

**THE CREATIVE ARTS IN A SOCIALLY RESPONSIVE  
ENVIRONMENT: THE MEETING POINTS OF  
THEORY AND PRACTICE**

**BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS**

**ON THE 33<sup>RD</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY OF  
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## THEORISING AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION IN THE NIGERIAN LIVE THEATRE

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### Introduction

All organisations including home, church, mosque, school, theatre among others are coordinated and controlled in peculiar ways. Management is a universal phenomenon that cuts across every aspect of life. The art of planning, staffing, motivating, directing and controlling human and material resource towards achieving a desired objective is essential to the growth of any given organisation. Management is an interesting area of the theatre that has attracted recognition from theatre practitioners, scholars and lovers due to its indispensable contribution to the sustainability of theatre business. Theatre management, according to Ayakoroma is seen as “the process or art of planning, organising, controlling, and directing all commercial and non-artistic aspects of a theatre, or any production programme, in order to generate audience patronage, audience satisfaction, and maximize profit” (23). Apparently, for a theatre to be able to achieve its desired objectives which include satisfying its consumer (audience) needs, and maximising profit, such theatre must manage its scarce human and material resources properly. The survivability of theatre is dependent on how its fiscal as well as administrative activities are managed. Positioning live theatre as a veritable relaxation and entertainment centre requires effective theatre management practice.

It is no gainsaying that theatre business is a lucrative and money spinning venture that is capable of boosting the country’s local economy if managed properly. At a point in the history of Nigeria, theatre houses were very functional as the culture of theatre-going was very rampant among the people. Venturing into theatre business was one of the best and safest ways of making money because of its commercial viability. However, one can say today that the story of theatre business has changed. Theatre practitioners can no longer pretend that all is well with professional theatre practice in Nigeria. People no longer visit the theatre the way they did in the 60s, 70s, and 80s. The perplexed state in which Nigerian theatre finds itself today has been a major concern for upcoming theatre practitioners. The level at which patronage of live theatre has fallen in Nigeria today is quite alarming. No doubt, the arrival of digital systems and technology, most especially cinemas, home videos, and social media contributed adversely to audience attendance and patronage of Nigerian live theatre, but the fact that other genres of the entertainment sector are getting and maintaining their audience in spite of the technology advancement and economic recession affecting the country can also not be ignored. Affirming this, Iwuh juxtaposes live theatre patronage with other entertainment genres and concludes that:

Live theatre in Nigeria cannot be said to have witnessed competition if judged from the point of view of audience patronage driven by the need and willingness to pay for theatre entertainment to consistently sustain a production company. Conversely, it has been passion and sheer commitment on the part of the practitioner. (128)

It has been observed that theatre houses in Nigeria are failing in the pursuit of generating, gathering and sustaining audience. Without mincing words, some theatre houses in Nigeria can boast of fantastic actors and beautiful performances with great technical paraphernalia, but do these performances and theatre have substantial audience attention and patronage? Obviously, the answer to this question is: No. Accordingly, some reasons have been identified as contributory to the dwindling patronage of Nigerian live theatre. Over times, theatre producers give more attention to artistic

activities at the expense of the business aspect which is the live wire of the theatre. Business activities of the theatre such as budgeting, financial control, marketing (publicity, public relation, advertisement) and house management are handled with levity. Equally, unfashionable appearance of the theatre, inexperience on the part of the theatre practitioners, customers' dissatisfaction, and poor marketing strategies among others are some of the identified reasons for the low patronage of live theatre in Nigeria. Relatively, this is a pointer to the fact that having fantastic actors, scintillating performances and beautiful theatre structure is not enough to attract and sustain live theatre audience. For theatre to be able to achieve its desired objectives of generating and sustaining full house or substantial audience patronage, it is necessary to put certain things in place.

It is important to mention that some theatre houses in Nigeria still enjoy substantial patronage from audience, and have been identified to be successful in audience gathering, audience loyalty sustenance, while maximising profit. MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos, is one of these theatres that are not affected with the redundant live theatre culture. The success of the MUSON Centre is linked to the effective management style employed by the Centre. To this end, this paper analyses the theatre management practice of MUSON Centre, Lagos, in order to bring to limelight how its theatre management practice has been effective in its audience gathering and sustenance.

### **Audience Participation in the Nigerian Live Theatre: Then and Now**

Theatre-going culture was very rampant among the Nigerians during the periods between 1960s and early 1990s. Theatre lovers viewed the theatre as a place of relaxation, recreation, social interaction and entertainment. The period between 1960 and 1965 in Nigeria was marked by the theatre-going culture that motivated Nigerians to go to the theatre with their families for relaxation" (Nwosu 173). Disheartening, life has been hauled out of the few available theatres as a result of poor maintenance and management.

The dwindling in the patronage of live theatre began as a gradual process. The battle with process of deterioration especially in the aspect of patronage of live theatre began in the late 90s. The advent of film houses and later home videos and subsequent diversion of attention to the new inventions contributed largely to the decrease in patronage of live theatre performances. Other factors equally contributed to the problem of audience patronage facing the professional theatre practice in Nigeria. Poor management of fund, material and human resources is another major challenge facing the professional theatre practice in Nigeria. Theatre practitioners' focus has been on presentation of good performance leaving the managerial aspects to suffer. Most theatre houses lack managerial know how on how to market and position their productions for considerable audience attention. The attention given to artistic and technical aspects of theatre projects at the expense of managerial and business aspects of the theatre has gone a long way to contribute to the deteriorating state of theatre patronage. Most times, the managerial and business aspects of theatre company's operations are left to suffer while more attention is given to the artistic and technical aspects of the project. The relegation of commercial essence which is the live wire of the show has gone a long way in contributing to the dearth of theatre.

Undoubtedly, theatre arts courses keep receiving patronage and audience in the Nigerian universities. It is however unfortunate that this has not translated to an increase in the number of theatres. One will then begin to wonder what the problem could be, as it is expected that the proliferation of the study of theatre arts in Nigerian higher institutions should correspond with the rise in the practice and art of live theatre. Without mincing word; live theatre has lost much of its patronage. Julius-Adeoye 'Rantimi avers that:

Live theatre has suffered a near extinction on the nation's theatrical stage The reasons adduced to this are myriad but one that is without controversy is that it is not economical to invest in live stage performances because of lack of ready audience. Ironically, while live theatre audience is dwindling, there is audience for other entertainment events like musical concerts, comedy, and variety shows, festivals, and corporate branding theatrical events (129).

The decline in audience patronage of live theatre is hinged on the fact that theatre practitioners have failed in discharging their duties the way the potential and existing audience expected. It is expected that their safety should be guaranteed whenever they go to theatre houses to watch live performances, but it is disheartened to note that most theatres houses are failing in this aspect. The audiences are no longer satisfied with the plays produced in theatre as most of the plays do not meet up with their expectations in terms of quality and presentations.

Another significant contributory factor is the Nigerian live theatre rigidity in compliance to old methods of marketing and showing up. Live theatre practitioners are yet to move with the technological train, hence the crush of most theatre houses and other consequences. The development of film industry, which make people prefer staying at home to watch videos on their big flat screen television than going to a theatre where their safety and comfort is not guaranteed, and then the advent of social media, which has enhanced the mobility of television have both contributed to decline in audience patronage of live theatre thus forced many theatre houses to closed.

Indiscriminately, the theatres of the earliest practitioners were economically viable as they were able to sustain themselves reasonably from the returns gotten from this venture. Effective management practice is one of the driving forces that kept the earlier theatre practitioners in business. Their approach at managing the theatre showed that there was favourable consideration for non-artistic aspects of the theatre. The artistic and the business aspects work hand in hand for the elevation of their theatre. Due diligence were paid to publicity, advertisement, public relations activities. The understanding of audience expectations and needs kept the earlier theatre practitioners in business. Haven studied the theatre of the earlier practitioners and realised the factors that made them achieve huge success in the theatre business and considering the challenges of low audience patronage, inability to generate audience and substantial profit maximisation affecting professional Nigerian theatre today, David advises that, “today’s theatre practitioners have to study those factors that accounted for the success of Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, and Moses Olaiya Adejumo theatres, before the era of the cinema in Nigeria” (84). Studying these forerunners does not necessarily mean one has to rigidly follow their managerial concepts but take clue from it and adapt to reflect societal trends in the planning and management of theatre practice.

Conversely, it will be an unarguable submission to state that effective theatre management practice is the panacea to some of the factors affecting the survival of professional theatre practice in Nigeria. Once Nigerian theatre managers/producers begin to change and follow the new trends of managing theatre structure by developing and exploring new theatre management strategies that will be audience friendly and reflects good audience engineering policies, the Nigerian theatre will most likely return back to its place of pride. Proper and effective management style must be adopted in coordinating, planning, directing and controlling all the arts of the theatre to achieve the desired goals and objectives of maximising profits and satisfying the audience.

### **Brief History of MUSON Centre**

MUSON Centre was set up by the Musical Society of Nigeria, a Society that was formed in 1983. It came about as a result of people of like minds who were interested in classical music coming together to start performing and enjoying music together. The formation of this society was an initiation of Mr. Akintola Williams, a lover of classical music who on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1983 approached Sir Mervyn Brown, the British High Commissioner to Nigeria between 1979 and 1983, to assist in organising a group of artistes and friends to form a society that will help promote the performance of classical music. By mid-October 1983, Mr. Akintola Williams contacted Chief Ayo Rosiji, Mr. Louis Mbanefo, Mrs. Francesca Emanuel and others on a proposal to form a Musical Group and on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1983, a steering committee of the Musical Group met to map out the strategy for the society. The name of the society, its objectives, structure, secretariat, administration, and short and long terms plans were agreed on.

The MUSON Centre complex was commissioned in February 1994 with the support of artistes and other interests in Europe, the Goethe Institute of Germany and Instituto Italiano Cultura of Italy. The MUSON Centre is located in Onikan, near the Yoruba Tennis Club and the Lagos Lawn Tennis Club, on one side, directly opposite the National Museum and close to Tafawa Balewa Square (TBS). The complex houses the MUSON School, where the training of students on the theory and



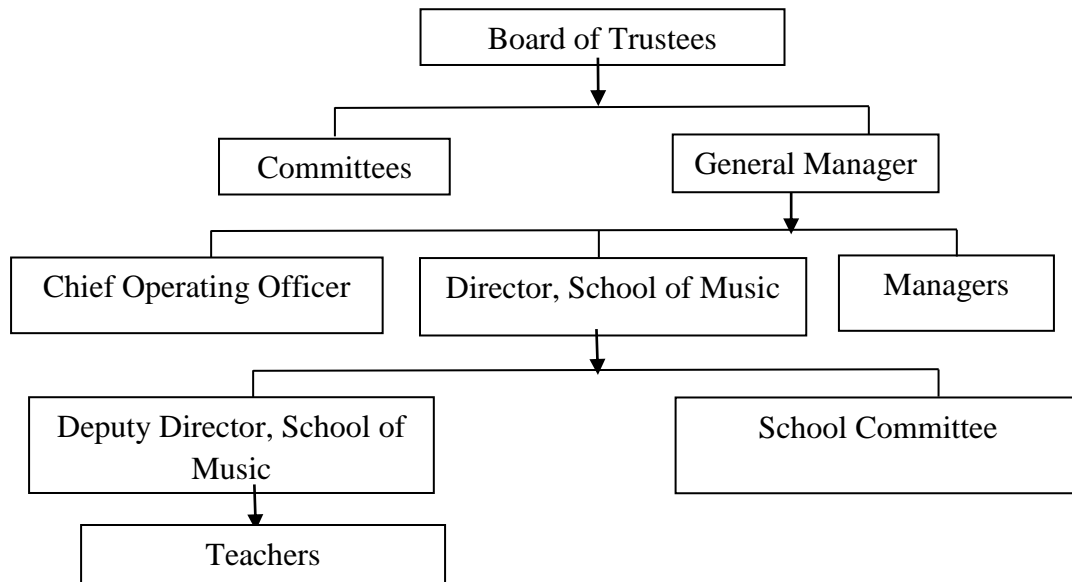
practice of classical music take place, the Library, Car Parks, Shell Nigeria Hall, Agip Recital Hall, and Function Room. Nwanaju lists the objectives of the Musical Society of Nigeria as:

1. To promote the understanding and enjoyment of classical music in Nigeria
2. To promote the performance of serious music with emphasis on classical music
3. To promote the education of children in performance and theory of music
4. To encourage the interaction of Nigerian and non-Nigerian musicians.
5. To provide facilities for the realisation of the above mentioned objectives
6. To raise funds from person and organisations for the realisation of the above mentioned objectives (27).

**Management Framework of the Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON) Centre**

There are 12-member Board of Trustees at the peak of the managerial hierarchy of the MUSON, they formulate policies and guidelines for the centre. Next to the Board of Trustees are the Committees (Artistes, Fund-Raising, Technical, Planning, Marketing, School and Competition, Members and Membership), who are volunteers and experts in their field; they give professional advice on issues about their respective fields. The next person to the Board of Trustees when it comes to the general management of the Centre is the General Manager, who is at the head of the affairs of the centre. He ensures the execution of the policies formulated by the Board of Trustees and the Committees. He has the Chief Operating Officer, and Managers (Finance and Administration, Marketing, Members and Membership Service, House and Operations, Events and Programme, Technical and Maintenance, Press and Publicity) assisting him. The management holds meeting every Monday to give reports of weekly activities; problems encountered, how they were resolved and review the activities of the Centre.

**Organogram of MUSON Centre, Lagos State**



Source: Iwa Alabi, (Manager, House and Operations, Muson Centre)

**Theatre Management in MUSON Centre**

MUSON Centre is established to present theatrical performances to the public for an amount considered reasonable and profitable. The management of the theatre involves activities that entail planning, organising, supervising, controlling, directing of theatrical programmes in order to generate audience patronage, audience satisfaction and at the same time maximise profit. However, the issues

of theatre management in MUSON Centre are discussed under Programme Management, House Management and Marketing Management.

### ***Programme Management***

The programmes of the MUSON Centre are fashioned in a way that the interests of every stakeholder of the theatre are well catered for. Different programmes are packaged to meet their committee, society and collaborators needs. Programmes are coordinated to project the interest of the Centre members, existing and prospective audience, star and upcoming artistes. The programmes of the Centre are categorised into three – In-House, Collaborative, and Individual Producing Company.

### ***In-House Programme***

The Artistes Committee is charged with the responsibilities of channeling the course of the artistic performances of the Centre. They work hand-in-hand with the Programme and Events Manager to plan programmes for the year. The Programme and Events Manager liaises with other managers before executing and packaging the various programmes of the Centre, neither does the Artiste Committee take the Alpha and Omega position, giving just little recognition to the Programme and Event Manager. While working on artistic aspect of the theatre, the Artiste Committee carries the Programme and Event Manager who sees to the business aspect of the production along at every stage of the production. The In-House Programme of the Centre is divided into:

- a) The Society's Productions, and
- b) The Muson School of Music Productions

### ***The Society's Production***

These productions are designed to help the Centre achieve one of its objectives – to encourage the interaction of Nigerian and non-nigerian musicians. The Society Production equally gives the Centre the opportunity to diversify – it gives the society the privilege to present productions that are beyond classical music. Similarly, a particular production among the society production is prepared exclusively by the MUSON Centre for its patrons and members to motivate and encourage their continuous commitment. MUSON Centre knows that for it to continue to enjoy its patrons and members' loyalty and goodwill, their commitment must be appreciated. The members and patrons are volunteers who contribute in their various capacities to the development and growth of the MUSON Centre. To encourage their continuous and active participation, MUSON Centre created and dedicated an aspect of the Society Productions to them. Hence, the Society's production is divided into:

- a) Soiree;
- b) The Muson Festival of Arts;
- c) Season Concerts; and
- d) Schools Competition

### ***Soiree***

This is a musical fiesta organized by the Society in the month of January of every year exclusively for its patrons and members. As a kind of motivation, the Society organises this musical party and invites its members and patrons to come and perform and enjoy music and other forms of performing arts together. This get together party usually takes place in the evening. The patrons and members come with their friends and families to the event. One unique feature of this get together party is that the patrons and members entertain themselves by themselves. Vocal solo and ensemble, instrumental solo and ensemble, choral, poems are performed by members to entertain members. Limited funds and resources are used to achieve great public awareness and publicity.

### ***The Muson Festival of Arts***

This is an annual one-week event organized by the Society. It is an initiation borne out of the fact that the Society wanted to go beyond just presentation and enjoyment of classical music to go into the performing arts. The Society invites outstanding Nigerian stakeholders in the visual and performing

arts to collaborate as partners by contributing their events to the MUSON Festival programme. The scope of the Festival includes Classical Music, Jazz, Drama, Poetry, Visual Arts Exhibition, Nigerian Youth Talent Competition and Concert, Nigerian Traditional Music and Dance, Choral Music, and Opera. The objectives of the Festival as stated by Mbanefo in *MUSON FESTIVAL* include using performing arts “to increase the number of MUSON’s membership, to extend the scope of interest of MUSON’s membership, to create more public awareness of MUSON’s objectives and activities, and to promote the MUSON Centre as a veritable Centre for the Arts in Nigeria” (9).

### ***Season Concerts***

The Society arranged an average of six concerts every year. At the concert, artistes comprising Nigerians and expatriates present a repertoire of baroque Italian and English pieces, German *lieder*, opera, classical and traditional Nigerian music. The musical provision of this concert is made possible through the voluntary contributions of the cream of local artistes, and international guest artistes.

### ***Schools Competition***

In pursuance of one of the Society’s objectives – promotion of the education of children in the performance and theory of music, the Society organises annual musical competitions for schools. Students between the ages of 10 and 18 years compete in different categories of vocal solo, instrumental solo, instrumental ensemble, and choral. The School Competition further assists the MUSON Centre in widening its audience horizon. No doubt, new audiences are generated effortlessly through the competition. The advantage of the competition is not only limited to more audience participation but facilitation of wider public awareness and subsequent increase in audience attendance and patronage of the theatre can be assured.

### **The MUSON School of Music Productions**

MUSON Centre has built a niche for itself in the performing arts market. The Centre does not rely on the society’s productions alone for audience patronage of their theatre; they explore and establish music school to indirectly increase participation and engagement. The MUSON School of Music holds classes in violin, piano, recorder, flute, trumpet and voice, at various grade levels. As part of requirement for the fulfilment of Diploma in Music in the school, students are expected to present musical pieces every Monday for free to the public at the Centre’s premises. The saying that no free food in Freetown is quite true; the free performance is a form of marketing strategies employed by the Centre to attract their potential audiences. When they visit the theatre once or twice to watch free performances and are satisfied with the overall theatre experiences at the Centre, they will be convinced effortlessly to see paid performances. Undoubtedly, this style may seem unpopular but its capability as new audience generating mechanism is quite applauding.

### **Collaborative Programme**

The Musical Society of Nigeria is devoted to supporting arts and in achieving this objective they collaborate and partner with individual producing outfits who are producers of art works. As part of their contributions to these programmes, sometimes they give out the hall for free, help in part publicity, or assist in the Front of House activities of the partner companies. The audiences of the partner companies are most times the target of MUSON Centre. Their attendance at the collaborative programme will subtly introduce MUSON Centre and its activities to them. Suffice it to say that MUSON Centre presents its product and services in the best light possible to its potential audience with this collaborative and partnership scheme

### **Individual Producing Outfits’ Programme**

Some producing outfits come to run their shows in the Centre. These outfits just bring their shows to the Centre after they must have hired and paid for the hall. They do not have any relationship with the Centre. In giving out the hall, the MUSON Centre gives certain terms and conditions to these companies and those conditions must be accepted before the hall can be release for rentage.

### **House Management**

The comfort and welfare of audience is paramount. MUSON Centre sees its audience as part and parcel of the theatre. They are not only concern with what the audience has to offer but how they can satisfy their audience and ensure their theatre experience is worthwhile. Their audience pocket is not their primary target but their mind. They are aware that the audience already know them, thus, the remaining task is to work on how they can like and trust them. Over times, the house management approach of the Centre has assisted in building the trust of audience for the Centre. The house management activities of the Centre involves receiving and caring for their clients/audience before, during and after performance. The discussion on this aspect of their theatre management practice is divided into:

- a) Before Performance;
- b) During Performance; an
- c) After Performance

### ***Before Performance***

Before each event, provisions are made to cater for clients/audience enquiries on events. Competent staffs are on ground always to give adequate information about all programmes. Security measures are put in place to make the place safe for every audience. Security officers are always on ground to protect the clients/audience and ensure that their properties are kept safe.

In addition, the Centre ensures that her Front of House crews have a very good sense of human relations such that guests and audience are received into the hall with the most warmth reception. For those that will like to purchase tickets at the venue, tickets are made available and easily accessible. Comfortable spots are provided at the spacious foyer for audiences who arrived at the venue before the advertised time and elderly ones among them are given chairs to sit.

To ensure safety and comfort, measures are put in place by the House and Operations Manager to make sure the auditorium is not overcrowded. Ticket sales are stopped once the hall is filled to check and control audience admission. The Centre has three halls: Agip Recital Hall has tiered seats for 298, and 14 boxes seating 78 persons, Shell Nigeria Hall has the capacity to hold 1000 people, and Function Room that complement the two main halls; it is a small hall that can be used for smaller-sized meetings and has the capacity to hold 200 people.

### ***During Performance***

It is generally believed that every person that comes to the Centre would comport themselves. In ensuring the comfort of the audience during performance, the Centre ensures that the hall is clean and conducive; all toilets are clean and neat, air-conditioners are in good condition and always working properly. For performance like classical music that needs much concentration from the performers, special attention is given to audience control. To avoid distraction during this performance, the house manager addresses the audience before the beginning of the performance telling them the dos and don'ts of the show. Applause are not allowed during the performance until the end of each piece; so, in ensuring this, light control provision are made such that once a piece begins, a red light comes up and green light comes up at the end of every piece to indicate and inform the audience that the piece has come to an end and they can now appreciate the performers. Also, children below the age of 9 years are not allowed into classical music performance.

### ***After Performance***

Usually after each performance, the house light is put on. All doors to the foyer are left opened. Provisions are made for waiters to be on ground to help audience at the foyer. Security measures are put in place to checkmate uninvited or unwanted guests who may have come to steal or cause commotion. Once such persons are apprehended, they are interrogated and if information gotten from such persons is not satisfactory to the management, such people are sent out or handed over to the police. The user comfort facilities provided by the Centre serves as a form of incentive package aimed at retaining the interest of the audience and encourage repeat visitation to the Centre. The audiences are assured that their lives and properties are prioritized by the Centre, thus, the fear of insecurity and bad reception is eluded.

## **Marketing Management**

The marketing department of the Centre is headed by the Marketing Manager. He or she controls all the affairs of the department and gives directives on what to be done in marketing the Centre and its products. The Marketing Manager works hand-in-hand with the Marketing Committee, Artiste Committee, Programme and Events Officer and the Press and Publicity Officer. The Programme and Events Manager provides information on the events to be done. From the information provided by the Programme and Events Manager, the Marketing Manager will mark out the target audience, where to seek advice, where to solicit for support and where to market the programme. The marketing management of the Centre is discussed under: Publicity and Advertisement, Box Office Operations, and Finance.

### ***Publicity and Advertisement***

The press and publicity officer decide the publicity and advertisement strategy to be used based on the mapped up agenda by the marketing manager. One of the strategies used in advertising their programmes is broadcast on radio. The Centre has established partnership with some radio stations like Cool FM and Rhythm FM such that when they need to advertise their programmes using these platforms they don't pay for the slot given, the radio station will in turn quantify the cost of the slot and whenever they have the cause to use any of the Centre's facilities they won't have to pay too.

Another strategy is the newsletter method. The Centre issues yearly newsletter to its members to give them information on the activities of the Society and matters of general interest in the music world. The newsletter is also a strategy for membership drive and to encourage financial support from music lovers and philanthropists. Also, posters and handbills are taken to strategic places in the city of Lagos; places where their targeted audience frequently visit. Metropolitan Clubs and Quintessence are some of the places they place their advert.

### ***Box Office Operations***

The bulk of earned returns of the Centre are gotten from ticket sales. The Centre employs both manual and electronic ticket system. Tickets are available at the venues of performance, advert places and can also be booked online. Most times, the nature of the performance determines the price of the tickets. Sometimes, ticket prices are discounted for students. While ticket rate can be ₦2000, students with identity card pay ₦1000 and V.I.P pay ₦5000. Audience segmentation in pricing is another method used by the Centre to enjoy continuous turnouts from audience. The financial of the audience is greatly considered before price tagging. They are aware that all fingers are not equal, and that a little drop of water makes a mighty ocean.

### ***Source of Funding***

Funds available to the Society to meet the cost of the Centre include donations (in cash and in kind from corporate bodies, trustees, friends and members of the Society), debentures, lease rentals from Recital Hall boxes, bank overdrafts and loans. The largest source of funding is from earned income such as ticket.

## **Conclusion**

MUSON Centre is aware that is typically difficult to sell offers to total strangers (new audience) and lot of efforts is needed to convince the stranger. The theatre management style of MUSON Centre is strategically and deliberately targeted at attaining productive results in marketing, audience participation, continuity and survival of live theatre performances. MUSON Centre studies and analyses their prospective and existing audience to understand their needs and expectations, and the best language to communicate. Budding theatre marketers can learn from the MUSON management style and can even adopt this management model, and then gradually formulate their own by adjusting and infusing strategies that reflects social and modern trends of attracting and sustaining audience patronage.

To achieve robust audience participation at live theatre performances, theatre producers need to change their style of approaching the audience. To gather, satisfy and sustain live theatre audience,

theatre managers need to understand the audience needs and expectations. Rushing at getting audience without doing the necessary homework will more often not yield the desired objectives of having full house and maximising profit. Walmsley explains that, “many theatre marketers and event managers, therefore, miss the mark as they are unable to critically reflect on why their audiences engage with theatre, resulting in their marketing not connecting with their audiences and ticket sales suffering accordingly” (336). By understanding what is of significance for audience when they visit the theatre, theatre managers will be guided on how to give the audience worthwhile experience and encourage repeat visitations. Effective marketing, publicity, public relations activities enhance theatre image and brand, thus, send positive signals to audience and stimulate their interest in arts, motivate and encourage prospective audience visitation to the theatre.

Gone are those days when Nigerians viewed theatre as the only reliable relaxation and recreational centre. Today, Nigerian live theatre is battling with other entertainment genres for patronage from audience. Entertainment genres like stand-up comedy, sports, music shows among others now share audience with Nigerian live theatre, hence, the prevalence of survival of the fittest. Consequently, professional theatre practice needs theatre marketers to do things differently. Live theatre managers need to take deliberate actions to stand out in business. Development and exploration of management plans and strategies that reflect advertisement of audience motivating offers, creation of easy access to the offers, presentation of appealing performances that will satisfy audiences’ motives for visiting the theatre, and creation of enabling atmosphere for the audience during visitation at the theatre has become necessary to attain the desired audience participation needed for a thriving live theatre.

Consequently, this paper makes the following recommendations:

1. More attention should be given to theatre management practice because is an important aspect of the theatre that is capable of stimulating more audience participation in the Nigerian live theatre; thus, restoring the lost glory of the live theatre and also enhance successful theatre business.
2. Theatre managers should stop talking theories and start working them. They should be encouraged to evolve and implement new management strategies that can standworld best practice.
3. Students offering theatre management as course in the theatre arts departments of the Nigerian Universities should be encouraged to go to theatre houses for internship programmes as this will give the students (potential theatre manager) first-hand information on what is expected of them after they leave the four walls of the university.
4. Workshops, seminars, symposiums and conferences should be organized frequently for theatre managers in order to enable them keep in touch with other theatre managers and producers and to be up to date with new developments in the theatre management parlance.

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**Interview**

Iwa, Alabi. Manager, House and Operations, Muson Centre, Lagos State on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2017 at Muson Centre, Onikan, Lagos.

(2)

## THE ARTISTIC INGENUITY OF *ALAGA IJOKO* AND *ALAGA IDURO* IN YORUBA TRADITIONAL WEDDING CEREMONY: DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

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### **Abstract**

Directing is not just an art for the theatre, it encompasses activities beyond the various productions and confines of the theatre walls. From inception, man (director) is saddled with the responsibility of putting things in order, which is why the human being is referred to as homo-sapien because of the ability to reason and think appropriately. The animals neither think nor reason appropriately like human beings, which is also why the institution of marriage only happens within the socio-frame of the humans who are presumed and adjudged to be adults in the society. *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*'s ingenuity during Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony is the focus of this article, their qualities and how it relates to that of a theatre director in the execution of a play production. *Alaga Ijoko* and *Iduro* who are dominantly women have been able to skillfully moderate and compere traditional Yoruba wedding ceremonies where men have been less efficient. This article through participant observation and descriptive method examines the ingenuity of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*, their role playing skills and musical inclination during Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony. The enigmatic performance of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* projects the Yoruba culture and tradition as one devoid of a surreptitious glance but mark of a people who are significantly rich in culture and explicitly connected to it.

**Keywords:** Directing, *Alaga Ijoko*, *Alaga Iduro*, Role Playing, Musical Inclinations.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*: it means a person who moderate, or act as a spokesperson, compere or Master of Ceremony (M.C). In Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony, this task is undertaken by women. *Alaga Ijoko* represents the bride's family while *Alaga Iduro* represents the groom's family. For the sake of this work, *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* shall be adopted and frequently swapped to be called moderator.

*Altitude-in-Glamour*: Altitude simply means an elevation which can be above earth surface while glamour can be described as an alluring beauty or charm. Altitude-in-glamour is specifically coined for this work to define the beauty of Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony and how highly esteemed it is viewed and perceived in the families of those involved. Both bride and groom's parent are usually proud to support their children in such ceremonial event.

### **Introduction**

What is a director? In some contexts the director is a person who takes care of the critical-aesthetical representation of a text; in others, one who conceives and composes a performance from nothing. In certain cases it is an artist who pursues her own image of theatre, materialising it in different performances with changing collaborators. In others, she is a competent professional capable of harmonising the performance's heterogeneous elements (Barba xviii).

Nigeria is a multi lingual nation that boost of more than 250 ethnic groups. Generally speaking, the Yoruba is one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria who are majorly domiciled in



south-west region, Nigeria. This work revolves around the directorial ingenuity of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* in Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony and it is no doubt an understandable verity that the Yoruba culture is formed and founded on a rich and invaluable heritage. The *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* defines marriage as the legal relationship between a husband and wife. It is the ceremony in which two people become husband and wife. Reflecting on online *Meriam-Webster Dictionary*, which defines marriage as the state of being united as spouse in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law, meanwhile, the same medium also define wedding dictionary as a marriage ceremony usually with its accompanying festivities ([www.meriamwebster.com](http://www.meriamwebster.com)). This definition supports the attitude-in-glamour of the Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony. This is because in Yoruba culture, it is honour unto the parents of the bride to give out their daughter in marriage.

It is pertinent to know that a ceremony doesn't just happen in vacuum, it involves invited guest, special guest, chairman of the occasion, the celebrants (bride and groom in wedding ceremony) and the moderator or master of ceremony (MC). In Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony, the bride's family usually employs the service of a woman to be the moderator and she is usually called *Alaga Ijoko* while *Alaga Iduro* comes with the family of the groom to be the moderator who supports the chief moderator in person of *Alaga Ijoko*. They both represent the bride and groom's family, while *Alaga Ijoko* is seen as spokesperson for the bride's family, *Alaga Iduro* represents as spokesperson for the groom's family.

This work also considers the activities of the moderator/spokesperson and the traditional wedding as a theatrical performance. Peter Brook in his book *the empty space*, cited in Brockett's *The Essential Theatre* says: "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged" (7). In agreement with Brook's assertion above, it is better to concur therefore that the various display by the Alaga in order to make the guest comfortable and compelling is simply as a result of their individual directorial ingenuity.

### **Evolution of Directing and the Director**

The art of directing has been with man from time immemorial. Humans are called homo-sapiens because they possess the ability to think unlike other animals, either in the jungle or domesticated. From time immemorial, different scholars have trace and given various accounts on directing, according to Effiong's account who traced the history, he noted that the term 'directing' were never known or used as the outset of theatre practice in Greece. Tinges and semblances of 'directing art' were not totally excluded from the performance scheme. The fact of the competitiveness of the drama festival instructed participants to be painstakingly thorough, critical, analytical and convincing. He further posits that even though it was not stated that Thespis had a director, in as much as his action and preparations towards acting carries the aforementioned indices in his mind, or whether stand-by coached him to do so, both affirmed the presence and practice of 'directing art' in Grecian productions (196).

In terms of funding and managing the production proper, the *choregus* in Greek era most probably mediate for the dramatist as they dropped hard earned money for competition. Such words, insignificant as they might have been, still contribute something to be considered during rehearsals and other preparations towards the performance. They could have attended the rehearsals to see the extent of preparedness. Records have it that a didaskalos ("instructors") was often hired by dramatist to teach specific skills. Aeschylus himself was a reputable actor and choreographer, while Sophocles had special abilities in coaching the chorus interpretation of lines. These are all directing-biased task. Therefore it would be very wrong to say that no form of directing existed in Grecian performance (as cited in Effiong 197).

However, history have records of people who supervised different elements of a theatre production even when the word 'director' was not really pronounced, an example is George II (1826-1914), the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. His supervision included rehearsals, scenic elements and other aspect which he coordinated into an integrated whole. The artistic coordination, realization and qualities of Saxe-Meiningen makes Edwin Wilson posit that the director emerges as a fully fledged, indispensable member of a theatrical team taking a place alongside the playwright, the performers and

the designers (136). George II's activities in preparation for productions record great attention and his creative ingenuity later metamorphosed into the word 'director' which later became popularly attached to the leaders of many theatre production beginning from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Perhaps significantly, the emergence of the director according to Edwin Wilson is regarded as separate creative finger coincided with important changes which began to take place in society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (136). From this moment onward, several directors have emerged to promote theatrical production in different continents of the world.

A director in the theatre is an important personality whose role and duties cannot be over-emphasized. Wilson and Goldfarb states that in the modern theatre, "the director is inevitable and indispensable" (34). Brockett assert that "the director is the person with the primary responsibility for interpreting a script, rehearsing the actors and coordinating all elements of a production" (449).

### **Brief Insight on Yoruba Traditional Wedding Ceremony**

Historically, marriage in Yoruba culture is an essential institution. It is perceived to be the climax of an early intimation and a necessity in life. A wedding ceremony occur when the families involved are sure beyond every reasonable doubt that both parties involved are ready physically, socially, morally, spiritually and psychologically. This is because Yoruba culture is not one that approve of divorce, they perceive both the ceremony and marriage as a binding string and elements between the two (bride and groom's) families exchanging vows. Fadipe cited in Odejebi posit that, "in Yoruba culture, men get married even when they are impotent in order to save either their immediate relatives as well as to get someone to look after their domestic establishment" (139). This paper does not in any way or medium promote such act where the woman is cajole or coerced to submit herself to an unfruitful conjugal bliss by getting married to an impotent man. Odejebi further states that marriage ceremony in Yoruba culture, like other West African countries, is always a glamorous affair depending on the state of wealth of the two families involved. The bride's father's house is usually the expected venue of the event, in a situation where it is not so, a rented hall, decorated for events is used.

In Yoruba traditional setting, women are presumed to play and act as the support system in the family, the sole authority rest on the man. However, in traditional Yoruba wedding ceremony, women skills become essential and important. *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* are roles done by women in the society who are humorous and sensitive to nature and life generally. Guest at the Yoruba traditional wedding includes;

- a) Bride's parents;
- b) Groom's parents;
- c) Bride;
- d) Groom;
- e) Bride's siblings;
- f) Groom's siblings;
- g) Bride and Groom's Cousins, Aunts, Nephew, Uncles, Nieces, and other family members;
- h) Friends of Bride and Groom;
- i) Priest or any religious leader depending on their religious sector; and
- j) Moderators (*Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*)

### **Directorial Qualities of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro***

In exclusive sensitivity to African nature, it is pertinent to reserve huge commendation for the Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony. Apart from the glamour and ceremonial altitude of both families involved, the honour it bestowed on the families involved is enormous and cannot be over emphasised. This brings to the realization of the effect of the ingenuity of the moderators (the *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*) in the celebration. These moderators are associated with various directorial qualities which shall be explained in tandem with their contribution to the Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony.

#### ***1. Role Playing***

In most events, be it corporate, formal or informal settings, an individual start the show as the master of ceremony (MC). Along the line, in corporate events, especially, we begin to see two people as the MCs. These two personalities are popularly referred to as the hosts. However, in Yoruba traditional engagement or wedding ceremony, the main master of ceremony is *Alaga Ijoko* simply because she represents the bride's family to be supported by the *Alaga Iduro* (the moderator for the groom's family). Through keen observation we perceived the exploits of the moderators as that of a theatre director and a stage manager in the course of a performance. The *Alaga Ijoko*'s directorial process includes maximizing the empty space where there are no constructed cyclorama, no stage direction, and no raised platform to signify authority on stage. As a woman the *Alaga Ijoko* with the permission or authority embedded on her by the bride's family, she gives instructions as she pleases to the groom's family and also to the groom. Artistically the director must ensure that a performance must be aesthetically pleasing to the audience. Gale Edwards, as cited in Arinde, defines the complexities the director has to contend with in putting up a beautiful performance. According to him,

being a director can be a very hard job for any man or woman. It's lonely, it's isolated, you are responsible if anything goes wrong, you are forgotten when everything goes right, you are attacked by the critics. If you are a good director, you should be faceless. If you want to know why I do it, it's because I still enjoy the task... you have to make a million (decisions). If any number of them is wrong, you can mock up the whole thing (99).

As a director, the *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* are not faceless but visible, they enjoy their task and that's why they engage the audience well at every Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony they appear. As a stage manager, the *Alaga Iduro* receives instructions and information from *Alaga Ijoko* and disseminates such information to the groom's family. This is evident in the relationship between the theater director and the stage manager. The stage manager ensures the directors instruction is followed appropriately. The stage manager adequately monitors the situation at the backstage while production is going on in the theatre. Instruction in this case is what the bride's family wants from the groom's family when they dance in to announce their presence.

## **2. Humour**

The role of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* is being carried out by women. These moderators are usually lively, friendly, vibrant, patience personified and humorous. They make every Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony lively. Indigenes and non indigenes always look forward to their performance. Humour in the theater can be culture bound; it is basically labeled under the dramatic genre comedy. Online *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines it as a type of simulation that elicit the laughter reflex, Aristotle as cited by Bamidele describes it in terms of some ugliness or defect, which is not painful or destructive but which we tend to laugh at (45).

Humour can also occur in ugly situation in order to enliven the place. It can also be used to *satirise* the socio political events in the society. All the attitudes attached to humour are what the moderators (*Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*) skillfully experiment in their various abilities. In cases where the demand of the bride's family is getting unbearable for the groom's family, both *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* jokingly and wittingly confront the misunderstanding among the two families. There are situations where the bride's family elders may refuse to proceed with the engagement ceremony until the number of yams written in the dowry list is complete. Even when it sounds unpalatable or annoying, it does happen, it is the *Alaga* (both *Ijoko* and *iduro*) that ensure peace is restored and things are in order. In the theatre, the director ensures things are in order, because the success of a production depends on the ability of the artistic director to manage every crisis he/she is faced with at pre-production, production and post production stage.

## **3. Versatile**

As a director handling and directing a theatrical production, the goal is to achieve an aesthetically pleasing performance. It behooves on the director to reflect the skills and versatility embedded in him in the production. However, in order to achieve a performance that is aesthetically pleasing it is

pertinent to consciously note that it is the compositional forms and beauty that is centered around the realities of human being while giving credence to the tradition and culture which is being maintained by the moderators even though they are not aware of the act being performed which originally precedes the traditional engagements. Quintessentially, versatility cannot be discussed without laying emphasis to aesthetics in a work of art. For Kant as with Hegel as cited in Kapferer and Hobert express the opinion that "aesthetics does not merely concern art but rather lies at the heart of the critical understanding of the human project as a whole" (n.p.). Reflecting on the theatrics of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* in Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony, using Kant's critical understanding of the human project, the moderator (*Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*) express versatile strength by rendering the panegyrics of the two families involved even when it is crystal clear that they are not members of the family.

Another versatile nature of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* is their mode of communication through dance. In Bakare's view, as cited in Peter, "pure dance is a product of kinesthetic stimuli that explore a wide range of movements" (549). Genre of pure dance performance accommodates various innovational and improvisational movement patterns. In other words, being the bedrock and live wire that stimulate the soul of the Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony, *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* exhibit good dance movements. They appear to be professional in improvising movement patterns while anchoring events. They usually endeavour to know the trending dance movements coupled with their skills in Yoruba traditional dances.

#### **4. Diplomacy and Objectivity**

As a compere hosting an event, one must be good in the art of public speaking to a large and considerable extent. The *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* express their directorial ingenuity by being sensitive to various innovations, diverse culture, domestic and international trending entertainment issues. The name '*Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*' sound local or illiterate, literally *Alaga* in Yoruba language can be said to mean chairman but in relation to Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony, '*Alaga Ijoko*' and '*Alaga Iduro*' are the moderators, chairman or chairperson of the occasion is usually someone else. In various religious denominations there are means to collect tithe and offering, meanwhile during Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony, guests of both families (bride and groom) diplomatically pay tithe and offering. This is done through payment of fines, *Alaga Ijoko* and her entourage usually place a fine on the groom's family, perhaps, it could be for late arrival, the fine could mean because the groom forgot to remove his cap while dancing to greet the bride's family, the fine can possibly be in any dimension, the bride's family through compassion oneness and love also help to bailout the groom and his family members by paying too.

Objectivity can be said to mean judgment based on observable phenomena and uninfluenced by emotions or personal prejudice. With this definition in mind, it is crystal clear that there are times in man's life when he/she will be faced with the objective truth. This therefore reflect the actions of the moderators (*Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*) to be objective even in time of merry making without attaching emotions or personal prejudice while paying homage to culture and tradition. In Yoruba culture it is wrong for a man to wear a cap while in his in-law's house, if per adventure, such scenario eventually happen, the man will be compelled to pay a fine. In posing the objective nature of both moderators, the truth about Yoruba culture and tradition is hereby affirmed even in the midst of a ceremonial glamour.

#### **5. Musical Inclination**

Actualizing total theatre requires music, this forms the major reason artistic directors sometimes make use of music to accompany their concept in the course of production in the theatre. Music is generally believed to aid prompt interpretation of the theme in a play. In explaining the vitality of music to dramaturgy, Ikibe defines music as, "a medium through which various concepts of the theatre is actualized" (2). *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* absolutely engage music from the beginning to the end of the ceremony. As moderators for the events, both *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* combine their musical skills, fascinating to the ears in a pleasant manner to usher in the groom's family, the groom and the bride. The bride is usually accompanied by her friends, family members who are of the same age grade. Few of the songs and their translations are written below:

## **Yoruba**

*Awa la nse bebe*  
*Awa re o, Awa la nse bebe*  
*Awa la n'owo tagbayi*  
*ni ile taa n'owosi*  
**Call:** *Awa le bi oko,*  
*Arin maa rin 'doti o,*  
**Response:** *Awa le bi oko,*  
*Awa le bi oko, Arin maa rin 'doti o,*  
**Call:** *Arin maa rin 'doti o!*  
**Response:** *Arin maa rin 'doti!*  
**Call:** *Arin maa rin 'doti o!*  
**Response:** *Arin maa rin 'doti!*  
*All: Awa le bi oko, Awa le bi oko,*  
*Arin maa rin 'doti o*  
*Lahun ere be*  
*Ere be lahun*  
*Owo ile la n lo*  
*A o ma yawo fise o*  
*La hun ere be*  
*Ere be lahun*  
*Ipinle ti Jesu fi le le leyi*  
*Ti gbogbo agbaye to*  
*Keda ma se ro pe*  
*Oduro nile*  
*Oduro lo ri apata*  
*Eyin ebi oko eyo*  
*Ebi iyawo eyo*  
*Afi 'pinle yii le le lori otito*  
*Afi 'pinle yii le le lori ododo*

## **English Translation**

Here we are doing wonders,  
oh! Here we are doing wonders,  
we spend a lot of money in peoples homes  
and get honored for it,  
We are the groom's family,  
who work spotlessly.  
We are the groom's family  
We are the groom's family, who work spotlessly.  
who work spotlessly!  
who work spotlessly!  
who work spotlessly!  
who work spotlessly!  
We are the groom's family,  
Who work spotlessly.  
Oh! What an amazing celebration  
Indeed, it's amazing  
For we spend our own money  
And not from loan  
Oh! What an amazing celebration  
Indeed, it's amazing  
this is the foundation laid down by God,  
which the universe treads on,  
let no man think,  
he stands on the ground,  
but on a solid rock.  
let the groom's family rejoice,  
the bride's family rejoice too,  
for this foundation is set on the truth  
for this foundation is set on righteousness

While the talking drums accompany the songs, the family members of the groom are compelled to sing and dance along with the songs raised by the *Alaga Ijoko* as they welcome them to the event.

## **Conclusion**

Directing is dynamic in itself; the artistic element allows a director to infuse various skills to show creativity and awesome vision in interpreting absolute vision and concepts. It is evidently and explicitly clear that outside the theatre walls, this work has been able to theatrically link the wisdom, skills, managerial and directorial veracity in handling an event (Yoruba wedding ceremony). The Yoruba tradition is one unique culture that recognizes the importance and role of every gender in the society. It is a fact beyond prejudice that Yoruba culture is patriarchal from inception. This work has been able to expose the true skills of the women where the men folks have been less efficient. Generally, women are known to be the makers of the home while the men provide for the family. This work does not imply that women are redundant in other chores or spheres of life; it perhaps extols the virtues and ingenuity of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* as a director who oversee all aspects of a production in order to have an aesthetically pleasing and magnificent production.

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## **AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCTION AND CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION: LESSONS FROM THE KUTUNGARE EXPERIMENT**

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### **Introduction**

For decades, emphasis has been on the universal accounts of the development of children as individuals and what they could not do at certain stages in their lives rather than on the social context and support that might enhance their lives. Many contemporary developmental psychologists are now however critical of this history and are conducting research and developing theories that emphasize the context of development and the process by which children collaborate with and learn from others. According to Ennew (1998), a developmental psychologist, a great deal of research has been carried out in constructing theory on the development of children's capacity to think. Until recently, Piaget, a renowned developmental psychologist developed theories on children's intellectual development but his writing and even more importantly the way he was interpreted tended to understate what children could do (Hart, 1998: 28).

Development practitioners and researchers are now seeking to understand the process by which different groups of children become excluded from decision making and the development train. Varying concepts of childhood and adulthood, according to Johnson and Ivan-Smith (1998: 6), 'depend on socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexuality, age and gender' and these must be explored in order to understand the changing roles and responsibilities of young people in households or families and society. James, Okwori and Prout (1998: 124) cited in Johnson et al. (1998: 6) raise the debate about one or many childhoods: 'Is it ever possible (or desirable) to speak meaningfully about 'childhood as a unitary concept?' Qvortrup, in Johnson et al. (1998), argues that there is value in understanding the 'childhood of society' and focusing on aspects and relationships that all children have with the rest of the society.

Focusing on these aspects of relationships will give adults a better understanding of children's realities and how to work with them to generate information on how to help them communicate these realities to policy and decision makers in a language and style upon which they can act. This requires inevitably a detailed level of research and analysis of diverse childhoods so that the varying impact of change on different children can be linked with a broader analysis of the structural influences that may affect all children in a given society. Visibility does not equal participation or empowerment and it is also tempting to assume that the only hindrance for children's participation is invisibility. Even in areas where children are used for child labour, prostitution, farm work or street hawking, it does not enable these children to participate in their local communities or have their contributions recognized, rather most children are mere pawns in the hands of adults indulging them in unrecognised and unrewarded labour.

From the foregoing, there is need to go beyond making them more visible and allowing them to participate in affairs that are exclusive to adults alone. Participatory processes can help achieve this result. These processes can help adults to understand social exclusion and different roles within the society from the perspectives of young people. Although there are tried and tested techniques to work with and analyze differences in people's lives, these techniques have mostly been used with adults, there has been less participatory work carried out with children and young people. Despite this, 'there is a growing emphasis on working to understand children and young people's roles in households and in society' (Johnson & Smith, 1998: 7).

Using the Kutungare experiment as an example, this paper will examine the use of Participatory video methodology to empower children and in the process liberate their voices. The

study focused in this paper, conducted by the author, was carried out in Kutungare in Birnin Gwari, Chikun and Kaduna North Local Government Areas in Kaduna state.

### **Background to the project**

In 2009, Boduvison studio, a multimedia production centre based in Lagos, Nigeria, came to Kaduna to shoot a Hausa children's television programme. With specialty in animation, documentaries, presentations and drama, the company has various children's videos and television programmes running on local and national network stations. These include *Story Time with Grandma*, a folk tale session with children in English and Hausa languages. The aim of the organization is the production of quality programming for the digital satellite Television networks both local and international. In order to achieve this, the organization has produced some movies and television soap operas for Mnet, MyTv and other platforms.

Located in Lagos State of Nigeria, it has established an excellent reputation for a range and quality of its secular audiovisual productions. *Tatsuniya da Gwaggo* (Storytelling with *Grandma*) is one of their children video programmes produced for the Television. The show uses the medium of film and video to positively mould the future of children through a concept that transcends mere routine claims to entertainment, information and education. Over 90 episodes of the programme were produced and transmitted on national television and cable stations across Africa.

*Tatsuniya da Gwaggo* was designed with the idea of reviving the tradition of storytelling by elders to children while seated around the camp fires, but in this case, it has been modernized to capture contemporary issues. Some of the aims of the project include: To entertain, educate and inform, to rekindle the fast fading morals, mores and values for which our society once had a reputation, to skilfully communicate healthy and beneficial messages whose results can be monitored and evaluated and to produce a children's programme with an African appeal and international standard. Grandma (the storyteller) keeps the African tradition of storytelling going by sitting with the children and telling entertaining, didactic and moral infused stories through which they are taught values and virtues. Boduvison's journey to Kaduna in 2009 was to realize more episodes of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo*. The author was a consultant on this set.

In the process of shooting the project, some of the children artistes were interested in participating beyond acting in the production. For example, Jemima Paul Mshelia who was 9 years old at the time of the production of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo*, yearned to be part of make-up design. Anytime the make-up artist had to dab a face or make any adjustment, she was eager to assist her. But almost all the time, she is told by the director to go back to her position. Looking back ten years today, she is wiser and would not rush into action as she did then. But her love was to assist a little and she was denied that opportunity. To her, it was an opportunity for expression as she always helped her mum do her makeup at home and due to the fact that the makeup on the *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo* location was not comprehensive, she felt it was too easy.

On another occasion, the author also witnessed another incident which almost stalled the production for some hours. As was the tradition on the set, the animator almost always acted out for the kids as an example before each scene or at a complicated juncture so as to clarify different acting styles for the children, but in this instance, he added a cliché, that for it to be natural, the child actors should act it their own way...the way a child of their age will act it. The scene took off and Grandma (*Gwaggo*) was in the middle of telling her story when another child – Ahmed Dikko interrupted her. As a talented actor, she maneuvered her way and the act continued. But that did not go down well with the director who stopped the act and proceeded into another take of the same scene after warning the kids without been specific about Ahmed Dikko.

The Animator had his act and the scene continued. But almost at the same spot, Ahmed Dikko still interrupted. Grandma liked the interruption because it provided her a cue to add other comments but it still did not go down well with the Director who now chided Ahmed Dikko directly. But Ahmed Dikko responded that that is how a child will do it. Ahmed's caregiver, a senior cousin of Ahmed scolded him which made the boy to withdraw from the act. The scene was retaken but it did not have the initial spark as Ahmed was the star actor in this scene and he puts the spark in the story. *Gwaggo* had to call the Director aside and discuss with him who finally agreed and the scene was completed with the Director now satisfied.



With this and many other instances where children were denied input in the production process, the need to probe how participatory the production process of the *Tatsuniya* production and what is the degree of children participation was, arose. Though Boduvision, like all other experts in the Hausa tradition, believe that the storytelling culture has a positive effect on children of today, a whole lot of questions came out of the author's observation of the production process: *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo*.

- Beyond the presentation of the people's culture of storytelling. *Tatsuniya* has been told this way for generations. But in what significant way has it benefited the children other than giving fun? Can the fun be adequate enough to build their capacity thereby unlocking their tongues?
- Shouldn't the cultural structure be used by Boduvision to build the capacity of children so that it is not just about somebody getting to tell them stories?
- Shouldn't the children be able to tell their own stories using their own paraphernalia...? From the child's angle?
- To what extent can the system of storytelling help children to grow?
- If at all it has been of help to their growth, how can the growth be sustained through their participation in this storytelling style? Shouldn't their voices be heard in packaging this story instead of sitting as mere audiences?

With these and more questions to find answers to as the project concluded, the author chose to have a rehash of the production process of *Tatsuniya* with children, but this time, children will be in the driving seat.

The first step was to carry out an appraisal of the production process of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo* with a view to ascertaining how participatory it was for the children involved in the production. For the purpose of this appraisal, the author x-rayed the form and content of the *Tatsuniya* production. This appraisal is split into two:

- a) Content analysis (taking a look at the issues contained in the *Tatsuniya da Gwaggo* stories.
- b) The Form (xraying the mode of packaging or realization of the production.

The findings from this appraisal threw up a whole lot of issues on the non-participatory nature of the *Tatsuniya* production.

Firstly, Participants were involved in the production as tools, actors and actresses to be used by directors on set. The producers of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo* had a set mind from the onset of the project. This objective was not one to be shared by participants as they were tools to change another group of people through the actions of participants on air, but behaviour-change initiatives use indicators to measure change which might be flawed because there is no room to pretest the process. *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo* throws up an additional factor into the idea of 'sustainability failure' – the tension between producing a quality product and following a participatory process. It is an example of a commercial endeavour where the result from successful delivery of a quality technical product was at odds with the results from the empowerment of a well-managed participatory process. Working with children goes beyond generalizing and concluding on the capacities of children participants.

Secondly, Jones (2003) lists the core skills required for effective communication with children. These include listening, being able to convey genuine interest, empathic concern, understanding, emotional warmth, respect for the child, and the capacity to reflect and to manage emotions. He stresses the importance of these skills in seeking to communicate with children. The producers of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo* met none of these conditions in their production with children.

Thirdly, the method employed by the *Tatsuniya* project was very different from those used in participatory development, and is self-evidently highly suitable for conventional video production. However, it relies on a relatively good understanding of technology. The production highlights the importance of identifying different types of stakeholders, and working with them – both separately and in togetherness. This has the potential to avoid some of the problems with group dynamics.

Finally, access to spaces of communication and dialogue is crucial in any participatory communications activity. What is often not made explicit in participatory communication approaches, however, is the important role of media access, which is increasingly crucial considering the rapid changes in media tools, coverage and worldwide use. Thus, participatory communication is also about visibility and voice in the mediated public sphere. *Tatsuniya da Gwaggo* gave no room for dialogue.

These findings highlighted a gap between the goals of the Production Company and genuine development. In the exploration of the production process of Boduision as presented above, it was discovered that there was need to explore an alternative production process which encourages participation of children and will translate to their empowerment. The author therefore proposed a participatory video communication framework as a strategy that can enhance and deepen children's voices in the development process. This design, which was implemented in workshop style, is presented below.

### **Description of the Workshop**

The workshop process was designed in different independent phases along the production cycle of an audiovisual production. These include preproduction, production and post-production phases. These subsequently took the following procedure:

- a) Background research
- b) Advocacy
- c) Training workshop (Preproduction)
- d) The shoot (production)
- e) Participatory editing and previews (Post-production)

#### ***Stage 1. Background Research***

Background research is a continuous process. The process involved the selection of participants and locating a conducive venue for the workshop. This Background research was built around: Identifying participants, their family background, access to amenities (video, radio and television), past involvement in audio-visual productions and identifying a conducive venue for the workshop.

#### ***Stage 2. Advocacy***

Advocacy was carried out in order to interact with the gatekeepers and opinion leaders in the Kutungare community. It was used as a tool to lobby the community as a whole to ensure their active participation in the research and workshop. People in the community needed to have an idea of what the project was about and why? Many visits were made to the community to talk with opinion leaders and elders. It took several visits to get an approval for the workshop. The team was able to discuss the issue of PV and the possibility of carrying it out with members of the community including children. After some deliberation among themselves, it was agreed that some of their children will be part of the workshop. After securing permission from the elders of Kutungare community, TRAPCO (a resort in the community) was secured as our venue for workshop and training. At this stage, arrangement was also made for equipment for the workshop ahead and other logistics.

#### ***Stage 3. Workshop and Training***

The training was done in order to set a base for the eventual workshop. To achieve this workshop and shoot of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo*, the researcher keyed into the assembled crew of Boduision from Lagos who were in Kaduna. This crew was made up of the following: Director, Assistant Director, Producer, Three cameramen, Cameraman, Production manager, Costume/Costumiere, Make-up, Set Designer and a Location manager. There were about forty people in all; this was made up of children, technical and artistic crew members and trainers.

In addition to this production crew, the researcher also invited three trainers who were experts in working with children. The researcher and these three trainers facilitated the crew members, adult cast members, some parents and the children through the rudiments of shot composition, camera handling script writing, make up, costume, etc. This was a training which was geared at building capacity in participants to face the work ahead.

The curriculum for the training workshop had to do with imparting knowledge into the group related to production with emphasis on children. This knowledge ranged from directing and facilitation to artistic skills. Emphasis was laid on using objects and pictures to illustrate complex concepts. The games and exercises also helped to breakdown complicated technical concepts as a way of imparting technical skills in the children and bond them into a team.

The workshop content was made up of skills acquisition which translated to the successful production of an audiovisual product. This included Group Development, Capacity building and skills development, Acting and storytelling skills, Camera handling skills, Drawing and Participatory Editing

### **Group Development**

The first day of the workshop was dedicated to group development which is key to any successful participatory video project. Building bonds of trust, respect and understanding between participants was the first stage in the process and this influenced everything that followed. A lot was influenced by the project set up and the atmosphere created during this initial workshop stage. Time was committed early in the process to activities that focus on getting to know one another such as ‘Listen & Share’ or the ‘Name Game’, games which made participants familiarize themselves with each other, the equipment they were to work with and their environment in general. Games and Play were used bearing in mind that majority of the participants in the project were children.

### **Capacity building and skills development**

Day 2 of the workshop was dedicated to capacity building sessions basically to build childrens’ capacities and skills in line with the work at hand. It was a session filled with the use of Games and Exercises to build childrens’ innate skills like storytelling and the art of camera handling without supervision while building confidence. Issues emerged naturally from the participants and trainers used this to their advantage by building on such issues to move the project further. Trainers were very informal, helping people to be relaxed, with issues arising as the sharing went on. This put participants in control. In the make up session, Aisha Kelani, a 10 year old girl showed her dexterity at making up artists. The difference between making up for the set and the one for everyday is very little and according to her, “this one is very simple since you use only pad and powder.”

The trainer also used different PLA tools to deepen analysis of the main problems by revealing how problems, causes and effects are inter-linked, he used the Venn diagram. This was used to represent the power/influence of different stakeholders’ using larger or smaller circles. This was done in order to gain an overview of the problem of adult power and influence over children and its effects. Reasons were put forward but the most fundamental reason was simply because adults felt children cannot think for themselves.

The facilitator guided participants toward an understanding of the Venn diagram by letting them physically manipulate hoola hoops which he rented for the session. He also came with different colors of pool balls. He began with the two hoops and two colors of pool balls, with another set of multi colored balls. With the hoops side by side, he made participants sort the balls, with one color in each hoop. He also allowed participants to figure out what to do with the multi-coloured balls, prompting them by physically overlapping the hoola hoops if needed. He also facilitated participants to label the Venn diagram using index cards, and explore other ways it can be used.

The use of Venn diagram also showed other adult participants the power relationship between them and children. It showed them that with a little trust and patience with children, they can come out with things they never expected. A Venn diagram approach is then used to represent the power/influence of different ‘stakeholders’ using larger or smaller circles. The location of the circle on a ‘map’ reflects the degree of involvement each stakeholder has with the group. The Venn diagram represents both parameters simultaneously by drawing the appropriately-sized circle at a representative location directly onto the map. A Venn diagram approach is then used to represent the power/influence of different ‘stakeholders’ using larger or smaller circles. The location of the circle on a ‘map’ reflects the degree of involvement each stakeholder has with the group. The Venn diagram represents both parameters simultaneously by drawing the appropriately-sized circle at a representative location directly onto the map.

### **Acting and storytelling skills**

The facilitators kick-started this session by reminding the participants of the project objectives but this time with scenarios created by the author and his team. The game River of life was used at this session. The workshop participants worked in pairs to tell the story of his or her life. To aid the process, writing materials were provided to illustrate highpoints of their life stories. The games and energizers were another form of play used to motivate participants.

The second session was more of a production meeting between the Director, crew members and the children. At this meeting, the crew members were briefed of their different tasks in relation to the main production. They were also informed of their added task of supervising some of the children who would be given a free hand as crew members. After this, the children were auditioned to discover those that had the capacity to be used in sensitive roles. This audition was carried out with games and the successful ones had adult crew members at their disposal in different groups to interact with. Role play was used to audition the children. One of such is a game which had to do with replicating what your partner has done. The children were facilitated to pair up after taking numbers. Odd and even numbers faced themselves and the facilitator tells any one of them to act a particular role ranging from what they had seen adults do, to what they were conversant with. The second person was to play out the role exactly how the partner had presented it. The democracy in the exercise was that everyone was asked whether it was well replayed or not. The choice was theirs and not from the facilitator. Through this game, the best actors were selected for speaking roles while the rest acted as audience. In all, every one of the children had a role and those without speaking roles formed part of the audience in the story.

### **Camera handling skills**

This is the stage where participants were introduced to handling the camera fully. It was processed using games. The aim of this session was to pass on camera handling skills and engage participants in group work using games. This was in preparation for “Handing over control” to participants. Though the game ‘knowing the camera’ was used in the first session as an Icebreaker, it is now to be used in an advanced mode: introducing the children to the equipment (Camera) and also for the children to overcome the fear of using the camera. But most of all, it was done so the children could learn through experiencing it (Experiential learning).

Children and adults were made to go through basic camera operations process such as focusing, maintaining white balance, and zooming in and out in a peer sharing mode. Participants also learnt shot types and storyboarding (planning on paper with pictures) while using the video camera to capture role plays and discussion. Picture Composition Exercise was also used. This exercise focused on the different types of pictures a camera can produce if handled correctly. Many of such games and exercises were used to get children and adults conversant with camera operation and its effects. But in all, these exercises succeeded in sensitizing the trainees to the biases that camera manipulation, both knowing and unknowing, can introduce.

### **Drawing and Storyboarding**

Although, it is relatively easy to learn basic video recording functions, making a coherent video involves a range of technical, narrative and organizational skills. For this reason, the researcher’s role developed from structuring video exercises, and facilitating a conducive group dynamic, to following and supporting the group production agenda. Participants were not expected to plan a complete video in advance, when they have no previous production experience. Instead, video-making progresses in iterative stages, with new sections planned and storyboarded, after reflection on the last section and current needs. This structure maximized the possibility of participant creativity by bounding it manageably. The storyboard helps to pre-visualize your production so that you can look at the scenes before videoing or editing and therefore are able to arrange the video the way that you want it.

In this session, facilitators teased out stories from participants’ with the aid of drawings. The session was facilitated using exercises such as the storyboard. With games and exercises, facilitators teased out what story participants would like to tell. Using the storyboard technique, participants put their stories into pictures and proceeded to film the shots in the order laid out in the storyboard.

The storyboard is like a comic drawing of your story. For this reason, drawing was introduced into the workshop to build capacities in the children so they could bring out their stories in drawings. This session was facilitated by the author and a professional cameraman. The researcher kick started the session by teasing out stories from the children. This is a way of finding out what stories they would like to tell. To build confidence in the children, the researcher started by stimulating them asking them to relate stories like how they eat biscuit. These presentations were followed with praises and encomiums. They were then given papers to write out short stories around topics of their choice.

#### **Stage 4. The shoot**

After a few days of training at the workshop, the children acquired some talents. At the stage of the Shoot, their assignment was to use the talents acquired to shoot a video in the format of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo*. This stage of the process involves participants making a video to communicate their experiences, stories, ideas or views they learnt so far from the workshop to an external audience. At this stage, video obviously functions as the creative medium, and the focus of the activity is external communication.

The story to be shot was a product of the story writing exercises, drawing and storyboarding. The production of videos been one stage in the whole participatory video process goes to show the degree of empowerment of participants. The key points from both fieldwork and the discussion sessions were put to test at this stage. In the process of the workshop, the groups agreed on a story to shoot. This story was patterned after the *Tatsuniya* series. The major difference between this story and the Boduvision approach is the fact that children were allowed to come up with their own storyline. The children were given the opportunity to handle several aspects of the crew, while others played the children role in the story. Planning tools such as storyboards (earlier planned) were helpful ways to ensure equal and meaningful engagement of all participants.

All participants had equal opportunities to undertake roles during the production phase. Roles such as ‘camera operator’ and ‘director’ particularly, powerful can be attractive to those who might otherwise dominate the process. Hence, participants were encouraged to rotate roles on a regular basis to prevent any individuals from appropriating particular roles. The ‘Storyboard Technique’ provided the ideal tool for ordering and regulating these rotations. Adult crew members monitored the children to ensure they got the shot type correct and picture quality was good. This shoot was for the children to test out the capacity built in them during the training workshop.

#### **Stage 5. Participatory Editing**

This session was a very slow and delicate one and a key stage in understanding which footage the participants’ value and what they preferred to exclude. This is so because many professionals will simply not appreciate the value of footage, which to them may appear poorly shot or otherwise imperfect. This in turn can cause participants to lose confidence in their abilities and ultimately derail the wider participatory process. Editing is an important and powerful stage in the process, yet it presents the greatest challenge to participation. All the time and care spent ensuring an authentic, honest and empowering participatory approach can be easily diminished at this late stage in the production of video messages. This is because if the wrong shots are used, the videos might not communicate. Undertaking a genuinely participatory edit also requires time, commitment and plenty of patience. All the footage gathered from the field were reviewed and logged. An editor who understand how to edit as part of a participatory process, respects and comply with decisions made by the group regardless of their own opinions, and who will not impose their own aesthetic judgments or preferences on the edit worked with participants through the editing session.

The editing stage is where this kind of project (participatory video) is most likely to come under pressure from other stakeholders and interested parties, as more people begin to take an interest in the video messages created and often start putting forward their opinions and even asserting their own agendas. The decision about who edits the group’s footage will have a bearing on the editing processes.

An editor who understands how to edit as part of a participatory process; respect and comply with decisions made by the group regardless of their own opinions; and who did not impose their own aesthetic judgments or preferences on the edit worked with participants through the editing session.

Undertaking a genuinely participatory edit requires time, commitment and prolonged patience. All the footages gathered from the field were reviewed and logged. A system of story construction emerged from the editing trials. The team collectively marked out relevant segments on the storylines. Discussions were then held on how the storyboard should be put together. A process of discussion and decision-making was then undertaken as the group decided how their video will be structured and which shots to use, how and when. Gradually an order and structure were built from the chaos and the outcomes of decisions taken, discussed and explored. The completed edited version was then shown back to the group for their comments and additions.

### **Discussions and Findings**

However, despite the problems encountered in the workshop, findings about children's abilities in this research challenge the premise that children cannot contribute meaningfully to research. They shed light on some of the developmental limitations on children that are imposed by age and the implications for researchers for doing research with children that facilitates the platform of meaningful accounts of their subjective experiences. It should be noted that there is also a substantial history of criticism of the assumption that young children are not sufficiently competent to report on their own experiences.

Donaldson (1978), for example, argued that we often confuse children's language ability with their general intellectual ability, and that when we attempt to make ourselves understood to children we find them to be more competent than we expected. Furthermore, when young children make errors in remembering an event, we are inclined to allow that to reinforce our prejudices about their (lack of) credibility more than we do when older children make errors (Lieppe, Mannion, & Romancyck, 1991). This was reinforced in the workshop as the children were able to comment and report on different activities coordinated. The only clause was this was based on their understanding of the activity.

In the experiment, the children gradually took over the process which goes to show that the method provides children with an alternative way of communicating their perceptions and as such is a more inclusive research approach. Participatory video is a powerful way to develop the participants' control over the project. This is because no matter how abstract the issue of participation was to the children and some of the stakeholders who had the question of "why participation of children in an industry more complicated than they could understand", they were able to comprehend and this was revealed in their response to group assignments.

Another strength of the participatory methods used was that they could help children express memories and recall childhood experiences, for example, the children often recalled memories of how they had played at specific places enabling children to provide nuanced dimensions of their neighbourhood experiences and building this into their storyline. For example, in the storyboarding exercise, Mohammed Yusuf, who was ten years old could interpret the story to be shot into a sequence of sketches. To him, it was more of using comic strips to narrate the story, which is actually what the exercise was all about. It only goes to prove that it is not the activity that matters, it is the manner that it is presented to the child coupled with the atmosphere in which it is happening that makes the child either open up or lock up. The storyboarding exercise humbled many adults who missed the purpose of the whole exercise. Children can remember accurately, especially when they are freely allowed to recall the details of events they have personally experienced.

Children psychology was put into consideration through the lifespan of the project. The use of exercises that value and encourage group activities and collective decision-making was also employed to complement the games. The researcher observed that children were much more reserved as many were not used to this kind of play with adults around them. What then is the value of using the participatory video methodology when aiming to empower children and what can be learned from employing a participatory approach with children?

Using photographs and drawings, reduces the authority of the adult researcher and can empower participants (Rasmussen, 1999). It was observed that the sessions where photographs, drawings, role play and video recordings were used provided the children with greater control over the conversation and enabled a more focused discussion. But while the experiment helped to reduce the authority of adult researchers and helped children to express their opinions, it is important to be

aware of the power imbalance that remains between the participants and researchers. Due to differences between adults and children in terms of cognitive and communicative maturity, power, and physical size, equality is difficult to reach (Eder & Corsaro, 1999; Mandell, 1988).

Editing the footage gathered was another matter. This is a key stage in the process. It was the most technically difficult, and very time-consuming. It was also the part of the participatory video process that required the most intensive intervention by the researcher. The nature of digital video editing makes it practically impossible to make the editing process participatory. Literacy can be a significant obstacle in research, and participatory video demands another layer of technical literacy. In the end, we settled for approximate participation involving a small number of people at each stage of editing.

Editing would almost certainly be the biggest barrier for community researchers to use participatory video on their own, partly because of the need for technical knowledge, and partly because it was the stage that led to biggest disagreements within the group. The process of creating a video with a single narrative implies reconciling the different agendas of those involved in the process. In the end, these different agendas were not wholly reconciled. The risk is that the video becomes reductive and superficial, but still evocative, therefore misrepresenting the situation. Certain things had to be cut out due to time limits and there were disagreements about what to leave out and what focus to give each of the films.

The role of the facilitator is crucial in addressing these problems, and what appeared in the final films represented the facilitators' best efforts to balance different perspectives. The researcher provided several opportunities for training in video and facilitation, both formal and informal, for the community researchers and research participants. However, there was still a need for ongoing accompaniment and support throughout the video process, especially editing, when the technical support the researcher provided often consisted of carrying out the actual editing with one or two participants guiding my choices. The researcher's role was often that of arbitrator, helping participants to reconcile differences or conflicts about the video.

## **Recommendations**

In view of the findings above, the researcher provides the following recommendations:

1. There is a need for a Regulatory Framework and policy on Participation of children in audio-visual production. There is need therefore to develop a national participatory video production framework or policy which will legislate for the leadership and coordination of children programmes using appropriate participatory approaches.
2. There is also the need for the strengthening of producers/Children collaboration. The study established that the top down production process adopted by the Boduvision crew created no room for participation and this could also affect the product as it could have been better. This finding implies a wide gulf between producers and artists. To enhance better quality of children production, it is recommended that the Audio-visual associations and government regulatory bodies should be encouraged to work towards linking research with children/artists' performance.
3. Children and young people's participation does not mean that adults give up their share of responsibility. Nor does it mean that whatever young people say will be taken on board and acted upon immediately. But that, children should be given more opportunities to prove themselves. Hence, adults should be encouraged to always have trust in children and provide them more opportunities to showcase their abilities.
4. Working with children can present special challenges. In particular, adults in all societies have power over children, which allow children to become vulnerable to exploitation during research. Adults must take care that children's participation is truly voluntary and not coerced. Participation is based on equality. Children's opinions do not have more weight or validity than anyone else's, but they should have the same weight provided they are based on equal access to information and resources.

## **Conclusion**

The Participatory Video Workshop has come and gone but those who participated in the workshop in different capacities, derived some benefits because the workshop left some lessons behind. One of these lessons is that most times, children are said to be uninformed or ignorant. Participatory video enables children to express their feelings and share experiences. The emphasis of participatory Video workshop was placed on process rather than product. The process helped to achieve the following: build confidence of participating children, increase participation of marginalized children, increase capacity for advocacy, foster understanding and awareness within participating communities, enable participating children to clearly communicate with its target audience(s), and challenge injustice and inequity.

One of the most important to address when working with children is to diminish the power imbalance between the adult researcher and the child. An unequal power balance can cause discomfort for the child and may inhibit expression (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008). By providing children with a wider range of methodological options, and options that place them in control of the process, the child may feel more comfortable and express themselves with more honesty and openness (Noonan et al., 2016). Thus, one of the most important findings of this study involves the relation between child participation, power relations and audiovisual production.

The concept of child participation conjures up very different ideas and perspectives to different audiences. It is a term which has an everyday meaning in our daily lives, but also has a very specific meaning in the context of participation and programming. Children must be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely and their views to be given due weight, and how this participation will take place, its scope, purpose and potential impact. Though it was hard to explain the concept of rights and participation to the children, it got across to them in the course of the training because of the free hand that they were given to make suggestions in a process they never thought they could be allowed to control.

According to one of the adults, empowerment of the individual came through working as a group together to overcome shyness and lack of self-esteem; and through the instrument of a video camera, self-esteem increased as participants transferred their knowledge and experience to others. To him, the message of the approach comes across in the participants' own words; they are in control of how they represent themselves. Rather than develop people's technical ability as videographers or filmmakers, it is used more as a process to develop confidence and group working skills and take people through a process of change as they realize their abilities and affirm their views and beliefs.

It is critical to the participatory research process that all stakeholders are actively engaged in building a common understanding. They should be provided with the opportunity to fully participate, and have access to information in order to do so. If this does not happen, then there is the risk that some will dominate the research process. Care must be taken to communicate on technical and political levels at which all stakeholders can comfortably engage. Powerful stakeholders can end up controlling the process when activities and information are shared using the language and approaches they have developed. Therefore, an important precursor to building a common understanding is determining the capacity of stakeholder groups to participate in the process.

People's participation essentially has to do with economic and political relationships within the wider society; it is not just a matter of involvement in project activities but rather the process by which they are able to organize themselves and, through their own organization, are able to identify their own needs, share in design, implement, and evaluate participatory action. It is only through people and organizations working closely together that a full understanding of a situation can come about, and the most appropriate action be taken. Participation is a process of partnership between young people and adults, whereby they share ideas and come to common solutions (Wilkinson cited in *Save the Children*, 2000: 8).

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**CULTURE AS AN IMPERATIVE FOR A RESPONSIVE CREATIVE  
INDUSTRY: LESSONS FROM WOLE SOYINKA'S *DEATH AND THE KING'S  
HORSEMAN***

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**Abstract**

Every society possesses a rich diverse cultural heritage viewed as an asset to the people and which represents a shared identity that binds them together. The recency of the cultural and creative industries and the cultural diversity existing among the nations of the world have caused many societies, organisations and governments to re-define the industry based on the peculiarities of their specific culture and environments. As an industry sector in Nigeria, the cultural and creative industry recently received the attention it deserves when Nollywood (the Nigerian film industry) was listed as a significant contributor to the economy of Nigeria, which is Africa's largest economy. This made it imperative to understand the components of the cultural and creative industry in Nigeria and leverage such information to define the industry in the Nigeria context. The Performing Arts – which include the Theatre, Carnivals, Drama, Music, Dance, Comedy and Festivals – as one of the sectors that define creative industries shall be considered for study in this paper with focus on one of Wole Soyinka's artistic work, *Death and the King's Horseman* (2002). In conclusion, this paper posits that Nigerian theatre has tremendously elevated and promoted the cultural heritage as well as the creative industry in Nigeria. Thus, the effort of this entity in elevating Nigerian cultural heritage can not be overemphasized.

**Keywords:** Creative Industry, Culture, Nigerian Theatre, Performing Arts

**Introduction**

The recency of the cultural and creative industries and the cultural diversity existing among the nations of the world have caused many societies, organizations and governments to define the industry based on the peculiarities of their specific culture and environment. Within the Nigeria context, the cultural and creative industries represent an ever-expanding complex of different economic sectors. In recent times, there has been an increase in focus on those sectors that have high creative intensity, leading to an urgent need towards achieving an all encompassing definitions of cultural and creative industry.

The term, “cultural industries”, was originally used by Hockheimer and Adorno (2002) to refer to entertainment that emanated through the industrial production process. These include recorded music, publishing, film, and broadcasting. This position is different from the subsidized ‘arts’ which includes museums and art galleries, the visual and performing arts (Galloway and Dunlop, 2007: 31).

To most people, the disparity between the creative and cultural industries is fuzzy. However, Cunnungham (2001: 114) provides a clear explanation of the differences between the two terms. He based his comparison on the historiography of the phrase, 'cultural industries', which he argues is “essentially... a concatenation of the arts and the established commercial or large scale public sector media – a concatenation that didn't hold” (Cunningham, 2001: 24). he argues that the emergence of

the World Wide Web and digitizations of media have drastically changed the original concept of the cultural industries which emphasized the visual and creative arts, broadcasting, music and film. The implication, therefore, is that while the cultural industries emerged from advances in technology witnessed during the earlier part of the twentieth century, the creative industries were kick-started by the technological changes witnessed between the end of the twentieth century and the onset of the twenty-first century.

From this background, this paper seeks to identify culture as the essential action for a responsive and productive creative industry and highlight the lessons derived from one of Wole Soyinka's literary work. Exploiting review of literature and observation, this paper goes further to elucidate on the concept of creative cities and how they define the industry and most importantly proposes a definition of the cultural and creative industry in Nigeria context.

## **Culture**

Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individual in these groups. Human acquire culture through the learning process of enculturation and socialization, which is shown by the diversity of cultures across societies. Culture is considered a central concept in anthropology encompassing the range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human societies. Cultural universals are found in all human societies. These include expressive forms like arts, music, dance, ritual, religion and technologies like tool usage, cooking, shelter and clothing. The concept of material culture covers the physical expressions of culture, such as technology, architecture and art.

Other definitions of culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experiences, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values. Culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of actions, on the other hand, as conditioning influences upon further action (*Online*).

Further, culture is symbolic communication (*Online*). Some of its symbols include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions.

## **Creative Industries and the Nigeria Creative Industry**

The creative industries sector is also referred to as the 'creative and cultural industries' or the 'creative and digital industries' or the 'creative industry' within the 'creative economy'. (Most recently they have been called the 'Orange Economy'). According to David Parrish (2013), the term 'creative industries', refers to a range of economy activities that are concerned with the generation and commercialization of creativity, ideas, knowledge and information. In a nutshell, 'creative industries' describes businesses with creativity at their heart, for example, design, music, publishing, architecture, film and video, crafts, visual arts, fashion, TV and radio, advertising, literature, computer games and the performing arts.

The United Kingdom's Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) defined creative industries as, "those activities which have their origin in individual creativity skill and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property" (DCMS, 1998, cited by Flew, 2011: 9). It identified 13 sectors that constitute the creative industries, namely, advertising, architecture, art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, performing arts, publishing software and computer services and television and radio (UNCTAD, 2008). However, it conceptualizes the creative industries as the development, production and distribution of goods and services whose main input is creativity and intellectual capital which generate income from trade and intellectual property right.

Significantly, UNCTAD's conceptualization of the creative industries goes beyond individual creativity in the arts. It embraces different manifestations of creativity that afford room for economic

exploitation. In addition, it highlights the role of the complex value chain required for the fulfillment of the creative industries economic function. This, to Allwell, is the major appeal of the UNCTAD definition.

Nigeria has huge and vibrant creative industries, employing millions of people and creating wealth for them. The country is considered a rich haven of creative assets that can help it provide employment, alleviate poverty and diversify its economy (Agoralumiére International, 2009). Comprehensive statistics on the creative industries in Nigeria are not available, although there are pieces of information here and there. Moreover, there has been no detailed creative industry mapping to identify the key sectors and evaluate their contributions. The British Council (2013), through focus groups and discussions with various stakeholders, has carried out a preliminary delineation of the creative industries in Nigeria. The effort identified the creative industries as advertising; architecture (interior décor, landscaping, etc.); arts and crafts; fashion and design; home video/film/television and radio; music; performing arts (carnivals, dance, drama, festivals, stand-up comedy, theatres); publishing (book fairs, e-resources, literature, etc.); tourism and hospitality (cuisine, museums and monuments, night clubs, event managements, etc.); visual art and animation (graphic design, drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, etc.).

### **Cultural and Creative Industry**

UNESCO (2006) defines cultural and creative industries as “sectors of organized activity whose principal purpose is the production or reproduction, promotion, distribution and/or commercialization of goods, services and activities of a cultural, artistic or heritage-related nature”. UNCTAD (2010) says,

... creative industries embraces activities ranging from traditional folk art, cultural festivities, books, pointing, music and performing arts to more technology-intensive sectors, such as design and the audiovisual industry, including film, television and radio. Also, contained are service-oriented fields, such as architects, advertising and new media products such as digital animation and video-games.

The activities of the cultural industries involve some form of creativity in their production; the cultural industries are concerned with the generation and communication of symbolic meaning; their output embodies, at least potentially; some form of intellectual property (Throsby, 2001: xx).

The evolution in the definition of the cultural and creative industries has made it possible to accommodate industry sectors that hitherto were not considered as creative. This can be attributed to the emergence of the internet and the new media which has proven to be a significant driving force in the creative economy. In Germany, nine core sectors have been identified to be part of the cultural and creative industries. However, in consideration of the fact that a universal consensus is lacking in what defines the term ‘creative industries’, a study commissioned by the British Council in Lagos (2013) attempt to establish a definition of what constitutes the creative industry in Nigeria (Dandaura, 2013). Their methodology consisted of engaging critical stakeholders across the nation as well as focus group discussion. Their report identified the following sectors as qualified to be included within the cultural and creative sector.

The Nigerian cultural and creative industry sectors identified comprised the practitioners in the diverse sectors identified as part of the cultural Creative Industry, the service providers, and the regulators. Nigeria’s film sector (Nollywood) is no doubt one of the most active creative industries sectors. It is regarded as a major force in the country’s economic growth and is easily Nigeria’s strongest claim to global influence within the creative industries (EY, 2015). Lobato (2010: 338) contends that Nollywood is “the most energetic” film industry in the world. He argues that the industry is larger than Nigerian and offers scholars a basis for theorizing about different forms of media. Online, “Nollywood” is a more popular concept than ‘globalization’.

Another sector that has bathed Nigeria with global limelight is creative writing. Here, notable writers, poets, novelists, dramatists, children story writers, ghost writers and scriptwriter – a group that has a great, but sometimes under-nourished, affinity with the film industry display their art. Creative writing is one of the vibrant sectors of Nigeria’s creative economy although statistics are not

readily available to quantify the monetary value. Again, there are many Nigerian creative writers, within and outside the country, but the exact number is not known. It suffices to state that the country has produced many first-rate writers including a Nobel Laureate. The publication in 1952 of Amos Tutuola's *The Palmwine Drinkard* raised the curtain on Nigeria creative writing in English to the International Community (Awoyemi-Arayela, 2013: 29; Fasan, 2010). The publication of Chinua Achebe's iconic work, *Things Fall Apart*, six years later firmly secured the country's place on the global literary circuit.

As Nwankwo (2017: 48) has argued, Nigerian creative writing was already a global phenomenon before the emergence of 'globalization' as an important concept. Doubtless, Nigerian creative writing possesses an enormous potential to create value for the country's creative economy. One major challenges Nigeria must confront, however, is how to capture the value created by its creative writers in the Diaspora.

### **Performing Arts**

Performing arts refers to forms of art in which artists use their voices, bodies or inanimate objects to convey artistic expression. It is different from visual arts, which is when artists use paint, canvas or various materials to create physical or static art objects. Performing arts include a range of disciplines which are performed in front of a live audience. Theatre, music, dance and object manipulation, and other kinds of performances are present in all human cultures (*Wikipedia*).

Performance by musicians, singers, storytellers, and actors has long been accorded legal protection nationally and internationally (Odunaike, 2016). The sector constitutes a specific genre of intellectual property in Nigeria. Performers focus on interpreting, translating and transmitting stories, songs, folklore and diverse literary works through performances and thus constitute an intrinsic part of the creative value chain.

Contemporary theatre in Nigeria can be traced to the works of Wole Soyinka which include *Trials of Brother Hero* (1960), *The Lion and the Jewel* (1963), *Kongi Harvest* (1965), and many others. Other eminent Nigerians who played a critical role in the growth of the performing arts include Ola Rotimi, Kola Ogunmola, Duro Ladipo, Adeyemi Afolayan and Oyin Adejobi. The success recorded in Nollywood in recent years has been a boost for the performing arts. Live performances before an audience are a form of entertainment. The development of audio and video recording has allowed for private consumption of the performing arts.

The performing arts often aim to express one's emotions and feelings. Performing arts may include dance, music, opera, theatre and musical theatre, magic, illusion, mime, spoken word, puppetry, circus arts, performance arts. There is also a specialized form of fine art, in which the artists perform their work live to an audience. This is called performance art. Most performance art also involves some form of plastic art, perhaps in the creation of props. Dance was often referred to as a plastic art during the modern dance era.

Theatre is the branch of performing arts; concerned with acting out stories in front of an audience, using a combination of speech, gesture, music, dance, sound and spectacle. Any one or more of these elements is performing arts, in addition to the standard narrative dialogue style of plays. Theater takes such forms as plays, musicals, opera, ballet, illusion, mime, classical Indian dance, kabuki, mummies' plays, improvisational theatre, comedy, pantomime, and non-conventional or contemporary forms like postmodern theatre, postdramatic theatre, or performance art. In the context of performing arts, dance generally refers to human movement, typically rhythmic and to music, used as a form of audience entertainment in a performance setting. Definitions of what constitutes dance are dependent on social, cultural, aesthetic artistic and moral constraints and range from functional movement (such as folk dance) to codified, virtuoso techniques, such as, ballet.

There is one another modern form of dance that emerged in 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century with the name of Free-Dance style. This form of dance was structured to create a harmonious personality which included features such as physical and spiritual freedom. Isadora Duncan was the first female dancer who argued about "woman of future" and developed novel vector of choreography using Nietzsche's idea of "supreme mind in free mind" (*Wikipedia*).

Dance is a powerful impulse, but the art of dance is that impulse channeled by skillful performers into something that becomes intensely expressive and that may delight spectators who feel

no wish to dance themselves. These two concepts of the art of dance – dance as a powerful impulse and dance as a skillfully choreographed art practiced largely by a professional few – are the two most important connecting ideas running through any consideration of the subject. In dance, the connection between the two concepts is stronger than in some other arts, and neither can exist without the other.

Music is an art form which combines pitch, rhythm, and dynamic to create sound. It can be performed using a variety of instruments and styles and is divided into genres such as folk, jazz, hip hop, pop, and rock, etc. As an art form, music can occur in live or recorded formats, and can be planned or improvised. As music is a protean art, it easily coordinates with words for songs as physical movements do in dance. Moreover, it has a capability of shaping human behaviors as it impacts our emotions.

### **Analysis of *Death and the King's Horseman***

*Death and the King's Horseman* is a play by Wole Soyinka based on a real incident that took place in Nigeria during British colonial rule: the horseman of a Yoruba king was prevented from committing ritual suicide by the colonial authorities. In addition to the British intervention, Soyinka calls the horseman's own conviction toward suicide into question, posing a problem that throws the community off balance.

The play opens with Elesin and his praise-singer entering the market place. Elesin is traveling there to see the women on the eve of his death, for he was the king's horseman, who, now that the king has died, must also die and travel to the afterlife with him. Elesin is an expansion gregarious and zesty man, and he and the praise-singer banter back and forth. The women, including the mother of the market place, Iyaloja, arrive and watch and listen. Elesin boasts of how he is not afraid of death and is prepared for his fate. When the women call him a man of honor, Elesin takes on air of mock-anger. He tells them his attire is not very honorable, and relieved, they help garb him in beautiful clothing. Before Elesin moves on, he notices an incredibly beautiful young woman and proclaims that he wants her. Iyaloja and the women are conflicted, because she is betrothed to Iyaloja's son. Nevertheless, they gave Elesin what he wants, and a wedding and consummation are scheduled before his ritual death. Iyaloja warns Elesin to keep his goal in mind and leave no curse with his seed.

The District Officer and his wife Jane prepare to attend a *gala*. They dressed in the clothing of the egungun, taken from the rituals of a Nigerian death cult. They find the costumes amusing, while they frighten the local Nigerian constable, Amusa. Pilkings, a typical Englishman in colonial Africa, is annoyed by Amusa's reluctance to talk to him while he is wearing the costume. Amusa does convey his message which is that he has heard that Elesin, a local chief, is preparing to kill himself for the ritual. Jane is horrified and Pilkings groans that he thought this sort of thing was stamped out. They hear the drums in the distance and wonder if this is what is truly going on. Pilkings calls in his houseboy, Joseph, a Nigerian who recently converted to Christianity. He asks about this chief and the ritual and Joseph confirms what will happen.

Pilkings was undecided whether to intervene or not, but Jane encourages him to do so, as she thinks it sounds barbaric. Pilkings instructs Joseph to take a note to Amusa ordering him to arrest Elesin. Pilkings and Jane prepare to go to the ball, and he tells his wife that a special guest – the Prince – will be there that night.

Back at the market place, Amusa and two constables arrive to arrest Elesin. The girls and the woman viciously taunt them, and they leave, warning that they will be back. Elesin triumphantly exits from his consummation of his wedding with the Bride, and begins to prepare for death. He announces that he is eager to make his journey. Amusa brings word to Pilkings about the arrest of Elesin, but is still nervous about talking to Pilkings because of the costume. Pilkings returns, urgently asking for the aide-de-camp. He sees Olunde and is surprised. He acts awkwardly. After he turns away and begins to take care of things, Jane and Olunde wonder if Elesin's death could be causing turmoil.

Suddenly, Elesin's voice booms across the hall as he is brought in, bound and struggling. Elesin sees his son and stops short. He begs him to heed him, but Olunde turns away in disgust and calls him an 'eater of leftovers'. Iyaloja went to visit Elesin in prison and Pilkings reluctantly allowed her in. she chastises and condemns Elesin for being a coward and not going through with his death. The women from the marketplace march to the jailhouse, carrying a burden wrapped in cloth. Jane counsels Pilkings to let them in because she assumes they are affiliated with Olunde, who would do

no harm. The women enter, put down their burden, and Elesin begins to clamor to get out of the cell. Pilkings, confused, refuses.

The praise-singer chants and condemns Elesin as well. The burden is unwrapped; it is Olunde, who has committed suicide to carry out his father's duty. Swiftly, Elesin strangles himself before Pilkings could stop him.

### Lessons

Culture remains the tank from which Soyinka draws his creative writing skills which has been appraised by different scholars. Clash of culture suffices in his artistic work where he pits traditional culture against Western culture with no bias which culture is better but rather leaves the audience to judge. Soyinka amplifies the beauty and significance of his Yoruba culture in *Death and the King's Horseman*. He uses this paradigm in his works to remind the world of its beauty with the focus on how to preserve the elements of his culture that still exist. Soyinka uses his creative skill to show the aesthetic value of Yoruba culture using the following: Proverbs, clothing; a cultural symbol, drumming, belief in the existence of gods and death as religious rites.

Almost every character at some point uses a traditional Yoruba proverb. Through his vast knowledge of Yoruba proverbs, Soyinka is able to endow his play with a strong Yoruba sentiment. The Praise-singer gets annoyed with Elesin for his decision to take a new wife and tries to dissuade him:

Because the man approaches a brand-new bride he forgets  
the long faithful mother of his children. Ariyawo-ko-iyale (201).

Similarly, with the use of proverbs, Iyaloja tries to admonish Elesin against his earthly attachments and stay true to the ritual upon which the good of his society depended:

Eating the awusa but is not so difficult as drinking water  
afterwards. Ati je asala (awusa) ko to ati mu omi si (201).

Characters often employ Yoruba proverbs primarily as a means of bolstering their opinions and persuading others to take their point of view. Proverbs play crucial roles in imparting meaning and understanding to a given situation. It is a formidable factor in discussions in order to build up an argument or to support a cause. Richards (2002), in his study, defines proverbs as, "a rich source of imagery and succinct expression, encapsulating abstract ideas and allusive wording usually in metaphorical form."

Akinbileje (2010: 47) explains that the measure of respect that is accorded an individual, more often than not, is determined by the quality and value of his or her outlook. Personality means the total outlook or appearance of a person. It includes clothing and its accessories. This is perhaps the reason why the Yoruba says: *aso la nki, ki a to ki eniyan*, meaning (it is the cloth we should greet before greeting the wearer), and *eniyan lasoo mi*, that is (people are my cloth)". Proverb tells a story, gives a message and complement words. Sheba (2000) defined proverbs as words of wisdom meant for only the wise to unfold, thus revealing the lost ideas (Akinbileje, 2010).

Soyinka presents clothing distinction through the character of Elesin thus:

ELESIN: Words are cheap. 'We know you for  
A man of honour'. Well tell me, is this how a man of honour  
Should be seen? Are these not the same clothes in which I  
Came among you a full half-hour ago. (*He roars with laughter and the  
women, relieved, rise and rush into stalls to fetch rich clothes*).

IYALOJA: Richly, richly, robe him richly  
The cloth of honour is alari  
Sanyan is the band of friendship  
Boa-skin makes slippers of esteem... (*Elesin stands resplendent in rich  
clothes, cap, shawl etc. His sach is of a bright red alari cloth*). The women  
dance round him... (Soyinka, 15, 16).

A look at the conversation throws more light to the importance of dressing in the Yoruba society and a signifier for the Africans. Dresses are not just worn anyhow, but communicate a lot, as African language and culture.

Pilkings and Jane's costume for the gala performance can not be overlooked. To them, it's just a costume for performance but to Amusa, he finds them fearful dressing in the gods clothing 'Egungun masquerade'. Significant meaning is attached to these kind of cloths in Africa, they seem to belong to the gods, supernatural beings and whoever wearing it is no ordinary.

Drumming also in Yoruba culture is seen as the basis of Yoruba traditional music. Yoruba drums communicate, like most African musical instruments, though they vary, and the untutored ear cannot understand the rhythms of drums. This, we see in the character of Joseph when Pilkings and Jane do not understand the sound and meaning of drumming in the community which to them constitutes noise while to the drummers and the indigenous people, it has a vital role to the wedding ceremony of Elesin and the ritual. Pilkings asks Joseph: "*What's the drumming about?*" (Soyinka, 32). His response is that he does not know. He does not know because he is inexperienced.

Furthermore, to the significant of market in African culture. Market can be said to be the meeting point of all cultures. Beyond buying and selling goods, cultures can equally be exchanged, promoted, and elevated in the market. Elesin walk through the market to complete his ritual rite and got trapped into the new world. He get carried away, paused the rites to enjoy his last moment which delayed the ritual until he was arrested in the act. The 'arrest' can be view as an interruption into the African ways of life by the Whites'. They force themselves on the African's way, to Pilkings; he needs to stop the suicide' whereas it is a ritual rites that must be fulfilled. The arrest of Elesin stops the ritual which prompted Olunde, Elesin's son to complete the rites to preserve the culture. Olunde, despite his education in the Western country, he values the essence of culture by coming home after hearing of the King's death knowing fully well that it is tradition for his father to follow his master in death.

Death is said to be inevitable. It is generally believed that it is a debt everyman owes. Africans have a common belief regarding the concept of death and the hereafter, and this controls their lives and the natural world. According to Idowu (2005), the Yoruba believes that death is a creation of Olodumare (God) made for the purpose of recalling any person whose time on earth is fulfilled. Death in the play signifies a transition from the visible world to the unseen. It is a way of escape from the visible world. Elesin acknowledges this:

ELESIN: Death came calling,  
who does not know his rasp of needs?  
A twilight whisper in the leaves before  
The great araba falls? Did you hear it? (Soyinka, 10).

The rite of passage is necessary for the king and his horseman. It is culturally believed that a man joining his king in death is something worthy of admiration and respect. Africans love life, no matter the adversity they are experiencing, and no African will eagerly give in to death. In the case of the king's horseman, he is duty-bound to die in the form of a ritual for the communal benefit. This, we deduce from Elesin's words: "I go to keep my friend and master company" (Soyinka, 13). The fundamental lesson here remains that creative industry cannot survive outside culture because that's the primary source of creativity.

## **Conclusion**

The study reveals the cultural and creative industries as an important response to each other. As exemplified by the playwright, the culture and tradition of the people remains part of their life and adds value to the society and any attempt to disrupt this will lead to a total destabilization of the social system. Thus, the creative industry draws from culture as they bring people's way of life back to them in form of writing, films, and music. It can be deduced that Soyinka as a creative writer sits on the fence in this his artistic work as he neither promote or condemn any of the culture but rather place and identify the essence and significance of each culture.



Exposure to the foreign ways of life do not belittle our Africa culture which no matter how far and learned we think we are, our culture has always been and will continue to be the source of creative writing. Therefore, culture should be promoted because it empowers people to make the society worth living in because it promotes positive values and norms that influence people's behavior. Also, it needs to be pointed out that the three sectors-film, music and writing-can work collaboratively to enhance their individual standing both at the global and local levels. There is so much Nigerian creative writing that can be converted to blockbuster films with a potential to shake the world and bring culture back to life. Nigerian musicians can create new soundtracks or licence their existing music to go with such films.

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## “LET’S TALK THROUGH IT”: FOCALIZING THE CONVERSATIONAL DIRECTING PARADIGM IN NIGERIAN THEATRE PRACTICE

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### **Abstract**

Over the last three decades, Nigerian theatre scholars and scholarship have not done much in terms of evolving theories in the area of core theatre practice. This has therefore resulted in the dearth of indigenous practical theatre theories, which can be instrumental to the growth of theatre practice in Nigeria. While scholars such as Rasheed Adeoye and Effiong Johnson amongst others have been at the forefront of theorizing in the area of directing, it is clear that a lot still needs to be done within this area to evolve mainstream practical theatre theories that can be useful to quality of theatre performances in Nigeria. This paper explores the conversational directing approach as an indigenous approach to play directing. The paper presents Conversational-directing approach as an experimental approach, which emphasizes critical dialogue between the director and the cast as an efficient means of dramatizing the meaning of a text. The paper makes a strong case for experimentation as the vehicle through which new insights and theories in practical theatre can be generated. The paper thus concludes by calling on dramatists and scholars to wake-up to the demands of indigenous theatre theories through experimentations.

### **Introduction**

The creative enterprise of directing is ever experiencing new shifts, changes, modifications and transformations resulting from the continuous deep experiential innovative demands of the endeavor. Over time, theatre scholars and dramatists have evolved different approaches to directing plays with the specific purpose of effectively communicating with the audience. Early dramatists whose theorizations influenced the art of directing operated from a conscious place of experimentation with ideas in an attempt to engender a profound procedure for achieving the intentions of a production. Thus, right from the harmonization capacities of the Duke of Saxe-meiningen in the court theatre to the procedural and detailed experimentations of Constantin Stanislavski, Bertolt Brecht, Jerzy Grotowski, Antonin Artaud, Adolphe Appiah, Vsevolod Meyerhold, and Augusto Boal, amongst others, processes and approaches to directing have been morphing through varied experiences and experimentations by theatre directors and dramatists.

There is no doubt that theatre practice in Nigeria has been deeply influenced by western thoughts and experiments, so much so that there is hardly any college theatre practice that does not make reference to the positions of these western dramatist as a foundational premise for the training of students in college theatres in Nigeria. While such practice is often permissible, it becomes worrisome when the emphasis and bases of training is put on the theorizations of dramatists that operated from a cultural background, which is totally different from what exists in Nigeria. This result from the fact that literature sparsely exists as it relates to specialized areas like directing within the Nigerian theatre landscape, as a lot of experimentations within this field are not given proper attention by theatre scholars and dramatists. Only a few indigenous theorizations and writings by scholars, such as, Effiong Johnson, Rasheed Adeoye (Neo-Alienation technique), have made it to the mainstream debate on directing in the Nigerian theatre landscape.

Thus, over the years, theatre scholars have paid little emphasis to evolving new paradigms of practice through experimentations, concentrating rather on the analyzing the sociological impacts of theatre within society. While it is important to understand the engagements of theatre within society, it is of more benefit to grow the practice of theatre through indigenous paradigms that closely relate to

the cultural experiences of theatre artists in Nigeria. This paper, therefore, responds to the need for indigenous theorizations in the field of directing by offering a unique practical approach/paradigm to play directing which leverages in the indigenous cultural attributes of analytical conversational guidance which is present in most cultures in Africa and indeed Nigeria.

### **Directing in focus**

The director takes charge of the processes of creation, which inadvertently accounts for the success or failure of every play production. This owes to the fact that the director occupies a significant position as the artistic/creative head of every theatrical production. His ability to combine the heuristic requirements of textual appreciation with the comprehensiveness of performance visualization and physical staging is indeed a very important creative endeavor crucial to the production process (Gana 2020). As such, the articulation of a play's production idea, insights and meanings are expressly dependent on the coordinated efforts of the different personnel in theatre and the director must provide the creative direction for the entire process. This is because play production is inelastic.

According to Adeoye (2006: 17), the play director functions at four different levels vis-à-vis, technical, artistic, managerial and fundamental. Each of these levels of responsibility also has in them, chains of responsibilities. At the technical level, "the director is the person who organizes the production. This involves scheduling the work process and supervising and acting, designing, staging and technical operation of the play (Cohen 1988: 145). At the artistic level, the director concerns himself primarily with artistic responsibilities such as picturisation, composition, rhythm and tempo and he importantly "decides upon the interpretation to be given the script and the production concept that will shape the staging, casts and actors, works with the designers, rehearses the actors and integrates all the elements into a finished production" (Brockert 1992: 308). Dean and Alexander described play directing and production as the presentation of a play on the stage for an audience, interpreted both in terms of dramatic action and dramatic sound and in terms of emotional and intellectual concepts of the author's script/text (24). Interpretation here is vital to the process of directing,

it goes beyond the mere stagnation of the play using human imaginary personages; interpretation dramatizes the meanings of the script from the directors perspective, taking cognizance of every conceivable nuance and incorporating same into the scheme to allow for the plays meaning to come alive (Johnson, 2013: 1).

Consequently the director's responsibility in every play production process is to ensure that the messages inherent in the performance are effectively communicated through motivating dramatic actions expressed in signs, images, symbols movements, music and moods which are manifestations of his vision. Vision drives a play production. It is the sum total of the directors understanding of the production material/text, resulting from a deep analysis of the ideas therein. The director's vision therefore informs his interpretation and the overall objective of the production expressed by the symbiotic interrelatedness of the visual as well as the ideological components of the theatrical elements. While the director's vision is critical to every play production the position of this paper is that vision transcends the director of include the actors and all the technical personnel that makes the dramatization of meanings whole in a performance.

As such, the actors vision, the designers vision the costumiers vision as well as the choreographers vision must all converse through discussions leading to an overall accepted vision which should drive the performance. The above position however should not alienate the director from his role as the head of the production. He remains a question solver. He must therefore be a walking and working encyclopaedia, a king and a priest, a master and a dignified messenger. As Adeoye (2013: 17) again notes:

His functions are legions in the play directing process and he is the primus inter pares among other theatre workers yet he may become an unfortunate member of the audience whose only time of recognition will be when his performance failed. The director is thus the most unrecognised senior artist who usually watches cynically as

the audience shower praises on his performers during and after performances. These and many more are some of the metaphors of the play director in the theatre.

One of the most challenging artistic tasks of the director is getting the actors to interpret roles by exploring the right dimensions of characterization within a play. The attributes, mannerisms, postures and movements which should accompany a character often times requires deep thought and careful reasoning by the director alongside the actors. The task of blocking actors is crucial to the meaning making process of every stage production. The relationship that exists between the director and actors while blocking goes beyond mere dishing out of instructions to actors regarding movements, body postures and voice modulation. It entails getting the cast to understand the reasons for doing what they do on stage. This is because the actors' interpretation of roles is instrumental to the communication process engraved in theatre. As such, the director's interpretation competence must rub off on the interpretation competence of the actors in order to achieve a performance that resonates well with the audience. It is within this line of thought that the conversational directing paradigm is conceived as an approach to directing that seeks to empower actors as well as other members of cast and crew with the skill of creatively thinking of themselves within the context of the production through dialogical in order to understanding the reasons for doing what they do within the production.

### **Conversational Directing in focus**

To begin with it is important to understand the conception of conversational directing as put forward by this paper. This approach is born out of several years of experiments in the practice of play directing. Thus, Conversational Directing as conceived in this paper is an approach to play directing that relies on the strengths of conversational analysis as a technique to progressively creating/dramatizing the meanings of play text. The approach acknowledges the creative potentialities of each member of the cast and crew and leverages on these to create a thrilling experience for the audience. Thus within the conversational directing approach, it is imperative to note that the director's job does not begin with blocking of actors on stage, it involves a journey through different stages of which conversations are engaged in between cast and crew with a view to arriving at the best decisions for the team. The approach is drawn from the traditional African context of learning in which individuals are guided through experience sharing.

The Nupe culture, for instance, believes in the strength of talking through issues; and believes that individuals learn more when they are led to understand the reasons why they do what they are expected to do. This is particularly true about theatre practice in its entirety, the designers, choreographers, actors etc as part of the cast and crew can create better when they fully understand the creative targets of a production. The process leading to this understanding as conceived in this approach is through analytical conversations. Like every other approach to play directing, analysis of the text is very important. Analysis within the context of conversational directing is on two distinct levels, the first bothers on group analysis of the text by the cast and crew and the second is an on-the-go conversational analysis which takes place during the process of creating the interpretation.

Group Analysis in Conversational directing approach focuses on creating a conversation between all cast and crew within the production. The director encourages all members to share perspectives regarding their impression of the text. At this level, the conversational Directing approach applies the democratic director's persona to engage the cast. The engagement between cast and crew here carries with it a considerable amount of criticality. Cast members are encouraged to question the question, in the sense that every perspective is interrogated and weighed on the basis of its merits as it relates to the intention of the text. Questions framed around the characters; the theme; the ideology of the text. This process helps the entire team arrive at a vision for the production as well as a production philosophy. In the event that the director has already determined/fashioned out his/her vision for the play, this process helps to put the directors perspective to test; or rather helps him see the text from a different perspective. Consequently, a well-coordinated group analysis adequately sets the pace for a successful production; this results from the fact that process eventually leaves every member of the cast and crew with a clear understanding of the production's vision and mission.

The on-the-go conversational analysis is a critical interaction between the director and the actors in the process of creating magic on stage. The director using this approach consciously attempts to spur the creative understanding of the actor in the quest towards interpretation of characters on stage. Spurring creative interpretation from cast and crew is critical to the creative process because an experimental director has a special flair for creating stage business, ingenious of interpretation, or other embellishment through which he thrust upon a play more, of himself and his own abilities (or the abilities of the cast) that are good for the production (Wright, 1959: 147).

Therefore, the director becomes a catalyst to the interpretative responsiveness of the actor. Using the on-the-go conversational approach, 'WHY' becomes a critical arbiter to the successful dramatization of meaning. While blocking an actor on stage; in every step of the actor's actions the director throws critical questions to the actor and allows him to respond, the responses are further interrogated and a more meaningful action, which adequately captures the objective of the scene in question, is arrived at. The approach therefore, distils the actions and inactions being carried out and interprets them in little parts in order to arrive at a meaningful whole. There are three crucial aspects of focus in the deployment of this approach while talking through it with actors; the director focuses on Thought, Movement and Speech. These three are aspects instrumental to the creation of meaning using this approach.

Thought as it operates within this approach encompasses the faculty of reasoning, which is attributed to the character being portrayed. In other words thought explains psychological make up of the character being interpreted on stage. Consequently the director's responsibility is to ask questions, which will get the actor to respond creatively to the psychological demands of a particular character.

Movement within the conversational approach focuses on eliciting plausible physical reactions from actors in relation to the emotional requirements embedded within the context of interpretation given to the performance. Here, the director deploys the 'why' tactics to interrogate every movement of the actor vis a vis dialogue being rendered. Movement under this section also encompasses postures, gestures, facial expressions and the entirety of human agency, which the actor is endowed with.

Speech within this approach encompasses the rendition of dialogue with the accompanying inflections of tone to convey meanings as embedded in the emotions of characters. The director therefore is interested in ensuring actor understands why he/she speaks a certain way, why he/she says certain things etc.

### **How it works: Conversational Directing Approach in practice**

In discussing the practical usage of the conversational directing approach especially as it relates to blocking of actors on stage the paper will cite examples from the stage production of *The Homecoming Queen* performed in February 2020 at the NUC Auditorium in commemoration of the Black History Month. *The Homecoming Queen* is a play written by Ngozi Anyanwu and tells the story of a traumatized young lady (Kelechi) who decides to return back to Nigeria after over 20 years in America to see her sick father. Having run away to America to find a new home and escape the devastating trauma of rape, which she experienced at an early age in Nigeria, she returns back to confront her fears. Upon her return she is faced with the daunting task of accepting her daughter (Beatrice), the product of the rape, which she initially fled to America to escape. Her crisis is further compounded upon her return to Nigeria as she experiences the identity struggle of a Diasporan and she finds it difficult to adequately connect with the traditions which gave birth to her. With the help and support of her father and childhood friend Obinna, she is able to overcome her fears.

Consequently in working with the actors during blocking the conversational approach proved to be very successful in the overall dramatization of meaning of the performance. The characters in this play needed special attention due to the deep psychological attributes, which they embody. Kelechi, for instance, had lived all her life with the trauma of being raped as such within the context of the play needed to show signs of psychotic breaks referencing the rape experience she encountered when she was 15. As such the director in trying to get the actor to embody the role of Kelechi constantly spurred her critical thinking by asking why. For instance on Kelechi's arrival, she is welcomed joyously by the village women who turn her around to inspect how well she has grown; obviously irritated by the women Kelechi responds to them by saying: "I see we still have no need for

personal space. Hey did you just call me fat?” The director in this instance interrogated the response by asking the actor why he thinks Kelechi responded to the women in that manner. Such engagement between the director and actor is what leads the actor to a better understanding of the character being interpreted.

Movement is inevitable in any performance. This is because; it is through movement that a performance comes to life. The director constantly probes for deeper interpretations of movement as manifested facial expressions, postures, gesture and bodily movement. Kelechi’s character required several stylized movement to help convey the complexity of her personality. As such the director deployment of the why technique became more intense in trying to actualize plausible movements for the character. Movements naturally go along with speech, therefore ensuring that the manner of speech complements the emotions being conveyed through thought and movement is very important. As such speech brings together the agencies of thought and movement. The director who wants to communicate through drama must ensure a synergy between the three.

In Kelechi’s discussion with Beatrice, she tries to recollect the fondest memories of her mother in the following dialogue:

**Kelechi:** Oh she was, I don’t really remember her way. She just had a way. It was the way she would just say, my deah, she was very soft, she could just soften anyone. I remember I use to squeeze her lot.

The director’s interest was in getting the actor to share why she thinks the character is saying the above lines. Understanding the reasons for the dialogue ascribed to characters is critical to the interpretation given by actors. The actor, in responding, related the above lines to the fact that Kelechi’s traumatic experience made her feel the absence of her mum who she lost at a tender age. This understanding of Kelechi’s emotional state inadvertently helps the actor in ascribing the right movement and speech pattern to the character while executing the role. Consequently, it is important to note that this approach empowers the cast in terms of exploring their creative capacities in theatre. Every member of the cast is creatively motivated with the knowledge that they are contributors to the process of meaning making through theatre.

## **Conclusion**

There is no gainsaying that the Nigerian theatre landscape is blessed with varied opportunities for theorizing directing approaches. The number of dramatist engaging in experimentations speaks to this fact. The conversational Directing Approach is a product of experimentation in directing, which has yielded positive outcomes. The approach is a testament to the fact that dramatist and scholars are constantly in the process of unearthing new ideas, which are beneficial to the growth of theatre practice in Nigeria. Although still at the infant stage of being properly conceptualized as a mainstream directing approach, it has been severally applied in the college theatre productions in Ahamdu Bello University, Zaria. Thus, dramatists need to wake up to the demand for indigenous practical theatre theories, which can be used to provide foundational learning to students and theatre practitioners in Nigeria.

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## THE CLAXON AND TOCSINS OF CULTISM IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: LESSON IN FELIX AKINSIPE'S *NEVER AND NEVER*

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### **Abstract**

Many at times, institutions of higher learning in Nigeria come under intense pressure from secret cult activities. These activities have become a cankerworm not only to the students and leadership of various institutions but also the government across all tiers. Over time, corporate bodies, individuals and governments across board have adopted various approaches to sensitize the society about the looming danger that membership of a secret cult on campus poses and its consequences as a service to the community. Drama is one of the adopted medium being one of the most potent means of passing information for easy comprehension by every class of the society. This paper therefore examines the causes, effect and strategies for eradicating the menace of cultism in Nigerian Higher Institutions as amplified by Felix Akinsipe in his play *Never and Never*. Using summative content analysis, the study x-rays cogent issues raised in the play *Never and Never* as projected by Felix Akinsipe. Higher institutions in Nigeria are saddled with the responsibility of producing strong and self reliant graduates who will fit into a just and egalitarian society. The trepidatious activities of these secret cults have an adverse effect as it threatens to truncate the aims and objectives of the Nigerian higher institutions. This is because secret cults on campuses are groomed to engage in social disobedience. This paper recommends that to decimate every secret cult activities on campuses across the nation. The authorities must invest into intelligence gathering across institutions as these secret cults usually have strong base sponsorship on and off campuses. Also, timely and adequate prosecution of both the active and passive members will be a great deal to putting an end to cultism on Nigerian campuses.

**Key words:** Cultism, Tertiary institutions, Quality Education

### **Introduction**

The Nigerian higher educational system is designed to provide accessible, relevant and holistic education by constantly attracting, developing and graduating competent, knowledgeable, talented and morally upright individuals capable of enhancing Nigerian economic growth and global competitiveness. Higher education is known to provide people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical, social, economic, cultural and moral issues facing humanity. Its products are to proffer sustainable solution to various problems facing the world through dissemination of knowledge in areas of their specialization.

Undeniably, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, cultism is one of the major vices in Nigerian Higher institutions and it remains a step in the developmental throat of the Nigerian tertiary educational system. The acceleration and the aggressive growth and expansion of this menace has put Nigerian Higher Institution on the spotlight for negative reasons which obviously reflect on the learning quality and the integrity of graduate of Nigeria Educational system. Ajayi postulates that,

cultism can be defined as a ritual practice by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy and initiation formalities as well as their mode of operations are done in secret and kept secret with their activities having negative effects on both members and none members alike (27).

To conclude that cultism is the root of every criminal activity in Nigeria is to say the least as their operation has gone beyond campuses alone, it has spilled into the host communities and indeed beyond as they offer criminal services to the powers that be in the society. Such services include assassination of perceived opponents to their sponsors be it political or contractual oppositions. These cultists track down their targets either in the office, home or in transit. Most often, they perpetrate their evil plans and escape without them being tracked down because they play the pun for the sacred cows of the society. They determine their scores by intimidating lecturers; they rape ladies who do not fall within the bracket of their interest also. The most prominent act of these confraternities is the contest for supremacy between two or more cult groups on campus. These groups show supremacy by maiming or ultimately killing opposing members to use their language; it is called, "counting scores." They carry out these gory acts not only on campus but also in hostels and on the streets.

The menace of cultism has been a problem every institution has been battling with since the 80s. Akor submits that, "one of the earliest reported secret cult violence occurred at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1985 when a non cult student incurred the wrath of another student, who was a cult leader for snatching the latter's girlfriend" (Guardian 1). Adewale also reports that,

in 1991 a student of University of Port-Harcourt was beheaded during a feud between cult members; at Delta State University in Abraka, the activities of secret cult group resulted in the death of a principal assistant registrar and his wife.

He further states that, "on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, 2002, a 300 Level economics student was shot dead and slaughtered at the Dallimore area of Ado Ekiti, the capital city of Ekiti State" (84). As the year goes by, the activities of cultists in our society becomes more biting and it calls for a definite action. These cultists have become so comfortable with sophisticated arms and ammunition at their disposal. The wards of the big wigs of the society are among them with unimaginable financial and logistic support base from the least expected members of the society who are well respected by the public. They have acquired fire power that has made them so comfortable that they now ambush or engage security agents in a shooting spree. This is why Mbachaga submits that, "the varying degrees of horror that cult groups unleash, leads one to conclude that they can be equated to bandits and possibly tagged campus terrorists..." (40).

The terrorizing and banditry activities of cultists have had its tolls on Nigeria population as far back as the early 90s. this is why Okwu submits that, "as till September 2003, 5,000 students and lecturers have died on Nigerian Campuses as a result of cult-related violent clashes" (195). It is disheartening and distasteful that destinies of young and promising talents are being terminated in their primes. More disheartening it is that governments, administrations upon administrations have promised to put a stop to this menace but it turns out to either be lip service, lack of implementable laws and policies or lack of the political will to use all mechanism of government to put a permanent stop to all cult activities in Nigerian higher institutions.

The strength of secret cults in Nigerian higher institutions has gone beyond night operations. They have grown so sophisticated that they now operate in broad daylight. Omoegun and Akanle submits thus: "On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2006, some cult members invaded university of Ado Ekiti at 12 noon where they burnt the cadet's office, killed three students and wounded many students and staff of the university" (83). Also, Jekayinfa reports that, "Mr Ileoje, the head of Department at the institute of technology (IMT) Enugu was shot in his office by a female cult member early in 1997." He states further that, "...at University of Ibadan, the Chief Security Officer was brutally beaten by cult members in the presence of his wife and children" (59).

The Federal Government of Nigeria, noticing the escalation of the ugly menace of cultism, has made concerted efforts at putting it to a permanent halt through various laws. The first major effort came from the Federal Government under the military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 1989, when he enacted the *Student Union Activities Control and Regulation Decree No. 47*. The *Decree* empowers the various governing council of each Nigerian University to control cultism. Also, in year 2000, the Federal Government under Chief Obasanjo issued a three month ultimatum to all vice chancellors of Nigerian Universities, Rectors of Polytechnics and Provosts of colleges of Education to eradicate cultism on their various campuses.

As at today, there is no state in Nigeria including the FCT that does not have legislated anti-cultism laws enacted, each placing a jail term while others recommending death penalty for cultism culprit. These efforts to say the least remain impotent as cultism activities on our campuses gets northwards day in day out.

### **Cultism in Nigerian Schools: An Appraisal**

In Nigeria, cultism dates back to the pre-colonial era where people of same ideology come together in unison to seek protection from their ancestors through offerings of sacrifice. Adeola is of the opinion that secret cults have “always existed in many parts of the country. The Ogboni secret cult is notable among the Yorubas, Ekpe secret cult among the Efiks, Ekine cult in the Delta region and Owegbe cult among the Edos” (56). In 1953, the first cult on Nigerian campus was established at the University College, Ibadan, now University of Ibadan. Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi report that, “seven idealist young students namely Wole Soyinka (now professor), Pius Oleghe, Raph Opara, Tunji Tubi, Daig Imokhuede, Olu Agunloye and Muyiwa Awe (now emeritus professor of physics) formed the seadogs confraternity aka pirates” (223). The idea was for oneness, solidarity and comradeship. Orintusin expatiates further:

The ideas behind the formation of the confraternity were both patriotic and altruistic as it was not imagined as a secret cult. The main objectives of the Seadogs were to be non-violent but intellectually and effectively be against the imposition of foreign conventions; to revive the age of chivalry; and to find a lasting solution to the problems of tribalism and elitism (73).

In 1965, an association of friends who usually converge at Nnamdi Hall of the school transformed into the Eiye Confraternity; while in 1972, some of the members of the seadog confraternity were expelled from the cult for contradicting its objectives and they immediately formed a rival organization called the Buccaneers Confraternity. The Seadog, Eiye and Buccaneers Confraternities were all in existence at the University of Ibadan. In 1962, the Federal Government of Nigeria created additional four universities namely The University of Nigeria Nsukka, the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Ile-Ife, University of Lagos and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. As more universities were created, the three confraternities were spreading into the newly created ones. Muyiwa avers that, “in the early 1990s, female students started their own cults” (Muyiwa 56).

As at present, the early confraternity which was designed as a pressure group and a positive force has obviously lost the track as it has now become a group of terrors, bandits, rapists and armed robbers. Cultism has overwhelmed almost all Nigerian higher institutions with an unimaginable gravity. As at today, there are above forty brands of secret cults across Nigerian higher institutions. Most prominent among them are Eiye Confraternity, Black Axe Confraternity (aka Ayee), Buccaneers Confraternity aka Alora, The Vikings, Pirates Confraternity, the Soires Fraternity and Vipers. The popular ladies cults include Daughters of Jezebel, Black Bra, Pink Ladies and White Angels. It is regrettable to note that what started in an institution as a group of intellects has now proliferated into all government higher institutions as a killer squad and its now mushrooming into private institutions.

### **Synopsis of the Play**

*Never and Never* is a satire that takes a critical but indicting look at secret cult activities on campuses of the Nigerian tertiary institutions. Abu, a very brilliant final year medical student, is the protagonist of the play. He is persuaded to join the Animals secret cult, but refuses insisting on his unwavering commitment to academic excellence, the cult members intimidate him into joining but Abu is determined to renounce his 'duress' membership and expose the cultists. A professor in his Department and the Dean of Students' Affairs become his confidants and vital instrument of panacea, who design strategies for the arrest of the cultists hence the freedom of Abu, other innocent students and the campus became cult free.

### **A Back to Back Exploration of Akinsipe's *Never and Never***

The fight against the menace of cultism in Nigerian higher institutions should be a collective responsibility of all. The negative effect it has on the educational reputation of Nigerian tertiary institutions as well as the image of the nation at large cannot be overemphasized. Hence, everyone is affected by the ugly face of cultism at different level and degree. Ajayi and Ayodele (2002) and Jekayinfa (2008) establish that majority of people who join secret cults are of the adolescent age (15-22 years) majority of whom are intimidated into it while a few join on personal volition. The strategies that cultists use to lure and recruit new members include set-up, cajoling, intimidation and talent hunting. Felix Akinsipe's *Never and Never* contributes its quota to the society in the fight against cultism on Nigerian campuses by x-raying the totality of campus cultism. The play establishes the specie of personality the Animal Fraternity is interested in recruiting. They include students who dress irresponsibly, students who are interested in getting their goals through shortcut, students who seek protection against the authorities, students who love extravagant life, students who are from wealthy and influential background and indeed the most brilliant students on campus. Abu who is a leading medical student on campus becomes a target for the cultists. Tiger, the capon of the confraternity wants him to join them at all costs. They both dialogue thus:

**ABU:** Why can't you people leave me alone? This is not fair, I told you am the only child of my parents and I am seating for my final medical examinations next semester. I am looking forward to becoming a medical doctor. I cannot risk my profession and the number of years I have put in on campus.

**TIGER:** We also want the best medical student in our group. You will take care of our medical problems when you graduate. So you have to corporate with us (*Never and Never* 28-29).

The expression here shows that secret cults are departmentalized. They are particularly interested in expertise and competence in specific areas, while they initiate some for combatant purpose; others are recruited for specific and strategic reason of intellect in terms of planning and playing advisory roles. In the case of Abu, his medical expertise is what they need to handle their medical challenges. Secret cult members go the extra miles to get their target member into their fold. After all strategies used in trying to convince Abu into joining the Animal Fraternity hit the brick wall, they noticed he was a social drinker and they set him up by making sure he drinks to stupor to the point of unconsciousness. He later got conscious in the groove of the cultists where he was brutalized and intimidated into being a member. A keen look at the behavior of a newly initiated cultist, there is always a sharp change from their normal self in terms of friends they keep, decline in academics zeal and interest, and their mode of dressing especially in terms of colour combination among others. In Abu's case in the world of the play, he became extremely secretive even to his beloved girlfriend. All efforts to get words from him about his attackers proved abortive after spending a week in the hospital. Bunmi, his girlfriend expresses worries thus:

**BUNMI:** Chika, I need your help.

**CHIKA:** In what way?

**BUNMI:** Let's find out what is going on. Abu has changed. (*Never and Never* 37-38).

The worry expressed in the picture above emphasizes how conspicuous and noticeable the change of a new secret cult initiate can be. A young eloquent, vibrant and focused young medical student is now a shadow of himself. He now acts so roguishly that the two closest people to him on campus, Chika, his roommate and his best friend, as well as Bunmi, his girlfriend, no longer understand anything about him as he now prefers new set of friends.

The world of the play establishes that, the life of a cultist is indeed a frustrated life as majority of them either get expelled from school, drug addicts, or become prostitutes in the case of ladies. In one of the meetings of Animal Confraternity, one of the cultists, Joyce expresses her frustrations. In her words:

**JOYCE:** It's no joke, Dog. It's reality. See Shola the Frog. We were initiated the same day but he is now mentally deranged. He is running the street and there is nothing we can do about that. And many cases like that.

**DOG:** He drank too much of the mixture. It was nobody's fault.

**JOYCE:** Why did he drink so much? Frustration. He told me he no longer fits the society. What of you, Dog, by the time we were initiated were you lame? (*Never and Never* 44).

The lines above show how frustrated cultists who joined under the promise and guarantee for protection against the school authority or other students, monetary gains and unmerited academic excellence can be. The promises are used as bait to lure and recruit new members.

Suffice it to mention, the attendant effect of cultism on Nigerian students can be seen in both inter and intra-cult clashes negatively affect the students in a very high proportion. Beyond incarceration, rustication or expulsion, students pay the ultimate price as destinies of tomorrow leaders are cut short in cold blood. An intra-cult clash in the world of the play generates the following dialogue:

**COBRA:** What was that?

**DOG:** It's Joyce.

**BIRD:** What is it with her?

**DOG:** She said she is quitting.

**UMAR:** Quitting? Why? To where?

**DOG:** I have silenced her.

**ABU:** Was it Joyce you shot?

**DOG:** Oh yes. The idiot is gone (*Never and Never* 45).

The atmosphere created above is that of horror. It depicts that joining a secret cult on campus can be a journey of no return as some renouncing members pay with their lives. The confraternities on Nigerian campuses are not only brutal with none initiates, they are also brutal with their members as forgiveness becomes forbidding to them.

Cultists leave in perpetual fear of the unknown. No matter how intimate they get to one another, the trust factor is always missing. They neither trust non-initiates nor themselves. They send one another on criminal errands, they bestow position of trust to their members, yet the trust is conspicuously missing. Members of secret cults live in fear; they suspect everyone around them including themselves. In the play, Abu who upon return from an inter-cult operation felt uncomfortable with his health, he took permission to go and take care of himself. In his words:

**ABU:** Just for today, I am feeling bad.

**TIGER:** Ok, go and take care of yourself, we cannot afford to miss you.

**ABU:** Thank you. By the authority of the Capon, I take my leave (*He departs*)

**TIGER:** Cobra and Dog, keep a close watch on that boy, I suspect him. (*Never and Never* 47).

The lines above explicitly present the level of sensitivity of cult members to happenings at different level. Every move a member makes is followed up for the fear of the unknown. Intelligence gathering is one of the main tools of continuous survival of secret cult groups on Nigerian campuses. They go the extra miles to find out what steps the school authority wants to take against them, what the government has in plan for them, the police and other security agencies are well penetrated as well. Hence their unwavering comfort on campus. They have information ahead even before the authorities hatch its plans they have adequately prepared. It therefore remains a difficult task to decimate cultism not to talk of completely eradicating them.

Adequate information and a high level of risk is a major solution to the problem of campus terrorism. Akinsipe's resolution of the play *Never and Never* suggests that as much members and godfathers the cultists have in our institutions for the purpose of feeding them with information, the

authorities of different higher institutions need as much adequate and timely information to arrest these cultists and make our campuses safe and cult free. Abu in the play haven known the level at which the Animal Fraternity trails every contact of its members with the dean of students affairs who is championing the fight against cultism intelligently informed a professor who in turn informed the appropriate body and they round them up. The interaction below aptly captures this:

PROF: Where is Abu?

ABU: Here, Prof., I taught you were not going to come.

PROF: As soon as you told me after the class, I went straight to the Dean of Students' Affairs. Since then we have been working with the police and SSS.

DSA: Well done, Abu. (*Never and Never* 53)

The terror and horror that different cult groups have unleashed on Nigerian higher institutions has not only given these institutions bad names, it has also affected the academic output of the students as no meaningful learning can take place in an environment where peace is not maintained, sustained and perpetuated. The existence of our campuses in fear and daily uncertainty can only produce graduates that are half-baked or grossly incompetent.

The playwright set forth in emphatic terms various reasons why students become members of secret cults. Across the play, in the lines of the members of the Animal Fraternity students who love to be respected and recognized on campus, students who are tough-looking, tough-talking and tough-thinking, students who want short cuts to everything. Short cut to reading, short cut to reading, short cut to learning, short cut to passing examinations, those who love to wear the best dresses, the best shoes, carry the best handsets and the latest of everything in town, students who are from wealthy and influential families or background and the students who for no reason feel insecure on campus. They want protection against the authority, protection against lecturers, and protection against fellow students. They seek protection even against their own shadow. Students whose mentality falls within this bracket of thinking are referred to as 'cultables.'

In the world of the play, secret cults on campuses, seek to acquire and exercise a great deal of power so as to compel and coerce the school administrations, lecturers and fellow students to do their will in criminal and immoral circumstances (*Never and Never* 12-13). This includes monopoly of girl/boyfriends, extortion of money and properties from fellow students, rigging of student's union elections in their favour, manipulation of disciplinary offences, examination malpractices and fraud. The courage with which cultists disseminate information about university authorities, the manner they harass principal officers, the courage with which they kidnap lecturers and coerce or threaten him or her to sign forged documents or give their members undeserving grades in their courses and most recently, cultists use ladies to set up male lecturers, they in turn use the evidence of his sexual escapade which could be inform of audio or audiovisual to threaten him into favoring them in all fronts within his capacity in the institution.

The aims and objectives of these secret cults for over three decades of its existence on Nigerian campuses remains impossibility. The establishment Nigerian higher institutions makes students subjects to the authority and powers of the authorities of each institution. This relationship is created by the laws establishing these institutions and the reverse is impossible. To corroborate this, Akpenpuun submits that,

the students' loyalty to the University authorities is lawfully compulsive and coercive. Therefore, their loyalty is not an optional matter and it is to the best of their own good in terms of their academic achievements and general well-being. This is why the law has given the University Senate the powers to suspend and expel the students who are found guilty of gross misconduct. In contradiction, the students' union leaders do not have legal powers to suspend or expel University Authorities at all (23).

It is therefore share ignorance for students through membership of secret cult to be of the opinion that authorities of their institutions can be at their mercy. Studies remain the primary duty of

students on campus and it is in their own interest to concentrate on studies which is their topmost priority in the University and other tertiary institutions. An understanding of the distinction or difference between them and the authorities, as well as concentration on studying is in their best interest. In doing this, they will appreciate the importance of peace, sanity, decency, obedience and self discipline to their academic success.

Over the past three decades, various attempts have been made to deal with the problem of cultism across tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, various measures taken, by government, non-governmental organizations and individuals to halt the menace throughout the cardinal points of Nigeria educational system. Governments at various levels have legislated different anti-cultism laws to deter its continuous existence. First is Decree 47 of the federal government of Nigeria in 1989 that pronounced a number of year jail term for anyone found guilty of being cultist. State governments across the country have also enacted anti-cultism laws. Ibeh stipulated that, "Rivers State Government made a law stipulating a ten-year jail term sentence without an option of fine for culprits of cultism" (38). Noticing that the menace persists, some states enacted laws that condemn anyone guilty of being a cultist while others who consider their law against it as not being potent enough reviewed such laws. In Ekiti State for instance, Ojomoyele submits that:

the original bill was said to have been promulgated during the first term of Governor Ayodele Fayose, was amended from the previous seven-year imprisonment for convicted cultists to death penalty, while the punishment for people who aid or abet the crime rose from five-year imprisonment to life imprisonment (*Vanguard* 1).

Beyond the efforts of the federal and state governments, the authorities of some higher institutions set up anti-cult groups consisting of student body itself and some security agents on and off campus to monitor and check secret cult activities on campus. Corroborating these efforts, scholars across various disciplines have written academic publication to warn about the imminent danger of cultism. They include but not limited to Akpenpuun Dzurgba's *Violence and bloodshed in Nigerian Universities: A search for Peace and Academic Excellence* (2004), Eneh Cyprian's *Cultism in the Nigerian Educational Institutions: Incidence, Causes, Effects and Solution* (2008), Dramatic play texts include Charity Angya's *Gone Sailing* (2000) and Felix Akinsipe's *Never and Never* (2006), among others. The collective campaigns and machineries set in motion by government, corporate bodies and individual using various means, secret cults on campuses across the nation rather than eradication are hibernated as it often raise its ugly head again after a perceived major success against it.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Cultism is a problem that has affected the growth of Nigerian educational system and its output. The emergence of this vice has put the nation Nigeria on the centre stage in the comity of nations for the negative reasons. Youths, who are trusted to be the leaders of tomorrow and the future of the nation, are trained with the expectation of proffering sustainable solution to the various challenges facing the nation through dissemination of knowledge in relevant areas of their strength. Unfortunately, a sizable number of our leaders of tomorrow have abandoned themselves to all kinds of debauchery and treachery. All spheres of Nigerian educational system are affected by cultism as those who are not initiated are intimidated.

This paper therefore recommends that vigorous reorientation, sensitization and education of youths through useful programme and workshop, seminar on the danger of cultism, the use of mass media, billboards, sign post, road shows and other means of campaign in the tertiary institutions and secondary schools against cultism will help to ornament the reasoning of youths about the avoidable tragedy of being a cultist. The campaign should be extended to parents alike as it will help them to remain vigilant and sensitive about the behaviour or behavioural change in their wards and the friends they keep.

Expulsion of cultists alone is not sufficient; authorities of higher institutions of learning should collaborate with state and federal governments of Nigeria to give amnesty to cultists on various campuses. This will afford a number of them to reflect and retrace their steps. At the

expiration of a specified timeframe, those who refuse to renounce their membership should be declared terrorists and dealt with in the way and manner the government deals with terrorists.

It is of high importance for government and institutions to invest in intelligence gathering to halt the accelerating menace of cultism. Schools are admonished to build internal security intelligent units. Membership of these units is to be strategically recruited, student based and anonymous, they should be adequately trained in the field of digital intelligence gathering and the use of computer to investigate and generate information. This unit should liaise with government security agencies in intelligence gathering within the school environment.

Corruption and weakness of our institutions especially the legal system in Nigeria contributes a great deal to the reason why cultism persists on our campuses. Government must therefore show strong political will to put an emphatic stop to the untold tolls it wrecks on the lives of the citizens, especially the youth and indeed the future yet unborn. The matter has to be addressed from the political class, our judiciary must be made to operate without undue interference, our laws must be potent and timely and its full weight must come upon culprits, perpetrators, facilitators as well as the aiders and abettors of cultism and its activities. As the legal maxim goes: "justice delayed is justice denied".

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## **THE ROLE OF DESIGN IN ENHANCING THE QUALITY AND PATRONAGE OF NIGERIAN FILMS AND MUSICAL VIDEOS**

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### **Abstract**

African arts and crafts have always fascinated art collectors and appreciators all over the world. Apart from the artefacts and crafts that adorn museum all over the world, the Nigerian entertainment industry is growing and the patronage of the materials produced from the industry like contemporary films and musical videos are being consumed by audiences in different places across the globe. This paper considers the role of design in enhancing the quality and patronage of Nigerian films and musical videos being produced as cultural commodities for global consumption. The paper submits that through better partnership between the film producers and professional designers in Nigeria, the quality of such films and musical videos could be enhanced to increase the scale at which they are promoted, not only as couriers of contemporary Nigerian reality, but also as articles of international trade that should earn reasonable foreign exchange for Nigeria in the global market economy.

**Keywords:** movies, musical videos, design, scene, costume, poster collaboration

### **Introduction**

African arts and crafts have always fascinated art collectors and appreciators all over the world. History has it that the ancient Benin Kingdom for instance had rich art and craft artifacts which were carted away by Europeans when Oba of Benin was arrested for refusal to comply with European directives. The Nok culture, the Igbo Ukwu and Ife crafts are also some of the places in Nigeria where arts and crafts have been found which fascinated the rest of the world. Apart from the old artifacts from these centres of art production in ancient Nigeria area that now adorn museum all over the world, the Nigerian entertainment industry is growing and the patronage of the materials produced from the industry like contemporary films and musical videos are being consumed by audiences in different places across the globe. We argue in this paper that professional designers have the potential to contribute more than they are currently doing in collaboration with film producers, in other to enhance the quality of films and videos. The design areas relevant to the film and musical videos industry include but are not limited to scene design, lighting design, costume design, promotional posters and DVD covers.

### **Nigerian Movies and Musical Videos**

Film production was introduced to Nigeria by European film makers, and flourished in the days of colonialism. Over time, Nigerian film producers also learnt the craft and Nigerian film production grew at a time that the dominant format was celluloid. However, with the introduction of the video cassette player which enables people to purchase films and watch in the comfort of their homes rather than go to the cinema, what Okome and Haynes eventually defined as the Nigerian video films, was born. The industry has grown so rapidly that it is now said that after Hollywood, it is Bollywood and Nollywood that now alternate as second or third globally.

Apart from the Nigerian movies, the music industry has also flourished in Nigeria. Beginning from traditional music art forms to high life and contemporary music, the genre of music has given artistic expression to many. The relationship between the film industry and music is manifest in the fact that the skills of film making are also being deployed to the production of musical videos. We are now in an era whereby music is appreciated not only as audio but also the visuals are added to the entertainment in order to get what is known as musical videos. Nowadays, the artists, directors and producers involved in film production work side by side with the production of musical videos

This paper considers the Nigerian films and musical videos being produced as cultural commodities because in them, there is the expression of Nigerian folklore and popular culture. To that extent therefore, there is a need for better collaboration between the film producers and professional designers in Nigeria in order to bring about improvement in the areas of scene design, lighting design, costume design, promotional posters and DVD covers.

### **Patterns of Consumption of Nigerian Films and Musical Videos**

The general pattern of the demand and consumption of Nigerian films and videos shows that they are highly in demand in other parts of the globe. This is partly because the Nigerians are many among the African diaspora and where they now reside is part of the market for the distribution of Nigerian films and musical videos in all continents of the world. For instance, the Nigerian performing artists in movies, music and musical videos are promoted and well known globally. As they are promoted as individuals, it will be beneficial to the international image of Nigeria as a country if they promote ideals that will give glory to Nigeria

Secondly, a lot of collaboration has taken place between Nigerian film and musical artists with well known stars from more developed entertainment industries like Hollywood. For instance, Genevieve Nnaji has produced a movie that is one of the box office hits and places recent Nigeria film production of the global map.

Thirdly, the availability of the internet to film and video producers and consumers has helped to popularize Nigerian films and musical videos worldwide. This is because the artists can now upload their movies and home videos on different platforms on the internet and subscribers can download them for a fee. This makes Nigerian films and videos accessible all over the world. For instance, Netflix is a platform on which contemporary Nigerian movies along with other foreign internationally acclaimed movies are available for download and viewing for a few. This has placed Nigerian movies within the reach of a global audience and therefore is an opportunity for the positive projection of the image of the country.

### **Enhancing Nigerian Movies and Home Videos as Cultural Commodities through Design**

Because of the importance of the Nigerian film and musical videos this paper hereby submits that in order for them to be promoted further as cultural commodities from Nigeria for international consumption, the following measures discussed below can be taken towards stepping up the technical quality of the productions by paying more attention to detailed areas where professional designers and other resource persons can contribute more than they are currently given the opportunity to.

In terms of scene design, the set for a musical video or movie is often required to be naturalistic and realistic. Professional designers can contribute more in this area by being part of the construction of the outdoor sets the way they have done over time for the indoor television studio. In achieving these, design skills related to painting and drawing, which are specializations in visual arts, can enhance the quality of the sets so designed.

Lighting design also requires technical specialists in order to give the desired effect. It is not enough of a crew of lighting technicians to mount lights and beam them on the scene in order for the cameras to record more clearly, the action being played out. There is need for a better understanding of the combination of lamps to use, the intensity of light to be beamed, and the colours that need to be combined to either paint an appropriate aura of the time of the day be it sunrise, midday sunset or night, as well as the mood of the moment be it tranquil, agitated or just an active day. Lighting design specialist can go a long way in ensuring that such areas are taken care of with better quality.

Costume design has always been considered as one of the specializations in theatre management. As such, a lot of theatre practitioners have developed interest and specializations in

designing costumes for actors and actresses to realize a particular role they are playing. With textile design, manufacturing and handling being also a key area of interest for some professional designers, more areas of collaboration need to be explored between the theatre artist interested in costume, and the professional designers who specialize in fabric, textile and other material that can be adapted in the construction of costumes.

Promotional posters are also required to market a movie or musical video that has been produced. The producers of the movies and musical videos need to rely on professional opinion of graphic designers and other visual artists for instance, in bringing out a captivating poster. There may be details to do with poster making known to professional designers which the film producers and the artisans that operate the printing press alone may not adequately handle; hence, the need for more involvement of the professional designers in the making of such posters.

Similar detailed professional skills as required for doing successful promotional posters are also required for the covers of the DVD through which most movies and musical videos are distributed in Nigeria. Like in the days of the vinyl record through which audio music were sold before the advent of cassettes and compact discs, the digital video disc must have an interesting cover. This usually includes pictures of the stars that appear in the work, a montage of some shots from the movie or musical video, as well as text. Laying all of these in an appealing and attention catching way requires the input of professional designers more than what the theatre and musical artist can do by themselves.

Another way in which the Nigerian movies and musical videos can benefit from the input of professional designers is that some of them have found themselves in places of authority in various institutions in the arts and culture sectors. For instance, government can facilitate easier access to monuments and appropriate locations by producers of movies and musical videos so that the locales for the productions are both more believable and also representative of Nigerian reality. These include museums and monuments, art galleries, tourist attractions, parks and gardens, which are all places tended by people who include designers and visual artists. Documentary productions can be made to promote tourism and the exhibition of such rich and diverse cultural heritage of Nigeria.

Apart from designers, the end credits of a Hollywood movie for instance, acknowledges the contributions of nearly two hundred or more specialists, while the end credits of a Nigerian movie or musical video hardly acknowledges up to fifty specialists. This implies that while in the Hollywood productions, all attention is paid to detail and specializations, this is yet unavailable in Nigerian movies and musical videos. Improvement in this area could be achieved through hiring of different professionals in the various technical aspects within and outside Nigeria, which includes different aspects of design. In the end, the quality of the output from the inputs of all of these professionals can meet up with global standards.

### **Prospects of the Film and Musical Videos Industry in Nigeria**

The organized private sector and finance houses should do more in film financing beyond their current attitude of preference for short term investments. The federal government in past regimes launched an endowment fund of some sorts to be accessed by film producers in Nigeria. Such initiative need to be reviewed, up scaled and sustained in a manner that will also be more easily accessible to film producers.

Government must make deliberate investments at the federal and state levels in the facilities that will promote film production like the film village in Abuja. I heard about one proposed in Kano, I need to find out how far, and such could be replicated in Jos, Calabar, and other locations. Regulatory bodies and training institutions are to address the needs of new entrants into the film industry like the feedback the National Films and Videos Censor's Board (NFVCB) resource persons will take away from this engagement with youths. This should help with planning for the future.

This paper is hereby submitting that in the quest for the enhancement of the quality of Nigerian movies and musical videos, partnership is a way to go in pooling resources together in the various stages of preproduction, production and post-production. Partnership is required between theatre artist, visual artists and professional designers to put together aesthetically appealing and excellent outputs of artistic collaboration. Partnership is required between new generation and older generation of film producers as a way of endorsing and grooming the efforts of the younger ones.

Partnership is required between production groups that are dominant in different socio-cultural zones of the country in order to bring about films that are culturally heterogeneous and representative of Nigeria's diversity. Partnership between Nigerian and foreign film producers with clearly stated mutual benefits along the production and consumption value chain

### **Conclusion**

Professional designers have a role to play, and they must be given the opportunity by producers to contribute to the quality of Nigerian films and musical videos being produced. Such collaboration will be enhance and increase the scale at which they are promoted, not only as couriers of contemporary Nigerian reality, but also as articles of international trade that should earn reasonable foreign exchange for Nigeria in the global market economy.

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## BEYOND ENTERTAINMENT: DANCE AND CULTURAL TOURISM IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

There is always 'a taken for granted' attitude to dance as art. Whether within academic circles or public arenas it is reduced to mere past time and entertainment. This, notwithstanding, dance remains a vital and dynamic art form connecting all segment of society. Within the ambits of rhythm interpretation and appreciation, the art of dance produces a language capable of expressing the religious beliefs, biological temperament, historical experiences social practice and economic peculiarities of the people that own it. However, the myopic understanding of what dance stands for is capable of devaluing its socio-cultural and economic essence and potentialities especially when looked upon as a profession for mediocres and vagabonds. This paper focuses on the place of Nigerian Dances and how it promotes and enhances tourism potentials directed at image rebranding and economic advancement of Nigeria as a Nation. The paper submits that, Nigeria is endowed with a robust dance tradition that can be explored maximally to advance into the global upsurge in tourism as a major revenue earning stream for Nigeria.

**Key words:** Dance culture, Tourism development, Economic advancement

### Introduction

The dance art is appreciated, even loved, but the dancer is evidently one of the least respected mortals in the Nigerian Society. He is exploited when contracted as a result of which he remains economically disempowered. If she is female, in a desperate bid to survive she is abused, and if a male, materially exploited (Bakare 82).

Dance is a serious art beyond mere entertainment which has from time immemorial constituted a source of livelihood for its practitioners. However, dance is considered as one of the earliest art forms traced to the cradle of man. Dance scholar's referring to experiences of child birth have analytically interpreted dance as originating even as a baby moves in the womb, followed consequently by the birth of the baby accompanied with actions such as wriggling, body movements with sounds (cry) which are dance in nature. Dance, according to Abeau, is:

To jump, to hop, to prance, to sway, to tread, to hip-toe and to move the feet, hands and body in certain rhythms, measures and movement consisting of jumps, bending of the body, straddling, limping, bending of the knees, rise on hip-toes, throwing forward of the feet, changes and other movements (20).

Dance can be summarily regarded as the rhythmic movement of the human body to time and space coupled with the exertion of a specific amount of energy (Ododo & Kenechukwu 3). Dance is not just a mere biological urge; rather, it is a process of exposure and training which begins at birth, an effort to express individual and collective feelings. Akas, quoting Nasser, says:

Dance is not a luxury... it is a part of each person's physical, emotional and cultural growth. It is a language (a universal language) through which we can share each other's pains and accomplishments (134).

The communicative nature of dance also suggests its socio-cultural relevance in a globalizing world and particularly among nations with a common ancestry and historical experience. Traditionally, dance in Africa and elsewhere plays an essential role in the culture of the people. It clearly reflects the historical, socio-economic as well as cultural ties of specific people, nations or regions. Its significance, in communal communion can be evidently seen in situations where, people or communal activities are always accompanied by dance and musical performances, in the course of which, people socialize and get better acquainted and connected.

Much more than entertainment, dance communicates emotions, celebrates rites of passage and help strengthen the bonds between members of the tribe as a whole, it is an expression of the physical, psychological and spiritual states of being that enables people to give meaning and context to their greatest joys, hopes, frustrations, fears and sorrows. This opinion is reiterated by Ododo and Kenchukwu thus:

... every rhythmic movement of the body to time and space in which energy is expended does not necessarily qualify as dance except where it expresses inner emotions and innate ideas (3).

It thus follows that, dance has to do with the conception and expression of thought, inner emotions and ideas using the instrumentality of the human body as an interpretative and communicative medium. Beyond the above, dance if adequately packaged has the capacity to advance the economic fortunes of the nation through cultural tourism as an alternative to a mono-product economy that is dependent on oil.

For maximum exploration of the potentials of the robust dance traditions of Nigeria to become an integral part of attempts being made towards developing tourism as an alternative revenue base, conscious efforts have to be made towards the resuscitation of the entire national culture sector. Retrospectively, despite the launching of a Nigerian cultural policy in 1988 by the then Babangida's Military Government, was not fully implemented until in 1999 when Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's Administration demonstrated a commitment to revamping and development of the culture and tourism industry in creating a Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The administration saw the imperative of culture in the social economy of the globalizing world and was thus influenced to re-invent the cultural project in the nation's economic consciousness.

This rebirth in national consciousness in connection with culture and tourism signaled an end to the hitherto disregard or plain under-evaluation of the culture sector in contradiction to the content and spirit of the provision of the cultural policy, thus shouldering the power of culture as muted in the 1988 cultural policy. Prior to this time the cultural sector was always an appendage of related or unrelated ministries such as Social welfare, Youth Development and Information.

### **Dance Culture in Nigeria**

According to Bakare, in the Nigerian society, the dance art is arguably the most preferred of the performative trinity – music, dance and drama (81), but has been unfortunately denied attention by Nigerian governments even though it continues to remain the most patronized and acceptable medium of entertainment as it enjoys a considerable amount of patronage by all and sundry.

The popularity of dance is due to its centrality to the cultural essence of the Nigerian people. Culture according to the *Cultural Policy for Nigeria* (1988) is defined as:

The totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenges of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political and economic aesthetic and religious norms and modes of

organization, thus, distinguishing a people from their neighbours (*Cultural policy for Nigeria*, 1988).

Dance to the Nigerian is holistic in both nature and content. It is part of their life and offers them the opportunity to express themselves in various ceremonies, festivals and rituals. Dancing developed as a national expression of united feeling and action. Its application is evident at the private, official and corporate levels during social, religious and political occasions, even for advertisement purposes. The role of dance in the society unavoidably has changed considerably in the area of development over the years. It has become a profession that provides sustainable livelihood for its practitioners, and able to showcase the rich cultural heritage of its owners, provide employment opportunities both at the natural, states and in some cases, local government levels.

The present state of professional dance in Nigeria is attributable to the efforts of the late Hubert Ogunde, who 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 consciously made concerted efforts to professionalize dance by advertising for opportunities for dance recruitment inviting dancers to apply and earn, a certain amount of money. Ogunde's efforts were further enhanced with the hosting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture held in Lagos, which gave dance a purposeful sense of direction and breakthrough as a veritable tool for national integration.

Hitherto, the dancer had been relegated to the background as mere play by the Nigerian society as such, the artiste under-valued himself and his artistry; he saw himself as socially inconsequential and so lacked the confidence to believe in his profession (Bakare 89). However, Yerima avers that:

... It was in 1977 with Nigeria hosting the Second World Black African Festival of Arts and Culture that was the turning point for the Nigeria dancer and indeed, the Nigerian arts... the festival showed the traditional dancer and the importance of dance to people of other countries (34-35).

The festival contained the process began by Ogunde where Nigerian troupes travelled abroad on cultural tours and performance in a bid to showcase the rich cultural heritage (dance) of the people of Nigeria.

The awareness created by the festival kick started the establishment of some governmental parastatals and agencies such as the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) and National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC). This culminated into the establishment of Council in all the 36 states of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), thus creating job opportunities for Nigerian dancers to be recruited as workers in these councils.

The development of dance structures to entrench dance as a viable profession in Nigeria reached orgasm in the 80s with the commissioning of Hubert Ogunde to establish a National Troupe by the erstwhile head of state, General Ibrahim Babangida. This gave birth to the National Troupe of Nigeria. Shortly thereafter, dance came to be perceived as a potent venture that is not only as an enterprise with potential for generating revenue for the nation, but also an instrument that could contribute to human capital development. This further helps to dispel the clouds surrounding dance as a mere active jamboree engaged in by 'no future ambitious people (NFAP). This position has been espoused by Akinsipe when quoting Francis Rust:

Dance... is not a mere past time, but a very serious activity... it is not mere art or 'display' divorced from the other institutions of society, on the contrary, it is the very basis of the social system in that it contributes significantly to the fulfillment of all society's needs (2).

For dance to strengthen its stand as an independent profession, a synergy with other sectors of society such as tourism, becomes imperative in order to triumph in the battle for survival and recognition. This is in spite of the fact that, its most compatible bed-fellow – the live theatre and the theatre going tradition is collapsing; experiencing a gradual decline in the past few years as confirmed by Akinwale thus:

... the political culture in existence in contemporary Nigeria has almost strangled the theatre out of existence. This is true if one takes into cognizance the number of stage performances theatre companies put up per annum. The number of itinerant theatre groups have reduced... thus the popularity live theatre enjoys is no more what is used to be (13).

This situation is worsened by the advancement in electronic media and the home video.

Dance if deliberately incorporated into the tourism spectrum of activities, would enhance the future and fortune of the dance art and the dance profession, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Nigeria. This is because, the tourism sector is being developed aggressively with new dimensions like the increasing popularity of carnivals which is also an amalgam of dances and masquerade displays amongst other creative activities.

### **Dance and Tourism: A Synergy**

Dance is stylized and structured movement in time and space. In the context of Nigeria's conceptions, dance involves, or at the marginal implies music. Dance in the Nigerian traditional context and in the context of our discussion here also encapsulates gymnastics and acrobatics structured to, or orchestrated by music.

Dance is an essential ingredient in cultural tourism, cultural tourism here is seen as tourism inspired by the urge to savour a peoples' culture and its manifestations. Despite the dynamic force of dance as an integral aspect of tourism in the much desired economic and social development of any nation, tourism has often been considered from the purview of visits to sites of attraction, improvement of the hospitality sector like hotel investments and arts exhibitions, in addition to carnival extravaganzas.

Several events incorporate dance on the Nigerian stage. These events attract tourist from within and outside the country. The events include the Abuja National Carnival, the Agila Carnival in Benue state, the Benue Youth Carnival, The Calabar Carnival, the Rivers state Carnival as well as fishing festivals such as the Argungu fishing festival, the Akata Fishing Festival in Benue State just to mention a few. These events boost the economic affairs of the respective states and Nigeria at large because, as tourists come in and enjoy the festivals; they also patronize hotels and local cuisine as well as traditional art and craft.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) sees tourism as the activities of persons travelling and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and any other purpose ([www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org)). It thus imply that the tourist must be driven by a desire which needed to be satisfied, for instance, somewhere to lay his/her head; something to satisfy the pangs of hunger; something to buy to show when he or she returns home that he/she has 'been to' such a place; things to see and sounds to hear in his/her chosen tourism destination, all of which aggregation to ensure physical relaxation of the body even as the total experience values his/her appreciation of her host environment to the transformation of the satisfied tourist to an advocate and ambassador of the positive values of his/her host country. Evidently, some people go outside of their usual environment for several reasons. This has birthed such strands of tourism as spiritual tourism, conference tourism, religious tourism and cultural tourism the category under which dance fiestas and carnivals belong.

Tourism is not only strategic but also vital for informing and shaping the character and the level of economic activity of society. Thus it is a potent tool used by nations and communities for image rebranding through cultural diplomacy, which as defined by United States Centre for Arts and Culture is "the representation of culture through the 'soft diplomacy' of artistic and cultural exchange (105). Suffice it say that countries and nations that use cultural diplomacy harness culture as a tool to building bridges. Dance plays major roles in cultural diplomacy. For example it features prominently during presidential visits, tours and in sporting events. Abba Gana Shitima citing Bond et al. corroborates this when he submits that:



Today more than ever before, culture has a vital role to play in international relations... cultural exchange gives us the chance to appreciate points of commonality and where there are differences, to understand the motivations and humanity that underlie them... (106).

Thus, in the contemporary age of globalization, cultural diplomacy is perhaps as important as, the harder laws, treaties, bilateral negotiations, multilateral structures and military capability. This is because instead of using military might or economic strength, nations and countries attract what they want rather than using coercion or payment. Dance being a universal language for Trans-cultural communication is a potent tool in cultural diplomacy. As such, there should be deliberate and conscious concerted efforts to discover the under utilization of the potentials of the various dance traditions of the people.

Hitherto, deploying cultural practices especially dances beyond their mere indigenous ownership and performative rituals to tourism friendly and commercial enterprise open to patronage with a cultivated aim of taking it beyond the confines of its resident communities. The words of UNESCO come in handy as it submits thus:

Culture is a dynamic force for change rather than a rigid set of forms or parameters that must be strictly adhered to. As the World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD) noted, a society's culture is neither static nor unchanging but rather is in a constant state of flux, influencing and being influenced by other world-views and expressive forms (1).

This demands a balanced integration of our indigenous cultures by placing them at the heart of development policies and refusing to confine our cultures in a conservative way. Here, culture is seen as a resource in development and not a hindrance to change or modernity. This will require finding ways of exposing our cultural heritage to the world without necessarily eroding or losing it entirely.

### **Conclusion**

Nigerian tourism is not all about economic activities, cultural activities can still be an effective inward strategy capable of reducing our over dependence on oil. Arts and crafts as well as local festivals if well harnessed can create jobs and small scale businesses for the teeming youths. Thus, dance as art, if its tourist potentials are harnessed properly will encourage Nigerians to appreciate their various tourists' attractions. This is in tandem with Mensah's evidence as captured in Obafemi and Ayakoroma:

The UNWTO specific forecast of Nigeria's tourism ranked the sector 13<sup>th</sup> on a list of twenty fastest growing developing countries in terms of tourist arrivals. It is said to have witnessed the most dramatic growth in tourist arrivals among West African countries, experiencing 28% growth between 1990 and 2000. Its projected annual growth rate between 1990 and 2005 was 15.6%. Nigeria was expected to generate \$10,06 million worth of economic activities in direct/indirect impact accounting for 6.1% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and 5.1% of total employment (39).

This estimation was eight years ago. The situation may have improved in recent times though. Nigeria's cultural tourism potentials for poverty reduction, improved economic well being and social mobility for all is clearly evident from the foregoing. Functioning as tourism, the robust traditions of Nigeria, dance inclusive could also double as a veritable instrument for the projection of Nigeria's national image thus underscoring the public relations posture of the nation.

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**THEORISING COSTUME AS VISUAL METAPHOR IN THE STAGE  
PERFORMANCE OF *OUR WIVES HAVE GONE MAD AGAIN***

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**Abstract**

Theory is an important aspect of costume research because it serves as a means to interrogate, support and justify why costume as an element is crucial to every stage performance. Costume is an essential feature of any dramatic production because of the visual appearance it gives an actor and the messages it carries. The essence of costume is rooted in the fact that the actor wears it to define his/her characterization to determine age, social status, nationality, culture and gender of the character through the visual appearance of the actor onstage. Costume carries a visual message which the audience sees and judge the performance with in the theatre. This visual representation is largely influenced by Utoh-Ezeajugh's theory of costume which are characterized through style, colour, designs and patterns in which a costume appears. Despite the outstanding role of costumes, some audience members still sees costume as an adornment of the actor in its elaborateness rather than a visual emblem that speaks to audience members metaphorically (directly and indirectly). Quantitative research method applied using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table to determine the sample size of questionnaires administered. Findings revealed that costume as an element in the theatre aid visual interpretation and as such have important tools employed in order to get the audience to understand the character and his/her personality. The study also revealed that beyond mere covering for an actor and embellishment, the success of a performance depends largely on the effective and appropriate use of costume in the theatre.

**Keywords:** Costume, Theory, Visual Metaphor, Communication, Stage Performance

**Introduction**

Costume through its colour, shape and style helps to reveal the (do's and don'ts) of the society through colours (red, black, white, yellow and green). Costumes are used in stage performances to project critical issues through the use of colours like white to connote peace, purple to connote royalty and red to connote danger in order to divulge the characterisation of actors in the theatre. For example, the nature and style of the 'Baban Riga' worn in the Hausa community is different from the 'Agbada' worn in the Yoruba society in Nigeria; also the style by which it is sown also differs and reflects the diversity of various cultures. Costume have been characterised by scholars such as Albert (2006), Daramola (2013), and Efimova (2014) see costume as an element of semiotics (non-verbal language) to connote happenings in the society which include festival celebrations, wedding ceremonies, mourning, rituals etc.

Gillette (2000: 38) posits that, "what a person wears, and how it is worn, says a great deal about that person and the society in which he/she lives". Costume as an element of semiotics aids every performance not just as a sign but as a representation of time, place, weather, situation, mood,

age, character, etc. Costume gives information about an individual's position, status, occupation and therefore helps other people from a different society to understand the role an individual plays in his/her society. For example, the costume worn by the 'Emir' in the Hausa Empire distinguishes his role and responsibility as the leader from the ones worn by the 'Dogari' and also his subjects. These differences in terms of costume can be seen in the colour, the quality of the fabric, the designs and other embellishments on the costume. The costume of the 'Emir' shows his elaborate lifestyle which places him as a noble character in the society.

More so, the generation of meaning from costume comes from the information and understanding people gain from the performance. In other words, the meaning one ascribes to costume depends on previous knowledge and interaction one has with the socio-cultural realities of a particular environment. From recent observations and findings by the researcher, inappropriate application of costumes in play performances has become issues of debate among several researchers, specifically, Ifatimehin (2006), Nwosu (2009) and Utoh-Ezeajugh (2015), who have observed that little attention is paid to as a sign and meaning making system which aid and guide the proper understanding of a performance because costumes help to reveal the identity of characters even before a single dialogue is rendered by an actor on stage. This is why this research aim to justify the importance of theory to costuming using the stage performance of our *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* by identifying, establishing and examining the costumes used in the production and how it communicated to the audience in the theatre. The inability to code non-verbal aspect of a performance leads to misinformation and negative understanding especially when the recipient is not familiar with the cultural background of the performance.

This obviously is why it is important for directors, actors and the entire crew of a performance to conduct a semiotic analysis of the performance for a deeper understanding of costumes to be used in the performance before it is shown to a larger audience. If audience members could not understand the meaning embedded in costumes through symbols or images in a performance, then what is the use of such performance whose sole intention is not just to communicate, but also to educate the viewers? The stage performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* was written by Tracie Chima Utoh, directed by Falade Godstime Abosede who is a deconstructionist director who use eclectic theory (the combination of two or more theories) in achieving her intentions in the performance which was staged on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March, 2018 by the THAP 403 2018 class at the Ahmadu Bello University Studio Theatre (Drama Village) under the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts.

Costume is symbolic with universal meaning based on different cultural understanding and since culture is dynamic, costume therefore can have more than one interpretation thereby changing meanings depending on the context. Despite the outstanding role of costume in performances, it still has continued to delineate in defining characters, relative to function, time and space. Costume is a vital cultural representation which helps to foreground the culture and nature of every given performance when applied in the context of the performance. This calls for a need to resuscitate what is left in and give costume the right attention it needs so people can attribute more meaning to costume than mere adornment. Utoh-Ezeajugh (2015), however, argued that man needed to cover his body from the harsh weather conditions such as cold, snow and rain which leads to using animal skins to cover and protect the body. Costume help actors to project their roles and represent the society which the theatre director wants to reflect appropriately.

### **Conceptualising Costume**

Scholars have define costume in n numerous ways, Bade-Afuye (2015) opines that, "costume is an interpretative tool in play making that compliments appearances of characters during a performance which is meant to serve as a blending factor to the actor's characterisation on stage." Costume in the theatre requires professionalism and adequate research for effective deployment in order to bring about the proper reflection of a society and actualisation of a performance. Costume can be a means for man to define himself, his people and his society. To Vrelli-Zaxou (1994), "costume has become the means of the social differentiation and a means of the self-expression which incorporates a variety of cultural origins based on the principle of rationalism."

Basically, costume defines human nature, profession and society. Throughout many centuries, costume has always been a mode of cultural identification and a sign of social element which

performs a representational role in the society. For example, in Nigeria, *Sango* (the god of thunder) in the Yoruba society is associated with the colour red which means *Sango* is always seen in red to connote fire; while *Obatala* (the god of creation) is synonymous with white colour to portray purity and calmness. These two gods are from the same society but are identified with different colours of costume to portray their roles and functions in the Yoruba society. Ifatimehin (2006) posits that, “costume signifies the difference among a people, characters, priests, booties, courtiers, messengers, warriors, market people, children and women.” Costume is sometimes seen as a signifier of status which is why it is celebrated and cherished by the African people because of its significance to distinguish their gods, masquerades, herbalists or traditionalists etc. and their functions in the society.

In Africa, there are specific costumes worn by masquerades, chief priests or leaders of a community. Jegede (2009) gives an example that, “the Abeti-aja (dog ear-shaped) cap is Yoruba accessory and any man wearing it is more often than not a Yoruba man.” This implies that there are certain costumes worn by specific people and for special occasion because it is an illustration of activities in the society. All age groups depict differentiation through their use of costumes. Costume could be a story telling medium used to establish circumstance and subtle details of the wearer’s economic status because they are visuals which aid a performance for effective role interpretation.

Corroborating Jegede (2009), Bade-Afuye (2015) agrees that, “costumes in the theatre are storytelling tools for communicating details of each character’s personality and status to the audience.” They help actors leave their (own) personalities behind and become new as well as believable characters on screen or stage. It is pertinent to emphasise that costume as an element of semiotics aids the message of a play performance by giving vivid information on the mood and style of the performance through its use of costume because it is capable of revealing the identity and the nature of a character which aids the eloquence and proper understanding of the audience about the performance.

### **Explaining Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh Theory of Costume (2015)**

Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh (2015) in *Costume and Make-up Design in Theatre and Film Productions: The Reality of Make Believe* explained the necessity of theory in costuming and its immense significance to stage/film productions. Utoh-Ezeajugh (2015) opines that, “costume is the most vital and significant element of play production.” This could, according to her, be attributed to the fact that costume is physically worn to aid role interpretation and could easily be recognised in the context of a performance with the artistic and aesthetic interpretation by members of the audience. Costume defines one’s personality and occupation through colour, style or form. An example is the robe worn by a priest in the church to distinguish him from other members in that church as a man of God. Also, the lab coat worn by a doctor, the wig worn by a lawyer and the ‘Khaki’ worn by a soldier are non-verbal elements which could be used in performances to define and differentiate the role and characteristics of one character from the other.

Actors in stage performances use their bodies as tools for interpreting different roles with the aid of other theatre elements such as make-up, lighting, settings, props, backdrops, costumes etc. to bring to life and enhance the messages to be communicated in a more effective way than obtained in the playtext. Utoh-Ezeajugh (2015: 9) averred thus:

Man’s use of costume is thus a reasoned and deliberate attempt to give him psychological leverage. As the only living creature who is aware of his own self, a human being uses his body as a medium of artistic expression by endowing the skin with special significance. Through the use of certain materials and a precise iconography, the body transmits messages, with its adornments symbolising a wide range of meanings. This will explain why a soldier goes to great lengths to wear camouflage.

The researchers also agree with Utoh-Ezeajugh (2015) that stage costumes can exaggerate some aspects of a character and can even reveal information about occupation, climate or time in a theatrical performance. Though, not only soldiers go to a greater length to wear and protect the camouflage as Utoh-Ezeajugh has explained above but most professions cherish and protect their

uniforms as an element of brotherhood which binds them together as a family. Sometimes, in the case of theatrical productions, costumes literally mimic what the costume designer thinks of a character or what a character should wear if the character actually existed, often-stylised theatrical costumes can exaggerate some aspect of a character. Nevertheless, there are some performances which deliberately mimic a profession to correct their ills in the society, depending on the intention of the director (a case of Nigerian policemen as usually seen in some stage and film productions in Nigeria).

Studies have shown that, depending on the functional environmental characteristics and other criteria, costumes in our various societies have numerous functions. Some of these functions are to reflect culture, societal norms, occupation age and days of leisure. They differ morphologically depending on the event. The costume for everyday usage is very practical in its use of colours and without any embroidery and decorative elements. There are of course some regions where a special costume is worn for different occasions. For example, Festival or ritual costumes are traditionally rich in colours and ornamentation. The festive costume is widely used in formal dancing and during festivals of specific periods, while in the case of ritual; the chief priest needs costume to prove his fetish nature, power difference with everyone within a community.

Bade-Afuye (2015) also agrees with Utoh-Ezeajugh (2015) theory on costume and he submits that costume is an interpretative tool that enhances the actor’s appearance in a performance because of the aesthetic pleasure the audience would derive from the costume worn by actors. This is because costume gives the audience specific information about the characterisation of actors and makes it pleasant to the eyes. The colour combination of costumes ought to reflect the mood of the play which will further enhance the understanding and interpretation of the story to the audience. Furthermore, Jegede (2009) reasoned in line with the thoughts of the researchers that, “whichever way a costume is used in the theatre, it must have a degree of communication to both the audience and the characters”. Hence, costume is important in theatrical performance because it reveals the hidden meaning in the characterisation of an actor apart from his/her personality outside the theatre. It also alerts the audience about the performance they are viewing on stage and the society such performance represents.

The method of research adopted is solely quantitative. Ukala (2006: 30) posits that,

a researcher must adopt a tested sampling technique in order to systematise his/her processes of data collection and reduce his/her prospective respondents to a manageable number, which should, nonetheless, be reasonably representative of the research population as a whole.

This research adopts a technique that qualifies and justifies the size and population for this study to represent views and voices of audience members about the performances under study. It is on this basis that this research adopts the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table as presented thus:

**Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population**

**Note:** *N* is Population Size, *S* is Sample Size.

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327

60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

From Krejcie and Morgan table above, the total number of audience who watched the stage performance of *Our Wives have Gone Mad Again* stood at one hundred and twenty four (124). According to Krejcie and Morgan table, if the total number of a giving population is above one hundred and twenty as highlighted in the table above, then the same size remains ninety two (92). Ninety two (92) copies of questionnaire were administered to gather responses and information's for this research and eighty six (86) were filled and returned with the analysis of the data below.

Table 1.0: The costume used in the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* helped to communicate and underscore the roles of the characters in the performances.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Strongly Agree	73	84.8	
Agree	10	11.6	
Disagree	02	2.3	
Strongly Disagree	01	1.1	

Table 1.0 above shows the opinion of the respondents in relation to the costume used in the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*. Hence out of a total number of 86 respondents; 73 (84.8%) of the respondents strongly agree that the use of costume in the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* helps to communicate to the audience to aid understanding of characters like the policeman, the politicians, madam Irene and others. 10 (11.6%) of the respondents agree; 02 (2.3%) of the respondents disagree, while 01 (1.1) of the respondents strongly disagree that the costume used in the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* has helped to communicate and underscore the roles of the characters in the performances.

Observing from the data on table 1.0, the table shows that 02 (2.%) of the respondents disagreed with the fact that the costumes used in the performance did not help to communicate and underscore the roles of characters which further proved the potency and appropriateness of the statement above in table 1.0. Also, from table 1.0, it can be inferred that the highest number of respondents strongly agree that the costumes used in the performance of *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* and *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* explained better the message of the performances. The policeman's uniform and Madam 'Funmi's 'gele, Iro' and 'Buba' in the performances aided the audience understanding of the storyline of the performance as seen in figure 1.0 below.



Figure 1.0: Scene six from the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* with the presidential aspirants and her husband, policemen and other party women wearing costumes that depict characters and professions. As seen in figure 1.0, costumes are used to communicate the setting and geographical background of the performance.

Table 1.1: Did the costumes used in the performance add value or meaning to the performance?

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Strongly Agree	60	69.7	
Agree	11	12.7	
Disagree	08	9.3	
Strongly Disagree	07	8.1	

From table 1.1, the views of respondents show that 60 (69.7%) of the respondents strongly agree that costumes added value or meaning to the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*. As indicated in the table above, 11 (12.77%) of the respondents agree that the costumes added no value or meaning to the performances; 08 (9.3%) disagree with the fact that costume did not add value or meaning to the performances under study; while 07 (8.1%) of the respondents strongly disagree that the costumes used did not add value or meaning to the performances. It can therefore, be deduced that 60 (69.7%) which is the highest number of respondents reveals that the costumes used added meaning and value to the two performances. The police khaki, the white 'Agbada' worn by politicians and the red and black shawl used by Madam Irene's friend in the image on table 1.0 further justifies how costume communicate meaning to audience members in stage performances.

Table 1.2: The costumes used in both performances added to your knowledge about the performances as an audience member.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Strongly Agree	72	83.7	
Agree	09	10.4	
Disagree	03	3.4	
Strongly Disagree	02	2.3	



Table 1.2 indicates that 72 (83.7%) of the respondents strongly agree that the costumes used in the two performances added to the audience knowledge about the performances especially the costume of the policeman as shown in table figure 1.0 which is the fifth scene of the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*. The black 'Jalabiya' worn by 'Hajiya Mairo' helps to distinguish her characterisation from other female actors on stage. The 'Jalabiya' further projects her role with the storyline of the performance as a woman from the Northern part of Nigeria. 'Jalabiya' is symbolic and peculiar to Northern women so when an audience sees a character in it, what quickly comes to mind is that the character is either a Muslim or someone from the North. The 09 (10.4%) of the respondents on table 4.6 also agree that the costumes applied in both performances under study added to the audience knowledge about the performances. 03 (3.4%) number of respondents disagree that costumes added to their knowledge about the performance while 02 (2.3%) of the respondents strongly disagree to the claim that the costumes in the performances appeal to their knowledge as audience members.



Figure 1.1. Scene one from the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* with Hajiya Mairo and Odara her husband.

Colours in costumes also help to reveal the intention of the director in the sense that the types of colours used in costuming to represent characters speak more to the audience about the nature of character. Colour black is perceived to be attributed to evil by some and the image on figure 1.1 seems to justify that while, colour red in some part of Nigeria is known to symbolise danger, blood or disaster because colour red in costume stands for unpleasantness. Madam Ene in the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* is wearing a red costume in figure 1.2 below which signifies to the audience how dangerous her character is and as we can see madam Ene in various scenes in the performance blackmailing other politicians and bribing police officers so she could emerge as the president of the country. Colour is an element of costume which could appear as a sign or a symbol to enhance details and values deeply rooted in performances.



Figure 1.3 Scene five from the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* a policeman in his uniform, Madam Irene and HajiyaMairo dressed in a way that reflects her cultural background.

From Table 1.2, it can therefore be inferred that the respondents were right when they strongly agreed that the costumes adopted in the performance added to the audience knowledge about the performance.

Table 1.3: Costumes used by characters in the stage performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* has helped to prove that appropriate costuming is relevant in every performance.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Strongly Agree	71	82.5	
Agree	05	5.8	
Disagree	06	6.9	
Strongly Disagree	04	4.6	

Table 1.3 shows that 71 (82.5%) of the respondents strongly agree that costumes used by characters in the stage performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* have helped to prove that appropriate costuming is relevant in every performance. While 05 (5.8%) of the respondents agreed that costumes used by characters in the stage performance is appropriate and very relevant. 06 (6.9%) of the respondents also disagree that costumes used by characters in the stage performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* have helped to prove that appropriate costuming is relevant in every performance, while 04 (4.6%) of the respondents strongly disagree about that claim. The costumes described by the playwright in the play-text are actualised by the director and costumier in the performances and it assisted the non-verbal delivery of the messages in both performances. Costumes are symbolic because the styles and designs of the costumes, the colours and manner in which the costume is worn enhanced the meaning which the costume carries. From figure 1.3 and table 1.3, it is therefore imperative to say that using the appropriate costuming is relevant for every character in order to actualise the intended characterisation and sustain the message delivery of the performance.

Table 1.4: Costumes used in the performances helped to announce characters role and relationship with other characters.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Strongly Agree	78	90.6	
Agree	06	6.9	
Disagree	02	2.3	
Strongly Disagree	00	0.0	

The respondents' views in table 1.4 vary in relation to the costumes used in the two performances. While 78 (90.6%) of the respondents strongly agree that the costume helped in the

announcement of the actor's role and their relationship with their characters, 06 (6.9%) of the respondents agree while 02 (2.3%) disagree and 00 (0.0%) strongly disagree. Costumes uses visual elements informs of colours which help to domesticate traditional costumes into some certain cultures. For example, the 'Igbo' culture in Nigeria mostly adopts the use of red, white, black and other colours in their costuming; 'Idoma' culture also use red and black as colours of identity which the culture could be identified with, the 'Tiv' uses black and white colours; which are mostly used in their traditional costumes as a mode of identification with the 'Tiv' culture. Colours therefore, can stand as a sign of representation for various cultures in Nigeria.

Table 1.5: The costume used in the performance enhanced the cultural and occupational aspect of the productions.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Strongly Agree	73	84.8	
Agree	08	9.3	
Disagree	02	2.3	
Strongly Disagree	03	3.4	

A close look at table 1.5 shows that 73 (84.8%) of the respondents are of the view that the costume used in the performance enhanced the cultural and occupational aspects of the productions.08 (9.3%) of the respondents agree while 02 (2.3%) disagree and 03 (3.4%) strongly disagreed. It can therefore be inferred that the highest number 73 (84.8%) of respondents strongly agree that costume application in the two performances enhanced the cultural and occupational aspect of the productions as being reflected in figure 1.0. Costume in figure 1.0 helps to announce characters occupation and relationship with other characters on stage. For example, the image in figure 1.0 displays a man wearing a blue uniform shirt and a black trouser; also, the man standing behind him is wearing a black uniform shirt and green trouser.

The semiotic differentiation in terms of colour between the two men in figure 1.0 is that, the man with the blue uniform shirt is a police man because that is the colour of the Nigerian police uniform and the man on a black uniform shirt is a 'mopol' officer because of his combination of black uniform shirt and a green trouser. The two men described are force men of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, but the difference in the colours of their uniforms assisted the audience knowledge to know the difference between a police officer and a 'mopol' officer. The analysis above between the police officer and the 'mopol' officer is in line with the highest number of the respondents who strongly agree that the costumes used in both performances helped to announce the roles and relationships of other characters in the performance.

Table 1.6: Madam Irene's costume in *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*, helped you to understand her character as a politician in the performance.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Strongly Agree	80	93.0	
Agree	06	6.9	
Disagree	00	0.0	
Strongly Disagree	00	0.0	

Table 1.6 above shows that, 80 (93.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that the costume of Madam Irene in *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* describes her role as a politician in the performance and 06 (6.9%) agree while 00 (0.0%) of the respondents disagree and strongly disagreed that the costumes used by Madam 'Irene' as a character explained her role as a politician in the performance.



Figure 1.4 Scene six from the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* that portrayed Madam Irene as a politician through her costume.

Therefore, it is noted that the highest number of the respondents 80 (93.0%) strongly agreed that the costumes used in figure 1.4 in the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* helps to explain and understand Madam Irene's character as a politician because of her use of 'Agbada' which is a popular outfit synonymous to Nigerian politicians. Costume possesses the power to convince the audience into total beliefs of what they see in the performance. It is certain then that costume is an element in the theatre that aid visual interpretation and as such have important tools employed in order to get the audience to understand the character and his/her personality. It is also worthy to note that the success of a performance can largely depend on the effective and appropriate use of costume.

Conclusively, the evidence gathered in this study reveals that costume in stage performances carry solid messages which largely depends on audience point of view. Costume as an element of performance assisted in communicating meaning through colour, style, texture which further enhance the mood, culture and gender of characters in the performance of *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*.

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(10)

## APPRAISING TECHNICAL COMPONENTS OF INDIGENOUS FILM INDUSTRY IN AKWA IBOM STATE: THE GLOBAL RELEVANCE

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### Abstract

The Creative Arts thrives in a socially responsible environment where meeting point exist between theory and practice, hence, this research endeavour on "Appraising Technical Components of Indegineous Film Industry in Akwa Ibom State: The Global Relevance." Right from the beginning of theatrical, and later, video film activities, the need for application of one form of technical component or the other has been on the increase. However, within Akwa Ibom State indigeneous film industry, the rate of technological application and advancement in filmology can simply be classified as slow. This paper therefore aims at appraising the technical components as well as the global relevance of the indigeneous film industry in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria with a view of proffering recommendations for the way forward. To accomplish this task, the researcher utilised both the primary and secondary sources of data collection. Interviews, observations and experimentations constituted the primary source while textbooks, journals, magazines, internet materials and other published works constituted the secondary source. In conclusion, this research endeavour avers that, though the standard of the technical components of indigeneous film industry in Akwa Ibom State is seemingly low, it can be improved upon if the recommendations proffered herein are adhered to for the benefit of scholars, students and film makers. Based on the above, this article recommends amongst others that for the quality of technical components of the film industry in Akwa Ibom State to be improved in furtherance of high quality films in the state culminating to higher revenue from the industry, the services of professional technical directors and their crew members should be employed.

**Key Words:** Appraising, Technical, Components, Indegineous, Film, Industry, Global, and Relevance

### Introduction

The genealogy of indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State birth from the historical perspective of the film industry in Nigeria now with the nomenclature of Nollywood. At its inception, the Nigerian film industry was seen as a glorified theatre because theatrical activities were recorded for home consumption as a result of upsurge of insecurity in the country. However, special interest was not accorded the technical components of the indigenous firm industry other than what was realizable for the stage performances in the country as at that time.

This became the tradition of indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State as an upshot of Nigerian film industry. One of the major reasons adduced this shortcoming is probably because of most the those involved in the task of film making in Akwa Ibom State in particular and Nigeria at large were and still are not academically trained professionals, hence, oblivious of the existence of the different professional areas in theatre practice as well as in film making. In buttressing this position, Ekwuazi avers thus:

However, the home video did not become a commercial proposition till *living in Bondage* and *Circle of Doom* were released. Each of these two films was instantly reduced to a basic formula and recycled and nauseam. All manner of entrepreneurs and artists, anyone with a nose for quick money, made a bee line for the industry: the Nigerian 'gold rush' was on course! The consequence was an industry with an

inherent capacity to overheat; an industry with a peculiar paradigm of power: the emergence of the marketer – product – (casting) director potentate (132).

This and many other issues related to the technical components of film making in Nigeria, the indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State and its technical components as well as the global relevance of this sector of the economy vis-à-vis the gross domestic and gross national products of Nigeria are closely examined in this work.

### **The Relevance of Technical Components in Film Production**

It is a truism that the technical components in film production are as important as the actors/actresses, the director and even the producer in film making process. This is so because, according to Senett, making a movie requires the help of a lot of people, so their advice, assistance, and cooperation (25). Research has revealed that this scenario transcends national, continental and even global configurations. It is in this regard that Sennett further expounds:

The birth of the production designer, as a title distinct from the older one of art director, occurred as a result of the increasing complexity of filmmaking during the fifties. As special effects became more sophisticated and storytelling more realistic, tasks needed to be done above and beyond that of mere set design. This was especially true since, with the breakdown of the studio system, each project had to be developed from scratch. In addition, there was a rise in the amount and kind of location work required for a prestige picture. In the end, the production designer became the Chief Executive of visual aspects of the film. No greater examples exist of the importance and power of the modern-day production designer than the three films... *Laurence of Arabia*, *Apocalypse Now*, and *Empire of the Sun* (156).

The above is a testimony of the relevance of the production designer in Hollywood film production, hence a confirmation of the global Scenario. In his contribution, with regard to the Nigerian film industry, Adeoye avers that, “the need for the application of technical designs in Nollywood productions to resonate, engage and experiment with the cultural essence of the Nigerian society, including its physical space, cannot be overemphasized” (47). Meaning that the designs in Nollywood movies productions must be in conformity with Nigeria cultural dictates; that is “the design should be sufficiently guided by the rich moral and ethical values of the Nigerian people, basically to tally with the locality it derives from” (Shimsenge & Gbilekaa 160). This is an audacious testimony of the fact that film production process anywhere in Nigeria and the world at large is effort in futility without the conscious application of technical components of one form or the other. A meticulous examination of the available technical components in film production as presented below will suffice the objective of this research endeavour.

### **The Identified Technical Components in Film Production**

In contemporary era which is generally regarded as the era of digitalisation, Performing Arts practice in which film production is among revolves around the potency of technology. The conscious application of the technical aids in the process of film production is what is referred to as the technical components in film production. Just like the theatre practice in which “technical aids are elements used in theatrical presentation usually to give depth and meaning to the artistic fare” (Ododo 154). Hanmakyugh avers that, “the accelerating pace of technology today has made common, products such as computers, high definition cameras and digital film projectors which were not available several decades ago” (134). These are the salient ingredients of the technical components in film production. Furthermore,

the technology of motion pictures is based not only on the prior invention of still photography but also on a combination of several more or less independent technologies; that is camera and projector design, film manufacture and processing, sound recording, lighting and light measurement” (Handzo et al. *Online*).

In recent times, a good number of impactful inventions have been brought to bear in the process of film production. One of this significant inventions in furtherance of improved technical components in filmology is the invention of “the steadicam camera support system which enables the camera operator to move about or even run about with the camera devoid of camera shakes and jostles experienced as when the camera is operated hand held” (Hanmakyugh 133). It is strongly within this premise that a seasoned scholar and practitioner in Film Directing and Cinematography, Hanmakyugh asserts that, “technology has continuously altered the landscape of film production even as at today, new technologies are gradually replacing the analogue tradition. These major innovations are clearly in: a) Cinematography/Camera; b) Post Production; and c) Distribution/Exhibition” (138).

From the foregoing, it becomes quite glaring that the identified technical components in film production include but not limited to all the technologically related areas in filmology such as camera, lens, lighting, sound, scene design/location equipment, sceneries/props generation and handling, costumes and makeup generation and application, editing and mass production equipment as well as distribution and exhibition process. This is a clear testimony that the success of contemporary film industry in Nigeria at large and Akwa Ibom State in particular strongly revolves around the quality of the technical components applied in the process of film making.

### **Appraising the Technical Components of Indigenous Film Industry in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria: The Global Relevance**

Within the Nigerian film industry otherwise referred to as Nollywood, the indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State constitute a remarkable percentage as films are chuned out regularly both in English and Ibibio languages. It is based on this premise that this paper aims at appraising the technical components of indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria vis-à-vis the global relevance based on the following outline:

- i. Indigenous Film Industry in Akwa Ibom State: Historical Perspective.
- ii. The Technical Components of Indigenous Film Industry in Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. The Global Relevance of Indigenous Film Industry in Akwa Ibom State.
- iv. Summary of Findings
- v. Conclusion
- vi. Recommendations

### **The Historical Perspective of Indigenous Film Industry in Akwa Ibom State**

Akwa Ibom State is said to be the highest oil producing State in Nigeria as at 2020 with the population of over 5 million people. The State was created on 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, 1987 by the Military Administration of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. The State consists of 31 Local Government Areas and is one of the 36 States that make up Nigeria as a country (<https://en.wikipedia.org>). Akwa Ibom State is blessed with rich cultural heritage. According to a rich historical compendium entitled “Akwa Ibom State at Thirty: A Historical Journey,” edited by Umoren and others, the culture of the people of the State is cross sectional, spanning the entire State and depicting their common origin. There is the Ekpo Society, Ekpe Society, Ekong, Atat (for men) and Ebre and Ibaan Isong (for women) to mention but a few. The people’s dress sense, foods, dances, marriage systems, folklores, proverbs and several other traditions are indeed the same. This makes minor dialectical and cultural variations amongst the people of the various communities, which arises from environmental and migration differences inconsequential in terms of their march to unity (27). The above postulation speaks volumes about the contents of the indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State because,

every Nigerian culture carries with it popularly accepted values that are positive elements of the people and which can further draw interest and give acceptable message about the culture through Nollywood as cultural product. This is why Nigeria being a monticules society is believed to be a source for popularly acceptable cultures that are aesthetically potent to sustain the popularity of Nollywood among its teeming patrons (265).



Indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria is therefore regarded as a conscious selection and packaging of the rich cultural heritage of the State in form of motion pictures though not completely devoid of omissions and (or) misrepresentations which is not peculiar to the State. The origin of the film industry in Akwa Ibom State can be traced to the first attempt in this direction made by a popular comedian in the State known as Mr. Emmanuel Eyo, otherwise called Funny Man. According to the founding president of Akwa Ibom United Entertainers' Foundation (AKUEF) in the person of Evangelist Emmanuel Etukudoh, popular known as Ekarika Adia Ubok Nnasia, who is one of the pioneer popular actors in the State, Mr. Emmanuel Eyo produced his first ever Akwa Ibom indigenous film in year 2000 and the second in year 2002 (Oral interview).

From the above mentioned pioneer (index) efforts by Mr. Emmanuel Eyo, Akwa Ibom indigenous film industry grew from the State of humble beginning to the present status where it has gained global recognition. Some of these artistes that have made indelible mark on the sand of time include the following, among others: Emem Isong, Ini Edo, Kenneth Ekanem, Moses Eskor, Moses Armstrong, Emmanuel Etukudoh (alias. Ekarika Adia Ubok Nnasia), Ime Bishop (alins Okon Lagos), Ekere Nkanga, Rose Diamond, Princes Rex, Tonny Dekklan, Emmanuel Eyo (alias Funny Man), Ubon Moses, Aniebiet Francis, Eno Ekwere, Benedict Ubi, Prince Jimmy, Prince Iyke, Princess Mabel Sam, Ini Ikpe, Itoro Ekanem, Okon Jacob, to mention but a few of them. Before the emergence of Akwa Ibom Entertainers' Foundation in 2016, there exist two professional film bodies in the state, namely: Akwa Ibom/Cross River Movie Makers Association (ASIMA) and Akwa Ibom/Cross River Actors' Forum (ACIF). It is clearly on record that though these two Monbone professional film bodies could not be resocitated due to internal squabbles, they had made indelible marks on the sand of time as far as indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State is concerned.

With regard to the technical components of indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State, suffice it to say that the industry is still grappling with the low rated technological film making equipment except in very few cases where modern day sophisticated equipment are either hired or borrowed to realise a specified effect and production objective.

### **The Technical Components of Indigenous Film Industry in Akwa Ibom State**

As obtainable in other parts of Nigeria and the world at large, the technical components of indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State comprise the application of the needed technological aids in the process of film making. Unlike theatre practice in which live performances are presented before live audiences, film marking is more technical oriented than the theatre because the process begins with technological equipment at the recording stage (Film Shoot) and ends with technology in form of editing, mass production premiering, marketing and exhibition.

Indigenous film making in Akwa Ibom follows these processes but the difference lies in the quality, the grade and the currency of the technical equipment because technology is dynamic in nature. To corroborate this postulation, Mamer avers thus:

Analog video technologies changed the industry in the 1980s, and digitized video technologies just further accelerated this incredible transformation. The first edition of Film Production Technique was an unapologetic introduction to undiluted motion picture technology. With the continued convergence of film and video, however, more and more video technology has been integrated... (xix).

Among all the recognisable technical components of film production, the camera appears to be most affected in terms of technological dynamism and frequency in utilisation. Zettle postulates that,

the most obvious production element-the camera – comes in all sizes and configurations. Some cameras are so small that they fit easily into your coat pocket, whereas others are so heavy that you have to strain yourself to fit them onto a camera mount (8).

To further buttress this postulation, with regard to the dynamics in technical components of film making and camera evolution, Mamer further avers thus:

In the late 1880s, Thomas Edison and W. L. K. Dickson produced what now constitutes the basic mechanism of the motion picture camera. The phenomenon that allows us to perceive a series of still images as a continuous representation of motion is based on the idea that the human eyes will hold an image for a split second. For an example, look at a light bulb for a few seconds and then look away, the eye will hold the imprint of that light for a short period. When presented with a succession of images, each one making a momentary imprint, the eye blurs them into movement (84).

In the same vein, Bordwell and Thompson inform us:

Motion pictures are so much a part of our lives that it's hard to imagine a world without them. We enjoy them in theatres, at homes, in offices, in cars and buses, and on airplanes. We carry films with us in our laptops, tablets, and cellphones. Press a button, and a machine conjures up movies for your pleasure. Films communicate information and ideas, and they show us places and ways of life we might not otherwise know (2).

The history of filmmaking globally has clearly revealed that films are not made by accident but "are designed to create experience for viewers" (Bordwell & Thompson 2). Furthermore, filmmaking has experienced drastic revolution mostly through camera evolution which has transcended through celluloid camera recording with different films ranging from 8mm, 16mm and 35mm through analogue to the era of digital cameras. It has evolved different models made from different companies. Such include Sony CV-2000; Sony AV. 3400; Panasonic NV-3085; Sony AV 5000; Panasonic NV-3160; and JVC PV- 4 800u. It has therefore evolved from VHS, Hi8, DV, HDV (using camcorder) to the present day cinematic revolution using DSLR Cameras to record format ranging from 51D, HD, Full HD, 2k, 3k, 4k, 4.5k, 6k, 8k and 11k. Such DSLR cameras includes Canon 'D' and 'C' series, Black magic series, Red series, to mention but a few of them.

In the global market, there are certain companies that are renowned in camera manufacturing and marketing. Some of these companies include the following amongst others: Sony, JVC, Panasonic, Nikon Cannon, Olympus, Konica, Fuji Colour, Pinhobe Camera, Black Magic, and Red Dragon, among others. All these companies constantly come out with different models hence the availability of over five hundred (500) different camera models in the world today.

In Akwa Ibom State, in particular, Nigeria and the world at large, the art of filmmaking is a recent phenomenon compared with other media. In corroboration to this assertion, Bordwell and Thompson opine that,

film is a young medium. Painting, literature, dance, and theatre have existed for thousands of years, but film was invented only a little more than a century ago. Yet in its comparatively short span, the new comer has established itself as an energetic and powerful art (1).

Being a new art in a developing society, filmmaking has suffered tremendous blows in Akwa Ibom State and similar communities in Nigeria most especially with regard to the technical components in which camera is a major aspect. This implies that filmmaking in Akwa Ibom State is made difficult due to lack of sponsors, producers and filmmaking equipment. According to Ndifreke Charlie, a renowned Director of Photography (DOP) and a proficient editor in Uyo:

Here in Akwa Ibom State, we are trying our best to be up to date in filmmaking but the finances needed are not available because we lack sponsors and promoters as obtainable in foreign countries and even other states in Nigeria. Technologies in

filmmaking change almost yearly. Here in Akwa Ibom State, we have the talents but lack the required equipment and sponsors. So, I can say that the dynamic nature of technology actually affects our indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State (Oral Interview).

The implication here is that in spite of the abundance of talents of acting in sons and daughters of Akwa Ibom State, the quality of films made in the State remain considerably low hence the setbacks experienced in Akwa Ibom Indigenous film industry at the moment.

### **The Global Relevance of Indigenous Film Industry in Akwa Ibom State**

It is a truism that Akwa Ibom State is blessed with abundant human resources (actors, actresses; makeup, costume, scene, lighting and sound designers); but the indigenous film industry dwindles in the State due to low standard of technical components, lack of competent producers and willing sponsors. These actors and actresses of Akwa Ibom origin have so far gained national and international recognition. Some of these artistes that have made indelible mark on the sand of time include the following, among others: Emem Isong, Ini Edo, Kenneth Ekanem, Moses Eskor, Moses Armstrong, Emmanuel Etukudoh (alias, Ekarika Adia Ubok Nnasia), Ime Bishop (alias Okon Lagos), Ekere Nkanga, Rose Diamond, Princes Rex, Tonny Dekkian, Emmanuel Eyo (alias Funny Man), Ubon Moses, Aniebiet Francis, Eno Ekwere, Benedict Ubi, Prince Jimmy, Prince Iyke, Princess Mabel Sam, Ini Ikpe, Ito Ekanem, Okon Jacob, to mention but a few.

In the same vein, since the production and marketing of the first Akwa Ibom indigenous film entitled *Kufre Ima* which was produced by Emmanuel Eyo and was shot with Camcorder camera marketed by Branny Video, a good number of other films have been short. Some of these Akwa Ibom indigenous films include the following, among others: *Iban Iba*, produced by Rose Diamond; *Final Obonganwan*, produced by Rita Paul; *Landlord*, produced by Rita Paul; *Ifak*, produced by Aniebiet Francis; *Ekpa Mkpud*, produced by Ubon Moses; and *Obuma*, produced by Prince Iyke. Titles produced by Prince JTT Jude include *Queen Nene* (2013), *Existence* (2014), *Isua Usiene* (2015), *Nkwa Itong* (2017), and *Blood* (2020). Other titles produced in Akwa Ibom State include *Iso Jehova*, *Oga Alone*, *Nsido*, *Ndito Keke*, *Edima*, *Nsini*, *Eka Abasi*, *Mkpo Ufok*, *Obonganwan*, and *Kufre Imain School*, among many others.

Furthermore, in the process of continuous strive in furtherance of gaining global relevance, indigenes of Akwa Ibom State have ventured into the aspect of establishing Film Academics in the state some which include Creative Media Arts Academy, (now moribund), Royal Arts Academy established by Emem Isong, and Valid Film and Advertising Academy, established by Uwemedimo Atakpo, a renowned Professor of Theatre and Film Studies in the Departments of Theatre Arts, University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria.

From the above discourse on the artistes, titles of indigenous Akwa Ibom films, and attempts to establish film academic in Akwa Ibom State, the issue of the global relevance of indigenous film industry in the State is not in doubt, but the issue is that more should be done in this direction towards improving the quality of films produced in Akwa Ibom State which will in turn improve accruable income in the industry in furtherance of turning Akwa Ibom State indigenous film industry into a “Gold Mine” where appreciable and substantial income would be generated towards improved Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the state thereby making the industry a centre of attraction where many youths and elders of the state would find refuge.

### **The Problems of Akwa Ibom State Indigenous Film Industry**

Akwa Ibom State Indigenous Film Industry is greatly bedeviled by problems. According to Jude, an indigenous film producer, director and editor in the state, “one of the major problems affecting Akwa Ibom State indigenous film industry is hatred among the practitioners. Another problem besetting the industry is leadership problem. The above simply means that there is no love and corporation amongst the practitioners.

In his own opinion, Ndifreke Charles maintains that lack of sponsorship culminating to shortage of funds and poor technological equipment/facilities for film production is another major problem hindering the progress of indigenous film industry in Akwa Ibom State. This research has

also revealed that another very important problem besetting Akwa Ibom State Indigenous Film industry is that of marketing. Speaking on this problem, a renowned continuity practitioner in the state in the person of Comfort Williams (Commy Wills) avers that film marketing is a serious problem that film practitioners are facing in Akwa Ibom State. If effective and efficient marketing strategy is made possible in the state, then film production would become a lucrative venture thereby improving and increasing the availability of funds leading to improved quality of indigenous films produced in Akwa Ibom State.

### **The Prospects of Akwa Ibom State Indigenous Film Industry**

In spite of the multiple problems and challenges that Akwa Ibom State indigenous film industry is grappling with, the prospects of the industry in the State are bright and encouraging. The prospects of Akwa Ibom State indigenous film industry are therefore hinged on the ground that talented actors and Actresses are in abundance within Akwa Ibom State. The State is blessed with stars and other talented actors and actresses. With these seasoned artistes, the State has a very bright future in becoming a leading State in Nigerian film industry.

In the same vein, Akwa Ibom State is a State with exquisite locations naturally suitable for different and diverse scenes for different genres of films. These locations are so wonderful such that when film makers from neighbouring and other States visit Akwa Ibom State for film shooting and other film activities, they openly confess to this fact and wish they had such in their states. If these locations were maximally utilized, Akwa Ibom State would take over the Nigerian film industry. Finally, in Akwa Ibom State, there exist experienced designers in film production such as scene, lighting, sound, costumes and makeup designers. If the activities of these designers are adequately synergised, the State would remain in the front line of Nollywood successes.

### **Conclusion**

The conclusion this research endeavour therefore emphasis the fact that Akwa Ibom State Indigenous Film Industry as come to stay for good and that in spite of the myriad of challenges face in the Industry by the practitioners, the future of this aspect of our economic sector is full of expected successes if the human as well as natural endowment abound in the State are judiciously utilized.

### **Recommendations**

From the above research outcome, this article proffers some salient recommendations in furtherance of the sustainable growth and development of Akwa Ibom State indigenous film industry. Some of these recommendations include the fact that they should be change of mindset of the practitioners in Akwa Ibom State industry from that of hatred and jealousy to that of love and team work. The second proffers by this work lies on fact that film production is capital intensive; therefore, the government and prosperous individual within the State should see the need to assist and sponsor different activities of film production in the State.

Furthermore, different designers of the Film Industry in the State are the practitioners and the custodian of the technical component of Akwa Ibom State indigenous film industry. Therefore they should be trained and retrained both internally and globally. Finally, seminar and workshop should be frequently organised to expose film makers in Akwa Ibom State to the modern marketing strategies aim and improving the financial base of the industry in the State.

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**THEATRE OF LOCATING THE DISLOCATION FOR SOCIAL  
REFORMATION: A DISCOURSE ON BEN BINEBAI'S *DRUMS OF THE  
DELTA***

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**Abstract**

Dislocation is an external manner. The term dislocation took its root from the biological sciences. It occurs when an extra form is put in an assignment, allowing the ends of two connected bones to separate. They are flexible bands of fibrous tissues that connects serious bones and cartilage. In essence, when force is applied to set free a force that had dislocated a body, it becomes a negative dislocating force. Dislocation is an unbalancing presence in both human body and society when it is applied negatively. It also functions as a health stabilizing force, and a force for social balance when appropriated by a possible sense. This theoretical praxis is believed by many scholars to be experienced positively and negatively. The same negative force attracts positive negativism to attain freedom. In theatre, most people had argued that theatre or performance is merely for entertainment, therefore, cannot reform the society. Many plays had been written on the subject of social reformation. Scholars had also been writing about drama and social reformation but this has not been adequately extended to Ben Binebai's *Drum of the Delta*. Therefore, this paper attempts to critically examine Ben Binebai's *Drum of the Delta* as a play of social reformation. The struggle for self-determination is a consciousness that has been allied to the people of the Niger Delta over the years. The clamour for liberation of perceived social economic, environmental and political oppression by the Niger Delta has been on increase in recent years.

**Introduction**

Dislocation is a theory of alienation of bad condition in the body through the same dislocating methodological approach. Dislocation expresses itself in a literary space that exposes vices and rendered it powerless. It displaces the evil creep of the tyrant and antagonist and negotiates the location of better deals. A dislocated society is an unbalanced society. A society in which majority of its citizens had denied freedom and protection. This goes to negate the law of physical universe. Binebai postulates thus:

The application of this theory to theatre practice and dramatic literature is based on the fact that the playwright is seen as a literary physician that makes the diagnosis of the sick society and use the physical stage as a clinic of examination and eradication of ailment. He is a literary physician who presents a health cheque history of a society, sometimes showing how the sickness came about, and proffer solution to the sickness which had dislocated the society; which made the playwright a doctor.

The playwright uses artistic beams to produce images of dislocations. The protest fought against it, using the legitimate stage. It is a drama that raises voice against philosophy, believe, opinion, political dogmas, unhealthy literary works that results in the dislocation of the people. This is a protest drama that possesses a genius revolution temperament. It captures significant dreams and transforms them into a concrete reality. This theory speaks pleasantly for the down-trodden and does propaganda for the magnificent for the human physe in African. It is a theory of weapons that put out a dislocating force in all possible manifestation.

Diseases, accident, spiritual crimes, curses, politic, culture, economical terrorism, marginalization and oppression present themselves as social agent of dislocation. Theatre as a space for reconstructing the society has invoked social reformation in Nigerian space. Social reformation had been a major concern of many in the society despite the angle it is being viewed. People all over the world want a society that favours them in one way or the other. Some want a classless society, while some want a society that is dominated by the rich, some societies that grant equal right to women argue that women enjoyed 40% of what men enjoy. Others, however, are of the opinion that both sexes should be separated to others. Security is the major concern including social justice, political equality, moral justice, freedom of choice among others. All these had given rise to social and deviant behavior such as rioting, strike actions, seminars, propaganda and demonstration.

Playwrights however are not left out of agitation for social change. The method carried by playwrights concerning social reformation is literary. The playwrights use the theatre space to locate dislocations of the society for social reformation. This is the major concern of this paper which focuses on the strategies employed by playwrights to assert social change. Playwrights have used their craftsmanship and theatre as an instrument for social change, youth's empowerment, women liberation, and political propaganda. This however had a negative and a positive influence. In most cases due to the negative nature and radicalism, or the extreme playwrights are banned from writing (staging). Nigeria dramaturgy today has wrought through many faces from generation concerned with cultural awareness to that of social and gender equality (Binebai, 2012).

Most playwrights have their plays rooted in the failure of government and disillusionment of the politicians after the colonial era (Rotimi et al. 2004); for instance, Ola Rotimi's *Kurunmi* and Wole Soyinka's *The Jero Plays*. The generations of playwrights that came after the civil war were more radical than their predecessors. The society is constantly changing, primarily because it consists of living and thinking people who are constantly changing and adapting to their personal relationship. Our society is constructed from living materials, each brick in the wall having its own store of experiences and ideas. Marxism attempts to account for the process of social change by using the idea of class conflict as the social dynamic that underpries such change.

Bode Sowande, a renowned Marxist playwright, had written a lot of plays based on the theme of social reformation. Bode Sowande's *Flamingo*, John Pepper Clark's *The Wives' Revolt*, Ola Rotimi's *Hopes of the Living Dead*, and Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun* (1982), all have deep rooted foundation on the philosophy that change is attainable when there is protest for revolution, and solidarity is attained when the revolution is genuine and unbiased.

Social reformation had lingered through the ages and has become a central theme in recent times. As a result of the foregoing, this study poses the following questions: What is Social Reformation? What is theatre? What is drama? What is location and dislocation? What is the relationship between theatre, drama, location, dislocation and social reformation? How is Ben Binebai able to portray social, moral, economic and political reformation in *Drums of the Delta*? These questions will help us in understanding the roles of Nigerian playwright in reconstructing the Nigerian nation.

The play genre of literature is a very powerful medium that operates in two fundamental values. These are the aesthetic function and utilization. It came into existence during legitimate theatre, these are the traditional values tied to literature practice. Plays have been embraced as an acceptable medium for social reformation and crusade. The drama on stage has created and recreated stories of the past in history into capturing performances. It functions as the custodian of people's culture and history.

The implication of the function of the play is that it's a potential for the best presentation and preservation of culture and traditional identity and naturalism of the people. The play like every other art, is a form of cultural vehicle. It has an embodiment of all cultural elements of the society that produce it. In this very study, we shall critically examine the social change that play gives to the resolution of militancy in the Niger Delta region, using the impacts of Ben Binebai's *Drum of the Delta* in re-engineering and re-orienting the government and the youths in the region.

## **Social Reformation**

Social reformation had been a subject of discourse to many critics and reviewers not leaving behind playwrights of social realism tradition. The meaning of the words social reformation is derived from the combination of two words: *reform* and *social*. In order to understand the meaning of these words, it is necessary to dissect and define these words separately. The word, reformation, is reform. According to *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, Reform as a noun is “a change that is made to a social system” (983). This definition is backed by *Wikipedia*, an online based *Encyclopaedia*; reform is defined as an act of making changes or an act of correcting, improving and amending something (Haralumbus 677). For one to effect change, it has to come with a result of dissatisfaction with a certain state of affairs or condition. On the other hand the word social refers to the interaction of organism with other organisms and collective co-existence irrespective of the interaction. It is voluntary or involuntary (*Wikipedia* 3). This implies that social interaction in the society is continuous because voluntary or involuntary there is always an interaction. In the analysis of Aristotle:

Man by nature is a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human society is something that precedes the individual that cannot lead. The common life or is as self-sufficient as not to, need to, and therefore does not partake of society, as either a beast or god (Mondal 1).

Angala further explained that, “man is a gregarious animal who must co-exist with human creature in groups” (Angala 16). This implies that man while living in his social environment tries as much as possible to adapt to certain condition that naturally might be unfavorable and terrifying to him. For this reason, he tries to amend his environment to suit his living condition is called social reformation. The various attempts carried out to define social reformation only appeals to that particular field of study. To an architect, social reformation means the structural transformation of the architectural and design layouts of the society (Iheanacho 16). In the words of Ekpenyong, as a socialist, social reformation means positive moment aimed at changing certain area of the society including the social, economic, political and moral sectors by social group (21).

This unique ability of combining these theories, practice, in dialogue is only peculiar in the playwright. Playwrights use their skills to speak about social reformation through dramas, especially in satires when they mock the ills of the society and in tragedies our common fate. Chidi Amuta believes that in Nigeria, “playwrights incorporate Marxist aesthetics in their dramas and make elaborate use of the Epic theatre as was proposed by Bertolt Brecht” (5).

The use of these theories in dramaturgy enhances social movements. Brecht is of the opinion that for an artist to influence his society, he must turn away from popular stage and move his performance to a neighborhood where he can meet people who are interested in changing society for the people of conscientization (Gbilekaa 45). These social movements are aimed at making gradual changes or change in certain aspects of the society rather than rapid fundamental changes (*Wikipedia*). This draws us to the difference between social movement and social revolution. Social revolution seeks to uproot unfavorable social condition radically. Social revolution is not something that is created and carried out by political elite, but rather by ordinary people who change the way they think and the way they live, argues (Bernsttence 9). Benford narrowed and compared social movements to drama when he asserts that social movements are replete with drama. He defines social movements as dramas in which protagonist and antagonist clash as they seek to affect advanced interpretations of power relation in various institutional domains (11).

Drawing from craftsman’s dramaturgical perspective, he states that, “the theatre provides a metaphor for analyzing everyday life” (20). Social movement scholars and social critics have examined how activist in playwright construct and communicate deviance in a fashion that potentially impacts on social change. This entails deploying dramatic tactics that capture the attention of media, audience and the general public. Playwrights employ a variety nonviolent direct action tactics including launching a travelling theatres that entertain the general public on their beliefs and way of thinking, in other to win them into their way of thinking to impact social change (21).

On the contrary, many of these tactics receive violent response from their opponents. These include placing bans on theatrical performance, arresting playwrights. Brecht proposes that for the



theatre to serve as a tool for locating the dislocation for social change, it must not reflect a society that is static; rather, characters and actions that are prone to change in a society that is historically produced. Be it gradual or radical, the end result determined if it is a reformation. However, many are of the opinion that social reformation can only come by changing the normal behavioral pattern of individual or religion. It is only when an individual changes the conception of his environment before he can move for the reformation of his society.

Marx and Engel are of the opinion that the ultimate force in the evolution of social determines the evolution of morals and of an economic nature (Edward 18). This theory of historical materialism which is based on the belief that the economic state of a society determines how reformation is being carried out in a society has manifested in dramaturgy. Brecht presented the society and lifestyle on stage, through Epic theatre in a way that he urges and indulges the audience to judge and decide if certain social norms are right. By engaging the actors in distancing themselves from the character they portray, able to distance the audience from the performance and critically study the situation. Gbilekaa affirms that the objective of the Epic theatre is to stipulate the Epic audience into thinking through a process of questions and answers. He quotes Brecht:

The Epic theatres spectator say: I'd never have thought it... that's not the way... that's extra ordinary; hardly believable... it's got to stop... the suffering of this man appalls to me, they are unnecessary... that's great art: nothing obvious in it. I laugh when they weep, and weep when they laugh (43).

Considering Marx's dialectical materialism, Brecht further argue that, the conflict that consumes the dramatic hero does not emanate from his freewill rather it is as a result of the structure of the contradiction of the economic, political or social forces that determines his action. The character is not free at all; he is an object-subject. Thus, dramatic action is a product of social relation. In Nigeria, Femi Osofisan imbibed and incorporated this theory in his plays. Gbilekaa puts it thus:

Osofisan's plays are about the first body of literary dramas that devotes their theories to the problems of the peasants and the working class. Viewing drama as a medium of instruction, he has created a unique theatre where he seeks to rouse this audience into critical awareness of the prevailing social decadence and thus, move them into taking appropriate actions. He achieves this by providing into the basic causes societal maladies at the same time proffering solutions as to how society malady can be overcome. His plays therefore consistently attract all forms of corruption, oppression, injustice and tyranny (74).

Gbilekaa further stated that as a social crusader with an optimistic vision of the future, he views it with a lot of hope. Believing that the collective action of people once aroused can bring back to perfection the pandemonium that is the order of the day. In other words, through collective endeavor of the people, aviable democratic social order is created. Marxist dialectical materialism is manifested in Binebai's *Drums of the Delta*. The major conflict behind the social movements in the play is purely economical. Major Isaac Boro and his revolutionary groups want transformation in their society, especially economic, political and environmental reformations.

The reason been that they are the ones producing the oil that sustains the economy of the country, yet they are being neglected, exploited and brutally oppressed by the Federal Government. The Federal Government connived with the oil companies to wage war against the revolutionary groups as well as molest their women, rape their daughters and render their children homeless, hopeless and helpless.

In *Hopes of the Living Dead*, the movement carried out by the lepers is non-violence. Though it shares similar fate with the characters of the rejected people in *Drums of the Delta*, the lepers did not engaged in attacking the hospital officials rather because they have a selfless leader. Boro in the *Drums of the Delta*, who fought for them, rejected every bride and accepted every form of humiliation and tortures in other to achieve their set goals. Because they fought with their hearts, kept the faith and never believed on compromise, they were able to reform their society. The lepers were granted a

place where they could cultivate and never depend on the government for their livelihood while the Niger Deltans handed down resource control.

### **Drama**

Drama as a means of communication seeks to widen the frontiers of knowledge of men on the genesis of social actions and their consequences. Society, which comprises of the people, institutions and environment, is dynamic and any alterations or change after the way of the people live as well as relate. The various products of meetings and activities of people in the society form the culture of the society. This culture is the way of live, of a given people in a specific period. This way of life comprises all the values, ideas, beliefs and creative society. Drama may be documented history of a group of society with the intent that the interpretation may influence perception and human action. The tool of this transmission of the struggle of man to tame nature is the dramatist. The playwright seeks to modify the socio-cultural processes. Drama is a word of art which delineates human life and activity through the presentation of action by means of dialogue between groups of characters though a literacy work, drama is mainly designed to be acted on stage. This is the reason it is referred to as the playwright's art.

The word, "drama," originated from the Greek word, dram, which means to do or to act. It encompasses all written plays irrespective of form or genres. Drama, according to a renowned playwright and antic, John Dryden, in his definition of drama, states that a "play ought to be a just and lively image of human nature, producing the passion and humors and the changes of fortune to which it is subject for the delight and instruction of man-kind". Aristotle, in his definition of drama; emphasizes the concept of mimesis, which means imitation of human being in action. He conceives of drama as story acted out by people on a stage before an audience, who should better be described as percipients because drama is an expressive designed mainly for our perception.

Nigerian independence was not only welcomed with wine music and dance but was also loudly applauded and welcomed by our literary celebrities. A society that is made up of diverse brains should always be ready to receive different ideas from the head that owns the brains. These ideas are constituted as a result of human conscious of his immediate environment. In modern usage, the word ideology is derived from the word ideas. Ideology came as a result of ideas of one person when accepted by a group of persons and not the entire society. Even in that group, there is bound to be different ideologies but it might be possible that all share similar goal. Geoffrey Galt defines ideology as "the belief, values, and ways of teaching and feeling through which human being perceives things and through which they explain things in what they takes to be reality" (181).

These ideas are constituted as a result of human consciousness of his immediate environment both physical and social is the way he interprets it. Just like the allegory of the blind man that climbed the body of an elephant. The ones touching the tail said the elephant is like a snake and so forth. Aristotle the great thinker propounded a theory on drama which he called the poetics. His poetics is based on what he saw in the theatre during his time. During the early day's dramaturgy and theatrically, there was a common ideology that tragedy only befalls the royal, the notable, so the commoners are viewed as incapable of experiencing tragedy. This formed the basis thesis of Aristotle's poetics. This theory was followed by many playwrights and it is still held in high esteem to date. This implies that ideologies are based on what we perceived as prevailing in his immediate environment and based on one's experience and the consciousness of the immediate environment.

Drama and ideology shared a very common and string relationship through time. All dramas are based on ideologies, and ideology needs the theatre to show the society its relationship. These ideologies are however adapted by playwrights on the philosophical strands of their society. Arthur Miller the great American playwright saw that the ideology of Aristotle and the Grecian playwrights does not refer to the capitalist American society. He adopted the Marxist ideology of historical materialism which asserts that, "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their consciousness (Marx 6). Authur Miller was able to show through the principal character in his play, *Death of a Salesman*. Individuals are always affected by their immediate societies. Some of the ideologies common in the theatre that directly affects the society are:

- a) Feminist ideology

- b) Marxist ideology
- c) Theological ideology

These ideologies among others cause direct change or gears individual into viewing their societies in accordance, through many feminist's movements and plays, the society comes to adopt and understand the true meaning of liberating women in the society. However, the response he got from critics was not welcoming. Oscar Brockett confirms this when he said:

It is difficult for us to understand how violent a response, Ibsen's play evoked when they first appeared. The response to the ghost was extreme because, although the disease is never mentioned, both the husband and the son of the principal character, Mrs. Ahim are victims of syphilis (155).

Brockett further said that because Ibsen suggested and introduced divorce and syphilis and questioned the inability of men to make decisions on their own it was believed he had done the unthinkable in the American Society. However, today divorce is flying all over America like Christmas gift. In Ibsen's other play, *A Doll's House*, the question of the decision of women was more intense when he wrote in the author's note that:

A woman cannot be herself in the society of the present day. This is an exclusively masculine society with the laws framed by men and with the judicial system that judges feminine conduct from the masculine point of view (155).

In our African Society today, Zula Sofala was also one of the women who captured the norms and practices of Igbo's society. In *Wedlock of the gods*, she writes about the inability of women to live a life of their dream in the Igbo society. The principal characters choose to die for life rather than remarried to Uloko's family. Irene Salami is another feminist who questioned the barbaric culture of the Benin people but do not directly condemn this culture. She states this in the author's note that it is left for the audience to decide if Ubi is wrong or her society had wronged her and the entire womanhood. She however uses Ubi as a woman who is willing to fight the subjugating culture, but fails to involve others in the cause of empowering women which leads to her downfall and her being hated by the other woman which she represent and fights for. Even if she had involved the women they would not have agreed to be part of it which they state clearly that they are satisfied. Irene Salami did not alter tradition but suggests that women liberation can only be successful if the women are aware that they are being marginalized and they stand together to fight for their freedom, not individually but collectively.

In Nigeria, prior to the independence, drama was used to celebrate individualism and heroism rituals, gods, just like the Grecians plays that celebrated one man becoming the hero of the society instead of collectiveness. It was when the consciousness of playwrights awakened that drama was used as propaganda for nationalization and cultural awareness (Binebai 3). The new generation of playwrights that joined is more radical and socially inclined unlike their predecessors. This was headed by Femi Osofisan followed by Bode Sowande and others. The ideology, of this era arose as a result of political instability engulfing the political affairs of the country. The playwright of this era sort after an ideology that would transform and revolute the society; and that ideology is Marxism (Rotimi 6).

### **Social Reformation and Drama**

Social reformation and drama examines the use of vehicles of social reform during the nineteenth century, and present. It analyzes plays that used melodrama as a mode of reformist presentation to encourage audience identification with a number of issues such as abolition and temperance and describes how reformist drama reforms the society. The drunkard articulated a discourse of masculine empowerment. It also considers the investment of corporate interests in the relationship between drama, and religion, between theatricality and theology reform and during reformation. This establishes the impact of late Medieval and early modern religions reform a dramaturgy. Taking an

interdisciplinary approach, it examines the interaction between theatricality and theology across a range of different plays including the croxton of the sacrament, Jacke Jugular, John Bale's "Three Laws" and Laris Wager's "Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene"; tracing development or arguments concerning the interpretation of the Sacrament, the relation between priest and players, and the use of abuse of image and drama in religious worship.

The drama of reform draws on a rich variety of contextual materials including liturgical texts, hereby trial accounts, dramatic treatise, polemical tracts, and religious laws. It explores the phenomenological similarities between drama and certain religious rites, notably the Eucharist and proposes that religious reform prompted attempts to reform dramaturgy. In presenting this analysis, he argues that while drama continued to function as dramatic propaganda, efforts to initiate new modes of playing were only partially successful. One of the greatest of all revolution was the 16<sup>th</sup> century religious revolt known as the Reformation. This stormy, often brutal, conflict separated the Christians of Western Europe into Protestants and Catholics. So far-reaching were the results of the separation that the reformation has been called a turning point in history. It ushered in the modern age because, once the people religious unity was destroyed, they began to think in terms of their own regional interest. From the diversity of those interests arouse new political and economic problems and beliefs. It had been shown that philosophy; arts and science were bequeathed to civilization by the people of North African and not but the people of the African continent who are the rightful heirs of such praise and honor. This is a tremendous change in World opinion and attitude, for all people and races who accept the new philosophy of African redemption, that is, the truth that Greeks were not the author of Greek philosophy but the people of North Africa.

This also had to do with a change from an inferiority complex, to the realization and consciousness of their equality with all the great peoples of the world, who have built great civilizations. In the drama of Greek philosophy, there are three actors, who have played distinct parts, namely: Alexander the Great, who by an act of aggression invaded the Egypt in 333 BC, and ransacked and looted the royal library at Alexandria and together with his companies, carried off booty of scientific philosophic and religious books (Alexandria 158).

The Victorian era was a period of dramatic change that brought England to its highest point of development as a world power. The rapid growth of London from a population of 2 million when Victorian came to the throne to one of 6.5 million by the time of Victorian's death, indicates the dramatic transition from a way of life based on the ownership of land to a modern urban economic. England experienced an economic increase in wealth, but rapid and unregulated industrialization brought a host of social and economic problems. Some writers such as Thomas Babington Macauley applauded, England's progress, while others such as Matthew Arnold felt the abandonment of traditional; rhythms of life exacted a terrible price in human happiness. The early Victorian period (1830-1843) saw the opening of Britain's first railway and its first reform parliament, but it was also a time of economic distress. The Reform Bill of 1832 extended voting privileges to men of the lower classes and redistributing parliamentary representation more fairly. A variety of socialist movement gained force, some influenced by the revolutionary theories of Karle Marx and Friedrich Engels. The literature of the 1890's is characterized by self-conscious melancholy and aestheticism, but also saw the beginnings of modernist movement.

The extreme inequities man and women stimulated a debate about women's roles known as the "Women's Question". Women were denied right to vote or hold political office throughout the period, but gradually non-significant rights such as custody of minor children and the ownership of property in marriage. By the end of the Victorian's reign, women could take degrees at twelve universities. According to John Staurt Mill; "the nature of women was artificial thing, most male authors preferred to claim that women had a special nature fitting them for domestic duties" (16). During this period, the novels and plays seeks to represent a large and comprehensive social world, constructing a tension between social condition and aspirations of the hero or heroine.

The theatre, a flourishing and popular institution throughout the period, was transformed in the 1890's by the comic masterpieces of George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde. It took aim at pretense and hypocrisy. The impact of a theatre-based intervention on teacher student relationship an communication, teaching practice, and general understanding of issues of poverty participating schools received finding, resources, and professional development to implement the drama program,

and participating schools hosted a school-wide performance of the poverty centred play. Drama reforms the mind of the students and pupils. It is according to the level of the audience the playwright targets the research suggests the drama intervention deepened teachers understanding of poverty and facilitated dialogue and positive relationships between teachers and students. The play also creates a conducive learning environment for the teachers and students.

### **Setting and Synopsis of the Play**

The play is set in a metaphorical kingdom of Odoko-land which symbolizes the contemporary Nigerian Nation. The picking strand of resource control among the Niger Delta people and the Nigeria government is where the story anchors. *Drums of the Delta* aptly captures the provoking scenario of plight and struggle of dejected, marginalized, economically and ecologically metalized people of the Niger Delta as a result of the harsh, unfair and oppressive laws imposed on them by the Nigerian government. It dramatically exposes the resurgence of the ideological and philosophical movement, pioneered by the legend, Isaac Boro, in the liberation of the people of the Niger Delta from the victims' laws tyranny and wickedness they have long been subjugated to.

The play starts with four militant youths, Owei, Joshua, Ogbonta and Oko who runs into the force for being killed by the rampaging force of Atala on their land sent by the Queen of Odoko land. Which sharing their personal ordeal together in the forest, they meet Sam, an old man who through a flashback narrates the story of Isaac Boro to them. He tells them how Isaac Boro abandoned his schooling career and instigates the mobilization of a revolutionary force against the tyrant Queen of Odoko land due to forceful capture of Ebitimi, the prince of the Delta. Isaac Boro is captured alongside with Dick and Sam his volunteers and the only option given to him is to join the force of the Queen against Olotu a rebellion ladderling order to gain freedom. In the battlefield Isaac Boro is shot by Atala, the Queen's lead warrior and he died saying:

MIJAB: Settles at the expense of the struggle of the Niger Delta people. They claim to be patriotic chiefs of the Delta yet they hooked the freedom of wealth, power, and fells unit political influences.

### **Revolutionary Struggle and Corruptible Government in the Play**

In *Drums of the Delta*, the question of revolution is a long standing one in the history and policy of man. Revolution is a more for reformation. It is a deliberate forceful steps and strategies talked to enhance change in the society. Boro, Ojukwu, Ken Saro-Wiwa is a principles of revolution men in our society for reformation. A quick reformation for better, every society is changing for better for worse, it is either moving forward or backward. The youth revolution is essentially from the old way to the new way. The change can be gradual or drastic process in which the youths are fighting for. In other hand, struggle could be seen as the agitation for somebody or some people wants in order to improve their standard of living. This could be a struggle for economic, social and political development and such struggle for reformation must be backed by a will and enthusiasm aimed at improving the total wellbeing of the people of the Niger community.

The youths of Niger Delta fought for a reformation in the Delta, well-being of their lives because of the few chiefs who constantly master-mind interest and close their eyes against the suffering masses. Neglected lives and water (Creeks) were polluted for the reason of the neglected, exploitation, exploration from government, oil companies. The youth of the Niger community struggle for their voice to be heard and the feelings of the people would be known. Revolutionary struggle is a struggle that is forcefully violent and is propelled as directed towards the collective improvement of a given society. Revolutionary moment are normally organized by a group of people who fell strongly oppressed and marginalized, that is the feelings of the youths of Niger Delta in the play. Isaac Boro and his group revolted against the madness of the Queen of Odoko land with Atala, her warriors. The tension and worry of the youths could not be heard because they were kept in the subaltern space. In the process of the struggle for justice and balance, Isaac was arrested and killed by Atala, the same people he fought for. But was reached at the end of the play, Ebitimi, the prince was returned to the people of the Niger.

The government and those representing the affairs of the Niger Delta people collectively kills the progress of the Deltan from developing. Chief Seigha and Zingi mastermind everything from the oil companies and the Queen paying and playing loyal to destroy the people of the Delta when the youth air their view, the dictatorial chiefs labelled them several names in the presence of the Queen and her administrator. Massive exploitation was badly exploited by the chiefs for selling their mothers for wealth. The people of Delta becomes so brutalized that they cannot feed their family because all their land has been given to the whitemen for exploitation with no presumed will, compensation was denied and environment degradation. All the land is filled with spillage. No fertile land for farming, water, air and grossly destroyed with surface and inside the water. Unemployment has to do with favoritism and sexual abuse by those unemployed sisters. Lack of social amenities, poor transportation, lack of hospitals, and so on are some of the challenges. While the chiefs, Seigha, Zingi and Oko, one of the volunteers, impact changes only to themselves, they brought separation among the freedom fighters and betrayal came into the lives of the freedom fighters in the jungle.

The form of betrayal is vitally shown when chief Seigha and Zingi and Oko betrayed their fellow volunteer service force men because of longevity and greediness in their part. Oko betrayed his brothers in the struggle because of money influence, which leads to the death of many youths, fathers, mothers, etc. in the Niger Delta. The Queen and her warrior betrayed Isaac. Isaac was in detention when he was called to fight Olotu, Atala shot Isaac. This is a rare life story. Atala represents Nigerian military force in the play, Olotu represents Ojukwu, during the Biafra war, Isaac was asked from the Federal Government to fight Olotu, when Atala lost strength, Isaac was moved from Lagos state to the then old Nigerian Federal Territory, after piloting many seas and water, he was allowed to die in his own land, (he was shot dead while he was still on boat/ship) in a town close to Port Harcourt (Bonny). The sea pilot escaped who lives to tell the story of Isaac to the people of Eleme (Rivers State). Isaac was shot by Nigerian military force.

MIJAB: Men of my fatherland, the enemies have killed my body but can't kill my dreams and my spirit fights on for your survival. Fight on your freedom!!!  
(*Drums* 33)

SAM: A dying man wishes to his loved ones are sacred testaments. Any attempt to violate them is a violation of consecrated wish. Boro, our hero, the shouting freedom. When the big tree falls, birds mourn, cows weeps sweating green grasses turn brown. When the light of the day dies, darkness lacks over the land. Sadness befalls the land. When a clan's hero dies. Mijab's is now no more. Dead as it guilty. He was a star among men, an icon of strength and unity, a spring of stimulation and a rewarding philosophy of life. Now he has gone to the terrain of the sun as a sun. And to the galaxies as the constant super star of life. Nations shall tingle and tango frightfully at the mention of his name emperor and empires shall bend over before him. His ideology shall like a devouring him conquered all his enemies. He has embarked on a great passage from man to superman, from superman to a timeless phenomenon. His conquest shall remain as the enduring and cherished photographs' time will conserve for the great coming generation (*Drums* 34).

### **Political and Economic Reformation in the Play**

Reformation is a vital part of every human society. This is because as the world evolves everything in it evolves. So does philosophy and ideologies evolves and are amended in other to fit in and transform human society. The political state of any country is never satisfactory to anybody. This may happen as a result of selfish or personal gain. This gives rise opposition, whereby making a group inferior to others. The inferior group in this case becomes the oppressed.

Even in Norway, where democracy is taught to be in its highest form, according to a research concluded by economist intelligent unit in 2012 (*Wikipedia*), there are groups of individuals who still feel that they are not being represented well. Nigeria being a country played plague with tribalism is not left out of the story different groups want to be represented the more. There is always constant argument of resource control and state creation. A group that feels that they are being oppressed

always carryout one form of revolution or the other. Most of them end up very violently. The Boko Haram outrage that have killed over one thousand persons, according to figures from the World Health Organization (WHO), is a result of group feeling they are being oppressed.

In Ben Binebai's *Drums of the Delta*, the Delta's realized they are being cheated on and carried various forms of dialogue to ensure there is a reformation in the political structure, brutal authoritative government of the Queen of Odoko land. Odoko land as allegorized in the play suffers from theunsonnivedof political sabotage and glamour for political control. Where the least populated are well represented and finds joy in savoring oppressively in the resources of the minority believing they can only, bark but cannot bite. This was clearly stated in the words of Asodo when he said:

ASODO: Your majesty, Do not be sacred by the actions of these people considering their small population. They cannot pose a threat to the unity and peace of our state. What journey does the yam obtain in a court presided over by goals? (*Drums* 38).

The above is a clear indication that the minority were not represented, even though they are, the oppressive blood suckers of Odoko land where not willing to relinquish power and are not willing to listen to the massive guttery of the Delta's, thereby they are not willing for any information. This clearly indicates that those who are benefiting in the likes of chief Seigha are not ready for transformation to take place. As long as they remain on top they are willing to step on the heads of the oppressed in other for them to attain higher political heights. One of the reasons Binebai allowed the bad or political ambitious oppressors to dominate his revolutionary plays especially *Drums of the Delta* is because he is painting a realistic and a critical picture of our own modern Nigerian leaders. However, he is not in support of oppression, he is an aggressive social critic when it comes to equating the oppressed and the oppressors, however, in *Drums of the Delta*, the people come together as one.

Precisely, in *Drums of the Delta*, he was more radical in approach; critically criticizing the political insomnia of the oppressive military and democratic government that rendered a lot of Niger Delta homeless and dead. So he proposed that the Deltas should be granted a republic. He uses MIJAB, the resurrected physiological mascot of Major Boro, to free the Deltans and declares the Niger Delta as a republic clearly stated:

At this victorious drum, this 14<sup>th</sup> year  
After KD (Kiama Declaration) I give the  
Nine secrets of survival (*Drums* 100)

This prophetic statement manifested exactly fourteen years after (KD), an Ijaw man was sworn in as the first Ijaw president in Nigeria; which means most of the reformation carried out had manifested. The prince of the Delta (Ebitimi) in the play had been given to Deltas.

While most countries boast of rapid economic development the story is different in most African countries. In most economic underdevelopment is caused by general or lack of resources to development, Nigeria in particular under develop economically plot as a result of natural resources, but as a result of poor management. Nigeria as among one of the richest countries in Africa but falls in the category of one of the least developed countries in Africa too. Social realist playwright takes plot of this economic sabotage and incorporates it in their dramas. In *Drums of the Delta*, economic dilapidation is a major theme portrayed and song in every scene of the play. *Drums of the Delta* is a clear indication that the economic dilapidation is caused by embezzlement and misappropriation of fund and greed. The Deltans after they realized this, they fought several battles to restore the economic state of their region and the county as a whole. But on the other side of the coin is highly determined cowardice leaders who fought against the course they are fighting for. Chief Seigha is an example of such leader; he sabotages his people in exchange for money, enriching himself and discouraging the youths that fight for economic liberation of their country and region from the words of Joshua and Maro:

JOSHUA: The problem of Niger obviously is the  
Problem of tyranny. The tyranny of the  
Oppressive government. Tyranny of deceitful  
Leadership, greed and envy. Ethnic jingoism  
And weak will to resist oppressive leadership.  
We have suffered too much; I pray that a honest  
And true leader fights for us at the top (*Drums* 52).

Joshua exhibited high tone of disappointment from their leaders. So does Maro.

MARO: The problem to say, e get many Seigha and  
Zingi dum for di land.....  
My brodas e don reach the time wey  
We go remove de dirty wey dey for  
Our house (*Drums* 55).

The disappointment expressed by the youths is however countered by the will for self-development or double eclogues of Oko. Oko, being selfish and greedy wanted a double. The likes of Oko are examples of our modern day called freedom fighters that collect money from the oppressive government and pretend to be fighting. Binebai is suggesting in this play, that for a country to be economically transformed from the negative cankerworm that eats up its resources, bad leadership must be uprooted. In *Hang Men Also Die*, Esiaba suggested a total and bloody removal of any leader who sits on the development of any society.

However, Binebai is tenement when it comes to the removal of such oppressive government and the enthroning economic transformation, he suggested leader MIJAB, who though have died once but his philosophy is model. In reality, the Niger Delta region has not been able to achieve the level of economic reformation suggested in the play. Instead, Niger Delta still lacks, the selfish leader who would die for the economic reformation of their country even if he dies, the death might be worthless because people behind him will rise money given for contract and convert it into their account.

### **Social and Moral Reformation in the Play**

In Nigeria today, the social stand of the country have highly dilapidated. The yam obtains no favour in a court presided over by the goats in the words of Azodo. The yam been the less privileged, the peasant, the oppressed have no justice accorded to them. This may be as a result of their lack of finance to obtain justice, because in Nigeria, justice is sold.

In *Drums of the Delta*, Seigha and Zingi sold the peace of the land, rtheir social developments, welfare for the price of betrayed and personal gains. If there were less of Seigha and Zingi in the Delta region and more of Chief Bini and Isaac Boro who were willing to sacrifice anything and say no to corruption for the social alleviation of their land, and generally human race. Binebai is not in support of military here, rather, he is encouraging genuine progress and genuine social development. Ben Binebai was not radical in his approach. This approach is lenient and peacefully in the sense that the Delta's only resource control, which is the return of their prince (Ebitimi) to them.

The death of the warrior as revealed by Owei is only as a self-defense and does not have anything to do with purposes. Even when being attacked by Atala, Boro did not fight back, rather he allowed himself to be captured meaningfully, he know that though in situation where dialogue could not solve the problem, there are non-violent, peacefully protest that can still ensure the return of Ebitimi and the restoration of social development in the country. However, the death of the Queen is a clear indication that for peace to rein, in order for social reformation to take place in the Delta region, the Queen must die, not just its corrupt leaders. The Delta must be freed as a republic of its own.

One of the benefits of religion in the world today is morality. Virtually all religion preaches morality. But with the state of the country today, morality is already out of line. Killing, looting, raping which is a sub themes in state of the country have fallen to its barest minimum. The play is populated by leaders who lacks consciousness and thereby lacks good moral judgment. For instance, in the life of the Queen we see a female leader who instead of doing what men can do positively, she



did better the negative things men could do. She orders Atala to shoot at sight of any Delta he comes across. She is an autocratic female leader that lacks judgment and would do anything morally to protect her interest. Another case is Atala, who allowed himself to be used, this can be clearly justified with his chat and that of the soldiers when they reinforce brutality on the Deltas.

Atala: Looting.....

Warriors: Is fair.

Atala: Raping

Warriors: Is fair

Atala: Burning

Warriors: Is fair.

The above shows that Atala has been blinded by his royalty to the Queen and his morality rather than his humanitarian sense of judgments. Seigha, Zingi and Oko, were another set of individuals that are morally corrupt. It is clear; not that anybody who betrays his course is not morally upright. Especially when it comes to doing it for their only selfish and the other party suffers. On the contrary, the likes of Maro, Owei, are good example of leaders that have conscience. Despite pressures from Zingi, Seigha and Oko, they never yield to take the money offered by the Queen, or even take their advice to abandon their course in order for them to enrich their accounts.

Boro also is a perfect epitome of a good leader. Who abandoned his University education, rejected alternative often from his father to be sent abroad to school, and abandoned his family for the liberation of his people as a whole. Another example of his protective leadership quality was when he was imprisoned. Knew fully well that the Queen is corrupt but choose to fight and protect his people as long as his demand is met to free prince. Binebai clearly indicates that though the country might be with moral corruption. But there are still few people who are morally upright and can still serve as good leaders for the people. But that would only happen if they will not abandon their course for personal interest.

### **Conclusion**

The role of communication in plays as an instrument of social reformation on the people perspective to active; participation in their own affairs, although belief of reforming the mind set and attitude of people are evident, nevertheless, it requires that the people be informed, educated, directed towards the set purpose and objectives of play development. The process of educating, informing and mobilizing, apart from instilling a new consciousness, could also create a community of interest which galvanized the people further purpose of attainment without concrete reformation education will remain at a level that can kindly spur them to action. The impact of plays in reforming the mindset of the people is to emphasize on the human behavior and social input, a well-informed people is an asset, which ensures stability and nation interaction.

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**ECO-METAPHORIC CONSTRUCT AS A RESONANCE FOR SUSTAINING  
NATURE: AN INTERROGATION OF KELECHI OGBONNA'S *THE  
TAMARISK: A HEALING SHRUB***

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**Abstract**

The world over the years has been experiencing a great number of natural disasters with all its vagaries of draughts, flooding, hurricanes, tsunamis, fire outbreaks, volcano eruptions, tornadoes, earth quakes, just to mention but a few. All this is linked to man's indiscretion towards his natural gifts, mostly in the area of habitat wreckage, commercial exploitation, pollution amongst others. In an attempt to forestall further havoc on fauna and flora, environmental apologists have been putting ink on paper, in order to create awareness on the management, control and impacts of ecological unfriendliness. Under the auspices of different taxonomy and polemic like; Ecotheatre, Ecocentrism, Ecocriticism, Ecopoetics and many others, quite a substantial quantity and quality of literary discourses have been generated. This paper, by way of adopting the qualitative methodology, will attempt an analytical posture of Ogbonna's *The Tamarisk...* (though figuratively), with the view to adding a voice to the sustainability of nature in order to give life more meaning. It is believed that this piece of theatrical metaphor will be the catalyst that would spur other creative writers to furnish Eco critical treaties in the area of appreciation, management and control of our natural environment to say the least.

**Introduction**

The world over is experiencing variant degrees of challenges ranging from economic recession and depression, terrorism, humanitarian concerns, political violence, environmental degradation, tsunamis, climatic change, drought to mention but a few. Therefore, the resultant effects of these cataclysms have left and are still leaving its trail of poverty, loss of lives and homes, and host of others on humanity. Yet, recent surveys about these natural calamities threatening human existence on the surface of the earth have shown that they are actually and greatly instigated, schemed and perpetrated by wo/man her/himself in the guise of eking out means of livelihood. For instance, in the opinion of Damar, Rakun, and Saidu, wo/man engages in the act of deforestation:

...by burning, cutting or overgrazing. Such deliberate acts have been done to improve cultivation, provide space for settlements, provide timber for construction purposes, provide fuel for house hold use, provide charcoal, smelt metals or provide feed for animals (81).

To further advance this discourse from above, wo/man in her/his bid to satisfy her/his insatiable luxurious penchants, explores, exploits and even plunders her/his environment to her/ his own peril. This is so, because "humans conduct their affairs to the detriment of the environment and therefore have failed to recognise the need for the common survival of human and non-human

elements alike” (Bernard 261). Hence, “in recent times, countries of the world... have incurred colossal losses in life, resources and property due to climatic and climate-related problems, such as floods, drought, storms, desert encroachment, radiation problem and global warming ...” (Akon 6), as a result of man’s ruthless mismanagement of his environment.

Furthermore, ironically it is established in some quota that, wo/man existence is greatly dependent on the good will of its immediate environment just as the existence of the environment to a very large extent equally hinges on the courtship of mankind. Be that as it may, suffice then to say, there exist an equilibrium state of relationship between these variables, and any attempt to upset this scale of eco-human balance spells doom for either of the two parties. Giving an instance between man and the wildlife, this argument is substantially buttressed by Kumari Shikha thus:

In this relationship they are so much interdependent on each other that any disturbance in one disturbs the other. History has proved this every now and then that every change in the civilization of animal and human beings have also changed and the effect on civilization of the changes in environment has been so acute sometimes it has wiped whole civilization from the face of the earth (1).

In advancing the above assertion, Ogaga Okuyade, talking about human unfriendly dispositions to the non-human world, agrees with Shikha positing that:

This relationship between humans and the environment is not that simple if one considers the fact that humans continue to consistently reduce the environment to a mere object or item that can be exploited for their sustenance or corporate greed (x-i).

Drawing a leaf here from Okuyade’s position pops up an issue which is also of great importance to this study. That in spite of all cautious effort put in place like; holding of global and national conferences, seminars, sensitization programmes being carried out by Governments of nations and non-governmental organisations, etc., at all times to secure and maintain this eco-human equilibrium; wo/man has consistently violated the rules that would have guaranteed a symbiotic relationship by treating the flora and fauna as mere pawns in their hands and equally refusing to acknowledge their devastating effects until havoc is wrought. Hence, wo/man at a commensurate or even more score suffers its consequences beyond her/his control.

Another concern that is also consequential to this study is that, Africa as a continent is not spared from wo/man’s unfriendly dispositions to her/his environment and its backlash towards him/her. Though, Africa as a continent is said to be a lesser contributor to these world damaging effects when compared to continents like; Asia, America and others, yet its damaging effects can be felt in Africa as it is evident in the area of droughts, desert encroachment, unpredicted climatic change, shortage of water supply and at another dimension, flooding to mention but a few. In continuance of this contention, Obama in Christopher Anyokwu relates thus:

Africa gives off less greenhouse gas than any other part of the world, but it is the most threatened by climate change. A warming planet will spread disease, shrink water resources, and deplete crops, creating conditions that produce more famine and conflict (353).

From the foregoing, even though Africa does not contribute so much to world environmental crisis, the above mentioned environmental hazards are currently plaguing Nigeria with its attendant negative trappings playing out in the semblances of hunger, poverty, sicknesses, violent crises, among others. Therefore, this study to say the least is timely, because Nigeria is experiencing (coming) out of one of the worse economic recessions and farmers and herders clashes in recent times. We have this situation on our economy because, as the desert encroaches and water depletes at the northern region of the country, pressure is mounted on herders to move down to the western and southern part of Nigeria, and this is one of the reasons, why the people of this state have not enjoyed good neighbourliness and in the main, growth and development is stampeded. Hence, the need to save her

from further economic depression and other climatic crisis, because Nigerian polity operates in an environment where wo/man (even at his advantaged position as ordained by nature) over other non-human beings, still treats nature with reckless impunity as it will be revealed in the continuance of this interrogation. Arts in general and drama specifically, being a product of the environment among others, has vehemently lend a voice to the maintenance, management and the sustainability of nature towards saving wo/man from its reciprocal damnation when it strikes. Because from Abdurashed Adeoye's position,

... theatre artists, who are the voice of humanity, should recover the race from climate change and environmental degradation through film production, radio drama, dance theatre, television drama and performance by dramatizing the evergreen African imagination and the problems posed by climatic change for meaningful sustainable development to take place (576).

From Adeoye's point of view, drama then, as a theatrical art has the ability to incite in its audience, (either as a closet or public) the need to have a rethink about certain negative happenings in the society with the view, to bringing positive change that should bring about a better living. It is on this premise that this paper attempts an eco-metaphoric interrogation into *The Tamarisk: A Healing...* with a view to forestalling further environmental hazards that make man helpless when they occur.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

The literary study of wo/man and his relationship with nature, falls within the purview of many nomenclatures as earlier observed in the abstract of this investigation. To give this study a sense of direction, we shall therefore attempt to practically situate a nomenclature that will approximately navigate this discourse through without too much detour or obscurity. Therefore, considering the arguments this paper has put on so far, this interrogation falls under the broad theory of Eco criticism which Estok in Ann Dobie sees as;

[A]ny theory that is committed to effecting change by analysing the function-thematic, artistic, social, historical, ideological, theoretical, or otherwise-of the natural environment or aspects of it, represented in document(literary or other) that contribute to material practices in material worlds (239).

What one can deduce from Estok's claim is that, any literary work, stage performances, films or others that are concerned with the business of engaging its readers/audience to go into critical thinking, with the view to ensuring that they take actions either individually and (more importantly) collectively to reconsider their relationship with nature towards striking an interdependent eco-human balance falls under this umbrella body called Eco-criticism. This thinking should have given birth to eco literal concerns like; eco centrism, ecopoetics, eco theatre, eco drama, etc. Because, "most eco critical work shares a common motivation, that is, awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planets basic life supports" (Shikha 3).

Also, in setting the template for the criteria for evaluating an eco-literal piece, Buell in Caminero-Santangelo, based it on "the degree to which a piece of literature strives to represent non-human nature (as opposed, for example, to making it a screen for other concerns,) give it a voice, invest it with value, emphasize human interdependence, decentre the human, alleviate environmental degradation" (699-700). Therefore, suffice then to say, that Eco Drama is an offshoot of eco criticism, since in the opinion of Andrea Tse and Jerry Odeh, Eco-drama:

...specifically deals with challenges confronting ecospheres and ecosystems, therefore, exists at the luminal (sic) between human behaviour and nature. It thrives to examine the consequences of human actions on the environment more importantly educates on the various ways and steps to make in order to avert eco-depletion and protect the environment (59).

Drawing strength from above, eco drama then, can be seen as plays which metaphoric and aesthetic concerns are geared towards exposing environmental degradations, its causes and its brunt on humanity and equally path find or navigate pragmatic ways out of this quagmire, with the view to forestalling these challenges associated with an upset in the ecospheres and ecosystems that are mostly perpetrated by humans. Through these metaphoric and aesthetic constructions, the playwright reaches out to his/her audience employing creative explication to interrogate environmental concerns, mostly, pointing out its negligence and consequences through metaphors. Therefore, this paper adopts Eco 'Metaphor' as a nomenclature for the purpose of this study. Hence, this intellectual metaphoric discourse on *The Tamarisk: A Healing...*, is to bring about its extrinsic textual interpretation on the need to constantly strike a balance between wo/man and her/his relationship with or to her/his environment, even though the text is an evaluation for other thematic questions. This "quest becomes imperative given the habituated pollution of the ecosystem, the degradation and despoliation of the natural environment as crystallized by industrial production of goods and services in the globalized neighbourhood" (Nder 4).

### **Humanism and the Concept of Ecological Disaster**

Eco Drama, and for the sake of this study, *Eco Metaphor*, which has been at the fore front of using dramatic appreciations, to address the concerns of wo/man's ruthless tinkering with her/his environment, which results in an upset in the ecospheres and ecosystem, with its attendant consequences, with the view to proffering solutions to this mind boggling issues has been around for sometimes now. Ironically, these challenges have not been averted completely. What this portends is that, drama per se, may not be the magic that could turn around the challenges confronting the ecospheres and ecosystem with abrupt sway. However, drama has the ability to incite thoughtful provocations, so much that its audience are gingered to collectively take actions that could bring about the desired change. That is to say, drama here is not an end to the means, but vice versa.

Then, this dramatic approach remains relevant since these ecological disasters and their resultant effects which come in the form of floods, drought, storms, desert encroachment, radiation problems, global warming etc are here with us (as stated earlier), and are varied, compounded and widespread in nature. Drama (generally speaking), as a product of the society, has universal appeal and addresses gamut of concerns that touch on human life also on a very wide scale. Because incidentally, the mentioned effects of ecological catastrophes above "transcends all facets of human life, from ephemeral to routine and occupational activities. It knows no political or social boundaries, respects no military-type make over, and tolerates no ignorance" (Akon 6). Akon's position therefore, brings to the fore the need for eco dramatists to persistently and consistently champion the course of reducing if not completely annihilating environmental cataclysms by writing more plays/scripts and stage and film performing them.

### **Play Brief**

The play in view, relays a story about a priestess, Chikere, who uproots the groove, sets the entire shrine of the community of Umuobasi Ano ablaze and leaves for the city as retaliatory gauge for her heart throb, (Thomas,) who is allegedly killed by the gods. The gods are angry with her because, they do not want her to share her responsibility of looking after the welfare of the community with any man being the only channel of communication between the gods and the community members.

The Igwe is briefed on this development; he places a curse on and banishes her from the community, as her name is never to be mentioned in the community again. Her absence creates a lacuna in the cosmological chain of relationship between the people of Umuobasi-Ano and their deities. Hence, the groove turns against the people. The community members reconsider their position on Chikere's private life, then Igwe sends a message to the Nwokekauba family, (Chikere's clan), telling them to find and restore her before the next Eke-ukwu or risk ejection of their family circle from the community.

A meeting is convened by the Nwakoebas, and after a serious deliberation by the family members considering her contribution to the wellbeing of the community arrives at a conclusion that,

she deserves a better treatment and that she only acted impulsively rageous in the heat of that moment. So, by simple majority she is restored and the curse placed on her revoked.

She returns to Umuobasi-Ano, falls in love again, though after along persuasion from friends, but this time with Njoku, who is also a pastor. But, the union came after both parties accepted each other's terms of references. The entire community, friends from the cities and neighbours from other villages troop out to celebrate this great memorable union in music and dance.

### **Play Contextualised**

Tamarisk are evergreen or deciduous shrubs or trees growing 18-21 m in height with dense thickets having about 50 to 60 specie of flowering plants in the family of *Tamaricaceae*. They usually have slender branches and grey-green foliage. Some species are fire adapted with long tap root to penetrate the deep water table. For instance, *Tamarix aphylla*, as an evergreen tree grows 18m tall. They grow on saline soils, allowing up to 15,000 ppm soluble salt and alkaline condition. The tamarisks are valued for their ability to withstand drought, provide shelter at sea coasts, wind break in the desert, serves as ornamentals, raw material for carpentry and fuel, etc. ("Tamarisk" *Encyclopaedia Britannica*; <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/tamarisk>).

The account given by the two sources above, brings to fore, the importance of the non-human world to wo/man. By implication, human beings depend greatly on the non-human world for their existence, nonetheless findings have revealed that, wo/man has consistently ignored this fact, hence, s/he has consistently treated this partner of his/hers with reckless abandon. Atreya's summation captures the above contention aptly that, human beings:

Living in the luxury that technology and machines have provided, human beings of the city have forgotten about the original place from which they evolved-nature. They have shut it out, along their fellow natural organism (from the tinniest to the largest), who are not as evolved as they are. They do not feel the need to include them. They do not care if their ruthless exploitations of the natural resources are hampering the survival of other living beings (377).

Advancing further from the above, on the argument of this age long human's unfriendly and endless seek, discovery and manipulative dispositions which have led to quantum destruction of the environment and nature, humans therefore, pay dearly with even their own lives. With this on our hands, then there is the immediate need for the humans to begin to chart a course for a friendlier human disposition towards the non-human world. This is a clarion call, considering the impromptu destructive dispositions of most of these natural disasters towards human. Most times it comes so sudden carting away and destroying everything on its path. This graphic image Ogbonna paints, when Ajonu barges into the palace to disrupt council proceedings accordingly:

IGWE: What is it! What matter of urgency has made you break the rules of the palace?  
AJONU: Another abomination has struck!  
ELDERS: What?  
AJONU: The priestess of the groove has gone berserk!  
IGWE: How?  
AJONU: She has uprooted the heart of the groove and set the shrine on fire.  
IGWE: Where is the priestess now?  
AJONU: On the run! (21)

The implication of the discussion from above, throws up how humans are unexpectedly caught up in the snare of these natural disasters. The human world goes to rest, taking a break from their destructive tendencies after tempering recklessly with the non human world to celebrate their scientific and technological advancement in road construction, estate development, communication, astronomic, oil and industrial exploration among others. This is evident in the area of indiscriminate cutting down of trees, careless mismanagement and dumping of refuse, release of dangerous gas into

the atmosphere, etc. Then suddenly, the repercussions come in the body of; desert encroachment, global warming, environmental pollution and degradation, severe health (COVID-19) pandemics and so on. These upshots have always left the humans confused and divested (in the heat of that moment) and its traumatic resultant effects are often attributed (from certain quarters) to something abominable, because they could destroy the very essence of a people's survival and if the people ever survive, the recovery process could be a near impossible or even long lasting.

Furthermore, another concern which the playwright puts on the burner of literary discourse is the reckless dispositions of humans towards their environment. Most of these disasters are occasioned by many inconsiderable human treatments melted on the environment. They do not just happen. Substantially, Ogbonna captures this argument thus:

CHIKERE: (*Very sober.*) My friends, I am not made of stone. I am a woman with flesh and blood (*Walking towards her altar, near the shrine*). Has anybody considered how I felt before Thomas came into my life? Thomas was my very first... the experience was heavenly and quite understanding, a vessel willing to learn... but the groove who permitted it at first took away the only man who has ever given me joy {*sobbing*}... who cares for me? Did my people whom I served dutifully consider how I felt? ...has anybody really cared how Chikere feels? (75).

Humans have consistently treated their environment with reckless abandon as if their existence absolutely has no connection with it. Therefore, in their attempt to satisfy their insatiable quests for luxury, habitats to fauna and flora are degraded. This they do not minding that the non-human organism equally needs care as much as they. Consequently, bushes are burnt or trees are cut down either to cultivate or to build and construct edifices to the detriment of the non human environment. Yet, the environment provides for most of the human needs in the area of food, herbs, coal, tourism and leisure, furniture and so on; hence, the need for them to take care of these natural endowments with utmost care and caution to avoid eco misbalance.

Additionally, *The Tamarisk*... as a piece of art, draws our attention to see the non-human world as a partner that needs the human care. The non-human kingdom, like the Tamarisk plants, can only grow to provide humans all the services individuals enjoy directly or indirectly from the plant and its by-products on the grounds that humans equally take care of them. This assertion she emphasizes through the conversation between Chikere and her friend who come to pay her a visit while on exile. Hear her:

CHIKERE: ...Yes it is obvious that the groove care and loves...oh, how I wish the gods will come to me in the likeness of men. But I want to be cuddled! I want to turn in the night and feel like a woman... (75).

Drawing a strong point from above, human beings have blatantly refused to accept that they are supposed to court their environment like a husband and a wife relationship, where the durability of their union anchors greatly on the level of mutual respect between the twosomes. It is yet to dawn on them that the non-human world is a partner in progress, 'who' needed to be treated like a woman who needs superlative affection. Hence, the need to pamper, nurture and nurse her. It is not enough to appreciate that nature has made this provisions for their edification; they owe it a moral obligation to be faithful to this contractual arrangement so as to prevent either party from becoming a renegade.

Another concern which the playwright pokes at is the need not to see the already bartered relationship between natural and human world as non-remedial dispute. The management of the non-human world depends largely on the care from the human's world, a little push from their angle and there is a restoration of the equilibrium of the eco and human relationship to some reasonable extent. Aptly, the playwright graphically addresses this challenge thus:

CHIKERE: 'Is there any hope for a tree that is cut down? Will it sprout again? Will the tender branches not cease'?



NJOKU: Yes, it shall not cease, 'Through the scent of water, it shall bud again'!

CHIKERE: I am like the tamarisk, issuing forth healing and goodness. Yet, great are my afflictions. But the dwarfed shrub cut down, will it sprout again? (80).

Taking a leaf from the conversation between Chikere and Njoku, her new found love, clearly situates the position that no matter the level of the environmental degradation and its reprisal consequences which would have led to loss of lives, property, potential tourist centres, cultural monuments among others, concerted effort from the human angle, to begin to treat nature with little respect would definitely lead to forestalling desecration and the restoration of the abused environment. And when this is in place, normalcy will return to the benefit of all. To this end, there is the need for the reorientation of the human world to become aware of their responsibility to this nonhuman world. This fact the playwright advances through the lead character, Chikere:

CHIKERE: YES, but I have no intention of crossing that path with a novice who simply feels he is in love.

NKECHI: With time he will learn and come to appreciate your worth. Education refines a man... (76).

Nigeria will continue to experience human inflicted disasters as long as the humans will continue to treat the issue of environment with levity. The environment, as a partner to human existence, will never compromise its standard with human lackadaisical dispositions towards it. Therefore, there is the need for the humans to retrace their steps. But this can only be achieved through thorough sensitization of the human mind by all the eco centric government and nongovernmental agencies to make them embrace this call superlatively, so as to make them begin to see the environment as an equal partner in progress and relate with it as such.

Finally, Kelechi Ogbonna sees the harmonious relationship between the human and the non-human world in view, but only when there is an attitudinal change by all towards the environment in their quest for material acquisitions. This she aptly captures at the village square through the Narrator during the traditional marriage rite between Chikere and Njoku accordingly:

My people, the noble task to better our society rests on all of us. Our desire, greed and quest for power and material well-being have left us shallow and empty. While we are greedy for gains we trample even on the gods not minding whose ox is gorged. We are the society that needs to be changed or expunged. We are the people who have rejected ourselves. We can only change things from within. Now the people of Umuobasi-Ano are willing for a change, let us join them in the celebration of the new dawn (82).

What Nigerians, as a people, need is to collectively come together to champion the course for a more friendly environmental temperaments. Because, the pursuit for a free environmental disasters by humans, can be achieved only when the Nigerians' taste for material acquisition equilibrates with a considerate tempering of their God given natural endowments. Because, again in Anyokwu's opinion he advises that:

Granted, one cannot make omelette without breaking eggs; the same way, one cannot exploit oil and gas without doing *violence* to the earth, without violating the natural beings. But in order for romance not to turn to rape, foreplay is advised (237).

It is in an attempt to attain a comfortable living that humans explore, exploit and pillage the environment to their own detriment. Consequently, natural habitats, tourist sites and natural heritage are destroyed with huge economic implications. Therefore, humans are left with no option other than to attitudinally change their primordial ill treatments towards the environment. They should begin to see nature's blessing as a part of their existence. Hence, the need to explore and exploit them with considerable treatment, only then will their co-existence be in peace.

## Conclusion

The researcher's investigations so far, unveils that the world over is experiencing different shades of disaster raging from economic depression, humanitarian concerns, terrorism, natural disasters and the most recent Covid 19 pandemics to mention but a few. These unpleasant occurrences leave behind their trails of losses of lives and property, farm lands, natural habitats, tourist sites and lives among others.

Humans are yet to come to term with the reality that their relationship with nature is mutual and reciprocal in nature. Hence in their quest for luxurious penchance, natural habitats, tourist sites, natural heritage and ozone layer are destroyed and depleted. Evidences of disastrous events over the years reveal that Nigeria is not spared of these natural catastrophes, even though Africa seems to contribute less to environmental unfriendly practices.

With this challenge at hand, the study tried attempting to bring this menace to a halt and if not, to reduce its negative impacts. Hence, drama comes handy since drama being a product of the society reflects on the goings on in that society with the view towards provoking its audience into critical thinking that could bring about collective action for a desirable change. Therefore, the study took a literary discourse into *The Tamarisk: A Healing Shrub* (though from an ecological perspective) to bring about mutual relationship and respect between the human and non-human world for a peaceful co-existence.

## The Way Forward

At a time when Nigeria is talking about diversification of her economy as a means to economic recovery, there is the need for the government of the day to look the way of environmental protection more stringently, because it is in this that her natural heritage and tourist sites are preserved and harnessed for tourism. Nigeria is one country that is endowed with these sites. Countries like Kenya and Malaysia, among others, have been able to sustain their foreign reserves through tourism.

There is a saying that the youth are the tomorrow's leaders, and if Nigeria must be saved from further environmental degradation, human development in this group of persons becomes paramount. Therefore, there is the need for the Nigerian educational sector to review its curriculum on subjects, courses and others so as to produce pupils, students and graduates who are well trained to appreciate the dare need to become consciously environmentally friendly for their overall and national development.

In line with the above recommendation, this study further recommends that:

1. Drama should be a core subject even from junior secondary school so that they can be exposed to these concerns through performance from an early stage.
2. There is the need for playwrights to look the way of eco metaphoric constructional engagements, with the view to having gamut of play texts and stage, radio and television performances to champion the course of environmental friendliness.
3. The relevant governmental and non-governmental environmental apologists should deepen their campaigns into the rural and urban rural areas. The city slums should also be visited, because most of the unhealthy environmental dispositions are found among the dwellers of these settlements.

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**FEMALE MUSICIANSHIP IN AFRICAN MUSIC STUDIES: *BALUU* AND  
*KENGBE* MUSIC OF ILORIN PEOPLE AS PARADIGM**

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**Abstract**

Discourses, counter-discourses, opinions, counter-opinions and arguments have been raised by scholars and researchers in African music scholarship, African studies, and culture and performance studies on the lack of research on the female gender in African musicology. Hence, this study finds the need to bring studies on female musicianship in African music to the fore, using indigenous Baluu and Kengbe music of the Ilorin people as paradigm. Through the descriptive method, field observation of the performances of Iyabo Awero, a Baluu musician in Ilorin, egbeoni kengbe of Magaji Nda family house in Ilorin, Kwara State and review of literatures, this study discovered that Baluu and Kengbe music are female oral musical arts unique to the cultural and social life of the Ilorin people. This study concludes that women are key players in indigenous African music performance as the performer-composers of Baluu and Kengbe music styles who are females have contributed a lot to the knowledge of indigenous cultural and social values.

**Keywords:** Musicianship, Female gender, African music, Baluu, Kengbe

**Introduction**

Various scholars and researchers have raised the question on the lack of “in-depth musicological studies and documentation of the contributions of female musicians to the growth and development of African music” (Samuel 339). This is because, overtime, emphasis has been placed on the male counterpart in African studies, especially in music. Hence, there is a view that women in West Africa are marginalised as professional musicians. Marshall stressed the need for more research to be conducted in the area of women and music in West Africa (2). She attributed lack of research in this area to both the combination of male dominated field of African studies, as well as the patriarchal structures of communities usually being studied in Africa as a whole.

Having worked on the male-female status of music in Mande society of Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Duran opines that, “studying gender in West African music is of central importance in studying West African culture to redress the prevailing view that women in West Africa play marginal roles as professional music makers” (142). Duran concludes that, “not only does more research need to be done on women and music in West Africa, but also on the gender roles within West African musical performances” (142). In fact, Idamoyibo stressed that, “women reserve rights to participate in, and possibly dominate the scene” (19).

There are two possible explanations for this lack in the scholarship on women in West African music. First is “the interests and gender of the scholar or ethnographer certainly affects the choices of topics studied” (Scharfenberger 224). Several researches have focused on drum orchestras and griot traditions. Researchers of drumming traditions primarily analyzed the male-dominated percussive elements of such ensembles, and largely ignored the female-dominated arena of songs and dances. The percussive complexity of hand-clapping often performed by women was mentioned in only a small number of studies.

The inaccessibility of certain women’s rituals is a second possible reason for a lack of West African music scholarship that considers gender. The activities of women’s associations and secret societies are often closed to men and cultural outsiders. Women are the central performers in certain

rites of passage and initiation rituals. “There maybe public performances during some aspects of the ritual, such as, the common practice of reintroducing girls back into society as women following initiation; but the majority of the ritual is performed to the exclusion of men and outsiders” (Scharfenberger 224). Thus, few researchers have been able to study these performances.

Herndon and Zeigler assert that, “a prominence of stereotypes from ethnographers regarding women’s participation in music has created a narrow perspective” (5). They argued that stereotypes such as the portrayal of women’s participation as vocalists rather than as instrumentalists, for example, has limited the body of knowledge on women’s involvement in musical settings. Thus, this study explores, x-rays and juxtaposes the indigenous music performances of Baluu and Kengbe music in the context of Ilorin culture where it emanated and developed. Both styles are secular music forms performed at different social gatherings in Ilorin and environs. Both being female oral musical arts, this study uncovers the origin of these styles, stylistic features, music ensembles, similarities and distinctive differences in Baluu and Kengbe music.

### **Discourses on the Female gender in African music**

The functional roles of the female gender in African music cannot be overemphasised. Usually, music in the African context exists with reference to the female gender. The female gender represents the woman, femininity and mother-figure in African music performance. Looking at African musical performances which can be in vocal or instrumental or a combination of both, the mother-figure is usually and visibly evident in either way. Meki Nzewi (cited in Scherzinger 90) unapologetically advances the thesis that all music in Africa is gendered female: “Music is a Woman”. Concisely, it is not that traditional music in Africa is performed only or even mainly by women but rather that music’s philosophical import is intricately associated with the social power of women. The effect of music on humans operates in a subtle nature similar to the woman’s exercise of power in the affairs of traditional African society.

Succinctly, the African woman possesses the power that binds a society together. Afisi explains that, “the African woman played a key role in the education and the teaching of children social, ethical and moral values which were part of the cultural standards for evaluating proper societal behavior” (229). This is why Leith-Ross emphasised that culturally,

African women were the transmitters of the language, the history and the oral culture, the music, the dance, the habits and the artisanal knowledge. They were the teachers and were responsible for instilling traditional values and knowledge in children (34).

Scherzinger rightly posit that, “the three concentric circles of participants in a Kiba performance of the Pedi people in South Africa for instance, symbolize a trinity of power, or energy domains, which are associated with gendered aspects of traditional life” (90). He explains further that: The inner circle of women drummers, symbolizing the womb, is the foundation (“the source and crucible”) of the performance; the middle circle of men *dinaka* (pipe) players, symbolizing the male role in society, is the active, yet “ephemeral” dimension of the performance; and the outer circle of women members, symbolizing the female guardians of the community, is the critically observant aspect of the performance (90).

In different African musical instruments ensemble, there is a usually reference to the female or mother-figure. For instance, in different drum ensembles such as Bata drum ensemble, Dundun drum ensemble and Gangan drum ensemble amongst the Yorubas in the South-western Nigeria, there is a lead drum called, “*Iya Ilu*”, that is, Mother Drum. There is also *Omole Abo* (Female backing drum) in these ensembles. These drums are named *Iya/abo* (mother/female) because of the essential and functional roles they play in the ensemble. Infact, in *Igbin* drums ensemble which is usually associated to *Orisa Obatala*, the four drums in the ensemble are named after *Obatala*’s four wives. That is, *Iya Nla*, *Iya Agan*, *Afere* and *Keke*. The tones they produce represent the seniority of the wives. This implies that, *Iya Nla* is the most senior wife and the largest drum in the ensemble.

In *Okpe Igoru* music in Delta State, for instance, the three drums of the ensemble are named ‘mother ukiri’ (*izu-ukiri*), ‘baby ukiri’ (*omo-ukiri*) and ‘varied ukiri’ (*ukiri ewvarien*) (*Idamoyibo* 20). The leadership roles the mother drum play in an ensemble, the fundamental

foreground, and the layer which other drums in the ensemble build on is symbolic and similitude to the key roles of a woman in an African society. In several African cultures, the drum that has the deepest tones in the ensemble is called the mother drum.

Ibekwe asserts that, “gender has a strong force on the type of musical performances of any ethnic group or society” (141). This is because of the gender roles in a given society. In her own opinion, Ibekwe stressed that, “women excel in musical activities which focus mainly on the rites of passage due to their gender role”. Evident examples are Kengbe music among the Ilorin people, which is the crux of our study, also Shao Awonga mass wedding musical activities among the Shao people in Kwara state, and Obitun in Ondo State. Ibekwe's assertion corroborates Nketia's position in his discourse on women in Ghana music that, “exclusively, women's music was performed at only two occasions: girls' puberty rites and recreational forms such as maiden songs” (Nketia 107).

There are several female oral musical arts across Africa. Among them are, Baluu and Kengbe of the Ilorin people in Kwara state, Nigeria which is the focus of our study. Another female musical art among these people is Ere-Olomoba, Ilorin-Fulani Royal nuptial performance. Similar to Kengbe music of the Ilorin people is Adenkum, a female band music of the Akan people in Ghana. Adenkum is the word for the hollowed gourds played percussively against the palms and lap, which are accompanied by call-and-response singing and performed at community events. Surano people in the west of Kumasi perform Dansuom, which means, “Lying in Water”.

This style of music is named as such for the large gourd that is placed upside down in a large metal tub full of water while singing in call and response. As the music gets moving, several of the women dance in the circle (Scharfenberger 227).

Also, Akùnyùngbà, Apíntí and Igbá-títí, the three prominent female court music in the Alaafin of Oyo's palace with the sole aim goal of praising the Obas, the chiefs and some other people connected with the Alaafin's palace. Nnwonkor of the Akan people in Ghana which is usually performed by women informally in the evenings is another example from western Africa. During their performance, women commented on social issues, often criticizing men's behaviour and commenting on other local concerns. The songs are accompanied by hand clapping and idiophonic percussion. Girls' nobility rite in Ashanti, Ghana is a performance of initiation rites, which includes music and dance performances. Another women's musical performance is found among the Limba in Northern Sierra Leone. Here, women sing and lament at funerals and work songs in the field and accompany themselves with drums for the girls' initiation society, Bondo. At second funerals, groups of women dress as the deceased person, and behave as they remember what he or she did in life, with peculiarities of speech and movement (Ottenberg 85).

Worthy of note, however, is the fact that, there are musical activities in some African societies which excludes the female to a large extent. That is, women are forbidden to even watch, let alone play or perform such music. For instance, in Egwu Omaba of Nsukka – (xylophone music) women are strictly banned from watching or taking part. Though, Idamoyibo explains that, “this restriction and restraints on the part of the women in some musical activities are for protection” (22). In his words:

When our forefathers restricted women from being close or from participating in some rituals and ritual music, or from playing some musical instruments, it is not for evil but for protection. It is for the fact that women are specially created with certain spiritual powers to procreate and to defy; thus her touch in any form is capable of defying the potency certain traditional medicine, particularly when she is in her period (22).

### **Juxtaposing Baluu and Kengbe Music**

Baluu and Kengbe music are female oral musical arts in the Ilorin culture. These two styles of music being indigenous secular music genres are meant for entertainment at social gatherings. They are unique to the cultural and social life in Ilorin. Though, the historical evolution of Kengbe can be traced to Igbá-títí court music in Alaafin of Oyo's palace, Kengbe and Baluu music developed in the

Ilorin Socio-cultural environment. It is noteworthy that, Kengbe and Baluu music styles have Islamic religious import in their music as they cannot be separated from the religion of the people among which it is popular. They fall within Olatunji Vidal's categorisation of Islamised music as they are influenced by the ideology and doctrines of Islam. Using Agu's classification of traditional music in Nigeria, the Baluu and Kengbe music fall under the, 'occasional music' category as performance is usually occasional and strictly serve entertainment purposes. Also, both styles adopt the Ilorin sociolectal variant of Yoruba language known as Yorùbá Ilorin.

Kengbe is significant to wedding/marriage entertainment music and symbolic to marital context in performance, Baluu is dynamic to various social gatherings in performance context. In marriage context, Kengbe music rise to frenzy on the second day of the marriage ceremony during the night party before the bride's traditional bath. As noted earlier, the two genres are predominantly female musical arts, though, the musical instruments section of Baluu music comprises of men. But, the musical instruments, dancers and singers' sections in Kengbe music are made of females, usually, matured and married women. Dance is pivotal to these musical performances; in some cases, however, dance can be excluded in a Kengbe music performance. But, Baluu dance is so important to if there is any Baluu music performance without the dance, the music performance cannot start or be said to have held. Baluu dance is the opening glee at any Baluu music performance. In Baluu music band, the dance section is different from the chorus section, however, in Kengbe music, the dance section sometimes serves the dual purpose of the chorus and dancers. That is, as they are dancing in choreography, they are also singing the choruses and responses to the leader's calls.

The texture of Kengbe and Baluu music is homophonic texture. As the band leader establishes melodic lines, the chorus repeats the melody. The nature of rhythm is a typical example of the complex rhythmic nature of an African music. Baluu songs are usually anacrusic as the first note is not accented and the songs start on a weak beat, but Kengbe songs are accented and they start on a strong beat. The simple binary form is common to Baluu and Kengbe music. Slight variations of the first section are observed in the second section of the melodic compositions. While Baluu music favours the five-note pentatonic scale, Kengbe music songs are more of the four-note tetratonic scale. Melodies in Baluu and Kengbe music are established and built on poetic rhymes, proverbs, cultural values, traditions, historical documentation, religious beliefs, philosophical expressions and exaggerations, a symbolic pointer of African music. Evidently, larger percentage of melodic lines in the Baluu and Kengbe music are used for speech surrogacy, which is a popular feature of African indigenous music. Melodies are performed in Chorus or sometimes in call and response form. It is also worthy to note that, in some of the songs gathered on the field, use of triplets was observed. Hence, we have instances where 3 quaver notes were sung into one crotchet beat.

### **Musical Analysis of Baluu Music**

Baluu music uses the Yorùbá language as its medium of communication and expression. The typical Ilorin sociolectal variant of the Yorùbá dialect called Yorùbá Ilorin is the language used. The Yoruba Ilorin is different from the conventional Oyo – Yoruba in the South Western Nigeria. This is because there are elements of Fulani and other indigenous languages like Hausa, Nupe and Bariba in it. Hence, there are differences in the intonation and pronunciation of some Yoruba words in Ilorin (Adeola 247). For instance, when Oyo Yoruba says, "Mo", Yoruba Ilorin will say, "Hin." In the song below by Iyabo Awero, the Oyo Yoruba, "to," is replaced with "tii" in the Yoruba Ilorin:

*Call: At'orinAtilu*

*Response: O dowo're*

*Call: Oro mi dowomuhammadutij'onsenla*

*Response: O dowoo're*

As for the songs and the instruments

They are committed in your hands

I commit my case into the hands of Muhammad who is the great messenger

They are committed in your hands

## Ó do wó ò re

Voice

A - to-rin a ti-'lu o do wo-o re O-ro mi do-wo o mu-ha-ma-du

ti j'on se'n la o do wo - o re!

The Yoruba Ilorin in Baluu music is a unique identity to the music style which distinguishes it from other indigenous Yoruba music genres. Compositions are built and arranged on the premise of poetic rhymes, proverbs, philosophical expressions and exaggerations. The language use in the music serves the efficient purpose of entertainment. However, idiolectal peculiarities may be noticed in an artiste's singing which can be distinguished from another artiste's singing.

The texture of the music is homophonic. The leader of the band takes the melodic lead while the chorus accompanies. However, the chorus does not have harmonic implication of any kind. Usually, chorus sings in Unison. Variations of the same melody are repeated simultaneously by the chorus as the leader of the band elaborates on the established melody. Melodic sections may be repeated before another melody is raised. Melodic lines are basically pentatonic.

The rhythmic pattern is polyrhythmic in nature. Baluu being an indigenous African music, the polyrhythmic nature would be naturally expected. As noted earlier, the instrumental section is dominated by male drummers (lead and supportive drums) who play underlying rhythms and accompaniment to the music. The number of the drummers in a band depends on how large the band is, usually between 3 and 8 drummers. In Iyabo Awero's Band, there are 8 drummers. The lead drummer (Iyaa'lu) leads and does the talking while other drums play rhythmic accompaniment creating a complex rhythm interplay.

### Analysis of the Kengbe Ensemble

The Kengbe is an instrument made from carved calabash and could be seen as water pitcher. It is carved in varying sizes from bowl shaped to gourd shaped and pot shaped. These varying sizes are used in the ensemble to produce variety of sounds and rhythms. The smaller Kengbe produces higher pitch while the big Kengbe is low-pitched. Kengbe has dual mechanism for sound production which is triggered either by a mallet (padded or unpadded) or simply by direct application of the hand. This dual mechanism is used to create complex rhythm which African music is hinged on. While one hand covers the hollow part of the Kengbe playing intermittently, the other hand strikes the body of the Kengbe. The lead player strikes the body with a mallet which may be padded or unpadded; other back-up players hit the body with the palm or the fist (fingers of the hand curled inwards). In some cases, the Kengbe could be filled with some small stones as an effect to the resonance of the instrument. While playing, Kengbe players place the instrument in-between the two legs as support. From the foregoing, Kengbe falls under the directly-struck idiophone category of the African musical instruments classification.





Fig 1: Picture taken after a Kengbe music performance at Queen’s Secondary School Ilorin. Two girls pose with the Kengbe while they squat in front of other performers.



Fig 2: A variant of the Kengbe instrument.



Fig 3: A woman playing the Kengbe instrument at a band performance. She placed it between her legs as support. The palm of the right hand covers the hollow body, while the left hand hits the body of the instrument.



Fig 4: The Kengbe players striking the body of the Kengbe with an unpadded mallet.

As noted earlier, Kengbe is a female oral musical art. Kengbe ensemble comprises strictly of females from different class and age groups. There are three sections of the ensemble: the singers, the Kengbe players, and the Kengbe dancers. Performers in all the three sections of the ensemble are females. The Kengbe often come with carved designs on the back of the calabash to beautify the instrument. Kengbe music primarily employs variants of the calabash in different shapes and sizes as its instruments without any other instrument outside the context of Kengbe itself. The Kengbe is used to produce the metronome, dance punctuations and rhythmic accompaniments to the songs and the dances. For every Kengbe music performance, the band leader takes the melodic lead as she sings most of the solo songs. For instance, the song below is an introductory song which usually opens their performances and serves as exposition:

*Bisimilahipel'ogooluwawafinKorin*  
*Bi moto tin nlo, nikeke tin nboniwajuAlimi*  
*Kato mi a borinwa lo*  
*Kasadura fun Iya'yawokori ma seyilashemo*

With the help of God we sing  
 as vehicles pass in front of Alimi, so do bicycles  
 Before we proceed with the songs  
 Let's pray that hers would not be the last one

# Bisimilahi

Voice

Bi-si-mi-i la-hi pe-'lo-go o-lu-wa la-wa fi - n ko-rin Ka-to mi a-a bo

rin wa lo - o ka-to mi a-a bo rin wa lo - o ka sha - a du-ra fun-I - ya ya - a wo

ko - ri ma shey e yi la shey mo - o

Usually, the chorus repeats the established melodic lines by the leader. Hence, the texture of the music can be called homophonic. The Kengbe players create polyrhythmic effect on the different Kengbe instruments.



Fig 5: The researcher and Kengbe musicians in a pose after a Kengbe music performance at Magaji Nda family house, Ilorin on 11 June, 2019.



Fig 6: The researcher, Kengbe musicians and young trainees after a Kengbe music performance at Magaji Nda family house, Ilorin on 11 June, 2019.

### Conclusion

This study is a response to the lack of in-depth musicological studies and documentation of the contributions of female musicians to the growth and development of African music; thereby, bridging the lacuna in gender studies and the lack of scholarship on women in African music. Through this research, we discovered that, unlike some other indigenous music and arts of the Ilorin people, there is need for more to be done on the documentation and preservation of these musical arts, especially Kengbe music, as only little has been done in the area of research, documentation and preservation of the Kengbe music. Also, a comparative research on Kengbe music in Ilorin and Igbá-títí court music in the Alaafin of Oyo's palace is highly recommended.

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**INTERROGATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS FOR SOCIETAL  
RECONSTRUCTION: NIGERIAN DRAMA AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

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**Abstract**

The world's people are falling through the twenty-first century, drifting in a culture that makes it easy for us to feel what those in power want us to feel and think in the language they use. The artists are the only part of our society who have not fallen over the cliff, but are instead climbing taller mountains. The playwright crafts our world and makes us view society through his own narratives, symbols, images and imagination for social reconstruction. As a product of a society, the playwright cannot divorce itself from his society without becoming irrelevant. It is against this background that this paper examines the role of Nigerian playwrights, as they act as checks and balances to reflect the turmoil of the Nigerian nation. Since independence in Nigeria and Africa at large, crucial social problems, such as, bad governance, corruption, terrorism, insurgency, illiteracy, abject poverty, unemployment, inequality, decayed social infrastructures, social injustice, etc. have been bedeviling the entity called Nigeria; hence, their implication for social economic development in Nigeria. In achieving this objective, this paper posits that playwrights in the Nigerian society have the creative weapons for the espousal of mirage of social ills clipping the nation's wings from growth, sustainable development and prosperity, most importantly of its teeming population. Therefore, the paper adopts the content analyses of, Aiyedime Kafewo's *Teni* and Olu Obafemi's *Naira Has No Gender* as a methodology into analyzing how the chosen plays have exposed the issues of bad governance and women oppression in their various dramas. Premised on 'Sociological Criticism' as the theoretical framework for anchoring, 'interrogations and representations for societal reconstruction: Nigerian drama and social responsibility'. The paper justifies that literature, when used objectively for social criticism can yields national reconstruction and sustainable development of people and natural resources. The study recommends and concludes that a continual social commentary on the social political reality of the nation through the various genres of literature should plunge the nation back into a prosperous and developed state and also bring about equality, equity, corrupt free society, peace, unity and development.

**Keywords:** Societal Reconstruction, Social Responsibility, Nigerian Drama, Playwriting.

**Introduction**

We have stepped over the precipice of the twentieth century, still bloody from wars and exploitations and the myriad sacrifices made in the name of progress. Now, we are falling through the twenty-first century, drifting in a culture that makes it easy for us to feel what those in power want us to feel and think in the language they use. The artists are the only part of our society who have not fallen over the cliff, but are instead climbing taller mountains. They are pulling themselves up towards cultural truths by their fingertips, struggling to pull the rest of man behind them. I'm interested in how the artist's

perspective develops out of a culture, grows within that artist's particular historical context, and then suggests change or dialogue within society (Annabelle 12).

Annabelle's position above sets the tone for this paper-the artists and his social responsibility, Nigerian playwrights and social responsibility (our emphasis). Art has been variously defined by many scholars as the conscious use of skill and creative imagination, especially in the production of aesthetic objects (Hastrop, 2016). It is also defined as a specific form of social consciousness, the artistic figurative representation of reality and activity aimed at the creation of specific-aesthetic values (Vangu, 2018). The artist is that painter in the society, sculptor, musician, playwright, poet, actor, novelist, comedian and photographer and so on. The society in which the artists exist came into being as a voluntary association of individuals for common ends, especially an organized group working together or periodically meeting because of common interest, beliefs or profession, an enduring and co-operating social group whose members have developed organized patterns of relationships through interaction with one another, bind all together by society, since they are a community, nation, of broad grouping of people having common traditions, institution and collective activities and interest (Tobi, 2000).

We live in a passing and changing world that everything is constantly changing. Probably this change is because of the power of science carrying with itself in the recent centuries specifically the 21<sup>st</sup> and beyond devoted to the human beings. The closing years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been a mixture of positive developments, opportunities and of challenges and new threats. Changes that began as a result of revolts against dictatorships and tyranny not only have revolutionized the political and economic aspects of life, but also are transforming the cultural aspects as witnesses the coincidental development of information technology. This time of epochal changes is increasingly making the world a homogeneous cultural entity, connecting all peoples of the world via satellites, the web, etc., gravitating towards the constitution of a global village. But those unprecedented positive developments have at the same time posed new challenges, fears and anxieties on an international scale.

In Africa, at the turn of 21<sup>st</sup> century Africa tribesmen found themselves ensconced in arbitrarily concocted new states, whose borders divide what had formerly been integral communities. These new borders were lumped together under the same nation states which for all practical purposes formerly had been different nationalities. At the close of this century, they remain in an arbitrarily declared new world order whose economic philosophy they have yet fully to digest and internalize and whose cultural homogeneity threatens to wipe out their distinct cultures and identities. The fears and anxieties are not only confined to Africa. Several European countries at the initiation of the European monetary union are apprehensive about the entire program, unsure not only of how it would affect their individual economies and programs, but whether it would radically affect their cultural identities. These epochal changes that continue to take place challenge intellectuals to think more reflectively about the direction of contemporary change. All this has motivated the artists to take up the challenge of social reconstruction in the face of contemporary change.

Resultantly so, after over four decades of independence in Nigeria, Nigeria has remained largely underdeveloped, socially, economically and politically. The only form of development that can be asserted undeniably is the development of underdevelopment itself (Gerald, 2014). For the majority of the people of Nigeria, besides living under kleptomaniac political elites, lives under poverty in the form of poor health, unemployment, sustained hunger and malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, teeming population, decay social infrastructures, inequality, social injustice, terrorism, insurgency and today environmental decay have been most excruciating and agonizing. Ethnic violence and mass dislocation of natives is a living experience in most parts of Nigeria. Bad governance has become a traditional phenomenon of visionless political elites who perpetuates all acts of inhumanity for continual holding on to political power; foreign aid projects have collapsed and there is widespread evidence of large scale corruption in Nigeria's social, political and economic institutions. The people need to re-appropriate the responsibility for their development. The present situation is therefore, one in which the Nigeria peoples can and must take up creative responsibility for their lives, present and future. The oppressed Nigerians may have thrown this rescuer mission into the hands of the Nigerian artists, most importantly, drama genre of literature and the playwrights.

Social reconstruction is perhaps the most typical challenge of the present stage in Nigeria. Social reconstruction is a philosophy focused on achieving social change (Wamala et.al, 1999). As a practice, it strives to achieve social justice and equity by altering the various social systems upon which society rests. It is based upon two major understandings: the first is that society tends to develop systems that marginalize and oppress others and thus the ideologies that perpetuate marginalization and oppression need to change, second, achieving this change requires creating a system that serves as a change agent and is open to changing its own purposes and structures as the social contexts in which it exists naturally evolve.

Drama has been widely acclaimed as a positive medium for mirroring society. While drama entertains it also teaches and informs. This powerful attribute of drama has been employed by playwrights over the ages to make constructive commentaries on the happenings in society and thus, affect some positive changes in man and his environment. This is aptly captured by (Eghagha, 2010), in the introduction on the potentials for popular theatre for national development thus, ...” because popular theatre (drama) has the capacity to reach all strata of society using a simple language, a simple method, its outreach could be the tonic the nation needs for the change in values which both the leaders and followers of the country are currently clamoring for”. The dramatist is able to achieve this through his works because, he is “a member of society, so naturally his artistic sensibilities are shaped and sharpened by the socio-economic contradictions and political happenings of his time”. This is in line with the role of theatre in most pre-colonial African societies. As Turner elaborates:

theatre, including puppetry and shadow theatre, dance drama and professional story-telling, performances are presented. Which probe a community’s weaknesses, calls its leaders to account, portray its characteristic conflicts and suggest remedies for them (11).

As a product of a particular society, the playwright cannot divorce itself from his society without becoming irrelevant. Particular trend is that drama or the theatre acts on the society, while the society also acts on drama or the theatre. It is against this background therefore, that this paper examines some crucial social problems bedeviling the Nigeria nation: bad governance, corruption, terrorism, insurgency, women oppression and social injustice, to see the role of playwrights in laying bare these conflicting images on one hand and on the other hand, the contributive responsibility of these playwrights in exposing these social ills, its implication for social economic development in Nigeria and proffering solutions. In achieving this objective, this paper posits that playwrights in the Nigerian society have the creative weapons for the espousal of these mirages of ills clipping the nation’s wings towards growth, sustainable development and prosperity of its teeming citizens. Therefore, the writers shall deploy Kafewo’s *Teni* and Obafemi’s *Naira Has No Gender*, into analyzing how these chosen plays have exposed the issues of bad governance and women oppression in their various dramas.

### **Conceptualization of Terminologies:**

Some terms and concepts featured in this paper which the writers felt should be explained, as they are used in the context of this work to put paid to any seeming ambiguity. The concepts include: societal reconstruction, social responsibility, Nigerian drama, and playwriting.

- *Societal Reconstruction*: Social reconstruction is a philosophy focused on achieving social change, justice and equity by altering the various social systems upon which society rests.
- *Social Responsibility*: The primary aim of the playwrights and in general, the artists, to commit oneself to the genuine struggle for cultural and socio-political revolution, using literary activities as a platform towards engineering the people towards social change.
- *Nigerian Drama*: Nigerian drama is a term used to describe written or spoken material that reflect, highlight and seek solutions to the problems the Nigeria societies is facing. More so, Nigerian drama is imitation or mimesis of human action before an audience composition that are acted before spectators in a theatre; a method of expression for the playwright who tries to



give order and clarity to human experience. It can be presented as a dialogue either on stage, television, and radio.

- *Playwriting*: Playwriting is the art or technique of writing theatrical plays, usually written with the aim of informing, entertaining and educating the masses in which the final written product is usually intended to be performed or read for an audience. A person who writes plays is usually called a “dramatist” or “playwright”.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is fore-grounded on, ‘Sociological Criticism’ as the theoretical framework for anchoring, societal reconstruction, social responsibility, Nigerian drama, playwriting, since what the writers attempt to do is basically focused on sociology of Nigerian drama and the roles of the Nigerian playwrights in communicating social happenings to the citizenry. In understanding a writer’s literary work(s), the readers may need to probe into the writer’s society. They may as well study how societal elements are represented in the drama itself, since it is believed that literature has certain functions to perform in contributing to the development of human societies through moral or behavior re-orientation.

Sociological criticism is literary criticism directed to understanding or placing literature in its larger social context; it codifies the literary strategies that are employed to represent social constructs through a sociological methodology. Importantly so, sociological criticism analyzes both how the social functions in literature and how literature works in society. This form of literary criticism was introduced by Kenneth Burke, a 20<sup>th</sup> century literary and critical theorist. According to Kenneth Burke, “works of art, including literature are “strategic naming of situations” that allow the reader to better understand and gain a sort of control over societal happenings through the work of art” (Adamm 23). Burke specifically considers pieces of art and literature as systematic reflections of society and societal behavior. He understands the way in which these artworks achieve this to be strategically employed through the work and he therefore, suggests the standardization of the methods used by the artists and authors, so as to be able to consider works of art within a social context. Therefore, this paper adopts this theory, because it best speaks to the works of, Kafewo’s *Teni* and Obafemi’s *Naira Has No Gender*, as these chosen writers through their writings condemned bad governance, corruption and women oppression in the post-independence Nigeria, as thermalized by the various plays, but importantly so, the theory is adopted because, this critical approach or theory is believed to be the most apt to render a full account of modern African literature.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Women Oppression***

The perception of women has been that of weakened relevance and subordination tied to the miscellaneous oppressions they face in a world referred to as “a man’s world”. The world at large views the women as the weaker sex in different conditions, mental and physical disabilities. The work the women’s movement has done in discovering some of their own history is important in trying to understand why this early oppressive relationship became more and more all-embracing, rather than being a temporary phase of history. Some Nigeria feminist writers such as: Irene Salami, Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan, Zulu Sofola, Olu Obafemi, Tess Onwueme, Irene Salami, Ahmed Yerima, Tess Onwueme, Emmy Idegue, Samuel Kafewo, Tracie Utoh, as well as feminists, such as, Sheila Rowbotham, Elizabeth Fisher, Barbara Ehrenreich, Marilyn French and many more, have in most of their writings traced women’s history and found it rich and full of struggle. They have documented the fight back of women in all aspects of their lives against oppression by men, and by the state. Thus, in questioning the point and reason the relationship between men and women became a relationship of dominance and oppression, Maria Mies says:

... it was men’s role as hunter which led to his expertise in simple weapons of aggression and capture. In addition, within nomadic pastoral tribes, men’s work involved breeding the animals with a lessening role of gatherer for women and an increasing pressure on women to breed and be controlled along with the animals by

men. Man the hunter was then able to hunt and capture women and young men, both of other agricultural tribes and nomads when they came into his territory. He was thus able to take the first steps in accumulation of property, surplus and power.... This analysis places the beginnings of oppression of women by men and the oppression of one group of men (slaves), by another, in the same historical epoch (91).

This is the way of Maria Mies (1998), commenting that women in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large, have faced a wide spectrum of experiences in navigating through several hindrances that have come to confront them since the dawn of patriarchy, male chauvinism and anarchy from the era of traditional African society. The place and rights of women have been undermined; exploitation and marginalization of women in the affairs of development both at the private and public spheres.

In several cultures, despite the change impacted on the women by modernization the women are still largely marginalized. Tragically enough, despite the change impacted on women by modernization and they wallow in the problem of discernment. The disparity in gender treatment and assignment of roles is still very much alive (Evwierhoma, 2002). Thus, according to Amobi (2011), this disparity which dates back to the pre-colonial era finds its roots and continues to thrive in the African traditional culture, Islamic and Christianity religion both of which preach submissiveness on the part of women. A wealth of research has documented the inequities that women face from their earliest years and in every facet of their lives, including in education, employment, marriage, parenthood, and political participation. Women also face unique challenges, including meeting their reproductive health needs and the threat of gender-based violence. Overcoming these challenges and empowering women to fulfill their potential as equal members of society requires profound changes in attitudes, roles, and behaviors inside the home, at the workplace, and in the community.

Although, Susan Ricardson (2008) has opined that,

the basis of women's oppression lies in her vulnerability during pregnancy and childbirth. During some of this period she is unable to work, except for the work of child-bearing itself and during much of it, she is able to work at partial strength only and feels both mentally and physically weaker. This varies from woman to woman, and pregnancy to pregnancy, but is nevertheless universal to some degree (35).

According to Ricardson (2008), pregnancy and child-bearing as women's biological roles must have condemned women to the domestic labour, especially within a family with children. In much of the Third World, women toil ceaselessly on domestic and subsistence work, such as carrying water, growing food, preparing food, making clothes. In Nigeria as exemplary of other Africa countries most especially, domestic labour is much grueling and time-consuming from which most men are almost entirely free. There is, however, a good deal of hostility directed toward men on the part of some feminist writers, as well as by some activists in the political movement. Christine Delphy (2019) has stated unequivocally that, "... it is men who benefit from patriarchal exploitation...." Also, Paula Fredrickson Landes averred thus:

How could feminist consciousness have developed without anger? Anger growing with the realization of the psychological and cultural manipulation of women; anger at the tremendous power men have had over women's lives to induce feelings of dependence and powerlessness, discord aging growth, independence, and individuation; anger at those religions which claim to provide moral guidance and liberation, but instead amplify this sexist oppression (2).

As a point of fact, the issue of feminism is struggling to gain a space in Africa. It is confronted with serious bias, misrepresented and misinterpreted, often deliberately by men who feel threatened with the way it is practiced in the west. Many Nigerian playwrights (men and women) create powerful female characters that play significant roles in social reforming. Nigerian dramas (literatures) are riddled with instances of women collective action as a political weapon to resist the encroachment on the few marginalized spaces available for them in the male-dominated society.

Furthermore, man-to-woman oppression and gender inequality have become the crux of attention of most Nigerian drama.

### **Synopsis of Selected Nigerian Playwrights and their Interpretations**

Kafewo's *Teni*, is among the ten short plays written by Samuel Ayedime Kafewo, which came about as a result of the Ahmadu Bello University's '1994 Instances Project', in which the need to use Theatre for Development (TfD) to explore the negative stereotypical roles women and girl-child is made to undergo in Nigeria and the female's feeble effrontery at challenging these suppressive traditions, laws and practices became imperative.

#### **Ayedime Kafewo's *Teni***

In *Teni*, the readers see a twelve years old girl sent into early marriage by her parents against her wish. Zakari, *Teni*'s husband will rather busy himself with bringing women home and drinking alcohol, while the wife (girl) is out under the sun and rain toiling to provide food on their table. Suffocated by the retinue of domestic responsibilities, *Teni* filed a divorce suite against Zakari, in the Alkali Court. The Judge found Zakari guilty on the grounds of drunkenness, starvation, constant assault and general maltreatment of *Teni* and advised *Teni* to seek advice from the church where their marriage was contracted, as the Alkali court only have jurisdiction over marriages contracted under Islamic laws. *Teni* runs home to her parents, thinking she would meet their understanding and supports to walk out of the marriage; they further used the sanctity of religion to cow *Teni* into passivity and submission to her husband in the face of her strangling reality. Traditional institutions are also dealt a satiric punch; for example, the Alkali Court is questioned on her unfairness to give justice in the face of adversity.

The play portrays the condition of women and how the girl-child suffers in the hands of tradition woven from male perspective, which in turn is majorly brought about by miss-information, self-interest, power, bloated-ego and illiteracy. A society where this form of malady strives most; inequality, frustration and underdevelopment are usually the characteristics of such milieu. In tandem with the day-to-day activities of every society, the main responsibility of the artists (theatre) is to mirror the society the way it is and help in changing its ugly narrative. Unless the artists want to break fate with reality; the playwrights must help in showing the society the ways it ought to be. Thus, this is Kafewo's way of telling the women-folk that, in every patriarchal society where gender inequalities are the order of the day, women who are seen as inferior usually strive to change their unfortunate living conditions that are their realities. In such conditions of oppression and subjugation, women have always acted in order to change this stereotype designed by men (patriarchy). This has been the process through history; a process of struggle to change "codes" and "decrees" that are only favourable to man. Simone de Beauvoir cannot agree less with Kafewo when she says:

Society, being codified by man, decrees that women are inferior. She can do away with this inferiority only by destroying the male's superiority. She sets about mutilating, dominating man, she contradicts him, and she denies his truth and his values. But in doing this she is only defending herself; it was neither a changeless essence nor a mistaken choice that doomed her to immanence, to inferiority. They were imposed upon her. All oppression creates a state of war. And this is no exception (18).

It is a wildly held belief that in Nigeria (Africa) the denigration of women is tied to the cultural definition of the role of women in traditional Nigeria society. In this context, women are meant to be seen and not heard; therefore, the girl-child is often neglected, overworked, underfed, neglected and denied access to education and proper health care, making her vulnerable to poverty, exploitation, early marriage and several social threats that limit her capacity to think and take decisions. Okwori avers thus:

In the context of severe deprivation and oppression, the women of Nigeria suffer double if not triple oppression. Social-cultural population and development issues are designed and affected from male perspectives. The women are voiceless. They

virtually need the expressed permission of their husbands before taking any decision. Young girls have no say on when and who to marry. Usually they are married out early and this has consequences for the number of children they are made to have and on their health. Since they have no say in the number of children they can have, they are actually bound to continue childbearing till they are spent. These practices are held and reinforced through cultural beliefs and traditions. The greatest instrument of this reinforcement is the arts and the media where the image of women has always been defined in terms of subservience, naivety and pettiness (viii).

Apart from the issues of men and women oppression bedeviling the Nigeria nation, the issue of bad governance and corruption have become a volcano that is constantly threatening the social entity of Nigeria.

### **Bad Governance**

Lordger Miller (2007) avers that bad governance is the unfavourable relationship between those who govern and those who are governed as a consequence of decision-making. This unfavourable relationship is created as a consequence of external factors or decisions such as violation of central or acceptable norms, such as those of liberal democracy, and bad economic policy. Based on The World Bank's governance indicators (2009), some key causes of bad governance are delineated here.

#### ***Lack of Voice and Weak Accountability***

Governing bodies refusing to listen to the voice of those they govern and take refusing to take accountability for their actions leads to bad governance. By ignoring the voice of those being governed, their opinions are no longer heard or taken into consideration by the governing body. Democratic governments focus on accountability as a method to ensure the public understands what is happening and provides them a way to proceed when things go wrong. Weak accountability in turn causes distrust between the two parties and can lead to instability. This distrust and uncertainty creates an unfavourable relationship between the parties.

#### ***Political Instability***

Bad governance occurs as a consequence of frequent changes in government or 'political instability'. Instability in political regimes, such as a democracy, has been proven to coincide with poor governance (45). Since independence in Nigeria, it has become a re-occurring decimal that each political era comes with a failed administrative responsibility despite the fact that every change of government is welcomed with euphoria and bloated hope by the citizenry (Edline, 2007). This ugly experience generates a feeling of disillusionment in the contemporary Nigeria society, as these political elites are unable to synthesize the various parts of government's machinery into performing meaningfully and creditably to transform the people's votes into meaningful development and prosperity. The manifestations of bad governance, according to Morendo (2015), include: deceit, election frauds, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, bribery, lack of dedication to duty, dishonesty, arbitrary policy making and the cheating of those who are governed.

A strong correlation exists between bad governance and corruption (Holmberg, Rothstein & Nasiritousi, 2009). Bad governance is often considered to come hand in hand with corruption. Corruption occurs in many sectors ranging from political to economic environments. Corruption can occur in many different ways and forms. The existence of corruption within a governing body causes bad governance as the officials place their personal gains over others. The concepts of corruption and good governance have a two-way causal relationship with each other and feed off each other in a vicious circle. If good governance principles and structures are not in place, this provides greater opportunity for corruption. Corruption, in turn, can prevent good governance principles and structures from being put in place, or enforced. Violations of the principles of transparency, accountability and rule of law appear to be most closely associated with corruption. In the end, corruption and poor governance are security challenges which undermine democracy, the rule of law and economic development.

Regrettably so, the bad governance and corruption failures by past and present political elites have further worsened the social conditions in Nigeria. This is because, cyber-crime, growth in domestic violence, high rate of suicides, growing inequality, ridden poverty, stunt social infrastructures, Boko Haram and heads-men insurgency, bombing, kidnaping, hostage-taking and high rate of illiteracy characterized the Nigeria nation. Resultantly, the frustrating aggression of the nation may have trickled down to its teaming youth and populace; resulting in the citizens often taking up arms against one another at a slight provocation, culminating in dislocation and displacement of the citizens from their location and residence, psychological despondency and domestic violence in which women and children suffer most. It is these gamut of social ills that have become the crux of attention of many Nigerian (African) writers; using different literary genres to communicate this broad day hindrances to developmental progress and prosperity.

### **Olu Obafemi's *Naira Has No Gender***

The play, *Naira Has No Gender* is a condemnation of Nigerian political leaders over bad governance that degenerate into corruption, crave for materialism, moral decadence and traditional ethos and more commodified for material wealth. The duo of Otunla and Aina enacted economic hardship through their love affair and their readiness to consummate same in white social weeding. The social weeding plan is on; hence; there is a debate between the couple on how ostentatious the weeding should be; a white and elaborate wedding reception that should gulp huge amount of money and political, technocrats and business associates in attendance. However, Otunla, on a second thought, sees the weeding plans as debase, wasteful, unnecessary, hopeless and undesirable in the midst of abject lack and stagnant poverty; culpable of attracting armed robbery to their home after the weeding. To further heighten the theme of corruption in the play, Chief Awadanu, an illiterate politician is in full control of political engineering that is in motion for continue alienation of the mass of Nigerians from their full potentialities and political rights.

Through *Naira Has No Gender*, Olu Obafemi shows how the traditional and modern cultures of the society have to combat the various maladies, which had eaten up the fabric of the society due to class differences. Even Olu Obafemi concurs when submits: "I have chosen an ostensibly trivial part-domestic, part-social issue in this play to examine how conscious (socially and politically) individuals confront the reality of the existence in a bankrupt cynical and dysfunctional social order" (Obafemi 5). The character of Otunla and Aina are perhaps the reason for hope for a better tomorrow in a society decorated with such gross social decay. That the weeding is consummated striped of all social aggrandizements tells that the Otunla and Aina's society will tomorrow be purged of all the societal ills as this marriage symbolizes. Corruption, exploitation, deprivation, rigging of election, mediocrity, ineptitude, myopia in leadership, inflation, armed robbery, poverty, suffering, and a host of other social maladies will fade into nothingness. This is the dream of the playwright, Olu Obafemi.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper discussed that there is a dialectical link between governance styles, the achievement of socio-economic development and drama (theatre) in Nigeria. The impact of the latter on the former is largely dependent on the paradigm which the playwright relates with his society; to write to placate the ego of the ruling class or to write to projects the yearnings of the people through his artistry. Whichever way the playwright chooses can either weaken or strengthens state capacity to realizing its vision and mission. Corruption and women oppression is arguably central to socio-economic development in Nigeria. The writers in this paper have shown how bad governance and women oppression issue in Nigeria are veritable materials for dramatic construction in the hands of the Nigerian playwrights, as accounted for in the works of Kafewo's *Teni* and Obafemi's *Naira Has No Gender*. To effect necessary change in leadership and social construction in Nigeria, playwriting and other genres of literature should continue to show the Nigeria society the way it is and thus, help in the re-construction of the society.

Therefore, the paper recommends that political leadership must refocus, reemphasize and pursue with vigor the vision as well as the mission of democratic governance which incidentally tallies with the aspiration for and the struggle by Nigerians for democracy in the country. What patriarchy has done is convince people that a strong and intelligent woman represents a problem; a

disruption to the social order rather than an integral part of it. Regardless of a woman's experience, education or abilities, the patriarchal nature of Nigeria society fosters the perception that women are less qualified and less competent than men. It feeds the message that men should wield the power and women should occupy a subordinate position in all areas of society. This outdated, yet persistent, point of view fuels educational inequality and a host of other disparities along the lines of gender on national and international levels.

Furthermore, the discrimination and oppression of women can only be extirpated or annihilated by women's advocacy on their rights and the nation's participation to achieve justice and equality and help contribute to nation building. A fundamental reason we have not yet achieved gender equality in every realm is that women and girls' voices are too often excluded from global and national decision-making. When programmes and policies are designed without women's needs central to their foundation, we're setting ourselves up to fail. Grassroots women should be adequately consulted in designing the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs). A proven way to overcome many systemic barriers to a woman's success has been: increased in woman's voice and her ability to become a leader in her community – fundamental to empowering women and participation by women in local, regional and national legislation as empowered change agents. Only a society free of bad governance and corruption may truly achieve this reality.

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**GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND THE WOMEN IDENTITY IN THE  
CREATIVE INDUSTRY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF EFFIONG  
JOHNSON'S *INSTALL THE PRINCESS***

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**Abstract**

From ancient till present, gender discrimination, mostly against the female sex by their male counterparts, has ironically positioned as a serious menace plaguing the Nigerian creative industry, thereby ridiculing development in the society. This menace is visible when the socio-political cum economical fronts of the nation is being controlled by the men, while the women are left with little or nothing. This is vividly portrayed in Effiong Johnson's *Install the Princess*. Due to the ineffectiveness of the men towards managing these strata as a result of corruption, nepotism, favouritism, greed, and divide and rule, the country is today faced with issues which have unequivocally affected its fronts. These issues range from poverty, hunger, sickness, and pain, thus have created death to the people and under-development to the country. The resultant effect of these is manifested in acts which include kidnapping, illegal oil bunkering, incessant killings, assassination, lethal car bombing, and total breakdown of law and order. Among the major findings is that this situation has provided impetus for creative punches in dramatic and theatrical representations by notable playwrights. Thus, with content analytical approach, this study investigates how Effiong Johnson attempts to establish the effect of gender discrimination on the Nigerian creative industry using the instrument of drama. The effect of it will create positive change amongst Nigerians, thereby effectuating change around societies. The study therefore recommends immediate abolishment of gender discrimination from the Nigerian society as that would increase the level of nation building.

**Keywords:** Gender Discrimination, Nigerian Development, Textual Analysis

**Introduction**

According to Rukshanda et al. (2017), gender discrimination as the name suggests is the unfair treatment of women and denial of opportunities and violation of their right. It is the unequal treatments of people on the basis of characteristics that differentiate those factors such as stereotypes, prejudice and/or racism motivate a person to discriminate. Gender on its own refers to the social roles men and women play and the power relations between them, which usually has a profound effect on the use and management of natural resources.

More so, gender is shaped by culture, social relations, and natural environments. It is as a result of this that the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been marked by a widespread movement towards gender equality/discrimination (Linda, 2016). It is a primary marker of social and economic stratification and, as a result, of exclusion. Regardless ones socio-economic status, there were systemic gender



differences in material well-being, although the degree of inequality varies across countries and over time (Gaelle, 2011).

Notwithstanding, discrimination occurs in various forms in human life. For example, Mathias and Christian noted, quoting Iro (2003) that, “any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity and treatment in employment or occupation, is discriminatory”. On the same plain, they also aver that Iro distinguishes between direct and indirect discrimination. The first form according to them arises if, without being less qualified, certain groups of society are explicitly excluded or disadvantaged by the legal framework due to characteristics such as gender. They went further to assert that, “indirect discrimination occurs if intrinsically neutral rules or laws negatively affect certain groups, e.g., female workers.” Linda (2016) concluded this platinum assertion by stating categorically that, “discrimination of part-time workers against full-time employees is still present in nearly every country. This form of discrimination is not perpetuated through differential access to and control over material resource” (Udry, 1996).

This assertion is globally plausible such as its practices are not farfetched. Rukhshanda et al. (2017) noted that, “even in advanced countries that claim to be champions of women’s right gender discrimination is present in one form or the other especially in the field of economics”. They clarified by stating that women are not compensated fairly for their efforts and contributions at workplace and are often overlooked when it comes to promotions. The glass ceiling effect according to Rukhshanda et al. (2017), quoting Baxter and Wright, is more prevalent in developed countries. Extensively, they posited that obstacles for women promotion became intense at higher levels of authority.

On the social sphere, discrimination against women is rampant in almost every field. In many developed and developing countries of the world, women are not considered worthy of education, and better medical treatment (Rukhshanda et al., 2017). Rukhshanda et al went on to assert that, “they have no rights over property and although they may be more capable than men, they are not allowed to use their potentials and talents”. Women according to them are generally treated as second class citizens and their needs are fulfilled only after the men have had their fill. This is often fathomed or envisaged in developing countries, of which, Pakistan is an exemplar (Nair, 2015). This defines the fact that it was ranked as the second worst country in the world by the World Economic Forum in the gender inequality index (Baxter, 2000).

Furthermore, in traditional African societies like Nigeria, culture has a pervasive influence on how women are treated (Julie, 2012). The *Culture Policy for Nigeria* (1988), the official document regulating the administration of cultural matters, according to Julie (2012), lends credence to the fact that culture represents the totality of the way of life of a given society. It is therefore no surprise that all discrimination against women tend to seek justification in cultural moves, beliefs and practices. To this, Julie (2012) further stated that, “for any society to develop and progress it must embrace change and objectivity, thus the Nigerian society cannot afford to lag behind”. She concludes by noting that “the transformation agenda of the Federal Government of Nigeria should be holistic and inclusive of the need to liberate the kinetic energy of all citizens without any discrimination to seek self actualization and contribute to national development.”

It is to the crusade targeted at abolishing gender discrimination through identifying its effects on the Nigerian development, as portrayed in Effiong Johnson’s *Install the Princess* that form the hitch to which this study is based. To achieve this aim, the Radical Feminism Theory is employed.

### **Causes of Gender Discrimination in Nigeria**

The fundamental causes of gender discrimination in Nigeria, which is a microcosm of the macrocosm of gender discrimination in other countries of the world, are many such as it has pragmatically and unequivocally prevented the female sex towards attaining magnificent heights either in clandestine fronts ranging from politics, social, economical, religious, cultural, family, and otherwise. The causes are many, thus manifesting in ironical ways, such as it has instead metamorphosed or diffused, asserting pervasive, albeit negative influence on the women gender. It is against this backdrop that Zakari et al. (2017) write that illiteracy is one of the prime causes of gender discrimination in Quetta city, which is also synonymous to the Nigerian experience in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to them, parents who are illiterate and those belonging to the low socio-economic economic group, are not in

favour of educating their daughters because it brings them no returns. According to them, girls leave their parents house and get married while the boys are the breadwinners of the family. In such cases, investing the education of the girl child is considered a waste of resources whereas investing in the boy child education brings fruitful outcomes in the form of money that he earns in future.

On a neutral note, rigid culture and tradition according to Zakari et al. (2017), quoting Manchanda and Boss (2015), are often major contributors towards gender discrimination in most African countries. To further buttress this assertion, Garima et al. (2018), quoting Gberevbie et al. (2014), write that, there is “an effect of cultural belief where female child is taken as second fiddle and does not have the cultural right to compete with male counterparts”. They further noted that, “male child enjoys the birth right of females as per the cultural and family norms of Nigerian societies”. A family, according to them, gives primary focus to male instead of the female. Garima (2018) writes, distinctly thus, quoting Shastri (2014) that, “female role is to look after the household and major factor behind this is our beliefs which were also influenced by lack of education”. This is fathomed in such a way that women are meticulously considered inferior to men (Zakari et al., 2017).

The birth of a son is considered a blessing and is believed to be a method of keeping women under control. Daughters are married off at an early age to men much older than them. Hence, they are generally considered weak, not only physically, also mentally. Positive attitudes such as intelligence, smartness, and strength are associated with men. Linder (2016) avers that itemizing the causes of gender discrimination in the Nigerian space, which are “culture and norms, education, economic, and politics”. On the cultural and norm factor, Zarkari et al. (2017) agree by quoting Agbalajobi (2010) that, “the cultures of many societies are based by subjugating women to men, and undermining their self-esteem. Linda also noted by quoting Abiola in Lanre (2003) that, “women are typically associated with domestic works, thus, gender discrimination remains pervasive in many dimensions of life, and the nature and extent of the discrimination vary considerably across countries and regions”. According to Linda (2017), in Nigeria Women are discriminated, even in the family. This is fathomed when the male children are ironically prevented from doing miniature duties at their respective homes. Such duties include cooking, sweeping, fetching of water, washing, and firewood. These enshrined are exclusively reserved for every African woman in such a manner that any woman who eventually partakes in politics or any social organization is pragmatically referred to as rebel and prostitute. This unequivocally deprives women, mostly the married women to participate in politics (Anne & Carrie, 2007).

On the educational perspective, Linda (2017) writes that, “another constraint that hampers women from equal access to politics or encounter restricting their quest to participate in active politics is education”. To further buttress this notion, Linda quotes Afolabi (2003) as stating that, “regardless of the vital role the women perform in the society; mother, producer, home manager, community organizer, social-cultural, and political activities, they are mostly stacked illiterates”. This notion therefore justifies the notion posited by the United Nation that women constitute 70% of the world’s illiterate population (Anne & Carrie, 2007). Furthermore, Linda (2017) writes that, “achieving literacy education is the most crucial step to enable literate women to take control over their lives to participate as equals in society”.

Notwithstanding, and on the economic factor, Linda (2017) undoubtedly averred that, “lack of economic incentives are one of the factors preventing women from participating to active politics in Nigeria”. He also asserts that “historically, women experienced discrimination that put them at a disadvantage economically. Quoting Agbalajobi (2009), Linda (2017) writes that, “lack of finance brings hindrance to effective female participation in Nigeria politics”. This ironically defines the notion why women cannot participate fully in politics when compared to their male counterparts because of their low financial statues (Linda, 2017; Frank & George, 2019).

Lastly, on political factor and rule of law, Linda (2017) writes, quoting Anifowose (2004) that, “the perception that democracy would automatically boast gender equality in political participation has not been vindicated after years of return to civilian rule in Nigeria”. The role embodied with democracy defines equality in all fronts such as it affects both sexes. Painfully, according to Linda (2017), quoting Kira (2003), women are unjustifiably discriminated irrespective of the fact that world over today democracy has become a vital tool to attaining sustainable development. Impact of democracy according to Linda remains elusive for women inasmuch as they

are not verse in understanding that political participation, which is a sine-quantum of democracy allows for diversity of opinion and participation of both men and women into political gatherings.

Conclusively, women are also partially responsible for the discrimination against them, though they are aware that the constitution may propose equal right, yet they do not protest when their rights may usurp (Zakari, 2017). Women according to them accept discrimination as a norm of the society and parts of their lives.

### **Effects of Gender Discrimination in Nigeria**

Gender discrimination, as a cankerworm which from prehistory till date has been ravaging the Nigerian space in fronts which unequivocally and unarguably includes political, economical, social, religious, cultural, and the family, is largely responsible for the sagacious increase in the level of poverty, suffering, pain, and death in the Nigerian space. This notion is plausible because in today's world, economic progress is only possible when men and women work side by side (Zakari et al., 2017). They further buttressed this assertion by positing that,

women constitute approximately half of the population of Baluchistan – a microcosm of the Nigerian statistical measure and by denying them education, the possibility of progress is reduced by half. As half of the population is not allowed to make use of their talent, Nigeria has not been able to progress compared with other developing nations in the world.

The discrimination against the female gender is so fathomed and prevalent in the Nigerian space most especially on occasions where the women are ironically seen as second filial, thus are most often denied of adequate medical attention which ironically affects their children. This menace has meticulously increased the level of sickness and diseases in the society (Zakari et al., 2017). Furthermore, the notion that women education is not beneficial to the family and the society at large is ironically misinterpreted as profound contributions by the educated in their respective families and societies are versatile. For example, an educated woman can take care of her immediate family in a way that her children would grow and become profound and industrious citizens in the society. The opposite is meticulously seen on the daily manifestation of terrorism in forms of youth restiveness, prostitution, armed robbery, drug abuse, incessant killings, cultism, militancy, insurgencies, negative clashes, suicide bombing, lethal car bombing, and other forms of menaces which negatively affect the people, thus propounding the audacity that instigates or questions the Nigerian nation as a unified entity. These unholy and malicious acts are often perpetrated or masterminded by uncultured youths whom are believed to have been bred by uneducated parents, mostly their mothers.

This expressively explains that the pervasive upheavals in the Nigerian society are sprouted and defined, thus armed due to the temerity that women are not properly educated and thereafter positioned in fronts such as politics, social, economical, military, religion, and so on. This would unequivocally result to abuse of power by their male counterparts, thus increasing the issue of corruption, nepotism, favouritism, and divide and rule system which has pragmatically eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian space in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This automatically hampers the development of the nation and increases the level of poverty, suffering, hunger, and starvation of the people as a result of constant diversion of public resources for personal gains by the corrupt politicians who daily oppress and repress the people.

### **Radical Feminism Theory**

Radical feminism theory is the breeding ground for many of the ideas arising from feminism. Radical feminism was the cutting edge of feminist theory from approximately 1967-1975, and it is no longer as universally accepted as it was, thus it no longer serves to solely define the term, "feminism". On the same note, radical feminism is the origin of patriarchy and the subordination of women therein, as seen by radical feminists to rest in male aggression and control of women's sexuality (Jelena, 2017). This explains how men are inherently more aggressive than women, who, because of their relative size disadvantages and dependency on men during child bearing years, are easy to dominate and control. This group of feminists views the oppression of women as the most fundamental form of

oppression, one that cuts across boundaries of race, culture, and economic class; a movement intent on social change, change of rather revolutionary proportion (Jelena, 2017). Radical feminism, according to Julie (2012), is a feminist theory course that starts from the idea of conflict between the sexes as a fundamental conflict, and oppression against women as a direct implication of patriarchy. In the analysis of Julie (2012), this theory rests on the assumption that all social system contains specific forms of interactive constraints; they do not have to cause repression.

Conclusively, and considering the fact that the study aims at closing the bridge that prompted the issue of gender discrimination in Nigerian space, this study employs the radical feminism theory. This is so because the radical feminism theory questions why women must adopt certain roles based on their biology, just as it questions why men adopt certain other roles based on gender. On the other hand, it tends to draw lines between biological-determined behaviour and cultural-determined behaviour in order to free both men and women as much as possible from their previous narrow gender roles.

### **Methodology**

This research work employed the case study and content analysis research approaches of qualitative research method. It involves explaining the issue, describing, analyzing and interpreting data on the analysis gender discrimination as portrayed in *Install the Princess*. It is qualitative because it deals with the analysis of this play by a notable Nigerian playwright and descriptive because it involves the use of ideas to describe and analyze the nature and effects of gender discrimination in the play texts. To achieve this, the study employed the primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the play text and the researchers' ideas concerning the nature and effects of gender discrimination in the Nigerian society, while the secondary source includes materials from the institutional publications, articles, journals, text books, internets, research materials, amongst others.

### **Synopsis of *Install the Princess***

The play *Install the Princess* revolves around Obong Nkenang, a sixty (60) years old king, who sacrificed himself and his two sons to bring everlasting peace to the people of Ekondo and Ekuku and to change the statuesque which deprives the female gender of equal right with the male gender. He believes that for a community to attain the level of greatness and development, the women's interest must be respected, thus he demanded that a woman representative should be among the council. Before his demise, he performed a ritual dance, which ultimately made him place princess, his only daughter, on the royal throne of a Ekondo community, thereby declaring to the gods to accept his choice of an heir to the ancestral stool since his two sons Ubokudom (first son) and Uko (second son) have refused to come back home from abroad where they went for further studies.

After his demise, news was brought to the palace that the Mediterranean Airline the two princes boarded from the United Kingdom to Nigeria disappeared and was later reported by cable news that the aircraft crashed into the pacific. The demise of the two princes became a problem to the people as to whom to take over the kingship of Ekondo, because Etiowo, the only surviving son of the royal blood, is deaf and dumb, which, according to the requirement of becoming a king in the land, is a taboo, This leaves the princess, a woman, as the only choice for the stool, which is also a taboo to install her. To curtail this, Ukarakoa, Upkotio, and Nkakat, the members of the royal executive council of Ekondo, suggest that a choice of kinship be made in another family.

The idea is thwarted by Ufokiban, the only woman in the executive council. For, according to the tradition, a king must emerge from the royal family. Therefore, she suggested that the princess be installed as the king and ruler of Ekondo community. However, the idea was attacked by the men in council, reasons being that a woman had never been crowned king or ruler of Ekondo community judging from the past. Rather, the men insisted that Etiowo be crowned despite his abnormalities; an idea which Ufokiban kicked against. The meeting was inconclusive and was later taken to the community youth to deliberate and come up with an idea. They later received the opinion from the youth that the decision of the executive council in the case will be accepted by all. Led by Nne Mmatim, the women rushed in requesting that the princess must be installed. They threatened to go nude around the market square and the shrine of Ekondo, supposing their right to install the princess as the king and ruler of Ekondo is not granted. Afraid of this, the executive council decided to send

Nkakato Utim Ekiko, the seer of Ekondo, in order to know the decision of the gods. At the shrine, a female goat was given to Nkakato to take to the palace, which means that the gods have decided that whoever they choose from the royal family is qualified being the king and ruler of the land.

At the end, Etiowo was dressed in king's regalia and taken to the throne by the men-in-council. However, along the line, Etiowo himself declined and insisted that Princess should act and rule in his behalf. The Princess was crowned as the king and ruler of Ekondo. In effect, equity, development, and transparency were restored in the land of Ekondo. She married a man called Udobong from the same land.

### ***Install the Princess and the Theme of Gender Discrimination in Nigeria***

From the foregoing, it is pertinent to deduce pragmatically and unequivocally that the Nigerian state, as creative industry is yet to attain greatness in many fronts-economically, politically, socially and otherwise. This is as a result of the prevalent gender discrimination against the female sex as portrayed in Effiong Johnson's *Install the Princess*.

Lucidly, the play, as microcosm to the macrocosm of the Nigerian state in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, though meticulously hilarious, unravels trending issues ranging from greed, corruption, discrimination, segregation, nepotism, divide and rule system and the clandestine quest for equality. For example, in the play, the playwright distinctively attributes these cankerworms to characters like Ukarakpa, Ukpotio and Nkakato who are members of the royal executive council in Ekondo community. They maliciously resorted into insisting that Princess should not be crowned king and ruler of Ekondo. Instead, they obliged that an alternative choice should be made by choosing a leader from another family outside the royal family; when it was obvious that Princess, a female, was the only eligible person in the royal lineage to be crowned king.

This was as a result of the fact that Etiowo, the only surviving son of late King Obong Nkenang was deaf and dumb and the other elder sons had been killed in an air crash. They insisted that Princess would never be a king and ruler of Ekondo owing to the fact that women were mainly to take care of household chores and bearing children for their husbands. That idea was presently prevalent in Nigerian society where the women gender are maliciously regarded fillers, thus deprived of all political and economical obligations, rather are placed to be under the command and supervision of the men. This is visible in the play where the men believe that the highest position that a woman is as queen. Disregarding this idea or philosophy, the women agitate and demand that Princess be installed as the king and ruler of Ekondo. Once the Princess was installed as regent, all traditional obligations that place the men as superior over the women was overcome. For example, in the tradition of Ekondo, women were not supposed to ask for the hand of a man in marriage; rather, it behooves the man to do so, even though Princess changed the statuesque by asking for the hand of Udobong in marriage.

Moreover, it was fathomed in the play that one of the reasons that the men vowed not to allow the Princess to be crowned king and ruler of Ekondo was because of greed and corruption. They obviously understood that such an oblivion and malicious habit of theirs could never be achieved if Princess, a woman, is installed as the king. Instead, they insisted that Etiowo, a dumb and deaf princess, be crowned king and ruler, despite the knowledge that it was against the custom and tradition of Ekondo. The statement of Ukpotio below clarifies it:

Ukpotio: You don't seem to see that you have easily ruled Ekondo through Etiowo as his closest aid? (84)

This was meticulously expressed when they tried to buy Inim, the most trusted servant and praise singer to late king Ubong, into supporting Etiowo to be crowned as king. They tagged Inim insane, because of his refusal to accept their egocentric obligation. This act is visible in the Nigerian space, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where the women gender is only allowed to occupy positions that appear as shadows under the supervision or superiority of the male gender. Placing them at the helm of affairs like the president of the nation, the senate president, governors, speaker of the House of Representatives, and judicial head, is to jeopardize their negative activities due to the transparent nature.

The men in the Nigerian society like the members of the royal executive council in the play, prefers to place a deformed and inability men as president, governor, national executive leaders, head of the judiciary, head of military, etc, rather than a woman, so as to control the activities of the nation in the background and to protect their malicious and dubious identity. These are the major menaces that are plaguing the creative industry of the Nigerian scenario, thus presenting itself as cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian state. The ineffectiveness of the robotic representation at the helm of affairs in the Nigerian society has therefore increased nepotism, favouritism, greed, embezzlement, and divide-and-rule system, which, on the other hand, increased the issues of poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment, hunger, sickness, general sufferings, and death of the people.

The above deficiencies prompted king Ubong to perform a ritual dance to the princess, which drew the attention of the gods to witness his choice of leader on the throne of Ekondo. Understanding the mischievous nature of the men, king Ubong requested that a woman should be chosen to represent the women in the royal executive council, as much as to speak for the women especially in matters that mostly concern them. The decision is hardly envisaged in the Nigerian state; rather, the men in their massive number would team up to disassociate the women in their midst.

In the final analysis, the playwright posits that the women gender should, as a matter of urgency, be given the opportunity to sit at the helm of political and economic affairs, which sums the creative Nigerian industry for change. He believes that gender equality should be granted to all, as that would distinctively resolve the precarious issues of corruption in the Nigerian state. This malicious dichotomy has unequivocally increased at the level of social disorderliness, ranging from kidnapping, arm robbery, lethal car bombing, assassination, drug abuse, and other forms of social vices that disrupt the smooth running of the Nigerian creative industry.

### **Conclusion**

From the study, it is established that the Nigerian creative industry is at the benchmark due to increase in corruption, which manifests through greed, favouritism, as well as nepotism, as a result of deprivation and disassociation of the women gender in terms of equity, right, and transparency in ruler ship and governance, as portrayed in Effiong Johnson's *Install the Princess*. Using drama as a mechanism for evangelism, the playwright obliged that the issue of gender inequality and discrimination against the women in the Nigerian space is alarming, and has instead metamorphosed into malicious acrimonies that might ridicule the existence of the Nigerian state in the nearest future.

### **Recommendation**

To tackle the issue of gender inequality and discrimination that has abruptly affected the Nigerian creative industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the following recommendations are therefore established:

- a) The women gender should be given the opportunity to attain the helm of affairs in strata such as politics, economy, military, paramilitary, etc., in order to bestow their creative ability for the development of the Nigerian creative industry.
- b) There should be an act in the Nigerian constitution that would instill equal right amongst the male and the female gender.
- c) The study also suggests that there should be an established agency that would supervise and ensure that equity amongst the genders is maintained and anyone who tries to violate the law of equity should be punished.

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## FROM PRACTICE TO THEORY: CHRISTIAN DRAMATIC THEATRE IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Christian drama is fast taking the shape of popular drama in Nigeria as it has become a staple diet in most Christian homes. With a Christian population of 86.5million, which constitutes 48% of the total population of Nigeria (PEW Report, 2011), the clientele is huge and the society is diverse as even non-Christians are not left out in the craze to watch 'Christian films'. They are being produced on live Theatres (stages), studio rooms of broadcasting stations, home videos, YouTube and even in play texts. There are some names in this emerging popular genre of Theatre and drama in Nigeria that are more or less household personalities: Mike Bamiloye, Mike Agboola, Segun Okeowo and even a professor of Theatre Arts to the bargain- Late Professor Foluke Ogunleye. Yet, Christian drama and Theatre has not merited a sustained academic attention in Nigeria. This paper is an attempt to study the practice of Christian Dramatic Theatre in Nigeria with focus on *The gods are to blame* (2009), a Segun Okeowo film. Utilitarianism theory serves as a guide for this study. Thus, we may then be able to have a better understanding of this drama and then fashion out a suitable theoretical model for the practice of Christian dramatic theatre in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Morality Play, Christian Drama, Christian Theatre, Society

### Introduction/Background of the Study

It is generally assumed that theatre owes two primary duties to its society-education and entertainment. The entertainment aspect of theatre is beyond question because nobody pays good money to go into the theatre, buy/watch a movie or subscribe data to watch a programme on YouTube only is bored. It is the education aspect of the theatre that is the fraud of this paper. Right from the Greek principal playwrights to Brecht; Soyinka to Obafemi, 'reflecting and affecting' the society of their plays is a major focus. For instance, Soyinka's portrayal of religious charlatanism through the characters of Chume and Prophet Jeroboam in the *Trials of Brother Jero* is both entertaining and correctional. This is supported by Friedrich Schiller of description of a stage as a moral institution where societal issues are debated (1974). Drama, being one of the most social of all art forms (Olorunsomo, 2009: 26) and one of the chief theatrical performances, offers the society the mirror with which to look at itself and reflect. Yet, with the volume of dramatic works unleashed upon the Nigerian society, we have witnessed minimal transformation.

Apart from the use of dramatic sketches in promotional productions and mass mobilization programmes, drama in Nigeria remains an academic discipline. We may not need any serious research to know that all the efforts put forth by our Nigerian classical dramatists such as Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, J. P. Clark-Bekederemo, Zulu Sofola, Wale Ogunyemi, Femi Osofisan and, lately, Olu Obafemi, Nigeria still remains "one of the most corrupt countries of the world". Even the radical playwrights have only succeeded in producing Sloganeering theorists. Yet, the works of these worthy Nigerian dramatists have received and continue to receive enviable recognitions, home and abroad. It is arguable whether a "Sidi" in Nigeria of today will prefer to go with Baroka, given that Lakunle



represents the lure of Europe and America, except perhaps, Baroka can guarantee that escape to such places (*Lion and the Jewel*, 1967). This may be the reason Olu Obafemi is asking the question: *Dark Times are Over?* (2005).

As participant-observant theorists of Christian theatre and drama, this paper is meant to show that Christian drama has done more to salvage the crumbling morals of a segment of Nigerian society (Oreniyi, 2014), the Church, and can do more, given the chance.

### **Definition of Terms**

At this junction, we may need to define two terms which will be frequently used in this study – Christian theatre and Christian drama. Christian theatre, according to Ola Foyeke (1997: 18),

...is a theatrical style that gives serious attention to spiritual participation (metaphysical occurrences), dialogue, critical conscientization and spiritual development by ‘staging’ the word of God. It is aimed at spiritual edification that can transform the people socially, culturally and spiritually.

This translates to an attempt to shift the pulpit to the stage. Christian drama on its own is a sermon in a play-way method. It is what Ogunleye (2007) describes as a ‘dramatic sermon’. It is a presentation of plays on biblical themes/issues through different devices of stage theatre. Oyekan defines it as “creative art of presenting a God-given message to the people through the medium of acting for the glorification of God” (2013: xx).

In Christian theatre, the same elements of theatre are employed but in a different way. For instance in explicit sexual scenes, actors are not allowed to show it on stage; they will only simulate similar actions that will suggest to the audience what is meant. This might be similar to Elizabethan/modern period offstage reporting of bloody scenes. Curses are not allowed on stage/set. Real incantations are not allowed; instead poetically rhyming words or sentences are again simulated. In effect, we are saying that the licentious liberties of the Theatre are not allowed in the Christian theatre because there are laws guiding the practice of Christian drama and theatre (Oreniyi, 2014). Of course, the *Holy Bible* is the basis of such laws which are in common practice among adherents of the faith.

### **Historical Foregrounding**

Christian dramatic theatre in Nigeria takes its cue from liturgical/morality drama of the middle ages. At this time, drama was developed on Christian liturgies of blessed ‘Eucharist’, Thanksgiving and Christ sufferings at the hands of the Roman authorities. The first of this in Europe was written by Andres de Oluos titled the *Final Judgement* (i.e., 1531-1535) in which natives were threatened with hell-fire if they refuse to marry (Zarrilli, 2006: 67). Drama of this type then was called “sacred drama” ( ). The church altar and the surroundings constitute the stage, the choir boys and the priests are the actors. Choir/priests’ robes were the Chief costumes. To the left of the altar is Hell and the right is Heaven. The dialogue is consisted of chanted tropes relevant to the liturgy of this mass being dramatized (Olorunsomo, 2014: 14). Drama in the middle ages, lays the foundation for the present day church/Christian drama, not only in Nigerian but also in Europe.

While one may not be able to say precisely how Christian dramatic theatre began in Nigeria, yet Adedeji provided a clue that it probably came with Christianising missions of Church Missionary Society (Adedeji, 1973: 26). Although, the mission did not purposefully deploy drama as a means of evangelization but chiefly for the purpose of communication in the church and later for religious propaganda and entertainment (Traore, 1972: 30; Ogunleye, 2007: 26). In the second phase of development of church drama that it was now introduced as recreational therapy for the Europeans in Church halls and later in public halls (Olorunsomo, 2014: 43). This was the stage of the Native Air Opera inherited by Hubert Ogunde who started his theatrical journey in the church before opting-out for professional theatre, leaving the stage for A. K. Ajisafe, A. H. David and G. T. Onimole who continued the tradition before it becomes what it is today (Adedeji, 1998: 28). In fact, Prof Adedokun informed us that the first female playwright in the world theatre is a German Nun: Hvroswitha (935-1001, A.D) who wrote seven extant plays based on the works of Seneca and Terence (Oladele, 2013: xviii). Ogunleye (2007: 22) traced the history back to the mid-1880s when a catechist named, Robert

Coker (now Prof. R. A. Coker) produced a cantata for the Anglican Mission in Abeokuta, titled, *Joseph* on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1886. Hubert Ogunde equally started with Christian plays before branching out into professional Theatre. His first production – *The Garden of Eden and the Throne of God*, by the Egbe-Ife drama group of the Church of the Lord, Ebute-Metta, Lagos on June 12, 1994, was an adaptation of G. T. Onimole's *Adam and Eve* (Adedeji, 1998: 21).

However, it is Foluke Ogunleye who was able to put on record Christian dramatists in Nigeria in the contemporary period, namely, Mike Bamiloye of Mount Zion Faith Ministries (MZFM), Mike Agboola of Evangelical World Outreach (EVOM), Kolade Segun Oke-owo of Christian Multimedia International, the focus of the present study. Contemporary Christian drama has gone beyond dramatizations of simple Bible stories in a church auditorium. Christian dramatic theatre has all the complements of full theatre – credible play texts, believable costuming, whether traditional or contemporary, realistic settings, directional ingenuity and superb acting styles. Infact, Foluke Ogunleye is a professor of Theatre Arts with a standing troupe and many published Christian play texts to her credit before her demise.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical focus of this work is utilitarianism. This theory postulates that relevant Art should perform a relevant function to the society. It subscribes to the view that art should serve a useful purpose in human life (Ogunleye, 2007: 45). Irele also agrees with this when he says that all forms of Art, particularly creative arts, such as literature (or playwriting) must embody a reference to human life and consciousness for them to bear any relevance to human life (Irele, 1981: 1). In essence, a play/drama should not only present human problem as the critical realist school does but should go ahead and propose a resolution to the human problems presented in the play (Karlsruhe quoted in Bamidele, 2000). Bertolt Brecht equally says drama should be an affair for philosophers who want to change the world.

Christian dramatic theatre, whose purpose is 'evangetainment' (Bamiloye, 2006), is fast occupying a strategic place in the entertainment industry and has lend a voice to conflict resolutions in contemporary society, such as Nigeria, afflicted with myriads of problems such as prostitution, drug addiction, marital infidelity, corruption, political mis-governance and other such vices. It offers an authentic Christian view point to the resolution of human dilemma; it does not just prepare people for heaven but prepares them to play useful roles in their society (Ogunleye, 2007).

### **Synopsis of the Play: *The Gods are to Blame***

*The Gods are to Blame* by Kolade Segun Oke-owo dramatizes a man's confrontation with his fate. Prince Adeoye, a lecturer and head of the Department of African Studies, University of Lagos, set out to confront the tragic fate befalling the kings of his hometown – Ejiworo. He decided to become the fourth king in 10 years on the throne of Elejio. This is in spite of remonstrations by his wife, his mother and the head of the princes. The last king who ruled for seven (7) years which is the longest among all the earlier ones, begged his wife, before his death, to warn all his children not to aspire to the throne of Elejio. Adeoye, however, confident of his education and exposure, decided to take it on and become the next Elejio. He went through the rituals, except one successfully.

The night after the coronation, problems started, there began a nightly visit of pregnant women who came to whip Adeoye in the palace. Vexed, Adeoye sought the advice of the head prince who upbraided him for not taking advice when he could. He however intimated him that the nightly visit of the pregnant women might not be unconnected with the ritual sacrifice of pregnant women made by Awonbiagbon, the first Elejio of Ejiworo. Awonbiagbon had done this as a ritual of appeasement to the gods who aided him in his war efforts. But the pregnant women, now defied came to trouble the occupant of the throne of Elejio. Every ritual sacrifice made to appease the angry pregnant women was to no avail. Adeoye first tried to connect his illness with the uncompleted ritual of Itakose necessary for his coronation. He decided to go for it, yet the problem only got worse.

At this point, a youth corper who was a former student in Adeoye's department came to pay a courtesy visit the king in the company of other corporers. He was invited by the king in for further visits. In one of these visits, the corper led his former lecturer to Christ. From now on Adeoye began to have a dramatic visitation in the night by a divine being who introduced himself as 'Adimula' the

son of a king who is also a king. This visitation changed Adeoye completely. Upon the next visit of the pregnant women, he confronted them with the claims of Christ's sacrifice as atonement for all misdemeanours of men including Awonbiagbon, the first king of Ejiworo. He countered their accusation of blood guilt with a counter-accusation that the human race as a whole is guilty of the death of Christ, yet God has forgiven us freely. This encounter ended the spirit-women nightly visit to the palace of Elejio. The tragic twist to this story is that the high priest in council with the others in council accused Adeoye of untraditional practices because of his Christian songs and prayers in the palace which could spell a doom for the land. Adeoye responded that they should leave the gods to fight for themselves. At this point, Jalaruru, the high priest insulted the throne by calling Adeoye by name. This apparently angered the gods and the high priest died on the spot.

### **Utilitarian Analysis of the Play**

Since drama imitates real life situation (Ogunleye, 2007), it cannot occur in a vacuum. Drama usually reflects the condition of the society that produces it. Biodun Jeyifo puts it this way:

Drama deals at a highly concentrated intense level with the contradictions of social existence. A dramatic piece which does not in one form or the other, deploy as its organizing structural criteria, a physical or emotional conflict, a moral or spiritual contest of will, a confrontation between contending principles is almost inconceivable (Jeyifo, 1985: 7).

In this play, relevant issues pertinent to the existence of the people are discussed and solution proffered.

On one hand, the play, *The gods are to blame*, is a response to a Nigerian classic, *The gods are not to blame* (1971) by Ola Rotimi. Both plays share the same cultural universe – Yoruba land where belief in destiny is strong but Okeowo's play deviates from Rotimi's ancestral path. Okeowo decries duplicitous docility of the Yoruba in the face of obvious risk to their existence. The various deaths in the Nigeria throne room is a symbolic reference to the various deaths in Nigeria leadership beginning with the pre-civil war era of Alhaji Tafawa Balewa in 1966 to Chief MKO Abiola and Gen. Sani Abacha in 1998 later to Gen. Shehu Musa Yaradua in 2008. The trios may represent the three Elejio (King of Ejiworo) that died in the last ten years of the play.

The play revolves around blood sacrifice as a pre-requisite for acquisition of power. This blood sacrifice may be in term of coup-de-tats or even actual human sacrifices. The boomerang effect of this sacrifice constitutes the death scare in the palace, the seat of power represented by the Elejio. The Prime-Lecturer decided to bell the cat by taking on the mantle of power. How could he have survived this? The Jesus persona introduced by Okeowo in the tradition of *deux-ex-machina* provides the leverage for the solution to the problem. The Jesus persona offers his blood as a compensation for the ravaging pregnant women's cry of revenge and hence breaks the power of blood guilt upon the throne of Elejio. Consequently, the political-priests cum kingmakers that always profit by the demise of the kings have to look elsewhere for means of livelihood. Jalaruru, the head priest who dared to challenge the authority of the new king, paid the supreme penalty of death. A question however looms large in the play – which God killed Jalaruru? Is it the gods of the tradition whom the high priest attempts to defend or the Christian God who detests the tradition of ritual sacrifices which Jalaruru delights in?

This play invariably points at lack of information as a bane of societal progress. Adeoye sought to know the reason behind the sudden deaths in the palace, once he got it; he applied the information to solve the problem. On the individual plane, the Youth corp member represents the individual who tries to manipulate the present not knowing what the future holds, only to discover that the future is far better than the present. The corper wants to change his post to that of an oil company where he hopes to get a better pay and probably be retained at the end of the service, but his sister advised him against the move. He was instrumental to communal deliverance of the land of Ejiworo. Who knows how many have lost their chances of being relevant by their uncanny pursuit of immediate gratification at the expense of uncharted future?

### **Beyond Utilitarianism: Christian Socialist Realism**

This paper proposes Christian socialist realism as a workable theory of literary analysis of mostly Christian dramatic theatre. While utilitarianism presupposes an identification of problems in the society and a proposition of functional solution, Christian socialist realism goes beyond this. Problem play, according to Ogunleye falls into three categories – the play that identifies the problems in the society without any viable solution. This is the precinct of critical realist school. The second problem play correctly diagnoses the problems of the society and offers a supposedly workable solution which most of the time calls for revolution of the normal order of things before the change could come. This is socialist-critical realism, the war cry of socialist agenda. Christian socialist criticism goes beyond these two; it is predicated on the belief that it is not all problems that can be solved by violent revolution. Christian drama offers moralistic revolution. This kind of revolution is inward, a rethinking of the situation of human dilemma and a resolve to take necessary action to redress the perceived problem. This is predicated on the biblical premise that a leopard cannot change its own skin. This translates that no force of thought can change human behavior no matter how powerful; man needs help, this time, and help from the creative energy of the universe. As seen in the play, only the divine essence in man can really change him from inward outwards. Though it is the precinct of religion but it transverses mere religion. It is a complete transformation that begins with just an individual to the community.

This is the reason Christian drama and theatre is making waves in various homes, changing lives with dramatic testimonies across the human landscape. It extends the frontier of socialist critical realism. Christian socialist criticism explores the inner change that can precipitate societal change. This is the theoretical formulation undergirding Christian dramatic Theatre.

### **Testimonies from Christian Drama Impact**

The following are excerpts from a book titled, *Is Drama in the Bible*, by one of the foremost Christian drama professionals on the field presently – Mike Bamiloye, Chairman Board of Trustees for All Nigerian Christian Evangelical Drama Ministers (ANCE DRAM) which draws membership from all over the country and even Nigerians in Diaspora (as quoted by Oreniyi B'Tunde):

Your Drama presentation of one night has produced the results that thirty sermons could do.... The film, *The Blood Covenant*... was shown recently in an interdenominational retreat gathering of some Missionaries and Ministers of God in the Redemption Camp, the result was serious. A powerful deliverance session followed, as many of the participants were stepping out confessing openly to various horrible sins which they were involved in, in their closets.... There was the story of a Witchdoctor who happened to watch, *Agbaranla (The Ultimate Power)* on television... when Isawuru burst into tears and surrendered to the Lord Jesus, this Witchdoctor was also doing the same at that same time. After... he became completely transformed and trembled. He gathered all his charms and occult properties and set them on fire (Oreniyi, 2014: 30).

### **Conclusion**

From the innocuous beginnings of Christian dramatic Theatre in Nigeria where sermons were dramatized to overcome the language barriers between the Christian missionaries and the natives, to the modern period where the churches were using drama as a supplement to the sermon by picking simple bible stories for play making, using the Altar as the stage; to the present day when every church and Christian fellowships in higher institutions have a standing drama group, besides the several professional drama troupes using every available channels to put forward their life changing messages of hope and redemption, Christian drama and theatre has come of age and do merit sustained academic studies to put the practice and the theory behind its success for public scrutiny and possible acceptance or rejection.

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## SINGING OLD TUNE IN NEW FORM: THE EVOLUTION AND CONCEPTUALISATION OF HYBRIDIZED BATA-RISATION

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### **Abstract**

There are elements of primitivity in modernism. This suggests that innovations are offshoots of a grounded work, idea or theory. Many emerging concepts often find grounds of expression in existing concepts which is later aided by advancement in knowledge and individual inventiveness. This explanation can be applied in the discussion of dance and creative stylization in Nigeria. Bata dance is common with the Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria; it was invented in the worship of Sango, the god of thunder and lightning and has evolved over time in different ways. Today, Bata is not merely practiced as a form of worship of Sango; it is now classified under the socio-entertainment/contemporary genre of dance in Nigeria. This social dimension of Bata has further propelled the re-invention of Bata dance which is today conceived as Bata-risation, a fusion of the traditional African Bata dance forms with western ideas; contemporaneity. This paper interrogates the core traditional Bata dance in line with the hybridized forms of Bata-risation. It takes into cognizance, the dynamics of aesthetic permutations devised on the blending of indigenous and western ideas. In view of the core objective of this study, social realist and aesthetic theories are employed as methodologies to examine the dynamics of hybrid forms embedded in the creative ingenuity of Bata-risation. The paper proposes that in the face of evolution and the emergence of new dance concept, which is reached via different ideological and philosophical concoctions of residual and emergent choreographic forms, the core of African aesthetics is maintained and propagated by the dynamics and the mechanism of hybridity.

**Key words:** Hybridity, Bata-risation, Primitiveness, Modernism and dance

### **Introduction**

Dance is an indispensable and integral part of man's life, both at his primitive stage and even today. In all civilization man has always danced and will always dance. Dance is innate in man. It is a medium to express himself and communicate non-verbally. Dance, like music, reflects human identity and diversity, one potent means of identification is dance. Dance reveals the life style, virtue, taboos and experiences of a people. African dance mirrors the people's socio-cultural and political organizational structure and reflects their geographical environment (Aihevbva 1).

Dance art has always been an integral part of a typical African man, he dances for everything in his life endeavor, be it marriage, child christening, chieftaincy title, ritual, rite of passage and even at death. His cultural, social and political identification are tied to his dance. Iyeh posits that, 'dance could be described as the epicenter of culture in most events ranging birth through life and death' (68). It has also proven to be an integral part of cultural events, that sometimes, the absence of it elicits a feeling of boredom from an audience.

Dance in Africa is a holistic part of society. It is not truncated or separated as an entity in and of itself. Dance is used to facilitate all phenomena in most African societies. All commemorations and events are documented in the dance. Births, deaths, weddings, coronations, and rites of passages are just some of the occasions for which dance is performed. Other events that dance chronicles are celestial occurrences, harvest times, fertility rites, and healing circles (Kariamamu 14).

Dances in African cosmology does not just evolve without reasons or bases but always attached to occasions, deities, legends and sometimes animals, occupations and environment. Such

dances are the Igbabonelimin of the Esan people of Edo, which was created out of the acrobatic antics of the monkey, Ekombi of the Efik, from the aquatic and inhabitant of the sea, Ijo Eleja (fishermen dance) Ijo Agbe (farmer's dance) Ijo Ode (hunter's dance) all are abstraction from occupation of the Yoruba people, all in Nigeria. However, others that were created after deities and legends are always ritualistic in nature; such are the Bata for Sango the god of thunder and lightning, Ijo Ode for Ogun the god of iron and Bori in Bornu for the cure of chicken pox. Olokodana asserts that, "dancers/choreographers and audience sometimes completely eradicate the ideal that these movements have contextual meanings, because no Nigeria dance is conceived in a vacuum." For instance, the Egwu Amalab'uyo, popularly referred to as the Amala dance of the Aboh people, is said to be a dance created in homage to the river goddess (Uche 94). Bata dance is described as a Sango way of life. Esapaide dance is a royal dance of the Edo people Nwabuoku (50-57), while the Obitun is a puberty dance for maidens among the Ondo Yoruba (89). Many are such dances scattered all over Africa, Nigeria in particular, that are attached to various mythologies and cosmologies.

Dance has come a long way and cannot be over emphasized that it has taken different dimension over the years, from generation to generation, and has metamorphosed from just being a hobby to a well-respected profession across the globe. Albeit, in Africa, especially Nigeria was a little bit different, when many primitively argued that dance cannot be seen or called a profession due to the fact that all Africans are born dancer, and dance is Africans' inherent. They have argued rather flatly that as a communal and cultural activity which they believe does not exert much in terms of mental ability on the part of the performer, it would be a futile attempt to want to justify dance as a profession like other professions native to our indigenous cultures such as carving and pottery. There is even another flat argument that because the early performers derived satisfaction from the fact that they have performed well and fulfilled their cultural onus, it would be wrong for the art of dance to be categorized as a profession (Shuaibu 296).

However, dance has moved and diversified in many variants and genres, such as dance therapy, history, choreography, contemporary, notation, ethnomusicology, ethnography and now hybridity which is juxtaposing, transforming and transplanting dance with any other related art(s) area and acculturation of ideas. Dance transformation over the years is overwhelming and has enveloped the world with different trends, styles and moves that are grandeurs in the entertainment circles which are being used for promotion, propaganda, political campaigns, advertorial, media publicity, movies and TV commercials. The use of dance in the world at large is massive and cannot be overlooked, as an educational entity, it has broad and versed acceptance where people read to the level of professorship and propound theories to back their claim in the field of dance. Therefore, as the world embraces dynamism in all facets of life endeavor, so also is dance from its primitivism to contemporaneity and modernism so as to conform to the dictates of newness that gives room for hybridity.

### **Dances World Overview**

Dance is the mother of the art; music and poetry exist in time; painting and architecture in space. The creator and the thing created, the artist and the work are all still one and the same thing. Rhythmical pattern of movement, the plastic sense of space, the vivid representation of a world seen and imagined – these things man creates in his own body in the dance before uses substance and stone and word to give expression to his inner experiences (Sachs 3).

Many dance practitioners see dance practice and definition from different perspectives and dimensions based on their personal encounter with the art of dance. Therefore, coinages of their definitions vary; but have some elements in common which cannot be exempted, such as the body, movement, time and space. All these elements are so vital that no dance art can happen without them being mentioned, it also depend on what/which angle the person is looking at it from, is it from the perspective of movement, body, space or time?

Movement as a concept may be defined in many ways; Novack has defined movement, in the context of her theory, to be "the primary basis for personal identity and social interaction... it is kinesthetic and visual... less specific than language... it has observable patterns and qualities which can be identify with culture and historical period, while dance is defined as a multi-vocal and flexible sphere of social activity (Hanstein 63).

Dance forms could also be classified and analyzed in varying categories -those that survived and thrived within the communities (traditional) that are raw, those making waves in the academic environment (modern oriented) and the prototype of the western world that is in vogue now - which is the medley of both traditional and modern, as embraced by our youth today (Ojuade) However, to a dance therapist, movement of the body is another way of healing the body and soul, not necessary with the space or time. They are of the opinion that movement precedes life, meaning when one does not move at birth there is no life. Chaiklin asserts that,

Movement and life signify the start of life. They precede language and thought. Gesture immediately emerges as the means for expressing the human need for communication. This has been true over the span human history. Havelock Ellis writes “if we are indifferent to the art dancing, we have failed to understand, not merely the supreme manifestation of physical life, but also the supreme symbol of spiritual life” (3).

Dance is a motorized action that is propelled by the stimuli called feelings, mood which spur one into an action called movement; it could be joy, hatred, and sadness, for dance to occur there must be motivation. Ifure Ufford-Azorbo posits that,

Dance, a performing and creative art of theatre is basically the movement of the body in rhythmic manner in space for different purposes which include the expression of an idea or emotion, the release of energy or a simple delight in the structure ordering of movement for entertainment (37).

The African continent is blessed with a panoply dance tradition which is defined in its different geographical zones. Therefore in Nigerian societies, the survival of our traditional dances is equally synonymous with the survival of life. Thus, Allan P. Merrian says, “dance is culture, and culture is dance”; that is, the entity of dance as a whole is very difficult to separate from man and his natural environment (Ojuade 3).

### **Bata Dance in Content and Context**

The evolution of Bata as a drum or dance has been varied and still in contention till date, while some believed that the drum was created by a woman called, Ayan, some others are of the opinion that it was during Sango, the king of then old Oyo’s reign that Bata surfaced. Jeleel Ojuade, a progenitor of a Bata expert father and dance professor proponent of Bata dance asserts thus:

According to Ayankunle Ayanlade, Bata was fabricated by a woman, whose name was Ayan. Unfortunately for this woman, she was not blessed with children. Despite her longer period of existence in life, it was only drums that she could lay claims of or regarded as her children. He adjudged her to be a very good singer and expert drummer. Lamidi Ayankunle in his own version reiterates the fact that the early practitioners of Bata drumming started with 'Bata Igba', that is Bata koto. It has only one face covered with animal skin, and it is played with hands. Though, he emphasized that it was 'Yangede' that Sango first danced to. Sango equally danced to other drums before Bata. Sango's acquaintance with Bata came into being with the demise of Yangede.<sup>i</sup>

Bata as dance derived its name from the drum which is used to placate and appease Sango the king of Oyo and later god of thunder and lightning. Bata as drum is in three variance, the Iya Ilu (Mother drum) Omele Abo (Female drum) and Omele Ako (Male drum), however, the discourse here is not of the drums but the dance as an art of hybridity. Bata dance also has four variances, the Gbamu, Eewo, Elese and Alujo, albeit, they all have their different rhythms and tempo which are dictated by the lead drum, Iya ilu (mother drum).



### **Hybridity Contextualization of Bata and Bata-risation**

The word, hybridity, following its biological etymology and Bhabha's exposition has been mostly explored in different fields and given diverse discourses through different dimensional schools of thought. The word though may be said to be an upshot of civilization, a concoction of transmittable traits birth through a process, or simply use to "designates the mutual influence and interpenetration of two cultures brought into contact through colonization" (Dzero 104).

Hybridity in this discourse is a celebrated phenomenon particularly for its "superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (Hoogvelt 158). Hybrid as a word has existed for along while and has been in use in many professions such as medicine, agro-product and many other facets of our life endeavor. However, it is somehow new in the dance practice most especially here in Africa. But looking at it from another perspective one might not really concur to its newness in African just like contemporary dance. The issue mostly is the knowledge ability to name our styles or creativity, leaving it at the doorstep of western world for terminology which has been the norm in almost all facets of Africa's endeavors. Foreign values has remain our standard seal of approval, if 'Oyinbo' (Whiteman) does it, it is physics but if done by African it is metaphysics which simply mean whatever is Africa is always inferior or fetishto the people, except it is foreign and it has eaten deeply into the fabric of almost every African psyche, as such becoming neo-colonization; mental slavery. Almost everything in Africa is based on the foreign standard even our culture, custom, tradition and norms. Our education, morals and values are not left out, our beliefs and deities are fetish before the foreign god.

Everything nowadays is tailored toward international standard; politics and religion inclusive. However, in actual fact, hybridity is simply a production of something from two different elements, an upshoot of a product of combination of two separate items, combination of different cultures to form a piece of art or performance. Rutherford observes that different cultures are persistently in a process of hybridity (211), whereas McMaster's observatory note of acceptance on hybridity states that between two or more communities, whether urban or reserve, there exists a space – a socially ambiguous zone with open margins which can be recurrently crossed, interrogated and negotiated. He suggests that, "a space of radical openness and 'hybridity', or spaces of resistance being opened at the margins... this space as in between two centres, which is a politically charged, though highly permeable space" (28). Justified and corroborated upon these views, Bhabha advances that,

We live "in-between" cultural differences where our aesthetic judgment and ethical values are derived from those boundaries between languages, territories, and communities that, strictly speaking, belong to no one cultural or national tradition — they are social values that are continually being translated and transformed in the process of global contact and communication and have no pure origin outside of it (39).

Conceptualization of Batarisation was birthed in 1998 when I was the president of the Dance Guild of Nigeria (GOND), during the celebration of the year world dance day and a dance competition was organized for the troupes under the dance guild. The brief then was for the troupes to contemporaries any traditional dance of their choice. However, apart from being the president, I was also the CEO/Artistic Director and Choreographer of a troupe, called, Ivory Ambassadors Dance Company and my troupe then used the Efik Ekombi as its model. So, getting a job at the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos, as Senior Cultural Officer in 2011, gave me the opportunity to revamp the idea of contemporizing traditional dance, Bata in particular as dance was my main job in the Department. It was the University of Lagos' Annual Convocation 2011 series and the Department was to produce a convocation play as the tradition. Femi Osofisan's *Many Colours Make the Thunder King* was selected for the year and as the choreographer. I introduced an open dance; or better still, an opening glee. The idea of bringing a new concept to the Department came to mind and remembering the idea muted as the president of the Guild years back ringed loud in my imagination. So, the concept of contemporizing Bata came to mind, it was simply a way to go far from the usual and redefine, exaggerate, modernize and juxtapose different dance step into the Bata rhythm and style.

The concept therefore, is about the change in its style, formation, sequence, costumes and patterns in Bata dance away from its original form. Though, the rhythm is the same but the beat and sequences/counting were altered for variety sake. The introduction of chairs as moveable props and English three piece suit as costume are form of hybridity. The hybridized sequences are the the Ewo, Else, Alujo and Gbamu in their normal rhythm but twisted and somehow manipulated to fit into the setting of the adopted props (the chairs). Ewo aspect of the Bata variants is a bit slow but not as the Else that is meant for royalty. Ewo in Batarisation is done on the party chair with the dancers sit on the chair in a W-pattern formation and moves to the dictum of the Bata rhythm and count which dovetail into different floor pattern ranging from X to V to O and finally ends on straight line at the up stage where the chairs will be dropped in a choreographic manner that transit to the Else variant which starts with balletic strip move into the Bata rhythm that rise in tempo to a crescendo and stop abruptly. Then comes Alujo in form of dance hall and manipulation of the suits, it dovetails in the Gbamu which is the fastest of all, the variants with infusion of hip-hop, ballet and dance hall moves into the fast rhythm of the Bata drum with a sharp suspense not more than a second and with wow end.

### **Conclusion**

Human environment and culture have taken on new nomenclatures and identities reached via a synergy of diverse systemic juxtapositioning of sociological actuality and imaginary conceptual frames operating beyond descriptive or restricted borders. This, however, is conceptualized as hybridity. As a 'post-colonial' concept, "Hybridity" emerged following the migration of humans from one place to another, and the consequential diffusion of human cultures and values towards the creation of a new form of characterization and identification (Olokodana-James 3).

In conclusion, hybridity may be new to dance practice but not totally strange in this part of the globe as long as there migration, inter/intra-marriages and acculturation, that has influence many of our being inwardly and outwardly, via attires, cuisines, abstract paintings, architectures politics and religion and finally our art of music, dance and theatre performances. Due to inability to name our art or ignorance of it nomenclature, we tend to take in or sounds and appears new to us as Africans. However, with all definitions and analysis expressed above by different scholars, for it to be easy for a lay man to understand the deep meaning of hybridity. It is a space created for freedom of expression, creativity beyond boundaries, breaking walls of resistance, creating and abstracting genuinely from nature. Albeit, the word, hybridity, existed in many other profession before now and has continue to cut across many others that have not really experienced it before now. Over the years, dance profession has been relegated to the background due to its cultural and traditional belief to be a natural endowment for Africa, as it is perceived to be inborn feat for all Africans to dance, so there is no special thing being a dancer. But with the creative synergy of taking dance far from it raw form to another dimension that wow even the original owners of such dance(s) makes it relevant this days, not leaving out its original trace and traits.

There cannot be any contemporized dance without the primitive dance and hybridity cannot exist without the existence of basic element (its raw/original form) which simply means that most of our contemporary and hybridized dances are always from our cultural and tradition dances. Therefore, it is suffix to say hybridity has given room for more creativity, opens people's horizon to think out of the box and broaden dancer's creative imaginations without forgetting or jettison the original basic moves, rhythms and mannerism attached to its origin as a cultural or traditional dance. But the fact still remains that all styles, genres and types of dances that we as Africans imbibe or adopted being it contemporary, modern or abstractions, it is just a phase and alien to our culture and it will sure fade or fizzle out while our cultural and traditional dance will still remain with us, as that is who and what we are.

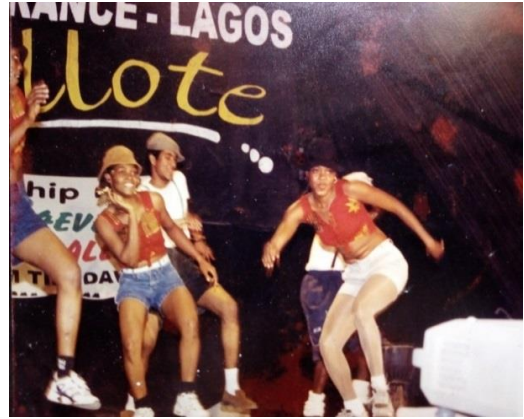


Fig.1 & 2: Contemporary Bata dance with modern costumes at Alliance France at Dance Meet Danze Festival 2001



Fig. 3 & 4: The manipulation of chair in Batarisation



Fig. 5 & 6: Aso Oke the tradition costume for Bata dance

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**MUSIC AND SOCIAL VALUE: INTERPLAY OF CRITICAL THEORY AND  
MUSICAL TEXTS IN SELECTED MUSICAL PRACTICE OF NAIRA  
MARLEY AND FALZ**

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**Abstract**

One point of intersection between Post Modernism and Marxism is the quest to undermine structures, thoughts and ideologies which are taken to be universal, grand and inherent. In Marxist thought, the human society is inherently stratified into unequal and constantly opposing classes – the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In this sense, Louis Althusser argued that this intrinsic class stratification is maintained through Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) which are under the control of the bourgeoisie. This proposition is itself fluid as it undermines the fundamentality of an unequal class structure since it should not need the effort of any of the sides of the dichotomy to maintain the dichotomy. However, the conflicting relations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat binary create tensions and ills – oppression, class discrimination, selective poverty, and social vices, in the society. In contemporary Nigerian society, several forms of discourse on the bourgeoisie/proletariat binary have emerged. One of such is the medium of music which is used to engage with the unequal class structure both as critical and corrective mechanism. It must be noted, however, that the medium of music as manifested in songs, which while they serve as the music artist's social responsibility are also texts – multidimensional space in which a myriad of strands of culture blend and clash, and as observed in Postmodernism, are fraught with contradictions and aporias; the artist engages in a language whose proper system he cannot control. This paper investigates selected musical practices (Falz's "This is Nigeria" and "Wehdone Sir"; and Naira Marley's "Am I Yahoo boy" and "Japa") to discover how the music artist, despite their attempts at constructively critiquing the weaknesses in the society, actively venerates the same binary he seeks to undermine. The paper concludes that due to the irreducible chain of signifiers which words are associated with, the selected musical practices cannot bridge the gulf between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie rather, it upholds the binary.

**Key Words:** Post Modernism, Marxism, Musical Practice, Social Responsibility

**Introduction**

The emergence of postmodernism in the late 1950s and early 1960s marks a pragmatic shift in cultural studies. Postmodernism has been designated as a new philosophical and literary movement, a new sensibility, a new aesthetic value. Commenting on the "new sensibility", the American cultural critic, Susan Sontag in her study, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, maintains that, "one important consequences of the new sensibility is that the distinction between "high" and "low" culture seems less and less meaningful" (302). That is, this new sensibility undermines and thwarts the whole idea of modernist cultural elitism. The rejection of elitism could be situated against the backdrop of Popular Culture. In other words, one of the undisputable facts that signalled the "end" of modernism is the production of hip-hop music; the amalgam of art and pop music. Hip-Hop music is a form of

popular music which sprung up in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and distinguished itself in form and content with varieties of multimedia instrument.

This paper attempts to engage in an intrinsic analysis of the selected music in order to put pressure on the diverse socio-political and economical predicament pervading the entire terrain of 21st century Nigerian society in particular and African society in general. Hip-hop as a social media culture is formally and completely political and ideological movement in that it reveals the relation of power and resistance in the society. Or, to put in Tejumola Olaniyan's words, political musician is "a musician who devotes his or her musical resources to evoking, interrogating and pronouncing judgements on the partisan political arrangements and attendant social relations of his or her context" (*Arrest the Music...* 3). If Olaniyan is to be believed, hip-hop artists have used their music in different contexts to articulate the day-to-day social and political struggle between the elite and masses. In similar manner, Douglas Kellner in *Media Culture* argues that, "media culture is a contest of representations that produce existing social struggles and transcode the political discourses of the era" (56).

It is worth emphasizing, then, that in spite of the difference in the mode of expression by the political Hip-hop artists, they have a unified purpose of brash and aggression against the political system. On this note, they might be referred to as "Political Satirists." Political satire is an abusive and aggressive art that deploys wit or witticism as a weapon of attack. Wit, to be sure, can be seen as an extended form of humour which artists use to express their emotional feelings, and personal and communal experience as a corrective measure against the hegemonic political system stifling life out of the populace thereby beckoning on the general public to bear witness. Sigmund Freud argues that wit becomes an effective means, "by belittling and humbling our enemy, by scoring and ridiculing him, we directly obtain the pleasure of his defeat by the laughter of the third person, the inactive spectator" (*Wit and its Relation...* 5). However, not all political satirists openly attack the system that oppresses them. Some project rage and disgust (for instance, Idris Abdulkareem's "Nigeria dey Jagajaga", Falz's "This is Nigeria", and Naira Marley's "Am I a Yahoo boy?"), while others censor themselves in a euphemistic mode (for instance, Olamide's "Oil and Gas").

In most cases, the ruling government uses his power (in spite of the democratic system of government) to either ban works or punish the former with imprisonment, fines, exile, molestation or death as the case may be. Arguably, the foibles characteristics of politicians could also be found among doctors, lawyers, academics, journalists, business tycoons and artists. Although, politics might be said to be the peak of social vices not only because of the embezzlement of public fund but, most importantly, its policy determines the fate of the nation as a whole and that of individual who made up and inhabit the society. In *The Offensive Art: Political Satire and its Censorship around the World from Beardom to Borat*, Leonard Freedman observes that political satire is more predominate in democratic states because it is made up of flaw and façade: "there exists more political satire in democracies than in any other system. For one thing, there is so much to ridicule in democracies." Satirists of every stripe find rich material in elections, political parties, interest groups, and so on- all of which prove to be rife with imperfections. Nor is democracy a guarantee against corruption, abuse of power, vast inequalities of income and status, or military and economic expansionism – all perennial subject of angry satire.

Contrarily, it is not only in democratic system, as Freedman wants us to believe, do we find flaw in government. Therefore, the aspiration of this paper is to problematize, from the theoretical discourse of Postmodernism, the discourse of Nigerian Hip-Hop music from the sheer pleasure of entertainment and relaxation, and to position it within the context of its social function through a critical scrutiny of both form and content. That is, the paper will be engaged in the discourse of both theoretical value-laden of musical practice and musical texts in order to examine the socio-political issues that have shaped the Nigerian political system from the inception of democratic system of government in 1999 to date, and how these issues have affected individuals and the nation in general.

### **Post Modernism and Popular Culture**

There are vast of literature on Postmodernism, this paper reviews some selected literature which are related to its argument. Postmodernism is, as Andreas Huyssen puts it in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, is "the great divide... a discourse which insists on the

categorical distinction between high art and mass culture” (viii). Huyssen pushes further his point, noting that, “to a large extent, it is by the distance we have travelled from this great divide between mass culture and modernism that we measure our own cultural postmodernity” (57). Iain Chambers in his work, titled, *Popular Culture: The Metropolitan Experience* accounts for the intellectual crises and controversies that signal the advent of Postmodernism as: “the symptom of the disruptive ingression of popular networks of cultural production and knowledge. The intellectual’s privilege to explain and distribute knowledge is threaten” (216).

For Angela Mc Robbie, Postmodernism is a platform where the downtrodden, subaltern, less privileged gain voice and carve niches for themselves. Therefore, postmodernism, as a “democracy to come”, legitimates our understanding of, as Mc Robbie notes, “the coming into being of those whose voices were historically drowned out by the (modernist) meta-narrative of mastery, which were in turn both patriarchal and imperialist” (*Postmodernism and Popular Culture* 15). Flowing from this, Kobena Mercer centres her theoretical discourse within the praxis of group identities in which Postmodernism serves as “the emerging voices, practices and identities of dispersed African, Caribbean and Asian peoples (who have) crept in from the margins of post-imperial Britain to dislocate commonplace certainties and consensual “truths” and thus open up new ways of seeing and understanding” (*Welcome to the Jungle* 2). The point of both McRobbie’s and Mercer’s assertions is to illustrate how Postmodernism brings forth and lends voice to the question of race, gender and sexuality in the field of literary studies in general and cultural studies in particular.

American Marxist critic, Fredric Jameson argues that Postmodern is a culture of pastiche, distorted by the “complacent play of historical allusion” (*The Ideologies of Theory* 105). Postmodern culture is, Jameson avers, “a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum” (“Postmodernism and Consumer Society” 115). Contrary to popular opinion, Jameson rejects postmodern culture as a mere allusion to past culture rather than a culture of new sensibility. Instead of a new aesthetic value, postmodernists are confronted with a clap-trap of esoteric discourse; to simplify: it is a discourse “of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense” (Jameson “Postmodernism and Consumer Society” 60). Thus, Jameson maintains that whereas modernism also alluded to old style with proper reference, Postmodernism, on the other hand, is nothing but a chain of quotations without definable quotation marks.

One of the critics of Fredric Jameson is David Chaney. David Chaney (*The Cultural Turn*) affirms that what Jameson Fredric termed as pastiche in Postmodern culture could be traced back to modern culture of the nineteenth century:

The privileged qualities of postmodernism- parody/pastiche, depthlessness, allegory, spectacular show, and an ironic celebration of artifice- hence all been central to the submerged traditions of popular culture. One has only to think of the traditions of music and vaudeville, the fair-ground, the circus and pantomime, the melodrama theatre and the literatures of crime and romance to find all these qualities clearly displayed (204).

On this theory, Chaney succinctly demonstrates that,

popular entertainment may be structured by the reiteration of certain formulas and genres which provide staple narrative form, and there may be endless nostalgic regression in re-cycling previous eras and styles, but even so there will be an overwhelming need for novelty in performance, styles and manners. The history of popular music since the development of cheap recordings as a medium of mass entertainment specifically targeted at youth audience has shown clearly (210).

And we would add: except twenty-first century Nigerian popular music which appeals to both youth and old audience.

In essence, the 21<sup>st</sup> century popular music is a problematic shift in that it does not only disrupts the hierarchical opposition between high and popular culture, but also explore the forward



and sideways movement of discourse between the high and popular music; one in which none of the forces of signification is identical with itself. The world of text (oral and written), for Postmodernism, is not a place where meaning is given ontologically prior to the text, rather it is a *space* (not a *place*) where meaning is progressively discovered ad infinitum. Postmodernism engagement with theoretical word games is captured in the words of John Fekete:

The prospect of learning to be at ease with limited warranties, and with the responsibility of issue them, without the false security of inherited guarantees, is promising for a livelier, more colourful, more alert, and one hopes, more tolerant culture draws enjoyment from the dappled relations between meaning and value (*Life After Postmodernism* 17).

However, there is a significant point which needs to be explored. Postmodernism is not an abdication of critical effort, or a refusal of meaning. Thus, the argument is not to menace the context of meaning rather legitimates our understanding that there is no simple or universal rule that could serve as a methodological reform for a proper meaning.

### **Musical Practice as an Interface between Text and History**

The musical practice of Naira Marley exemplifies the complex interrelationship between text and history, and positions song as functional components of social and political structure. This is not to view songs as a mere transparent cultural media recollecting historical events and situation, contrarily, it is a constitutive agent of historical context. It is in this regard Jean Howard argues, in his essay titled, “The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies”, maintains that, “literature is an agent in constructing a culture’s sense of reality” (25). This means literary discourse should not only demonstrate texts as objective apprehension of historical account but a study of texts as social, political and cultural formation. His songs under focus illustrate how music serves as a medium and reflection of politics, and how the rhetoricity of language (fabrication) unveils the inherent contradictions of history.

Traditionally, hip-hop music has been criticized in different social institutions (the church, society) as a popular culture with profound corrupting influencing, especially on the youths in the society. In other words, the popularity of hip-hop songs has enshrined illegal and immoral actions in the mind of youths. Contrary to this popular view, the discourse of Naira Marley’s hip-hop music is an attempt to demonstrate and critique the critical practice of cultural materialism as a viable analytical framework in the evaluation of the songs under study, one in which music has radical social implications within contemporary power struggles. These implications are appropriately demonstrated in the songs titled, “Am I Yahoo Boy” and “Japa” in which the speakers depicts and utilizes the iconoclastic roles of cultural figures, and accentuate the plights of sensitive artists within contemporary political and cultural power structures.

The controversial song, titled, “Am I Yahoo Boy”, is situated against the backdrop of the economic and political system of post-colonial African society and within the contexts of cultural and political productions (the State and the “Yahoo boys”). The listeners (or readers) are presented the issue of power despotism and resistance in the society. There are two speakers in the song, each trying to resist power of the domineering culture. In the opening and in the first stanza of the song, the first speaker’s tone smacks of someone who is at loggerhead (“trouble”) with government agents. Presumably, the speaker has been accused as “a yahoo boy” by established authorities known as “Sars” (crime enforcement agents) and “Olopa” (police officers). So, the speaker calls on his fans who follow his blog (“Eyin blogger blogger”) to come to his rescue and examine if his facial attributes depict him as, “omo yahoo”. It is important to note that the repetitive word “blogger” also represents the internet fraudsters or “yahoo boy”. Then, the speaker can be said to be, paradoxically, a “yahoo boy”. As a musical artist, the speaker satirically notes that his occupation is only attached to the musical producer, named, “Sarz on the beat”, rather than criminal agents; and fans can “contact” his “hotmail” at “Naira Marley” at yahoo dot com”. Using pun as a literary ingredient, he defiantly resists the authorities from arresting him.

*Introduction:*

See me see trouble  
Am I a Yahoo boy?  
E ra mi egba mi o  
(Listen to me come to my rescue o)  
Shey mo joomo yahoo?  
(Do I look like a yahoo boy?)  
Emi o mo Sars  
(I don't know Sars)  
Sarst'emi mo is Sarz on the beat  
(Sars I know is Sarz on the beat)  
Olopakole mu wa, TaniSarsfemuloni bi  
(Police officer cannot catch us. Who does Sars want to take away here?)

*Stanza One:*

Eyin blogger blogger  
(All blogger blogger)  
Shey mo joomo yahoo  
(Do I look like a yahoo boy?)  
Shey won ko yahoo si mi lorini  
(Do they write yahoo on my head)  
Am I a yahoo boy  
Emi hotmail mo fine gan  
(Me hotmail am fine very)  
Am not a yahoo boy?  
But contact me  
Naira Marley at Yahoo dot com

The song, on another level, exemplifies the question of autobiography (“Life Writing”), or what Jacques Derrida describes as “Thanatography” (“Death Writing”). Jacques Derrida discursively argues in his study, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, that the moment a writer signs the story of his past life, he enters into his “death”. “Death” here means that no appreciation or criticism can ever be ascribed or return to the bearer of the name. Only the name can inherit; this is why the name, as distinguished from the bearer, is always a dead man’s name – a name of death. On this basis, the textual Naira Marley should not be mistaken with the Naira Marley of flesh and blood. The Naira Marley of flesh and blood, like most autobiographical writers, inscribes his body and his name in the song (or text) even though he puts on the mask of metonyms or pseudonyms without proper name. He hides under the plurality of identity that can be reproduced and repeated infinitely within different contexts. Then, the identity which the writer inscribes on the page is not identifiable with what the listeners or readers know about his name. The identity of the textual self comes to the readers through “the ear-of-the-other” (language) he draws up with himself.

So, then, the task of the readers is to depersonalise him under the “false name” of Naira Marley. Frequently, a writer always imposes the identity of him [her] self, but in the name of another. Derrida rightly writes: “If the life that he lives and tells to himself (“autobiography”, they call it) cannot be his life in the first place excepts as effect of a secret contract... then as long as the contrast has not been honoured – and it cannot be honoured except by another, for example, by you” (9). On this theory, the attempt to draw meaning outside the free play of language within the text is a risky literary endeavour which makes meaning exists ontologically prior to text and, by implication, stops the free play of identity. The free play of identity can only be achieved the very moment the bearer of name (the one whom the readers indiscriminately refer to as Naira Marley) enter figuratively into his “death”. What returns to the textual Naira Marley, roughly speaking, never comes back to the flesh and blood Naira Marley.

Hence, for listeners to be abreast of his present predicament, the speaker, in the first stanza, alludes to some cultural and historical figures of the twentieth century within the continent of Africa

and America: “Fela”, “Mandela”, “President Kennedy”, and MKO Abiola. These historically figure took part in the fight against neo-colonialist-imperialist culture of post-independence Nigerian society in particular and Africa in general: “Fela” a lead Afrobeat musician who used his music to, as Tejumola Olaniyan puts it in *Arrest the Music!*, “successfully cultivated and made hegemonic in global consciousness an image of himself as quintessentially ‘political musician... by ‘political musician’ he means a musician who devoted his or her musical resources to evoking, interrogating, and pronouncing judgements on the partisan political arrangements and attendant social relations of his or her context” (16); the policy of racial segregation (Apartheid) within South African society, “Mandela” was imprisoned in 1962-1990 and president-elect in 1994-1999 (cited in Nancy Clark and William Worger *South Africa: The Rise and Fail of Apartheid* xvi, xix); racial inequality, disenfranchisement and political and economic struggles between black and white in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s in the American society, President Kennedy, assassinated in 1963 (cited in Menson-Furr *Modern Theatre Guides* 10); and the totalitarian military regime of the late 1980s and early 1990s, MKO Abiola, supposed president-elect in 1993, imprisoned in 1993 under the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida, and killed in the prison in 1998 under the military dictatorship of General SaniAbacha (cited in Wole Soyinka *The Open Sore of a Continent*). The iconoclastic tendency of these geniuses can be grasped in what they stand for within different historical epochs. The allusion to these historical icons illustrates them as the representative of a nostalgic sensibility of change, resistance and freedom in society generally in order to demonstrates the political tension between the State and the speaker (artist).

Therefore, these icons act as symbolic figures of intelligentsias contending ideas of social injustice against the downtrodden in the society, and exposing the power relations stifling life out of the powerless. The concern of the speaker is not the historical personalities of the master figures, but the consequences of the aftermaths of power struggles. The moral standings of the cultural icons stand in contrast to the notorious actions of the speaker. Thus, the traumatic experiences of speaker of “Am I Yahoo boy” serve as a context to re-interpret the historical personalities of these icons in the twentieth century African and American societies. This, by implication, enables the listeners to grasp the irresolvable conflicts between history and music, and the significance of such discrepancies; that is opening up the ideological and political concerns inherent in the music:

Won feshey mi bi Fela  
 (They want to treat me like Fela)  
 Won feshey mi bi Mandela  
 (They want to treat me like Mandela)  
 Won feshey mi bi President Kennedy  
 (They want to treat me like President Kennedy)  
 Won feshey mi bi MKO Abiola  
 (They want to treat me like MKO Abiola)

The speaker uncompromisingly exposes the social vices within the social institutions – the state, youths, and religion settings. The “Government” is referred to addicted (“Ibile”) criminals (“barawo”) who exploit the wealth of the nation for their own selfish interests; “Bloggers” (internet fraudsters) in turn are “armed robbers” who hackers into the personal accounts of government officials; the religious leaders of the two major religions exploit their hungry and helpless congregation for their personal “enjoyment” (“gbadun”) while their members lavish in abject poverty. All these suggest that the contemporary society has lost its moral and spiritual essence; they are agents of decadence and disruption in the contemporary society. The speaker’s attack on the social institution is not just to expose the ills and vices inherent in it, but a call for sensible and meaningful actions that could be used as corrective measures against contemporary politics and culture:

Government nabarawo (Ibile)  
 (Government is thief) (Original)  
 Bloggers na armed robber  
 (Bloggers is armed robber)

Imam deygbadun  
(Imam is enjoyment)  
Pastor na enjoyment  
(Pastor is enjoyment)

In the second stanza of the song, the speaker amply and explicitly addresses himself as a “Yahoo Yahoo”. The tone and mood of the speaker demonstrate someone who societal problem pushes to crime activities such as internet fraud. The affinity of the speaker with internet crime is succinctly captured in his choice of words: “Yahoo Yahoo”, “Maga”. His physical appearance has made him a suspect before the law enforcement agents. While his friends are stick to fraud activities, he has decided to disguise himself as a music artist. This affirms the fact that the first speaker and the second speaker are men of the same skill: “Yahoo Yahoo”. As an addicted and cruel “Yahoo Yahoo”, he prays that nothing (including God) should disrupt the relationship between him and his regular victims. Like the first speaker, the second speaker maintains that religious belief and value has been thinned out of human existence and pushed to the backwater side of the society:

*Stanza Two:*

Ah!

Oya Yahoo Yahoo

(Now Yahoo Yahoo)

K’oloun ma je ka damu

(God don’t let us suffer)

Maga to sanwo mi se

(Fool that pay my money)

Karin wako ma daru (Ibile)

(Our relationship should not scatter)

Yahoo yahoo

Kóloun ma je ka damu

(God don’t let us suffer)

Maga to fun mi lowo steady se

(Fool that give me money steady)

Karin wako ma daru

(Our relationship should not scatter)

Oya

(Now)

Torimo’n fresh mo’ndan

(Because am fresh am fresh)

Won ni mo ti’nshey yahoo

(They said am doing yahoo)

Yahoo lawon ore mi se

(Yahoo are my friends)

Shebi music lemifi n gawu

(Is music am using to show[or disguise])

Eyan abracadabra

(Family of abracadabra)

Iyenaburonakamora eh eh

(That is younger brother of nakamora eh eh)

Eni to walayeyiti o se Oloun se elowawa

(The person in this life that do not offend God go and search for him [or her])

The song, titled, “Soapy” is a follow up on and aftermath of the conflicts between the first speaker and the law enforcement agencies (“Olopa” and “Sars”) as demonstrated in the song, “Am I a Yahoo Boy”. The song revolves around the technique of call and response (the speaker and his fans, the “Marlians”) with the use of symbolic-imagery drawn from religious setting. The music resources

are appropriately drawn from two local languages (Yoruba and Hausa languages). The speaker laments that the social stratification has become so obvious to the extent whereby some people wallow in poverty (“je’ya”) and others merry in abundant wealth (“chop life”). This can easily be grasped in the facial look of individuals in the society, as the speaker argued metaphorically; that is to say those who are well-nourished with balanced diets in the same proportion of an exotic juice named “Five Alive” (a combination of five different fruits), and those who live an impoverished life style akin to a religious sect called “Deeper Life”:

Call: Inside life, l’ootiri Five Alive  
(Inside life, that you will see Five Alive)  
Response: L’ootiri Five Alive  
(That you will see Five Alive)  
Call: Inside life, l’ootiri Deeper Life  
(Inside life, that you will see Deeper Life)  
Response: L’ootiri Deeper Life  
(That you will see Deeper Life)  
Call: Inside life awonkan n je’ya, awonkan n chop life  
(Inside life some people suffer, some people chop life)  
Response: Inside life  
Call: Inside life awonkan n s’epe, awonkan n j’ewa  
(Inside life some people curse, some people chop beans)

Again, the speaker brings to the fore the issue of spiritual and moral decadence in the society. Most youths seek diabolic intervention for money ritual from traditional herbalists:

Call: O t’ese’lebo  
(He seeks traditional help)  
Response: O t’ese’lebo  
(He seeks traditional help)  
Call: Yahoo ni Babalawo  
(Yahoo is Babalawo)  
Response: Yahoo ni Babalawo  
(Yahoo is Babalawo)

Traditionalists are expected, in real sense, to be custodians of cultural values and norms in the society; ironically, they have notoriously engineered undesirable actions among youths. So, it might be argued reversely that the social institutions in the society are the agents of corrupting influence rather than the cultural media. Indeed, the speaker maintains that individuals, social institutions, and the society in general are caught up in the web of corruption; although only those caught red handed are charged with criminal offence and punished under the law. Since the law enforcement agencies are owned and controlled by the government, the minority tyranny is likely to escape the consequences of the corruptive actions while majority downtrodden is suspected and convicted for any slight of offence in the society:

Call: Ole l’everybody  
(Thief is everybody)  
Eniile mo basanibarawo  
(The person caught is the thief)  
O fese’ka fun mi  
(He wants to wicked me)  
Response: O fese’ka fun mi  
(He wants to wicked me)

This is a typical example of contemporary power struggles within the violent hierarchical oppositions between the dominant culture and the subaltern. Despite the religious degradation in the society, the speaker finds faith and solemn in “Allah” (God) and, religious belief (“Kurani” [Quran]) and practices (“adura” [prayer]):

Call: Mi o l’ogun mo niKurani  
(I don’t have charm I have Kurani)  
Response: Mo niKurani  
(I have Kurani)  
Call: Mo de n s’adura mi  
(I am doing prayer)  
Bi n se n s’adura mi, Allah n gba’dura mi  
(As am doing prayer, Allah is answering my prayer)  
Response: Allah n gba’dura mi  
(Allah is answering my prayer)

Like some of the historical figures alluded to in “Am I a Yahoo Boy”, the speaker’s loggerheads with the authority eventually landed him in the goal. It is in this regard that the listeners are ushered into the inner experience of individuals detained by the constituted authorities. Conventionally, the prison is supposed to be a secluded place of reshaping and remoulding the undesirable behaviours and actions of maladjusted individuals. The experience of the speaker at “Kirikiri”, “Ikoyi” prison and “EFCC cell” is that of torture and traumatic experience. Like “Fela” who became popular among his fans both at home and abroad, after severe torture in the prison the speaker became not only a heroic figure among fans (the “Marlians”) but was crowned as the head (or king) of the group after the order of “Mandela”. For the speaker, being detained in the prison is an honour as he together aforementioned historical icons are now heroes to many people. Arguably, the heroic stands of these cultural figures could only be evaluated within different contexts; the iconoclastic tendency proffered by the speaker is a matter of *perspective*:

Call: A ti lo a ti de  
(we have gone and came back)  
Response: A ti lo a ti de  
(we have gone and came back)  
Call: Enioriyo o dile  
(Only the survival that reach home)  
Response: Enioriyo o dile  
Call: Eniba lo l’oba de  
(Only the person who goes that meet crown)  
Igbati n pada de n’sel’on de mi l’ade  
(By the time I came back immediately they crowned me)  
Response: N’sel’on de mi l’ade  
(Immediately they crowned me)  
Call: K’adekopel’ori  
(May crown stay long on the head)  
Response: K’adekopel’ori  
(May crown stay long on the head)  
Call: Kibatakopel’ese  
(May shoe stay long in the leg)  
Response: Kibatakopel’ese  
(May shoe stay long in the leg)  
Call: K’awonota mi kanl’ese  
(May my enemies have broken leg)  
K’awon [?] ki won kanl’ese  
(May my [?] should have broken leg)

### **Musical Practice and the Fluidity of Social Responsibility**

The social responsibility of the musical artist, it must be noted transcends beyond the veneer of socio-politico and socio-historical milieu as exemplified in the musical practices of Naira Marley. It also traverses the oppressed/oppressor discourse in the society and should also plunge into espousing the intricacies within one side of the binary – the oppressed. In Marxist thought, proletariats do not adequately perceive the inequality and oppression that is structured against them due to the presence of what Louis Althusser, in his text titled, “Ideological and State Apparatuses”, calls the repressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus. For Althusser, “the State is a ‘machine’ of repression, which enables the ruling classes (in the nineteenth century the bourgeois class and the ‘class’ of big landowners) to ensure their domination over the working class, thus enabling the former to subject the latter to the process of surplus-value extortion” (9). The repressive state apparatuses includes the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, and so on; while the ideological state apparatuses refer to the religious ISA (the system of the different churches); the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private ‘schools’); the family ISA; the legal ISA; the political ISA (the political system, including the different parties); the trade union ISA; the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.); and the cultural ISA (literature, the arts, sports, etc.) (Althusser 15). These ideological apparatuses do not involve the use of force compared to the repressive state apparatuses.

While these apparatuses undermine the notion of unequal class structure being an inherent part of the society, it buttresses the idea of false consciousness expounded by Georg Lukacs. This false consciousness stems from the inability of the oppressed class to organise itself into a force capable of hegemony. In *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, Lukacs argues that,

all classes ripe for hegemony have a class consciousness with the same inner structure. Everything hinges on the extent to which they can become conscious of the actions they need to perform in order to obtain and organise power. The question then becomes: how far does the class concerned perform the actions history has imposed on it ‘consciously’ or ‘unconsciously’ (53).

Due to the apparatuses conditioned on the oppressed class, it becomes difficult for such class to consciously make out inequality, oppression, and exploitation in a capitalist society thus naturalising and legitimizing an unequal class structure. Thus, rather than become a class for itself, the oppressed majority consciously deny their class to appear like the bourgeoisie. It is more like a classic case of oppressed class with a burgeoning bourgeoisie face. This is exemplified in the musical practice of Falz.

In the musical text, “Wedone Sir”, the speaker reveals how the oppressed class hide under the banal of false capital to escape from the reality of oppression prevalent in the society. The title “Wehdone sir” is a sarcastic veneration of this escape from reality. The speaker expresses of an imaginary proletariat:

You dey pop bottle when you dey club  
(You consume much beer in a bar)  
But your rent dey hard you to pay  
(But it is difficult for you to pay your rent)

In addition to the above, the speaker decries the falsity of the live that the majority in the society lives. In the face of unemployment and biting economic hardship, the proletariat frolic and call to consciousness the fact that they are being oppressed. This explains why the speaker recounts about a lecherous character who fiddles with seven women, who claims to be rich and who is an internet fraud star. To such denial attitude put up by the majority in the society, the speaker disparages:

But who am I to take a action

So I say Wehdone sir!  
Wehdone sir

The above reveals that the sarcasm inherent in the musical practice. The speaker can be read to be implicated in the same inaction that bedevils the oppressed class. This is evident in the rhetoricity of the question: “who am I to take a action?” Thus, rather than undermine the inaction of the oppressed class, the speaker ends up illuminating his inability to properly tame the state apparatuses put in place which serve the interest of the bourgeoisie. In the second stanza of “Wehdone Sir”, the ideological apparatus of religion appears to come under criticism by the speaker:

Your pastor dey go on holiday abroad  
(Your pastor goes abroad on holiday)  
but you still dey pray in the name of God  
(But you still pray in the name of God)  
make you see food oh  
(So that you see food)  
make you no fail God  
(So that you don’t fail God)  
man of god dey chop Him dey robust  
(The man of God feeds well and is healthy)  
in your small salary you will pay your tithe  
(From your little salary, you will pay your tithe)  
fellowship in the day crusade for night  
(Attend fellowship in the day and crusade at night)

The above excerpt reveals that the idea of class stratification being an inherent pre-civilisation feature of the human society is fluid. This is based on the premise that it is a construct meant to serve the interest of a selected few. For example, as seen above, the “man of God” is symbolic of the privileged class that enjoys the “tithe” of the masses which comes from their “small salary”. The speaker, having exposed the social ills, rather than propose solution to crippling this apparatus maintains:

Oga this your story no dey add up gan  
(Sir, this your story lacks credibility)  
This your fabu e dey mad gan  
(This fable is outrageous)  
But who am I to take action  
So I say wehdone sir  
(So I say well done sir)  
Wehdone sir  
(Well done sir)

It becomes therefore a matter of expounding on the challenge without proposing the solutions. Aside exposing the ills in the society, the speaker of “Wehdone Sir” also explicates on waning moral values in the society. For instance, rather than embrace the values and virtue of hard work and chastity, the characters in the text engage in vices. While the idea of morality is largely relative, a culturally oriented society like Nigeria frowns at such vices of laziness and immorality. This is represented in the lines of the “Wehdon Sir” thus:

You are into yahoo yahoo activity  
And you say out to your friend  
I’m a self employed businessman  
Wehdon sir  
You are a member of the night



But you still call yourself an entrepreneur  
Wehdon ma

The words, “yahoo yahoo” and “member of the night”, are implicit of the illicit acts defrauding people on the internet and prostitution. This is because these individuals who engage in these acts desire to change their social class. In Falz’s “This is Nigeria”, the menace of moral decadence is emphasized. The central preoccupation is the corruption that sweeps across all institution in the country. The song opens with an imaginary activist character recounting the paucity of good moral standing across several institutions in Nigeria in addition to the poverty of infrastructure and facilities. This is recounted thus: “extremely poor. The medical facilities are poor. We operate a predatory, neocolonial capitalist system, which is founded on fraud and exploitation...” Building upon the words of the imaginary activist, the speaker of “This is Nigeria” carefully alludes to several cases of corruption and mismanagement. On an occasion:

This is Nigeria  
Wey da madam Philomena  
(Where Madam Philomena)  
Money vanish from your office  
(Money got missing from your office)  
36 milli you say na animal  
(36 million and you accused an animal of the theft)

The hyperbole employed above reveals the wanton loot that most individuals in position of authority. The theft alluded to in the lines above is the hoaxical statement issued by an official of the Joint Admissions Matriculation Board, who claimed that a spiritual snake swallowed colossal amount of money from her office. If that record occurred in the secular, the speaker further recounts of the immorality that trails the institution of religion:

This is Nigeria  
Praise and worship we singing now  
Pastor put his hands on the breast of his members  
He is pulling the demons out

The above satirically lays bare the waning moral standards as one who is supposed to be a model “puts his hands on the breast of his members”. This could be interpreted as laying hold on the resources of others. It could also be seen as using the office of religion to perpetrate immoral acts. “This is Nigeria” also chronicles the insecurity in Nigeria as evident in the lines:

Fulani Herdsmen still dey slaughter  
(Fulani Herdsmen are still killing)  
Carry people dey massacre  
(They massacre many people)

On a whole, the musical practice of Falz in the song, “This is Nigeria” is realist in nature as it opens up the several identifiable issues bothering the Nigerian society. However, rather than truly present the issues ravaging the lower class and express means on how to end the unequal class structure since it has been earlier argued that the idea of unequal class structure is not a given but a construct, the speaker of “This is Nigeria” undermines the very proletariat that he seeks to elevate. First, the speaker observes that “This is Nigeria/ everybody be criminal” (everybody is a criminal). This implicates the speaker and the same oppressed class that he called the “poor” in the opening line of the song. It thus portends that the idea of being oppressed is relative. Take the case of the allusion to the missing 36 million naira in the song. Would it fair to call the “madam Philomena” a member of the bourgeoisie or proletariat or in Marxist term, “working class”? Who does “Philomena” oppress by claiming that that chunk of money was swallowed by a snake? Thus, the speaker belongs to a

“Nigeria” where “everybody be criminal”. In this case, the musical practice itself is criminal and cannot claim to bridge the economic divide between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

### Conclusion

The paper has demonstrated how media culture, using the selected musical texts of Naira Marley and Falz as illustrations, serves as a fundamental medium in which the populace is imbued with the awareness of the ideological and social practices that shape contemporary power struggles in the society. The uniqueness of media culture, to be sure, could be traced to the laudable interest of youth and its accessibility to both the high and low classes. Thus, the speakers of the musical texts express their democratic rights to question, to criticize, to challenge the discrepancies, the imperfections inherent in the political and social system. The preceding discourse, therefore, illustrates how the speakers engage a problematic initiative to open up a concrete space for a dialogue and exchange, without violence and force, between the different sociopolitical institutions and the downtrodden of the society.

On the one hand, the musical texts may be said to open up a revolutionary action among the proletariats, on the other side, they generate the perpetuity of peaceful coexistence of the warring forces of signification. In addition, the paper throws into question the notions of authorial authenticity, originality, and ownership, and the orthodoxy assumption of the composers as the ultimate presence or truth within and behind their music. The intentions of the composers, strictly speaking, are not standards for the overall evaluation of the musical texts. Texts are performance rather than constative act. The “hyper reality” invented in the texts is discovered by the listeners or readers through words. Word is not a stable body of signifiers furnished with a transcendental signified; far from it, word is a chain of irreducible performative signifiers which open up illimitable contexts of discourse. The paper, then, concludes on the argument that the critique of musical texts of Naira Marley and Falz explores the socio-political constituted values of their songs in which they are not definitive but rather open up a chain of infinite discourse.

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**AESTHETICS AND RELIGION: THE POTENTIAL OF ARINGIYA  
FESTIVAL FOR FAITH TOURISM IN IKARE AKOKO, ONDO STATE**

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**Abstract**

As a form of tourism that has proven over the years to be a surprisingly strong, resilient and fundamental contributor to economic growth of various nations by generating huge amounts in exports and job creation, the African traditional theatre relies on aesthetics drawn from the ever-robust traditional and autochthonous heritages that are important in the cultural development of its people. Its manifestation in form of rituals and festivals in Nigerian cum African traditional societies is an indicator of the uniquely laden culture inherent in the Africa societies. The festival theatre is “spirit oriented” because it is believed that the whole performance is engrossed in some superhuman powers. In Nigerian society, festival theatre becomes a form of faith tourism, as they are instrumental to the process of societal cleansing, reshaping, reconfirmation of faith and rejuvenation. Looking at *Aringíyà* Festival of Ikare Akoko, Ondo State, a south western state in Nigeria, and theoretically resting on the theories of ‘ritualism and holism’, this paper theoretically appraises the economic contribution of the African Traditional Theatre as a faith tourism to the Nigerian economy. Resting on an overview of African Traditional System, this paper analyses the aesthetic attractions within the festival and concludes that although there is an existing healthy relationships, unity, cohesion, continuity, and progress between Ikare-Akoko and the outside world, if properly identified, packaged and marketed, the performance of *Aringíyà* festival would go a long way in promoting tourism in the society; as the festival gives room for tourist attraction.

**Keyword:** Faith-Tourism, Aesthetics, Aringíyà, Ritualism, Festival, Holism, African Traditional Theatre

**Introduction**

Manifesting in forms of ritualistic ceremonies, dances, recitations, drumming, praise songs, incantations, and other traditional creative displays, there exists an abundance of theatrical and dramatic aesthetics inherent in the African traditional performances. Festivals, being a remarkable part of African rich cultural heritage that are held as popular form of entertainment and religious enactment, are usually decorated with songs, dances, chants, recitations and dramatic performances. They occupy very important place in the lives of an average African and present an idea of the theatre in its totality (i.e., encompassing the use of dance drama and music).

Aesthetics in the African theatre draws from the ever-robust traditional and autochthonous heritages of the continent, which are important in the cultural development of a people. To this end, Ogunbiyi points to the speculative origins of African traditional theatre and drama, which apart from the origin, is largely linked to the struggle between the early African man and nature, and based on an enormous fact on the existence of African drama and theatre (14).

From a broad spectrum of analysis, Africa as a continent has endured the epistemological and realistic restraints of the West. This has ranged from philosophy through other fields of study in humanities, and into theatre. In theatre, the colonialists made sure that standards set through their ‘systematic’ colonial processes are hold universal, thereby denying the existence of rich and robust traditionally indigenous theatrical and dramatic aesthetics in Africa before their encounter with it. This has generated several reactions, home and abroad, against the years of Western hegemony in

Africa, thereby leading to the marginalization, domination and suppression of the cultural and traditional consciousness of Africans. The denigration of Africa's traditional heritage also paralleled the unholy exploitation of both human and natural resources of the continent, thereby distorting and dislocating the already established oral traditional heritage therein.

African traditional theatre has received varying views from both Western and African literary and anthropological thinkers and critics. For example, Ruth Finnegan (2012), M. J. C. Echeruo (2014), Ossie Enekwe (2014), Oyin Ogunba (1978), Wole Soyinka (2012), Sunday Ododo (2013), Lilian Bakare (2017), among others, have viewed African traditional theatre differently. Much of what is embedded in view by West-based scholars on this subject has been dismissive of the existence of any dramatic content in African traditional performances, based on their own canon. Afrocentric writers started responding literarily in order to salvage the continent from collapse.

The manifestation of festivals in Nigerian cum African traditional societies is an indicator of the uniquely laden culture inherent in the African societies. As exemplified in Egungun culture and tradition expressed in Egungun festivals in some parts of the Africa continent, there is hardly any part without one form of festival or the other. Some other major festivals as celebrated in Nigeria are Oyise-Owhe Festival in Owhe, Isoko land; Ololu and Alapsanpa masquerade of Ibadan; Alapata masquerade festival and Osun Osogbo Festival in Osun state; Ogun, Sango and Obatala festivals in Yoruba land; Obitun Festival in Ondo town; Obalogun Festival in Iloko; and Oromo Festival in Ethiopia, among others (Dugo 51).

In Ikare Akoko, Ondo State, a South-Western state in Nigeria, *Aringíyà* is a grand celebration of the community girl child's dignity, in confirmation of her virginity and in readiness for womanhood. The feast is usually the moment of seclusion where the maidens are separated from their parents and other community members. The celebration, marked by singing, dancing and drumming, is believed to be a moment of renewal of faith and belief in their traditions and ancestral powers; and of acquaintances with friends and relatives. For the individual who willingly participates, it is a time to confirm, for the sake of honour, one's purity and innocence in the presence of families, friends and the community at large.

### **An Overview of African Traditional Theatre and Religion**

Africa is a continent that is rich and robust in its traditional heritage with so much pride attached to the display of its various indigenous oral performances. In Traditional Africa, the great artistic institution is the festival. Contrary to popular understanding, the festival is not just a religious occasion; if it were, it would hardly command more than a fraction of the interest it generates among the people (Ogunba 22). Festivals provide the major substance of African oral literature, which today has gained critical attention from well-meaning scholars and artists all over the world. From the late nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, African traditional festivals were looked upon with disdain. They were denied their place as full-blown drama and theatre capable of even securing spaces in the academic curriculum of institutions of learning. Unfortunately, this dismal view came from outside of Africa and has been supported by mostly artistic scholars trained in the west who today are exponents of the evolutionary school.

Ruth Finnegan in her highly famous critical work, *Oral Literature in Africa*, argues thus:

Though some writers have very positively affirmed the existence of native African drama ... it would perhaps be truer to say that in Africa, in contrast to the Western Europe and Asia, drama is not typically a wide-spread or a developed form. There are, however, certain dramatic and quasi-dramatic phenomena to be found, particularly in parts of West Africa (485).

This submission can be said to be the beginning of a highly critical debate on the existence of a separate dramatic and theatrical forms in Africa. As far as the art of the theatre is concerned, African scholars have demonstrated clearly that it is in the pre-colonial rituals, festivals and other related performances that we can boast of indigenous theatre practice long before westernization. The pre-colonial theatre (and drama) practice, in Africa, is usually described as 'traditional' theatre practice by many scholars, in contrast with its 'modern' counterpart. As far back as 1916, Delafosse had noted

that he heard griots recite stories in which their heroes were made to speak (49). In their hands, these stories came alive in theatrical scenes with several characters played by a single narrator. Such is the case of the African story-telling performance in its dramatic forms. According to Oyin Ogunba, a typical African man is highly religious, making sure to observe various religious rites in the course of his daily activities. To Ogunba, the African man:

... sees spirit in all living objects. The relevance of this dual concept to festival drama is that drama is spirit oriented. Thus, the “festival man” ‘is constantly striving in his performance to approximate a spirit or reflect the spirit behind things (41).

In essence, the festival theatre is “spirit oriented” because it is believed that the whole performance is engrossed in some superhuman powers with so many advantages to them. In Nigerian society, festival theatre becomes instrumental to the process of societal cleansing, retooling and rejuvenation. Such an occasion is an avenue for seeking help from the supernatural beings believed to control events that are esoteric or inexplicable (for instance, thunder, earthquake and other natural calamities).

Agreeing with Ogunba, on his submission that “oral” traditional African performances are concerned with and share the same function in evoking similar responses with the Western “literate” drama (25), Ogundeji asserts that:

...the formalistic western concept of ‘arts for arts’ sake’ is not applicable in the African traditional cultural context, because art has always served, and still serves other utilitarian purposes beside the aesthetics. The fact that the carved image of a woman kneeling down and carrying a child on her back and a container on her head is meant for serving kola nuts to guest does not remove its artistic qualities (3).

Similarly, the several images of gods, goddesses and spirits used in places of worships are first and foremost works of art. The utility of the artifacts does not preclude their artistic qualities. In the same vein *ìjálá*, *èsà-egúngún*, *ìyèrèifá*, *sàngópípè*, *Oyapípè*, and *Èsùpípè* chants are Yoruba poetic types used in worshipping *Ògún*, *Egúngún*, *Ifá*, *Sàngó*, *Oya*, and *Èsù* respectively, though worshippers may also use them for pure entertainment. Ogundeji further identifies three stages of African Traditional Theatre based on the Yoruba cosmology and ontology as, “the sacred ritual performances, the ritual Festival performances, and the de-ritualizing performances.” According to him, in the sacred ritual performances, the religious and cultic functions are primary and foregrounded while they are secondary and therefore backgrounded in the ‘de-ritualizing’ performances. The aesthetics, in this case, is secondary, and therefore, backgrounded in the sacred ritual performances, whereas it is primary and therefore, foregrounded in ‘de-ritualizing’ and ‘de-ritualized’ performances (14-22, 36).

Citing the Yoruba *Ìgbágan* (the carrying of *Àgan*) ritual ceremony, as an example, the ritual ceremony is a sacred ritual performance, in form of acts of masquerading, re-enacted on the eve of the beginning of the masquerade *Igbagan* Festival. It is a performance, which according to Adedeji (1969), is partly re-enacted in honour of *Olúgbèè Àgan*, the legendary hybrid (half human, half gorilla) child picked up from the bush where he had been abandoned and brought home in a ritual procession. Ogundeji maintains that the sacred ritual performance of the festival is in two stages (acts). According to him:

the first, which is known as the *ìkúnlè* (the kneeling down) is enacted when the *Omo-eriwo* (initiate cult members) keep a vigil in the *ìgbòìgbàlè* (the sacred grove) where they commune with, offer sacrifices and pray to, the ancestor. Part of this stage of the performance is carried out kneeling down, hence the name *ìkúnlè* by which that part of the whole performance is known. The second part of the performance begins at about midnight, when, the *Àgan* suddenly cries out, calling on the cultists to carry him. The cultists respond to the call appropriately (52).

Apart from re-enacting the discovery and bringing to town of *Olubee Agan*, these sacred performances are meant as a prelude to the *Egúngún* festival performance that normally starts after

daybreak. Till date, as maintained by Ogundeji, the secrecy that enshrouds sacred ritual performances is still maintained in the Ìgbágan processional performance. Throughout the performance, the public audiences are not allowed to watch outside the conclave of the sacred Grove, igbòìgbàlè.



Pix 1: Cross section of masquerades at Igbagan Egúngún Festival  
*Source: Dasylya, 2017*

This last bit of secluding the audience disagrees with Kennedy's submission on who the actor is. To him:

In African festival and rituals, the actor is not alienated from the society; he is the sharer of the experience and not the dispenser. The actor is part and parcel of the culture being portrayed; he becomes a complete performer when his speech, mime, music and basic acting style synchronize to create a total life (24).

This observation confirms the fact that traditional African festival is a communal drama with the performers seen as fulfilling their religious and societal obligations and not only imitating the misgivings or behaviours of others in the larger society. In such performances, the actors bare their emotions of happiness, sorrow, sordidness, and request; at times, as in *Aringiya* festival where it is believed that the performers actively participate in the supplication.

It is an expression of life, as Kennedy goes further to say that African theatre is mostly a celebration of life whose language is verbal as well as non-verbal; there is the oral aspect, and its composition is its moment of creation. A good example of such festival where the audience takes an active role as posited by Ogundeji is the yorubaEégúnAlaré (masquerade player) performance, which according to him, is a clear example of the de-ritualizing performance where the ritual relevance is yet to be totally done away with. This festival involves the presentation of different characters, animals and human beings, gods, goddesses, spirits, moral and historical sketches, by masked players before a general audience, in an open arena, for the purpose of entertainment.

Nevertheless, it is not impossible that westernization, in general and its mode of theatre practice in particular, has influenced the 'de-ritualizing' and 'de-ritualized' stages of the 'traditional' theatre continuum in some parts of Nigeria. Such influences tend to be stronger and therefore more apparent in the post-colonial 'traditional' theatre forms like Kwagh-Hir and Egwu-amala than in the pre-colonial forms such as EégúnAlaré which had emerged and grown to maturity before the arrival of the first set of explorers, Hugh Clapperton and Richard Lander, in Nigeria in 1826. Adedeji maintains that:

The crucial western forms of theatre practice, such as the use of the proscenium stage, the box office, an elaborate narrative plot, dialogue, and a passive audience have generally not influenced the 'traditional' theatre practice. "Traditional' modes of performance are instead maintained at various levels and degrees. These include a

procession, open-air arena setting, episodic and symbolic actions, an active audience, masking, music and dancing, etc. (27).

The well-choreographed and synchronized dances, and the different body movements and facial expressions constitute the non-verbal aspect, while the songs, incantations, humming, screaming, among others, form the verbal aspect of the performance (Kennedy 29). It can therefore, be seen that the traditional African theatre is highly participatory and it is communal and not the product of a single individual, but a composite collectivity of all performing idioms. This is why traditional African festival is better understood within the context of performance itself and these specific aesthetic elements are well captured in *Aringíyà* performance.

### **Theorising *Aringíyà* Traditional Festival Theatre**

In the contemptuous words of Terry Eagleton:

Cultural theory as we have it promises to grapple with some fundamental problems, but on the whole fails to deliver. It has been shamefaced about morality and metaphysics, embarrassed about love, biology, religion and revolution, largely silent about evil, reticent about death and suffering, dogmatic about essences, universals and foundations, and superficial about truth, objectivity and disinterestedness. This, on any estimate, is rather a large slice of human existence to fall down on. It is also, as we have suggested before, rather awkward moment in history to find oneself with little or nothing to say about such fundamental questions (34).

Eagleton, as a witty summarizer of the ‘foggy’ terrain in cultural studies, has aspects of his submission that relate to this study. Perhaps the West has not failed in ‘universalizing’ dramatic canons that favour its ideologies. Western theorists have not also failed in being dogmatic about the dramatic essences, which have received stiff and ambivalent responses from African critics and theorists. It is the pride of art that it remains one way of unearthing truth as there is no need to be dogmatic in historicizing canons for they are not sacrosanct to the probing pertinence of arts.

On the other hand, Sunday Ododo contends thus:

One constant feature of theatre practice is the creative engagement of practitioners and theorists to evolve new theatrical forms, reinvent old ones and inject fresh air into the existing ones. From the Greek’s classical theatre to date, numerous innovative concepts on how theatre practice can be more engaging and meaningful have emerged (xii).

It is as a result of the need to forge an all-inclusive canon, which can give traditional African theatre’s aesthetics a robust attention that theoretical framework of this work is placed. The need resonates a profound inner code of African aesthetic values within the larger context of the world theatre cultures. Indeed, supporting Osofisan (198), the time has come to re-launch the search for new forms by also suggesting the direction to be pursued.

*Aringíyà* traditional African festival theatre offers to one’s sensibilities a scenario as thus: in life we look forward. We look forward because human moves toward progress. In looking forward, we also tend to look backward while being conscious of where we stand as a people in the present. Moving forward depends on what we know about the past and the present. To the practitioners of *Aringíyà*, individuals, whose experiences determine the stability and progress of Ikare in a communal sense, know the past. These past experiences are not fragmented like we see in Western drama where issues are individualistic and isolated in performance. These past experiences link up with the need for a better communal life and are presented to the audience holistically. The performance carries a regenerative, re-inventive, and re-invigorative role, and a spectrum of stock-taking within the Ikare worldview.

Two concepts, in a lucid and concise manner capture the agitating, transformative, and reformist nuances of *Aringíyà* festival theatre – ‘Ritualism’ and ‘holism’. The concept of ritualism is



usually referred from a religious perspective. This hinges on the belief that man craves continuously to commune with his ancestors, deities and ultimately the supernatural beings. This crave lies in his acknowledgement and acceptance of his helplessness in unexplainable phenomenon and thus, relying on supernatural help periodically. Occasionally, he tries, in a ritualistic pattern, to seek help, commune and celebrate the unseen.

Rituals therefore become a stylized repetitive pattern of behaviour associated with religious beliefs and practices and in some sense deemed to be sacred. Ritual contains a temporal element holding, at a particular point in time (during certain needs and occasions), with a liturgical order and spatial element, often taking place in a specified location with actors also being spatially coordinated, which forms an integral part of African society to “ensure its survival for generations to come” (Layiwola 4). Hence, Ikare people believe in the several processes and procedures within the practice and the performance of *Aringiyà*.

Holism on the other hand, captures aspects of the performance that are mythic, archetypal, spiritual, ritualistic, and essentially entertaining and edifying. *Aringiyà*'s performance leaves nothing out of consideration within the metaphysical and the artistic domains of the Ikare people. It tells the belief of the people, the rituals observed, and the knowledge garnered by performers and spectators, and thrills all people to the wonders of its uniqueness. This is why *Aringiyà* traditional African festival theatre can appropriately be described as holistic and ritualistic. This is also why when one watches a traditional festival, as Ogunba (1970) would put it, one is immediately struck by the fact that one has been exposed to a dramatic experience.



Pix 2: Showing an image of a moment when the spirit seemingly takes control – (possessing the performer).

Source: *Fieldwork*, 2019

### **Origin and Performance of *Aringiya* Festival**

Many traditional feasts including *Aringiya*, Egungun (Masquerade), and New Yam festivals take place in Ìkàré-Akoko every year. *Aringiya* festival is one of the most important traditional festivals in Ìkàré-Akoko. Record has it that *Aringiya* is a water goddess brought into Ìkàré from Ile-Ife. On arrival in Ìkàré, the goddess was placed beside a brook situated beneath the Owa Ale hill. The brook is located 500metres from Owa Ale's palace; hence, it was named Omi-Atan. The worship of *Aringiya* goddess, renowned as the goddess of chastity, fruitfulness and harvest, brought about the *Aringiya* festival celebrated during the early months of the planting season and it always precedes the Egungun festival.

Traditionally, *Aringiya* is a festival celebrated by the whole of Ìkàré land but it is only young maidens (virgins) from the nucleus of the town that are the main celebrants. The maidens qualified to participate in *Aringiya* festival are maidens from the Iyometa and Orun-un. These two areas merged together to form Iyomefa. Iyomefa comprises Okoron, Okegbe, Iku, Okoja, Okeruwa and Odoruwa Odeyare. It is a taboo for girls from the other three areas of the village to participate in the festival. Participation in the festival is voluntary and the girls are always very enthusiastic about it while non-

participation means guilt on the parts of the girls who refuse to participate. It is believed that any girl between the age brackets of 14 and 18 years who refuses to participate in the festival is no more a virgin, and this is tantamount to shame for the girl and her family. It is indeed, a one-day festival for the virgins.

According to Prince Adeniran, in an interview with the researcher, at the peak of the festival, when the men have finished the cleaning and clearing work, the water becomes still (stops flowing) and all the maidens will go down on their knees and bow down their heads at this point as it is believed that the *Aringiya* goddess is out to receive her children. Just then, a masquerade known as 'Igede-oka' whose cognomen is 'Apaje-buje' (meaning one who kills the witch and takes a bite) will descend from the hill holding a long cutlass. Swiftly jumping across the brook, the masquerade cuts off the heads of maiden who might have lied about their virginity or are pregnant but stubbornly and deceitfully followed the other girls to the side of the brook. This was usually the penalty for offenders in the olden days, but modern law does not permit such instant judgment anymore; nowadays, the masquerade just fishes out the girl(s) and she will be publicly disgraced; she and her family will be ridiculed everywhere in the town.

Where none of the girls is found to have erred, the masquerade just descends from the hill, brandishing its cutlass, dancing around the girls and praying for them. This done, all awaiting mothers, and every other person who have come to the goddess to seek for one favour or the other is required to come forward for prayers. Before ascending the hill, the masquerade also prays for the community at large and blesses everyone present at the festival – this is the climax of the festival. Immediately after its ascension, the spirit of the *Aringiya* goddess occupies the girls and they are at the point, transposed, crossing the liminal margin of the line between the land of the living and the spirits.

They (the virgin girls) rise and begin to dance out from the brook round the Iyomefa area of the village. In their transitional state, they proudly sing and dance round the village naked, showing the world that they have kept their pride (virginity) for the husbands that will marry them. Men and boys that are looking for wives will come out to watch them and make their choices of wives. No one is allowed to touch them or take photographs of them. While dancing, the girls move from one house to the other, saying prayers and giving warnings of impending doom. They take the form of seers and as confirmed in an interview with Pa Jimoh, a member of the Okegbe household, the girls move with an aura of fear and when they get to any household, "members of the house come out to listen to them". The climax of the festival is at the point where the maidens assemble at the Owa Ale's palace with all the guests, friends and spectators. Everyone who attended the festival the previous year and has been blessed for any prayer said are called out to give testimonies of the wonders that have occurred in their lives.



Pix 3: An image of some of the maidens waiting to have their bath  
*Source: Fieldwork, 2019*



Pix 4: an Image of some of the maidens waiting at the Owa-Ale's Palace for Prayers

The reigning Owa Ale goes inside to bring out all the ancient crowns and starts wearing them one after the other, and as he is doing this, everyone present in the palace will prostrate and shout “*Kabiyesi o...*” in reverence to the late kings. The monarch will bring out all the aged crowns of the land except one; the crown originally brought from Ile-Ife. This special crown is made of cowries. All the other crowns will be used to decorate the palace; while putting them on, the king says words of prayers for the community and the visitors, and until the last one, he then holds his staff of office and prays for all the girls who participated in the festival that year. He prays for everyone that has testified to one blessings and for everybody in the village (both indigenes and visitors). Finally, he will pray for the peace, harmony and development of Ìkàré land. Thereafter, the king retires to the inner chamber, the girls are relieved of their state and funfair continues with family and friends in their various houses and the palace.



*Pix 5:* an image of a cross-section of the maidens waiting for the Owa-Ale at the shrine  
*Source: Fieldwork, 2019*



*Pix 6:* an image of the Owa-Ale saying his final prayers for the assembly as a whole

### **Religious Function of Aringya Festival Theatre**

Religious festivals are important for families and the community at large. One will agree that religious festivals help to teach principles, ethics, and values of the society to generations to come. At different levels, all religious festivals bring the same message of love, tolerance, and understanding. On the religious functions, ritual rites embedded in traditional religion is a means through which the entire community assembles to worship and commune with gods, ancestors and fellow countrymen. During the rituals, the people communally thank their gods for past years and present the new season for them to bless. Through this medium, the rejuvenation of faith and trust in the gods strengthened, testimonies in honour of past miracles, blessings received are declared, and covenant renewed. While the festival feast constitutes an opportunity for resolving friendship odds between people and families, opportunity is also given to nurture traditional political sphere.

The performance of *Aringíyà* traditional theatre is in part, ritualistic. The reason for this is to justify the fact that the enactment of the ancient play is usually dedicated to Ikare’s ‘Orisun’ (collective spirit of the ancestor amongst whom is *Aringíyà*). In the Ikare situation as it affects the outing of *Aringíyà* traditional drama, performance of ritual is a theatrical experience. This is in conformity with the views of Catherine Bell who once wrote that:

the performance of ritual creates a theatrical-like frame around the activities, symbols and events that shape participant’s experience and cognitive ordering of the world, simplifying the chaos of life and imposing a more or less coherent system of categories of meaning onto it (156).

As said earlier in this discussion, ritual performances in *Aringíyà* traditional theatre are not only worthwhile, they are also often seen to be beautiful and pleasure giving. It must be stated clearly

that a number of dramatic performances in traditional societies are ritualistic in content. The *Aringíyà* traditional theatre of the Ikare people is one. It comes with various forms of sacrifices in which the bean-cakes and melon are used to propitiate the gods of the land to be at peace with the performance/enactment. What is most appealing with the ritual content of *Aringíyà*, however, is the aesthetics that accompanies the ritual performances. This quality makes it dramatic and entertaining.

### **Tourism Potentials of *Aringíyà* Festival**

In Nigeria, traditional festivals act as an avenue to attract tourists. Simply put, it is a great form and centre for tourism attraction. Therefore, further understanding the functions of festival in line with for tourism promotion within Ikare-Akoko cannot be over emphasised. This fact can be discussed via its impact in the life of the community. Notably, functioning as a tourist attraction, the festival influences in the economic wellbeing of the community. As Traditional festival attracts visitors to a destination who spends money within the community, enhancing the local economy and supporting them through restaurants, hotels, and other tourism selected businesses, members of the Ikare community, most especially of the Iyomefa quarters have had cause to see the Aringiya festival as a source of community life, and further promoting their health through leisure. The compulsory stop of work during *Aringíyà* Festival gives the people some moment of rest from farm work, trading at the market and other tedious work for them to refresh before going back. Also, it has been further revealed that through this, opportunities have been created for individual carvers to carve paraphernalia, some of which would be needed for the feast especially the “clay pot” used at the *Aringíyà* brook by the virgins, mask and other costumes for the masquerade. In addition, African traditional festivals generally afford skilled women in weaving and pottery making the opportunity to make their wares which would be displayed for their visitors to admire and buy.

The high inflow of tourist and day visitors into the community during such occasions contributes immensely to economic empowerment of people through the injection of tourist expenditure into the community. Tourist expenditure is felt in the community from the boarding of taxi to lounging in hotels to visiting tourist sites such as the Oke-Iba, Aringiya brook and a visit to the Palace of the Owa-Ale( a palace believed to be over 500 years old).



*Pix 7: An image of the old palace where the Aringiya shrine is housed*



*Pix 8: An image of the old Owa-Ale's Throne*

*Source: Fieldwork, 2019*

Tourism as an economy driven industry relies heavily on the environment, both physical and social. In other words tourism activities cannot do without the host societies effort at making the environment hospitable and attractive to individuals who would like to spend substantial amounts of money into seeing the cultural heritage of the people. Furthermore, it aids the development of the physical environment by attracting the expansion of basic infrastructural facility in the community. Such expansion, currently ongoing within the Owa-Ale's Palace is the construction of a 3,500-capacity town hall that would function as an event centre, against the open space, were visitors and community members alike usually remained underneath the sun during such festivals.



*Pix 9: An image of the On-going construction of the 3,500-capacity Town Hall*  
*Source: Fieldwork, 2019*

Though, if not properly managed, the essence of the festival and community's cultural value may be lost as tourism not only bring prospective developers and tourist, it also exposes the community to various vices in the aspect of immorality and corruption. Nevertheless, with the effort of the Ikare Cultural committee, and the readiness of the community members as a whole, this festival is enabled with the ability to protect flora and fauna, which adds glamour to the community. Thus, it is not surprising that traditional festivals in Nigeria generally provide the stimulus for additional infrastructural development in the local area which will go a long way in promoting tourism.

In addition, tourism is instrumental to preserving local culture and tradition of the community. During cultural festivals tourists/visitors have a unique chance to interact with the local community, thereby gaining a deeper experience of the ambience, customs and local cultures. For this researcher, the opportunity to partake in the festival has given us a chance to having a better knowledge of the history and traditions of the Ikare-Akoko community. Before now, being a widely accepted tale, the Olukare's claim to being the only true king of the kingdom has never been doubted. But, during the process of carrying out this work, one was able to listen to the Owa-Ale, series of court cases and their outcomes, and, truly, one would accept that the community can only be peaceful as long as the two households are allowed to share the crown. The fact that tourists are able to learn about their cultural values and socio political systems enhances the resident's pride and promotes the preservation and cultivation of the local culture as this leads to a preservation of such customs. Therefore, in this vein it is not hearsay to maintain that festivals act as a medium through which a society's image can be projected and improved. By allowing tourists/visitors to get to know the local culture, and traditions of their land, the local community is giving the opportunity for the world to experience the spirit of their land.

### **Conclusion**

As no two societies can boast of a totally same culture, traditional festivals have continued as act as a form of cultural entertainment through which a community showcases its diverse cultural endowment to its numerous visitors. *Aringíyà* festival performance of Ikare-Akoko and other traditional African festivals are total theatre, because unlike what we have in the western world where documentation helps in the presentation of their artistic works, African traditional performances are typically oral renditions that are the properties of the immediate community.

Already fostering healthy relationships, unity, cohesion, continuity, and progress between Ikare-Akoko and the outside world, if properly identified, packaged and marketed, the performance of *Aringíyà* festival would go a long way in promoting tourism in Ikare-Akoko and Nigeria as a whole; as the festival gives room for tourist attraction. Invariably, *Aringíyà* festival engenders the maintenance of the ordered relationship of the 'African Universe' (dead-living-unborn). This is why a

breach in the dictates and codes of the festival came with death (in the olden days) and comes with heavy sanctions (nowadays).

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## RELEVANCE OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY AND THE MEDIA TO THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

The creative industry, which is an informal sector, stands a great chance of developing Nigeria socially and economically due to its potentials. The film and music sectors alone, just aspects of creative industry, raked in a whopping sum of \$104 Million into the country's economy in 2019. However, this industry has been given less critical attention. This paper, hinged on Status Conferral theory, therefore examined the contributions the creative industry offers society, and enumerated the need to invest more in it. It also highlighted the collaborative roles of the media in promoting the creative industry to bring about the needed socio-economic development of Nigeria. The paper adopted qualitative research method which relied on non-quantitative or non-statistical modes of data collection and analysis. Thus, the primary sources of the research are the primary texts, relevant books, Journals, articles, library materials, newspapers, and the Internet. It is argued in this paper that the creative industry in Nigeria has the potential to unleash its benefits on the society. Consequently, it concluded that the creative industry remains significant in the scheme of things in Nigeria. The recommendations are that government should invest more in the industry to encourage various artists who are helping to grow the economy without tasking the government to provide jobs for them. Also, government should enact enabling laws that will guarantee artists the liberty to operate smoothly.

**Keywords:** Artists, Creative, Development, Entertainment, Film, Industry, Media.

### **Introduction**

The creative artist is a big receptacle that houses varied fields, including film, music, dance and choreography, drama, comedy, design and installation arts, painting, theatre arts, illustrations, spoken words, acting, carnival arts and performance, sculptor, among others. They form the creative industry, sometimes referred to as the entertainment industry. They can be rightly referred to as the heartbeats of society because every aspect of life revolves around them; without them the society is dull, and as good as dead. They spice up life, and give meaning to living. They have consistently contributed to the development of the society in many ways. In an interview with Tosin Omoniyi and Halimah Yahaya, the Chief Executive Officer of the National Unity Museum and Trade Tourism Village, Panda, Nasarawa, Akin Olowokere, avows that the entertainment industry can be compared to no lesser level than the oil and gas industry as it is even more everlasting. He states that even at the war front, there is still the army band, navy band, or the police band, and that entertainment still goes on in all facets of human endeavours.

They also play important roles in shaping the pattern of economic activities. Temidayo Badmus reports the Managing Director of the Nigerian Film Corporation, Dr. Chidia Maduekwe, to have said that,

in the United State of America, USA the creative industry generated a staggering \$698 billion dollars equivalent to 6.5% of all goods and services generated in that country. In India Bollywood, it accounts for over 7% GDP and is next to ICT in terms of importance and job creation to the economy (3).

Nigeria's Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, affirms that there are many countries in the world that have made it from the creative industry, "for instance in California, the GDP is largely dependent on the creative industry, which is like the fifth in the world" (NAN 2). Mohammed describes the Nigerian creative industry as the 'new oil'. According to him, the feat that Nigeria is recording in its creative sector indicates that it harbours a breakthrough for the nation. *Premium Times* cites the minister as noting that Nigeria could not afford to take the creative industry with levity, as it had become the cash cow for many other nations ("Creative Industry is Nigeria's..."). He said, "the creative industry contributed £84.1 billion to the British economy in 2014. It also contributed \$698 billion to the US economy, according to a 2015 report. So, Nigeria cannot afford to be left behind; hence, we are ready to explore and exploit the new oil" (2).

The Director General of National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), Adedayo Thomas, agrees that Nigeria's creative industry has big potential to create jobs and generate foreign exchange earnings if the necessary facilities are put in place. According to him, "the industry has this export potential because it has content that are appreciated all over the world" (*Sun News Online* 1). The Nigerian creative industry is not doing badly at all. According to *Vanguard*, Nigeria's blockbuster movie, *The Wedding Party 2: Destination Dubai*, made over 73 million naira on its opening weekend in 2017, going down as the highest opening weekend ever at the Nigerian box office for both Nollywood and international films (*The Wedding Party 2* Rakes in N73m). After just eighteen days it started showing in cinemas, the film raked in N312million (*Vanguard, Wedding Party 2* Hits N312m).

Diversification of the Nigeria's economy away from oil to areas like the creative industry is a way forward in not only revamping the country's economy, but also in sustaining it. It is simple and achievable because it does not cost the government much investment apart from providing the enabling field for creative arts stakeholders to ply their trade and function. The neglect of an industry like the creative industry in Nigeria is one of the reasons Richard Samans laments that, "many countries have significant unexploited potential to simultaneously increase economic growth and social inclusion" (4). It is the recognition of the importance of the creative industry worldwide that is making Saudi Arabia to be planning to spend \$64 billion over the next 10 years to develop the country's entertainment industry. Rob Smith points out that Saudi Arabia is diversifying its economy so as to reduce its reliance on oil which has been hit by falling oil prices.

Almost all aspects of the creative arts perform some, if not all the same functions, as the conventional mass media do. Basically, these functions are, the provision of information, education, entertainment, and transmission of culture from one generation to the other. However, the entertainment function tends to be the most pronounced because of its ability to bring relief to man, especially helping to ease tensions of various forms. It is also the sector that mainly generates revenue. This paper is significant because, even after we have identified the remarkable strides the creative industry is making in Nigeria, and also come up with indigenous theories to back up the practice of creative arts in Nigeria, if the mass media are not engaged to publicise the outcomes, such efforts will only amount to futility. The media are capable of putting the creative industry on the global radar as exporters of world-class services and content.

There is need to study the relevance of the creative industry and the media to the socio-economic development of Nigeria because, according to PwC, Nigeria's entertainment and media sector will be the fastest-growing in the world between 2017 and 2020 (*The Guardian* "Entertainment Industry"). Therefore, the core objective of this paper is to highlight the important roles the creative industry and the media play in the socio-economic development of Nigeria. Within the context of this study, "Artists" refers to all those involved in creating artistic products, to wit, dramatists, musicians, actors and actresses, dancers and choreographers, comedians, poets, and so on.

### **Theoretical Construct**

This study is influenced by the Status Conferral theory of the media. This theory was propounded by Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton in 1948. According to Ryan Smith, the status conferral function was created when Lazarsfeld and Merton were explaining the functions and the power that the mass media have in our society. They argue that the media have the ability to force so much information from anywhere, at any given time, about any topic, and that they can make this topic seem like the



most pressing matter to date. Ryan Smith is of the opinion that it is the role mass media give to a person, group of people, or event that make these things seem significant or important, whether justified or not.

The theory says that the media make the audience to see certain individuals, people, ethnic group, political class, or profession in a particular way based on the nature of coverage given to them. According to Janes Lemert, "Status conferral" is the notion that press coverage singles out and confers importance upon the person or group covered. Hence, "Status conferral, or recognition by the mass media, indicates that one is important enough to single out from the mass and that one's behaviour and opinions are significant enough to demand media attention. By legitimating the status of individuals and groups, the media confer status and prestige" (Severin & Tankard 327). Further, since media attention enhances attention to people, subject and issues, Ezekiel Asemah opines that the media perform the status conferral function, where they create prominence for issues and people, by giving them coverage. The attention brings about a degree of prominence, although it may sometimes be undue. It means the media can elevate an individual, event, or institution to a position or extent that the members of the public will begin to look at such an individual, event, or institution as very important.

Put sufficiently, therefore, Status Conferral by the media is when they give prestige, clout, and importance to a person(s) or event through the instrumentality of priming and framing. It could be deliberate or an unintentional act. This could occur in the line of performing their core duties of informing, educating and entertaining the public, among other functions. This is in line with the position of Barclays Ayakoroma, who avers that once the media takes on an issue, and they are critical about it, "there is the likelihood of the mass audience looking at such issues from that perspective" (7). Elo Ibagere also supports the view that the media have power to attract attention to themselves, and they also "have the tremendous power to direct this attracted attention on a single event or phenomenon" (21).

No doubt, the creative industry has the potentials to enhance the socio-economic development of Nigeria. However, it seems its contributions, at present, are not taken into cognisance because people and the government tend not to be aware of them enough. The reason may be that the media have not been giving them priority reports, and setting agenda around their significance by conferring status on creative arts issues, hence this theory is germane for this discourse. It is relevant because it is the duty of the media to confer status, and report the importance of the creative industry to the society, and how it can be further used to for the socio-economic development of the country. Fittingly, Chukwuma Anyanwu confirms that the media call attention to those areas of need which are of particular relevance to economic growth. When the media confer status on the creative industry by focusing their reports on it, the society shall benefit from the industry.

### **Concept of Development**

Development can be viewed as the arithmetic and geometric growth that takes place in the lives of people, and a society in all ramifications of life, especially economically, socially, and politically. According to John Eberlee, in contemporary times, the concept of development has moved away from the fetishism of growth and development, to the ability of a people to recover their resources and use same accordingly to solve their individual and collective problems, to bring about new frame of life where each stage is an improvement of man's wellbeing and welfare due to poverty of leadership and bad governance which has given rise to monumental corruption. Similarly, Everet Rogers says, "development is a widely participatory process of social change in a society intended to bring about social and material advancement for the majority of the people through their gaining control over their environment" (345). In other words, development implies a change in which the people are involved and the essence is a positive advancement in the lives of the people. The people are the drivers of this type of development which empowers them as they increasingly gain control over their environments.

Hitherto, 'development' was seen as only being limited to growth in the economy, rise in per capita income and increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). But for Michael Todaro (1982), the objectives of development include the ability to meet basic need such as food, shelter, health and protection, achievement of self-esteem and human freedom. He is of the opinion that society deserves human freedom in form of emancipation from alienating material conditions of life and freedom from

the social servitude of man and ignorance of nature, misery, institutional and dogmatic beliefs. Hence former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, maintains that the welfare and security of the people was, to a large extent, synonymous with national development and stability (*Naijaloaded*). Emphasizing that growth and development are positive attributes, Olusegun Obasanjo recalls that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) espoused the concept of *human development* as the ultimate goal of *national development* (Olu Femi).

Deriving from the foregoing, Elo Ibagere observes that one can maintain that social development, therefore, is the change of the people constituting a social system toward patterns of that system that allows better realization of human values which allow that system greater power and control over itself, its environment, and its political destiny. Ibagere concludes that social development, therefore, has to do mostly with the behaviour of those who make up the social system (49). Recognising that film production is the engine that drives peace, unity and development, Professor Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, a former Foreign Affairs Minister, and at present the Chief of Staff to President Muhammadu Buhari, calls on Nollywood to be at the vanguard of using it to build values of love and tolerance among Nigerians (Araayo Akande).

Therefore, it's very important to examine the relevance of the creative industry and the media to the socio-economic development of Nigeria because there is a consensus that broad socio-economic progress is a much stronger priority in economic policy, just as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth continues to be the primary way national economic performance is tracked statistically by governments and reported in the media (Richard Samans). From above, it is glaring that the creative industry can aid the socio-economic development of any society.

### **Creative Industry and Development**

The rebasing of the Nigerian economy in 2014, which put the size at \$510 billion, showed that there are great potentials in the non-oil sector of the economy. Out of this, the entertainment industry generates \$600 million and employs over a million people (Manuaka 18), although Benjamin Njoku claims the industry has employed about 2.5million youthful Nigerians. These facts are corroborated by Nigeria's former Coordinating Minister for the Economy and the Honourable Minister of Finance, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, whom Wahab Gbadamosi and Sylvester Inegbedion quote as declaring that the rebasing shows that Nigeria has a much more diversifying economy than we thought because the underlying strength of the economy is not so much in oil as in other areas.

From the rebasing records, it can be seen that services rose from about 26% to 51%. It is noticed that some sectors of the economy that were not counted before are now significant. The movie industry that did not even feature as a contributor to the GDP before now accounts for about 1.2% of the GDP. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala adds that, "What I am saying is that Nigeria's economy is evolving like others all over the world in terms of services" (5). Barclays Ayakoroma also submits that in the next economic re-basement of the Nigerian economy, the Nollywood industry has the capacity of increasing the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and help reduce poverty and unemployment in Nigeria if the potentials and creativities are sold to the world using modern strategic marketing means (*The Guardian* "Dons canvass improved marketing...").

The Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, also averred that the creative industry is the fastest-growing sector of the economy with \$53 million and \$51 million (\$104m) accrued in 2019 from film and music, respectively. Kabir Afolayan quotes the Minister as saying that,

we need to work harder so that we can actually actualise the potentials of this industry and make it not just the fastest growing sector in Nigeria but also increase our GDP from 1.24 percent, the industry accounts for 2.24 percent of our GDP. This can actually grow to 3 percent of the GDP (2).

Kingsley Iweka also reports that the vibrancy of Nigeria's music industry has also had a sizable economic impact. PwC's Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2017-2021 forecasts that revenue from the sector will hit US\$73m by 2021 (making it the biggest in the region).

The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, states that in 2016, the film industry sector contributed N239 billions of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP),

Nigeria's music industry grew by 9 per cent in 2016 to reach a value of 39 million dollars. According to a *Vanguard Newspaper* report, Ahmed notes that the music industry was set to grow by 13.4 per cent by 2021, with an estimated worth of about 73 million dollars ("FG Approves N7bn..."). Benjamin Njoku and Silvia Lambiase, Country Editor at *The Business Year*, assert that Nollywood is today recognised globally as the second largest movie production industry in the world by volume after Bollywood, and that it contributes 5% to Nigeria's GDP. It is worth over USD5 billion, and it produces more films than Hollywood (*The Guardian* "Entertainment industry..." 2). The movie industry in Nigeria (Nollywood) is the second largest film making corridor in terms of quality and quantity after Bollywood. The industry has attracted global attention because our films are viewed all over Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and continental America. It portrays the goings-on in the society, and film producers re-enact them to make them pertinent to society.

Artists are employers of labour by engaging helping hands locally and internationally when they take part in shows and performances within and outside the shores of Nigeria, like in film festivals in Africa, Europe, India and North America. The creative industry has created a lot of jobs for our youths by engaging them off the streets. According to Seyi Sokoya, popular movie director, Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen declares that Nollywood has employed over 10 million Nigerians directly or indirectly. Silvia Lambiase, Country Editor at *The Business Year* reiterates that it is also the second-largest employer in the country, proving its huge socio-economic impact (*The Guardian* "Entertainment industry..." 2). Aderibigbe Tolulope reports that comedy has become a source of livelihood to many Nigerians who in recent times have become superstars, celebrities and millionaires from the stand-up comedy craft.

Artists are social influencers and crowd pullers when they perform anywhere around the world. When it is in Nigeria, at the end of the day, a large percentage of the crowd lodge in hotels; they buy drinks and clothes; and the government generate money in form of taxes which ultimately develops the economy. Nigerian musicians like Wizkid, Davido, Timaya, Seun Kutu and numerous others have been able to dazzle the world with their genre of music, according to *Washington Post*, the success of these artists is the reason why Afrobeats continues "to the surface of any number of recent hits, such as Justin Bieber's 'What Do You Mean,' Rihanna's 'Work' and Alicia Keys' 'In Common'" (Bellanaija 1). The collaborations with artists in other countries have introduced both sides to millions of new fans worldwide; when their music are bought the economic effects trickles down on Nigeria's economy indirectly.

Again, the creative industry help to launder the image of the country around the world, and this invariably attract foreign direct investment through annual festivals, workshops, and multi-cultural performances; especially now that Nigeria's image has been badly dented by the activities of 'Yahoo Yahoo Boys' whose illegal way of doing business has not only been negatively affecting the image of Nigeria in the world, but it is causing embarrassment to Nigerians at some foreign airports where Nigerians are specially checked due to the bad image these fraudsters have given Nigeria (Guanah & Obi 9). Foreign musicians now proudly put on Nigerian fabrics to shoot their videos thereby affording our indigenous (Adire) cloth makers the opportunity to export their products in large quantity. Hence, *The Business Year* (TBY) recognises that entertainment is today one of the country's main expressions of soft power, "a country's persuasive approach to international relations through its economic, cultural, and media influence in order to gain positive attraction" (*The Guardian* "Entertainment industry..." 2).

The creative industry reduces the crime rate in the society. The former Lagos State Governor, Akinwunmi Ambode, attests to this fact when he received artists who performed at the *One Lagos Fiesta* (OLF) 2016. He said, according to statistics, the state recorded the lowest crime rate during the period of the OLF, saying that the artists contributed significantly in keeping the city secured and in scaling up the international rating of the state as a safe place (*Premium Times* "We'll use Entertainment...").

It has been established by scholars and medical personnel like Modupe Omibiyi-Obidike, Meki Nzewi, Randel McClellan, Steven Friedson, Fabian Maman, and Mariam Iyeh, among others, that the creative arts, especially dance and music, are therapeutic. Specifically too, comedy, just like every other performing arts, has therapeutic powers, because it serves as an antidote for depression, sickness and disease; that even the book of Proverbs 17: 22 of the Holy Bible says, "A merry heart

doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones” (Vaughan 1207). Merriment caused by laughter can reduce various social frustrations that people face daily. More sources like Justina Iyasere and Juliet Bumah acknowledge that laughter has therapeutic values, and has several physical, mental, and social benefits. Stella Ogundipe emphasises that, “humour and laughter strengthen your immune system, boost your energy, diminish pain, and protect you from the damaging effects of stress. Best of all, this priceless medicine is fun, free, and easy to use” (33). Further, a medical doctor, Bisola Akindeko, supports this view when she asserts that:

Humor and laughter can cause a domino effect of joy and amusement, as well as set off a number of positive physical effects. A laugh a day may help keep the doctor away, say a growing number of healthcare professionals. Laughter is like 'internal jogging,' a form of exercise that keeps the body and the mind fit. It can give the heart muscles a good workout, improve circulation, increase your pulse rate, fill the lungs with oxygen-rich air, decrease tension, and perhaps even relieve pain, says Donald Black, professor of psychiatry at the University of Iowa College of medicine (49).

In a YouTube video, Sadhguru confirms that, “there is substantial data to show that if a person is exuberant, joyful and wonderful, their immune system is always functioning at a better level of protection than those who are depressed and worried about something.” If comedy engenders laughter that neutralises depression and anxiety, it enhances social participation on the part of a guaranteed healthy workforce that will invariably accelerate the economic development of the nation because workers are considered as the engine house of the economy of every nation. No wonder Roundtable gives credit to comedy for neutralizing the dire situation in Nigeria in the face of stark ineptitude of its leaders and the very harsh economy; yet, Nigerians are still be described as one of the happiest people on earth. Due to their roles and contributions to the development of the society, most creative artists are qualified to be referred to as social entrepreneurs, David Bornstein having asserted that, “what business entrepreneurs are to the economy, social entrepreneurs are to social change. They are the driven, creative individuals who question the status quo, exploit new opportunities, refuse to give up, and remake the world for the better” (Abimbola, Agboola & Olarewaju 564).

Communication is vital for peaceful coexistence, and for meaningful development to take place in any society. The media provide various communication means through which the different segments of the society can be reached with development information. Some aspects of the creative industry like drama, dance, music, referred to as the traditional media, are considered as being capable of functioning as mass communication media (Elo Ibagere, Chinenye. Nwabueze, Sulaimam Osho, Kehinde Oyesomi, Abiodun Salawu & Angie Igbino, Paddy Scannell, Jammy Guanah, Joy Anho, and Rhoda Dalung) because they perform exactly the same functions the conventional media carry out. Their effects bring about socio-economic development of the country. They are being used to create awareness, sensitise and mobilise citizens, and to create peaceful atmosphere where development can take place. Hence, Taiwo Ajai-Lycett is convinced that artists have the potential to help develop the people politically by giving them the correct information, correct ideas about their country, love for their country, and responsibility to their fatherland. She declares that,

entertainers have a responsibility to impart social skills and information to the generality of the public because we have a captive audience who looks up to us. If we do appreciate our importance in the polity, then, we should grab it (Igbino 33).

Creative contents satisfy the needs of citizens, and most times the citizens do not get to benefit from these contents without the media making them to be aware of their availability, and where and how they can be accessed. The media have a great role to play towards projecting and raising more awareness about the happenings in the creative industry. This shows that the relationship between the creative industry and the media are symbiotic in nature because one cannot do without the other, and they do benefit from each other.

### **Collaborative Role of the Media**

Mass media are the channels used in communicating with the general public. The common ones are the Social media, Films, Newspapers, Television, Magazines, Radio, Books, and so on. The media do have a great impact on the society, especially, because as gate-keepers and critical factors in the information dissemination process, media practitioners decide what they filter for their various publics to consume, depending on different yardsticks. Sociologist Michael Schudson sums up the societal impact of media this way:

The greatest effects may not be measurable influences on attitudes or beliefs produced by media but the range of information the media make available to individual human minds, the range of connections they bring to light, the particular social practices and collective rituals by which they organize our days and ways. The media are more important, not less important, than popular opinion would have it, but rarely in the ways assumed by popular views. The media organize not just information but audiences. They legitimise not just events and sources that report them both readers and viewers. Their capacity to publicly include is perhaps their most important feature. That you and I read the same front page or see the same television as the President of the United States and the chair of IBM is empowering; the impression it promotes is equality and commonality (24-25).

Suitably then, since the media survey the environment, and also interpret the news, Oluwalanu Sanusi, Adelabu Omowale and Myke Esiri posit that the media offer various explanations correlating and interpreting information to make the reality clear. Therefore, the mass media are able to decide exactly what information that will be delivered because they can influence the public's mindset and raise people's aspirations. Dennis McQuail summarises the power of the mass media thus: attracting and directing public attention; persuasion in matters of opinion and belief; influencing behaviour, intentionally or not; defining reality, concerning status and legitimacy; informing quickly and extensively; more available to those with political and economic power (86-97).

The media operational in a society determine the state of the creative industry there. Even when artists are faring well in their trade, it is the duty of the media to put more pressure on them to be on their toes so they can work harder, and do better because their creativity accelerates social development. Therefore, to create visibility for creative artists, the broadcast media outlets invite artists to their studios for interactions and interviews that fans can call in to participate too. Quality air play on radio and television are given to artists' songs, videos, and performances. The entertainment columns of print media, comprising newspapers, magazines and other publications do give a lot of coverage the creative industry's activities. They also dedicate feature articles and editorials to writing on the creative industry. Other ways the media publicise, as well as help to promote the creative industry includes public relations, media relations, and advertising. That is why communication experts and marketers agree that the right combination of the promotional tools or marketing communication will result in maximum publicity for a product, and will also increase turnover, promote corporate image and enhance corporate growth (Nwamara 111).

The important place the media occupy in the society guarantee the fact that when they carry positive news items about the creative industry, such news will get to the right recipients. This kind of alignment between the media and the creative industry aids the latter's development efforts. The media play important role of development through positive reporting and promotion of artists' works. Through publicity via the social media, artists' works reach the right audience globally. Due to the instrumentality of powerful information sharing platforms of the social media, like the electronic mail (Email), instant messaging, snapchat, instagrm, short message service (sms), You Tube video Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, Sound Cloud, Hulkshare and many more, artists' activities are being promoted. Through the YouTube, music labels and artists release movie trailers ahead of the release. Via this means, they reach out to both local and international potential audience who buy their products, and generate both local and foreign exchange for the country.

The mass media, especially the social media also serve as powerful creative materials sharing outlets through which the media promote the creative industry. This is done by helping creative artists to create buzz about their acts; upload and post their acts, engage in interactive conversations with their fans; connect with fans on a personal level using photographs, videos and audio clips on a regular basis, and also network with other stakeholders in the creative industry. Again, with social media, drama can be streamed live as it is being staged. As at the end of 2018, Ajala Akindele said 51.2% of individuals, equivalent to 3.9 billion people, were using the Internet, that is, about 30% of

global population is actively living in the cyberspace, in real terms (Olubanwo & Oguntuase), and it has been estimated by IT experts that there will be 70% Internet penetration by 2023. These users are potential consumers of creative arts.

The media are like market places of ideas where people with various views bring them forward, and the best of such ideas may eventually prevail. They have the ability to generate ideas about the creative industry, and go ahead to also create awareness about the potentials inherent in the industry, because, apart from growing talents that abound in the country, the industry positively develops the country socially and economically. Chukwuma Anyanwu argues that the media in all forms have direct effect on the economy and are also influenced by the economy. To support his views, he quotes the MacBride Commission thus:

Both in its structure and its content, communication intermeshes with, and is dependent on, the economy in many ways. A constant flow of information is vital for economic life. As well as being a great economic force, with incalculable potentials, it is a decisive factor in development. As an element of increasing importance in all national economies, communication represents a growing segment of a country's gross national product and has direct repercussions on productivity and employment (129).

When the media give hype to the news about the creative industry and artists, it catches the attention of people who eventually patronise them. The perfect example are artists being used for the endorsements of their products by big companies. This enriches the artists, and the companies have more patronage, and invariably the economy of the nation benefits from it too because the monies circulate in the economy of the nation as individual taxes, company taxes, and value added taxes are paid. This gives credence to the status conferral theory which makes significant people or events we see or read about regularly in the media. Ryan Smith explains that, "subtle mentions of a person or seeing their face in a commercial make us think that the person is "worth" the mentions and that they are actually worth the attention, just because we are seeing their face or hearing their voice constantly" (3).

### **Conclusion**

The creative industry is an integral component in the socio-development of Nigeria because of its potentials. Having realised that Nigeria can generate huge revenue from the creative industry, it won't be out of place for the government to include it in its top priorities in its Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), and for creative artists to be included in policy and decision making when it comes to the creative industry, as this will eventually boost the country's economy. This will go a long way because it will afford them the opportunity to address the various problems the industry faces, especially funding, access and opportunities.

Popular Nollywood movie director, Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen, amplified this view further in an interview with Seyi Sokoya, when he emphasized:

We have to be part of the policy-makers... we are more connected to the people than the politicians; we influence more than the political office holders. If our films can make people stay glued to their seats and make them laugh and cry without seeing us face-to-face, we can make things happen. We have the pedigree, brand and followership to make things happen positively (2).

Therefore, for awareness purposes, if the media give flight to the contributions of the creative industry, by reporting them regularly with more captivating stories and media framing, readers', viewers', and listeners' attention would be drawn to them.

### **Recommendations**

1. The government should play a more active role in the Creative Industry by providing grants for stakeholders to access a loan through Bank of Industry (BOI) and other financial institutions.

Such grants and loans will assist the industry players in expanding their businesses and come up with quality products.

2. Government must ensure there is an enabling environment, in terms of regulatory framework, laws, and protecting intellectual property for artists to express that creativity, and for the industry to thrive. There should be adequate infrastructural provisions for artists` use to curb cross-border filming and production.
3. There should regular media liaison with the creative industry stakeholders, including government agencies.
4. The different associations that make up the creative industry should unite so as to have a common voice to pursue their common goals.
5. Government should ensure that violators of creative works` copyrights and pirates of creative works are persecuted for it to serve as deterrent to other potential violators.
6. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) should ensure that broadcast stations in Nigeria adhere strictly to the code of ethics that stipulates the transmission of 30 percent foreign programmes and seventy percent of local programmes which are the products of the creative industry.
7. Government should give a tax break and tax holiday for the creative industry stakeholders so that they can have strong footing before they resume full tax payments.

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## DIALECTICAL STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CRISIS IN THREE NIGERIAN PLAYS

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### **Abstract**

There is a way the human psyche weighs and reacts to crisis of the others especially when it bothers on either or both collective and personal sensibilities. Consequently, there is always the existence of the anxiety of what the consequences of the action or the reactions of others will be on the actions of the self. The effect of such abstractive experiential anxieties and dilemmas of others within the functionality of ones' psyche is in itself a crisis. This is also the same process that produces generative consciousness that leads to counter discourses in what is called intertextuality. This idea of generative intertextuality can be seen in three Nigerian plays: *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* by Ola Rotimi, *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* by Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajugh, and *Our Wife Has Gone Mad* by Bode Ojoniyi. This paper therefore examines how these three plays generate each other. Theoretically, the paper combines reader response theory and dialectical text consciousness theory in its analysis and concludes that collective existential and personal experiential experiences are factors in generative and counter generative discourse in literary studies.

**Keywords:** Intertextuality, Crisis, Consciousness, Generative discourse

### **Introduction**

It appears intertextuality reveals the process through which a writer's mind(human consciousness) gets trapped in the 'crisis' of others and how such crisis involvement consequently develops chains of reaction and counter actions within the discourse of a creative enterprise like playwriting. The point being made here is that it seems there is a way the human consciousness gets entrapped in the externalization of other's experiences, fears and aspirations especially when such bothers on either both personal or collective sensibility(values) that is seen to have been misrepresented or distorted. It is sufficed to note that often, misrepresentation or distortion of issues of collective sensibilities could prompt an unprecedented psychological crisis or conflict (Wolfgang, 1988). Again, the externalization of other's fear or aspiration in form of narrativity, especially, playwriting, is part of the tools for existential manipulations, negotiation and conflict, which Ojoniyi (2013) claims, is capable of holding the human consciousness captive with regards to its interpretation and the appropriations of the meanings derived from such interpretations for actions and counter actions. Thus, creative texts (play inclusive) are sensitive materials in intellectual discourse for they are harmed with contestable ideological thrust(s) that could provoke psychological crisis.

Arguably, playwriting is a form of crisis within the playwright with regards to several playing of signs against signs in binary oppositions, and difference marking through characterization in the process of playwriting (74). Basically, the prompt for a playwright to result to his craft seems to be a form of crisis that needs a form of concretization and projection of an idea towards an intention. This crisis often manifests in the playwrights' consciousness as he tries to appropriate the story in/on his mind, experiencing some form of dilemmas in plot, characterization among othersto forge dramatic piece towards achieving a carefully meditated end(s). Such process is like a 'bricolage', a process described by Derrida (cited in Lodge, 1988) where the 'bricoleur', the myth maker invents his myth, his socio-cultural institutions and values through the medium of language and performance. Of course, this experience of the playwright in the process of playmaking cannot also be divorced from the position of Nietzsche (cited in Schacht, 1983) that, as individuals, we relate with world through our fears towards the realization of certain intentions.

Of course, playwrights always engage in their craft to condemn or appraise certain course having appropriate interpretations derived from their experiences to take actions. Plausibly, such actions include playwriting. Having said that, Abrams (Joseph, 2000, cited in Michael et al. 2011: 1) agrees that, “authors (playwrights inclusive) have definite intentions in creating structures of meaning and that those meanings have reference to objectively recognizable phenomena within an actual world shared by authors and their readers”. Meanwhile, Abrams’ position gives credence to Ojoniyi’s (2017) that any discourse is inevitably value laden overtly or covertly. Therefore, value as a universal phenomenon is arguably contestable and controversial for it varies from one culture to another culture, one territory to another and even, from one person to another. So, if we agree that discourse (here play texts) as a value laden material is contestable and controversial then their consumption and reception could definitely spur either positive or negative reaction. Here, it is important to note that authorial intention or the textual orientation can be contentious and provocative when the pervading ideology in the text or of the text clashes with the readers’ interest or view. After all, thought works by opposition (cixious cited in Lodge, 1988).

Arguably, reading, a psychological exercise often provokes either or both spontaneous and reflective action(s) (here the action could be positive or negative). And, when such provocation takes place, one can be sure of certain crisis to develop within the reader’s consciousness especially when there is a perceived violation of personal or collective essence or value. Consequently, the reader may resort to contestation in a form of write back as an imperative action to protect, defend or sustain the interest of a personal self, collective self or both (Holland, 1975, 2009, cited in Michael, 2011; Ojoniyi, 2014, 2015, 2017). Again, in the process of reading, the readers’ psyche is awakened or challenged to react either spontaneously or reflectively as the meaning of the text is formed in his/her “unconscious compensations for the ways in which that text challenges their sense of identity or ‘their theme’” (Holland, 1975, cited in Michael, 2011: 809). What is more, to a reader, the turn of appreciating and internalizing plays of similar theme largely depends on their special dramatic ornaments and ideological positions. Thus, to examine the relationship between plays may be to underscore their ideological stances over certain cosmic phenomena— themes as gender equality, fundamental human rights among others. Meanwhile, plays that share similar subject matter have been said to be a product of certain communal values but with similar or different degree of personal interest which often prompt deconstruction and reconstructions of values. This position reflects Kristeva’s position that ‘any text is an “intertext” – the site of an intersection of numberless other texts, and existing only through its relations to other texts’ (Orr, 2011). Again, this is what Kristeva popularized as intertextuality when she avers that there is

multiple ways in which any one literary text is made up of other texts, by means of its open or covert citations and allusions, its repetitions and transformations of the formal substantive features of earlier texts, or simply its unavoidable participation in the common stock of linguistic and literary conventions and procedures that are “always already” in place and constitute the discourses into which we are born (Kristeva cited in Orr, 2011: 641).

Here, it is important to note that perhaps ‘the discourses into which we are born’ is a material of all literary texts. In fact, the above statement seems to only serve to affirm what scholars like Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Philippe Sollers and Michel Foucault have all variously claimed. It seems Kristeva’s “intertextuality” by focusing on its core idea, the notion that there is nothing outside of language, and hence of the text’ only reechoes their thoughts (641). However, the focus of this paper is not on the source or material of all literary texts but on the manifestation and transformations of that, “open or covert citations... its repetitions and transformations of the formal substantive features of earlier texts...” (641). If we agree with the opinion of Philip John Moore Sturgess (2011: 1-2) that, “narrative expresses intent on investigating or testifying to narrativity”, (including playwriting) and, Ojoniyi (2017: 206) that “narrativity is a consciousness, that is, an existential intentionality that is aimed at the projection of an ideology, a perception or a world-view”, we can easily come to the conclusion that the need(s) for ‘repetitions and transformations’ is not just a means

to maintain the status quo but to challenge and shift the paradigm in ideological discourse towards a particular end.

It can be argued that the consciousness, the intentionality to contest, transform and project certain ideological stance on gender issues and power politics is what has prompted successive generative discourses in the selected three Nigerian plays for this study: *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* by Ola Rotimi, *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* by Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajugh, and *Our Wife Has Gone mad Again* by 'Bode Ojoniyi. Therefore, this paper examines the three plays using the reader response theory and dialectical text consciousness theory. The theories are combined for two reasons: first, to see the participation of the two latter authors in the making of the meaning of the first play through their reply (counter write backs) and, secondly, to attempt an investigation on the factors that account for the differences in their perspectives.

### **On Reader-Response and Dialectical Text Consciousness Theories**

As noted by M.H. Abram (2005), reader-response criticism came to prominence in 1960s. Although, then, it did not stand as a critical theory on its own, it only centres on the totality of the process of making meaning of literary texts. However, it challenges the standpoint of the classical ideology that literary texts are organic and whole in the process of making meaning. That is, meaning is exclusive within individual text. Instead, reader-response criticism shifts the focus to reader as an active element in making meaning of literary text. In fact, meaning is taken to be a product of the transaction between the reader and the text (Hughes, 2011; Abram, 2005). This standpoint is essential and valid for this paper when we consider the spur of generative discourses from the readers who have encountered the selected Nigerian plays above. The response of the readers cannot be undermined when one considers the veracity of their actions during and after their engagement in the process of making meaning. In his contribution to reader-response criticism, Wolfgang (1988) projects the participation of the reader in the course of reading as important as the text itself. Coming from the phenomenological perspective, he avers that one must "lays full stress on the idea that, in considering a literary work, one must take into account not only the actual text but also, and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to that text" (Wolfgang 1988: 212).

However, one may question that how can the reader's 'actions involved in responding to that text' be examined? It seems there is a way the veracity of reader's action can be felt through the diverse outlets or forms in which his/her response(s) manifests. Of course, yes; several records of public violence, mass protest, demonstrations, petitions, trials and write-backs are directly linked with the reading of notable texts and theatrical performances like Ngugi's *I Will Marry When I Want* among others plays across African states. In this paper, the three texts under examination would be claimed to relate not only on thematic affinity but as successive responses, which can be seen as write-back. The first published play among them, *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* by Ola Rotimi, would be taken as the initiator of the discourse that generates response in the second play, *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* by Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajugh. And, the third play, *Our Wife Has Gone Mad* by 'Bode Ojoniyi, would be seen in this paper as a response to both the first and the second play. Perhaps, the artistic dexterity and the creative ingenuity employed in the play, *Our Wife Has Gone Mad*, to spice the ideological base on which the thematic preoccupation was built won 'Bode Ojoniyi the 2017 Olu Obafemi Drama Prize. Meanwhile, this could also be seen as a response from a set of readers, the award organizers.

Dialectical text consciousness theory is developed by 'Bode Ojoniyi in his doctoral thesis to understudy the structure and process of human consciousness in dealing with existential texts in their antithetical terms in provoking actions, counter-actions or refrain from taking actions. The theory is built on Jean Paul Satre's existential theory of consciousness and Derrida's deconstruction theory. According to Ojoniyi (2013, 2016), human consciousness is capable of both reflective and intuitive apprehensions of fear and hope in deconstructionist terms of binary opposition, difference marking, privileging and elimination of actions for actions. This existential process is what he identifies as a form of crisis of consciousness as individuals struggle with their 'nothingness'. However, the apprehension is facilitated by the natural or physical world, hereditary traits and circumstantial reality. Equally, these elements are part of human's instrument for interpretation and narration of texts (texts here means cosmic phenomenal). And, hope or fear (as a negative hope) leading to arbitrary actions,

opposition, desperation, and elimination of others are claimed to be the possible results of human interpretations of his situation for existential survival. In this paper, the consciousness of the characters in the plays will be examined as they relate with one another and the playwrights' possible agitations will be examined.

### **Existential Psychological Crisis in the Selected Plays**

Arguably the three plays centre on gender politics and power relation in Nigeria. In fact, the titles of the plays can be held as the testimony to the seriousness of the ongoing discourses on gender politics and power relation in Nigeria literary space. However, the publication of *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* by Ola Rotimi is the main text, for this paper, that spurs critical gender discourses provoking generative and counter generative discourses that gives birth to these two other plays. Of course, in a sense, writers are seen as the conscience of the society with regards to the trappings and contents of their outputs that challenge the society to critical reflections and development. In essence, they are social engineers whose building tools include their diverse creative outputs as they construct and deconstruct social artifacts towards different ends.

As a playwright, Ola Rotimi is conscious and apprehensive of gender politics and power relation within and outside of his environment. He therefore initiates a discourse around the issues. He enters into the play of signs and signification in a form of binary opposition, privileging, difference marking and elimination through his creativity. In *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*, he creates a world to denounce hegemonic masculinity as a variant of unreflective patriarchy- through a form of irrational display of power and inordinate ambition exhibited by Lejoka-Brown. In fact, the title of the play is a reflection of his renunciation of the ruthlessness and despotic personality or 'self' that will not submit to decorum to achieve personal goals within a collective inquisition. In the pursuit of political ambition, Lejoka-Brown violates the sanctity of marriage as an institution between man and woman for procreation, sexual satisfaction and mutual development. He marries Sikira not for love or any respect for mutual fulfilment or development but as a means to achieve personal political goals. His desperation and blatant disregard for marriage as a social institution shows in his discussion with his friend, Okonkwo;

Lejoka-Brown: I married that problem only four months ago.

Okonkwo: (*Accusingly*). Without telling Liza either!

Lejoka-Brown: Her marriage is for emergency, in order that... (*Defensively*). What type of question are you asking anyhow? 'Why didn't I tell Liza? Why didn't I tell' – what's the matter? Does a man have to broadcast to one wife every time he marries a new one? (*Lowering his voice.*) That woman's case is only for necessity, anyway – temporary measure. We need women's votes, man, if we must win the next elections (Rotimi, 1999: 10).

For Lejoka-Brown, 'self' must be satisfied at the detriment of 'other'. He must be elected the president and Sikira must be eased out of his home for his dream wife, Elizabeth, a Western trained nurse who he met and married as a soldier when he was on peace keeping mission at Congo. In his consciousness, there is a serious existential crisis to survive. He has apprehended politics as an easy means for him to living a luxurious live and, all resources must be expended to achieve this lofty dream. Eventually, marrying Sikira, the daughter of the president of the market women association is a potent means to winning women's vote. Hence, Sikira becomes a resource, an object at his reach as a man, an hegemony in patriarchal society, with the aid of the Islamic tenets that privileges marrying at least four wives to fulfill the injunctions of Allah.

At that moment, his consciousness, in a kind of reflective intuition in the mode of a play of signs and signification, different marking, privileging and elimination to take action, sees Sikira as a sign of necessary evil that must be endured to getting women's vote after which she would be eliminated – divorced. Thus, in place of Sikira as a wife, he has privileged Elizabeth as a sign of good, worthy and competent to fit for/as his first lady. He, as a self, is so inconsiderate and cunning in his dealings with 'others'. In Sartre's analysis of the manifestation of being, there is a way Being for-

itself, (the conscious being or human) relates with Being for-others (Ojoniyi, 2013). This relationship can be parasitic in nature in similitude of a situation where 'self' becomes the parasite that feeds on the host, the 'other'. In this sense, Lejoka-Brown is the prima self, the Being for-itself, who is unaccountable to any human, not even a woman, his wife, as he assumes the hegemony over his property, his wives for 'self' satisfaction.

Again, the inherent fear that often results from human appropriation of interpretation of cosmic phenomenal or text like the distressing political circumstances that surround the realization of his dream prompts him to be un-reflective and uncouth in his approach. The fear would not let him respect the tenets of democracy and civility. He would not see the wrong in imposing his military idiosyncrasy on his party members in a democratic setting:

Mallam Gaskiya: And, aside from the fact that the present Leader of our party is so old-fashioned and autocratic about the risky implementation of his whimsical strategy, this whole mumbo-jumbo about military exercise in a political set-up is a sham!

Lejoka Brown: How do you know Surprise and Attack won't work in politics? What do you people know about politics- I mean hard-bonepolitics?..

Okonkwo: Major!

Lejoka Brown: What do I do wrong? (Rotimi, 1991)

For Lejoka-Brown, his military idiosyncrasy is the only best way to displace the political opponent having contemplated his chances in desperation for becoming the president. Just as Nietzsche (cited in Schacht, 1983; Ojoniyi, 2013, 2015) puts it, man often relates to the external world with their inherent fear, Lejoka-Brown relates with others through his fears: the fear of survival; to live in luxury of political power. His appetite for excessive materialism is what he projects into politics and political portfolio. He abandons the cocoa farming for politics as a platform where huge free 'national cake' will be tapped without any corresponding responsibility or work:

Lejoka-Brown: Are you there...? Politics is the thing now in Nigeria, mate. You want to be famous? Politics. You want to chop life? No, no-you want to chop a big slice of the National cake? – Na politics. So I said to my party boys – when was it? Last week, or so. I said to them... I said: Cakes are too soft, Gentlemen. Just you wait! Once we get elected to the top, wallahi\*, we shall stuff ourselves with huge mouthfuls of the National chin-chin something you'll eat and ear, brothers, and you know you've eaten something (Rotimi, 1991: 4)

Eventually, Lejoka loses his political goal of becoming the president. He is relegated and replaced by his party. To his dismay, his wife, Sikira becomes the presidential candidate of the party. The nemesis of his inherent flaws begins when he is visited unannounced by Elizabeth, his white wife. The visitation brings about unprecedented challenges that eventually crumble his illusionary political goal and marital hegemony. Here, apparently, the author seems to be incising a need for intellectual and cultural enlightenment for women who are trapped in unnecessary religious or cultural burden with the arrival of Elizabeth and her interaction with the two dominated women. Ola Rotimi, hence, makes the presence of Elizabeth in the Lejoka-Brown's household provokes a sudden change in the moral and value standard of the two wives, Sikira and Mama Rashida. Consequently, their apprehension of gender order and family relation gets transformed; Sikira will not indulge Lejoka-Brown's excesses again as she returns to her parents' house after a disagreement. Also, in honor of Elizabeth's advice, Mama Rashida finds solace and happiness in her poultry business as it grows.

To achieve a resolution, Ola Rotimi rejects and condemns hegemonic masculinity and inappropriate power relation by bringing the irrational 'self', like Lejoka-Brown to a halt; he makes him to lose his political goal to Sikira, an insignificant 'other'. He deconstructs the circumstantial reality of the hegemonic masculinity that often leads to polygamy by bringing Lejoka-Brown to lose the two wives by bringing them to a point of lucid reflection on their 'selves' against the hegemonic

'other' (Lejoka-Brown) in order to gain their freedom from the constructed social, religious and cultural limitations.

Of course, the reception of Ola Rotimi's position is bound to spur certain reaction. And, among many reflective responses or reaction to *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* by Ola Rotimi, is Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajugh's *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*. Through this play, Utoh-Ezeajugh challenges the perceived subjectivity of truth and reality in Ola Rotimi's work. She engages in "open or covert citations... its repetitions and transformations of the formal substantive features of earlier texts..." (641) Through her play, she creates a world that is a complete departure from the world in Rotimi's play, like abricoluer in myth making. In the play, she creates a world that is totally absurd and matriarchal in nature by hyping women's ruthlessness in both political and domestic spheres. As it appears, her motive seems to be a step towards vengeance on hegemonic masculinity. To achieve this feat in her consciousness, Utoh-Ezeajugh needs to turn around the gender order against men, perhaps, like the way she perceives how patriarchy subjugates women's rights and freedom. Hence, men become object of evil, threat and intimidation that need to be marked for elimination from the position of authority while women are privileged to wield both political and social power. Men are totally relegated and reduced to a necessary nuisance in the society and home. In fact, any attempt from men to challenge their wives authorities is met with serious punishment. The men's ordeal is reflected in the conversations of the women below:

- Ene: (*Offhandedly.*) Serves you right, Funmi. How many times have I complained about this Inyang to you? What has been your response? You've always insisted I should give him a second chance. You have now seen with your eye the ordeal I have to put up with...
- Funmi: Ene, my sister, we all have different grades of imbeciles in our homes but what shall we do? Men are necessary evils or so they say.
- Ene: Necessary or not, evil is evil and I, Ene, will not put up with it any longer. What have I not done for this useless Inyang? I took him to my village and gave him Money to pay my dowry... Now what do I get in return? Ingratitude! .... He cannot even impregnate me... (Utoh-Ezeajugh, 2001: 23)

It is important to note here that Ene, as a character, has been privileged, like the primitive self, to exercise dominance on her husband as Lejoka-Brown does. She has perhaps become an instrument of vengeance on the usual parochial stance of patriarchy that puts blames of barrenness on women arbitrarily. Here, Inyang becomes the victim of such vengeance of patriarchal insensitive that blames women arbitrarily on domestic issues. His wife, madam Ene is barren after many years of marriage and no other person is to be blamed than him. This is the same unreflective action of hegemonic men who easily come to conclusion that it is their wives' incapacitation that cause barrenness without any scientific prove. The women are made to be very ruthless with the men in the play. They are fashioned to fight men and revel on slicing off their penises, in a kind of radical feminist pleasure. The company of these women can be likened to a kind of 'self' whose temperament against 'other' is always vicious and laced with anger and bitterness especially when power is at stake;

- Irene: Talking about dead men, did you hear about the man who died from bleeding after his wife took a blade and neatly sliced off his "member".
- Ene: It is possible the "member" was not even working. What is the use of a member that does not function? She probably did him a favour. I would not call such an action murder. I would call it "mercy killing". She deserves some gratitude from the dead man's ghost.
- Mairo: His ghost will be too impotent to come out... (Utoh-Ezeajugh, 2001: 45)

Arguably, Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajugh portrays women in the play as a species that can be more or equally rash in wielding political and marital power when compared to men. Examining the resolution of the play from a critical point of view, it can be said that Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajugh

leaves no hope for the restoration of normalcy as the women are not apprehended and punished for their crimes. This is often the position of the social realist writers. Often, they tend to show or preempt the state of societal decadence without a solution (34). Perhaps, their inability to suggest possible solution(s) is an indication of their limitation or the condition of their consciousness. Again, perhaps, not projecting solution comes from a consciousness with a certain intention. However, as it seems, the position of Utoh-Ezeajugh perhaps is to send counter hegemonic response to patriarchal apologists for the play is a form of reaction or protest against social, cultural and religious circumstances suffered by Sikira and Mama Rashida in the hand of Lejoka-Brown in *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* by Ola Rotimi.

Subsequently, 'Bode Ojoniyi's *Our Wife Has Gone Mad* problematizes the gender politics and power relation by challenging the hypocrisy and absurdity that often attend pseudo hegemonic masculinity that would not accept its limitation and redeem its image. In a sense, he rejects *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* by Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajugh as a write-back for the perceived lacuna of not creating polyandry as a response to the polygamy in Ola Rotimi's play. Again, arguably he reconstructs the over blown issues of gender politics, power relation and counter demonization and stereotyping of women in it. In the author's note of the play, he writes:

'... in the course of my examining the intertextual relationship, the actual basis for *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* as a write back to *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*, I noticed a fundamental lacuna in their intertextual relationship. *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* is fundamentally built on the issue of polygamy which is not what is addressed in *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*. I was therefore, interested in a write back to create polyandry....'

If the major lacuna he perceives is polyandry and, that motivates his counter narrativity then, it is important to ask that to what extent does his write back makes use of 'open or covert citations' of the two previously published plays? Again, one could inquire into Ojoniyi's consciousness, through the play, the essence of creating polyandry as a response to polygamy as an essential counter write back to a seeming patriarchal society. As it turned out in the play, in a way, to him, the politics and circumstances that often prompt polygamy, a contraption of patriarchal system, must be challenged by juxtaposing such circumstances with the possible circumstances that motivate polyandry even in a gender order that seems to privilege masculinity. And, when this is done, perhaps we can have a lucid reason to accepting or condemning polyandry as a product of circumstantial reality of a seeming patriarchal society.

With *Our Wife Has Gone Mad*, Ojoniyi reveals an existential factor that could precipitates polyandry in a gender balance society. In the play, Madam Daniella succeeds as she simultaneously marry three men, having three children, each for them, without the knowledge of any of the men to this act, her secrecy. In her consciousness, to marry the three men is a vengeful pleasure. Arguably, her deed can be taken as her interpretation of men and marriage as cosmic texts which can be manipulated to achieve one's pleasure. She is a complete existential character in pursuit of her own pleasure even at the expense of social or societal values of marriage and integrity. When the Matron claims she is as strange as her action, she argues that the Matron position is a result of societal conditioning of not seeing women as humans with feelings like men since it could only be strange when a woman marries two or more men but, normal when a man does so:

Matron: You still sound so strange to me...

Daniela: Yes, I will give that to you ma. I must really sound strange against your expectation, against your culture, against your tradition and against your religion... But I know that it is not just about sounding strange; it about being strange to be human!

From Daniella's claim, it is evident that all social constructs and limitations could be negotiated with the power of wealth, materialism, and ultimately the power of the human will. Arguably, as it seems, economic power is the super structure under which other socio structures



operate. This position gives credence to how her marriage to each of the men is carefully managed due to her financial capability. In fact, she conveniently negotiates her freedom in her first marriage to Alhaji through her wealth. Alhaji could accept her excuses for several assumed business trips because she spoils him with money and material things. Of course, her decision to marry a second husband is as a result of her rejection of the patriarchal hegemony under which Alhaji hides to marry a second wife even when their marriage was barely seven months. She feels betrayed and vows to retaliate against the society that permits such an act of betrayal of love. Of course, she vows to marry three men to match Alhaji's three wives. And, she makes good her vows.

Later, she returns to school to study more as she earns a PhD in petroleum engineering and decides to relocate to the East in the name of working with an oil company. There, she marries a second husband without divorcing Alhaji. She goes ahead to marry a Chinese man when she travels out of the country for further trainings and conferences. She successfully manages her three marriages until she has an accident and gets hospitalized. This eventuality brings the three men to the hospital to see her. Considering the circumstances that lead her to polyandry, a seeming taboo in her society, it is obvious that a common factor permeates the relationship of Madam Daniella with the three men -the common factor of survival through the money she pumps for them. The three men did not have any problem with her absence that could last for two to three years because she always redeems herself with money and materials. By so doing, she remains so dear to their heart.

The resolution of the play shows how the three men are caught in their pseudo hegemony, caressing a woman they actually have no control over with dignity and pride. Unlike Lejoka-Brown over his wives in *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again*, they evidently do not have any control over Daniella. They equally have no ambition or wish to control her as long as she settles them with money. The men would not admit their gullibility. In fact, courtesy of their financial incapability, they would see Madam Daniella as an insane woman for admitting her 'crime' of marrying them simultaneously. In a sense, the two plays *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again* and *Our Wife has Gone Mad* succeed in revealing the circumstances that can provoke women to polyandry and polygamy without gender restriction from a patriarchal societal order. In essence, the will to survive can rupture any hegemonic power when such rupture guarantees survival.

## Conclusion

No doubt, gender issues within the discourse of power relation and economic survival are very sensitive existential and psychological issues that any discourse around them could spur discourses and counter discourses. In fact, the politics of ideas on them are materials that often prompt writers, as readers themselves, to create and counter create texts for readers. And, as long as there are texts and readers, there will be responses to texts by readers. In essence, there will always be a write back because in the process of both the production and consumption of texts and counters texts by readers lies the crises of consciousness, a continuous clash of interests between the readers and the authors. It is sufficed to say that this crisis will keep generating discourses and counter discourses which is known as intertextuality in literary criticism. Thus, readers' response of rejecting, accepting, affirming, denying and modifying texts and textual relationship will continue to manifest covertly or overtly in the way we write, receive and respond to issues of passionate interest. Definitely, gender issue will continue to be one of such issues that would always elicit discourses and write-back in seeming contested space where values and culture are ever changing.

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## SCENOGRAPHY AND ITS SILENT VOICE IN THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to systematically explore the relationship between scene design and communication. Scene design also called Scenography deals with the total visual presentation of a dramatic action. It entails the conceptualization and realization of the dwelling place of the dramatic personnel. To realize this dwelling place, scene designers are needed in the theatre. Scenic designers are professionals in theatre who design sets for the stage that communicate aspects of a performance, such as time of day, location, and era of action. Sets are supposed to lay a foundation to performances as they communicate information silently to audience through visual design. Despite scene design communicating silently to the audience members about a production even before the aural elements of production communicates its message; scene design is still treated with levity in most theatrical productions. Also, its semiotic relationship to theatrical production is scarcely researched upon. Therefore, this paper provides an analysis of scene design in relation to communication as it relates to the success of theatre performance. This paper adopts the literary methodology. It concludes that scenography is a root to a successful production in the theatre. It recommends that every production in the theatre should have a designer who is knowledgeable not just about the dramatic action to be performed but also innovative enough to communicate through design.

**Key Words:** Scenography, communication, theatre, performance, voice.

### **Introduction**

In the theatre, meaning is often generated by a designer through his designs. And the designs must aesthetically blend with the philosophy of the performance to export meaning and communicate a message to the audience. Theatre design encompasses all that goes into making a production successful on stage. And these include scenery, sound, properties, lighting, costume and make-up. Designs have symbolic meanings hidden deep in the design. That meaning can be decoded by a person sharp enough to decipher the different sign-systems and codes at work in society and the actual messages produced thereby. The symbols revealed by a designer in a production have to blend with the works of other members of the co-operation, since theatre is a cooperative art. The blended co-operation is to establish the setting, create mood and set tone for a production. Because when the audience gathers regularly to experience a performance, they generally wait not only to be entertained but also to be communicated to. And this communication is often time silently passed by a scenographer before the production even begins. According to Holdar Magdalena, scenography includes all aspects that contribute in shaping the spectator's knowledge and perception of the space that is relevant to plot, play and performance (8).

### **The Concept of Scenography**

According to Oni (2004), technical theatre practice focuses on creativity with imagination as its centre piece (3). Therefore, scenography, also called, scene design, is an aspect of technical theatre. It involves artistry, creativity imagination, selectivity, order, discrimination of ideas, and the transportation of these ideas from page to the world of the designer's imagination. That is why Charles Swift (1969) sees scenography as a way of "conceptualizing and realizing the environment of

dramatic personnel" (18). To design the dwelling place of a dramatic action, the designer requires craftsmanship to translate design ideas from page to stage. According to Enendu (2014), "both simple and complex designs require craftsmanship, engineering and technological support..." (22). It takes good skill and the technical know-how to be able to technically solve some dramaturgical problems that should be unraveled convincingly in view of the audience using stage design, stagecraft and technology carefully planned and executed to communicate.

Scenography is act and art of creating the dramatic world of a play through a systematic planning. In designing generally, the designer leaves a state of equilibrium to a kinetic state reflecting a mental picture that will be aesthetically fit for the audience. In the process of giving desired design aesthetics to a performance in the theatre, planning and designing is the first step to be taken into consideration. Orisaremi (2000) asserts that, "scenography is the art of conceptualizing a visual interpretation of a theatre production" (94). Similarly, Kenneth Eni (2013) says,

scenography is the art of creating out of the imagination of a suitable environment and realizing it on stage to house a dramatic character and action towards an effective visual effect in a theatrical production (354).

From the definitions of scenography above, scenography is considered as an art. Also, the art of scenography begins with conceptualization of an idea to bring out needed aesthetics in the theatre. And no designer can succeed if his imaginative ability is low. Eni explained further by saying that the concept of scenography is "... the art and craft of designing and constructing the totality of the visual elements that culminate in the total visual effect of a production" (354). It can be deduced therefore that no performance of any kind comes on stage without due process of planning and designing. The artistic director takes time to conceptualize his/her approach and style of production, even so the actor, to some extent, can be termed as a designer. Thus, no one comes on set as natural as real life experience; everything seen on stage is carefully planned.

### **Relationship between Communication and Scenography in the Theatre**

Scenic designers are professionals in theatre who design sets for the stage that communicate aspects of a performance, such as time of day, location, and era of action. Sets are supposed to lay a foundation to performances as they communicate information silently to audience through visual design. With what the audience see when they walk into the theatre auditorium, their minds are set, awaiting an action in line with the visual reality portrayed by the scenographer. People do not just come to the theatre to see an action but also to be communicated to, therefore, theatre considered a dual force in the human society. a force which makes men sad or merry while still communicating an important message to them.

Communication in the theatre, according to Chukwuma Okoye (2000) is "an activity that involves the generation and exchange of message between performers and audience in an environment that is more or less governed by convention" (45). This statement makes it clear that the environment of communication is a force that determines the transmission of inputs or messages generated by the playwright. When messages are accurately sent across to the audience in an environment that enhances the actor of a dramatic character, the message is made clearer to the audience. As a result, the environment in which the communication occurs must be made conducive for performers and the conduciveness of that environment for dramatic action is done by the scene designer. Thus, the designer pays detailed attention to every detail of the environment before, during and after a production in the theatre. Before the production, as Pamela Howard (2002) has observed, there is the "scene designer visually liberates the text and the story behind it, by creating a world in which the eyes see what the ears do not hear" (4). He does the design that will enable the eyes of the audience flow freely before action and set the mood for the expected action in line with the script.

The scenographer in his scenographic art sets free a performance that is tied down by a playwright in a textual form and makes it visible. Ahmed Yerima (2005) notes in his work, *Modern Nigerian Theatre* that, "theatre is the building and drama is doing" (21). This means that the playtext needs to be liberated into space for it to come into action. Guy Claude Francis (1999) states that, "theatre is action" (8). However, action can only become a performance when it is made visible to the

audience. Indeed, action can only take place in time and space. Therefore, the scenographer and other designers like the lighting designer make sure that the actions are in line with the director's approach blending with the text. The communication between actors and audience depends on sound and sight. Thus, Kenneth Kom (2001) submits in percentage that the information passed around comes as seventy-five percentage appearance, fifteen percentage words and ten percentage action (26).

From the above analysis, appearance is of essence. Thus, when an audience walks into a theatre building, the first thing they see is the scenery, the painting, the arrangement of the stage and set props, the metaphor, the dominant colour and other little details. From what they first see, they try to imagine what the production is all about and in the process gain some understanding before the act appears on stage. During the production, the actor's complete body, especially his eyes and mouth are means of communication. They should be made clearly visible if a character is to be projected. Perhaps the most fascinating and rewarding use of design is the possibility of influencing the mental state of the audience by engaging their sight. To be able to engage the mental state of the audience, a specialist in scenography is needed. Tim Streader and John Williams (1985) state that,

a scenographer has to be an artist who can understand how to work with and incorporate the idea of the director, understand text as written, be sensitive to the need of the performer exposed to an audience, and create imaginative and appropriate space for the production (18).

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that a scenographer is not just a technician but an artistic designer. He/she must follow all the designing process of actualizing a design concept. He/she should be able to incorporate his idea with other ideas to achieve a definite goal. The designer must be a master of visual language and should be able to communicate with the audience using visual elements. Theatre is a communication process between performer(s) and audience. This means that for there to be any theatre experience, there must be an effective communication both auditory and visual.

Adegbite (2012) says scenography has many functions in the theatre but its main function is for clarity of purpose and mission in a performance (40). Chukwuma Okoye (2000) also sees scenography as a tool for communication, stating that communication utilizes two kinds of sign, namely: the auditory and the visual. The words and other sounds constitute the auditory sign; the visual is constituted by the performer's kinetic facial movement of the body and the elements of the environment (49). According to Okoye, visuality in the theatre experience plays an important role, a very vital role in the communication between the performers and audience. The environment and the appearance of the actor aid the accurate understanding of what the actor is saying. This theatrical environment is made up of the set, properties, light, scenery and costume, and so on. He also sees scenography as a necessary element in theatre production, stating that acting cannot exist without some sort of scenographic display. He further states that even if the performer is in the nude, so long as the nudity is presented within the context of a theatrical performance the actor's physique is his makeup (costume) (2000: 46). It can be deduced that things assume more intense communicative significance once they are part of a theatrical event, even if such things in real life attract little or no significant attention. This significant regime of the theatre is a factor that is necessarily recognized by the audience. The audience believes that everything on stage possesses a semiotic dimension, that is, it functions as a sign. According to Okoye (2000),

theatre arts use signs drawn from all the manifestations of nature and human activities. But once used in the theatre, each of the signs acquires a significative value which is much more pronounced than in its original use... (47).

Thus, scene design silently communicates the vision of the playwright and since design elements are in contact with a playwright's work (play text), it will provide harmony or contrast; more so as design and technical concepts do reflect the vision of the playwright, Eni sees scenography as a means of projecting the playwright's and the director's artistic expression. In order to do this

effectively, Eni adds that, "... to achieve a unified and successful production is usually the result of the mutual respect and open mindedness of both designers and director" (2013: 161).

### **The Functions of Scenography**

Scenography serves many functions in a theatrical production. Parker, Wolf and Block (2003) assert that scenography helps the audience to understand what type of play they about to see (45). The colour of paint on the rear walls will make the audience know whether the play they are about the see is either tragic, comic or melo-dramatic. For example, in Nigeria, white represents royalty and peace, red, brown and ox-blood represent danger, grey represents wisdom and cream represent light events. Therefore, when I walk into a theatre auditorium to see a play, the first thing I look at is the set. I check out the dominant colour on the set, the motifs and the designer's metaphor on the set. If the dominant colour of paint on the set is brown, red or horse blood, I believe the play is a tragedy, therefore, my mood is set expecting to enjoy a tragic performance but if the set is designed with cream colour of paint, I am expecting to watch a comic performance. Thus, the set has silently communicated to me the kind of performance I am expecting even before the play commences. Also, drawings, motifs, signs and ornaments hung on the set tell a story about the play just like the colour of the paint even before the play starts. For example, an epic play like *Wedlock of the gods* by Zulu Sofola, as a designer, I draw motifs on the set like guns, paddle and canoes the message it will send to the audience is abnormal. Guns are modern, and there is nothing in line with gun in the play therefore a wrong message is sent already to the audience. Canoes and paddles are used by the riverine people, but the setting is not related to the riverine people therefore, that motif also sends a wrong message.

According to Parker, Wolf and Block, audience views and understands the mood of the play through the establishment of visual elements of the surroundings and expression of the dominant atmosphere. In this first impression on the audience, they observe that scenography tries to create an expression of the mood, and its relationship to the action and character (47). *Britannic.com*, in an article, entitled, "Objectives and Aesthetic Aspect of Scene Design," observes that as part of the multifarious functions of scenography, it helps distinguish realistic from nonrealistic theatre. It assists the audience to understand what they are watching based on reality or fantasy, and establishes the locale and period in which the play takes place. It helps determine if the play is set in the past or present, and where it takes place. It is also observed from the same source that scenography design reinforces the production's theme or concept, thereby unifying the concept and approach to the production. The entire designing unit in production headed by the scenographer unifies their design concepts in order to reinforce the central theme of production. It also provides a central image that helps tie together all elements of the production.

Finally, scenography also helps solve practical design problems by providing entrances and exits. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the art of scenography enables the designer to establish the relationship of scenery to the action and the actors, the dominant mood, the play's theme and the story in general thus communicating silently even before actors communicate aurally.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Scenography is a root to a successful production in the theatre. It is a creative attempt to conceptualize a suitable environment to house a dramatic action to aid effective communication. This environment is the totality of all pieces of scenery, light and costume, including the presence of the actor; these scenographic elements are drawn from the human being and his environment. The element of this environment enriches the vision of the playwright and artistic director's interpretation to give the audience a balanced holistic view of the production. In conclusion, the place of scenography in any theatrical expression cannot be overemphasized as it combines and unifies the intricate parts that constitute the arts of the theatre. It is basically the visual interpretation of the playwright's intention embedded in the script (play) for the consumption and meaning derivation for the audience during production.

Since scenography communicates silently in the theatre using symbols and signs drawn from man and his environment, this research recommends that there is a need for scenographers to know and understand symbols of different cultures in his society to as be able to represent meaning properly because they (scenographers) design plays portraying different cultures. Also, it recommends that

every production in the theatre should have a designer who is knowledgeable not just about the dramatic action to be performed but also innovative enough to communicate through design.

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**TECHNI-CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE METAPHYSICS OF PERFORMANCE:  
IYORWUESE HAGHER'S *MULKIN MATASA* IN FOCUS**

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**Abstract**

Science and technology play an indelible role in augmenting the presencing continuum or the act of being and or becoming in theatrical performances. While the actor assimilates the written or oral text of a play, his being (character) relies on a number of scientific and technological innovations to give this act the appropriate framing. This paper examines the complimentary role of science and technology in what Tassi Aldo referred to as, "metaphysics-in-action". The paper uses qualitative research methodology through which Hagher's *Mulkin Matasa*, produced by the Department of Theatre Arts, Benue State University, Makurdi, is used as analytical frame of reference. Intriguingly, the frontiers of metaphysics of performance or "metaphysics-in-action" extends beyond the use of the actor's body as liminal or threshold through which the new being emerges on stage, to also include the deployment of technical facilities and or elements like lighting, costume and makeup, sound and scenery to actualise the environment of the new being. The paper concludes that, understanding the place and proper articulation of the technical component in the process of becoming is essential to quality performance. The paper encourages quality training and team work between directors, actors, and designers to actualise this process without problematics.

**Keywords:** Techni-critical analysis, Metaphysics, Performance, *Mulkin Matasa*

**Introduction**

Tassi Aldo in the paper, "The Metaphysics of Performance: The "Theatre of The World", presented a strong argument and an interesting reading and understanding of performance today. While the paper examined the act of being or becoming in performance, and therefore, purely an artistic reading of performance, this paper takes on the technical component of performances bearing in mind its role in enabling the actor "become rather than pretend to be what he is not" in performances. Substantive bodies of theories and literature in acting have elucidated the principles and practice of acting in the global theatre space. An interesting constituent of these theories is the manner in which some emerge apparently condescending with others simply augmenting or strengthening existing theories. Antonin Artaud re-echo's this thesis and antithesis in theorisation and practicalisation when he writes that:

Theatre has redefined itself in the last hundred years. It has resolutely rejected all the conventions that have sought to control its performance in advance, in effect bypassing the book metaphor. Theatre has once again taken on metaphysical weight. It speaks of itself as "metaphysics-in-action" declaring its goal to be one of reconciling us philosophically with Becoming (Tassi 2)

Apparently, this understanding clarifies the problematic arising from the use of acting terms namely, replication, imitation, seeming, presencing and becoming and of actors and beings (character) in performance instances. This is further explained contextually given the variety of acting styles that are in existences over the years-conventional and avant-garde, the deployment of sympathy and of empathy. Notwithstanding, both conventions strengthens and recognises the presence of the actual character crafted by the playwright or created through extemporisation on stage rather than actors pretending, replicating, imitating or simplistically acting out these roles for audience viewership. The point being canvassed here is that, what the audience sees on stage during performances are beings



examining the nature of beings and the implications of their nature and activities to the society in which these beings find themselves. This means some level of training is required for these quittances to be justifiable. This includes developing the voice and body of actors, engaging them in observatory exercises, research, and rigorous rehearsals. While the author applauds the effort of Tassi Aldo, he finds a lacuna that needs to be explored. Performance discourses are always incomplete without examining the technical aspect which gives acting the necessary framing and or environment. Therefore, while Tassi Aldo looked the artistic component of performance, this paper looks at the technical complementarity of lighting, costume, scenery and sound with illustrations drawn from the production of Iyorwuese Hagher's *Mulkin Matasa*.

### **Perspectivising the Metaphysics of Performance**

In order to understand the metaphysics of performance, our attention must be drawn to the meaning of metaphysics as a philosophical concept which is first appropriated as a branch of philosophy. Armstrong A. H. conceptualises philosophy as, "the search after truth about the nature of the universe and of man, a search which the ancient philosophers (with certain exceptions) believed could result in the attainment of sure knowledge of the truth sought" (1). This agrees with Socrates conception of philosophy as "the act of asking questions and questioning answers until you come at answers that are unquestionable and questions that are unanswerable" (Anyam & Inja 3). Accordingly, a philosopher is "a professional thinker, equipped with the insight and rational stamina to delve more than superficially into the difficult and complex problems of life and living..." (Anyam & Inja 3). The philosopher's inquiry which is predominantly the knowledge of the universe is branched off into Metaphysics, Epistemology, Ethics and Aesthetics. This paper finds metaphysics relevant in its enquiry into performance practice today.

In an attempt to classify Aristotle's treaties namely, 'Physics', the editor of his works, Andronicus of Rhodes, encountered some works with non-physika lining and or inclination, this led him to label them as 'meta physika'. The philosophical concept, metaphysics is therefore, the combination of two Greek words, 'meta', meaning 'after' and 'physika', meaning 'physics'(or nature). When these words are joined together, it becomes 'after physics'. Thus far, metaphysics has enjoyed varied understanding namely, 'after physics', which refers to Aristotle's treaties that came after those dealing with 'physics' to 'beyond physics' which refers to that which is beyond the physical world (Inja 16). However, Omoregbe Joseph contested this later understanding and finds it to be an inaccurate parameter for conceiving the term. According to him, "metaphysics is not just preoccupied with issues beyond the physical world but rather the whole of reality; that is, nature and all that reality (being) entails" (In Inja 16). It is based on this understanding that metaphysics is defined as, "the science or philosophy of investigating into being qua being and all that which belong to being as beings" (Inja 17). Apparently, this search requisition is expected of the artist and the theatre which present themselves as path ways for the emergence of beings and all that which belong to being as beings on stage. It further affirms the role of the artist as the practical watch dog of the society. In furtherance to this, metaphysics is concerned with "the First Principles and seeks to explain the nature of being or reality (ontology) and of the origin and structure of the world (cosmology) (Inja 17).

Ontology, which is the study of beings and existence, is considered an aspect of metaphysics. Other aspects include, Theology, the study of God, Universal Science, the study of the First Principles, namely, "the Law of non-contradiction and the status it holds in non-para-consistent logic" (Inja 18). Also included are, cosmology which focuses on and or examines the nature of the universe, and Teleology, which examines the end or purpose of the universe (Inja 18). These aspects of metaphysics appeal to various performative routines of man as he engages life on daily basis. Though this act in itself may not be regarded as theatre, with exception for cultural performances, they are thematised by metaphysics within conventional performance culture. Tassi referred to this as "the 'live' performance of reality", that is, "imitated in the 'live' performance of theatre" (3). Within performance context, Tassi maintained that, "over the past hundred years a number of acting methods have arising, each addressing itself to what has come to be known as, "the actor's problem", namely, that which Stanislavski referred to as the difference between 'seeming and being' (2). Within these acting frames, are the contentions surrounding the act of impersonation which is a mere replication of

a character in performance form on stage and of the actor's total transformation where the self is lost to the new character that emerges on stage. Tassi further explains that,

...impersonation as it takes place outside the theatre is a matter of pretending to be what one is not: that is to say, of using one's body in such a way as to refer the spectator to someone else. In the theatre, however, impersonation is a matter of becoming what one is not. The actor's body is used as the site of a metamorphosis. ... the goal to be achieved in the theatrical performance is one where the character in the play appears onstage not as someone the actor refers us to, but rather as someone who has come to full-blooded presence in the actor's body. The primordial function of the theatre performance, then, is to bring this character to presence, using the actor's body as a threshold (2-3).

Metaphysics, therefore, is concerned with two major issues connected to theatrical performance; (i) examining the nature of being and existence and their implication on humanity, as performed in reality or everyday life; and (ii) presencing or living these beings and their experiences on stage with the aim of improving the living trajectories of humanity. What takes place in the theatre is an imitation of the 'performance of being' which is taking place in nature. The theatre imitates this performance not by referring to it but by doing it. Although,

what transpires onstage may indeed resemble what exists offstage: it may even be a replication. But resemblance or replication is not the point of the theatre performance. This could be accomplished any number of other ways: in a painting, for example. The point of theatre performance is to make characters and events appear in person (Tassi 3).

Marowitz Charles captures this succinctly thus: "The world before it becomes his world and himself before he became his self". Tassi sums it up that in effect "the actor is, attempting to reach the state of affairs where his body can be used as a threshold across which he can bring *someone else*, character in the play, to presence on stage" (3). Just as one of the etiquettes of theatre which reads "do not come into the theatre with moody feet", so is the actor within performance context expected not only to exfoliate his mind of all form of external distractions, but fundamentally, eliminate himself for the new being to come alive. Within this frame, the actor's body must be understood as the liminal through which the character originally crafted by the playwright or performance bearers emerges on stage. Aldo affirms that, "the primordial function of the theatre performance, then is to bring this character to presence, using the actor's body as a threshold" (3). When a being (artist) who possesses enormous experiences and understanding of human ontology and cosmology gives himself up like the phoenix for another crafted being to live this or these experiences as the case may be on stage, one is quick to appropriately infer of 'metaphysics-in-action. It is this transformational quality which unlocks the potential threshold of the actor that leads to eventual transformation of the actor himself and the society at large. Therefore, in the attempt to explain the nature of beings or reality, the new being (character) on stage disserts human existentiality, societal huddles and challenges and the effect on humanity. It alienates and encourages productive action(s) and dissociates from and rebukes action(s) that are counterproductive to the hopes and aspirations of the society. Its major aim is to improve the life and living of humanity.

### **Acting, Design and the Metaphysics of Performance**

Studies in the area of acting spans across many centuries of theatre practice. This has helped in shaping and reshaping this aspect of theatre, namely, advancing the creative ingenuity of actors as they engage in new forms of trainings and the varying impact existing styles make on theatre audience. Thus far, two major acting styles have gained momentum in theatre practice; the representational and presentational styles respectively. Intriguingly, these styles have peculiar ways of calling on and presenting the being (character) on stage. Deploying these acting styles in performative instances requires opposing or different degrees to which the actor presents himself as liminal for the

character; namely that of sympathy and empathy-one demanding total enmeshment or metamorphosis and the other-quasi enmeshment or transformation in the performance process. Agreeably, these variations are muted to determine the level of communication, audience's perception and understanding of the thematic preoccupation, their association with characters, the contentions reflected on stage and the transformative impact of the performance's intention on them.

In addition, the manner in which issues are thematised, treated and presented varies under these styles – from informed chronological presentational pattern to a more disjointed, non-linear and head-on manner. It has also affected the form of design approaches and cost-input on theatrical designs for productions. Epochs of theatre evolution also has a major influence on both the acting and design architecture of theatrical productions. Parvis Patrick agrees that, "...each historical movement, and each dramaturgical and stage practice corresponding with that movement, possesses its own criteria of dramaticity (way of setting up a conflict) and of theatricality (manner of using the stage) (208).

In discoursing acting styles, recourse must be made to the act of "self-denier" and "self-recognition" and the simultaneity of "self-recognition" and "self-denier". When the actor denies himself, he becomes the requisite passage for the character to emerge on stage. Similarly, when he recognises himself on stage, he closes the door or passage, wilfully to enable him behaves as an actor or even an audience and not a character on stage. This way, he is able to subject the performance to scrutiny and make commentary on issues while also engaging audience on the same issues presented on stage. The representational acting style demands the actor's self-denier to unlock the potential door or passage for the emergence of the character crafted by the playwright on stage. The actor is encouraged to live the role rather than pretend to be the actual character onstage. A number of training skills are probable for the actor to attain such acting dexterity. Observation, research, character consistency and sustainability and intense practice and perfection before performance are fundamental to this course. The point of assertion here is that, the actor is expected to enable the presence of the new being or character with high meticulousness. The presentational acting style finds the actor interpolating between losing himself and gaining himself-that is he goes in and out of character-what postmodernist refer to as 'double self-consciousness'. This gives him the leverage to subject the performance under scrutiny by engaging himself and the audience.

Design for performance also accompanies these acting styles. However, the history of designing for production became tenable when the stage was universally recognised as a location rather than a space for performance. Aronson Arnold captures this historical development thus, the stage was

identified as a stage or a space for acting, not as some other place, such as a room, a forest, etc. On the occasions when the stage space was to be identified with another location, that was to be established through dialogue, action, reference, or through suggestive rather than explicit scenery (4).

With developments in theatre technology these suggestive descriptions became a major principle in playwriting and the frame of reference for directors and designers in play production process. According to Edward Craig,

the presentation of a drama must reveal to us the inner life, the very essence of this drama. The complete picture offered to us by the production must be at each moment corresponds to the various phases of the dramatic action. The decor is not an autonomous frame, the objective presentation of a place in which the action would be as if projected after the event.... By being directly in harmony with the movements of the actors, with the suggestions of the play, and possibly with the music, it becomes integrated with the life of the drama and participates in its revelation. The interplay of line, colour, objects and lighting effects produces in the public a visual emotion which is in harmony with is auditory emotion and which strengthens it (Aronson 4).

Similarly, Jones maintained that,

a setting is not just a beautiful thing, a collection of beautiful things. It is a presence, a mood, a symphonic accompaniment to the drama, a great wind fanning the drama to flame. It echoes, it enhances, it animates. It is an expectancy, a tension. It says nothing, but it gives everything (Aronson 4).

Therefore, in line with these acting styles are both the realistic or actualistic and the theatrical design styles. Molinta Enendu informs that, “reality in theatre studies and scenography refers to real, truthful, observable and physical world that could be represented on stage” (19). The actualistic design which is also called realistic design framing therefore, presents “a strong metaphorical or presentational image or related series of images – the “pretty pictures” (Aronson 2). Asomba Domba explains that,

this is a scenic style wherein a designer conceives the units in their natural forms including, as far as it is realistically and dramatically possible, all the details on the form being designed. Through the style, he is basically seeking to create a drama, a natural environment (54-55).

This design conception compliments the realistic or representational acting style where actors are trained and expected to absolutely remain in character by living the role to audience’s conviction-the deployment of full sympathy.

The presentational styles is non-realistic in nature-minimalism best describes it because it seeks partial enmeshment in character, the performance structure is concatenative, with actors going in and out of roles as the convention demands. This acting style is aptly complimented by the design style known as theatricality. Charles Russell refers to this new practice with particular interest on design as “an art of shifting perspective, of double self-consciousness, of local and extended meaning” (Aronson 2). Charles further explicates that, “through the use of discordance, ugliness, and juxtaposition-what post-modernists would call rupture, discontinuity, disjuncture, etc.” Aronson adds, “the spectator of postmodern design is constantly made aware of the experience of viewing and, at the same time, in the successful examples, made aware of the whole history, context, and reverberations of an image in the contemporary world” (Aronson 2). Therefore, when discussing the technical component of the metaphysics of performance it is apposite to first identify the style of acting, for in most cases, the acting style determines the approach to design for productions.

### **Technical Complementarity of “Metaphysics-in-Action” in the Production of *Mulkin Matasa***

Acting styles are well accompanied by design styles that best accentuate and articulate them. Such prescriptorial provision is first attributed to the playwright or performance bearers in non-dramaturgical performances, and often relied on both by the director and designer in coordinating the action and crafting the designs for productions. Parker, Wolf and Block corroborate that, “the scene designer brings to the production a visual interpretation and expression of the author’s aim. Thus, scene design becomes a fusing of a visual statement and the basic intent of the play into a single dramatic impression” (45). This is not a sacrosanct principle, as the period, design niche and director’s choice of interpreting a play in a production instance have a major influence on the final design outputs of the production. However, whatever the movement, and choice of interpretation, the director must ensure a synchronistic balance between the technical and artistic aspect of the production. This is because the deployment of an inappropriate design style raises a lot of ‘production dust’, both artistically, technically and aesthetically. These production challenges have an overriding negative effect on purpose or function of such production. To avoid such production mishaps, directors, actors and designers are mandatorily required to synergise their individual task. Perhaps, this is the only way a functional and aesthetically pleasing production can be achieved.

The performance of *Mulkin Matasa* did not veer off from the original realistic or representational acting and design formation of the playwright. Unarguably, realism or actualism design approach is used as perfect complimentary design architecture for the acting style which is also realistic. Actors played in a realistic environment thus actualising the playwright’s artistic and technical framing of the play. Therefore, various realistic locations are replicated, namely, indoor and

outdoor locations. A prominent scene design for this production is the court room. This room has its specific interior and exterior design layouts which appropriate the career and job descriptions of lawyers. The design reflects with high level of verisimilitude, the actual court in everyday life. Below is a picture of the court room.



Plate 1: Shows the interior decor of the court room

As shown in the picture above, an elevated set is designed as the judge's seating area, slightly in front of the judge and a step lower is the clarks seating position, to the right is the dock and to the left is the lawyers seating position. By playing in this actualistic scenery, the audience see's an actual judge, and lawyers rather than a group of actors pretending to be them on stage. This presencing continuum is further made believable by the costumes which they are adorned. Costume is regarded as kinetic scenery; it provides vital information such as the time and place of action, the status and cultural lining of the character and so on. Costumes used in the production include traditional attire and military camouflage uniform. The Tiv and Hausa/Fulani indigenous fabric are used to provide the cultural identity of the beings on stage. Therefore, at first sight, the audience see's a set of two indigenous groups namely Tiv and Hausa/Fulani rather than mere actors demonstrating or replicating the experiences of these people on stage. Below is a picture to further illustrate the complimentary role of costume in the performance.



Plate 2: Shows the costume design for the production

It must be further mentioned here that the intermittent use or interpolation of indigenous languages with English also helped in propelling the cultural identity of the two indigenous groups. In addition, the appropriate use of costume according to the cultural tenets of the concerned cultures and occupations makes for clarity and understanding of the various activities of these beings as they examine the nature experiences of beings on stage. Age, sex, and class within the cultural groups are also easily discernible due to good research and design dexterity of the director and designers.



Plate 3: Further shows the costume of a politician and his wife

The plates presented above gives a fair idea of the nature of lighting in the production. Since the acting and design styles are simply realistic, the director and designers made use of straight lighting which makes visible and enhanced the natural environment in which these beings played in. Beings are seen playing with their shadows splashed on either the floor or wall. This is typical of the experience of every being in everyday life and living. No attempt is made to create special effects in stimulating the mood of the play using intense lighting. However, the tempo of the performance is properly raised and sustained through the combination of good interpretative acting, costumes, sound and scenery.

Finally, sound as discussed herein is understood beyond the use of sound effects, to include voices of characters and the language they use. Accordingly, the sound of their voices perfectly helped characterise, enhance and project their characters. Children, adults, the aged, traditional rulers, politicians, and soldiers sounded differently in tone and manner of language and delivery.

### **Conclusion**

Acting needs to be housed for a full theatre experience to be witnessed. Whether it is conventional or avant-garde in nature, designing for production must speak the same artistic and technical text or language for such performances to be readable by the audience. Unarguably, acting is an intriguing and purposeful inquiry into being quo being and an effort to liquidate the seeming problematics experienced by these beings. The production of *Mulkin Matasa* illustrates the continuum between acting and technological innovation in production making. The act of production can be described using the aphorism 'two sides of a coin or two kernels in one nut'. These sides or kernels encompass the technical and artistic composition of production. Therefore, while Tassi's paper examines the artistic composition of play making, the author considered the technical component with the intension to further strengthen the act of being or becoming in theatrical performance. To this end, directors, actors and designers are encouraged to develop keen interest in both areas, since it is impossible to divorce them from each other in order to achieve a sound production.

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**RETHINKING AFRICAN INCLUSIVISM-PEDAGOGY FOR HUMAN  
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: A COMPARATIVE  
STUDY OF A.T.E AND D.I.E**

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**Abstract**

Against the background of theorizing to back up African Indigenous drama/theatre practices: this article examines African Traditional Education: vis-à-vis its philosophical foundations, goals, nature and its characteristics. Prior to Western civilization in Africa, education in the continent was purely indigenous; but the Eurocentricism orientation of African colonizers and elites would always refute it. These disprove and contest has led to the relegations of Africans, exploits, indigenous knowledge and practices in the global word. This study thus attempts a comparative study of African Traditional Education and Drama-in-Education; an offshoot of modern education; to emphasize the relevance of the former which are borrowed greatly by the later. The study hinges on Social Comparison Theory for its theoretical framework and qualitative research method by adopting a comparative analysis of both A.T.E and D.I.E to highlight the similarities of both practices to prove the relevance of African Traditional Education. The findings of this study revealed that much of A.T.E features are present in D.I.E as much as in modern education which invariably implies that Africans had an established educational system before the advent of western education. More so, the A.T.E system is all encompassing, grounded in African culture, norms and nuances, which could be termed, *African Inclusivism-Pedagogy* when compare to the modern day educational curriculum that delineate learning into disciplines. This study therefore recommends an A.T.E curriculum that recognises the value of African traditions to be integrated into the modern educational methods of teaching that can make learning more relevant and exciting for Africans.

**Keywords:** Rethinking, African-Inclusivism-Pedagogy, A.T.E, D.I.E, Human-Capital-Development

**Introduction**

Colonization, modernization and globalization have distorted and retarded the pace and tempo of African growth and the trend of civilization in so many ways. The incursions of the colonial masters on the African continents engender the above concepts with civilization as its watchword. The consequences of African contactwith the Western world has led to the neglect of African philosophies, civilizations, exploits and knowledge which would have been of added advantage to modern technology and exploit. The abandonment and non-appreciation of African Knowledge and philosophy has made African continent backward among comity of nations. It makes the world to see Africans as barbarian and having nothing to contribute to human and societal development: Whereas, African has an organized body of knowledge, philosophy, practices and civilization that is worthy to be reckon if African propound theories to back them. Thus, colonization, imperialism, civilization and globalization bring about pillage, plunder led to and stagnation cum decline of traditional cultural pursuits and indigenous knowledge in the colonies. Mimiko lamenting this problem asserts that:

The social fabric was completely devastated and a new culture of violence was implanted. Traditional African systems of conflict resolution were destroyed and, in their places, nothing was given. The democratic process, rudimentary though it was, but with great potential as accompanies every human institution, was brutally



uprooted and replaced by the authoritarianism of colonialism. A new crop of elites was created, nurtured, and weaned on the altar of violence and colonialism armed with the structures of the modern state to continue to carry out the art and act of subjugation of the mass of the people in the service of colonialism (641).

The attempts at answering the Europeans of the charge that the Africans were irrational; and possessed a body of knowledge and civilization prior to their exposure to Western civilization by some of scholars has led to the forceful propagation of all sorts of African beliefs and ideologies as African philosophy. These attempts are glaring in the works of John Mbiti's *African Religious and Philosophy* (1969), Father Placid Tempel's *Bantu Philosophy* (1959), Wole Soyinka's *Myth, Literature and the African World* (1976); Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986); Yemi Ogunbiyi's *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book* (1981), and so on. All the aforementioned books set out to theorize for African indigenous practices prior to colonization and westernization.

This study argues that African societies cum Nigerians possessed a great body of knowledge and civilization that is relevant and akin to modern civilization. However, lack of proper documentation and theorizing to support African thoughts make most African thoughts and knowledge void, unrecognized in the light of modern knowledge and learning. It is against this backdrop therefore that this study set out to theorize for African Traditional Education (A.T.E) as it is analogous cum synonymous with Drama in Education (D.I.E); in nature, scope, characteristics and goals.

To achieve this set goal the study reviewed extant literature related to the concepts under study and further adopts a comparative study of both key variables to reach its logical conclusion of equating (A.T.E) to (D.I.E). However, the former is of African origin while the later is of European origin. Thus, in line of propagating the later to gain universal relevance this study coined the term "African-Inclusivism-Pedagogy" or "African-Holisticism-Pedagogy", as theory guiding A.T.E as a result of the careful study on both concepts.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### ***Social Comparison Theory***

This theory was proposed by Leon Festinger in 1954. Social Comparison Theory was based on the reliance in self description that self is a social construct and that we define ourselves in part by using others as benchmark (Wheeler 7). Festinger argued that when people uncertain about their abilities and opinions, that is when objective information is not readily available: they evaluate themselves through comparison with similar. This theory become relevant to this study because in an attempt for African scholars to prove the relevance of African indigenous knowledge, practices and beliefs; they must therefore compare Africans with other so called civilized culture and society. Hence, for African to prove to their European counterpart of their inherent or indigenous drama; we often make reference to Greek drama, where drama is claimed to have originated. In the same vein, for African to claim to have an established educational system prior to the advent of colonialism as argued in this paper we must compare African Traditional Educational system with that of the so call Western education practices, by chosen an aspect of it, Drama-in-Education which bear similar qualities with African Traditional Education system.

The original idea behind Festinger's Social Comparison Theory was that people engage in social comparison because they have a strong need to evaluate themselves and sometimes they must do it (Wheeler 7). Social comparison is something people decided to do or decided not to do in a controlled and rational way in order to arrive at objective assessment of their personal qualities. Thus, a comparison between A.T.E and D.I.E of this nature is a health one to highlight the strength of A.T.E in the light of modern education strategies and techniques and to further argue for the possibilities of integrating A.T.E techniques and qualities into modern educational practices.

### ***Education and Society***

Barker defined education as all those processes of learning which enable a person to acquire skills, behaviours, knowledge, values and norms which are considered necessary to live a happy and

successful life in the society to which he belongs (9). Adeyemi and Adeyinka defined education as the process of transmitting the culture of a society from one generation to the other, the process by which the adult members of a society bring up the younger ones (23). According to Rodney, education is crucial in any type of society for the preservation of the lives of its members and the maintenance of the social structure (62). Education grows out of the environment; the learning process being directly related to the pattern of work in the society. Adeyemi and Adeyinka believe that education is the process of cultural transmission and renewal, the process whereby the adult members of a society carefully guide the development of infants and young children, initiating them into the culture of the society (23).

Education is “the process of cultural transmission and renewal”, the process whereby the adult members of a society carefully guide the development of infants and young children, initiating them into the culture of the society. For infants and young children, education often takes the form of indoctrination, that is, the process of compelling the child to “eat” or “play” or do his/her homework at particular times of the day. In the training or upbringing of children, a measure of freedom is allowed so that they can have the opportunity of learning at their own rate and behaving in their own particular ways, provided their learning processes and general behaviour do not present a wide departure from the accepted social standards and conventions of their society. Freedom is therefore a relative term and the extent of freedom a person enjoys depends largely on the culture of the society to which he or she belongs and the values which that society upholds.

What seems to be a common thread linking the generality of definitions of education by varied scholars over time is the idea of preservation and perpetuation of the cultures of different societies through inculcation of the norms, values, practices of the particular societies among the young, in the context of educational practice. In other words, the cultural future of a people is based on the kind of education that such people provide for their children. When that education is Western, then there are serious implications for the African child and African societies in general because their survival, development and social transformation are threatened (Rodney 83). Being society and culturally based; the above definitions of education go in tandem with African traditional practices. The western paradigm (apparently focusing on the individual) tends to be selective, competitive and largely formal in nature. Western education also emphasizes on hierarchy, structure; a chronologically graded education system, running from primary school through to university, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programmes and institutions for fulltime technical and professional training ( Bangura 29). Western values are generally blamed for the creation of African elites who failed to identify with the values and aspirations of the communities in which they had been raised (Rodney 89).

### **African Traditional Education an Overview**

African Traditional Education refers to the ways of teaching and learning in Africa traditional society based on the knowledge accumulated by indigenous Africans over long periods in response to different physical, environmental and social problems. Chitumba posits that there was education in traditional societies whose aims were passing on to the youths, the accumulated knowledge, wisdom and skills of the cultural groups (26). African Traditional Education is described as mostly having no schools nor the formal organizations associated with conventional western learning. It does not divide curricular content into disciplines such as arts, sciences, agriculture, and economics; but, wedges the children’s daily routines and livelihoods of their family and community together, integrating skills and knowledge about all aspects of life into a single curriculum (Gwanfogbe 21).

The teachers in African Traditional Education are mostly unpaid, yet they prepare the children to function with efficiency in their communities. The system allows no drop-outs because promotion from one level to the next is not based on selection but is automatic. The education is characterized as “remarkably comprehensive since it has as its aim the full integration of the child into the life of the tribe” (Farrant 19). According to Rodney, indigenous African education can be considered outstanding: its close links with social life, both in a material and spiritual sense; its collective nature; its many-sidedness; and its progressive development in conformity with the successive stages of physical, emotional and mental development of the child” (2). Traditional African education, therefore, was wholesome. All elders in the society were expected to play the

father and mother roles in teaching and advising, rewarding and punishing children in the village or community. The teaching and bringing up of children was therefore a collective responsibility, hence, the African saying that, "it takes a village to raise a child". Marah observed that traditional education in Africa was intimately integrated with the social, cultural, artistic, religious and recreational life of the ethnic group (16).

Children were instructed in social etiquette, agricultural methods and other skills that ensured the running of the social entity of which they were integral members. In the early age of the child, the education was largely the responsibility of the biological mother, but the community structures and systems took over as the child grew older, for example, in the initiation of adolescents into adulthood. Initiation schools played a part in complementing traditional education, particularly when boys and girls transitioned into adulthood. These schools were crucial to the child's full understanding of their changing roles in society. According to Van Rooyen et al., the lack of initiation rites in modern day communities causes a lot of confusion among the youths (02). Individuals have to look at young people's difficulties in finding themselves and see something that is missing in our society. Initiation schools developed children's will power through promoting asceticism, self denial, mortification, physical endurance and self control. Spiritually, children were taught to become an entity in unity, not only with other men but also with the whole of nature, comprising the earth, water, fire, light, etc. to pass from being an individual to the social situation aimed at full cosmic participation (Van Rooyen et al. 106). In other words, African Traditional Education like formal education in every society is the process of cultural transmission and renewal," the process whereby the adult members of a society carefully guide the development of infants and young children, initiating them into the culture of the society. For infants and young children, education often takes the form of indoctrination, that is, the process of compelling the child to behave right at all time.

### **Drama in Education an Overview**

Drama-in-Education is the most significant model of learning and is a basic activity for learning; it is the way of helping children to think about their individual or social problems. Children can learn to explore issues, events and connections, by means of drama. In drama, children draw on their knowledge and experience of the real world in order to create a make believe world (O'Neil & Lambert 11). Thus, drama is one of the few areas of the curriculum which is built on dreams and voices. Dramatic forms in educational services are inclusive of all other educational and arts forms. That is in Drama-in-Education all dramatic activity can be employed language, music, dance and movement are put to use. There are two main categories of dramatic forms namely: play and improvisation.

*Play* is unplanned activities; it is the prerogative of children and it differs from work (Courtney 33). Through play children learn to get on with others and to find out how they stand in relation to others. In fact, children's play is purposive and requires considerable effort. It is the only and the natural vehicle through which they learn about themselves and the world. Drama is similar to play in that it is useful in developing play so that children can extend themselves creatively and constructively. With drama and play children ought to be able to express and communicate their feelings and understandings in their own ways (Allen 42). However, their response is not only personalized in drama, it is basically social.

While *Improvisation* is a form of dramatic play which has a regular shape. It is known to be a form of representation and is acknowledged by the actors to be dearly separated from life. In education, this form can be called child drama or creative drama or similar terms can be used. Dramatic improvisation followed by reflection gives children practice in reasoning and acknowledging (Philbin and Myers 179). Furthermore, it may help children to find drama very attractive because they can respond in a natural way during their play activities. It also provides emotional content in their socialization. According to Courtney, play and improvisation symbolize the real life situations which children experience. They understand the essence of human experience within focused meaning and collaboration in which ideas are mutually explored (Courtney 33).

There are some views concerning drama in schools. According to Lynn McGregor, educational drama can be classified into two groups: learning through drama and envisaging drama; also known as learning with drama (McGregor 2). The first group of drama emphasizes the

exploration of issues and people through drama. It is an exploration, which involves both the teacher and child, resulting in discussion of the issues involved. It can be used as a method to teach particular subjects, such as history or social studies. The second group of drama is envisaging drama; also known as learning with drama as an art form in its own right. It places responsibility on children to work on the stimuli given by the teacher. Usually the teacher plays a relatively passive role. This activity means that children have to produce ideas, decide among themselves how to put them together and then create a scene with its own characters.

According to Dorothy Heathcote, all dramatic activities can be located on a continuum, from the most classic or highly stylized, to the most domestic or casual (Wagner 173). A new dimension of experience in drama can be very quickly reached by shifting from one place on this continuum to another. The classic mode requires great concentration and control so it seems difficult as a way into drama. Yet, the domestic mode looks easier. It is casual and similar to everyday human relationship. For this reason, a teacher selects the appropriate kind of drama on the basis of needs of the class which is important in the present circumstances.

Drama-in-education is process-centred and considered to be reform pedagogy. Central to D.I.E the methodology is a focus on learning by activity, problem-solving, action-reflection interplay, and discovery by experience (Bolton 150). The focus on the social construction of knowledge in drama enables students to realize that knowledge is both a product and a means of social contact (Szauder 4). This implies that in the as if world of drama, students need to use their existing knowledge, and, by interacting and collaborating with others, they gain additional information and make meaning that enables them to resolve certain challenges and issues. In this way the authenticity of the activity is emphasized in that learning is contextualized in both a fictitious context and as it applies to the real world. The manner in which the students represent their views through performance role plays, tableaus and/or improvisation is influenced by their previous experience and knowledge. This focus on the real problems of life comes about in a protected environment that aims to facilitate learning through experience (Heathcote & Bolton 16). Thus, new educators agree that continuity is very important and that if all teachers are trained to use drama this would help to safeguard the student's opportunity for dramatic experience in elementary schools (Dodd & Hickson 128).

### **Comparison between A.T.E and D.I.E Learning Strategies and Educational Goals**

Traditional education uses teaching methods and familiar materials drawn from the children's environment. Such methods are related to the culture and traditions of the children's ethnic group such as folk tales. Smith unpacks the use of folk tales as educative devices in traditional African societies (cited in Marah 20). Stories are used not only to amuse and express feelings but also teach ideal forms of behaviour and morality. Children learned by listening to their elders, imitating or emulating them. These stories are handed down from generation to the next; their concern was to induct the youth into moral, philosophical and cultural values of the community. Just like Drama in education too, it make use of devices that the students/participants are familiar with: such as storytelling, myths, songs and mime as it is used in African traditional education. In the same vein Drama in education too could be used as a tool for teaching moral behaviours and virtues among youngsters (O'Neil & Lambert 11).

African Traditional Education is collective and utilitarian. It incorporates the input of all members of the community, thus preparing the learner for full participation in society. The same apply to drama in education practices; it is a shared collective experience of the participants who participated in the process. The first advantage of using drama in elementary schools is that it allows students to work together and to share responsibilities for the development of self-actualization which is the main objective of education and which also continues throughout life. If a student achieves self actualization, he will have the qualities of being realistic, creative, trust and independent.

Traditional African Education was not confined to school room walls, there were no special buildings. The homestead and the community were the contexts of African education. Different games such as wrestling, running, training for healthy living, cooking, hunting, forms of carpentry, training to become blacksmiths, critical thinking, drumming, dancing, marriage counseling etc. were used as part of the traditional curriculum at different stages in the development of the child. Norms and values of the community such as honesty, loyalty, bravery, mental and physical wellness, leadership,

responsibility and accountability were part and parcel of the curriculum that developed the African child (Datta 19). The same is applicable to drama-in-education it is never restricted to the classroom. It can take place in any place and location and in varied form.

Traditional methods used what westerners would call, 'Mastery Learning' (Marah 19). Thus, failure was virtually non-existent; every effort was made, encouragements given, incentives provided to make sure even the most coward went through, say, the circumcision process. Group instruction, group assignments, apprenticeships and age groupings to experience a particular significant event, were the most common methods employed to instruct the young. The content of African Traditional Education was determined by society to cater for the physical, social and spiritual aspects of the life of children and followed certain principles that are suggested by Adeyemi and Adeyinka. These are as follows:

- a) *Principle of Preparation*: This involved the removal of economic and social poverty, hunger, disease, squalor, ignorance, malpractice, production of human power (human resources).
- b) *Principle of Functionalism*: It determined that people learnt through imitation, initiation ceremonies, work, play, oral literature.
- c) *Principle of Communalism*: All members of the society owned things in common and applied the communal spirit to work. Children belonged to the community and every member of the community had a stake in their upbringing, e.g., if a child misbehaved while the parents were not around other adult members of the community would discipline and correct him or her on the spot.
- d) *Perennialism*: Education was a vehicle for maintaining or preserving the cultural heritage and status quo, it was conservative.
- e) *Holisticism or multiple learning*: In economically, socially and practically advanced societies like the Zulu, Ashanti and Nupe there was a high degree of specialization in learning. In latter societies, education equipped boys and girls to undertake multiple occupations that required related skills, e.g. when a child was taught to be a fisherman, he not only learnt to catch fish but also to preserve, market it, mend nets, manufacture canoes and set up temporary shelter. There was no gap between work and study; there was no unemployment in African traditional societies (Adeyemi & Adeyinka 26).

While, there are three basics approaches or models for dramatic in education, namely: Exploratory, Illustrative and Expressive (Ustundag 3).

- a) *Exploratory*: The exploratory model is the most common in classrooms. In fact, most "how to do it" drama texts deal with this model which is the most widely known amongst students. Teachers use this model for students to explore new experiences.
- b) *Illustrative*: The students try to analyze their own inner meaning by means of illustrative model of drama which uses their mental powers, body and voice. This model allows students to use dramatic action for understanding personal relationships.
- c) *Expressive*: The expressive model is used to communicate ideas. This model has a socially practical significance.

Drama-in-education is emerging as a powerful model of learning through which students are encouraged to gain mastery over their thinking; which is akin to the principles and values of A.T.E. Furthermore, there are some purposes for using drama as a method as noted by Ustundag which is as follows:

- a) Drama affords students an opportunity to work together co-operatively on a shared project. It also increases the child's awareness of the divergence of views both within the classroom and within the wider social context.
- b) Drama extends both the range and quality of the child's language usage. It provides an opportunity for trying out different models of discourse and can create an impetus for a wide variety of oral and written forms.

- c) Drama can also offer children the opportunity of critically appraising their own and other's work.
- d) Drama is a particularly useful way of "openingup" problems, themes and topics that are of social concern. It enables children to view such subject matter from varying perspectives and to raise their own awareness of the complexity of the issues involved.
- e) Drama involves children in a complex process of selection, demanding of them an ability to choose between various effects and devices in order to shape a unified and coherent utterance (Ustundag 3)

In a similarly, A.T.E posses qualities similar to that of D.I.E as observed by Adeyemi and Adeyinka which make this study advocate the inclusion of African Traditional Educational values and principles into modern educational practices (26).

### **Discussion of Findings**

African Traditional Education like Drama in Education may be summed up as curriculum centred with the child in mind. In a similar vein, the new movement in education, which has introduced the concept of child centered education, is combined with children's play. It is therefore a fact that the meaning of child centered education is deemed close to children's play, "as we have in African societies", (mine emphasis) rather than subject centered education (Bolton 152). Moreover, drama is seen as the "play way" to education. Both imagination and play are inherent parts of effective education. Thus, drama is a vital part of education in schools (Ustundag 11).

African Traditional Education like Drama-in-Education is the most significant model of learning and is a basic activity for learning: it is the way of helping children to think about their individual or social problems. Children can learn to explore issues, events and connections, by means of ATE and drama-in-education learning activities. In drama-in-education, children draw on their knowledge and experience of the real world in order to create a make believe world (O'Neill & Lambert 11); just like in African Traditional Education where individual learn through experiences and practice. Thus, ATE like drama is one of the few areas of the curriculum which is built on dreams and voices.

Drama in Education has long been a powerful medium which enables human beings to examine their world and the people who inhabit it with them. Through drama people can learn more about themselves and others and can develop a greater understanding of society. Drama in education allows children to follow the same path of discovery. Drama facilitates the transfer of power from adults to children in developmentally appropriate ways. Thus, the specific objectives of *Drama in Education* are listed as follows:

- a) To help students discover that they know more than they thought they knew.
- b) To lead students to see the real world more clearly in light of what is revealed by the imagined one.
- c) To help students capture more and more of what is implicit in any experience.
- d) To develop a tolerance for a variety of personalities and ideas.
- e) To make an abstract concept or experience very concrete so the students can understand and have controlover it (Ustundag 5).

In accordance with the description of Drama-in-Education given in this study self-actualization is the first advantage for the students. Self-actualization leads to other effects as well. These can be summarized as follows:

- a) To give students an opportunity to examine their own problems with a new perspective.
- b) To show student the direction in which he or she is going.
- c) To make students to reflect on experience and see what they do in common with other people.
- d) To go beyond the tight framework of the curriculum in subjects, such as science, languages and mathematics.
- e) To give students freedom besides responsibility.

- f) To show students how they can stay with something they don't like and work through it to a point of accomplishment.
- g) To increase student's vocabulary and help D.I.E participants develop a finer control of rhetoric through interaction with others and through tapping subjective experience.

The above summation of the advantages of drama-in-education is in tandem with the aims of African Traditional Education according to Fafunwa; which he refers to as, “education for purposefulliving” which is embedded in the following cardinal goals of African traditional education identified by Fafunwa:

- 1) To develop the child's latent physical skills;
- 2) To develop character;
- 3) To inculcate respect for elders and those in position of authority;
- 4) To develop intellectual skills;
- 5) To acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour;
- 6) To develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs; and
- 7) To understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large (Fafunwa 20).

### **Conclusion and Formulating “Inclusivism-Pedagogy” Theory for African Traditional Education**

Education, which is the process of helping people to find essential meanings in life, involves both teaching and learning. While the identified principles of African Traditional Education listed above have far reaching implications for the formal education of today. Translated into modern curriculum and pedagogical theories and practices, the cardinal principles are largely similar to the goals, contents, methods and evaluation techniques of the modern day educational system or objectives of teaching and learning in any institution: although the modus operandi may be different. For instance, the seven traditional objectives can be categorised into the cognitive, psychomotor and the affective domains as found in modern day curricular practice. These objectives are also prevalent in drama-in-education when it is used as a classroom teaching tool or method. The first objective relates to the psychomotor development of the child through physical participation such as traditional games. The second, third, fifth, sixth and seventh traditional goals of education closely relate to the affective domain of modern day education. The fourth goal is directly related to the cognitive domain. When closely studied, some of the goals may fall into two or more of the domains of educational objectives as categorised by Bloom (cited in Adeyemi & Adeyinka 23), depending on how one examines them.

To this end, A.T.E Principles like drama-in-education which is a relevant teaching tool and an aspect of modern education; which shared similar principles with modern educational system is a useful tool for learning in the curriculum across all the levels of education. Therefore, African Traditional Education and drama-in-education which is an offshoot of modern day education system are similar in that they are closely linked in their goal, values, learning process, outcomes and they deal with the holistic development of the child. This study therefore recommends an A.T.E curriculum that recognises the value of African traditions to be integrated into the modern educational methods of teaching that can make learning more relevant and exciting for Africans

On theorizing for African indigenous practices; African Traditional Education like any effective system of education was based on sound philosophical foundations. These foundations or principles have been rightly identified by Ocitti (cited in Adeyemi & Adeyinka 23) as Preparationism, Functionalism, Communalism, Perennialism and Holisticism. The Principle of Preparationism, which underlined both formal and informal educational practices, implied that the role of learning and teaching was to equip boys and girls with the skills appropriate to their gender in preparation for their distinctive roles in the society.

Education, even in the most centralized and stratified societies, was meant to enable individual to fulfil socially defined responsibilities irrespective of gender. Male education in A.T.E

thus produced farmers, warriors, blacksmiths, rulers and other male-dominated occupations from which women were excluded. On the other hand, female education was predominantly designed to produce future wives, mothers and home-makers. The principle of preparationism further meant that male and female education prepared its recipients to adjust to the community and to play a useful role in it. Children developed a sense of obligation towards the community and grew to appreciate its history, language, customs and values. This is perhaps one of the greatest attributes of indigenous education as opposed to Western education which tended to alienate young Africans from their cultural heritage (Kelly; as cited in Adeyemi & Adeyinka 32).

African Traditional Education is a participatory kind of education in which people learned through imitation, initiation ceremonies, work, play, and oral literature. In this way, the learner was productive as he/she learned and was smoothly integrated into the community. Thus, the gap which exists today between study and the world of work was absent in pre-colonial society. Indeed, there was no unemployment in African traditional societies.

It is against the background of the above explications that this study outlines the following principles as that guides the theory of *Inclusivism-Pedagogy* of African Traditional Education:

1. Founded on the principles of Preparationism, Functionalism, Communalism, Perennialism and Holisticism: these principles make ATE Philosophical.
2. It prepares the recipients on their roles from cradle to grave, making the individual useful at every stage of their lives.
3. It prepares the recipients on different disciplines that would make them relevant to the society and themselves; rather than the western education that makes its recipients specialized in a given area of study.
4. A.T.E contents cover all the modern day educational domains and objectives like: Psychomotor, Cognitive and Affective domains, etc.
5. A.T.E uses all the educational resources materials that the recipients are familiar with to equip and prepare the students, i.e., storytelling, myths and oral histories, etc.
6. A.T.E prepares its recipients to appreciate their cultural values, heritages. Languages and respects for elders and established authority.
7. A.T.E is compartmental less, the various contents; disciplines are interwoven at every level.

It is based on the above that this study refers African Traditional Education practices as *Inclusivism-Pedagogy* principle which implies that A.T.E is all-inclusive, having no boundary, compartment and limit. Thus the A.T.E principles and values should be integrated into contemporary educational practices, to alleviate the rate of unemployment or unemployed-ability and further curb amoral and vices among Nigerians teeming youth.

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**FROM PRIMARY ORALITY TO SECONDARY ORALITY:  
INTERNATIONALIZING EGGON *TA ERKOR* PERFORMANCE IN THE AGE  
OF GLOBALIZATION**

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**Abstract**

In this paper, the researcher tries to examine the possibility of internationalizing *Ta Erkor* indigenous performance of the Eggon people of Nasarawa State, North Central Nigeria in order to promote and showcase its theatricality across the world through the indices of globalization such as the television, video-film format and internet sources. This paper also explores the proposition for a paradigm shift from primary orality to secondary orality; that is, from its original face-to-face format into the digital format. It examines how this performance and the indices of globalisation could be adapted to each other and harnessed in the service of development objectives of the Eggon people. *Ta Erkor* means to wage a war. It is a kind of traditional performance in Eggonland that is usually performed by able-bodied men between the ages of 18-40. The performance mode falls within the category of the traditional popular theatre of the Eggon people which is derived from their theatre tradition. The aim of this performance is to produce an individual who is skilful and protective and one who could conform to the social order of the community. The performance is largely secular, eclectic and dynamic in form and content. This paper is anchored on the theories of intermediality and globalization. The paper concludes that, despite the challenges, losses and treat inherent in globalization, there are also significant gains, opportunities and benefits the advent of globalization has offered. It therefore becomes imperative for the Eggon people to key into these numerous benefits and opportunities provided to internationalize and promote their culture and indigenous performances across the global.

**Introduction**

In contemporary times, especially with the on-going globalization agenda of world powers, the need to project indigenous identities and performances in Nigeria has taken many alternative patterns to enhance the glory of the Nigerian culture, pride and heritage, and to seek to discover and re-establish Nigerian civilization and promote Nigerian dignity, self-assertion and consciousness. Often times Programmes, such as, *Tales by Moonlight*, *African Pot*, *Goge Africa*, among others showcased through the Nigerian Television Authority and other television stations always recapture the unique mood of our indigenous society. Consequently, what these stations are doing is internationalizing, selling or marketing the rich indigenous cultures, values and performances of the Nigerian people on the global scale. By internationalizing, we mean the act of globalizing, marketing and projecting the culture and tradition of a people to the global community. This projection and promotion over the years has tremendously attracted tourists, investors and enthusiasts from different parts of the world to Nigeria.

Today, globalization has made it increasingly inexpensive for people to produce and distribute to a global audience their indigenous arts. It has made it easier for people to access people, products and places around the world. Today, indigenous performances continue to thrive in the face of technological advancement. For instance, many television dramas in Nigeria draw their materials from folktales, legends, myths and oral traditions of the people. In the rural areas of Eggon land today, the ordinary man's life has been immensely influenced by globalization. Cinema houses have been built; football viewing centres established, internet sources are accessed, opening up new vistas for rural community development and connection with the rest of the world. For instance, today the

internet has made most indigenous performances alive and interactive. It has no doubt resulted in many positive impacts, including increasing access to limitless information and entertainment as well as facilitating the production of new information and entertainment. While surfing the internet sites such as YouTube, Instagram and Facebook among others, children and adults alike are exposed to new ideas and information that may increase their knowledge and perhaps spark their own creativity and innovation. For example, Facebook helps members to communicate and stay in touch with their friends. Ultimately, once you join Facebook, you will be able to share photos, videos, plan events, keep-in-touch with friends wherever you are, and stream events online, among others.

It is evident that globalization and its indices have come to stay. People now live in an integrated world characterized by changes of different magnitudes, uncertainties and competitions. The threat to indigenous cultures in the globalizing world of today is to a considerable extent inescapable because the process itself shows no sign of stopping. There is hardly any continent of the world that has not had its share of the influence either negatively or positively. For instance, people in local settings might view globalization as “Westernization” or “Americanization”. Others may resist globalizing processes as foreign or even evil. Still others may change or adapt globalizing processes to fit their own needs. In other words, globalization is a fact of life because all are affected by it in terms of its benefits or losses. Hence, the one solution that is not available is that of stopping its spread to the entire world system in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Thomas Friedman submits that, “the last ten years demonstrates a dramatic increase in the reach and integration of this new/old process that has revolutionized the world” (44). Today, we eat modern food, use modern dress, speak modern language and use modern tools. As such, our thought patterns have become globalised and modern.

Marvin Carlson posits that “the recognition that our lives are structured according to repeated and socially sanctioned modes of behaviour raises the possibility that all human activities could potentially be considered as performance, or at least, all activities carried out with a consciousness of itself” (4). Carlson defines performance as “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (37). In this definition, Carlson stresses the fact that certain behaviour has an audience and an effect on the audience. His definition addresses what seems to be an essential quality of performance, which is based upon a relationship between a performer and an audience. This is because; we play roles, occupy statuses, and play games with one another in a designated area or space (5). In Eggon traditional society, everyday life is framed up and performed. Their Performances have been integral to their existence. It means that, every performance of a people springs from their cultural patterns exposing both the material and non-material heritage.

Eggon means ‘to hear’ and it is also used to refer to those who are native speakers of Eggon language. They are made up of three clans: *Anzo, Eholo and Ehro*, a broad categorization that incorporates several dialectical groups, similarity of eclectic settlement, values, customs and religious practices with autonomous social structures peculiar to their existential philosophy. The Eggon people of north central Nigeria are spread across the entire Nasarawa State consisting of Keffi, Kokona, Nasarawa, Akwanga, Nasarawa-Eggon, Lafia, Doma, Obi and Awe Local Government Areas. Nasarawa-Eggon is their nucleus settlement and the seat of their traditional stool (Dugga 29). Nasarawa Eggon is a town on the flat plain that flanks the *Akun* Eggon hills. These hills located along the gateway between Northern and Eastern Nigeria on the Makurdi-Jos and Abuja Highway, historically served as a shelter for the Eggon during early periods and offered protections against their enemies.

### **Conceptualizing and Historicizing Globalization**

Globalization has become a buzz word; a buzz word that has become hegemonic in almost every sphere of human endeavour. It is an octopus with several tentacles created by dominant social forces, the powers that be in the world today to serve specific interests. In the course of its emergence, various challenges, opportunities, losses and changes had taken place. These developments had, in most cases affected the systematic existence of human kind both positively and negatively regardless of the geo-political location within the universe. The term has been defined variously by different scholars from different points of view. According to Anthony Giddens:

Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa... (64).

For Roland Robertson, one of the leading scholars of globalization, it is “the compression of the world and intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole” (8). It means that, globalization has to do with increasing interaction and integration of diverse human societies in all important dimensions of their activities – economic, social, political, cultural and religious, among others. Therefore, it is quite clear that globalization is about deconstructing and restructuring the social geographies of the world into a single place.

Globalization as a concept is not particularly new to the world. It is arguable that the concept dates back to preneolithic times. In a sense, the potential for a single global human society has always existed; but the occasion has not arisen perhaps until now. Human beings have always seen themselves as one single species, capable of interbreeding, communicating and learning from one other. Today, however, the single human species adapted itself to widely varying conditions on earth by means not of biological but of cultural differentiation (Mennell 359). Tor Iorapuu says, “scholars believe there has been three major phases of globalization: 1870-1914, 1945-1980, and from 1980 till now” (2). Iorapuu further argues that, “the continent of Africa since the era of trans-atlantic slave trade experienced more than any other continent the changing faces of globalization in several ways-economic, political, social, cultural and religious” (2). Iorapuu’s view firmly acknowledges that globalization has both the good and the bad sides; there can be losers as well as gainers. Globalization in this context is considered as a process and not a means to an end. It is a process in which states of the world interconnect and interact at multi-continental distances. Robertson posits that one element no doubt has been the driving instrument of globalization which is technology. According to him, technology and globalization go hand-in-hand. Globalization unleashes technology which in turn drives firms to plan production and sales on a global basis. Technology changes the work we do (Iorapuu xii).

A development scholar, Layi Erinosh, argues that,

the various theoretical strands on globalization can be grouped into two broad areas. There are on the one hand theories about the historicity of the process and on the other those that are anchored on its benefits to human kind from the standpoints of the economic including the revolution in information and communication (8).

Erinosh posits further that what he regards as the historicity of the process is explored in the context of the debate on the origin of globalization. He asks if globalization is a new or old process. It is evident that there are those that are of the views that globalization is a new process because of the revolution in information and communication technology that has brought human beings and societies closer to one another than at any other time in world history. While some others share the opposite view points namely that it is not a new process. Globalization has been a part of humanity from time immemorial (Erinosh 8). Moreover, the process gained more momentum when the Europeans came into contact and colonized the new world, and it seems to have reached some kind of climax in recent times due to the revolution in information and communication technology that has revolutionized the world.

The second theoretical strand, according to Erinosh, is deduced from an appraisal of the impact of globalization on humankind. There is no doubt that it has engendered various reactions and it is believed by a significant number of people that it is the best thing that has happened to humankind. Yet, to others, is a threat or curse or tool for the exploitation of third world countries or for engendering unequal relations among nation states. There is no doubt that globalization is one of the most challenging developments in the world history. The system, in its more generic and broad sense is part of the movement of history.

Researchers working in the field of intermediality in theatre and performance, such as, Freda Chapple, Chiel Kattenbelt, Sarah Bay-Cheng, Andy Lavender and Robin Nelson, examine theatre and performance in the context of other media. They probe the aggregate inter-relatedness of digital media

and the performing arts. Coming from a perspective that theatre offers the staging space for inter-medial performances. The researchers' study the proliferation of texts, medial spaces and inter-medial relationships created when the live medium of theatre and performance intersects with digital technology. Chiel Kattenbelt defines intermediality as, "the co-relation of media in the sense of mutual influences between media" (31). She continues that the concept of intermediality assumes a correlation in the actual sense of the word, that is to say, a mutual affect; taken together the redefinition of media co-relationships and a refreshed perception. Co-relationship of media means that previously existing medium's specific conventions are changed, which allows for new dimensions of perception and experience to be explored. It is those co-relations between different media that result in a redefinition of the media that are influencing each other, which in turn leads to a refreshed perception.

What is notable also is that, in the discipline of theatre studies, a change of paradigm is taking place. One contributing factor to the change in paradigm might be that our contemporary culture has become a globalized culture, with all the performative features that it entails. When an indigenous performance undergoes a paradigm shift from its primary orality to secondary orality owing to the incorporation of digital technology such as film, television and the internet, we can say that intermediality has taken place. This is because of the interplay and the incorporation of the two media. For example, the advent of information and communication technology today has created a platform for intermediality. This technology has so compressed space and time by its virtual presence that people have plunged in headlong.

What the above means is that, the growth of internet facility has led to exponential experimentation in the production, processing, transmission and reception of indigenous performances. For instance, these days a song or music rendered and transmitted on social media such as youtube, facebook and others, can reach millions and billions of listeners across geographical and linguistic barriers in the world. The audio-visual facilities are even more tantalizing in their reach and effect. The development of satellite television has opened new frontiers for performers. They can now perform from a single spot and expect to be heard, seen and appreciated in all continents of the world. The beauty is that, Nigerian satellite television stations are very active in this global communication revolution. These stations are patronized by Nigerians, Africans and global audiences, thus, adapting and recycling the images of Nigerian popular theatre of indigenous performances to fit into the expectation of the target culture and people. Often times live performances are performed in their primary or original format then transmuted and sold to television stations as secondary contents. When these stations showcase or broadcast these contents as secondary contents, because of the shift in paradigm and transmutation that has taken place in a digital format, millions of people around the world that have access to the vehicles of globalization can have access to the performances. Intermediality describes the introduction or the interplay of digital technology and its functions within the context of traditional locality. It discusses the confluence of media, medial spaces and art forms involved in performance.

Sociologist Robertson has coined an expression, "glocalization" to identify how globalization has created conditions to promote and address local issues. This concept is used to describe the introduction of digital communication and its functions in the context of the application of technology within the traditional locality. Here, technology of the web is used to adapt indigenous performances into the digital format for digital audiences. In this way, indigenous theatre and the indices of modern mass media are adapted to each other and harnessed for the development objective of the people the theatre or performances are meant for. This is what the researcher calls "cultural convergence" or better still, "cultural hybridization". This theory places theatre and performance at the heart of the new media debate anchored by globalization. It provides an overview of the discourse on the relationships or interface between the indigenous arts and globalized media.

### **Eggon Theatre Tradition**

A discourse of the theatre tradition of the Eggon people ultimately comes with the question of functionality and aesthetics. Eggon theatre, like any other African theatre experience is functional to the extent that it refurbishes their belief system and reinforces their socio-cultural values. It is engaged with similarity to other Nigerian cultures as originating from deep religious, economic and social activities of the people but defining its uniqueness. However, it is important to note that theatre,

whether Western or African, is first and foremost an experience. Every experience is best appreciated within a socio-cultural context. Even though, there may be a cross cultural persuasions, the final shape, content and value of a theatrical experience are determined by the cultural perception and expectations of the participants in the experience and the owners of the core culture (Ododo 121). This is why Dauda Enna contends that, “every society conceives, establishes and sustains a theatre tradition peculiar to the society’s need, existential philosophy and aspiration” (30). This implies that every community or culture purchases a theatre that is unique to the need and aspiration of that community or culture.

For the Eggon, *Ta Erkor* as theatre satisfies the unique need and aspiration of the Eggon people. Their very existence is tied to it because it is through it that they most times experience a communal renewal which strengthens them to face the challenges of life afresh. This simply shows that a study of Eggon traditional theatre largely depends on indigenous cultural antecedents that are peculiar to their environment, experience, existential need, aspiration and philosophy. The Eggon people have a theatre tradition which is found in their cultures and exhibited through their varied songs, music, dances, festival, rites, rituals, storytelling among others. This form of theatre can be traced to the activities of the early man where he re-enacted his hunting experiences to his peer or when a ritual priest held a sacred communication with the gods through chants and incantations in the presence of the people.

However, two significant issues usually confront the attempt at classifying most Eggon traditional theatrical practices. The first is what looks like the imprecision of the term “Theatre” while the second is the debate as to whether Eggon people can actually lay claim to having had a traditional theatre at all. This study shares the view of the relativist school which sees theatre as an ethno-cultural experience and activity. Eggon traditional theatre has been categorized into five sub-units though, the list is by no means exhaustive. These are: Psycho Drama (*Asherjege* and *Gbedur*); Occupational or Occasional Theatre (*Ekpa* and *Likya*); Storytelling Theatre (*NyumOnzho* – folktales, storytelling, riddles and jokes, proverbs and other tongue twisters); Popular Theatre (*Ta Erkor* and *Gbu Ewa*) and Ritual Theatre (*Adaga Aha* and *Kyen-Eku*) among others (Embu 54). Added to the above, Embu still submits that, they also include “hunting re-enactment and children’s theatre performed usually at relaxation times”. He continues that, some emerging theatre forms include modern festivals organized yearly at village and clan levels by youths and community-based societies as a form of cultural revival where cultural performances such as masquerades also feature”. This statement presupposes that, traditional Eggon society which is the hallmark of this study has a rich and potent theatre tradition which through the ages has flourished into a unique specimen of scholarly resourcefulness. This is evident in the religion, traditional functional rituals and festivals of the Eggon people. For instance, the *Likya* festival which is an annual festival to mark the harvest season in Eggon *Enro* is celebrated with intensive activities such as dances, music and feasting as a mark of jubilation and thanksgiving to the gods over bountiful harvest. On the other hand, Dugga notes that,

there are two distinct periods of importance in the study of Eggon theatre: the pre and post colonization eras. These refer to the factor of social interaction with a wider world community and the attendant changes they introduced into the Eggon societies. While the earlier contact was not successful in fully introducing Islam or the Hausa social system, colonization helped to entrench both the Hausa and Western systems. Each of these has modulated the people’s perceptions and social life which in turn redefined their arts (33).

Eggon theatre provides a performance tradition that operates from and still retains the indigenous base from which current practices are drawn. Like many other African traditional performances, the fundamentals in Eggon traditional theatre are not somewhat different. Most African traditional theatres are characterized by dances, songs, drumming, fluting, rich costumes among others, so the Eggon. These aesthetics and functional qualities are also common denominators in the performance under study. Hence, one can hardly imagine a theatre tradition of the Eggon people whether secular or sacred without the presence of one or all of the above elements. The popular and communal nature of most of the theatre traditions is highly participatory and engaging.

### ***Ta Erkor* Performance**

This performance mode falls among the traditional popular theatre of the Eggon people. It is derived from the initiation rite of the Eggon people. *Ta Erkor* which means to “wage a war” is a kind of traditional performance in Eggonland that is usually performed by able-bodied men between the ages of 18-40. The performance is a simulation of warfare in which the skillful wielding of the *Ombyli* (extra-large cow-hide shield) is used with stylized movement creating spectacles. *Ta Erkor* is shrouded in chants with stylized movement and display of the warriors’ paraphernalia (bow, arrow and shield made from elephant’s skin or cow hide). It is this stylized display of the paraphernalia by the warriors that creates spectacles. This performance is also participatory because the audience also contributes by clapping their hands, singing using the language of the environment and cheering the performers up.

*Ta Erkor* is masculine in nature. It is a performance where men in the community meet to exhibit their prowess and dexterity. One of the skills a person is expected to acquire is how to manipulate his bow, arrow, knife and elephant skin (*Ombyli*) which are regarded and considered the major weapons and shield in traditional warfare. One of the ways this special skill is acquired is during harvest season when guinea corn has been harvested; male adolescents will prepare bow and arrow made from the corn stalks and use as weapons. In trying to acquire the necessary skills for the performance, or during rehearsals, they usually aim at a pawpaw fruit or mango. These fruits symbolize the visualized enemies they will battle with in the future. If the targeted fruit is hit with the arrow, the person is praised. This special skill acquisition contest is performed not just for the purpose of competition, but to make the would-be warriors acquire important skills (Interview with Ugulu).

In the early 1904, specifically before the British contact with the Eggon in 1907 such performances in peace times were used as rehearsals and trainings for real battle (Enna 42). In Eggonland, it is believed that those that fall within these age bracket belong to the warrior group of the society and are often referred to as *Moa-okola*. This crop of community youths usually maintain and sustain internal and external security by executing any directive by the *Moa-Adakopo Ashum* (Cult custodians). It is imperative to note that all Eggon performative arts are rooted in the *Ashum* cult society. “The *Ashum* cult directs and controls Eggon collective expression towards maintaining harmony and peaceful co-existence within the society as a condition for a favourable relationship between the people and the supernatural being” (Enna 30). Performances are therefore geared towards the maintenance of order and social cohesion. An interview conducted with Ugulu who happens to be the *Ashum* Cult Custodian (*Andakopo Ashum*) of *Wakama* clan in Nasarawa-Eggon Local Government Area during a field work research indicates that, in Eggonland, once a person reaches the ages of 20-40, he is expected to have acquired diverse skills in traditional warfare which if harnessed properly, will make him a warrior and a protector of his community (May 13, 2016).

During this performance, the *Moa-okola* has the leverage of wooing young maidens around through the dramatic display of their chants, paraphernalia and valour. Enna states thus:

What usually calls for this performance mode is simply because in pre-colonial Eggon society, it was often regarded an insult to the boys in a particular Eggon village to allow a maiden to marry in another village, particularly if the girl is beautiful and is already betrothed to any of the young *Moa-okola* men. Unfortunately, the girl herself has very little choice, as most of the marriages were by eloping with the girls. Usually, if it is between hostile villages, it is the case of eloping with the girls during market days the two villages usually attend. The writer went further to say that, even young married women are not spared. The aggrieved *Moa-okola* will either demand the release of the girl peacefully or challenge the *Moa-okola* of the other village to an *Erkor* (43).

In furtherance to this, Enna says that, before the appointed day for the battle in which elders of the villages will be present, the captured girl will be kept under very strict surveillance (44). The performance starts with the blowing of the *Gbaru* – a trumpet made from cow horn that usually signals the beginning of the offensive. Drumming, war song and dance steps stimulate their

beautifully costumed armed warriors and lead them to the venue. As the *Moa-okola* test their skills, the combination of praise songs celebrating great ancestral warriors captures the air and gives it a festive mood. There is usually an accepted time to break the battle which serves as a period for instruction. If it is discovered that one of the *Moa-okola* is injured, the *Erkor* is usually called off using a signal from the *Gbaru*, while the successful side goes home chanting victory songs. When all participants in the battle have returned to their respective villages, the women and girls continue to sing praise songs to the warriors who demonstrate war dance steps and pose stylishly with their weapons. Once the aggrieved village is unable to recover the abducted woman during *Ta Erkor*, she will legally belong to the captor's village. One of the aims is to test the battle readiness, prowess and dexterity of the *Moa-okola* of the two villages who in future might come together to fight a common enemy. It is highly pedagogical, entertaining and instructional.

Below is a pictorial representation of *Moa-kola* (two Eggon warriors) in performance, skillfully manipulating and displaying their war paraphernalia.



An organized simulation by the Eggon warriors (*Moa-okola*) in *Ta Erkor* performance

### **Internationalizing *Ta Erkor* Performance**

One innovation that has greatly revolutionized the world today is the advent of the internet technology. This technology has so compressed space and time by its virtual presence that people have plunged in headlong. It has no doubt resulted in many positive impacts, including increasing access to limitless information and entertainment as well as facilitating the production of new information and entertainment. While surfing the internet sites such as YouTube, instagram and facebook among others, children and adults alike are exposed to new ideas and information that may increase their knowledge and perhaps spark their own creativity and innovation. For example, facebook helps members to communicate and stay in touch with their friends. Ultimately, once you join facebook, you will be able to share photos, videos, plan events, keep-in-touch with friends wherever you are, stream events online among others. Often times, videos and programmes showcased through the internet always recapture the unique mood of our indigenous society. Today, people can view the world as well as happenings in the world through their handset which has become television and window to the world.

Since the internet has provided the people with an opportunity to share photos and post different events online for the cyber community via their handsets, the same platform can be used by the Eggon people to internationalize *Ta Erkor* performance across the world. The Eggon people can take advantage of this technological driven platform to even sell, market and globalize not only *Ta Erkor* performance but their cultures, tradition and other indigenous performances globally. Again,



this performance could be used as content for revenue generation that can expand the economic base of the Eggon sons and daughters as well as improve their living standard.

Secondly, video-film as a creative cum communicative art can also absorb an entirely indigenous performance and improve upon its potentials to bring social changes by projecting the mediated messages farther and wider. It is one mode in which people can record images, events, organize them to imply meaning and through them communicate to others. The Nigerian video film industry has emerged as a medium of popular culture carrying with it popularity that cuts across the broad spectrum of societies. It has creatively and extensively borrowed from the oral texts and literary form of indigenous performances and this, has contributed to its popularity and acceptability. Today, an increasing amount of video films are produced in many Nigerian languages projecting, documenting and preserving the culture of the Nigerian people. Most of them draw inspirations from indigenous and historical archetypes to inculcate the core values of our society on the people. Films can help us know more about our cultures and even become better in our understanding of cultures from other lands. Since this unique platform is available for everyone to utilize today, the Eggon people cannot be left out. It is an onus on the Eggon people to package *Ta Erkor* theatre from its primary orality and adapt it through the medium of the video film which is the secondary orality, and internationalize across the world. This interface of media also provides a yardstick for the Eggon people to also project and promote the Eggon world-view- their culture, religious practices and theatre traditions to the outside world.

### **Conclusion**

The paper examines the significance, role and value of *Ta Erkor* performance of the Eggon people of Nasarawa State, central Nigeria. It hinges its precepts on the gains and benefits of globalization in internationalizing and marketing *Ta Erkor* performance toward the growth and development of the Eggon people. It is evident in the paper that globalization whether the Eggon people like it or not has come to stay. Hence, it beholds on them to key into the many benefits it has provided in order to internationalize, promote and market not only *Ta Erkor* but other of their indigenous performances across the globe.

The paper shows that indigenous theatre aesthetics are very resourceful and amenable to contemporary theatre utilization especially in the area of their functionalities. It also demonstrates that revolution in information and communication technology has facilitated the rapid production and dissemination of cultures and indigenous performances across the world. It is glaring that 21<sup>st</sup> century is an age of rapid transition. Post-colonial societies have seemingly become changing societies as a result of cultural diffusion through the process of globalization. What this means is that globalization is inescapable, inevitable and unstoppable today, it therefore beholds on the Eggon people to now key into those significant gains, benefits and opportunities it has offered to promote and propagate their cultures and cultural performances across the world. They should think locally and act globally as well as think globally and act locally.

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**EXAMINING THE PERFORMANCE AESTHETICS OF *KOROSO* DANCE:  
THE BAUCHI STATE COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE DANCE  
TROUPE IN FOCUS**

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**Abstract**

Right from the creation of man, dances serve as a means of entertainment, as well as, a medium to teach morals. This phenomenon cuts across different cultures of the world. Aesthetics in dance and especially in terms of beauty as they relate to the Nigerian cultural Troupes has to do with the ability of these cultural Troupes to live up to their expectations in the promotion, preservation and propagation of culture, norms and values through the aesthetics of choreography, movements, songs and instrumentation, props, costumes and make-up. It is in view of this that this paper examines the aesthetics of *Koroso* performance of the Bauchi State Council for Arts and Culture. We employ the descriptive and analytical methods of research in order to aid our understanding of the philosophies and the artistic grandeur coherent in their performances.

**Introduction**

Among all other expressive arts, dance seems to be a mother of all, because it is a unique “human activity which simultaneously reconcile the heart, body and spirit” consciously or unconsciously in search of expression of feelings and emotions (Oreck, 2013, p.3). Dance has been defined by scholars of anthropology and cultural studies from different views which can be summarily translated to mean a rhythmic movement of human/animal body into production of sounds which is composed in time and space for the purpose of communicating meaning or messages to people (Hirst, 1985; Wolf, 1978; Kroeber, 1943).

Dance is derived from species-specific capacities and the fact that it is a part of the human constitution and a basic force in social life, and not merely the consequence of human invention at some particular time and place. This informs Blacking’s concept of dance as a “social fact” (Blacking, 1976, p.89). Its evolutionary importance as a mode of communication is borne out by the fact that it has not been superseded by verbal language, although clearly verbal language is generally more efficient for cultural adaptation. The universality and survival of dance suggests that it cannot be abandoned without danger to the human species; that it must be practiced by all; and that its evolutionary value lies in its effectiveness as a mode of non-verbal communication. And as a non-verbal means of communication, it is an inter-language with which people encode strategic intentions specifically into movements that differ from their movements in non-dance contexts.

Dance occupies an important place in the social structure of man and as a non-verbal means of communication, dance educates, entertains and informs people about certain societal codes. This informs Damisa (2012, p.1) to say:

Dance is concerned with the use of body gesture, body movements and other dance elements for expression. The elements being referred to here are: rhythm, time, space, dynamics, costume, props, make-up, music, drama and so on. Dance messages are communicated using the elements mentioned above and through signs and symbols to impact on the life of the people.

The above definition of dance speaks on it’s physical and utilitarian nature as an art. The physical description of dance reduces as perfected rhythmic activity that occurs within a bounded space at a specific time while its utilitarian essence covers the role playing and messages loading part

especially about the society in which it appears or originates. This notion is supported by Pusnik (2010, p.5) when he notes the discrepancies that usually arise in the definitions of dance. According to him, “a number of theoretical definitions of dance define it as a conscious way of rhythmic physical activity but they overlook the multiple roles and meanings that dance has for the society in which it appears”.

In an earlier submission, Bourdieu (1994, p.4) argues that, dance “as a specific language is a socially, historical phenomenon, dependent on the space and time in which it exists and dependent on the power structures that rule in that time”. Dance is a cultural practice created by the lore of a group of people or individual, hence it is a reflector of human identity through the use of movement, time, space and body. The implication of this is the ability of dance to objectively and subjectively portray both material and immaterial culture of a people and subsequently entertain such people. This therefore makes it aesthetically pleasing.

### **Aesthetics and Beauty**

The study of sensory and perception of ‘beauty’ is a form of knowledge/philosophy whereby the notion of beauty becomes subjective to the perceptions. Aesthetics in dance and especially in terms of beauty as it relates to African dances remains an important area to be looked into which is why Scarry a professor of aesthetics models a premise for ‘beauty’ as a “sense process that can lead toward social justice” (Blacking, 1983, p.90). It is her belief that ‘beauty’ contains sacred, unprecedented and life-saving features that incite deliberation about the nature of truth and fairness. In recognizing and appreciating ‘beauty’, people experience it’s pressure toward distribution, and seek to both protect and reproduce (or create) its effects. In addition, as ‘beauty’ brings copies of itself into being, its observers undergo a “radical decentering” that moves them towards ethical fairness; and “people seem to wish there to be beauty even when their own self-interest is not served by it” (Blacking, 1983, p.91). Scarry’s referent of beauty aligns her theory to the Romanticists’ assumption of ‘beauty’ as being ever-present in nature. Which is why amid the continuous overarching questions around what the terms of ‘beauty’ may be and who may name them, we are on the opinion that ‘beauty’ can be effective when deployed within a particular, culturally explicit frame of performance analysis.

Importantly, dance is revealed through everyday movement but artistic in design. Human body becomes a medium or instrument through which a man transcends “its traditional personal limitations... to become kinetically alive and aesthetically aware in order to respond sensitively to the feelings and needs of the dancer and spectator...” (Turner, 1971, cited in Ufford-Azorbo & Ufford, 2014, p.479). In fact, Hawkins (1988, p.3) concludes:

Dance is one of man’s oldest and most basic means of expression. Through the body, man senses and perceives the tensions and rhythms of the universe around him and using the body as his instrument, he expresses his feeling response to the universe.

By means of expression of feelings, dance becomes aesthetically functional as that which goes beyond mere movement of the body. This particularly in Africa is because “dance is used as a functional tool of expression and used for variety of reasons, ritualistic purposes, a secular activity engaged in for recreation or entertainment, embracing such factors as physical exercise, performance of skill” and others (Oreck, 2013, p. 30).

The accommodating nature of dance in Africa is another point of aesthetics. Dance is an independent art which exists alongside other expressive art forms. This is usually influenced by the hosting culture of such dance. No wonder Oreck (2013, p.2) says, “another characteristic of African dance is in its holistic nature. The interaction of multiple elements that can exist within an African dance performance gives it the view of the all-embracing art of expression”. The utilisation of human body, energy, space, time and rhythm of drums, in a coordinated way, suggests and usually adds to both aural and visual aesthetics of dance. For instance, Kini-Olusanyi (1996, p.29) remarks that:

the dance to drum (and other percussions) is a potent and vitalising element of African culture... drumming and dancing are almost synonymous projections as

ardent, driving rhythms, pungent complexities of form and consonant, articulate expression.

Thus, Umukoro (2002, p.72) sees dance and music as “twin arts of the theatre... dance and music evolved simultaneously as complementary arts.... Dance is the visual translation of music which usually elevates the joy of aesthetics in the visual aural sense of the people”. This also underpins the position of Willis (1990, p. 65) that, “dancing is the principal way in which musical pleasures become realised in physical involvement in bodily grounded aesthetics”. It suffices to say that dance becomes beautified or aesthetically pleasing when all elements of body, rhythm, space, time and energy are utilised according to the demand of a particular dance form. It is until then, that communication or expression of feelings, emotions and methods can be guaranteed during any dance performance. More importantly, dance aesthetics is elevated with proper consideration of motif dances within its performative context. Here, the utilitarian purpose of the dance comes to play. This purpose can be located in the observation of Geoffrey (1962, p.213):

Africans dance. They dance for joy, and they dance for grief; they dance for love and they dance for hates; they dance to bring prosperity and they dance to avert calamity; they dance for religion and they dance to pass the time.

The above implies that the beauty of dance in Africa setting can be located in its expression of social belief system and not just a means of entertainment. No wonder Ojuade (2004, p. 240) states the essence of dance in any society that, “in its function as an expression of social organisation, dance safeguards the traditionally established social and political hierarchy and equally emphasise the standard of behavior and instructs on moral within the society”.

#### **Brief History of the Bauchi State Council for Arts and Culture**

According to Yari (2017 an interview), the troupe was founded in the year 1984 by the then military administrator, Gen. Mohammed Sani Sami, who is now the Emir of Zuru. He was moved by the performances of the Niger State Cultural Troupe (Gwape International) which performed at one of the Trade Fairs in the then Bauchi State. The Trade Fair took turns between the three states of Bauchi, Borno and Gongola. Eventually, the military administrator sought for the assistance of elders in coming up with a dance troupe of their own. Amidst various setbacks, the troupe was formed. Mr Peter Adegboyega Badejo was brought from A.B.U., Zaria to train the group for a period of three months. After the departure of the renowned choreographer, the troupe can now boast of over forty of their own traditional choreographed dances. Among these dances are *Rakachai*, *Itsom*, *Agwangwaje*, *Takai*, *Fulani dance*, *Maladumba dance*, *Koroso*, *Asauwara*, *Tsubtu*, *Kamun-kifi*, *Asawara* and *Baushe*.

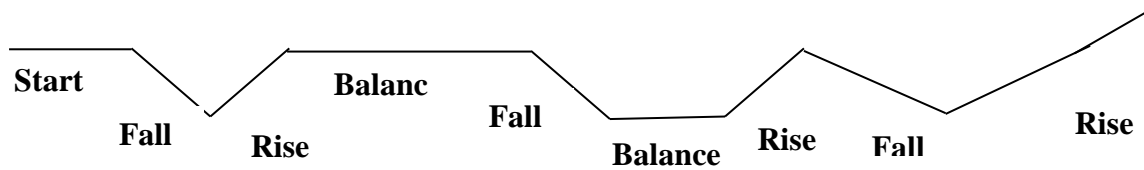
#### **The Analysis of Koroso Dance of Bauchi State Council for Arts and Culture**

The beautification of a particular art especially, expressive art of dance, lies in its performance structure, content and forms. This is because; all elements of body, energy, level, rhythm and space must be carefully understudied in order to unravel their intrinsic function in the presentation. The purpose of the dance performance within its performative context is highly important to its appreciation. Therefore, the performance forms, choreographic contents, technical elements of *Koroso* dance as well as the floor patterns of the dance shall be subjected to aesthetic analysis without sacrificing the sociological relevance and functions of the dance among the people of Bauchi state.

Koroso dance is a common dance among Hausa community in Northern Nigeria. It is usually performed as duet (male and female dancers) to entertain people at public functions. What, however, distinguishes the Koroso dance of the Bauchi State Council for Arts and Culture from another lies in its composition and structure. In Bauchi state, the Koroso dance being designed, choreographed and executed by the State Council for Arts and Culture, comes in duet with men and women forming a troupe. The dance is generally used to entertain people of different communities at public functions such as naming ceremony, graduation, house warming and other events of life. The choreographic input in the dance clearly shows evidence of a serious preparation through rehearsal by the troupe.

In Koroso dance, a group of 12 dancers, 6 males and 6 females, enter the rectangular arena in a unified slow movement after announcing their presence with a call and response rendition of *yayayanmatayaya* by the males which follows with the response of the females *yayasamariyaya ne*. The step is locomotive as the dancers stamp their feet in a hopping manner. The movement dovetails into a high tempo after their salutation to the seated audience. As the tempo increases, the posture also changes. The men bend forward with exaggerated movement of the feet still stamping in a fast speed. A musical instrument, *sarewa* (flute) to be precise, dictates the movement as they return to a gracious tempo movement.

After the poetic rendition of the song “Yaro da gorubasailatsa” fast tempo resumes as the dancers hop to the rhythm and exchange positions with the women. The musical tempo therefore goes thus:



*Fig1: The rhythmic composition of Koroso music*

From this, the arrangement of the music can be seen as artistic. It equally reinforces the performative essence of the dance as an entertainment dance form as it also shows the dynamism in design of the music in rise and fall patterns.

### **Aesthetics of Choreography**

Choreography generally means the creative or perhaps an artistic arrangement of dance steps in a pattern for communicative purpose. The art of choreography goes beyond mere creation of dance steps for dancers to include a total design of array of steps in a synchronised order with other elements of the theatre like music, costume, props, songs, and so on. In Koroso dance as examined in this study, choreography becomes the principal aesthetics.

### **Aesthetics of Floor Pattern in Koroso Dance**

Dance as a visual art is dynamic in its forms and style. Floor pattern is one of the elements that define its dynamism. Floor pattern is the visual image created by dancers on stage which usually come in various shapes such as circle, rectangle, triangle and other creative patterns. Like choreography, floor pattern projects dynamism. In fact, it controls the dynamic appearance of dancers on stage.

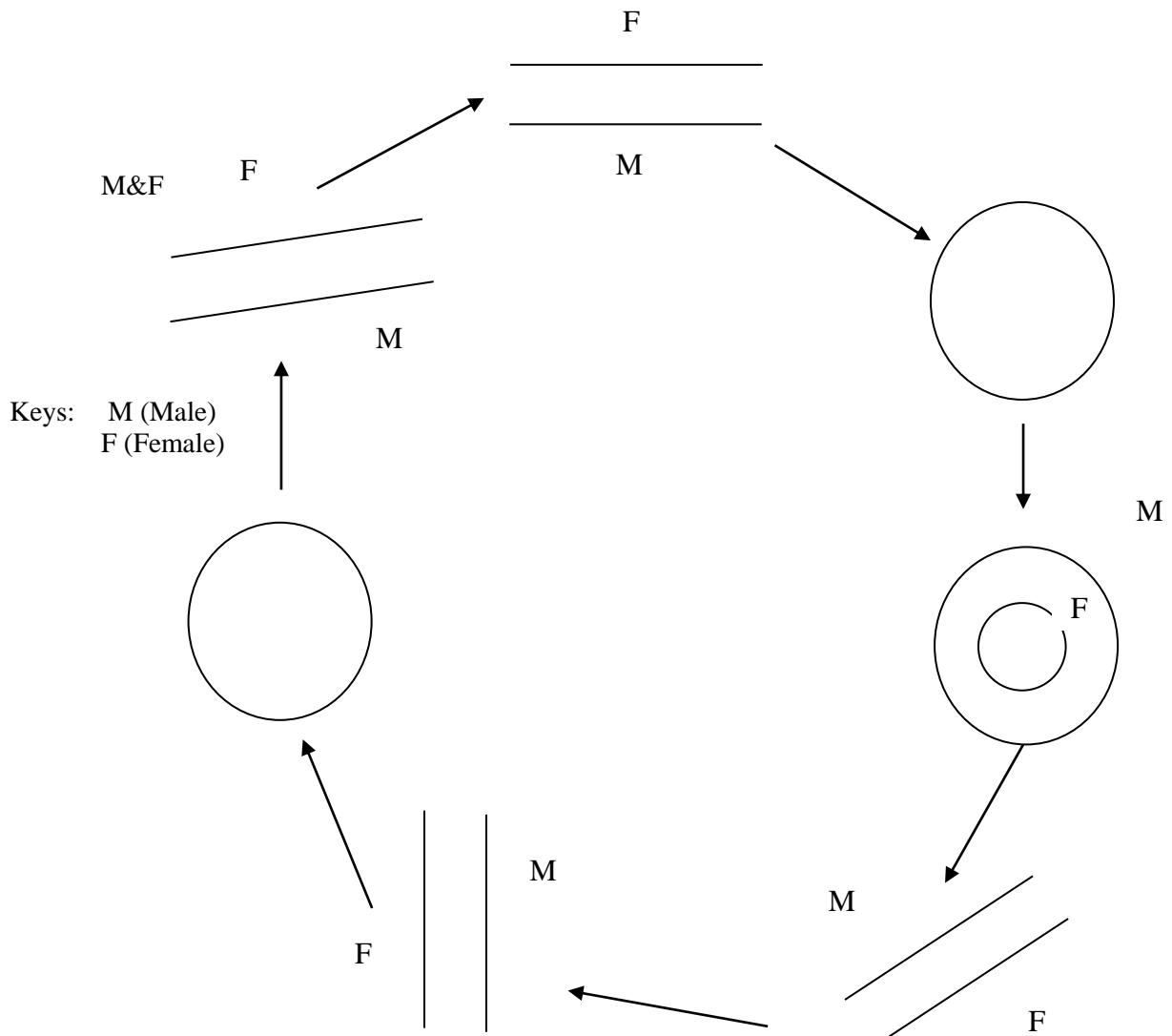


Fig3: the floor pattern of koroso dance

From the pictorial representation of the floor pattern above, It is clear that the aesthetics of floor pattern is highly creative, dynamic and artistic in composition. The entrance pattern shows men and women in a parallel-horizontal line. They appear as couples with the same pace of movements and dissolve into a circular pattern and changed to create two circles with men enclosing the women. This connects to the parallel horizontal pattern with men and women on different lines and dovetails into a vertical parallel lines and interchange positions. This is how the progression of dynamism is done until they return to the starting pattern which leads them out of the dance arena.

Significantly, the inter-connectivity of these movements from one form to another, shows the aesthetics of floor pattern in the performance. The floor patterns relief the audience of not only the stagnant picture but of the monotony of images during the performance. This adds to the entertaining and educating gesture of the Koroso dance, as performed by Bauchi State Council for Arts and Culture.

### Songs and instrumentation in Koroso Dance

In Koroso, the *sarewa* (flute) which is a member of the Duman-Girke ensemble is the major organ which dictates whatever song to be sung in the course of performance. The Duman-Girke musical

ensemble as used by the Bauchi State Council for Arts and Culture is made up of different instruments of Idiophone, Membranophone, Aerophonic classifications of musical instruments. The membranes consist of both the male and female gender. Some of these drums are coloured red to in this case attract the audience. They are also of different shapes and sizes in order to create different sounds and tunes which at the end produce a harmonious rhythm enjoyed by both the dancers and its listeners. They are played with two straight sticks by the *makida* (which can go for both the sticks and the drummers). It consists of the *kazagi*, *shakida*, *tsiluwa*, *mabi da tsiluwa*, *kongas*, *lalajo*, *sarewa* and in some cases *skalangu*. All these instruments combine to produce the music which the dancers dance to. The songs used in this dance are mostly poetic. The *sarewa* makes the call and the dancers respond in song to the call as thus:

Yaro da gorubasaiwasa 2x	All a child can do with a Doum Palm is to lick
Yaro da gorubasai latsa2x	All a child can do with a Doum Palm is to lick
Komai nababbayafinayaro 2x	Whatever is for the elder is bigger than that of the child
Bakandamanakafin ta karye	Kasha wuya2x whatever you come with you shall meet your match
Wajedaya a wajedaya 2x	Together Together
Wajedayagagerogadawagayakuwa 2x	Together is the combination of sorrel, millet and guinea corn
Ahaiyeyaro 2x	Exclamation
A haiyewata ta fi wata 2x.	Oh we are not the same

The use of these songs in this dance aim at teaching morals and to especially encourage togetherness thereby making the people to be useful to themselves and the community at large.



Fig 5: *Duman-girke* drum ensemble.  
Source: Researcher. Date: 18 Nov. 2017

### The use Costume in Koroso dance

Costume is any means of covering worn by performers for any performance. Mudi (2017, interview) explained that the costume used by the dancers of Koroso is *Riga da Buje* (shirt either a short sleeve or armless and trouser) for the males and *Riga da Patari* (top and skirt) for the females. The complete costume consists of *Warki* (skin wrapped round the waist), *Wuri* (skin with beads tied on the head), *Kachai-Kachai* (leg rattles), *Takalmi* (shoes), and *Jigidanwuya* (local beads).





Fig 6: *Dancers in costume*

### **Props in Koroso**

The Koroso dance does not require the use of any prop as it is a simple dance. The dancers dance freely to the music without the use of either stage or hand props.

### *Make-up*

Make-up in a performance is very important because it sends a message to the audience. It is a means of communication especially non-verbal because it is through make-ups that we get to establish difference in roles. In Africa, there is a distinct make-up for almost every event and occasion. In the Bauchi State Council for Arts and Culture, however, the name of the make-up applied is the *Tozali* (traditional eye pencil), *Jan baki* (lip stick) and white powder which is applied by the dancers.

### **Conclusion**

Traditional Nigerian Dance troupes mostly utilise indigenous dances to express situations, beliefs, sentiments, and emotions. Each particular dance has a linkage with human activity. It is a manifestation of human existence. Every experience in the culture is translated into music and dance. Dancing, therefore, is a major source of entertainment and learning in traditional African societies.

### **Recommendations**

In line with the wave of changes in every corner of Nigerian sectors, it is our recommendation that traditional dances such as koroso and many more should as a matter of cultural growth and development be diffused with modern touch in order to elevate the visual aesthetics in choreography; and also modify the packaging of dance performances to attract needed investment and encourage State Councils for Arts and Culture on the integration of similar cultural/occupational dances to create a unique whole without sacrificing the aesthetic relevance of the dances.

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## **SATIRE AS A TOOL FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIETY: A CRITIQUE OF THE NIGERIA POLICE IN SELECTED *BRODA SHAGGI* VIDEOS**

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### **Introduction**

Art in all its forms cannot change society directly, but it can change people, who in-turn are capable of changing society. The film medium as one of the artistic forms through which the members of society can be influenced, have overtime been embraced by a lot of artists due to its efficiency and technological flexibility. The 21<sup>st</sup> century society of today has witnessed and continues to witness rapid technological innovations and advancement. The internet for instance has helped to increase the 'glocal' characteristic of the world, by bringing far places closer and making the world a global village. With the use of the internet in collaboration with the film technology, several artists have been able to create filmic content which they share on the internet to affect their respective societies and the world at large. The capacity that film has to influence the society can be hinged on its ability to ensure cultural change and culture modification. According to Anyagu (2013, p. 154-155),

Film is the most effective medium for the promotion, propagation and preservation of culture, and film which is also, like stage drama, the art form that most explicitly replicates and explains human culture, and socio-political activities, presents in varying degrees, real human situations and tells a story about human beings and their activities within a given environment and time.

Therefore, culture sits at the base of film production and it is the intended target of every film maker either consciously or unconsciously. When cultural change is achieved among the members of the society, it is certain that the society would change.

The proliferation of film production over the years brought about the creation of videos and movies by many people using devices like mobile phones and small camcorders. This 'deregulation' of the film industry has catalyzed and increased the number of people that participate in the production of video films for the consumption of society. The Kaduna State Book and Arts Festival 2019 (KABAFEST 2019) played host to young teenage film makers from the state, who create film using phones and partially broken laptops. The materials for film making are often gotten from within the society. Anyagu corroborates this assertion when he states that, "no film stands outside the socio-cultural issues of its environment" (2013, p. 155). It is either they create to support what is happening in the society, or they create to speak against it. The reason why artists are perceived in some quarters as social commentators is simply due to the connection that their works always have with society. It is impossible for an artist to create a work of art that is not subject to interpretation in connection with society.

The society is made up of several institutions that coalesce to make up the whole of the environment where people live and exist. Social, political, economic and other institutions are available around us as we live, and it is the data that is gotten from these various institutions that is used to create video films. These films are capable of influencing the institutions in a sort of reverse and cyclical manner. The Nigerian police is an example of a social establishment that offers film makers information for their art, through the knowledge and observations that can be gleaned from the practice of the profession. Several filmmakers have utilized materials gotten from the study of the Nigerian police, to create videos that chastise the establishment. Samuel Perry is one of such film

makers that have been able to use film to discuss the Nigeria Police Force in a critical manner. Overtime, he has created the character of *Broda Shaggi*, which is portrayed as a police officer alongside his partner: Officer Woos. Together they portray the Nigeria police force in-light of the behaviors that the members of this law enforcement establishment are known for. The satirical videos intend to chastise the police with the aim of correcting the ill behaviors that they are known to exhibit, with the hope that the institution can become better and help improve the society. Before proceeding further in this discourse it would benefit us to understand what satire entail within the boundaries of this paper. This would help us to put in proper perspective, the arguments that would be presented.

### **Satire as a Tool for the Reconstruction of Society**

Satire is a powerful artistic tool that can be used to covertly drive home a point. With the use of devices like irony and paradox, satire serves as a medium through which issues are addressed indirectly. When it is employed, the aim is often to address the issue indirectly and to achieve the same effect that would have been achieved if the issue were to be confronted upfront. Because satire uses humor, sarcasm and other covert styles to actualize its intention, it requires analysis if it would be fully understood. According to LeBoeuf (2007, p. 1),

Satire is a powerful art form which has the ability to point out the deficiencies in certain human behaviors and the social issues which result from them in such a way that they become absurd, even hilarious, which is therefore entertaining and reaches a wide audience. Satire also has the ability to protect its creator from culpability for criticism, because it is implied rather than overtly stated; in this way, it becomes a powerful tool for dissenters in difficult or oppressive periods.

Since the historical era when the plays of Aristophanes rocked the Greek society, satire has been used to criticize the society and speak truth to power. Its evasive nature has made it possible for important matters of state to be addressed, using light and humorous atmosphere. Despite the tactics that are employed when using satire, it is often impossible to miss the message that it intends to pass. It is usually clad in styles that are generated through the caricaturing of characters. There are three types of satire that are categorized into: Juvenalian, Horatian, and Menippean (Olaniyan, 2015). The Juvenalian satire is named after the Roman satirist, Juvenal; it is known for its harshness and bitter approach to corrupt practices in society. Horatian satire is named after Horace, the satirist; it is known to be less harsh, gentle, smiling and of a sympathetic nature. The third type of satire is attributed to the cynic, Menippus; and it is acknowledged to be the oldest form which constitutes an attack against the foolishness and the vices in the society.

The idea that revolves around criticism is to say the good and bad part about a thing, with the intention of making the thing better. In a situation where the subject or object of criticism is not an action of folly or a vice in the society, the satirical art would often be mild and could be geared towards eliciting laughter to the delight of the audience. However, when the criticism is regarding an issue that the artist believes is injurious to society, then the criticism could be a harsh and bitter one. In the different genres of art: literature, theatre, music, visual art, and so on, satire has been used for the benefit of the society.

The way that it works is such that the satirical piece of art is created sometimes with the use of ironical components, either as characters or as settings or as any other part of the art. The placement of these ironical components together would translate into paradoxical situations. Paradoxes are equipped with the ability to appear unbelievable, as a result of their inability to promote coherent understanding on the surface. They can elicit laughter due to their strangeness and this affords the piece of art the characteristic of humor. Satire is a potent weapon that can be used for the reclamation of social values and morals that are easily swept away, when people do not pay adequate attention to the fundamental ethos of their society. In the traditional African society for example, songs, dances and even styles of drumming are sometimes used to satirize members of the community. The beauty of satire is found in its ability to address issues covertly, yet efficiently. It is able to talk to a person, without directly pointing at the person using a kind of back door approach. It is able to retain its power and force, while being neutral on the surface at the same time.

Much of the message in satire is related through the sub-textual level. In William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (2007), for example, Hamlet is able to criticize his uncle for allegedly killing his father and marrying his mother, through the use of satire. He employs a group of actors and tells them the story to act in front of members of the royal house. The action begins and Hamlet notices the discomfiture in his uncle as he is watching the play; the discomfort later results into an outburst from the uncle, King Claudius. It is then that Hamlet confirms his thoughts and suspicion regarding the King. In the play we know that Hamlet had the option to go directly and confront King Claudius, and accuse him of the death of his father. But he does not take that route; rather, he decides to use satire to get the truth about the matter in concrete terms. This is the ability that satire possesses, to address issues on a sub-textual level and yet get results openly.

### **Analysis of Selected *Broda Shaggi* Videos: Nigeria Police in View**

The growth of the film industry and the fusion that the world realized between film and the social media is an important development in recent history. Many movies are created today that are made as content available on the internet. The multi-billion dollar movie producers Netflix are an example of platforms that have been able to merge the need for easy accessibility of movies through the swiftness of the internet. Some of the films and video content available online and offline, can be created with media devices as small as the mobile phone, and their impact will be phenomenal.

The *Broda Shaggi* videos are an example of available video content online. They are created in episodic forms and can be accessed through internet platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and others. Instagram is one of the various platforms that the artist use to disseminate his content, and on the platform he has been able to gather for himself a following from about forty-five million people. This is good for a filmmaker, to have a large audience that would readily watch any content you put out. The character of Broda Shaggi in the *Broda Shaggi* videos is played by the creator and producer, Samuel Perry, also known as, Samuel Animashaun. Samuel Perry is a graduate of Creative Arts from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, with a B.A honours degree. Born on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1993, he hails from Ogun state which is also his place of birth (Knowefritin.com, 2019). The videos that are analyzed in this paper have been chosen out of the many works of the artist, because it is the opinion of this researcher as it would be discussed in the paper, that the videos have been able to successfully satirize the Nigerian police. The selected videos are six (6) in number: *Mompha rearrested by Nigerian Police Force*, *Yahoo boy vs Police Force*, *A bad day at work*, *Broda Shaggi fights Eniola Badmus*, *The OAP* and *Broda Shaggi shoots a herbalist*. The six videos have a combined time frame of approximately one (1) hour. In this paper, the analysis of the videos would be done under three (3) segments of: Characterization, Setting and Themes.

The problem of police corruption that has bedeviled the Nigeria Police force for a long time now is a problem that affects several policing systems across the world. The seriousness of the problem is based on the fact that corruption make it impossible for the police to fight crime, and to do their job effectively. It is ironical when the people that are supposed to fight crime are found swimming in criminality. The situation is very grievous; and it is necessary that every country that is serious about fighting crime must first cleanse its policing system of criminal practices. All over the world, from countries that have better standards of living to countries that have struggling economies, the problem of police corruption and unethical behavior is a worrisome issue. Several scholars and organizations across the globe such as the Transparency International (2012), Ibrahim (2019) and Bayley and Perito (2011), among others, have documented reports and surveys of police corruption and unethical behaviours. These reports and surveys are testament to the rising need for a clean police system, and what such a development can mean for the society.

Developing and under-developed countries in the world, some of them in Africa, have very bad records of police corruptions and unethical behaviors. Bayley and Perito (2011, p. 5) assert that, "corruption in the developing world is an open fact of life for anyone who encounters a police officer voluntarily or not." The reality of the situation is scary, because it is clear that it is impossible for any society with a policing system susceptible to corruption and unethical behaviors to truly progress. This is because criminals would always be working in collusion with the policemen, and this would see the circle of crime continue endlessly with the citizens at the mercy of criminals. Ibrahim (2019)

emphasizes the problem of corruption in the Nigeria police system in his paper: *Analysis of Corruption in the Nigerian Police Force*. According to him,

there is widespread corruption within the force including those in the leadership positions are not innocent of misbehavior. It can also be argued that the manner in which the junior police officers carry out their duties suggests that they are not accountable to any authority (Ibrahim, 2019, p. 3).

The state-of-things present a serious and problematic situation which calls for urgent attention, if the criminality in our society is to be addressed with a lasting solution. The corruption problem in the Nigeria police force is exemplified in the report by two news agencies on the enforcement of a nationwide lockdown imposed by the Federal Government of Nigeria due to the novel Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic, banning interstate travelling. The Nigeria Police are the foremost organization in the country in-charge of civil maintenance of law and order. Every other security organization works in collaboration with the police, so that the law can be enforced and order can be maintained. In the report by *Politicsnigeria.com* and *thecable.ng* dated 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 and 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020, respectively, the Nigeria Police Force are indicted for aiding the citizens to break the lockdown order placed by the government in exchange for bribe. In the report by *Politicsnigeria.com* for example, the Police are accused of aiding citizens break the ban on interstate travel between Oyo and Ogun state in South-Western Nigeria, for as low as ₦100. This is a regrettable behaviour that could make the government efforts to reduce infection rates and slow the COVID-19 transmission in the country, counter-productive.

The *Broda Shaggi* videos studied in this paper have the same setting, except one. The setting of the video, *Broda Shaggi shoots a herbalist* is the house of a herbalist, where policemen led by Broda Shaggi go to collect charms for protection against bullets. The check-point is a common policing feature used across the world to conduct stop and search duties. Unfortunately, the check-point is one of the locations where the police commit many unethical acts such as accepting bribes and citizen extortion. The videos in this study contain themes of police harassment, bullying and intimidation of ordinary citizens. Bribery is one of the major themes showcased in the videos. There is also the theme of spiritualism and the belief in traditional medicines, which are some of the things Nigerians are known for. It is not uncommon for Nigerians to be seen observing one traditional ritualistic practice or the other, due to their connection to their African roots. Men of the police force and other law enforcement agencies as Nigerians themselves are open to subscribing to the influences of African traditionalism; hence, it portrayal as part of the theme in one *Broda Shaggi* video.

In *Broda Shaggi shoots a herbalist*, Broda Shaggi alongside his other police officer friends go to a herbalist to obtain a potion that would make it impossible for bullets to penetrate their bodies. In a typical caricaturing manner, the herbalist makes his consultations and offers them (the policemen) a magic potion. The potion is to be tested on the herbalist first, he is to be shot and observed to see if the bullet would penetrate his body. The herbalist is shot and injured, then the policemen run away. The video ridicule policemen who are civil officers of law and yet believers of magic and metaphysics. The law uses scientific measures and methods to source for facts and evidences, therefore the irony of police officers believing in something unscientific is obvious in the satire.

In the other video skits: *Mompha rearrested by Nigerian police force*, *Yahoo boy vs Police force*, *A bad day at work*, *Broda Shaggi fights Eniola Badmus*, and *The OAP*, Broda Shaggi and other police character(s) intimidate citizens and bully them by stereotyping anybody seen in a big, fine and flashy car as a yahoo yahoo (internet fraudster) person. With the sole intention of extortion, the victims are harassed and intimidated until they offer the policemen some money as bribe. In the videos, the police officers at some point request for these bribes by themselves from the victims, and where the victims are not forthcoming they are insulted and repeatedly threatened. Though this is not a behaviour that can be attributed to all policemen, majority of them exhibit this kind of behavior and it has been documented in several studies mentioned already in this paper. The Nigerian Police appear not to care that a young man and sometimes woman can have a legitimate job and make a lot of money. They are fast to treat young rich citizens as criminals and particularly, as internet fraudsters. Nigerians have a bad record of participating in financial fraud across the world, but it is inconsiderate

to assume that every successful youth in the country is involved in the act, especially without any concrete evidence. Even with concrete evidence, we all know that it is not the job of the police to be the judge in a case but to charge a suspect in a competent court.

The characterization of actor(s) in the videos is generally funny. The characters are given dialogues that fluctuates in-between seriousness and joke. At one point the characters are saying something funny and at another point they are saying something serious. The funny dialogues are used in a way that they refer to the matter at hand, in a light way. The language that is used in the videos is the Pidgin English. This type of English is very common among the majority of Nigeria's population, and it is derived from a sort of mixture of English words and other words that are gotten from slangs. The ability to use this style of language can assure the artiste that the message of the video would reach many people. In the pattern of characterization, there is a heavy use of irony that makes the satirical component of the videos come out clear. The characters through their actions and dialogues, sub-textually chastise policemen and the Nigeria police force in a way that overtly seem like praises. The words and the actions in the skits generate laughter employed to serve as a tool of emphasis on the issue that is discussed.

A careful study of the videos reveals findings that show how they use satire to seek the reconstruction of the Nigeria police and by extension the Nigerian society. These findings are stated below.

### **Findings**

The artist has been able to use social media in collaboration with the internet and film technology (or art), to offer a social responsibility. In this study the researcher reaffirms that the internet and social media are powerful mediums, and it is important that people are very cautious of what they use it to do. The world is increasingly becoming technological, and so it would greatly benefit any society that has its citizens using the internet to better their community. The researcher discovers that the deployment of satire in the selected videos with the aid of social media instantaneity, help to easily expose the Nigeria police as they continue to put the lives of the entire population at risk with their reckless unethical behavior. If the nation must move forward, the government should take the reconstruction of the police force more serious. The incessant threats to citizens by men of the Nigeria police, subjects the people to unwarranted traumatic experiences that can mar them for life. The police harasses citizens with loaded guns, and dare to shoot unarmed people whose offence some of the times is simply the refusal to offer a bribe. This kind of reality requires correction if we must advance as a people and progress in this country.

Also, due to the nature of the satire employed in the videos discussed in this paper, it is possible for the messages that are embedded in the videos to be easily missed by the viewers. The video skits have the characteristics of Horatian and Menippean type or style of satire. While they attack the vices and the ills in society, the videos also employ soft and gentle approach of criticism. The gentility in the style of criticism can be observed for example in the heavy use of laughter to caricature and satirize the Nigeria Police institution. It is important that if the viewers must grab the messages in the skits, they must not allow themselves to be carried away by the fun of laughter. Laughter in this case is a caricaturing tool that is used to ridicule the police for failing to live up to their duties and responsibilities. There is an African proverb that says, if a problem is too big to worth a cry, then it is laughed at. The people can learn so much from the videos to use and build the society, if they understand them beyond the level of mere entertainment.

The researcher also observes that due to the funny nature of the video skits critiqued in this paper, it is possible for the Nigerian Police to overlook them as mere acts of comedy. It would be a very counter-productive attitude if the Police do not accept criticism contained in the videos, because it can help them to develop if they acknowledge their faults. It is important that the police institution and the government (which is in-charge of the police institution) should take this criticism serious enough to motivate a solid plan or solution to fight police corruption in our society. If this cannot be done, then the malaise would continue to plague the country and it would help crime and criminality to blossom.

### **Conclusion**

In this study we have been able to discuss video film, its place in the modern society of today and the role that the internet has played in the utilization of the film medium for social responsibility. Through a qualitative approach of analyzing and interpreting documents, the researcher remind us of the role satire can play, in the criticism of society, its institutions and members. The paper concludes with findings that the researcher has arrived at from the interrogation of the case study. Satire is re-emphasized as a potent tool which can aid in the reconstruction of the institutions of society for progress. The achievements that satire can get when it used in film art technology and the internet, has been exemplified in this discourse. Easy accessibility by the public, quick dissemination and the reduced cost of film production are some of the reasons why satirical videos on the internet are veritable platforms through which society can be reconstructed.

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**STAND-UP COMEDY, SPOKEN WORDS, SOLO ACTING AND THE  
FESTIVAL OF SOLO PERFORMANCE (*SOLO AFRICA*)**

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**Abstract**

The creative industry in Nigeria continues to make giant strides in order to keep the industry vibrant and promote the arts; and the maiden edition of the festival of solo performance (Solo Africa) is one of such remarkable events. This paper aims to illuminate the performances of the main Stand-up comedians, Solo Actors, Spoken word artistes and other solo artistes at the event and portray them as the continuation of the storytelling tradition. The African folkist theory will be adopted in this research along sides the avantgardist theory of the theatre that allows ample room for experimentation. The Field Study approach is employed in this paper because it gives prominence to observations made de-emphasising numerical data; it is a descriptive qualitative method. Findings in this paper reveal that the storytelling tradition that seems to be going into extinction has long been reborn in the performances of today's solo performers. This implies that the storyteller has been split into the different styles of modern solo performance but an adept storyteller can still manifest all these styles in his performance. This paper therefore recommends that research should not be left in the hands of only scholars and critics, performers should be encouraged to research their own performances and theorise about them, to engender a proper connect between theory and practice.

**Introduction**

Storytelling has been one of the most valuable products of the theatre in Africa since the inception of theatre history; but with the invasion of colonization, civilization and technological inventions, the art of storytelling is being swallowed up in the burgeoning forms of solo performance which are a refinement of the storytelling tradition, that has been exported via especially the slave traders to the Americas, where a plethora of the auditory arts have gained full expression. Monodrama, stand-up comedy, spoken word arts and pop-singing and dancing have become very popular in the theatrical scene of the United States of America and other parts of the globe. Even Africans are not aware that most of these modern pop-culture music, drama and dance traditions have been traced by scholars and critics to the period of storytelling or oral tradition in Africa. Solo Africa aims to sell the art of African storytelling to the rest of the entire world, while reminding Africans about the need to keep, hone and promote this unique gift.

In the maiden edition of Solo Africa, the first Festival of Solo Performance which held in Abuja, in April 2019, the major performances where Monodrama, Stand-up comedy, spoken word/performance poets, solo singers, drum soloist, dance soloist, keyboard soloist and saxophone soloist; all of them manifestly expressing features in their performances that are bold reflections of the storyteller in the African traditional theatre. The storyteller was one who told stories to an audience about myths and legends in the community, stories about man, his environment and his deities; stories that kept the people in check, that taught children and the younger ones how to live according to societal expectations for the peace, security and development of the society. Some of these story tellers were gifted in the art of music, drama and dance and they held their audience spell-bound for the duration of the performance. Some storytellers were very good at imitating, revealing, mimicking, interpreting and representing their characters: human, animal or divine, some were masters of comedy – good at evoking laughter, some were very creative with words – poetic, while others were outstanding when it comes to singing. Most importantly, they were all good at involving their

audience, a very integral part of every storytelling performance. But an adept storyteller is able to act, dance, sing and evoke laughter in one evening or session of storytelling.

This paper will focus on the stand-up comedy, monodrama and spoken word performances during the event because they are obvious representatives of what can be described as ‘folk or oral literature’ in today’s theatre; they represent what the folk use to say and how they use to say it, doing things with and to words, so that generation to generation will be preserved, protected and provided for. Storytellers now run around performing with different nomenclatures as their area of specialization describes; but a storyteller is a storyteller and the basic elements are represented in Jan Vansina’s terse description of the storytelling mode: “The best known situation of performance is the telling of tales. A performer sits, often in the evening, surrounded by listeners and spins a tale.” It is not a mere recitation. He adds:

The voice is raised or lowered, used as a means of dramatization. Nor does the storyteller just sit there. The tale is acted out with body gestures, even when the storyteller is sitting. Sometimes he or she may stand up, move around, and mime parts of the action narrated. In most cases the public is not just watching. The public is active. It interacts with the teller, and the teller provokes the interaction by asking questions, welcoming exclamations, and turning to a song sung by all at appropriate points of the action. The teller and the public are creating the tale together. The teller leads the event but responds readily to the public and leads his or her public to experience the tale. He or she tries to frighten, delight, worry, and put them on tenterhooks, in turn and skillfully builds on the passage which move the audience most, expanding the exciting parts and condensing or transforming the ones where the attention of the audience lags (34-35).

The audience in every storytelling session plays a very important role and from the description of Vansina above what the stand-up comedian, the monodramatist and the spoken word artiste are doing today reveals the storyteller of yore. The fact that Solo Performances take place in high brow event centres like the Hilton and Sheraton Hotel in Abuja or the Eko Suites or Muson Centre in Lagos does not mean they cannot happen anywhere, in fact, storytelling or Solo Performance can take place anywhere including the compound or sitting room of the storyteller, according to Gichingiri Ndigirigi:

The narrator (usually the mother) of an ogre story for example, might break off in the middle of a story to attend to the pot cooking the family’s dinner, or to comment about the goat in the shed that never stops bleating. Or the neighbor might drop in to borrow salt, or snuff, as the children are left wondering what happened next (4).

The smaller the stage space the more exclusive it is for a storyteller to perform. F.B.O. Akporobaro submits that, “the written word today is only an outcome of the “oral forms” which are man’s earliest and original medium of self-expression and artistic creativity” (1). Akporobaro explains further, “an oral literary expression exists as a performance, as a speech act accentuated and rendered alive by various gestures, social conventions and the unique occasion in which it is performed” (3). Performances during the time of Oral Literature come mainly as riddles, proverbs, oral poetry and narratives, the definitions of the present subgenres will further reveal the connection to the storyteller.

### **Definition of Terms**

Scholars and critics in Nigeria have truly not done much in the area of Solo performance; a definition of the following terms will be a proper guide for this paper: Oral Literature, Stand-up comedy, Monodrama, Spoken word/performance poetry, Solo Performance.

Oral Literature has been described variously as traditional literature, orature, folklore, verbal art and folk literature. They refer to the time when Africans, as Ruth Finnegan posits in *The Oral and Beyond*, were dexterous at ‘doing things with words’. According to Finnegan, “it envisages words in the context of action. That is, it is more concerned with what people do with words than with

language as an abstract, cognitive or somehow independent system” (2). She says of her book: “The volume’s prime focus is on people doing things with words orally – spoken, vocalized, unwritten”(3). Vansina sees, “oral tradition as verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation. The definition specifies that the message must be oral statements spoken, sung, or called out on musical instruments only” (27). Finnegan confesses that, “Africa is celebrated above all for the treasure of her voiced and auditory arts, and as home of oral literature, orature and orality, and the genesis and inspiration of the voiced tradition of the great diaspora” (1). Scholars, academics and critics have failed to take advantage of this confession and it is exactly one of the forces that propelled the organizers of Solo Africa to call for more attention in the area of conferences, researches and performances in solo performance to project the form. Furthermore, Isidore Okpewho’s postulation clarifies the many nomenclature of oral literature. He avers:

*Orature* is a recent but seldom used term that again emphasizes the oral character of the literature. *Traditional literature* puts emphasis on the fact that this form of literature comes from the past and is handed down (Latin *trado*) from one generation to another [...] *Folk literature* identifies the creators of this literature as the folk, by which was frequently meant the common, uneducated people mostly in villages or rural communities [...] The word *folklore* implies much more than literature and in some quarters underplays the literary aspect of what the folk do [...] (though by-the-by it is more a Lore than a Literature, and would be most aptly described by the good Saxon compound, *Folklore – the lore of the people*) (3-4).

To buttress his point, Okpewho cites the definition of two East African scholars (Nandwa and Bukonya). They aver that, “oral literature may be defined as those utterances, whether spoken, recited or sung, whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree the artistic characteristics of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious expression” (4-5). The folklore of a people, Okpewho therefore adds, “consists essentially of two kinds of activity: what these people traditionally say (e.g., songs, proverbs, tales) and what they traditionally do (weaving, dance, rituals)” (5). Oral literature, according to Okpewho, is made up of riddles, puns, tongue-twisters, proverbs, recitations, chants, songs, and stories and that they are a representation of only the verbal aspects of folklore. Akporobaro maintains that, “oral literature or folk-literature refers to the heritage of imaginative verbal creations, stories, folk-beliefs and songs of pre-literate societies which have evolved and passed on through the spoken word from one generation to another” (33).

Michael Etherton defines ‘comedy’ as, “a form of drama in which matters work out well at the end of the play, proceeding to this conclusion by way of humour and wit” (13). In the opening paragraph to a paper, entitled, “Stand-up comedy,” Richard Zoglin defines stand-up comedy as “comedy that generally is delivered by a solo performer speaking directly to the audience in some semblance of a spontaneous manner” (1). Stand-up comedy is a performance by one person that is targeted at evoking continuous laughter from its audience. Agoma Awaritoma, in his book, *Stand-up Comedy in Nigeria*, defines a ‘stand-up comedian’ as,

a person who tells stories – short or long – in a funny way in order to evoke laughter. He may employ music and occasional props, but must use a microphone in order to communicate effectively with his (large) audience. Because he is alone, he must learn to use masterfully body language, facial expression and voice control or manipulation to hold his audience attention. He is a very good actor. He is a soloist, who must sing, dance and act very well to remain on stage. He is a person who is funny naturally off the stage but deliberately and skillfully funny on stage (16).

The storyteller displays the skills and qualities of the present day stand-up comedian and could be referred to as one of the first practitioners of the art of stand-up comedy. Historically, the village “idiot” or “fool” or “drunk” has been known to possess some useful skills in comedy. This accounted for why, in most royal courts, these ‘idiots, jesters or fools’ were used to entertain important guests. Martin Grotjahn asserts that, “the clown is a one-man comedy;” and that, “the

clown's history reaches back through the ages to the jester, the fool, and the dwarf of medieval days" (91). Most highly placed people or even great kings in history, used to keep 'court fools' for their own personal entertainment and more. Tony Allen in chapter 2 of his book, *Attitude*, discusses the history of stand-up comedy. He avers:

The traditional fool operates with a similar set of creative options to the traditional storyteller, except that with the fool there is no text being served because none exists. While the fool can call on a vast repertoire of technique and comic business, his performance serves only the moment. Like the storyteller, the fool avoids the first person. He expresses himself through selfless play. Beyond that there are no rules and the options are endless – it's playtime (3).

Oliver John Double, in "An Approach to Traditions of British Stand-Up Comedy," states:

There are various definitive features of the form which can be identified: it is a spoken form; it is a solo form, involving only one performer; it involves direct communication with the audience; and perhaps most importantly, it is defined by the effect it has on its audience, by the fact that it provokes laughter (3).

Colleen Frances Manwell talks about what separates stand-up comedy from other solo performance. He affirms: "Comedy is unique in that there is ultimately only one necessary outcome – laughter and without it stand-up comedy fails to be comedy" (19).

In defining the term, Monodrama, we shall consider Greg Mbajiorgu's effort at differentiating it from other forms of solo performance, as succinctly captured in his opening statement in "Dramatic Essence of Solo Performing Artistes in Post-Colonial Nigeria: 1966 – 2012." He posits:

In carrying out this study, one has avoided using the term solo performance in its generic sense so as to exclude all the other forms of solo performances which are not the concern of this paper viz. solo performance of music (with Don Williams as one of its chief exponents), solo performance as stand-up comedy (exemplified by Ali Baba's brand of comedy), solo exhibition of visual arts and cultural artifacts (which has shot El Anatsui to international fame) and solo performance of comments and commentaries (Church Samson Akpan formally of University of Calabar, was an author of this kind of solo). For the purpose of clarity, this discourse will strictly focus on solo performance of drama by Nigerians, starting from the earliest record of it on the Nigerian stage to the present (33).

Naturally, the roots of the Mono dramatists could be traced to the same storytellers, bards, groits and the shaman in African history like Patrice Pavis submits as cited by Mbajiorgu:

The oral storytelling performance is part of a long secular ancient tradition which has influenced Western theatre practice by setting it against other pre-historic traditions such as Arab storytelling and African griot.

Pavis traces the history of one-man-storytelling art to the ancient narrative tradition. It is very obvious that both the art of Western and African soloists of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have been directly or indirectly influenced by prehistoric oral narrative traditions. This is undisputable because of the theatrical leaning of the ancient story telling format. Storytelling as Brian Crow would put it, "is a theatrical performance common to African cultural traditions which is closely related to drama and often contains dramatic elements" (33).

According to Louis Catron, "Mono dramas you see today have fresh styles and techniques that were established by the twentieth-century theatre artists who contributed new realism, truth, and artistic styles, making the one-person play an increasingly popular, respected theatrical form" (222). Bruce Miller affirms:

A monologue situation is specialized and requires that the acting skills take on a different order of importance than in a play where characters are dealing with each other. Nonetheless, it is part of the actor's craft to be able to reach into his tool kit of technique and use those things that will best serve him at any particular time (155).

Michael Kearns clarifies what this subgenre is all about and what it is not:

Performing solo should be designated as a singular performing art. It is not traditional acting (many highly trained and highly skilled actors struggle valiantly with solo performing). It is not stand-up. It's intended to look easy, relaxed, personal, and improvisational. It requires learning new skills and abandoning certain 'rules' of acting.

Most performers new to solo process view this art form as traditional theatre. It is not. In traditional theatre we watch a story unfold. In solo performing we are taken on a ride by a storyteller, the story unfolds, not in front of us but within our own individual imagination (12).

Even with all these styles of solo performance, the storyteller still stands out displaying stand-up comedy, monodrama and spoken word features in his performance. Nevertheless, how an artiste sustains his act, maintains his connection with the audience and retains his place on stage as a performer is all dependent on his dexterity and talent. Louis Catron opines:

One principal appeal for performers and audiences is the very fact that a monodrama is a solo, a tour de force. For actors, the monodrama is an artistic challenge with more opportunities than multicharacter plays to display talents. For audiences, the soloist shows remarkable abilities, and we can conjecture that the novelty of a single actor also is appealing. For both, the virtuoso performance is one of the monodrama's more attractive qualities, rather like the difference between twelve people each juggling one ball versus one person juggling twelve balls (10).

Louis Catron therefore posits:

Solo production illustrates the power of one – a solitary performer presenting a theatrical experience as richly vibrant and varied as multi-character plays.... it may bring to life a historical or totally fictional character or even an autobiographical story; it may be drama or comedy and it may be a story of one person or it may involve a number of other characters that the actor evokes in the audience imagination – but there is only one actor (1-2).

A monodrama is an improvised or memorized acting by one person in front of an audience aimed at entertaining, educating, enlightening or informing for society to be better; naked theatre by one person, with nowhere to hide and no one to help, withholding nothing and exhibiting or giving everything. Catron states: "The solo theatrical form is what some prefer to call the monodrama. But the form is so flexible that it is also called a monologue (sometimes prefaced by dramatic or theatrical), a solo play, or a one-person show" (7).

Spoken word/performance poetry is defined by the *Urban Dictionary* as,

Poetry intended for onstage performance, rather than exclusively designed for the page. While often associated with hip-hop culture, it also has strong ties to storytelling, modern poetry, post-modern performance, and monologue theatre, as well as jazz, blues, and folk music (1).

The performer also interacts directly with its audience and they deal with topical and current events and issues that their audience can identify with. For the spoken word artiste or poet performer, he prides himself in his ability to play with words; a kind of wordsmith; singing or reciting is his domain. There is an obvious effort not to distract his audience with action, gestures, body movement or facial expressions. His audience has come mainly to hear him (words) and not see him (gestures) acting. Edward Gordon Craig in “The Art of The Theatre” corroborates this point:

The poet’s imagination finds voice in words, beautifully chosen, he then either recites or sings these words to us, and all is done. That poetry, sung or recited, is for our ears, and, through them, for our imagination. It will not help the matter if the poet shall add gesture to his recitation or to his song; in fact, it will spoil all (30).

Furthermore, he believes drama is designed to be seen on stage, while dramatic poem is to be read. He posits: “Therefore gesture is a necessity to a drama, and it is useless to a dramatic poem. It is absurd to talk of these two things, gesture and poetry, as having anything to do with one another” (30).

The foregoing is an extreme position because a well-trained actor could add action and gestures to a well memorized and rehearsed poem and the impact on the audience would be electrifying, it becomes more attractive rather than being a distraction; the theatre of today enjoys change, it continues to evolve in order to satisfy its audience. The spoken word artiste is a direct representative of the storyteller doing things with words. The *Urban Dictionary* re-affirms the African origin, “a spoken word is a revival of an ancient African art form” (4) to foreground its storytelling origin.

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines ‘Solo’ as: “a (part of) a piece of music (to be) played or sung by one person 2 a job or performance... done by one person alone”. Also, to go solo, is seen as going “without a companion” as well as, “to perform alone” (1064). And ‘performance,’ according to Richard Schechner, is “an extremely difficult concept to define.” Thus he looks at it from Ervin Goffman’s point of view: “performing is a mode of behaviour that may characterize any activity. Thus, performance is a “quality” that can occur in any situation rather than a fenced-off genre” (22). Awaritoma Agoma therefore opines that in the theatre, “performance is more all embracing than only ‘acting’, ‘singing’ and ‘dancing’ thus the choice of ‘solo performance’ could convey more theatrical activity” (14). Okumba Miruka says, the word, ‘performance’, is generally understood to mean, “the delivery or rendition of an item” (57). Furthermore, he avers:

The idea of performance nominally implies a demarcation between the performer and his audience. The performance is even guided by certain tacit regulations to which every participant subscribes. There is an orderly sequence of events and the context of performance is defined. For instance, narratives are traditionally told in the evening; there is one performer at a time. Usually the evening narratives take place in very informal settings where the narrator is even at liberty to suspend his tale to attend to domestic issues and come back to continue (57).

‘Solo performance’ unquestionably is any performance by one person in front of an audience. Solo performance is a theatrical art that showcases the improvised or memorized exploits of a single individual (one person) on stage in order to entertain and enlighten as well as inform; in a bid to impacting his immediate audience positively. Greg Mbajiorgu, a major proponent of Solo Performance, in “The Art of Solo Performance: A Study of Funsho Alabi’s Escape from Drugs”, defines Solo Performance as, “a play or drama by one actor who enacts or interprets the role of one or several characters alone on stage” (162). Solo performers are usually individuals with some theatre training; this is what separates them from performers during the time of oral literature, who relied mostly on their talents. Awaritoma Agoma in his PhD Thesis on Solo Performance posits:

The solo performer needs to train and use every available skill in order to achieve his theatrical goal; whether he is acting, dancing or singing, or he is telling stories, playing a guitar or dancing to silent sounds or imaginative music, the fact remains

that a single individual is standing or sitting or even lying down alone in front of an audience performing to their delight. The solo performer therefore needs to be very creative in order to capture, hold and sustain the interest and attention of his audience (4).

Historically, solo performances have also been traced to storytelling, Chennai Patrika in “The Actor on Stage: Solo Theatre”, submits:

Solo performances are thought to have originated through the act of tribal storytelling and narration to convey a message or incident, hundreds of years ago. This has evolved and been honed to what we call a solo act on stage today. The history of one-man shows is hard to trace until the seventeenth century [...] An exciting feature of solo plays is the lack of the fourth wall thus encouraging audience interaction and bridging the gap between both sides of the stage. This not only excites and involves the audience but is also a creative tool for the actor to make sure the audience understands the persona and range of each character since one-man acts are unintentionally open to interpretation (1).

Solo performance is therefore a new but very old art form as John Cairney opines:

The burgeoning of the one-person performance in recent years might lead many to believe that this specialized theatrical genre is nothing more than another of its fashions, but this belies its much older origins. The one person theatrical show goes a long way back. Theatre adapts itself to its own generation and fashions in performance change with it (3).

Thus, stand-up comedy, monodrama and spoken word/performance poetry are adaptations of storytelling as Jo Bonney opines:

At the most basic level, despite their limitless backgrounds and performance styles, all solo performers are storytellers. And if we assume that the very first performances in human history consisted of an individual telling stories in front of other members of his society/tribe, then the form is primal (xiii).

### **Theoretical Framework and Methodology**

The Avant-gardist Theory of the theatre is the main anchor of this paper and it reached its height in the period of *modernism*. Edward E. Wright says the word ‘avant-garde’ is “from the French and it is a military term” (69) whose translation means ‘vanguard’ and they refer to leaders or pacesetters in a movement. They are people who seek to change the conventional “into something they have considered more vital and meaningful” (69); and that these avant-gardist do not believe “the older forms are capable of expressing reality.” He affirms:

They present their substance by disregarding the accepted forms and by using a technique so foreign that the conventional players are often left in a state of amazed wonder. They are creating new principles, establishing new rules for the game, and this is as it should be. The theatre is a living and dynamic institution and as such it is in a constant state of change. Its only alternative is to perish. It is Stark Young who said: “The skillful playwright keeps the theatre alive, but the man of ideas makes it grow.” These men of ideas are always in the minority as they seek out new methods or techniques to attain their goals (69).

Solo performers are avant-gardist setting the pace for any one-man performer and as people of ideas, they are inspired to set new rules as they perform because they realize that the two most important and



compulsory elements in the theatre are the performer and the audience. Richard Schechner informs us that,

what rules are to games and sports, traditions are to ritual and conventions are to theatre, dance and music. If one finds a “better way” to perform, this better way must conform to the rules. The avant-garde is apparently a rule-breaking activity. But actually, experimentation in the arts has its own set of rules (13).

Michael Kearns says to: “Keep in mind that one of the realities of solo is that you are a bit of a renegade. You break rules. Defy the so-called standards of success. Create and commit to your own standards and do not depend on the validation of others” (108). And Jo Bonny tells Alterman Glenn that, “Solo shows are a personality driven form. It’s difficult to mention rules because it’s so individual” (176). And Christopher Ashley also says to Alterman, “the thrill of writing a one-person show is that you get to invent a new kind of theatre for yourself. It’s a great form for breaking the rules” (181). And Logan Murray believes, “there are no rules where creativity is concerned” (xxvii). And in Jordan R. Young’s *Acting Solo* the following exchange gives more insight to the above issue:

Someone said to me once, ‘You’re breaking new ground[...]you’re creating a new theatrical form here.’ I said, ‘That’s not true at all.’ What we’re really doing is going back to a very primitive form of theatre. Theatre started with someone saying to a group of people, ‘I’m going to tell you a story.’ We’re also going back to – and this is what I find exciting – the power of the actor, to create just with words, and with his ability as an actor (187-188).

Frances Harding supports this view with, “the new themes or styles of performance arose from a combination of inspiration, re-generation of existing forms, intellectual decision and direct influences felt from a new source” (17). These are commonplace with solo performance and are exemplified in the performances by the stand-up comedians, monodramatists and the spoken word artistes that featured during the Festival of solo performance – solo Africa; all of them are a re-generation of the existing storytelling form and experimenting with their unique styles of solo performance.

The second theory is that propounded by Sam Ukala – Folkism described in this paper as African folkism; and it simply refers to plays that reflect the “history, culture, and concerns of the folk” and they are composed and performed “in accordance with African conventions for composing and performing the folktale.” But it is common knowledge that, in times of oral traditions nothing was written down; therefore the said: “African conventions for composing and performing folktale” must have been communicated from generation to generation by word of mouth. It is why, according to Sunny Awhefeada in “Sam Ukala, the Folklorist as Dramatist, at 70,” says: “Some of the plays by earlier Nigerian dramatists such as Soyinka, Rotimi and Osofisan appropriate some of the touchstones in folkism, but they did not reflect its full manifestation.” Even Sam Ukala’s early plays did not reflect the full manifestations of the theory of folkism as he fully propounded it. Awhefeada posits that, “a reading of the plays of Sam Ukala often approximates a story telling session.” This is very integral to this study because it is the most important element that connects the stand-up comedian, monodramatist and spoken word artiste to the storyteller; it tries to portray traditional African performance in today’s theatre.

Folkist plays are plays that are grounded in the tradition, culture, values and mores of the African people. *The Slave Wife*, *Akpakaland* and *Iredi War* are some of Ukala’s plays that are submersed with the folktale motif. The storytelling theatre is a quintessence of the procedure and techniques of the oral method of performance as exemplified in the different styles of solo performance in Solo Africa. As avant gardist, their performance must not contain the eight laws of aesthetic response of folkism to make it a folkist performance as propounded by Ukala and articulated by Austin Anigala cited by Stephen Ogheneruro Okpadah in “A Study of Neo-Folkist Aesthetics in Dramaturgy of Sam Ukala.” Their performances may not reflect all the laws but the second and third laws (2. Joint performance law; and 3. Creativity, free enactment and responsibility law) are very

obvious. Again, the fact that they are storytelling forms, where words are wrestled with qualifies them to be folk performances. Sam Ukala has called his published plays folkscript, in line with the storytelling theatre; but because most solo performers like stand-up comedians and mono dramatists rely a lot on improvisation (without scripts), they could be referred to as folk performers. Other trappings of folkism embodied in these folk performances are proverbs, rhymes, singing and dancing which are commonplace with the storytelling theatre.

Stand-up comedians, monodramatists, spoken word artistes and even song soloists may not manifest the entire eight laws of folkism but as folk performers, they are very creative individuals who have realized that they must bond with their audience; it is a joint performance with their audience, the other character as far as they are concerned is the audience, they are the reason they are on stage and they are solely responsible for their success or failures. Law one (law of opening) and law eight (law of closing) are also observed in these auditory styles of solo performance. Most importantly however, folk performers realize that words, whether sung, recited, spoken or dramatized are the major tools for achieving folk performance. As storytellers, they paint, carve, build, choreograph and perform with words. But a combination of their American designation: stand-up comedy, mono drama and spoken word and their African origin, produce in their performances this unique flavour that goes beyond African-American.

The Field Study Methodology was deployed and it helped the researcher to observe closely the live performances of the major stand-up comedians, mono dramatists and spoken word artistes as well as view the recorded video; and as a part of the organizers of Solo Africa there was an open line of communication especially towards the finalization of the PhD Thesis of this researcher entitled “Solo Performance in Modern Nigerian Theatre: A Study of Select Solo Actors.” It is a descriptive approach and it is qualitative.

### **Solo Africa – the Festival of Solo Performance (Maiden Edition)**

Solo Africa – the Festival of Solo Performance was organized to promote and project this unique subgenre of the theatre (solo performance) as one of Africa’s contributions to the world; also to acknowledge and appreciate veteran contributors to the art of solo performance through its Award for Solo in Africa or Africa Solo Award (ASA), encourage burgeoning performers to consider solo performing as an entertaining, economical, impactful and profitable theatrical form through its ‘Ultimate Solo Challenge’ (UTC) that preceded the main festival as well as educate students of theatre, dramatic, creative or performing arts about this neglected aspect of theatre studies and draw the attention of researchers and critics to do more in this area while theatre scholars are enjoined to deliberately add solo performance to their curriculum as a subject of study, while the entire corporate world and other stakeholders are invited to continue to sponsor and support Solo Africa as an annual event in the creative industry.

The three major storytelling forms that have been established in this paper are stand-up comedy, monodrama and spoken word and they were well represented in the performances of Onome Da Saint (Abuja based), Chief Otota and De Don (both based in Lagos) three stand-up comedians with radio talk shows in Nigeria. The monodramatist include the pacesetters of solo performance in Nigeria: Tunji Sotimirin – actor/playwright/lecturer and first person to perform a full solo play in Nigeria, Greg Mbajiorgu, actor/playwright/author/Lecturer and first Nigerian to publish a solo play, Benedict Binebai – solo playwright/Lecturer, Rachael Tuodonye – actress and first female to perform a full length solo play in sub-saharan Africa, Rudolf Kansese – Lecturer and reputable director of solo plays), Grace Okonkwo – actress and student of theatre arts. And the Spoken Word Artistes included Emmanuel Ishaku – actor and student of theatre arts and Michael Meremma Nwadiolor – winner of the second position in the Ultimate Solo Challenge (UTC). Distinguished theatre academics who were present to present the African Solo Award (ASA) to the recipients include Prof. Sunday Ododo, Prof. Daniel Omatsola and Prof. Mabel Evwierhoma (represented by her husband, Engr. Evwierhoma) amongst other academics at the event. This study is not a detailed analysis of the performances, it will therefore mention a few of the outstanding and memorable performances relevant to it because of space; they are *Molue* by Tunji Sotimirin performed by Tunji Sotimirin who first performed *Molue* exactly 30years ago. *Karena’s Cross* by Rachael Tuodonye written by Benedict Binebai as directed by Rudolf Kansese and *The Prime Minister’s Daughter*, an adaptation of Greg Mbajiorgu’s *The Prime*

*Minister's Son* performed by Grace Okonkwo as written and directed by Greg Mbajorgu himself. De Don put up an amazing stand-up comedy performance that held the audience in delirious laughter for the entire duration of his performance. Emmanuel Ishaku and Michael Nwadiolor charmed their audience with the music of words in their spoken words pieces entitled "I am God" and "Caesar Owes Me", respectively.

### Conclusion

This paper has established the fact that Stand-up comedy, Monodrama and Spoken Words are a manifestation of the storytelling tradition of the African theatre and it is rooted in folkism. And because it is a one person performance, it comes under the canopy of solo performance. Each strand of storytelling has their area of strength for example; in the performance by De Don, from his first sentence to his last sentence the audience was laughing uncontrollably, thus the stand-up comedian is that storyteller who is very good at evoking laughter, his forte is comedy. While Sotimirin in *Molue* and Rachael in *Karena's Cross*; held the audience spell-bound with their mind blowing dramatization and embodiment of multiple characters in one person, they are storytellers that are good in drama. The spoken word pieces performed by Emmanuel Ishaku and Michael Nwadiolor stung the audience with rhymes, rhythms and pace, very musical combination of words without gestures or action as observed in stand-up comedy and monodrama. Undoubtedly, they are storytellers skillful in the use of words. Further evaluation unveils solo performers as avantgardist who continue to experiment with their performances on stage as long as their audience is satisfied. They realize that the theatre is constantly evolving seeking for new and exciting ways to keep increasing audience attendance without losing sight of the fact that the two most important elements for theatre to take place is the actor and the audience.

Greg Mbajorgu and Tunji Sotimirin like this researcher (a practicing stand-up comedian, performance poet, lecturer and the initiator and organizer of Solo Africa) are still performing apart from researching and writing with no deliberate encouragement from the academia. A great thinker once said until the philosopher king is king there will be no peace in the republic. Until performers are encouraged to research, analyse and evaluate their own performances and a reward system set up to encourage gifted artistes to continue to perform until they go down six feet; and also until, we begin to have "inaugural performances" just like we have "inaugural lectures" this meeting point between theory and practice may continue to be artificial or difficult to attain.

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**TRENDS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THEATRE: AN AFRO-SEMIO-AESTHETIC INTERPRETATION OF IDEGU'S *TOUGH MAN* AND ODODO'S *HARD CHOICE***

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**Abstract**

Since the emergence of theory in the literary circle, right from the time of Aristotle till date, there has been changing phases of theory. That is theories wearing a new garb. There has been nothing really new since the ancient time rather, we have witnessed a new dressing of theories. These trends gave birth to a mother movement or theory like Afro-postmodernism. This emerges because most literary scholars till recent times believe there is dearth of African theories that can help in the interpretation of African plays. This is because western theories may have not really helped in the interpretation of African plays. Afro-postmodernism has created the avenue of trending theories like Ukala's Folkism and Canice Nwosu's Ichoka Mythic-Folkism and many others in Nigeria. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that the current study looks at Afro-Semio-Aesthetics as viable approach in the interpretation of Nigerian plays. The study adopts the content analysis of qualitative research methodology by experimenting Afro-Semio-Aesthetics in the interpretation Idegu's *Tough Man* and Ododo's *Hard Choice*. The findings reveal that there is dearth of African/Nigerian theories that can be used in the interpretation of African plays. The study concludes that there are lot of Afro-semio-aesthetic elements embedded in Nigerian plays that require indigenous creative/literary theories of interpretation for meaning making. The paper recommends that efforts should be geared towards the evolvement of more African theories of interpretation for interpreting African.

**Introduction**

Right from the time of Aristotle to modern era there have been different forms of conventions in the theatre practice. Aristotle the Greek philosopher has postulated what drama should look like and what should be put together for a work to be referred to as drama. This trend has influenced dramatists right from Soyinka, Rotimi, J.P. Clark and this has equally transcend the aforementioned till the current playwrights (Mohammed-Kabir & Onuche 1).

The above is an insightful epigram for the current study. This is overwhelming because it serves as a key into the discourse. They maynot have been anything new in terms of theorizations, rather wearing the existing theory(ies) anewgarment and making it looks like it is new. In the same vein, Ameh Akoh submits that,

every theory thus merely exhumes past theories and wears them new baptismal garbs, and from structuralism and semiology to feminism to reader-response, each theory always attempts to offer its own mode of salvation to the reading of the text, or when it cannot it ends up celebrating its impossibility. And by extension from the reading to the writing and production of a text.

Ameh Akoh argues further that, "...theory had always existed since Plato-Aristotle, or even earlier in its orality, in no other period in history has it so vigorously been a subject of academic discourse than the last three decades of the twentieth century up to date" (1). That is to say, besides Aristotle's conventions in the practice of theatre and drama, theatre practice since the advent of Hegel and Marx and Engels has taken a definite ideological repositioning in the struggle of theories and theorizations. Example can be drawn from this:

As against Aristotle's position on giving strong vent to capitalism, Marxist aesthetics and analysis of the society has been employed both in the conventional and popular realm to release the people from the claws of capitalism, and even conscientise them to revolt against decadent social order that oppresses them (Mohammed-Kabir & Onuche 1).

The trending thing since the inception of theory and practice of theatre – ranging from traditional theatre to the modern theatre, theories have assumed different position in the practice of the arts. Some of these theories stem from romanticism down to modernism, postmodernism and post postmodernism, and many others. This is corroborated by Mohammed-Kabir and Onuche thus:

Out of the many ideologies that have influenced playwrights around the globe are classicism and romanticism. This no doubt has not help in the emancipation of man. Therefore, other 'isms' like realism and naturalism began to ensue with the quest to solve the numerous problems facing human existence (1).

These theories not only influenced playwriting and the interpretation of such plays, but also influenced acting, directing and the performance of these plays on set for audience consumption. These theorizations as trending thing in theory and practice of the theatre, equally affected the management of the performance space like the theatre complex, found space. Hence, from Aristotle to Hegel, what we have witnessed in these periods is a shift from one form of capitalist ideology that supports the high class until Hegel who slightly digressed and made a scholastic U-turn as captured by Saint Gbilekaa thus:

the appreciation and celebration of literature in the world today comes under two critical schools: the formalist and the radical. The formalist school is guided essentially by literary canons of Aristotle and Hegel while the radical are guide by the precepts of Marx and Engels. It is important to note that this aesthetic schism is clearly based on ideological persuasion (28).

Corroborating Osundare's submission that theory in the process of transformation provides a: "neat, handy background aid to methodological and analytical procedures" (19). That is of reading, writing and producing a text. As in the same manner through which it goes to: "govern interpretation of text by appealing to an account of interpretation in general" (Knapps & Michaels 723). By extension, it aids the analytical discourse, criticism and rational diagnosis of the text. In the perception of Jackson, a 'revolutionary fantasy' (1). It is against this backdrop that this study set the foreground to look at the influence of Afro-semio-aesthetics as one of such trending approaches to text interpretation as an act in theory and practice of the theatre.

Semiotics is concerned with the study of signs and symbols of all kinds, what they represent or mean and how they relate to the things or the ideas they refer to; sign, signifier and signified. Semiotics, also known as semiology, the science of signs, according to Charles S. Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure, is concerned with the relationship between form and meaning, with particular emphasis on language. Charles Sanders Peirce further defines sign as, "something which stands to somebody for something" (67). On the other hand, Mark Fortier defines semiotics or semiology as: "the study of signs: words, images, behaviour, human and animal arrangements of many kinds, in which a meaning is relayed by corresponding outward manifestation. The falling leaves in autumn, for

instance, are sign of the coming of winter” (Fortier 18). That is, they can be used interchangeably. On this premise Doki argues that, “it is, therefore, concerned with the process of signification and communication, that is, the means whereby meanings are both generated and exchanged” (31).

Aesthetics is generally believed to mean ‘sensual perception’ and is concerned with ‘feelings’. Sensual perception as we know is connected to the/with the ability to acquire an insight in something, an object, symbol, sign, language, character, spectacle, costume etcetera. However, that ability is not dependent mainly on the physical manifestation of the eye-sight, but on the reflection that is transmitted into the eyes and the sense of sight. This implies to this research that perceptions are reflected into the inner eyes; they belong to the sense or the mind, and are capable of generating some feelings and meanings. It is closely related to the philosophy of art, which is concerned with the nature of art and the concepts in terms of which individual works of art are interpreted and evaluated.

### **African Aesthetics and Semiotics Explained**

Avalanche of African scholars and critics like Christopher Okigbo, Wole Soyinka, J.P. Clark, Okot p’ Bitek, Rowland Abiodun, Kofi Agawu, Zulu Sofola, Obiakor, Sam Ukala, Sunnie Ododo and Canice Nwosu, among others have succinctly captured the term African aesthetics directly or indirectly in their quest to propagate Afro-postmodernist drive. As it is said that: “The term, *African Aesthetics*, refers to the African perception and appreciation of the nature, beauty, and value of artistic expressions or representations” (Shava 11). The sensual perceptions of Africans about their works, nature and culture (Afro-semio-aesthetics). By extension, it is the perception and appreciation of nature, art and beauty of artefacts by Africans and for Africans at home and in the diaspora. It is embedded in the plurality of African cultures, and embodied in people’s art and practices within their lived African societal contexts. It draws from and is directly related to the diverse geographical, environmental, historical, cultural, religious, or spiritual experiences of African peoples, which is the position of African semio-aesthetics. African semio-aesthetics is a significant component of African people’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage that simultaneously affirms their diversity and reinforces their cultural unity and togetherness. These cultural components of the African people are reflected in Idegu’s and Ododo’s plays, respectively.

While it may have been useful to utilize only Western theoretical paradigms in the study of African art history and aesthetics early in the twentieth century, it has now become imperative to search carefully within the African cultures in which the art originate, and to use internally derived conceptual frameworks in any critical discourse on African art (17). The essence of the African semiotic and aesthetic concept is its representation as a construct of African people on the continent and people of African descent in the diaspora that articulates African culture. Hence, “Africanist art historians have begun not only to reexamine their Western-derived methodologies but also to search for theoretical alternatives, lest they lose the ‘African’ in the African Art” (Abiodun 20). To this study, African semio-aesthetic perception may be seen as how Africans consciously define their own concept of beauty that is, the African-derived standards of perceiving, appreciating, appraising, or applying Afro-semio-aesthetic values or knowledge of things in Africa.

African semio-aesthetics is African centered, and it reveals the cultural bond between Africans in the continent and abroad. Corroborating this Susan Vogel posits that, “African artists place a high value on fine workmanship and mastery of the medium” (43); which may need proper understanding by the West to avert misjudgment of the African/Nigerian conceptions of their cultural practices. Therefore, African semio-aesthetics embraces a rich variety of creative forms and styles peculiar to people of African origin that incorporate a combination of practical, physical, material, temporal, and spiritual aspects. To this end, Adams posits that, “while the African continent is vast and its peoples diverse, certain standards of beauty and correctness in artistic expression and physical appearance are held in common among various African societies” (45). It includes African artistic expressions: visual and performative images, signs, symbols, verbal arts (poetry, oratory performance), rhythm, music (song and dance), dress, hairstyles, cosmetics, designs (African architecture and decorative patterns), and crafts in and from Africa. African semio-aesthetics therefore can be seen by the current study as the way African conceives his numerous artefacts, the meanings of these artefacts and their religious, social, political, economic values in both discursive and non-discursive perceptions.

Beyond the rituality of African art history, Afro-semio-aesthetics goes a long way to portray other values like communication, social interaction, meaning making values that are critically perceived and conceived by Africans in Africa and Africans in the Diaspora. Thus: "Taken collectively, these values and standards have been characterized as comprising a generally accepted African aesthetic" (Welsh-Asante 60). African artefacts have generally been exhibited with reference only to cultural context and use. In view of recent studies of African aesthetic principles and related moral and religious values, there is good reason to emphasize the formal African semio-aesthetic aspects of the objects and the moral and religious ideas they express.

The ethical and religious basis of African art may explain why the principal subject is the human figure; African art often appears in ritual contexts that deal with the vital moral and spiritual concerns of the human condition. To corroborate this, Abiodun submits thus:

No single traditional discipline can adequately supply answers to the many unresolved questions in African art history. Because of the aesthetic, cultural, historical, and, not infrequently, political biases, already built into the conception and development of Western art history... (18)

Hence, Afro-semio-aesthetics is an ideal enterprise in the arts which is used to evaluate, judge and interpret artistic consumptions in Africa. This is to say aesthetics is not alien to Africa as well as other climes like Europe, America and Asia. Aesthetics was also explored in the Greek and Roman arts as found in their art forms, be they sculpture, artefacts, literature and performing arts, among others. African aesthetics has been dominated and influenced by the West who misjudges African semio-aesthetics. Barry also argues in favour of African aesthetics in the arts, maintaining that, "African cultural aesthetics has been dominated and characterized by Euro-western tradition and culture because of the influx of colonialism" (61). Hansen comments further that,

the study and analysis of African art and aesthetics have been dominated by Western culture. Initially the aesthetic sensitivities of African cultures were characterised as 'primitive' and of low intellectual calibre. Africans reacted to such negative stereotyping by articulating their own, deliberately by non-western aesthetic theories (61).

Therefore, African critics and writers have done a sort of re-writing or re-examination to the practice of Euro-western misconception of African cultural aesthetics in many instances, such as, in drama, poetry, music, novel, and film, among other means. Supporting this, Sesan further argues that:

At the turn of twentieth century, African philosophers, anthropologists and literary historians began with frantic efforts to examine and revamp African art and aesthetics from the moribund state it was forced to be by the western critics. Their argument was that the aesthetic quality of any art cannot be appreciated without due consideration for the culture that produces it. Before full aesthetics of African art can be appreciated, there should be close consideration of African culture (10).

Consequently, we are not only concerned in the cultural signs and symbols explored in the plays selected to be studied and analysed as African cultural symbols of Afro-semio-aesthetics which eventually produce the desired taste, beauty, and communication, rather we are also concerned about the different meanings they (cultural symbols) project 'non-discursive' wise. Therefore, we are looking at cultural signs and symbols in *Tough Man* and *Hard Choice*, as African cultural semio-aesthetic signs, symbol, codes for communicative hegemony.

Afro-Semio-aesthetics, as coined by these researchers, is a conceptual amalgamation of both semiotics and aesthetics designed to bring some strands of semiotics that are relevant in the interrogation of aesthetics in the selected plays of study from the African/Nigerian perception. It implies that if both concepts deal with sensual perception as posited by the researchers, it therefore means that, "African-semio-aesthetics" in Afro-postmodernist era, simply means the ways Africans



perceive their signs and signification which is African semiotics and the sensual perception of their work of art and culture which is African aesthetics.

The concept of Afro-semio-aesthetic dwells on the premise that every clime has its culture, so does Africa. African-semio-aesthetics lean on idea and correctional impetus against the euro-centric domination of the African semiotics and aesthetics. This correctional impetus is that Africa has semiotics and aesthetics. African semiotics and aesthetics deal with the philosophical sensual perception of the African man and his cultural heritage. The African perception of his culture lies with how he perceives his culture and tradition, his arts and artifacts, mythologies, legends, symbols and signs which are relatively African. Thus, Africa has the aesthetic and semiotic sensibilities that are different from the Euro-American aesthetic and semiotic sensibilities. In other words, African semio-aesthetics is the manner Africans evaluate, assesses and judges his arts and culture.

Therefore, African semio-aesthetics, is geared towards evolving a concept or theory that can be used in the reading and interpretation of African playtexts with a view of revealing those afro-semio-aesthetic ingredients fused in those playtexts by the playwrights that can assist in the generation of meanings and communicating effectively. Concretely, African semio-aesthetics emphasizes that Africans have aesthetics and semiotics that Africa has semiotics and aesthetics which deal with the way Africans perceive their cultures and arts, this perception influences the reading and interpretation of African playtexts. This is the position of the current study. It does this through Afro-semio-aesthetics.

#### **Synopsis of Idegú's *Tough Man***

A mad rush, then a heavy bang suggests that a big massive auto crash has taken place and plucked down Steve Achema in his prime in Efile, the land of the living, from where he transcended to Efojegwu, the land of the dead to meet other beloved patriots and descendants of Igala land. In Efojegwu, Achema was accosted by Inikpi and Ameh who lifted him up to his feet and offered a seat among them. These three beloved descendants of Igala engaged themselves in a discourse on the purposeful leadership and good followership in Igala land. As the drama unfolds, Inikpi, Ameh and Achema agreed to take a look down and watch the activities of characters in Efile, the land of the living. From the echoes of reality in Efile, the land of the living, Inikpi, Ameh, and Achema were flabbergasted and bewildered as demonstrated by the sighs, shaking of heads, heads resting on the palms and similar postures. Inikpi, Ameh and Achema agreed that the future of Igalaland and the people is blurred. Achema provides reasons for the ugly state of affairs in Efile; the land of the living. Inikpi, Ameh and Achema nod their heads in agreement that hope is not lost. As they continued to gaze down unto the land of the living, they saw a boy in whom, they believe lies the future hope of the Igala land.

#### **Synopsis of Ododo's *Hard Choice***

The play, *Hard Choice*, opens in a joyous atmosphere where the prince of Igedu Kingdom and the Princess of Emepiri Kingdom want to get married. But there is pandemonium as some unidentified and masked youths invade the venue and snatched away the crown of the king of Igedu kingdom. This ugly scenario marks the beginning of the tragic events in the play. The quest to find the missing crown begins. The High Chief Ubanga is behind this ugly incident because of his selfish interest in marrying the princess of Emepiri Kingdom. After the snatching the crown, it was handed over to the queen who is unknown to King of Emepiri, the chief plotter of the incident. As the play progresses, King Iginla who is in the hideout and his Bashorun, begins to plan for war if the missing crown is not found. The snatching of the crown is a disgrace to their kingdom; that act is on its own a taboo, because one of the symbols of authority of Igedu kingdom is missing. They promise war which makes Eze Okiakoh to seek for peace, as a result, goes to meet King Iginla in his hideout. The play proceeds and it is revealed that the crown in question is in Oguguru shrine and the only thing that can bring it out of that shrine is red wine which is human blood, and that is the Princess' blood. But it comes to the fore that it is the Queen who vows to sacrifice the Princess for her husband to become the king about twenty-one years ago, the event that leads to the death of Eze Okiakoh's brother. On hearing this the Princess makes a hard choice by willingly presenting herself for the sacrifice as that is the only thing that will avert the impending war on the kingdom.

### **Afro-Semio-Aesthetic Interpretation of *Tough Man and Hard Choice***

Emmy Idegú crafted his play, *Tough Man*, by bringing together the world of the living and the dead. Through sensual perception of aesthetic and semiotic elements, he tries to bridge the gap between the world of the living and the dead. This is explicit from the conversation between Achema, Ame and Inikpi below:

- Inikpi: (*Deep silence.*) Oh, what a shame. Is this the same land I died for?  
(*Silence.*)
- Ame: Their intrigue, blackmail and sabotage that brought me here before my time has not ceased.
- Inikpi: Will their intrigues ever end?
- Achema: How? They are terrible students of history. They refused to abide by the selfless sacrifice that Inikpi stood for. They rejected the focus and development dream of Ogbai Kolo Ame.
- Ame: (*Looking at Achema.*) And they terminated the vision, mission and pragmatic people-oriented leadership you stood for (64).

He artistically, looked into the cosmic world of the Igala culture to create smooth and peaceful co-existence between the world of the living and the dead, substantiating the position of Soyinka in *Myth, Literature and the African World View*. Soyinka in postulating his theory of the “Fourth Stage,” locates the link between the world of the living, the dead and the unborn and opined that there should be link between these three worlds for a better tomorrow. The world Soyinka refers to as chthonic realm, mythonic helm or divinity essence. Idegú may have leaned on this to create communication between the Igala cosmic worlds of the living (Efi), the land of the dead (Efoj’egwu), and the highest realm (the realm of Odoaba Oga’gwu-Ojo Chamachala). Ancestral help was explicated thus:

- Inikpi: (*Sighing.*) Humnnnn. So what do we do? How do we help our people? Things cannot continue like this. (*To Ame*) What do you think?
- Ame: There you come again. You sacrificed yourself for Igala people. Your death was never appreciated... (22)

The above may be understood through what Ricoeur refers to as, “the gained understanding is used for expanding the text into a life world, here the interpreter seeks to achieve the writers thoughts and feelings but does this through (the interpreter’s) understanding and meaning gained from the text” (Ricoeur 1627). Locating the synergy between Soyinka’s perception of the cosmological order of the African world and that of Idegú is an effort to deconstruct the plays selected for this study through language, character and Afro-semio-aesthetic analyses. This last realm alone may create difficulty for the reader if he is not well grounded in the art of interpretation through binary oppositions and sensual perception of semiotic and aesthetic analyses. Though, through the playwright’s use of the character of Achema, we were able to deduce what Idegú meant by the last realm. These are all encoded in the play for the reader to create meaning out of what he has read. It is clearly stated in the line of Achema thus:

- Achema: Ogbai Kolo. You know we have three worlds. I lived in the first, I tarried in the second with you. It is time to go and take a look at the third realm with Ojo chamachala. I cannot keep him waiting any longer. Odoaba’gwu has waited for me enough” (70).

Adopting Ricoeur’s explanation that,

the interpreter explores about this question ‘What is this book about?’ And examines the texts inside nature thereby developing the quest to take an adventure into knowing what the play is all about on the part of the reader of a play (Ricoeur 1624).

This could be interpreted as whether Odoba is sitting there and waiting for the character of Achema or that is the third world. This can only be done and understood through the tenets of Afro-semio-Aesthetics. The reader/interpreter may equally find ideological disparity between Idegu's interpretation of the three worlds and Soyinka's perception of the three worlds. Emmy Idegu crafted his play, *Tough Man* by bringing together the world of the living and the dead. African semio-aesthetics therefore is seen by the current study as the way African conceives his numerous artefacts, the meanings of these artefacts and their religious, social, political, economic values. Idegu artistically, looked into the cosmic world of the Igala culture to create smooth and peaceful co-existence between the world of the living and the dead.

The exchange between the trio in Idegu's *Tough Man* will implicitly help in the interpretation of the play text through Afro-semio-aesthetic values. The trio enumerate their sordid experience and ordeal in the world of the living.

Achema: They pursued me from birth.

Ame: Oh yes, I remember. Yes, from birth they sharpened their swords against you. Odoba used me to defend you.

Achema: That is true. Your concern before you left us helped me to a point.

Inikpi: (*Smiling.*) What a joy to hear that. It is good you both are here now.

Ame: (*To Inikpi.*) But you started it all. You gave your all for those of us coming after you to emulate.

Achema: That is correct. But they always have a way of pushing their best into early exit from *ef'ile* (21).

The connect between the living and the dead was established by Inikpi as she tries to champion the way forward on how to ameliorate the problem of the people. What is most important is that, the relationship between the living and the dead should be well understood by the reader/interpreter through Afro-semio-aesthetic elements for proper interpretative purposes.

In Ododo's *Hard Choice*, a clash of interest exist between Chief Ubanga and the Queen. There is an indication that the Queen is only using Chief Ubanga to deter the princess from marrying a prince from another community (tribe) and Chief Ubanga carries out the action for his interest in marrying the princess. In order for the Queen to achieve her defiant aim, she indulges in the use of hooligans or touts through Chief Ubanga. Who invaded the venue of the marriage and snatched away the crown of King Iginla. The crown here caught the attention of the researchers; the symbol of authority to King Iginla and Igedu Kingdom. After the crown was snatched away, what becomes of the character of King Iginla? This is because the crown is an embodiment of meanings. The sensual perception of Africans about the crown which culminates African semiotics and aesthetics is apparent to Africans/Nigerians. This is evident from Bashorun's line thus:

BASHORUN: Good to know, but Your Highness, your search is rather too slow for us. In case you don't know, the life of our king hangs on that crown. If in three days, it not recovered and surrendered, we shall be left with no other choice but to match on your kingdom and recover the crown ourselves. I believe you know what that means. In one word ... WAR! (*Turns and leaves with his men. The others remain speechless as the message sinks*) (Ododo 23).

The crown that propelled Bashorun to threaten Eze Okiakoh and the entire Emepiri kingdom with war demands interpretation through Afro-semio-aesthetic analyses of the play. The crown holds sensual perceptions of Afro-semio-aesthetics. The three elements (explanation, understanding and appropriation) of Ricoeur's theory of interpretation become necessary to the study of these playtexts. A reader/an interpreter needs to know what these plays are all about. He needs to know what the plays talk about and he appropriates the plays to existing phenomena in the world. The priest in Africa means a lot, hence they all resorted to consulting him and Eze Okiakoh in *Hard Choice* asks:

EZE OKIAKOH: Debia, what is the message?

DEBIA: The sun and the moon are on a course of collision and the stars are trembling. Why? A vow is abrogated but appeased. The object of appeasement is sacrosanct and restless. Your Highness, only the original vow will avert the calamity, but it is too dear to let go. My king, when a medicinal pot of soup sits on fire boiling, only the brave and courageous attempt a leak from it. My lord, fire is burning inside water and water is helpless. Otapaipoh says that only red wine will quench this fire if...

CHIEF UBANGA: (*Cuts in.*) Enough of these incomprehensible statements.

DEBIA: It's not me, it is Otapaipoh. Otapaipoh says that what belongs to the gods is being forcefully substituted; deceit and connivance are conveyor belts in this act. Your Highness, your clue to solving this impending calamity is to offer royal red wine to the gods. I speak no more ... (*Packing his things to depart, other chiefs intercepted him.*)

CHIEF BEMBE: Debia, the gods have spoken through you in their own language. To leave without speaking to us in the idioms we understand is to leave us more confused and far withdrawn from the answers we seek (27-8).

Bringing the Debia in and consulting the gods is Africa's, which can only be deduced through African semiotics and aesthetics. The language of the gods, as an element of Afro-semio-aesthetics, is equally African and it is only the Debia that can interpret it. That is why through the priest, it was discovered that the crown is in the shrine of Oguguru. Of all the places, why the queen decides to drop the crown at Oguguru shrine? This is in line with the Afro-semio-aesthetic concept. It was discovered as the play progresses that Oguguru shrine requested for royal red wine, which is purely African. This royal red wine, which was latter translated to be royal blood, may be achieved through African semio-aesthetics elements. The Princess of Emepiri's necklace that she handed over to the Prince of Igedu kingdom is symbolic and the jubilation by the two communities in unity is a signifier; these are all elements of African semio-aesthetics, which must be well interpreted for communication enterprises. This is explicit from the following dialogue thus:

PRINCESS: (*She removes the coral beads on her neck.*) Oki my love, with these coral beads, I decorate you to reaffirm the vision we both share...

DEBIA: Yes, she's right. It is one aspect of our customs that has remained a guided secret because of fear of abuse. Apart from marital ties, any male that an only-child-princess gives her royal coral beads, automatically becomes the crown prince of Emepiri Kingdom... (*Hard Choice 50-51*).

African semio-aesthetics constitutes the factors both tangible and intangible in form and ideas to represent African world-view. In recent times, African semio-aesthetics is at the core of Nigerian plays directly or indirectly. Nigerian playwrights have explored African semio-aesthetic approaches to present and explore African sensual perceptions through cultural symbols and signs that are peculiarto Nigerians/Africans in the writing of their plays.

### **Conclusion**

Revealing from the discourse above, obviously, Afro-semio-aesthetics deals with the ethnographies of the African people as most of the African plays are re-written of African culture, tradition and arts. Thus, they are reflected in the plays selected for this study conspicuously. Hence, the ethnographies of the African people should be well understood for the reading and interpretations of African plays to enable free flow of meaning generallyand effective communication in the text. The ethnographies include – the language, food, clothes, ceremonies, medicines, burials and so many others. Therefore, in an African play, before a reader condemns the construct of the play from character, language, idea, conflict or any other thing in the play, he must understand why the playwright constructed the play in that order. This is simple because he should understand what does the culture of the people permit and

what it does not permit. Thus the reader/interpreter will be well guided through all the aforementioned elements of African semio-aesthetics. The study nailed it that there are lot of cultural elements embedded in Nigerian plays that require indigenous creative/literary theories like Folkism, Ichoka-Mythic-Folkism and more recently, Afro-semio-aesthetics for proper interpretation.

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## UNDERSTANDING DRAMATIC RESPONSES AS TRANSPOSITION: AN EXAMINATION OF THE THEATRE OF *THE RAFTS*

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### **Abstract**

The theatre of *The Rafts* covers J. P. Clark-Bekederemo's *The Raft*, Femi Osofisan's *Another Raft* and Ossa Earliece's *Yet Another Raft*. There has been a long debate about the nuances between transposition, adaptation, transliteration, transformation, translation and even trans-plantation. In the forefront of the divergent views is the one that argued that adaptation is same as transposition, and as such, are mostly used interchangeably. Nigerian drama is beset with diverse contentions about or around the concepts or idealization of the term, 'transposition' vis-à-vis other terms like adaptation and, or, translation. The crux of the arguments has been over the placement of dramatic responses whether or not they can qualify as transposition. Many playwrights have also joined the debate contending that their works are not responses to any preconceived text. In spite of this contention, the question remains, what propels playwrights/dramatists to respond to an already existing play-text? What pre-text(s) contribute to the 'new' meaning playwrights give or bring to a precursor play-text? Arguably, dramatists rework the works of other playwrights because of their interest or curiosity for an older work. It is this interest/fondness that allows the dramatist to further choose which of the precedent dramatist's ideas he intends to rework. Also, the immediacy of the themes or in totality, the dramatic achievements of a dramatist's play on stage also affects the choice of reworking such plays. (Yerima, 2003: 120). This paper, therefore, seeks to convey the elements of transposition in *The Raft*, *Another Raft* and *Yet Another Raft* with a view to clarify the nuances between transposition, adaptation; and how dramatic response can pass as transposition.

### **Introduction**

Adaptation has been used and is still used in different contexts in drama. Most often, it is used interchangeably with transposition. However, they both mean different things. Adaptation suggests no more than one playwright taking another work and modifying it. Nevertheless, this definition is limited in itself as adaptation goes beyond that. Ahmed Yerima (2003: 119) sees adaptation as "playwrights making suitable, plays already written, for new surroundings or audience, for a greater appeal". Yerima believes that there are principles to be considered in adaptation; there are rules and end results which emerge as new drafts of the older plays.

Edde Iji, while attempting a definition of Adaptation and Transposition (1997), stated that,

Summarily, Adaptation in literature, drama or theatre connotes adjustments and cultural, socio-political, environment and other conditions in a changed situation or milieu, endowing the work with new meanings and contextual framework *without substantially tampering with the content structurally* (emphasis is mine).

Going further, Iji (1997) sees transposition as, "...changing the relative position, order or sequence of a literary work (drama, etc.) in response to changed locale giving it new emphasizes other than the original in which it exists. Thus, endowing it with varied colorations".

From the above definition, it can be deduced that while adaptation modifies the text and give it a new meaning contextually, transposition changes the position of the text, modifies its meaning, changes the form and gives it a new meaning. In essence, adaptation of a work of art can take place within transposition. However, his definition can be faulted on the ground that he did not give any

clear cut definition in terms of the processes of adaptation or transposition in form and content. This has called for misconceptions and misplacement of the concepts, especially as its regards their usage.

Hence, adaptation is limited in itself in just modification and updating. An adaptation departs from the original, and aims at simplifying or complicating a work in order to give it new meanings. To achieve this, there is need for a radical shift in perspective to suit new requirements of locale. An example is Ahmed Yerima's adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Othello*; *Otaelo*. Emphasis is being placed therefore on the fact that adaptation is not a response; it is only a radical shift from one perspective to another.

Transposition is first and foremost a response to a precursor text or pre-text. This makes the response a shift in content and form. It is not limited to the text (content), and may occur from one form of media to another. Transposition traces the source and modifies it, in an attempt to reproduce and reshape the original structurally and ideationally.

### **Transposition: An Overview**

The term, 'transposition', has come to assume very prominent position in dramatic studies, especially as it pertains to the relevance of play-texts in other societies. Henry Whittlesey (2012), in *A Typology of Derivatives: Translation, Transposition, Adaptation*, defines and summarizes transposition as,

...an attempt to produce the original as the author might have done if he or she appeared in the given socio-historical time and place of the transposition and retained the consciousness that created each sentence of the original. The central elements of transposition consist of this engagement with each sentence and the shift in content/form. Thus, it resembles translation in the grammatical aspect and adaptation in the alteration of content. It may alter some aspect of the original and retain others. It is not chained entirely to the original like a translation, but does have to track each sentence of it. While the most prominent form of transposition is likely to be a text shifted from one language to another, a transposition does not have to take place across languages. Nor is it limited to the text. In fact, it can occur from one form of media to another, like literature to painting or literature to film (Whittlesey, 2012).

Transposition has been a part of drama right from the classical Greek times. This is evident in that drama originally is a transposition of rituals (from the Dionysian rites and festivals). Greeks tended to refer to myths for the source of plots for their plays, rather than to invent plots of their own or dramatize real-life events. These plots were totally a reworking of their myths. To further illustrate this, Sophocles' play-text, *Oedipus Rex*, is a Greek myth that tells the story of a man killing his father and marrying his mother; this by no means was Sophocles' invention, except his creativity in creating a drama out of that myth. This myth is also found in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Transposition is not a new phenomenon. There is over-abundance of works that have been transposed throughout history. This can be seen in the works of renaissance writers like Molière, William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe and their likes. William Shakespeare, for instance, used the legendary figure called Julius Caesar to show the social reality of virtue through his play, *Julius Caesar*. The transposition was from a historical material which Shakespeare used to make a statement about social realities; the issues of nobility, conspiracy, contest for power and imperialism.

African writers on their part have been seen to borrow materials from classical Greek drama, and dramas of earlier writers to creatively rework such materials to fit into their society. For example, Sophocles' third play in his Theban trilogy, *Antigone*, was transposed to become *The Island* by Athol Fugard. Ola Rotimi's *The Gods are Not to Blame* was based on Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. Euripides' *The Bacchae* was transposed by Wole Soyinka to become *The Bacchae of Euripides*. Apart from classical dramas being the source document for African writers, oral traditions, traditional myths, legends and folklores has been an integral part of playwriting in contemporary African society as "they are the means by which play-texts have survived the process of history, and have become part of a 'great tradition'..." (Etherton, 2012: 106).

Apart from myths, legends, history and contemporary reality, transposition is another long-standing source of African drama. Transpositions in Africa are basically our societies' contemporary works. Etherton explains this when he said that,

The Greeks express a view of man in society which is more humanist and expansive than that of feudal Europe dominated by Christianity. This is precisely why the rediscovery of Greek intellectualism was so exciting to Renaissance readers and authors, and why ancient Greek and Roman plays were so 'new' and so stimulating to the European dramatists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Greek humanist, for whom her playwrights found an effective form, is also probably what appeals to African intellectuals today (108).

Transposition, in its entirety, deals with a deliberate reworking or transformation of materials from one form to suite another. It could be a reworking from classical ritual, novels, and even oral traditional forms like in the case of J. P. Clark's *Ozidi*. However, the 'trans-position' (exchange and permutation, repositioning) of these systems is radically different in the cases of Femi Osofisan's *Another Raft* and Ossa Earliece's *Yet Another Raft* due to their different representational objectives. While Osofisan focuses on the gods and the need for man to look for the solution to his problems on his own, Earliece focuses on the selfishness of leaders and the placement of their benefits over the citizenry.

### **Nigerian Drama and Transposition**

No writer, arguably, could claim that he has not been influenced by one writer or the other. This, in essence, is the true case of Nigerian (African) drama. According to Ogede (2011: 201), African authors may be relatively latecomers to the literary scene:

But they are not alone in the making of emulation of each other's works as their composition pattern; as theorists of influence have long made known, inter-textuality is a universally accepted practice. This string of connections and configurations between different works and various writers is technically referred to as inter-textuality in literature.

Over the years, Nigerian writers have depended on earlier texts for their themes and styles. This is true owing to this era of multiculturalism and globalization. In this regard, there have been successful transpositions in Nigeria, as Nigerian dramatists tend to rework materials from different sources, epochs in history and societies. In reworking plays, Nigerian dramatists not only sought to make the work of art relevant in itself, but to show the universality of the values in the model text and to draw a correlation between their world and the world of the model text. In this sense, transposition uplifts a common humanity among cultural and historical divides. This is evident in Obotunde Ijimere's reworking of the medieval morality play *Everyman* which depicts vices such as deception, materialism, greed, among others that are universal in their existence in all epochs and human society and as such lie in the very essence of man (Etherton, 2012)

Most often, the need to contest Western representations of Africa as a primitive or "insignificant other" has led to the reworking of classical materials or Western drama in a bid to "affirm equality of cultures and societies." Western cultures, education, colonialism and slavery, no doubt has denigrated the existence of an African philosophy, not to talk of drama. However, efforts are being made to revalidate our cultural existence by dramatists through the recurring thematic concern evident in Nigerian dramas. From the onset, these dramas have functioned as opposition plays to colonialism, lying side by side with European/Classical and African plays, while transposing the former into the latter. This can be illustrated using Ola Rotimi's *The Gods are Not to Blame* as a transposition of Sophocles' *King Oedipus*. Though, Rotimi's intention differs from Sophocles', with the Nigerian flavour in his play, Rotimi has tried to prove that there is an equal culture in all societies and though beliefs defer, its existence cannot be overlooked. In the same vein, Soyinka and Osofisan further attempted to "draw connecting links between the Yoruba and Greek worlds in *The Bacchae* of



*Euripides* and *Tegonni* respectively”. At this point, a breakdown of some Nigerian transpositions would aid an understanding of the topic.

Soyinka’s *Opera Wonyosi*, a transposition of Brecht’s *The Three Penny Opera*, which in turn was a transposition of Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*; Soyinka’s reworking of Euripides’ *The Bacchae*. Also, there have been two Yoruba transposed versions (the plays) of the play, *Everyman* by Von Hofmanns thal, who transposed his play from the medieval European play of the same title. Ola Rotimi’s transposition of Sophocles’ *King Oedipus, The Gods are Not to Blame* also falls under this category (Etherton, 2012). Femi Osofisan’s reworking of J. P. Clark’s *The Raft, Another Raft*, which has subsequently produced *The Raft Series* with Ossa Earliece’s *Yet Another Raft* being the last version on this series.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is fore grounded on the theory of inter-textuality. This theory is chosen because it shows the processes the texts undergo and the relationships between the texts under study. To understand the theory that is being used in this study, it is important to understand the concept of text. A text in this context means

...a body of signs constituting a message which has an existence independent from its author or sender and its reader receiver. A text has no one meaning or that there needs to be accepted, normative way of reading; texts will produce different meanings according to the conditions or contexts in which they are read or consume (Roger, 1996: 98).

A text consists of multiple writings, and writings which are drawn from a range of discourses, already in circulation in some form or another. If anything, the writer is not thought of as the great originator, the creative genius, but rather a synthesizer: someone who draws together and orchestrates linguistic raw materials. However, a text is ‘constantly *rewritten* into a variety of different material, social, institutional and ideological contexts’ (Bennett, 1983: 216). Literary textuality then can be seen as a kind of discursive recycling, although the new relations which come to exist between the discourses appropriated and incorporated into a text ensure that literary writing is never the same, never completely repeated.

Therefore, it is believed that no text exists in a vacuum; all play-texts are related in a way through a process called inter-textuality. The idea of texts being *rewritten* through the reading and interpretive process is a helpful way of thinking about inter-textuality. Inter-textuality encompasses that aspect of literary and other kinds of texts which struggles against and subverts reason, the belief in unity of meaning or of the human subject, and which is therefore subversive to all ideas of the logical and the unquestionable (Allen, 2000: 46).

Inter-textuality has to do, for Kristeva, with desire and with the psychological drives of the *split subject*. For Kristeva, the subject is split between reason and desire, the rational and the irrational, the social and the pre-social, the communicable and the incommunicable (Kristeva, 1980: 92). Usually, the networks of meaning to be deciphered are always split into half; the conscious and the unconscious, the language being communicated (that is for the receiver; the reader) and the language being intended (that is for the sender; playwright). However, the meaning here, on the part of the playwright is usually preconceived and liable to multiple interpretation from the reader.

### **Critical Reflections on J. P. Clark’s *The Raft* and Femi Osofisan’s *Another Raft***

Critical works have been done by other scholars and critics regarding the first two plays under study – *The Raft* and *Another Raft*. However, there is no accessible critical review on Ossa Earliece’s *Yet Another Raft*. This section will focus on careful reflections of some of these critical works as it relates to the topic of this research work.

In reviewing the production of some inter-textual dramas in the Nigerian literary landscape, Binebai and Abraye (2019: 78) state that:

In J. P. Clark's *The Raft*, the playwright presents an absurd-existential condition of humanity on the fatal tide of the Niger Delta using the compressionist form. The characters with different values that populate the raft all die despite their struggle existence.

According to them, the play is a 'symbolic representation of the Nigerian nation'. Other critics consider the death of all the characters on the raft as the total destruction of the Nigerian society, though Clark on his own part tried to reflect on the psychological collapse of the Nigerian nation at the time he wrote this play. Binebai and Abraye (2019) perceived a limitation and deficiency in *The Raft* that Femi Osofisan inter-textually responds to in his play, *Another Raft*. This deficient point is noted by critics in Clark's inability to provide a way forward for the troubled Nigerian nation. Osofisan filled this gap by consciously creating a new Nigeria which was not encapsulated in Clark's *The Raft*. According to them,

the Raft is a tragedy, the characters are doomed through the manipulation of supernatural antagonism. A world of metaphysical animism is created in the play, but Osofisan's universe in *Another Raft* acknowledges these supernatural characters in *The Raft*, the Yemosas – sea spirits whom he demystifies and destroys leaving the human characters like Reore, Oge and Orousi to take their destinies into their hands without the intervention of supernatural forces (79).

Binebai and Abraye's position on the inter-textual nature of the plays is from an analytical viewpoint whereby we see inter-textuality as 'a system of dramaturgy in which the creation of new plays is based on existing plays. The intention is to protest or contest some ideas or creative idioms in the old play' (78). They illustrated this while pointing out that;

*Another Raft* is a play that is based on the artistic protest against the artistic production of *The Raft* through the viaduct of ideological bias. Clark's fatalism, tragedy, metaphysical animism, class society and critical realist approach to the construction of *The Raft* is contested and protested against by Osofisan who negotiates the destruction of tragedy, invents optimism, demystifies the gods, creates a classless society and relocates the Nigerian society for national development in *Another Raft*. Simply put, Osofisan's protest in his metatext is primarily an ideological protest. He considers society dislocation in a drama which does not point the way forward (79).

Their positions on the plays are based on perspectives as their opinion has added to the body of critical analysis on the duo plays.

Furthermore, Gbemisola, in her thesis, *Aesthetics of Adaptation in contemporary Nigerian Drama*, noted that *Another Raft* is a re-visioning of J. P. Clark's *The Raft*. She noted that,

Osofisan follows a pre-existing model, but he uses the model to challenge socio-economic imbalance in the *status quo* which he believes the earlier plays seem to reinforce. In interrogating class struggles in the two plays (*The Raft* and *Another Raft*), Osofisan consciously subverts the social order that upholds inequality, using the underprivileged as a sacrificial lamb to sustain their oppression by the ruling class (22).

#### **Aspects of Transposition and Adaptation in *The Raft*, *Another Raft* and *Yet Another Raft***

Each of the plays under *The Raft* series is set in times contemporary with when they were written individually, and takes place in strategic places around riverine areas. J. P. Clark's *The Raft* is set in the Niger Delta, Ijaw to be precise. The play begins on the Niger Delta and ends somewhere past the port of Burutu. All the actions of the characters are confined to the raft on which the four men are on, that is transporting logs to Burutu. The raft is travelling down the river on its own to a fate unknown

to its occupants. The play and the actions therein are directly influenced by both the nature and the phenomenon of the Niger River. Also situations, names and events described in the play are highly proportional to those as can be seen in the Niger Delta of Nigeria at the time the play was written. This is also true of the situation in Nigeria in 1964 as represented in the text.

Osofisan, on his part, created a new world away from that of J. P. Clark. Though, the actions of the characters are confined to the raft, Osofisan set his play in the far South-Western region of Nigeria – present day Osun State (Osun state is the only state in the Western part of Nigeria that has the most populated water body. The people of this region worship a river goddess called *Osun Yemoja*). He used the names, places and events that allude to the people of that region at the time the play was written. With these two shifts in the setting, transposition can be said to have taken place. However, while trying to respond to the earlier versions of *The Raft* series, Earliece changed the setting of Osofisan's *Another Raft* and relocated it. He sets the play back in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, as J. P. Clark did. However, unlike the first two plays which were set on a raft, Earliece sets his play offshore in the creeks while his characters search for a raft that would take them through the water to their town. The names, places and events like the others are replica of the setting being represented.

Osofisan's own departure from the Ijaw land to a typical Yoruba land is different from the other playwrights' setting. However, this is quite significant because Osofisan proves to us that such issues which Clark represented in the South-South (Niger Delta region) is vast and has a deeper root in the people's attitude, not just the leaders. He expanded the horizon of the situation while creating a new environment for his play as a means of detaching himself from Clark's world in order to show the need for a solution.

Furthermore, allegory which is the representation of abstract principles by characters or figures also manifests in *The Rafts* series. Clark's *The Raft* is an allegory, no doubt, though the playwright may not agree to this postulation. In an allegory, the story and its characters represent real events and ideas. In this case, they are an allegory of the social, political and economic events in Nigeria at the different periods in which they were written.

In the face of independence and post independence, Nigeria was undergoing some political unrest. The different playwrights use their plays to address such issues peculiar to their time. Clark's play, *The Raft*, represents the troubled situation of our newly independent country. Seeing that the situation lingered, Osofisan wrote *Another Raft* to show the longevity of the problem and even went as far as introducing the military, giving us a longer span of time through history and a progression along that line. Earliece also used such means to show us that right from the time of our independence until 1995, Nigeria has been adrift, and is in search of a saviour, despite Osofisan's position of paddling together which was rendered in 1988.

Reading the plays as allegory shows that the four men on J. P. Clark's *The Raft* represent the four old regions of Nigeria. One part of the raft breaking off represents the breaking off of one of these regions and the tide-wash, the wind lash, the iron and fire and the call of land, all represents the different phase of uncertainty from the point of Nigeria's independence to the time the play was written. However, it is important to emphasize that J. P. Clark's play was written in 1964, representing the four stages of uncertainty the country went through; one stage for each year!

Osofisan, having established that *Another Raft* represents the political unrest in Nigeria at the time he wrote, used Agunrin (a character) to represent the military that were the 'sacrificial carriers' of the country; to salvage the country from the acclaimed corrupt civilian leaders. The twelve characters are typical of the twelve regions that existed at the time he wrote his play. The raft breaking up with two leaders on one part of the broken raft represent one of these regions breaking off, and two characters reaching out to save them is also allegorical of some other parts of the raft trying to save the lost among them. Earliece's departure from the raft and his usage of the Creeks to illustrate the Nigerian situation is allegorical of the plight of the nation in search of a raft to take us back to where we started from. He believes, as is seen in his play that our problems are caused by lack of policy and crave for dominance and power by individual leaders. This he represented using the character of Agadagba.

On a final note, it is without doubt that *The Raft* series, being an allegory of the political events in Nigeria, is clear and justified. Taking it further from there, the play is full of symbolism

open to varying and justifiable interpretations. The river and the raft could both be seen as symbolizing life; the unknown future and the search for a solution. Uncertainty lies the path on every side and unexpected circumstances can come up without notice. Nearly every aspect of Clark's *The Raft*, Osofisan's *Another Raft* and Earliece's *Yet Another Raft* can be seen as symbolizing some aspect of human existence.

### **Dramatic Response to Leadership Issues in *The Raft*, *Another Raft* and *Yet Another Raft***

Available records on the history of the political development of Nigeria since independence have shown that the reins of government has always fallen into the hands of a political leadership class that showed more interest in private, group or ethnic gains than in the general wellbeing of the Nigerian state. In all, political power has alternated between the civilian and the military since independence and neither of the two categories that ruled the country has done better for the development of the nation. Indeed, the political leadership class has succeeded in bringing in corruption by providing a fertile ground and an environment conducive for the phenomenon to thrive incurably at the expense of national socio-economic, cultural and political development.

There is a transposition of the above in the plays as each playwright respond to each issue as it affects their time in history. Having fallen under the first generation of playwrights, J. P. Clark was being influenced by the dominant tradition of writers to comment on the leadership of the government. However, this comment was made considering the loopholes created by the new leaders of the new nation in the 1960s. Thus, it could be argued that J. P. Clark used the four lumbermen in his play to represent the leaders of the four (4) regions in Nigeria as at the time of independence; Northern region, Western region, Mid-west region and Eastern region. Lumbermen, according to the English online Dictionary (*English 2.9*), are men involved in the production or sale of lumber. They could also be seen as overseers of business of cutting, processing and marketing lumber. *The Raft* basically evolved round the four lumbermen and their activities which ended in futility leading to their death. J. P. Clark's prioritization of the issue of leadership shows that leadership is one of the biggest problems of the Nigerian economic development. This is evident in that the activities of the lumbermen which was totally economically inclined is likened to the role of our regional leaders in the conduction of their affairs, especially as they are the sole overseers of the economy and politics of the people within their region.

Osofisan on his part portrayed the issue of leadership on a more different terrain. He moved our focus from just the four regional leaders of the nation to generalizing the very essence of leadership, which encompassed both the religious and political arms of leadership. However, seeing that we have justified that the four characters of *The Raft* represent these regional leaders, it is pertinent to further state here that when Nigeria became a republic in 1963, the regions were replaced by twelve states; a justification for Osofisan's use of twelve characters to illustrate the progression of Nigeria's leadership structure. This is also a signification and 'metaphorizing' of history and passage of time and emerging contemporary development. Osofisan goes as far as introducing both the leaders and the led, which J. P. Clark on his part fails to recognize. The religious leaders were represented using Orousi and Omitoogun, the political leaders were represented using Lanusen and Ekuroola, while the led were represented using Oge and Waje. These are just a faction and dual representation of the classes of positions of the citizenry of Nigeria.

Osofisan depicted our political leaders as people who live far away from the people and do not understand the people's plight.

LANUSEN: ...Chief Ekuroola! Did we have a choice! You live in Lagos, far away, on soft cushions and padded chairs. You're the Abore, but you prefer to live away from us, on safe ground. Your roofs are solid. When it rains you don't hear it. But what of those of us who have no other shelter except our homes in Aiyedade? ... (p. 24)

Osofisan's plays are usually devoted to the problems of the peasants (the led) which he believes are the faults of the leaders. His plays therefore consistently attack all forms of corruption, oppression, injustice and tyranny from leaders who care less about the plight of their people. This was however

the case of the Nigerian society at the time Osofisan wrote his play, that is why he noted in the opening of the play that,

In 1964, the Nigerian playwright, J. P. Clark, now known as Clark-Bekederemo, wrote his play, *The Raft*, which came to symbolize the troubled situation of our newly-independent country. So many events have occurred since then to take the nation many times just on the brinks of sinking, but miraculously, we have kept afloat. Nevertheless, even as the decades drifted past, the storms have not ceased, nor have we been able to steer ourselves out of the fog of those initial errors... (p. 5).

Osofisan's response, dramaturgically, has not taken away the storms that were raised by J. P. Clark. Osofisan, rather than intervene in the issues as to the solutions, he gives man a voice and urges him towards his own freedom. But, realistically, can that be the ideal solution for a nation who has been adrift for twenty-eight years? As he had noted from J. P. Clark's play, we have not been able to steer ourselves out of the fog of those initial errors. What then can we say is Osofisan's justification of attempting an unrealistic solution to the problems of the nation? Men have always been in charge. However, Osofisan gave a background into the role of the military leaders in the Nigerian politics. True to history, the military came into power with the civilian political cue. This was also captured by Osofisan in the words of Lanusen:

LANUSEN: Listen (He pulls the carrier aside hastily) What's the matter? The priest is in the water. What are you waiting for? Do it now!

AGUNRIN: No, get away from me!

LANUSEN: There can't be a better moment! Now they're all fussing about the old man in the sea! Go on, do what I paid you, kill him! (54).

One pertinent aspect to note about the rise of political leaders in the plays as true to the fact that leadership in Nigeria embodies the idea to exploit the people as against the genuine essence of leadership which is to serve the people.

At the time Earliece wrote his play, *Yet Another Raft*, the country had already returned to the civilian rule, where democracy was the system of government. Under this system, anybody, with or without a clear motive could rise and take over the leadership of the nation. Men's crave for power and authority became the reason men took leadership positions, and not the need to serve the people. Earliece depicted this in the play using the character of Agadagba who declared himself king over the people who he rendered homeless and lost because he crave for the authority that comes with power. Together with Enyi, his accomplice, he pushed for his plans to be executed.

AGADAGBA: ...If we cannot leave here, do we just fold our arms waiting to die?

ENYI: You see we are lucky, we have both sexes here. I mean men and women...

AGADAGBA: At least our fathers started in a situation worse than this.

BOMA: ...where are you people heading to?

ENYI: That we do not have to leave here.

EDIRIN/DIDI: What?

ENYI: We could establish our own kingdom here and multiply (p. 28).

It can be deduced that Earliece in his conceptualization of the play considered the secession of the South-Eastern people of Nigeria in 1966 which was not captured by Osofisan in his own play. Could it be that Agadagba represented Ojukwu and the cause he stood for? Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu in 1966 pushed for the secession of the South-Eastern people of Nigeria owing to the fact that the central government of the country at that time, which was headed by Col. Yakubu Gowon, had lapses. This motive could be justifiably genuine, but there was still an ulterior motive tied to it considering the doggedness of the heads of each opposing sides.

This was what Earliece attempted to capture with his play while paying attention to the personnel spear-heading the cause and not the cause in itself as the major ideals of the play. Earliece

did not attack leadership as an issue. Instead, he responded to the attitude of the leaders and their cravings for power and authority as a major thematic concern. Hence, for Earliece, the individuals involved in the struggle for leadership pose a threat to the development of the country.

In pointing out the problem of our country through his play, Earliece stresses on the issue of individual domination and the chaos in the struggle for self-relevance. The limitation of this play is that, having noted the problems of the 1995 Nigeria, he could not render a solution. To another end, we can say that this is quite deliberate because the problems in our country still persists today, even resulting in different regional crisis. Therefore, as an inter-text, Earliece returns to Clark's position of ambivalence and cynicism that characterizes *The Raft*. Earliece debunks Osofisan's position of man being solely responsible for steering the raft to safety. Inasmuch as Earliece sees man as the main factor responsible for solving his problem, he ended his play with an end that signifies the never-ending nature of our continuous struggle for domination and power.

### Conclusion

Having gone through the distinction between adaptation and transposition and their usage in the in dramatic literature, the concept of transposition is basically a response; a response to a precursor text that exists in a different way. However, transposition can also occur in both form and content, like in the case of our case studies. This is evident in the thematic concerns, styles and ideologies they share. These are aspects of transposition that are considered in this study. Moreover, the transposition that occurs here should be understood within the context it was done.

It is important here to give an appraisal and assessment of how Osofisan and Earliece responded to the precursor text by J. P. Clark, within the context which informed the topic of this discourse, giving a general assessment of how it achieved this, and if such led to any gap that needs to be filled. Osofisan saw the gap in J. P. Clark's *The Raft* in relation to the Nigerian society in his time. Hence, he notes that several events have occurred to take the nation in the brinks of sinking, but we have kept afloat. It is the drifted nature of the nation's social, political and economic structure that Osofisan's *Another Raft* aimed to address. However, the play could not give us a realizable solution, as man realizes that he can steer himself to safety. But, his play failed to capture the place of safety for the nation. Instead, we kept pushing, fighting the waves, striving to win and pushing again. This brings us to the search for the next play on the series; Ossa Earliece's *Yet Another Raft*.

The expectation of an audience from Earliece's play is the solution that would be proffered as a means of ending *The Raft* series. Ironically, Earliece toss us up and down through his play until he informs us that the quest for leadership and domination on the part of our leaders will lead us towards crisis and an unending war. To this end, we can say that there is no justifiable end from the provisions made by the play-texts under study. Thus, *The Raft* series craves for a continuation of the replication of the plight of the nation until we come to a satisfactory end; a dramatic response at that.

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## VERISIMILITUDE AS A SOLUTION FOR A RESPONSIVE COSTUME DESIGN: A CRITIQUE OF NOLLYWOOD'S PRESENTATION OF PRECOLONIAL IGBO CHARACTERS IN HESSIAN FABRICS

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### Abstract

Nollywood's idea of uniformly costuming Igbo precolonial characters in hessian fabric also known as sackcloth appears to be a misrepresentation of time and place. Thus, the picture created by Nollywood's precolonial Igbo characters appears to be far removed from the films' presumed background which is precolonial Igbo. This research has therefore investigated the adherence of these costumes designs to the reality of precolonial Igbo people. The primary goal of this research was to examine the precolonial Igbo costumes with a view to retelling authentic precolonial Igbo costumes. Realist film theory and traditional historicism were adopted for the research, while select Nollywood films were employed to recap Nollywood's Igbo precolonial character. This research would by the strengths of its insights provide appropriate model or catalogue of Igbo precolonial dress-culture.

**Keywords:** Costumes, Hessian fabrics, precolonial Igbo dress-culture, authenticity, Nollywood costume design

### Introduction

Nollywood's tradition of presenting precolonial Igbo characters in hessian fabrics calls attention to verifying the plausibility of this idea to the realities of the precolonial Igbo people. Igbo people are an ethnic group native to the South-East and some parts of South-South of present Nigeria. Although there are notable divergences in dialects of the various Igbo areas (which is hardly noticed by non-Igbo), the people are generally identified with a commonality of language, fashion and dress pattern. Before the British invasion of the Igbo area and its consequent annexation to the other parts of present Nigeria, the Igbo society was an egalitarian one. Religion conditioned and gave force to all social and economic activities – planting, harvesting, gender-relations, and others. Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy. Everyone was first a farmer before any other vocation.

The political organization of the precolonial Igbo times did not extend beyond the village level. The council of elders provided the leadership and arbitrated over civil and criminal issues. The kindred system was a well-developed governance mechanism, needless noting that the society was patrilineal. This does not however mean that women were considered insignificant, as in fact, the '*umuada*' – an association of daughters born into a clan but married outside it, exerted enormous authority in virtually all parts of Igboland.

Age-sets, title and masquerade societies provided varied forms of social control. In most parts of Igboland, children and teenagers went about unclothed until they had become adults. Ceremonies such as '*iwa-akwa*', which directly translates as cloth-wearing ceremony, marked the passage from boyhood to manhood. In a personal interview with Alex Ugwuja, it was revealed that in Nsukka area, young maidens wear referred to as *umu-mgboto* (unclad girls). They were given a piece of cloth to conceal their buttocks only after their initiation into womanhood. Most of them still had their upper bodies uncovered even after the initiation (2020). Ijoma, in his research on the Igbo history, relates that the Akwete community in the present Abia state was famous for weaving of cloths. The cloth, *akwete*, named after the town, was weaved on a narrow loom installed in the corner of a room (42). Bolakoka detailed the fabrics used by the weavers as "...wool, silk, raffia and bark of certain trees



(hemp)” (n.p.). Cotton textiles were said to have been weaved into cloths worn at the time. Describing the materials used for weaving at the time, Basdin relates that cotton, palm leaves and bark of tree were employed as fabrics for weaving of cloth. He revealed that the bark employed for the purpose of weaving cloths was sourced from the “*ufa*” tree (327). The bark was gathered and spun in the same way that cotton was.

Notably, fabrics other than cotton were reserved for men who wore them during hunting. Corroborating this fact, Lyndersay records that, “warriors (*egbenu*) and hunters in the past used barkcloth (*aji*) – the bark of the *achitree*...” (405). Although Basdin’s account seems to differ from Lyndersay’s because of the difference in terminology of the trees – *ufa* and *aji*, respectively, both account reveal that the bark used by the Igbo precolonial weavers were sourced from tree and not jute plant as Nollywood films appear to be saying. Another clear point here is that, that contrary to Nollywood seemingly postulation that hessian produced from jute was the only fabric used by the precolonial Igbo people, the cloth produced from bark were never used as everyday wear by the Igbo of that time. They were rather used by hunters as previously noted. Bolakokathus agrees that “... the coarse raffia materials were used by masquerades and in the past as headgear for warriors.... The more comfortable and colourful spun cotton is used to weave cloth for everyday wearing” (n.p.).

The significance of this research therefore lies in the fact that costume as a culture bearer has the ability to simultaneously capture and reveal the past of a people. It could therefore be used to depict the history and evolution of a people’s culture. To what extent a costume could be responsive in recreating history, however, depends to a large extent on the willingness of the designer to embark on a meaningful research into the past of the people. The designer’s ability to go beyond discovering not just how the people wore their cloths, but also the fabrics or materials their cloths were made from, will no doubt facilitate depiction of the true picture of the culture and time being portrayed by the film. The knowledge of the fabric used by a culture at a point in history will not only facilitate the designer’s ability to create a responsive costume. It will also eliminate the tendency to create costumes with pejorative undertone as it appears in Nollywood’s use of Hessian fabric in depicting Igbo precolonial characters. Adherence to reality is therefore very vital in film costuming, as the designer’s ability to dig into history will, to a large extent determine their keeping to authentic representation of the actual fabrics used by the people portrayed in film.

It is pertinent to note that film costume (unlike stage costume which is ephemeral) endures for as long as the film lives. It could thus be used to either present or distort history. History will be misrepresented if due attention is not paid to how the elements and principles of costume are manipulated during design process. Film costumes as bearers of a people’s culture and past, could thus serve as a tool for creating and disseminating derogatory information about a people.

### **Film Costume as a Documentary of History**

Of all the components of filmmaking with which characters and cultures are defined, the images created by costumes and set appear to be the ones that could be indelibly registered in the minds of film viewers long after viewing the film. Costumes and set are visual components, because they appeal to the viewers’ minds and stick there for a long time. While dialogue and sounds could easily be forgotten by viewers, the narrative or image of a culture relayed by the costumes in a film could become a recurring picture in the minds of the viewers. And this could become the viewers’ sole definition of the film’s cultural background.

Film by its nature, has the ability to set the tone for the values and images of the culture presumed to have informed it. To this end Abone asserts that, “films are... artifacts created by specific cultures which reflect those cultures” (23). However, Abone’s assertion is true only when the film does not just draw facts from the culture it intends to reflect, but also present what authentically reflects the culture. That is the only time that a film could be said to have been created by the culture. So, a film filled with misrepresentations of fact could be said to have been borne of the filmmakers’ imagination and not of any culture. Umukoro however corroborates Abone’s opinion when she avers that, “drama and society are so inextricably interwoven that the study of dress as a basic theatrical concern tends to be hinged on the study of dress in social reality, usually of the perceived background of the play” (47). Unfortunately, this is not the case with most Nollywood films, as the costumes most times tend to be far removed from the realities of the films’ background. Critiquing the erroneous

design concept of the Nollywood costume designers, Utoh-Ezeajugh laments that, “these dress codes more often than not, conflict with periods, settings, and concepts of the productions...” (67).

So, the need for film to present reality in its narration of culture or history can never be overstressed. Regrettably, Nollywood films appear to be lacking in this demand, as it seems that their presentation of reality in costuming appears to have been relegated to superficiality. Abone maintains that, “quite often, the projected image determines the perceived image since it is what you give out that is received...” (27). She reiterates that, “...film can propagate and even influence national image” (27). Costume design as it has been practiced by Nollywood, however, appears to negate this enormously powerful attribute of film as a cultural image formatter. As cultural ambassadors, Nollywood costume designers have been in the forefront in presenting Igbo characters with what viewers automatically accept as Igbo costumes.

It appears that Nollywood costume designers have been practicing the tradition of presenting Igbo precolonial characters with hessian fabric which is commonly known as sack-cloth. This practice however appears to disassociate these films from the realities of the precolonial Igbo people. Unfortunately, many viewers of Nollywood epic films, some of whom are unaware of Igbo traditional dress culture, accept this historical fabrication as the true picture of Igbo characters of the precolonial era. Majority of what they believe about the Igbo people appear then to be determined by what they are fed with by Nollywood films. Ayakoroma, a Nollywood film critic, in his study of the trends in the development of Nollywood films posits thus:

The industry has gradually developed an iconography...a set of visual imagery in video films – houses, costumes, props, visual movements...which are identified with various locations...If we are watching a traditional genre for example, we see native doctors, who must be adorned in white or red cloth.... If it is an epic or historical genre for example, what we see are sack cloths as costumes... (13).

So, because these costumes do not show evidences of false fabrication of history, they are internalized as reality even by the critical viewers of Nollywood films. Painfully, these costumes by extension tend to corroborate the European’s claim that Africans were uncivilized prior colonialization. Nollywood ideology of presenting precolonial characters with hessian fabric unfortunately, does not just extol colonialism but also portrays the colonized as primitives devoid of craftsmanship. This practice therefore tends to be defamatory. Recounting the economic activities of the Igbo of the pre-historical times, Ijoma avers that:

Over the centuries the Igbo showed dynamism in their technology and their quest to improve their lot and environment. Contrary to wrongful notions created by European observers at the turn of this century, the Igbo were not stagnant. Early enough, they acquired the knowledge of iron working and this helped them to overcome the ecological difficulties of the forest environment. Oka in particular showed great dexterity in iron technology (42).

The problem of this research does not however bother on how foreign observers have presented the Igbo of the past. But on how indigenous filmmakers have neglectfully been misrepresenting them. Although, Emelobe, in his attempt to accentuate the need for African films to project true African identity, observes that filmic representations:

...are in a sense ideological tools that can serve to reinforce systems of inequality and subordination. They can help to sustain colonialist projects. For instance, Hollywood’s representations of Africa are largely misguided. Their movies and literature place Africa at a one-dimensional stereotype based on their preconceived notions. These notions ...are mostly negative, primordial, biased and unbalanced (213).

Hollywood's representations of Africa could be taken with a pinch of salt by a critical viewer since there are many works that have condemned their representation of Africa as false and deliberate attempt to demean Africa probably in order to justify Western invasions of African countries. Nevertheless, when the misrepresentation is projected by an indigenous film industry, it becomes more difficult to doubt or perceive the picture as false or a defamatory fabrication of history and identity. Nollywood is an indigenous film industry, so its portrayals of indigenous costumes have the ability to shape the perceptions of its viewers on indigenous characters. This is even truer especially when the creators of these narratives are not just Nigerians, but Igbo indigenes. Ayakoroma in his analysis of trends in the development of Nollywood films notes that,

since the financial control of the industry is in the hands of Igbo businessmen, it has been easy for executive producers to raise video film stars of Igbo extraction. It is not surprising then that a greater number of the "selling faces" in the industry are Igbo (11).

So, it appears that the issue of misrepresenting Igbo precolonial characters in hessian cloths by Nollywood films were initiated and had continued to be reinforced by Igbo filmmakers. Incidentally, this idea of costuming precolonial Igbo people with hessian cloth by indigenous filmmakers might become a powerful force in forming what Non-Igbos would consider as authentic Igbo precolonial cloth. Thus, authenticating what Europeans portray as justification for colonialization of the Igbo people. Smith avers that, "European justification for colonialization includes the idea that the quality of life of colonial subject will be improved by the presence and guidance of Europeans" (n.p.) Although Smith's research on the Igbo precolonial dress-culture initially appears to be objective, he concludes with an idea which appears to be biased as he opines that:

there were major differences in clothing regarding both the precolonial and post-colonial times. More clothing and colours were adopted and worn post-colonial. The citizens of the Igbo society would now easily express themselves through clothing. Attire is now made up of more expensive and durable fabrics, and is now more stylish (n.p.)

Smith's submission appears not just prejudiced but also tilts towards romanticizing the essence of colonialism.

### **Igbo Precolonial Dress Culture**

Igbo people are globally known for their resourcefulness at trade and industry. Notably, this attribute was not devised during colonialism but were innate in the people. If the people are truly resourceful as they have been globally acclaimed, it is then doubtful that they would rely on one source of fabric for making their cloth as suggested by films such as *The Beautiful Ugonma* which have all its character costumed in hessian cloth. The idea that the precolonial Igbo people clung solely to this fabric is thus questionable, especially when the fabric in question is not friendly to the skin. Lyndersay making reference to Spear's account of his experience in Igboland of the precolonial times, recaptures the archaeological perspectives of traditional Igbo dress. She reiterates a well-known folktale recounted by Spear on how an Igbo hunter invented weaving. She recounts that the hunter who got his inspiration from a spider and its web, eventually made a prototype of the spider's web with "bush-rope" (403). Succinctly put, Lyndersay's account of the hunter and how his wife eventually requested for a cloth like the hunting-net implies that before the hunter's discovery and invention, what was worn by the people was bark. So the hunter, in response to his wife's request, developed "a loom made from bush rope used for climbing (ukpa) and later from raffia" (404). This is an indication that the Igbo are naturally creative artisans. Also quoting Edwards Lyndersay referenced Olaudah Equiano, the Igbo ex-slave's recollection of the dress of his homeland:

The dress of both sexes is nearly the same. It generally consists of long piece of calico, or muslin, wrapped loosely round the body... this is usually dyed blue, which

is our favourite colour. It is extracted from a berry, and is brighter and richer than any I have seen in Europe. Besides this, our women of distinction wear golden ornaments... when our women are not employed with the men in tillage, their weaving cotton... (405)

Nollywood's practice of costuming the precolonial Igbo people in hessian cloth, however, tends to suggest that the people could not weave cloths from fabrics, such as, cotton and other natural fabrics until the advent of the European colonialism. Equiano's narration above is an indication that the people used and wore cotton cloth before the advent of the Europeans to Igboland. Hawkins, a trade explorer's detailed description of Igbo dress in the late 1790s also debunks this Nollywood ideology and notion. He establishes that:

Both sexes... go almost entirely naked, the loins and waist only being covered; the women wear a slight garment, or bandage of cotton cloth, round the waist, or a small apron of cotton stuff, fancifully decorated with feathered, or strips of different coloured cloths... about six inches long, and eight broad, hanging in front, and tied on by two strings of cotton.... The men from the age of puberty... wear a narrow bandage of cotton round the waist... (87)

Hawkins' descriptions are pointers to the fact that both men and women of the precolonial times wore cotton. His account is undoubtedly authentic because while hessian fabrics needed to be imported at the time, the people grow cotton and needed not import them; thus, making cotton more accessible to them than hessian which are made from jute plants and imported from India. Although the people also employed other kinds of fabric other than cotton for cloth-weaving, there are still no evidences to show that they used hessian fabrics for clothing. Ijoma notes that, "the material for weaving was not always cotton; palm leaves and bark of tree were also used" (43). Nevertheless, the bark of tree used by the Igbo for cloth-making was not extracted from jute plants as Nollywood films seems to insinuate. Utoh-Ezeajugh in her account of the evolution of dress culture among the Igbo people, postulates that, "for the Igbo... the dress culture for men evolved from *Ikpachi* or *Aka Nwoke* which was a woven cloth tied at the side of the waist, creating a kind of slit-opening from the waist down the length of the cloth..." (38). The contentious hessian fabric is however made from jute plants and are used by Indians as lining for rugs and for making sacks used for storing agricultural and industrial products.

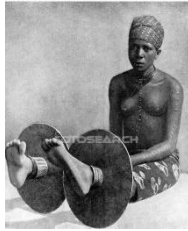
Although most Western anthropologist accounts of Igbo people of precolonial period appear to have undergone criticism based on the fact that their information were considered to be second-handed hence faulty. Yet, it appears that none of these anthropologists' accounts describe the Igbo of precolonial era wearing hessian cloth. The question now is 'What informed Nollywood costume designers' idea of costuming precolonial Igbo characters with cloths made from jute plants'? It appears that the issue is that of not paying attention to details as the filmmakers appears to be motivated by profit alone; thus, relegating the quest for intricate knowledge of designing to the background.

To adequately describe the precolonial Igbo cloths, however, in addition to researching into history one could also look at the socio-cultural life of the traditional Igbo people. Some of the extant traditional rituals appear to still retain to a large extent aspects of traditional cloths as acculturation of such cloths appears to be regarded as taboo by the ritual performers. Just as foreign food items (such as bread) could not be used in feeding or venerating the Igbo gods, the wearing of foreign cloths or fabrics are still not adopted as cloth worn during most Igbo ritual performances. So, Igbo ritual performances could also serve as gate way to accessing precolonial Igbo cloths. Among the precolonial Igbo of South-East Nigeria, costume was an essential part of the people's way of life because all their festivals were celebrated with spectacular costumes. Perani and Wolff posit that, "among many peoples living along the Niger/Benue river valleys in Nigeria including the... Igbo, cloth is used to fabricate a spectacular ancestral masquerade" (42). There were also performers who costumed themselves for dances and wrestling. For traditional performances, dancers used colourful costumes – maidens wore short waist beads, neck beads, anklets with bare chest; men wore loin

clothes barely covering their genitals. The traditional seers who mediate between the community and the gods wore symbolic clothes and accessories such as feathers signifying mark of grandeur. There are various traditional theatrical genres in the traditional Igbo society. Therefore, different kinds of costumes are used to portray the different characters and situations of the diverse performances. Traditional performances such as the *Ozo* cult of Onitsha people, the *Ine Ezi* of Anam people and *IgbaNjaof* Awka people are done mirthfully. So colourful regal costumes are worn during these performances. While rituals like the *Igu-Aro* of Umueri people and *Iti-Mmanwu* (masquerade performance) are done in a more serious heightened mood and so were performed in serious costumes which inspire awe and respect. Aniako describing the social-control functions of Igbo masquerade reiterates that, "...spirit forces incarnated as masks exercised executive, juridical and legislative authority in many Igbo villages and towns" (346). Masks are therefore indispensable aspects of costume of Igbo masquerades.

Quintessentially, among the Igbo precolonial people, young Igbo men wore loin clothes, older men were dressed in calve-length cotton wrapper gathered and knotted at the belly. Some Igbo clothes were worn to help restrict the wearers' movements so that he could move in a dignified way. Thus, giving the wearer a dignified posture and in turn signifying an elevated economic or social status. Examples of such costumes are the *odu* of the Onitsha *Otu-odu* women, the *nja* of the *Igba-njam* maiden-group of traditional Awka people, the *nja* of the *Ine-ezi* maiden-group of Anam and the costume of the *Ijele* masquerade of the Umueri communities all of Anambra state. These ornaments were variously used to symbolize merits, authority and status in society. It can thus be deduced that the Igbo traditional society has a lot of accessories which Nollywood could adopt and use in creating precolonial Igbo characters.

Agreeably, some of these evidences were not documented, we learned about them from play scripts, novels and folklores. *Fate of an Orphan* (2000), a play by Alex Asigbo which was set in the precolonial times, precisely in the 1870s (personal interview with Asigbo, 2020), provides us with information on some aspects of precolonial Igbo clothing designs. Describing an Igbo traditional prophetess, the play text relates that, "she's attired in a red wrapper. A white head band covers her hair and on hand she carries a lump of chalk" (7). Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) (which was also set in the precolonial times) also describes the traditional Igbo man everyday cloth thus: "*Okagbue* was [in] his underwear, a long and thin strip of cloth wound round the waist like a belt and then passed between the legs to be fastened to the belt behind" (82). Traditionally, the attire of Igbo men generally consisted of little clothing as the purpose then was to conceal private parts, although elders were fully clothed. Loin clothes in the Igbo traditional world signify youthfulness. Wrestlers wore it during their wrestling performances; hunters also wore it during their hunting escapades. It is still worn in the omambala area of Anambra state during the *ilonmuo* (ancestral worship celebration). The extinct *Igbanja* of Awka people and *Ine-ezi* of the Anam people both made use of *nja* (a brass leg-band signifying wealth). Children were usually nude from birth till their adolescence but some ornament of beads and cowries were worn around their waists. Describing the use of cowries for body adornment in the traditional Igbo world, Isichei relates that, "the curved back is cut away, and the shell, open on two sides, is threaded on double thread to place around the neck or body... Some boys wear no other clothing or adornment but these chains of white shells on the neck or the body." (17) *Uli* liquid makeup was also used to decorate both men and women in form of lines forming symbolic motifs on the body. Emphasizing the significance of *uli* makeup in Igbo culture, Aniako posits that, "What seems paramount aesthetically is the graphic quality of designs painted on the body which has endeared this art form to the Igbo women as a tool for the visual alteration, expansion and manipulation of the human body for aesthetic effects" (334). These fashion items were precolonial Igbo peoples' invention, perhaps the most quintessentially pointers to precolonial Igbo peoples' dress culture.



First



Second



Third

Picture Credit: Sourced from Ndebe Wordpress.com.

The above pictures show precolonial Igbo maidens dressed in *nja* anklet, *jigida* waist beads and *akwete* fabrics respectively.

### Examples of Nollywood Presentation of Precolonial Igbo in Hessian Fabrics

Film costume as a bearer of culture and history has been effective as a tool in that regard. But it could also become effective as a tool for undermining the values and essence of a people's past. It could thus be used to make pejorative comments on a people. This research finds Nollywood's presentation of Igbo precolonial character questionable and worthy of reconstruction. Siegfried Kracauer's ideas on cinematic realism and Traditional Historicism were thus adopted for the studying of precolonial Igbo dress culture. Traditionally historians have been concerned with finding out what actually happened at a given time and place. Dobie suggests that, "they worked to establish the factual accuracy of the stories that make up the record of the human past so that they could establish, with as much certainty as possible, that the account they render was a valid delineation of what had happened" (175). Since this research is concerned with investigating the realities of Nollywood's portrayal of precolonial Igbo characters in hessian fabrics, it is then pertinent that the research should take cue from a theory which lauds realism in filmmaking and accuracy in recounting history.

Realistic film theory which is also known as cinematic realism as upheld by Siegfried Kracauer, has been an extremely useful model for questioning the nature of cinematographic images, the relationship of film to reality, the credibility of filmic images and the role film plays in the shaping and understanding of the world. The concept specifically points to the verisimilitude of a film to the believability of its characters and events. Siegfried Kracauer, a German film theorist was notable for arguing that realism is the most important function of cinema. In his book, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (1960), he maintains that of all the arts, film is the one uniquely qualified to record physical reality. Although he concedes that many films combine reality with formalist tendencies, he insists that the films that bring viewers to bear with "aspects of physical reality are the ones most valid aesthetically" (221). His opinion thus berates film costumes that mislead viewers' idea of physical reality of the character or culture being portrayed by the film.

The ability of film to present physical reality, according to Kracauer, is not far-fetched since he opines that unlike stage play, film possesses unique quality of recording and revealing the world authentically. Conveying camera's affinity to life, he posits that though other art forms such as stage performance or painting are "real", they "...reach into the world without... really forming a part of it" (29). Expanding on this notion, he reiterates that, "a theatrical play, for instance, suggests a universe of its own which would immediately crumble were it related to its real-life environment" (29). Analysing the properties of the film medium, Kracauer opines that film's basic properties resemble those of photography in the sense that, "film... is uniquely equipped to record and reveal physical reality... the only reality we are concerned with is actually existing physical reality... material reality... physical existence..." (28). His *Film Theory: The Redemption of Physical Reality* accentuates film's "photographic nature" which enables films to capture and represent the world in its real or natural form. He therefore advocates for filmic realism of everyday life.

Agreeably, costume designer could manipulate the elements of costume design to suit the film's concept, it must however be done on purpose. Any manipulation of the elements of costume

design in a historic film that misrepresents reality is thus considered inappropriate and worthy of change. Going by Kracauer’s idea on film and its ability to represent reality, Nollywood costume designer could achieve a seemingly undiluted authentic precolonial Igbo costume if they actually take their time to research into the Igbo past. This will of course entail more work in terms of reading and interviews as observation of the precolonial Igbo people is now impossible. Oral enquiry into the dress culture of the time will in addition to reading documented evidences (that point to the dress culture of the people) be revealing. Since the misrepresentation abound more in Nollywood “epic” films, which could be likened to historical films; it is important to carefully present viewers with costumes that authentically represent the Igbo people of the precolonial era.

Costumes as components of filmmaking are culture bearers. So using costume design elements, costume designers recreate cultures, personalities, eras, social and economic status so that film costumes become story telling tools – a means through which films communicate to its viewers. Certain fabrics and styles are hence used to indicate specific culture and period. Using *asoketo* costume Yoruba characters in historical films would thus be considered appropriate because the costume was informed by the Yoruba traditional dress culture. However, defining a Yoruba historical character with the traditional Fulani cloth, *leppi*, would no doubt create conflict in the mind of a knowledgeable viewer because the cloth is far removed from the realities of the Yoruba dress culture. But a viewer who is not conversant with Fulani dress culture will quickly imbibe this as the traditional Yoruba dress culture. Authenticity should therefore be the primary motivation for costuming a cultural or historic film.

Contrarily, Nollywood costume designers have been engaged in costuming Igbo precolonial characters in hessian fabrics. This practice seems to have evolved simultaneously with the emergence of the industry. Films such as Andy Amenechi and Don Pedro Obaseki’s *Igodo* (1999) have all the characters uniformly costumed in hessian fabric. Although the costume designer, Iyen Agbonifo had all the warrior’s hessian fabrics dyed purple and variegated with assorted beads, the everyday costumes of the villagers were left in its natural hessian carton colour. This is also contradicting as warriors’ costumes should have been the ones left plain. One begins then to wonder what message the costume designer intended to pass with such contradictory designs. It is however worthy to note that *Igodo* was among the pioneer “epic” or historical films done by the industry. Though historical blunder in costuming could never be justified, we assumed that the costume designers were still in the early years of their career as most of them appear not to have been educated formally or informally in the art of costume designing. Nevertheless, leaving the usual green marks seen on the sack bags on the costumes of the villagers was an act of carelessness on the part of the costume designer and portrays him/her as a careless designer.

Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 1: *Igodo*’s warriors, wearing hessian fabrics dyed purple and designed with white beads; while Plate 2 shows the village Council of elders all costumed in plain hessian fabric.

Deplorably, however, Nollywood costume designers still cling to the practice of costuming precolonial Igbo characters in hessian fabrics up to the present time. Thus giving the impression that this practice was informed by the peoples’ realities of the precolonial times; while costume designer could simulate fabrics such as those weaved from bark with hessian fabrics, it must be fortuitously done with the aim of achieving desired message. It becomes necessary then to reprehend such simulations if they become a constant practice as seen with Nollywood costume designers – especially

when such practice is far removed from the realities of the time and place being portrayed by the film and has been severally faulted by critics and viewers.

Examples abound of Nollywood films made in the recent times that still stick to this practice. In 2018, Nollywood released another “epic” film, *Tears of Ugonma* by Emmanuel Godwin Apeh. This film followed the same Nollywood established fashion, of uniformly costuming all characters, who appear to have existed before European colonisation of the people with hessian fabrics. Given the interval between 1999 when *Igodo* and its contemporaries were costumed, it was expected that Nollywood costume designers would have engaged in meaning research to discover what the people wore at the time. As this practice that does not reflect the reality of the presumed place and time has been frowned at. It appears however that Nollywood costume designers are unaware of the existing reviews on their work. It appears also that Nollywood costume designers have deliberately decided to imitate most of the Igbo film producers, who have evidently ignored any form of improvement on what they serve the viewers of their films. Profit appears then to be the sole motivator of their art. This becomes so clear as the industry has continued to pump more of such films into the market.

Another example of this practice is drawn from *Eyes on the Throne* produced just in 2019. *Eyes on the Throne*, just like its predecessors, has all its characters depicted with hessian cloth. Also adhering to what appears to have become a norm in Nollywood, *The Beautiful Ugonma* (produced just this year 2020) evenly costumed all its characters in hessian fabrics. The major characters had their own hessian fabrics dyed black, to form various motifs ranging from horizontal lines to curves. Though the costumes were worn in the appropriate Igbo fashion of dressing men in long wrapper, mini wrapper for maidens, ankle-length wrapper for mothers and knee-length wrapper for young-men, the use of hessian fabrics severed the costumes from the realities of Igbo people of precolonial times or of any other time for that matter.

Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6



Pictures above show characters from *Eyes on the Throne*, *Tears of Ugonma* and *The Beautiful Ugonma*, respectively. All the characters in the various films were dressed in the Igbo fashion of long wrapper for women, short wrapper for maidens and ankle-length wrapper for men. They were however all costumed in hessian fabric which is not an Igbo fabric. The fabric thus severs the films from the realities of the Igbo precolonial times.

### Conclusion

This research argues that Nollywood’s practice of Igbo precolonial characters with hessian fabrics is a misrepresentation of the Igbo precolonial peoples’ cloth. It frowns at the seemingly complacency of Nollywood costume designers towards research. The result is perceived to might have misled Nollywood film viewers, into believing that what Nollywood films present as precolonial Igbo cloth is historically authentic.

Film by its nature appears to attract more viewers than written documents or other sources of history. It becomes imperative then that films, as carriers of culture and history, should endeavour to present reality especially in historical films. Nollywood appears to be a powerful tool in shaping perceptions as seen in its efficacy in creating popular dress culture among the populace. It is therefore a powerful tool for shaping peoples’ perception of reality. Nollywood films have thus become undoubtedly a powerful source of knowledge, and by extension image creator of diverse Nigerian cultures.

Unfortunately however, in an attempt to make films that have been classified as epic, the costume designers have severally used hessian fabric to portray precolonial Igbo characters. The



practice is perceived as having pejorative connotations which tends to romanticize colonialism. It creates impression that the knowledge and usage of cotton fabric by the precolonial Igbo people was consequent upon their encounter with their European colonial masters. This research has attempted to disprove this idea as baseless, with evidences of the peoples' use of cotton fabrics prior colonialization. It has attempted to retell the precolonial dress culture of the precolonial Igbo people. It has attempted to provide what could be termed a "catalogue of the precolonial Igbo cloths". This research hopes that Nollywood costume designers could tap into the insights provided by the research on precolonial and traditional Igbo cloths in costuming precolonial and traditional Igbo characters. It believes that this will help to change the way Nollywood viewers conceive precolonial Igbo people.

The research maintains that verisimilitude is essential in historic filmmaking if a responsive costume design is to be achieved. It suggests that Nollywood costume designers should abide by reality in their costuming of historic characters and enjoins them to keep to actual representation of history and time. It stresses the need to create an authentic costume that will conform to the realities of place and periods. It thus recommends that Nollywood costumes designers should begin to embark more on adequate research before costuming historic films as this will improve on the lapses and flaws seen in their earlier works. The research believes that it is Nollywood's ability to dig into history that will determine its adherence to responsive costumes.

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## VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT: IMPLICATION FOR READING LITERATURE TEXT

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### **Abstract**

Vocabulary development has evolved. It has been neglected to mean forms of researches all aimed at presenting the best practice of understanding it and its intension. Some approaches have been developed at defining its scope, content and impact on teaching and the reading process. The paper treats vocabulary development and how it relates to reading literature comprehension. It gives a brief definition of literatures, vocabulary development and the reading process. It also discusses the methods of vocabulary development revealing the teaching approaches right from the primary school to the advanced level. The paper discusses developing vocabulary through listening skills reading skills. Other approaches the teacher can use in class to help students develop their vocabulary even further. This has to do with methods of word attack skills.

### **Introduction**

*Oxford Advanced Dictionary* 7<sup>th</sup> edition (2012) defined Literature as a written fiction of a high standard. It is a piece that passes as work of art, that is, any printed information on a particular subject or issue like text books, newspapers, magazines and so on. Literature is a veritable literal tool that enhances communication of any language within any given culture or society. Literature, like any other art form, engages the reader in a complex set of emotional, symbolic, moral, intellectual and social consideration. Literature builds communication, images, symbols and stories as it uses them with more complexity and subtlety than normal everyday communication. It also avail readers certain sensibility human beings have such as form, sensual experience, rhythm, repetition, contrast which we call aesthetic.

For us to understand what vocabulary development is, and its impact on reading literature text a cursory look into the processes of reading and comprehension must be looked into. Many educators and parents have wrong notions and conceptions of what Reading Process is. This is typical of many Nigerian parents and teachers who see reading as the ability to pronounce words only. To them, the ability to translate writing into speech sounds means a child or student can read, even when they do not understand. This is a wrong notion. It is simply ‘mouthing words’ without being coherently sensible.

For obvious reasons, many readers have problems understanding literature texts. One of such reasons is the limited vocabulary they have, as word level comprehension is important. Words are important in comprehension. By beginning with the word, an intention to establish some clear pattern of relations among ideas that will apply to sentences and paragraphs, as well, is created. Mofareh (2015: 20) observed as he opined that:

While students are expected to read and have a good understanding of their set texts, they are also encouraged to read beyond the examinable parameters of the subject, and develop a spirit of inquiry to guide their own reading. Looking for meaning of new word is important during reading.

Vocabulary development occurs with a successful reading habit. This means a highly developed vocabulary register is an indication of understanding that comes with reading widely and comprehending well. Therefore, growth in reading power relies more in continuous in words knowledge.

### **The Reading Process**

Reading process is best understood when we are able to identify why we read literature text, which in most cases, ends in obtaining information through comprehension. Reading literature and comprehension are intertwined and inseparable. Hyeok and Jee (2014) said that,

the effect of reading purpose on reading comprehension and perceived difficulty. English Teaching, despite a large amount of research on reading, little attention has been paid to experimental studies on the effects of purposeful reading. This study explored the effects of reading purpose on reading comprehension and perceived difficulty.

Reading becomes impossible where this is the case because reading skill is built on the oral skills of listening and speaking. This procedural correlation shows that, if a reader understands spoken language where it is spoken, it becomes easier learning to read what he hears and write what he read. It is further easier, if he or she is able to express themselves using the same way that the reader already facilitate his or her understanding of the text.

Often times, teachers misrepresent the teaching of reading with teaching of language. At this juncture, it is important that it be stated here that reading lesson is not when meaning of words are explained. Reading, a meaningful mental activity that involves taking the contents of a text, is a process of communication between an author or playwright or a poet and the reader.

### **What is Vocabulary Development?**

Vocabulary development is the deliberate and systematic expression of what is in the learner's brain of a target word-stock with the objective of enabling the learner to use the words he has learned in speech or writing. Word knowledge as will be observed in the preceding paragraphs enables a learner to comprehend increasingly complex text. In other words, it enhances the ability to process text, understand the meaning and integrate what the reader already knows. Mofareh (2015) again said that,

vocabulary learning is an essential part in foreign language learning as the meanings of new words are very often emphasized, whether in books or in classrooms. It is also central to language teaching and is of paramount importance to a language learner. Recent research indicates that teaching vocabulary may be problematic because many teachers are not confident about best practice in vocabulary teaching and at times do not know where to begin to form an instructional emphasis on word learning.

Vocabulary development should be seen by the teacher and the learner as an integral part of reading comprehension, instructional programme and not an incidental occurrence. Chnara (2016) states thus:

The greatest tools we can give students for succeeding, not only in their education but more generally in life, is a large, rich vocabulary and the skills for using those words. Our ability to function in today's complex social and economic worlds is mightily affected by our language skills and word knowledge.

Vocabulary is the most significant determinant of Reading Comprehension materials that are more easily understood. It helps to increase students' knowledge on words, and their meaning. Reading is a self discovering process. In the process, reading combined with written material increases cognitive and meta-cognitive effort to acquire new knowledge.

## **Methods of Vocabulary Development**

Having seen the role of vocabulary development in the process of reading comprehension, the methods or ways in which it is deployed will be discussed in subsequent paragraph with a view of understanding, also, how it aids effective usage of words.

### **Listening Skills**

As agents of socialization and impartation of non-formal education, the attitude parents towards reading and their reading habits impact on the formation of a child's reading habit. Parents and teachers are saddled with the onerous task of preparing children and students for reading through speaking to them at pre-school ages, or assign, others to read to them where the parent of a child is an illiterate. Engaging children in this way helps develop their listening skills as well as improve their vocabulary. It also builds the foundation on which the child's sense is developed to conceptualize. Also, it develops diction, listening and reading of literature.

### **Good Reading Habit**

Studies show that cultivating life-long reading habit is essential to success of a child in the long run. For the vocabulary of a child to grow, it must develop basic reading skills at a very early age or pre-school age, with the parent encouraging and providing moral support, and by the teacher afterwards when the child enrolls in primary, secondary and high schools. The quality of literature a child can access determines good reading habits. Picture books, storybooks, with engaging characters and board books with age appropriate vocabulary for early learner can be purchased by parents for their pre-school children. As it offers children a wide variety of options, it encourages them to read and develop interest in intensive reading, which is a veritable tool in development of one's vocabulary.

The more one reads and studies literature, the more the learner comes across new words, learns how it works, the more it impacts on his or her competence as a reader. Literature becomes richer and engaging, thereby, expanding one's vocabulary. Reading should not just be an activity associated with home work, or studying. Give your child (kid) time to read a book that they enjoy to foster a (good) habit of reading. This increases their chances of finding a favorite that fuels their interest in discovering new words and their meaning.

Drama text, novel and poetry are profitable. They encourage and quicken advancement of the oral abilities since they inspire students to accomplish a clearer perception of a work's plot and a more profound understanding and consciousness of its characters. These meeting exercises of reading drama, novels, and poetry builds up the speaking capacities of the students and offer significance to elocution hone. Poetry helps in the aesthetics of vocabulary formation through reading drama and novels.

### **Reading**

Talking and listening precedes reading. Professionally, it is an instructionally imperative that teachers must first train a child to talk and listen before they are taught to read. Children will be able to relate print to oral language. Below are formulated steps set out for teachers to achieve the above:

1. Self introduction in the first week of school.
2. Stories be read or retold to the children.
3. Choral reading of poems or nursery rhymes.
4. Telling stories of events of interest to the children's lives.
5. Intra-school excursions should be encouraged and experiences discussed.

These steps, when taken, can lead to a better understanding of language and expansion of vocabulary.

### **Reading Speed**

Reading speed is the rate at which something is read. It is usually determined by the purpose of reading for comprehension, learning, and memorization. As the students develop their reading habits, it is considerably important that they learn to develop their reading speed by reading silently. In doing so, readers do not have to pay so much attention to the pronunciation of every word when they read.

Instead, they concentrate on reading for understanding as vocabulary and fluency increases. So does comprehension. Frequent reading activity improves the learner's reading speed which, in turn, translates to higher comprehension of what they read. According to James (2018),

for a text to be understood by a reader, it is a process imperative that he or she relate their knowledge of the language being read and background knowledge relevant to the content of the text, if the printed text before them is to be understood. It must be noted here that it is not to be advanced beyond the level of the spoken English of the reader.

However, this differs when reading play text during rehearsals. Reading aloud during a play rehearsal is encouraged. Apart from enhancing competence, it brings to the fore usage of a word, knowledge of the word's full meaning, correct pronunciation and sound of word.

Reading a literature text, whether play, poem or novel, explores the texture and meaning of human experience in a complex and compelling way. It can also lead to insightful reflections, hence, wisdom as it concerns our lives and nature of human existence. Literature is a literal vehicle that conveys thoughts, emotions, and expression of culture. People's way of life, perception of things and world view find expression through literature. It is an embodiment of ideas and innovations as well (Sham et al., 2015)

The use of Drama, Novel and Poetry in Teaching Language can pave the way for the learning and teaching of basic language skills. Poetry is a metaphor that is the most prominent connection between learning, because most poetry consciously or unconsciously makes use of metaphor as one of its primary methods. Drama offers a significant learning process. There are learning benefits that can be derived from studying Drama. Also, novel helps students' cognitive and emotional levels. Specific themes and concepts being developed in class should also be incorporated within the novel.

Teachers may employ poetry, drama and novel texts requiring students to develop the skills of listening, speaking and written language like good communication skills, spelling, handwriting, grammar and punctuation, when assessing comprehension." There are certain strategies that a teacher can use to develop to develop the vocabulary of his students, put down by authorities in reading available to a reader that can be used in identifying meanings of printed words. For the purpose of this paper, we shall focus on four (4) major strategies.

### **Sight-Word Recognition**

Sight words are commonly used words that children are encouraged to memorize as a whole by sight, so they can effortlessly recognize these words in print without having to use any strategy to decode. Word recognition is very important, it is the act of seeing a word and recognizing its pronunciation immediately without any conscious effort. Since reading comprehension is the ultimate goal in teaching a child, and student to read, the critical early objective is to ensure that they are able to read words with instant and automatic recognition.

Sight word recognition is important because it increases fluency and allows the reader to focus on the decoding of more complex words. As students become more fluent with decoding and sight word recognition, they become more able to focus on comprehending the text. This is in tandem with what Muttall (1989) referred to as, 'active vocabulary' – words that students know well, use frequently and confidently. In other words, active vocabulary is made up of words readily used and clearly understood by an individual when speaking and writing. It is instructive, therefore, that students are taught this skill for them to attain proficiency in reading in all subjects.

Developing this skill involves encouraging students to read wide and respond, correspondently, to what they read. Students become familiar with commonly used words and expression when they ponder over words they have come across in a text given by their teachers to read. In the process, they develop and increase their individual language lexicon and register. As proponents of this skill acquisition, teachers are impressed upon to set tasks as class-work or homework for their students, in intensive reading to develop them on sight-word recognition.

### **Word Analysis**

Word analysis is the study of the 'internal structure of a word. It is the breaking down of words into their smallest units. Word analysis skill is limited to words that are within the learner's listening or spoken vocabulary. This paper shall look into the two (2) known types of word analysis skills: Phonic analysis and Structural analysis.

**Phonic Analysis:** Phonic analysis is the use of consonant and vowel sounds to decode words. It is the study of the relationship between sounds and spellings which helps the student to recognize words heard when spoken but never seen in print. To Richard (2019),

one of the critical requirements for decoding, and ultimately word recognition is phonological awareness. It is a broad term encompassing an awareness of various-sized units of sound in spoken words. Phonics involves the skills of letter-sound correspondences.

Going by the definition and description of phonic analysis, it can be easily deduced that the main aim of helping students develop phonics is to aid their pronouncing of words properly in the passage that they may not have recognized as sight words, with the view assisting them guess their meanings, reasonably and effectively.

In teaching this skill, the teacher must be mindful of the need to select words from the student's reading scheme. Venturing outside the scheme to import words can render the exercise futile. Certain phonic generalizations have been outlined by reading experts to serve as guide or manual to the teacher for effective teaching. It is advised that the teacher should teach only the necessary generalizations so as not to bore or confuse the students. The import of this is to break words into syllables. For example, where a student comes across the word 'undo' and is confused or do not know the meaning, it is expected of the teacher to write the word in syllable like 'un/do' after which he calls out the word in syllable. The student, upon knowing the sound of the word 'undo' will be able to guess the meaning of the word.

In the same vein, monosyllable words could also be called out emphasizing the vowel or consonant sounds with which a student can identify the meaning of a word. Consonant word like '(st)op'. '(wh)at' could be called with emphasis on the consonant sounds. With this done, the student now discovers the sound of the words and can easily know the meaning of the word within the context of their usage, having seen it.

**Structural Analysis:** Structural analysis is the breaking of words down into their basic parts to determine word meaning. It is a powerful vocabulary tool since knowledge of a few word part can one clues to meaning of a large number of words. When using structural analysis, the reader or student breaks words down into their basic parts like:

1. Prefix: word parts located at the beginning of a word to change the meaning.
2. Roots: the basic meaningful part of a word.
3. Suffix: word parts attached to the end of a word: suffix often alter the part of speech of the word.

For example, words like 'multilingual', 'pre-season', if spelt as 'multi-lingual', and 'pre-season' becomes clear to the reader or student because the prefix gave the meaning of the whole word. Another example is the word 'bicyclist'. 'bi- prefix means two; 'cycle'- meaning wheel 'ist'-a noun suffix meaning a person who does a thing.

To accelerate students' knowledge and use of structural analysis, the meaning of most commonly used Greek and Latin affixes and root that occur in English should be taught them. This will help them to identify affixes (prefix and suffix), and know what they mean. For example, 'anti' (against) – 'anti-robbery'; 'multi' (many) -'multi—role'; 'en' (into)- 'en-route'; 'less' (without) – 'power-less', etc.

**Contact Clause**

Of all the word-attack strategy, this is the most important and frequently used. Context clues are limits within a sentence which may help a reader in identifying the meaning of a new or unfamiliar word. These are hints embedded in or between words and sentences: they shed light on or give an idea as to what the meaning of an unknown word is.

Contextual usage of a word best describes the meaning. As such, words should be taught within context. Since the essence of teaching vocabulary is to encourage mastery of words and their proper usage, few words should be presented in a given lesson so as to ensure full grasp of the word and their meaning on the part of the students. In literature, poems, plays etc., feelings, emotions and sentiments are conveyed contextually. Hence, there is the need to encourage the mastery of words.

Understanding words and their meaning contextually, is predicated on certain contextual assists or aids that a reader uses to make intelligent guesses as to what the meaning of an unknown word may mean. They are: Substitute Words, Figure of Speech, Inference, and Structural aid.

**Substitute Words:** These are words that take the place of another. It involves the grammatical use of synonyms and antonyms, associating them with existing new words in the text to help bring out their meaning. Teachers may come to the aid of students where words in a text confuse a student by encouraging them to find similar and less difficult word with same meaning. For example, 'alleviate'. Where the student is lost, associated words are provided either by asking the student to give the synonyms or the teacher does so. Words like 'lessen', 'relieve' could be given as substituted words which may serve as an eye opener to the understanding of the student. In the same manner, the teacher can give an antonym of a word in question to stir up the meaning.

**Figure of Speech:** It is a word or phrase that possesses a separate meaning from its literal definition or meaning. It can be a metaphor or simile, designed to make a comparison. Figure is different from idioms or phrases whose meaning cannot be deduced from individual words. The need for students to acquaint themselves with the use of idioms and figure of speech cannot be over emphasized. It will help them in deduce their meanings wherever it is posed before them. Chosen texts for the training should be simple and comprehensible with less lexical items, otherwise, inference will be a difficult task.

**Structural Aids:** They are grammatical elements that help in giving an idea or notion for predicting or guessing effectively the meaning of a difficult word. Punctuation marks such as commas and hyphens (dashes) are guides or clues for finding a meaning which teachers should teach their students. The contextual assist provided in the above is responsible for the peculiarities of literature texts. It requires the ability of mastery of words, their proper usage and understanding. It takes a well developed vocabulary and reading to decode meanings in the literal sense of the word.

### **Dictionary Skills**

The dictionary is an important reference material for both teachers and students. Developing dictionary skills is a strategy in attaching new words and enriching one's vocabulary. Though an indispensable tool, frequent consultations must be discouraged. Looking up words in the dictionary should be a last resort thing as it creates a kind of dependency syndrome which slows down reading activity and thought process.

Be that as it may, teachers should teach students how not to use the dictionary to identify new words. This means that teachers should train students in how to locate words in the dictionary, to pronounce the word using the phonetic symbols as well as understand meaning of the word appropriate to the sentence. As important as it is, the teacher should make the students understand the limitations inherent in the use of dictionary sometimes in looking up words and their meanings. Instead, concerted efforts must be made with a view of assisting students to recognize that sentence context present a reader with the best clue to precise meaning of a difficult.

Literature is a powerful tool in vocabulary development. It creates room for better expression of language, through reading comprehension, the perception of things and views. Literature, from the standpoint of multicultural young adults' novels, provides a platform on which learners can build cosmopolitan world view and identities. Literature help to interpret a situation the way it is, critical



discussion, analysis of play or novel, and foster solutions. In a way, it helps an audience to take wise decision when faced with a real life situation akin to a play or novel. John (2015) says:

the use of drama seems to be an effective technique in today's communication based, student-centered foreign language teaching. Since it is an authentic material, it helps students to promote their comprehension of the verbal/nonverbal aspects of the target language they are trying to master. Particularly, teachers, who wish to make language learning more colourful, motivating and interesting, can make use of drama in their language classes.

The point stressed here is that, literature is built of language, composed of many ambiguities, contradictions and ironies. It is this, ambiguities and ironies that bring out the richness, density, and the beautiful communication skills in a learner or student. Literary texts can go about as an advantageous supplement to such materials, especially when the main "survival" level has been passed. In reading scholarly messages, since students have additionally to adapt to language expected for local speakers, they become comfortable with a wide range of etymological structure, informative capacities and implications.

### **Conclusion**

We must first accept the fact that falling standard of learning has affected, virtually, every aspect of education, especially reading literature text. This is further worsened by the quality of teachers being trained to train students, especially in English and literature. Having taken time to go through the various components of vocabulary development and the place of literature in reading and assimilation, it will be worthy of mention to conclude that the process of learning and reading can be improved with elaborate educational policies.

At rudimentary levels, for instance, understudies ought to be given rearranged or uniquely composed stories. At modern levels, be that as it may, students are given literature in its unique shape with the goal that they can build up their scholarly fitness in the objective dialect. To put it in another way, learners learn for all intents and experience distinctive classes of literature at cutting edge levels. Watching how characters in a play or a short story use sayings, for example, simile, metaphor, allegory and metonymy, in order to express their open expectation, students figure out how to compose sentences using vocabularies, obviously, innovatively, and intensely.

### **Recommendation**

It is therefore recommended that:

1. A comprehensive overhaul of training modules for teachers of English and literature be considered. A teacher not well grounded in basic and applied principles of teaching Literature-in-English can never develop his or her vocabulary. The implication of this shortcoming has a chain effect on the vocabulary development of students.
2. Parents should contribute in their children educational development by being proactive in imparting knowledge and introducing good reading habits to children at early stage.
3. Children should be exposed to literature text at early stages of their lives, this way they will develop interest, mastery of words and usages.
4. Literature-in-English should be encouraged as policy in education, courses of studies notwithstanding.
5. Being a key to effective language communications Literature-in-English will provide students with sound leverages.
6. In all, critical thinking should be encouraged through tasks that demand intense rumination of the mind while carrying them out

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## CONCEPTUALIZING BODY TATTOO AS A CREATIVE COMMUNICATIVE ART: THE OGALLALA STUDIO ARTS IN VIEW

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### **Abstract**

Body designs have been an integral part of African Culture. In the olden days, people made use of makeup such as; Ufe, Uli, and Nwakasi, to design the body, but aside the purpose is meant for it also nourishes the skin medically. The current trend of tattooing is becoming too alarming, where its designs always come in various forms, styles, and shapes without knowing the intended message it sets to pass across and why it must be drawn in various sensitive parts of the body. The aim of this research is to interpret the communicative values of tattoos drawn in various sensitive parts of the body here in Nigeria. Objectively, this paper would (a) emphasis why Nigerian Youths are beginning to value tattoos more than the westerns, (b) it would expose what motivates any tattoo is drawn and the reason(s) for such and it would interpret why Nigerian Youths select specific parts of the body where it would be drawn. For effective research on this paper, content analysis and interviews would be used as the methodology for effective interpretation. From the findings to an extent Nigerian Youths see the tattoo as a tool to differentiate societal status amongst themselves which is not meant to be and must be redressed. In conclusion, tattoos are aesthetically nice on the body, but it must always be done communicatively and not on the exposed parts of the body

### **Introduction**

Body design has been an old traditional act in Africa especially Nigeria. They at times come as tribal marks, not for beautification but have sociological implications when interpreted. Some of the traditional tribal marks can be inform of lines, tiny opening, tiny ropes tied somewhere and so on. Daramola and Jeje as cited by Taije Aluko said that, “those tribal marks are not just put in any part of the body, but in the following places; forehead, chest, stomach, hack in some cases on the legs and hand, in other to explain some cultural undertones” (3).

The use of tribal marks then and now especially in some ethnic groups in Nigeria is to represent situations, market days or events that attracted such marks. Those marks to the best of the researcher knowledge are not done with designs such; human face, colorful flowers or inscriptions, rather the lines are well placed as it is in some Northern/Western parts of Nigeria to depict something meaningful and not for beautification. In order, to showcase the sacredness of body design then, it is not done by just anybody or in any studio (as it is in tattoo) rather some selected person(s) or families have been destined to do it. This is so because, it is a belief in Africa or Igbo cosmology that some trades are not taught by humans’ rather ancestral spirits based on historical backups surrounding the family or the person to be taught respectively. Nicholas Akas stated that,

body design art in Igbo tradition is usually done by a particular set of person or family, in order to continuously uphold the cosmological legacy which if uttered will affect hereditary lineage, thereby shifting the mantle of authority to another family (6).

The above quote shows how special body design was in the olden days against Westernized style called tattoos. The invention of tattoos in Africa is an adapted act from the westerners, who always modified their bodies at times with or without reason(s). Some of the individuals who tattooed their bodies in the Western world are celebrities, soldiers and individuals (either to remember special

events like; when they were heartbroken, their birthdates, inspirational quotes, flowers or animals they have and cherish so much). All these about body modification as states are purely Westernized against what some core body designs are meant for in Africa. Tattoo designs have taken a larger percentage in the life styles of individuals, youths and celebrities in Nigeria, just wanting to imitate their western counterparts or being identified as a star. So, tattoos in Nigeria now becomes a yardstick to measure social status where people wearing it are seen as fashion, rich people, classy, stars or Wanabes. Henry Anayo Akas (tattooist interviewed) said:

The Nigeria Ideology of tattooing at times is baseless because some do it because of peer pressure or want to be noticed which makes it totally abnormal. But when they are born again as they would always claim, they will start looking for how to remove it.

So, this research sets out to interpret some selected tattoos wore by individuals in Nigeria towards understanding its socio-communicative essence wherever they exist.

### **Cultural Perception on Tattoos**

Culture is one major thing that determines people's way of life and ideology. The essence of culture is to give one sense of belonging or identification, which can come in any form either through dressing, feeding, dance, music or approved tribal marks. When all these are sighted anywhere, it automatically presents where one is coming. Each culture in Nigeria has what they are known for or identified without any doubt or seeking extra interpretation. But tattoos have been strongly frowned at culturally in Nigeria because people wearing it are seen as irresponsible, thieves, bad boy or girl and lack strong paternal training. Stemate D observed that,

tattooing is not an African thing, rather it is purely westernized, where the western children to an extent have the freedom to do or tattoo anything on his/her bodies. But in Nigeria, to be able to precise anything you must inform your parents to avoid being the black ship of the family or wrongly misinterpret (6).

Furthermore, it is frowned culturally, because of its new style of body modification, where they are drawn in very selective and sensitive parts of the body like; the breast and private parts. These are parts of the body that culturally and morally wise, are not meant to be exposed anyhow (all in the name of fashion) nor being touched by anybody (like the tattooist). But, the act of tattooing has really devalued the sacredness of some human body parts and exposed some youths both male and female to diseases like, HIV, Hepatitis B or C; and while some are even raped in the process. Some of these tattoos drawn in selective areas of the body has forced a lot of individuals, celebrities, and youths to keep exposing it, which is totally against core Africa tradition where a woman or man, is only allowed to expose his/her body only in three clarified occasions such as:

1. When he/she wants to bathe;
2. When he/she wants to have sexual intercourse with the husband or wife; and
3. When he/she wants to sleep

But with the advent of tattooing in Nigeria, it flaws the cultural essence stated rules on exposing the body into the following:

1. Tattoos drew at sensitive parts of the body make it sexually attractive.
2. Exposed tattoos make one more outstanding and recognized in several gatherings.
3. The inability to expose tattoos presents the person as having low self-esteem.

When exposed and from the style drawn, it automatically shows how much the person involved spent while acquiring such. So, it is against these bases that wearing of tattoos to an extent is not been acceptable culturally in Nigeria.

### **Socio-Communicative Essence of Tattoos on the Nigerian's Body**

Robert Leach opined that, “no artistic work of art drawn is meaningless or uncommunicative; all that is needed is to understand the artist ideology while drawing and the value of art as requested by the individual” (123). Some newly tattooed bodies among Nigerians either celebrities, individuals or youths are not totally abstract, rather they follow the bandwagon of westernized ideology in drawing communicative tattoos. The communicative essence of tattoos can be appreciated based on the parts of the body where they are drawn or the reason(s) surrounding each drawing. Henry Anayo Akas (a tattooist interviewed) said that “in my years of experience as a drawn fine artist and tattooist, people no longer follow the old ideology of Uli body design; rather, the westernized format where some notable activities trigger each drawn tattoos is the in thing now”. To an extent from the interviews and content analysis method used, the researcher can say that cultural hybridity is really affecting the socio-communicative essence of current tattoos drawn in Nigeria. Some of the socio-communicative symbols are drawn by Henry Anayo Akas (a tattooist and whose studio is under study in this paper).

- a) *Lion/Tiger*: This is normally drawn by security officers and weight lifters to present themselves as strong people that must be feared by others.
- b) *Eagle*: This is another iconic animal that people rarely draw here in Nigeria, just because of some reasons best known to them. But the tattooist (understudy) said ‘any woman seen with this rare symbol is feared so much and seen as a strong person who cannot be intimidated’.
- c) *Flowers*: This at times has no much communicative value, rather some individuals wear it in Nigeria to represent their role models especially celebrities who wear the same.
- d) *Inscription*: Like the westerners, some Nigerians use this to portray special moments in their lives. Those inscriptions can be bible quotation, can be named of their spouse, and can also be events in their lives or tragic moments (for example, woman of fifty-sixty years old that wrote on the left-hand side of her breast the names of her six sons that died on the same day in a motor accident)
- e) *The Face of human beings*: Some draw the faces of their celebrities they love so much which can either be musicians, footballers, or actors to show how much they adore the celebrity as a diehard fan.

So from the aforementioned and some pictorials that would be analyzed later in this research paper, shows that some tattoos styles are adopted from the westerners and are very communicative when semiotically interpreted beyond aesthetics.

### **Types of Tattooed People**

As tattoos drawn varies from individuals wearing it, that is exactly how we have different types of people seeking for tattoos on their body. So many scholars have tired giving various interpretations on people seeking for tattoos, but the most suitable for this research paper is Sanders and Vail categories as cited by Garica Merritt Gabriel, where tattooed people are classified as:

- a) *Collectors Seeker*: This type of individuals always seek out for specific artists and visualized a particular style before committing a significant amount of time while searching for that special studio and special tattooist. They always conceive their existence on their stylized tattoos
- b) *Tattooed People*: This set of individuals felt that their tattoos were an integral part of who they are and not afraid to be known via their tattoos.
- c) *People with Tattoos*: This is another set of individuals do not primarily conceive of themselves as tattooed people and might feel more apprehensive on being known with their tattoos.

From these various types of people logically interpreted in this research paper, will assist in classifying each person wearing tattoos in Nigeria to know where they belong and how they feel wearing it.

### **Why Some Nigerians Remove Tattoos?**

According to Henry Anayo Akas (interviewed) said:

There are several factors that make some people want to remove expensive tattoos on their body. When such desire starts becoming worrisome in them, it can force some people especially the ladies to do anything or use anything for it to be removed.

He further stated based on his 13years experience in tattooing the following are the major reasons:

1. *Parental Authority/Fear*: Some parents who are not in support of it, when they see it on children or wards, they either beat the person or threaten to stop paying his/her school fees. When such threats become intense, the individual involved will start seeking for removal.
2. *Job Security*: Some might have drawn tattoos as students in the university due to peer pressure on fashion. But once maturity and responsibility sets in, especially if the person has been jobless and what is required of him/her to get a job is to remove a tattoo; immediately he/she will do so. The same is applicable to those working already and want to retain their jobs.
3. *Family Name*: Some people with a myopic mindset always see and believe that drawing tattoos are meant for irresponsible beings and need not be associated with. So, when such pressure is much on a person with a tattoo not wanting to be tagged a disgrace to the family name. The next option is to request the removal.
4. *Religion*: When some said they are born again, so to prove it is by removal of their tattoos.
5. *Brain Washing*: This occurs mostly when some are brainwashed with having iconic tattoos are demonic and will hinder their progress in life. In order to avoid such from happening today as prophesied by their prophet or Iman, they will request for removal immediately.
6. *Self-Accord*: This last set of individuals, whenever he/she feels fed up with a particular tattoo, and then the next action is to seek for removal.

He further added that perfect removal of tattoos must be done with a machine called Laze. With Laze Machine, though the removal process might take three or four months as the case may be, it must be achieved. See pictures of the following:



*Plate 1: Laze Instrument used in removing tattoos*



*Tattoo Instrument*



*Plate 2A: Already removed tattoo*





*Plate 2B: Already removed tattoo*



*Plate 3: Still in second month of removal process.*

### **A Brief History on the Tattooist**

Henry Anayo Akas is a well-known tattooist at Onitsha, Anambra State. He is a graduate of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. His area of specialization is Sculpture and he has over twenty sculptural works to his credit. Furthermore, the act of tattooing was a passion he developed back then as an undergraduate, where he tattooed students just to sustain himself then in the university. But after graduation in 2015, the desire to be a tattooist and aside his core area of specialization was very high. So, he went on three years' incentive apprenticeship under a Chinese man. He narrated his early experience thus:

I thought as a fine art graduate, the act of tattooing would be very easy for me, but it is a different ball game. I was told by my Chinese master to debunk everything I have learned in the university and learn the new art. I will say it really helped me because is now my only source of feeding.

People work into his shop in thousands on a daily basis to be tattooed which always varies in various ways. It is important to state also that the researcher is not in any way related to the interviewee; it is purely a coincidence that we bear same name.

### **Analysis on Tattoos Drawn in Ogallala Studios of Arts and Tattooing**

This section is going to interpret some of the symbolic tattoos drawn in the studio and socio-communicative implications attached to them base on Nigeria's perception. The interpretation would be based on interviews carried out on the tattooist by name Henry Anayo Akas. Those tattoos are as follow:



*Plate 4: Eagle/Flower*

This iconic sign is very symbolic to the bearer. According to the tattooist (interviewed),

She requested for this type of tattoo on her breast because of some painful experiences. She was heartbroken, raped and has being used as a sex object a lot by men because of fake love promises they always claim to have towards her. So, she decided to draw this as a way of scaring some men away with the assumed notion that she might belong somewhere; while the Rose flower symbol simply reminds her that love should be given only to true men who can sacrifice for their loved ones.



*Plate 5: Wise king*

This tattoo reminds the individual what he experienced in the hands of his Uncle, who refused to train him in school. He tired pleading with the uncle several to train him in school but he rather advised him to go and learn a trade, the reason being that education is not meant for everybody. So one faithful night as reported by the tattooist base on what he was told by the individual, as he saw late father in a dream who told him not to depend on anybody rather he should struggle for himself. The late father told him “you are a king so be wise”. So, the dream he had inspired the tattoo on his body.



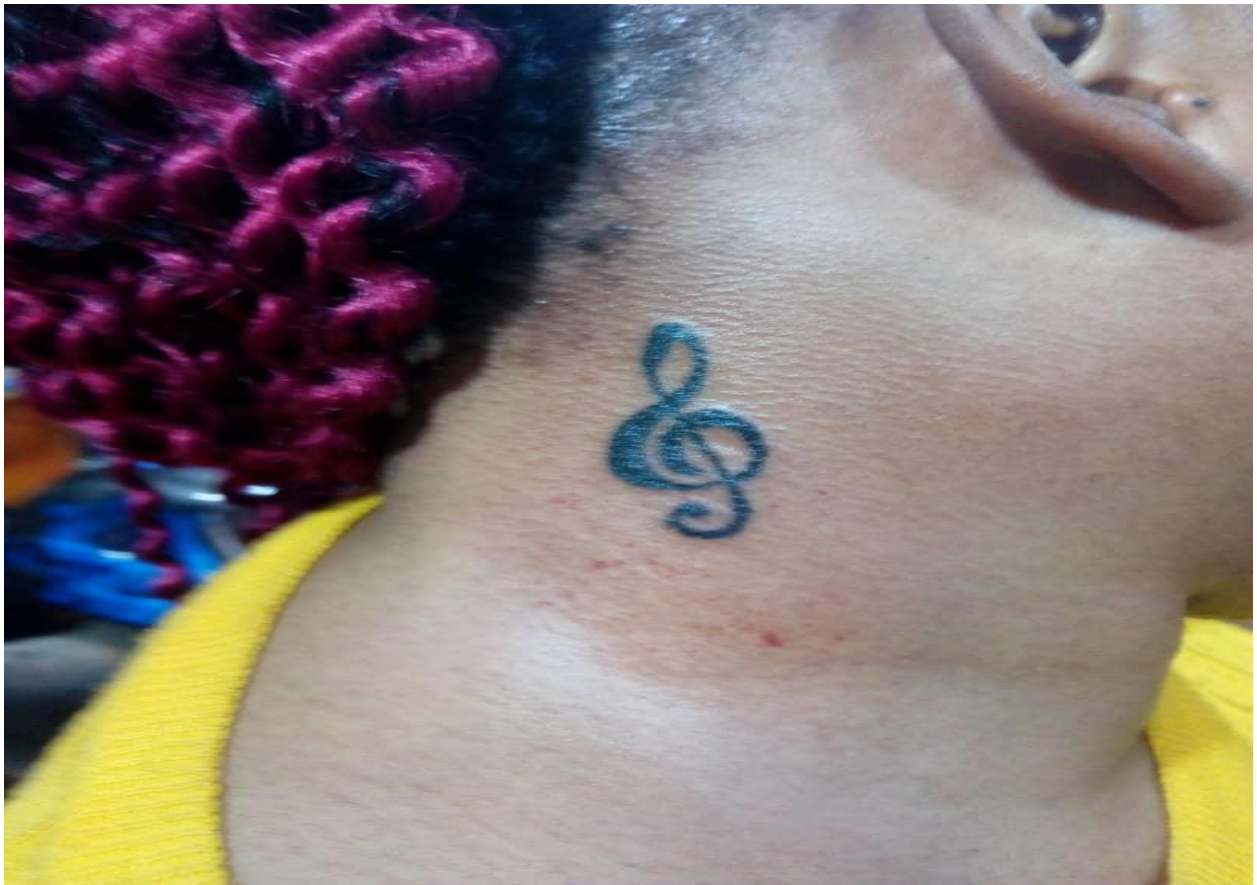
*Plate 6: Strokes*

The drawing is very abstract in nature and the location to be the back is questionable where anybody can wonder what inspired such drawings. But according to the tattooist, the strokes tattoos remind the wearer how many obstacles a man will meet in life before he achieves success.



*Plate 7: The Rose flower on the Lap*

From the tattooist, it serves as a seductive tool for the wearer. She said her lap is her sexual weak point, so any man that symbolically adores the flower on her lap can have her as much as he wants in bed. So, it takes a highly romantic mind to lure and turn her on through this tattoo.



*Plate 8: The Clef*

Aside from this tattoo being a musical icon, its location is more communicative. This is another sexually sensitive area in some women. So, according to the tattooist, the wearer said it is only a man that understands the power of music that can be her boyfriend. The man must be a lover of music, not just any music but the ones with a romantic undertone.



*Plate 9: Silent*

The tattooist said the wearer used this always reminds him to talk less in gathering and listen more. He said (the wearer) why he chooses the silent icon is because he has always been accused of one bad thing or other that has landed him in the police station several and cost him a lot of money for bail. So he decided to be more careful by talking less.





*Plate 10: Inscription*

The tattooist said the wearer and his family have been victimized by one wicked uncle several over plots of land. They tried to fight him, but could not because he is rich and well connected. So the only solution they resolved to be prayers. According to the wearer, God Almighty fought their battle for them miraculously and the uncle dead. So, that was what gave rise to this tattoo. From the analysis, the researcher can take a stand by saying that some of the tattoos drawn in Nigeria by Nigerians as adopted from the westerners have their own indigenized socio-communicative undertone.

### **Conclusion**

The desire to draw a tattoo is an adopted act that cannot be stopped in Nigeria as it is now. The researcher might be considered judgmental if he recommends ways for the act of tattooing to be stopped among Nigerians. However, the major thing this paper seeks to suggest is, if tattoos will be drawn at all on anybody, let it be interpretive, communicative and not exposed as seen in some of the pictorial analysis, because such is not our come tradition.

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*Pictures of the Interviewee as a Sculptor*



*Pictures of the Interviewee as a Tattooist*

**Research Questions asked the Tattooist, Henry Anayo Akas**

Interviewer: What is your name?

Tattooist: My name is Akas, Henry Anayo

Interviewer: Are you a student or graduate

Tattooist: I am a graduate of Fine Art from Nnamdi Azikiwe University 2015 set.

Interviewer: Why do people draw tattoo?

Tattooist: To the best of my knowledge it either is for fashion or represents the situation of things as it is in a foreign country.

Interviewer: What inspires the type of tattoos drawn?

Tattooist: What mostly inspires the type of tattoo drawn is based on the person's likes, professions or how he wants people to see him.

Interviewer: Are there communicative essence attached to the tattoos you have drawn so far.

Tattooist: Yes, there is communicative essence attached to tattoos. People who love tattoos always use it to portray actions, situation, or day to day events. They believe having this will give them an everlasting memory.

Interviewer: Is there any special attachment to the parts of the body where tattoos are drawn.

Tattooist: I will answer this by saying Yes or No. Yes, because choosing special parts of their body where tattoos can be drawn showcase how special such a particular tattoo is to the wearer for instance a woman drawing her boyfriend's face on her chest, while is No because to some people it means nothing.

Interviewer: The type of tattoo instrument used in drawing tattoos

Tattooist: The instrument used for tattooing is called tattoo Gun, while the ink used in drawing is called tattoo ink. This tattoo ink is purely harmless.

Interviewer: How do you know the styles to draw on your customers?

Tattooist: I have a catalog of symbols normally requested by individual so all I do is to present it to them and allow them to make their choice, whichever they select then I draw.

Interviewer: Are there difficulties drawing tattoo.

Tattooist: The simple answer to this is training and one must have the passion to draw before he/she starts drawing tattoos.

Interviewer: What age bracket wants a tattoo more?

Tattooist: Does who want it more is people between the ages of 18 – 34 years.

Interviewer: Do get arouse while trying to draw on the sensitive parts of a woman.

Tattooist: (*Smiles*). It wasn't easy for me at the early stage, but as I go deeper into the trade it wasn't feeling anything.

Interviewer: Is there any difference between olden days make up and the modern tattooing.

Tattooist: There is a big difference especially in the area of style of drawing and instruments used. What is used then when there was no technology is totally different now.

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