Nigeria reveals a lower statistics of students that specialize in costume design than in the other specialized arms and appendages of the theatre. As an art form, theatre embodies complexities both literary and theatrical that must collaborate to form an organic whole. Since no art of the theatre may thrive without others, it is important that the entire fragments unify harmoniously. This level of disdain with which the art of costume design is treated is further amplified in the negligible number of scholastic endeavours done in that field as well as the number of professionals in the field. This is no gainsaying that this is alarmingly low compared to the number of playwrights, actors, dancers, musicians, broadcasters, even lighting/scenic designers. Shuaib, in observing the sluggishness that has overtaken the development of theatre practice in Nigeria, laments that:

many others concerned scholars, practitioners and consultants also engaged in critical review and examination of Nigerian theatre practice, in relation to their various areas of specializations, so as to develop a visible theatre practice in Nigeria. ...But regrettably, only few researches have been carried out in the technical areas of costume and make-up. However, the reason for this is not far-fetched, because not many competent scholars and practitioners are available in these fields (www.ajol.info/index.php/cajtm/article/viewFile/76628/67075 p33-53).

However, this trend did not begin overnight but with the decision of students to choose their areas of specialization at a certain stage in their career that may be influenced by many reasons, one of which may be that the course does not really prepare theatre students for any gainful employment both in and outside theatre practice. This researcher's experience at Redeemer's University reveals that some of those that register for the course do so in order to upsurge their CGPA or balance their credit units and not as a serious area of interest while those with genuine interest for the course are perceived by their peers as indolent and unserious students that cheapen their way out of theatre school. Little wonder then that the statistics of established and upcoming costume/make-up artists is painfully low while students that specialize in other areas regard themselves smart enough to avoid being stranded in the labour market on leaving school. While this may be unsavoury, we may not

actually castigate these students for their lacklustre attitude to the art of costume design. This is because unlike the inception of popular theatre in Nigeria pioneered by the like of Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, Duro Ladipo and Moses Olaiya (Baba Sala) when the use of costumes formed an integral part of their production ensemble, adding meaning, clarity, glamour, function and aesthetic, some contemporary directors seem to be more interested in the acting, speech and blockings of the actor forgetting the words of Gassner (118) that clothes make the man, at least in the theatre. This position is further corroborated in the foreword of Gaskell that 'You can do a play without a set but you can't do it without costumes. Well, you can, but the audience would feel deeply cheated'. He goes further to reveal that:

With the coming of realism, and contemporary life, the function of costumes became equally more important in defining the social existence of the characters and their precise psychology. ... something that focuses the audience on the life of character and the play (Thorne 8).

Wilson (306) educates the reader on the importance of costumes in theatrical performances stating that in theatre, clothes sends us signals similar to those in everyday life, but as with other elements of theatre, there are significant differences between the costumes of everyday life and theatrical costumes. Can we then attribute the unsavoury attitude of students, professionals and other theatre practitioners to the art of costume design as ignorance or nonchalance? Whatever, no reason justifies this disaffection of any theatre stakeholder towards this important theatrical phenomenon. Fast fading is the era in which costume designers undertook in-depth researches on their designs, while Nigerian actors have almost reverted to the Elizabethan era in which the actor wore the clothe that caught their fancy and had little relevance to the play. In fact, some actors are in the practice of resisting costumes that would aid the production in favour of the ones that would suit their intents and purposes. Further, some contemporary Nigerian producers and directors even forget either deliberately or accidentally to engage the services of a costume designer for their productions or even engage their associates that are not knowledgeable in the field as last minute costume designers. From the experiences garnered over the years, as well as those of some costumiers that this researcher has encountered, some producers and directors alike think it as a waste of resources engaging the services of a costume designer and as such try to do so at no cost at all, while oftentimes, it is discovered that there are no real budgets for costumes in their plays. Need we then ask

for the expedience of societal re-awakening to the indispensability of costume design as a theatrical phenomenon? Would a more qualitative pedagogy of this hitherto neglected field not provide the wherewithal for entrepreneurship among theatre students that have been unable to express their creative intuition?

Misconceptions between Clothes and Costumes

Furthering the discussion on this unhealthy trend in the Nigerian theatre academy/practice, the writer attempts a clarification on the misconception between clothes and costumes. Cohen (139) insists that “costume, of course, is clothing; it must be functional as well as meaningful and aesthetic”. Taking this argument further, Badeji (74) corroborates Cohen's insistence that “stage costumes have to be designed more broadly and extensively than everyday clothes”. And since the costume “needs to serve the play, and support the actor” (Thorne 8) the designer has to be “creative, imaginative, and above all, be able to interpret the script thoroughly in order to arrive at a desirable end” (Badeji74).

To this end, Thorne (8) remarks that costume design for the theatre is an engaging and rewarding experience. Whether it is for intimate, small scale productions on tour, or for the vast space of an opera house, the experience will prove to be both creative and challenging. However, checkmating this trend of disregard for the art of costume design might require laying the facts bare by establishing the indispensability of costumes to theatre as clothes is to man. This is because theatre as the mirror of life must be as close to reality as possible and ironically as one of the theatrical ingredients that can facilitate this, it is appropriate that the functions and use of costumes be discussed in the paper.

The Rationale in Wearing Clothes

Before channelling this discourse to the world of fashion, it is important to delve a little into the world of clothing, one of the basic necessities in life. Perhaps, educating theatre students and practitioners alike on the reasons for wearing clothes would always serve as reminder to the society at large on the important as cloth is to man's existence, which might make it attract more scholarship and research. Adelugba (1987:24) introduces his article with these words:

I begin this paper with a discussion of clothes in real life... It must by now be clear that the logic for wearing clothes in real life and the aesthetics principles guiding this also apply, with inevitable variations, in the

context of costumes in the theatre.

Going by biblical accounts, the basic reason for wearing clothes seems to be for decency, that is, to cover nudity. However, the speculations of anthropologists and historians projects protection from cruel and harsh weather conditions for which man searched for ways to oppose the forces of nature. It is therefore not surprising that Brown (9) insists that clothing as protection against weather is in a sense a portable shelter.

However, the insistence of Brown is debatable since findings in garment construction in the Early Middle Ages, the Norse, to be precise reveals a high aesthetics similar to modern fashion especially in fit and cut. Intrigued by this discovery, Fransen, Norgaard and Ostegard remark that:

In the Early Middle Ages the cutting and production of a piece of clothing was associated with a great deal of mystery, and how the Norse, who lived on the edge of the world's society, so to speak, could carry out this profession under such primitive conditions is just as mysterious (5).

Another reason advanced by anthropologists is magical sympathy that thrives between a man and his clothing. Some forms of clothing reinforce beliefs, and when worn by certain people, help to ward off evil and malevolent beings. This may account for the wearing of charms, prayer-garments and amulets.

But with increased civilization, clothes began to gather to it other functional and aesthetic factors. One of these is the socio-sexual functions in communicating the wearer's availability thereby arousing sexual interest in the onlooker and increases sexual interest in the wearer. This is what anthropologists regard as the erotic function of cloth. Dress is used to draw attention and to communicate the availability of oneself (Bogatyrev 14).

Clothes may be communicative of class, rank, status and the socio-political affiliation of the wearer. It announces social worth and is indicative of the wearer's economic stance and political pedigree. For instance, the Roman toga which became a symbol of manhood and dominance was allowed only on Roman freeborn. Only Roman citizens were allowed to wear a toga. Crowther (14) reveals that: "People were proud to be seen in their togas, even though they were awkward to wear". In summation, Schwarz (25) suggests that the status and ranking function of cloth is more reasonable than the erotic function of dress. Cloth helps in revealing the

wearer's culture, his nationality and his attitude towards his culture and society. Since a society's mental life is often reflected in her myths, custom and values, the wearer's dress may be reflective of his culture. Clothes reveal the wearer's job. Since some jobs already have some dress codes attached to them, professionals in these fields are therefore obliged to conform. Some of these professionals include lawyers, judges, nurses, soldiers and many others.

Some forms of clothing reveal the weather and climatic conditions of certain places when worn. Clothes that would be worn on cold, wet or windy days would be warm and heavy, but light and airy on warm sunny days. Finally, clothes may be reflective of the wearer's mood or state of mind. A bereaved person is likely to dress in dull and sombre outfits with little or no accessories, while the celebrant of a joyous occasion would be gaily and gorgeously dressed.

Functions of Costumes in Theatrical Performances

Although the playwright and actors may be at the pinnacle of any theatrical performance, to assert that they are absolute would be erroneous. As a collaborative effort, all the areas of the theatre, animate and inanimate, must unify to give the play both function and aesthetics. The discourse of this paper has been on costume, so highlighting the reasons for the indispensability of costumes is also expedient to this study because it is fundamental that every theatre student be knowledgeable in it. Also, enumerating these functions might educate theatre stakeholders and facilitate a change of attitude to the art of costume design. Costumes function in theatrical performances by communicating the play to the audience thereby performing story-telling function that is both fulfils the semiotic and aesthetic objectives of the play. Setting the mood, the setting and the entire play presentation because given that costumes are well designed, few words are needed. Wilson (306) reveals further that costume “help to set the style of the production”.

- Assisting in character evolution by aiding the transition of a character in a play.
- Revealing the state of health of the actor.
- Revealing the inner sentiments of a character as well as his/her vanities.
- Showing the relationship of characters to one another.
- Indicating the weather and the climatic condition that is prevalent in the play
- Indicating the wealth and status of individuals in a production.
- Revealing the age, sex and religion of characters in a performance. -revealing the age of the actor.

- Revealing in clear terms the profession of the wearer.
- Revealing the historical period of the play, aiding the identification and understanding of the period in which the play is set; distinguishing between contemporary and history plays.
- Aiding the actions on stage by adding meaning and clarity to it.
- Accommodating the actor's movement actions and providing psychological balance for the actor.
- Aiding the overall visual environment of the theatre, by relieving the eyes, providing visual balance and aesthetic to the production.

This is often the introductory part of the course which is often fundamental to a would-be costume designer who must also be armed with other principles and elements of costume design for effective execution of his/her concepts.

The Pedagogy of Costume Design in Redeemer's University

Naturally, the packaging of a commodity is likely to determine the attention it receives. This analogy is rather appropriate to combat the challenges encountered in the pedagogy of some courses in Theatre Arts departments. Considering the fact that Theatre Arts is not a very popular course in Nigeria since it is often misconstrued as an unserious profession of immoral people whose businesses is just to drum, sing and dance. Some people even wonder at what lecturers in the department teach, what students learn, or what theatre graduates would engage in on leaving school. In view of this, prospective undergraduates are discouraged by their parents and guardians from reading Theatre Arts in favour of Medicine, Law, Engineering and other glamorous courses. In fact, from the statistics taken in the present 200 level Theatre Arts class, only eight students out of 22 confessed to deliberately making Theatre Arts as their first choice course. Invariably, others are Theatre Arts students either by incident or accident. In the light of this, majority of these students may not even have a foreknowledge of what to engage in and often decide on acting, media and music. After all, Nollywood is a sure bet, the print and electronic media await media students, while the vibrant Nigerian music industry is even a surer bet. But what is the fate of the students that specialize in costume design? Without a vibrant industry for costume designers, the few theatres that exist and the nonchalance of theatre practitioners to the art of costume design, who would find them employable? It is in the light of this that we decided at Redeemer's University to re-package and re-brand some courses in the Theatre Arts Department. This is done in a way to accommodate the already existing academic content while also infusing vocation and

entrepreneurship into the practical aspect of the course. This way, the course might attract students to it and also, society at large especially with the knowledge that a bright future awaits these theatre graduates in and out of school.

Consequently, in the Redeemer's University Theatre Arts Department, the student ultimately specializes in an area of the theatre in the third year. This is done after testing the waters of all the courses in the Department in their first year including THA103 (Introduction to Design). This is the course in which Theatre Arts students get their first feel of costume/make-up design and which gives them an insight into what they might encounter if they specialize in the area. Here, the lecturer in charge of this course needs to tactfully and methodically introduce this course to these 'freshers' since this may be catalytic to their choice of special areas, and more especially if one considers that the next contact of these students with this course would be in their third year, if they decide to specialize in it. Against this back-drop, the course outlines should be designed methodically to cover the fundamentals of design, especially costume/make-up to facilitate an effective pedagogy that would be etched in the memory of the students and further pique their interest in the course in their third year.

For clarity, below are the codes, the titles and description of the design courses as they appear in the *Redeemer's University Brochure 2010-2013*. The descriptions of these courses are as accurate as possible.

THA 103-Introduction to Design

This course basically aims at introducing students to the visual components/environment of theatre/theatre by identifying the elements of design, their functions and indispensability in any production. This course further gives the student an awareness of his/her creative instincts, while encouraging him/her to gradually develop his/her taste and personal style and aesthetic.

THA319: Design and Technical Theatre I

A study of the basic principles of theatre design and technology, design construction, painting, costume, and make-up, properties, sound, lighting, design and execution, technical directing.

THA320: Design & Technical Theatre II

An integrated practice in the areas of set and light design, construction, sound,

costumes, make-up, props, interior designs and decoration.

THA411: Design and Technical Theatre/Costume and Make-up: Advanced Study

A study of the latest trends in set construction, costume and make-up and the use of the ICT in design.

THA 412: Design and Technical Theatre/ Costume and Make-up: Advanced Practice

A practical realization of a project in lighting, costume design/make-up, props and interior décor related to departmental production. (*Redeemer's University (RUN) Brochure, 2010-2013*).

All the descriptions above are intended to guide the lecturer in preparing the course outlines that would facilitate an effective teaching of the courses. It is however reasonable to point out that these courses are divided to two parts: Light/Set design, Costume/Makeup. In this light, two lecturers who are specialists in these fields are assigned to each part. It is given that all part one students take both parts, while third year students are expected to specialize in an area of the theatre. But for those that eventually specialize in design, they are expected to do so in one part of the course – Light/Set, Costume/Make-up. This is referred to as the 'major' area of specialization, and some others, the minor area of specialization.

To further highlight the pedagogy of these courses in the Department of Theatre Arts, Redeemer's University (RUN), the course outlines for THA 320, second semester, 2012/13 session is presented:

Second Semester, 2012/2013 Session

Having introduced students to design in their first year, those that decide to specialize in costume design are re-introduced to the art of costume design in the first semester of their third year with the course code, THA 319. This is when emphasis is placed more on the theory of costume design and its academic content. This is because costume design is a practical course which dwells more on 'walking the walk', rather than 'talking the talk'.

Course Outlines for THA 320: Design and Technical Theatre I

This course aims at re-introducing design, especially its technicalities to students

specializing in Costume/Makeup. This shall enable them practise and apply the theories of design, using their creative intuition and personal style as means of expression. Further, as a practical-based course, it shall engage students in series of practical which aims at aiding them in taking up vocations both in and out of theatre practice.

Week one: Revision

Weeks two & three: Designing costume for the Stage: Script to Performance: *Ahmed Yerima's Yemoja*.

Week four: Designing High-fashion: A Critical analysis of *Project Runway* – hosted by Heidi Klum.

Assigning the task of creating seven designs for seven clients to students.

Weeks five & six: The Basic skills of tailoring: Tools for sewing and their uses, parts of a sewing-machine, caring for a sewing-machine, procuring fabrics, measurement, processes involved in cutting, joining, and finishing a garment.

Week seven: Creating beards and wounds in a play.

Week eight: Hair-dressing: Local and foreign hairstyles.

Week nine: Local and foreign make-up items and their functions.

Week ten: Makeup for different occasions. (b) Aging a character in a play.

Week eleven: Reports on the *Runway-Show*, *Project Head to Toe* – Progress, challenges and prospects

Week twelve: Caring for costumes: *BOJA*¹ Costume Wardrobe as case study.

Week thirteen: Turning in project files and Finished Projects: Assessment, comments and approval.

Week fourteen: Runway show: *Project Head to Toe*.

The Revolving Phase of Fashion

Whether we reckon with it or not, what we wear or choose not to wear is determined greatly by the trend of fashion. Since what is available in the shops is what determines what an individual buys and consequently wears, this makes the fashion enthusiast susceptible either consciously or unconsciously to the forces of fashion. Incidentally the fashion designer whose creative instincts, personal taste and style often reflect in his/her designs is often the force that controls the trend of fashion. Revealing this, Russell (546) stresses that by “what the designer chooses to stress or ignore, we sense his personal style influenced by the cultural pattern within which he lives”. Marinho

(262) corroborating Russell remarks that “every work of art is an individual expression of something that cannot be expressed in any other way” and no matter how fast he runs, a designer cannot escape his/her taste, personal style and creativity; in fact he cannot escape himself. In truth, it is his 'self' that informs the output of his works which would in turn determine the degree of his followership.

In discussing the creative process in carving the Igbo mask, Okoye (44) argues that it would appear that the observance of culturally identifiable forms limits the artistic expressivity of the artists and results in the creation of works with static forms. Do we then agree that the designer too may be influenced by his society? While we do not absolutely agree with this position, it is still important to note the assertion of Thorne (12) which projects that anti-fashion trends are common, usually as a reaction to the political, social or economic issues of the time. However, it would still not be out of order to agree with Okoye since every man including the creative artist is a product of his society, but more often than not, people desire to look good, trendy, and up-to-date and this informs the constant need to keep pace with the craze of the constantly changing world of fashion.

It is even common-place in vibrant economies around the world for ardent followers of fashion to overhaul their wardrobes not because the clothes in them are old or undersize, but this is to make room for incoming ones that are trendy and up-to-date even if they are not as beautiful or functional as their existing wardrobes. With the assurance of this kind of apostleship from fashion enthusiasts, both local and international fashion houses constantly have to be on their toes to meet the never-ending demands of their clients.

The Road to Self-Actualization

In view of this, there is obviously no better time than now for a designer to make a debut in the ever vibrant world of fashion break free from the encapsulating world of designing for only play productions. In fact, since costumes evolve from everyday clothes, it would not be illogical to train as a fashion designer while training as a costume designer. While not suggesting that the academic content of costume design as a course be thrown out, killing two birds with one stone might just be expedient. This is what we call here 'edupreneurship' – education and entrepreneurship.

Although the existing fashion designers are still very vibrant, the fashion world is constantly on the lookout for new things and even hunts for it. One of such reality shows that make a search for new talents is *Project Runway*. This show hosted by Heidi Klum seeks talented designers who are rewarded and even helped to start

their own fashion line. In spite of the fact that such talent-hunt shows may not be all encompassing in Nigeria, fashion shows and exhibitions all around the world have become a household affair. Thus a talented designer with that extra touch may be launched into limelight unexpectedly. This is because some channels on the cable, DSTV and other satellite television stations have channels that are dedicated to fashion. Some of these are *Fashion TV*, *E-Channel*, even *M-net* and *Series*. This is to discover new designs, designers and models and what celebrities wear in order to promote them and their works. For fashion agencies, it is always heart-warming to discover talented designers who might even re-create outdated fashions to *haute-couture* thereby receiving global applause from the fashion world. Perhaps, this move is deliberate as it invariably breaks the monopoly of huge fashion names like Gucci, Ralph Lauren, Versace, Tommy Hilfiger, Kimora Lee Simmons, Sarah Burton, Michael Kors, Beyonce Knowles, Sean John and many other designers around the world whose designs dominate the fashion arena.

Although our local fashion industry in Nigeria is not doing badly when one considers the activities of designers like Deola Sagoe, Nikky Africana, Dakova, Nikky Khiran, and many others, it is however desirable that we begin to rub shoulders with big fashion names all over the world. As such, the search continues for upcoming designers that would take the world of fashion by storm. But this would only be possible when an awakening and re-awakening is given to our youth. These must develop a passion for fashion, not just as consumers but as producers of fashion in order to achieve fame, material success, glamour and consequently the employers of labour.

Project Head to Toe: The Run-Way to Self-Awakening and Reawakening

Inspired by Heidi Klum-hosted *Project Runway*, with the same point of view but with a different approach, method and reward, *Project Head to Toe* was unveiled on 6th June, 2012 with ten costume design students parading their designs. Four of these debutants were in the final class, 2011/12 Session – Winfred Daramola (Aarewa Creations), Abigael Jaiyeola (Pearline-Diamond Collections), Blessing Aloko (Emy Designs), Doyinsola Asagba (Kandie Kreations), and the only male designer among them, Charles Obasanya (Charlie'O). Others in the third year class include Adenike Ndefo (Nikky Critty Fashions), Eneyi Ogbaji (Eneyi Price), Christianah Offioeli (Nineebel Collections), Nancy Gbagi (Nnlicious Creations) and Somisola Oyesola (Somilicious).

The show, *Project Head to Toe*, is so-called because each designer is responsible for the overall look of his/her client/model from the tip of his/her hair to the soles of his/her feet. This includes the make-up, head-dress, hair-style, jewellery and accessories, appendages and the foot-wears. At the beginning of the second semester, the four final year costume/makeup students were assigned to design a couture dress, a casual outfit, traditional attire, a corporate outfit and a valedictory look for themselves. This project was designed to be a departure from the stereotype of designing costumes for stage plays in which they could just pick costumes from the existing ones. Since it is a tough and competitive world out there, this is intended to equip them with a vocation as outgoing costume/make-up students. However, the third year students were also asked to design four looks each with the exception of the valedictory look.

But before they set to work, some episodes of the reality show, *Project Runway* were viewed and reviewed, analysed and discussed. This motivated these students who excitedly set to work. Individuality and originality, silhouette, aesthetics, harmony and finishing were to be salient in their works. Soon, ideas were projected, sketches were turned in for approval and work began in earnest. As it is compulsory for designers to shop for models that would present their outfits, they also did, took their measurements, purchased different textures and colours of fabrics and got tailors and seamstresses to translate their sketches into actual designs. It is also worthy of mention that these students who hitherto had always worked with this researcher in the decorations really outdid themselves in making the BOJA theatre stage really eye-ful for the runway show. Even though there were a few lapses here and there and the designs had some cut, fit and finishing problems, the show which featured ten designers and fifty male and female models was more successful than we envisaged.

This maiden edition of the run-way show was chaired by the then Head of Department, Kola Oyewo while the body of lecturers in the Department constituted the examination panel that scored the designs of the students. At the end of the show when the scores were tallied, Abigail Jaiyeola (Pearline- Diamond) emerged the winner of *Project Head to Toe* (2012). Although her reward reflected in her scores, she was encouraged to pursue this vocation in which she is so talented, especially if one considers her exquisite designs that rested well on her models. She also made a judicious use of fabrics and colours.

This show was well received by the Department and even the paying audience that came to see the show. These relieved the examination tension that may have

beclouded the show as they applauded and jeered as the models paraded their garments.

Project Head to Toe: Second Edition

The second edition of *Project Head to Toe* which featured the third and final year costume/makeup students was held on 22nd January, 2013. This time, a total of seven designers exhibited their designs. The reduction in their number is occasioned by the fact that some of the students had registered the course as their minor before this researcher took over the teaching. Regretfully, they acknowledged the impact that just a session of registering the course has had on them as this paper shall reveal in the summary of the interview session with them.

These seven designers are: Sandra Moweta (Omaberry Creations), Gold Martin- Maritza (Maritza-Gold), Goodness Amos (OMG Couture), Judy Omini (WOW! Collection), and Bukola Adeyinka (Eve Collections). Others are: Somisola Oyesola (Somilicious) and Christianah Offieoli (Nineebel Collections).

In this edition, each designer was tasked with designing five exquisite but original looks for five clients. These include a period costume, African attire, an evening dress, an office wear and a day wear. The same process was also adopted by these upcoming designers to attain their goals. This time, Gold Martin-Maritza thrilled the audience with her outlandish designs and emerged the queen of the pack. Her designs were very fresh and original, functional and aesthetic.

This edition was chaired by Ahmed Yerima, who incidentally is the Dean of the College of Humanities. He conducted the oral examination for the designers after the show. Yet again, all the lecturers in the Department constituted the examination panel amidst a cheering audience.

The Discovery of Self

Bogus as it may sound; *Project Head to Toe* has succeeded in adding so much value and glamour to the costume unit in Redeemer's University. And more heart-warming is the fact that *Project Head to Toe* is not just an end in itself but has succeeded in discovering the talented ones among the students. It is also interesting to discover that two of the graduated students, Winifred Daramola and Blessing Aloko, have taken up vocations in the fashion world. Below is the summary of my interview with these students:

Winifred Daramola, RUN Theatre Graduate, 2011/12 Session

Winifred, 21, reveals that her love for costume/make-up extends beyond the theatre. She confesses that she was motivated by the runway show which serves as a catalyst for her creative instinct. She says that she has on graduation gone ahead to brush up her skills in professional make-up artistry at BNM Style-Cue. She is now the CEO of Aarewa Make-overs. She intends to take it as a fulltime job and hopes to open an office as soon as possible at Iyana-Ipaja area, Lagos.

Blessing Aloko, RUN Theatre Graduate, 2011/12 Session

Blessing, an ardent costume/makeup student, confesses in my interview with her that she is truly blessed by *Project Head to Toe*. She goes on to say that she actually realized that she could design clothes on her own without depending on any designer to do it for her, or having to rubber-stamp someone else's work. She has since gone to learn make-over at Face-sketch in Lagos and is in the process of going of training in a fashion school. On completing the training, she hopes to start her own label.

Nancy Gbagi, 23, RUN Final Year Student, 2012/13 Session

Chairperson/CEO of Nnlicious Creations, Nancy first paraded her designs in the maiden edition of *Project Head to Toe*. Most of her designs were designed with Ankara fabrics. Though she did not come first in the show, she took her vision beyond the show. In an interview with her, she showered encomium on *Project Head to Toe* for making her realize something she never knew existed in her. Realizing this, she gave her art a boost by acquiring more knowledge when she attended a workshop in Lagos in August 2012. On 13th November, 2012 in a show tagged *Entrepreneurial Night*, held on the RUN Cafeteria stage, Nlicious launched her line to the larger society. Her range includes men and women's clothing, shoes, bags and accessories. She has had yet another exhibition at *Rave Night* on 23rd December, 2012. Her office is located in Ikotun, Lagos.

Gold Martin-Maritza, 19, 300 Level RUN Theatre Student

Gold is set to take the fashion scene by storm. She dazzled the audience with her mind-blowing designs at the second edition of *Project Head to Toe* held on January 22nd, 2013. Her designs were not only original but revolutionary. She reveals in an interview with her that she had always been interested in designing which is evident in her sketching ability. She is full of encomium for the show to which she attributes her self-discovery and actualization. Since emerging winner in the last edition of the

project, Gold has been collecting her designs that she does with both African and Western fabrics. At the moment, she has over one hundred (male/female) designs that she is set to exhibit in five different fashion shows coming up in the second-quarter of the year. These include the *Unilag Fashion Week*, *City People Fashion Show*, *The Nigerian Fashion Show*. She plans to further her training in design on leaving school.

Conclusion

Although the road to self-discovery and actualization is often long and tedious when one considers the teeming talents that abound all over the world, if one dares to be different by engaging all his/her creative intuition, breaking new grounds would be a possible feat and with the influx of new-media like the Internet, Blackberry phones, DSTV, the print-media and the glossy pages of fashion magazines like *Fashion&style*, *Digest*, *Reality Magazine*, *City People*, *Ovation* and foreign ones like *Ebony*, *GQ*, *Vogue* and many others, into the society, the medium of information dissemination and advertising of products and services has put the world in the designer's pocket. Further, many fashion shows like *City People Fashion Show*, *Lagos Fashion Week*, *Nigerian Fashion Week* and many others in which upcoming designers can showcase their designs are organized regularly. There is therefore hardly any excuse for failure or mediocrity.

Starting with a small show like *Project Head to Toe* within the nucleus of Redeemer's University may be the genesis of self-discovery and the exodus to self-actualization. This way, as this study has shown, is an avenue to saving our students from the epidemic of embarking on the almost white elephant project of white-collar jobs. This should be the basic intention of a course like Costume/Make-up design. But suffice to say that Heidi Klum-hosted reality show, *Project Runway* is handy in inspiring this dream, *Project Head to Toe*. It is worthy to mention that in recognition of the new trend in the pedagogy of costume design, the costume section in the Department of Theatre Arts of Redeemer's University has recently being equipped with sewing equipment to facilitate a more qualitative pedagogy of the course both as academic and as vocation in and out of Theatre practice.

Note

¹BOJA is the acronym for the Bunmi Julius Adeoye Theatre of the University.

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QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PERFORMANCE AESTHETICS IN NIGERIAN THEATRES

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Abstract

Performances appeal to both our aesthetic sense of sight and sound. These performance aesthetic elements are such that when properly designed and blended improve the quality of the performance. However, the issue of production aesthetics in performances has always been on the front burner in Nigerian theatrical scene and has continued to generate comments because of their pivotal importance in the overall understanding and appreciation of a production. But the questions that readily come to mind are: How effectively have performance aesthetics been utilized in our performances? Can we authoritatively say that quality has been assured in this regard? Do we have the required equipment and requisite manpower to ensure quality? This paper is designed to provide insights to these questions. It is a further attempt to examine the concept of performance aesthetics in Nigerian theatres vis-à-vis the quality of their application and use. Other allied areas such as equipment, tools and technical embellishments shall be elaborated upon within the context of the discussion.

Introduction

The whole essence of aesthetics in productions, if we are to go by its literary meaning, is to enhance the beauty of the play and its appreciation. Because of the importance attached to aesthetics in performances, many critics engage in exploring their contributions to both the thematic projection and understanding of the performance. Aesthetics come in different forms depending on the expertise and technical know-how of the production crew involved and how production materials are arranged and manipulated. But suffice it to say that the beauty of theatrical performances lies not only in the artistic contributions of actors in terms of their movement and gesticulations on stage but also in the technical additives which enhance the spectacle of the production. Furthermore, one of the essences of incorporating these technical additives, apart from the need to improve the visual aesthetics of the performance, is to allow for easy understanding and appreciation of

the theatrical event. This becomes imperative since theatre performances are built on effective communication of ideas, feelings and meanings using both human and material resources. To further buttress this, Nwadiuwe (“Radicalism” 101) postulates that “as a communicative medium (live productions), they reflect through sounds and visual images the dynamics of the environment by disseminating messages... and discussing social problems... all these are flavoured with robust entertainment.” Oftentimes, we do have problems with how these aesthetic elements are applied in performances, and these have in most cases, impaired meaning and understanding. It is either that they are not adequate or that the equipment and paraphernalia to execute them are limited which affect the quality and the aesthetic potentials of the theatrical performance. It is because of this ineffectiveness, the lack of these aesthetic elements in productions and the erosion of meaning that prompted the questioning of the quality assurance of their application and use in performances with the intention of agitating for a change of attitude and ethical reorientation towards improved performance aesthetic application in theatrical productions.

Performances and Production Aesthetics

Stage performances are ephemeral and transient in nature. Apart from flashes of the actor's movement on stage and often times his gestures and gesticulations, what lingers in the mind of audience members is the stage metaphor which is woven around the production concept. However, the rendering of the performance in metaphoric signs and images will make little or no meaning without the “collaborative functions of the other elements of production because of the heavy dosage of spectacle in them” (Ekweariri 115). These elements communicate primarily with the eye and the aesthetic undertones of the production are woven around them. These production aesthetic elements include but not limited to the following: set design, costume and make-up, stage properties, light and all the other visual and non-visual elements including sound and sound effects and dance. Therefore, production aesthetics could be seen as those artistic and technical elements that collaboratively engender good production. Taken from another perspective, they are the visual elements of production that complement the auditory and kinetic display of the actor to create divers appeal, which is the hallmark of theatrical communication. For instance, in *Edufa* as encapsulated by Eshiet and Oko (72):

Using a grid of universal signs as deep structure of theatrical communication and meaning, the compositional context of the play is riveted by demonstration proofs, and modes so expressive as the dramatic situation, the entire live environment is articulately seen not merely heard. The play plunders and physically strikes its audience with century-old contradictions, discordances which mire life in misery in the landscape of action.

Theatre is communication and one of the hallmarks of effective communication in the theatre is the ability to satisfy the audience's viewing sensibilities by not only emphasising the speech patterns and mannerisms of the actors but also improving the visual quality of the performance. This is partly what Enendu ("Communication Technology" 94) means when he writes that "theatre production depends almost entirely on sound and visual components for meaningful stage communication and entertainment." By implication, what it means is that without these aesthetic elements and their visual appeal, engaging spectacle may not be achieved and the performance may be drab and uninteresting. Writing on spectacle, Brockett (48) says that:

Spectacle encompasses all the visual elements of production: the movement and spatial relations of characters; the light, settings, costumes and properties. Since others would normally supply these elements, the playwright does not have full control over them; and because the script seldom describes the spectacle precisely, the other theatre artists must discover the playwright's intentions through careful study of the text.

Another form of spectacle is legerdemain because they work closely with other technical elements. It is a kind of deceptive skill that enables something to be done without an obvious understanding of how it is done. It is a magical manipulation of skills to achieve stage fantasy. They attempt to suspend disbelief and impress the audience in order to make memorable some important moments of the play. In the words of Albright, Halstead and Mitchell (263):

The idea of spectacle calls to mind effects of some magnitude while that of legerdemain suggests the magical. Between these two, one may find as

basic requirements of the play every conceivable illusion and among them famous effects in which generations of theatre craft men have taken special pride

Many of these effects require skill and knowledge. But whether the effects are contrived by specialists or by the designer, the best of them are of such prominence in theatrical performances and so well known that it is often necessary to plan the show around them so as to achieve the desired goal. Through this, aesthetics will be improved and continued patronage will equally be sustained.

Furthermore, it is important to stress that performance aesthetics is essentially hinged on the availability of technical installations. Iwu (26) writes that:

a properly built theatre with the right fixtures, equipment and facilities minimizes the workload on the directors, actors and designers, making them more creative to enrich the theatre experience of patron... (otherwise) it will be frustrating and mis-representational of the artistic skill of a performer or designer such that instead of a mental relaxation for the patrons and audiences, boredom results.

This is because most of the wonders created on stage, apart from the ingenuity of the designers, much of it are due to the supporting roles of technical installations and equipment. For instance during the post-performance analysis of the play *Noah Built the Ark* by Molinta Enendu in 2006, Enendu affirms that technical facilities installed in the (Arts Theatre, University of Calabar) played major roles in the realization of the desired effects. In his words, "Apart from the technical knowledge and achievements of the designers, the architectural characteristics of the theatre, its machines and scenic mechanisms were indispensable requirements and necessities to this theatrical spectacle and marvel" (Enendu "Static and Moving Scenery" 175). In another development, Parker and Wolf (3) opine that:

There is penchant for spectacle (and) spectacular lighting, sound and engineering technology, made possible by computer control and computer generated design, bring to the stage a powerful and innovative production style. The audience dazzled by pyrotechnics and special effects, is left breathless with a memorable experience that will forever influence their attitude toward 'live' theatre.

So right from the beginning of theatre, spectacle and the creation of fantasy and stage marvels have continued to exist. In other words, performance aesthetics has been an integral part of stage productions and will continue to be so as long as creative imagination is required in theatrical productions.

Quality Assurance and Performance Aesthetics Effectiveness

Although, the emphasis in performances is communication and meaning, but the movement of actors on stage and other supporting elements must be visually functional and effective if the meaning is to be well understood. Functional performance aesthetics creates emotionally engaging experiences. Although this may not apply in all theatrical situations but to a very large extent, these emotionally engaging experiences enable audience members to be empathetic towards the plights of the actors by “sharing in the laughter, the applause, the tears, the joy or solemnity of the event” (Nwamuo 23). But going by the prevailing situations in Nigerian theatrical scenes today, can we beat our chest and say emphatically that all is well aesthetically? Can we say production aesthetic elements have been effectively utilized in theatrical performances and what are their impact levels? Answers and opinions are bound to vary on these, but if we are to be objective, especially given the fact that most theatres in Nigeria are ill-equipped, we may come to the conclusion that they are no longer effective which goes further to imply that more works needs to be done to salvage the situation. We live in a visual world and the visual quality of images is of crucial importance in the understanding and interpretation of a dramatic performance. Images here are not only restricted to the applications of costume and make-up, lighting, set design and stage properties but also extend to stage composition whereby orderliness is ensured in composing actions, articles and background materials in the performance; picturisation, movement, rhythm and style. All these contribute to the aesthetic undertones and embellishment of the production. However, it is pertinent to state that production aesthetic elements also include other elements of cultural affiliation such as “song, music, drum, flute, chants, incantation, proverbs, storytelling, dance, mime' divination, myths, ancestors, sacrifices, oracle consultation etc.” (Imam 3). According to Uwatt (8), these in theatrical productions are “aimed at appealing to the four primary human appetites – emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual – through synthesizing the arts of costuming, drumming, chanting, dancing and make-up as theatre.” He goes further to say that through these, the audience feel relaxed, become involved in a natural way, participate and feel part of the show and “in which mood, emotion, characters, etc. are developed through

stylized movement, dance, music acrobats etc” (8). How many times do we have all these in a particular production? Even when we do see them, can we say they were properly blended to achieve the desired result? This has been part of the problems affecting productions today. For instance, the ALVAN theatre production of Charles Nwadigwe's “Domestic Embarrassment” in 2012 was short of what a production should be aesthetically. Apart from the fill lights for general illumination that were used, other elements of technical embellishments that ordinarily improve aesthetics were found inefficient. Make-up was virtually non-existence and scenery was selectively done thereby making the play technically drab and monotonous. What sustained the interest of audience members was the hilarious nature of the play.

The world as a cosmic environment is made up of both the natural and the artificial, and these natural and supernatural worlds are common in both the drama on stage and in film productions. Theatre, as an artistic expression that is, among other functions, geared towards the edification of the human spirit, is anchored on the creation of believable pictures on stage that are capable of arousing both the emotions and feelings of the audience and at the same time sustaining their interest. However, the essence of theatre production is not to be inconsiderably entertaining in its desire to yield enough box office returns; the production must also strive to fulfil its finer roles of providing proper information and socio-moral education by representing these worlds realistically on stage or instigating critical interrogation. But ironically, investigations by this writer on selected stage productions in some universities including Imo State University, Owerri, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, University of Calabar, Rossy Arts Theatre Ikenegbu, amongst others have shown that these two different worlds are wrongly or poorly depicted in our Nigerian theatres, either due to the unavailability of the required equipment to actualize them, or the lack of creativity and imagination on the part of the production crew. This has far-reaching implications that do not only affect the aesthetic and functional elements of the production but also cast doubts on the credibility and experience of these designers. Talking about equipment, the story is pathetic in most universities where theatre arts programmes are studied. This apparent lack of equipment in Creative Arts Departments has occupied the attention of notable theatre scholars like Pilbrow (146), Nwadigwe (“Postmodern Trends” 85), Enendu (“History” 12), Adeyemi (122), Ododo (32), Ekweariri (4), Oni (200), etc. Their submission is that creativity thrives with imagination, technical know-how backed up with the required equipment and that when the required equipment is lacking, the pursuit of beauty is reduced which also affects communication and meaning. The

issues of costume and make-up studios and kits are virtually non-existent as most departments struggle to mount believable productions. Technical facilities like the counter-weight and flying systems and standard theatre houses, to say the least, do not exist in most theatre and creative arts departments. The point of emphasis here is that where these equipment are made available, the authentic creation of both the artificial and natural worlds will be made possible and the beauty and otherwise ugliness of the performance will be made manifest. Granted that the lack of equipment and qualified personnel are banes to performance aesthetic applications in the theatre, but, every production should do more than just entertain the audience. It should also improve their visual sensibility and incorporate elements of spectacle and aesthetic motives. These spectacles and design motives are part of the story telling process, and more often than not, sustain the interest of the audience more than the spoken words. Through these, we would be sure of quality (no matter how little) and the continual patronage of the audience would be guaranteed.

Conclusion

The position of this paper is not that performance aesthetics have not been part of theatrical shows but the bone of contention is that they have not been adequate which have undermined desirable quality in theatrical productions. Although it is obvious that there are limitations in some theatre arts departments in Nigeria in terms of equipment and other staging paraphernalia, but the best possible result should be gotten from the few existing ones. There is also danger in relying heavily on equipment because more often than not, they hamper imaginative thinking and creativity. Nevertheless, they have their own positive values and impact in theatrical performances; when properly applied and cannot be taken for granted. Therefore good quality production can both be achieved in austere and abundant situations. However, for this to be achieved, all hands must be on deck. Directors and technical directors should work hand in glove to achieve this. Production is a collaborative venture and the success of it does not go to one individual alone. Directors should learn to be flexible and accommodate genuine inputs of others especially when it comes to design related issues because of the heavy dosage of spectacle embedded in them. It is only when there is harmony of purpose and interests that quality will be assured otherwise it will continue to elude us with disastrous implications on the future of theatrical shows especially now that the technological advancement in the movie world is beginning to influence our viewing sensibility.

Recommendations

The spirit of doing and practicality should be imbued in us. Theatre Arts departments should desist from buying or borrowing costumes rather a local alternative should be sought after and used. This at the long run will help to form costume repertory for the theatre. And even when they are borrowed or bought, its appropriateness and relevance must be determined before purchase.

There is need for the necessary tools and equipment relevant to the execution of theatrical performances to be procured. When it becomes difficult, at least, the basic ones that will aid the designer's imagination should be procured since it has been established that there are limitations to the level of creativity a designer can come up with in the absence of required tools and materials.

Budding directors should seek for more artistic and technical additives in their productions. The era of emphasis on dialogue at the detriment of other supporting details is fast disappearing. This is a jet age where the audiences clamour for more visuals than aural. However, there should be a healthy blend of the two worlds because quality cannot be assured when the performance is more tilted to one side.

Experience and technical know-how is also a key factor in the assurance of quality in performances. This is because even if there are world-class equipment without corresponding skill on how to utilize them for desired result, they will be underutilized. Therefore, there is need for theatre technologists, technicians and indeed all that are involved in production processes to, as a matter of necessity, improve on their skills.

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QUALITY ISSUES AND THE BAN ON SELECTED MUSICAL VIDEO BROADCASTING IN NIGERIA: A DEFENCE FOR THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMMISSION (NBC)

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Abstract

This paper investigates the recurrent music ban on musical video broadcasting and the issues of quality of musical contents that have warranted such a phenomenon by the National Broadcasting Commission in Nigeria. The major contention was the justification or otherwise of the ban. The paper employed observational and analytical methodologies to examine the causes of the bans on musical videos in Nigeria by NBC, the reactions of the affected artistes and their fans and the negative effects of erotic lyrics, nudity and suggestive dance steps by minors, lady-dancers and the musicians on the youths and other categories of musical video audiences. The paper submits that the NBC's gestures are commendable and should be sustained while quality assurance efforts should be intensified through promotion of quality musical videos produced more for the purpose of entertainment than education or information. The paper also calls for collaborative efforts among all stakeholders in the music industry to achieve quality in the musical videos produced for general public consumption. This paper encourages musicians to invite creativity into the musical industry in Nigeria by coming out with songs and performances that reflect the cultural values of the country rather than mere entertainment songs and acts that have a greater tendency to corrupt younger minds.

Introduction

The falling standards experienced in the world of arts and the humanities have raised concerns for systematic measurement, comparison with a standard, monitoring of processes and an associated feedback loop that confers error prevention. Quality Assurance includes management of the quality of raw materials that are produced for consumption by the consumers. The quality of every product and service is designed to meet the needs of the target population; however some products offer dysfunctional effects that constitute more harm than good to the consumers.

In Nigeria, the National Broadcasting Commission reportedly banned a number of new music videos from being broadcast anywhere in the country in 2013 (Ohai 2013). The banned musical videos include:

- i) Tillaman ft vector in *Koma Roll*
- ii) Wande Coal – *Go Low*
- iii) D'Prince – *Take Banana*
- iv) Flavour – *Shake*
- v) Goldie - *Ski Bobo*
- vi) Chuddy K – *Brazilian Hair*
- vii) Timaya - *Shake Your Bum Bum*
- viii) Psquare – *Alingo*

The musical videos were said to be banned because of the quality and contents of the songs and videos respectively. Tillaman's *Koma Roll* was accused of erotic contents and suggestive dance steps, Wande Coal's *Go Low* contained scenes of nudity in the video while D'Prince's *Take Banana* contained erotic, vulgar words and suggestive dance styles. Flavour's *Shake* contained vulgar and suggestive dance steps, Goldie's *Ski Bobo* featured a minor with suggestive and immoral dance steps while Chuddy J's *Brazilian Hair* was banned for featuring children and ladies with suggestive and erotic dance steps. Timaya's *Shake Your Bum Bum* was banned for containing erotic and suggestive dance steps with vulgar lyrics while Psquare's *Alingo* was accused of containing erotic scenes at the end of the musical videos.

As a major regulatory body, the NBC keeps close watch on the contents of music videos and audio CDs broadcast by Nigerian television and radio stations. In the past, the body had officially kicked out Afrobeat musician, Femi Kuti's wave making song *Bang Bang Bang* and Konga's *Baby Konga* from the air space. Quite recently, the Commission, in addition to the above list, had to flex its muscles when DJ Zeez's *Body Language* fell short of its expectations. The irony of the quality checks is that the NBC does not regulate what is broadcast on cable channels such as MTV Base, Soundcity, Trace and Channel O, as well as internet platforms like YouTube and Vimeo.

The basic quality assurance questions begging for answers include: should the NBC uphold and continue to exert ban on musical videos with questionable contents at the expense of the entertainment values of the viewing publics? If musical videos

are checked by NBC to ensure quality assurance on Nigerian television stations, who regulates the broadcast of the same musical videos on cable channels that are mostly watched today without restrictions? Do the musical videos so qualified as 'unfit' for the Nigerian airwaves contain any entertainment, informative or edutainment values to deserve pardon?

The thrust of this paper is to defend and justify the actions of the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission's incessant ban on musical videos in Nigeria with a view to promote quality assurance. The objective of this paper is to justify the ban of Musical Video Broadcasting in NBC's quality assurance plans.

Musicological Appraisal and Analysis of Two of the Banned Musical Video P-square's "Alingo"

P-square's lyrics open with one of the musicians' reaction to a lady's dance movement. The song is single greater hits for p-square recorded in 2012. The song is an Afropop genre. The music became popular due to its somewhat controversial dance steps which makes it quite complicated for a lot of people to copy. However the dance steps of the musicians and some ladies in the video suggest sexual activities.

In the rhythm, the musical lines suggest that the dance moves sends them (p-square) crazy and makes them "bark like bingo", thus "the way that she's dancing" she's getting higher.

She's makin' me bark like a bingo
& I come dey try 2 dey sing eh
& d way dat she's dancin'
I don dey, I don dey, I don dey
She's makin me bark like a bingo
& I come dey try 2 dey sing oh
& d way dat she's dacin' I don dey...

The chorus describes P-square's feelings as the girls "move their wings" "bursting my brain" "whining and grinding face to face". In verse two, the P-square says he likes the way the ladies in the video dance but the dances all depict sexual activity. The verse reads:

Ey ey ey ey, p-square we back again
Ey ey ey ey, this girl dey craze oh

She come dey do like say she bless o
She whinin' and grindin' and whinin' and burn dis place oh
She no dey play oh
Na face to face oh
As she dey go low, go low

The erotic video pictures made the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) to place a ban on the music video stating “erotic dance scene at the end of the musical video”. P-square reacts to the ban thus: “we heard about the ban, but when they (NBC) ban a particular song, they are indeed helping to promote that song...if they ban a song from being broadcast on Nigerian stations, will they stop Channel O, Sound City and other cable networks from playing the same song? It's not possible” (<http://www.punchng.com>).

Timaya's “Shake your Bum Bum”

Timaya's music video “Shake your bum bum” is a true reflection of eroticism while the musical rhythm and dance steps by the choreographers suggest sexual activities. The opening of the song is a call on the dancing ladies to shake their bum bum (their bottom) irrespective of their sizes or a place of origin because the act gives him pleasure and causes an arousal of his libido.

In verse 1, Timaya expresses his sexual attractiveness that makes ladies to call his phone without relenting, following her on twitter and calling for a relationship. Timaya expresses positive response on the condition that the lady shakes her “bum bum”. This implies that shaking of a lady's “bum bum” as in the musical video is a way of attracting men's attention. The extract reads:

Onor nor nor this girl she are calling my phone number ye onor nor nor nor
This girl she don't let me go
May be then she follow me for twitter
Then say she want make I ping her ha
She want me to answer
Everything she want make I ring her
But if you shake your bum bum (shake up your bum bum your bum bum)
Baby shake up your bum bum bum bum, bum bum yeyeye

In verse 2, Timaya confesses that he is reacting positively to the way the lady

“rolls” her “behind” which can cause him “to go blind”. In verse 3, Timaya reveals that even though his body is there, his mind is imagining he will “give it” to the lady since he knows what the lady want. All these are depicted in the musical video. He concludes in verse 4 that he likes the way he makes love to the lady and likes the way the lady screams dances and jumps up during love making. He calls it “kerewa” which is the kind of dance that makes men want to collect the lady's numbers. The verse reads:

Everybody wanna dance hey hein wanna dance hey
shake up your bum bum cause your bum bum this song is on your
bum bum listing up now the way that you want it, I want it too the way
that you love it, am loving it too the way that you screaming, dancing
and jumping baby girl me I be they want you too
See as she don they dance kerewa
She don they put man for big whahala
See anything way she are dancing her dancing the men go want collect
her number

The demonstrations in the video are exact demonstrations of the rhythm which suggest sexual act, which certainly invited the NBC's hammer.

Reactions to the Ban of Selected Musical Video Broadcasting in Nigeria

The first school of thought views the ban of musical videos as a right step in the right direction because of the negative contents they have. Based on the social learning theory of Albert Bandura, Dorothea Ross and Sheila Ross, scholars in this school of thought are convinced that sexually related content in musical videos created for adults also reach the children and corrupt them easily. The sexually related words and images within the context of the musical videos carry meanings which may be less interesting than the mode of expression. These words and images certainly have negative effects on the viewing and listening audience.

The second school of thought holds everything against the ban of musical videos in Nigeria. It is a school of thought that supports edutainment as an avenue for using entertainment to educate the audience. To this school of thought, the use of nudity, erotic and suggestive dance steps are entertainment images behind the real message of the musicals. The musical videos have their original messages and stories which nevertheless cannot be overlooked by what may be considered as the

'distortions' of erotic visuals. When the NBC banned over eight musical videos from being broadcast on the Nigerian airwaves in early 2013, the trend triggered different reactions from the musicians and the general public.

The spokesman for Psquare, Bayo Adetu, described the ban as "as unnecessary and unjustifiable action". Psquare, Wande Coal, Timaya, Flavour, D'Prince, Chuddy K and Tillaman who were all affected artistes condemned the action. The Acting Public Relations Officer of the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission, Maimuna Jimada, said the commission was not aware of the ban and was not in charge of banning musical videos. She explained that the commission was solely responsible for ensuring that the musical videos and audios made for the public consumption were safe (Abiodun). Thus, if a music video or audio has content that is not suitable for broadcast, such video and audio are tagged "not to be put on air". Ordinarily, Mrs. Jimada also explained that if a video is tagged as not to be aired, its producers could still reproduce them with better content for broadcast.

Corroborating the commission's stance, the Deputy Director and Head of Corporate Affairs, National Films and Video Censors Board, Mr. Yunusa Tanko, disclosed that the board was unaware of such ban, and was in charge of censoring the content of musical video. He however complained that the artistes fail to bring their works to the board for proper check before broadcast. While media survey indicates that some of the artistes were calling for dialogue between the NBC and stakeholders in the entertainment sector, another survey indicated that most musical video fans were not happy about the ban (Abiodun).

Issues of Quality in Nigerian Musical Videos

Quality assurance refers to the processes and procedures that systematically monitor different aspects of service process or facility to detect correct and ensure that quality standards are being met (Bucki 1999). The quality of any material refers to the substance and characteristics that define such work. Music is naturally characterized by form and content. In Nigerian Musical Videos, issues emanate from the content of the material. As outlined earlier, the basic issues that have emanated from Nigerian musical video include;

- i) Issue of erotic content in words and pictures
- ii) Issue of nudity
- iii) Issue of suggestive dance steps
- iv) Issue of featuring minors with immoral dance steps

v) Issue of vulgar lyrics

The contents of Nigerian musical videos ordinarily would not pose any threat but the perceived tendency to corrupt the viewing audience has made it an issue. The audiences are at the receiving end and the theory of Social Learning by Bandura states that “the audiences learn and derive knowledge from what they view on television and film” (Ike 201). If this theory is assumed to hold water, the content of most Nigerian musical videos that are banned can constitute social vices in the society and corrupt the morals of the audience, especially children who are often considered as the future of tomorrow.

Some theories of edutainment do not perceive entertainment materials as being intended to corrupt the audience but primarily to educate, inform and entertain the audience through a single work of art. The theory of edutainment has been supported by scholars in the humanities. With regards the Social Learning Theory, music, when wrongly interpreted and appreciated will lead to erroneous conclusions and adoptions (Doki 2006). In support of the edutainment theory, and with reference to the ban of musical video in Nigeria, Doki writes;

Most interjections into lyrical submissions are aesthetics meant to garnish the song. We must be careful in wholistically analyzing the total world of song to be able to fashion out meaning and sense in such song. Zule-zo for instance combines acting, dance and music to blend harmony and this, create some unique and fascinating pictures that must be explained in unison simultaneously. Misconception it was, that caused the ban on Zule-zo when they first sang “Kelewa”. The Nigerian Broadcasting Cooperation claimed the demonstration by Zule-zo of how the woman was made love to was pornographic (Doki 8).

The author in the above paragraph wrote a conclusion in defence of Zule-zo's song “Ikpongo Tswar” and opined that a curious listener of Zule-zo's “Kelewa” should rather busy his or herself with the theme of the song which is unfaithfulness by an adulterous woman, and not the contextual display of the act. To the author, the act of unfaithfulness by an adulterous woman is shameful and must be condemned, which is what the music track was concerned with. The contextual display in the content of the song “Kelewa” is mere aesthetics and should be appreciated as such.

The above submission justifies the theory of edutainment against the social learning theory. The Edutainment theory is based on a solid blend of core communication theories and fundamental entertainment pedagogy that guides the development of all interpretive programming. In fact, the social learning theory is a departure from the edutainment theory. It posits that people learn by observing others and the consequences of their behaviour. If the persons so choose, they then emulate the behaviour by rehearsing the action, taking action and comparing their experiences to the experiences of others, and then adopting the new behaviour. However, the theory of Reasoned Action dwells on the effect that one (an audience) should perceive before adopting behaviour.

The concept of eroticism relates to the wider meanings and connotations of the term, in that it clearly situates eroticism as a form of pleasure drawing on sexual sources but detached not only from the primary reproductive purpose of sex but from its more socialized functions such as creating relationships. Eroticism implies a conscious and deliberate concern with the subsidiary aspects of the sexual drive. Eroticism is often associated with heightening pleasures. Eroticism, put simply is a tool for human sex drive (libido). Nudity on the other hand is qualified as either exposed buttocks, or genitalia or general lack of clothing. Suggestive dance steps include movements of the body that depict sexual activity.

Considering the nature of eroticism, nudity and suggestive dance steps, it is evident to state that the selected societies in Africa like the Nigerian society consider acts that depict, promote or suggest sexual activities as inimical to the values of their people. To this end, the inclusion of eroticism, nudity and suggestive dance steps constitute an issue that is capable of inviting bans on musical videos in a country like Nigeria. The ban of musical videos for featuring minors with immoral dance steps and vulgar lyrics appears to be an action that expresses concern for children and adolescents who are considered a future generation. To the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), it is a step in a right direction targeted at safeguarding the Nigerian values.

Negative Effects of Corrupt Musical Video Watching on Youth Behaviour

Nigerian youths today spend more time watching videos than doing anything else. The watching of music videos has a great impact on the behaviour of teens in many ways on a daily basis. The effects of this are mostly negative. The negative effects of video watching and listening on teens are: the indecent way they dress and view their bodies, their language and accepted words and the way they want to try to live

their lives (Lopez <http://www.worldmusic.net>).

The extensive watching of videos has greatly affected the demeanour of dressing in female and male teens. For example, teenage girls flaunt around their bosoms with rumps hanging out of their clothing just because it is in the music videos, so they portray the same body image thinking that this is the trend. In addition, teenage males strut around with their pants sagging below their derriere and wear many chains around their necks trying to resemble a rap artiste. Music videos obviously give young male teens the illusion that having this particular image will bring them women galore.

Secondly, music video watching affects teens' language and their acceptance of it. As it is today, girls are accepting being called a "bitch" (a female dog) by the same or opposite sex because they see video women shaking and groaning in the video while being called that. The teenage girls little understand that the world bitch belittles them (which it does), so they smile while hearing someone say, "yeah, that's my bitch". Furthermore, music videos give male teens the impression that it is okay to disrespect women by calling them out of their name, because when the artist does it in the video, women don't object to it.

Thirdly, suggestive dance steps, nudity and erotic words and images do incite young men and women into sexual acts. It reveals to them the motion picture of sexual activity and creates an urge for sex in the youths, especially those who are feeble.

Finally, the use of minors in musical videos is only problematic when they are given roles of undertaking erotic and suggestive dance steps. First it corrupts the child in question and second, it portrays the child as a model to other children who will certainly emulate what they see and hear. Children copy what they see and hear faster than the adults and they easily become inclined to such things. Survey of children's parties in Calabar, Cross River State between 2004 and 2005 indicated that children easily sang and dance Zule-zo's *Kelewa* music with ease – a song that was later banned from broadcasting due to erotic lyrics and suggestive dance steps. In America, more than one-thousand scientific studies and reviews conclude that significant exposure to musical video images and erotic lyrical content increase the risk of vulgar behaviour in certain children and adolescents (American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Public Education 342).

Conclusion

Quality assurance has remained a contemporary concern in most disciplines and the

arts are not an exception. Practice in the work of arts demands immediate attention, not because standards are falling per se, but because of the dysfunctional roles they play in the society. Artistes, musical performers and singers must come together with all stakeholders in the musical industry to chart a way forward for achieving quality assurance. The incessant ban on broadcast of some musical videos in Nigeria by the National Broadcasting Commission is real. The ban has been occasioned by factors ranging inclusion of erotic lyrics and nudity to the use of minors and suggestive dance steps that are capable of corrupting the values and moral standing of the audience. This study establishes that there exist a strong influence of musical contents and lyrical context on the behaviour of the children, youths and other categories of audience even though such dysfunctional effects may not be intended by the musicians who are at the heart of the event.

This study therefore confirms the efficacy of Bandura, Ross and Ross's Social Learning Theory at the expense of other edutainment theories. The reactions of the artistes who condemn the ban of their musical videos from broadcast on Nigerian television and radio stations should be expected. This is certainly because the Nigerian musicians whose works are banned by the NBC do not believe that their erotic lyrics and suggestive dance steps with females as well as nudity factors corrupt the values of the viewing and listening audience. Most times, they expect that the theme of their musicals and the meanings embedded in the oral expressions should be cherished the more. The fact remains that there is more to what the eye sees and what the ear hears than what the mind thinks as far as music videos are concerned. Musical lyrics may not intend to offend the moral taste of the audience, yet the images thereof may do worse.

The NBC's actions are not out of place as far as this paper considers quality of the contents of Nigerian musical videos as issues to be given attention. The NBC is a regulatory body saddled with the responsibility of preventing "corrupt" musical videos from going on air on Nigerian Television and Radio Stations. If the relevance of the NBC was nothing to write home about, the commission would not have been in existence. Whereas the ban on selected musical video broadcasting may question the quality of works of musicians in the country and their intention thereof, the ban on broadcast of such works on television and radio stations in the country would invite a respectable measure of sanity in the moral standing of the Nigerian children, youths and other categories of audience.

It is the humble submission of this paper that the ban on broadcast of musical videos with nudity and suggestive dance steps on the Nigerian airwaves is quite

commendable and should be sustained. The grievances expressed by the affected musicians and their fans over the banned musical video broadcasting should be addressed with caution. The freedom to broadcast such musical videos on satellite stations is an opportunity for the artistes to reach out to their fans because such platforms cannot be controlled by NBC. However, parents should intensify their policing strategies to keep watch over what musical videos their children are exposed to in order to stop them from the ones that can corrupt them. The NBC and National Film and Video Censorship Board (NFVCB) should work together with the Nigerian artistes to avoid production of “provocative” musical videos.

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Appendixes



Figure I: Excerpt from Timaya's *Shake Your Bum Bum*



Figure II: Excerpt from Tillman's *Koma Roll*



Figure III: Excerpt from PSquare's *Alingo*



Figure IV: Excerpt from Flavour's *Shake*



Figure V: Excerpt from Wandecol's *Go Down Low*



Figure VI: Chuddy's *Brazilian Hair*

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).

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