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THE PERFORMER

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Editorial Comment

Volume 13, 2011 of *The Performer: Ilorin Journal of the Performing Arts* is now firmly placed in your hands. You will be intellectually satisfied and your curiosity of wanting to know more will be sustained because the papers in this particular Volume have gone through painstaking review processes. They are also written by credible scholars of life and letter who have challenged existing ideas and substitute same with contemporary ideologies that will renew our existence.

More is still in this offering because Volume 14, 2012 of *The Performer: Ilorin Journal of the Performing Arts* is placed immediately after Volume 13, 2011. This Volume has critical articles on pedagogy of pluralism, socio-cultural dimension, psychology, sexuality, dialectical intentionalities and of others which are interrogated on the larger umbrella of drama, dance and music. The new addition to Volume 14, 2012 is the review of a Book, *The Dramaturgy of a Theatre Sociologist: Festschrift in Honour of Ayo Akinwale* (2012) edited by AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye carried out by 'Lere Adeyemi. Please don't wait, read on.

Dr. AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye
Editor

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Re-imaging Nigeria through Folk Media and Child Education: Benue State as a Paradigm

By

Doki Ama Gowon * and Tijime Justine Awuawuer *

Abstract

Re-imaging Nigeria is a project of the moment which was engineered by Dora Akunyili, the then Honourable Minister for Information with the slogan – Re-branding Nigeria. This noble project required the services of every sector, organ, and segment of the society. The paper thus advocates and canvasses for a return to traditional values of pre-colonial age. It also evaluates the positive implications of the African indigenous folk performance tradition for cultural re-branding and reconstruction for the survival of culture and national development. The paper believes that indigenous folk theatrical forms could serve as potent tools of educating our children who actually are agents of the re-imaging project for posterity.

Introduction¹

A number of African countries had launched image campaigns. Countries like Uganda with their “Gifted to Nature” and South Africa’s “Proudly South Africa” image programmes respectively. In Nigeria, The Heart of Africa Project was launched by the Federal Ministry of information and National Orientation Agency in 2004. Dora Akunyili as then Minister of Information and Communication had launched another national image-making project - Re-branding Nigeria. This project was far more than just “repackaging” a nation’s strategic issues. National image re-branding has always been the part of the culture of every society (Monyeh, 2010, p. 416). Therefore, re-branding should not be seen as false publicity but must be approached from a more practical proof using all the domains of human learning including folk-media as a contraption, because

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they are art forms that draw the concentration of the citizenry to the assortment of societal inadequacies through oral narrations, songs, music, and dance, folk tales, folk operas etc that excellently achieve the task of re-creating a structure for positive development.

Thus, the contextual use of folk here refers to the group of people living within a given social environment, while media is considered to be the tools that enhance mass mobilization in that social environment. Therefore, folk media as a concept could be viewed as a cultural method of mass media. Onogu (2010, p. 28) considers folk media to include: “folk art, folk dance, folk memory, folk music, folk song, folklore, folk tale and other forms and structures that collectively form traditional means of communication in a community”. In essence, folk media could also be termed “popular” media because the genres are drawn on the people’s popular preference, values, belief system and indigenous language making it an authentic instrument for information dissemination, education and development.

Folk media play very important role on the rural citizens of any country. The rural people are mostly, illiterate, simple and ignorant as well, and this is why ‘Folk Media’ have come to be very suitable to them all. This is obvious because all the messages delivered through the folk media are easily understood. As such the people enjoy the presentation of these folk media as a whole. Folk media carry diverse messages, of education, political, social, healthcare, sex and agricultural innovation, in order to inform and educate the rural citizens especially in villages where the modern medium of mass communication like radio, newspaper and television are not available. Thus, folk media have been trying to compensate such wider incoverage as well as the communication gap.

Folk Media and Child Education

The United Nations had considered a child as person between the ages of 0-22 years of age. Child Education therefore can be thought of as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society to the child. This it is equivalent to what social scientists term socialization or enculturation. Education in this context is designed to guide the children in learning a culture with an aim of molding their behaviour in the ways of adulthood, and directing them toward their eventual role in society. This kind of education is considered a “child-centred” education. Its main objective is to educate the “whole child”—that is, to attend to physical and emotional, as well as intellectual growth.

Moreso, children's plays reflect the adult world and also a rehearsal for a better living. For example, most children in African setting play a game of animals like hyena, sheep and shepherd, or play with clay or wooden toys representing animals and plants. Moreso, in Nigeria, traditional education is based on informal apprenticeship with kin and early participation in the work force. Special skills, such as traditional medicine, music, crafts, etc. are acquired through more formal apprenticeship with specialized persons. Other special skills, such as tree felling, hunting, and metallurgy are taught by ritual leaders during initiation ceremonies. The Tiv people for example acquired the art of blacksmithing through initiation. Those who are qualified to be initiated in such art work are known right from youth through participation in the folk activities. The knowledge of range and livestock husbandry among the Fulani people is passed on as young boys are taken to rearing camps, thus they learn from first hand experience which grasses are good for the cattles.

In essence, the education that comes from folk media lead to a better society as through these, the children take action based on the ideas they discover in the folk media. These folk media involve a connection between the children and the society as these can encourage understanding and expose misunderstandings. These are thus the human experience that can relate the child to society. These new awareness can be of benefit to both the society and the child. Hence the child gets better comprehension about his environment as he puts the lessons got from these folk media into practice.

Theoretical Context

Folk media that are encapsulated in folk beliefs include ideas about the whole range of human concerns, from the reasons and cures for diseases to speculation concerning life after death. This category therefore includes folkloristic beliefs (superstitions), magic, divination, witchcraft, and apparitions such as ghosts and fantastic mythological creatures. The second classification, that of traditions, includes materials dealing with festival customs, games, and dances; cookery and costume might also be included, by extension. The third category, narratives, includes the ballad and the various forms of folktales and folk music, all of which may be based in part on real characters or historical events. The category of folk sayings includes proverbs and nursery rhymes, verbal charms, and riddles. Folk arts, the fifth and only nonverbal category, covers any form of art, generally created

anonymously among a particular people, shaped by and expressing the character of their community life.

One of the pioneers of socio-cultural theory a Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, whose writings in the 1920s and 1930s emphasized how children's interaction with adults contributes to the development of skills. According to Vygotsky, (Thompson, 2007 Microsoft Corporation) sensitive adults are aware of a child's readiness for new challenges, and they structure appropriate activities to help the child develop new skills. As children participate in such experiences daily with parents, teachers, and others, they gradually learn the culture's practices, skills, and values.

Socio-cultural theory therefore, highlights how children incorporate culture into their reasoning, social interaction, and self-understanding. It also explains why children growing up in different societies are likely to have significantly different skills and values. In Africa for example, Oshionebo (2006, p. 145) maintains:

Through folktales, it was possible for Africans to give instruction and transmit the African culture to offspring. Riddles and proverbs, which serve the purpose of sharpening a child's wit also, serve the pedagogical purpose of inculcating aspects of African traditional philosophy and social etiquette.

No doubt, traditional education in the area of character training is severe. In fact, African society attaches the greatest importance to character training, which encourages respect for elders, norms and values. The socio-cultural theory considered in this paper therefore, is the basis to which the Nigerian child will be taught how to respect the Nigerian constitution beginning from his immediate norms and value of his society, since re-branding can only be achieved when there is respect for the constitution. Also to note is that through folkmedia, informal education the children are taught the skills and roles they would need when they become adults. These lessons eventually form the moral codes that governed behaviour. The people use oral performances to pass on their culture and history from one generation to the next for reference purposes.

Folk Media and Re-imaging Nigeria: The Example of Benue State

Taking a cursory look at the socio-cultural theory vis-à-vis the visions of the then Minister for Information and Communication, Dora Akunyili, which clearly emphasised that what Nigeria needed was national image re-branding. Therefore, folk-media within various parts of the

country have been centring on the teething troubles of the nation and at the same time advocating possible approaches for solving these problems. This is true because, folk-media are the indigenous mass media practiced at local level found within every Nigerian cultural background. In traditional Nigerian society for example, there are proverbs, folktales, songs, music etc for children on ethnic, behaviours and the consequences of bad behaviour and misconduct. This aspect of indigenous education places considerable emphasis on character training which Fafunwa (2004, p. 8) refers to as “corner-stone of African education”.

These folk-media in Africa (Nigeria) existed within the functional context, and they sought to perpetuate the virtues of society and purge all evil. For instance, the traditions of story telling for the children always have didactic intension. Of interest is the fact that, the children are more fascinated when they watch the story teller who in the original context exemplifying the good values of society. In doing this, they assumed the different roles in their stories, and they often sing and invite the audience (children) to participate, but their ultimate goal is to instil moral value to them.

Therefore, looking at the mainstay and the objectives of re-imaging Nigeria, one obviously sees that folk-media deal with the nation's demands and needs as they reflect the society. Folk-media of any cultural background in Nigeria is an out-and-out instrument for the nation's advancement because they prick and instruct the reasoning of the aged and the younger ones as these folk performances mirror the society. This is because, creators of these media are aware of the exigencies of the society around them, thus using these media to communicate the worries of the society by trying to correct the vices there in with the view to improving the lot.

According to Gail and Brewster (1991, p. 2) “the stories can be used to reinforce conceptual development and thinking strategies in the children”. This explains the fact that folk-media could be used for the purpose of teaching the children as can be seen in proverbs and marvels that are powerful instruments of moral instructions, which are used to develop the children morally and intellectually. It is apparent that the above reflections corroborate the importance of those contents, virtues and values captured in the lessons of the folk-media.

For example, based on our personal experience in Igede land, it will not be an over statement to say that, in Igede land folk-media are avenues through which the people harnessed in bringing up children morally by the set standards using some folklore and other oral performances to ensure

cultural preservation and continuity. And when such media are combined with myths and legends, the children get to know their roots and learn to associate themselves with their origin. The context of these myths and legends may not be contemporary, but the stories reflect timeless concerns about urban living, including privacy, death, etc. They seem both to instruct human beings in what not to do and to illustrate the price of such rebellion from the proper way.

For instance, the major concern of *Agbara* dance of the Igede people of central Nigeria is that of building a viable future for the society with songs that teach morals. For example, one of the songs which is repeated from time to time during the performance goes as follows;

Igede: *Anginya ha I' awule*
 L'ikirah ha I' idah

English: people are better together
 Like cakes are better with oil.

These teaches the children that people are only good when they come together to achieve a desired goal using the analogy between the cake and the oil which the children are fond of. Therefore, the importance of this performance and other ones can not be overemphasized, because in the context of re-imaging Nigeria, the first thing to consider is the issue of national unity, considering the Nigerian controversy of North - South dichotomy, and beyond that, the religious intolerance that are abound. This form of performance in Igede constitutes proverbs known as *Etu* which refers to the use of wit in making sensitive sentences and statements whose meanings are symbolic in recreating a new society, because re-imaging will have to start from the grassroot. They are regarded as old wisdom because their ultimate users are predominantly old people in the community, and in some cases, an individual's maturity is measured by the level of proficiency in this art of speaking.

Another form of performance in Igede that is worth mentioning is that of *Okpibi*, which is performed by means of twisted language to expressing some phenomenon as puzzle for the audience to expound (Oridiye, 2007, p. 26). This is a performance of the game of riddles involving two or more individuals held in form of competition. During the performance, the giver of the riddle would say *kpibi* and the others would reply *kpang* in readiness for the puzzle. It should be noted that until the confronted party gives the stipulated reply, any riddle given would be cancelled. This exercise always end with interrogative words in various forms; some take the form of one word questions usually in archaic words

which however stand for modern expressions. It is quite necessary to point out here that the meaning could never be deduced from the actual word in most cases but are best known through direct encounter. By that we mean, one can only know them when he is told of the meaning before. This could be given in story form which the narrator narrates a story at the end of which he poses a question to the audience for critical reasoning. This form of performance does not only tasks the children to intellectually reason independently but also teaches moral lessons. By this Fafunwa (2004, p. 15) maintain that:

As the child grows into adulthood, he is exposed to more advanced intellectual training, the riddles and proverbs become more complicated, and philosophy, psychology, reasoning and judgement are introduced.

Moreover, since such composers are created in that art form, they dwell on topical issues that some time transcends national debate.

One important folk performance in Igede is the children rhymes designed specifically to help children on how to count numbers and know other aspects of the society. For example, *bem bem* rhymes help the children in counting items. The *tiye, tyre' ojawa* rhyme is always performed with the children lining up with outstretched closed palms while the player or recites will then stands in front and mime putting a stone in the palms. The audience (children) are then asked to select the child in whose palm the stone was actually put, and any member of the audience who select the right palm becomes the winner while the player joins the group. Again, the *Kpiti-kpiti* rhyme is also dramatized when the children are arranged in lines sitting with their legs indicating the syllable of the rhymes, if the rhyme stop at the leg, the leg is then withdrawn. Subsequently, the children whose two legs are withdrawn are said to be liberated while the child with the last leg in the line is considered to be the unlucky one who is usually punished by the group. The lesson the children are expected to get from this performance is the essence of obedience to the societal rules and regulations.

Of interest to note are the activities that are found during the *Igede Agba* festival based on the sanctification and ritual sacrifice by the elders to the gods before eating new yams. This is held on first *Ihigile* market day of September each year and would last for three days. There are usually feasting, invocations, propitiations and sacrifices, dancing and masquerading. However, the heart of the festival is the clearing of all foot paths leading from every homestead to the shrine of *Akpan* the principal gods of the community to be appeased before the people could eat yam.

The main focus of this festival encourages communality for a shared responsibility for the common good of the society, and ensuring continuity and preservation of the people's cultural heritage. The children on observing these festivals find them as distinctive resources reflecting their community's accomplishments and evolvement and its antique development. Also the Tiv people of central Nigeria are known for their dexterity in folk-media performances whose the aims are didactic and pedagogical. The Tiv folk media therefore, have demonstrated to the reasoning of education being an embodiment of their function redefining their goals as public educational avenues through which informal education is impacted.

Therefore, these folk media tend to present to the children the societal goals, policies, values and programmes amidst the respect for elders in a way that their reasoning are motivated towards developing their faculties for an engrossment in honesty, cultural preservation for economic and socio-political development. A typical example of such performance is the popular Kwaghhir with its wild animal masquerade enactments one of which is known as *Buusa*. Doki (2006, p. 157) in explaining the *Buusa* masquerade posits that:

A stubborn boy who neglected his father's orders to stay indoors and went out with his friends to the forest was captured by this wild animal buusa. Computer age children, who are supposed to be controlled via some form of remote system thereby making it difficult for parents to monitor and train their children, who some times end up in tragic situation are the concern of *buusa nyam* episode.

This type of performance is aimed at frightening or scaring the children from being stubborn, as tragic end may await them if they dare go contrary to the detects of their parents. This kind of performance for the children therefore, is in line with the national policy on education which upholds the respect for the worth and dignity of the individual by inculcating in the children, respect for elders and those in position of authority.

Another useful folk performance for the children in Tiv land is that which uses indigenous songs to teach them the natural environment. One of the songs in such performances is titled, *fa ikyon na ti* which goes as;

Fa ikyon a ti	Know the names of trees
Or wam fa ikyo na ti	My friend, know the names of trees
Fa ikyo na ti gbaiye	Know the names of trees gbaiye
Jiagba mkueme	Jiagba mkueme

Li kwaav liemen

Akindeoo konndo, maku...

Li kwaav liemen

Akindeoo konndo maku

This song is aimed at educating the child about names of trees around him so that when ever he/she is sent to get them for herbs he/her will not be confused. It also helps the individual child to have a mastery of his language which he may subsequently transfer to the official language, English. This type of performance is worthwhile because, the children get to understand their mother tongue before any other one which hitherto facilitates the reasoning of children. By this, we mean the power to integrate experience by observation, imitation and participation as are some of the key learning procedures even in the formal educational setting.

Some of the folk-media practiced in Tiv society like the *Kwagh alom* epic narration are aimed at helping the child or the adolescent to learn the local geography of his community. for instance, sometimes the story touches on forests, hills, and other physical areas of interest. Moreover, proverbs and riddles in this art form constitute a formidable intellectual exercise as they are used as media for developing the child's reasoning power and skill in decision making by thinking locally and reasoning globally. Onogu (2010, p. 31) emphasises this when he buttresses that:

What is certain about folk media in Nigeria is that the various indigenous cultures are increasingly being explored and availed in bringing rural dwellers into mainstream of development process, rather than being passive recipients of an externally initiated development media that is unfamiliar to them, their language and idiom.

This affirms that, through folk media, the children will be educated socially, economically and politically, because folk media are discovered not to function as recreation and entertainment only but also as agents of child education amongst many African societies. This is to say, the stories aim for example, to explain the evils of laziness, unfaithfulness, disobedience, and to explain the reward which awaits those that do good (Oshionebo, 2010, p. 144).

Therefore, unlike Western theatre, folk performance is a composite art in Nigeria. It is a total art with a fusion of elements from music, dance, pantomimes, versification, epic and ballad recitation, graphic and plastic arts, religious and festival peasantry. It imbibes ceremonial rituals, belief and social value system. It has deep religious and ritualistic overtones and again, it can surely project social life, secular themes and universal values.

Conclusion

Folk performances are potent tools for cultural and socio-economic advancement of the people. In fact it is the main instrument for child education, socialisation, and information dissemination. As a result, efforts should be made to institutionalize folk media and also encourage its inclusion in the national schools' curriculum. This is based on the fact that folk-media - folktales, myths and legends can help portray the norms and values of the society to the younger ones and at the same time revealing the history of the people.

Therefore, government at all levels in Nigeria should be organising concerts and festivals where children can come together to share various experiences and lessons for their development. Thus, participation in these aspects of performances demands a high power of reasoning. Moreover, it is through logical reasoning that they could be understood thereby helping the intellectual development of the children which prepares them for the challenges of nation building. More importantly, it is observed that, children prefer receiving messages from electronic media therefore; these folk media should be recorded on tapes for them to listen to and also watch just as it is done in the *Super Story Series*.

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The Theatre Instrumentality in Fighting Examination Malpractice in the 21st Century University System

By

Aondowase Boh*

Abstract

If it is the hope of Nigeria to make appreciable development then her Universities must be rid of all forms of examination malpractices. If this is done, the prestige and optimum productivity of Nigerian graduates can be restored when they eventually found themselves in the labour market and other national endeavours. It is sad to note that, many Nigerian graduates cannot defend their 'good' certificates. This could be because many of the graduates get the so called 'good' certificates through fraudulent means. Sad enough, lecturers and other stakeholders are also neck deep into this menace. There is need to enlighten Nigerian university stakeholders on the dangers of examination malpractice. If this is effectively done, it will help bring back the lost glory of Nigerian graduates and propel them to work towards economic and political developments in the 21st century. This can effectively be done through functional theatre methods. Theatre for Development is used with a conviction that human behaviours are formed through social activity and can therefore be changed, and that audience as potential agents of change should be active participants in their learning. Theatre is perhaps not revolutionary in itself, but a rehearsal for revolution against examination malpractice. This paper concludes that theatre can trigger off positive discussions against examination malpractice, the cancer to academic excellence.

Introduction²

Scientific, technological advancement, justice and all manner of progressive development all over the world can be possible when there is viable, stable and functional educational system that is devoid of any form of examination malpractice. It is the educational institutions that train and

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equip individuals that use the acquired educational knowledge and skills in their respective chosen areas of study to help develop a nation. This gives credence to why every nation looks up to its educational institutions in preparation for the challenges of tomorrow. Having realised the value of education to the growth and development of any nation, Nigeria had established 67 Colleges of Educations, 40 Polytechnics which are controlled by federal, state governments as well as private ownerships. Apart from Colleges of Educations and Polytechnics the nation has 25 Federal Universities, Nigeria Defence Academy, 16 State owned Universities and about 7 Private owned Universities making a total of 49 Universities that are controlled by government and private individuals as at 2002. As at 2012, the figure of public universities in Nigeria according to committee on Needs Assessment of Nigerian Public Universities rose to sixty-one. In 2013, the number of federal universities increased to forty, while state government owned universities came to a total of thirty-nine and the total number of privately owned universities increased to fifty. This brings the total number of universities in 2013 to one hundred and twenty-nine. The National Universities Commission (NUC) is the accreditation body that enforces uniform standard and sets admissions capacity of every university in Nigeria. Nigeria can profitably look up to her educational development when the issue of examination malpractice is adequately addressed.

The quality of a certificate one has is expected to speak about the competence and ability of such a person. However, due to one form of cheating or the other, the certificates some people get do not reflect their capabilities. This informs why some people can acquire 'good' certificates but cannot defend them. This phenomenon is attributable to examination malpractice.

Examination malpractice is, therefore, a cancer that is capable of destroying the aim and objectives of setting up University system in Nigeria. Even though governments, non-governmental organisations and some university stakeholders have used different approaches aimed at addressing the menace, there seem to be no head way in that the phenomenon has continued unabated. It is in this regard that theatre for development is being suggested to help check the issue of examination malpractice in Nigerian universities and other institutions of learning across the nation.

Theatre for development has been used to stimulate discussions that have led to positive changes in many parts of the world. It combines the entertainment fabrics of arts with other participatory methods to bring about

desired changes. It is in this regard that theatre for development approach is being suggested as a way forward for mobilising university stakeholders against examination malpractice.

Conceptual Clarification

Examination malpractice can be seen as anything negative that happen during and after examination. Experts, however, look at it according to Orhungur (2005, p. 80) as “any negative thing done before, during and after examination”. The negative thing can have multiple faces and so far as it runs counter to the objectives of the examination, it is referred to as examination malpractice.

Examination malpractice is therefore any action done or omitted which makes it impossible to use an examination in determining the level of competence of a candidate in absorbing, reproducing, and where appropriate, applying knowledge. Onyechere (1996, pp. 18-19) agrees with the above views when he avers that “any examination be it public or private has rules and regulations guiding it. An examination malpractice can be any act of omission or commission that contravenes the stipulated rules to the extent that they undermine the validity and reliability of tests and ultimately the integrity of certificates issued”. An instance whereby these irregularities are permitted and perpetuated by the candidates or their agents with the intention of gaining undue advantage in examination is malpractice. Onyechere (1996, pp. 18-19) testifies to this when he opines that “...any act of wrong doing or neglect that contravenes the rules of acceptable practice, before, during and after examination by any body in any way is ascribed to malpractice.” The cancer called examination malpractice is causing a lot of damage to Nigerian educational system. It is in the long run affecting the socio-economic and political development of the nation.

To curb this malady, there is need to mobilise Nigerian university stakeholders against it through theatre for development approaches. Theatre for development is a theatre of greater relevance which according to Ogunbiyi (1981, p. 42) “...must become an instrument in the hands of a greater number of people in their struggle for better working conditions, for more rights...indeed for better lives”. Such a theatre needs to provide a means of building a critical consciousness in the stakeholders and even mobilise them for action, engage them in the struggle against examination malpractice and also help them reflect on the benefits of the struggle.

Theatre for development debunks the myth that reality is unchangeable and the world cannot be transformed. It emphasises the re-

historification of history, with the aim of reminding people to make them seek solutions to problems affecting them. Kidd agrees with this when he asserts according to Ogunbiyi (1981, p. 43) that:

In this approach, the theatre performance is not the total experience; it must be with critical analysis, organisation and struggle. The performance can provide a dialectical view of the world but this must be consolidated and sharpened through dialogue and action; it must be part of a continuing process in which past action provides the dramatic material (a historical view of reality) for analysis and strategising leading to future action.

Theatre for development mirrors the society for the society to see itself. When the society sees its ugliness it can chose to react to change the situation. Vine (1993, p.109) agrees with this when he asserts that; “Human behaviour and institutions are formed through social activity and can therefore be changed, and that audiences, as potential agents of change, should be active participants in their own learning.” The concern of this paper is to find ways of reuniting feelings, thoughts and actions among university stakeholders that include University administration, staff (both academic and non academic) students and parents so as to create a ‘praxis’ in direct opposition to those practices that retard progress, development as well as the quality of Nigerian graduates in the 21st century. This can be the bedrock upon which the social, political and economic well being of Nigeria can be enhanced.

The Manifestation of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria

Examination malpractice is as old as man. This means the phenomenon has been of a serious concern for most of the recorded history. Barnett and Dalton (1981, p. 67) inform that in order to forestall examination malpractice in ancient China, applicants for civil service positions were made to take examinations in individual cubicles and were thoroughly searched before entering the cubicles. Death penalty was imposed on both the examiners and the examinees caught cheating as a final deterrent. This means examination malpractice is a dangerous trend that can lead to underdevelopment the world over.

In Nigeria, Onyechere (1996, p. 27) observes that examination malpractice dates back to pre-independence era. However, the rate was minute, irregular and limited to spying/ ‘giraffing’, secret passing of papers between candidates or merely whispering answers to neighbouring

candidates and in some cases prepared answer notes to popular questions were smuggled in by candidates. There were no recorded cases of connivance, aiding and abetting by invigilators/supervisors or staff of examination bodies.

Orhungur (2005, p. 80) observes that “the first recorded incidence of examination malpractice in Nigeria was the leakage of Cambridge School Certificate Examination in 1914.” However, the first serious outcry as regards examination malpractice was heard from the West African Examination Council (WAEC) over the leakage of its school certificate examination question papers in 1977 (Denga, 1988, p. 31). With this outcry, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up a tribunal to investigate the mass leakage and suggest possible measures to forestall its future occurrence. The tribunal suggested numerous severe punitive measures aimed at curbing examination malpractices. Apart from that, the Federal Government in 1984 promulgated decree 20 to impose punishment on both the examiners and the examinees caught in the act of examination malpractice. Even though the problem of examination malpractice has been in existence since the advent of higher education, its level of practice was extremely low and quite negligible in the 1960s and 1970s (*New Nigerian*, 1993). Then in Nigeria, the observance of moral standard was higher and the small size of students makes the supervision of examination easier and have accounted for the situation in 1960s and 1970s.

Causes of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria

Examination malpractice in schools is caused by both external and internal factors. Those whose admissions are fought for and obtained through the use of money usually engage in examination malpractices. This is because students look at their connections and as such will always want to ‘pass’ through connections. These categories of students do not usually read hard enough to pass on their own but introduce relevant materials in examination hall. Misplacement of talent is also a cause of examination malpractice. Students whose parents impose courses of study upon them hardly perform well in such courses. In order to impress their parents, they resort to cheating.

Cultism is another reason why students cheat in examinations. Cultists do engage in nefarious activities that take their time off studies. Such students believe that they are above the law. This makes them to involve in examination malpractice sometimes through the use of force and threat.

Lack of self confidence, self concept and self esteem is another cause of examination fraud. Students' unwillingness to *stress* themselves for hard academic and parental pleasure on the child to excel academically also cause examination malpractice. Voicing his displeasure against examination malpractice, Akintonde (1994) attributes the causes of examination malpractice to moral decadence in the society, unstable political and economic situation in the country.

Government's neglect which manifests in under funding and neglect of institution is another cause of examination malpractice. The shoddy learning conditions in many Nigerian Universities is something to worry about. How can one imagine a situation whereby school buildings are dilapidated, libraries and laboratories are empty, students are hundreds to a lecturer, lecturers and administrators are demoralised, distracted or depraved. Academic curricula are also out of tune with the demands of the times and we still expect high academic standards? Commenting on the sorry situation, the *Guardian* editorial (August 21, 2005) says "...as they stand today, our tertiary institutions are not equipped to impart in their wards utilitarian knowledge, skills and proper values for the survival of the individual and the society as put by section 8 (59) b of the National Policy on Education." There is a need for action now in the educational system. This action could be used to address the educational malady occasioned by examination malpractice and other retrogressive issues that impact negatively on the educational system.

Education is one of the most important sectors of our national being. The reason is that as a tool for the quality of human capital, education is our first line of defence against the poverty of the mind and resources that manifest as other social problems. How can one react to a news paper caption "23 caught writing exam for varsity students" (*The Daily Sun*, 3rd August, 2005). The irony of the whole issue is that those caught were secondary school students who were writing for university undergraduates. According to *Daily Sun* (2005) "No fewer than 23 secondary school students hired to sit for semester examination by students of the University of Lagos have landed in serious trouble". What a shame, what an irony! This explains the deteriorating state of education in the nation owing to examination malpractice. However, bad as this issue seem to be, theatre for development can be used to provide the needed remedy.

Theatre for Development and the Fight against Examination Malpractice

Theatre for development is a theatre that seeks to bring development to a group of people be they ordinarily, marginalised or ignorant of any situation. It centres on creating dialogue in a dramatic form, which while entertaining is also analytical and so can help break away emotions and propels the audience to critically analyse the dramatic situation for positive actions. Theatre for development is an instrument of positive change in the society. Its main agenda is to bring about socio-economic and political change in favour of the majority of the people. This change can be looked upon from the angle of development that is possible when the people concerned are persuaded to see the advantages in what can be done to bring about their development.

In order to understand the role of theatre for development, one must keep in mind its main objective which is to change the people or spectators, the ignorant in the theatrical phenomenon into subject, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action. In this theatre, both the actor and the audience reserve the right to think for themselves often in opposition to the character's behaviour that is not in line with his progress and development.

It presents episodic dramas that highlight the causes of examination malpractice, the effect of the phenomenon on an individual, the university community and the society in general. It also presents possible ways of dealing with a particular problem. The drama can as well highlights governmental negligence and ask governments, university authorities to sit up and fight the menace to a stand still for a better society. The process of liberation begins with a critically active response to one's experience. This is in line with Duggan's (1999, p. 2) assertion that "...drama depicts change perhaps more pungently than other arts forms because not only does drama draw on life for its source, but its raw materials are 'actual human bodies, attributes, and behaviour'. Drama always holds the mirror up to life".

Through improvisations actors could create short episodic dramas that contain conflicts that mirror the dilemma graduates, students and others that engage in examination malpractice face through role-play. The drama could possibly end with the central characters facing difficulties in passing interviews for employment or performing poorly on the job and been sacked. It also highlights students that are caught in examination malpractice and expelled from school. In another episode, a lecturer that specialises in aiding students to pass examination in one way or the other is caught and sacked. His name is published in National dailies and announced on the radio as deterrent to others. He suffers through neglect and shame. Either way the audience is made to observe objectively that, if this is them,

that is what could happen in the future if care is not taken. If it is not then this is what has happened to others and they should learn from this mistake.

As the audience watch the scenarios unfold, they will know in advance that it contains series of problem they will face if they involve in examination malpractice. Possible options could be discussed and speculations could be made. The activist will then ask what the audience think they would do if they were in a similar situation. Many suggestions could be offered and they will be arguments and disagreement on issues. After the different opinions are clarified, the next stage will begin.

The audience are then asked to give their analysis of what had happened. The audience will become the sounding board for objective reflection and continuing action. They will suggest different ways of solving the problem. Others may oppose and suggest other ways. If disagreements persist, the opinion could be tested by going back into the drama. In this way, the audience which will comprise of university stakeholders will work as a whole group tackling the menace collectively.

The key figure in the mobilisation process is the facilitator who acts as a direct link between the audience and the dramatic action. He has the responsibility for orchestrating the whole event. He must encourage and enable the audience to intervene. His role is to make sure that all stakeholders that wish to intervene are clear about the situation and their intervention within it before intervention will begin. Contributions could be elicited by questioning, beginning with the person who intervenes and opens up to those who have been watching. Such questioned could be asked: how can you get on without involving in examination malpractice? What can help you? What can stop you? How would you feel? What do you think could be done? And so on. These questions will help the group to develop a wider understanding of examination malpractice and the dangers it poses to an individual and the society at large. The activist facilitator, must keep the audience focused on the central problem, and select the appropriate questions to further the dramatic debate, support the audience and actors, challenge the spectators, know when to listen, when to speak and when to insist on an action.

The merit of this approach is that it objectifies a complete experience (as portrayed through improvised drama) and asked how we might generalise from the particular, learning from the experience of others and re-applying those lessons to produce different outcomes in people's lives. It also conveys the implicit believe that outcomes and futures are not

predetermined; we are simultaneously the products and creators of our history (Vine, 1993, p.119).

Conclusion

Theatre for development is a therapy against social vices that impede progress and development in the society. It has taken responsibility for selecting and shaping materials for its audience in a way that will help them make connections and deepen their understanding of their own experiences that may appear remote to them. For a successful fight against examination malpractice, aggressive public awareness campaigns are to be mounted using theatre for development methods. This fight against social and academic problem like examination malpractice is for everybody – parents, school authorities, governments, students and the society in general if Nigeria is to be advanced scientifically, educationally and economically in the 21st century. Conscience, it is said is an open wound, only truth can heal it (*The Guardian* 2005). The needed truth can be seen through theatre for development which Obafemi (1996. p. 171) believes the society needs when he says;

Our society must have a theatre that is functional, almost in pedestrian sense that you can clearly understand... *the urgency for the need for a functional theatre is so great that a heavy loaded sophisticated stuff is a cheat on society... clearly let the people understand what you give them because their understanding is a way of improving their lot.* (emphasis added).

Through theatre for development audience are encouraged to make a reasoned response to a given action. They must observe, think and then take agency in their lives.

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A Feminist Inquiry into the Rite of Transition and Cultural Divide in Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu*

By

Chinenye Amonyeze*

Abstract

Playwrights have a knack, in voicing their personal opinions, to not only prick the public conscience but also act as vehicles for social, economic and political changes. Since their art is parasitic on the society, which they base the lives of their dramatic personas on, their creations end up revealing the major defects in the society's attitude towards burning existential issues. The playwright in this way becomes a moral instructor guiding the audience and by extension, the society through his activist's activities. Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu*, an adaptation of Euripides' *The Trojan Women* scrutinises the patriarchal dominated society's handling of women and the feminine struggle for subsistence. The study adopts the black feminist approach of Alice Walker and Bell Hooks to examine Femi Osofisan's feminist concerns in *Women of Owu*. *Women of Owu*'s interrupted rite of transition and the feminine denial of access to social development is explored in detail by Femi Osofisan through his extensive focus on the social force of patriarchy and its psychoanalytical imprint on its victims. Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu* promotes the issue of social compassion in a negative 'victor takes all' world where the frail's socio-cultural status continues to wilt in the face of physical dominance.

Introduction

Rites of passage refer to those ceremonial acts in the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood in a society. While the terms 'passage' and 'transition' supposedly infer the same meaning, 'passage' mostly connotes elapsed time between different phases, while transition succinctly refers to change in form occasioned by time during that phase/time process. "*The Free Dictionary* (2013, n.p.) defines a rite of

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passage as a ritual or ceremony signifying an event in a person's life indicative of a transition from one stage to another, as from adolescence to adulthood". The term 'transition' for the purposes of this discourse designates a voyage or journey. Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu* setting in a transit camp is not accidental. It is paradoxical that a transit camp which is where change or transition is induced serves as an apogamic ground where the Owu women's human rights are abrogated and their quest for social determinism further frustrated. Osofisan's play presumes a paradoxical shape considering that the play is an adaptation of Euripides' classic, *The Trojan Women* to a Nigerian circumstance.

The transition period is an uncertain interlude between two conditions, having a metamorphic quality that will become legitimate in the next phase. Having fulfilled the conditions for leaving this stage which involves submission to the new colonial masters, the women are prevented from continuing with their normal lifestyle by the colonists who want to carry them away from Owu and remove their taproot from the soil of their ancestors. In her article, "Feminist Radicalism in the 1980s", Miles (1985, p.21) argues that

for women, reproduction is an experience of mediated labor which situates them in time and integrates their biological, emotional and intellectual capacities. Women's reproductive consciousness is continuous and integrative for it is mediated within the reproductive process. At the biological level, reproductive labor is a synthesizing and mediating act. It confirms women's unity with nature and mother and child...

The need to complete the symbolic regenerative cycle is what impels Erelu, in *Women of Owu*, to undertake ritual suicide at the play's close in her bid to ascend the ancestral realm, mediate her colleagues' case and help sprout new life after her grandchild's brutal slaughter.

Inside Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu*

Osofisan's *Women of Owu* is a disguised feminist apologia in the hands of an anti war crusader. Based on Euripides' *The Trojan Women* which is set in the classical Greek period, the theme of the original play is modified in Osofisan's adaptation to reflect contemporary realities of war, slavery, women abuse etc. Owu, a city-state in Southern Nigeria, is overrun after seven years of siege by the allied armed forces of Ijebu, Ife and Oyo mercenaries. The city has been besieged (for example Iraq by American troops) to save the people presumably from despotic rule but the

conquistadors end up plundering the city, annihilating the men and children and portioning the women amongst themselves as slave ants and wives. In the piece, war is presented as a needless violent argument that often affects the innocent negatively. Osofisan's drama rejects a mortal view of life and alternatively prescribes communal effort as remedy for social ill.

Euripides's *The Trojan Women* has a melodramatic pacifist philosophy in its dramatic analysis of the Trojan women's mental condition after the vengeful atrocities carried out on the city of Troy by Greek soldiers. His play presents the despondent state of his female subjects who are coming to terms with their vanquished lot and questioning the aggressive dehumanising tactics of their Greek captors. In interrogating the Trojan women's psychology, Euripides calls attention to certain stereotypical attitudes like the law of defeat, male chauvinism and the role of the gods in humanity's affairs. The writer takes an existentialist approach in examining the extreme lengths basic human dignity can be stretched just for one to survive. The condition of the woman's mind and decorum are put in proper perspective by Randal (1987, p. ix) who submits that at one time convention tended to define women and politics as mutually exclusive, occupying different spheres. Politics was understood as a public activity dominated by men and requiring typically masculine characteristics. Women were identified above all with the private world of the family and domestic life".

Osofisan's play vacillates between gods and humans who are their puppets. In *Women of Owu*, the gods, represented by Lawumi and her son, Anlugbua, mindlessly abuse their cosmic powers as can be gleaned from the excerpt below:

LAWUMI: These allied forces, they need to be punished in their turn (p.20).

An atavistic war is fought out by the two contending parties who are pawns in the hands of higher forces whose ruinous egos are mocked by Osofisan. Men are presented as whimsical models carrying out their genetic fingerprinting on defenseless women thus:

ERELU: So because of his lust, he will pitch one god against the other!

Ah, my daughter, what will men not dare just to satisfy their greed! (p.24)

The gods rebut the accusation of wanton irresponsibility by accusing human beings of being impervious and disobedient to divine powers. Lawumi feels that Owu forgot the important role of the gods in its

establishment and how its citizenry in enjoying their affluence, like the rich man in the Bible who after a rich harvest told his soul to rejoice, paid no heed to the writing on the wall. The factors that impelled Owu's destruction then include the war against Apomu and the consequent abduction of Iyunloye, Maye Okunnade's wife. The sale of their Yoruba kinsmen into slavery and failure to heed Dejumó's prophecy also contributed to Owu's doom. The play has Erelu at the head of the oppressed women who rightly should be the protagonists. Her sacrificial act at the end of the play imbues heroic shine on her and in the same breath raises questions about her objective in the plot.

Bridging the Multicultural Divide

When a writer starts creating an adapted work, he relies heavily on the original text which he modifies in forms, and functions through his creativity and selects a style to best embody his artistic intention with the result that the end product is a creative piece and not a copycat. Through Anlugbua's character, based on Euripides' Poseidon, Osofisan retraces the chronological history of the Yoruba city, Owu and transplants the Trojan story firmly on the African soil. The fate of a community largely comprised of captive women is at stake as Anlugbua confirms Owu's ancestry while recounting Owu's mythological history:

ANLUGBUA: (softening) Listen, this city was very dear to me. I was there when your grandparents built up. The little old village of my father into a fortress, and called it Owu (p.5).

Osofisan's adaptation investigates the audience's mind and in this way increases the intellectual capacity of the audience. In merging traditional Yoruba dramatic forms with classical Greek aesthetics, the play's thematic immediacy is enhanced. Anlugbua and Lawumi's comments shed light on the complexities of life and debunk the ruinous war mongering logic that there is a 'law of defeat'. The women of Owu are depicted not merely as preys of men but of nature represented by the scheming mythic gods, Anlugbua and Lawumi. Owu is depicted as the safest place in Yorubaland whose role in the cosmic scheme of things rightly should be assured but whose rights are voided following the neglect of certain initiation prescripts.

Derrida's deconstruction declares that a text has an almost infinite number of possible interpretations. Derrida views textual compositions to be founded on certain linguistic structures and oppositions which speech must negotiate to be comprehensible. (Glendinning, 2011, p.52) opines that

“Derrida advocates the reach for an articulation of the deep structures of life”. Most of Derrida’s theory focused on proposing multiplicity of meaning in a text in order to bring it to a reducible level. Derrida argues against the theoretical claim to power with an apprehending logic that critics have been able to impose their critical theories on texts only by ignoring or overlooking the contradictory effects of language. Derrida conceives these binary oppositions and paradoxes manifesting in the form of language and signs as existing without ontological meaning but dependent on reciprocity with other cultural auxiliaries. All the logocentric appurtenances mentioned above are present in Femi Osofisan’s *Women of Owu*.

Femi Osofisan’s work echoes the black feminist concerns of Alice Walker and Bell Hooks. His pedagogic approach towards the examination of women as an oppressed group in the society adopts an oppressed framework while utilizing the deconstructive tools of language to unravel the dynamics of language in an adaptive text to communicate the experience of a depressed social group. (White, 2004, p. 89) underlines Alice Walker’s feminist approach which locates the interconnectivity of gender, class and races especially their capacity to deprive basic human rights from certain sects, propagate oppressive systems of class domination and through brute force perpetuate colonization and slavery. Hooks adopts contemporary feminism to confront issues of race, sexuality and gender which are major landmarks in Femi Osofisan’s *Women of Owu*. Bell Hooks *Belonging: A Culture of Place* considers the feminist historical themes of sexism and racism on black women and the denigration of womanhood: threnodic themes coursing through Femi Osofisan’s *Women of Owu*. Hooks (2010, p.12) “zeroes in on patriarchy and advocates an end to sexist oppression and colonization”. Erelu, the heroine in *Women of Owu*, is an evident advocate of Hooks and Osofisan’s engaged pedagogy challenging the law of the victor and rallying the women to stand up for their rights, viz.:

ERELU: ...No, women, there is no shelter anywhere
but in ourselves! Each of us has become our
own god (33).

Femi Osofisan’s views concord with Paulo Freire’s theory of engaged pedagogy which mediates the unanalysed power relations that shape cognitive theory. Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed to Kincheloe (2008, p.8) suggests that mainstream psychology has historically dismissed the cognitive abilities of those outside dominant colonizing cultures, patriarchy and elite classes.

The transformation of language is a necessary process in adapting dramatic works across the multicultural divide. The writer should however ensure he does not lose the soul of the message. The purpose of adaptation is to transplant a work into a new soil that will give it fresh merits and added impetus. The play is anti-war but the term 'war' is ambiguous suggesting anti colonialism, not just against societies but gender aggression. Woman 1 provides a clue:

WOMAN 1: How? What can we do? What power of persuasion do we have over these bloodthirsty men? (p.16)

Osofisan's assessment of the global village renders it an atrocious patriarchal system operating disparities of race, technology, wealth and gender.

Classical Greek social attitude conceived women as objects to be seen and not heard with women being placed below slaves and eunuchs in social stratification. This attitude has certain contemporary parallels, though not exactly the same, with the African society where women are denied some basic traditional rights. Nwabueze (2011, p.20) states in *Studies in Dramatic Literature*, "in the ancient traditional African society, women were described as individuals with little or no personal independence who pass from the control of the father to that of the husband" (underline for emphasis). A deconstructive reader could easily substitute the underlined phrase above with the phrase: 'the victors' to implicate succinct meaning since the playwright adds the Middle East war against terrorism to the fray of the Nigerian gunpowder scenario. In the presentation of gods in the two authors' plays, Athena in Euripides' *The Trojan Women* and Lawumi are presented as impulsive and vengeful. Abrams (2005, p.95) in examining feminist abuse opines that:

Another prominent procedure has been to identify recurrent and distorted 'images of women', especially in novels and poems written by men. These images are often represented as tending to fall into two antithetic patterns. On the one side we find idealised projections of men's desires (the Madonna, the Muses of the arts...) On the other side are demonic projections of men's sensual resentments and terrors (Eve and Pandora) as the sources of all evil...

A deconstruction of Femi Osofisan's play unravels his ethical questioning of the political effects of cultural colonisation. All the binary oppositions,

paradoxes and power hierarchies are at play in Femi Osofisan's use of language in the phrases 'the law of combat' and 'the law of the defeated'.

Stereotypes of women abound in the play's characterisation which depicts Iyunloye as crafty and wily like all women in the society. The playwright makes Iyunloye describe herself thus in the play as she teases Maye's ego in a bid to evade summary execution:

IYUNLOYE: that's what I've used here to build up a thriving market and establish myself as a woman to be reckoned with. Without your nurturing my dear husband, I would not be here! (p.49)

Iyunloye's derisive handling by Owu women is a paradox of sorts as they want her humiliated equally like them and vehemently disdain her dignified comportment. Iyunloye is described by Erelu as a sexual object to be coveted and conquered by men and deserving extreme punishment. Iyunloye is rendered as a remorseless hustler bargaining for her rights at the hands of the sensitive general, Maye. It is enigmatic then while denying Iyunloye's plea for temperance of justice, Erelu also bargains for a commuting of her penalty.

Hooks (1984, p.25) suggests that "when feminism is defined in such a way that it calls attention to the diversity of women's social and political reality, it centralises the experiences of all women, especially the women whose social conditions have been least written about, studied, or changed by political movements". Male chauvinistic interpretive meaning is at its peak in Gesinde's questioning of Erelu's unhappiness with Orisaye, her daughter's allocation to the captors. Gesinde's opinion is that Erelu should be joyful that her daughter is destined to become a slave wife of a king even if that rank is a servile sort. The men keep the women in a hopeless state pondering the next fate to befall them. This attitude ironically highlights the treatment husbands mete out to their wives who are usually kept in the dark about certain decisions which the 'man of the house' takes for their own good.

Orisaye is presented as an ideal form of womanhood for men through her qualities of, piety, innocence and pristineness. War, as can be gleaned from the text, affects the innocent worse than other individuals as Orisaye loses control of her senses and becomes delirious. Erelu queries the reason for standing up to their tormentors when the gods who should be their bulwarks had abandoned them and turned fate against them. Adumadaan, a filial model in terms of responsibility and sense of duty

recounts her sacrifice to family and society wondering the sadistic intention behind the Ijebu general bidding to have her as a war trophy. It appears that the play is making a statement that hard-work and devotion are weaknesses to be punished. Women's feeble psychological response to sex is highlighted in Adumaadan's lines:

ADUMADAAN: ...Weaknesses. Our flesh too often,
and in spite of itself, quickens to a
man's touch (p. 42)

Sex is used as a control tool to bring the women to submission as evident in Erelu's lines in page ten lamenting the brutal rape of their daughters. Rape becomes the ultimate dehumanising weapon of a woman in an approving patriarchal society; not accidental but calculated to achieve psychological aims. Erelu's death trance at the end of the play is the climactic peak of her rite of initiation into the ancestral order.

Apogamy

Femi Osofisan's feminist concerns in *Women of Owu* spotlights the interconnection of issues of racial, gender and class inequalities and the necessity of communal unity to engender healthy development. *Women of Owu* is a study in sexology bearing in mind how the invading men have apportioned to themselves bereaved wives and old women like Erelu, Adumaadan etc. Not minding Erelu's ancient visage, the sadistic allied Generals fancy her as a slave. Stinking and clad only in their underwear, the women mourn their lots victims of a war designed and executed by men. They blame the men as looters and gluttons:

WOMAN 1: Dancing and drinking to their victory and
may Anlugbua choke them with it

Erelu: Remember the palace was bustling with their
bridal songs (p. 11)

Erelu decries the Ijebu beasts and Ife animals who are allies in the women's psychological harassment. These men are epitomes of sadistic pleasure, wickedness and moral turpitude who pillaged a 'once-flourishing city'. The women wish a reverse apogamy upon the marauding menfolk as their punishment for the sacrilege committed.

Hooks reviews the need for communal harmony and unity to engender healthy development and advancement of mutual objectives of the female group. She perceives this mutuality as a more solidified platform for conceiving symbiotic benefits that de-emphasise racial, class and sexual aesthetic. Gods and male conquistadors add to social problems by creating

more disasters in the play. While deities do not appear onstage in Euripides's drama Osofisan's adaptation brings Anlugbua and Lawumi onstage as dramatic characters whose divine temperament collude with human nature to wreck calamity. Supernatural forces are mocked in the drama and presented as feeble in averting the devastating intentions of men. The women in Osofisan's *Women of Owu* appear incredulous when the gods abandon them. They however quickly come to the conclusion that humanity's innate weakness is partially responsible for their condition, viz.:

CHORUS LEADER: No, stop the wailing and brace
yourselves my dear women. The
lesson is clear. It's us, not the gods,
who create war. It's us, we human
beings, who can kill it. (p.15)

Erelu provides more enlightenment about their malady:

ERELU: In defeat, dear women, always expect the
worst. That is the law of combat. The law of defeat
(p. 16)

The logical refrain is emphasized so many times by so many people in the play in a manner that alludes the logic is a subject of mockery. Men in this globalization/empire period are not in control of their fate. Osofisan's categorical style comes alive in the next lines where subtlety is abandoned for equivocal terms:

CHORUS LEADER: ...See for yourselves! While our
conquerors Prepare the first phase of
our enslavement, our brave gods Run
to hide in their heaven! (p.16)

The above statement reinforces one of the salient preoccupations of the drama i.e.: man's lonely stand against the destructive forces of nature. Mankind can be substituted with the group of women who stand alone in the fight against an oppressive patriarchal establishment. Maye Okunnade exudes typical male thinking in his desperation to make Iyunloye pay for her infidelity.

Gesinde ridicules the elite class which he alternates with great men that appear irrational to him. The women echo this ridicule in accusing the invading party as 'people who kill in the name of liberation' without recourse to the trauma the liberated face. Anlugbua is shocked at the negative transformation of a docile character like Maye who is now a General whose sensibilities are demonized. There are numerous instances

of colonialism which sound like America's invasion/liberation of Iraq and subsequent deposition of Saddam Hussein viz.:

WOMAN 1: ...They said our Oba Was a despot, that they came to free us from his cruel yoke! (p.2)

Instead of becoming emancipated the women's status as dregs of the society degenerates further:

WOMAN 1: After your liberation, here we are with our spirits broken and our faces swollen waiting to be turned into whores and housemaids (p.12)

Erelu situates the men properly under the savage term highlighting their predilection to show off their physical superiority, make economic profit and wreck more psychological damage. The ostensible idea of freedom is mocked in Woman 2's lines:

WOMAN 2: Sing, my friends! Let us celebrate Our new-won freedom of chains! (p.13)

WOMAN 1: Nowadays, When the strong fight the weak, it's called A liberation war To free the weak from oppression (p.8).

The globalisation of oppression against women through the patriarchal institution is disastrous. The anti-war sentiment is echoed by Erelu who states that:

ERELU: war never ends, but only moves to another place (p. 66).

Conclusion

Randal (1987, p.81) states that "women are more ethical and humane than men. In so far as they participate in conventional politics, they bring to it concern for ordinary human beings and for standards of conduct". The sense of responsibility articulated above by Randall in addition to the need to sustain traditional cultural values of regeneration by collective ritual symbolized by Erelu's martyrdom is one of the hallmarks of women's resistance to continued male subjugation. Erelu's advice about adapting resistant strategies to merging situations to enforce feminist worries is timely. Maroney (1985, p.55) in her article, "Embracing Motherhood: New Feminist Theory", analyses women's alienation struggle from the rite of birth to adulthood in the social development process thus

although women also face a moment of alienation in birth it is mediated by their own voluntary and involuntary labours.

‘women, unlike men, do not have to take further action to overcome their alienation from the race, for their labour assures their integration’ and structures a consciousness informed by suffering and labour that unites the actual with potential and confirms the integrations both of women with the generationally renewed

Women in the Middle East, like in some parts of Africa, are stereotyped as voiceless second class citizens. Erelu’s husband, the Oba, is hounded by the invading forces and snared in the night like Al Qaeda’s Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Erelu’s ritual possession in the final scene is a necessary rite of transition and ritual death which helps her conquer the fear of the looming real death. The women conceal Erelu’s rite of transition into ancestry from Gesinde who would have reported the matter to the generals and scuttled the women’s last effort to assure their mythic survival. After her initiation/possession by Anlugbua, Erelu comes into a greater awareness and blurts out the lines about the deer’s need to resist its hunters. The realization of a woman’s psychological status, as can be seen by Erelu’s situation, is relevant before tangible action occurs. The essential purpose of Erelu’s lines is to reveal the existential dilemma of the women and assist them to face the rigors of feminist radicalism. This is what marks Erelu out as a true heroine because she overcomes her weakness and frailty to martyr herself onto the ancestral realm.

Derrida’s linguistic deconstruction served to illustrate textual ambiguity with a critical reading that would identify and pick out figures of speech in the work. These meaning filled figures of speech are put to good use by Femi Osofisan in the elegies of Erelu and the chorus of Owu women. Osofisan’s deconstructive approach utilises music and dance to create mood, buttress requisite principles of the play and mostly stress the need for resilience in the face of oppression.

Dance is the only rite element the women are permitted to indulge in their confinement. Osofisan’s songs like Euripides’ choral odes reinforce the thematic aims of the play. Each song or dance in the play achieves a psychological purpose with the chorus, representing the mass of oppressed women in the larger society, playing the role of didactic magnifier. The plot is precise though sometimes the lines are hyperbolic and the dirge-like plot threatens to alienate the audience due to the playwright’s Brechtian *verfremdungseffekt*. The playwright’s message is pristine clear: create a world system where justice and economic resources will be managed justly!

Salami (2005, p.430) “declares that although the men articulate their patriarchal ideology and celebrate their masculinity, the collective action of the women flouts their authority”.

In the play, the messiah for the women is not expressly stated but depicted in abstract form. The Chorus leader’s lines give a hint of the spiritual element of the savior:

CHORUS LEADER: ...They and the other victims Need
someone to release their spirits and
send them back Safely home to the
ancestors, someone trained in the task
(p. 62).

Yet beneath this obscure image of a feminist savior is a concrete avowal of victory for the distraught women of Owu through Erelu who gains supernatural ascendance at the play’s close (surely to protect their interests more proactively from the spiritual realm). Erelu is queen and becomes the ideal of women’s dignity whose transition to ancestral divinity should never be defiled by enslavement to barbarians. Erelu’s last lines suggest a postscript rebellion if women must successfully resist subjugation:

ERELU: then the deer must train themselves to seize the gun
from their hunters! The cows to take over the
narration of their own story (p. 66)

Erelu’s martyrdom in this mode assuages the fertility needs of the earth goddess since the post ritual attitude of the Owu women on the communal expectation of their moral and spiritual conduct gains ascendancy and achieves cultural regeneration.

species in both nature and history.

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A Linguistic Analysis of Selected Translations of Yoruba Home –Video Proverbs

By

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Abstract

Many Yoruba Home video films enjoy very wide audience acceptability in a multilingual nation such as Nigeria because they are fully sub-titled in English. In such Yoruba films, proverbs are employed by interlocutors to drive home their palpable didactic imports. This paper attempts to describe linguistic choices of the translators of the proverbs through a matched guise also to determine certain extent of meaning preservation, modification or distortion at the major levels of linguistic analysis. The data for this study were drawn from ten purposefully selected Yoruba videos which have copious proverbs and produced by seasoned Yoruba home video producers. A contrastive analysis of the English translation of the Yoruba proverbs was carried out. A number of proverbs in this study were inferred by the translator using indirect paraphrase. This paper has therefore attempted to corroborate the efforts of Catford and Newmark among others in translation studies.

Introduction

A study of Yoruba home video films requires the history of the overall industry under which film making is identified internationally. Nollywood has over the years become a world phenomenon, as its movies are being sold in Ghana, Togo, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa as well as Jamaica, the United States of America and the United Kingdom to name a few.

Today, Nollywood ranks third in the movie industry after Hollywood (USA) and Bollywood (India). It has been able to hold its head high despite so many deterrents, which include, expensive

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technical tools of the trade, inconsistent supply of electricity, horrible traffic-jam conditions all of which can induce extreme lateness in production.

Nollywood movies are made on shoestring budgets ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000 a piece spanning 7 to 10 days. This is said to be an incredibly short jam packed production time by all standards. What makes the industry so unique is that it is a video driven industry; the movies in the early days were produced and put straight on VHS cassettes and then released or distributed for sale to the public. Now with the new technological advancement in place they are usually on VCDs, and referred as home videos by Nigerians.

In Nigeria however, there is a large market for these films. This is because of the vast population of the over three hundred ethnic groups in the country. Three major ethnic languages: the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa dominate the multifarious ethnic groups in the country. These groups are believed to be richer in proverbs than other languages. In Yoruba language particularly, several proverbs are used to salvage contextual needs as they arise among interlocutors. Some of these Yoruba proverbs have been studied by Omoloshio (2006), Yusuf (1994, 1995, 1997a, 1997b) and Arua (1998). Other paremiological scholars in Nigeria include Adejumo (2009) and Adeyemi (2009), Adeleke (2009), Arimi (2009), and Alabi (2009). Another article in the literature on Nigerian proverbs is that of Adedimeji (2009) to mention but few.

This paper sets out to contribute to the understanding of Lexico-semantic characteristics of proverbs interpreted in English. This is because none of the works above on Paremiology has focused on Proverbs in relation to translation and its Nigerianess. Majorly, this study sets out to: describe the content and context of the English interpreted Yoruba proverbs in the selected home videos; discuss the lexico-semantic choices of the interpreted proverbs and determine the extent of meaning preservation, modification or distortion at the lexico-semantic levels.

Methodology

The data for this study were drawn from ten purposively selected Yoruba video films. They are copious proverbs produced by Yoruba film producers. The films were closely watched on video telecast while the researcher took note of proverbs and manner of interpretation of the

subtitles. The English translated proverbs in the subtitles were placed side by side with the source proverbs and a contrastive analysis was discussed using Catford's (1965) and Newmark's (1981) theories of translation. A frequency count was carried out in order for us to assess the level of meaning preservation, modification and distortion using the lexicosemantic features as tool for the analyses.

Yoruba Paremiology

Yoruba proverb studies started in 1852 when Samuel Ajayi Crowther collected many Yoruba proverbs in his book titled, *The Vocabulary of Yoruba Language* (Adeyemi 2009, p. 531). Bamgbose (1968), for example, focused on the structure and forms of Yoruba proverbs. Other notable scholars in this field include Ogundeji (1992), Ogunsina (1992), Adekeye (2001), Adebowale (2006), Ojoade (2004), Adewoye (2006), Owomoyela (1975), Yusuf (1994, 1995), Alabi (2000) and Odebunmi (2006). All of these focus on the form, function, and use of proverbs, and as such have contributed greatly to Yoruba proverb scholarship.

Lau, Tokofsky and Winick (2004, p. 8) drawing from the works of Taylor (1985), Whiting (1994), Mieder (1993), Arora (1994), Burke (1957), Dundes (1981), Honeck (1997), Winick (2003), etc., define proverbs as "short, traditional utterances that encapsulate cultural truths and sum up recurrent social situations". According to Lau, Tokofsky and Winnick (2004, p. 6), "proverbs can persuade and dissuade...express deference or confidence, show worry, instill fear or respect, or even mock the listener".

For the Yoruba people, however, Adeyemi (2009, p. 531) says 'modern Yoruba novelists and poets portray colonial and post-colonial politics as they affect the historical past and present, and the socio-cultural and economic life of the people by using proverbs in Yoruba language to stimulate and provoke political consciousness in the readers. In Yoruba literary scholarship, there is hardly any literary criticism on Yoruba novel, play or poetry that does not mention the use of proverbs in a discourse.

Scholars of Paremiology and folklore both locally and internationally have done a lot of research on proverbs. A few of the foreign authors include Wang Qin in China, Wolfgang Mieder in USA, Chong-wha Chung in Korea, Vadim Mihalev in Russia, Catherine Blanchoud in France, Frank Detje in Germany, Susanne

Hose in Germany, Kyosti Korpiola in Finland, Gyula Paczolay in Hungary and Kwesi Yankah in Ghana. Others include Zenko Shimabukuro in Japan, Tadao Shimomiya in Japan, Shigeyoshi Fukuda in Japan, Miori Fujimura in Japan, Yoko Mori also in Japan and Masahiro Yoshioka in Japan. All of these Paremiologists attended the 1996 Tokyo International Proverb forum. Most of the international paremiologists have written articles that further explain proverbs as it is used to accompany language use in their various environments.

Some of the available works of leading researchers in proverb studies include those of Awolola (2005), Oguntimehin (2004), Yusuf (1994, 1995, 1997a, 1997b) and Arua (1998) under the field of Semantics. The aforementioned investigated cultural meanings embedded in proverbs. Adejumo (2009) and Adeyemi (2009) studied Yoruba proverbs from a Critical Discourse Perspective, while Adeleke (2009) examined same diachronically. Arimi (2009) wrote on Yoruba proverbs from a sociological purview while Alabi (2009) on her part analysed proverbs in two literary texts using syntactic as well as lexico-semantic approaches.

Lexical Patterns

The predominant morphological process common in most written texts is derivational. Babatunde (2003, p. 176) in a study, where he analysed Tunde Olusunle's poem *Fingermarks* identified Derived morphemes to be describable in the following categories.

- Compound lexemes made up of noun + -ed participle functioning as adjectives, e.g. wave-starved, gang-raped, etc.
- Compound lexemes made up of noun + gerund, also functioning as adjectives: e.g. rum-reeking, cigar-puffing, sense-assaulting, all-encompassing, etc.
- De-verbal adjectives functioning as premodifiers for nouns: e.g. penuried pockets, schooled brigands, unblemished lambs, depressed slumber and cow webbed pots, etc.
- Adjectivized nouns functioning as premodifiers for nouns: e.g. mouldy morsels, greasy cafes, rusty racks, sweaty hussles, miserly masters, filthy floors, brutal thunder, etc.

Babatunde (ibid) adds that there are motivations for lexical structures. They include:

- Vivid description, as seen in the predominant use of derivatives as adjectives.
- Brevity, parsimony and directness e.g. “waved starved workers” – a worker starved with wage
- Passivization as a means of depicting the NP (subject) as a victim e.g. “penuried pocket” suggests that the pocket became penurious through no acts of its own, etc.
- The patterns in (b) suggest the description of an on-going state (e.g. rum-reeking reverend, blood coughing men, etc.) without the indication of a possible end in view. In fact, the state is more or less that of a habitual action.

Adebija (1989) and Jowitt (1991) in their study of Nigerian English expression identify six major classes of lexico-semantic patterns. They include:

- (a.) transfer of Mother Tongue features into English, e.g house head, from the Yoruba ‘olori-ile’, see eye to eye, from Yoruba ‘oju-koro-oju’, death sells at a kobo, from Yoruba, iku di mewa sile’.
- (b.) Transfer of idioms: Example are
 - When a child learns to walk, he leaves fingermarks on the wall
 - The wise cripple forewarned never tarries to hear the crackle of cannons, never waits to see the bruises of battle. From the Yoruba saying: ‘ogun asotele kii pa aro toba gbon’
 - Wise sayings muttered in fragments make whole sense to the thoughtful mind. From the Yoruba saying: ‘abo oro lanso fun omoluabi, to ba de inu re yio di odidi’
 - Analogy: Adebija (1989) describes lexico-semantic analogy or generalization as “the formation of new words on the basis of partial likeness or agreement in form or in sense with already existing words, either in the mother tongue or in sense with already existing words, either in the mother tongue or in English”. Examples include: sin-ful, naira-ful, fee-less, etc.
 - Acronyms: NEPA, GRA, SAP, VIP and MANR.
 - Loan words: bukas, babalawo, molues, kombis, oriki, oga (chameleon), agbada, garri and bonga-fish, rogbodiyan.
 - Coinages: mudufuls, lugardian, radiovision, essence, obitos, alagbon, bonga-fish, Bob Marley Braids, Anini’s scions.
 - Semantic shift or extension: ‘carrying’ as in “kobo-carrying suitors”, etc.

Lexical patterns such as we have reviewed in some literature within our reach may feature in our data. We shall then be privileged to assess the lexical choices made by both the directors of the ten Yoruba home videos in their attempt to translate the proverbs in the dramas to English language. To give this study a proper background we have reviewed contributions of theorists on translation.

Newmark (1988) argues that the text may reach a ‘broad equivalent effect’ only if it is ‘universal’, as in this case the ideals of the original text exceed all cultural frontiers. Newmark (1986) uses the term ‘text-bound equivalence’ in his discussion of equivalences while North (1981) works on ‘functional equivalence’. Baker (1992) six years after Newmark’s submission devotes her work to equivalent types, and argues that equivalence is always relative in the sense that it is influenced by many linguistic and cultural factors.

Lexico-Semantic Categories and Analysis

SN	Film Title	Source Text (ST)	Target Text/Translation into English (TT)	Typology	Extent of meaning preservation, modification and distortion on the TT
1.	Ikú Èwà	Àwòdì ní rè barà, atégùn ta á nìdì kán, ó ní ohun tó bá tí yá kan kì í pè mọ.	The wind has aided the flight of the eagle, so it is up and away.	Partial Direct Translation	Meaning preservation
2.		Oní kúrúnà tó ní inú òun ò dani, sebí àwà nàà tí rí bí ita rè se rí.	Rashes needn’t boast of it’s being horrible, its appearance is evidence enough.	Partial Direct Translation	Meaning preservation
3.		Qmọ eni ò sa ní rewà tí tí ká fe fún ra eni.	No matter how beautiful, one wouldn’t marry his own daughter.	Direct Translation	Meaning Preservation
4.		A lè fi tipá mèsin lodò lóòótó, sùgbón a lè fi tipá fún un ló mí.	A horse can be forced to the river but water can’t be forced into its mouth.	Direct Translation	Meaning Preservation
5.		Ogbón tó bá fo igi òro, tó fo igi àràbà, èyinkùlé agò nàà ní padà bọ wá da ilẹ sí.	Smartness that scale the small tree, scale the medium and even timbers, those smartness often ended up at the stupid’s backyard.	Direct Translation	Meaning Modification

6.		Ó kúkú wu Elédùwà ló dirí ewà fún àkùkò.	It is the fate of the cock that made the creator adorn its head with a blazing crown.	Partial Direct Translation	Meaning Preservation
7.		Nígba tí ọfọn tí wá tò sí inú gbẹgiri báyii, kẹlẹkọ kó ẹkọ ẹ nilẹ lókú.	Now that things are as they were, it's everyone to his camp.	Indirect Translation	Meaning Distortion
8.		Eranko tó bá sé iyéméjì ní ọde n pa lóko.	It is the doubtful game that fall prey to the hunter.	Partial Direct Translation	Meaning Modification
9.		Bí età ò bá tà, kò sí ọmọ eranko kẹranko tó le tà.	No animal sale ahead of the fox.	Direct Translation	Meaning Preservation
10.		Ọmọ Àjànàkú kan, kíí yàrá, ọmọ tí eya bá bí eya nàá ní ní jọ.	An Elephant does not bear dwarf, children of the blade will always be sharp.	Partial Direct Translation	Meaning Modification
11.		Àjànàkú kú ó ní morí ýkan firí, bí a bá rí erin, ká sọ pé a rí erin.	One must give honour where it is due.	Equivalent Meaning Translation	Meaning Distortion
12.		Málúú tó jẹbù ló ní ká na Fúlání, ọmọ ọba tó ja olẹ lóní kí á bú bẹrẹ òun.	The cattle that ate the seed yam causes the beating of the Fulani. A thieving Prince attracted slight to his lineage.	Direct Translation	Meaning Preservation
13.		Pàkúté tí a de fún àparò, agílíntí ló mú.	The trap set for the Partridge only caught an iguana.	Direct Translation	Meaning Preservation
14.		Aṣọ tí igbín bá bọ silẹ, kò sí eranko, kẹranko tó lẹ gbe wọ mọ.	I was a queen and no mere mortal can have me again.	Indirect Translation	Meaning Distortion
15.		Kàkà kí kìnihún ó ẹ akápò ekùn ó ní kí kálukú ó ya ẹ ọde tiẹ lóṣòṣò ni.	It's a nightmare how can I relate with Èwà.	Translation Shift	Meaning Distortion
16.		Ogún Ọmọdé kò le ẹrẹ fún ogún ọdún.	Twenty children cannot be together for twenty years.	Direct Translation	Meaning Modification
17.		Òkété ni èèwọ àwọn Oníkòyí, ọúnje aláḍùn ní fún àwọn elerin mọsa. Báyii láá sé ní ilé wa, èèwọ elòmí.	Bush rat is a taboo to the Ìkòyí people, but a tasty delicacy to the elerin mọsa, it is different strokes to different folks.	Partial Direct Translation	Meaning Preservation
18.		Tí wón bá ní eranko oniwo ní ó kan nipa, imòrán igbín wani.	Ògúndélé of all people?	Translation Shift	Meaning Distortion

19.		Gbogbo erú ló ní baba, ònà ló jìn.	Slaves also have relations but for distance.	Direct Translation	Meaning Preservation
20.	Ti Olúwa ni Ilẹ̀	Abèrèrè kì í sí ònà.	He that seeks guidance will not go astray.	Partial Direct Translation	Meaning Modification
21.		Eni tí ó bá dalẹ̀ dandan ní kí ó bá ilẹ̀ lọ.	A traitor must pay with his life.	Equivalent Meaning Translation	Meaning Distortion
22.		À n pé gbọn ni a kì í pé gò.	Two heads are better than one.	Equivalent Meaning Translation	Meaning Preservation
23.		Àyè gba ebòlò òun ránni sí òdú, àyè gba elédè ó wá fẹ́ máa sun àsùn nara.	This house can't contain him and us.	Translation Shift	Meaning Distortion
24.		A ti fí òjé bọ olóòsà lẹ̀wọ́ ó ku baba ẹni tí yóò yó.	The herbalist has worn the bangle who dares remove it.	Partial Direct Translation	Meaning Modification
25.		Ti a kò bá gbàgbé ọ̀rọ̀ ànà, a ò ní rẹ̀ni bá seré.	If we don't let bygone be bygone, we will be left without playmates.	Partial Direct Translation	Meaning Modification
26.		Tí wọ̀n bá ní omi ní ó se eja jinná, a ó sọ pé irọ̀ ní.	Who can ever associate water with the fish's doom.	Partial Direct Translation	Meaning Modification
27.	Agogo Èèwọ̀	Baálé ilé kú e tún fẹ́ mú ọ̀lọ̀kùnrun je oyè, ariwo yín ku èèkan.	That would be putting a square peg in a round hole, you will end up in square one.	Translation Shift	Meaning Distortion
28.		Bí a bá ní kí wèrè ó se òkú iyá è bóbá se fẹ́ ó le sún je.	If we allow a mad man to seize power, he might destroy us all.	Indirect Translation	Meaning Distortion
29.		Àgbà ló tó orò lẹ̀, ọ̀ba ló tó eyín erin fọ̀n.	It is you the cap fits.	Indirect Translation	Meaning Distortion
30.		Mọ̀jà mọ̀sá la fí n mọ̀ akọ̀ni, akọ̀ni tí kò bá mọ̀sá irú wọ̀n máa n kú sí ojú ogun ní.	A good soldier knows when to fight and when to retreat, the inexperienced ones are consumed in battle.	Direct Translation	Meaning Modification

The discussion of our findings is presented in the next section using a pie chart to show the frequency of the lexico-semantic categories.

Discussion of Findings

The first observation during the perusal of our data is that, most of the translations do not follow the source language wordings but deduction of meaning through inferential processes. This is to say that, most of the proverbs were indirectly translated. In other words, a considerable degree of logicity in meaning explication comes to play in translation. There is therefore a great deal of semantic and pragmatic presupposition in the translated Yoruba proverbs as carried out by the producers of the home videos.

Most of the imaginary and metaphorical characters that feature in the Source Text are neglected. The translators simply disregard the literal message and translate the implied information non-literally in order to convey the message to the audience. Examples of such can be seen in numbers 11, 15, 18, 23, 29, e.t.c. on the table above. Though, the level of correctness in these instances is not adjudged.

Another significant finding in this research is that some of the proverbs retain the original word structure in the Source Text and the translation preserves the source language meaning. Another important finding in this research is the level of completeness or otherwise of a translation process. Translation could be full or partial. It could be rank-bound or unbound, total or restricted. A case in point here is in sample 39 on the table. The style of translation in this reference corroborates Jacobson's (1957) revelation of the difficulties faced by translators. We find as true, the fact that translators face the problem of not finding a translation equivalent. In this study specifically in sample 1 where there are deficiencies in terminologies such as 'Bara' in Iku Ewa, 'Aileja', 'Agbajo owo' and 'Ajeje owo' in Arugba and 'palapaala' in Koshegbe. These words can pose difficulties to the translator in the process of translating because, English language do not have corresponding lexis for such lexical terms in Yoruba. In some instances, inaccurate translations were not censored for correction by the producers. One of such inaccurate cases includes 'itanje ki je agbon' which was translated as 'self interest impedes right action' instead of 'self deceit impedes correct sense of reasoning'. Also 'ofi ikanju labe gbona' was translated as 'you are too much in a hurry' instead of 'you are in a hurry to lick a hot stew'. Distortion and narrowing of meaning was recorded for such instances.

Conclusion

This paper purposed to examine English translated versions of proverbs used in Yoruba home video films using Lexico-semantic elements for analysis. In order to carry out a systematic study we reviewed Nollywood as a popular industry in the world before discussing translation theories critically. To open the nucleus of the study we visited contributions of Paremiologists in Nigeria before previewing lexico-semantic variables. The tabular analyses gave not only the contrastive picture of the proverbs expressed in Yoruba but also the translated versions in English language. On the table above, the varying lexico-semantic variables are itemized explicitly to give room for a head count which has enabled us provide the frequency of occurrence of each typology of translation. The pie chart above displayed the degrees of each variable.

Overall, we find that translation could be full, partial, equivalent and intra-systemic. There are also translation shifts in actual or intended meanings of proverbs as uttered by the speaker. Most proverbs in this study were not translated directly, but influentially. Thus, the implicit information rather than the overtly stated surface structure configuration of the proverbs were translated by the translators. The didactics of most of the films were also intact. There is above all, a wholesale of Mother Tongue influence in the translation.

Apart from the lexico-semantics of translations of Yoruba proverbs, which is our focus in this study, other viable areas such as the syntax, pragmatics and sociolinguistics could be explored. We have also observed some Rhetorical expressions, Imageries and Metaphors in the chosen proverbs.

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Ritual Dance as Factor in African Communities: An Appraisal of Oyarore Salt Festival

By

‘Tosin K. Tume’*

Abstract

Over the years, African ritual dances have been castigated as relics of our die-hard evil traditions. This is because people are either too scared or impatient to look deeply into these so-called devilish dances in order to ascertain what they really entail. African ritual dance which is mainly an offshoot of the traditional religion of our fathers, has suffered a major setback due to the advent of foreign religions - Christianity and Islam. There is no gainsaying the fact that, African dance; an esoteric art, is an embodiment of the totality of the African way of life. The aim of this paper therefore; using Oyarore Salt festival of the Alagon Keana people as a yardstick, is to create a new awareness for African ritual dances and also to highlight the numerous positive roles of ritual dance in the African society. This study collates its data using the Participant-observation method, in addition to several unstructured one-on-one interactions with some Alagon Keana elders who are considered to be custodians of the Alago culture. This study finds that Oyarore festival; especially its dance content, is indeed crucial to the well-being of the Keana people.

Introduction

The early European scholars and researchers of African dance did not help matters as they put in print their misinformed and misleading opinions about African dance. A certain European ethnographer, Mr. Hunter; accompanied a photograph of a masked Efik dancer with the following description:

With fantastic dances he parades the streets, making extraordinary gestures and contortions...without rhyme or reason. The whole object of this dance is to conciliate the Jujus or Devils... the Niger bush native does not pray to his

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gods to help him but to the devil so that he may not be harmed (Ajayi, 1998, p. 193).

Apart from the outrightly rude, racist and condescending tone of these foreigners, it is also obvious that they are oblivious to the positively multi-functional nature of ritual dance in the African society. There also seems to be a mix-up about the European concept of the 'Devil' and the African concept of 'gods'. To which Awolalu (1976, p.5) advocates that such misleading and derogatory terms as primitive, savage, witchcraft and pagan should not be used to describe traditional African religion in general. This fallacy has proven to be detrimental to the survival of African ritual dance.

Oyarore Salt Festival is a product of the history and culture of the Alagon Keana people. Alago is the ethnic identity and language spoken by an ethnic group which originates from the old Kwararafa kingdom. Hence, the Alago people of the Keana village are popularly referred to as Alagon Keana. They are found in the present day Nasarawa State in the North Central, Nigeria. The traditional religion of the Alago people is a major factor which influences the cultural values of the people. The religion has produced a lot of festivals; hence cultural dances, of which Oyarore is one. This paper is a study of the Oyarore Salt festival as a whole; and the dance content in particular. The study aims at discovering the significant roles of the festival in Keana community. This analysis will be carried out both in form and performance context.

Conceptual Clarifications

Ojuade (2004, p. 240) succinctly captures the essence of ritual dance when he says that:

Religious ritual, which is one of the major sources of dance in Nigeria, regulates the relationship between the members of the society and the supernatural powers which there is strong belief that they are in control of human activities...It is a central element in a ceremony or festival which is an act of worship for the members of a particular religious cult. The dance is usually performed by the initiates and may include the leading members of the cult.

Ritual dance therefore, represents the broadest of African dance. It enforces and affirms the belief system of the society, as such, they are usually religious in nature and are designated for specific occasions that expedite and facilitate the most powerful expression of the African people,

which is ancestral reverence. It is important to state here however; that Africans worship the gods but only revere the ancestors, what they have for their ancestors is filial respect.

However, in the course of reviewing this work, a question arose as to whether all ritual dances require wild movements during spirit possession. Several dance scholars and practitioners have commented on the issue, while one school of thought is of the opinion that ritual dance is incomplete without 'wild spirit possession' so to speak, another school of thought believes that spirit possession in ritual dance does not necessarily have to be in fast tempo. In Emoruwa's (2006, p. 168) opinion, ritual dance movements are characterised by 'wild gesticulations', he submits that:

In ritual dance performances, the dancers are possessed assumably at certain stages in the process of their dance movements and at such moments, they are capable of doing or accomplishing certain movements which otherwise would not have been possible...the atmosphere becomes charged and electrified with the dynamism of movements and pulsative rhythm of music; awe, uncertainty, and unpredictability are seen to characterize the dance performance.

Dissenting to this school of thought, Bakare (2005, p.79) states that

At another level, most ritual dances which are not trance-inclined are slow in tempo... responsible for this is the fact that the priests who normally lead such dances are elderly people who naturally do not possess enough stamina and strength to execute fast tempo movements.

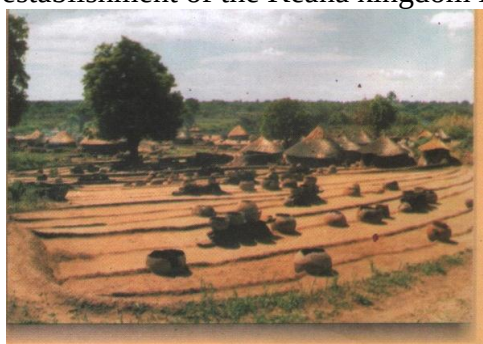
One could flout this opinion by asserting that when possessed, the performers are no longer in control of themselves, they become mere vessels for the spirits or gods. On the other hand, while watching AFRICA UMOJA - The Spirit of Togetherness, choreographed by Todd Twala and Thembi Nyadeni of the Victory Theatre, South Africa, this researcher was captivated by the Venda Snake Dance of the Zulu people, and one could not but observe the sharp contrast between the fast off-beat movements of the Sangoma- the elderly Priest and the slow snake-like movement of the maidens being prepared for their coming-of-age rites. The Sangoma, obviously in spirit possession, does some chants and incantation; twirls and swirls to invoke the spirits of the ancestors but the maidens maintain a slow; though trance-like movement, all in the same dance package.

Another example is the Biripo dance of the Ilaje people which is incomplete without the spinning movement from which the name of the dance; Biripo- meaning 'going in a round', is coined (Emoruwa, 2005, p. 98). But we also discovered that slow and deliberate movements characterise the Tsav-utu dance of the Tiv people, even when the devotees are 'possessed' or 'in trance'. From the above analysis, it is observed that in African ritual dance, the terms 'possession' and 'trance' are loosely employed.

Oyarore Salt Festival

According to Abdul Oyimani; a Keana indigene and one of my informants, the Keana village was founded in 1232 by the first Osana (the village head) - Akyana Adi who went hunting with his brother. Akyana got thirsty and drank water from a pond named 'Nyokonwa', but discovered that the pond was salty. He took some of this water to boil in order to bath with it but when the water dried up, he found salt instead.

During this time, salt was an uncommon substance and as such people used ashes to cook in order to make food tasty. He decided to stay back in this place and maximize the potentials of the great gift, which the gods had bestowed on him. His brother however, refused to stay back with him and he posed a question to Akyana saying 'A ke a na' what this means is 'Will you stay here alone' to which Akyana responded in the affirmative. It is said that the name of the village - Keana was derived from that conversation. He later went and brought his family to settle there with him and salt mining became their source of livelihood. The result is what is known today as Keana village. The founder of Keana village, Osana Akyana Adi, initiated Oyarore festival to celebrate the successful establishment of the Keana kingdom in the 13th century.



(An overview of the salt ridges in Keana village.)

Today, the Oyarore Salt festival is an annual event celebrated by the Alago people of Keana Local Government area of Nasarawa state between the months of October and November. The festival is a series of interrelated cultural activities and celebrations. The various stages of the festival are as follows: Epwaza, Ojakioba, Agwonya, Alene, Owebibi, Igyonya, Okpoya/Kwene, Otonobi/Amiri, Adumasa and Epwo. It is a weeklong festival that serves as a period of retreat, sober reflections, supplications and thanksgiving to the gods. The community seizes the opportunity of the festive period to celebrate freedom from oppression, conquest and famine on one hand, and the providence of bountiful bumper harvest and salt production during the year on the other hand.

Dance as Factor in Oyarore Festival

In the African milieu, it is nearly impossible to talk about dance without mentioning music. Tume (2012, p.166) asserts that “both (music and dance) are considered as Siamese twins because they complement each other. She further states that these art forms transcend beyond the purview of entertainment, as they are essential condiments for information dissemination, didacticism and spiritual supplications”. Therefore, as we discuss the Oyarore dance, we shall also analyze the songs which propel the dance movements.

The Oyarore Salt festival features dances at different stages of the festival, but the most important and perhaps the most significant of these dances are; Igyonya, Amiri and Adumasa. Though performed on different days and in different contexts, these three dances combined together are what are referred to as Oyarore Salt Dance.

Igyonya

This first segment of Oyarore dance takes place on the fourth day of the festival. The dance is performed by the male youths of the community known as Ayonya. This segment is preceded by what is known as Owebibi rites. Owebibi literally means the endurance path or dangerous period. It is so named because the Osana is confronted with a compulsory test of will, character and endurance mounted by members of the other royal families – Ayakato, in order to create a vacuum which could pave way for them to ascend the throne. Osana positions himself as a target for the Ayakato, who are armed with spears – Okute. If the Osana is hit, he automatically loses the throne, but if he emerges victorious he moves to the Onarikpe spot in front of the palace. This is where he proceeds to throw a spear across a reed fence in the direction of the Ayonya, who strive to catch it.

This spear in this context symbolises the benevolent spirit of the gods, and whoever catches it is rewarded with the gift of a virgin bride. Before throwing the spear, the Osana points it to the north, south and west. He takes his time and does a special dance movement to build up tension and anxiety amidst the crowd. With his eyes shut, he throws the spear suddenly. This is done so in order to catch the Ayonya unaware and to debunk any claims of favoritism. Immediately the spear is caught, a dance is performed to celebrate and rejoice with the lucky man. He is surrounded by the other male youths who clap their hands in 2 rhythm, moving their heads from side to while singing.

As marriage is a fairly expensive venture and virgin brides are becoming rare, for a young man born without a silver spoon to win a virgin bride free of charge is viewed as double good luck which should be celebrated.



(A re-enactment of Igyonya on stage by the Nasarawa State Performing Troupe.)

Ajima kenene agyawo yawama 2x
 Agyawo yawa negenege - agyawo yawama
 Agyawo yawa naganaga - agyawo yawama
 Ema keneyine obi ka dami nayison
 Ela ka gyayine awani

Translation

A beautiful woman is a treasure to have
 The way she walks and talks is a sight to behold
 Ajima, your beauty and purity has singled you out\
 I am fortunate to have a woman like you

This song extols the virtues of the virgin bride, it also encourages the other maidens to maintain their dignity and pride of womanhood. The tempo of the music increases and their dance movements automatically

follows suit. They sway their hands from side to side while gliding and shuffling their feet in a 4 musical time, they also glide their necks in the 4 directions of their hands.

Unlike the other segments of the Oyarore dance, Igyonya is not actually choreographed, it features solo and duet dance performances. At this point the music rises to a crescendo and the atmosphere becomes charged as the audience pours encomium on the dancers. This takes the dance to another level as the male youths stamp their feet in frenzy on the ground in sheer joy and celebration of their virility. In this segment there is an emphasis on the movement of the head and torso, the dancers vibrate their chests to show off their flexibility and dancing prowess in order to attract female admirers.

Amiri

The second segment of the Oyarore salt dance is known as Amiri. It derives its name from the venue of the dance performance which is the Opwunu shrine situated at the graves of the departed Osanas. This is the ritual-inclined aspect of Oyarore dance and it is performed by a cult named Obak'amiri. Though the membership of this cult comprises of both sexes, the onus of the ritual lies solely on the female initiates. The purpose of this dance is to make supplications on behalf of the community, to the ancestors and the deities. The initiates are aware of the gravity of their responsibility and on this they concentrate. The dance motif is done in the medium level; this is to stress communalism which is a major theme of the festival, and also to highlight the importance of the task they carry out on behalf of the community. Though there is no age-limit for the participants, the dancers are arranged according to their different age groups, starting from the little girls, the teenagers/young maidens, wives, young men, with the Asolokpagye (kingmakers/titleholders) at the rear. Their first destination is the Opwunu shrine where they join the Osana in doing a rite of supplication.

Their journey starts with a special message sent out by the Okpo drum. This is to announce to the community that the Obak'amiri initiates are on their way to bring the Osana back from Opwunu shrine. Immediately this is done the women respond by shouting 'A booo', then they start their journey. On their way to the shrine, there are no songs, only drum beats done in 4, to which the women do a special slow deliberate movement; jerking their 4 necks, shuffling their feet in communication with mother-earth, holding the edges of their wrappers while counting four-four steps

forward and backwards alternatively. Their posture is a perpetual crouch as they bend towards the earth throughout their journey to and fro the shrine.

The rhythmic unity of all their bodies, generate the purification of body and soul and sanctify the worshippers for the delicate task ahead. They move in a straight line with grim determination. Bakare opines that dance movements done in a straight line gives a feeling of boldness, strength and determination (2004, p. 37). None of them talks, answer any greeting nor stop their movements, not even to answer the call of nature. The ethereal quality of this segment of the dance is the crux of Oyarore Festival. At the shrine, Otete; Osana's most senior wife, hands over her calabash containing Odudu (a mysterious sacrificial object) to the Asolokpagye, who in turn join the Osana inside the shrine to conclude the rites.

The significance of this rite is to venerate the ancestors and solicit their support for a favourable new year of salt-mining and farming. History has it that this has happened only once since the inception of Keana village. (The Asolokpagye leading the Obak'amiri back from the Opwunu shrine.)



Adumasa

The Amiri event dovetails into Adumasa which is the grand-finale of the Oyarore Salt Festival. It is entirely celebrative in nature. On getting to Iwuagwu, the council of chiefs in a single file lead the Osana into square, their arrival is heralded by a special tune done by the chief flutist 'tu tu tu ru ru' this tune is translated to mean - 'O ya rooo re' the chorus is provided by the royal band, and this is acknowledged by ecstatic shouts and cheers from the community.

Once the elders are seated, Otete, with a piercing voice does a chant which goes thus; 'O go go go go gaaaaa', to which the women respond 'A wa a aa yi eeeh'. Then together they all take the song below in a wailing form:

Ose nwinyin nalo ozalo ojyi Keana 2x
Iyin walo kpada, kado za

Ojyi Keana vwu

This song says the Osana is a cleansing agent to the community and that he has succeeded in cleansing the whole land, this is also a way of announcing to the community that the cleansing rites had been performed and that it is a success.

Arize arizele ariyo 2x

Oya yin sowowa nya gwa yinbo

So gbari gbari na gwa nayinso

Arize arizele ariyo

Translation

The kernel is ripe for eating

It is ready for eating

Let's eat it now

Lest it goes sour

This is a rousing song for the community to celebrate the success of the ritual. Once this song is raised, the Ayobula files into the Iwuagwu square in a single procession hitting the back of their right palms into their left palms to 2 count, their foot-work also is done in 2 two-two count alternating their movements from the right to the left. Their hands and leg movement follow the same direction.

Once the male dancers establish their presence on stage, the instrumentalists change the music and the Kalangwu leads with this rhythm - 'Wasa berekete sai Keana'; ♪♪ ♪♪ ♪, meaning- 'If you want to witness spectacular cultural performances, then go to Keana'. This is to psych themselves as well as their audience up. In order to meet up with the new tempo which is faster, the dancers jerk their shoulders and backs to a 4 count while moving from 4 side to side. This is the motif of the dance. They sing and dance in a circle. Bakare observed that when people dance in a circle, it suggests that they have something in common (2004, p. 34).

The dance continues with the title-holders who take the floor in pairs according to their hierarchy. The dance motif features feet gliding and flamboyant movement of both arms and legs, alternated from the right to the left, all to the count of 2. This dance is highly graceful and elegant. The title-holders sing praise songs in honor of the Osana to appreciate his good leadership. The flutist plays a major role in this dance as he doles out rich proverbs in the Alago culture via his instrument:

Oyi nayo dusioni alazananu 2x

Osana nayo dusioni

Alazananu alazun nayison

Translation

Let's leave the crown for whom it fits 2x

Osana is worthy of the throne

Let's honor him

The stage is then set for the Osana who is the last person to perform his dance. As he gets up to dance; he is cheered by the titleholders and all the townspeople. His dance steps are even more dignified than that of the titleholders; it is called 'Mikpoda'. The graceful Mikpoda movements are done in 2 counts sideways with the hands spread out to display the hand props 2 - the spear. There is limited body movement involved in this dance; the Osana just sways to the music. At some points, the Osana stands still, holds out the spear in different directions and nods his head in rhythm to acknowledge the people's ecstatic shouts and ululations. The Osana's dance is the climax of the festival because it is very rare to see him at all not to talk of seeing him dance. Thus, his dance brings a special kind of excitement and flavor to the festival as a whole. At this point, the townspeople ululate and pour encomiums on the Osana, there are shouts of 'A wa a ye e', 'Alan gba gye' all to celebrate and motivate their King.

Conclusion

Oyarore Salt Festival which is older than any living son or daughter of Keana land, has transformed into a season of gaiety, home-coming, stock-taking and deep reflections for the Alago people in Keana community. The primary aim of this festival is to appreciate the gods for a successful salt mining year and bumper harvest, to appease them in case of wrong-doing by any member of the community and to usher in another fruitful year of salt mining, farming and trading.

The significance of salt mining, agricultural production, morality, deity, womanhood and community bonding is exemplified by the various activities of the festival. These intriguing activities reinforce the African belief that it is the combination of hard-work and divine help that translates to success, wealth and general well-being of any given people. Supplication rites, propitiations and invocations form an integral part of the Oyarore festival, and dance serves as a medium for these rites. To a large extent, the nitty-gritty of these rites are highly revered and kept secret from non-initiates.

Oyarore Salt Dance is not performed as mere entertainment in the festival; it is part of the ritualistic observances of the festival. It aids the fluid communication synergy between the members of Keana community, their ancestors and the gods. The dance movements employed in Oyarore Salt festival have in them allusions to events, places and symbolism of the Keana historical development. Hence, it serves a vehicle for oral tradition and communal edification.

We acknowledge that times change, and that some of our old traditions have lost relevance in these modern times. Nevertheless, culture being a dynamic social phenomenon should be interrogated and improved upon, and not be condemned. It is interesting and ironic to note that those who introduced foreign religions to Africa but condemned our traditional religion have not totally abandoned theirs. Our rich cultural artefacts which were carted away to the Western world were not destroyed; instead they are now being proudly displayed for commercial purposes by the same people who condemned them as evil and demonic. Most of the worldwide celebrated Western festivals, carnivals and holidays are deeply rooted in pagan origins, but the Westerners have found a way of refining them such that they are globally acceptable and as a result have boosted their economies in the area of tourism. This is what should be emulated in Africa.

It is laudable, that in preparation for the country's centennial anniversary, the Nigerian Federal Government has called on European Nations to return the over 3000 artworks believed to have been stolen by British expedition personnel during the Benin invasion. The search for these national treasures is a right step taken in the direction of national re-orientation, re-awakening and renewal.

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A Study of Julie Okoh as a Nigerian Female Playwright-Director

By

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Abstract

The importance of a play director and the role of a playwright in the process of play production cannot be over-emphasised. However, this study is not intended to debate the superiority of either of the two artists over the other but to discuss the interconnection between the two. Therefore, this paper examines the female director in Julie Okoh. The study, also, discusses the reasons why there are few female play directors in the Nigerian theatre and why they prefer writing and directing their plays. Consequently, this study adopts the interview and the deductive research methods. The paper reveals that the art of play directing is very important in the process of play production, so also is the theatre director who engages in the art. The study concludes that the art of play directing is not an impossible art for the female gender.

Introduction

Playwriting is a highly creative, meticulous and challenging art of the theatre. It is a craft that gives the playwright and the director the license to create characters and present them like normal human beings. Therefore, the vital and crucial roles of a play director in play performance process make the art of play directing a significant part of the theatre. Perhaps, this is why Musa (2006, p. 232) succinctly states that:

the art of performance whether; social, cultural, improvisational, scripted, commission, or religious can only become reality through the creative endeavour of theatre director in his complex and tasking art of play directing.

Though the art of play directing is a very demanding art, it is however, not an impossible art either for the male or female gender; hence, the beaming

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of our search light on the works of a Nigerian Female Playwright and a director - Julie Okoh.

Literature Review

Kelsall's (1985, p. 1) submission below describes aptly the importance of a good playwright and significance of a good play. He states:

Just as a wheelwright makes wheels; a playwright makes plays. The work is a craft... In what way can the reader better understand the written text as theatre? Without the craft there is nothing; a wheel which falls to pieces on the road is a bad wheel; a piece of theatre which will not play is bad theatre.

For the playwright to truthfully create, he needs to be vast in the display of the under-listed skills:

- The manipulation of words which can be referred to as oratory skills,
- Building and development of characters,
- Provision of moving images sometimes beyond human imagination,
- Development of plot structure,
- The art of giving stage instructions in a way that the readers and actors would be carried along,
- The art of structuring conflict
- Putting down a story worthy of performance and criticism,
- Ability to abide by the laws of genres,
- Ability to build strong suspense that will make the audience or reader curious
- Blending of one's story with the socio-cultural setting of the play and so on.

The playwright, who possesses the afore-listed skills can be likened to a 'god' because he decides the fate of his characters, the setting of the play and the kind of home he provides for them- whether they will be rich or poor lies in the hands of the playwright. He is therefore the master-creator of the play.

Suffice to say that the importance of the art of play directing and the director in the theatre can never be overemphasised. This is why it became imperative for the dramatists of old to add the theatre director to the list of principal theatre artist. Barranger (1991, p. 106) elucidates on this that:

emerging in the 19th century, the theatre director is one of the recent additions to the list of principal theatre artist...whereas the playwright creates the play's world, its

events, people and meaning on paper. The modern director...interprets the playwright's vision; audiences experience the play largely through the director's imagination- eyes, ears, emotion and intellect, so the modern director has become as distinct a force in the theatre as the playwright.

This confirms that adding the theatre director to the lists of play production crew made a great difference in the theatre. Ever since the director became a theatre authority, production styles changed, the actors are no longer directing themselves, playwrights also have the assurance that their plays will be well directed without any misinterpretation. Thus, play director plays a distinctive role in the theatre.

Little wonder why, Musa (2006, p. 231) describes the play director as "a metaphor in the theatre...a leader in the play production process, he is also paradoxically a messenger, an intermediary, a mediator and a creator of the highest order." Having examined comprehensively, the playwright and play director, it will be apt for this study to elucidate in the art. Play directing can be defined as the practical interpretation of a playwright's script by the director, from page to stage. Hodge (1971, p. 1) explains that "play directing is a highly sensitive craft..." Johnson (2003, p. 57) also shares Hodge views when he defines directing as

an intellectually-tasking, creati-theatrical stage activity, which involves the management of artistic personnel and creative devices towards a deliberate moulding of a perceived vision, into its most sublime form. It is the master art of the theatre which utilizes all the theatrics of theatricalities in the process of presenting a vision of life. It is like filling out a formidable force, strategic in all theatrical arsenals for the session of the director's art-clan from the colony of the playwright.

Stemming from Johnson's definition above, he clearly establishes directing as an art which can be properly handled by committed directors, giving its enormous demands. It therefore, means that it is only intelligent and very creative play director that can manage human resources; both cast and crew and also harness all theatre technical elements; such as lighting, costume, make-up, props, music, sound, special effect and so on, to put on stage that which has been written down by the playwright.

Consequently, the theatre director has a lot of production complexities to contend with, this is why Edwards (1991, p. 82) says

being a director can be 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.

This is the hard and tasking complexities that play directors, including the female directors have to contend with. It is worthy of note that this feat our case study; Julie Okoh has performed. It is also gratifying to note that in the creams of successful female directors in Nigeria are: Stella Dia Oyedepo, Late Zulu Sofola to mention a few.

Julie Okoh as the Playwright/Director

Julie Okoh narrated the experience that led her into the art of playwriting at the first Nigerian Playwright's Confab, which took place between 8th and 10th of March, 2013 at the Dramatic Arts Department of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, she said:

I love writing and I started very young, but I was writing poems and short stories. An incidence that happened on my street inspired me to write plays; a woman poured acid on her husband and he died... No one was ready to understand the agony and trauma the woman was passing through which led her to murder... I needed to pass messages across to the people of the whole world about women, why they do what they do, how to care, treat and relate with them, how to cherish them. So, that was what led me to playwriting.

Okoh does stop at writing plays but she goes ahead to direct such plays. In a section of an interview with this researcher at the aforementioned Playwrights' Confab, Okoh stated clearly that until she is convinced that her play has the spices needed for it to be cooked, she will not publish it neither will she put it on stage. She enumerates such spices to include the following

- A play with complete plot structure that has a beginning middle and ending;
- A play which has a well-developed characters;
- Appropriate choice of language which should be based on the level of education of the character, production crew and audience
- Precise stage instructions and the
- Use of metaphorical expressions and so on

Expressly, Julie Okoh applies all the above in all her published and unpublished plays. She is also noted for simple language. This she uses to portray the socio-cultural disposition of her characters. Thus, submitting that language plays an indispensable role in play making. This, position enjoys Adeoye's (2013, p. 1) position when he asserts that:

Language is a key factor in cultural aesthetics and its universality cannot be over-emphasised. It towers, and very critically too, above other socio-cultural and religio-political behavioural patterns and nuances. As a distinguishing factor, it glitters and shines within the icon of human identity. Language is so important that its loss is seen as the loss of race, and or human identity.

It is worthy to remark too that Julie Okoh displays a remarkable ability of language manipulation in her works. She creates plot structure that sustains her storyline, builds and develops characters in line with the images in her plays. Her stage instructions and conflicts are well created; she also creates moods and feelings that keep her audience transfixed.

It is also worthy of note that Okoh pays much attention to issues bordering on women in the society. For example, in *Mannequins* (1997), she "condemns the problems of girl-child abuse which is prevalent in Nigerian society. In the play, a little girl is defiled by her father unknowingly. She suffered trauma from (VVF)- vesico vaginal fistula. VVF according to The Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development, a non-governmental organisation, is a "subtype of female urogenital fistula "UGF" which occurs when the blood supply to the tissues of the vagina and the bladder is restricted during prolonged obstructed labour, the tissues die between these organs, forming holes through which urine can pass uncontrollably"(Okoh, 1997, p. 1). This occurrence is buttressed by (Ajayi, 2006, p. 1) when he expresses his displeasure on the issue of insecurity in Nigeria, he counsels the government to "provide adequate security for its citizens, especially the children...there are cases of female children being molested and harassed sexually". In *Mannequins*, Okoh says "I presented the danger of abusing the female folk and charged them to rise up and say capital NO to it" (Okoh in Ajayi, 2006, p. 1)

Okoh in her play *Edewede* (2000) treats the subject of female circumcision. Africans believe so much in female circumcision, they regard it as a means of protecting and preserving the sexual morality of young girls. Circumcision is also seen as a rite of passage from girlhood to womanhood in African society. This perhaps explains why they cherish this aged long

tradition. However, Okoh sees circumcision as an act that lacks compassion and consideration for the female folk, she regards it as a primitive, non-civilized, flagitious practice and an act of dehumanisation of the women folks. The play expresses her feelings against the archaic tradition and a call for eradication of the beastly act in the African societies.

Closed doors (2007) is another play from Julie Okoh, it bothers on the rejection and agony female victims face with in the society. The play revolves around Tracey who is impregnated by a politician and as a result is disowned by her father. The politician abandons her and wants her dead so as not to jeopardise his political ambition. She runs away in search of shelter and security.

She later finds herself in Goodwill Nursing Home where she meets many young girls as inmates who also have similar experiences. Unfortunately, the Goodwill Nursing Home is baby racketeering home where abortions are done for their inmates. However, Tracey finds friends and confidants in some of the inmates who encourage her to keep her baby and go back to complete her studies after delivery. Along the line, she comes across her mother who has been on her trail. Her mother helps in taking proper care of her baby and herself.

Julie Okoh has many other plays to her credit such as *Aisha* and so on, she has also directed many of them by herself. Though she did not plan to become a play director, but her experience in the past led her to the art of play directing. She narrated how her plays were being rejected by the staff of the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Port Harcourt (She was then, a Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature of the same University). “To get plays staged was difficult”, she said, “I gave plays to those in Theatre department, they would not stage it; I was asked to pay exorbitantly.”

Another notable challenge faced by Julie Okoh was when she managed to raise money to stage one of her plays, *Mannequins*. The rehearsal was cancelled two days to production by colleagues who believed “I was contaminating the tribe which is the Centre of culture in University of Port Harcourt Nigeria by writing a dirty play”. What is dirty about the play? I asked. “They said I wrote about the incident that occurred in the University and they recognised some prominent people in the play. Staging plays was so difficult then. One day, my mentor, the late sage, Ola Rotimi called me and said “why don’t you direct your plays? So, I decided to try no matter how difficult it seems and I went for one year play directing training”. Today, Okoh has become a professional director.

Okoh also realised that her plays are not well directed by a few directors who had handled her plays. Most of them are student directors who cannot interpret her plays well. This is one of the reasons why she showed serious interest in play directing. In fact, she crossed from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature to Department of Theatre Arts, University of Port-Harcourt, Rivers State of Nigeria. Today, Okoh has directed most of her published and unpublished plays. She has also contributed immensely in the area of play directing. Her exploits include departmental productions as well as convocation plays at the University of Port-Harcourt. Interestingly, she has never been found wanting. It is noteworthy that Julie Okoh does not direct only her plays but plays by other playwrights. As a female play director, Okoh makes it known to her audience that she does not find play directing difficult anymore because of her determination to be versatile in the theatre world.

It is noteworthy however, that Okoh mentioned in a section of an interview with this researcher that she is working seriously in carving a niche for herself in the art of play directing by creating a style that will be called her own. This will soon become a reality because Julie Okoh is incessantly working on making a style in her chosen art.

Conclusion

It has to the fore in this study that despite the achievements of female dramatists, especially those in the academics, they feel reluctant in facing the challenges of play directing. The example of Julie Okoh, a theatre scholar, seasoned playwright and creative director is thus, worthy of emulation.

This research does not conclude that Julie Okoh is the only female dramatist who directs plays in Nigeria, but we only point out her achievements in the areas of play writing and directing in order to motivate other women who are yet to discover their skills and talents in both arts. The essence of this research therefore, is for the promotion and advancement of theatre in Nigeria. Thus, it is our sincere hope that Nigerian female dramatists will stand up to the challenges of play directing which will be of great benefit to them, to Nigerian theatre and to African theatre at large.

Suggestions and Recommendations

The study has shown that directing cuts across all areas of the theatre which includes technical theatre, drama, music and dance. This makes the theatre director relevant in the theatre. Julie Okoh's example is an invitation

to other female dramatists to embrace the art of play directing, an important art of the theatre.

Therefore, this researcher is recommending for upcoming female dramatists and those who are already practicing:

- That they should learn the art of play directing while the few play directors among them, learn how to write good plays. Doing this will promote theatre practice
- That women should learn to face their challenges and know that nothing is impossible for a determined person. Apart from learning the skills of writing and directing plays, women should also empower themselves in any career they find themselves so as to be relevant in the society.
- It is also important that playwright/director should allow other artists to criticize or direct their plays, this will help bring out the hidden beauty of their works and give other interpretations other than that of the playwrights.
- It is also important that female playwrights and directors use their plays as medium of training female dramatists the art of play directing.

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The Development and Implications of Contemporary Dance Genre to Dance Practice in Nigeria

By

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Abstract

Dance is part of identities of the many tribes and communities in nations. It indicates or differentiates us as beings or entities in the same state called Nigeria. In the early 1990s, 1992-1994 to be precise, a 'new' genre of dance eroded and overwhelmed the dance industry in Nigeria. It is known and called contemporary dance. It was believed to have been introduced by the French Cultural Centre in Lagos. The spread of the dance genre was like wildfire that almost swept off the essence of our traditional dances. It was most rampant in South West Nigeria, precisely Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States. Its consequences still linger till date among the different professional dancers and choreographers across the country, with its traces and traits in every work of dance choreographed. This paper, therefore chronicles the origin and development of this dance genre as well as its vast effects on our cultural dances, the dance artistes and the dance industry in general. This paper concludes that people of Africa should not reject contemporary dance genre because it is about other people's culture, and that our ability to allow several foreign dance forms to grow side by side with our own various dances will allow us to come to term with the reality of postmodern studies.

Introduction

Over the years, several performances have taken place in the area of drama, exhibition, film show, cultural dance and musicals in Nigeria. However, the advent of the contemporary dance genre in Nigeria, in 1994 through the French Cultural Centre, with the Claude Brumanchon and Benjamin Lamarche Dance Workshop cannot be overemphasised. The Dance Workshop attracted different dance groups and individuals such as the National Troupe of Nigeria, the Ivory Ambassadors, the Black Marbles,

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Akins Productions, and many others too numerous to mention. The Workshop which took off with about three hundred dancers saw only seven dancers as finalists. They were later taken to France to gain more experience in the area of the 'supposed' new dance genre. On the return of the dancers, the dance industry in Nigeria started to experience a new twist that spread like wildfire and enveloped the South-Western part of the country. It is worthy to note that he who pays the piper dictates the tune. That was the case of the introduction of the dance genre: contemporary dance.

The initiators (the French Cultural Centre) paid for everything they did with Nigerian dancers. This includes workshop allowances, something that had never happened in the Nigerian dance industry before. This attracted more dancers to the workshop as an avenue to make their daily bread, even when they knew they would not be picked or selected. The trend did not subside without serious implications on our culture and dance practice in Nigeria. This study therefore, examines the development and implications of contemporary dance genre to dance practice in Nigeria.

Developmental Phases of Dance in Nigeria

The development of dance in Nigeria is in phases just like other arts. After the primitive or ritual phase which can be termed as belonging to the earliest period, came the missionary era during which the Nigerian traditional dances in classical form, especially those ones with rituals, suffered a setback. This was because the Missionaries openly discouraged traditional performances. The setting up of the colonial administration opened up a number of urban centers and this led to the relegation of the existing traditional forms to the background. Due to the fact that the setting and motives for such performances were different, the style and form also changed.

This period marked the beginning of the second phase of development of dance as an art form in Nigeria. With the attainment of independence in 1960, a lot of dance/cultural troupes emerged in almost all the urban centers to take care of the cultural interest of people or groups. This led to the emergence of new choreographers who usually were the leaders of such cultural groups. Immediately after the FESTAC 77 fiesta, many groups emerged. The government established art councils to evolve cultural programmes and festivals, such as the National Festival Arts (NAFEST). This art festival, which has been held in the former region of Nigeria, has proven to be an important catalytic element in the movement

of dancers and musicians away from their home areas into spheres of entertainment and modern theatre

Many were the private dance groups that were formed after FESTAC 77. Such groups includes African Heritage by Bhola Eberiga and Umobit Christopher; African Moonlight by Victor Eze; Grassroot by Sola Sobowale; Troupe Aficana by Lizzy Hammond; Ayota by SegunTaiwo; Akins Productions by Issac Ikemefuna; Gangan Performing Troupe by Kayode Idris; Okin Performing Troupe by Yemi Remi; Victory; Centre Stage by Sola Fosudo; Ebony Club International by Soyinka Ayoola, John Okhai, Bassey Emmanuel and Muiyiwa Oshinaike; Ivory Ambassadors by Steve James; Black Marble by Muiyiwa Oshinaike; Gongbeat by Debo Alexandra; Pitch Production by Felix Emoruwa and many others too numerous to mention. Most of the above mentioned dance companies, as they are called today, were culturally-oriented and professional.

The present phase is the supposed 'new' dance trend, the contemporary dance, which is still attributed to the French Cultural Centre. But one will be quick to ask if truly contemporary dance as it were, in Nigeria was actually the innovation of the French Cultural Centre, because there is a difference between an initiator and an inventor. Clark (1998, p. 191) hints at this in saying that:

In African philosophy, the significant notion exists that at creation, every human being is imbued with the creative spark, which is grounded in the substance of the individual soul and personal concrete destiny. However, this creative energy- usually perceived as a discernable manifestation of creative spirit of the divine essence in the human-maybe due to the practice of attention and intuition insight, be expanded and formulated into active perceptive use or be left dormant. But wherever the latent energy of creativity is kindled into becoming sensitive to human conditions in the concrete world, creative impulse are activated to explore and make meaning of these conditions. Herein to the Africans lie the operative principles that result in inspiring creative achievements...

Contemporary dance in Nigeria could be said to have been made popular by the Claude Brumanchon's workshop with Nigerian dancers which was meant to be a cultural exchange of dance cultures but soon turned to be importation or enforcement of French contemporary vocabulary on the Nigerian dancers. The French Cultural Centre lured many dancers into

believing that the programme or the dance workshop was a cultural exchange programme, where ideas and minds would be rubbed together to evolve a dance piece that will depict the co-existence of the two countries. It was meant to celebrate the African-Nigerian rhythm with the French-Western moves to form a common dance vocabulary that will suit both parties. But alas, it turned out to be an imposition of French culture on our people (Nigerian dancers). Till date, that French vocabulary has come to stay and has eaten deeply into our new generation of dancers who cannot do any dance movement without that vocabulary, even in our core traditional dance.

Our attention needs to be called to the meaning of contemporary or modern dance as the case maybe. Contemporary dance is not totally the creation of a new dance step or movement but refining, restructuring, amplifying or intensifying an existing movement in conventionality to whatever statement you want to make at a given time within a given situation. It is on this premise that Martha Graham who was termed as the mother of contemporary dance said it is a shift away from the unadventurous or regimented way of doing the same movement or dance all over again and again but creating a new thing from the same old way. So, she referred to contemporary dance as 'freedom', 'new' and 'now' which simply means that contemporary dance gives room for liberty of expressions, innovations and ingenuity but the word contemporary dance cannot stand alone as it were without an existing traditional movement.

Dance in Nigeria has been developing since the time of the *Alarinjo* theatre in the old Oyo Empire. One cannot but emphasise the role of the *Egungun* masquerade. The emergence of such troupes in the middle of the nineteenth century as *Aiyeba Labe*, *Aiyelabola*, and later *Agbegijo*, *Ajangila* and *Ajofeebo* that constantly performed in the king's place at *Egungun* festivals and other functions also popularised dance. With the aforementioned, dance transcended the level of ordinary entertainment but went professional. And the transformation at that time can be termed contemporary because they continue to advance in their creativity.

The theatre convention of the *alarinjo* theatre can vividly appreciate against its own historical background, professional practice and system of operation as a traveling theatre. Its inmate dynamics sustained it as a going concern during its span in spite of the forces which have committed it to antiquity, its members are being raked up and its undying influence is now visible in the organisational and

operational practice of the practitioners of the contemporary traveling theatre led by Hubert Ogunde. (Adedeji, 1981, p. 244).

Ogunde was assumed to be the first Nigerian artist of the contemporary theatre to turn professional and assume the leadership of a flourishing theatre troupe.

Between the year 1991 and 1992, Muyiwa Osinaike, a dancer and choreographer of high repute started a new form of dance style before the advent of the dance workshop organised by the French Cultural Centre. His style was termed then by many audience and dancers alike who are conversant with the trend as 'stunt or madness'. Nevertheless, few dancers managed to learn or tap from this source because they were then apprenticed to Muiyiwa Osinaike. They are the likes of Dayo Liadi, Abel Utuedor, Mc Cypress, and Anthony Odey. The said stunt or madness later paid-off for them in the new contemporary dance genre in Nigeria popularised by the French Cultural Centre. The greatest mistake or unfortunate thing at that time was that Muiyiwa Osinaike himself could not define the genre of his style due to lack of knowledge of such words like 'contemporary'. Therefore, this act of ignorance gave room to the dance workshop by Claude and Benjamin organised by the French Cultural Center to take the shine away from Muiyiwa Osinaike by redefining it to the average Nigerian dancer as contemporary dance. However, even before the popularity of this genre, there were lots of playhouses that had been using this style of dancing in order to make their plays more compact. Such playhouses were the Ori Olokun Theatre in Ife, University of Ibadan Masque, Bassey Effiong's Anansa Playhouse, Chuck Mike's PEC Repertory Theatre, Felix Okolo's Tempo Production, Israel Eboh's Fezi Productions and Ben Tomolaju's Kakaaki, etc. All the above and many others have been engaging in contemporary dance before the dance workshop of the French Cultural Centre. At that period, Okolo and Muiyiwa were the duo that reigned in the National Theatre with this dance genre which was commended by Ogungbade (1994, p. 12) in *Guardian* newspaper:

Past theatre tradition cultural ethnos in designing a non-aligned theatre concept that would not suit the modernist expectation of a form that says much without speaking much. The overall objective of [this] device is to shut the actor, so that the audience can have less to hear, but much to see, thereby able to think more.

The Nigerian Dancer and his Obliviousness

The arrival of the Saros (freed slaves from Sierra Leone) created a new class of “black white adulterated” was found to be acceptable to the new class of slaves or “Bee-toes”. The new literature class embraced the “Waltz, the foxtrot of the Europeans in order to evolve the highlife which was mainly a social dance with modern music, calypso influence are sung in English, pigin or vernacular. The highlife dance was mainly for the night clubs and parties in the cities. (Yerima, 2004, pp. 10-12).

If the assertion above is anything to go by, it is pertinent to note that modern or contemporary dance had been in Nigeria before the French Cultural Centre organized its workshop in 1994, contrary to claims or speculations by a few dance practitioners, mostly in Lagos, about the evolvement of modern or contemporary dance in Nigeria. This is a crystal confirmation that contemporary dance has been with us even before the French Cultural Centre made it popular. The likes of Chuk Mike and especially Felix Okolo, in the 1980s, with his plays like *Irara Alagbe*, *Edikankan* and *Walking Stick* which employ the expertise of Muyiwa Osinaike in creating ostentatious or hyperbolic traditional movement in ballistic technique to compliment the ‘crazy’ directorial approach of Okolo which was then termed ‘stunt’ in dance. This was due to the obliviousness of most of the dancers around then which was propelled by their lack of both formal and informal training. However, it was a time of insurrection in the dance industry in Nigeria, as the dancers did not have fore-knowledge of such revolutionary moves. They had no other suitable word for it then than stunt or madness. Also, due to lethargy and witlessness of the dancers’ inabilities to cope or endure with the trend at that time, the initiators (Muyiwa) became discouraged, and as a result of this neglect, it then shows that whatever originates from us as Africans is always viewed with disdain. Also, it is widely believed that the concept of that contemporary African culture is a distorted copy, a mere imitation of western, and therefore, lacks authenticity. This is why Bakare (2006, p. 4) notes that: “as a result of these, a whole generation of Africa is growing up without a sense of self-esteem. They are growing with the mentality that whatever is African is inferior. Consequently, whatever is African is jettisoned while whatever is western is patronised without discrimination”.

That insurgency in Nigerian theatre brought about the awareness of the new approach to dance in the late 1990s to date. There were many other

performances that hauled this same path. For example Makinde Adeniran's *Kaaki a go go*, Segun Adefila's *Crown Troupe* picked its genre of theatre which he still practices to date. Felix Okolo's *Mekunnu Melody* was not left out, Felix Emoruwa's *Echoes from the Graveyard*, Ebony's *Passionate Mission*, Ivory Ambassadors' *Issues of our Time* and National Troupe's *Journey through Life*, *Song on Erima* and many others. So it will be an aberration for anyone to assume that it was the French Cultural Centre that introduced to Nigeria and Nigerians the contemporary dance genre in any context. Bakare (2006, p. 6) frowns seriously on this when he says:

Therefore, while the Europeans and the Americans will no longer come to Africa with chains to enslave Africans, nor come with their jungle boots and helmet to colonise us, with the benefit of negative intelligence, they have come in a subtle and more ways using culture, art especially dance/musical entertainment, and media. They have repackaged their chains, jungle boots and helmets in bright and exciting colours called pop, dancehall and contemporary dances and we have embraced them and so we dance our way back to slavery.

Ignorance is said to be the greatest disease. This is when one does not know about the existence of something, which does not mean the non-existence of such a thing. This is the case of those uneducated dancers who first encounter the French choreographers.

Another critical voice condemns this Eurocentricism:

The truth remains that stage presentation not structured or sequenced by dance or stylized movement is alien to the inherent Nigeria sensibilities. This is the case of the new generation dancers who one way or the other has not read, seen or heard anything about the existence of modern or contemporary dance before now. So, when the French cultural introduced its vocabulary to the Nigeria dancers, it was new, fresh and more attractive to embrace without knowing the indepth knowledge involved. (Akinsipe, 1999, p. 44)

The Adverse Effects of Contemporary Dances on African Dances

Looking at the trend globalisation, there is no doubt that socio-cultural, political revolution which is the order of the day is necessary. The reality of modern pressure and social

revolution has altered the order of the trend of life. Africa, indeed, Nigeria, in particular, must not forget the principle of comparative advantage. Africans must put to effective use, its dance culture” (Monyeh, 2007, p. 113).

But it is good to note that there was serious consciousness about the trend by concerned scholars. This same trend brought out the likes of Adedayo Liadi, Abubakar Usman, Abdul Onibasa, Faith Benson, Abel Utuedor, Esther Olaniyan and Bayo Ogunrinade. These were of the first set of dancers selected, as they distinguished themselves out of almost five hundred dancers that participated in the dance workshop. They were taken to France to create a dance piece titled *When the Gods Cry*. They toured Europe and some African countries. However, the dance piece was pure French vocabulary, which was totally against the idea behind the French-Nigerian dance workshop.

There were so many changes that affected the mentality, morality and essential values that are attached to our highly placed cultural norms. It was believed that the new dance genre is totally ‘new’ and it has never been experienced anywhere else and the movements were alien to the Africans. The movements in this vocabulary are just moves that display ones strength, agility and aesthetics without sometime, a meaningful message. Most times, the costumes are shabby and repulsive for the eyes to behold in the name of its being contemporary. So, what is new in rough and torn costumes? What is in obscured identity? What is freedom in learning or placing another man’s vocabulary above yours? What is more oppressive than that singular act? The new generation choreographers were gnarled with the idea that it is the “in thing” and without it, proficiency in someone is not a ‘good’ choreographer. These traces and traits are still lingering to date, where condemnation becomes the order of the day.

Though contemporary dance in Nigeria flourished through the new generation dancers, it is not without yielding to the clamouring of some dance scholars and cultural administrators, whose aims were to put them back on track. The dividend of that was the success recorded by one of the contemporary dance companies, *Ijodee* that participated in the Africa Contemporary Dance Competition in Madagascar with a dance piece titled; *Ori* that came first out of fifteen countries that participated. The dance piece was able to achieve such feat due to its African content and context. At this point in time, the trend of contemporary dance in Nigeria boomed like oil, gaining more ground as more dance practitioners are now realising the importance of literary works being delivered by scholars in the field,

towards the understanding of the dance genre. During the yearly World Dance Day Celebration, organised by the Guild of Nigerian Dancers in 2003 Yerima (2003, p. 12) reflects that:

What I mean is that the dancer must be enlightened about the demand of the profession he has chosen as his life career. He must find meaning first within himself and find the answer to such question as what he or she is doing in dance, before he begin(s) to dance. Dance is passion, and dance must be consumed in passion, to be committed. Dance is a way of life..

Many dance groups and the so called contemporary choreographers sprung up just to actualize the aims set by the French Cultural Centre, which is to discover new talents in dance choreography. At this point, it is very necessary to note that the idea muted by the French Cultural Centre put asunder many dance groups and put into hysteria too many relationships. The major groups that broke up at that period were the Black Marbles that experience the formation of Black Root by Adetona Adegboyega, Dayo Liadi, Abel Utuedor, Adele Oladipupo and danze Odey by Anthony Odey. All these collaborations did not last as most of them went their different ways to form their individual groups. Dayo formed *Ijodee*; Abel Utuedor, *A One Sun*; Adele Oladipupo, *Unique Fingers* (now Adele); Iyke Nwabunor, *Talk to Dance*. So also were others from other states such as Abdul Onibasa and Bayo Ogunrinade that broke out of *Omitun* to form *Alajota* and *Agelujo* respectively. The National Troupe of Nigeria was not left out of this revolution. The likes of Steve James, Usman Abubakar and Adeleke Onanuga started *Ivory Ambassadors*, *AfikanKreative* and *Dugomba Dance Company*; especially after their expiration of service with the National Troupe of Nigeria.

To further gain more ground and have more of the Nigerian dancers' sympathy and sentimentalities, the French Cultural Center instituted a contemporary dance festival named Dance Meet Danse (DMD) which was an annual programme between the Francophone dance companies and their Nigeria counterparts. Ever since then, revolution in the dance industry and the Nigerian dance arena also witnessed quite a lot in the area of newly established dance groups emergence. This was because the French Cultural Centre encouraged the formation of new dance group in the ruse that they wanted to give the upcoming dancers and choreographers an ample opportunity to express their ingenuities. This gave birth to the proliferation of different dance companies by appellations within that period, just to be

able to perform at the dance festival organised by the French Cultural Centre which today is a shadow of its past. Such groups are *Kuje* that was carved from the names of the owners: Kudi Ojikutu and Juliana Zoubai; *Wakajo* by Kingsely Odika and Chinedu Phillips, *Asiedu* by Ndidi Okocha and Ngozi Utuedor (late), *Talking Legs* by Tonia Chidi; *Adu'lawo* by Kenneth Uphopho and Clement Omogo; *Ijodun* by Yinka, *Ntoroso Odido* by Mike and *Ikoto* by Ezerim Justin. It is worthy to note that all the names mentioned above and were members of one existing troupe or the other. As sweet as the idea sounded, it struck a discordant tone in the Bigerian dance industry.

Conclusion

This study is a condemnation of the contemporary dance genre. It is the attitude of most Nigerian dancers toward the “new” trend that gives one a cause for concern. This is because their lack of information is taking them out of track. This has led to comments and observations from different dance scholars and culture enthusiasts like Ahmed Yerima, Arnold Udoka, Chris Ugolo, Ojo Rasaki, Jeleel Ojuade and others so as to bring sanity to the derailed dance practitioners. Their agitations were not in vain because it has yielded good fruits. Now, many dancers are in the universities to gain more knowledge theoretically practically so as to become better dance artistes. These dancers include Toyin Olokodana, Kenneth Uphopho, Vincent John, Chinedu Phillips and many others in that category. That agitation had seriously and greatly impacted on their works (dance pieces). Such awareness created by the agitation that contemporary dance is not a French vocabulary but the ability to expatiate, elaborate and exaggerate on the existing dance movement or step of our indigenous rooted dances was expanded or explain in simple manner by Bakare (2006, p. 8) when he posit that:.

There is no singular dance form that is globally called contemporary dance. Every community evolve its own contemporary art at each stage of its development, based on his people's needs, hopes, aspirations, achievement and aesthetic sensibilities and this is true dance art. The dance that the French cultural centre promotes is not contemporary but postmodernism creations which are undesirable as far as Africa is concerned. Postmodernism creation is undesirable in Africa because the political intentions of its constructs are to sustain the impoverishment of Africa the country invisible and powerless.

Yerima (2003, p. 4) blames the lack of contemporary knowledge or awareness on the part of the foremost Nigerian dance practitioners like Arnold Udoka, Chris Ugolo, ChuksOkoye, Ojo Rasaki Bakare and many others for dearth of proper documentation or notation of any sort for record purposes, unlike the other forms of art. :

Therefore, the first problem of dance and dancers of today started to exist - no form of dance documentation. And where dance documentation does not exist, research on dance in Nigeria and dance history is missing and sometimes impossible. If we do not know where we are coming from it becomes difficult to know where we are going. This is the case of dance today in Nigeria....It is not enough do dance without documentation, dance [is] fluid and transient. Without proper documentation dance will disappear. Right now Nigeria dance history has little or no artistic record for the Nigerian dancer. We must go beyond our forefathers and mothers who handed dance down only by word of mouth, leaving the dance to distortion.

It will not be out of place to say that the gaps between the academics and the core dance practitioners are too wide in the sense that that there are some sentimentalises or ego tripping. The academics see the practitioner as skillful but uneducated while on the other hand the core practitioner sees the academics as a theoretician without practical experience. This lacuna can be bridged by periodical organization of dance workshops, seminar and conferences. Lastly, the dance students should endeavor to partake in dance practical training outside their school schedule so as to enable them to meet up with the challenges of dance practicals when they are out of the gown for the town. The department of the Performing Arts, University of Ilorin is already doing this through the introduction of some courses that make the dance students to do industrial attachment with professional dance troupes or group in town.

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Arts Theatres in Nigeria and Challenges of Lighting Design

By

Oklobia J. Adakole * and Joel Fanyam *

Abstract

Theatre design is an important aspect of every theatre production or performance. However, it has been observed over the years that there has been a steady and sure decline in theatre design patronage and application. This can be attributed to a wide range of concomitant problems. Some of these include; lack of commitment on the part of theatre practitioners, inadequate funding and patronage on the part of authorities, poor facilities and equipment, unprofessional training in theatre design and others. These have made theatre practice an all comers affair, especially with the springing up of private theatre companies that are more aggressive at sourcing for funds for training and equipment, as against the established Nigerian Universities owned theatres that depend solely on government meager budgets. These private theatre organisations due to their mobility and accessibility to various venues and theatres have found themselves at the front burner of theatre practice in Nigeria even though most of their staff members are apprentices. Whereas, the government owned arts councils, despite their structures, have converted their theatres to venues for conferences and receptions of all sort. This paper, therefore, attempts a comparative analysis of design in the University theatres and that of the private owned theatre companies. This is an effort to fathom how and why the situation has gone so bad for theatre practice in Nigeria.

Introduction

The importance of design in theatre performances can be traced to the beginning of civilisation, especially during festivals, storytelling sessions and traditional seasons. Examples could be seen in the careful choice of costumes, colours, patterns, masks, make-up, and shapes amongst

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others, which would be used to depict different types of animals or spirits being dramatised or represented in such performances like in Nigeria. In the case of masquerades, the head would be deliberately designed or carved to either look strange, scary or welcoming. These deliberate designs or specially carved images give more meaning to the performances and to bring the stories closer to the understanding of the listeners or spectators. Certainly, daytime performances rely more on costumes, colours, make - up, while evening or night performances are usually lit with borne fires or moon light as the case may be.

The Development of Theatre Design

In the Greek periods, theatre design began with the festivals in the Greek society. There were many festivals in the Greek period that dramatised human, animal, supernatural, royalty and their subjects, etc. “From the beginning, Greek drama was presented exclusively at festivals honouring Dionysus, one of the many gods worshipped by the Greeks, who conceived of their gods essentially as immortal human beings. Each god had power over a limited sphere of activity” (Brocket, 1992, p. 59) The taking over of Greek performances by Greek authorities into structured festivals, gave rise to better organised and better forms of design, beginning with the design of venues for the performances.

The designated venues in the Greek theatre became performance spaces for future theatrical and festival events. Stages constructed within the venues for spectators to have better views and entrances to the stage were provided for better access for the performers. “Plays were performed in the theatre of Dionysus, on the slope of the hill beneath the Athenian Acropolis (a fortified area including the Pantheon, the city treasury, and other buildings considered essential to the city’s survival)”. Brocket (1992, p. 63) Later, the auditorium was elaborately designed to include aisles for free movement of spectators and was stratified for those in the higher class of the Greek society and in the lower class respectively. It was a form of design that added value and beauty to the performances. The spectators had places to sit and watch the performances rather than clustering and stretching their necks over other spectators to watch the performances.

In the Roman period, theatre designs were more elaborate and signified. The venues for performances were decorated as special places of great interest. Equally, costumes were carefully given detailed outlook. Colour played important roles in design of costumes and separation of characters in terms of status and action. The essence of design through

costumes, make-up and sets over these periods were to enhance aesthetics and build the reality of the actions of the plays to the people. During the Roman periods, there was a form of stage different from the Greek and African arena stage, This was when the proscenium stage was introduced.

Years later, it is believed that design saw greater improvement in theatre performances. In the Medieval period, design was elaborately employed to define angelic characters as well as places of actions. Hence, permanent places were constructed within the church to designate certain venues, and those venues also defined the types of actions that were to be carried out, the moment spectators saw a character around such a designated place.

Design, however, continued to improve and develop in better forms, especially after the medieval period. Industrialisation increased and improved peoples reasoning. It was a source for the revolution of many sectors of the societies in the world. For instance, different new forms of lighting sources were introduced. Lighting became more sophisticated and better improved. Many forms of lighting sources and design facilities continued to emerge with different qualities that improved the nature and qualities of theatre performances which also transformed the Nigerian performances from traditional to modern forms using design technology.

State of Theatre Design in Nigeria

With the coming of modern technological challenges, the developments in most of the arts theatres in Nigeria, have taken a reverse step from improving the standard of performances. This is due to lack of adequate theatre design equipment and facilities, especially in the specialised areas of lighting, costume, stage and set construction. Apart from the poor maintenance of the few available facilities, they are not replaced. They have all gone obsolete and unserviceable. Ododo (1994, p. 165) notes that:

A visit to most of these theatres will validate this observation. Apart from very negligible few theatres in the country, several theatre facilities, lighting equipment especially are lying dormant, crying for repairs and replacement – lanterns without lamps, dimmer boards with several dead channels, fuses, etc. The scene docks of most of these theatres are without reasonable or useable flats, platforms and other set pieces. Not even few theatres can boast of standard make-up kit today.

With the proliferation of private theatre companies, these challenges are less being surmounted, because privately owned theatre companies are more disposed to invest in design equipment and facilities than the government owned arts theatres which are inadequately funded and equally poorly managed due to corrupt practices. This situation has also affected professionalism in design and its study in the Nigerian Universities.

The State of Government Owned Theatres in Nigeria

Theatres, especially at the state levels were triggered by the National Council for Arts and Culture decree of 1995 and its subsequent amendment in 1987. The Councils for Arts and Culture was established in 1988 to fulfil aspects of the stipulations of the National Cultural Policy of 1988, whose cardinal objectives can be summarised from the words of Anka (1991, p. xxiii) to include:

- To mobilise, promote and motivate the people's indigenous cultures.
- To stimulate artistic creativity drawn largely on our traditions and values and their progressive updating to serve modern developmental needs as our contribution to world growth of culture and ideas.
- To sustain environmental and social conditions through arts while enhancing the quality of life, produce responsible citizenship and ordered society.

These objectives are not different from those of any of the Councils of Arts and Culture. Their functions are rooted in the essence of societal traditions and values where graduates of design should practice and enhance their professionalism. The creation of Arts Theatres, Councils of Arts and Culture or Bureau of Arts and Cultures as the nomenclature permits, was to enhance a better packaging of the Nigerian traditions and cultural values through performances and exhibitions that would showcase the rich, varied and versatile elements of Nigeria's traditions and cultures in fulfilling the objectives of the National Cultural Policy of 1988.

The design for some of the government arts theatres, for example the National Theatre, Igamu, Lagos, amongst others, were lifted from Western style theatres, away from the traditional African theatre designs as identified earlier – market or village squares. These striking differences could be seen in their structural designs, types of equipment etc. One of the factors that distinguished these Arts Theatres, in design, from the design of the traditional African theatres is the fact that the Western style theatres

were the training environment in most if not all the institutions that train theatre designers to a certain level. This is a legacy, you can say of the colonial periods in the names like Dexter Lyndersay and benefactors like Duro Oni who rose to be one of the foremost practitioners in the field and is at the present a leading expert in stage lighting design in Nigeria. It also stems from the fact that Western style theatres are more elaborate and precise in performance structure than that of the African theatre designs due to the fact that, its forms are a manifestation of the creativity of the playwright, director, actor/actress and musician, designer and others.

This “collaborative” art form can, however, be compartmentalised into two distinct areas of input: technical and artistic. (Enna, 2000, p. 55) The compartmentalisation of these theatres gives focus to certain elements that are succinct to the success of performances within them. Design plays a pivotal role. The complex nature of African theatres, demands the integration of various art forms such as poetry, music, dance, dialogue, spectacle, painting, sculpture and architecture (Asomba, 2000, p. xi). It is a combination of scenery, costumes; make - up, sound, stage and set construction and lighting that make visual elements in theatre performances appealing. These elements are indispensable embellishments that compliment and aid an actor in his or her efforts in articulating and communicating the idea of a drama to the audience (Asomba, 2000, p. x).

Unfortunately, these are the elements that are suffering in the Government owned arts theatres across the country which in turn, adversely, affects the Universities as well. Hence, most graduates of theatre design did not find any facility to practice and decided to live the profession for other professions like the banking profession while living the old professional designers in their few numbers to practice and train others in over seventy (70) universities offering theatre studies, thirteen (13) Colleges of Education and thirty seven (37) Arts Theatre councils among other private theatre companies across Nigeria. The biggest Arts Theatre complex in Nigeria is the National Theatre Complex in Lagos which was build (copied anyway) for the sake of its complex aesthetic outlook from Bulgaria. It has a combined sitting capacity of about one thousand five hundred. Others are designed to hold fewer audiences. The bulk of these others were originally designed as film exhibiting halls. Hence, the poor maintenance and decay and, or total collapse of the facilities. At the moment, most of them have been surreptitiously converted to venues for holding marriage ceremonies, religious activities, rather than theatre

activities they were originally meant for. A good example is the Abuja Cyprian Ekwensi centre for arts and Culture.

These and many other factors are also responsible for the poor approach to theatre design and patronage in Nigeria. A good theatre raises the standard of a theatre and the performances therein. The poor state of design experts in the Government owned theatres in Nigeria has further contributed and helped to reduce the quality of productions and the zeal of the audience for theatre performances. Yet the Government owned Theatres are more in a position to afford the cost of good theatre design equipment, facilities and construction. The Government is the sole controller of national domestic income and expenditures. Arts theatres should be seen as avenues to promoting the nations cultures and as other means of generating the much needed revenue for the nation that can be reinvested into maintaining, developing and improving on design aspect of theatre productions.

The present situation is that the Government owned theatres have been turned into reception venues with little attention to sophisticated design, leaving the field to private owned theatre companies, who are still managing to sustain the cultural values and traditions of the people. These private theatre companies now lend to Government owned theatres equipment such as lights, collapsible stages, sound, special effects equipment and others, even at festivals that are of national colour like the yearly National Festival of Arts and Culture. Private theatre companies are the threads that sustain cultural promotion and theatrical activities, both at local and national dimensions.

Good arts theatre productions are important to healthy development of a society and cannot be given away to poorly maintained and managed theatres that limit audiences appeal due to lack of good design. Adebayo (1995, p. 93) is of the opinion that theatre occupies a significant position for the positive development of every society. Of all the artistic expressions, the theatre holds the ace as the most favoured because of its wide aesthetic appeals; with a unique characteristic of vivid and picturesque orchestration of events using design, it imprints on the minds and the most realistic, and authentic portrayals of social reality. Devoid of the often banal sentimentality and sometimes esoteric language of poetry and the distant intimacy of prose, the theatre is the genre that relishes in bringing live characters before live audiences, to examine the nuances and cadences of social reality.

State of Private Owned Theatres in Nigeria

There are quite a large number of private theatre organisations spread across the length of Nigeria. Some of these include; Ebony Theatre Company in Benue State, Jos Repertory Theatre in Plateau State, Afculture Theatre Company in Abuja, just to mention a few. These theatre companies have strived to keep the fire of theatre performances aflame despite the comatose position of Government owned theatres. They have single handedly continued to run theatre performances in the few available spaces and structures that can accommodate theatre performances.

The unfortunate aspect of the whole situation is as these private theatres operate without their own physically designed structures, but are sustaining the Government owned theatres by recruiting their staff for performances. This is because it is Government owned theatres that contract performances and productions to these private owned theatre companies because of their design equipment. Despite the fact that they – the private owned theatre companies run themselves with sponsorship from donor funds, they cannot survive on the insignificant gate takings due to audience turn out at performance venues. More so, most of their (private companies) designers are regarded as mere apprentices.

Patronage on the Part of Nigerian Authorities

The processes of funding University Arts Theatres in Nigeria have become very difficult over the years. This is basically because of governments approach to Arts, in general and Theatre, in particular. Often times, monies for the procurement of equipment and or maintenance of old ones are diverted to other uses, mostly private uses. For example, there are situations where ten thousand naira (₦10, 000. 00) has been severally allocated for the procurement and maintenance of equipment in one of the government owned theatres. Even in situations where trained theatre artistes are at the helm of affairs or in positions to reposition arts theatres, they simply turn blind eyes to arts theatres and their development, maintenance and improvement. They see contracting and hiring equipment or dealing with private owned theatre companies as doing the private theatre companies a “favour”; especially that some of the private theatre companies are owned by them.

Emerging Challenges of Theatre Design

The emerging challenges of theatre design in the Nigerian theatre are connected to corruption in the larger Nigerian society. However, more specifically, they are embedded within the following factors:

Lack of Total Commitment on the Part Theatre Practitioners

One of the most unfortunate aspects of this is that most of the theatre practitioners employed in Government owned arts theatres are not graduates and do not have any form of formal Western education because the Universities have not provide adequate experts to handle various aspects of the theatre outside and inside the schools. As such, their performance is hampered because they cannot measure up with today changes and challenges. This has hampered their understanding and knowledge of design equipment terrain and development. They are usually recruited on the basis of their raw talents and apprenticeship and not because of their qualifications. Having no technical knowhow, they prefer to have the private companies by the side with the equipment and facilities to handle technical aspects of production so as to keep their jobs and titles even where they don't know anything in that area.

Poor Equipment and Facilities

The rot and decay of design equipment and facilities in Nigerian University theatres have greatly affected the quality of theatre performances and thus, turned the erstwhile abandoned theatre venues owned by the government into funny uses earlier mentioned. Adebayo (1995, p. 97) has asserted that; in a similar situation where it may take a university graduate's annual salary to buy a pair of fresnel spot lights, where a professor's annual basic salary cannot buy a standard dimmer board, it is more sensible to eschew modern stage lighting. This statement is a defeatist stand against the prevailing situation. It is our opinion that if over the years, Private theatres are faring better, then the University owned which is normally supported by government funds needs to be overhauled to be able to perform optimally.

In contemporary times, Adebayo's (1995, p. 97) assertion cannot hold any water, because it would simply smack of compromise, especially with the proliferation of modern design equipment and facilities, from the cheap and less durable Chinese market or the durable and more expensive European or American markets. Some design equipment and materials are no longer as expensive as in the past, except where those in authorities want to cut corners and defraud the establishment. There should be no excuse in striving to play catch up with the rest of the world. This would thereby eliminate the existence of poor equipment and facilities in Nigerian Arts Theatres.

Poor Professional Training

This aspect of challenges facing theatre design is most significant. Students in Universities that offer theatre arts and other such related disciplines are seriously short changed because of the few trained teachers in this field. In the country, there are not many teachers who specialise in design that can comfortably cover the number of students in training across all the Nigerian Universities. Unlike other Arts of the theatre Agbo Folarin, Duro Oni, Domba Asomba, Dupe Mathias, Earnest Agoba, Enendu are some of the few of the names in the areas of design and technology (Asomba, 2000, p. 165). These experts are inadequate to the number of students in the Universities training to be professionals in theatre design in Nigeria.

Obsolete Equipment and Poor Maintenance Culture

The present crop of trained professionals in this field had the opportunity to be trained with the best and up to date equipment of the period. However, over the years they have not played any significant role in the maintenance, refurbishing or even replacement of equipment. Those who have found themselves in administrative positions where they can, with the stroke of a pen, replace obsolete equipment and employ good hands to maintain the equipment, would rather play politics and continue to have Nigerian theatre lag behind in this global village. The general bad maintenance culture bedeviling us in this country is, of course, another cankerworm grossly affecting design equipments and facilities.

Lack of or Irregular Electricity in Theatre Venues

Mention must be made of irregular electricity in this discourse, of challenges facing theatre design. This is simply because it is the major source of illumination that cannot be wished away during a performance, rehearsals, back stage activities,, for special effects etc. Without electricity all the issues about theatre design as enhancing or giving more meaning to theatre performance lighting for illumination for all its purposes would be fairy tales. Even University theatres that have stand by generating sets often lack the funds to buy fuel - petrol or diesel to run the sets as demanded or needed. The experience of most theatres is that those who want to use the venues buy just enough fuel to run the generators for the periods that their activity would last and whatever other bill is being paid for the usage of the venue is comfortably diverted to other uses under different administrative terminologies. The other major setback is the general non availability of

electricity in the country. This has had inimical consequences to the positive development theatre design in Nigeria.

Conclusion

That design is an indispensable aspect of the theatre performance experience cannot be overemphasised. However, it has been observed that over the years there have been steady decline in theatre design application. For instance, most Universities have produced plays using halogen lamps instead of lanterns. This obviously is due to the earlier stated reasons, amongst others. The development of Nigeria in the twenty first century requires the equipping and re – equipping of the Universities and Government owned theatre companies respectively. The present Government's stand on public private partnership is an aspect that should be explored further for meaningful human and material resources development.

Theatre practitioners, professionals, teachers and students should be encouraged to look more seriously to the field of design in the theatre. University authorities should be pushed to provide more funding that will improve the present stance of Arts Theatres in the country. Procurement, replacement or refurbishing of old and obsolete equipment and facilities should be encouraged. This can be done if designers are encouraged to look inwards for the provision of homemade equipment that would be cheaper to produce, manage and maintain.

Theatre patronage would improve and the essence of theatre in moulding the society through acting as a mirror and criticising the ills of the society in demand for better standards will be fulfilled towards a better Nigeria. Theatre provides a good medium for purging the society and its design should be considered thoroughly in this contemporary time. Theatre practitioners should strive to purge themselves of this total disregard for the importance of design as an important and indispensable compartment of the theatre experience. That way, all theatre compartments can equally work together and side by side for the improvement of better total theatre experience for better patronage in the country.

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Negotiating the Female Voice: The Example of Osofisan's *Tegonni*

By

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Abstract

One of the major goals of feminist literature is to determine what kind of voice women have or do not have in literary texts. Femi Osofisan's *Tegonni* provides an arena of female discourse through political mobilisation and opposition voice. The female voice functions inspire commitment of revolutionary mobilisation. It inspires commitment and tries to encourage positive actions. The concept of female voice as used in our context implies broadly the Marxist concept of class construction in terms of relational outcome, intrinsic antagonism based on inequality and exploitation. Consequently, this paper examines *Tegonni*'s positive political leadership developed from resistance to domestic family issue to a grand empowering. *Tegonni* emerges as a woman who despite deep insecurities (colonial cum racial powers) manages to maintain control of the reality she has created for herself. *Tegonni*'s positive portrayal is an attempt to change the subservience and mere object like image of women who could be seen but not heard. The submission of the paper is that the play becomes a server contest between (a female) intelligence which presses forward and (male) authority which obstructs the female progress.

Introduction

It is important to acknowledge the fact from the beginning that Osofisan's *Tegonni* creates a perspective that smashed stereotypes of male "macho" mentality and female femininity. This is done through the creation of a central woman character that shows a feminist ethos in the sense that the play seeks to address female "silence" and exclusion especially from political issues. *Tegonni* emerges as a woman who despite deep insecurities (colonial cum racial powers) manages to maintain control of the reality she

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has created for herself. The issue of race relations in the play is very significance. That *Tegonni* manifest herself on the side of struggle and resistance against is very corrects.

Patriarchy seeks to take away women's voices and render counterpart. This practice of male authority and control has always been blamed for the continuing denigration women suffer especially in African societies. Theoretically, Feminism (the female voice) expressed emancipator traditions; this is so because it is grounded in the normative vision of a world free of particular kinds of oppression. The idea of society free of male domination and gender oppression has generally been the problematic idea for feminists (Wright, 2011, p. 14). To avoid a mere romance of the idea of revolutionary action, the protagonist gets into action through confrontation of the institution and social structures that protect and enhance all forms of oppression.

The significance of racial relations in the play and Tegonni's reaction to the colonial power, reminds us of Aba women's riot of 1929, Thai remarkable incident of women's attempt to assert and resist colonial government's injustice and inhuman treatment of the colonial people of Nigeria. The historical fact of the riot is said to them the introduction of women taxation in that area of the country. Be that as it may, the focus of this paper is on gender conflict and personal courage combined.

In brief, Osofisan's *Tegonni* is an adaptation of Sophocles *Antigone*. The story of *Tegonni* is set in an imaginary Yoruba community Oke-Osun during the British colonial rule. Just as Sophocles *Antigone*, the daughter of Oedipus was discovered offering burial rites for her disgraced brother Polyneices in open defiance of the edict of Creon, king of Thebes, so was *Tegonni* caught in the act of giving her brother Prince Oyekunle a proper burial, Prince Oyekunle, the rightful heir to the throne but denied by the support of the Colonial government headed the Governor General to his younger brother who usurped the throne. Technically the fusion of Yemoja, the water goddess, her retinue and Classical *Antigone* into the mainstream of the play is an attempt to demonstrate the playwright's wish to provide the enabling aids for the protagonist to act: to assert her individuality. By so doing he takes his stand in expressing feminist ethos of struggle against oppression, If we behave like those on the other side, then we are the other side. Instead of changing the world, all we'll achieve is a reflection of the one we want to destroy. In

defiling the Governor and his proclamation, Tegonni demonstrates the point that moral law transcends the unjust laws of men in the society. Essentially, the issue is beyond the test of ultimate allegiance: should we respect and obey the laws of the state or those higher moral laws, dictated by our conscience? This is so because, the play shows a complex mix of a man of authority's desire to intimidate, and scuttle Tegonni's desire to assert her individuality by means of political powers and a determined female's wish to remain a float as it were. *Tegonni* in the play entered restricted profession of guild of carvers. This guild of carvers shows the existence of class inequality. The fact Tegonni break in (joins) this patriarchal class before now shows her as expressing the stance of emancipator destination of the female gender. The use of masks by women in the play is a slight symbolism to debunk the dominance domain of men's oppression. It can also be seen as a foreshadowing of the conclusion of the message of the play—when skill and not gender ascription will matter.

Female Intelligence

A starting point for us to examine the character of *Tegonni* is to observe that the sexual division between men and women are not natural in the ways that gender social construction is expressed in patriarchal society like ours. The denial or restriction of women from certain craft has no biological justification. Such restrictions contribute to the grand plan to suppress or stifle the female voice. The struggle to liberate women from this unjust relationship of power, which she represents, becomes most compelling. Tegonni's action prepared the ground for taking issues of culture identity and gender seriously. "She insisted on joining the guild of carvers" (2006, p. 20). The keeping away of women from this guild is technically a way of keeping them out of economic power; Tegonni's action therefore becomes a clarion call for female economic empowerment. It is important to remark here that women empowerment is one of the main points of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

This carries with it, its own political implication. Positively, it means that patriarchy should be recognised as a structure of unequal relationship that should not go without challenge or questioning. This political implication also explains women's oppression equally on psychological terms. The end product is that women's oppression and feeling of powerlessness and inadequacy, is institutionalised. "No

woman has ever joined that profession less of all a princess (1999, p. 21). We must state here that she joined and made a huge success of it. And that is the real locus of feminist struggle. This commitment and her dexterity made Captain Jones to fall in love with her and very much prepared to marry her.

Her commitment to principles can be seen as an important protection of her self-will. When others around are expediently adjusting to the prevailing realities of power - authority. Kunbi one of Tegonni's friends and ally states this gloomy impact of the colonial government's power as she laments.

Kunbi: You see now, my friends! This is the drama of our defeat as a people. Adelero will be buried well. The one who licked the Governor's boots shall be allowed to go to the grave with honour. But the one who opposed him, who stood for his rights, will be fed to the dogs... (93).

Tegonni's commitment (gumption) gives her enormous moral strength and the courage to change what she must and face the crushing social reality as it were. At this juncture we agree with Ekwunife (2006, p. 109) "who says that socially the play tells us about the efficacious nature and the social implications of women's revolt. Tegonni's action is essentially based on principle. Principles we must say do not exist outside and beyond reality, in some kind of timeless realm. The truth therefore is that Tegonni's sense of struggling for a redefinition of what is needed to live equal and meaningful lives in a patriarchy society is admirable. As a feminist revolutionary she has forced a rethinking of the meaning of equality between men -and women as the real import of dependency comes to the fore. This rethinking of meaning of equality finds expression in French (1985, p. 101) reaction to male domination of human affairs as she posits that "Feminism is the only serious, coherent, and universal philosophy that offers an alternative to patriarchal thinking and structures".

The Governor as an antagonist in the play is wary, envious and suspicious of an independent self-willed young woman who is in love with Captain Jones. His fear is that the relationship could create a different vision of freedom, respect and equality. Kunbi, remarks in that way "if the marriage will help the living, why would the dead complain? Just think what the town as a whole will gain, by having the

white man as our in – law rather than or antagonist (1999, p. 22). The Governor's fear is hardly surprising, since Tregonni's action challenged some of the deeply held assumptions of the inferior position of women. But her experience of working with men has made her realise how feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness are reproduced within unequal gender relationships, even when people think they are treating each other "equally".

The real crux of the matter is that a mere personal issue of marriage has assumed a political importance beyond the spouse (Jones) imagination. On the surface, the Governor's ideals of political militancy seem to involve a total dedication, A kind of if you are involved, it will be difficult not to feel deeply and genuinely on the side of the authority by his subordinates. But his reason(s) for opposing the marriage can be seen as an act of racial discrimination that leaves much to be admired,

Gov: ... You especially, whom I brought to Africa because there is work for us white races to accomplish here. But you catch the smell of some black arse, and you forget! It is time to take a firm control here, I sec, and show who is in charge! The Empire will assert its power (pp. 64-65).

It is important to remark that ordinarily the Empire's power is not threatened by this natural response of two same adults. Rather Die words show that he feels his own individual live disappearing, as his young officer appears to be working harder and harder and becoming popular. This is no doubt connected with living out a particular conception of masculinity whereby politics as work (authority') had become an end in itself.

This view is not unfamiliar in feminist discourse, because men often learn that male identities are secured in the public arena of work (authority) and that there are no limits to how hard the male should work (exercise power). Exhaustion (relaxing) one's authority becomes sign of weakness. As politics becomes work, this form of masculinity only seems to get reinforced. This male authority reduces open human loving culture and consciousness of the individual. It builds a moral psychology of self-denial. This self-denial provokes the feminist standpoint of female socialisation. From early age girls especially' in Africa are taught to sacrifice their individual choice, wants, and obey the male voice,

Even in a private matter like marriage, the girl is supposed to accept the person given to her, so Tegonni's choice of a man. Who is from another culture is very symbolic. It shows an empowered female voice. This female voice is regarded as an ideology, which is indeed a process of struggle based on one's belief. In this case it is a social structure of real activities that has the effect of producing and transforming patriarchal subjectivity. It is striking to note that racial domination is a central component in the fight for the female voice to be heard. The problem of racial domination is a powerful articulation of class domination that needs to be challenged as a repressive

Repressive Authority

A woman is supposed to be happy when she gets a husband of her choice, to make her unhappy by patting the choice (if family pride at stake or sheepishly obeying the law by not giving her brother a burial will amount to making her life meaningless. Because. Whatever meaning our lives have comes from whatever efforts we have put into the struggle to be happy. For the male authority (Governor) it is easy to take personal and family life of the female for granted. The level of commitment and sacrifice that he makes to maintain his authority "political work" and structure is opposed to Tegonni's desire for self-expression in the play. This is especially true as we see his effort to suppress her family and cultural values. Anyway, as a woman and one under a colonial master at that Tegonni's "sexual politics" can only be acceptable if it does not threaten the Governor's power as a man and the status quo in particular. This awareness explains his hostility towards women in the play, even those churchwomen who came to give him a cheerful welcome were treated shabbily. Indeed, according to Seidler (1991, p.199) feminism creates a very difficult psychological situation for men". More so, according to Moi (1993, p.26) "the personal is political". To hold the view that the personal is self-indulgence and selfishness like the Governor who also thinks that the political represents a sense of duty is false. It is another way of expressing the stereotype that men are rational and superior to women who are emotional and irrational.

The organisational and leadership qualities of Tegonni depict her strength of character. Her words and actions penetrate the morass of bureaucratic structures and language presented by the Governor. The image of a fixed and unchanging reality in which there are no options

or possibilities for change presented could not hold before her. Her effective political mobilisation and wit help her to achieve effective political campaign. Faderera's words say it all: "You redeemed all of us! Yes, thanks to you, we did not suffer the humiliation the white men intended for us!" (1999, p. 78)

Tegonni and other women's local activism is really hinged on the process of building a network of economic, social exchange, information sharing, informal contacts and the creation and affirmation of social integration and cohesion. These are the strategies to overcome the obstacles in their way. It has practical value, as it is a form of self-consciousness for them. Tegonni explored common abilities by working together and exploring shared goals. This is achieved by training other women in the carving business, "You've not only grown to be one of the best in the profession, but you've also helped train other women, so that we now have our own Women's Guild of Carvers and Casters" (1999, p. 78). It becomes clear that the world of women in the society is defined not only by the homes, but also by women's work as contributors to the society. This informal network that women build serve to empower them. While men look most visible leadership roles, the experience that women acquire even in subordinate roles helped them to formulate a basis for the new politics of challenge to the authority. The networks women have developed in the play arc on the basis of informal structure. Informal lie as used here implies the cohesion building sense of belonging and being grounded in the society. Society is not a static concept, but rather is constantly in process, is being built, affirmed and strengthened by people's participation like Tegonni or weakened, torn down and relegated by their indifference like the Governor's actions.

We must remark that Osofisan do not ignore women's roles in local political life. Tie presents women who do most of the behind-the-scenes and largely uncredited work. For example, the bold action taken by the women encourages them to claim a more public role in the political set up as well as the right to question their positrons before now. Tegonni is able to go outside of the stereotypical normal channels of female to solve or highlight the problem of domination. She mobilised women to challenge the Governor.

Tegonni's power, to resist the repressive authority is based on how she is viewed by others. Her influence and ability were looked upon as a kind of neighbourhood assets. Outside the confines of women is a world

of powerful men and institutions that impacted almost negatively on women. She then entered this mysterious world not as a humble petitioner, but as a woman of power and strong will.

Mobilisation for Actualisation of the Female Voice

The inclusion of classical Antigone in the trend of Tegenoni's travails becomes not just social feast but political expression of solidarity for the expression **of the female voice**. It helps to create an empowering and effective political participation amongst the women. She brought new energy and new life, as new visions of freedom, equality and justice came into focus. Her appearance is like a seal of approval as it aids Tegenoni psychologically, Tegenoni energies were almost drained in the struggle to assert her views against a constant opposition that deemed her "pig headed (stupidly proud) and egoistic"(1999, p. 88). But Tegenoni was deeply engrossed in protest against patriarchal ideology laced in a colonial cloak. She redefined the relationship between state and civil society as she insisted that power was not simply a matter of access to state resources, but that people (female) had to control the different areas of their lives.

One of the high points of Tegenoni's mobilisation against the authority that obstructs her progress is the posture of a new vision of equal human relationship. She has equally rediscovered the meaning of equality at the core of creative individuality. In the words of Seidler (1991, p. 224): "individual dignity and integrity are based on the value of each person's experience, grounded in the sharing of pain and suffering." Tegenoni grasped the different ways she is being forced to compromise her individuality in order to be what the Governor expected of her and she organised her friends against the Governor's expectation.

Inequality generates hidden conflicts around elements that the inequality itself has set in motion. So to deal with her situation she develops a strategy for achieving her goal by providing the Governor as a special enemy to the women to organise against. The demand for public show of apology becomes an avenue for her to inform the people the more. The more people know about a situation, the more effectively they can organise around it. In a kind of twist, after a very long recount of the travails of the plight of the conquered people she refused to apologise to the Governor. She says: "neither today, nor anytime for ever and ever! Never as long as I live, will I be sorry for having done my duty to my brother. Her resolve is empowering to the people who had previously believed that they could not have any direct impact on the political

process. By acting in the public sphere as it were, Tegonni not only try to change the circumstances of the people's lives, but also to change their self-image as well. The private values of family and society and the experience of the confrontation with the Governor have changed the self-perceptions of many especially women. This interplay of the private and public spheres in women's lives enhances women's appreciation of their own value and abilities. The use of mask by the women is another strong feminist standpoint that must be emphasised. The mask (masquerade) Egungun is an exclusive male affair, Just as Isokun says, "Women in masks! Our world is changing fast" (1999, p.111). "Not even Gomina will suspect that they can enter the sacred grove." (1999, p. 12). Rayo concludes the scene as he says: "Yes, it's a new age! We are on the brink of a great transformation" (1999, p. 112). Yes indeed, it is time for transmutation, so that those cultural restrictions on women can be removed, as they become empowered. The true import of this mask is that the female characters have learned how to talk openly, honestly and straightforwardly about issues of female concern. This can be regarded as a process of both political and educational mentoring as the masks were from Tegonni's workshop- employed as a tool in the struggle for liberation.

Tegonni's firm stand not to repudiate her marriage to Jones and resolve never to say sorry for her action are eloquent attestations to the fact that women should learn to remain steadfast to the course they believe in. They should also know that they should not blame themselves because the sources of their misery and powerlessness do not lie on their own shoulders, but are part of a situation shared by others. This condition is to be changed not only through individual efforts but also essentially through collective social and political actions. (After all the women in masks gave a big scare to the solders and the Governor). It supports the view that individual change effort contributes to the "collective conscious" and integrity: vision of freedom and equality. It therefore follows that each woman must work hard to find the voice to express her views.

The solidarity that emerged from the women in mask demonstrates the truthful message that we learn when we share our ideals with others; it becomes something that keeps us on with the struggle. For the feminist^ it means that we have to grasp why we are struggling against the oppression and exploitation of the patriarchy system. This solidarity is important because from Tcgonni's

expression, it appears that each time a woman seek self-determination she meets obstacle(s). So like Tegonni. Women must acquire physical skills, a body of knowledge and of course, and the techniques to handle issues. Paradoxically, as Miller (1977, p. 17) observed if women assume that their own need shave equal validity (with men) and proceed to explore and state them more openly, they will be seen as creating conflicts. This becomes men's *raison d'être* for female domination.

Conclusion

We have demonstrated that Tegonni's economic and will power provided her oppositional political tactics. She maintained network of affiliation, which gave her the capacity to organise and advocate for local concerns. She began to mobilise other women to become self-aware and more self-consciously political in their approach to issues. Politics here is not simply a matter of political convictions or commitment to a political group. It is a feminist challenge to prevailing structures of oppressive status quo. Tegonni's role in the play helped to deconstruct the sexist definitions and assumptions about women and women's roles.

The words of the Governor show him as corrupt and conniving deal maker exercising underhanded influence for his own ego enrichment, Tegonni as a counter is not self-serving but determined to give the people especially women the will, access to power and some means of influencing events around them. Unlike Tegonni the Governor tried to reinforce the people's sense of powerlessness and so discourage the rise of a cohesive community' politics and the possibility of collective power.

Tegonni's activities of consciousness-raising made the women to be aware of their plight as they shared her views and feelings of the institutional structures of oppression and subordination. The fact that she resisted the repressive authority of the Governor becomes a clarion call for women to mobilise against oppressive rule of men. The reality of family, allegiance, and sexuality relationship moved from mere domestic issue to central political issue that find expression in feminist ethos of giving them a room of their own as it were.

Tegonni's efforts show that structures of dependency and subordination in both private and public life have to be challenged if the female voice is to be heard. It is not enough to give women access to work in the public sphere and then deny them (voice) participation in the

organisation of power and authority. Her marriage to Jones, which is regarded as clandestine by the Governor, is due to the fact that he does not consider it fit for the white men. It is nothing short of obstructing progress because of its ethnophobia. This relationship between Tegonni and Jones is based on equal and mutual love. This kind of marriage will bring institutional transformation that can enhance female integrity and dignity.

Finally, Tegonni's actions and words show that if women remained silent it is their fault. She negotiated the platform as it were, and got up to speak. Indeed, if the female dared to speak out a gradual removal of oppression and silence will begin. Tegonni in the end becomes the powerful individual who could negotiate the treacherous waters of the new society. Her economic power aided her political organisational ability in giving the female folk the essential voice for self-expression. Osofisan elevates Tegonni to a pedestal of prestige so as to demonstrate how important it is to change old perspective of women in the society. The protagonist understands the specificity of the oppression of women. She equally understands the systematic character of the articulation of patriarchal relations and directly challenges the authoritarian powers of patriarchal hegemony. The chauvinism of racial powers of the colonial government is well criticised. The crux of the matter is that Osofisan is committed to calling attention to women's space in our patriarchal society, cultural constraints and taboos notwithstanding. The negotiation of female voice is borne out of conviction that the full participation of women in all socio – political and economic relations on equal stance without any form of domination will make the society a better place.

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Determinism as Thematic Directions in the Nollywood Yoruba Film-*Ayitale*

By

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Abstract

Determinism is the philosophical concept in the manifestation of event governed by causal laws that are sometimes referred to as cause and effect theory. Consequently, this paper assesses the philosophical contribution of the knowledge of determinism as the thematic preoccupation in the Yoruba Nollywood film *Ayitale*. Using the content analytical method and the Normative Self Regulative Approach theory (NOSRA) to analyse this film, it has come to the fore in this paper that the binary fusion of the practicing religion in Yoruba land has an overbearing effect on the consummate audience through films, due to the audio visual appeal. The paper also argues and concludes that themes in film videos must be critically assessed to propagate humanistic ideology on the psyche of the audience.

Introduction

Over the years, film, cinema, video film or home video has been a phenomenon to advance the development of man in his society in its form and content. This communicative devices from their genesis to their metamorphosis has served as an agent for socio cultural change through its communicative potential. Film as a social and artistic media has been a great influence in national development through its ability to influence and reflect the dominant culture of a society. As a medium of artistic expression, it has served a didactic purpose in impartation. The function of film as a social media for the overall development of man is only possible through the theme in its gaze. In the past, film has been used as a form of propaganda by the colonial masters to impact and enlighten the colony on issues through themes that are political, historical and cultural. At present, films of the

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dramatic genre served as an agent to rescue the society from moral decadence through its thematic preoccupation in full dramatic piece, feature films, soap operas etc. Today, institutions have employed drama for therapy in corrective and rehabilitative measures; an example is the mental institutions, prisons and hospitals to propagate the negative effects of drug abuse, multiple sex partners and also to disseminate information on health matters, education and current affairs in the country through its themes.

Themes therefore are interpreted as the central focus that links every part of the play and brings them to a comprehensible message. The theme of a play is the pivot in which all other elements like character, plot, action, climax, and resolution rotate. It is simply what the play or story is all about. It is what the playwright decides on before writing his play. Themes of the film range from political to historic and morality, which could involve ambition, love, or values of the past. It is on this premise that determinism as a thematic preoccupation will be discussed in the Nollywood film, *Ayitale*.

Synopsis of the Film, *Ayitale*

Abeni (played by Joke Muyiwa) had suffered neglect and heartbreaks from previous marriages due to her failed marriages, but the story changes when she meets with Aremu (played by Tubosun Odunsi) who had also suffered similar fate, Aremu's persuasion makes her consent to marriage during her menopausal period, she conceives and bears a child whose father Aremu dies on the day she gave birth, and so the child Ropo meaning to replace, Moronranti, meaning something for me to remember, becomes the world of Abeni. With no family and the hostile attitude of her in-laws, she protects and pampers Ropo in his developmental stages until his departure to Lagos. In the consequent scenes, Ropo becomes rich, a philanthropist consequent upon Abeni's diabolic act to secure wealth for her only son -.Ropo. Abeni turns to a hunchback due to an undiagnosed illness and at the point of death, she reverts the "oso" (money ritual) on her child Ropo, and the sickness is also reverted, Ropo turns to a hunchback and Abeni recovers again, after much persuasion, she resolves to save her son's live by undergoing a risky journey. Upon the success of this journey, she saves Ropo's life. Eventually, mother and son live but obviously having learnt the risk in diabolic activities in order to be rich.

Dramatic Elements in *Ayitale*

Theme

Determinism as theme in the film is a profound dramatic element which is driven by the main character Abeni who metaphysically is the *Ayitale*. She resolves to be a loner until Aremu's persuasion. The cause of this determination is the failure of her previous marriages, loneliness, pessimistic view of life and withdrawal from societal values marriage and companionship. However the loss of her husband in her joyous moment triggers the maternal instinct more than necessary which makes her seek favour for Ropo through the money ritual. She believes that through Ropo, she will be destined for a good life she had been previously denied due to poverty, Ropo now becomes her channel to dignity in life and in death. In spite of the priest's warnings and at the cost of the wealthy life, Abeni is determined to achieve this purpose even with a hunchback. Her determination is articulated in her lines with the Ifa priest. In her own words:

Abeni -	I want my son to be rich. Though I'm wretched, i want my son to be exceptionally rich.
Ifa priest-	there is a price to pay for it, are you ready?
Abeni-	There is no sacrifice that is above death, i am ready to pay the price.

Determination as a thematic focus is also evident in her second visit to the priest in order to refract the diabolic act.

Emi o se 'so f'omo mo (I want to refract the money ritual)

"Reverse the wealth ritual I'm no longer interested ", the event that climaxed Abeni's suffering at the end of the film is her determination to save her son, she embarks on a journey to the top of the hill in order to capture the spirit of her son in bodily form. On the other hand, if determinism is the belief that every occurrence has a cause, then the view is evident in *Ayitale* as all events either good or evil that happened to Abeni later in life happened due to her unbending resolve to live a good life and this is due to her previous life experiences, i.e barrenness and poverty. The theory of cause and effect that is evident in determinism is seen in the issues of Aderopo

Again, the fortune of Aderopo is dependent on his mother's act and the misfortune of Aderopo is absolutely dependent on his resolve to meet the marriage requirement of Bimbo who is resolved to marry a man whose mother is dead. Other dramatic elements that aid the realisation of the theme are:

Characterisation

Abeni displayed an unquantifiable measure of a loving and caring mother to her son. The love is evident in her determination that her son must be rich at the cost of her health. It climaxed when she falls from the high mountain so she can save him from imminent death. Ropo portrays the character of a dehumanised ingrate, a selfish individual who could deny the existence of a mother so he could find favour from his spouse. Ropo an arrogant and irredeemably wicked son, this is evident when he orders his uncle and his mother, out of his house ,he gives the cause of his action to the mother's dehumanised form as a smelly hunchback.



Picture (1) Abeni on her sick bed with hunchback.



Picture (2) Abeni determines to reverse the money ritual.



Picture (3) Abeni holding on to Ropo's image in body form trips over the hill.



Picture (4) Ropo appreciates his mother for saving his life.

Conflict

The conflict in this video drama is embedded in the theme of determinism, the cause that determines that effect and which specifies that human action or event are predetermined, excluding the free will, Abeni and Ropo's free will are very much incompatible with the concept of determinism. The effect of their action is quite incompatible with what the free will dictate and wishes, both characters do not wish to die like paupers and so they manipulated the course of their lives action, the effect is the long suffering, the conflict is entrenched in between the cause of their human action and the effect

- The film climaxes when Abeni due to her strong will to save her child, falls to the bottom of the hill, here the script writer and producer resolves to turn a humanistic angle, Abeni should have been created to die as a consequence of her action, according to the title *Ayitale* who works herself to death in attempt to save

her child, instead she is made to encounter various trials and tribulation before success is attained. The messianic complex in Abeni becomes the driving force of the plot to the resolution of this drama of suffering.

Nostra Theory Aesthetics for the Analysis of the Film, *Ayitale*

The Normative Self Regulative Approach (NOSRA) by Animasaun is an Afrocentric theory that was propounded in order to address the course of film packaging and analysis especially in Nollywood. The problems arose due to the fact that previous theories and approaches that were used misrepresented the industry somehow, induced with elements that are totally alien to the form and content of what Nollywood movies should represent. From the script to the screen, the nollywood movies are bedevilled with identity crisis, culture conflicts, resolution in terms of content, and packaging through cinematic effects and design in terms of form as Simpson (2011, p. 139) succinctly addresses and postulates; “The look within, the continuous search within, will give a total, not a partial and dismal picture of society’s endeavours, its tensions and stresses. What we want is an edifying image of Nigerian womanhood, and nationhood not a disparaging and condescending treatment of feminine frailties in the face of masculine follies. Simpson postulates further that the picture that should emerge from the dramatization of our day to day activities is an aggregate of society’s effort in the face of modern technology and a modern mode of thought i.e. today’s Nigerian and African”.

Despite the need to advance in the context of form–packaging with cinematic effect and designs, the yardstick for excellence should never be those criteria of Eurocentric or American world view who propounded these theories in accordance with the demanding situations of their own world. Hence the importance and necessity to use NOSRA Theory. Animashaun (2011, p. 71) embellishes this fact that:

“In essence, it is meant to analyse what is being represented and how it is represented, how the representation made to seem to be true, common sense, moral and natural within the positive culture of the society”.

Another important reason is that the Regulative Censors Board which formulates and interprets the imported theories in packaging and analysing Nollywood films has been silent on their interpretation by the film producers and directors and so they developed a nonchalant attitude towards

its execution, the result is that each producer/director takes liberty for license.

From the above, it is clear why NOSRA as an Afrocentric theory is important to Africa and Nigeria. NOSRA as a theory emerged out of the juxtaposition of the previous functional theories to carve an autonomous identity, a specific approach to film packaging and reading, examples of existing ones include

- Hay's Theory: It was formulated in 1930 to address a rising crisis in image and effects. It is a crowd response theory which compromises the reality appeal of looking and listening. In essence the audience confuses the character with the super objective or the thematic force driving the character. The intention is to improve the American race by keeping the movies moral
- Representational Theory: In this theory, movie images are replications of real life situations. There are two approaches to the application of this theory; Sociological and Semiotic. In the sociological approach, image is determined alongside work roles with cinematic image and effect to represent either domestic private life i.e. a husband, or wife, hence themes are also society and human centered, characters are direct representation of what an ideal situation should look like.

How written words communicate meaning. The rules are represented through symbols and sign system formulated by the society i.e. black means death, white for purity, red for danger, knocking of stones against the stone, meaning danger or the chirping of some birds at a time of the night, essentially it is culture based, themes represent the cultural outlook of the given society. It is on this premise that NOSRA theory evolves to create an identity that is Afrocentric. Among others, NOSRA is preferred as an approach to film packaging and analysis especially AYITALE due to these reasons. (1) The theory is propounded by a Nigerian who is familiar with the socio-cultural essence of the Yoruba.

- Motherhood, parentage and family life in general are essential factors in the life of an African and this is articulated in the feature of the theory in its sociological and cultural bias.

The theory advocates training and packaging as could be seen in the qualities of actors in the film. The protagonist, (Ayitale) is Joke Muiyiwa, a professional actress of repute, a scholar and a lecturer in the performing arts, Femi Adebayo (Ropo) is the son of the reputable theatre practitioner, a

lawyer. Toyin Bifarin Ogundeji is the costume and make-up artist .She is also a lecturer and a technical director at the Obafemi Awolowo University, and a host of others too numerous to mention. NOSRA is also recommended due to these reasons:

- It has a sociological basis, it emphasises that actors must maintain a socio-cultural affinity with the role he or she is asked to play. He or she must be fluent in the medium of expression. It also advocates that cinematic and extra cinematic effects must conform to the norm of the society in its gaze ,that is the provision of real cultural atmosphere and attraction
- It is neither gender biased nor specific- Negative representation is addressed, eg. Abeni in *Ayitale* still displays maternal instinct being a good mother
- It will not glamourise degradation or dehumanisation of human lives through violence or moral depravity.
- It offers protection to the gaze setter and watcher
- It considers religions and cultural moment and regulate within them.
- It promotes cultural and moral sanity and sanctity. Ropo is exhorted and admonished while Abeni too learns that it is not necessary to engage in diabolic means to attain good fortune hence the trials and tribulation

Conclusion

This paper concludes that there is a need for an Afrocentric theory which should address the immediate African/Nigerian problems in film analysis and packaging hence Nosra theory is introduced due to the aforementioned, mostly given reasons that the theory is sensitive to the peculiar problems of the immediate environment of the film. Nosra is used to analyse the film *Ayitale* in the theme of determinism as thematic concept .The paper also makes a suggestive premise of humanistic ideological concerns in films so that the medium can fulfil its didactic nature alongside its role as an entertainment medium, as could be seen in the deconstruction theory on the theme of *Ayitale* which ended with cosmological pardon for the heroine instead of death penalty.

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Theatre for Development, Participatory Monitoring and Feedback: The Example of *Ikyaan* and *Amua* Communities in Benue State-Nigeria

By

Desen Jonathan Mbachaga*

Abstract

Follow up and impact evaluation in the Theatre for Development continuum has generally been a problem. Lack of follow up and continuity of workshops has bedeviled the practice in Nigeria. It is the contention of this paper that knowing the outcome of any drama intervention carried out should be a priority by practitioners in Nigeria. The paper therefore, documents findings during the execution of a drama based intervention towards health promotion among rural women at ***Ikyaan*** and ***Amua*** communities in **Benue State – Nigeria**, which focused on the issue of Maternal health especially the issue of making pregnancy safer (MPS). It was discovered among others that the drama intervention helped to change the opinion and belief that the antenatal drugs given to women causes convulsion in children as was the initial belief in one of the communities. More so, clinic based deliveries have increased significantly in one of the communities due to the drama intervention. The paper concludes that TFD presents an alternative research approach that provides stimulus for thought and action that breeds liberating initiatives that permeates the whole being and communities.

Introduction

Within Development, there is increasing recognition of the need to hear the opinion of the people who are most affected by development (Harding, 1997, p. 38).

Measuring depth of impact and cross checking results and change as a result of TFD intervention has been a challenge, despite the awesome claim of

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accolades for the practice across the globe, constraints continue to hamper and trunket the full realisation of the philosophy or even expectations of the practice - bringing about change.

It is imperative to describe the nexus between TFD and Participatory learning and Action, what Abah (2003, pp. 126–128) describes as;

A commonality of agenda, because the defining characteristics of both is the ethics of participation. PLA is a cavalcade of tools designed to be learned and used by ordinary villagers in the analysis of their problems ... TFD on its own part is a per formative means of concretizing community issues as the body, words and objects (props) in space define, analyze and strategize for action ... TFD can operate from and with PLA; and PLA can spring from TFD.

- PLA and TFD build pictures of issues, of problems and of life stories. While PLA may very often build pictures on two dimensional surfaces (on paper or in sand), TFD pictures issues in songs, through storytelling and through body(ies) in motion in the arenas of the village.
- While PLA will generate participation through writing transect, social mapping, etc., TFD generates involvement through performative forms of forum theatre, of intervention.

The above submission by Abah shows that TFD as ‘action research’ is a strategy that utilizes various communication strategies to provide a stimulus for thought and action. The core essence of the participation process of theatre can be found in the fact that the workshop experience is a collaboration between the drama catalysts and people for whom change is desired – the researched. This is because both parties are engaged in a situation of learning and sharing experiences which allows for deep exploration, analysis and discussions that help people get better understanding of issues around them and think of how to improve their lives.

It is worth noting that in any given study that involves field work, the follow up exercise usually comes at the end of the study to help ascertain its successes and failures. Participatory monitoring therefore avails the TFD practitioner with tools that enable him to effectively check impact of workshops without necessarily being seen as a supervisor but a co - learner. The need to know the effect of the drama intervention on the lives of the people in the two communities in this particular research experience is what informed this paper.

Background to the Study

The right to health is a fundamental human right and the issue of making pregnancy safer (MPS) is not only women's right but one that has been neglected with tragic consequences.

NEPAD Health Strategy (2003, pp. 9-10) reports that:

The reality that in the 21st century one in twenty African women will die of conditions related to pregnancy and child birth is indicative of the limited chances and choices facing the majority of African women... skilled care coverage at delivery is only available to 42 percent of women in Africa.

Several thousands of women continue to die each year from pregnancy related complications and child birth, majority of these are reported to come from sub-Saharan African and Asia.

The Federal Ministry of Health (2002, p. iv) posits that:

At the dawn of the 21st century, maternal mortality is still unacceptably high in Nigeria. For every 100,000 live births about 800 women die in the process of bringing these precious babies into the world. This means that out of about 27 million women of reproductive age, about 2 million will not survive either pregnancy or child birth.

This invariably means that maternal deaths are directly linked to complications resulting from pregnancy or child delivery, in the case of safe motherhood emergency obstetric conditions, poor dieting, and non attendance of antenatal clinic, poverty, as well as cultural beliefs and behaviour being in the fore front.

Benue state has been identified as one of the states in Nigeria with high cases of motherhood problems with a mortality ratio (MMR of 1,500 to every 100,000 live births – with at least 5 women dying every day in Benue from preventable causes.

Alachi and Aondowase (2008, p. 53) agree with the above when they posit that:

Health seeking behavior of women in Nigeria, particularly those in the rural areas like rural Benue is still backward in terms of relevant health information and services. Pregnant women for instance, seek the services of Traditional Birth Attendants instead of going to hospitals. These women deliver infants according to local customs and beliefs. It is sad to note that most of these attendants have no formal training to deal with harmful practices; conduct clean

deliveries recognize danger signs and refer women to health facilities in case of complications.

It is this sorry state that prompted this study in two communities in Benue state by the writer in a bid to use TFD as a strategy to improve Maternal Health consciousness among men/women aimed at increasing their limited understanding of issues surrounding MPS and galvanizing them to embrace clinic based deliveries rather than having babies at home and other relevant reproductive health topics.

Reentering the Research Communities

The initial drama workshop was carried out on 15th - 25th April 2008 and we formally re – entered the research communities for follow – up between 23rd and 28th January 2009 – nine months after the workshop. The first port of call in each community was the village heads residence where we re – echoed our previous interaction with the communities and thanked each village head for their support during the program. The village head of Amua had this to say when we visited him:

“This kind of thing has never happened in this community before now. When politicians come to us they only want our votes but they don’t come back to fulfill them. Your visit to our community has opened our eyes to understand things that make women healthier and stronger during and after delivery. This is a good thing and I thank you all for coming again to see the work you began with us”.

It was heart warming to hear villagers calling the animateurs names of characters in the drama skits which they acted during the intervention.

Findings from Follow – Up Visit to Communities

At the first community - Ikyaan, the process of evaluating impact of the performance on the research community began with the local health providers after the official visit to the village heads residence.

Mr. Joseph Ude who has been the only health worker in the only clinic in the community for seven years readily welcomed the team and told them during discussions that he has had twelve deliveries in the clinic since we came and left. This shows a jump from the initial clinic record of one

delivery. Further probing revealed that seven of the women actually went through ante natal clinic visits up to the time of delivery. Clinic records were reviewed and we were glad to see the records of the antenatal visits reflecting as well as the deliveries.

Since two of the women that delivered in the hospital lived close to the community clinic the team went to their homes and had a face to face interaction with them. One of the women told the research team that as a result of discussions during the drama workshop in the communities, she had sold her two goats in preparation towards her delivery and bought the hospital requirements which include; dettol, soap, olive oil, spirit, pads, razor blade (1 pack), detergent.

Another interesting development at **Ikyaan** community is that, one more trained nurse has been posted to the clinic. Probing revealed that the village elders after the drama intervention sent a delegation to the local Government Chairman of Makurdi Local Government. The purpose of their visit was to ask for more staff and a befitting structure where their children will be delivered.

This new staff to the community clinic is the result of this effort which was as a result of the discussions during plenary after the performance of the drama skit.

The importance of 'dialogue' in participatory drama is emphasized here as discussions in this instance served as a lubricant and stimulus to action in the interface between social circumstances and workshop activity. Clearly the drama triggered questions in the mind of the elders and they discovered that they can seek audience with the authorities and ask for qualified nurses to be posted to their community so as to improve their health. All this was made possible by dialogue using the local dialect to question and analyze situations and seek solutions.

To fully ascertain whether the villagers still remembered the story line and issues raised in the drama skits, we rounded up about fifty residents in groups of 10 and 15 randomly in each community and asked if they remembered the events that happened in the localities some months ago.

Out of the 50 persons rounded up, 30 vividly remembered the skits while 15 had to be prompted by little actions or lines from the skits. Five confessed that they never came to the workshop venues so they could not relate to the stories. Further probing revealed that these people refused to come to the workshop because they felt there was nothing to benefit from the program in terms of monetary rewards as one of the men put it:

“When politicians come for rally, they kill cows and give money to be shared so when we did not see a cow when you people first came or money, we declined coming to the workshop. This is why we are in darkness today and cannot answer your questions”.

This shows the influence of ‘money politics’ on the lives of the community and how this influences and defines their participation in development projects.

Asked if they planned for pregnancy ahead by putting aside money for emergencies only a few numbering 10 actually put to practice discussions. Their responses are however worthy of note:

- “I started to buy things to prepare for my babies delivery the month she told me she was pregnant because I want her to deliver in the clinic”.
- “We discussed the issues in the drama at home and decided that our wives (the women in my compound) should begin attending ante natal clinic immediately they become pregnant”.
- “I believe that arranging for emergency blood donation and keeping money for the bill when a woman is pregnant is necessary”. This means making plans for the unknown and shows acceptance of safe motherhood practices.

Regarding ability to remember danger signs each of the 50 respondents named at least 6 danger signs and identified 4 elements of safe pregnancy. This demonstrates that knowledge regarding danger signs has been significantly enhanced. Also, clinic records at **Ikyaan** show a significant jump in the clinic delivery book with about twelve deliveries recorded after the drama intervention instead of just one delivery prior to the intervention.

At **Amua** the local chief developed a strategy of attending antenatal clinic so as to encourage women in the community to continue attending as well as help them embrace clinic based delivery. This was collaborated by the health officer in charge of the local government clinic in the community. This shows that local chiefs are committed to working with the community health providers to enhance safe motherhood practices in the area.

When asked if they had made practical arrangement for transportation in case of emergencies the respondents had not done anything in this area because they felt arrangements can be made when there is need. Here, we emphasized the need to prepare for transportation of women to

delivery points re echoing the case of the woman who gave birth to a baby in a wheel barrow because adequate transportation was not in place.

At **Amua**, we discovered that the local health provider Mrs. Mercy Ahile who operates a private clinic in the community has started ante natal classes for pregnant women numbering 4. However, there was no record of visits or delivery. This weakness in record keeping in clinics was re emphasized.

The process of rounding up 50 respondents randomly was repeated in the second community with the following findings:

It is imperative to note that, during the post performance discussions in this community, the issue of women and men believing that taking the prescribed drugs for pregnant women is one of the reasons why their children have convulsion.

Thus, we made inquiries into this and discovered that due to the clarifications given during the workshop, people now believe that the cause of this illness among children could be a result of other diseases and not necessarily the drugs given to women during antenatal clinic.

About of 36 of respondents readily agreed that they are convinced that, the drug does not cause convulsion or harm their children. While, about 14, still attributed the cause to witch craft attacks by enemies or family members who hate them.

Further probing revealed that some of the men would first of all seek solutions traditionally from the soot - sayer or witch doctor in the event where they suspect anything wrong. This shows that belief in witchcraft as the cause of ailment which is common among the Tiv is still a strong barrier to health seeking behaviour in rural communities.

Clinic records at the Local Government Health centre at Amua show that 3 deliveries were received at the centre after the drama intervention though none of the women attended ante natal clinic. It was discovered that the low deliveries was due to competition between the private clinic and the local government health centre. Women prefer the private clinic because it's the only centre with a trained medical doctor even though it is expensive.

Summary of Follow Up Findings

The findings from the follow up visit to the research areas reveal that Knowledge regarding safe motherhood practices has improved as well as an appreciable number of clinic based deliveries recorded as a result of the drama intervention.

Findings from the follow up visit also show that planning ahead for pregnancy as discussed has been well received in both communities but actual practice is higher in **Ikyaan** community.

It is imperative to note here that, belief in witchcraft as source of illness is still a part of communal life in these areas.

Findings reveal that discussions bothering on danger in delivering at home without the care of a skilled attendant as well as the danger of patronizing quack traditional doctors who administer crude methods in pregnant situations and delivery was taken seriously such that the community elders sought for an additional trained nurse in one of the communities.

The ability of participatory drama in provoking action is strongly proven here because the performance is nothing except it propels action and further action regarding the issue treated.

This shows that the study through drama helped to propel the people to become fully aware of their predicament and what they need to do in order to change their situation. More so, the study has helped to change the opinions and belief that the ante natal drugs given to women do not cause convulsion as was the initial belief in one of the communities.

Suffice to say that, even though the mass media particularly radio, television and internet are been used as channels of information, education, and communication, one bottle neck still remains, that of enhancing participation. The core issue here is that most of the programs that are broadcast on our radio and television stations are designed to disseminate information to the public without expecting their feed back or input or response.

However, drama as a participatory art gives the audience ample opportunities to analyze, contribute and bring their own solutions to the problem at hand.

The mass media programs in this instance do not complete the cycle of communication with participation as stated elsewhere; “effective communication is communication that allows for feedback” (Mbachaga, 2003, p. 3).

The above simply means that by allowing for feed back through the discussion after the performance, participatory drama gives the people a chance and power to decision making thereby enhancing ownership of the outcomes.

The study observed that drama based interventions aimed at advancing community consciousness and mobilizing for social change can yield

fruitful results and can be a powerful tool in disseminating information as well as mobilizing community participation among rural folk especially in secluded communities where there is no access to radio or television. However, for maximum impact; the process requires a deep understanding of the people's cultural value systems that make meaning and help to define the historical realities of a people.

Tor (2003, p. 308) strongly agrees with the above when he reiterates that:

Essentially...most development approaches failed (in the past) because development actors ignored democratic cultural possibilities that meet or share the historical realities of the people concerned. ... Treatment of development issues cannot isolate cultural dimensions and it is around this quest of exploring and integrating cultural dimensions into development action that the dynamics of Theatre for Development and community organizing come into play.

In recognition of the above, the study utilized dances and folk songs as cultural mediums in the process which also included the recognition of gerontocratic structures and acknowledgement of traditional institutions and their role in the development process.

This is because traditional rulers, gate keepers, and local groups that support activities within the communities played active roles from the beginning of the workshop. For instance, in both communities, traditional heads helped in mobilizing their communities through their secretaries and elders whereby announcements signed by the village heads were taken round the communities.

Women were mobilized to help animateurs with fire wood and water while the village heads gave yams to the team to show that they heartily welcomed the initiative. This strongly echoes the need for stake holder's participation in the process of development and the skills of the animateurs in mobilizing participation in the process from the onset.

Another critical finding in this study is that poverty is a strong hindrance to the health seeking behavior in rural communities. This is because most of the families in rural areas can't afford the hospital fees which put them in a situation where the people face a huge burden of potentially preventable and treatable diseases that leads to unnecessary deaths and untold suffering.

In Nigeria today, poverty among the citizenry is strongly connected to misappropriation of resources which inevitably leads to bribery and corruption that have systematically been mainstreamed and legitimized into the political, social and economic structures of the Nation.

The resultant effect is poverty as well as poor standards of living among the people including lack of social facilities and ineffective infrastructure, especially in the rural areas.

The study recognized that the concept of 'Dialogue' is crucial to the process and overall success of TFD. If new information is to be disseminated, absorbed, and practices altered, then emphasis has to be on 'dialogue' not 'monologue'. The above is crucial to the TFD methodology and practitioners because if the villagers are to be able to collectively express and analyse their own realities, address the problems and participate in the solutions then 'dialogical forms' that promote listening, learning, and communication must be in place. In TFD that dialogue occurs horizontally between animateurs and audience as well as field workers and the field workers audience.

In the case of this study, women and men in the research areas were brought together in dialogue by the use of straight forward drama skits based on issues generated from the community with facilitation in the cultural language of the people – Tiv.

In course of the exchange in the two communities the women and men interacted in an open process that enriched their understanding and paved way for easy internalization and acceptance of the issues of making pregnancy safer.

The local health providers and community members literally were engaged in sessions that required them to answer certain questions directly from the community bothering on quality and access to health care as well as understanding the harm rather than the intended good that certain cultural practices elicit. The experience was an on the spot response that required issues to be clarified and understood with solutions proffered collectively. The discussions held after the performances were found binding by all the stake holders because views expressed during the plenary and group discussions were collectively done because all segments of the communities were represented. This is because through the facilitating style of 'prodding', the animateurs and the community went through a process of learning new situations because the process enabled them to reflect, then responded, then reflect and act. Another issue is the lack of facilities and trained personnel in rural communities.

Corruption is another observable cause of the above trend as despite the lofty policies and aim of the health programmes of the government they fail to achieve their desired objectives because government functionaries

and politicians simply siphon the funds meant for such project into their own pockets.

Doki (2003, p. 1) agrees with this when he submits that;

It has been observed that, the laudable objectives and frantic efforts by various governments to institute a sound health system for her subjects, is most often truncated by miscreants who find themselves in strategic positions of administration. Such opportunists can hardly resist the strong urge to manipulate or selfishly engineer and divert what is meant for community use to their personal gains.

The above captures succinctly, the challenge of providing and channeling financial resources as well as human resources sufficiently to ensure the provision of effective care to boost high -quality maternal and new born care in rural areas. More so, it thwarts governments' efforts in mobilizing and harnessing its resources for health development.

The belief in traditional medicine hinders people from seeking prompt and appropriate medical health care. This proved from the fact that traditional medicines are cheaper and the practitioners charge little. More so, lack of skilled and trained doctors in rural areas contributes to this factor as a delay as probing revealed. Even the TBAs are untrained in basic life saving skills.

Conclusion

This paper has presented a report of a study carried out in two rural communities in Benue state - Nigeria. The thrust of the study was to use drama as a participatory approach to trigger discussions with people in the research communities regarding the issue of Making Pregnancy and child birth Safer with an aim at increasing their knowledge base and understanding and promoting the well being of the mother and child.

It is imperative to state that, TFD provides policy makers and planners with the much needed alternative approach to providing people with information that will enable them improve their knowledge base regarding the causative factors of diseases that affect them. More so, TFD presents an alternative research approach that provides stimulus for thought and action that breeds liberating initiatives that permeates the whole being and communities. In line with this, health care programs to improve maternal health must be supported by strong policies, adequate training of health care providers and logistical services that facilitate the provision of those programs.

It is therefore suggested that:

1. The health system in the state needs to review and scale up programme against diseases and conditions that relate to pregnancy and child birth by further empowering communities and rural folk to act to improve their health. This can be done by ensuring proper dissemination of information on safe motherhood to the rural populace in a language that they can understand.
2. Training and retraining of midwives and traditional birth attendants (TBAs) is crucial to this, because while we continue to claim awesome accolades regarding the health of women certain realities might not go with the successes recorded with regard to women in rural areas.
3. Most Nigerians live in abject poverty despite the efforts of the poverty alleviation scheme. More needs to be done in alleviating the poverty of the rural masses as evidence from this study shows that poverty and ill health are part of a vicious circle in which poverty undermines health, and ill health contributes to poverty and is a reason why individuals and some times whole nations are unable to escape from the poverty trap. This is also connected to the issue of affordability of health care services among the rural poor in Nigeria.

If we are to succeed in the MDGs task to half number of people in poverty by 2015, we must include, involve and listen to poor people and their representatives. The poor have long recognized the link between good health and development. But until recently, this link has been neglected in mainstream development thinking.

As good health is crucial to protect the family from poverty, so better health is central to poverty reduction. Improving the health of the poor must become a priority, not only for public health but also for other sectors of development — economic, environmental and social.

4. The communities in question must embrace antenatal clinic attendance and hospital based deliveries to avoid regrets and deaths which can be avoided. More so, health centers in research communities need to be strengthened especially in the area of qualified health personal trained in life saving skills as well as a proper supply of adequate drugs so as to enhance their capacity to handle unique health challenges and conditions relating to pregnancy and child birth.

This will go a long way in making the people develop deep confidence in the health facility as well as providers.

5. There is also need to create avenues for public communication regarding health literacy so as to effectively empower people to take action

to improve their health. This can be through collaborative efforts of the local government health departments, local health providers as well as community members.

6. More so to improve the quality of maternal and new born health care available in rural areas, government and policy makers should ensure that there are; Sufficient skilled attendants, functioning linkages between the health services and the community to sustain interactions, and a working transport and referral system to ensure timely access to higher level of care, especially in emergency in rural health centers is needful in the health policy of the nation.

7. Drama and drama related programs have been used successfully to promote this issue and should continuously be utilized in this regard to persuade, inculcate, and to educate or reorient rural folk.

This means what is required is the drama and theatre that can effect social change by effectively relating to the peoples socio-cultural reality and ensuring collective discussions and decisions on issues within the peoples environment. Such drama must emphasize the need for redirecting and correcting society by mobilizing and influencing reality. Theatre here becomes a tool of mass education in promoting health beginning with individuals and the generality of the public.

When the above is put in place, the quest towards reducing maternal deaths and improving quality of health among rural folk will be greatly enhanced.

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Dysfunctional Societies and Functional Responses of Dramatists in Henrik Ibsen, Arthur Miller and Ahmed Yerima's Plays

By

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Abstract

This paper beams the searchlight on three societies – Norway, America and Nigeria – and discovers dysfunctions that needed the intervention of dramatists, to which Henrik Ibsen, Arthur Miller and Ahmed Yerima responded appropriately. Using descriptive methodology, we discover the Norway of Ibsen as hypocritical, with a lot of socio-political ambivalence, Miller's America is characterised by fantasy, shabby lies, new dream and exploitative capitalist ideology while Yerima's society is bedeviled by prolonged military rule, resulting in unfair treatment in revenue sharing, agitation for resource control, high level of youth unemployment, and contention over political power. The paper therefore concludes that if dysfunctions must be corrected a rounded critical approach to societal malaise must be of great essence to dramatists.

Introduction

This paper examines the interaction of the dramatist and the society, especially the important role the dramatist plays in intervening in the real and perceived dislocations caused by potent phenomena in the society. Using the descriptive methodology, we intend to look, through the prisms of Henrik Ibsen, Arthur Miller and Ahmed Yerima, problems thrown up by societies, and dramatists' (particularly these three) responses to them.

As a matter of fact, the persistent commitment of some playwrights has brought them in collision with the political hegemony of their times: Wole Soyinka ; Ngugi Wa Thiong'o; Amadu Maddy and the governments

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in Nigeria, Kenya, and Sierra Leone respectively (Etherton, 1982, p.22). Moliere was accused by the Archbishop of Paris before King Louis XIV, that his play, *Tartuffe*, produced in 1664 AD, was offensive to the Church and was banned by the State (Barnet, et al, 2001, pp.498-499). Hubert Ogunde's "Strike and Hunger" and "Bread and Bullet" were also banned in 1946 and 1951 respectively by the colonial government of Nigeria (Clark, 1981, p.305). So also his play, "Yoruba Ronu" was banned by the Western Region government in 1964. The antagonism drawn by these dramatists were borne out of their responses to the dislocations experienced by their societies. This interventionist duty is identifiable with dramatists across the globe, and that is what this study seeks to examine by looking at the world of three dramatists - Ibsen, Miller, and Yerima - across three centuries, and how they reacted to its socio-political, economic and religious dysfunctions with a view to furthering the nuances of change.

Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*

Briefly, *A Doll's House* (1879) revolves around Nora Helmer who is faced with consequences of having several years earlier forged the signature of her father to borrow the money needed to save the life of her husband (Torvald Helmer), who was terribly sick. By law she could not borrow money without the consent of her husband. Just now that the fortune of her family has improved, the husband, now fully recovered has been appointed a bank director, with a fat pay, the lender (Krogstad) threatens to expose Nora as a criminal if she refuses to influence her husband to secure his job, which he is about to lose in the same bank. In *A Doll's House*, Ibsen's target is his Norwegian society. He tries to proof the inadequacy of that society to satisfy the natural need of the individual for freedom. For instance, Torvald, who represents the societal norms, in the play himself falls foul of societal demands. He is guilty of the same offence of lying for which he accuses his wife, he lies when it is convenient for him to do so. When someone knocks at the door, he thinks it is Krogstad coming to lay further accusations, he desperately says to Nora, 'Hide, Nora! Say you are not well' (p.578). This, undoubtedly, smacks of hypocrisy, yet this are supposed to be pillars of the society. Come to think of it, this is just moments after he has just stripped his wife of her God-given responsibility:

... In order words, you'll go on living here; that's understood. But you will not be allowed to bring up the children. I can't trust you with them (p.578)

Definitely, Torvald's harsh reaction to his wife is not as much as for the fact that she forged her father's signature, but for the fear of public opinion and for the law that forbids women from borrowing without their husband's consent, even if the husband is dying and needs to be saved. This kind of law obviously rates the woman as inferior since the same law permits the husband to act wholly independently, even dispose of property that originally belongs to the wife without her consent or knowledge.

Undoubtedly, Nora's disappointment in the way Torvald abandons her at the very critical hour of need, rather than share the blame and responsibility for her unsocial action, cannot be better expressed than in her following statement:

All right. But you neither think nor talk like the man I would want to share my life with. When you had got over your fright – and you weren't concerned about me, but only about what might happen to you – and when all danger was past, you acted as though nothing had happened. I was your little sky-lark again, your little doll, exactly as before...(Rises) Torvald, that was the moment I realized that for eight years I'd been living with a stranger, and had borne him three children...Oh, I can't bear to think about it! I could tear myself to shreds (p.581).

This is one of Ibsen's ways of showing the kind of hypocritical and tyrannical society he observed in his days, and the extent to which the bourgeoisie placed economic freedom far above all other things. No wonder, George Brande, in his *Maincurrent in Nineteenth Century Literature*, volume one (1923), declares the society of Ibsen days as conservative and stagnant, and expresses his concern for 'liberty of spirit', 'liberty of thought and human condition'.

It is obvious that Nora has turned a victim of the law and society, no wonder she reacts in a way that drew criticism to this play and others of Ibsen's realistic plays. In his poetic practice Ibsen demonstrates over and over that his perception of truth is something individual and subjective. It is the minority that is always right. This is the reason why he allows Nora go out into the world alone both to find out who she really is and to be able to re-assess values and concepts. She sweeps aside any doubts about what the problem is, "I must try to discover who is right, society or me" (p. 580). She even admits that her husband is right when he says that she no longer understands the society they live in. This ending, during Ibsen's days,

caused a lot of stir because, as Brockett (1996, p.165) noted, “to many, it seemed an attack on the family itself, the very basis of society”, and due to “Ibsen’s refusal to allow the audience the escape that Torvald had sought – the pretense, following a moment’s anxiety that the old social order was secure”.

The situation of Nora is 'typical of Ibsen's realistic problem drama: the individual in opposition to a hostile society. Dr. Stockman in *An Enemy of the People* is set against a conservative society, even led by his brother, the Mayor Peter, in his avowed bid to press for purification of the community's water which he claims he receives a report alleging its contamination at the pump room. He is stoutly opposed and even threatened variously and at the end, though he stands alone, he feels a sense of esteem.

Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*

The Salem witch-hunt of 1692 and the senator Joseph McCarthy and the House of Representatives Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) which was set up to identify present and former communists and so-called fellow travelers in all branches of America life form the basis of *The Crucible*. Miller had claimed in his autobiography, *Timesbend* (1991), "if I hadn't written *The Crucible* that period would be unregistered in our literature on any popular level." Although Miller says *The Crucible* is not history but he uses historical materials to construct this play. According to Ader (1997, p.92),

Employing the mythic opposition between civilisation and the wilderness, he pictures a society on the edge of a "virgin forest [that] was the Devil's last preserve and home to marauding Indian tribes"; its "parochial snobbery" over their moral destiny - the conviction "that they held in their steady hands the candle that would, light the world" - exacerbated by (as Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum have confirmed) dissention over religious leadership, property rights, economic change, sexual repression, and the movement "toward greater individual freedom", all of which helped fuel persecution of the other as a way to forestall a fractious dissolution.

Synopsis: Rev. Samuel Parris’ (pastor of the church in Salem) daughter, Betty is sick, but the sickness does not appear to be ordinary as she whimpers and behaves strangely, not opening her eyes. Mrs Ann Putnam’s

daughter too is sick and her murder suspects that her soul had been taken over by the devil, in fact by death, simply because she has lost seven children already to the cold arm of death. While Rev. Parris does not want to believe such a rumour, which has already made the round in the village, but through pressure and persuasion by Mr and Mrs Putnam, he begins to believe. Tituba is fingered as possessing the power to conjure the spirit of the dead, which means he possesses the devil. After a lot of assurances by pastor Hale and practical prompting by Putnam she begins to name villagers whom she claims had come to her with witchcraft spirit. These kick-starts an orgy of arrests and such people slated for death by hanging.

The whole exercise of holding a court for witchcraft and condemning people to death, by hanging, as practiced by the Salem community, is preposterous and greatly fallible, because it cannot be predicated on any solid biblical canons. The reason is that the Mosaic law, Exodus, chapter 22, verse 18, “thou shall not suffer a which to live”, and Leviticus, chapter 20, verse 27, “A man also or woman that hath familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death...” (The Holy Bible, KJV, 2010, p. 173), relied upon by the court have been overtaken by the meta-critical canons handed down by Jesus Christ in the New Testament. It recommends sanctity and preservation of life, forgiveness; encourages repentance from sin, and emphasizes only divine judgment for every unrepentant sinner. It is therefore inconceivable for the church in Salem to ignore this nearly 1,692 years after the New Testament had been existing and take the law into its hand. It is apt to note that the entire appalling situation is instigated by vendetta, economic interest, such as desperate scheming by some individuals to acquire (snatch) other people’s property, like land, cattle, and other domestic breeds. Unfortunately, the church sheepishly turned out to be gullible. Another curious angle to this alarming exercise is that the judicial process itself is not only strange but highly questionable. It is a system that puts pressure on suspects (sometimes torture) to confess to committing the sin of witchcraft so that they could be set free, instead of sentenced. It is a process that strangely operates upside down (in opposite direction) when compared with the modern judicial process.

In their desperate bid to get scapegoats, those who constitute themselves as investigators and judge, like Reverend John Hale, Reverend Samuel Parris, Marshal Herrick, Judge Hathorne, and Deputy Governor Danforth are practically suggesting names to the click of girls who constitute themselves as witch hunters. In most cases, once such names are

suggested the girls eventually come round to affirm them as having witchcraft spirit. An instance is when Tituba is accused of witchcraft and threatened to confess or be hanged. After confessing, the following conversation ensues:

Hale: When the devil comes to you, does he ever come –
with another person? Perhaps another person in the
village? Someone you know

Parris: Who comes with him?

Putnam: Sarah good? Did you ever see Sarah Good with
him? Or Osburn? (*The Crucible*, pp. 45-48)

The fact that names are already suggested to this girl is very absurd, unlawful, unprofessional, damaging and murderous on its own. Not only that Tituba agrees that she saw these two with the devil, it also inspires Abigail who has been waiting for such opportunity and she, in frenzy, mentions eleven people whom she claims she saw with the devil, and the implication for such people is death by hanging.

There is no gainsaying the fact that several pointers exist to show that there are more to the accusations coming from the girls than meet the eyes. While Rev. Parris wants to secure for himself a respectable leadership of the Salem church (pp.28-31), Mr Putnam covets Jacobs' land and thinks the only way to get it is get rid of Jacobs (p.96). For Abigail who is the leader of the witch hunters, she's bent on snatching Elizabeth Proctor's husband whom she has had a secret affair with in the past, and the only way to realise her ambition is take Elizabeth out of the way. The following two statements (by Abigail to Proctor and by Proctor to Danforth during interrogation) point to this:

Abigail: And you must. You are no wintry man. I
know you, John. I know you. (*she is weeping*)
I cannot sleep for dream'; I cannot dream but
I wake and walk about the house as though
I'd find you coming through some door. (she
clutches him desperately) (p. 23).

Proctor: She thinks to dance with me on my wife's
grave! And well, she might, for I lusted, and
there is a promise in such sweat. But it is a
whore's vengeance...you must see it now
(P.110).

Actually, Elizabeth Proctor's guilt before Abigail is that she identified Abigail as a fornicator and potential husband snatcher when she was

housemaid in her house, because she caught her in an immoral state with her husband and sent her away. That partly informs his statement above and this, still to Danforth: "My wife is innocent, except she knew a whore when she saw one" (p.111).

The point now is if Danforth has fears that reprieve could cast doubt upon the guilt of the twelve people who are already hanged, there is a second critical angle that comes in here. Shortly before now he has been informed that the girls who accused these people of witchcraft have absconded from the village. Does the latest act of these girls not suggest fraud to Danforth and thus question the credibility of the entire court proceedings? If they are sincere why should they run out of town? If that is the situation with Danforth and his team, then it leads us no other option than to conclude that Danforth is a confused, spiritually shallow and ignorant Deputy Governor. He is unintelligent, directionless and with a poor sense of judgment, very gullible, and possibly, silently vindictive. However, it is important to point out that this is Miller's way of revealing the hollowness of the 1692 Salem witch-hunt, with its associated tyranny. No wonder he, in his autobiography, "*Timesbend* (1991), fingers this play as the one with which he feel(s) proudest. He says that, partial of that "lasting" quality can be found in the appeal the work exerts at times of political upheaval when audiences around the world seem to have taken it to heart: as "either a warning of tyranny on the way or a reminder of tyranny just past" (cited in Bigsby, 1992, p.95).

Ahmed Yerima's *Hard Ground*

Hard Ground's locus derives from the appalling nature of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, reflecting in the marginalization, oppression, the poverty, the deprivation and the dehumanization - despite that the region produces the oil that is the mainstay of the nation's economy, the past three and a half decades. At stake in this play is indeed a burning national issue. The plot of the play is weaved around Nimi, a young boy of eighteen who has been hardened by his involvement in the struggle into which he had been enlisted as he was about finishing in the primary school. Though Nimi is the head of a group, the boys have an overall boss whom many of them do not know physically. His name is Don. He performs his coordinating role secretly from a base. Nimi has just been released from detention after a clandestine maneuvering by his father, but he insists that he must go back to the camp to resume the struggle. However, he is prevented by his mother. He receives the news that the 'Don wants to kill him because he has killed twenty members in the camp, a charge he denies. At the end, as the Don

comes to visit him in his house, not sure of the Don's intention Nimi conspires with his mother to murder him, surprisingly, however, the Don turns out to be his father.

The strategy employed by Yerima to expose the grave danger to his society in this play is to dig into the underbelly of the struggle itself and unearth the havoc it was wreaking on the actors of the struggle and the people for whom the actors claimed they were struggling. Although he establishes the fact of the marginalization, exploitation and environmental pollution, and pauperization of the region, and its people, which normally would justify a struggle or some form of reaction he, however, questions the form and dimension of the struggle adopted by the people, particularly the youth. This, he does by presenting the shortcomings and contradictions inherent in a violent struggle. One, he shows how the struggle has made innocent young boys monsters and murderers. For instance, life has become valueless to Nimi since he has been accustomed to taking it. Asked whether it is his right to kill, Nimi says,

...If we have to, Baba. Poverty stinks, and if another man holds the soap, and won't let you have it, then nudge him slightly and collect it. For you need a good bath to become a decent, perfumed human being like him (P. 11).

Replying Inyingifaa (his uncle) who asks whether he will knock the person to death he replies:

Yes, knock him to death
Yes, if necessary and often by any means
We can lay our hands on (P.11).

Nimi, in the camp, is no longer Nimi, but the Scorpion. The pain of this negative transformation could be clearly seen in MAMA (his mother)'s lamentation: "I know I did not give birth to a scorpion, but a human being...We sent you to learn the language, to be properly brought up in our ways, not to become a scorpion" (p.10). Nimi craves to be a hero of the struggle but Yerima abhors his kind of heroism, believing it is motivated by the evil spirit. As he says, "they should have let me die with my friend for the sake of the land...Oh God! Why did they rescue me? I should have been allowed me to be shot and die for the glory of the land..." (p.1). The mother replied in frustration: "...My only son turns a monster before my death?...How else can I exorcise this evil spirit from my baby? (p.1)

Another danger of the struggle the playwright hints of is its tendency to annihilate the entire region through multiple and continuous killings all

in the name of the struggle. Tigolongolo, a god, created as a character in the play, enunciates this as he condemns Nimi's murderous escapades:

The struggle will take you all, if you do not allow the heartbeat of your brother control your hot blood... That is all I take from here these days. Young souls, old souls, little boys and girls, whose destinies are still hanging, forcefully dragged to me. Some headless, some faceless, some already eaten up by fishes and periwinkles. Oh man! You are wicked! The gods are angry (pp.46-47).

As Nimi venerates the Don, (at the initial stage of the play) whom he considers the overall head of the struggle, the Supreme Commander, though he has never met with him physically, his mother has a contrary view: "What useless man sends children to their early deaths, all in the name of a dream state? I say what sort of useless man?" (p.14). As far as MAMA is concerned, the Don is not a messiah but a serial killer. This is palpably registered in her following action in response to a question she asked her younger brother, Inyingifaa:

And this Don...this hero of men this your new Messiah...Was it not this Don who gave order for our brother's death?...please answer, for the ghost of Soibifaa waits for an answer.

INYINGIFAA: Yes, but...

MAMA: Thank You! (Slowly, she walks out of the room)

Her action here is very instructive, because prior to now she had not known that the Don they had been talking about was the same one responsible for the death of her brother. Now that Inyingifaa reluctantly confirms it, she becomes speechless and walks inside, interpretable thus "if that is the same Don, he is not a Messiah, but a serial killer".

The playwright also tries to reflect the trauma and frustration the struggle subjects the people who reside in the region to as can be seen in the reaction of KINGSLEY, a Rev. Father, when he sees how NIMI reacts to the death of his expectant wife, Pikibo: "Jesus! What kind of struggle is this, it is beginning to eat up even our flesh" (p.50). Realizing that the Don actually ordered the killing of his wife and her unborn son, he develops hatred for him. Instead of a Messiah, he now, like does his mother, sees him as a devil, who must be killed. The fact that he uses the third person plural "they" as he speaks about the Don, "they call him the Don" (p.51), is worth nothing as a clear demonstration of his rejection of the struggle and

the Don, especially when it is noted that he mistakenly wants to use “we” but drops it and uses “they”. Prior to now he has always heartily uses “we”.

Three things register clearly and significantly that shows that Yerima’s interest and message in this play is on the side of a peaceful resolution of the conflict, though he offers no concrete suggestion how this is to be brought about. One, Nimi, who is at the very centre of the struggle and who, in fact, craves to be its hero, by dying for it, opts out of it as he bows to pressure from his mother and to only go back to the creek to bring his wife and settle for what he now terms a “happy” life.

Two, the intrusion into the stream of the struggle by Tigolongo (death) who condemns its violent dimension, and orders a stop to the killings because, as he declares, “the gods are angry”, can be interpreted to mean that divinely, the struggle does not have approval.

Finally, the killing of the symbol of the struggle (the Don) through the connivance of Mama, and Nimi, who by now is no longer on the side of the struggle indicates its permanent death knell.

It is however important to question Yerima’s position about the role of the government of Nigeria in the evolution of the whole struggle. It is obvious to all that the activities of the oil prospecting companies who are acting in league with the federal government in the region has rendered the land and water polluted, thus depriving the people of arable land and good water, both for drinking and fish farming. The same factor accounts for a very high level of poverty in the region.

Conclusion

Having looked at the societies of Ibsen, Miller, and Yerima, and how, through their works they have made attempts at societal re-engineering, it is needful to observe, however, that they operated at different levels of societal interrogation. Of the trio, Ibsen appears to be most daring. He not only question the official hypocrisy which manifested in form of dichotomy between ideology and practice, and between official and private life of individual bourgeois, he also challenged his conservative, stagnant society, which under the mask of liberty has all the features of tyranny. This, he did through most of his realistic social plays, especially *A Doll’s House* which we have examined here, in which he upholds the aspiration of the individual, contrary to societal norms of his days, as a corrective measure for that society.

Miller, unlike his contemporaries, refused to be hoodwinked by the whimsical posturing of the America new dream and the emerging affluence

in the country but differed by writing a play that exposed the exploitative tendency of capitalism, the official American ideology, through which Willy Loman met his demise in *Death of A Salesman*. Similarly, he re-echoes the tyrannical Salem witch-hunt of 1692 (in *The Crucible*), in which many people were killed by (hanging). He did this simply to demonstrate the extent of damage such evil motives that precipitated the tragedy could inflict on any society. One may note, however, that the phenomenon of sorcery which forms the thematic basis of the play could hardly stand today due to the present level of civilization and the deference to human rights globally. Notwithstanding, the socio-political implications of the despicable act are relevant in many societies today. The nuances of the hunt, such as hatred, vengeance, victimization, greed, dissention over religious leadership, sexual repression, and tyranny still resonates in many societies, especially where there is struggle over political power.

Yerima's contribution to society reform has been tremendous, this, he has done through many plays. However, his great efforts in dissecting the problems of militancy and regional agitation in the Niger Delta would have been more rewarding if he also interrogated the role of the federal government of Nigeria in the evolution of the problem. By and large, it could be seen that of the trio, Ibsen, and Miller are known to be dissenting voices in their societies. While their contemporaries were consenting with official positions they chose to differ on the ground that such positions were hypocritical, unrealistic, ephemeral and replete with contradictions. While these two are no longer alive, Yerima is in the trenches, fighting for the course of his nation. Therefore the advantage and possibility of covering greater grounds for his society are still very much open.

In conclusion, however, it will be necessary to stress that for an effective, thorough and fruitful intervention in the dysfunctions of the society, going with the majority may not always be an option. Rather, a very critical, but rounded, approach will be a rewarding necessity for dramatists.

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Significance of Pattern Composition on the Carnival Calabar King and Queen Costumes

By

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Abstract

The term 'pattern' involves decorative designing. It is a common principle of design used in textiles to reinforce and enhance the fabrics with different visual sensations that help to stimulate interest, provide visual enrichment and enjoyment, and communicate thoughts through symbols. In patterning, surfaces are vitalized with rich variety of symbols to captivate the eyes; whether large or small, the intricate patterns contribute to the richness of a surface appearance. The focus of this paper is on the significance of the patterns and symbols used in the design of the Seagull Band Junior and Senior King and Queen Costumes for the 2013 Carnival Calabar. To achieve this, the theme 'ain't no stopping us' was interpreted to include the 'Achiever' as the junior king, 'Bliss' as the junior queen, 'Genius' as the senior king, and 'Creativity' as the senior queen. Costumes were designed and constructed by a team of experts with appropriate patterns and symbols to give credence to character. These costumes were used for the king and queen competitions in both the junior and senior categories. The competition was assessed by an international panel of judges. The judges adjudged the costumes and the interpretation of their patterns as best depictions of the theme in all categories of the competition. The paper reiterates that the conscious use of appropriate patterns and symbols in costume design can achieve a certain effect vis-à-vis that of enhancing the character during theatrical performances.

Introduction

Patterns are made up of a basic element known as motif. This is a simplified shape of an object, which forms the unit design. When it is non realistic, it is said to be abstract. It may be in form of a dot, shape, line or it may be complex and intricate.

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Some authorities in design Gilfof, 1983, Gatto et al, 1978, Parker and Smith 1974, enumerate and explain the different types thus:

Grid: This is composed of a network formed by intersecting lines or shapes in vertical and horizontal manner usually uniformly spaced. By so doing there is provision of equal emphasis throughout the enclosed area. A superimposition of more than one grid creates a vibrating optical effect. The grid pattern is readily seen in the checkerboard design used mainly in West African fabrics. A structural quality to pattern is achieved with grids, colour, textures and values making it a complex entity (Gilfof, 1983, p.45, Gatto et al., 1978, p.183).

Alternating Pattern: This is the grouping of motives along one line with alternating number either below or above. There may be variations in colour, lines or shapes but the patterning must be consistent. The idea is the manipulation of the placement of motifs. The general effect is that of an undulating look which gives a feeling of movement that increases as elements are spaced further apart (Gatto et al., 1978, p.185). In other words, the motifs may also be placed in alteration by altering their position as they relate to the central axis without changing the original direction of the pattern (Parker and Smith, 1974, p. 52).

Radial Pattern: This kind of pattern radiates from the centre outwards and usually in a precise interval. Bedaux and Bolland (1980, pp.19-20) in their study on West African design noted that the radial design explodes and accelerates, thus making design dynamic, active and structurally strong. Examples of radial design include the 'star', 'wheel spokes', fireworks', 'peacock plumage' etc.

Border and Bands: These enrich surfaces with decorative design, which add a feeling of elegance and individuality to the fabric. Talabi (1979, p.18) sees them as a combination of repeated symbols and a repeated unit design, or lines and texture, which add a unifying force to the piece of design. Throughout history, sport teams have used this unique design pattern to identify themselves. "Borders and bands will emphasize the edge of a form or set apart a particular area, somewhat like underlining a word to make it more important" (Gatto et al., 1978, p.186). Borders make clothing visually stronger. Depending on the role, a border may emphasize the neckline, sleeves, edge or hem of a character's costume.

Rhythmic Patterns: This is a kind of pattern that pulsates and flows in simple or complex motion. Gatto et al. (1978, p.187) reckon that:

Patterns that move along curved, circular, or undulating paths will produce a visual motion that moves our eyes along

prescribed directions. We sense a flowing action in rhythmical pattern because each motif seems to move easily to the next unit throughout the total flow of the design.

In other words, when a pattern curves in and out especially in arcs or wave-like action a rhythm is created with overriding organization or unifying factors. Rhythm is an easy way to tie units together to form both optically and intriguing well-organized patterns. Parker and Smith (1974, p. 52) sum up this observation, in the following words: “motifs in opposition tend to break the rhythm in a series of static arrangements creating a feeling of stability. Inverted motifs change the direction of the movement.” Variations of motifs establish different rhythm or feeling of movement.

Patterns on Textile Materials

In Africa, textile is regarded as part of an expression of cultural values, so that, “marriages, funerals and other rituals governing the physical and spiritual worlds require proper cloth”. Textiles are therefore part of cultural life whose patterns are readily linked to a particular people. Examples, the Ghanaian *kente*, the black-white stripes of the Tiv people of Benue State, the Yoruba *aso oke*, the Igbo *akwete*, to mention but a few. This is why Gilfoy (1983, p. 11) writes that:

Textile reflects the cultures from which they come. They are simultaneously personal, societal, religious and political, and they are valuables for the spread of ideas from one culture to another... culturally, they express the accumulated wealth and knowledge of a society and the status of their owner, and they may also have spiritual significance when used in religious ceremonies.

The accumulated wealth, status and spiritual significance mentioned above, are due to the type of patterns that are embedded on the surface of fabrics. To this end, Lamb (1984, p.26) writes that in Sierra Leone, some groups of men used raffia palm fiber cloths in their association to maintain order in daily life, propitiate the ancestors and educate the young. According to him, the Poro School, “takes place in the forest separated from the daily life of the community... Poro cloths were woven in the bush, to keep the uninitiated from seeing the secret patterns in production”.

McLeod (1981, p. 78) gives another example when he observes that the Ghanaian *Kente* carries patterns that serve to identify the rank and purpose of the wearer, and also to express ideas about political and moral relationships. Baumann (1974, p. 37) also notes that in Kumasi, during

ritual ceremonies, the King wears a large white cotton cloth studded all over with Arabic writings in various coloured inks, and of a most brilliant well formed characters, said to further empower the Chiefs to perform the rituals properly.

Apart from the need for special occasion, cloths are also related to the wisdom of proverbs, which are visually realized through the use of specific motif's intricate weft-flat patterns (Gilfoy, 1983, p.42). The wax and non-wax prints function as language or as a facilitator of the spoken or written word. One's identity, beliefs and set values are embedded in these fabrics. Some wax prints combine proverbs with visual forms to express certain Akan beliefs, values and social relations. The visual form on the cloths elicits the spoken proverbs. Therefore the surface of the cloth is used to convey messages either through written or representational imagery. The manner in which the cloth is worn can also be used for very expressive communication.

Significance of Pattern Composition-General Overview

There seems to be a general agreement that well composed patterns make the performer to look more elegant, bold, sophisticated or even mysterious. Large, strong, powerful patterns command attention, while subtle, muted and closely-knit patterns produce a more reserved or refined effect (Gatto et al., 1978, p.150). As long as a pattern is planned, it will always give the same effect of enrichment and visual interest. In this case, purposeful patterns are used to camouflage, assist or enhance the character of the performer. Examples abound in nature where animals and birds are known to be attracted to one another through recognition of specific patterns. This could be observed among the different specie of monkeys ranging from guenons, mangabees, drills and baboons. If animals can be identified by their patterns, it is believed that patterns on clothing can also communicate to reveal the personality of the wearer or the reason or motive behind the adornment of such clothing.

Specifically, Gilfoy (1983, p. 210) notes that the North African inspired lozenge design is to protect the Muslims against a harmful glance. Thus, wearing this image of an eye is believed to cast off evil and this belief makes most Islamic motifs to be thought of as being magical as well as protective. Special mention is made about Dogon people of Mali who perceived that rectangles gives structure to the unformed words of the spirit, thereby making the checkerboard (grid) the most important in both daily life and ritual. Accordingly, "Dogon fields are plowed in crisscrossed

rectangles; and rectangles also appears on ritual masks, and as shadow and light motifs on buildings” (Gilfoy, 1983, p.45). The shadow and light design also symbolizes the opposition and contrast found in life as well as in the spirit realm.

In support of Gilfoy’s assertion, Prussin (1986, p.75) relates the checkerboard design to Islamic belief’s which ties the cosmos to an orderly arrangement of squares, with power emanating from the centre which they relate to Allah. Selorm (2011, p.3) believes that contrary to western fashion, there is often a deeper meaning hidden away in African designs. Therefore colours, patterns, and designs have an ancient root and meaning, which could be used deliberately. In Africa therefore, and in Nigeria in particular, unique motifs are created to express cultural values.

Analysis of Pattern Composition in the 2013 Carnival Calabar King and Queen

The Carnival Calabar first made its début in 2004 and had since grown to the biggest street party in Africa. The king and queen competition is usually a parade of brilliant, massive, and spectacular costumes which arises from the imaginative interpretation of the carnival theme. This competition heralds the carnival proper and performance venue is the U.J.Esue Stadium on the night of the 25th of December.

Five bands of the carnival namely, Bayside, Freedom, Passion 4, Seagull, and Master Blaster thrilled the audience as they showcased their king and queen in the junior and senior categories. Costumes for the Seagull band were designed by Clary Salandy and constructed by Mahogany of London. The author featured prominently in the carnival, and participated in the interpretation of the king and queen costumes for the Seagull band. The Seagull band is led by Senator Florence Ita Giwa. The 2013 theme ‘ain’t no stopping us’ was to showcase the potentials, resources, ingenuity and endless possibility of a State struggling to wriggle out of her financial inertia. The different categories are explained as follows:

Junior King- The Achiever: The achiever is one who is always dedicated to his vision. He knows that success is not achieved alone but by the cooperation of other people. He knows how to manage his emotions and that of others around him. He is an adept at the practice of listening to learn more about the world around him. When something is not working, instead of using the same ineffective tactics, the achiever pivots and tries to tackle the problem from a different angle. His two attributes include dedication and blind persistence. His success fuels happiness and happiness in turn

fuels greater success. It was in the light of the above attributes that the Seagull band presented the junior king as the achiever.

Analysis of Patterns: The king's costume was made up of a golden trophy topped with a golden star which he wore as a mark of his achievements. The trophy represented success and the golden star a spark of inspiration. The King's costume was surrounded by eight gold and red stripes forming the letter 'V.' The costume was shaped as a half star on which sat other golden stars on the apex of the 'V' giving the illusion of energy and togetherness. The pattern of a 'V' is a symbol of victory, and the number eight, is a symbol of infinity. The golden stars on his costume depicted his hopes, dreams, and perfect quality. The stars represented new golden opportunities for him to go on in life. The golden yellow colour of his costume represented inspiration, success, wealth and his achievements. The red colour in his costume represented his passion to go on, his struggle, hard work, determination, and excitement. In line with the theme, the king was poised to bring prosperity to his people and encouragement to his peers, and 'ain't no stopping him'.

Junior Queen- Bliss: Bliss is a state of ecstasy, characterised by peace and joy. To be blissful then requires perfect conditions both within the self and outside the self. Bliss creates conditions for rejuvenation and growth. When bliss is well managed, it becomes self-actualizing and evokes the feeling of love, awe and wistfulness.

Analysis of Patterns: The queen's costume captured the very essence of bliss and was represented by a sweet and delicate flower of pink and white which expressed the sense of joy and serenity. Every petal of the flower costume was blended from white representing purity, innocence, truth, knowledge and illumination. The blending continued to the vibrant pink colour representing the epitome of beauty, grace, happiness and treasured youth. The reflective lines which radiated from the centre of the costume symbolized an awakening indicative of the beginning of life. The petals of the costume started small at the centre but got bigger and bigger towards the fringes. This perspective represented the idea of growth and the never ending cycle of life, thus, 'ain't no stopping us.' Her elaborate cape was textured with patterns of flower buds and leaves signifying newness and continuity. The queen complimented her costume with a pink headdress, made up of filaments bearing the anthers of the flower. The anthers of a flower contain the pollen which fertilizes the ovum of the flower, leading to the production of new seeds. This strengthened the symbolism of the never-ending cycle of life.

Senior King-Genius: A genius is a person who displays exceptional intellectual ability, creativity or originality associated with the achievement of unprecedented insight. Genius sees targets that others cannot see and has the courage to move against the tide of opinion when he is convinced to do so.

Analysis of Patterns: The King's costume consisted of three panels in front and two at the back. The front panels carried two large eyes and a small eye at the centre of the forehead representing the 'third eye.' The two back panels cradled the brain where grey matter is found and this was established with silver colour. The genius was symbolically represented by the three eyes because the eyes are the windows of the soul. They scan the world and lead to the creation of ingenious answers to questions that arise. The king's costume was designed with several shapes scattered all over the costume. Circles represented continuity, stars represented the universe, the eternal and the apex, open eyes represented awakening of consciousness and ingenuity, having the power to see forever. Other geometric patterns like squares, rectangles and polygons represented esoteric power, inner consciousness and continuity. Wavy patterns represented energy. Question marks represented awareness and curiosity. The third eye represented inner consciousness and the ability to see potentials. The brain represented the intellect, positive energy and consciousness. The different patterns on the king's costume graduated from small to large representing growth, continuity, synergy interaction and breaking of new grounds. The King was costumed in warm colours of red and orange to signify strength, power, leadership, passion, control, confidence, and creativity. The king was designed by the Seagull band to inspire people to discover that special thing in them, because that is where their personal genius lies, and to use this positively for the benefit of their State and the Nation.

Senior Queen-Creativity: Creativity and innovations are critical skills in the 21st century work place. Creativity is the ability to produce new, diverse and unique ideas that are not restricted by rules, customs or norms. Creativity is central to our growth and learning. We gain from creativity because we have the ability to produce new ideas; also, we have the ability to approach different situations from different perspectives. The creative ability to turn fantasies into reality prompted the Seagull band to create and present the queen as 'creativity.'

Analysis of Pattern: The queen's costume was designed with a spectrum of musical keys, symbolising her melodic creative energy. Arising from her spiral costume were golden musical horns which were highlighted

with pink, the colour of youth and grace. Together, the spiral, the horns and the brilliant colours on her costume, formed a medley, a spectacle of creativity. The spiral nature of her costume represented the evolving journey into life, connoting continuity, and carried the power of flow and change. The relationship between the musical keys and the spirals showed that music appealed to all, carried the power of change and can go on and on to infinity. Thus creativity and development be it personal or for the State could grow and advance to any height of one's choice. The queen's creativity was represented by the different colours on her costume which showed the bright future of the people and was rich in symbolic meanings. There were nine different colours which carried the following symbolisms:

Golden yellow, for the bright, rich economy and endless joy this will bring. Red represented the passion of the people, pioneering spirit, leadership qualities, ambition and determination. Pink, represented youth, grace, and mother's unconditional love. Orange, represented warmth, happiness, cheerfulness and hospitality of the people. Purple represented imagination, spirituality, togetherness and the union of the body and soul. Green was for balance, harmony, growth and rebirth. Blue represented trust, honesty and loyalty of the people. Turquoise gave a calming perspective and inspiration. Black represented power, mystery, sophistication, control and the dignity of the people. White represented innocence, wholeness, balance and purity.

Conclusion

From the analysis of the patterns and symbols on the costumes as discussed above, it is clear that those patterns suited the characters of the 'achiever,' 'bliss,' 'genius,' and 'creativity.' The stars, the victory symbol, the trophy combined with the massive costume to give character to the performer. 'Bliss' used the radial pattern projected by the flower and harmoniously designed with a mixture of two colours to enhanced characterization. Alternating patterns were used on the costumes of the 'genius.' These comprised of different shapes and symbols. Borders and bands were also used to emphasize the edges of the costume. The costume for 'creativity' made use of rhythmic patterns with curves and spirals giving a feeling of flow, movement and infinity. According to Noubikko (2010, p. 2) "the brain attempts to discern and understand patterns as they occur and give expression to unique and creative patterns of its own. It will resist having meaninglessness imposed on it." By meaninglessness, he meant

pieces of information unrelated to what makes sense to observers or learners.

Patterns on materials used for theatre costumes should also be meaningful to the audience. In China, patterns are used meaningfully, and are always embroidered on robes of ceremony worn by the actors. Buss (1922, p. 94) writes that “scroll and animal and flower knots and leaves, claws, scaly tails, fangs, and squinting eyes depict fury, malice, cunning, goodness or wisdom...” The pattern of a dragon means protection and that of a fox means betrayal. The list is unending. In Nigeria a typical Igbo Chief could easily be identified with his chieftaincy dress top with patterns of the lion’s head, known as *Isi Agu*. The Tiv people of Benue State are identified with their black and white stripped patterns. Picton and Mark (1979, p. 9) record that the ‘tribal association of a Moroccan Berber woman can be read in the pattern of the stripes on her cloak.’ The Zulu beadwork design is not merely a decorative art of weaving small glass beads into aesthetically pleasing patterns but, “research has shown that these designs were surprisingly articulated vehicles of communication that helped to regulate behavior between individuals of opposite gender” (Stan, 1983, p. 114). Further explanations reveal that men could see whether a woman is uncommitted, engaged, married, unmarried, has children or unmarried sisters. The above ability of the Zulu beadwork to communicate is said to be rapidly subsiding under the pressure of urbanization and culture change. The theatre is a good place to revive this unique use of pattern to communicate.

Again, socially high ranked people are identified through special item of clothing in place of patterning. Example, only the Roman Emperors wore garments dyed with Tyrian purple. Bassey (2001, p.65) writes that among the *Efik*, only *Ekpe* adepts wear the *okpomkpom Ekpe* (a long strip of decorative cloth tied around the neck). In other traditions, images are painted on clothing as decorative motifs to represent objects, place or events. Thus, patterns do not only enhance the person’s appearance but also define his place in the community. Spencer (2003, p. 4) writes that in Japan, patterns have been used to exploit loopholes in the law by recreating cloths which ordinarily was banned by law but designed for use in the theatre. Creating costumes which is full of subtlety, illusion and hidden meaning helps emphasize the character’s role. Most textile materials especially the wax prints carry a number of identifiable and meaningful patterns which could be used for personal, political, social and religious expressions.

The size and shape of patterns in costume design have considerable effect in the development of character. The designer has the responsibility to understand the working principles of, and how to use the various elements of design in the manipulation of meaningful patterning. Decorative embellishment or shapes of garments may have prestigious value so that the wearer of such things is immediately marked out as having great wealth or status. Design elements and principles enable the creation of any pattern for visual sensitivity and creative order because in the theatre, good designs combine with the actor's experience to promote the action in the world of the play. Good patterning creates harmony which in itself is a pleasing arrangement of parts that engage the viewer, creating an inner sense of balance and order. A chaotic thing indicates disharmony, and as Morton (2002, p. 2) puts it, the brain has the capacity to reject something that is not stimulating or something that it cannot organize or understand.

Patterning is not a new idea but, costume designers should make bold to employ patterns in costume design to reflect the nature of the performance. There are patterns that specifically correspond to people's temperaments, and these should be purposefully employed. This is because the knowledge and application of the psychological meaning of patterns can further aid characterization better. The design of costume has to take this growing need into consideration in order to meet the demand of play/film productions.

The patterns, colours, and textures that a costume designer chooses make an immediate and powerful visual statement to the audience. Most members of the audience can read meaning and understand patterns and symbols on costumes, though a publication of the analysis of patterns on costumes will be of great help. It should be understood that costume is a very powerful visual element in the theatre and when they fail to be meaningful they create a barrier to the understanding of the production in question.

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A Socio-Cultural Dimension to the Making of Oyin Adejobi's Theatre

By

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Abstract

This paper examines the socio-cultural dimension of Oyin Adejobi's theatre. This with a view to understanding the theatrical experience of Oyin Adejobi as a performer, a director and a 'script' writer who largely relied on improvisational technique. His theatricalities were devised not only to entertain his audience, but to bring about socio-cultural developments. Our objectives are to study the play-making technique of Oyin Adejobi and to understand the play directing techniques of a popular travelling theatre practitioner based on improvisational style. The methodology adopted is the combination of descriptive and critical perceptions in order to bring out values in the Oyin Adejobi's theatre. In doing this, we discover that his play-making process is not cognisance of the westernised directorial methods of intensive script analysis and effective communication skill in composition, movements, rhythm and picturisation, but only rely on improvisation, popular themes and free movements. It has come to the fore in this study that play-making process in the hands of a popular theatre practitioner like Oyin Adejobi relies on improvisation, appropriation of space and audience's satisfaction for a flourishing box-office. This study brings to bear the need to study creative works of the popular theatre practitioners in order to make them extant and relevant for socio-cultural developments.

Introduction

Amongst the giants of the Operatic mode of Nigerian Theatre, Oyin Adejobi did not take a peripheral stage. After the biggest three: Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola and Duro Ladipo; Oyin Adejobi, Moses Olaiya (Baba Sala), Lere Paimo, Adeyemi Afolayan (Ade Love), Isola Ogunisola, Akin Ogungbe, Jimoh Aliu and others featured prominently in the Yoruba

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Operatic Theatre that grew out of the Church Cantata. This form of theatre became so popular with warm reception by the audience. Their form of theatre is functional. The practitioners consciously projected a shared experience with their audience. The shared experience might be mythical, historical, socio-cultural or realistic of which the audience possessed sense of recognition.

This study considers the socio-cultural undertones in the plays and play-making of Prince Oyinlola Adejobi. It becomes expedient to critically examine the works of Oyin Adejobi and the directorial perception of a Prince, born into a Royal family in Osogbo, the capital of Osun State. It is equally germane to examine his art by relating to its roots and finally the social indices of Yoruba culture in Nigeria. Our method is to describe by explaining the art of Oyin Adejobi, its growth and development within the popular theatre form in Nigeria. He wrote, directed and performed his plays in variety of productions on the stage, radio, television and movies. Some of these plays are *Iya Olobi*, *Ile Iwosan*, *Kootu Asipa (Asipa's Court)*, *Iyekan Soja*, *Ekuro Oloja* and of course, the most popular play, *Orungun Adedigba*, a play based on his biography.

Play-making in the popular theatre mode mostly relied on improvisation. Conventionally, the arts of theatre is a collaborative form, not just because it is the most social of all arts, but obviously for its nature and practice involving many other experts. As a performance art, in play-making, a director, stage manager, set designer, costumer, make-up artist, choreographer, actors and dancers assemble all the elements of theatre to create a *mise-en-scene*. But in popular Travelling Theatre, all these categorizations collapsed into one in the hands of the leader of the troupe. This is so because the theatre, for Africans, is a virtual world specially created by the artist, who takes charge of everything. The popular play-making is a total theatre where everything becomes object of interest in visualisation to involve both emotions and concepts in a total configuration. In this sense, dance, music, action of the drama, drumming and songs are choreographically weaved to an holistic form, not in parts in play-making which does not follow the western or academic conventions. However, Oyin Adejobi happened to be the first to break away from operatic dramaturgy with the production of 'Orogun Adedigba', a play based on his early life (Kerr, 1995) ; although he was not known internationally as Hubert Ogunde and Duro Ladipo. This study concludes that there is need to celebrate, study and preserve the works of our great artistes like Oyin Adejobi, Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, Duro Ladipo, Moses Olaiya and others.

The Root of Oyin Adejobi's Theatre

The root of Yoruba Popular Theatre is traceable to the Alarinjo, the traditional Yoruba travelling theatre. This Alarinjo theatre, according to (Adedeji, 1981, p. 221) first emerged from the dramatic roots of egungun (masquerades) as ancestor worship in the reign of Alaaḡin Ogbolu in Oyo Igboho about 1504, as a court entertainment. The stock characters of Egungun like hunchback, albino, dwarf, leper, lame and blind as (Kerr, 1995, p.12) observes in the speculative research carried out by Adedeji, under the leadership of Ologbin Ologbojo. This egungun cult emanated from political intrigues that brought into existence within the period. Alaaḡin Ogbolu was able to resettle his people back to the Old Oyo. It first started as a court entertainment under the patronage of the Alaaḡin, but later developed, according to Adedeji, to a lineage profession. In the seventeenth century, Alarinjo had broadened its appeal; after the demise of Ologbojo, the mantle of leadership shifted to Esa Ogbin, a maternal relation to Ologbojo, and to whom professionalism in masque-dramaturgy has been traced. Esa Ogbin, therefore, took the theatre to the people, the masses. At about the time, various masque- dramaturgic groups sprang up from different lineages from that of Ologbojo. Their performances through the itinery, manifested a meeting of people's art forms in term of music, dance, drama, costuming, sculpturing, tattooing and so, gave the nature of their professionalism the term Alarinjo (Travelling Theatre) as it is termed by (Adedeji, 1981).

The Beginning of Oyin Adejobi's Theatre

The incursion of foreign religions, especially Christianity influenced the form of traditional theatre from Alarinjo to Yoruba Opera. The dramatic elements of Yoruba Opera had their roots in both the pre-colonial Yoruba professional theatre form, Yoruba masquerades, Egungun (Alarinjo), and the tradition of Christian Cantatas (Gbilekaa, 1997). The European missionaries introduced the Christian Cantata at the Christmas to inculcate the Biblical messages in order to woo more converts. Due to the interactions between the indigenous and colonial cultures, the African elites and the influence of the breakaway African churches, there came the transition from Christian cantatas to secular operas. Consequently, the Westernized Yoruba elites began to develop nationalistic sentiments. Also the breakaway African churches, such as Apostolic church and the Cherubim and Seraphim created syncretic rituals based on indigenous cultural forms infused with the western aesthetic form. This New dramatic form was created by these

secessionist churches became so popular with Lagos elites who were at the time very conscious of the self identity. These dramas were performed in School Halls, Glover Memorial Hall, Lisabi Hall and Ebute- Meta (Kerr, 1995). The performances were based on the familiar stories commonly drawn from folktales, myths and legend, with later infusion of Biblical stories. This form of drama was tagged 'Native Drama' with interspersions of music and song, which allowed a free movement into dance and gesticulation. When theatre was proselytized by the breakaway African churches, the name of the dramatic form became Native Air Drama'. Amongst the notable names then were A.k Ajisafe and A.B David (Gbilekaa, 1997).

Hubert Ogunde popularized the Native Air Opera the more with his innovation of the dramatic action and dance to embellish his operatic performances. The structure of his drama was the formation of the generic art-form which began with an Opening Glee, the dramatic action was in song and dance with little or no dialogue and at the end, a Closing Glee, also in song and dance. Kola Ogunmola's Folk Opera (Adedeji & Ekwasi, 1978) and Duro Ladipo brought in socio-cultural and mythical dynamism into the development of Yoruba Theatre, respectively. Most congenial point is that the operatic form developed along with the innovative and peculiar dramatic compositions of each artist, but the operatic retained the significant feature to its roots in the Alarinjo, the traditional Yoruba travelling theatre. The name became Yoruba Popular Travelling Theatre, partly because of the wide acceptability of the genre by the various communities such plays were taken to, and obviously because of the identification and familiarity of the folktales, myths, histories and legends in the enactment of the stories to the peoples. It drew a wide spectrum of reception with "massive –audience that cut across class or status boundaries" (Olaniyan, 2007, p. 356). Other reasons for the wide acceptability were due to the use of the indigenous language, Yoruba, or simplified English and the improvisations imbued with dexterous speech, movements and gesticulations.

Oyin Adejobi as a Prince came into close contact with traditional troubadours in the Ataoja of Osogbo's Palace, as he watched the drummers and singers performed, he began to imitate them. This experience formed the latent and the natural inklin into performing arts that was later rekindled in the church. He was born into the family of Prince Osunleru Akani Adejobi of the Sango Sowo in Osogbo and Madam Esther Omorinola Adejobi. He attended All Saints School, Osogbo between 1939-1945,

where he completed the Standard Six, spending six years instead of nine years. In Standard Four, Prince Oyin Adejobi composed songs for the valedictory end of the year service for the outgoing Standard Six Pupils. Having completed his elementary education, he proceeded to learn book keeping and stenography, but later he went to study music with the assistance of his uncle, Dr. Adeleke Adejobi, his guardian in Lagos. He worked for S.C.O.A and other places, until 1953, when he left Lagos for Osogbo. While working in Lagos, he was both the organist and the choirmaster of Ijo Eniyan Oluwa Aladura Church in Yaba. He was shot into the lime-light when he wrote and conducted a service song using a collection of twenty lengthy songs he had composed on social and moral themes. This was performed at the Glover Memorial Hall for the fund raising for the church, on the 6th February, 1948. The show was highly successful, and a repeat performance was requested for the public, at Lisabi Hall, Ebute-Meta, Lagos.

A Socio-Cultural Dimension to the Making of Oyin Adejobi's Popular Theatre

The term 'popular' means a form of theatre that is widely and commonly liked by a large number of audience. Such a theatre is a travelling theatre that moves to entertain vast and diverse audiences in an ever-growing urban culture. In this mode, theatre is taken to people. We have described the roots of Oyin Adejobi's theatre in the 'Alarinjo' tradition and the Yoruba operatic theatre, which culturally, socially and linguistically enact stories the audience identifies with and understands. It is a theatre with a simple spine of plot, not complex, not necessarily a text, designs of set, lights and sound, or an elaborate stage, but just a place, a time, the play, the performers and the audience. This is a theatre that uses traditional methods of operation both in troupe administration which its leader becomes source of inspiration in play making and management. The word popular might mean 'roughness' of a play process, in that, script was not written in advance, but largely improvised. The practitioners were not really conversant with the conventions associated with play production, consistence of dialogue, characterisation and characters deployment, crude make-up to depict age, time and space, props and costumes were merely considered to delineate social status without appropriate considerations for the actions, themes and sequence of the play. The songs, dances, noise, pace and tempo, aside, topical references, jokes, contrast of sequences in dramatic actions; all added to the glamour of the production. The popular

audience had no difficulty in understanding the play, accepting its inconsistency of accent, incantations, costume, or in darting between mime and dialogue, realism and naturalism of the dramatic action, especially in comparison with a previous production.(Babafemi, 1990). We understand the peculiarity of its acceptability, not mainly on the power of its orality or improvisational skill of the practitioners, but more so on the “collaborative interaction of performers with each other and with audiences, drawing on repertoire of accumulated idioms and strategies of characterization”(Barber, 2004, p. 176).

Oyin Adejobi's theatre was essentially modern. His popular theatre was “an integrated matrix of cultural forces” (Atanda, 2011, p. 654) presented in distinctive but recognisably different styles in the use of colour, stage design, backcloth, metal panels, especially for lighting the stage and setting the plays. Like all other Yoruba Popular theatres, his stage performances were done on platforms (stages) in church buildings, school halls, club houses sometimes on open space, as the conditions and circumstances warranted, before an audience seated on chairs in rows. Unlike the procenium stage, thrust stage, pit theatre, theatre in the round as commonly found in the western styled stage in arts theatre of Nigerian Universities, State Council for Arts and Culture and at National Theatre. In play-making, Oyin Adejobi did not use western technique of play production process. A process of choosing a script, calling for general audition for a particular performance, casting, production book and stage management skills for continuity for rehearsals and productions. Barber (2004, p.180) asserts that:

The only piece of writing that normally entered into the actual production of a play in the 1980s, when I worked with the Oyin Adejobi Company, was a synopsis. The idea of the synopsis came from television: the TV producers demanded plot outlines, in advance, of every proposed episode of the theatre company's unscripted comedy series such as *Kootu Asipa* and *Ile Iwosan*. When they were rehearsing this synopsis, written by Oyin Adejobi himself and typed up by a young girl acting as secretary, seemed to be referred to only once: at the first meeting, when Adejobi-glancing occasionally at the typed page explained the story of the play to the assembled company.

As a director, in Yoruba Popular Theatre, the founder of the company, is the script writer, the director, production manager; and all roll

to one. Oyin Adejobi once opines that, as a director, he knows among his troupe members who could take one role or the other. He worked, unlike the conventional theatre director, 'the university people', when you intend to direct and produce a play, you must ask a new actor to act a particular part, though you must have conceived how such role must be acted. If you are satisfy, the performer may have the role, still, a director must inject new ideas. In some situations, a director must mont the stage to demonstrate to an actor to see how you want him or her to do it. An experienced actor would sometimes make suggestions and additions. Basically, improvisation gives rooms for addlibing, flexibility, exergerated gestures, movements and actions. The idea of writing plays in the Popular theatre, was writing the story, or its synopsis. Duro Ladipo had some of his plays scripted, but they were published versions of plays they had performed, in more than one occasion, yet these texts were composed in parallel with the performed plays, not antecendent to them.

Once, Oyin Adejobi was being asked about what he understood by blockings and directorial concepts Babafemi (1990, p. 24), says:

Well, we might have them all these things during the rehearsal even though I was listening to such language for the first time from one of your people. Stage centre and this and that, but I have not able to see the difference between what you have been doing and what we have been doing.... In my own case I dont't necessarily look for someone to help or give me an idea on how to direct the play because when I write up (sic) a play I might have got my own idea on how it is ging to be acted....When I form a story to make into a play. (sic) I study it properly and be able to draw out a plan between this and that.... When one ask(sic) an actor or actress to raise up his or her hand and one sees that the hand is not Properly raised up then one must go near him or her to help him or her to raise up. The hand to the required height. So all these are part of directing in my own knowlege.

Karin Barber, having studied Oyin Adejobi's Theatre, was able to discover that there was someone actually assisting the founder, the director, Oyin Adejobi in actualizing and realising his vision and concepts of play-making, that was none other person than Alhaji Karimu Adepoju (a.k.a Baba Wande). When Oyin Adejobi conceived a play, either from the repertoire of stories narrated by his father, the one read from books or any other source, he wrote the synopsis and this would be handed to his

manager, in this case Alhaji Karimu Adepoju, an actor, a 'production manager', a 'stage manager' and 'assistant director' would swing into action. Practically, he would explain the sequence of events in each scene to the actors. Ideally, an experienced actor was expected to add and make suggestions to the dialogues and actions, who would be guided by Alhaji Karimu Adepoju. Barber (2004, p.180) has this to say on the directorial sequence of Oyin Adejobi's play- making:

There were sequences that were carefully orchestrated and rehearsed so that a pattern of statements and counterstatements culminated in an extremely well-controlled, often humorous- indeed hilarious- effect. There were land "landmark" phrases and sentences that endured over the years even when substantial changes in characterization and plot had occurred. There were "set pieces"- usually monologues, where one actor took over the microphone and assumed complete control- and also fluid passages between set pieces, where actors navigated their way using the key phrases as landmarks.

Alhaji Karimu Adepoju says that " Baba (referring to his boss, Oyin Adejobi) gives me the story, and I turn it into a play.... Let's say I have got an idea now, and let's say Baba writes the play, he tells me the story, immediately he's telling me the story I started to read it in my head, and I was seeing it, the way how to direct it" (Barber 2004, p. 181).

From Adepoju's statements, we could decipher and draw a linear creative spine from story, conception of script and harmonious growth of direction of movements, gestures, dramatic dialogues and monologues, and wholeness of the dramatic action, even before he began to work with the company, in his head. Taking the performers through the play in rehearsal, Alhaji Adepoju was only drawing from what Barber called "mental script" (Barber, 2004, p.182). So with the professionals, those who were experienced actors got the key words and structured them into meaningful sentences, with actions pegged up in spectacles. But with the inexperienced actors, Barber observed that Alhaji Adepoju would teach them what to say sentence by sentence. While the play was on, his direction was stretched further, he would be seen walking, talking, instructing, behind the scenery, correcting actors and giving them cues " in a penetrating undertone" (Barber, 2004, p.182).

From the foregoing, whether Oyin Adejobi really worked with assistance of Karimu Adepoju, is like begging the question. The fact

established, however, is that there was cordial relationship between him and the members of his theatre. Adejobi succinctly says that a director must be someone who is accomodating who is not easily irritated. The performers responded in seriousness of taken up the challenge of a particular role given to him or her, cooperated with their boss, and Alhaji Adepoju, the manager, who taught them the dialogues, movements and action. There was an holistic participation in the production process in the oyin Adejobi's theatre.

One of his plays, "Ekuro Oloja" was based on the story he heard from his father about a man who prides himself of extorting from his fellow man. A play socially weaved to teach moral in a modern Yoruba society that was cognisance of cultural implication of doing so. Yoruba socio-cultural understandings based on philosophies, norms and moral teachings frown at any despicable act. The summation of these could be found in the proverb that says that " Ohun te'yan ba gbin ni yio kaa" that is whatever one sows, shall he reap. Many of such can also be found in the folkloric stories based on the tortoise's derelict acts to teach children moral etiquette at night. In this play, an adulterous wife is caught in the act by her husband's best friend as the audience choruses in approval and satisfaction that such an action is anti-social and anti cultural perception of the audience.

Another play is "Orogun Adedigba". This play depicts the personal experience of Oyin Adejobi in a polygamous environment, where jealousy, envy, trechery, diabolism, hatred over shadow love to undermine the physical and psychical development of a promising boy (Oyin Adejobi). The realistic essence of the play reveals the reason behind Oyin Adejobi being physically challenged, whose step- mother, knowing spiritually that he would grow to become a great man, places curses on him to become lame. In the play, the truth is revealed, and the step-mother is put to shame. But fate working out destines in realistic manifestation sees to the progress and growth of the victim into the limelight.

"Kootu Asipa and Ile-Iwosan" were television plays based on social-cultural relationship performed in naturalistic style presentation in series. The two plays are based on the domestic affairs and health matters to bring about communal ethos and, harmony and developments to the entire society.

Conclusion

Play- making in the hands of a popular artist like Oyin Adejobi is a total assemblage of arts. He 'writes' from the story to 'script' and gives

directions in dialogue, movements, gestures, dance and music to give a whole dramatic action. Yoruba Popular Theatre, although it is modern, yet it retains the vibe of the traditional alarinjo dramaturgy of its total ensembles. Its director enjoys total freedom of the unconventional directorial sequences of play production. The director deeps into the depth of his inspiration from socio-cultural events of his milieu. The main stay, of the popular troupe, is the economy. The founders of the Yoruba Popular Theatre like Oyin Adejobi found recourse in polygamy; their wives and children were permanent members of their companies. The improvisational skills, appropriation of space, time and materials in the process of play making enabled the practitioners to manage their cast and resources for the success of their plays before a large and enthusiastic audience. To them, the most important aspects of play-making were the play, the performance and the audience. In return, it paid off with a flourishing box office. There is need, therefore, to study, write books on these great talents in the Popular Theatre in Nigeria, in order to make their works extant for the younger generation to learn from and build on for the development of theatre and culture in Nigeria.

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Pluralism and Christianity in Recent Drama of Yoruba Nollywood

By

A.A Olubitan*

Abstract

Generally speaking, Christianity cannot be said to be a system or institutionalised religion, rather, it is the revelation of God in Jesus and the invitation of the gospel. Although, what we believed came from what we have learned from others consciously or unconsciously in the course of history. Thus, in most cases our beliefs always lead us to certain actions in one way or the other. For instance, Christians believe that their own religion is the only religion on earth that can save people. Hence, the admonition that people must come to the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. Consequently, different methods have been employed to propagate this mandate viz-a-viz the great commission in order to bring the generality of the people to the knowledge of the gospel and possibly convert them. One method used to actualise this, is the instrumentality of the Christian Drama through Home Video films. The extent to which Christianity had held on to this exclusivist claim in spite of the consciousness of other religions is our focus in this paper. To this end, the work aims at articulating the term-Christian faith and the doctrine of salvation in Christianity in a pluralistic society like Yoruba land and how adherents have used Home Video Christian films to proclaim the gospel in Yoruba Nollywood.

Introduction

It is to be noted that long before Hegel, the idea of Christianity as the absolute religion was placed on shaky foundations by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. The experiential aspect of the knowledge of God is to be checked at all times by the body of Christian as given in the Bible, and by the voice of reason, humbled and purified by the indwelling Spirit. Faith honours reason when thus restored to soundness, and gives it perfect authority in that

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field over which reason should preside. The Scriptures of revelation and the voice of sound reason blend into one perfect and harmonious whole (Wiley and Culbertson, 1946, p. 43). With this understanding, our objective of this paper shall be; to do an evaluation of Christian faith in order to assess the doctrine of salvation from the Christianity perspective and how Home Video Christian films have been used to achieve the aim of proclaiming the gospel in the context of a pluralistic society like Yoruba land. The notion of a pluralistic society will connote a multi-religious state. In view of this, our aim shall be, to assess the Christianity's claim to the finality of salvation and how it can be sustained in a pluralistic society with Yoruba land as our center of focus. We shall attempt this discourse, through an assessment of two Yoruba Nollywood Christian Video films titled: "Igbekun (The Spell)" and an overview of 'Agbara Nla' (The Ultimate Power)" produced by Mike Bamiloye of the Mount Zion Faith Ministries.

The Concept of Pluralism

The pluralism concept is of the opinion that, God is actively revealing himself in all religions that exist, that there is nothing that is unique or normative about the person of Jesus. Christ, according to this view, is simply one of many great religious leaders who have been used by God to bring salvation for humankind. However, it would suffice us to hint here, although, not in detail, that, the whole essence and intent of the concept of religious pluralism is for a move from the insistence of the superiority or finality of Christ and Christianity's absolute claim to truth; toward the recognition of the independent validity of other ways (Culpepper, 1992, p. 312). The basic presupposition of this is that there is no special revelation that elevates Christian truth claims over those of other religions (Culpepper, 1992, p. 313). In essence, religious pluralism is all about having the satisfaction that all the religions are living, active and possesses salvific value. What the story highlighted in the introduction portends is that, we are all tending towards the same direction, and serving the same God. Our differences lies in the fact that we are all looking at God and serving Him from different perceptive views. And God has also chosen to reveal Himself to mankind from different angles.

Yoruba Land as a Pluralistic Society

In cogent reason, one of the main characteristic of modern societies is their pluralistic nature (Imo, 1993, p. 219). The ethnicity, socio-political and religious diversities in Yoruba land made her to be a pluralistic society. In consequence of this, Christianity is standing height to height with other religious tenets. But, in spite of the pluralistic nature of the Yoruba society; there is a renewal of concern for the people in the society even as we live side by side each other. The understanding of society in this wise, can therefore be seen as a group of people who share a common culture, occupy a particular territorial area and feel themselves to constitute a unified and distinct entity. It is a network of relationships that binds members together.

According to Onaiyekan (1984, p.129), there is a near-unanimous agreement in the academic circles that there are three main religions practiced in Nigeria, namely, Christianity, Islam and African Religion. Even though, it is Christianity and Islam that is given much prominence which, as Onaiyekan (1984, p.129) opines, sprouts from and building upon the traditional religious heritage. Hence, the religion of the cross and the crescent was seen gradually replacing our common substratum of traditional setting (Onaiyekan, 1984, p.129). This is the development in the Yoruba socio-cultural life which also defines the general religious life in Yoruba land.

In this context therefore, religious experience in Yoruba land can best be understood in the sense that we can easily trace our intra and inter-connectivity to a particular family source or background. Despite the plurality of religious beliefs; the family cohesion and blood ties that is common in Yoruba land makes it a pluralistic society. In sum, the context in which Yorubaland is viewed as a pluralistic society is in consequence of its religious diversification and ancestral and family connections. From this standpoint, our acknowledgement of the idea of a pluralistic society in Yoruba land connotes a combination of experiences coupled with differing traditions, customs, dialect, religion and linguistic background

However, giving the aforementioned, we also understand that, the more we become closer to each other irrespective of our diversity, the more conscious we become aware of our problems and challenges. There is no doubt about the fact that so much is said by Christianity on issues that confront the Nigerian society. Akanmidu (2005, p. 6) also says that:

...The Church should be that institution in human society that discerned in anticipatory way the emerging problem of a society and, repenting on behalf of all, would shape its own

life in accordance with its religious – moral vision so as to stand as a beacon of moral practice for the rest of the society. How best can the church respond to the emerging issues in the society, if not through the continuous proclamation of her core salvific values.

Christian Drama in Nigeria

According to Agoro (2005, cf 2002a, p.195), Christian Theatre/Drama as been defined “as a play in which there is the manifestation of Christian ethos, and which represents an authentic presentation of the Christian worldview as it is depicted in the Bible” (p.62). In other words, it is the body or collection of Christian ethical teachings and theology being compiled and presented in action form via drama either on stage or on home videos. Adekusibe (<http://www.nigerianbestforum.com>) also avers that, Christian drama is a creative art that is designed to communicate the message of Christ.

Apparently, the resort to theatre in Christianity for the propagation of the gospel is in view of the fact that drama has a unique universal appeal with a visual language that can be grasped by both the illiterate and the educated; the ordinary people (masses) and the elites. As a result, the church in Nigeria encouraged and supported several theatrical productions for the viewing of the populace (Agoro, 2005, p.65). As a matter of fact, Jeyifo (1984, p. 42), believes that the support that Christianity gives to theatre and the interest it showed in drama in Nigeria is so immense that it has greatly affected the development of drama and theatre in the country.

However, any attempt to go down memory lane and trace the historical development of Christian drama and theatre in Nigeria will only amount to duplication of efforts. Agoro (1996, 1998, 2002a and b and 2005a) in his works has a comprehensive history of the development of Christian theatre in Nigeria. Our efforts in this paper, will be to just sight few cases from some of his works that are seen as responsible factor for the growth of Christian drama and theatre in Nigeria.

The first factor that precipitated this growth, according Agoro (2005, p. 66), is the emergence of new churches and parachurch organizations that were interested in using drama and theatre in their evangelistic endeavours. In most cases in Nigeria, anytime a ministry or a church is to be inaugurated, apart from preaching and prayers, songs and drama ministrations especially stage play are usually used to capture the attention of the people and possibly draw them to their fold. Most time they

can feature a seven day power packed revival programme with film show or live performance on stage.

Another factor, besides the aforementioned, is the establishment of interdenominational groups with interest in evangelism through theatre. This enterprise has enhanced the growth and development of Christian drama and theatre in no small way. National Congress on Evangelization and the Scripture Union are among others, the interdenominational group that has strengthened and shaped the development of Christian drama in Nigeria (Agoro, 2005, pp. 8-69). Worthy of mention are the various Christian fellowships on the campus in the nation's tertiary institutions especially the Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES), have all accentuate the growth of Christian drama and theater in Nigeria (Agoro, 2005, p.70).

The effective utilisation of theatricals and dramatisation as a tool for evangelization is what this paper shall focus on in the next section. However, it will suffice us to say, that, on a general note, the factors highlighted above and numerous others facilitated the growth and development of Christian drama and theatre for the reason that, Christian play has the potential and capacity to appeal to the sense and heart of the audience. The impact of Evangelist Mike Bamiloye cannot be sidelined in our articulation of Christian Drama in Nigeria. Bamiloye, today has become a phenomenon in Yoruba Nollywood of Christian accent. Being our case study in this paper, we shall do a brief perusal of his ministry in Yoruba land.

Over 20 years ago, on Sunday August 1985, The Mount Zion Faith Ministries began with the name Mount Zion Christian Productions. It was borne out of burden and vision in the hearts of Evangelist Mike and Gloria Bamiloye to evangelize the world through the medium of drama and film productions (www.mountzionfm.org). This Ministry took off with Mike Bamiloye and the only three other members, Gloria Obembe (now Gloria Bamiloye), Grace Adeyemi (now Grace Femi-Akintunde) who joined the ministry the day the second sister withdrew and one other sister. The sisters were then students of the College of Education, Ilesa in Osun State, Nigeria. The President of the Ministry, Evangelist Mike Bamiloye was also a student of the Institution but had graduated two years before that time.

Consequently, between 2005 and 2010, within a space of 5 years, six TV serials were produced by Mount Zion Films, Production, Nigeria: "Blood on the Altar"; "The Forgotten Ones"; "One Careless Night", 2007; "The Stormy Seas", 2008; in addition to more than 11 feature films, like:

“Omo Majemu”,2002; “Enemy of my Soul”,2003 and “Majemu Ikoko”,2009. By the priority of the mission set before the ministry, they are vacating the live-drama stage for a while so as to be able to feed the general masses with the word of God through the films and television drama outreaches (www.mountzionfm.org).

The ministry has expanded into many evangelistic arms: *Drama Outreaches, Film Production, Drama Institute, Production Studios, Marketing Outfit, T.V. Production Outreach and Publications*. The goal of the ministry is to use Christian drama to win souls and which they have continued to do, using various avenues. One of it is ‘Gofestival’. This is a gathering of all evangelical drama ministers, which unites all drama ministers and trains them for the propagation of God’s kingdom. They converge in Gofestival to train people through seminars and workshops (cache.zoominfo.com/cachedpage/?archive_id).

Mike Bamiloye is also the Chairman, Board of Trustees of the All Nigerian Conference of Evangelical Drama Ministers (ANCEDRAM). This association is not a drama group. The major role of ANCEDRAM is to act as overseers over the affairs of drama ministries under it. ANCEDRAM works hand in hand with pastors to ensure that their drama groups are built up to the expected and acceptable spiritual standard (www.linkedin.com/groups/All-Nigeria). Bamiloye believes that the mandate upon ANCEDRAM extend to the spread of dramatization of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the West, East and South Africa, and the mandate covers the translation and subtitling of their movies to French, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, Russian and other major languages of the world (cache.zoominfo.com/cachedpage/?archive_id). ANCEDRAM is an association that is out to bless the life of millions around the globe through Drama Ministration.

Christian Theatre as an Evangelical Tool in Yoruba Land

Yoruba land as a multi-religious society is occupied by adherents of the three main religions in Nigeria. Adeniyi (2005, p.195, citing Abogunrin, 1988, p. 3), observes that the adherent of the main religions in Nigeria is not sharply divided over the issue of the existence of God, who is the creator and Lord over all. All believed that God the creator is the Supreme Being and the only One at the centre of creation. To the adherents of African Religion, He is called *Olodumare*, who is good, holy, all wise, the judge, merciful, all seeing, all powerful, all knowing, and who transcend what human beings can comprehend (Adeniyi, 2005, p.195). However, contrary

to the Christian beliefs, the Muslims see Allah as God who has no son, no father, no brother, no sister, no wife, no daughter and no friend (Surah vii:73). Although, Christians believe in the omnipotence of God, but also see Jesus Christ as God's son and saviour in sharp contrast to the view and beliefs of African Religion and Islam.

In Yoruba land, there have been many vibrant and dynamic drama ministries and ministers who believe that one of the most effective ways to evangelize to the "unbelievers" at this end-time is through Christian drama. It is observed that Christian Drama/Theatre brings soul-winning, revivals in the house of God, restoration, enlightenment and escape, it also teaches moral lesson, and leads to church planting as well as healing and deliverance (Adekusibe <http://www.nigerianbestforum.com>). One, out of many that has been engaging in the act of producing and passing Salvific messages across through films is Mike Bamiloye of the Mount Zion Faith Ministries Ile-Ife since 1985 as noted earlier (Owoeye, 2002, pp.131-132 and Adekusibe (<http://www.nigerianbestfoum.com>)). The use of films by this Yoruba and Nollywood Christian drama evangelist according to Owoeye, is probably due to the fact that the film deals with enacted plays which are then viewed. It is believed that such plays through films are powerful in implanting or impressing different messages on people. We shall sight two case studies as our illustrations: "Igbekun' (The Spell)" and an overview of "Agbara Nla", written and produced by Mike Bamiloye.

"Igbekun"

In today's world, many homes are known to be under serious satanic attacks and devilish visitations. Some Christian homes are already destabilized and several not what they seem to be outside. Needless to talk about the several secret divorces and separation of couples. Many gospel ministers' homes are under demonic manipulations of divorce- without-separations. And some are divorcing out-rightly. These are some of the works of devil's agents, many of whom have mingled with the congregation of the church of God. It is these experiences that reflect in the themes of the latest movies released from Mount Zion film Productions titled: Igbekun the Yoruba version of the Movie. The story line is about a Christian home under attack of strange marital spell (Igbekun) and how the theme of salvation has been used to show God's interest in the affairs of mankind to save them from any satanic assault.

Mr Oye (Mike Adameji) and Bukola (Nike Aderemi Fashikun) are a young Christian couple who were spiritually careless about their home

and marital relationship that they allowed the enemies to shake the foundation of their union. Sade (Busayo Asikhia), a demonic agent manipulated situations in their home and affected their marital foundation. Aunty Heleen (Gloria Bamiloye), an elderly woman with discernment of the spirit, came in between to deactivate the evil time bomb set to explode in their union. There was a moment of spiritual carelessness, and there was a moment of sudden awakening. Then there was a moment of outcries for interventions and there was a serious warfare followed by a terrible reprisal (salvation). It is an action movie loaded with spiritual message that, irrespective of the prevailing situation and circumstances, God is always ready to save.

“Agbara Nla”

Perhaps, the best way of buttressing our discourse in this paper will be to make reference to this all time Home Video TV serial titled; *Agbara Nla*. It was a popular serial production in the 1990's and it is reputed to be the first TV serial produced by Mike Bamiloye. It demonstrated an acclamation of the name of Jesus against the forces of darkness i.e as represented by the evil forces of ‘Ayamatanga’ in the film. The film was projected to show that, there is power in the name of Jesus to pull and bring down any powerful evil forces. The film impacted on the viewer that, it is only by the name of Jesus, can and will devil and its evil cohorts be overcome.

The after-effect of this film was felt in the whole of Yoruba land which was deeply saturated by it. Its acceptability led to the production of its English version, titled: “The Ultimate Power”. Without doubt the film was produced out of deep and indept inspiration from God. It was one movie out of many that has gone far and wide to transform lives and bring the ‘kingdom of darkness’ under the subjection of Christ, which is what the film aims at achieving. ‘Agbara Nla’ is a celebration of the authority and supremacy of God in the name of Jesus.

The essence of all these illustrations, are to inform us that, irrespective of the situation, Jesus has come to deliver us and that he is the Saviour. Either one is confronted with dark/occultic powers or experiencing any challenge whatsoever at home or in one’s life, Jesus is the only saviour that can delivers and calm every seemingly impossible situation. Hence, some of these Drama pieces are geared towards presenting Jesus Christ as the only saviour of the world and the One that can set people free from bondage. To this extent, some of these films are shown to prove that there

is no name by which mankind can be saved except through the name of Jesus. Consequently, Christian Drama aims at presenting the Jesus Christ of Christianity above any other name or messenger of other religions. This they forcibly propagate in their films and Home videos especially in some recent drama of Yoruba Nollywood. Most of the situation or scenes portrays always lead to the person concerned accepting Christ as his saviour. It is upon this basis that we see the theme or doctrine of salvation on Christian faith as very gemane, central and thematic to the heart of the gospel. Christianity cannot trade it with pluralism of religion in the name of religious harmony.

Christian Faith in a Religiously Pluralistic Society

It is quite obvious that Christians are called to bear witness to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to every person within the human family. The witness takes many form-lives that evidence the indwelling presence of God, serving, proclaiming, teaching, and defending. Christian apologists have been one major instrument from the apostolic age until today in the Church's effort to understand the Christian faith and to advocate and defend it to people both inside and outside the Church (Cunningham, 1988, p. 5).

The Christian Church now lives and ministers in this new global community-a small pluralistic world where the clash between world-views has great impact upon the way Christians understand their own faith and define their world mission. In earlier historical area, most Western Christians, living in predominantly Christian cultures had little knowledge of alternative world views or opportunity to dialogue with adherents of other views or even to weigh those views for themselves (Cunningham, 1988, p. 10). The Church's missionary activity was usually left in the hands of professional missionaries who often went to foreign cultures without understanding or appreciating the prevailing religious or general world views of particular people. In sharing the good news of Jesus Christ primarily through preaching, many missionaries did not come to understand how their message was being heard by people with quite different views (Cunningham, 1988, p.11).

Furthermore, Christianity's task today is defined by our new setting in a pluralistic world. It is directed to many people with enlarged cultural horizons within the Church as well as to those outside the Christian Church who may be deeply committed to an alternative view of life (Cunningham, 1988, p.11). The Christian encounter within rival ideologies occurs within the Western countries where Christianity has dominated, as well as in other

places in the world. Rivals to the Christian faith are advocated in many areas of modern life- in Universities, television and radio, literature, the arts, politics, economic theories, and social life, as well as through the missionary activity of other world religions (Cunningham, 1988, p.11). Consequently, many contemporary people are exposed to a far greater variety of possible systems of belief and world views than people in previous generation. The challenge of contemporary alternatives Vis-à-vis religious pluralism to the Christian faith in Yoruba land is not exclusively in relation to non-Christians. In Yoruba land, many Christians themselves are for the first time examining the appeal of alternative approaches to life and re-evaluating the Christian faith in the light of their exposure to new ideas. This is the responsible factor for calling for religious pluralism in Yoruba land in some quarters.

Cunningham (1988, p.11) observes that, the average Christian has not wrestled with the challenges of entering into dialogue with alternative points of view, a responsibility we have to embrace in order to foster peace and harmony in Yoruba land. Dialogue has become increasingly essential in the encounter between Christianity and its modern rivals. The people of Yoruba land have a right to ask for the reasons one should choose to be a Christian rather than to opt for Islam or Afrel. There is the need for some understanding of the people we live side by side within terms of their religious difference. This is the more reason why we must further inquire into ways by which we can accommodate each other and appreciate the uniqueness of our differences without relegating our core salvific value to the background.

At present however, as pointed out by Akanmidu (1998, p. 282) it must suffice us to say that even though the dialogue route has been the popular option by many Nigerian scholars in Religions to achieving religious tolerance, understanding or coexistence, still, it is to be noted that in a pluralistic society, adherents of the various religious beliefs are certain that there resides in their religious persuasion an elements of salvation; in view of this, the option of religious tolerance, understanding or peaceful coexistence is the best. Notwithstanding this option, it is apparent that, from all intents and purpose, Christian faith does not only recommend evangelism but it tries to enforce it as a procedure through which Christianity grows (Akanmidu, 1998, p. 282). From this angle, evangelism is not expected to be a redundant policy within the Christian faith but an active one. The evangelism anticipated in Christian faith is not such that is circuitous or representing one that is designed to reach the converted

Christians but one designed to call out people from other religion to the feet of Christ.

Conclusion

The prerogative of who will be saved and will not be saved is generally believed to be at the onus of God in a pluralistic society setting. But Christianity believes that the existence of a 'fundamental' difference which is attributed to Christian faith is in consequence of the salvific process of Christian faith. Christ shed his blood on Calvary in order to redeem mankind. The salvation of man and his reconciliation back to God therefore hinges on his acceptance of the only begotten son of God (John 3:16). Any religions that will claim to have God as its centre of focus, should reconsidered this religious claim to absolute truth in Christianity. The doctrine of Christian faith and salvation in Christianity, firmly believes and establishes that, Christ is the universal redeemer; no one is saved unless through him. It is stated in the gospel, that Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners. For Christianity to lose its essence and this core salvific mandate therefore, and think of itself as one of many diverse contributions to the religious life and experience of people in Yoruba land will be tantamount to losing its foundation and values in the gospel. Any attempt to derail from the message of salvation as the centrality of the gospel in this regard will be false and misleading. This position underscores the continual growth of theatricals milieu by the Christian Performers who are now called 'Drama Ministers' in Yoruba land.

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Language and Psychology in the Gendered Psyche

By

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Abstract

Sexism in language has often generated lots of controversies. While it is mostly believed that sexism is the cause or the effect of women's oppression, challenging this stance proves to be a valuable asset for women writers to engender social change. This paper explores gender power in relation to the women's voice through an overview of women writings. With Alice Walker's womanist view, this paper discusses the interconnection between language, gender and psychoanalysis view which allows the female gender to be at the mercy of their choice of words within and outside the socio-cultural context. It has also come to the fore in this paper that women's creativity has greatly helped to correct women's inferiorised positions through their use of assertive, active and positive female characterisation.

Introduction

Women should not be perceived only in relation to their biological or physiological role but as one that can make positive contributions to the society in which they are. This paper not only explore gender power in relation to the use of language and sexuality within the socio-cultural context, it also recognises gender as a social construct which has incorporated the problem of identity, sexuality and the denial of autonomy that tends to make women voiceless in different societies.

The works of many feminists/womanists linguists such as Patricia Stubbs, Alice Walker, Deborah Cameron, Deborah Coates, Mabel Segun, Modupe Kolawole, Hudson Weems amongst others have reacted against the ill-treatment of women in the global societies, yet the societal perception of womanhood is still crude especially in Africa. This is because most men do not see any positive contribution from women apart from their nature and

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nurture ability. While this view has beclouded many patriarchal societies that they fail to see the capable side of women except the sexual servitude and the domestic role that they represent, Stubb's (1981, p.xii) observes that:

No matter what part in society individual women in fact play, traditional images focus on their domestic and sexual roles. This has the effect of continually limiting women's notions of themselves and their possibilities. It undermines from within the women's movement knows this, and so attempts to combat cultural stereotypes of female experience. These are confronted and hopefully discredited by the creation of new alternative images which instead of narrowing women's consciousness of themselves, try to expand it.

Utilising female potentials in Stubb's observation is a portrayal that women writers are changing their views and the way they write.

Interestingly, psychoanalytic theory privileges questions of subjectivity and sexuality, the women writers have employed the use of culture as a significant symbol to interrogate their situations within the patriarchal setting. This is believed to have an important role in the shapening of things. Culture establishes inequality between the two genders; creates sexism and often gives psychological oppression to the women. However, women, right from the outset have been relegated by culture in most African traditional social setting which reveals the extent of oppression and discrimination. Such discrimination is used against the female sex whereby she is often made to see herself as an incomplete and inferior being that nothing of any important can come from except for her reproductive ability. Osita (2012, p. 204) observes that the root of social oppression against women in Africa can be traced to traditional society where social roles are assigned to men and women along sex lines – male and female.

Female creativity has, however, helped women to correct their inferiorised positions. It is a means through which female dignity, femininity, protestation and feminine aesthetics are identified, depicted and upheld. Through these writings, the constraints affecting women are discarded. In fact, Showalter (1986, p. 14) says that female writings have its own unique character whether because it draws on female body images, uses a woman language, expresses the female psyche and reflects women's cultural positions.

Language in Women's Writings

The first crucial theme to explore is how women writers use language to define women, through female characterisation and engagement with different themes, issues, and cultures. While many critics of female discourse have noted that women's creativity reinforces certain established ideas of women's status in society, this paper shows that most women writers such as Tess Onwueme, Lorraine Hansberry, Julie Okoh, Rona Munro, Caryl Churchill's, Sarah Daniel's, Efua Sutherland, and many more present female characters in a more radical way, which allows women to realise their individual voices, actions or both. Such characterisation gives them the opportunity to move away from socio-cultural impositions on their self-expression. It is of great importance that this paper shows how language plays a part in women's texts, paradoxically, as both a force of oppression and resistance; it attempts to explore the importance of language in women's writings while engaging with Alice Walker's womanist theory as a theoretical framework.

Although women writers of different continents write with the intention of entertaining their audience, the portrayal of most female characters is paramount to them. This entails seeing their writings as an expression of what it is to be a woman from a woman's perspective. The focus of this paper is an exploration of women writers' creation of female characters, both as biological and social constructs (that could be radical or liberal, active or passive, vocal or silent) who have assumed the role of the mouthpiece of their own stories through which the traditional or contemporary themes, society, experiences and issues are addressed.

Apart from women writers being constrained to write in line with what Ellmann (1968, p. 60) calls 'phallic criticism, which is the tendency in female writers writing to want the approval of male critics, they also face the influence scrutiny of female readers (and critics) who focus on the relationship between thought, language and character. Ruthven (1990, p. 31) identifies that to read a canonical text in a feminist way is to force that text to reveal its hidden sexual ideology which tends not to be mentioned in non-feminist criticism. Ruthven's observation also applies to womanist theory which shows a way of deconstructing the canon, and allows the feminist/womanist readers to examine the ideologies behind literary phenomena.

Womanist and feminist readings go beyond a simple rereading of texts. They aim to rediscover undervalued women's writings, historically, artistically and aesthetically. Womanism goes even further, by exploring

more of the womanist view in the female characters and issues discussed by women writers. The womanist critics offer these groups of womanist readers a new critical approach, where focus is put on issues such as mother-daughter empathy that have been long neglected by traditional critics. This allows them the opportunity to explore the situation of the womanist daughter facing the consequences of her actions. While such a view is explored in works like Ama Ata Aidoo's *Anowa*, Rona Munro's *Bold Girls*, womanism provokes female readers to see gender as a product of arbitrary cultural differentiations imposed upon sexes to support the unequal distribution of power.

One of the expectations of female readers is, however, to see new writing and reading collectives, female characters who can effect the necessary changes that society has denied them, by realising fellow women's experiences as socio-cultural and socio-biological art. This mirrors Ekwierhoma's (2003, p.18) assertion that the woman who encounters a text by a woman authenticates that creativity and narration are not alien to women, because in history women "have also told the important stories of our culture" (Showalter, 1986, p.3). Although Showalter's assertion might be valid, especially as means of including female readers in the historical analysis of women writers, Ekwierhoma's view is perhaps less convincing, as it ignores the readers who may be guilty of biased reading of women's writings that uphold the objectification of the female gender, and who would see the themes in such writing as uncultured, unsocial and unfeminine. As an avenue of communication, language interprets the whole of our experience, reducing the indefinitely varied phenomena of the world around people, and also the world inside of people.

Language as means of communication is a unique attribute possessed by human beings. The ability to use it with clarity, precision and vividness has been questioned by sociolinguists, feminist/womanist and other theorists. This seems to show the extent to which language can be ineffective irrespective of gender, but it is common among the female gender that their voice is solely defined against the view of the 'other'. Language is explored in this study as one of the main means whereby cultures and traditions are transmitted to people. If one accepts that language and culture are interwoven in creativity, then language has the potential to become an influential force in the shaping of writers' works. However, this study explores how language is used as a mechanism of socio-cultural silencing, and the recovery of alternative forms of women's creative expression. Spender (1980, p. 97) points out that

people who have the power to use language advantageously have the potential to order the world to suit their own ends, the potential to construct a language, a reality, a body of knowledge in which they are central figures, the potential to legitimate their own primacy, and to create a system of beliefs which is beyond challenge

This seems to apply to women writers who have the ability to redress their situation through the use of language in the characterisation they give to their individual female characters. Such writings are not only to correct the low self-esteem caused by discrimination and oppression in society; it also has a potential to erase the negative identity that the female gender has been associated with traditionally. The study of women's language use has a long history and it demonstrates that both genders are treated differently through their use of language. For example, Cameron (1995, p. 41) notices that linguistic rules and standards of 'correct speech' reveal information about patterns of power and privilege in society. In this sense, women writers from different cultural backgrounds share their concern about the ways in which women are (re) presented in language.

This is to confirm the sociolinguists' view that language is governed by social conventions where the social structures account for the trends of language use, which invariably allows women's outward identity to be seen as socially imposed to protect patriarchy. Such a patriarchal stand is a gendered attribute that feminist and womanist theories seek to eradicate in order to help women perceive themselves as capable human beings rather than accepting themselves as simply the opposite of men. Language exposes the kind of social being that people are, regardless of gender, and arguably a patriarchal culture is created through speech. The problem is that women are marginalised in patriarchal societies. Hence, while men find language as a tool to social entry, women see it as an impossible objective. For most women writers, language is not a tool of recognition of who they are, but a tool of oppression. This reflects Spender's point noted earlier about man-made language and also reinforces Deborah Cameron and Jennifer Coates and Deborah Tannen's exploration of written language in particular as an alien concept for women.

Language, much like gender, cannot be easily looked upon without reference to socio-cultural factors that determine one's perception of identity whether personal or national. In line with language creating one's identity, identity is often defined in terms of one's gendered situation which is often defined by psychoanalysis. Hence these various factors must be

taken into consideration and investigated to some extent in any gender focused discourse analysis.

Psychoanalysis and Language

Sigmund Freud's view of psychoanalysis has continued to question femininity and to see the repression of desire in womanhood. Freud sees that the acquisition of the meaning of sexual difference is the crucial moment in the psychological development of human beings. In situations where female children are being brought up under an Oedipal complex, their sexuality and social relationships are naturally subjected to the process of repression. This shows Oedipus complex as decisive to the formation of gendered subjectivity which allows the woman to take up the feminine position that only makes her an object of desire and not the subject of desire. Jackson (1983, p. 129) notes that psychoanalysis is also very bad news for anyone attempting to keep children from becoming feminine or masculine stereotypes. This shows how psychoanalytical theory creates what Cameron (1991, p. 90) identifies as a model of "psychic economy" that effectively makes women totally lost, outside of themselves as they go through the awful submission to the male dominated order. Psychic economy, therefore, entails what constitutes being male or being female. It is determined by culture and bestowed on the individual by an unalterable biological make-up. Spence and Helmreich's (1978) ideas believe that gender identity can be achieved through the erosion of gender stereotypes.

This shows that Freudian psychoanalytic theory allows one's gender identity to evolve through the identification of same-sex parents which develops out of an intrinsic Oedipal stage of psychosexual development. In another formulation of psychoanalytic theory, Chodorow's (1978) overall conclusion is that mothers play an important role in gender identity development. She believes that mothers are more likely to relate to their sons as different and separate because they are not of the same sex and at the same time, they experience a sense of oneness and continuity with their daughters because they are of the same sex. As a consequence, mothers will form a connection with their daughters thereby fostering femininity in girls, which is what Walker (1984) observes in the attitude of elderly women who wish to curb womanish girls and encourage them to obey the socio-cultural norms that define them as feminine. This explores how women's existence is objectified and often reduced to a 'castrated' state. Meanwhile, mothers distance themselves from their sons who respond by shifting their attention away from their mother and toward their fathers after being ignorantly

taught domination as a masculine attribute by their mothers. This identification with their fathers creates a sense of masculinity in these boys. Vaz (2006, p. 234) observes that

relational psychoanalytic theory helps validate the past lives of enslaved African women by remembering, affirming and glorifying their contribution. After excavating analytically and reflecting critically on the life stories of our foremothers, the methodology entails construction and creation of a novel paradigm.

Vaz shows how psychoanalytic theory helps the womanist to discover something new about the theory and the zeal to live in a complex gendered society that has emerged from childhood experiences, from the interactions with empathetic women. On the other hand, Vaz does not analyse how Walker's theory creates an unconscious process and the potential of psychoanalysis theory to disallow the female gender her autonomy, morality and boldness.

Cognitive-developmental theory is, however, another psychological theory on gender identity development identified by Kohlberg (1966, p.23). This theory observes that there are critical events which will have lasting effects on gender identity development, but they are cognitive rather than psychosexual in origin. Unlike psychoanalytic theory and learning theory that will be discussed next, cognitive developmental theory sees that gender identity comes before rather than follows from identification with the same-sex parent. Once a child's gender identity becomes established, the self is then motivated to display gender-aligned attitudes and behaviours.

Apart from the two above, the most influential of the theories of gender identity development are the social learning theories as explored in the works of Fagot (1978), Dweck et al (1978), Buss et al (1990). Although these writers considers some universal features of gender, some of the analysis also show that parents do not always teach the children gender, but children acquire their sense of gender through their reinforcement and punishments. In these theories, the social environment of the child, and factors such as parents and teachers, shapes the gender identity of a child. The parent or teacher instructs and limits the child on femininity and masculinity directly through rewards and punishments, or indirectly through acting as models that the child imitates. In direct rewards or punishments, children are often given the norms, codes and rules expected of their gender. For example, outward appearances as in what to wear, girls in dresses and skirts, and boys in trousers; object choices like toy

preferences, dolls for girls and trucks and balls for boys; and as far behaviour is concerned, girls are expected to be passive, timid and dependent while the boys are to be aggressive, bold and independent. These rewards and punishments create in children the awe to learn appropriate appearance and behaviour in the society. Indirect learning of one's gender identity emerges from modelling same-sex parents, teachers, peers, or same-sex models in the media. Thus, this creates asymmetry between the two genders.

Apart from the fact that many women writers see sexist language as the source and consequences of gendered roles, many sociolinguists have also written extensively on the topic. As so many women writings such as, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Marcella Evaristi's *Mouthpieces*, Irene Salami's *Emotan*, Zulu Sofola's *Song of a Maiden*, Ama Ata Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost* and many others criticise sexism in patriarchal societies. This paper however, notes Spender's (1980) observation that language is a cause of female oppression and not just the symptom of it. Spender believes all words are sexist in nature because their meanings and usages are created by men from a non-female view. As the women writers explore language as a form of disseminating information, their works reveal that sexism is a system in which women and men are not only different, but are unequal which tends to be the genesis of the socio-cultural sex roles assigned to both genders.

To do away with the stereotype gendered characters, Aidoo (1986) summarises that the female dramatist should dedicate her creativity energies to expository works. She believes that female writer should be responsible for exposing the sexist tragedy of women's history, protest the on-going degradation of women, celebrate their physical and intellectual capabilities and should unfold a revolutionary vision of their roles. Obviously, such empowerment will reduce the vulnerable and masochistic view of femininity in all ways.

This is also identified by Walker's womanist theory which shows the women writers' engagement with language as an avenue to expose and redress their second class position. This helps them to be able to celebrate their physical, mental, emotional, and intellectual capabilities. The idea Walker creates of female writing corresponds to Woods' (2003, p.115) assertion that language expresses cultural views of gender, as well as reproduces them. Yet language is not static. Instead, one continuously changes language to reflect one's changing understanding of oneself and one's world. However, while psychoanalysis as been presented as just a

method, it shows that nature does not define women, but most often, women use nature to define themselves through emotional inferiority and psychological subjugation.

Conclusion

Womanism recreates a link with histories that include African cultural heritage, enslavement, women's culture, and kinship with other women; especially women of colour. The theory does not only give voice to the silenced and marginalised on the grounds of race or gender, it also considers the simultaneous effects of race, class and gender. However, most women's writings have encouraged their engagements with cultural, aesthetic and social elements of in/visibility in literature at different levels. While such writers reject the notions of social relegation and male supremacy, they engage in creating more positive and assertive female characters that differ from the portrayal of passive dependent female characters often displayed by earlier male and female authors and enable these characters display of worth, capacities and capabilities. Thus, it creates a sense of women's selfhood and self-identity that are presented in the plays through female characters.

Through the exploration of womanist theory and the writers' use of language, most women's writings show that they have their own unique female characters who call the attention of readers to the female images, use assertive languages, express the female psyche and reflect women's cultural positions from different continents which are liable to change. Such exploration portrays the female gender with elements of self-determination, self-affirmation and self-actualization that helps to remove silence, voicelessness and patriarchal conditioning as associated with womanhood. It is however visible that the influence of 'gendered position' has been drastically reduced through several women's writing in African societies thereby making them psychoanalytic writers within the feminist context.

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Dialectical Intentionalities in the Development of Conflicts in *Ole Ku* Film by Tunde Kelani

By

‘Bode Ojoniyi* and Mary Okocha

Abstract

The centrality of conflicts to any dramatic work is not a likely contentious issue. What may be controversial are the origin and the processes of the development of such conflicts. We have been attempting to see the source of every dramatic disagreement as necessarily developing as a crisis of sort in the consciousness of each character (Ojoniyi, 2011 and 2012). The belief is that every conflict develops as a form of crisis of opposing intentionalities as to what actions or counter actions a character should take or refrain from taking. In essence, the unavoidable existential apprehensions of the consequences of the characters’ actions and counter actions seem to constitute the basis of the development of every dramatic conflict. This process is often initiated by the playwright and the director/producer to the characters. In this paper, we trace the development of the dramatic conflicts in *Ole Ku* by Tunde Kelani from how we perceive the intentionalities of the characters in the work. Part of what we seek to understand is the making and the workings of the characters’ intentionalities in their choices of actions and counter actions. We attempt to see if a pattern could be established in how these intentionalities function. We also conclude that dramatic conflict is intentionality and it is a universal experience.

Introduction

There is perhaps no human action that is an action taken in vacuum without a purpose. Therefore, there seems to be always a purpose behind every character’s choice of action. Closely linked to this reality is the fact that, every dramatic character is a creation of the playwright (Yerima cited in Adeoti, 2010, p.108; Sofola cited in Obafemi and Yerima, 2004, p. 60) or the director/producer. We can then take every dramatic creation as Derrida’s “bricolage”, a story, (Derrida, 1978 reprinted in Lodge, 1988,

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pp.107-123). We can also attempt to understand such story in line with Soyinka's take on myth as the eternalised inner intuition of the myth maker or the story teller (Soyinka, 1976, p.3). As we do this, that is, as we begin to take the story as an eternalised myth, it then appears there is, at all times, a noticeable attempt by the playwright or the director producer to achieve a goal. This means there is always a consciousness behind every work, reflecting in its plotting, characterisation, conflict development and resolution. This consciousness is the intentionality behind such work. Here in this paper however, we want to consider the intentionalities of the characters in *Ole ku* as such develop the dramatic conflict in the film. In essence, our focus is primarily on the intentionalities and counter intentionalities of the dramatic characters in the choices they make as the conflict in the film develops and not the intentionalities of the playwright or the director/producer even though we may have to say few things on theirs.

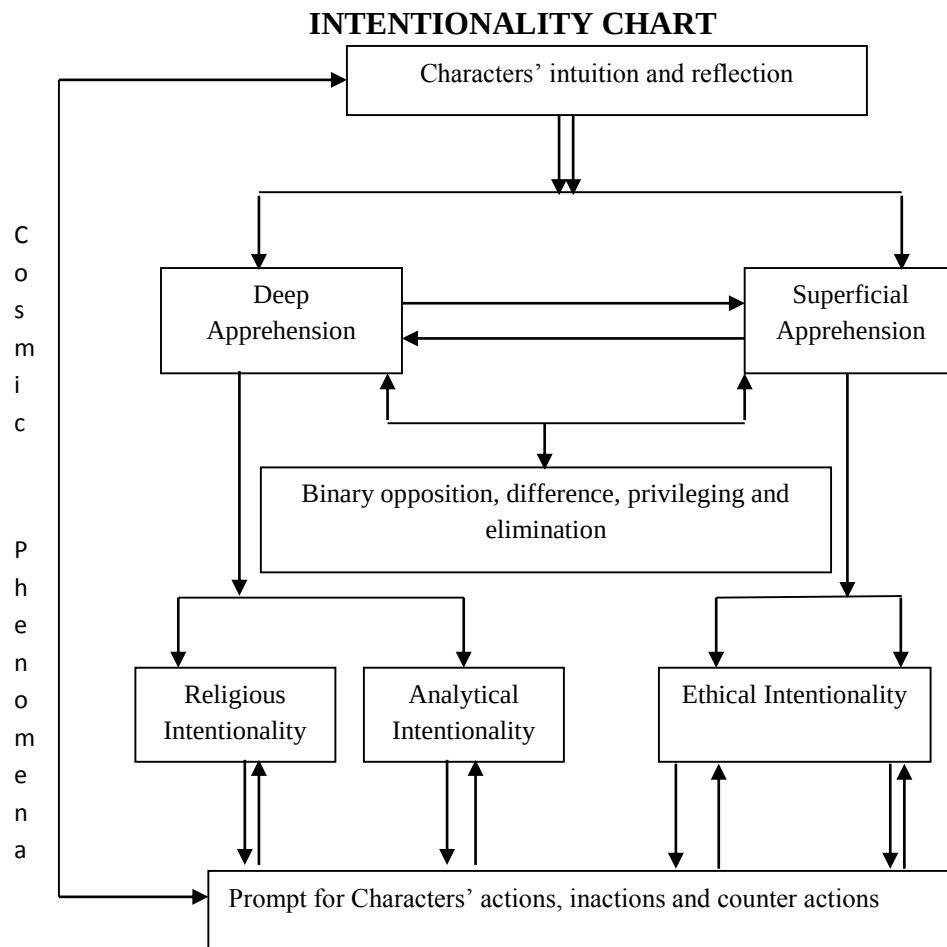
Intentionality

Intentionality means “aboutness”, something like what a character is thinking about, like an object in one's or a character's mind. The “something” in consciousness is known as its intentionality (Phenomenology, 2008. Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/phenomenology>). Etymologically, intentionality is from the word “intendere” which means “‘stretching out’ towards its object”. In essence, whatever consciousness is directed at is its intentionality. Sartre sees (1957, p.39) intentionality as that which is a concrete and real retention of past consciousness, making it possible for consciousness to refer perpetually to itself.

On Sartre's take on intentionality as the concrete and real retention of past consciousness, we opine that intentionality is likely to be tied to a character's apprehension, interpretation and appropriation of his or her interpretation of the totality of cosmic phenomena. These phenomena are his or her history, culture, tradition, religion and myths of origin. But, since the phenomena, unfortunately, are both tangible and intangible and they are the ingredients of intentionality, therefore, contrary to Sartre's claim, intentionality cannot just be “the concrete and real retentions of past consciousness”. Intentionality must also consist of new, possible or generative phenomena. It seems that the human consciousness is capable of generating such future possibilities through its boundless imaginative mental abilities. So, consciousness does not just refer to itself, consciousness connects both the tangible and the intangible and can

therefore refer to the unknown or the unseen future. In essence, consciousness accommodates future hopes and this forms part of the reality of intentionality behind character's action, inaction and counter action. For us, therefore, intentionality is the prompt for every character's action and counter action based on the influence of the character's fear and hope. Below are the possible events and processes within intentionality as captured in this proposed intentionality chart.

Cosmic
Phenomena



(Ojoniyi, 2012, p. 77).

From the chart above we can see that from intuition and reflection, consciousness processes the “text”, interpreting and appropriating the interpretation to arrive at the prompt, the intentionality for actions, inactions

and counter actions. Processing the text through interpretation and the appropriation of the interpretation to take action or refrain from taking action as shown above could be based on deep or superficial apprehensions. When an eventual action or inaction of a character is based on the deep apprehension of the circumstances, the character would be said to be an analytical or a religious character. But when the action or the inaction is based on a superficial reflection the character would be said to be an egoistic or an ethical character. The processing of the text through interpretation and appropriation of the interpretation to take action or to refrain from taking action, as we have seen, involves binary opposition, difference forming, privileging and the eventual elimination of certain actions for the privileged actions.

About *O le Ku*

The original *O le Ku* text was published by UPL Plc., Ibadan in 1974. It was written by Professor Akinwumi Isola. In 1997 the text was produced as a film by the *MAINFRAME* Film and Television productions. It was directed and produced by one of the foremost film director/producers in the Nigerian film industry, Tunde Kelani with Professor Akinwunmi Isola again as the screen script writer.

The film centres on Ajani who is a final year student of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The Kelani commenting on the work at the back of the cover claims that it “underscores the universal confounding process of determining the right choice of spouse” (1997). We would return to our take on this quotation later. So, Ajani, the main character in the film, is presented as desperately looking for a life partner as a result of pressure from his mother who insists that she must see and carry her grand-children before she dies to meet Ajani’s father. She claims she is “under pressure” from the dead father of Ajani who has been appearing to her in her dream and to whom she must give the good-news of Ajani’s eventual marriage when it finally happens. Of course, she enlists Ajani’s brother in mounting and sustaining the pressure on Ajani to heed her call and heart-cry to bring home a lady and be married.

Ajani who is already in a relationship with Asake has apprehensions of the unseen about the prospect of the relationship because of the stance of Asake’s father. In the process he meets Lola and again, he meets Sade. Yet the challenges of making the right choice appear fettered by circumstantial realities and the inherent fear of making the right choice as against the wrong choice in the numerous possible choices and alternatives he is

confronted with. This is what brings us back to our take on the “the universal confounding process of determining the right choice of spouse” as identified by the director/producer, Tunde Kelani. For us, this is an existential consciousness crisis of fear and apprehension of what tomorrow holds as prospect for each character. It is like, to borrow the title of William Blake’s popular work, “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell” in human’s consciousness, an inherent progressive battle of hope and fear in man. As Kelani suggests, it appears to be a universal confounding phenomenon which, for us, contrary to his limiting its reality to the “process of determining the right choice of spouse”, transcends such narrow choice of a mere spouse.

The search for the right choice, the true meaning, in the chains of signs is what we have identified as dialectical intentionalities. So, dialectical intentionalities exemplify the basis and factors that necessarily set the processes leading to every character’s action, inaction and counter action or inaction in motion. We would critically look at these consciousness processes of intentionalities and counter intentionalities and how they graduate into physical crises and conflicts in the film, *O le Ku*.

Dialectical Intentionalities in *O le Ku*

The actions in the film start on a seeming negligible comic note as Ajani, Ijaola and other friends are seen discussing one of their lecturers, Dr. Larinde, who is said to have traced the origin of certain English words to Yoruba roots. For instance that, “me” in English comes from the Yoruba “*mi*”, “sneeze” from “*sin*”, “immunity” from “*imuniti*”, “cash” from “*owo kisi*” and so on. Now, we may want to dismiss this as insignificant, but often something like this becomes an intellectual quest – for we often time and again desire to understand the root of such closeness in words (signs) or meaning even in our cultures. When Carl Jung was confronted with the strength of such similarities in cultures and myths across the races’ world, he proposed the thesis of the existence of archetypal pattern, a bank of a collective unconsciousness from which, as he claimed, cultures and races draw identifiable patterns (Jung cited in Eruvbetine, 2006, p.5).

This bank of the collective unconsciousness is not somewhere out there in the unknown world, it is here in our minds from where we attempt to apprehend the world around and within us. It consists of our hopes and fears, such that Dr. Larinde’s claim may be underlined with the questions of race superiority and explication from the often parochial narrations of the West. Closely related to this is the conscientious attempt by another lecturer

in the film to correct the narrow claim of “Hugg Roper”, a Western historian, that Africans have no history. So, buried within the consciousness of the lecturers is perhaps the quest, to borrow the title of one of the works Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1981), to “decolonising the mind...” of the students.

The actions of the lecturers and the students border on what Soyinka identifies as the quest for race-retrieval and race-explication form the narratives and historical distortions of the West and the myth of the gods (Soyinka, 1976, pp. 1-3). Of course, to fully achieve a total race-explication, the minds of the colonised must be “decolonised” through a new radical form of education. This decolonising educational formula in itself requires a form of re-programming or re-conditioning of the consciousness of the colonised that is often excessively reactionary. There is no doubt that this is the subtle quest, the intentionality of the lecturers and students from the opening scene of the film.

Shifting their discussion from the issue of language, Ajani and his friends begin to discuss “Erebe Gala Night”. While some claim they have forgot the programme, Ajani, who as it turned out, has a pre-meditated plan and agenda, rejects such idea as forgetting “Erebe Gala Night”. To him, it is as if it is a crime to forget such a night with its attending “great expectations”. The expectations of being with one’s girl friend and, also, of projections into what should happen on such occasion when they are together. So, all along, whilst preparing for the night, Ajani has perhaps been involved in a kind of consciousness act of sexual gratification with Asake, his girl friend. And, of course, to achieve this consciousness act of sexual inter-course with Asake in the real sense of it physically, he has dully invited her to come and celebrate the night with him on the campus.

The intentionality to pick Asake to campus for the night is absolute as we attempt to imagine Ajani’s numerous consciousness mental picture of his engaging (as reported to Jesus Christ of the woman caught in adultery in the Bible) in the “very act” with Asake. This is the reason why when Asake’s mother requests that Ajani should release her on time to come home, he could not promptly assure her. In Ajani’s consciousness, his present and future intentionalities are fixed and they are in opposition to Asake’s and her mother’s intentionalities. Of course, consciously, “erebe night” symbolises and means something closely related to total revelling which must culminate in sexual gratification with one’s girl friend in the minds of Ajani and his friends.

Among the unmarried teenagers and youth is the myth that the only thing that proves and solidifies love is sexual intercourse between a boy and

a girl who claim to be in love. This myth must have informed the numerous sexual scenes on the field where Ajani takes Asake for a walk. Of course, the “field walk” is designed as a motivational sightseeing for Asake – for we can assume that Ajani is aware of what happens on the field at night, not to talk of a special night like “erebe night”. When Asake comments on the looseness of the campus girls to Ajani, he retorts by saying that that is not enough to stop her and him, the supposed true lover, from going ahead with their own true love (sexual intercourse) experience.

When the field trip failed to produce the expected result, Ajani tactically delays Asake until very late in the night when it is impossible to get a taxi back to her house in the town. Right from the beginning, Ajani’s intentionality is not that Asake would return to town that night. When Asake becomes apprehensive of what to tell her parents if she fails to go home to sleep, Ajani quickly counsels her to lie that she slept in Alaba, her friend’s house. He eventually succeeds in persuading her to follow him to his hostel and pass the night with him believing that his dream and mental reality of a sexual gratification with Asake is now being fulfilled. Of course, the others, Ajani’s friends like Ijaola, have also taken their ladies with them to their hostels for the night.

We perceive that each could only be imagining what the others are doing with their girls now that they are alone in their different hostels under nobody’s watch. Of course, Asake’s mother would also be imagining what experience her daughter would be going through with Ajani through the night. Asake’s father is also not left out in the game of image making through the night as he keeps wondering about the where about of his daughter. Each character is apprehensive of the present experience and what the experience would generate as counter action. For Asake, she is going to tell her parents tomorrow, particularly the father that she slept in Alaba’s house. This would be an open lie to the mother who is aware that she left the house with Ajani.

But the mother would have to continue her game of deception and ignorance of the truth before Asake’s father. She would agree that Asake slept in Alaba’s house. She would begin to wonder if her daughter is still a virgin. Asake’s father would continue to doubt the report of his daughter querying the rationale behind her “dancing and forgetting her house”. Ajani would continue to wonder why Asake adamantly refuses to allow him to have sexual intercourse with her despite all his antics and schemes to actualise his intentionality. Now, each character would want to understand why the other character is acting or behaving the way he or she is doing.

This desire would give rise to the preparedness for counter action or behaviour.

On the part of Asake's father one of such counter action would be to stop Asake from going out except to work, stopping her from receiving visitors, particularly male visitors and eventually banning Ajani from coming to see her. The action of Asake's father is based on the combination of his fear and hope. The fear is in what may happen to prevent Asake from going to the University, like an unwanted pregnancy or lack of concentration because of frivolous love relationship as the father sees her relationship with Ajani, while the hope is in her going to the university to get a degree with her maiden name. On the part of Ajani, the next logical thing to do would be to start dating another girl as a counter action to Asake's stance on sex – for her stance would be interpreted to as part of the fall-out of her father's position. In fact, this is exactly Ajani's justification for dating Lola Ajasa as he explains the reason for his dating her to Ijaola and others. Another of his claim is premised on the logic that there is no empirical evidence that Asake would still marry him after her graduation from the university. Evidently, every character's actions and counter actions are a combination of inherent hope and fear in his or her consciousness. These hopes and fears are responsible for the anxieties, dreads and apprehensions behind every choice they intend to make.

Still on the issue of hopes and fears, we note that Asake's father apprehension births his intentionality to plot with Joshua, the Prophet, to lie to Asake that Ajani is not approved by God as her divine husband. In fact, in the first place, the intentionality to consult the prophet or an oracle for divine guidance on the choice of action to take or not to take underscores the reality of the existence and the development of conflicts as a form of crisis in the characters' consciousness. Unfortunately, it is within such troubled and crisis ridden consciousness that the intentionalities, the prompts for every action and counter action, are birth.

So, within dialectics of intentionality are survival theory, apprehension theory, superiority/privileging theory and elimination theory. In the survival theory is the inherent desire to make the right choice that will guarantee and secure the characters' future. This theory can be used to analyse Joshua as a prophet. His survival instinct prevails on his actions and counter action. In fact, he is a prophet not because he is "called" by God, but to survive the economic situation of the country, this is what informs Asake's father's comments on Joshua that "*o ti so kini i digi di patapata*" meaning, "you have transform this 'call' to a genuine one" while making

jest of him. This also informs the reason he could employ him to lie to his daughter in the name of divine revelation from God. We then easily confirm Adeleke's words that Asake's father is Joshua's God (in the sense that whatever Asake's father tells Joshua to do is what he does) as he assures Asake and Ajani not to worry about Joshua's claim that they are not divinely ordained to be wife and husband.

The apprehension theory encompasses the fear and hope theories as explained above in the dizziness of choice making in relation to the character's quest to fulfil purpose or destiny. Ajani is apprehensive of the future of his "waiting" for Asake to go to university and her father's actions; Asake is apprehensive of her father's warnings. In fact, all the characters live in one apprehension or the other.

The superiority or privileging theory is the theory that explains the processes by which a character eventually decides on which action to take or not to take. The actions are ranked or scaled in the order of importance or superiority, the one perceived to be most important is therefore privileged above the others. Asake decides to abide by her father's instruction and stops seeing Ajani because she accepts the superiority of her father's wisdom and counsel above that of Ajani, her own and others. In line with human's line of thought, the instruction of the oracle of Ifa and the prophets are respected because of the perceived superiority of such instructions to mere human reasoning and wisdom.

The elimination theory deals with how an action is eventually eliminated for another action after it has been de-privileged, deemphasised or relegated on the scale of necessary actions. This theory also accounts for the killing of a character perceived as one's enemy. Once a character is marked as a hindrance to one's progress or fulfilment, the next action is to eliminate him or her. We must, however, note that elimination is not necessarily to death. What Ajani did when he eventually marries Sade is to eliminate Asake from his consciousness as a potential future wife. What Asake did when she stops seeing Ajani is to temporarily deemphasise Ajani and the need for marriage in her consciousness. Asake decides to take her own life after coming to a conclusion that she has made a wrong choice when she accepts her father's counsel to stop seeing Ajani to concentrate on going to the university.

Asake must have concluded in her consciousness that living without Ajani would be a nightmare and an illusion. She confronts her father openly for the first time, challenging him as a wicked man. So, frustrated, she concludes that her life is worthless without Ajani who is now perceived to

have played his own part and role to see that the relationship succeeds. The failure of the relationship leading to Ajani's marriage to Sade is eventually perceived as Asake's failure and lack of wisdom. Since, this is the picture in her consciousness, she perceives herself as a failure. Her life or living is then de-privileged, following which she swallows poison in an attempt to kill herself.

Lastly, on the intentionality of the playwright or the producer, echoing Nietzsche's theory of projection (cited in Schacht, 1983, p.125, Ojoniyi, 2008, p.6), we would like to note that there seems to be a conscious intentionality on the part of the playwright to project the Pirate fraternity, the Sea Dogs, as a cult of the intellectuals and lovers of justice. Their song, "*ologbon ni o j'ogun aye*", meaning, "The wise or the brilliant would inherit the world" exemplifies this claim.

Conclusion

No doubt, dramatic conflicts in *O Le Ku* as shown in our analysis of the film develop from a sort of crisis in the consciousness of each character as he or she responds to the actions and counter actions of the other characters. Essentially, every dramatic conflict is a relational problem or challenge and it is, ultimately, a question of survival. This is the reason the characters intentionalities, the prompts for their actions and counters actions, is very important to us in developing a suitable and relevant theory for characters study in both the live theatre and home video/the film industry. It is our candid opinion that the application of the theory of dialectical intentionality as explained in/through the theories of apprehension, privileging, survival and elimination above, representing a kind of post-structuralist binary opposition, would greatly enhance playwriting, characterisation and acting. There is no action or counter action without intentionality and within such intentionality is a dialectics which represent a crisis and conflict within self and later with others in relational issues or matters. We can therefore say that dramatic conflict is intentionality and it is a universal experience.

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Effects of some of the Emerging Dance Styles on the Nigerian Youths

By

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Abstract

This essay examines the emerging Nigerian dance styles, i.e. Yahoozee, Alanta, Suo, Etighi etc in relation to their practices among youths, as well as the problems and prospects embedded in the applications of these dances. Through the social cognitive theory as propounded by Miller and Dollard (1941), this paper evaluates these dances in its content and context. In this regard, our research methodology entails the non-participatory observation method and interviews, while consultations from academic journals, books, magazines, internet etc contribute to giving credence to our submissions. It was discovered that the constant freedom and access the youth have on the environment and the society at large are critical to the influences of these dances on them. Also, that deep acquaintance with these styles eventually consolidate the urge of dwelling on them, possibly at the detriment of their academics and also against the desire of their parents. Owing to these amplifiable realities, we recommend that parents should ensure that their children receive the required education as well as follow up their enthusiasm for dance practices without hindering one another. Equally, concerned bodies should ensure that the youth practice these dance styles without negative connotations.

Introduction

In the contemporary Nigerian society, the quest for entertainment remains constant. Apparently, one of the fast growing entertainment channels is dance and interestingly, the extensive day to day practice and even competitive tendencies it undergo proves its authenticity. While this qualifying assertion seems glorifying, the continual euphoria of its practices may result to unwanted consequences, particularly considering the youth.

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Through the current globalisation phenomenon that has gradually crept into almost all spheres of our nation, certain amount of westernisation has been imbibed, thus ensuring a hybridisation of the western trends and styles in African culture. Unfortunately, music and dance has been adversely affected by this form of hybridisation. Consequently, today, rather than seeing children practice and dance to our various cultural dances, they whole heartedly embrace the contemporary style which is fast spreading like wild fire.

This researcher supports creation of dance styles, we however find it bothering that rather than complement our cultural dances in terms of varieties, these styles have almost completely taken over, at least from the perspective of the youth. The vibrancy and rapid growth of hip-hop musicians and their art has further consolidated this contemporary dance styles as it encourages varying degree of movements that could identify with the music. It is however sad to note that some of these dances have obscene gestures replete in them. Invariably such dance styles can be likened to the analogy of “a container with no content” because of the crazy dispositions it tends to portray. It is however heartwarming to note that a few of these dances have prospect of developing as a viable dance form. This paper therefore takes into consideration the above highlighted factors. We ultimately seek to ameliorate the conditions of such dances that have negative effect on youth in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

In order to appropriately situate the discourse in this paper, the “social cognitive theory” shall be adopted. This theory according to www.wikimedia.com:

Stemmed out of work in the area of social learning theory proposed by N.E Miller and J. Dollard in 1941. Identifying four key factors in learning new behaviour, (i) drives, (ii) cues, (iii) responses, and (iv) rewards, they posit that if one were motivated to learn a particular behaviour, then that particular behaviour would be learned through clear observations.

The dichotomy between cultural/traditional dances and contemporary/modern dances has been further strengthened by the changes that are replete in the society. The putative cause of this range from technological advancements in virtually all aspects of life, to shift in focus and individual crave for experiences that are new. These observations are

what give our adopted theory a basis, particularly in the area of experimenting with dance.

From an analytical point of view, the “social cognitive theory” clearly fits into the processes of transformation experienced in the society today in relation to dance. Miller and Dollard’s four key factors in learning new behaviour correspond with what a Nigerian youth experience. Judging from the rave of the moment revelations in music and dance, it would not be out of place to deduce that learning through observation has been a key factor in the transference of motifs, styles and new skills of dance, Santrock (2008, p. 26) clearly correspond our opinion, stating that:

Social cognitive theory is a learning theory based on the ideas that people learn by watching what others do and will not do, these processes are central to understanding personality. While social cognitists agree that there is a fair amount of influence on development generated by learned behaviour displayed in the environment in which one grows up, they believe that the individual person (and therefore cognition) is just as important in determining moral development.

Owing to the foregoing, it is common to find youths developing “drive” for something different than the dances they have been doing before, get “cues” from their residual knowledge of movements as motivation, and experience a level of “responses” or acceptance from friends and peer groups and then get “rewards” of it being gradually practiced.

From the emergence of Galala, other dances like Suo, Skronto, Alanta, Etighi, Oliver twist, Yahoozee amongst others have been continually practiced even till today. We believe that Miller and Dollards “social cognitive theory” has in a way contributed to the emergence of most of these dances and equally, its acceptance has also brought about some negative acts from the youth. Therefore, as we move on in this discourse, more analysis based on this shall be made.

The Nigerian Youths and Social Life

It is very difficult to alienate social life from the Nigerian youth because it forms the core of their daily experiences. In Nigeria today, the youth are very susceptible to the allure of interesting music, lyrical vibes and exciting beats, and as such it is hard to find a youth without an I-pod, a wireless earphone, blackberry phones or other technological instruments that enable them listen to music uninterrupted. Definitely, advancements in

technology has favoured the youth incredibly in that aspect. Equally, the television stations who have unrelentingly promoted the Nigerian contemporary musicians and some foreign cultures have opened up a vista to the visual appreciation of these various music and dance. Nicholls (1997, p.42) rightly observe that

The mass media are narrowly based, have a large percentage of foreign program content, promote an urban bias, and are insensitive to the different needs and cultural particularism of rural dwellers. Moreover, interaction with pop culture by the young has created a generational gap.

The Nigerian television stations and radio stations have therefore further engendered the continuous and effective social life of the youths. Equally involved in this trend are the various companies who have tapped into dance as a viable means of promoting their brands as well as influence the social life of the youth thereby giving them a platform to develop their talents. The reality television shows like “Maltina dance hall”, “Malta Guinness street dance competition”, “so you think you can dance” and a host of others have experienced a considerable level of success in this area. Similarly, the youth’s obsession to the styles of music and dance of some established and upcoming Nigerian musicians they admire, draw their attention to the pay satellite televisions like D.S.T.V where they tune to “O” channel and other stations to listen to, and view their favourite stars. Anizebe (2006, p.11) confirms that “the attention of the viewers have shifted completely to the pay TVS, i.e. Digital Satellite Television (DSTV), which continues to attract them despite the fact that they pay more for signals than anywhere in the world.” Finance is even not hindrance to some dogged and diehard fans that can pay exorbitantly to be admitted into halls where these musicians and dancers constantly perform. From the assertions above, it is clear that the social life of the youth has becomes a nucleus of their lives.

The Practice of Dance among Nigerian Youths

The days when dance bands and popular music sway the youth may have passed. This is not to say that there are no youth listening or dancing to popular music, it only suggests that the number is much more less than those who have wholesomely embraced the contemporary music and dance. The allure of sounds, beats, lyrical flow and raps of various styles have made the contemporary music a constant phenomenon in their daily practice. This is why we envisage that the various Nigerian dances currently

practiced are still in the emerging stage; this is because as musicians come with variety of new styles, new dances are imminent.

From the creation and consequently popularity of the Galala dance, several other dance styles have emerged. Despite this, Galala (though not as effectively practiced like before) still enjoy a level of practice. This goes to show that the dynamics of the Nigerian music and dance is deeper than what it was a decade back. Today, the phase it has undergone is awe striking; it has even been adopted in religious worship where youths have constantly practiced these various dances as their own way of expressing thanks and appreciation to God. As such, it is very common to find dances like Alanta, Etighi and others performed to gospel songs. It is however more interesting that some youth who are getting married nowadays opt for a Disk Jockey (D.J) who mix different forms and versions of love music from contemporary Nigerian musicians to suit their taste, they hide under the shadow of that day being special to them thereby ridding the other guests the pleasure of dancing to the traditional music which such occasion call for.

Dancing to this various music has been made easy by the adaptability of these various Nigerian contemporary dances to different music. Though the dances are created by different people (most of who are equally musicians), other musicians have adopted their style of dance as an appendage to their overall performance on stage.

Environmental factor is also a key influence on the practice of dance among Nigerian youth. A key example of this is the Ajegunle (ghetto) city where galala originated from. It is discovered that environmental factors are prime to the creation of the dance. Ugolo (2001, p.142) provides a deeper insight, stating that:

John Odafe Asiemo, popularly known as Daddy Showkey is a pop musician who has invented a pop dance that truly reflects his personality and the socio-political environment/atmosphere in which he grew. His dance is a by-product of so many factors which include the effects of urbanization, military rule, poverty, deprivation; injustice, oppression, violence, etc. as can be seen in Nigeria and indeed the ghetto life in the cities and urban centers in the eighties and nineties.

Although, many dance styles have emanated from Ajegunle after galala, other factors are responsible for such dances; majorly based on individual

creative instincts. Owing to the above, it is obvious that these emerging dance styles have had effect more on the Nigerian youth.

Effects of the Emerging Nigerian Dance Styles on the Nigerian Youths

Just like a doctor's prescription would have effect on an obedient or disobedient patient, several other aspects of life encounter such moments where effects are unavoidable. In a culturally viable country like Nigeria, particularly in the area of dance, several inhibitions or otherwise could result to certain effects which may be palatable or not. Of a truth, arguably no one has an immediate answer to the rapid growth of technological advancements on virtually every aspects of life; certain aspects of it can be considerably checked before metamorphosising into what may eventually not be handled. In the area of dance in Nigeria, the contemporary and postmodern trends have undoubtedly created an impression, particularly among the youth. However, irrespective of this, we are all progenitors of a passing phase of culture and tradition, and are all obliged to protect these culture and tradition for future purposes.

Thus, it is interesting to note that there are young ones who have the heart of the likes of Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Alvin Ailey and others who have left their prints in the sands of time. However, caution has to be applied in some other aspects.

Since music plays a significant role in the practice and appreciation of dance, it is thought wise that a considerable amount of appropriateness be ensured in the lyrics of the music. This is because it has a way of affecting creation of dance movements. An example of this is a track from Raymond King's music album titled "Alanta dance" which goes thus;

Call: New dance wey dey reign now (repeated many times)

Response: Alanta

All: Paka, poka, paka, paka poka (8 times)
He be like say something dey scratch your body
He be like say something dey bite your body
na so dem dey dance Alanta

Verse One

He better make you spoil your face oh
If you wan dance Alanta,
My friend make you spoil your face oh
Na so dem dey dance Alanta
Fine girl make you spoil your face oh

If you wan dance Alanta
 Fine boy make you spoil your face oh
 Na so dem dey dance Alanta

Verse Two

At the same time make you scratch your belle
 He be like say he dey bite your belle
 At the same time make you touch your self
 If you like make you touch your head

Chorus

Call: New dance wey dey reign now (repeated many times).

Response: Alanta

The lyric above is in Pidgin English which is commonly understood and accepted by all, some of who live in Ajegunle city. The track and album itself seems to be dedicated to alanta dance, and invariably it serves as a manual for the preliminary teaching of the steps. Majirioghere (2008, p. 21) notes that:

Alanta dance gyrates contorts his body like some rubbery contraption and flexes like a gargoyle, eyes popping out, legs set like a quadrilateral triangle, a distended tummy and tongue pocking out of his mouth. It is an aggressive war-like dance.

From our observation of the video, the lyrics and consequently the dance reveal more. The dances were made to suit the lyrics, making both unpalatable and immoral to the sight. We see ladies and young guys disfiguring their faces, poking tongues out and doing movements that can be characterised as imbecilic or abnormal, the lyrics even went as far as asking fine boys and fine girls to “spoil their face” while dancing Alanta. First, it is a negative attitude to creativity considering that creativity should be for positive change. Secondly, the documentation of this lyrics and dance patterns into Compact Disk for public consumption means young ones who are barely old enough to discern right from wrong would be exposed to such abnormalities thinking it is dance.

From another perspective, we review Dj Zeez’s track titled “ori e fon ka si be”. The lyrics of the song goes thus;

Chorus

Ori e o fonka sibe (2ce)
 Ori e o fonka sibe, fonka sibe, fonka sibe

Solo

Te ba de yanki	Your head is scattered around (3ce)
Won gbo wa nibe	if you get to Europe, they are listening to us
Te ba de Dublin	if you get to Dublin, they are listening to us
Won gbo wa nibe	in Germany, we are well known
Ni Germany a le nu pa	

Interpretatively, the song makes no meaning as it is only eulogizing the singer himself; here the objective of his music which should be touching and impacting lives positively is defeated. In the first instance, the interpretation of the song when combined with the Nigerian dance style called “Yahoozee” produces a pathetic experience, particularly from semiotic point of view. Yahoozee is a type of dance style that demands usage of the hands (specifically the first two fingers next to the thumb) in rhythmic patterns, stroking the hands interchangeably beside and over the head, equally with movement of the right leg continuously. An examination of this music and the dance styles produces a degenerating communication, which could mean “your head is not correct”. This equally falls short of the expectation of the Nigerian music and dance which should be morally alright for artistic consumption. The implication here is that young ones, who learn faster at tender ages, rapidly develop interest in such music and dance, especially in this slang oriented environment now in Nigeria.

The freedom and access children now have to the society is unbelievable, this affords them the opportunity, to go to the streets where other forms of behaviours are entrenched into them by their friends and peers.

Unfortunately, it is from bad exposures that some of these young ones develop a strong desire to venture into music and dance, consciously or unconsciously neglecting their academics. Interestingly, it is a common phenomenon for some music and dance prodigies to allow crave for money and fame becloud their sense of judgment with respect to education. Ayo Balogun popularly known as Wizkid was reported to have dropped out of Lead City University having developed his music carrier which started at a very tender age of eleven. This syndrome is pathetic, particularly considering that while a graduate certificate has suddenly become preliminary and graduates are enrolling for masters, some musicians and

dancers have suddenly rest on their school leaving certificates, thus considering fame and wealth a more viable option.

Another area bedeviling the emerging Nigerian dance styles is crave for night outs at clubs and different social gatherings. Usually, there are night clubs who offer extensive practice of dance during the weekends and it is customary to find a few Nigerian artists invited to some big night clubs to sing and perform. In a bid to sell themselves, they are given to employing young ladies who dance in all manner of ways to keep the audience's attention and equally create impression of them. Afolabi (1999, p.13) expatiate on this, saying that:

Many Nigerian artists have found the trick of good sales of their work in the purveyance of sex and obscenity, sometimes raw pornography. In performance, many Nigerian artists (musicians especially) employ the services of professional (female) dancers who rather than dance normally are expected to wriggle their waists, busts and buttocks in rhythms that are suggestive of sex act.

This is really appalling because the various Nigerian dance styles that have emerged are intermittently used in these night clubs. More than ever, the Nigerian dance scene needs to be purged of various irrelevances that are quite obvious.

Conclusion

The Nigerian entertainment circle has grown tremendously, majorly because of the rise of, and practice of contemporary dance and music. Its emergence and continual practice has obviously almost driven the cultural dances to an abyss of neglect and artistic subjugation. This paper is not an attempt to be vitriolic, but only as an artistic forceps and to mediate between the idiosyncratic nature of some emerging Nigerian dance styles and our cultural dances which is the hub of our indigenous entertainment circus in Nigeria.

As we have highlighted in our discourse, these Nigerian contemporary dances as practiced by the youth seems to be hotchpotch in its approaches, and the reason not farfetched is their dependence on creativity that is imbued with styles that are chronical in nature. It is even made more glamorous by the post modern trend which unfortunately has had its place among youth. Nevertheless, since we cannot completely annihilate these dance styles, it is our prerogative to provide some

recommendations that would prune this dance styles as well as improve the practice of our cultural dances. They are;

- That the Federal Ministry of Youth Development in conjunction with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism should cogitate and strategically ensure the repositioning of the Nigerian youth through several orientation programmes that border on core issues relating to their behavior, way of life and particularly the Nigerian cultural heritage which they are not really abreast of. Equally, a standard measure of practice of the emerging Nigerian dance styles should be put in place, along with its music counterpart so that the moral standards which we hold highly in Nigeria would be upheld.
- That parents (most especially mothers) give a considerable time to their children, particularly with respect to their activities within the society. They should know what they do, the friends they keep, the kind of music they listen and dance to and generally, what constitute their daily experiences. Also, it is considered highly imperative that parents endeavour to take their children home at least once or twice in a year. This will breed familiarity with the cultural and traditional dance of their ethnic group, affording them the opportunity to learn and practice the traditional dances like the contemporary dances.
- That music and dance practitioners within the contemporary society should seek education irrespective of successes achieved in their chosen career. This will be a viable tool in stamping their authority within different strata, and equally earn them an undisputable advantage in all ramifications.

Beyond pontification, we hope that with our highlighted points above, and other useful/relevant points as reflected in our discourse, there would be a better, an improved and a favourable practice of the emerging Nigerian dance styles.

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Yorùbá Proverbs in Media Intervention: The Case of Radio Nigeria Harmony F.M's Òkodoro-Òrò

By

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Abstract

Proverbs are the moral science and conscience of the Yorùbá nation. Many of these proverbs contain traditional observations on the nature of things and some are moral boosters among other functions. As important as proverbs are in many societies, little attention is being given to this by majority of Yorùbá people particularly the educated. The result of this is the moral decadence among many youth today. One of the factors that are responsible for this situation is modernisation that has made these people to prefer foreign languages especially English to the indigenous languages. This study therefore appraises the electronic media's interventions in redressing the situation. The innovative use of proverbs in Yorùbá press reports in a radio station in Ilorin, Kwara State, is the focus of this paper. The programme titled Òkodoro-Òrò literally meaning "the reality of the words", has served as means of sensitising and re-awakening listener's interest in Yorùbá proverbs in addition to the news being provided. Thirteen randomly selected episodes of the programmes were recorded off air over a period of two weeks. Twenty five proverbs were used as copus in this paper. The findings revealed that through the programmes, the listener's awareness of Yorùbá proverbs is re-awakened while his or her lexicon is positively imparted and developed. In addition, the language and culture of the Yorùbá people are preserved.

Introduction

The broadcasting industry came to being in Nigeria in the year 1932 in Lagos on an experimental basis, whereby, the British Broadcasting Corporation Empire programmes with the occasional local programmes were transmitted by telephone wires to subscribers (known as Wired

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Broadcasting Services). It was used as government propaganda instrument, because it was not intended for the Nigerian audience. It was also meant to satisfy the colonial staff at the various regions. The Wired Broadcasting (Radio) Service as it was called was later renamed Radio Distribution Service (RDS) and several stations were opened in some parts of the country like Ibadan (1939), Kano (1944) and later extend to Kaduna, Enugu, Abeokuta, Jos, Zaria, Calabar and Port Harcourt (James, 2009, p. 60).

In any given society, developmental initiatives are geared towards structural transformation in that society. In order to achieve this, there must be an effective communication media in personal, interpersonal and non-human relation. It is in this light that the media have been found to be the most successful way of relaying messages to people both at the rural and urban areas. It is a known fact that radio is the easiest medium to be accessed by majority of the people, especially the rural populace. As the society increases in population, the need also arises for an effective communication system to be developed and sustained to disseminate information to the audience and one of the vital instruments of mass communication in this development process is the radio. Hence, the creation of more states in the country has always led to the growth of the radio station.

The impact of the broadcasting service of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), state owned and private stations in our contemporary Nigerian state cannot be over-emphasised. In view of the foregoing, the present paper examines the impact of Harmony F.M. located in Ìdòfiàn, Kwara state, Nigeria in the development and preservation of a significant aspect of Yorùbá cultural values that is almost going into extinction, proverbs.

Proverbs among the Yorùbá People

Proverbs are collection of earthly experience, critical observation and deep thought. Proverb is very important and abounds in many languages of the world as each speaker of any language has his own set of proverbs. Proverb enriches discussions, gives deeper meanings to words and as a result has deeper impact on the addressed and is not easily forgotten.

The African (Yorùbá) proverb is a distinctive aspect of language use employed mainly by adults in informal conversations as well as in formal speeches at meetings, conferences and other occasions. Bámgbóṣe (1974, p.120) states that the use of proverbs in a discourse is a traditional stylistic device in Yorùbá speech-making. It is a common proverb in Yorùbá that *Òwe lẹsin ọrọ ọrọ lẹsin ọwe, bọrọ bá sọnu ọwe la ó fì wa*. This means that

proverb is the “horse of words”, because utterances ride on proverb to achieve the purpose of communication. This may have been born out of the fact that “Yoruba proverbs are self-evident truths” which help to “drive home a point or describe a situation in a few striking words” (Delano, 1973, p.77). Agbájé (2005, p.50) also Opines that proverbs are regarded as the wisdom lore of the society.

Yorùbá proverbs are the preserves of the wise people, hence, the saying: *Bi ówe bi ówe là ñ lùlù àgídígbo, ọlọgbón ní í jó o ọmọràn ló ñ mọ ọ*; meaning: “It is in proverb that the àgídígbo drum is being beaten, it is only the wise that dances to its rhythm and only the knowledgeable that knows its message”.

Proverbs actually make a language. A language is alive and functional as a result of the proverbs which that very language embodies. The relationship and nexus between a language and proverb could be likened to a skeleton with flesh as well as a body with a soul. Simply put, proverbs are the ingredients and tools that enrich and beautify a language. The concept of proverb cannot be well understood and complete without considering the views and opinions of scholars and communication experts.

Finnegan (1978, p. 389) sees proverbs as easy “record” of some sort which links the present with the past and the past with the present. She defines proverb as “a saying in more or less fixed form marked by ‘shortness, sense and salt’ and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it.” Proverb is equally defined as a short saying in more or less fixed form which expresses a general truth in a delightful and figurative way. Although this agrees with a Yorùbá proverb, which says *Àbò ọrọ̀ ní à ñ sọ fún ọmọlúàbí bó bá dẹnú ẹ̀ tán á di odidi*, meaning that “a word is enough for the wise”. However, Yusuf (2012) in his keynote address during the Second International Proverb Conference in Nigeria which was held at University of Ilorin also informs that the ‘truth’ in such definitions as quoted above, should be removed as some proverbs do not always contain ‘truth’.

People within a society imbibe and apply the uses of proverbs in their everyday activities. Vansina (1985, p.11) exemplifies that proverbs express the experience of contemporary situations or events, morals to be drawn from such occurrences or situations, or express intense emotions associated with them. This is true of other oral traditions, but more than any other; proverbs are more or less a sort of brief compass that comes handy in everyday discourse of a group of people. Consequently, this paper sets out

to analyse the oral artistry in the use of proverb in the electronic media as found in *òkodoṛo òrò*.

It must be noted that the English has completely taken over the functional role from the indigenous languages. This portends some dangers for the speaker of the indigenous languages. It is in view of the foregoing notes of caution that this paper calls for a renewed interest in the use of indigenous languages. One medium that is at the reach of everybody from urban to the rural populace is the radio.

In developing countries, radio is the only medium that can really be labeled “mass”, where a large proportion of the population can be reached by radio broadcasts and possess the means to receive them. No other medium now has the potential to reach so many people so efficiently for information, educational, cultural and entertainment purposes. Radio can be used easily and economically to reach outlying regions and for communication in the many vernacular-often unwritten – languages existing in developing countries (MacBride et al, 1980, p. 61).

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Motivation for the study derived from the observation that English has displaced indigenous languages, especially in elite parents–children relationship; this is in addition to the fact that some Yorùbá graduates/teachers are losing real contact with the language. They only teach it in the form of ‘Garbage-in-Garbage-out (GIGO)’. That is, from books to classroom and nothing more. This is an indication that the future blinks for the sustainability of the language and all that it transmits, particularly culture. Indeed, if the language dies, the speaker’s death is also imminent.

Thus, the corpus for the study was made up of thirteen randomly selected programmes that were recorded off air over a period of two weeks. The observer method of data collection was adopted. The analysis was done using descriptive statistics as analytical tool. A projection into possible number of proverbs that the listener is opportuned to acquire was therefore made based on the number of proverbs that were featured in the selected episodes.

Based on the understanding that proverbs across cultures constitute a special class of utterances, akin to metaphorical or idiomatic expressions whose meanings cannot be arrived at by solely relying on the meanings of

the words of which they are composed, our analysis considers the provers within the context of the News items being reported. The views of scholars on some of the strategies that are very useful in the creation of awareness on the importance of proverbs among Yorùbá people were also reviewed. For instance, Ọmọlòsọ (2006, p.8) submits that “the understanding of the proverbs will incorporate the meanings and the contexts in discourse”.

The study, like Omoloso’s (2006) adopts the blend of Lambrecht’s (1998) Information structure and Conversational pragmatics as espoused in works like Austin (1962), Yule (2007) etc. These theoretical frameworks have been referred to as Context – Structure Theory /Analysis (Ọmọlòsọ 2006). The theory emphasizes the belief that there is an intrinsic relationship between the structure of a proverb and the contexts in which it is used. It must be pointed out however, that this study differs from Ọmọlòsọ (2006) in some respects. Whereas, some expressions that call the attention of the addressed to the proverbs referred to as ‘information signaling hedge’ (ISH) and ‘proverb signaling hedge’ (PSH) respectively in Ọmọlòsọ are used in ordinary daily usage of the proverbs are used in the corpus collected for this study, to call listener’s attention to the news contents. And in view of this significant difference, our analysis considers proverbs as serving as ISH or PSH to the News contents. Therefore, emphasizing the value accorded the proverbs in the News reportage. We also examine the appropriateness of the proverbs that were used as riders (or ISH) following Ọmọlòsọ’s (PSH). Therefore, the Context – Structure Theory / Analysis proposed and explicated in Ọmọlòsọ (2006) with a little modification was used as our conceptual framework. This was used to justify the fact that proverbs must be contextualized. As a matter of fact, amidst the array of definitions of proverbs, Hussein (2005) was also adopted as our conceptual framework; regarding the use of proverbs as artistic creation. The definition supports the thesis in the paper that language (and indeed proverb) should not just be preserved on pages of papers; it must be used to keep it functional. Hence, radio, a branch of the electronic media, and of course the most available to every member of the societies and requires no special training before being used, has been chosen for our data collection. It has been proved with series of research that discussions or works of art garnished with proverbs are always rich and attract peoples’ attention, this was also identified as the strong weapon with which programme under study attract attention from more listeners than other similar programmes.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Results

The following are the representative corpus (samples of some proverbs) and the press reportage that were recorded off air for a period of two weeks. It was discovered that apart from providing the new headlines in Yorùbá to inform the listeners, it also expand their proverbs' lexicon while at the same time providing some entertainment.

Data Presentation

- Ikú oníyàálù, ìyà ló fí n jẹ omele
(When one's helper is dead, one will suffer)
- Tẹni n tẹni tàkísà n tààtàn
(What belong to one is one's possession, filthy garment belong to the dung hill)
- Àbò ẹni, lààbò ilú
(The security of an individual is the security of the nation)
- Sàń ń lǎá ń rìn ajé ní mú nì pẹ+ko+ro+
(It is good to call a spade a spade)
- Ẹní bá bèrè ibéèrè ló ń fẹ́ idí ẹ gbọ́
(Whosoever ask question want an answer)
- Ibi a bá ẹ sí nǎà la ti ń jẹ
(It is from one's labour that one eats)
- Ẹni bá júnìlọ́ jufá ilé ẹni lọ
(Whosoever is older than one, is older than the oracle in one's house)
- Ọmọ bẹẹrẹ ọ̀sì bẹẹrẹ
(Many multiple children leads to many sorrow)
- Ohun tó sí adé lórí ọba ohun nǎà ló sí filà lórí ijòyè
(It is the same thing that removed crown from the king's head that removed cap from the chief's head)
- Ọ̀fò ẹni kò ní se ẹlòmíràn
(The evil that should befall one would not befall another person)
- Ibi tí ẹnikan ti ń sunkún àìlẹ́yín lẹnikan ti ń sunkún àìrètè bo tirẹ
(When someone is crying of lack of teeth another is crying of not having enough lip to cover his own teeth)
- Ọ̀rọ́ tétí kejì bá gbọ́ ti kúrò lasiri
(Whatsoever two people are aware of is no longer a secret)
- Ọ̀rọ́ tí abuké ẹ́dà bá sọ ẹ má yiri rẹ wò látòrun ló ti sọ ọ

(Whatever a hunch back (person) says should not be screened it is from heaven)

- Bòjò bá pa àjé lóru kò ní délé wí
(If rain beats a witch in the midnight she would not tell when she get home)
- Kí làá jẹ làgbàa kí lààs+e
(It is what to eat that comes before what to do)
- Kò sí akíkanjú kan tí kò ní rẹ nígbèyìn
(No strong individual that would not get tired at the end)
- Dàda ò le jà, ó ní àbúro tó gbójú
(Dada could not fight but has a younger brother who is brave)
- Òrò àgbà balẹ̀ milẹ̀ tititi
(Elder's words drop and make terrific impact)

Analysis and Results

As mentioned earlier, the average proverbs in an episode is put at thirteen, and the data were collected for two weeks, (ten days) because the programme is usually aired from Monday to Friday. Thus, in our projection, if thirteen proverbs were featured on each episode, a total of two hundred and sixty proverbs are likely to be aired in a month that has twenty days of airing. For the duration of the programme on the basis of five days per week will culminate in three thousand, three hundred and eighty proverbs in a year.

The above can be represented in figure as follows = $13 \times 5 \times 52 = 3,380$.

Considering the data analysis above, it is obvious that many proverbs are disseminated on air during the news reportage, this in no doubt promote Yorùbá cultural values that are expressed through the proverbs. Thus, the media, especially the radio has a lot to offer in the development of indigenous languages and cultures. .

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is obvious that proverbs actually make the Yorùbá language. The language Yorùbá comes alive and functional as a result of the proverbs which are employed in the press reportage. In the programme, proverbs serve as the ingredients and tools that enrich and beautify Yorùbá language. Also when we compare the numbers of proverbs in each episode per the days of the airing of the programme in a week per

month and within a year, the average proverbs a listener is exposed to is significant to enrich his lexicon about Yorùbá proverbs and cultures.

Our findings reveal that it was during the reportage of òkodoro ọ̀rọ̀ that proverbs are being used and this underscores the reason for which it attracts more listeners than other similar programmes in the different Radio Stations in the State. The proverbs are always used to attract the attention and re – awaken the interest of the listeners. Each news item in the reports is being preceded by at least an appropriate proverb. This therefore shows that the electronic media adds value to the language as it promotes and preserves proverbs, a very significant aspect of the Yorùbá cultures.

We are not oblivious of the fact that book forms preserve proverbs, but such may remain on the pages of papers forever, because conventional reading is dying and electronic reading is most preferred by many youths. Press reportage on radio have greater value than other media, this is because many people have access to radio than other media. People listen to news reportage through different medium such as world receiver/battery radios, Media players (MP3), iPhones (IPs) and cell-battery radios that are at the reach of majority of the people. It has been suggested that a parallel programme in English should also be given consideration; the argument still holds that translation cannot adequately convey the meaning in one language into another. Hence, our main concern in this study is that the indigenous languages must be preserved and promoted.

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The Esoteric and Cultural Relevance of Alekwu Afia Masquerade and the Eje-Alekwu Festival among the Otukpo

By

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Abstract

This paper examines the Alekwu Afia masquerade and the role the masquerade played in the life now and beyond and how this has also helped in synthesising a critical segment of Idoma society, the Otukpo people. The Otukpo people place the entire belief in the Alekwu Afia deity and believe that death is inevitable. In addition, death is not natural and there must be a causation of death. This may come in the form of old age, sickness or accident. Consequently, this study adopts a historic-structural, analytical and systematic approaches in carrying out research on esoteric and cultural relevance of Alekwu Afia. Findings have revealed that Alekwu Afia, aside from determining the life and after life of the average Otukpo man, it has also possessed a drama of life with clear aesthetic elements soothing the soul of man.

Introduction

Otukpo is a single clan district which comprises seven sub-clan districts of Otukpo Local Government area of Benue State Nigeria. The district of Otukpo is situated almost at the central part of Idoma land. Otukpo borders Ugboju district to the North, to the East, it borders Ito district of Oju Local government area of Benue state. To the West, it borders Oglewu district while to the South-West it borders Akpa district of Otukpo Local Government Area.

According to Agbo (1991, p. 1), Otukpo clan is among the earliest kindred to settle in the present Idomaland. The clan is made up of seven sub-clans Ai-Odaji (Sons of Odaji), Ai-Ogwuche (Sons of Ogwuche), Ai-Oono (Sons of Oono), Ai-Okopi (Sons of Okopi), Ai-Ode (Sons of Ode),

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Ai-Agbooko (Sons of Agbooko) and Ai-Ogabo (Sons of Ogabo). The elders of these sub-clans are unanimous in the stories of their forebears that they originated from 'Apa' in the present Taraba State. Apa was a part of the old Jukun (kwararafa) empire. This was during the 14th century, when the kwararafa kingdom was still experiencing relative political stability. By the 15th century this stability was shattered due to the endless unrest orchestrated by the constant raids and wars the people were subjected to from the north. It was these incessant raids and wars that scattered the ancestors of Idoma, Igala and Igbirra from their settlement, East of Okari (Wukari).

The Otukpo people believed that their migration started as a result of the 'Ef'onya' or the 'horse war' or better still the Fulani Jihad. Erim (1997) propounded that the Otukpo kindred group moved away for Kwararafa expansion, that the movement was in two major phases, the first phase of the movement which was for Apa expansion, between 1595-1625A.D, the second phase of the movement which was for Tiv expansion, between 1685-1805. Erim asserted that years between 1835 and 1865 saw their settlement in their present homestead. The people of Otukpo believed that after they left Apa, they took shelter in numerous temporary homes enroute their present settlement. Some of the places they passed and settled briefly before finally settling at their present location were Okongo, Obana, Ifagwu, Odu, Ijuwo, Abiche, Otiya Okwutachi and Ogbaya before they finally came to Upu. At Upu according to Ikwue, they met the Oglewu people (another Idoma clan) and bought the land for a traditional price under the charge of an Otukpo illustrious son, Onyilo. Though the Oglewu and the Otukpo people had been at war for some time, their disputes were settled with the purchase of the land and later Owufe, the only female child of Ona Oko was given out in marriage to an Oglewu man from Alaglanu. The captain of the war on the Oglewu side who accepted the price for the peace settlement when Upu was bought was called Onche Onage.

The Otukpo people trace their origin to Ochakl'lapa who is regarded as mythical being, a spiritual father or a real historical figure. Although all this still remains a matter of historical speculation due to the fact that there are no written records to substantiate this belief, all that exist is the information handed down through Oral tradition from generation to generation. However, an interview carried out with Ijauka Ochete, one of the most renowned Otukpo traditional historians, conducted by Armstrong (1970, p. 43) revealed that Ochakl'lapa was a king that reigned in Apa in the old Kwararafa kingdom, where the Otukpos believed to have migrated

from. He also stated that most of the attributes he (Ochakl'lapa) acquired were due to divine nature of his office. Thus, he possessed the right to decree on anything he thought was right and he could even pronounce death on anyone without fear or favour and opposition. All these combined attributes made people put him in high esteem and to see him as supreme.

In this regard, the genealogical account of Otukpo which is often exhaustively narrated by 'Alekwu-Afia' or the ancestral masked spirits during the Alekwu festival, Ochakl'lapa was said to have had descendants. The Otukpo people therefore trace their origin to Ochakl'lapa, after him the Alekwu Afia or masked spirits of the dead ancestral would then invoke upon 'Aje' or 'Earth' and 'Owo' or the 'Creator'.

Historical genealogy narrators in Otukpo, be it 'Alekwu Afia' or historians, often present the history of Otukpo in chronological order. Of outmost importance to the narrators of Otukpo genealogy is patrilineal descent and affiliation, this is because inheritance is by patrilineal descent. Thus, the people of Otukpo believe that Ochakl'lapa was the earliest ancestral being, he was followed by Akwunte. Akwunte was followed by Ohaowo, followed by Ogabo. Ogabo was then followed by Ogwu who was the father of Oko, a focal figure of the modern history of Otukpo people.

It should be noted that among the Otukpo people, there are other kindred groups of different patrilineal descent, but these groups have been assimilated into the major kindred groups. A true son or daughter of Otukpo should be able to trace his or her lineage to one of these Sons of Oko. According to Mr. Idoko Amedu, the grandchildren of Oko were great hunters like Oko and the other ancient fathers. He went further to say that Ode made a great success of his hunting skills by killing animals such as Elephant (Adagba), Leopard (Eje) and rare birds like Uloko. He traditionally presented the heads and feather of these animals to his elder brother Ogwuche. In Ogwuche's quest to be conferred a Chief, he journeyed with his brother Ode to Ugboju Ai-Omega, in Agatu, where their mother was from, in order to pay tribute to her maternal chieftain. Their maternal chief inquired if the people of Otukpo had ever had a Chief in their history. Ogwuche and Ode remembered that their fathers had told them of the title of 'Odu' conferred on Akwunte years ago. According to an interview conducted Ogah said they were advised to go to Odu in Doma, Lafia division to get the title back.

Ode embarked on this journey and he brought back great honour, symbolized by a long red cap, sacred ritual sand and the wearing of royal beads on wrist. He also brought back the respected title of 'Odu' which he

presented to his brother Ogwuche, after which he was then conferred the 'Oche-Otukpo-Odu.' The people of Otukpo settled down in this community, despite their wandering and escape from the raiding Abakpa (Fulani) they managed to preserve a substantial amount of the culture they had imbibed from their forefathers. Thus, they maintained their Iron culture, nomadic hunting life which they perfected and institutionalised in the art of 'Ote aje', an annual communal hunting parade, their woodcraft, their ritual and ancestral worship, their farming, weaving and masquerading.

Theoretical Framework

Eje-Alekwu as a traditional festival in Otukpo is an aspect of their cultural life. The festival involves the brewing of Burukutu (local beer) from guinea corn and millet and the display of masquerades. The masquerades (Alekwu Afia) would move from one place to the other telling stories of the individual's family ancestors and delivering messages from the gods to such families. The masquerades would sometimes dance before spectators to the rhythm of drums. Various gifts ranging from money to meat and food are showered on these masquerades (Alekwu Afia). These masquerades also make some sounds which could indicate anger, happiness or sometimes the sound could mean messages from the gods.

The major focus of the festival is on the ancestral worship, the people of Otukpo keep in contact with these ancestors through liberations and ritual ceremonies. The function of the festival mainly is to keep the memory of the living dead verdant and to engage in communication and fellowship with them.

As Parrinder (1974) rightly puts it, there is a difference in the tone between communication with God and communication with ancestors which usually takes place during the Eje-Alekwu festival. It is true that a pioneer Africanist, who applied his vigorous intellectual resources to the study of Idoma, Armstrong (The Odejo of Idoma land), did a study of the Alekwu in detail. His study of Alekwu was readily applauded by some prominent Idoma indigenes. Amongst the Idoma of Benue state, the Late Professor was perplexed by the high development of kingship institution and secret societies such as Alekwu. But he had indoctrinated himself into believing that the Idoma's were intransigent, barbaric and of the lowest intelligence. He therefore thought the origins of the Idoma institution must be of Hausa origin. His fellow American, Sidney (1988) has picked up and dusted this belief with gusto. He devotes a whole booklet into proving that the Idoma Alekwu institution was indeed Hausa in origin.

The works of Armstrong (1970) and Sidney (1988) suffer from serious disabilities; firstly, they were American not Africans. Experienced scholars have insisted that the work of African scholars, for the future of the study of African culture obviously lies in their hands; this is because it has been realized, that western scholars have never been genuinely interested in African culture per se. Their works have all been part and parcel of some conspiracy or debate in the western world. This means that African scholars must bear the unenviable burden of expounding African culture. As far as this paper is concerned, there is no evidence to prove the authenticity or otherwise the works of these two American scholars.

In fact, Erim (1997, p. 60) reflects on the Idoma man's belief in Ekwuafia festival and generally Alekwu:

In Idoma belief, the Idoma members of the kindred group are paradoxically alive. In other words, death in the corporal sense does not remove the dead from the kindred members as such. Rather, certain classes of the ancestors are considered vital and living members of the community.

This implies that the reason for such a belief on the part of Idoma people on Alekwu is that the spirit does not die.

According to Emielu (2006) The African social communal music is characterised by repertory of religious songs, work songs, satirical songs, insult or ridicule songs, he further observed that music plays a dominant role in community life in Africa which cuts across all facets of communal life including ritual ceremonies and festivals, a variety of group and activities.

Emielu (2006) citing Akpabot (1985/1995) classified 14 songs text in African music. They are, historical, social control, insults, obscenity, praise, children, funeral, work, war, humorous, communication, women, philosophical and ritual songs.

The Alekwu Afia esoteric concept would be derived from the ritual songs view of Emielu as aptly cited in Akpabot. The main reason for this is the fact that during performance the Alekwu Afia undergoes a lot of ritual dance that has an esoteric underpin. Some of these rituals songs according to Opita a custodian of the Otukpo are usually geared towards societal ills for example these songs below;

Odamocheya.....Odamocheya odan-ocheya anu we ikwu ko, chea

Translated thus; what one does, that is the cause of one's death. Literally speaking, the evil that men do live after them.

Ema Oyaleyi owe mane?, Ema mum kpenwu owe Mani. Ema oyagekwu anu wema ma

Translated thus; Relationship that is not deep rooted, but remains shallow is no relationship. Relationship that you snub me is not a true relationship. Relationship that lasts till death do you part is more beneficial and enduring.⁹ From Opita above, one clearly sees the direction of Alekwu-Afia ritual songs in correcting societal ills.

The Historical Origin of the Festival

Most of the elders and the Alekwu actors unanimously maintain that the Alekwu cult was handed down to them by their forefathers. However according to Anyebe (1997) The Alekwu cult is as old as the existence of the Idoma on earth. Alekwu Afia is believed to be the creation of an Idoma ancestral father Anube, a genius, mystical and an artist. In his living outpost (Iponu), out of the hearing and sight of people, he tutored his fellow elders the mysticism and creation of Alekwu Afia revealed to him by the supernatural (gods). Having learnt about the secrecy and mysticism of Alekwu Afia, the elders decreed that any woman who becomes privy to the secrets of the Alekwu Afia cult would be sentenced to death by been buried alive, the traditional Idoma way of execution.

Unknown to the elders, Oyine, the first and favourite daughter of Anube had eavesdropped by the fence of the outpost (Iponu) while her father was tutoring the elders the mysticism and artistry of Alekwu Afia. Thus, Oyine knew every secret about the Alekwu Afia. Oyine's doom was sealed when she neglected to keep the secret to herself. When Alekwu Afia made her maiden appearance, Oyine revealed to her fellow women the secrets of Alekwu Afia. The elders on discovering that Oyine had revealed their secrets proceeded to execute Oyine and her fellow women whom she revealed the secrets to. In the case of Oyine, having committed the most grievous offence, she was buried up to her shoulder and for three days she pleaded her curse in tears.

When she died, musicians and artist celebrated her agony; "Oyine daughter of Anube, the champion endurer, Oyine who devoid of limbs proclaims her curse through the trunks. Oyine is still celebrated by Alekwu Afia as a heroine. To obviate this awful situation a decree went abroad that all masquerade must henceforth originate from Opu the amphitheater. And when a masquerade makes his way home into a compound, a woman sings and dances to woo it home. Alache Ichicha, daughter of Oyine was the first

woman to perform this ritual hence, the phrase “Anya ma ekwu eima ekwu” – women begets masquerade, but are not privy to its secret.

Alekwu Afia itself is a symbol of peace, plenty and continuity among the Idoma people in general and the Otukpo people in particular. The mystery of the development of Alekwu Afia is modeled on the development of guinea corn from the seed stage to the harvest. This perhaps is why guinea corn plays a major role in Alekwu rituals.

Where and when Anube developed this mysterious art no one can say for certainty because of the fluid nature of Oral tradition and the lack of written records at that time. Alekwu chanters and the elders remember that in modern Idoma land, Alekwu Afia was first practiced in ‘Okpoga Ole Otuta’ – Okpoga the home of mystery, the place where Apa soil was replanted as a permanent home after centuries of pseudomadic adventure in search of a new fatherland. From Okpoga, Alekwu Afia spread to other parts of modern Idoma land; Agila, Igwumale, Okpiko, Oglewu, Ogboju, Ochobo and particularly Otukpo and eventually to other lands.

The Idoma word ‘Alekwu’ or ‘Alekwu Afia’ eludes a clear cut translation or even definition, however, Alekwu is the totality of the Idoma life that guides and guards the Idoma from cradle to the grave, no matter his situation in life. No Idoma is properly buried until the burial ceremony is performed by Alekwu or other Ekwu (Masquerade) where the people practice no Alekwu Afia cult.

Characteristics of the Festival

In the course of communicating with the living-dead, the Alekwu Afia uses three languages; Igala and Igbirra languages before translating into Idoma language. Infact, inability to communicate in the former two languages disqualifies one from practicing the art. Initiation into the cult is voluntary but based on maturity and the ability to keep its secrets from the public. The mode of instruction is through indoctrination, this may last for months or years, depending on how fast the initiate is able to learn. Initiates are tutored in Ikpodoko (shrine) also they learn more as they follow the masquerade from one place to another during the festival. The Alekwu cult surrounds itself with fear and mystery; members meet in secret and greet each other with signs only known to them. They swear their loyalty to the cult and bound themselves to severe pains of punishment.

Otukpo, like her neighbours (Oglewu, Ugboju, Ochobo and Okpiko) engages in annual festival of Alekwu once in a year, at the end of the month of March to celebrate the close of harvest season. Communion with Alekwu

annually is necessary as a progress report; since the last festival has death taken toll, has death been warded off. The Alekwu is of outmost significance in the day to day life of the Idoma no matter where they maybe. No cultured Idoma eats without first offering the food to Alekwu. This means that the lives we live continue in a circle of the departed, those alive and those yet unborn, and alignment of this three produces harmony in an Idoma community. A study of Alekwu cult is infact, a study of the Idoma philosophy of better living. The Idoma race has much to offer the world in the art of social harmony through the Alekwu Afia philosophy.

Eje-Alekwu centers on Alekwu Afia, the festival is done in two stages; Aje-Opa, earth cult ritual and Alekwu Oyathoha, celebrating the festival together. The earth ritual is done from the day the Adah-Alekwu (Chief Priest of Alekwu) announces the date for the Eje-Alekwu festival. The Aje-Opa (earth ritual) is performed by a male sojourner in his maternal place (Oyi-Onyakole). These rites he carries out include a cock, palm oil, bean seed and water to appease the earth.

The cock is slaughtered and its blood is poured into two or three holes dug on a spot marked for the ritual. The flesh is cooked and shared out to the elders present. The male sojourner in charge of this ritual is not allowed to sleep with or come in contact with any woman until he finishes the rituals. The belief is that women are unclean during their monthly cycle, thus coming in contact with them at this period runs the ritual that ushers in the festival. A special bush or grass (Achi-Aje) is reserved for the earth ritual; it is set on fire immediately the earth ritual is over. Animals killed in the process of burning the bush are taken to the Priest and prepared and shared among the participants present. Rodents holes are dug with only sticks and not iron implements during the bush burning exercise, sticks are used so that not all the rodents would be killed to preserve the rest for future use, anything other than this (use of sticks) attracts a fine from the offender, this is because using iron implements is one of the rules guiding against the earth ritual.

The elders believe that Aje (earth) is the most elderly of all the planets and thus the earth ritual is carried out in recognition of its supremacy. After this earth ritual the elders would then go back and announce the impending festival to their families, here issues concerning the festival are discussed. Warning against fighting during the festival is issued; violation of this warning attracts fines.

After the meeting between the elders and the Adah-Alekwu, the hunting expedition would then commence. The Ogobou-Ote (head hunter)

is then mandated to announce the date of the hunting through the community town crier. The length of the hunting depends on the interval between the hunting expedition and date of the festival itself. On the day of the hunting, the young men would turn up with their weapons; these include guns, bows, arrows, and cutlass. They assemble at a popular junction before setting off here; the headhunter narrates the rule and regulations guiding the expeditions. Noise making, unnecessary alarm and quarrel are disallowed. Observe well before shooting at an animal, this is to avoid shooting a fellow man inadvertently. However, if by mistake a person is shot or killed in the course of hunting, reprisal is not permitted; such an incident is termed as accidental discharge. Women too are not left out in this search for meat, theirs include fish. Children between the ages 8-18 years have the task of clearing the foot paths and widening it, to be used by the Alekwu Afia during the festival.

During the festival each member of the clan whose parent died sacrifices chickens or goat to the ancestors. The Alekwu Afia uses velvet material, it is sewn in a long flowing gown, the material used are in colours of black, white, green, red and yellow combined to represent the rainbow, though black is the most dominant color. This may mean that the cult recognizes the rainbow as deity, but it is not substantiated in this research. The flowing gown nature of the costume enables the masquerade move about without obstruction. The masquerade, is always accompanied by two people one in front, the other behind it carrying the excess gown in both hands and coils the rest around his neck, the masquerade rests its neck on the shoulder of the man in front.

The masquerade (Alekwu Afia) uses guttural voices, which are different from that of human voice, thus their identities are hidden from the public. The change in voice instills fear into the people. An 'Akpa' (a local speaking instrument carved out of bamboo) is used to effect this voice change. In English, this sound produced is called ventriloquism. During the process of moving from one place to another, some people slaughter goats and pour the blood on the ground for the masquerade to walk on, such an act is an appeal to the ancestors for protection, signs of gratitude and affluence on the part of the wealthy.

Masquerades are representatives of named ancestors. Every costume have meaning with regards to the ancestors that are represented. The costumes are of different designs but the same styles and colours. It is only through close observation can their differences be known once the placement of each color is known you can easily identify the spirit each

masquerade is representing. The heads of the masquerade are shaped in corn-like form and longer than an ordinary cap, it has a small pillar with a piece of cloth cut thin on it, this corn-like head has small bells fixed on it. Once it is shaken, the noise can be heard from a far distance, this warns the people especially women and children of the presence of the masquerades. The dominant colours of the costume is black, the costume covers every part of the masquerade body as no part of his body is expected to be seen outside. The annual Alekwu festival takes place once a year, at the end of the dry season to usher in the raining season and bountiful harvest.

Organisation of the Festival

The Eje-Alekwu festival is a communal celebration which together allows indigenes who live in other places to attend the festival. The festival is a period set aside to give the ancestral spirits of the clan wine, to appease and bring them to feast together. The preparation of the burukutu (local liquor) takes seven days; this allows pasteurisation of the guinea corn to occur. Every family brews its own burukutu (liquor) which is usually made ready on the last day of the festival. The liquor is made ready on this day because it is used as the final rites before the ancestral spirits (Alekwu) comes out of the shrine (Ikpodoko).

The ceremony lasts for three days. On the eve of the festival, an elderly person, in fact the eldest man in each village of the clan who can hardly see is given a thread to pass it through the eye of the needle. This exercise occurs when the sun is over head, if he passes it through, gunshots are fired and ululations from the women are heard but if he fails, the festival for that year will be put off, such cases have never occurred once this exercise is over, then the masquerades (the ancestral spirits) file out of the shrine.

On the first day of the festival, an Agidigbe (locally made drum without animal skin but with two hallowed holes with water) is sounded from Ipagbla (Chief Priest palace) to usher in the festival. The drum is played all throughout the festive period. Once the drum sounded, no burial/funeral ceremony is permitted to take place until the festival is over. Anybody who dies at this time is buried with rites; his relatives can neither cry nor mourn his death. The ancestral spirits have been invoked and thus is not ready to welcome any new spirits into their midst. Anyone who goes against this rule faces not only the wrath of the elders, but also the wrath of the Alekwu. At dawn, all the activities revolving around the shrine are secretive to women and children; this protects the mysticism of the Alekwu

cult. Sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirits; roasted meat is shared among the male folks.

According to Okplefu, this sacrifice has certain symbolic features which link the human with the ancestors, so that the ancestors are subjected to human control. Thus, the ritual manipulation of the sacrificial victim helps men mediate their relation, the works, also serves to control this transaction by influencing the ancestors through prayer and songs to act on man's behalf.

Before the festival begins, the participant must sacrosanct the time, place and victims (animals) of the sacrifice and all those who will participate in it. The officiating priest does not wear shoes when performing this ritual in the shrine (Ikpodoko). As the sacrifice is offered to the ancestors, the priest uses the opportunity to appeal and appease them, asking for more blessings and protection of the family, the village and the clan against their enemies, as asserted by Ikwue. The sharing of the victims (animals – rams, goat and cock) confirms the spiritual bond between the worshippers and the spirits to whom the portion is given.

The ritual sacrifices have three structures, consecration, invocation and communion. It unites and reinforces the participants, sacrifices is itself prayer in physical form. Rituals are still carried out in the shrine on the second day. A vigil is held by the spirits in form of masquerade that have already been reincarnated. After this vigil Alekwu Afia is allowed to come out. It is called Obe-ekwu (Chief Masquerade) first among equals. As an expert masquerade, it invokes the spirits of the ancestors in such a way that a bird called Owuna is lured down and caught alive. This requires a lot of sacrifices, once the bird is caught, women shout loudly, dance and sing and ululate. Women are forbidden from beholding the masquerade from the waist downwards, violation of this renders a woman childless for life except cleansing rituals are carried out.

The third day is the last day of the festival, which witnesses a large turnout of crowd in the clan's heads palace or gathers at Orpu (village square) as the case maybe. The clan head and council of elder will then move out amidst gunshots, drums, flutes and women ululation (Oga). The chief of the clan (Oche) takes the center stage and addresses the crowd; his messages are relayed to the audience by someone with a clear voice (ochowo). Such messages are centered on unity and history of the clan, the past chief's though no more alive are named down to the present one and eulogized. This according to Idoko Amedu is also to avoid any mistake in

the course of this narration because any repetition is a sign of bad omen, if he makes mistakes up to three times. In a case like that, the oracle is consulted immediately to find out the reason behind it.

Back in the chief's palace, matters concerning the corporate existence of the clan are discussed. It is only the indigenes of the clan who are made up of home based elder that participate in the discussion. It should be noted that a heavy down pour usually accompanies the end of the festival especially at night. This marks a memorable and successful festival for the year. Whereby there is no rainfall something is believed to be wrong and the oracle is then consulted, any pronouncement by the oracle is used to prevent future occurrences.

At the end of the festival, women who might have sighted the masquerade from the waist down (Ebi-Okpo) would come out to confess, if they will be barren for life. Once confession has taken place, necessary fines are paid and purification rites are performed on them by the Chief Priest. The exercise renders them free from any evil associated with the offence committed.

Water is sprinkled on them to allow them move and interact freely with their fellow women or else any woman who touches them will have to undergo the same cleansing rites. This exercise marks the end of the year's festival.

Significance of the Alekwu Festival

As Sallah is to the Muslims, Christmas is to the Christians so is the Eje-Alekwu festival to Otukpo clan. Lot of preparations are made towards the festival. Unity is foremost among the clan, people come from far and near to celebrate and attend the festival, it creates a forum for peaceful interaction between the young and the old. The celebration transcends from the level of the masquerade moving from one place to another into further celebration at night by the youths. The level of fraternization depicts the social status of each and every participant; meetings are in age groups, peer groups and social status groups.

The festival involves the transformation of the physical body of a man to the spiritual body of the ancestors to attain the height of Alekwu and brewing of liquor. The festival is used to highlight the norms and values of the clan, it enables the young ones to know their past, present and its bearing on the future. In fact, the festival gives the clan a sense of direction in life. The masquerade gives blessing to and receives gifts from their children as

they move around the clan settlements. Communion are held, thus, strengthening love, peace and unity among the people.

The festival is used to launch development of projects in the clan, this encourages friendly interactions as violent crimes are jointly tackled and communal land disputes become minimized amongst various sub-clans. Long standing disputes between families, friends etc. are finally settled during the festival. The festive mood relaxes the nerves of the people. The words of the ancestral spirits (Alekwu) and elders are final in the settlement of all cases, the elders settle these cases by allowing each party state his case, investigations are carried out and witnesses are called. The final decision taken is devoid of partiality. The guilty party is strongly warned, the innocent is pleaded with to forgive and forget about the incident. The festival is basically a time for enjoyment and relaxation, promotion of peace and unity, a time when traditional faithful pray and make offerings for protection, defense from their enemies and for the appeasement of their dead ancestors.

Conclusion

The Alekwu Afia festival is practiced in Otukpo community for the society to reproduce itself continually, socialising, modifying and defending social values that are unique. The festival has experienced changes that are as a result of the dynamic nature of the society. This dynamic nature hinges upon the conflicting values in the society. The dominating western values as well as the culture contact with the Igbo, subordinating the Alekwu Afia to the extent that it has become routine. Again, institutions like the church, the police and the courts pose a threat in addition to the penetrating western values that result from colonial intrusion, and leaving it to be practiced at all spheres. Therefore, in spite of these various effects on the festival, it is still practiced with its 'new' functions, coupled with its metaphysical essence and enmeshed within a "lined" relationship of domination.

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Sexuality in Ogori-Magongo Ovia-Osese Festival

By

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Abstract

This study examines ways through which sexuality is being presented in Ovia-Osese festival of Ogori-Magongo of Kogi State, Nigeria. Although there are numerous festivals in, and around Africa that feature women in composition and performance, in Ovia-Osese festival among the Ogori-Magongo people of Kogi State, new developments have evolved that pronounce sexuality as a major feature of the celebrations. This study employs three different research methodologies: descriptive, participant observation method and oral interviews. These methods reveal facts about the origin and evolution of the festival, objectives, taboos, and its effects on Ogori-Magongo people. This study finds out that sexuality, as it concerns the women folk is the core of what is showcased in the celebration of Ovia-Osese festival. In conclusion, therefore, traditional women-based festivals like Ovia-Osese should be seen beyond cultural events and moments of celebration. They should rather be observed from the area of gender classification and compositional features like sexuality for women which sums up to produce the eventual performance. It is hereby recommended that scholars and critics, especially women, should explore such areas as traditional festivals for women from diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria, which addresses critical issues like sexuality and other gender related issues.

Introduction

Sexuality is often defined simply in terms of bodily feelings or attraction to people of the same sex or a different sex, but it encompasses many different aspects of life beyond sex alone. Three common ways in which sexuality can be described are in terms of *sexual behavior*, *sexual orientation* and *sexual identity*. Like gender, sexuality in Africa is a complex and multidimensional issue, but it has rarely been the subject of

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sole concern for many African writers on festivals. On the contrary, it has been largely peripheral, treated not as an enduring issue in itself but connected to larger social discussions.

Festival is an organized series of events involving feasting and celebrations, done at some devoted periods or time. Festivals are observed by Soyinka (1982, p1. 34) as

a cultural event within which diversified forms are found and forms which through their visual impact tend towards the creation of differing categories for a comparative description”; a cluster of performances in any given community. It is a conscious performance, informed and controlled by aesthetic ideas by the competitive desire also of ‘showing off’ dramatic skills

Similarly, William (1983, p. 63) expresses that:

Festivals bring about the suspension of ordinary time, a transformation of ordinary space, a formalizer of ordinary behavior. It is as if a community becomes a stage set and its people actors, with a battery of seldom - seen props and costumes. Meals become feast, and greetings, normally Simple, become ceremonies.

In Africa, there are many kinds of women based festivals. Among them are the Maitisong festival in Botswana, Emil Chil festival in Morocco, Osun Osogbo festival in Osogbo, Imale festival of the Ikale people in Ondo State and Ovia-Osesse festival of Ogori-Magongo, Kogi-State, to mention but a few.

Statement of Problem

Festivals form a large part of African socio-cultural activities, though very limited works have been written on how sexuality is being performed in them. Many writers especially women, have dwelt on issues of sexuality and in fact gender in Africa. However, most of the works are in prose, poetry and drama. The issues that most of them address are issues like gender inequality, women emancipation and women’s quest for liberation. Writers like Buchi Emecheta and Flora Nwapa have also at different time written about roles of women as mothers, daughters, wives, slaves and even as single working women who support large families when their husbands abandon them for younger women. There are also series of plays written to eulogise women’s heroism, monarchy and leadership. Some examples are *Queen Amina of Zazzau* (1999) by Wale Ogunyemi, *The Reign*

of *Wazobia* (1988) by Tess Onwueme, *Not without Bones* (2000) by Effiong Johnson and *Efusetan Aniwura* (1970) by Akinwunmi Ishola, among others. Many critics have assessed issues on sexuality as they affect the society, but very little attention has been given to the application and workability of how women are made to 'learn' how to be women during festivals even though there are many festivals of women and for women in Africa. In Nigeria, there are festivals celebrated in honour of past women heroes who fought the course of women during their lifetime. One of such festivals is Moremi festival in Offa, Kwara State. Sexuality will therefore take a different turn in this study; hence concentration will be on how it has been played out in a traditional festival like Ovia-Osese.

Meaning, Composition and Performance Style of Ovia-Osese Festival

Ovia-osese, also known as "owiya – osese" is a festival celebrated by ogori and magongo communities in kogi state. Ogori and Magongo are located in the Central Senatorial District of Kogi State, Nigeria. Ovia – Osese is celebrated nowadays every second or third week of April depending on the nearest week to Easter celebrations. This is so because the people of Ogori-Magongo are predominantly Christians and the few families that are Muslims in the community were the ones that agitated for the change from the usual month of August claiming that April is more convenient for them. It was the Muslim community of indigenes who also requested that the celebrations should last for only three days instead of the usual seven days since it began. The modification of Ovia-Osese festival was championed by one Janet Better known as 'Iya Eko' in the early twenties when she took it upon herself to redesign and modify the celebration of the festival in such a way that there would be no communal or religious crisis. Ogori calls it ovia-osese while mangogo calls owiya – osese. The name of the festival is not pronounced the same way because of a particular dialectal difference in their language. The alphabet 'V' does not exist in the vocabulary of the osanyin, dialect which is the adopted language of the Magongo people, however, the meaning is the same. Ogori is the headquarters of the two communities at the local government level and this may be the reason why most of the accounts and registers that relates to the festival are usually the adopted information especially in the academic documentations. Stemming from this, this paper will adopt the Ogori use of terms and language for the sake of clarity of purpose.

The term “Ovia” means purification while “Osese” means initiation. Ovia-Osese festival is a purification and initiation of young maidens to womanhood festival. It is usually celebrated for all female indigenes of Ogori and Magongo communities who are between the ages of 14 to 19. The young women are known as Iviyas which simply means maidens.

On the first day of the celebration, many women from the Iviya’s family sing and dance round the town in a procession, forming two groups. The procession ends at the family house of the maiden’s father where she is made to sit and receive gifts from different people. On the second day, all participating maidens are taken to the market square from all directions. At the market square, women singers, drummers and dancers, hold hands and dance round in a circle. Young men particularly those who are prepared to marry come around to look out for potential wives. After the market square show, all maidens are led in a single file procession to the house of the leader of the women in the community. The woman leader is called ‘Iyaodina’. On the morning of the festival, all maidens are dressed in elegant Aso Oke attires tied around their chests and same material tied around their waists in readiness for the initiation ceremony. They wear a uniformed kind of hair style, which has been adopted as the official hair style for the festival. One big ridge of a wholesome portion of the hair is plaited from the forehead to the back of the head, while the other two sides on the left and right are divided into two. The front portion is matted to both the left and right sides before each ear while the remaining part is woven to rest behind the ears on both sides.

Colourful beads are attached to the middle ridge and across the sides from one ear to the other to trace out the hairstyle and decorate it.

They are led by the Iyaodina to the ‘Oyara’ (Village Square) in a double line procession amidst singing, dancing and drumming.

The usual processional song goes thus:

Call

Ibuse po pa
Etaga we lo
Ibuse ma ka na no

Response

Eh eh eh eh
Eh eh eh eh
Eh eh eh eh.

Translation

Wayward girls are forbidden to come along

Eh eh eh eh

Leave your cosmetics behind
 Wayward girls don't come with us
 They also sing other songs like:
 Owiya kamasin/2x
 Owiya kamasin, imabiloreda.

Eh eh eh eh
 Eh eh eh eh

Translation

I am celebrating Owiya too/2x I am celebrating owiya too, I am not begging from anyone.

Obori ti e, obori ti e, ogbon gbenke imama esudoji, obori ti e

Translation

I am doing the good thing, I am doing the good thing, because I did not eat with the devil, I am doing the good thing.

Maidens sing and dance to these songs with pride and to the admiration of all present at the village square.

The processional dance of the maidens is not in any specific pattern. There is a common dance motif that most maidens adopt during the festival. It involves a simultaneous tapping of the legs that goes with a rhythmic movement of the arms and tight fists. A usual floor pattern of the circle formation is common among the group of maidens; they dance in a circle after breaking away from the double line procession that leads them to the village square.

Sexuality in Ovia-Osese Festival

The training on sexuality in Ovia – Osese festival begins at the house of the Iyaodina, which is regarded as the training school or a place for grooming. The grooming process is known as “Opa – Obubwe”. Other trainers at the Iyaodina's house include women who are teachers of different subjects of specialisation.

Usually, the training syllabus covers philosophy of life, vocational knowledge, special career interest like medicine (the use of herbs), marital requirements, love ethics, home economics and management, child care and motherhood. The training period used to be three years with the last three months devoted to intensive grooming of the maidens for her role in life as a woman, wife and a mother. Later, the training period was reduced to seven days, and recently to three days after Iya Eko influenced the change.

The grooming lessons include how to strap a baby to the back correctly, positioning of a baby for breast feeding, sitting position when bathing a baby. The matrimonial lessons include what a woman should do

to lure her husband into sexual engagement when he doesn't desire it. The maidens are also taught how to apply local cosmetics to beautify their faces and bodies in order to impress and attract their husbands, how to prepare special delicacies, using local spices that will bring out the aroma and improve the taste of food. The domestic training tips include how to sweep in the right way, specifically showing the correct position of the broom, one hand on the broom and the other hand resting on the back. Maidens are also taught how to lay the bed correctly, the time to prepare breakfast and dinner for their husbands, the correct way to dress, particularly how to tie wrappers round their waists. The training emphasizes that the maidens must never expose their bodies. Other trainings include how a woman should sit in the public, how to dance, how maidens to receive visitors especially their would-be husband's friends and the kind of food and local drinks to entertain them with. They also benefit from vocational trainings such as knitting, weaving (aso oke), carving of small wooden combs for parting hair, hair weaving and wine brewing. They are also taught the importance of trading from where they would make money when they are married.

Generally in Africa, there are so many rules guiding the upbringing and growth of a girl child. The women folk are believed to be responsible for impacting moral values on a growing child. Mothers are expected to teach their daughters how to be good wives and mothers, virtuous, faithful, strong, fertile (she has no right to be barren), respectful, skillful, confident, courageous and loving because that is what the society expects from them. Any attitude short of those ones enumerated above incurs oppression, rejection, marginalization and humiliation from the society. This is why it becomes beneficial to the society when emphasis on the kind of morals enumerated above dominates a traditional festival as found in Ovia-Osese festival.

Other means through which sexuality is promoted in Ovia-Osese festival can be seen in the playing of the Okitoroko drum. The drum is an instrument that must be played only by women. Usually, up to twenty women play the drums at the same time producing different rhythms. Dances are performed in procession by a group of girls known as 'Ivia-Egben' (Maiden's Children); who can be likened to flower girls paraded in modern day wedding ceremonies. Innocence, which is the hallmark of the ceremony, is the reason for retaining the performance of the maidens' children as a symbol of purity.

No maiden is supposed to get married in Ogori-Magongo unless she has passed through the rites of passage Ovia – Osese. The implication

for any girl who accidentally conceives before the purification and initiation ceremony rests on the fact that such a girl brings disgrace to her parents and the child that such a girl brings forth will not be allowed to marry from the community. This is pressed on the belief that such a child will bring curse of bareness on the land. Another calamity that would befall any girl who commits the abomination is that such a girl stands the risk of death during childbirth. Hence, it remains a rule that all Ogori-Magongo girls must remain virgins until they are legally married, after the celebration of Ovia-Osese.

Findings and Recommendations

Ovia-Osese is a rite of passage festival designed as a bridge that every Ogori-Magongo female adolescent must cross unto adulthood. It is a ceremony that openly extols the virtues of womanhood while celebrating the pure, chaste, undefiled and untouched physical and emotional conditions of young girls of marriageable age. The festival serves as a vital social check on promiscuity and the abuse of the female body before marriage.

Ovia-Osese is not only an enactment of history, but also an expression of a people's desire for a sane and healthy society, organised purely under observance of rites and festive conditions, the festival is not associated with frivolities. From the perspective of theatre, it is a dramatic festival which Echeruo (1994 P.145) describes as "an autonomous form of dramatic rendering, which is a generous combination of high seriousness, religious energy and fun".

This study has examined the performance of sexuality in Ovia-Osese festival. Our findings among others reveals that the grooming exercises that initiates pass through during the Ovia-Osese festival celebrations aids them to be the kind of woman every man and society would desire. This is because of the moral lessons that the maidens are taught which barring all encumbrances should inspire their behaviours in the society.

Having found that what the society stands to gain in these kinds of festivals are enormous, this study recommends that other festivals like Ovia-Osese that has not been made popular should be explored through research and open for intellectual discourse especially by women scholars and critics. This will not only help recognise such festivals, it will help create a platform for continued research that gives birth to new discoveries and modifications.

Conclusion

This work concludes that the essence of traditional festivals for women like Ovia-Osesé should be held in high esteem as it helps to further reiterate the relevance and contributions of women to a sane and virile society. This is the thrust of Sofola's (1996, p. 108) submission that:

People whose social structure makes one gender irrelevant is seen as abnormal or partially existing. Both male and female lines of vital presence exist side by side in nature if the cosmos is to have the male life energy giving force needed for survival as well as the female nurturing and preserving force also needed for survival. One without the other is dead.

It is also recommended that scholars and critics, especially women, should explore such areas as traditional festivals for women from diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria, which addresses critical issues like sexuality and other gender related issues. For gender discourse to be meaningful, the plight of women within sex and sexuality should not be ignored.

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Solving the Problem of Poor Voicing in Nigerian Christian Music

By

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Abstract

Music has imparted greatly on the church services in Nigeria because good music attract some members to every services/worship of the church. Members are drawn to most of the churches where good music is played. It is from this premise that this paper examines some of the major problems of poor voicing in Nigerian Christian music. This paper highlights some of the perennial problems leading to poor voicing in Nigerian music and proffer solution to the identified problems. It also showcases some of the essential things in the art of singing that will improve congregational singing in the church. The study discusses the role of singing in the church. This write-up is based on our empirical study on singing and choral training experience. Some useful information relevant to the study was got from some books and journals to support our research evidences. The research investigation revealed that training of the voice will be of help to an individual to sing more effectively and also help the church to serve and worship God more acceptably. The study concludes that every Christian could be said to be a singer because he or she partakes in congregational singing at least in the church.

Introduction

Singing has been used by various groups or individuals for various purpose such as worshipping, funerals, wedding, birth, puberty rites, during calendared ceremonies (such as planting and harvesting) preservation of history and also maintenance of the ethnic society. Singing is described by Hyslop (1986, p. 49) as the use of voice as a musical instrument with the mouth open (as distinct form of humming). The voice is said to be the most complex of all musical instruments which is highly adaptable and flexible, that with mastery of graduation of tone it imparts to the sensitive nuance

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which is its main source of expression. Singing is both an art and a science. It is a natural, artistic expression.

Singing has always been a part of worship and praise to God. It is the most natural expression of music. Singing ought to be a natural process. Some people are born with voices which develop into instruments of beauty and power with little training. According to Ekwueme (1993, p. 23) others have vocal gifts which lie dormant until they are shown how to use them. The unsatisfactory ways of singing today, most especially in the church have caused great difficulties in Nigerian Christian music.

Many scholars such as Ekwueme (1993), Rolm (1992); Hunt (1957); Ajewole (1996); Eveline (1993); Chisty (1969); Emielu (1998); Oikelome (2000) identified common faults of poor voicing in Nigerian Christian music. Poor voicing in Nigerian Christian music is traceable to musical training and non-musical training that individual or choir is exposed to. The voice is the major instrument needed in the choral setup. It is the major qualification of a would-be chorister. This article is aimed at discussing some visible problems facing effective singing in Nigerian Christian music and proffer necessary solution to the identified problems. The study also examines the basic singing techniques and discusses the role of singing in the church.

This study relied on oral tradition, written documents, live musical performances and electronic/discography sources of information in its methodology. Oral information were collected through interviews and interaction with various music directors, choir masters, choirs, instrumentalists and so on in some selected churches visited in Lagos and from printed and electronic materials on the problems of poor voicing in Nigerian Christian music.

The following are the problems encounter in singing that lead to poor voicing in Nigerian Christian music:

- Bad posture
- In appropriate breathing technique
- Poor tone quality
- Poor diction
- Wrong interpretation of dynamics and balance
- Wrong rhythmic precision
- Incorrect intonation
- Poor musical expression
- Resonance

- Inappropriate attack
- Inappropriate release
- Excessive nasality
- Rasping singing
- Voice co-harshness
- Hooting voice
- Roughness of tone production
- Un-rounded sound production
- Shout – singing
- Lack of uniformity
- Poor rendition

This study proffers the following solution to the identified problems.

Posture: Since singing involves a lot of body and muscle movements, a singer needs to maintaining balance and good posturing while singing. The mechanisms of breathing and breath control have to function uninterrupted. A good singing posture must be such that allows for free movement of these internal organs. A lot has been said on keeping the rib-cage expanded and the shoulder kept level to allow for good breathing.

According to Eveline (1993, p. 26) learn to stand firm, with both legs slightly apart (about 6 inches). Keep the upper part of the body, from the waist upwards upright, do not slouch (do not carry a hunch back) but endeavour to keep the spine (your backbone) fairly straight with the head not dropping low or dawn back too much. Generally you should feel alert, stand firm or sit upright ready for action.

Breathing: There are two acts to breathing; inhaling and exhaling. When inhaling, breathe in through the nose and mouth without making sound. This will pull the diaphragm downwards. The exhaling process will start the vocal cords vibrating. According to Hunt (1957,p.31) this process requires the controlled contraction of the muscle controlling the diaphragm. Stream of air flows through the diaphragm up the wind pipe to the larynx, vibration of the vocal cords creates pitch. This brings about the sound, which is called phonation.

The following exercises could be helpful.

Inhale slowly. Then, exhale by pushing all of air out until the abdomen is stiff. Hold this position as long as possible, then release the muscles, allowing air to fill the lungs again.

Sound the following consonants in a long rhythmic success

ch, ch, ch

f, f, f,
sh, sh, sh.....

Tone Quality: The tone produced by the choir depends on the resonance of the individual voices. The sounds produced by the choir (colour, dynamics, pitch, and vowel sounds) need to be unified or sound as one, with the tone of the other voices in the group.

Diction: Singing is a function of two acts, music and poetry. These acts should complement the other with the right blending by the singer. Diction is the clarity with which consonants are articulated and vowels are enunciated. This will aid in the correct pronunciation of words in singing.

According to Emielu (1998, p. 7) the lips and tongue form the vowels. The tongue vowels are – ee, ay while the lip vowels are oo, oh. The ah vowels is formed with the tongue low and forward.

There are many other vowel sounds and combinations, but they are derived from the vowels shown above.

The exercises below could be helpful.

Sing the vowel on one pitch by proceeding down and up each side of the triangle.

Singing the tongue vowels: ee, ay, eh, ah and the lips vowels: au, oh and oo.

Dynamics and Balance: This is the act of establishing the limits of a choral ensemble loudness and softness of tones. The scales of dynamics should be known by each member of the group. The volume of voices should be balance among the parts involved if any diction is louder than others, it should be for musical reasons.

Rhythmic Precision: Rhythmic training is essential to successful ensemble performance. Depend on the meter, a rhythmic beat, or pulse is usually divided into two, three, or four parts. The division of the beats should be felt as you sing, to keep the tempo steady and the rhythm of the melody the same as the others on a given part.

Intonation: Intonation is the ability to sing in tune. It is also an art of singing in perfect unison with others within a section. The tone becomes spread, the singing becomes “off pitch” thus ruining the tone quality, unite and blend the music.

Expression: Musical expressions are sometimes written by the composer direction for singing or playing their music. The singers need to interpret these directions. According to Ekwueme (1993,p.25) to have a very good facial expression, the singer should stand before a mirror and take some little phrases, repeating it in many different ways trying to express the desired

emotion, and joy, sadness. Make the singer face each other, saying the phrases to themselves and seeing if they can see who is trying to express.

Resonance: The two types of resonance; free resonance and forced resonance present in human voice should be adequately used. The seven vocal resonators used for singing include the chest, tracheal tree, larynxes, pharynx oral cavity (mouth), nasal cavity (nose) and sinuses. Out of these seven, the pharynx and the mouth are the most important resonators.

Attack: This has to do with the beginning of any piece of music to be performed. The performers involved should start the music perfectly at the same time. Be it a consonant or vowel all members must attach the beginning of music at the same time. According to Christy (1969, p. 20) the sign of bad performance can be seen in poor attacks due to lack of uniformity. For instance, there can be several sound of syllables of the music such as god, get, good, blood, goat and others.

Release: The end of a word must sound together for example there must be only one 't' in such words like sit, let, not, etc. Even the cut-off of any phrase must be together whether on vowel or consonant. Care should be taken in singing the end of voiceless words such as bless, mass, pass, etc. Such words should not be dragged for too long to avoid hissing sound. They should not be, a good choir should not avoid **good attack** and **release**. According to Hyslop (1986, p. 4) release has to do with the correct duration of notes. There should be no staccato performance where it could be legato.

Amateur Choir/Singer makes such mistakes. There should not be introduction of rest where there is none. Other requirements of good oral practice refer to good discipline in a choir.

Nasality / Nasalisation: This is a style of vocal production where sound is vocal with the passage of air stream through the nose. This technique of singing is good but not to be used excessively.

Rasping: This is when sound is uttered in a grating manner. This should be carefully watched during singing.

Co-harshness: This is the process of using harsh voice in singing. This fault can be corrected by singing in line and tune with an instrument.

Hooting Voice: This is an act of singing in which the singer produces cricket sound while singing. This fault can be rectified through careful listening and singing in parts (Harmony).

Roughness of tone production: Such voices cannot sing a clear cut melody. It should be avoided.

Rounded Sound: A singer should aim at achieving in singing a rounded open mellow, flowing, sonorous and sweet sound. The shape of mouth

(rounded sound) is always determined the sound production. Wrong sharpening of the mouth while singing should be immediately corrected.

Shout-singing: Many untrained singer/choir always “SHOUT” when they sing, because everybody wants to be heard. According to Oikelome (2000, p. 26) shout singing should not be encouraged, legato singing should always be emphasized. Let the words be said correctly. What is important in any choral music is a blending in singing.

Uniformity: Singer/Choir should stand or sit uniformly while singing there must be a particular form of sitting and holding of music scripts. All members of choir or singing group should have music files or jacket. All these should also be in uniform colour, i.e. the files and jackets even the books should be in the same colour. Rolm (1992, p. 30) when song or anthem are taken from a standard book, the song piece must be kept in the music file. The choir robe also must be uniformed. Uniformity is very crucial in the choir performance.

Rendition: It is good for singers/choir to sing from memory. The standing of the members of the choir must be uniformed. Place right palm over the left and down together in a relax form. This will prevent the hands from wandering or fidgeting from performance. This can prevent nervousness within the physical appearance of the choir members.

Choir Discipline

To solve the problem of poor voicing in Nigerian Christian music; individual involving in singing act must be well discipline. The first requirement for any would be successful singer/choir is DISCIPLINE. BBC (1992, p. 319) noted that discipline is the practice of making people obey rules and punishing them when they do not. It is the quality of behaving or working in a controlled way.

Today, in Nigerian Christian music many singers/choir do not observe any longer the rules and guiding principles of voice production.

According to Ajewole (1996, p. 6) the following oral practices need to be assessed and re-assessed in a musical group/choir structure.

For one to maintain a good musical group the attendance must be regular of the group concerned.

There must be punctuality.

Distraction of attention must be avoided.

Leaving rehearsal before the end of the rehearsal.

Lack of self-control.

Lack of concentration e.g. knowing when the choir director hints to start song.

Over zealous chorister or choir member must be checked.

Side talks should be avoided.

Lateness to rehearsal should be controlled

Here presented some hints that will assist singer/choir members in gaining more confidence with the use of their voices in singing:

Be natural and relaxed when singing. This will take away any form of nervousness.

Breath is the foundation of all singing. Therefore, you should breath normally and deeply without breaking the musical phrase.

Hold your script away from the face so that your singing is not obscured. Never turn a page during a rest or on an up beat as this can interfere with the tempo.

If you feel you are singing out of tune, stop and find the pitch by remain silent. Don't attempt to force your voice "Out of tune singing".

The best way to make for good diction is the ability to sing with meaning. Make effort to observe the meaning of the words you are singing and sing accordingly. The punctuation of the text should be adhered to, otherwise the meaning of the song will be lost.

The following are the basic singing techniques for effective performance.

Stand or sit up straight with shoulders level, chest high, and both feet on the floor so the lungs will fill with air.

Breath in through the mouth, not the nose. Take a breath so that you sing the first word at the correct time. During the singing, breathe where there is a mark of punctuation, such as a comma or full stop in the words of the song.

Open your mouth wide to let the sound roll out easily.

Breathe out gently as you sing so that the words can ride on a steady stream of air. Do not let out all the air at once so that you can hold a note without pausing to gulp air.

Keep your eyes on the choir director as he leads the songs. Looking in another direction will cause the audience to look around and ignore your singing.

If a note is high, relax your throat and sing softer and you will probably be able to reach it. Never strain your throat to force out a higher sound. The sound you produce will not be good, and you may injure your voice.

Everyone should stand up and sit down at the same time.

Attend choir practice regularly to improve your musicality.

Do not regard music in church as entertainment, but as an act of worship.

The role of singing in the Nigerian Church cannot be over-emphasized. Singing performs the following functions in the church.

It is a Christian privilege: Singing is more than a duty or obligation. It is a way for the children of God to express their faith and hope in and love for their saviour and Lord.

Singing offers participation in worship: Worship required a person to project himself into the service.

Singing attunes the hearth with God: It brings man's needs into focus with God's provisions.

Singing is a unifying influence: Good congregational singing should have the same effect on the worshippers.

Singing expresses personal feelings: The singing of songs and hymns even in a casual manner may direct the thinking of the unsaved to Jesus.

Singing strengthens character: It is often easier to remember songs than poems, scripture passage, or portions of literature "Catchy" choruses that appeal only to our senses do not build Christian character.

Singing is an educational force: We learn our theology through our hymns as well as through teaching and preaching.

Singing is good stewardship: One thing the church can and should do is to develop the gift that every person can use in worship – his voice to sing. Singing is a trust given to everyone. It is part of Christian stewardship to use what God has entrusted to us.

Conclusion

Singing is one of the paramount ways to worship, serve and communicate with God. Voice is the first musical instrument for singing. Training of the voice will help an individual to sing more effectively and also help the church to serve and worship God more acceptably. A good voice training will provide more instruction for all choir members and develops music leadership so as to expand worship experiences.

For an effective music performance in the church the choir rehearsals must be organized in a place where there are no external noises. Every member of the choir must know that rehearsals are very serious and not a joke.

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Wole Soyinka's Elegies and the Context of Performance Poetry

By

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Abstract

To an extent, readers and critics are familiar with Wole Soyinka's style of carving titles for his poetry. For instance, though we have *Ogun abibman* (1976) which is a single title of a long poem and *A shuttle in the crypt* (1972) where the demarcations into sub titles clarify the poet's obsession with other themes, a common trend runs through his works like *Idanre and other poems* (1967) *Mandela's earth and other poems* (1989) and *Samarkand and other markets I have known* (2002). Critics have always found it convenient to always use the major poems in each title to navigate the terrain of the poet's ingenuity. This has some credibility in its own right but to the negligence of the salient points made by the poet in his "Other Poems". In the "Other" poems of Soyinka, we have the "exit poems" which, on the surface are compositions for persons who have transited from the earth. This paper traces the origins of poetry for the dead to the pre-literate African culture where all entertainment forms are predicated on performance. Beyond emphasising the context within which such poems are rendered, the paper also distils the implications of such transitions for the dead and the living. The researcher concludes that Soyinka's attempt at reviving an aspect of performance poetry asserts core values bequeathed on the living by the dead.

Introduction

Ruth Finnegan in *Oral literature in Africa* (1984) asserted the important space that poetry occupies in the African literary space today by exhibiting an origin that dates back to the pre-literate era. In listing of various forms, she demonstrated that poetry was discernible in everything-birth, work, war, coronation, marriage, religion, children play and

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entertainment, and death. In her recourse to death and its place in African communities she took an interesting look at elegy. Though Abrams and Harpham (2012, p. 101) described the contemporary meaning of elegy as “a formal and sustained lament in verse for the death of a particular person, usually ending in consolation”, elegiac poetry in Africa is distinct because it includes “poems which take death or sorrow as their general themes without being connected with funerals or actual mourning” (Finnegan, 1984, p. 151). Articulating the nexus between funeral poetry and the African worldview, Ogunjimi and Na’Allah (1994, p. 77) asserted that:

Funeral poetry recalls occasions of despair, loss and tragedy. The artist consciously or unconsciously builds his poetic creation around these archetypal rites of passage. The period of birth marks the period of passage into the mortal world while that of death is the passage into immortality. The celebration of the rites of passage is organized around the cosmological beliefs of the people...It is believed that an elderly person who had died will be re-incarnated to sojourn in the ancestral world to take care of those still living.

In a typical African society, occasions of death provide a natural setting for performances that enact reminiscences and evaluation of the deeds of the deceased. In fact, in cultures like the Akan of Ghana, funeral poetry is very common among women. Similarly, apart from the conventional mourning statements, the Yoruba people- especially those in the hunting profession- have a performative ritual poetry called the *Iremoje*. The legacies and aesthetics of this art is what Akeem Lasisi tried to enact in *Iremoje: Ritual poetry for Ken Saro- Wiwa* (2000). Importantly, it is the content of oral modes and the implications of their navigation to the text turf that Nkosi (1981, pp. 107- 108) appreciated when he said:

A great deal of oral poetry, whether it is praise poems of South Africa, the sacred songs of the Masai, the Odu corpus of the Yoruba, or the religious chants of the Igbo, or the funeral dirges of the Akan, has fertilized much of contemporary African verse in European languages: even if it has not probably done so it has sometimes created a healthy tension between traditional African modes and acquired western technique.

Generally, the fame or office occupied by the deceased determines the quantum or quality of elegies. Because, it is considered as a taboo to speak ill of the dead- even when the deceased has fallen short of

expectation- most elegies are rendered in panegyric tones with the worldview and the didactic import of the death metaphor foregrounded. These are apart from the fact the funeral poetry is used to console the family or community of the deceased and also as an indispensable compliment of the religious rites that perfects the transition of the deceased from the world. For Soyinka's funeral poetry, these features are re-enacted but in an emotional tone that places emphasis on important issues that affect the living who are occupiers of the space bequeathed by the dead.

Death in Soyinka's Poetry Corpus

The theme of death has always been very crucial to Soyinka's poetry. Ojaide in *The poetry of Wole Soyinka* (1994) cited Francis Katamba's "Death and man in the earlier works of Soyinka" (1975, p. 69) as one of the earlier critics that associated Soyinka's tropes with death and its implication on man. The initial thrust of Soyinka's recourse to this theme appears to assert the African worldview and to philosophize on the subject, with the very obvious examples from his major poems. For instance, In *Idanre*, we find a cyclical relationship that existed between the worlds of the living, the dead and the unborn. Recall that Soyinka had delineated the worlds in peculiar but inter dependent hierarchies when he theorised that "the world of the unborn in the Yoruba worldview is as evidently older than the world of the living as the world of the living is older than the ancestor world" (Soyinka, 1992, p.10). In fact, the interdependence is asserted when the poet accredited that one of the sacred duties of the ancestors is to defend and cater for the living:

Tomorrow they preside, guests unseen
To whom the rams will bow, and with open throats
Quench totemic thirsts, thirst of earth
The hems of hidden voices brush all feet
This night, dew wet with departed breaths (*Idanre*, p. 66).

This philosophy is re-enacted in *Abibman* (1976) where, in the build up to the impending onslaught against the oppressive apartheid regime, the poet said:

A savage truth, the steel event
Shall even dislodge the sun if dark
Must be our aid. A savage memory raked
From veils of ashes, bores
Light tunnels through the years.
A horde of martyrs burst open our present

They march beside the living (*Abibman*, p. 2).

The capacity of the synergy between ancestral icons- Ogun and Shaka- and the human forces validates the poet's protest in *Mandela's earth* (1989), where in "Funeral sermon, Soweto", crisis is precipitated on account of an imminent truncation of the rites of passage which the poet considers as an important aspect that sustains the cordiality of the cosmos. The beginning of most stanzas in the poem with the refrain "we wish to bury our dead" and "we wish to mourn our dead" present the importance of the rites of passage that is being denied through the draconian laws put in place by the apartheid regime. The mood fluctuates between "mourning" and "burial" and erupts a condition of gloom, the parentheses that conclude the poem indicates that the agony continues:

But others donned a deeper indigo than the bereaved.
 Unscheduled undertakers spat their lethal dirge
 And fifty- eight were bright- attired
 Flung to earth in fake paroxysms of grief
 And then we knew them, counted, laid them out.
 Companion voyagers to the dead we mourned.
 And now, we wish to bury our dead... (*Mandela's earth*, p. 17).

Not only this, it accentuates the fact that, in the African worldview, death is not an end but a transient border to ancestry where the dead living reside.

But the minor poems lay claims to other tangible matters. In *Idanre*, Soyinka appears to have set a philosophical tone that aligns with the African worldview. Unlike in "Koko oloro" and "A cry in the night" where the poet deals with themes of procreation, titles like "Death in dawn", "Around us dawning" and "A first death day" affirm the mysteriousness, inevitability, painfulness and a seemingly helplessness of man over death. In "Exit", a poem dedicated to the longest serving French president who died after a prolonged battle with prostate cancer, the poet says:

All that could be done was done
 The best skills exhausted, no limits placed
 On what the purse could buy. The rest
 Was vanity... (*Samarkand*, p. 30).

The struggle of man against death appears futile. In fact, the poet's resort to the road imagery in *Idanre and other poems* (1967) gives cadency to this thought. The first three lines of the excerpt below state the general rule of the inevitability of death.

Man's passage pre-ordained, self ordered winds

In reconstruction (piecemeal was their deft
 Rebirth a cupped shell of tortoise, staggered
 Tile tegument;) And the monolith of man searches still
 A blind hunger in the road's hidden belly
 (*Idanre*, p. 69).

In the last two lines the emphasis is on man's helplessness. But, in other poems like "Death in the Dawn", "Around us, Dawning" and "In Memory of Segun Awolowo", the poet blames the inventions of man- especially the automobile that travel on land and air- as responsible for premature deaths. Soyinka's query of untimely deaths also touches Ogun:

Death the scrape-iron dealer
 Breeds glut on trade. The fault
 Is his of seven paths whose whim
 Gave Death urgency (*Idanre*, p. 14).

As it concerns the stillborn, Soyinka also describes a process of recycling which takes place almost immediately after a stillborn is interred in the poem.

The summary to the metaphysical angle, for Soyinka, is that there exists collaboration between the dead and the living. This is emphasized in *Abibiman* (1976) where motivation for revolutionary action is reaching a critical stage:

A savage truth, the steel event
 Shall even dislodge the sun if dark
 Must be our aid. A savage memory raked
 From veils of ashes, bores
 Light tunnels through the years.
 A horde of martyrs burst upon the present-
 They march, beside the living
 (*Abibiman*, p. 2).

In "Abiku"- which appears to be a title that Wole Soyinka and John Pepper Clark are interested in- we see an exhibition of the destructive-creative attributes of Ogun and, for Soyinka, a re- presentation of the myth as symbolic of stubborn persistence in revolutionary struggle. Similarly, the emphasis on the cycles of life and death exposes the mythical aesthetics of "Abiku" which is based on the possibilities of transience between the physical and the ethereal worlds. The poet will go on to emphasize the sanctity and sacredness of the dead warning against the despoliation of the flesh from which the soul has departed through the unnecessary interrogation of postmortem. In "Post mortem", he writes

his flesh confesses what has stilled
 his tongue: masked fingers think from him
 to learn, how not to die.
 let us love all things of grey; grey slabs
 grey scalpel, one grey sleep and form,
 grey images (*Idanre*, p. 31).

The poet, however, over the years appears to have realised the value and importance of such inquiry going by his statement in *The Punch newspaper* of December 4, 2013. Soyinka, in that news report titled “Soyinka seeks coroner’s inquest into Iyayi’s death”, had called for a post mortem on the body of Festus Iyayi, who was killed by the convoy of an executive governor of a state. Obviously, the complexity of modern challenges may warrant such an exercise, this is not to desecrate the dead but to seek for justice especially where in those circumstances that surround such deaths, the foul play is suspected. No doubt, the poet’s philosophy on the subject has a paradoxical symbolic re- presentation, especially if we factor in his statement in *The man died* (Soyinka, 1972, p. 13) “the man dies in all who keep silent in the face of tyranny”.

Heroes and Anti- heroes in Soyinka’s Poetry

In *Idanre and other poems* (1967) and *A shuttle in the crypt* (1972), Soyinka, against the backdrop of the massacres and senseless killings of the first military coup and the civil war in Nigeria, salutes figures like Adekunle Fajuyi and Christopher Okigbo. The poet tramples upon the taboo that restricts negative criticism of the dead in poems that evaluate activities of tyrants and despots and the death of these ones as good riddance worthy of celebration. He demonstrated this in *Samarkand and other markets I have known* (2002) when, in “Where the news came to me of the death of a tyrant”, he gives reaction to the news of the death of Sanni Abacha. At the time of writing the poem, palpable insecurity enveloped Nigeria and Soyinka had no choice than to go on self exile due to threats to his life. The poems of this category are characterised by the detailing of the sins those personalities committed against humanity. After a robust ironic catalogue of Samuel Doe’s credentials in “The Apotheosis of Master Sergeant Doe” (*Mandela’s earth and other poems*, pp. 28-30), the poet compliments his grouse with a ‘sadistic’ celebration of the exit of the former maximum rule in the following words that lampoons Africa’s sit-tight despots:

Your worthy predecessors raise a toast
 From exalted heavens, or from eternal roast

Swinging Bokasa, Macias Nguema, Idi Amin Dada
 You sucked their teats, you supped from their cannibal larder
 And belched in unison. The pinnacle attained,
 Next goal is duration. Shall we see you ordained
 In the Guinness Book of Records, the master stayer?
 Until the people's fiesta: a blood-red streamer
 In Monrovia skies, a lamp post and- the swinging
 Redeemer (*Mandela's earth and other poems*, pp. 29- 30).

The caution that the poet wants to generate here is very overt. With the listing of antecedents, one expects to see a change of attitude from African leaders but, sadly, this has not happened. Soyinka's home country soon found itself in a worse situation. An election judged as the freest in his country was annulled, the man who got the people's overwhelming mandate was kept in detention and successive military rulers push the nation to the brink. The poet will burst into euphoria after the death of the man whom many saw as an enigma of terror and indolence. In "Exit Left, Monster, Victim in Pursuit (Death of a tyrant)", the poet says:

The answer came cue.
 A month of victory chants turned
 Curses of millions tongues.
 It was a blasphemous equation-
 The killers took the one on whom
 A nation's hopes were vested.
 The field, they gloated, was now leveled.
 The Gunners's gone
 Who never faced his foes
 But took them from the rear
 His targets- women (Kudirat et al)
 Octogenerians- Alfred Rewane- and
 Once faithful servitors now mired
 In the Gunners fears
 Entrapped as flies in spotty webs
 The Gunner spun at whim.
 The Borgias came to mind
 In this 20th century tale-
 Of poisoned rings and coated chalices
 A Grand Guinol that yet awaits
 The happy ending of a fairy tale.
 (*Samarkand*, pp. 25-26).

The emotional disposition of the poet here not only shows the ordeal of the victims but the offences committed against humanity but this, on the surface appears to be on a personal note. Just like the poet traces, the overall sin of apartheid and the global conspiracy that sustained the act in *Mandela's earth* (1989), we see in "Some deaths are worlds apart", a poem dedicated to Kudirat Abiola, the wife of Moshood Abiola - the acclaimed winner of the June 12 election in Nigeria, the insensitivity of the western powers, who placed the business of oil above the heinous crimes that was being committed by the maximum ruler in Nigeria. The poet captures the very sad development thus:

Oh, there were noises from the diplomatic world
A protest diskette ran its regulation course- but
She was no media princess, no sibling
Of hagiomaniac earls. All too soon it was:
Business as usual. Dark sludge
And lubricant of conscience, oil
Must flow, though hearts atrophy, and tears
Are staunch at source (*Samarkand*, p. 22).

Notwithstanding, Soyinka credits the effort of those martyrs. The performance aesthetics of the poems that recognise characters that paid the supreme price for justice is enthralled in panegyric tones. So we find in the poet's elegies, panegyric which ordinarily is a peculiar poetry rendered for the living. This is understandable because, going by the theory of death in the African worldview, the dead retains a position in ancestry validates the praises rendered in the poems. The panegyric tone that relishes his encomium on Kudirat Abiola is a common feature of "exit" poems that are dedicated to heroes or heroines of revolutionary struggle:

She was not royal, white or glamorous
No catch for playboy millionaires.
Her grace was not for media drool, her beauty
We shall leave to nature's troubadours.
Courage is its own crown, sometimes
Of thorns, always luminous as martyrdom.
Her pedigree was one with Moremi,
Queen Amina, Aung Sung Kyi, with
The maid of Orleans and all who mother
Pain as offspring, offer blood as others, milk.
(*Samarkand*, p. 23).

To immortalise the deeds of personalities who have played prominent positive roles in revolutionary struggles, the poet does not stop at merely accrediting their efforts but canonises them by registering them in the hall of fame. This could be said of all Soyinka's revolutionary figures: Atunda, the "pioneer" of revolutionary acts is graded with Christ, Osiris and Zeus. Ogun's actions rate him with Prometheus and Dionysus. Shaka and Mandela are like Ogun, and for their messianic roles, like Christ. This easily explains why Soyinka translates Kudirat, from a mere legend into the categories of ancient heroines.

Perhaps the prelude to this atrocity was the slaying of the nine Ogoni activists by the Abacha administration. It was a very trying period for the people of the Ogoni land who, like other communities in the Niger Delta had suffered deprivations, alienation and violence orchestrated by the politics of oil extraction. Among others, poets like Tanure Ojaide, Onookome Okome, Ogaga Ifowodo and Nduka Otiono, intervened- respectively- with titles like *The fate of vultures and other poems* (1990), *The mammiwata poems* (1999), *The oil lamp* (2005) and *Love in a time of nightmare* (2009). As a writer, Saro Wiwa also gave expression to the dilemma of a nation in *Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni tragedy*. (1992) and his posthumous work, *A month and a day: A detention diary* (1995). Unfortunately, another level of intervention got him entangled in a legal battle which saw him arraigned before a special military tribunal that subsequently sentenced him and his colleagues to death by hanging. The connection between the Russian poet and essayist, Joseph Brodsky and Ken Saro Wiwa in "Calling Josef Brodsky for Ken Sarowiwa" (*Samarkand*, pp. 31-38), exhibits the ordeal of poets or writers in communities where oppression and deprivation thrive. Brodsky was once regarded as insane, his poetry seen as seditious and contributing nothing to the evolution of the Soviet nation, he was arraigned before a jury and was sentenced to five years imprisonment for his "parasitism" ([www.http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph/Brodsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph/Brodsky)). Soyinka captures the reason for his intervention when the execution of the death sentence became imminent and, in a usual manner that accredits the efforts of Ken Saro Wiwa in the fight for freedom, considers him as Moses:

I never really knew you. I cling to yours because
I own a closer death, a death that dared elude
Prophetic sight. Dreams we all share, but close
Presentiment may hover round the head, invisible
To all it most concern. We had become immune to dread.

Assailed by tortuous ways of evil we eschewed
 The literal. The loop was patient, a suspended sentence
 Hung over him, named Moses of Ogoniland.
 (*Samarkand*, pp. 34-35).

The poet's words here collate the experiences of Nigerian writers during the Abacha years, though Moses did not die Saro Wiwa's kind of gruesome death, the powers that be, neglecting their positive contributions to the attainment of nationhood, prevented them from entering the promise land. For Saro Wiwa, the promise land is the emancipation from neo-colonialism and slavery of the Ijaw nation entrenched through the exploitation of oil and the consequent impoverishment of its people.

The "Elegies" section in *Samarkand and other markets I have known* (2002) present the pitiable social conditions in the poet's country call for remorse. The poet, in "Vain Ransome", uses the extra judicial killings that took place in Kenya and Tanzania as a castigation of that act and all tendencies of terrorism. However, his major concern is not about physical deaths but some debilitating social traumas. At the centre is his country, the prospect of greatness appears dim. "The Children of this Land" presents a sorry state of a generation that is expected to carry on with the affairs of the country but who are pre-occupied with the mundane,

But the children of this land embrace the void
 As lovers. The spores of their conjunction move
 To people once human spaces, stepping nimbly
 Over ghosts of parenthood. The children of this land
 Are robbed judges, their gaze rejects
 All measures of the past... (*Samarkand*, p. 69).

The massive corruption that that has covered all aspects of national life, to the poet is also appalling. In "Low-cost Housing", Soyinka laments the lack of shelter for the common man. worse than this, the intension to solve the problem, though initiated, remains a mirage with "rodents", "reptiles" and other beasts replacing human beings as tenants in those houses. The reason for this is that:

...Rhetorical designs
 Approved, contracted, ostentatious turning of the sod
 To camera lights and drums and buntings, then,
 Abortion at the drawing board. Drains outlined,
 Roof penciled in, token beds of cement will become
 Archeological puzzles for future digs (*Samarkand*, p. 73).

“Elegy for a nation” which the poet dedicated to Chinua Achebe at seventy, has a robust catalogue of the reasons for the poet’s melancholy. As someone who saw the struggle for independence and how successive governments have mismanaged the wealth and resources of the nation the poet cannot but be in a sad state. Despite the potential for greatness, the economy of the poet’s country is bad, unyielding to the medication from “IMF, World Bank and UNO”, the prosperity of the past is lost, the dream of its founding fathers is in shambles, cultural heritage melting away through the destruction and neglect of bequeathed cultural legacies, the nation is embroiled in a war triggered by religious fanatics and the impact of mediation is ruptured as the people remain unappreciative or insensitive to the poet.

The jealous gods are no more. Age by age
We inched towards the sun, then raced beyond
To drink the heady draught of space, returned to earth
Emboldened. The voices of new prophets are not voided
In the wilderness but fulfilled. Applause
Is the new music of the spheres- it’s heard
In other lands, I am told. I have not heard it here.
(*Samarkand*, p. 84).

The last line in this excerpt parallels the expression of the Judeo-Christian script that says a prophet has no honour in his own land. This is the condition that will validate Soyinka’s elegiac tunes because the wisdom of the poet is being harnessed elsewhere but not in his domicile. Indeed, with the kind of situation, hope remains in distant lands.

The Context of Performance Poetry and Wole Soyinka’s Elegies

In pre- literate times, exigency set the stage for performance, the artist- in this case the poet- and the audience, are easily mobilised by occurrence. For elegies, occasions of demise inspire renditions by mourners who are not necessarily professional poets and the spontaneity of the lines rendered sets in motion audience participation. The sense of loss entrenches the mood of sadness that is always associated with this sub genre of poetry.

In Soyinka, we see elegy beyond the frontiers of orality. The poet’s ingenuity gives room for infraction which, in pre-literate times, is predicated on modification. The mood, for instance, fluctuates between sadness and exhilaration depending on the subject whose demise is the focus. The access to a robust plot is unhindered as the poet condenses in his verses the attributes of the deceased. Similarly, direct references to names

enforce the reality of the poet's elegies but, beyond this, issues of general concerns that form the crux of his thematic constructs, are exposed.

Conclusion

This contextual basis for Soyinka's use of death in his poetry falls within the matrix of elegy. The poet is able to sustain some of those convention associated with the sub genre but his innovation hinges on his use of those poems to raise questions of injustice or draw attention to the endemic social chaos and disorders.

Not only this, because those poems are not as long as the major poems in his collections, they are very handful for declamation. The poet's performance techniques is enthralled is the loaded metaphors deployed to capture the attributes of deceased persons. Though the poet hardly gives annotations to direct declamation, the reasonably length of most of the poems set the stage for the audience who can listen to the poems and relish the aesthetics of "sadness" and "joy" in the poet's poems of "exit". The didactic essences of those poems relive the functional capacity of art. Akporobaro (2008, p. 475) accounted for this when he contends that:

Soyinka's writings are dominated by a vision of the terrible condition of the modern man in his dissociation from the moral ideal and the divine. Militant evil, expressed through the agents of oppression, warfare, corruption and death provides a rich source of imagery, mythic motifs and related leitmotifs.

We often find the poet drawing on personalities from backgrounds outside Africa. When this is done, the poet brings correlation to impress on the point that what goes round comes round. For Soyinka, occasions of death provides the privilege of re- assessment of values, the ultimate goal being to mediate on the crisis the world over.

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**Book Review - AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye (2012).
(Ed.) *The Dramaturgy of a Theatre Sociologist:
Festschrift in Honour of Ayò Akínwálé*,
Ilorin:Department of the Performing Arts,
University of Ilorin. 435 pages**

By

Lérè Adéyemí *

The book presents a comprehensive survey of contemporary literary and performance arts in Nigeria. Although, it is specifically dedicated to Prof. Ayo Akinwale and contains important documentary and analytical materials on the famous playwright, author, actor and director of plays, this book has even more to offer, especially when home-based scholars attract a disproportionate amount of critical attention accorded to African theatre practitioners outside .Passionate rigor characterizes this book, what Borges calls algebra and fire. This volume of essays and tributes most aptly titled: *The Dramaturgy of a Theatre Sociologist: Festschrift in Honour of Ayo Akinwale*, celebrates one of the most outstanding and prolific Nigerian theatre sociologists, director, actor, playwright and scholar of the twenty-first century. In recognition of his immense contribution to the development of the Nigerian theatre as well as his footprint that is visible to all, his humanness, diligence and love for other scholars' intellectual development, the ensuing compendium of perspectives on Ayo Akinwale's dramaturgy is therefore part of an expansive critical approach to recognise and celebrate his generational influence on emerging literary scholars in particular and Nigerian theatre in general.

The book is edited by another prolific, eloquent and the "budding Soyinka" of Nigerian theatre AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye whose academic star is steadfastly rising and shining. His tireless energy, dauntless courage and painstaking efforts have resulted in the publication of this book. In the rather unique quality of this volume, there are emerged three sections.

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Section one contains twelve essential essays on Ayo Akinwale's dramaturgy. Nwagbo Nnenyelike's paper titled: The Nigerian actor as a theatre sociologist: The example of Ayo Akinwale supplies the framework for all the other papers on Ayo Akinwale's theatre sociology as it articulates the characteristic features of theatre sociology, the relationship between the society and theatre and the dramaturgical perspectives of Ayo Akinwale. According to Nwagbo, the acting career of Ayo Akinwale is located within the premises of sociology of theatre. Nwagbo negotiates his point by first undertaking a comprehensive review of Akinwale's journey from his primary school days when Fagunwa's novel *Ògboju Ode nínú igbo irunmọle* was acted in his school to the time he became a lecturer under the Deanship of Prof. Oludare Olajubu. He concludes by affirming that theatre sociology is a critical chain in theatre scholarship and all Nigerians actors should follow the role model of Ayo Akinwale.

Solomon Ikibe, Felix Emoruwa and Kehinde Adedamola examine the functional use of music, dance and drums in the three major plays of Ayo Akinwale. They appreciate the drum aesthetics (sound/speech, rhythm and dexterity), and the meaningful, logical and appropriate use of musical devices, dance aesthetics and drum elements not only as aesthetic ornaments but as decoder of deep-rooted messages and deliberate cultural identity formation for his country Nigeria. They advocate for notation of playwrights' songs to preserve the original tunes of songs, involve professional dancers or utility actors (actor-dancer-singers-acrobats) while appropriate drums aesthetics that are culture-specific to environment of the audience should be used to "enhance the general appeal of production" (p.155). AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye, Tayo Arinde and Adavi Abraham analyse the directorial styles and poetics of Ayo Akinwale. Some of the styles identified are: crowd management pre-blocking technique, costume or audience management style, directorial images, picturisation and movement, poetics of opening glee, ensemble acting, power play, claptrap aesthetics, cyclical plot continuum, poetics of festival, theatre, de-intermission, poetics of total defense and the aesthetics of show off closing glee etc. Friday Otun's paper adopts the linguistic approach especially pragmatics to identify the functions of language in Ayo Akinwale political play titled: *This king must die*. He identifies the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in the speech of the actors. These are the acts of directives, expressives, representatives and commissives.

Tayo Simeon Arinde's second paper is titled: The theatre sociologist in Ayo Akinwale: A study of *Mountains of Wealth* is an addition to the

conceptualization of theatre sociology as a field of study and a critical theory of literature. He commends Ayo Akinwale for his use of cultural heritage in his play. He advocates for “Association of theatre sociologists in Africa”. (p. 143).

Michael Olanrewaju Agboola’s paper is titled: A dramatist’s search for a sane society: A study of Ayo’s Akinwale’s *This king must die*. The paper examines the theme and mode of characterisation in the play within the framework of historical materialist’s theory of Marxism which holds man accountable for his actions and so must find solution himself. He praised the playwright for fashioning out a populist historical materialist approach of collective determinism in search for suitable leaders

All the essays collected in section one not only analyze the literary productions of Ayo Akinwale, they interrogate his works, make suggestions and portray him as good model of a theatre sociologist, ‘a total man of the theatre’, (p.56), ‘master of the theatre secrets’ (p.98). Theatre sociology transcends mere objective and scientific analysis of society. It penetrates the surfaces of social life, revealing in a much deeper sense, the feelings of man in the face of his varying experiences within the society. All the essays present and portray him as a literary and theatre sociologist who understands the inter- relationship between theatre and the society. The chapters in section one also interrogate transitional dialogue and offer humble assessment of Ayo Akinwale in the face of post modernism, globalisation, language, culture, directional poetics and his other important interventions in the performing arts.

Section two adopts the general perspectives with relevant essays on current issues on the Nigerian contemporary theatre containing twenty three essays. Section one and two have much in common. The majority of essays included in the two sections are written by contemporary and seasoned academics who have undergone training under Prof. Ayo Akinwale. By including the impressive younger scholars alongside the work of pre-eminent writers and scholars such as Alex Asigbo, Emmanuel Dandaura, Ezenwanebe Osita and Ododo Enessi, one can see the give-and-take occurring in the writing on Nigerian theatre and on a theatre sociologist invoking the communal spirit identified as essential by postcolonial theorists especially nativism. Alex, C. Asigbo and Dandaura’s paper titled: Mercantilism and the mis-application of ritual in Nigeria’s Nollywood entertainment industry is an addition to the mounting and harsh criticisms on Nigerian film industry especially on films that lay emphasis on rituals and metaphysics. This phenomenon according to the

writers devalues the cultural integrity of Nigeria and is capable of making Nigeria film industry a laughing stock in the comity of nations. Such ritual-oriented films may not orientate the people towards positive activities that can transform their society for better. Ritual-oriented films according to the writers should always be marked “Not for export”. The position of Alex and Dandaura negates the general call by Africans in the Diaspora for “essential texts” which should continue to propagate the ideas in theatre geared toward critically supporting the centrality of ‘African memory’. Rituals, sacrifices and festivals seem to have permanently stayed with Nigerians regardless of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and lately globalisation.

The impact of Elizabethan stagecraft on the contemporary media by Odiri Solomon Ejeke provides a succinct and thoughtful essay on the impact of Elizabethan stagecraft techniques in media drama. Odiri opens with an introduction to media drama which he refers to as cinema/film and identifies the Elizabethan stagecraft techniques in contemporary Nigerian films namely: pictorial narration, panoramas, tracking scenes, action tableaux, close-ups, slapsticks farce. All these, according to the writer, had all been carefully explored in stage plays since 1860 till 1900. Others are characterisation, stylisation, symbolisation which formed the bedrock of Elizabethan staging. He concludes that though the Elizabethan theatrical practices were crude and rudimentary, some of the techniques used by media drama today only improved upon the Elizabethan techniques.

Okey Okwechime and Kola Eke engage in discussion on masculine pretensions and feminine potentiality as portrayed in Irene Salami’s *Emotan: A Benin Heroine* in their joint essay titled: Women against patriarchy in Modern Nigerian drama: A study of Irene Salami’s *Emotan: A Benin Heroine*. The originality of the essays is located in the fact that it renews and updates our knowledge on Salami’s model of feminism which is not a direct attack on men but through ironies shows men’s contradictions and pleads for corrections. An essay that belongs to feminist discourse is of interest to a wide range of scholars particularly when satiric presentation of masculine pretensions and feminine potentiality serve as a thread of connection between deeds, actions and dialogues.

Ezenwanebe C. Osita represents an incisive critique of Onwueme’s *The broken calabash* and *The Reign of Wazobia*. She explores the cultural contents of the plays, gender sensitivity and evaluates the use of language within the feminist and pragmatic theoretical framework. The paper concludes that the two texts are a recreation of the rich cultural traditions of

the Igbos and they are deeply gender sensitive. She describes the language of the play as an “altered English” or a combination of standard English and Igbonised English which is called “Nigerian Englishes: in Nigerian Linguistics circle. What the essay basically contributes to the growing number of studies on feminist criticism is the use of Onwueme’s texts as information bearers, elaborated speech, events aimed at knowledge conservation and delivery in a highly patriarchal society like Nigeria. Solomon Ikibe’s second paper is on: Attaining cultural development in the MDGS: Isoko folktales of Nigeria in focus. Ikibe selects five folktales in Isoko land and Niger Delta to demonstrate how folktales can be used to attain the developmental strategies in the MDGS. The folktales are Mimo the dishonest and unfaithful wife, Odame and Ogbe’ Omoro go back home: Otie Mena Momomo and three Adventurers from the hinterland visit London. Out of the five folktales, only one is not on the inequality between men and women. The first four folktales bring out the injustice and patriarchal oppression of women. ‘Mimo’ is regarded as dishonest because she wants freedom, Odame and Ogbe are husband and wife, Ogbe the tortoise steals the herbal medicine for the pregnancy of his wife and becomes pregnant, here we see the pretensions of men, ‘Omoro’ the beautiful girl is accused of pride because she wants freedom on marriage. The last folktale devalues the natives because they cannot speak English. Even though Ikibe has “nativist impulse” he could not use it through a critical paradigm robed in nativist ideology to challenge the patriarchal domination in the society. All the folktales he uses are anti-feminist. How can the Nigerian society develop without taking the women along? This is a question unanswered in the paper

Omotoye’s paper titled: Comparison of common phenomena in Aladura/Pentecostal churches and theatre arts in Yoruba land is located within sociology of religion and literature. The paper examines the shared generic characteristics of the Aladuura/Pentecostal churches and theatre groups in Yoruba land. He traces the history of the Aladuura/Pentecostal churches and how Christian drama emerged in Yoruba land. He observes that the splendid use of Yoruba language, dance, songs, invocatory utterances, in prayers, music and songs as common phenomena in Pentecostal churches which are carried over to Christian and secular drama. Omotoye’s paper is an important record of artistic endeavor of Nigerian theatre practitioners. His determination to put on record the multi generic performance of Pentecostal churches and Nigerian theatre drawing on a rich variety of Yoruba culture is admirable.

The other two papers in theatre-religion category are: Musa Makhu's Theatrical dimensions in id-el-kabir celebration in Auchi Nigeria, Felix Emoruwa's choreographic aesthetics in liturgical worship dances. Makhu's paper attempts to debunk the general impression that Islam does not condone theatre. His paper reviews the various theatrical dimensions and features prevalent in modern id-el-kabir (the festival of sacrifice) celebration in Auchi, Edo state. He subjects the plot of the festival to quasi-theatre presentation and pleads that since theatre is an educative and entertainment medium, its functional utility should be explored and adopted in Islamic community. Emoruwa explores the place of choreography and dance aesthetics in liturgical worship dances using Ilaje C&S zion church. He discovers three forms of worship iconic representation of the Ilaje C&S zion church. Emoruwa's essay is pleasant to read, thanks to a straight forward style of writing and a smooth flow of ideas from one paragraph to the next.

Austin Emielu's paper is titled: Issues of forms and styles in Nigerian popular music: A study of Edo Guitar band music. The essay examines the issues of forms and styles in Nigerian popular music and the constraints that exist in their analysis. Using Edo guitar band music as a case study, the paper observes that the musical elements of Edo guitar combine both the traditional and western musical resources. The musical elements do not exist as a unitary stylistic framework rather, artistic creativity/autonomy or ethnic affiliation are the determining factors of the forms and styles of the Edo guitar music. This essay is a must reading for students and scholars of Nigeria music and culture.

Akas Nicholas Chielotam's paper titled: Bastardisation of cultural essence in Nigeria; An examination of Flavour's Aladarada music video mounts a tenacious and sophisticated argument against the negative pop-culture syndrome in Nigerian music industry. He argues that creativity and originality are insulted in the musical video of Flavour, the content is zero because it projects nudity, social prostitution and money as tool for sex. His use of language is anti-cultural, because through his use of language, dance steps, he portrays Nigerian culture as a stagnant phenomena, rigid dogmatic system and conservative (p 300). The essay is impressive in the depth and breadth of its learning and in the clarity of his use of language, however it is also necessary to examine the positive side of the production to make Akas's assessment scholarly balanced. Almost without exception, all the other presenters in section two of the book either explore or apply the

concepts of borderline and transition and of connections and continuity in their analysis. They all examine the borderline between reality, illusion, and the interpretation of life in the contemporary Nigerian theatre scholarship. The essays in section are uniformly graceful while the contents of their papers in some ways rhetorically and strategically felicitous.

Section three is a pictorial autobiographical reminiscence of the celebrant. The pictures in section three serve as a storehouse, and of remembering as playback to recover memory since experiences become blurred with the passage of time. Certain memories in the life journey of Ayọ Akinwale as a theatre sociologist are brought back to life through the pictures from pages 414-426.

Conclusion

The book succeeds admirably in its objectives: to celebrate an accomplished and distinguished theatre sociologist and also ignite the fire of serious scholarship in the coming generation of scholars, playwrights, actors and actresses. It is an important contribution to theatre scholarship and a welcome addition to the growing corpus of literature in modern Nigerian theatre. The Yorùbá elders say that however careful one is while walking, his or her head will shake and no matter the method one uses to crush or pound water-yam, mumps will still appear. Even though this 435 page book is excellent and one is proud of it, there are few errors, e.g orthographic errors, poor use of diacritics and tone marks on some Yorùbá words, grammatical errors in some of the essays, pp. 98, 99, 100, 101 among others. The book does not include a glossary of terms to reduce the unfamiliarity of the non-specialists readers of some of the technical terms used in the book. As media and theatre specialist, if the book includes CD of some of the performance traditions discussed in the book and short excerpts for readers to access it would be an excellent addition to the text. The book is highly recommended for scholars, researchers, cultural workers, practitioners and all students of the Performing arts, and in the Humanities in Universities and other tertiary institutions.

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