

Nigerian Theatre Journal

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

Vol. 21 No.2

ISSN 0189-9562

Editor

Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma

2021

Copyright © 2021 Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA)

Nigerian Theatre Journal (NTJ) (ISSN 0189-9562) is published by the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), C/o The Editor, NTJ, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Africa, Toru-Orua (UAT), Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

All Rights Reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information or retrieval system, without the prior permission, in writing, from the Publisher or SONTA Editor.

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

- Prof. Alex C. ASIGBO - Chairman
- Prof. Barclays F. AYAKOROMA - Editor
- Prof. Sunday E. ODODO - Member
- Prof. Ameh D. AKOH - Member
- Prof. Tor IORAPUU - Member
- Prof. Julie UMUKORO - Member
- Prof. Moh'd I. UMAR-BURATAI - Member

EDITORIAL ADVISERS

- Prof. Olu OBAFEMI - University of Ilorin, Nigeria
- Prof. Chris NWAMUO - University of Calabar, Nigeria
- Prof. Duro ONI - University of Lagos, Nigeria
- Prof. Saint GBILEKAA - University of Abuja, Nigeria
- Prof. Irene AGUNLOYE - University of Jos, Nigeria
- Prof. Sam UKALA - Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria
- Prof. John S. ILLAH - University of Jos, Nigeria
- Prof. Sam KASULE - University of Derby, UK
- Prof. Osita OKAGBUE - Goldsmiths College, University of London, UK
- Prof. Kevin WETMORE - Loyola MaryMount University, Los Angeles, USA

Nigerian Theatre Journal (ISSN 0189-9562): A Publication of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). Since the leadership of SONTA changes every two to four years, it is encouraged that enquiries be sent to **SONTA Editor**: Prof. Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Africa, Toru-Orua (UAT), Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Subscriptions: Libraries and Institutions:	US \$100
Individuals:	US \$ 70
Association Members:	US \$ 50
Students:	US \$ 25

Journal Orders and Remittances to SONTA Editor (Prof. Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Africa, Toru-Orua (UAT), Bayelsa State, Nigeria). Email: sontaeditor@gmail.com.

Manuscripts: Articles for publication should be emailed to The SONTA Editor via sontaeditor@gmail.com. Such manuscripts should meet the criteria outlined in the **Instructions to Contributors**.

Contents

1. Understanding Dramatic Responses as Transpositions: An Examination of the “Theatre of <i>The Rafts</i> ” - Charity KALU	1
2. Eco-Metaphoric Construct as a Resonance for Sustaining Nature: An Interrogation of Kelechi Ogbonna's <i>The Tamarisk: A Healing Shrub</i> - Achor Friday AKOWE & Samson IDAKWO	17
3. Reconstructing the Society through Satire: A Study of Selected <i>Broda Shaggi</i> Videos - Mayowa Oluwasegun OLADEJI	32
4. Restructuring through the Appreciation of Nigerian Dance Values - Rudolph KANSESE , PhD	50
5. Evolution and Conceptualisation of Hybridised Bata Dance: <i>Bata-Risation</i> as Paradigm - Steve James ITSEWAH	62
6. <i>Alaga Ijoko</i> and <i>Alaga Iduro</i> as Compere-Director in Yoruba Traditional Wedding Ceremony - Adeyemi Oluwadamilare ORESANYA & Rukayat Olabisi ADEBIYI	73
7. Examining the Performance Aesthetics of <i>Koroso</i> Dance: The Bauchi State Council for Arts and Culture Dance Troupe in Focus - Godwin Sambo ADAMS	92
8. Aesthetics and Religious Tourism: The Potential of <i>Aringiya</i> Festival in Ikare Akoko, Ondo State - Olanireti O. FALADE	104
9. Evaluation of Drama IGCSE Coursework Pieces at Day Waterman College: A Review of Selected Candidates' Assessment Template - Silver OJIESON , PhD	123
Instructions to Contributors	138

UNDERSTANDING DRAMATIC RESPONSES AS TRANSPOSITIONS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE THEATRE OF *THE RAFTS*

Charity KALU

Department of Theatre and Performing Arts
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
Email: charyzz777@gmail.com

Abstract

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 idealisation 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. 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*. This paper, therefore, examines the elements of transposition in *The Raft*, *Another Raft* and *Yet Another Raft* with a view to highlight the nuances between transposition and adaptation; and how dramatic response can pass as transposition.

Keywords: Understanding, dramatic responses, transposition, examination, theatre, raft

Introduction

Adaptation has been used and is still used in different contexts in drama. Most often, it is used inter-changeably 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 sees adaptation as, “playwrights making suitable, plays already written, for new surroundings or audience, for a greater appeal” (119). 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, states 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)* (“Reminisces on Bertolt Brecht...”).

Going further, Iji sees transposition as, “...changing the relative position, order or sequence of a literary work (drama, etc.) in response to changed locale giving it new emphasises other than the original in which it exists. Thus, endowing it with varied colourations” (“Reminisces on Bertolt Brecht...”).

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, Iji’s 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 Yerima’s adaptation of William Shakespeare’s *Othello* as *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. 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, in *A Typology of Derivatives: Translation, Transposition, Adaptation*, defines and summarises 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 (2).

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 recur to myths for the plots of their plays, rather than to invent plots of their own or dramatise real-life events. These plots were totally a reworking of their myths. To further illustrate this, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* is based on a Greek myth that tells the story of a man killing his father and marrying his mother. This was by no means Sophocles' invention; it was his creativity in crafting 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. Shakespeare, for instance, used the legendary figure, Julius Caesar, to show the social reality of virtue through the 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, creatively reworking 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* is based on Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. Euripides' *The Bacchae* was transposed by Wole Soyinka as *The Bacchae of Euripides*. Apart from classical dramas being the source documents for African writers, oral traditions, traditional myths, legends and folklores have 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 106).

Apart from myths, legends, history and contemporary reality, transposition is another long-standing source of African drama. Transpositions in Africa are basically contemporary works of African societies. Michael Etherton explains this when he states thus:

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 another. It could be a reworking from classical ritual, novels, and even oral traditional forms like in the case of Clark's *Ozidi*. However, the 'trans-position' (exchange and permutation, repositioning) of these systems is radically different in the cases of Osofisan's *Another Raft* and 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 personal benefits to the detriment of 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 Oge Ogede, 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 (201).

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 globalisation. 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 show the universality of the values in the model texts, drawing correlations between their worlds and the worlds of the model texts. 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 109-110).

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, have 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, placed side by side with European/Classical and African plays, while transposing the former into the latter, these dramas have functioned as instruments in the struggle against colonialism. This can be illustrated with Rotimi's *The Gods are Not to Blame* as a transposition of Sophocles' *King Oedipus*. Though, Rotimi's intention differs from that of Sophocles, Rotimi, with the Nigerian flavour in his play, has made the point that there is an equivalent culture in all societies; though beliefs defer, their existence cannot be overlooked. In the same vein, Soyinka and Osofisan further attempts to "draw connecting links between the Yoruba and Greek worlds in *The Bacchae of Euripides* and *Tegonni*, respectively" (Etherton 108). 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 Hofmannsthal, 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 112-132). Femi Osofisan's reworking of Clark's *The Raft*, Osofisan's *Another Raft*, which has subsequently produced *The Raft Series* with Earliece's *Yet Another Raft* being the last version on this series.

Theoretical Framework

This study is foregrounded 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 consumed (Rogers 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 synthesiser: 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 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 46).

As observed by Graham Allen, inter-textuality has to do with desire and with the psychological drives of the *split subject*. The subject is split between reason and desire, the rational and the irrational, the social and the pre-social, the

communicable and the incommunicable (Allen 47). 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 Clark's *The Raft* and 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 Earlice'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, Ben Binebai and Sunday Abraye 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 (78).

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 perceive a limitation and deficiency in *The Raft* that Osofisan's inter-textually responds to in *Another Raft*. This deficiency is noted by critics in Clark's inability to provide a way forward for the troubled Nigerian nation. Osofisan fills this gap by consciously creating a new Nigeria which is 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 (Binebai & Abraye 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 illustrate this while pointing out thus:

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 (Binebai & Abraye 79).

Furthermore, Gbemisola Adeoti, in *Aesthetics of Adaptation in contemporary Nigerian Drama*, notes that *Another Raft* is a re-visioning of Clark's *The Raft*, adding 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 what is termed *The Raft Series* in this paper, is set in contemporary times, when they were written individually; and each takes place in strategic places around riverine areas. Clark's *The Raft* is set in the Niger Delta, Ijaw to be precise. The play begins in the Niger Delta and ends somewhere around the Port of Burutu. All the actions of the characters are confined to the raft (logs) which the four men are transporting to Burutu. The raft is travelling down the river, carried by the current to a fate unknown to its occupants. The play and the actions therein are directly influenced by both 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 area 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.

On his part, Osofisan, in *Another Raft*, creates a new world apart from that of Clark. Though, the actions of the characters are confined to the raft, Osofisan set his play in the far South-Western region of Nigeria – in 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 *Osun Yemoja*, a river goddess). He uses 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 in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, as Clark did. However, unlike the first two plays, which are 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 replicas of the setting being represented.

Osofisan's own departure from the Ijaw land to a typical Yoruba land is different from the setting of the other playwrights. This is quite significant because Osofisan proves to us that such issues which Clark represented in the South-South (Niger Delta region) are vast and have deeper roots in the people's attitudes, not just the leaders. He expands 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.

There is no arguing the fact that Nigeria experienced political unrest in the struggle for independence and even after independence. The different playwrights use their plays to address such issues peculiar to their time. Clark *The Raft* represents the troubled situation of the then newly independent Nigeria. 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 independence up to 1995, Nigeria has been going adrift, and is in search of a saviour, despite Osofisan's position of paddling together which was rendered in 1988.

Reading the plays as allegories shows that the four men on 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 represent the different phases of uncertainty from the point of Nigeria's independence to the time the play was written. However, it is important to emphasise that Clark's play was written in 1964, representing the four stages of uncertainty the country went through; one stage for each year.

Having established that *Another Raft* represents the political unrest in Nigeria at the time, Osofisan uses 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 the 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 the country back to where it started from. He believes, as is seen in his play, that our problems are caused by lack of policy and the craze for power and dominance by individual leaders. This he represents using the character of Agadagba.

On a final note, *the raft* series, being an allegory of the political events in Nigeria, is without doubt clear and justified. Taking it further, the plays are full of symbolism, open to varying and justifiable interpretations. The river and the raft could both be seen as symbolising life, the unknown future and the search for a solution. Uncertainties lie on 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* could be seen as symbolising some aspects 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 have always fallen into the hands of the political class that are more inclined to private, group or ethnic interests than in the general wellbeing of the Nigerian state. In all, political power has alternated between the civilian and the military since independence and the two categories that have ruled the country have done anything meaningful to enhance the development of the nation. Indeed, the political leadership has succeeded in legitimising corruption; they have provided a fertile ground and

conducive environment for the phenomenon to thrive, freely, at the expense of the nation's socio-economic, cultural and political development.

There is a transposition of the above in the plays as each playwright responds to each issue as it affects their time in history. Having fallen under the first generation of playwrights, Clark was influenced by the dominant tradition of writers to comment on the leadership of the country. However, this comment was made considering the loopholes created by the then leaders of the new nation in the 1960s. Thus, it could be argued that Clark used the four lumbermen in his play to represent the leaders of the four regions in Nigeria as at the time of independence: Northern Region, Western Region, Eastern Region and Mid-west Region. Lumbermen are men involved in the production or sale of lumber. They could also be seen as overseers of the business of cutting, processing and marketing lumber. *The Raft* basically revolves round the four lumbermen and their activities which end in futility leading to their demise. Clark's prioritisation of the issue of leadership shows that it is one of the biggest challenges of Nigeria's economic development. This is evident in that the activities of the lumbermen, which were totally economically inclined, are likened to the roles of our regional leaders in the conduct of their affairs, especially as they were the sole overseers of the economy and politics of the people within their regions.

On his part, Osofisan portrayed the issue of leadership on a more different terrain. He moved our focus from just the four regional leaders of the nation to generalising the very essence of leadership, which encompasses both the religious and political arms of leadership. Seeing that the point has been made 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. This appears to underpin Osofisan's use of twelve characters to illustrate the progression of Nigeria's leadership structure. This is also a signification and 'metaphorising' of history and passage of time and emerging contemporary development. Osofisan goes as far as introducing both the leaders and the led, which Clark on his part failed to recognise. Religious leaders are represented, with reference to Orousi and Omitoogun; the political leaders are also represented using Lanusen and Ekuroola; while the led are represented with Oge and Waje. These are just a faction and dual representation of the classes of the Nigerian citizenry. Osofisan depicts our political leaders as people who live far away from the people and do not understand the people's plight thus:

Lanusen: ...Chief Ekuroola! Did we have a choice! You live in Lagos, far away, on soft cushions and padded chairs. You're the Afore, 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? (24)

It is pertinent to state that generally speaking, most of Osofisan's plays are devoted to the problems of the peasants (the led) which, he believes, are attributable to negligence of the leaders. His plays 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. As a point of fact, he notes in the opening of the play:

In 1964, the Nigerian playwright, J. P. Clark, now known as Clark-Bekederemo, wrote his play, *The Raft*, which came to symbolise 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... (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 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 gives a background into the incursion of the military leaders into Nigerian politics. Truly speaking, the military came into power on the wings of the civilian political class. 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 also note about the rise of political leaders in the plays is 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 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. The questionable crave for power and authority became the reason why men aspire for leadership positions, and not the need to serve the people. Earliece depicts this in the play, using the character of Agadagba who declares himself king over the people whom he renders homeless and lost because he craves for the authority that comes with power. Together with Enyi, his accomplice, he pushes for his inordinate 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 (28).

It can be deduced that in his conceptualisation of the play, Earliece 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 represents Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu and the cause he stood for? It will be recalled that Ojukwu pushed for the secession of the South-Eastern people of Nigeria in 1966 owing to the fact that the central government at that time, which was headed by then 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, as a major thematic thrust, he responded to the attitude of the leaders and their cravings for power and authority. Hence, for him, the individuals involved in the struggle for leadership pose a threat to the development of the country.

Furthermore, in pointing out the problem of our country, Earliece stresses on the issue of individual domination and the chaos in the struggle for self-relevance. The limitation of the play is that, having noted the problems of Nigeria of 1995, he could not render a solution. On the other hand, we can say that this is quite deliberate because the problems in our country still persist today, even resulting in different regional crises. Therefore, as an inter-text, Earliece returns to Clark's position of ambivalence and cynicism that characterise *The Raft*. Earliece equally 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 problems, the ending of his play signifies the never-ending nature of our continuous struggle for domination and power.

Conclusion

Having examined the distinction between adaptation and transposition and their usage in the in dramatic literature, it could be surmised that the concept of transposition is basically a response; it is a response to a precursor text that exists in a different way. However, transposition can also occur in both form and content, as exemplified in the plays under study. 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 under which it was done.

It is pertinent to note how Osofisan and Earliece responded to the precursor text by 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 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 to the brinks of sinking, but that it has kept afloat. It is the drifting nature of the nation's social, political and economic structure that Osofisan's *Another Raft* addresses. However, the play could not give us a realisable solution, as man realises that he can steer himself to safety. But his play fails to capture the place of safety for the nation. Instead, we keep 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 tosses the reader up and down through his play until he posits 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 solutions offered 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 desired end.

WORKS CITED

- Adeoti, Gbemisola. *Aesthetics of Adaptation in Contemporary Nigerian Drama*. Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation, 2010.
- Allen, Graham. *Intertextuality: The New Critical Idiom*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Ashiwaju, Garba, & Olusegun Areola. *Nigeria since Independence: The First 25 Years*. Ibadan: University Press, 1995.
- Bennett, Tony. "Text, Readers, Reading Formation: Literature and History." *The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 16.1(1983): 3-17. 10.2307/1314830
- Binebai, Benedict, & Abaye, Sunday D. "Text as an Agent and Agency of Dislocation: An Intertextual Inspection of Select Nigerian Dramas." *An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal*, 13.1(2019): 78-79.
- Brecht, Bertolt. *The Three Penny Opera*, trans. H. MacDiarmid. London: Eyre Methuen, 1973.
- Clark-Bekederemo, J. P. *Three Plays: Song of a Goat, The Masquerade, The Raft*. Oxford: University Press, 1964.
- Earliece, Ossa. *Yet Another Raft*. Port Harcourt: Nucraft Multimedia Publishers, 2011.
- Etherton, Michael. *The Development of African Drama*. Zaria: Tamaza Publishing Co. Ltd, 2012.
- Euripides. *The Bacchae*, trans. James E. T. Rogers. Oxford: Packer, 1872.
- Falola, Toyin, & Tunde Akinyemi. *Emerging Perspectives on Femi Osofisan*. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 2009.
- Fugard, Athol. *The Island*. Viking Press: New York, 1976.
- Homer. *Iliad*, trans. A. T. Murray. London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1924.
- Homer. *Odyssey*, trans. Theodore Alois Buckley. London: George Bell and Sons, 1891.
- Gana, Emmanuel T. "Dramatic Responses as Transposition: An Examination of Emmy Idegu's *The Humans are not to Blame*." *A Journal of Theatre & Media Studies*, 1.2(2016): 46-57.
- Gay, John. *The Beggar's Opera*. Edgar V. Roberts (Ed.) (music ed. Edward Smith). London: Edward Arnold, 1969.
- Gbilekaa, Saint. *Radical Theatre in Nigeria: Radicalism in the Drama of Femi Osofisan*. Ibadan: Caltop Publications Ltd, 1997.

- Hofmannsthal, Von. *Everyman*, trans. George Sterling, and Richard Ordynski. San Francisco: A. M. Robertson, 1917.
- Iji, Edde. "Reminisces on Bertolt Brecht and his Contemporary Relevance in Nigerian Theatre." Lecture in a Conference on Brecht Centenary. Unpublished, 1997.
- Ijimere, Obotunde. *The Imprisonment of Obatala and Other Plays*, trans. Ulli Beier. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1966.
- Mishra, R. K. "A Study of Intertextuality: The Way of Reading and Writing." *Prime Journals*, 2012.
- Ngwoke, Omeh Obasi. "Symbolic Water Imagery in the Drama of J. P. Clark-Bekederemo." *An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal*, 11.45(2017). 10.4314/afrev
- Nwabueze, Benjamin O. "Military Rule and Constitutionalism." *Spectrum Law Series*, 1992.
- Ogbeidi, M. M. "Political leadership and Corruption in Nigeria since 1960: A Socio-Economic Analysis." *Journal of Nigerian Studies*, 2004.
- Ogede, Oge. *Intertextuality in Contemporary Literature: Looking Inward*. London: Lexington Books, 2011.
- Olofinsao, Abiodun. "Intertextuality and African Writers." *Crossroads*, 2019: 19-27. 10.15290/cr.2017.19.4.02
- Osofisan, Femi. *Another Raft*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd, 1989.
- Osofisan, Femi. *Tegonni: An African Antigone*. Lagos: Concept Publication Ltd, 2007.
- Rotimi, Ola. *The Gods are Not to Blame*. Ibadan: University Press Plc., 1979.
- Sell, Jonathan P. *Intertextuality as Mimesis and Metaphor: The Deviant Phraseology of Caryl Phillip's Othello*. London: Lexington Books, 2011: 203-205. 10.25115/odises. v0i9.207
- Shakespeare, William. *Othello*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Sophocles. *The Theban Plays: King Oedipus, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone*, trans. E. F. Watling. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954.
- Soyinka, Wole. *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion of Rite*. WW Norton & company: London, 1973.
- Soyinka, Wole. *Opera Wonyosi*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981.
- Webster, Rogers. *Studying Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Hodder Arnold Publication, 1995.
- Whittlesey, Henry. *A Typology of Derivatives: Translation, Transposition, Adaptation*. 2012.
- Yerima, Ahmed. *Basic Techniques in Playwriting*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd, 2012.
- Yerima, Ahmed. *Otaelo*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd, 2002.

ECO-METAPHORIC CONSTRUCT FOR SUSTAINING NATURE: KELECHI OGBONNA'S *THE TAMARISK: A HEALING SHRUB AS PARADIGM*

Achor Friday AKOWE

Department of Theatre Arts
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education
Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria
Email: akoweachor@gmail.com

&

Samson IDAKWO

Department of Theatre Arts
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education
Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria

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, eco-theatre, eco-centrism, eco-criticism, eco-poetics and many others, quite a substantial quantity and quality of literary discourses have been generated. This paper attempts an analytical posture of Kelechi Ogbonna's *The Tamarisk: The Healing Shrub* (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 theatrical metaphor will be a catalyst to spur other creative writers to engender eco-critical treatises in the area of appreciation, management and control of our natural environment.

Keywords: Eco-metaphoric, construct, resonance, sustaining, nature, interrogation, tamarisk

Introduction

The world all over is experiencing various 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. 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. 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 man himself in the guise of eking out means of livelihood. For instance, in the opinion of Damar, Rakun, and Saidu, 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, man in his bid to satisfy his insatiable luxurious penchants, explores, exploits and even plunders his environment to 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.

Ironically, it is established in some quarters that, man’s 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. Suffice to say then that, there exists equilibrium in the 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 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 civilisation of animal and human beings have also changed and the effect on

civilisation of the changes in environment has been so acute sometimes it has wiped whole civilisation from the face of the earth (1).

In advancing the above assertion, Ogaga Okuyade, making reference to unfriendly dispositions in humans to the non-human world, agrees with Shikha, positing this way:

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 from Okuyade's position pops up an issue which is also of great importance to this study. That in spite of all cautious efforts put in place like holding of global and national conferences, seminars, sensitisation programmes being carried out by Governments of nations and non-governmental organisations, and so on at all times to secure and maintain this eco-human equilibrium, 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, man at a commensurate or even more score, suffers consequences beyond his control.

Another concern that is also consequential to this study is that, Africa as a continent is not spared from man's unfriendly dispositions to his environment and its backlash. 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, its damaging effects can be felt in Africa as it is evident in the area of droughts, desert encroachment, unpredicted climatic change, shortage of potable water supply and at another dimension, flooding, to mention but a few. In continuance of this contention, Christopher Anyokwu cites Barak Obama as asserting 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 Nigeria, pressure is mounted on herders to move down to the Western and Southern parts of the country. This is one of the reasons why the people have not enjoyed good neighbourliness and in the main, growth and development is stampeded. Hence, the need to save this country from further economic depression and other climatic crises, because the Nigerian polity operates in an environment where 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 man from its reciprocal damnation when it strikes. Because from Abdulrasheed 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 better living conditions. It is on this premise that this paper attempts an eco-metaphoric interrogation into *The Tamarisk*... with a view to forestalling further environmental hazards that make man helpless when they occur.

Conceptual Clarification

The literary study of man and his relationship with nature falls within the purview of many nomenclatures. Thus, we shall attempt to practically situate a nomenclature that will approximately navigate this discourse through without too much detour or obscurity. Considering the arguments this paper has put forward

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 position 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 may have given birth to eco-literal concerns like eco-centrism, eco-poetics, eco-theatre, and eco-drama, among others. This is because, "most eco-critical works share 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, emphasise human interdependence, decentre the human, alleviate environmental degradation (699-700).

Suffice to say then 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 from the above, we can observe that eco-drama can be seen as plays in which metaphoric and aesthetic concerns are geared towards exposing environmental degradations, its causes and brunt on humanity and equally find pathways or navigate pragmatic ways out of this quagmire. This is with the view to forestalling the 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 audience employing creative explication to interrogate environmental concerns, mostly, pointing out its negligence and consequences through metaphors. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, this paper adopts Eco ‘Metaphor’ as a nomenclature. Hence, this intellectual metaphoric discourse on *The Tamarisk...* is to extrinsically carry out textual interpretation on the need to constantly strike a balance between man and his relationship with or to 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 crystallised by industrial production of goods and services in the globalised 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 forefront of using dramatic appreciations to address the concerns of man’s ruthless tinkering with his environment, which results in an upset in the ecospheres and ecosystem, with its attendant consequences, with the view to proffering solutions to these 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 wand that could turn around the challenges confronting the ecospheres and ecosystem. However, drama has the ability to incite thoughtful provocations, so much so 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 a means to an end.

Nonetheless, this dramatic approach remains relevant since the several ecological disasters and their resultant effects which come in the form of floods, drought, storms, desert encroachment, radiation problems, hydro-carbon emissions, global warming, and so on, 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. Incidentally, the effects of ecological challenges mentioned above transcend “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). This, 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 for the stage and film media.

About the Play, *The Tamarisk: A Healing Shrub*

The Tamarisk... tells the story of 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 to have been 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; and he places a curse on her. He also banishes her from the community; that 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; and 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 Nwokekaubas, and after a serious deliberation by the family members, considering her contribution to the well-being of the community. They arrive at the conclusion that, she deserves better treatment and that she only acted impulsively in her outrage at that moment in time. So, by simple majority, she is restored and the curse placed on her revoked.

Chikere returns to Umuobasi-Ano, falls in love again, though after long 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.

The Play Contextualised

Tamarisks are evergreen or deciduous shrubs or trees growing 18-21m in height with dense thickets having about 50 to 60 species 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 15,000ppm soluble salt and alkaline condition. The tamarisks are valued for their ability to withstand drought, provide shelter at sea

coasts, and act as wind breaks in the desert, just as they serve as ornamentals, raw materials for carpentry and fuel, among other uses. (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>).

The account given above brings to fore, the importance of the non-human world to man. By implication, human beings depend greatly on the non-human world for their existence. Nonetheless, findings have revealed that, man has consistently ignored this fact; hence, he has consistently treated this partner of his with reckless abandon. Atreya Banerjee's summation captures the above contention aptly on 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 tiniest 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 from the argument of this age-long human's unfriendly and endless seeking, discovery and manipulative dispositions which have led to substantial destruction of the environment and nature, humans pay dearly with even their own lives. With this on our hands then, there is the immediate need for humans to begin to chart a course for a friendlier disposition towards the non-human world. This is a clarion call, considering the impromptu destructive dispositions of most of these natural disasters towards man. Most times, it comes so sudden, carting away and destroying everything on its path. This graphic image Kelechi 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 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, astronautic, 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, carelessly building houses or erecting fences that block major drainages in urban cities, and so on. The repercussions come suddenly in the form of desert encroachment, global warming, environmental pollution and degradation, severe health pandemics (like Coronavirus, COVID-19), and so on. These off-shoots have always left the human populations confused and divested (in the heat of that moment) and the traumatic resultant effects are often attributed (from certain quarters) to something abominable, because they could destroy the very essence of a people's survival. But then, if the people ever survive, the recovery process could be near impossible or even long lasting.

Another concern which the playwright puts on the front burner of literary discourse is the reckless dispositions of humans towards their environment. Most of these disasters are occasioned by many inconsiderable treatments melted on the environment by humans. 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 do. 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 man in contemporary society to take care of these natural endowments with utmost care and caution to avoid eco imbalance.

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

Chikere: ...Yes, it is obvious that the groove cares 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 from above, it could be averred that 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 is anchored, to a large extent, on the level of mutual respect between the couple. It is yet to dawn on humans that the non-human world is a partner in progress, 'who' needs to be treated like a woman that needs superlative affection. Hence, the need to pamper, nurture and nurse her. It is not enough to appreciate that nature has made these provisions for their edification; humans have the 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 equilibrium of the eco and human relationship to some reasonable extent. Aptly, the playwright graphically addresses this challenge:

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)

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, and cultural monuments, among others, concerted efforts, 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. When this is in place, normalcy will return to the benefit of all. To this end, there is the dire need for the reorientation of the human world to become aware of their responsibility to this non-human 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 standards with humans' lackadaisical dispositions towards it. Therefore, there is the need for the humans to retrace their steps; but this can only be achieved through thorough sensitisation of the human mind by all the eco-centric government and non-governmental 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:

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. As a point of fact, the pursuit for sustainable disaster-free environments by humans can be achieved only when the Nigerians' taste for material acquisition equilibrates with considerate tempering of their God-given natural endowments. Again, Anyokwu's opinion is apposite:

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 heritages are destroyed with attendant 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 blessings as part of their existence. Hence, the need to explore and exploit them with considerable treatment, only then will their co-existence will be sustainable.

Conclusion

The researcher's investigation, 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 pandemic, 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. Unfortunately, humans are yet to come to terms with the reality that their relationship with nature is mutual and reciprocal in nature. Hence, in their penchant for luxurious lifestyles, natural habitats, tourist sites, natural heritages and the 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 unfriendly global environmental practices.

With these challenge, the study attempted to bring this menace to the fore in order to bring them to a halt, or reduce its negative impacts. Hence, drama comes

in handy since it is a product of the society it reflects. It portrays the goings on in a given society with the view to provoking its audience into critical thinking that could bring about collective action for the desired change. Consequently, 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 peaceful co-existence.

The Way Forward

At a time when Nigeria is talking about diversification of her economy, as a veritable 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 abundant tourist sites. Countries like Brazil, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia, among others, have been able to sustain their foreign reserves through tourism.

There is a saying that, *the youth are the leaders of tomorrow*; 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 dire need to become consciously environmentally-friendly for their overall and national development.

For purposes of clarity, this study further recommends the following:

1. Drama should be a core subject even from junior secondary school so that students can be well exposed to these concerns through dramatic performances 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 a gamut of play texts and stage, radio and television performances to champion the course of centrality of environmental friendliness.
3. The relevant governmental and non-governmental environmental educators should deepen their campaigns into the rural and urban areas. The city slums should be visited, because most of the unhealthy environmental conditions are found among the dwellers of these urban slum settlements.

WORKS CITED

- Adeoye, Abdulrasheed A. "Ecotheatre and Climate Change in Nigeria." Ameh D. Akoh, & Stephen E. Inegbe (Eds.), *Arts, Culture & Communication in a Post Colony: A Festschrift for Lawrence Olanrele Bamidele*. Kent, UK: Alpha Crownes Publishers. 2013: 575-592.
- Anyokwu, Christopher. "Blues in the Niger Delta: An Ecocritical Analysis of 'Ebinyo Ogbowei's poetry.'" Austin A. Akpuda (Ed.), *The Literary Response to Modernity*. Aba: E-Klanbooks, 2014: 236-272.
- Banerjee, Atreya. "Ecology Within the City-Space: Bijan Bhattacharya's *Jatugriha* and Miller's *Death of a Salesman*." *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities (IJELLH)*, IV.VI(2016). Retrieved 16 Feb. 2017.
<www.google.com.ng/search?q=ecocriticism+in+Indian+fiction&Client=ms_opera-mini-android&Channel=news&gws-rd=cr&eiIJTjWJLNMW-ajyEsKgG>
- Bernard, Stephen. "Eco-survival in the Poetry of G. Ebinyo Ogbowei." Ogaga Okuyade (Ed.), *Eco-Critical Literature: Regreening African Landscapes*. New York: Palgrave Books, 2013: 259-272.
- Caminero-Santangelo, Byron. "Different Shades of Green: Ecocriticism and African Literature." Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson (Eds.), *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. New York: Wiley, 2007: 698-706.
- Darmar, D. N., Rakun, S. A., and Sadisu, S. "Developing Curriculum on Deforestation and Climate Change: A Tool for Addressing Climate Change Issues Among Geography Students in Senior Secondary School Two (SSS2)." *Nigerian Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 20.1(2013): 81-91.
- Dobie, Ann B. *Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism*, 3rd ed. United States of America: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012.
- Esu, Akon E. O. "Developing Curriculum on Climate Change" in *Nigerian Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 20.2(2013): 6-7.
- Nder, Mathias O. "Nature as Theme: An Ecological Interpretation of Odu's *A Jar of Honey* and Ignatius Musonza's *Ike's Plant*." *Makurdi Journal of Language and Literature*, 1.1. Makurdi: Bookwork Publishers, 2009: 1-12.
- Ogbonna, Kelechi S. *The Tamarisk: A Healing Shrub*. Akwa: Valid Publishing Co., 2015.
- Okuyade, Ogaga. "Introduction: African Cultural Arts Forms, Eco-activism, and (Eco)-logical Consciousness." Ogaga Okuyade (Ed.), *Eco-Critical*

- Literature: Regreening African Landscapes*. New York: Palgrave, 2013: x-xi.
- Shikha, Kumari. "Ecocriticism in Indian Fiction." *IRWLE*, 7.1(2011). 1-11. 17 Feb. 2017.
 <www.google.com.ng/search?=&ecology+the+city+space:bijan+bhattarya+jatugriha+and+a+author+miller%27s+of+a+salesman&client=ms-opera-android&channel=news&gws_rd=cr&ei=LzfjWM73HIivaOL905Gp>
- "Tamarisk" *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 16 Feb. 2017.
 <<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/tamarisk>>
- Tse, Andrea Paul and Odeh, Jerry Ideh. "Drama, Youth Reorientation and Environmentally Sustainable Nigeria: An Eco Reading of Osofisan's *No More the Wasted Breed*." *Benue Journal of Youth and Development*. Makurdi: Gofats Ventures Ltd, 2016: 57-68.

RECONSTRUCTING THE SOCIETY THROUGH SATIRE: A STUDY OF SELECTED *BRODA SHAGGI* VIDEOS

Mayowa Oluwasegun OLADEJI

Department of Theatre and Performing Arts

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Email: oladejimayowao@gmail.com

Abstract

Satire as an artistic tool can be used for criticism of misbehaviours in society. Film accommodates the possibility for satire to be deployed for societal development. Satire uses laughter and caricaturing, to propose alternative ways of behaving. This paper studies selected satirical videos of *Broda Shaggi* to understand how satire offers ideas for the improvement of the Nigeria Police. The institution in question is one of the critical establishments of society. It is, therefore, important to learn how it can be made better for the benefit of the people. This study is a qualitative research that uses document observation method, the information gotten from the videos are descriptively analysed and presented. The paper uncovers that since laughter is key in the satirical style of the artiste, it is possible that the intended message(s) of the video contents may easily be missed or overlooked. Therefore, it is recommended that beyond the entertainment aspect of the videos, viewers must strive to think critically to understand the latent messages embedded within them. The artist must also try to emphasise the germane messages, goading his viewers towards the crux of the matter he is trying to tackle. The paper submits that the Nigeria Police must not just view the videos as mere acts of comedy and thereby disregard the message, rather they should pick the corrections that can help the Police perform their duties better operations and to improve the Nigerian society.

Keywords: Satire, tool, reconstruction, society, Nigeria Police, *Broda Shaggi* videos

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, has, overtime, been embraced by a lot of artists due to its efficiency and technological flexibility. The 21st century society of today has witnessed and continues to witness rapid technological innovations and advancements. 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 contents 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 Victor Anyagu,

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 (154-155).

Therefore, culture sits at the base of film production. Anyagu notes that, “every film is an overt or covert reflection of the cultural, socio-economic and political issues of the environment or society where it is made” (154). Hence, we can see that culture is capable of playing a poignant role in the formulation of the aim of a film when it is being created; 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 outfits, 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 catalysed and increased the number of people that participate in the production of video films for the consumption of society. The Kaduna State Books and Arts Festival 2019 (KABAFEST 2019) which took place on the 11 to 14 May, 2019, played host to young teenage film makers from the state, who create film using phones and partially broken laptops. The festival is organised to serve as a gathering for literary scholars and enthusiasts to rub minds together and move the sphere of art within the state and by extension the country forward. 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” (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 got ten 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 film makers have utilised materials gotten from the study of the Nigeria 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 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 in the light of the behaviours that members of this law enforcement establishment are known for. The satirical videos intend to chastise the police with the aim of correcting the ill behaviours that they are known to exhibit, with the hope that the institution can become better and help improve the society.

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 humour, sarcasm and other covert styles to actualise its intention, it requires analysis if it would be fully understood. According to Megan LeBoeuf,

Satire is a powerful art form which has the ability to point out the deficiencies in certain human behaviours 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 (1).

Since the historical era when the plays of Aristophanes such as *The Wasp* (422 BCE), *Lysistrata* (411 BCE) and *The Frogs* (405 BCE) rocked the Greek society, satire has been used to criticise 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 Elizabeth Olaniyan categorised into: Juvenalian, Horatian, and Menippean. 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, according to Jacob Agaku. In his discourse on humour which is a significant component of comical and satirical works, Bernard Orji notes that it is a simulation that brings about the laughter reflex in people. Here, it can be observed that since Satire appreciates the use of humour, laughter which is an important component of humour is able to function also in satire. However, Olaniyan differentiates comedy and satire, amplifying the two concepts thus: "...comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself while satire derides, that is, it uses laughter as a weapon and against a butt existing outside the work itself" (20). Thus, it can be noted that unlike comedy that is not channelled directly to be used as a weapon for reconstruction, satire appears apt for criticism. 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, 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 humour. Satire is a potent weapon that can be used for the reclamation of social values and morals that are eroding easily; this is 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 satirise 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*, for example, Hamlet is able to criticise 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.

Plot Structure of the Selected *Broda Shaggi* Videos

At this juncture, it is pertinent to look at the plot structure of the four selected *Broda Shaggi* videos. The videos are: *Broda Shaggi Fights Eniola Badmus*, *Broda Shaggi Shoots a Herbalist*, *Mompha Rearrested by Nigerian Police Force*, and *Yahoo Boy vs. Police Force*.

1) Broda Shaggi Fights Eniola Badmus

Eniola approaches a police check point in her white Toyota Venza Jeep and she is stopped by Broda Shaggi and Officer Woos, who had already laid ambush by the side of the road. They interrogate Eniola, asking her several irrelevant questions and alleging that she had committed several crimes while she has not done anything wrong. They ask for her car *particulars* which she provides; they then ask for her driver's licence, which she produces. Suddenly, they accuse Eniola of not being the same person whose photograph is on the driver's licence. They allege that the wig on her head was not worn by the person in the photograph; hence, she is guilty of impersonation. Of interest here is that this skit features a lawyer as part of Broda Shaggi's team, which could be conceived as some sort of collaboration between the police and the judiciary in the administration of justice. The lawyer reads out the crimes purportedly committed by Eniola, telling her the gravity of the offences. At this point, Eniola is incensed and begins to prance around. She uses her size to intimidate the policemen and even slaps the lawyer, who is dazed and cannot continue reading the charges. He runs away, leaving Eniola with Broda Shaggi and Officer Woos. She then slaps Officer Woos, who also runs away. At this point, Broda Shaggi, who is intimidated, begins to apologise to her as he

returns all the things (documents and others) that he had collected from her.



Screenshot 1: *Broda Shaggi Fights Eniola Badmus*

2) *Broda Shaggi Shoots a Herbalist*

Broda Shaggi Shoots a Herbalist tells the story of Broda Shaggi and two officers going to a herbalist to get charms that would protect them against gunshots. The herbalist uses a computer to consult the gods, in what appears to be a caricature of the move by some people to merge traditionalism and foreign technological innovations. The herbalist provides the potion but the policemen propose that he should first test the potion on himself. To prove the efficacy, the herbalist drinks the potion and they shoot him. To their utter amazement, the herbalist falls down and in the pandemonium that follows, the policemen run away for fear that he may have died. Fortunately, the herbalist is only wounded. The skit captures the belief in the use of metaphysical powers by some members of the Nigeria Police for protection them against criminal elements.



Screenshot 2: *Broda Shaggi Shoots a Herbalist*

3) *Mompha Rearrested by Nigerian Police Force*

In *Mompha Rearrested by Nigerian Police Force*, some police officers are conducting a Stop-and-Check operation. Mompha, who has a huge media presence in Nigeria, come along. Mompha had been arrested before by security operatives for crimes reportedly linked to financial crimes. Consequently, the policemen express shock when they see Mompha in a Toyota Camry (“Muscle”) car. They laugh and mock him knowing that he is someone who drives expensive cars like Lamborghini, but has now stooped low to drive Toyota Camry because he is trying to evade arrest. They accuse him of being a criminal and interrogate him for a long time. The policemen ask for his car particulars and driver’s licence as well as other documents; he complies but they refuse to allow him go. Out of exasperation, Mompha takes out something from the car, which appears to be some money, and gives to the officers. Immediately the officers collect the gift, they recant all that they had said about him being a criminal. They shower him with praises and salute him as they let him go.



Screenshot 3: *Mompha Rearrested By Nigerian Police*

4) *Yahoo Boys vs. Police Force*

In *Yahoo Boys vs. the Police Force*, a young man and woman are seen approaching in a red convertible sports car on a road around an estate. Immediately Broda Shaggi and his colleague see the car approaching, they immediately mount a blockade on the road. The car stops and the police officers call the young man in the car a fraudster (yahoo boy). The young man corrects them many times saying that he is not a fraudster; but the police officers continue to haul insults at him. They read out some perceived charges against him, threatening that he will suffer for disrespecting them. The young man appears relaxed, busy smoking a cigar. The policemen order him to follow them to the police station. The young man is unperturbed and Broda Shaggi and Officer Woos turn to the young lady in the car and start to insult her, rubbishing her integrity and even implying that she must be a whore. When the young lady could not take the insults anymore, she angrily tells the policemen that the young man is a fraudster. The young man is shocked by this assertion, but she urges him to agree. She persuades him to accept that he is a fraudster if that would make the policemen to allow them to go. He (the young man) then agrees that he is a fraudster and agrees to “settle” the policemen so that they can let them go. Immediately, the policemen change the tune of their accusations to salutations and they start praising the young man, pointing out his outstanding qualities. They then allow him to go while still showering him with praises.



Screenshot 4: *Yahoo Boys vs. Nigeria Police*

Analysis of Selected *Broda Shaggi* Videos: Nigeria Police in View

The growth of the film industry and the fusion that the world realised 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 contents 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 contents 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 uses to disseminate his content, and on the platform he has been able to gather for himself a following from over eight million about forty-five million people as at 20th August, 2021. This is good for a film maker, 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 has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Creative Arts from the University of Lagos, Nigeria. Born on Tuesday, 6th July, 1993, Samuel Perry hails from Ogun State, which is also his place of birth. The videos that are analysed in this paper have been chosen out of his many works, because it is the opinion of this researcher that the videos have been able to successfully satirise the Nigeria Police. The analysis of the videos would be done from three dimensions: themes, setting and characterisation.

The problem of police corruption that has bedevilled the Nigeria Police 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 makes 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 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 behaviour is a worrisome issue.

Several scholars and organisations across the globe such as the Transparency International (T.I.), Ahmed Ibrahim, and David Bayley and Robert Perito, 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. Culled from the World Wide Web, these researches all focus their attention on the police system while approaching the matter from different perspectives. The study by T.I. is a global analysis of corruption within the police system. T.I. research was on ten selected countries across all the continents of the world (Australia, Afghanistan, China, Georgia, Honduras, Jamaica, Kenya, Serbia, Singapore and Venezuela); and so, the findings from their research give a good idea of the general state of corruption within the police system across the globe. They capture the aim of their study thus:

This report is the result of a survey of global experience of police anti-corruption reforms. It analyses police corruption and looks at reforms that were undertaken to tackle it. The report offers a way to analyse police corruption more systematically through a ‘police typology,’ and looks at examples of police reform in ten countries around the globe (T. I. 5).

Bayley and Perito cover an area that is not as broad as the study by T. I. because they limited their research to understanding corruption within an area that has experienced the particularity of insurgency and peacekeeping operations. They assert that, “police corruption is an international problem. Historically, police misconduct has been a factor in the development of police institutions worldwide, but it is a particular problem in counterinsurgency and peacekeeping operations” (1). This makes their study of importance to this essay due to the fact that Nigeria is a country that is conducting several peacekeeping missions across its regions. Their conclusion can be of help to Nigeria, because the study peculiarity of the

study's nature can help give ideas on how the problem of corruption in our police system can be handled.

However, the work done by Ibrahim is more direct and relevant to this study because it uses the Nigerian police system as a case study. Unlike the other researches that try to cover a broader area. He captures the aim of his study when he asserts thus:

This paper examined corruption inside the Nigeria Police Force as an ethical relapse that confronts the organisation. It provides an overview of the historical incidentals and founding of the Nigeria Police Force as an institution with the accountability of protecting life and property, and maintaining peace and order in the country (1).

The focus of Ibrahim's study makes it of great importance to this paper because it gives a more direct analysis of corruption within the police force that we can learn from.

Developing and under-developed countries in the world, some of them in Africa, have very bad records of police corruption and unethical behaviours. Bayley and Perito assert that, "corruption in the developing world is an open fact of life for anyone who encounters a police officer voluntarily or not" (5). 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 behaviours to truly progress. This is because criminals will always be working in collusion with the policemen, and this would likely ensure that the circle of crime continues endlessly with the citizens at the mercy of criminals. Ibrahim emphasises the problem of corruption in the Nigeria Police 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 misbehaviour. 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 (3).

The state of affairs in Nigeria presents a serious and problematic situation which calls for urgent attention, if the high level of criminality in our society is to be addressed in order to find lasting solutions. The corruption problem in the Nigeria Police 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 Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, banning interstate travelling. The Nigeria Police are the foremost organisation in the country in charge of maintenance of law and order. Every other security organisation works in collaboration with the Police, so that the law can be enforced and order can be maintained. In the report by thecable.ng and Politicsnigeria.com dated 25th May, 2020 and 30th May, 2020, respectively, the Nigeria Police 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 to blatantly break the ban on interstate travels between Oyo and Ogun States in South-Western Nigeria, for bribes as low as ₦100. This is a regrettable behaviour that could make the efforts of government to reduce infection rates and slow the transmission of the dreaded COVID-19 in the country counter-productive.

The *Broda Shaggi* videos studied in this paper have the same setting, except one. The setting of *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, its portrayal as part of the theme in one of the selected *Broda Shaggi* videos.

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 caricature manner, the herbalist makes his consultations and offers them (the policemen) a magic potion. To be sure of what they are procuring, the potion is to be tested on the herbalist first; he is to be shot to see if the bullet penetrates his body or not. Ironically, the herbalist is injured and escapes death by the whiskers. The video ridicules policemen who are officers of law; yet, they are firm believers of magic and metaphysical powers. The law uses scientific measures and methods to source for facts and evidences; therefore, the irony of police officers believing in something unscientific is a subject of satirical comment.

In the other video skits: *Mompha Rearrested by Nigerian Police Force*, *Yahoo Boy vs. Police Force*, and *Shaggi Fights Eniola Badmus*, 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 person (internet fraudster). 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 behaviour and it has been documented in several studies mentioned already in this paper.

The Nigeria 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 frauds across the world; but it is inconsiderate to assume that every successful youth in the country is involved in the act, especially when there is no 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 of jurisdiction.

In the video skits under study, it would be observed that fine cinematography was utilised to tell the stories. In *Mompha Rearrested...*, for instance, it can be noticed that the camera angle as well as the choice of shots employed were intended to help pass a particular message to viewers. The shots mostly employed in these skits are long shots, which are basically establishment shots. They are used to give holistic background information to the viewers of a film. Roy Thompson and Christopher Bowen assert concerning the long shot that, “a viewer is presented a wider field of visual information, often shot from a long distance away” (10).

In *Mompha Rearrested...*, just like in the other skits, the victims of the policemen are often introduced from far away. They give some vital information such as the social status of the approaching character, before they (the police) accost such character. This is in order for the viewers to get mental pictures of the characters before they come close. In the three related videos, we are introduced via long shots to the characters and their backgrounds and we understand the background of the situation before the policemen come into the picture. In the videos, the victims of the policemen all approach the checkpoints mounted by the policemen in their exotic cars. Broda Shaggi orders his colleague (a junior officer) to stop an approaching car, saying that it belongs to a fraudster. Unfortunately, he jumps into conclusion by just seeing a car from afar.

The above approach is indulged in by several policemen sometimes when they immediately profile a person based only on the outward appearance. Also, the reactions of the victims in these skits, which represent the opinions of the people regarding the operations of the police, are portrayed in the videos using the close-up shots. The close-up shots are able to concentrate on expressions and countenances of the characters in ways that they pass messages across to the viewers. Timothy Heiderich notes that,

the expressions and emotions of an actor are more visible and affecting and is meant to engage the character in a direct and personal manner. You are starting to lose visual information about the character's surroundings, but the character's actions are more intimate and impacting (10).

When we are presented with a close-up shot of the victim of the police actions in *Broda Shaggi Fights Eniola Badmus*, we see the reactions of the characters and we understand the police are on the wrong side of reason. More than once, Eniola Badmus reacts, questioning the policemen to know her offence: "Wetin I do na? Wetin I do?" It is this pattern in the use of shots that we observe running through the three skits. The medium shots also help to stand in between the long shots and the close up shots to provide information.

Characterisation in *Broda Shaggi* Videos

The characterisation of actor(s) in the videos is generally funny. The characters are given dialogues, fluctuating between seriousness and joke. At one point, the characters say something funny; and at another point, they say 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 characterisation, there is a good use of irony that makes the satirical components of the videos come out clear. The characters, through their actions and dialogues, sub-textually chastise policemen and the Nigeria Police in a way that overtly seems 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.

Findings

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. The artist has been able to use social media in collaboration with the internet and film technology (or art) by way of social responsibility. In this study, the researcher reaffirms that the internet and social media are powerful media, and it is important that people are very cautious of what they use it to do. The world is increasingly becoming technologically driven; so, it would greatly benefit any society that has its citizens using the internet to better their community.

The researcher has discovered that the deployment of satire in the selected videos, with the aid of social media instantaneity, helps to easily expose the Nigeria Police as they continue to put the lives of the entire population at risk with their reckless unethical behaviour. If the nation must move forward, Government should take the restructuring of the Police more serious. The incessant threats to citizens by men of the Nigeria Police subject the people to unwarranted traumatic experiences that can haunt them for life. The Police harass citizens with loaded guns, and threaten to shoot unarmed people whose offence sometimes is simply the refusal to offer bribe. This kind of reality requires correction if we must advance as a people and progress in this contemporary time.

Also, due to the nature of the satire employed in the videos discussed in this paper, it is possible for the messages so embedded in the videos to be easily missed by the viewers. The 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 to satirise the Nigeria Police. Thus, it is important that if viewers must have full grasp of 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 tool of caricature 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 be worth crying for, 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 selected video skits, it is possible for the Nigeria Police to overlook them as mere acts of comedians. It would be a very counter-productive attitude if the Police do not accept the criticisms contained in the videos, because they can help in ameliorating the anomalies if they acknowledge their faults. It is important that the Police and the government (which is in-charge of the police institution) should take these criticisms seriously to motivate a solid plan or solution to fight corruption in the

Police and 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 utilisation of the film medium for social responsibility. Through a qualitative approach of analysing 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-emphasised 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.

WORKS CITED

- Agaku, Jacob M. "Reflections on Film Theory and Criticism as Interpretation: Hoy and Adorno." Edward S. Ossai (Ed.), *Banchi: Nasarawa Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*, 1.1(2013).
- Anyagu, Victor A. "Filmmaking in Nigeria: The Interface of African Culture and Folklore." Edward S. Ossai (Ed.), *Banchi: Nasarawa Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*, 1.1(2013).
- Bayley, David & Robert Perito. *Police Corruption: What Past Scandals Teach about Current Challenges*. US Institute of Peace, 2011. Accessed 11 May, 2020. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12415>
- Heiderich, Timothy. "Cinematography Techniques: The Different Types of Shots in Film." Produced by the Video Maker. <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://www.oma.on.ca/en/contestpages/resources/free-report-cinematography.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiOkbra2cTvAhV65eAKHcqVBtoQFnoECAMQAQ&usq=AOvVaw2H6RixvwJbPrc9IG0gR1aM>

- Ibrahim, Ahmed T. "Analysis of Corruption in the Nigerian Police Force." *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 24.9.3(2019). Accessed 14 May, 2020. www.iosrjournals.org
- LeBoeuf, Megan. "The Power of Ridicule: An Analysis of Satire." *Senior Honours Projects, Paper*, 63(2007). <http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/63>
- Olaniyan, Elizabeth M. "The Effectiveness of Satire as a Dramatic Tool for Societal Reformation: Efua Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa* Examined." *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Arts and Humanities*, 2015. Accessed 11 May, 2020. www.idpublications.org
- Orji, Bernard E. "Humour, Satire and the Emergent Stand-up Comedy: A Diachronic Appraisal of the Contributions of the Masking Tradition." *European Journal of Humour Research*, 2018. www.europeanjournalofhumour.org
- Pyman, Mark, James Cohen, Matt Boardman, Ben Webster, & Nick Seymour. "Arresting Corruption in the Police: The Global Experience of Police Corruption Reform Efforts." Saad Mustafa (Ed.), *Transparency International UK*. London: Transparency International (T. I.), 2012.
- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Markus, Julia & Jordan, Paul (Eds.), 18th imp. London: Longman, 2007.
- Singh, Raj K. "Humour, Irony, and Satire in Literature." In *International Journal of English and Literature (IJEL)*, 3.4(2012).
- Thompson, Roy & Christopher J. Bowen. *Grammar of the Shot*, 2nd ed. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2009.

Websites

- <https://www.google.com/amp/s/politicsnigeria.com/undercover-with-n100-bribe-motorcyclists-ferry-passengers-across-ogun-oyo-states-amidst-lockdown/amp/>
- <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thecable.ng/undercover-investigation-for-n16500-security-agents-will-allow-you-travel-from-lagos-to-abuja-despite-interstate-ban/amp>
- <https://knowefritin.com/2019/09/broda-shaggi-biography-things-you-never-really-know-must-read.html> Accessed 7 Sept. 2020.

Video Sources

- Broda Shaggi Fights Eniola Badmus.* #brodashaggi #conedy #laughs #nigeriacomedy – YouTube. URL address: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=sMPS_CgN830

Broda Shaggi Shoots a Herbalist. #brodashaggi #oyahitme #shaggination
#comedy #laughs #nigeriacomedy – YouTube. URL address:
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=rhba2Z8TOfQ>

Mompha Re-arrested by Nigeria Police Force. #brodashaggi #comedy #laughs #
shaggination – YouTube. URL address:
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=6vpjzZeadM0>

Yahoo Boy vs. Police Force (full video). #brodashaggi #oyahitme #comedy
#laughs #police – YouTube. URL address:
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=MaST3iFDb-Y>

“Kwagh-hir Theatre.” UNESCO 2019.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPQIFzjIZ4I>

RESTRUCTURING THROUGH THE APPRECIATION OF NIGERIAN DANCE VALUES

Rudolph KANSESE, PhD

Department of Theatre Arts
Niger Delta University (NDU)
Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria
Email: rkansese@yahoo.com

Abstract

Restructuring is a process of modification or, the reformation of a thing or system in order to make it more productive. Every nation has a system or structure through which it operates. A structure that is operating efficiently; that is the socio-economic foundation of the nation creates room for fast-tracked development and discourages frequent agitations by the people. Such cannot be said of Nigeria which is increasingly sliding to becoming a failed state in need of restructuring. This study is conducted as a wakeup call for the restructuring of Nigeria by reflecting on the value and philosophy of Nigerian dance. The proposition here is that Nigeria (in addition to other restructuring quests) can be restructured when citizens allow themselves to be influenced by the ideals, values and philosophies of Nigerian dance. These ideals which include: Nigerian dance as a means of expression such as joy, a means of social integration, expression of utilitarianism, a way of veneration and respect, and encouraging cultural sustenance, can influence Nigerians to restructure their lifestyles if only they can take time to reflect on the ideals. It boils down to the fact that everyone, especially those that have been cut away from their traditional dance and culture to make new alliance in order to be re-cultured. This method of restructuring can be driven by Federal, State and Local Governments policies where the people can be encouraged to align and realign themselves with traditional dances and be positively influenced by them.

Keywords: Restructuring, Nigerian dance, social integration, reflection, influence, value

Introduction

Dance is defined as "...the movement of the body in a rhythmic way, usually to music and within a given space, for the purpose of expressing an idea or emotion, releasing energy, or simply taking delight in the movement itself" (Mackrell, par. 1). In another definition Emily Rai-Pi Huang declares that dance "...is the

movement of the human body through space over time” (par. 1). Rasaki Ojo Bakare also indicates that dance is the “...movement of the body in space and time” (2).

In the three definitions above, the three major points of focus are the body, space and time or rhythm. The indication here is that the body as the tool of the dancer engages in rhythmic movements by occupying space. The import of these three elements of dance is also captured by Saviour Agoro when he stresses that: “the basic materials of dance are space and time and human-bodies” (22).

The declaration of the existence of these three elements does not mean that rhythmic movement of the body must be done on a particular space as a stage alone before an audience. Dance can also occur naturally without the intention of staging. With this assertion dance is regarded as an activity which humans freely engage in as well as an art where the participants are aware of kinesis and designs meant to satisfy patrons. Natural movements in addition to artistic ones are mostly conditioned by the culture of the dancer. Josephine Abbe vividly captures Buckland’s view by stating that “dance has the propensity to foreground cultural memory as embodied practice by virtue of its predominantly semiotic modes of transmission” (6).

The issue of dance for dance sake is not always easy to come by as dance as an expression of human behaviour always or almost always has something to express about the person dancing. Whereas in other performing arts such as music and drama the performer can falsify emotions, this is not easily realisable especially when one engages in personalised dance movements. Judith Lynne Hanna defines dance as:

...human behaviour composed from the dancer’s perspective, of (1) purposeful, (2) intentionally rhythmical, and (3) culturally patterned sequences of (4a) nonverbal body movements (4b) other than ordinary motor activities, (4c) the motion having inherent and aesthetic value (19).

This paper captures the values and philosophies and essence of Nigerian dance, especially how these ideals can help to influence restructuring.

Nigerian Dance Discourse

The origin of Nigerian dance can be traced to the existence of the Nigerian as he engaged in various movements in space and time. Movements such as walking, running, jumping, spinning, stretching, crouching, gliding, and so on were used to create dance. The dependence on these natural, but spontaneous movements made Nigerian dance more of an expressive art; and he incidentally took delight in it.

He used dance to express his various emotions or moods such as happiness, sadness and anxiety. Therefore, the major origin of Nigerian dance came from the joy of moving the body in rhythmic dance movement.

Another origin of Nigerian dance may be traced to our ancestor's desire, at that early stage of existence to interact with his environment and fellow beings. His greatest challenge was the mystery of his environment such as seasonal changes and other phenomena that appeared strange to him. He began to be aware of the existence of other beings; ethereal beings and bodies in his environment. In his bid to understand his environment and the forces that shape it, he started to engage himself in certain regulated utilitarian dance movements. With time, he realised that these movements were effective in understanding his environment. So he made the movements official by engaging in them from time to time. Having discovered that his existence, success and security depended on the veneration of these mystical forces, man found it necessary to venerate them through structured dance movements.

This is how different ritual dance festivals began. In addition to the emergence of ritual dances, secular dances which came about as a result of social integration of the people also became dances adopted for regular celebration and entertainment. These ritual and secular dances were then variously structured as traditional dances of the people.

One vital issue about Nigerian traditional dance is that it is utilitarian in nature. It expresses the communal life of the people, their social integration, collaboration and experience. In a nut shell, Nigerian dance represents the community. Everyone is involved in dance at every stage of communal experience and existence. Various preoccupations of the people, such as occupation, recreation, education, worship, and social integration reflect in their dances. Different categories of people from childhood to adulthood have their different dance forms which recount their experiences and communal life style. These dances are more consciously observed at various levels or institutions. These institutions which include family, peer group, guild and palace or shrine (Yerima 22), have their peculiar dance forms. It is at these levels that the dances are carefully learnt, practiced, interpreted and preserved.

Some families are famous for certain traditional dance structures. It is therefore usual for star dancers to train the young and upcoming dancers in the dance technique for the purpose of continuity. At the peer group level, dances are organised at different stages of man's development; this is also called "rites of passage." Here, various dance celebrations are used to mark the transition of man from one social stage in life to another. The birth of a child, the attainment of adolescence, the age of maturity, becoming an elder and death of the elderly: all these stages are celebrated in different forms of dance expressions. Dance is

therefore seen to possess an organic function which keeps the people of the community together from cradle to death.

There are various professional guilds or associations that organise themselves under prescribed customs. They structure their dances to interpret their professions. Guilds such as farmers, hunters and goldsmiths have their individual dance structures. Associations also organise themselves as cultural dance groups. Palaces are high points of traditional dances where kings as custodians of tradition encourage different categories of traditional dance performances. There are equally various cultural dance groups popularly referred to as 'cultural groups.' They are made up of itinerant amateur dancers who are well versed in their traditional dance idioms. Members who are mainly from the same local government area or culture are brought together from their different occupations or engagements to form the group simply to express their love for dance. They move around or get invited mostly on weekends to entertain at social gatherings.

Close to the cultural dance troupes are the dancers in the State Art Councils. Incidentally, these councils engage in drama and music as well in addition to dance. They are government agencies responsible for the popularisation of Nigerian arts in general. Traditional dances by these councils are done to foster the cultural identity of each state government. They are used to entertain guests during state functions and sometimes go out of the state to engage in cultural festivals or competitions. Different festivals such as the National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST), the Abuja Carnival, and so on, are avenues where Nigerian cultural heritage is made manifest through her indigenous dances.

The universities are also grounds where Nigerian dances are promoted. However, dances done do not follow a particular pattern as with the art councils or the cultural groups where the dances are done to promote their individual culture. Rather, different dances are performed in accordance with the demands of the educational programme. There is a wide use of dance styles from traditional to those creatively devised. As a point of fact dance is not always done as an independent art, but as an appendage to drama. This circumstance in the universities reflects the general attitude of the society where dance is regarded as commonplace, and so does not require critical attention as given to drama or music. It is not surprising that even in the larger society, theatre practitioners prefer to use dance to complement drama instead of seeing it as a self-sufficient art form.

Perhaps the scarcity of dance scholars and manpower is the greatest challenge to the autonomy of dance art in these institutions and Nigeria as a nation. The presence of such personnel would have charged the right course for dance promotion, sustainability and its elevation to the status of an independent art like music and drama. Again, the dearth of dance specialists has reduced the chances

of learning or acquiring the art as a specialised skill. Even the art councils and cultural groups depend more on the ability of the artist-dancer to perform or express creative dance skills, rather than instituting special dance instructional or educational programme so that dancers can receive regular training in the art.

The National Troupe of Nigeria has three units; music, drama and dance. The dance unit is headed by an assistant director of dance who is usually a seasoned dance practitioner and choreographer. Members too are made up of professional dancers who are occasionally trained in different dance forms of Nigeria. This arrangement has offered dance practice at this national level to be valued as an independent art form. One clear reason for the achievement of this independent status is that the Troupe's regular invitation at different occasions in the country and abroad is based on the display of professionalism.

Although, dance scholarship has focused on the development of traditional dance in Nigeria, yet, not much has been done, especially when one take into cognisance the attention given to other performance areas such as music and drama. Various segments as dance criticism, history, semiotics and choreography have not been properly researched by scholars. The reason is that dance is not regarded as a serious independent art form; but, rather, as an appendage to drama and music. Early study of dance by Nigerian scholars like J. P. Clark, M. J. C. Echeruo, James Amankulor, Meki Nzewi, Onuora Ezekwu and Ebun Clark have always discussed dance in connection with drama, music and theatre (Amankulor 84; Clark 57; Echeruo 137; Ezekwu 131; Nzewi 433). Their studies are largely anthropological and ethnological. This is similar to precursory dance studies in Nigeria carried out by Ulli Beier and Robin Horton who are foreigners. Other Nigerian scholars in dance in addition to the ones mentioned above are Harry Hagher, Felix Begho, Catherine Acholonu and Godini Darah. These scholars began to expand avenues of dance studies by looking at Nigerian dance criticism and analysis of forms, structures and styles. All studies carried out are still mostly anthropological, ethnological and sociological.

Nigerian dance has been classified into two major categories; these are ritual and social dances. Scholars have further subdivided Nigerian dance into various forms, which Peggy Harper itemises as: (a) religious, ritual or ceremonial dance; (b) social dance; (c) political dance; (d) occupational dance; (e) historical or mythological dance; (f) educational dance; (g) recreational dance; and (h) entertainment dance (6). This is somewhat a framework through which Nigerian dance can be studied.

In view of the changing state of dance in Nigeria, especially due to Western civilisation, Peggy Harper compartmentalised dance into three domains: "the traditional world, the neo-traditional world, and the contemporary world" (280). In as much as these three worlds identify the historical development of dance in

Nigeria, they have come to be recognised as different forms of Nigerian dance. The first world being purely indigenous dance, the second as neo-traditional takes into account the external influence on indigenous dance; however, there is a firm interest to revive or revitalise traditional dance movements. While the first two worlds have distinguishing characteristics and forms with which they can be identified and assessed, the third world, being contemporary dance does not always have a distinctive form or structure. Rather, its form fluctuates with every choreographer and sometimes with every created dance piece. The form also fluctuates with time or period of the dance.

Industrialisation brought about by Western civilisation is responsible for the emergence of contemporary dance form in Nigeria. Nigerian choreographers, especially the younger generation have embraced Western dance and foreign ideas on individual basis. This marked the dawn of capitalism where dance makers shifted interest from absolute cultural representation to accommodate economic interests. Dances were produced to entertain an audience who may not have absolute knowledge of the performers' cultural symbols and expressions but were only anxious to get a good treat for their money or time.

This emerging structure became very popular in the Western part of Nigeria with the dances of Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, and Duro Ladipo. Also, in the Eastern part of the country John Ekwere and his Ogui Players created new dances. Different choreographers also emerged from Nigerian universities with their own choreographic styles; artists such as Odukwei Segfyi, Peter Badejo, Felix Begho, Fidelma Okwesa, Folabo Ajayi, Georgina Gore, Arnold Udoka, Amatu Braide, Rasaki Ojo Bakare and Chris Ugolo (Ugolo 87). Other choreographers include: Chuks Okoye, Muyiwa Ojo, Jahman Anikulapo, Olu Olukanye, Meek Nwabuoku and Moji Bamtefa. By virtue of their training in theatre arts (with exception of Meek Nwabuoku, who received his training in ethnomusicology), most of their dances were initially tailored to suit works of drama. But with time, artists like Georgina Gore, Fidelma Okwesa, Peter Badejo, Amatu Braide, Rasaki Ojo Bakare, Chuks Okoye, Arnold Udoka and Chris Ugolo began to see dance as an independent art form.

Consequently, dances were choreographed without being tied to drama. This crop of choreographers became serious dance scholars embarking on various dance studies; such as history, anthropology, criticism, choreography and general appreciation. The methodology of dance studies laid down by Peggy Harper became more or less a reference point for them to advance their researches. They became lecturers in the universities teaching dance as a course. Interestingly, many more dance scholars, especially in tertiary institutions are appreciating dance from different perspectives. However, most of their studies are still largely socio-anthropological.

Although, a number of scholars like Demas Nwoko have refused to accept the integrity of a Nigerian contemporary dance because it is perceived as misrepresentative and starkly foreign, some other scholars have acknowledge the veracity of the art form. Scholars such as Chris Nwamuo and Josephine Abbe agree that Nigerian contemporary dance employs indigenous dance motifs and modern technique (Abbe 7; Nwamuo 43). Ahmed Yerima has equally appreciated the existence of Nigerian contemporary dance which is characterised by the hybridisation of different Nigerian dance styles and he cited, particularly, the example of Hubert Ogunde's choreographic contribution; a man described as the doyen of Nigerian contemporary dance (30).

Several other scholars have commended Ogunde's contemporary choreographic contribution to Nigerian dance. The highpoint of his dance expression started from 1966 when he formed an independent dance company to concentrate entirely on dance creation and performance. Chris Ugolo, with his doctoral thesis extols Ogunde's effort in creating a Nigerian or national choreographic style achieved through a re-creation of traditional dance steps. The dance structure was not designed to faithfully copy tradition but to explore the new creative drift of Ogunde, in addition to taking advantage of the new wave of capitalism. Ugolo is able to capture the choreographic structure of Ogunde as an example of Nigerian contemporary dance in the 1940s to the 1970s regarded as the folk era. However, contemporary dance is a very dynamic art that has continued to evolve in form with time. Nigerian contemporary dance, in spite of being characterised by indigenous dance motifs and techniques is also inspired by foreign concepts and techniques which are mutable. Current development of contemporary dance is built on abstraction of ideas with minimalist and unconventional movement techniques. Although, dance is complete in itself, it has nevertheless been enhanced by technological changes especially digital media forms. These are now contributing to the structuring of Nigerian contemporary dance.

The development of contemporary dance from the 1990s, especially with the intervention of France, through her choreographer, Claude Brumachon has contributed immensely to the current structure of Nigerian contemporary dance. The dance is therefore defined as an art form laden with indigenous motifs and expressed through Afro-centric bodily movement influenced by Western technique.

A Reflection on the Nigerian Dance Values to Achieve Restructuring

Restructuring simply means to reorganise or rearrange a system or an existing structure in order to make it more efficient. The desire to restructure a system is based on two major shortcomings of that system: one is the dislocation of the

system or structure whereby it is no longer working to produce any result or good result and two; where the system or structure has worked to reached its maximum level and so there is no further development, or that the progress is hindered by its achieved peak. In that case, the operators of the system can advocate for restructuring whereby the old structure would be tinkered in order to achieve accelerated development. The first one which is about the dislocation of structure is dangerous and can cause a revolution which may lead a nation, for instance, to anarchy.

Every nation has its system or structure which is made visible by the political order, government operation, private organisations, culture, economies, religion and the like. The citizenry is expected to work and exist within the directives of the system in order to be well accommodated into the fabric of the nation. The moment there are records of distrust of the system by aggrieved citizens and general disregard for the system which continues to rise unabated, resulting to a dislocation of the structure, then the solution is to advocate for restructuring where the citizens can chat a way forward in order to prevent bloodletting.

The word, *restructuring*, has been hovering over the political space of Nigeria for a while with countless debates at homes, offices, streets, in the print and electronic media. The thrust of most of the debates are geared towards the institution of federalism or actual federalism which was the original political structure of Nigeria, as made manifest by the Independent Act of 1960 after the Colonial rule. In a federal system of government power and rights are shared between the central government and the states, regions and provinces with substantial autonomy granted to states, provinces and regional governments. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, the Central Government exercises so much control at the detriment of the State Governments. The Federal Government has more and extensive control of power over the States. This is an example of *true federalism*. True federalism is practised in the United States of America; and there is sanity in the operation of the system. Although, Nigeria is said to be running a federal system of government; yet, the system appears more of a *unitary* system where the Central Government is regarded as supreme.

The Unitary-Federalism contraption in Nigeria appears to be problematic because there is no clear-cut direction of governance. The politicians have shamelessly taken advantage of the confusion to operate the polity inhumanly. The executive or government of the day wield excessive power, accumulating wealth and subjecting the governed to numerous inhuman treatments. Those in the corridors of power or those connected to those in government have advantage of a better life and financial benefits than those who are not connected, thereby creating room for those who are not linked to the few ruling class to be marginalised. The

marginalised are often discontented and frequently agitate for a fair deal by requesting for more representation in governance and improvement in their financial status. Unfortunately, everyone cannot be in government and the few involved are mostly selfish and plunder the resources meant for the development of the populace as their personal gains. As a point of fact, critics, analysts, the disgruntled and others have continued to decry such imbalances and advocate for restructuring of our socio-political existence, the researcher is adding to the call for restructuring through Nigerian dance. The thrust of this desire is to reflect on the virtues and ethics and philosophise of Nigerian dance to promote fairness and equity among the people.

Beginning with the evolution of humanity on the face of the earth, Nigerian man engaged in various regular movements such as walking, running, jumping, spinning, gliding and many more to ensure his survival. These spontaneous movements are easily transformed into dance. This indicates that that dance primarily evolved from man's utilitarian movements. With these movements the Nigerian was able to freely express himself and his emotion. The expression here did not promote evil or negativity, but, rather positivity. To dance is principally geared towards the propagation of gaiety, and this is what our ancestors felt when they capitalised on natural movements to plunge into dance which eventually became benefiting to their general happiness and wellbeing. We can as well reflect on this origin of dance as a means to express joyfulness in our day-to-day existence.

Dance is also said to have originated from deity veneration and interaction with the environment. The existence of the Nigerian man within his environment was filled with so many mysteries which he had no immediate answers to. He found the environment alien and needed to conquer it to ensure his survival. It was in his inquisition to understand the environment that he began to discover the existence of ethereal beings which influenced his living and success in the environment. With these discoveries, he had no choice but to have fruitful interaction with the surroundings and ethereal entities. In the wake-up call for restructuring, Nigerians should be aware that the environment is God's gift to humanity with the presence of deities that are supposed to be manipulated for man's general good.

The Nigerian man is therefore responsible for what happens to the environment. Vegetation is not supposed to be destroyed without replacement. The industrialisation of our economies where trees are felled and wildlife destroyed is making our living more motorised and artificial instead of being essentially natural. Our lifestyles are now substantially influenced by mechanical gadgets and some of us can no longer exist without them. We should not allow artificial living replace natural existence. It is good to have these developments through

industrialisation but they should be managed to influence natural living. The restructuring here is for Nigerians to explore more of nature in the face of industrialisation.

The deities as mystical forces are natural and our ancestors were seriously influenced by them from the beginning of age. Development and industrialisation should not jettison the Nigerian's original belief since they were not designed to do evil but to influence man's existence. As long as these indigenous and religious beliefs are there to promote good, the deities should still be venerated or acknowledged but with absolute worship given to God the Almighty. Surprisingly, many of these deities believe in the existence and the power of God.

Nigerian dance explores more of utilitarian body movements; meaning that the movements are not employed haphazardly, but are always useful and make reference to something in the life of the Nigerian. In the bid to restructure our lifestyles, Nigerians should endeavour to make useful decisions and act in ways that others would benefit immensely from. The belief in the utilitarian movement of Nigerian dance should therefore inspire Nigerians to think of useful actions alone which would in turn benefit others around. The exhibition of utilitarian movements also directs us to reflect on communal life which is natural, in addition to exploring the benefits of social integration which in Africa promotes togetherness of living.

Nigerian dance is essentially a communal dance; it engages everyone to as a unifying force or factor. It is an expression of the peoples' culture which the indigenous Nigerian is aware of and subsequently guards jealously. The desecration of a traditional dance in a particular local government area will be frowned at by indigenes who are well informed about their culture. This sense of togetherness in Nigerian dance can be explored to achieve restructuring where the people can relive the community experience of caring for one another. Caring for one another is obviously not the concern of many Nigerians in these contemporary times. What many of them are bothered about is how to enrich themselves mainly and sometimes at the detriment of the poor.

Nigerian dance is also practised through various professional guilds and associations, especially in the villages. They mostly meet at their leisure periods to relax by engaging in dances, especially those that reflect their professions. Moments like these create room for bonding and strengthening of friendship. These days, especially in the cities, people with white collar jobs or those in similar professions find it hard to relax for various reasons: there are those who close late from work, those with multiple jobs, those who are too individualistic to associate. Nigerians should try to reignite the ideals of these associations as it was the case with the Nigerian dance in order to encourage fruitful bonding and cooperation.

Nigerian dance is divided into three main sections: Nigerian traditional dance, neo-traditional Nigerian dance, and Nigerian contemporary dance. These are the three stages of Nigerian dance development. The transition of Nigerian dance from traditional to contemporary does not render the former dance genres obsolete. Rather, they are all still being practised: traditional dances in the villages, neo-traditional mainly with itinerant traditional dancers and contemporary with revolutionary Nigerian dancers still promoting Nigerian idioms, ideals and values. This genre is practised mainly in the cities. Nigerian identity is indeed an indefatigable factor for the survival of Nigerian dance. In our quest for restructuring therefore, Nigerian identity should always influence our level of development. The adoption of foreign technologies and cultures should not be done to replace our identity and indigenous technologies. Rather, these foreign ideals should be employed or used under the influence of indigenous values. For instance, the use of mobile phones, with its numerous benefits can be done to promote Nigerian indigenous programmes and values. Home-grown cartoons and software for their production can be designed to promote numerous home-based cartoon programmes which would in turn help propagate Nigerian indigenous lifestyle and philosophy instead of perennially subjecting Nigerian children and youths to foreign cartoons only.

In a nutshell, Nigerians should not be carried away by the benefits of industrialisation, embrace of external cultures and technologies to disregard our local contents or indigenous contribution to the socio-economic existence of the nation. These foreign concepts and materials should be adopted in ways that our local contents and indigenous lifestyle can be more developed, energised and effective. Afterall, no nation in the world is absolutely self-sufficient and independent of other nations.

Conclusion

The quest for the restructuring started with the institution of Nigeria, particularly when the Southern and Northern Protectorates were amalgamated in 1914. These call for restructuring, especially through debates is usually captured as Constitutional conference, National conference (non-sovereign) and Sovereign national conference (Nwafor and Ogbodo 64). These national conferences from the 1914 to the 2014 were all geared towards reforms or restructuring as response mechanism to the peoples' yearnings and disagreements.

In as much as such confabs are necessary, they have not yielded the desired impacts because of the peoples' lack of commitment towards the implementation of the agreement reached in addition to their half-heartedness towards nationalism. Confabs are sometimes too official and artificial; hence, the researcher advocates

the evaluation of the etiquette of Nigerian dance which are entrenched in the peoples' culture as panacea to restructuring.

WORKS CITED

- Abbe, Josephine. "The Dance Art in Nigeria." Chris Ugolo (Ed.), *Perspectives in Nigerian Dance Studies*. Ibadan: Caltop Publishers, 2007: 1-14.
- Agoro, Saviour. *Introduction to the Performing Arts*. Port Harcourt: Hanging Gardens Publishers, 2005.
- Amankulor, James. "Odo: The Mass Return of the Mask Dead among the Nsukka-Igbo." *The Drama Review: Masks*. Ed. M. Kirby. New York: M. I. T Press, 1982: 46-58.
- Clark, Ebum. *Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre*. London: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Echeruo, Michael. "Concert and theatre in late 19th Century Lagos." Yemi Ogunbiyi (Ed.), *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Pitman Press Bath, 1981: 357-369.
- Hanna, Judith Lynne. *To Dance is Human: A Theory of Nonverbal Communication*. London: University of Texas Press, 1980.
- Harper, Peggy. "Dance in Nigeria." *Ethnomusicology*, 3.2(1969): 280-295.
- Harper, Peggy. "Dance Studies." *African Notes: Bulletin of the Institute of African Studies*, 4.3. Ibadan: Institute of African Studies, 1968.
- Nwafor, Kenneth & Nwakpoke Ogbodo. "Media Frames of Group Identities in the 2014 National Dialogue in Nigeria: An Analysis of the *Daily Sun* and *Leadership* Newspapers." *International Journal of International Relations, Media and Mass Communication Studies*, 2.1(2016): 63-79.
- Nwamuo, Chris. "New Dimensions in African theatre." *Nigeria Magazine*, 1984: 40-45.
- Ugolo, Chris. "Hubert Ogunde and the Invention of a Nigerian National Choreographic Style." Thesis. University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 2004.
- Ugolo, Chris. "The Nigerian Dance Theatre: Agenda for the Next Millennium." *Nigerian Theatre Journal*. Abuja: SONTA, 1999: 85-89.
- Yerima, Ahmed. "Nigerian Traditional Dancers: History and Practice." Ahmed Yerima, Ojo Bakare & Arnold Udoka (Eds.), *Critical Perspective on Dance in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited, 2006: 17-45.

EVOLUTION AND CONCEPTUALISATION OF HYBRIDISED BATA DANCE: *BATA-RISATION* AS PARADIGM

Steve James ITSEWAH

Department of Theatre and Media Arts

Federal University of Lafia

Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Email: itsewahjames@yahoo.com; stemokhai@yahoo.com

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 are later aided by advancement in knowledge and individual inventiveness. This explanation can be applied in the discussion of dance and creative stylisation 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 bata dance forms with western ideas; contemporaneity. This paper interrogates the core traditional bata dance in line with the hybridised forms of ‘bata-risation.’ It takes into cognisance, the dynamics of aesthetic permutations devised on the blending of indigenous and western ideas. In view of the core objective of this study which is creating a concept; ‘batarisation’ from an existing traditional dance, called, bata; while 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 Yoruba 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 civilisation man has always danced and will always

dance. Dance is in man. It is a medium to express himself and communicate non-verbally. Dance reveals the life style, virtue, taboos and experiences of a people. Dance mirrors the people's socio-cultural and political organisational structure and reflects their geographical environment' (Aihevba 1).

Dance has always been an integral part of a typical African dances for everything in his life endeavour, 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 Mariam Asabe Iyeh posits that, "dance could be described as the epicentre of culture in most events ranging birth through life and death" (68).

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 some singularities 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" (Kariam 14).

Dances in African 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, while *Ijo Eleja* (fishermen dance), *Ijo Agbe* (farmer's dance), and *Ijo Ode* (hunter's dance); are abstractions from the occupation of the Yoruba people 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 of the Hausa religion for the cure of chicken pox. Toyin Olokodana-James 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" (89). 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 way of life of Sango. *Esapaide* dance is a popular dance of the Edo peoples, while the *Obitun* is puberty dance for maidens among the Ondo Yoruba (50-57). 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 emphasised that it has taken different dimension(s) over the years, from generation to generation, and has metamorphosed from just being an all comers' affair 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 an integral part of Africans. 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 categorised as a profession (Shuaibu 296).

However, dance has moved and diversified in many variants and genres, such as dance therapy, history, choreography, contemporary, notation, ethnography and now hybridity which is a subject in the dance area and one of the product of experimentations, as a result of 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, the dynamism and creative ingenuity of this new generation choreographers is worth commendation. With the hybridisation and acculturation of dance of different cultures, the world has yet experience some dimension into form of hybridised dances as an educational entity. Therefore, as the world embraces dynamism in all facets of life endeavour, 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

Curt Sachs notes that 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 – this things man create 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 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 depends on what/which angle the person is looking at it is it from.

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 kinaesthetic 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 (63).

Dance forms could also be classified and analysed in varying categories - those that survived and thrived within the communities (traditional) that are original those making waves in the academic environment (modern oriented) and the prototype of the western world that is in vogue now – as embraced by our youth today. 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. Sharon Chaiklin avers 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. To Havelock Ellis, “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 motorised action that is propelled by the stimuli called feelings, mood which spurs one into an action called movement; it could be joy, hatred, and sadness. 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. Jeleel Ojuade, quoting Allan Merrian, says, “dance is culture, and culture is dance” (3); that is, the entity of dance as a whole is very difficult to separate from man and his natural environment.

Evolvement and Content in Bata Dance

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 a professor of dance, who is also a 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 emphasised 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. (6)

Bata as a 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 variants, 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 Contextualisation of Bata and Bata-risation

The word, hybridity, following its biological etymology and Homi 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 civilisation, a concoction of transmittable traits birthed through a process, or simply used to "designates the mutual influence and interpenetration of two cultures brought into contact through colonisation" (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 long while and has been in use in many professions such as medicine, agro-product and many other facets of our life endeavour. 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 endeavours. Foreign values have remained our standard seal of approval.

However, in actual fact, hybridity is simply a production of something from two different elements, an off-shoot 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 Gerald 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). Justifying and corroborating 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).

Conceptualisation of Batarisation was in 1998, when I was the chairman of the Dance Guild of Nigeria (GOND). As part of activities marking the celebration of the World Dance Day in that year, a dance competition was organised for troupes under the dance guild. The brief then was for the troupes to contemporise 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 Ekombi dance of the Efik people of Akwa Ibom State, as its model. Getting employment at the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos consequently, as Senior Cultural Officer in 2011, gave me the opportunity to revisit the idea of contemporising traditional dance; Bata in particular as choreographing dance was

my main assignment in the Department. As part of activities for the Convocation programme of University of Lagos in 2011, the Department was mandated to produce a convocation play as it is the tradition. Femi Osofisan's *Many Colours Make the Thunder King* was selected for that year; and as the choreographer, I introduced an opening glee.

The idea of bringing a new concept to the Department came to mind and remembering the idea muted by this researcher as the president of the Guild years back rang loud in my imagination. The concept of contemporising Bata came to mind; it was simply a way to go far from the usual and redefine, exaggerate, modernise and juxtapose different dance steps 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 were altered for variety sake. The introduction of chairs as moveable props and the English three-piece suit as costume are forms of hybridity.

The hybridised sequences are 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). The *Ewo* aspect of the bata variants is a bit slow but not as the *Else* that is meant for royalty. The *Ewo* in batarisation is done on the party chair with the dancers sitting on the chair in a class arrangement and formation while they move to the dictates of the Bata rhythm and count which dovetail into different floor patterns and finally ends on a straight line upstage where the chairs will be dropped in a choreographic manner that transits to contemporary choreographic *Else* variant. This bit starts with balletic slide move into the bata rhythm that rises in tempo to a crescendo and stops abruptly. Then comes *Alujo*, in form of dance hall and manipulation of the suits; it dovetails into 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.

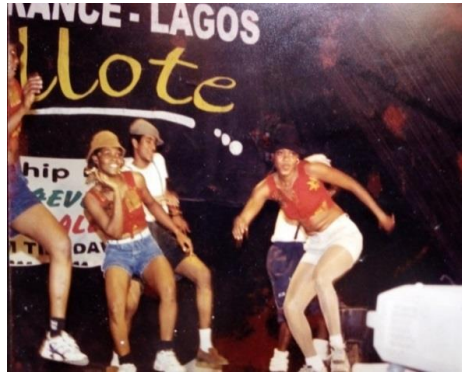


Fig.1 & 2: Contemporising bata dance with modern costumes at Alliance France at Dance Meet Danze Festival 2001



Fig. 3 & 4: The manipulation of chair in batarisation



Fig. 5 & 6: Aso Oke the tradition costume for Bata dance

Conclusion

Human environment and culture have taken on new nomenclatures and identities reached via a synergy of diverse systemic juxtaposing of sociological actuality and imaginary conceptual frames operating beyond descriptive or restricted borders. This, however, is conceptualised as a concept. 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 characterisation 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 is migration, inter/intra-marriages and acculturation, that have 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 the inability to name our art or ignorance of its nomenclature, we tend to imbibe the word hybridity as new to Africans. However, with all definitions and analysis expressed above by different scholars on hybridity, it might be difficult for someone who is not in academic or dance practice to understand the meaning of hybridity in this perspective. Therefore, it is a space created for freedom of expression, creativity beyond boundaries, breaking walls of resistance, creating and abstracting genuinely from nature. Put simply, the word, *hybridity*, existed in many other professions before now and has continue to cut across many others even as the world goes digitalised. Over the years, though dance profession has been in existence but was excluded from the education ordinances from 1982 till date. However, 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 its 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 contemporised 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 hybridised 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(s) dancer's creative imaginations. But it is of note that all styles, genres and types of dances that Africans imbibe or adopt 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.

WORKS CITED

- Aihevba, Peter. "A Critical Account of Dance in Modern Nigeria Theatre." *Dance Journal of Nigeria*, 2.2(2015): 1-11.
- Ayankunle, Lamidi. Interview on the Practice of Bata Dance and Music of the Department of The Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. 6 June, 2003.
- Bhabha, Homi. "Afterword: A Personal Response." *Rethinking Literary History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002: 19-205.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Chalkin, Sharon. "We Dance from the Movement Our Feet Touch the Earth." Sharon Chalkin & Hilda Wengrower (Eds.), *The Art and Science of Dance/Movement Therapy*. New York: Routledge, 2001: 3-11.
- Dzero, Irina. "Meanings of Hybridity in Aimé Césaire's 'Discours sur le Colonialisme.'" *The French Review*, 85.1(Oct. 2011). 102-114. Web. 12 Aug. 2017.
- Hanstein, Penelope. "Model and Metaphor: Theory Making and Creation of New Knowledge." F. Sonda, & P. Hanstein (Eds.), *Researching Dance: Revolving Mode of Enquiry*. London: Dance Book Ltd, 1999: 62-88.
- Hoogvelt, A. *Globalisation and the Postcolonial World: The New Political Economy of Development*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Iyeh, Mariam Asabe. "Mundanca in Igbabonelimin Masquerade Dance of the Esan People of Edo State, Nigeria." *Dance Journal of Nigeria*, 2.2(2015): 68-81.

- Kariam, Welsh. *World History of Dance: African Dance*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004.
- McMaster, Gerald (Ed.). *Reservation X: The Power of Place in Aboriginal Contemporary Art*. Seattle: University of Washington, 1998.
- Ojuade, Jeleel. "Learning and Acquisition of Nigeria's Yoruba Bata Music and Dance: A Symbiotic Relationship." *The Performer: Journal of the Performing Arts*, 13(2011); 14(2012): 24-35.
- Olokodana-James, Oluwatoyin. "Performance Aesthetics and Choreographic Pattern of Akoto Dance of Badagry, Lagos State." Submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Lagos in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement of the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Theatre Arts, University of Lagos, 2018.
- Olokodana-James, Oluwatoyin. "Trans-Sociological Hybridity: Conceptualising Africa Contemporary Dance Identity." Paper presented at the Biennial International Conference on Africa and its Diaspora (BICAID) with the Theme: **Voluntary or Involuntary Migration and the Conceptualisation of Africa Identities and Homeland**, hosted by the Institute of African Studies, Franklin College of Arts and Science, University of Georgia, USA. 8-10 Nov. 2017.
- Rutherford, J. "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha." *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990.
- Sachs, Curt. *World History of the Dance*. New York: N & C, Inc., 1963.
- Shaibu, Hussein. "From Natural Talent to Professionalism: The Challenge of Nigeria Dancer." Ahmed Yerima, Arnold Udoka and Rasaki Ojo Bakare (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Dance in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd, 2005: 293-304.
- Ufford-Azorbo, Ifure. "Dance Styles and Audience Receptivity in the University of Uyo 2014 Season of Performance." *Dance Journal of Nigeria*, 2.2(2015): 35-50.

ALAGA IJOKO AND ALAGA IDURO AS COMPERE-DIRECTOR IN YORUBA TRADITIONAL WEDDING CEREMONY

Adeyemi Oluwadamilare ORESANYA

Performing Arts Department
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-iwoye
Ogun State, Nigeria
Email: adeyemioresanya@gmail.com

&

Rukayat Olabisi ADEBIYI

Department of Performing Arts
University of Ilorin, Nigeria
Email: adebiyirukayat93@gmail.com

Abstract

Over time, directing has gone through developmental stages. It encompasses activities beyond the stage productions and confines of the theatre walls. To direct means the art and act of leading, asserting authority, guiding, controlling, managing, and a means to factor out good production ambience, showing, and addressing a performance needs with an intentionally conceived aim. From directorial perspective, *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*'s ingenuity during Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony is the focus of this article. Their qualities and how these relate to that of the theatre director in the execution of a play production are also examined. *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* who are predominantly women have been able to skillfully moderate and compere traditional Yoruba wedding ceremonies where men have been less efficient. This work is inclined on feminism and gender conceptual clarification. This article uses the descriptive method. It examines the ingenuity of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*, their role playing skills and musical inclination during Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony. Our findings portends that 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. This paper concludes that chauvinism should be condemned as being repugnant to mankind, natural justice, equity and good conscience. It is recommended that women should be encouraged and entrusted with positions of authority in the society. Also, the entertainment industry should create a

department, where various talents can be nurtured and trained to become good traditional moderators.

Keywords: Directing, *Alaga Ijoko*, *Alaga Iduro*, role playing, musical inclinations

Introduction

Yoruba wedding ceremony is basically the traditional engagement. This is where the service of both *Alaga Iduro* and *Alaga Ijoko* is essential. The director is considered the brain box of a successful production. The director is also the honey behind the spectacle in the theatre production. In art of Yoruba engagement ceremony, *Alaga Iduro* and *Alaga Ijoko* holds the honey, they are the livewire that makes the ceremony a memorable event. Just as the director transit from one mood to the other, *Alaga Iduro* and *Alaga Ijoko* also display well in different mood. It does not matter how low or high the mood is, these people create the best event for both families. The transition of the director from one mood to the other is not a baseless one but that which is dictated by the nature of his job. At times, he plays and jokes with the cast and the next minute he is back to business. An average director is a master of mood swing. This is the reason August Staub describes the theatre director as “...the master of all the arts of the theatre. He is the core artist without his will, the kinetic, visual and auditory components of the theatre are incapable of proper union, and will for the most part remain juxtaposed rather than coalesced” (Musa 113).

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 variety that the Yoruba culture is formed and founded on a rich and invaluable heritage. Marriage is the legal relationship between a husband and wife. It has been defined as, “a socially or ritually recognised union or legal contract between spouses that establishes rights and obligations between them and their children, and between them and their in-laws” (Ogoma 95).

Marriage comes with celebrations. It enjoys the support of well-wishers of the families involved. It is pertinent to note that a ceremony does not just happen in vacuum, it involves invited guests, special guests, 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 families, respectively; while *Alaga Ijoko* is seen as the spokesperson for the bride’s family, *Alaga Iduro* acts as the spokesperson for the groom’s family.

This work is inclined on feminism and gender conceptual clarification. This paper also considers the activities of the moderator or spokesperson and the traditional wedding as a theatrical performance. Peter Brook, in his explication on the importance of the space and performance area, solidifies the efficacy of the director in crafting out a brilliant performance in the space not necessarily the theatre stage. In his book, *The Empty Space*, Brook magnifies his directorial prowess by saying: “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” (Brook 7). This study agrees with Brook’s position and asserts that the various displays by the Alaga in order to make guests comfortable and compelling are 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 traced and given various accounts on directing. According to Effiong Johnson, the term, ‘directing,’ was never known or used at the outset of theatre practice in Greece. Tinges and semblances of ‘directing art’ were not totally excluded from the performance scheme. The competitiveness of the drama festival necessitated participants to be thorough, critical, analytical and convincing. Johnson 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 (Johnson, “Directing Principles...” 196).

In terms of funding and managing the production proper, the *choregus* in the Greek era most probably mediated 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 (Johnson, “Directing Principles...” 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 aspects which he coordinated into an integrated whole. Edwin Wilson posits that, “the director emerges as a full-fledged, indispensable member of a theatrical team taking a place alongside the playwright, the performers and the designers” (136). His position is that the artistic director is the indispensable coordinator whose concept is usually revealed through the performers and various designers that have contributed to the stage play. George II’s activities in preparation for productions recorded great attention. His creative ingenuity later metamorphosed into the word ‘director’ which later became popularly attached to the leaders of many theatre productions beginning from the 19th century. Perhaps, significantly, the emergence of the director, according to Wilson, is regarded as separate creative finger coincided with important changes which began to take place in society during the 19th 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-emphasised. Edwin Wilson and Alvin Goldfarb state that in the modern theatre, “the director is inevitable and indispensable” (34). Oscar Brockett also asserts 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. Yoruba culture is not one that approve of divorce, families involved perceive both the ceremony and the marriage as a binding string and elements between the two families exchanging vows. It has been posited 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” (cited in Odejobi 139). It is not the intention of this paper to promote a marriage institution lacking in conjugal bliss. Cecilia Odejobi 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 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.

Feminism and Gender Conceptual Clarification

Feminism reveals principles, beliefs, ideas, and concepts that guide and are basic to the preoccupation of its adherents (Evwierhoma 54). The occupation of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* as compere in Yoruba traditional wedding started out of the ideas and concept of brilliant and intelligent women. That is why the trade is still being practiced by women in 21st century. Both male and female should be regarded as creature of God with unique preferences and equal in their own peculiar ways. Feminism has been seen as,

the only serious, coherent, and universal philosophy that offers an alternative to patriarchal thinking and structures... feminists believe that women are human beings, that the two sexes are (at least) equal in all significant ways, and that this equality must be publicly recognised. They believe that qualities traditionally associated with women – the feminine principle are (at least) equal in value to those traditionally associated with men – the masculine principle – and that this equality must be publicly recognised (Evwierhoma 55).

It is essential to note that through the tenets mentioned above, feminism has actually succeeded in creating an ambience and perfect recognition for women through their artistic ingenuity. That is the more reason women have continued to maintain their trade as *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* in Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony.

Gender scholars have modified varied circumstances theoretically for sexism. These modifications are often situated within the confines of politics, tradition, culture, materials, and modernity, physical and physiological. The fundamental physical and physiological differences between men and women, in part, according to Cheri Kramarae and Paula Treichler, account for the ascribed masculine supremacy, and patriarchy inevitability in societies (2261). Patriarchy repose itself conveniently as the major form of the evolution of feminine domination. The woman's credibility is vested ironically upon tradition. Cultural gender intellectuals notably Ann Oakley and Sherry Ortner adopt the view that culture and society are the determiners of gender roles. In their perspective, they opined that, "culture is the sum total of human societies' accumulation of traditions, values, norms, prescription of behaviour, among other things, over the

years of their existence” (cited in George 25-26). Accordingly, Olaseni Abayomi posits that,

the order bestows on man the responsibility to guard the terms and the natural foundations upon which the development of society and the home is founded, while the woman guards the home unity and health as well as the integration of society through rearing, including the nurturing of the off-springs when they are young (27-28).

Traditionally, the Yoruba culture principally promotes patriarchy. However, women have always strived to be instrumental in the development of the society. Starting from the family, the women in the pre-colonial era were known to be supportive. They go to the farm with their children to assist their husbands on their farms. These women also take care of the domestic chores in the home. And before bedtime, they engage their children in storytelling, singing and dancing. The women engagement and contribution continued arguably in the colonial and post-colonial period. The natural talent and skills from singing and dancing during the storytelling moment formed part of the knowledge the women use in performing the role of *Alaga Iduro* and *Alaga Ijoko* during Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony.

Women are also known to be nation builders. Ojuolape recount the notable contributions of few of them, in Yoruba-speaking, South-West, Nigeria; there were notable women with titles such as the “Erelu,” “Ayaba” and “Olori” (King’s wives), “Iyalode” (Women’s Leader), “Iyalaje” (Market Women’s Leader), “Yeye Oba” (King’s Mother) and “Iya Oloosa” (priestess of the Goddess). Others were the Moremi of Ife, Efunsetan of Ibadan and Emotan (Ojuolape 1). Likewise, in the Hausa-Fulani traditional political emirate of Northern Nigeria, Queen Amina’s contributions and influence in the political development of the emirate remains a unique reference point. However, existing gender literature and history have not sufficiently captured the relevance of women in that era. Rationalising explanations for this intellectual discrimination, literary and historical injustice against women, conventional African history provides only fragmentary images of women because men wrote it (Sadiqi 35).

Gender also refers to the nomenclature in identifying men and women in particular societies and at particular times. Individuals have attached roles with similarities and differences between them which are conditioned by a variety of political, economic, ideological and cultural factors, and are distinguished in most societies by uneven and unequal imbalance in power relations. It has been opined that,

gender constitutes one of the determinants of how poverty is experienced and of wealth creation. Rights and entitlements of men and women to opportunities, resources and decision making are based on socio-cultural norms rather than on human rights or the respective development capability of men and women (Ekpe & Eja 16).

CIRDDOC defines gender as a system of roles relationship between women and men that are determine not biologically but by the social, political and economic context (1). Scott captures the nature of gender, thus:

Gender is the social organisation of sexual differences but this does not means that gender reflects or implements fixed and natural physical differences between women and men, rather gender is the knowledge that establishes meaning for bodily differences. These meaning vary across cultures, social groups and time since nothing about the body including women's reproductive organs, determines univocally how social division will be shaped (Scott 2).

This paper is about extolling the virtues of women where men are mostly not effective. To host a formal or informal event has nothing to do with gender. Yoruba traditional ceremony has actually successfully revealed the event women are comfortable doing better than men. It is not an event that happens in the kitchen or bedroom, it is a wedding ceremony. It also involves financial gain. After every event, these comperes get paid in cash and gift items.

Gender equality

Ekpe and Eja interpret this to mean, “a situation where women and men have equal conditions for realising their full human rights and potentials; are able to contribute equally to national, political, economic, social and cultural development and benefit equally from the results” (16). This paper aligns with the description above. The women involved in the occupation of *Alaga Iduro* and *Alaga Ijoko* efficiently carry out their duties with the mentality of personal, marital, social and cultural responsibilities towards the state. These women pay their tax; use the proceeds from their job as Master of Ceremony to support their businesses and families. Furthermore, it entails that the underlying causes of discrimination are systematically identified and removed in order to give men and women equal opportunities. According to Ekpe and Eja, equality is therefore understood to include both formal equality and substantive equality, and not merely simple

equality to men (16). To Omonubi, women are suffering from chauvinism in different sector. The values and potentials of women are not fully utilised, some men only recognise women as sexual objects alone. She posits that:

Politically, Nigeria women are negligible and undermined force, with little political involvement. Economically, they constitute the majority of the peasant labour force in the agricultural sector, while most of the others occupy bottom of occupational ladder and continue to be channelled into service and domestic occupations (Omonubi 2).

The consequence of the unequal status between men and women is high level of economic and political powerlessness among women, powerlessness in turn retard development of any level, politically, economically and socially.

Brief Insight on Yoruba Traditional Marriage

Historically, marriage in African culture is an essential institution. It is perceived to be the climax of an early intimation and a necessity in life. According to John Mbiti:

For Africans, marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all the members of a given community meet: the departed, the living and those yet unborn. All the dimensions of time meet here and the whole drama of history is repeated, renewed and revitalised. Marriage is a drama in which everyone becomes an actor or actress and not just a spectator (133).

Marriage is therefore, basically an affair that is beyond the nuclear family. It involves the physical, spiritual, moral and financial support of all members of the extended families, and the general community. To William Abraham,

marriage in African tradition is the joining of two families through the union of one man and one woman and their children, always to the exclusion of all other men as regards the woman, and in monogamous societies, to the exclusion of all other women as regards the man (22).

Marriage is a serious business which is accompanied by a wedding ceremony. This ceremony occur when the families involved agree to bond together financially, physically, socially, morally, and spiritually.

Traditional marriage takes a deep process of thoughts, research, sacrifice, agreements and disagreements between the two families involved before they eventually consent to the union. There are many accounts of Yoruba traditional marriage. Awolalu and Adelumo submit that, “among the Yoruba, marriage is the affair of the family and not the concerned individual. This is because the people regard marriage as something that will unite the families of both husband and wife and make them one” (178). Toyin Akingbemi opines that, “the decision or intension to marry comes from the man” (61). Akingbemi’s position appears more Pentecostal in conformity with the post-colonial tradition that does not recognise cultural virtuousness.

Furthermore, Daniel Ogoma posits that, “a man does not know when he is ripe for marriage in life. It is the parents, after close observation of some fundamental changes in their son that would determine when it is time to marry” (97). This also erodes self-determination in the young man. It does not matter the financial status of the parents, a man must be confident and certain about either to get married or remain single. The most important factor about marriage is that the man must be matured enough to own up to responsibilities.

The most important aspect of the traditional marriage ceremony is the payment and collection of the bride price. The bride price is usually divided into two, which is shared between the families of the bride’s parents. It is usually noted that, “bride price is not a tag to sell;” rather, it is considered as a commitment and a sign of appreciation from the groom’s family to the bride’s family. It can also be seen

as earnest of their good faith, and an expression of the degree of honour and esteem held for the woman’s family, they make a series of presentations consisting of items of wealth, however locally expressed, e.g., livestock, hunting implements, money. Without such presentations, any eventual liaison is only an irregular union and enjoys no protection (Abraham 22).

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.

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

It needs to be noted that the modern concept of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* emanated from the indigenous roles of women from both families; they are assigned escorts. One group escorts the new bride to the new home, while the other group receives the escorted. The spokespersons of the groups naturally become the *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* respectively.

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 realisation, 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 with their contributions to the Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony.

1. Act of Mobility

As a director, in as much as there is life and sound health, there is no location that is too far to work. This is exactly the attitude of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* as compere in Yoruba wedding/engagement ceremony. In Nigeria, there's virtually no state that Yorubas do not live. The craft, cleverness and creativity of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* is not limited to the Southwest region of the country. Act of mobility in the life and professional ethics of these moderators is embedded in their discipline and ability to perform without any form of hindrance considering location or space for their performance. These moderators contribute to the progress and general awareness of the undiluted unique and rich Yoruba culture.

2. Mentorship and Training

The director cannot work in isolation; she/he works together with the stage manager and other crew members and cast available for a particular production. The director's media is majorly the stage, the actor and the play text. While working with multiple actors and crew severally, there's no doubt that there will be few individuals who appreciates the work and creative instinct of the director. This is where mentorship comes to reality. In view of the above, the *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* can be referred to as the director and stage manager of the Yoruba marriage ceremony. They give room for mentorship and training through apprenticeship system. These moderators train interested candidates in line with the art and skill of moderating a Yoruba engagement ceremony. Innate ability is good but one becomes a better person if presented with the opportunity of learning and relearning to master a particular trade or art of performance. The art of mentorship, training and apprenticeship presents a novice or an individual with

fresh talent the opportunity to develop through the process of regular rehearsals, and performances which form her/his experience over time. An individual who has no experience from both rehearsal and performance cannot qualify to be called a director. So also is a compere in the person of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* who cannot boast of performance success or evidence of apprenticeship cannot as well qualify in their rank to be called a professional *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*.

3. Soul of Entertainment

The traditional wedding ceremony is a serious event. It is perceived to be a landmark ceremony by both families involved. The *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* are amazing and interesting personalities whose only goal is to ensure their audience never regrets attending a wedding ceremony. This therefore means that even though the event is considered to be a serious one because of its importance, the place of entertainment cannot be devalued. These moderators are therefore considered to present themselves as the soul of entertainment by ensuring a lively atmosphere. In this case, Just as directing can be described as a thought creating process where all the arts of the theatre are combined into one form to give the audience a beautiful show, the *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* as the soul of entertainment endeavour to be all in one as they take up the role of the orchestra in drama performance, a comedian, a radio presenter, a TV host, an anchor, a musician and generally an entertainer. These character traits of the moderators portray them as hardworking personalities which is the core trait of a theatre director.

4. Role Playing

In most events, an individual starts the show as the master of ceremony (MC), be it a corporate, formal or informal setting. 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 maximising 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 interesting and able to please the audience. Gale Edwards, as cited in Tayo 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 (Arinde, "Directorial Style and Skill..." 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 theatre 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.

5. 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 theatre can be culture bound; it is basically labelled under the dramatic genre comedy. It is a type of simulation that elicits the laughter reflex. Aristotle describes it in terms of some ugliness or defect, which is not painful or destructive but which we tend to laugh at (Bamidele 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*) skilfully 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.

6. Versatile

As a director handling and directing a theatrical production, the goal is to achieve a well-defined and successful performance. The onus is on the director to reflect the skills and versatility embedded in him in the production. However, in order to achieve a charming performance, it is pertinent to consciously note the compositional forms and beauty that centres on the realities of the performers (Bride and Groom), and the audience (family members and guest). This conscious orientation gives credence to the tradition and culture which is being maintained by the moderators. Quintessentially, versatility cannot be discussed without laying emphasis to aesthetics in a work of art. Reflecting on the theatrics of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* in Yoruba traditional wedding ceremony, the moderators (*Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro*) (bring to bear their) versatile strength by rendering the panegyrics of the two families involved even when it is crystal clear that they are not members of the families.

Another versatile nature of *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* is their mode of communication through dance. In Rasaki Ojo Bakare's view, "pure dance is a product of kinaesthetic stimuli that explore a wide range of movements" (cited in Peter 549). In other words, the genre of pure dance performance "accommodates series of innovative and improvisational movement patterns." As 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 improvisation, movement and floor patterns while anchoring events. These moderators usually endeavour to know the trending dance movements to complement their skills in Yoruba traditional dances.

7. 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 trends in entertainment. 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. The 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, 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 part of the fine.

Objectivity can be said to mean judgment based on observable phenomena, 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 or she is 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.

8. Musical Inclination

Actualising 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, Solomom Ikibe defines music as, "a medium through which various concepts of the theatre is actualised" (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 start the event. In most cases in the theatre, the orchestra starts the play with songs. The moderators usually have songs to welcome the groom's family. The groom and the bride are also usually introduced with songs. 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**English Translation**

Songs	Interpretation
<p>Àwa lán se bẹbẹ Àwarè ó, Àwa lán se bẹbẹ Àwa la n'owó tagbayì Ní ilé táa n'owósí</p>	<p>Here we are doing wonders, Oh! Here we are doing wonders, We spend a lot of money in people's homes and get honoured for it,</p>
<p>Call: Àwa lẹbí ọkọ Arìn máárìn'dọtí</p> <p>Response: Àwa lẹbí ọkọ 2ce Arìn máárìn'dọtí</p> <p>Call: Arìn máárìn'dọtí</p> <p>Response: Arìn máárìn'dọtí</p> <p>All: Àwa lẹbí ọkọ (2ce) Arìn máárìn'dọtí</p>	<p>We are the groom's family, who work spotlessly.</p> <p>We are the groom's family (2ce) who work spotlessly. who work spotlessly!</p> <p>We are the groom's family (2ce) Who work spotlessly.</p>
<p>Láhún ẹrẹbẹ Ẹrẹbẹ láhún Owó ilé lánlò A ò màyáwó fisé o Láhún ẹrẹbẹ Ẹrẹbẹ láhún</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>Ìpínlẹ tí Jésù fì lélé lẹyí Tí gbogbo àgbáyé tọ Kẹdà má se ròpé Ó dúró nílẹ Ó dúró lórí àpáta, Ẹyin ẹbí ọkọ ẹ yọ Ẹbí iyáwó ẹ yọ Afi' pínlẹ yíi lélé lórí òtítọ Afi' pínlẹ yíi lélé lórí òdodo</p>	<p>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</p>

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 ability to interpret 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 recognises 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.

Recommendations

At this juncture, this study proffers the following recommendations:

1. *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* are female moderators who should be protected from molestation and discrimination. They must be respected and honoured as it is done to hosts in circular and formal events.
2. The Nigerian orientation agency should take it upon themselves to give proper orientation to the citizens through wide spread advertisements and announcement on all media stations including print and social media platforms on the rights and protection of women's right.
3. There should be law backing inclusion of more women in the governance of this country. This will ensure more female representation in various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). It also means that the chauvinistic approach of men towards women will be drastically reduced.
4. The entertainment industry (Nollywood in particular) should create a department where various talents can be nurtured, and trained to become good traditional moderators. *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* are moderators whose role becomes as important as the Yoruba traditional marriage ceremony because they are meant to be seen as the entertainment livewire of the event.
5. Youths should be more encouraged to engage in inter-tribal marriages. Such marriage ceremony will make *Alaga Ijoko* and *Alaga Iduro* take a new dimension in moderating events. This new dimension means both

moderators from different ethnic background work together as compere in a traditional marriage ceremony. It is important to note that no tribe or ethnic group is superior to the other, hence the encouragement of the working relationship between the moderators from different tribes.

WORKS CITED

- Abayomi, Olaseni O. *State and Citizens*. Lagos: Law Searchers Nigeria Ltd, 2000.
- Abraham, William. "Sources of African Identity." Alwin Diemer (Ed.), *Africa and the Problem of its Identity*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1987: 22.
- Ajayi, Kunle. "Gender Self-Endangering: The Sexist Issue in Nigerian Politics." *EKSU J. Soc. Sci.*, 14.2(2007): 137-147.
- Akingbemi, Toyin. *Ikale People & Culture*. Lagos: Third World Media Ltd, 2007.
- Arinde, Tayo S. "Quintessence in the New Creative Interpretation of Mohammed Bn-Abdullahi's *Step Aside*." Zikky O. Kofoworola, Martin O. Owusu, Abdulrasheed A. Adeoye (Eds.), *African Theatre: Studies in Theory and Criticism*. Ghana: Department of Performing Arts, 2017: 237-253.
- Arinde, Tayo S. "Directorial Style and Skill of Ayo Akinwale in the Mountains of Wealth." AdbulRasheed A. Adeoye (Ed.), *The Dramaturgy of a Theatre Sociologist: Festschrift in Honour of Ayo Akinwale*. Ilorin: Department of the Performing Arts, 2012: 98-107.
- Awolalu, Omosade J., and Dopamu O. Adelumo. *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: Onibonoje Press, 1979: 178.
- Bamidele, Lawrence O. *Comedy, Essays and Studies*. Ibadan: Sterling-Horden Publishers Ltd, 2009.
- Brockett, Oscar G. *The Essential Theatre*. Florida: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1996.
- Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.
- CIRDDOC. *Gender and Politics in Nigeria. CIRDDOC Public Education Series*, 5. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publication, 2001: 1.
- Ekpe et al. "Women, Gender Equality in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of Socioeconomic and Political (Gender Issues)." *J. Res. Peace Gen. Dev.*, 4.1(2014): 15-20.
- Evwierhoma, Mabel. *Female Empowerment and Dramatic Creativity in Nigeria*. Lagos: Concept Publications Ltd, 2013.
- Johnson, Effiong. "Directing Principles (Re)Concerned and (Re)Considered." Zikky O. Kofoworola, Martin O. Owusu, Abdulrasheed A. Adeoye (Eds.), *African Theatre: Studies in Theory and Criticism*. Ghana: The

- Department of Theatre Studies, Methodist University College, 2017: 195-215.
- Johnson, Effiong. *Visions towards a Mission: The Art of Interpretative Directing*. Lagos: Concept Publications Ltd, 2003.
- George, U. G. "Theoretical Position of Gender Roles in Society." L. Olurode (Ed.), *Women and Social Change in Nigeria*. Lagos: Unity Publishing and Research Ltd, 1990: 25-26.
- George-Genyi, M., and G. Genyi. "Gender Identity Politics in Nigeria." *International Journal of African culture, Politics and Development*, 3.2(Sept. 2008).
- Greenwald, M., S. Roger, & P. Roberto. *The Longman Anthology of Drama and Theatre. A Global Perspective*, rev. 1st ed. New York: Simone Schuster, 2000.
- Hodge, Francis. *Play Directing, Analysis, Communication, and Style*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971.
- Ikibe, Solomon O. *Isoko Performing Arts: Music in Folktales as Paradigm*: Germany: LAP Lambert Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG, 2011.
- Kramarae, Cherie, & Paula A. Treichler. *A Feminist Dictionary*. London: Pandora Press, 1988: 2261.
- Mbiti, John S. *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann Pub., 1969.
- Musa, Rasheed A. "Directing Style and the Nigerian Theatre." Paper Delivered at SONTA 2001, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 28 Nov.-2 Dec. 2001.
- Musa, Rasheed A. "Directing Wole Soyinka's Comedies on the Nigerian Stage." Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2007.
- Odejobi, Cecilia O. "Influence of Socio-Economic Change on Marriage Norms in Yoruba Society in Southwest Nigeria." *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. Rome: MCSER Publishing, 2013: 139-148.
- Ogoma, Daniel E. "Reflection on an African Traditional Marriage System." *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Affairs*, 4.1(2014): 97.
- Ojuolape, Wunmi. "The Role of Women as a Wife, a Mother and a Career Woman." Being Paper Presented at the Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre, Sea School, Apapa, Lagos. 2000.
- Omonubi-McDonnell, M. *Gender Inequality in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd, 2003.
- Peter, Adeiza B. "Dance Practice and the Choreographer's Creativity through the Lens of Bakare, Ojo Rasaki." AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye, Uche-Chinemere Nwaozuzu, Solomon Ejeke, & Etop Akwang (Eds.), *Uncommon Artistry; Understanding Bakare, Ojo Rasaki's Dance, Drama and Theatre*. London: S M Publications, 2014: 548-557.

- Sadiqi, Fatima. "Changing Gender Dynamics in Africa." *CODESRIA Bulletin*, nos. 3 & 4(2002): 35.
- Wilson, Edwin. *The Theatre Experience*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 2009.
- Wilson, Edwin & Goldfarb, Alvin. *Theatre: The Lively Arts*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1991.

EXAMINING THE PERFORMANCE AESTHETICS OF *KOROSO* DANCE: THE BAUCHI STATE COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE DANCE TROUPE IN FOCUS

Godwin Sambo ADAMS

Kaduna State University, Kaduna, Nigeria

Email: gasadgagare@gmail.com

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 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 14; Kroeber 106; Wolf, 94).

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” (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. Thus:

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 (Damisa 1).

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 Marusa Pusnik when he notes the discrepancies that usually arise in the definitions of dance (5). 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 his submission, Pierre Bourdieu had argued 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" (4). 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 Elaine Scarry a professor of aesthetics models a premise for 'beauty' as a "sense process that can lead toward social justice" (Blacking 90). It is her believe 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 decentring” 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 91). Scarry’s reference 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 cited in Ufford-Azorbo 479). In fact, Hawkins 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 (3).

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 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 Barry Oreck 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” (2). 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, Esi Kini-Olusanyi 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 (29).

Thus, Matthew Umukoro 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” (72). This also underpins the position of Richard Shusterman that, “dancing is the principal way in which musical pleasures become realised in physical involvement in bodily grounded aesthetics” (65). 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 Golden Geoffrey:

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 (213).

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 Jeleel Ojuade 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 behaviour and instructs on moral within the society” (240).

Brief History of the Bauchi State Council for Arts and Culture

According to Ayuba Yari (in 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. Peter Adegboyega Badejo was brought from ABU, 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:

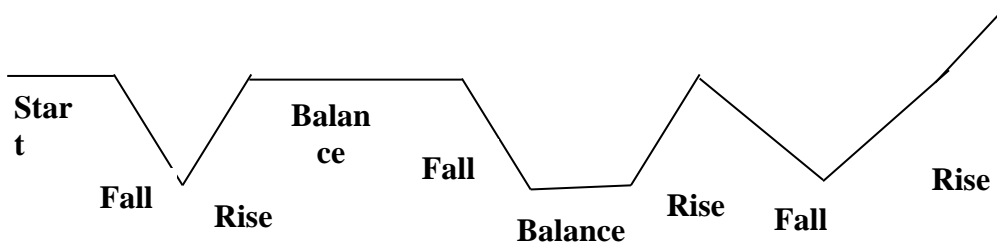


Fig1: The rhythmic composition of Koroso music

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.

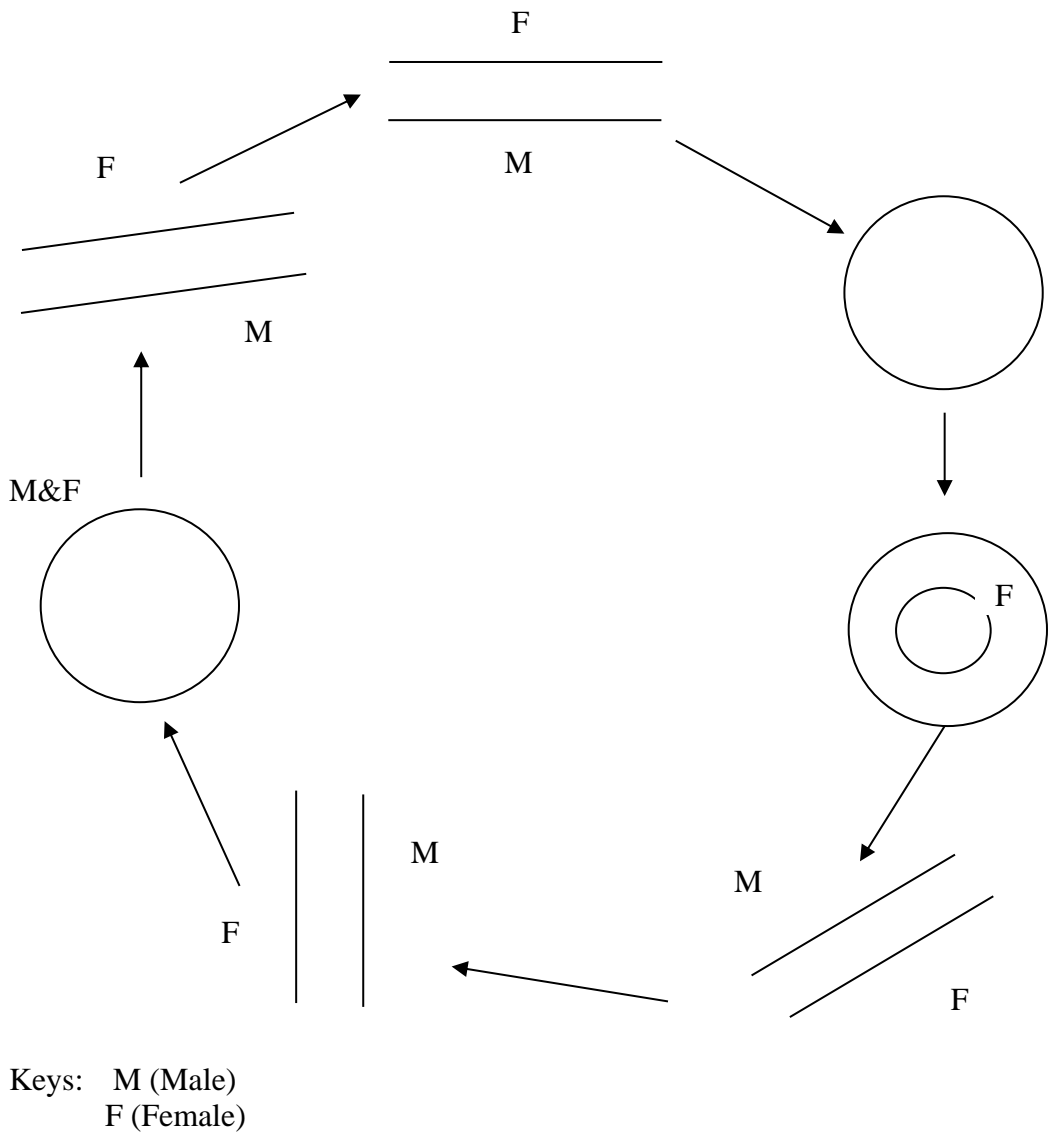


Fig 3: The floor pattern of Koroso dance

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 *kalangu*. 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 the dance aim at teaching morals; and it is 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.

WORKS CITED

- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Policy Press, 1994.
- Blacking, John. "Movement and Meaning: Dance in Social Anthropological Perspective." *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, 1.1(1983): 8
- Esi-Kinni, Olusanyin. "The Arts as Communication in the American and Nigerian Societies." *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies*, 6(1986): 29-30
- Geoffrey, Golden. *African Dances*. New York: Norton and Co., Inc., 1962.
- Hawkins, Erick. *The Body is a Clear Place*. NJ: Princeton Book Co., 1992.
- Hirst, Spencer. *Society and the Dance: The Social Anthropology of Process and Performance*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Kroeber, Brian. "Recent Anthropology." *Science*, 98(1943): 311-314; 334-337.
- Mudi, B. Oral Interview with Researcher at Bauchi State Council for Arts and Culture, 20 June, 2017.
- Ojuade, Jeleel O. "The Nigerian Dance and the National Question." *Nigerian Theatre Journal*, 2004: 236-247.
- Oreck, Becker. *Dancers Talking Dance: Critical Evaluation in the Choreography Class*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Press, 2013.
- Pusnik, Marusa. "Introduction: Dance as Social Life and Cultural Practice." *Anthropological Notebooks*, 16.3(2010): 5-8.
- Richard, Shusterman. "Somaesthetics and Burkes Sublime." *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 45(2005): 63-66.
- Scarry, Elaine. *On Beauty and Being Just*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Suru, Damisa, C. (2012). "Marriage and Funeral Dance Performances among the Oso People of Nigeria." Unpublished PhD Thesis Submitted to the Department of the Performing Arts, University of Ilorin.

- Ufford-Azorbo, Ifure & Ufford, Ikike I. "Body Rhythmicity and Bakare Ojo Rasaki's *The Deformed Can Also Dance*: Democratising Dance Practice in a Democratised Nigeria." In A. A. Adeoye et al. (Eds.), *Uncommon Artistry: Understanding Bakare, Ojo Rasaki's Dance, Drama and Theatre*. London: SPM Publication, 2014: 478-486.
- Umukoro, Matthew. *The Performing Artist in Academia*. 11th Faculty Lecture, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan. Ibadan: Caltop Publications, 2001.
- Wolf, Frommer B. "Dance in Anthropological Perspective." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 1978: 31-49.
- Yari, Ayuba. Oral Interview with the Researcher at Bauchi State Council of Arts and Culture, Bauchi. 17 June, 2017.

AESTHETICS AND RELIGIOUS TOURISM: THE POTENTIAL OF ARINGIYA FESTIVAL IN IKARE AKOKO, ONDO STATE

Olanireti O. FALADE

Department of Performing Arts
Adekunle Ajasin University
Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria
Email: oolakojo@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper argues that there is no viable contention that most African traditional festival theatres have the potential to promote religious tourism. However, one of the unresolved challenges of the institution is effective fusing of aesthetics and religion to make most of the festival theatres attract global attention to faith tourism. *Aringíyà* puberty festival in Ikare Akoko has proven over the years to be a surprisingly strong, resilient and a fundamental contributor to the socio-economic growth of its immediate environment. The objective of this study is to examine for development, the aesthetics of the ever-robust traditional and autochthonous heritages that are important in the cultural development of the people. The study observes that the festival theatre is “spirit-oriented” because of the involvement of some superhuman characters in its performances. In Nigerian society, festival theatre becomes a form of religious tourism, as they are instrumental to the process of societal cleansing, reshaping, reconfirmation of faith and rejuvenation. Resting on the theories of ‘ritualism and holism,’ this paper theoretically appraises the socio-economic potential of *Aringíyà* and opines that it can be explored to contribute hugely via religious tourism to the Nigerian economy. In view of the discoverable potential, this study analyses the aesthetic attractions in the performances of the festival and concludes that if properly packaged and marketed, the performance of *Aringíyà* festival would go a long way in promoting tourism in the society.

Keyword: Aesthetics, religious tourism, *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, Yemi Ogunbiyi points to the speculative origins of African traditional theatre and drama as being 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 held 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 marginalisation, 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, Wole Soyinka, M. J. C. Echeruo, Oyin Ogunba, Ossie Enekwe, Sunday Ododo, and Lilian Bakare, 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 Africa 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 Alapasanpa Masquerades 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;

Obalogue Festival in Iloko; and Oromo Festival in Ethiopia, among others (Dugo 51).

In Ikare-Akoko, Ondo State, a South-Western state of 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 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; it would hardly command more than a fraction of the interest it generates among the people if it were (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 19th century to the first half of the 20th 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 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 Westernisation. 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, Maurice 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 the Nigerian society, festival theatre has become 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).

Ogunba submits that, “oral” traditional African performances are concerned with, and share the same function in evoking similar responses with the Western “literate” drama (25). Adetotun Ogundeji, in agreeing with Ogunba, 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 artefacts does not preclude their artistic qualities. In the same vein *ìjálá*, *èsà-egúngún*, *ìyèrèifá*, *sàngó-pípè*, *Oya-pípè*, and *Èsù-pípè* chants are Yoruba poetic types used in worshipping *Ògún*, *Egúngún*, *Ifá*, *Sàngó*, *Oya*, and *Èsù* respectively. However,

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 festive performances, and the de-ritualising performances.” According to him, the sacred ritual performances are primary and foregrounded while the festive performances function as secondary and therefore back-grounded in the ‘de-ritualising’ performances. The aesthetics, in this case, is secondary and, therefore, has background in festive performances; on the other hand, it is primary and foregrounded in ‘de-ritualising’ and ‘de-ritualised’ performances (Ogundeji 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 *Igbagan* Masquerade Festival. It is a performance, which according to Joel Adedeji, is partly re-enacted in honour of Olúgbèé 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 (51-52). 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 *ikúnlè* (the kneeling down) is enacted when the Omo-eriwo (initiate cult members) keep a vigil in the *igbó-ìgbàlè* (the sacred grove) where they commune with, offer sacrifices and pray to, the ancestors. Part of this stage of the performance is carried out kneeling down, hence the name *Ikúnlè* 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 (Ogundeji 52).

Apart from re-enacting the discovery and bringing to town of *Olugbee 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, *Igbóìgbàlè*.



Pix 1: Cross section of masquerades at Igbagan Egúngún Festival
Source: Dasylya

This last bit of secluding the audience disagrees with Chinyowa Kennedy's submission on who the actor is thus:

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 synchronise 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 festivals where the audience takes an active role, as posited by Ogundeji, is the Yoruba Eégúnaláré (masquerade player) performance, which according to him, is a clear example of the de-ritualising 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 Westernisation, in general and its mode of theatre practice in particular, has influenced the ‘de-ritualising’ and ‘de-ritualised’ 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 Eégún-alaré 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 synchronised dances, 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 collectivism 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 *Aringiya* performance.

Theorising *Aringiyà* 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 summariser of the ‘foggy’ terrain in cultural studies, has aspects of his submission that relate to this study. Perhaps the West has not failed in ‘universalising’ 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 historicising 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 (“Facekuerade Theatre...” xii).

For this reason, therefore, 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 the theoretical framework of this work is placed. This need resonates a profound inner code of African aesthetic values within the larger context of world theatre cultures. Indeed, the time has come to re-launch the search for new forms by also suggesting the direction to be pursued, as advocated by Femi Osofisan (198).

Conceptual Framework

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 but rather, they 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-energising 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; by hinging on the belief that man craves continuously to commune with his ancestors, deities and every other 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 stylised 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, *A Place Where Three Roads Meet...* 4). Hence, Ikare people believe in the several processes and procedures within the practice and the performance of *Aringíyà*.

Holism on the other hand, captures aspects of the performance that are mythic, archetypal, spiritual, ritualistic, and essentially entertaining and edifying. *Aringíyà*'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 *Aringíyà* traditional African festival theatre can appropriately be described as holistic and ritualistic. This is also why when one watches a traditional festival, as Ogunba would put it, one is immediately struck by the fact that one has been exposed to a dramatic experience.

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 about 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 Okorun, 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 any maiden who might have lied about her virginity or 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 Okegbee 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 2: An image of some of the maidens waiting to have their bath

Source: Fieldwork



Pix 3: An Image of some of the maidens waiting at the Owa-Ale's Palace for Prayers

Source: Fieldwork

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 reference 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 varying 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 4: An image of a cross-section of the maidens waiting for the Owa-Ale at the shrine

Source: Fieldwork



Pix 5: An image of the Owa-Ale saying his final prayers for the assembly as a whole

Source: Fieldwork

Religious Function of Ariginya 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.



Pix 6: Showing an image of a moment when the spirit seemingly takes control – (possessing the performer).

Source: Fieldwork

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 earlier stated, ritual performances in *Aringíyà* traditional theatre are often seen to be beautiful and pleasurable. It must be stated clearly that a number of dramatic performances in traditional societies are ritualistic in content and 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 Potential 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 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, thereby allowing them to spend money within the community thus enhancing the local economy and supporting the development of restaurants, hotels, and other tourism related businesses, of the Ikare community. The Iyomefa quarters have had cause to see the *Aringíyà* festival as a source of community life, and further promoting their health through leisure.

Furthermore, the compulsory stop of work during *Aringíyà* Festival gives the people some moment of rest from farm work, trading at the markets and other tedious work; for them to refresh before going back. This is similar to the compulsory week of peace in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Also, it has been further revealed that during the festival, 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, masks and other costumes for the masquerade. In addition, African traditional festivals generally afford skilled women in weaving and pottery making the opportunity to promote their wares, which would be displayed for the visitors to admire and buy.

The high inflow of tourist 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
Throne*

Source: Fieldwork



*Pix 8: An image of the old Owa-Ale's
Aringiya shrine is housed*

Source: Fieldwork

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 on-going 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

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, 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. 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. *Aringiyà* 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 *Aringiyà* 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. In view of this, it is therefore recommended that, regardless of the State's effort at establishing a research department within its Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the establishment of a standard Centre for Research and Documentation to encourage further researches on this festival, and

many others within the State, can be encouraged. This will serve as a repository, because when information is passed through the words of mouth, distortions occur as the years go by.

Finally, in order for *Aringíyà* festival to be well known across the globe and attract more tourists, the Ikare-Akoko Local Government Cultural Troupe should be featured, as often as possible, in various Arts' Festivals and Carnivals at the State level while the State troupe can then present such performances to the world. This is definitely a way to open the festival to the view of the world and make its impact felt across board. Overall, *Aringíyà* festival engenders the maintenance of the ordered relationship of the 'African Universe' (dead-living-unborn). For this reason and many more, a breach in the dictates and codes of the festival came with death (in the olden days) and heavy sanctions (nowadays).

WORKS CITED

- Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- Adedoyin, Oba Kolapo Adegbite. "Why Ikare has Two Kings – Owa Ale." Gbadamosi Hakeem. *Nigerian Tribune*. 10 Mar. 2017.
- Adeniran, Oba Prince Adeyemo. "History of Aringiya Festival." Oral Interview with Olanireti Olakojo. 12 Apr. 2019.
- Akporobaro, Fred. *Introduction to African Oral Literature*. Lagos: Princeton Pub. Co., 2012.
- Asigbo, Alex. "Performance Contexts of Rituals in Transition: The Ikeji Masquerade Festival of Arondizuogu as Paradigm." Sola Adeyemi (Ed.), *African Performance Review*. United Kingdom: www.africantheareassociation.org, 2013: 20.
- Bakare, Lilian. "Costumes in Igogo Masquerade Theatre of the Ekiti People." *EJOTMAS: Ekpoma Journal of Theatre and Media Arts* (2017): 407-430.
- Bell, Catherine M. *Ritual Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Delafosse, Maurice. "à l'étude du théâtre chez les noirs." *Annuaire et Mémoires du Comité d'Études historiques et scientifique de l'AOF (in French)*, 1916: 40-61.
- Dugo, Habtamu. "The Powers and Limits of New Media Appropriation in Authoritarian Contexts: A Comparative Case Study of Oromo Protests in Ethiopia. Africology." *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 2017: 48-69.
- Eagleton, Terry. *After Theory*. New York: Basic Books, 2003.

- Echeruo, Michael. "The Dramatic Limits of Igbo Ritual." Yemi Ogunbiyi (Ed.), *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Tanus Books, 2014.
- Enekwe, Ossie. "Myth, Ritual and Drama in Igbo-Land." Yemi Ogunbiyi (Ed.), *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Tanus Books, 2014: 182-199.
- Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral Literature in Africa*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2012.
- Halliday, Michael Abrams. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. HBJ: Fortworth, 1993.
- Kennedy, Chinyowa. "The Ethnography of Performance as a Methodology in African Theatre for Development." *Drama Australia Journal*, 2006: 83-92.
- Layiwola, Dele. "Is Ritual Drama a Humanistic Methodology? Thoughts on the New Theatre." Dele Layiwola (Ed.), *African Theatre in Performance*. Australia: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000: 120-158.
- Layiwola, Dele. *A Place Where Three Roads Meet: Literature, Culture and Society*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 2010.
- Ododo, Sunday Enessi. "Facekuerade: The Transitional Duality in Ebira-Ekuechi Festival Performance." *Cultural Studies* (2008): 285-308.
- Ododo, Sunday Enessi. *Facekuerade Theatre: A Performance Model from Ebira-Ekuechi*. Maiduguri: Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), 2015.
- Ogunba, Oyin. "Introduction." Oyin Ogunba and Abiola Irele (Eds.), *Theatre in Africa*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1978: ix-xv.
- Ogunba, Oyin. "Literary Art and Literary Creativity in Contemporary Africa." *Obafemi Awolowo Library and Information Service*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 21 Nov. 1978.
- Ogunbiyi, Yemi. "Nigerian Theatre and Drama: A Critical Profile." Yemi Ogunbiyi (Ed.), *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*, 2nd ed. Lagos: Tanus books, 2014: 2-67.
- Ogundeji, Adedotun. *Ritual as Theatre, Theatre as Ritual: The Nigerian Example*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd, 2000.
- Osofisan, Femi. "Radical Playwrights in Ancient Feudal Town." Femi Osofisan. *The Nostalgic Drum: Essays on Literature, Drama and Culture*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 2001: 207-217.
- Pa Jimoh. "Aringiya Festival and its Relations to the Maidens of Ikare Town." Oral Interview with Olanireti Olakojo. 25 Apr. 2019.
- Peacock, James. "Ethnographic Note on Sacred and Profane Performance." Richard Schechner, & Willa Appel (Eds.), *By Means of Performance Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990: 208-214.

- Rotimi, Ola. "Drama in African Ritual Display." Yemi Ogunbiyi (Ed.), *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*, 2nd ed. Lagos: Tanus Books, 2014: 92-97.
- Schechner, Richard. *Essays on Performance Theory*. New York: Drama Books Specialists, 1977.
- Schechner, Richard. *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Soyinka, Wole. *A Dance of the Forests*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960.
- Soyinka, Wole. *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Soyinka, Wole. "The Fourth Stage: Through the Mysteries of Ogun to the Origin of Yoruba Tragedy." T. Olaniyan, & A. Quayson (Eds.), *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2007: 364-374.

EVALUATION OF DRAMA IGCSE COURSEWORK PIECES AT DAY WATERMAN COLLEGE: A REVIEW OF SELECTED CANDIDATES' ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Silver OJIESON, PhD

Day Waterman College
Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria
Email: silverabhulimhen@gmail.com

Abstract

The theatrical experience is perhaps one of the ageless engagements that do not depend on how old or experienced the actor is before they can assume a given role. As children-centred roles are best enacted by children themselves, even if they were portraying adult-centred concerns in their make-believe world, drama performances by children, whether of academic intent or talent showcases have come to form the collective reality that is children's theatre. In some cases involving the dramatic experience of teenagers in secondary schools, where drama presentation of students, as a subject is assessed, the need to appraise the performances according to IGCSE standard is what this paper seeks to evaluate. Three pieces of performances (Monologue, Text Published and Group Original Devised Pieces) are submitted as students' coursework to the Cambridge International Examinations. As stipulated in the IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) syllabus, which is a CIE conducted foreign/British compliant curriculum, the production of IGCSE drama coursework is to be internally assessed and externally moderated. To this end, this paper communicates the yardsticks for evaluating students' coursework of drama-based teaching, both for students of IGCSE drama and for teachers of KS3 and KS4 focused drama option area in International Schools.

Keywords: Drama, performance, children, education, IGCSE

Introduction

The basic concern of assessing children's drama performance is not to, as a matter of professional judgment, compare them as amateur, but to give them the platform on which to understand the modus operandi of theatrical engagements. Children as it seems, do engage in drama as a way of unleashing pent-up emotions as well as building on inherent histrionic sensibilities. It is best understood when a child-actor or student of drama enacts a role in their best potentials to be compared with professional artistes. Unless the point of assessment is not the ultimate goal of drama education, which as a school subject needs unbundling, most of the

theatrical engagements in schools are simply aimed at the co-curricular exegesis of school children. In most International Schools like Day Waterman College, the traditional Annual School Play has been instituted to hold every December, both for students and parents' shows.

The Day Waterman experience is such that there is also the School Musical Drama which holds every April to the general public and intending students, parents and invited guests. In both shows, student-actors participate on a voluntary basis. This avenue has been known to yield a high propensity of a pool of potential Drama Students at the Key Stage 4 when as an option area from year 10 and year 11 students engage with Drama coursework weighted at 60% of their final examinations.

The Cambridge International Examinations require students to turn in three aspects of their coursework vis-a-viz monologue, text published and original group devised pieces for assessment (internal), as well as external moderations at the United Kingdom. For this purpose, the students are taught the theatrical concepts about the actor-audience relationship, use of space, articulation, the importance of technical elements and the core of the story telling medium which drama and theatre represent. To actualise this aim, all drama students are cast in major roles in the Annual School Play when in Year 10 and using lesson periods (3 lessons a week), they engage with ensemble dynamics. In the second term, more attention is given to Individual pieces (Monologue) with an aspects of devising original pieces from given stimulus. Whilst 3rd term is dedicated to component 1 of Drama IGCSE (40%) essay-written work, pockets of performances are staged to complete the academic requirements of the session.

Drama and Education

According to Hodges et al.,

the principal goal of any educational program is to facilitate student learning. In educational programmes, assessment is intrinsically linked to student learning and performance. In cooperative education, this learning largely occurs in two milieu: the educational institution and the workplace (190).

Education should ordinarily aspire to bolster the learners' confidence in the process of enhancing their self-concept, become self-driven, master new skills and be able to attain lofty academic heights. In order to appreciate the essence of assessment, it is imperative to appreciate the value of evaluation as a critical index, which measures the progress and value attained by the learner in the course of studying a programme. As it is not a one off experience, assessment is seen as a

progressive continuum in which the learner makes concerted efforts to attain comprehensive mastery of concepts by which acquisition of knowledge can be judged. This is why it is most essential to refer to the view of Anandra that,

the term Assessment has been widely used by educators to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, and skill acquisition of students throughout their learning in life. Different terminologies are there for assessment and evaluation such as Measurement, Tests, Examination, Appraisal and Evaluation (4).

Furthermore, Hendy and Toon aver that,

drama in education is not trying to make children into actresses and actors any more than physical education is trying to make them into the athletes or gymnasts of the future. Using drama activities with young children puts them on the path of a creative journey and helps them to develop their social, cognitive and language skills. Drama is about our humanity in all its complexity, helping us to make sense of the world around us (2).

In the assessment of drama based teaching, it seems that the method recommends that children's education start from the imitation of things seen by kids. It supposes that young learners are encouraged to act out things in the most basic form as improvisational techniques in a spontaneous make-believe manner inherent in all children. It is a system that sees dramatic education as being the basis of all education that is child centred. This is why in the words of Courtney:

The dramatic imagination lies behind all human learning, both social learning and 'academic' learning. It is the way in which man relates himself to life, the infant dramatically in his external play, and the adult internally in his imagination. This is what Freud means when he says that dramatic play enables the child to 'master' his environment, and what Burton means when he says that drama is an experiment with life here and now (56).

Courtney is of the opinion that the child's creation of a world of his own in play is the foundation for the arts. Hence, play activities enhance and facilitate children's role in learning, because, as a method of education, it is used as a means of projections where it expresses the child's innermost thoughts, drives, and

motivations which relay private meanings (73). Eric Erickson also maintains that play is the microcosm through which children deal with the macrocosm of the adult world (98). “Make-believe” is an inherent part of the play situation and, for all practical purposes, dramatic play is indistinguishable from play itself. Vygotsky sees education as a combination of instruction and imitation. He claims that imitation, itself, is basic to social learning, whereby,

To imitate, it is necessary to possess the means of stepping from something one knows to something new. With assistance, every child can do more than he can by himself-through only within the limits set by the state of his development (369).

Sources of Data and Analysis of Case Files

The data for this study was retrieved using an Active-Observer Participant as well as the Analytical method through evaluation of Drama Course Work Videos of two different sets (2018 and 2019) as submitted to the Cambridge International Examinations, the body in charge of the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in the United Kingdom. The contents of Drama IGCSE coursework is recorded on videos indicating candidates’ name, numbers, title of play, roles assumed and the author of the pieces. Three aspects of Monologue pieces (3-5 Minutes), Text Based/ Authored/ Published Pieces (10-15 minutes with 2-6 actors) and students’ performances of their original devised pieces (10-15 minutes with 2-6 actors) all submitted for external moderation. All the actors in the videos are within the ages of 13-16 and were assessed using several criteria as delineated in the CIE/IGCSE syllabuses for 2017-2019. The aim of the performance is to ensure that actors understand the concept of drama and are able to move a piece of play from page to stage. Aside this, the students’ ability to reflect on the concept of acting, directing as well as design for the theatre, is considered crucial to the realisation of their performances. To this end, the presentations conform to the use of the following templates: (1) Masterful use of performance space; (2) Confident Projection of Voice; (3) Varied Levels of Emotional Intensity; (4) Physicality; and (5) Audience Rapport.

The four candidates selected for this study illustrate to an extent how the assessment of Drama IGCSE as a subject is assessed internally at International Schools where drama as an option area constitutes examinable subjects. Attempts have also been made to conceal the identity of the selected candidates as no revelation of sensitive details with respect to their names or family background is indicated. Since 2018 up until (2020); 18, 9 and 22 students of drama have been internally assessed by this author using the stipulated CIE criterion. The aspects of the component 2 drama coursework remain same, but for the purpose of this

article, only the selected candidates' record of assessment covering the three aspects of Monologues, Text Published and Devised Pieces can be sampled in this article because of space constraints. To this end, it is expedient to use a fewer number of selected students because they represent a pool of two different sets of year who have sat for the Drama Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations. In the same light, the nature of the assessment is such that the comments for one candidate is so detailed that having more than the indicated number will be too lengthy for the purpose of this article. As much as the three aspects of monologue, text published and original devised pieces go, candidates' assessment comments sampled in this article cover all aspects of the coursework presentations.

In the course of the analysis, a mnemonic representation of student's identity is used to refer to the students' name as Candidate A1 and A2, for the 2018 cohorts, while the ones for the 2019 session are mnemonicised as Candidate B1 and B2. The purpose of this is to conceal the identity of each original candidate by making the purpose of this academic exercise totally devoid of any form of personal bias. In addition, the use of the suggested identity is not to be mistaken for the grades attained by the candidates in question as the IGSCSE grades are not delineated in the form of indigenous examinations, such as, NECO or WAEC as it is either an A*, A, B, C, etc., against NECO/WAEC's A1, B3, C6 and their equivalents.

Sample Assessment of Drama IGCSE Performance (Year 2018)

Candidate 1

(1a) Monologue *Individual Piece* (Extract from a Play/Monologue)

Name of Play: *Mother Earth* Playwright: D.M. Larson

Comments on AO1: Understanding Repertoire (15%)

A1 plays the role of Mother Earth in this engaging piece as she decries the state of the earth and its inhabitants who metaphorically are her children. She was able to bring out the frustration of mother-nature after agonising about how her children have abandoned her by destroying the elements thereby causing so much harm to the ozone layers. Her understanding of the piece and who she is to her children informed her breakdown in tears thereby giving the piece the evocative tone with which the pacing of the performance was based.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skills (20%)

A1 performed Mother-Earth's character in this piece with flair, displaying well-differentiated levels of emotional intensity using a clear vocal articulation. She

used masterful stage movements and supple body language to communicate her feelings towards the audience. Her performance realistically portrayed the frustration of Mother-Earth and calls to mind the damaging effects of climate change on the survival of species resulting from human neglect.

(1b) Text Published-Group Piece (Extract from a Play Text)

Name of Play: *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* Playwright: Ngugi Wa Thiongo

Notes to identify candidate: Wearing a white long sleeve garb and white trouser, with a white bowler hat, walking stick and a black bag.

Comments on AO1: Understanding Repertoire (15%)

A1's realisation of the part of a politician in this piece was executed in accordance with the character's function in the play. She moved the role from page to stage convincingly based on a detailed understanding of the style of the play. As the colonial-errand boy in the play, she portrayed the role of a desperate politician seeking colonial connections with varying levels of emotional intensity by attempting to bamboozle Dedan Kimathi into working against his resolve to fight the imperialist by all mean possible.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skills (20%)

A1's commanding use of the performance space was executed with measured steps in accordance with the manner in which she paced the piece. Her confident projection added credence to her masterful attempt at cajoling Dedan Kimathi who was hell bent on dismissing the new quest for an Independent Kenya. Her use of gestures and facial expressions were consistently in tandem with her excellent rapport with the audience which enabled her to straddle between well-differentiated levels of emotional intensity in a desperate attempt to convince Kimathi.

(1c) Devised Group Piece (Original Devised)

Title of Piece: *Broken* Stimulus used: Prisoners of War

Notes to identify candidate: Wearing a Nurse's robe, red beret and wielding a stethoscope.

Comments on AO2: Devising (30%)

A1 created the role of Katharina, who was a 'doctor-without-border' nurse in the wake of the second world way. Katharina's fate changed when Major Vauseline turned her into a sex slave, leaving her traumatised and pregnant. The role of Katharina speaks volume to the piece as a helpless helper taken prisoner by corrupt military personnel plying his trade in human flesh for sexual gratification.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skill (20%)

A1 was able to interpret the role of Katharina with clear vocal articulation and with commanding use of the performance space. She realised the piece with varying levels of emotional intensity and was able to establish a good rapport with the audience. Through the use of sorrowful facial expressions and body language, she drove home the point of excruciating pains experienced in the incessant abuses meted on her in the piece.

Candidate 2

(2a) Monologue – Individual Piece (Extract from a Play/Monologue)

Name of Play: *Bungled, Botched and Bullied* Playwright: D. M. Larson

Comments on AO1: Understanding Repertoire (15%)

A2 played the character of Janey, who desperately seeks some quiet time alone but is haunted by the presence of people around her. She fears for her sanity and inability to relate with none other but her doctor, who is beginning to intrude into her privacy. She moved the piece from page to stage with the conviction that whilst Janey may be lonely, she desperately seeks some attention and a little audience to bully with her verbose incredulity.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skills (20%)

A2 was very articulate in this piece as she delivers her lines with an extremely clear vocal articulation and confident projection. She used a powerful physicality and commanding use of the performance space to depict that she understands the dynamics of an engaging theatrical presentation, which she gave the audience. She portrayed the part with highly effective pacing and well-differentiated levels of emotional intensity when she ranted at the doctor.

(2b) Text Published – Group Piece (Excerpt from a Play Text)

Name of Play: *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* Playwright: Ngugi Wa 'Thiongo

Notes to identify candidate: Wearing a Black pant trouser, white shirt and a blazer with a shawl hanging down her neck combined with a white bowler hat and walking stick.

Comments on AO1: Understanding Repertoire (15%)

A2 realised the role of Henderson in this piece with a detailed understanding of its function in this play committing herself to the part in performance. She understood the process of moving from page to stage with an accomplished interpretation of the piece as a result of the style of the play such that her patronising appeal towards

Dedan Kimathi are somewhat interspersed with vengeful outbursts. Her imposition as a colonial wild cat was aimed at neutralising Dedan Kimathi's unconventional rise to the political limelight of the Kenya freedom struggle.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skills (20%)

A2 was able to bring out the cunning nature of Henderson in this piece using her powerful physicality and commanding use of the performance area. Her performance was laden with varying levels of emotional intensity and effective pacing as she angrily threatened Kimathi's ideologies. She used a clear tone and well-articulated speeches to portray Henderson's frustrations, while at the same time maintaining a cordial rapport with the audience.

(2c) Devised – Group Piece (Original Devised)

Title of Piece: *Blood Revenge* Stimulus used: Double-Crossing

Notes to identify candidate: Wearing a black pant trouser and a check red/black long sleeve shirt.

Comments on AO2: Devising (30%)

A2 devised the role of Dylana as a cunning and back-stabbing girl who is desperate to break free of all shackles including throat cutting deals to liberate herself at Connie's expense. She is smart, quick at thinking and very fluid with alliances so as to cater for her own wellbeing. In this piece, she double crosses and acts on impulse, helping to bring a spice of notoriety and verve to the plot giving the story an unexpected twist when she kills her half-sister, Connie.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skills (20%)

A2 interpreted Dylana as a sensible character, who cuts deals to stay alive by using clear vocal articulation and a good physicality. She realised the role with effective pacing and varying levels of emotional intensity in an effort to subdue Connie and appeal to the human side of The Boss, respectively. Her rapport with the audience was good as she used expressive gestures and body language to communicate her intentions; thus, making commanding use of the performance space given the apparent danger she was in the course of the enactment.

Sample Assessment of Drama IGCSE Performance (Year 2019)

Candidate B1

(B1a) Monologue *Individual Piece* (Extract from s Play/Monologue)

Name of Play: *It's Terrible Being Nice* Playwright: Gabriel Davies

Comments on AO1: Understanding Repertoire (14%)

B1 plays the role of a young damsel named Cynthia who never used to care about love and ‘catching feelings’ until she met her soul mate. She fears that loving 100% will make her soft and leave her at the mercy of her new lover. Hence, she begs him not to marry her giving her odd behaviours and the following instances where upon she had to help the old cross the road, bought her friend gift at full price and felt compassionate enough to give alms. Cynthia considers such acts of kindness beneath her and things she would never do until meeting her fiancé; thus, making her to appear so soft. Her understanding of the piece and how the character impacted on her representation greatly influenced the way she was able to move it from page to stage. She fears that love was radically changing her and the decision to reject the proposal lest she becomes too soft to help herself in case of a heart break which might leave her miserable.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skills (18%)

B1 performed the love-struck character in this piece with flair, displaying well-differentiated levels of emotional intensity and using a clear vocal articulation. She made masterful use of the performance space and suggestive body language to communicate her feelings towards the fiancé. Her emphasis on certain rhetorical questions which were indirectly directed at the audience, although aimed at rousing her fiancé were said with audience rapport in mind as she conveniently convinced the audience why it was not a good idea to remain loved. Her performance realistically portrayed the conflicting personalities of Cynthia, whose fear of relapsing into a love-affair that no one could save her from scares the hell out of her, necessitating her decision to rescind the love overtures from her fiancé.

(B1b) Text Published – Group Piece (Extract from a Play/Text)

Name of Play: *Kongi’s Harvest* Playwright: Wole Soyinka

Notes to identify candidate: Wearing a purple-ish flowery baggy pant trouser and blouse.

Comments on AO1: Understanding Repertoire (14%)

B1’s realisation of the part of an organising secretary in this piece was executed in accordance with the character’s function in the play. She moved the role from page to stage convincingly based on a detailed understanding of the style of the play. As the mouth-piece of Kongi’s harvest in the play, she portrayed the role of a messenger as well as a bridge-builder whose diplomatic duties are executed in favour of the People as well as pleasing Kongi at the same time. She was able to portray this role with an artful tact that saves her the venom of Kongi’s ire as well as remaining in the good books of the people of the Nation. The role is portrayed

as an intelligent and very trustworthy public officer who is very dependable as Kongi seems to relate at par with the secretary.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skills (19%)

B1's commanding use of the performance space was executed with measured steps in accordance with the manner in which she paced the piece. Her confident projection added credence to her masterful attempt at cajoling Kongi against his initial plans to make the royal fathers bow to him with the new yam as he was hell bent on dismissing their titles. Her use of gestures and facial expressions were consistently in tandem with her excellent rapport with the audience, which enabled her to straddle between well-differentiated levels of emotional intensity in a desperate attempt to intercede for the royal fathers before the harvest. Her interpretation of the secretary was executed with confidence and assured reactions as she kept in character all through the performance.

(B1c) Devised *Group Piece* (Original Devised)

Title of Piece: *Fall of the Kings* Stimulus used: A fool and his money are soon parted.

Notes to identify candidate: Wearing a Grey slit skirt, black camisole and a black jacket with silver stripes.

Comments on AO2: Devising (27%)

B1 created the role of Ms. Selena Patterson, who was married to her billionaire husband, Mr. King, until her blood sister, Victoria, visited and got pregnant for him (Selena's husband). By this time, Selena was heavy pregnant with Tessa; but Victoria sent assassins who set her car ablaze with Selena inside; but she survived. When she survived the assassination attempt, Selena found her way back to King's empire as Adrian's nanny after a surgery. Selena's job in Victoria's life was that of a fixer, cleaning up Adrian's predatory sexual messes, the result of his unhealthy exposure to his mother's sexual advances since infancy. Part of Selena's job description was to settle out of court with all victims of Adrian's predatory sexual advances until Adrian's predatory sexual escapade reached Tessa, Selena's own daughter. This was when Selena decided to reveal her identity, she sued the Kings and had their wealth striped and given to Tessa and herself, the rightful heiress.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skills (18%)

B1 was able to interpret the role of Ms. Patterson using a clear vocal tone and confident projection. She employed commanding use of the performance space as she interacted with Tessa and Victoria. She was able to realise the piece acting

with varying levels of emotional intensity as well as a good rapport with the audience. Through the use of a confident look and a concealed identity, she unveiled her mixed emotions through a myriad of facial expressions and body language whereby she was able to quickly reminisce on several instances in which she cleaned up Victoria and Adrian's mess and kept the Kings' business out of scandal.

Candidate B2

Monologue – Individual Piece (Extract from a Play/Monologue)

Name of Play: *The right Sort of Love* Playwright: D. M. Larson

Comments on AO1: Understanding Repertoire (15%)

B2 was able to realise the role of Jo, who quite understood that loving someone deeply had repercussions. Her understanding of the role and its function in the play influenced the manner in which she gave an accomplished interpretation of the piece moving it from page to stage with ease as she pours out her frustrations and angst for the estranged lover to see. She was able to portray the role from a masterful approach, which enabled her to believably depict the part by decrying all the bitter experiences and regrets that came with being in love. Her understanding of the role was insightful as she could foreshadow the miseries that might bedevil the union if they failed to listen to their imperfections.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skills (19%)

B2 made commanding use of the performance space coupled with confident projection while she told-off Teddy to be mindful of his insistence that she loved him nonetheless. She articulated her lines with effective pacing and powerful physicality as she made masterful use of the performance space. Her use of body language and facial expressions were matched with well-differentiated levels of emotional intensity which portrayed her as heartbroken, bitter and as a vengeful woman. She was able to establish some rapport with the audience while enacting the piece giving the impression of a possible doom should Teddy press further for a relationship that is clearly incompatible.

(B2b) Text Published Group Piece (Extract from a Play Text)

Name of Play: *Women of Owu* Playwright: Femi Osofisan

Notes to identify candidate: Wearing an orange scarf with a bluish and purple design Ankara top and wrapper.

Comments on AO1: Understanding Repertoire (15%)

B2 played the role of first woman who numbers amongst the numerous dispossessed women whose homes have been sacked by the combined Armies of the Fulani Mercenaries and the Ijebu Allied Forces in which all their men were slaughtered. In company of other women, they meet Anlugbuan, a deity who concealed his identity so as not to draw attention to himself. At first encounter the women were excited but suddenly vented their ire on him for not coming to deliver them from the throes of the seven years siege mounted by the Allied Forces. She gave an accomplished interpretation of the piece based on detailed understanding of the style of the play and function of the role in the play. Throughout the piece, she demonstrated a highly effective and perceptive understanding of the process of moving from page to stage.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skills (19%)

B2 used her colourful vocal command and clear articulation to communicate with the audience and performed with stylistic understanding throughout. She made commanding use of the performance space and established excellent rapport with the audience. Her interpretation was effectively paced with well-differentiated levels of emotional intensity as she internalised the attributes of the distraught women of Owu, who in spite of the war, still hoped for a saviour but were heartbroken to find out that the god – Anlugbuan was going to be of little or no help. Upon realising that help was not coming, the women abandon Anlugbuan and decided to live their fated existence without recourse to the gods, bearing a strong physicality.

(B2c) Devised Group Piece (Original Devised)

Title of Piece: *Payback in Kind* Stimulus used: The Price of Greatness is Responsibility

Notes to identify candidate: Wearing a Brown Pant trouser and a black long sleeve.

Comments on AO2: Devising (29%)

B2 created The Police Officer in this piece as she goes about trying to bring order to a world in which wrong doers have to be prosecuted and acts of lawlessness are recompensed with the requisite consequences. She investigates the aftermath of the rape by Rufus and gang which has left Elena broken and scarred for life. She brings professionalism to bear on her investigations as she seeks only to punish dissidents but without much evidence struggles to put one and two together to knot the case. She executes this role with a detailed understanding of the process of moving from page to stage. Through this role, the culprits in the murder of Rufus

and other associated incidents leading up to his demise are unveiled, giving the plot a well-developed resolution.

Comments on AO3: Acting Skills (19%)

B2 interpreted the Police Officer's role with deep emotional connections to the issues at hand as she went about investigating the murder of Rufus Sintali and the core issue of rape which gave birth to the murder consequence. She depicted the role using a stern body language and a tough stand on issues deploying a powerful physicality. Her masterful use of the performance space was combined with her ability to depict varying levels of emotional intensity thereby helping to effectively pace the piece. She was able to deliver her lines using a well-articulated vocal tone and confident projection. The officer's persona was well portrayed through gestures and facial expressions, eye contact and a good rapport with the audience.

Conclusion

In the course of teaching drama IGCSE over the years, it is clear that not a lot of teachers, especially in Nigeria and those outside the International School setting are abreast with the modalities of teaching Drama as a subject in the stipulated CIE format. What this means is that, to the chagrin of a number of theatre graduates, especially those with no 'Education' background, there has always been the discrimination of 'not having IGCSE experience' which most times is a yardstick for dismissing their recruitment into the International School circle. In simple words, most graduates of Nigerian Universities who studied drama, theatre and the performing arts are at a disadvantage once the teaching IGCSE Drama has not become one of their experiences as teachers of drama. It is simply not enough to know, or have studied theatre arts as a course; to teach drama as a subject in these international schools, no matter one's professional experiences and academic qualifications, it seems that the intending teacher of drama, who was graduated without recourse to international curriculum must need pay for his or her inadequacies in this respect. This means that a deliberate course of study has been designed to immerse the new teacher to adapt him/herself into appreciating the reality and requirements of the British Curriculum in order to know what to teach.

Drama is such a peculiar subject such that even at the University level or Teaching Training Institutes/Colleges of Education, no definite syllabus orientation exists for the would-be teacher. Like other subjects, the Nigerian teacher is not equipped to teach the content of the curriculum that is foreign in template unless they find themselves in an academic environment of an International Outlook where the IGCSE curriculum becomes the template upon which the class room teacher operates. Hence, the paucity of well-trained teachers become a challenge that only settles itself by the number of experienced teachers

who have gone through the rigors of mastering the climb over a period of time. This option, of having or being experienced in order to transfer knowledge as is known, maybe, to the advantage or disadvantage of some people in a particular system. Hence, a document of this kind can only be a little contribution in its bid to enlighten the would-be drama teacher in their bid to having a holistic assessment template for drama coursework performances. In the component 1 aspect of essays, where questions bordering on acting, props, costume, lighting, directing and devised pieces or stimulus come to play, an average person who understands dramatic literature may have little or no challenges preparing students to take the examinations.

Highlighted above in this article are the simple and straightforward notes on how to assess monologue, text based and devised presentations. With reference to individual/stand-alone pieces which allow each candidate the opportunity to stretch their talents unlike the group work where someone else's deficiencies might impede general best outcomes, the two basic demands in the examinations boil down to 'Understanding Repertoire' and 'Acting Skills'. In the course of the individual pieces, more efforts are put into ensuring that the best results come to light. This follows the general understanding of drama as being aimed at entertainment for its goal whereas it can also serve as therapy, education and informational purposes. This may not be wrong even with academically inclined pieces but in the case of presentational modalities, much attention is paid to the curriculum rather than their extra-curricular exegesis. This means that, unlike the need to give the audience satisfaction for their viewing pleasure, course-work based teachings and preparations are geared towards attainment purposes. As indicated in the samples, the candidates are assessed on the basis of their abilities to meet laid-down criteria rather than their creative stretch and flair.

The number of students who pick drama at the KS4 stage speaks volume to the resolve of most candidates who take a step further by choosing the subject in spite of the numerous fears that 'drama is a difficult and tasking subject'. As much as the above template is not exhaustive at all, the criterion for assessing drama based teachings at Day Waterman College, it seems much more needs to be done to sensitise the would be teacher and students of drama if a paucity of manpower and expertise is not in the offering.

WORKS CITED

Ananda, Kumar. *Assessment for Learning*. Centre for Distance Educ., Bharathidasan University, 2016.

- Cook, Cadwell. *The Play Way*. London: Heinemann, 1917.
- Courtney, Richard. *Play, Drama and Thought*. London: Casell & Co. Ltd, 1968.
- Erickson, Eric. *Childhood and Society* New York: Penguin Classics, 1955.
- Gordon, William. J. J. *Synecstis*. New York: Harper Pub., 1961.
- Hodges, David.Chris, Eames., & Richard, Coll. "Theoretical Perspectives on Assessment in Cooperative Education Placement." *Special Issue: Critical Assessment Issues in Work-Integrated Learning*. Wellington: University of Waikato, Fiji, 2014.
- Hendy, Leslie., & Toon, Lucy. *Supporting Drama and Imaginative Play in the Early Years*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001.
- Piaget, Jean. *Play, Dreams and imitation in Childhood*. Trans. C. Gattegno & F. M. Hodgson. New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.
- Vygotsky, Lev. S. *Thought and Language*. Trans. E. Hanfmann & G. Vakar. New York: Wiley, 1962.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

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

Style: *NTJ* has adopted, as its official guide, the Publication Manual of the Modern Language Association (MLA), 6th Edition. Consequently, all manuscripts must be in conformity with this MLA referencing style. Paper(s) should be typed, single-spaced, on A4 paper, with wide margin. The submitted paper should be emailed to SONTA email address: sontaeditor@gmail.com. An abstract of not more than two hundred and fifty (250) words summarising the main points of the article, should accompany the manuscript.

NTJ encourages that each paper submitted should deal with the methodology used in addressing the subject in proficient detail relating to the place of data within the proper methodological settings and all. In case of illustrations, it must be submitted with the final draft and must be of professional quality, and executed in colour ink, with clear, medium weight, black lines and figures. Typewritten lettering should not appear in illustrations. Such should be numbered appropriately. Authors should use Microsoft Office Word Format of 14 font size for the title and name of the author, and 12 font size for the body of the article, including a reference list format as **WORKS CITED** (All in Times New Romans font style).

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

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

Editorial Reaction: Papers will not be returned to authors if they fail to meet by a wide margin the basic criteria for selection. Otherwise, authors may expect to receive some notification before the next edition of the SONTA Annual International Conference. If an article is accepted, the authors will be sent letters of acceptance.

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