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AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT IN APPLIED THEATRE: A REPORT OF AN INTERVENTION IN BENUE STATE NORTH-CENTRALNIGERIA

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how indigenous performances of songs and dances of the people could be used in the business of sharing information and mobilisation. In this paper, the Re-Contextualised Indigenous Performance Approach (Re-CIPA) was employed in Benue State, North Central Nigeria in two parts of Makurdi, the capital city, to mobilise people towards understanding the concepts of democracy and governance. Selected dances were prepared ahead and moved around during the campaign to create spectacle that attracts people around then the dances are presented, breaking for discussions and narrations. This methodology is more like a live Television show presentation, with segments that include mini documentaries, discussions and interactions. At the end of the exercise, it was discovered that no matter how busy people are, they try to create room to watch or observe what suddenly happens around their environment. The conclusion therefore is that audiences could be engaged easily if messages are packaged well in applied theatre. People listen, watch, comment, learn and change their attitudes and subsequently their actions.

Keywords: Audience, Engagement, Applied Theatre, Intervention, Benue State.

Introduction

This paper is a condensed report of a project I carried out in Benue State with the support and supervision of Steve Abah of Ahmadu Bello University, Zariawhose simplicity, patience and accountability, I had written about in another book, *Theatre Unbound*. The project covered in this paper was titled, "Discussing Democracy and Governance". The time line was December, 2014 – January, 2015 (NPTA Report 5). This period coincided with the peak of campaigns for the 2015 governorship elections in Benue State. The governorship battle line was drawn between the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All People's Congress (APC) but the voting population lacked a clear working idea of what democracy and governance was, thus the need to do an education-oriented programme for the populace.

The intervention employed Re-Contextualised Indigenous Performance Approach (Re-CIPA), in Akile (Klm 16, Makurdi-Gboko Road, Makurdi Local Government Arear [LGA]), Asukunya Village Market Square, Tarka LGA, Benue State, Wannune Town, Tarka LGA and Kanshio Community, Makurdi LGA. The report here however covers the two Makurdi locations, (Akile and Kanshio Communities).

The Approach

Re-CIPA as an approach requires employing the indigenous performances of songs and dances of the peopleand giving the songs or performance a new context, that is. bringing in a new subject and new context from which to present and discuss the performances. In this case, thenew context was democracy and governance. This is different from conventional dramatic skits that are produced during Theatre for Development (TfD) interventions. Dances, or dance dramas are used to create spectacle that attract people without prior notice. The dances are presented breaking for discussions and narrations. This is more like a live TV show presentation, with segments that include mini documentaries, discussions and interactions.

As a concept, Re-CIPA was coined in my practice of applied theatre where modifications are made to traditional TfD approach. For instance, while TfD interventionists take time to stay among the people and study their problems before presentations are made at the end of a period, this practice takes the gorilla theatre approach to ambush, then hit-and-run. Conspicuously different from TfD, this approach can take place in one day from beginning to the end. The show is brought to people unannounced and then withdrawn after audience engagement.

The Audience Engagement Strategy: Traditional Dance Troupes

Two troupes were prepared ahead of time through intensive re-contextualization rehearsals and education of the members to serve as narrators and discussants apart from dancing. It is worth noting that generally speaking, every indigenous performance has its original context within which it was created and of course, the context in which it is presented. It should be noted that generally speaking, the context of performance determines the content or the relics of a performance. For one to use these performances outside its originally designed state, one needs to recontextualise the performance to agree with the new context in which it is needed.

Simeon Tsav's recent study of performance agrees that folklore performancestudies in recent times has been favoured by the contextual approach (22). According to Tsav, this approach emerged as a reaction against the then prevalent tendency onthe part of comparative ethnologists, especially Sir James George Frazer, to make sweeping cultural statements without much basis on empirical evidence, about societies they had no experience of (55). The roots of this contextual approach couldbe traced to

Bronislow Malinowski, the father of modern ethnography, who, in his study of Trobriand Oral narratives, was struck by how much was lost in the reduction of the oral text to print and the subsequent analysis of the material divorced from the context that gave it life in the first place (Tsav 56). Malinowski and his contemporaries (notably R. Radcliffe-Brown) therefore called for a rehabilitation of that context for a proper understanding of the meaning of the text. In his fieldwork on the Trobriand Oral narratives, Radcliffe-Brown talked about the Trobriand fairy tales thus:

The text, of course, is extremely important, but without the context it remains lifeless. As we have seen, the interest of the story is vastly enhanced and it is given its proper character by the manner in which it is told. The whole nature of the performance, the voice and the mimicry, the stimulus and the response of the audience mean as much to the natives as the text; and the sociologist should take his cue from the natives. The performance, again, has to be placed inits proper time-setting – the hour of the day, and the season, with the background of the sprouting gardensawaiting future work, and slightly influenced by the magic of the fairy tales (quoted in Okpewho 1).

The burden of his mission, as revealed by the above extract, is to emphasise the study of proper social setting of a cultural act as an aid to a reliable understanding of its meaning and effectiveness. This concern for the proper setting of cultural act as an aid to a reliable understanding of meaning and effectiveness marked the framework for greatly influencing a new movement which sought to replace the abstractionist tone of studies in human and social attitudes with concrete demonstration of how these phenomena were realised in actual situations. The re-contextual approach is aimed at representing social man in a creative capacity within the context of system of signs recognised by his community. Thus,

We must also bear in mind the sociological context of private ownership, the sociable function and the cultural role of amusing fiction. All these elements are equally relevant; all must be studied as well as the text. The stories live, innative life and not on paper, and when a scholar jotsthem down without being able to evoke the atmosphere in which they flourish he has given us but a mutilated bit of reality (quoted in Okpewho 1).

For this particular project, Tiv dances and performances were re-designed to compare Tiv traditional dance forms and Tiv gerontocracy with the ideal democratic and governance principles. For example, the narration says Tiv nation was operating aform of governance that could be called gerontocracy before the coming of the colonialists. This form of government compares very well with democracy

except that while in gerontocracy, leaders emerged because of their ages. In democracy on the other hand, leaders are elected, supposedly on their personal credibility. In terms of governance, gerontocracy survives strictly by consultation, accountability, participation etc and so these elements must be maintained in our practice of governance today. The audience is engaged after each narration following a performance segment.

For the actual intervention, the troupes would drive to a location to key in on a political, social or economic gathering and perform. For purposes of sustainability and follow-up, apart from performing for the purposes of this project, the troupes have agreed to continue presenting the message of democracy and governance wherever and whenever they are invited or hired to entertain and follow it up with engagement of the audience. On why democracy and governance education is chosen for this project, it has been discovered that there is high level ignorance of what participation in democracy and governance is in Benue State, probably more than any other state in the country.

The approach of Re-Contextualised Indigenous Performance Approach (Re-CIPA) is employed because politics in Tivland employs Re-CIPA through the medium of songs and dances as such it is easier for the intervention to key in on same approach to reach the population with the massage of democracy and governance. One of the performances took place in Makurdi at Kanshio, along Makurdi-Aliade road. Present was Professor Steve Abah of Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance who came

all the way from Zaria. Others were a political party chairman of Kanshio Ward and another aspirant as well as other politicians who would not identify themselves. Since this performance took place in front of two drinking spots, it took time to control the audience and gain attention of some people that were already tipsy. However, as the dance performance attracted more and more passers-by, the exercise became more and more engaging as people started participating by discussing the drama in the dances and airing their opinions. Below are briefs on the presentations. Dance Drama on Democracy using Re-CIPA with Tavershima Dance Troupe, Kanshio, Makurdi LGA, a member of Media Vision Africa-African Community Theatre Network as facilitated by Richard Tsevende, choreographed by Abraham Dzuamo.

Movement 1:

The performance started with a narrator who introduced the *Biem*-dance as a traditional performance in Tivland that share similar elements with democracy and governance. According to the narrator, *Biem*-dance captures the essence of organised hunting expedition of the Tiv people, organised by themselves for themselves. In the narration, it was made known that in the past, the Tiv people used to set aside a large bush and before it could be burnt, hunters from different

communities were invited to ensure that no animal inside the reserved bush escapes. On the day of *Biem*, community members would come out with different weapons such as cutlasses, bows and arrows, guns, fishing nets, spears and many others. After the hunt, the sharing of the catch is done fairly, following the well established Tiv principles of fair sharing, *Kwar Karen* and *Ya-na-Angbian*.

Movement 2:

The *Biem* dancers came out to perform the dance with different weapons as props, demonstrating how the hunters managed attacks without hurting themselves.

Movement 3:

The Narrator comes in to help the audience discuss *Biem* practice, the imitational dance and democracy. The analysis concluded that it was the democratic principles employed as well as principles of governance that made *Biem* expeditions successful. The audience agrees that if same principles are employed in our political system, same positive results would be attained.

Movement 4:

The Narrator permits the dancers to dance to the end. At the end of the performance, the participants still engaged the audience into dialogue where most audience members agreed that they had learnt a lot from the dance-drama. Most respondents maintained that they have not heard much about democracy the way it has been presented. Others suggested that the programme be extended to interior villages where many people will be enlightened.

The outreach finally came to an end at about 6:30pm on 30th January, 2015.

Pictures of Performance at Kanshio, Makurdi LGA on 30th January, 2015

roupe members belonging to Media Vision Africa-African Community Theatre Network (MVA-ACT Network) stormed Kanshio community without prior notice and started performances in an open place, facing two beer parlours. At the beginning, there was no audience. But before the troupe finished a step, people relaxing in the beer spots started turning around to see what was happening and riders started stopping by.



Lesson: Audiences are attracted by spectacle. Passers-by and riders became attracted and stopped to watch. The lesson here is that even busy businessmen/women can spare a minute to KNOW what is happening. In Re-CIPA, this is the time to present a message.

The dance became intensive and people settled down to watch. In the next picture, notice Abah (A renowned TfD scholar, with a towel round his shoulders, standing behind the drummers, among who is Richard Tsevende (a cultural expert and erstwhile director of Benue State Council for Arts and Culture, as the 3rd drummer, in brown dress.



The Dancers changed from dance into a drama in which the whole community of hunters are looking for a leader. They searched everywhere. And finally, a young female hunter was found.

She was declared the leader by the chief, by the authority invested in him. This is how democracy should produce leaders.





Re-CIPA performance at Kanshio, Makurdi. Field Pictures: Don S. Iorngurum, 2015

After the drama, people were engaged. A political party chairman of Kanshio Ward and an aspirant expressed their acceptance of the performance. They asked how they could help spread the message the more. More and more people continued discussing the performance even after the dancers. Leaders of the group tarried for a while to record reactions.

Performance at Akile, Makurdi LGA, on 5th January, 2015

It was a political rally. Two troupes were driven to the location where people were already gathered. The troupes started performing and people drew closer. The Narrator then stepped into the arena and intervened, opening discussions on democracy and governance. Akile (located at Kilometer 15 along Makurdi-Gboko Road) is a deciding factor community in Makurdi politics. It is a vibrant community that is well populated. This day was an organised political rally even though the troupe was not invited. While people gathered there to wait for the political candidate, the troupe came with entertainment but also to educate people by discussing democracy and governance. The lesson we got that day is that, actually, whatever gathering that is open to the public is a potential audience for any

appropriate performance. At Akile, the following took place:

Dance-drama skit on Democracy using ReCIPA with Real Inc. Entertainment Group, Wannune, a member of Media Vision Africa-African Community Theatre, Network, (MVA-ACT) as Facilitated by Don S. Iorngurum, choreographed by Philip Asaasuen and Ephraim Inyamkyume.

On arrival, the Governorship Candidate of People's Democratic Party (PDP), Terhemen Tarzoor went round and greeted people that were waiting for him.



The Dancers halted while the candidate greeted people. After, they trilled the gathering with a welcome step.



A lady supporter of the Governorship Candidate joined the dancers and trilled the audience. Lesson: Audience members could freely participate in a performance once they know the step.





Meanwhile, Don S. Iorngurum and Richard Tsevende put heads together and were prepared to present their messages at every slight opportunity.

The Presentations:

Movement 1:

The episode begins with *Swange* Dance; a prominent dance in Tivland of Benue State, North Central, Nigeria. *Swange* is made up of different dance segments called by different names. Two of the steps or segments presented at the occasion were *Ityolu* and *Agbur* steps. After the presentation, there is a break for a brief interaction with the people.

Movement 2:

Narrator comes in and explains the origin of *Swange* dance and compares it with ideal democratic practice that involves participation, consultation, accountability etc. He seeks from the audience the similarities between democracy in governance and the one inherent in Tiv culture as portrayed in *Swange* dance.

Movement 3:

Swange dance is performed to its peak and the Narrator comes in again. He praised the dances and asks why Tiv people are no longer dancing as much as they used to in the past. He asks whether this may be a reason why Tiv people do not understand that democracy is simply what they were doing even before the coming of the whites in Tivland.

The audience is engaged for some time until the Narrator moderates the discussion back to Tiv sharing method called *Kwar Karen* where there are principles of fair

sharing that go beyond the family circle. This method is discussed again and compared to good governance. Narrator calls *Swange* Dancers to continue.

Movement 4:

Narrator stops the dance again and introduce the *Ijir Tamen* practice of Tiv people. *Ijir Tamen* is the highest assembly of all Tiv traditional rulers where leaders come to present their constituencies' problems and issues; after discussing and arriving at a consensus, they take back a report to their clans and the resolution becomes binding on all. This practice is compared with the concepts of consultation and accountability in governance.

From here, the Narrator recalls the early politicians that represented Tivland well and the dividends of democracy that they brought about in Tivland such as the creation of Katsina-Ala Division in 1976 to add to the then only Gboko Division. This is still commemorated with a dance called *Division-Dance*. He takes permission from the audience to invite the *Division* dancers to stage. The audience is happy and ready to watch. *Division-Dance* is performed and audience is engaged again by all the participants as much as time permitted.

It was explained to the gathering that we were not politicians but people that want democracy and governance to be fairly practiced. While each dance was on, a narrator would move in explaining the relationship of the dance to democracy and governance. People became thoughtful and issues were raised such as how to access the governorif he wins. Responses were made to these questions explaining how the electorateshave a right to send delegations, write letters, send messages through

campaign managers and other figures that are given appointments from the community.

Conclusion

During this exercise, the issue of citizens having the right to call on their leaders to listen to them was presented and the people were encouraged to present their grievances to the authorities. Fortunately, the following issues came up during the governorship candidate's visit. He came by 5:30 pm when the announcement said 12:00 noon. Secondly, groups that came from Mu neighbourhood (populated mainly by people from other parts of Tiv that are not directly related to the candidate) were ignored when he gave some money for distribution. The aggrieved community quickly sent a message to the candidate to come to them before election. On 2nd February, 2015, the candidate came. Representatives of the various groups challenged the governorship candidate on issues raised above and the candidate responded and corrective measures were immediately put in place by recognising the various groups and women as well as even the opposition party members present. The candidate re-scheduled a visit and came on time this time around even before other citizens. The candidate further promised to constitute a forum for dialogue in this community, should he become the governor of the state.

In the two locations, the rough figure of people who attended/watched the programme is placed at far more than five thousand. People's responses to our work were very positive, ranging from exclamatory statements such as *Tar wase hideve!*, meaning, "Our world has returned". But there was a little set back. When we performed in a PDP environment, few people suspected we were sponsored by APC, the opposing political party and when we performed in APC dominated environment, people suspected we were sponsored by PDP. However, people watched and learned. Prior to the performances, many were of the opinion that the electorate cannot query the elected by calling them to give account. Now because of the performances, the people asked their leaders that were present whether all that we have said is true. One councillor responded positively but soon ran away as people were beginning to be confrontational. Another dimension of achievement was the methodology employed. This seem to be the first time Tiv dances are employed in guerrilla theatre style, discussing serious issues and holding talks with the audiences as handled through the Re-CIPA approach.

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INTERSECTION OF GENRES IN THE OHAFIA *UKENKWA* OUTINGS: A TRANSGENERIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

As a typical tribal /traditional society, Ohafia is essentially patriarchal. Most Ohafia proverbs, folktales, narratives and anecdotes on women are basically derogatory. However, it is interesting to note the office of the dreaded *ukenkwa*. The *Ukenkwa* outing is examined in this paper as an art form which can come under the organising principle of the narrative and is expressed through the genres of poetry, drama and story-telling. This paper explicates the connectivity of literary forms in this traditional practice performed in form of enactments by the Ohafia women as an embodiment of poetic elements which advance the dramatic elements in its enactment; that projectthe story at the foundation of the enactments. An attempt is made to determine thepossible relations between the elements of the narrative, the narration, and the storyin the enactments, in an approach that cuts across the three genres of literature. In this paper, narraratological concepts of Story from Gerald Genette and Mediation fromMonika Fludernik are employed in the explication of the literary forms found inthe *Ukenkwa* outings.

Keywords: Culture, Satire, Performance, Poetry, Drama and Narration.

Introduction

The Ohafia are Igbo people found in Abia state of Nigeria, spread over twenty-five villages that are divided into nine autonomous communities. The cultural homogeneity of the Ohafia is evident in the uniformity of their system of values manifested in the practices of various rites, age grade organization and system of succession. Furthermore, the Ohafia outlook to life which essentially borders on stoicism, devoid of unnecessary revelry can be traced to their past warrior-like tendencies. Even though there is a high level of communality within the Ohafia culture, there are also individualistic traits; which may be attributed to the intense competition that exists within individuals of the same age grade, and between one age grade and another.

Major interest of scholars in the field of Igbo oral literature has been predominantly occupied with the collection, transcription, and classification of Igbo traditional

orature, than with the analysis. It is also obvious that there is a scarcity of published texts on Igbo traditional narratives, songs, chants and recitations. This may be as a

result of the fact that collecting them is complicated, since most of them exist as verbal components of different traditional rites, and as such cannot be collected without the actual enactment of such traditional rites. This is because as traditional enactments, it is distinct from modem narratives, and the mode of composition is public, not private, or reserved by people who have acquired formal education. This distinction is aptly explained by Egudu and Nwoga concerning traditional poetry in the following terms:

Traditional verses are composed according to the social (cultural or ceremonial) needs of the communities ... and according to the traditional formderiving from and indigenous to the communities. They have not been influenced in any vital sense by literary forms and techniques which have been introduced through formal education (1).

What this means is that the traditional Igbo literature is not patterned after the orthodox literary genres of the novel, poetry, drama, etc. They are performances which embody or enact all the modern genres fused together.

Women/The Girl-child in the Ohafia Culture

The male child in the Ohafia culture is raised as a potential warrior, and defender of the clan, while the female child is raised as a future wife and mother. The Ohafia culture is essentially patriarchal; as such, women are expected to be quiet, obedient and respectful to their fathers, husbands and elders. Consequently, a young maiden who exhibits undue boldness, or tries to assert her individuality, is branded as *Ogbaga anya* (brazen). Such an individual will be the subject of satirical songs such as:

Song Text 1

1. Oguuri: Agbogo anya nda e, 2. Okweuri: Anya nda kikiri, 3. Oguuri: Agbogo anya nda e, 4. Okweuri: Anya nda kikiri, 5. Oguuri: Nne ya turu ubi, 6. Okweuri: Anyanda kikiri, Agbogo eshiere Ute! 7. Oguuri: 8. Okweuri: Anyanda kikiri. 9. Oguuri: Oya wu igbigi ruom e

10. Okweuri: Igbigi ruom nwanem igbabikwu,

11. Nwanam ikwobigbanda!

12. Omere Nnaya eje Afia!

1. Solo: Maiden of the brazen eyes,

2. Chorus: Brazen eyes kikiri.

3. Solo: Maiden of the brazen eyes,

4. Chorus: Brazen eyes kikiri

5. Solo: (As) her mother prepares for farm,

6. Chorus: Brazen eyes kikiri
7. Solo: She draws out the mat!
8. Chorus: Brazen eyes kikiri,
9. Solo: She is Igbigi ruom,

10. Chorus: Igbigi ruom, child of mother Igbabikwu,

11. Child of father *Ikwobigbanda!*12. Hinderer of her father's progress!

This form of derogatory satire rendered at menstrual feasts and marriage ceremonies by the women-folk, narrates the story of the brazen and obese, lazy girl who hinders her father's progress. The purpose of satire in the Ohafia society is to punish the delinquent by bringing them to ridicule, and it is hoped that this will help correct the individual and act as a deterrent for those who are upcoming.

Therefore, everything possible is done to instil on the girl-child all the vital attributes that will ensure her success as a wife and mother (according to the dictates of the Ohafia culture). It is not therefore out of place for a mother to admonish her young daughter in terms such as: *kpuu jaiyi! I mara m bekwale shi iwu nwami?!* (Be still! Are you aware of the fact that you are a woman?!) if the little girl shows signs of being overtly boisterous.

The sequential structure of text 1 is presented in temporary terms and narrate the story of the brazen lazy girl who would not help her mother in the farm, but lie around at home, and consequently become obese, as depicted by the onomatopoeic derogatory name *igbigi ruom* (line 9), and constitute a source of worry to her parents; (because of her inability to attract suitors), and becomes a *hinder her father's progress* (12). This form of derogatory songs is meant to discourage rebellion and encourage decorum, industry and restraint among young girls. The narrative voice is heterodiegetic, since there is no evidence of the "experiencing I" in the action related sentences; it is overt, because of the presence of pragmatic signals that show awareness and orientation towards an audience and authorial, since there are signs of an omniscient knowledge about the subject matter and characters. It therefore follows that the narrative situation presented by this discourse is a heterodiegetive, overt and authorial narrative situation.

The Ukenkwa in the Ohafia Culture

After the rites of *izu uche* or traditional retirement in the Ohafia culture, members of the two age grades are considered elder statesmen and women. They continue to exist

side by side as different entities until about 14 to 18 years afterwards, when the male members merge to form the *ugbom ogo* (ruling council) of elders that preside over the affairs of the community with the *Ezieogo* (traditional ruler). At the same time, the female members of the age grades will also merge in a very significant rite of passage to become the *Ukerabuo* literarily meaning "two age grades", also known as *Ukenkwa*.

The rite of assuming the office of the *Ukenkwa* though not overtly elaborate, compared to other rites in Ohafia, is nevertheless significant as it highlights the women and places them in a very important position where they perform the crucial role of safeguarding the cultural dictates, maintaining decorum and punishing culprits who venture to fall out of the acceptable norms of the society. This is particularly significant when we consider that women get to play such roles in a patriarchal society such as Ohafia.

On the morning of the rite, the out-going *ukenkwa* will assemble at *obu atan*, their usual meeting place. The new *Ukenkwa* will then undergo a form of induction and handing-over ceremony, witnessed only by the *Ezieogo* together with the *ibom isii* (the traditional ruler and his council of six elders). All paraphernalia of *Ukenkwa* such as *eku*, *efere*, *ite*, and *iko* (spoon, plates, pots, and cups) will be ceremoniously passed to the new group. The high point of the rite is the selection of who will strike the drum. This drum from which their name (*Ukenkwa*) is derived is a vital symbol and instrument of their office, thus, three women are usually nominated, who will observe the drummer of the out-going *Ukenkwa* beat the drum for a while, and then each of them will practice beating the drum in the presence of all. The one whose beat is most precise becomes the official drummer, and receives the drum.

The *Ukenkwa*, together with the *Ezie nwami*, (Queen, not the wife of the *Ezie ogo* or traditional ruler) presides over the affairs of women in the Ohafia culture. They usually adjudicate cases or offences such as: indecent exposure of body parts, incest, abortions, or any other like offences that are considered taboo to the Ohafia culture and ethics. The greatest weapon wielded by these women already in their late eighties and above is satire and in all cases the women strive to be fair to all, scrutinizing each case with a great sense of fairness, justice and equity as represented in their slogan, which is usually recited at the beginning and close of all their proceedings:

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Song Text 2

1. Ezie Nwami: Hii hii hii, 2. Ria azu. Ukenkwa: 3. Ezie Nwami: Ife agba aka, Ejigi enyo ele ya. 4 Ukenkwa:

1. Queen: Hii hii hii,

2. Ukenkwa: Remains at the back, 3. Oueen: Athing around the wrist,

4. Ukenkwa: Need not be viewed with a mirror.

The slogan of *Ukenkwa* which guides all their proceedings is a quatrain that encapsulates their attitude and morality. It is in a call and response form and the first and second lines make the first rhythm-unit, while the third and fourth lines make the second rhythm-unit. Each unit is made up of two rhythm-segments where the sense in one segment completes the other in a logical form of a complete thought.

An acoustic phonaesthetic idiophone (line 1) that includes all manners of side talks or gossips; which the response (line 2) insists remains at the back. The proverb (Lines 3 and 4) mediate the message in the slogan. The recitation is usually brisk as occasioned by the short breath-pauses that delimit short lines and a fast tempo and quick rhythm that produces it. The voice that is projected is an overt hetrodiegetic voice that mediates the message of transparency, equity and justice contained in the recitation.

More serious crimes are also the subject of satirical songs of the *Ukenkwa*. When such crimes are reported the culprits are summoned to obu atan, the official venue of Ukenkwa deliberations, and vigorously tried. Guilty offenders are subjected to Okpukpo, a form of theatrical re-enactment of the offence by all the women in the community, led by the *Ukenkwa*. They will in the process cover the house of the offender and their relations with refuse. Derogatory and satirical songs are composed with the name of the offender and the offence committed, and rendered during the course of the enactments. The ridicule of the *Ukenkwa* is not limited to gender, age or the position of the individual in the society as shown in the following cases:

Song Text 3

1. Oguuri: Ori o Ori o, 2. Okweuri: Nmahim.

3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.	Oguuri: Okweuri: Oguuri: Okweuri:	Ori o Ori o, Nmahim. Ori Okpuegbe enweghi okara ukwu, Ma onweghi ogben lu, Owu ya kpara uka, Nmahim!
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.	Oguuri: Okweuri: Oguuri: Okweuri: Oguuri:	Ori o Ori o, Nmahim, Ori o Ori o, Nmahim, Ori Okpuegbe enweghi oba nnu, Ma onweghi ogben lu, Owu ya kpara uka? Nmahim!
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.	Oguuri: Okweuri: Oguuri: Okweuri: Oguuri: Okweuri:	Ori o Ori o, Nmahim. Ori o Ori o, Nmahim. Ori Okpuegbe enweghi ulue obibi, Ma onweghi ogben lu, Nka orande a gota*, Nmahim!
1. 2. 3. 4.	Solo: Chorus: Solo: Chorus:	Ori o Ori o, Nmahim. Ori o Ori, Nmahim.
5. 6. 7. 8.	Solo: Chorus:	Ori Okpuegbe lacks clothing, If she's wretched so be it, Didn't she get into trouble? <i>Nmahim!</i>
1. 2. 3. 4.	Solo: Chorus: Solo: Chorus:	Ori o Ori o, Nmahim. Ori o Ori, Nmahim.

5. 6. 7. 8.	Solo: Chorus:	Ori Okpuegbe lacks even a bowl of salt, If she's wretched so be it, Didn't she get into trouble? <i>Nmahim!</i>
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.	Solo: Chorus: Solo: Chorus: Solo: Chorus:	Ori o Ori o, Nmahim. Ori o Ori, Nmahim. Ori Okpuegbe lacks a decent abode, If she's wretched so be it, She can as well sleep in the gutter, Nmahim!
Song T 1. 2. 3. 4.	Cext 4 Oguuri: Okweuri:	Ota gbawa ofioro a nno o, Haya haya, haya haya okwerele, O gbawa ofioro a nno o, Haya haya!
1. 2. 3. 4.	Solo: Chorus:	Ota peeped at the lady's toilet, Haya haya, haya haya he admitted, To have peeped at the lady's toilet, Haya haya!
Song Text 5 1. 2. 3. 4.	Oguuri: Okweuri:	Uchendu luhaa nne lua nwa o. Haya haya haya haya okwerele, Luhaa nne lua nwa o, Haya haya!
1.	Oguuri:	Uchendu yehaa ime meha o,

2. 3. 4.	Okweuri:	Haya haya haya okwerela, Yehaa ime meha o, Haya haya!
1. 2. 3. 4. 1. 2. 3. 4.	Oguuri: Okweuri: Solo: Chorus:	Okpa ikoro tuba nwa iyi o, Mgbaa! Mgbaa! soga nege ewu, Tuba nwa iyi o, Haya haya! Uchendu married a mother and child, Haya haya haya haya he admitted, To have married a mother and her child, Haya haya!
1. 2. 3. 5.	Solo: Chorus:	Uchendu sired and aborted the baby, Haya haya haya haya he admitted, To have sired and aborted the baby, Haya haya.
1. 2. 3. 4.	Solo: Chorus:	Elephantiasis threw the foetus into a stream, <i>Mgbaa! Mgbaa!</i> bleating like a he-goat, He threw the foetus into the stream, <i>Haya haya!</i>
Song Text 6 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.	Oguuri: Okweuri:	Owenyele owe ayalahelege nwagbogo, Henye owe ayalahelege e, Oo Ugbokinyong. Uwarra gwere otula zhi anyanwu e, Anyanwu fulu otula tia mkpu e! Ugboooo, Tinti yororo, Oo miri onye wi?!
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	Solo: Chorus:	Owenyele owe ayalahelege, young maiden, Henye owe ayalahelege e, Oo Ugbokinyong. Uwarra exposed her buttocks to the Sun, The Sun saw this view and screamed! Ugboooo,

- 7. Tinti yororo,
- 8. Who will come to my aid?!

All the songs recorded from the *Ukenkwa* outings are structured in the solo-chorus patterns with the usual immediate and delayed response categories, depending on the time the chorus responds after the soloist. Choral responses are with different wordings and the songs also fall within the mold of satire, of different forms of misdemeanors in the society. The *Ukenkwa* are burdened specifically with administering the proper penalties and punishment for such crimes.

Text 3 is a three stanza octave that fall within the immediate response category (since the chorus responds immediately after the solo has taken her line), with different wordings that complete the thought initiated by the solo in a call and refrain format. Short breath-pauses that delimit short lines, quick tripping rhythm, and a fast tempo are represented in the first four lines, which is basically an intermittent repetition. the fifth line is rendered with a normal breath-pause that produced a normal line of average tempo and serve as a build-up for the climax which is also rendered in short breath-pauses that delimit short lines, a quick tempo and fast rhythm, in the last three lines of each stanza.

The narrative voice projected from the discourse structure of text 3 is overt and hetrodiegetic, with the power of omniscience. And although absent from the diegetic universe of the tale, is able to comment freely and make value judgments on characters and situations in the story. Emanating from this discourse text is the story of Ori Okpuegbe, a wretched woman who hated to go to the farm like others, but stayed at home conducting clandestine trysts with adolescent boys young enough to be her own children. The song satirizes and ridicules her material and mental wretchedness, and each stanza highlights an aspect of her wretchedness; the lack of decent clothing, basic household items (exemplified by a bowl of salt), and a decent abode. From the song, it is mediated that her wretchedness is the consequence of her laziness and moral depravity.

Text 4 and 5 are both quatrains structured in the immediate response pattern with varying wordings in a call and refrain form, in which the chorus complete the idea initiated by the soloist. Text 5 is however in three stanzas. The soloists in both texts merely initiate the subject of the songs: Ota, who was caught peeping at the female toilet (text 4) and Uchendu who violated his step daughter (text 5). In both texts, the chorus supplies the remaining information to complete the subjects initiated by the soloists. Both texts also made use of the short breath-pause that delimits short lines resulting in quick tempo and fast rhythm.

In text 4 there are two rhythm-units of two lines each, making a rhythm-segment of four lines, while there are six rhythm-units in text 5, of two lines each, making twelve rhythm-segments. In both texts, the sense in each segment balances the other in a logical sequence, producing the rhythm that is tied to sense: each action is matched by its implication. The sequential structure of both texts present identical narrative instances; the sameovert hetrodiegetic (omniscient) voice narrate the tale of Ota, who admitted to havebeen peeping at the lady's toilet (text 4) and Uchendu, a man who sexually violatedhis step-daughter, got her pregnant and induced a premature labor after which he dumped the fetus in a stream near his home (text 5).

The word elephantiasis in the first line of the third stanza of text 5 is a metaphor referring to the subject, who happened to suffer from the disease, in a metonymy that represents him by the name of the disease connected with him. In the second line of the third stanza there is an onomatopoeic idiophone which is the actual imitation of the bleat of a he-goat; the simile likened the subject to a he-goat, in his sexual escapades.

Text 6 falls within the delayed response pattern, in which the chorus waits for the soloist to conclude her part, consisting of three lines, before taking their part. The part of the chorus is of different wordings from that of the soloist, which is basically contained of a series of rhythmic but semantically meaningless words (used perhaps to enhance rhythm and musicality) except for the word young maiden (line 1) which serves to initiate the subject matter of the song. Other aspects of the soloist's utterances merely serve as expletives for musicality and rhythmic purposes. Thus the solo initiates the idea of the young maiden while the chorus completes the narration. The verbalization presents a hetrodiegetic narrative instance (since the voice projected in the story is overt, hetrodiegetic and omniscient) and mediates the tale of the abash-less maiden named Uwarra, said to have exposed her buttocks to the sun, and scandalized by this view, the sun called out to be rescued from such a horrifying spectacle. The *Ukenkwa* are known to strongly uphold the Ohafia societal etiquette and social values, therefore any form of misdemeanor, such as indecent exposure or the likes becomes the subject of their satirical songs, the reason is to punish the offender by bringing her to ridicule, in order to correct her. This is also a means of exercising social control on others within the Ohafia culture.

There is use of personification in the song as the sun is given human attributes of "seeing" the exposed buttocks (line 5). The imagery of horror is sustained (lines 4 to 8) as the terrified wailing voice of the sun, reacting to the spectacle, is quoted in the last 2 lines of the song.

The overtness of the narrative voice projected in the discourse stems from the

expressivity markers and pragmatic signals that reveal the awareness of and degree of orientation towards the audience, who also fully participate in the song.

The *Ukenkwa* outings present an interesting theatre fusing the media of songs, stories, dance, gestures and gesticulations as well as action that is integrated into an interesting spectacle aimed at ridiculing any culprit who steps out of the bounds of the culture; for the purpose of correction. This is the role of the *Ukenkwa* in the Ohafia society; to ensure that the societal etiquette and values are upheld. And it is achieved with the agency of the *ikpe* (satire) which acts as a weapon of social control and expression in the songs performed at the *Ukenkwa* outings. Therefore, any misdemeanor that is brought to the notice of these women is taken very seriously investigations are conducted and culprits are scrupulously tried and if found guilty, appropriate punishments are administered ranging from fines that may be in form of cash, bottles of hot drinks or a goat. In cases of more serious offenses, culprits are sentenced to receive the *okpukpo*.

The first actions heralding this process take place the evening before the actual performance with the women hanging a limp branch known as a "flag" on the offender's door. Early the following day, all the women in the village, led by the *Ukenkwa* cover the home of the culprit and his close relatives with garbage. This turns the entire village into an operatic theatre, where the women (and even children) play major roles. There is dancing, singing of songs that narrate and mime the offences of the culprit. For instance, during the *okpukpo* of Uchendu who violated his step daughter, some of the women tied layers of rags, or polythene bags on their legs to allude to the legs of the culprit deformed by elephantiasis. Others put on large sticks under their wrappers that appear like a grotesquely large male sex organ during the performance.

The performance may last for a day or extend to several days, until all the demands of the *Ukenkwa* are met. More fines will have to be paid by the offender before he is allowed to remove the refuse. The purpose of the performance is to punish the delinquents by bringing them to ridicule, which is hoped, will correct them eventually. Also it is meant as a form of deterrent to others and keeps them in line.

Conclusion

The stories in the enactments are carried forth through the media of verbalisation that translates into the genre of poetry and narration, as well as through the agency of performance, in form of several media such as dance, gestures, gesticulations, acting, mime etc. which translate into the media of drama. This means that the three modern

genres of literature; poetry (verbalization in songs) drama (performance in action), and narration (verbalization in stories) are melded together in the enactment in such a way as to form an amalgam that is difficult to separate. The *ukenkwa* also remain relevant in the Ohafia culture as effective custodians of the societal norms and guardians of social conduct because although they are women, in a patriarchal and male/dominated culture such as Ohafia, they are allowed by the virtue of their office to watch everyone irrespective of gender, status in the society or age.

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DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEUR SKILLS FOR CASTING: PROSPECTS AND CONSTRAINTS

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Abstract

Casting technology has intricacies and requires technical know-how. It is generally the process involving molten materials, usually metal or natural earthenware to create an object or artifact. These molten materials are poured into a mould cavity that takes the form of the finished part to form a particular artifact of choice. Both sculpture and ceramics practice this art of casting in their own unique way. This paper therefore focuses on the technology of casting in entrepreneurial education and skill development within the university community and society. The self-determination theory is suitable for this paper because of the entrepreneurial potentials. Although slip casting is relatively simple and inexpensive compared with metal or fiberglass casting, their technicalities are the basis of this paper. Recommendations to acquire and foster casting among the students, organisation in order to improve the technology of casting.

Keywords: Technology, Fibreglass / Slip Casting, Material Pocessing Method.

Introduction

Ceramics and sculpture are inevitable in every society. This is as a result of our daily encounter with the end products (artifacts) of this duo. Ceramics are inorganic, non-metallic solids generally made by mixing clay, earthen elements, powders, and water, and shaping them. Once shaped, it is fired in a high temperature in an oven

known as a kiln/electric furnace. Sculpture on the otherhand, is made with clay and can be reproduced through casting for mainly decoration or beautification purposes (Ajayi, 2022). Casting, the focus of this paper is a vocational discipline under ceramics and sculpture. Casting can be executed in relief or in the round with different material based on the artist' choice (Oyedun, 2013; Ibrahim-Banjoko 2009). The materials are many, ranging from clay to cement, concrete, fiberglass, bronze, polycast, papercast and a host of others. Being a practical discipline, it requires a specific skill in order to achieve successful product. This paper is a practical project, based on this, it was analysed and discussed one stepafter the other. Likewise, the materials, tools, and equipment used during execution of both slip and fibre casting were itemized and explained from moulding tofinished stage for better understanding. This sort answers the research questions stated.

Casting generally possesses a precedential value in Nigeria, Africa, and the World at large. Its practice is unlimited, it is everywhere, yet Nigerian society is not fully exploring it, especially in this harsh economy that renders many people jobless/unemployed. To this end, this paper explores developing technology of casting for sustainability (DTCaS) to revamp unemployment in Nigeria. It surveys DTCaS materials, tools, equipment and the production process involved. It also encourages students and youths to learn and practice DTCaS as a means of skill acquisition for self-reliance instead of the quest for a white-collar job here and there. More so, this study appraises the significance roles of DTCaS in this technological age.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this paper:

- 1. To what extent does developing technology of casting for sustainability (DTCaS) revamp and idleness and unemployment in Nigeria?
- 2. What are the materials, tools, equipment, and production processes of DTCaS?
- 3. To what extent do DTCaS encourage students and youths to learn and practice as a means of skill acquisition for self-reliance instead of the quest for a white-collar job?
- 4. What significant roles do DTCaS plays in this technological age?
- 5. What are the prospects and constraints of executing DTCaS in a society like Nigeria?
- 6. To what extent can these ills be solved?

All these and many other hidden questions were answered in this study broadly and glaringly.

Theory

This paper adopted the self-determination theory (SDT) and skill acquisition theory (SAT). Self-determination theory (SDT) proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000), is a macro theory of human motivation, emotion, and development that takes a keen interest in factors that propel and facilitate the assimilative and growth-oriented processes in human beings. SDT has a lot of importance in the education domain and society at large, whereby students'/youths' natural tendencies to learn and acquire skills (DTCaS) of their choice represent the greatest reserve they could access and acquire. The theory suggested that the tendency to be either proactive or passive is enormously influenced by the social situations in which students are nurtured. SDT encompasses three major human needs to learning; that is autonomy, competence, and relatedness which explains the critical role of students' motivation in learning with the free will to explore various technologies (physical and digital technology) that can enhance their learning and skill acquisition. It hinged on the motivation (intrinsic) to accept DTCaS willingly to enhance their learning without much or total policing, monitoring, or supervision from teachers, or superior fellow. The diagrams below explain it better.

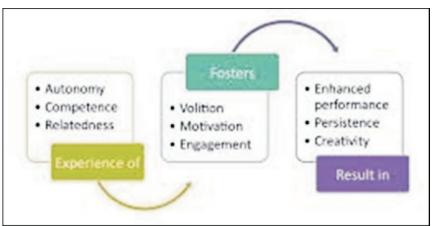


Plate 1: Showing self-determination theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation is the core component of DTCaS as it involves motor learning and skill acquisition (Daci & Ryan, 2000 cited in Ajayi, 2022).

On the other, skill acquisition theory (SAT) is not just a theory of the development of language, especially a second language, rather it is a general theory of learning ranging from cognitive to psychomotor skills (Mystkowaska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2012). Pondering on this assertion justifies that SAT is highly encompassing, According to Cornford (1996) in Taie (2014), a skill could involve learning,

motivation to learn, content and context knowledge, problem-solving, the time factor, practice, and performance, among others. Thus, all forms of learning involve the brain (cognitive) and hands (psychomotor) which, sculpture and ceramics technology of casting for sustainability (DTCaS) is not left out. In this regard, SAT is procedural as Dreyfus's model of skill acquisition and Benner's novice to the expert model are implicit in the process below:

From the diagram below plate 2, we can affirm that SAT has five prolific stages; novice stage, advanced beginner stage, competent stage, proficient stage, and expert stage. These stages are crucially important to the students or youths that want to be a master in DTCaS.



Plate 2: Shows the five stages of the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition (Stephan, 2017 cited in Ajayi, 2022).

In this paper, the Dreyfus model demonstrates the means of understanding the learning needs and style of learning at different levels of skill acquisition (DTCaS). At the novice level, no knowledge/learning is acquired, at an advanced beginner level; limited important learning springs up, incompetent level; students started working independently with good confidence and efficiency, for the proficient level; he has learned and dynamic inexperience and at expert level, he is excellent, a master and authority in his action.

Literature Review

This paper is reviewed to have in-depth understanding under the following: Skill Acquisition, Concepts, Technology and slip casting.

Skill Acquisition

Skill is the special or peculiar potential in a human that allows him or her to do something well. It can be acquired to earn a living. Encyclopedia.com (2018) confirms that skill is usually understood as an ability to do something well, either manually, mentally, or both. It says further that skill usually means actual competence that has been acquired by training, schooling, or practice. Therefore, skill acquisition can be seen as the process of learning a new thing or trade. Classhall.com (2022) affirms that skill acquisition is the art of learning to do something to earn a living and survive. The professions to learn from includes; art (bronze casting), mechanical engineering, civil engineering/bricklaying, pottery, textile design and dressmaking, carving, hairdressing, vulcanizing, driving, photography, and a host of others. Learning to read and write is even a skill acquired from school either in primary school, secondary school, or tertiary institution.

Technology

Technology is simply the process of doing things with either simple or sophisticated machines. Fundamentally, the word technology was coined from two Greek words "techne" and "logos". The techne means art or craft and logos mean word or speech. The two words put together mean art or craft of word (Oloidi, 2011). The Web-Dictionary (2022) also states that "technology is the application of practical knowledge in art, science, engineering, technical nomenclature, a scientific or industrial process, invention with method and materials of producing objects". In this regard, Gek (2014) cited in Ayeni, Olufemi, and Adesola, (2018) opines that technology is the scientific knowledge used in practical ways to meet and satisfy human needs and comforts.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that technology is central to all disciplines and it is inevitable in art; it cuts across all human endeavors. Currently, the efficiency of mankind is intricately tied to technology, whether in design, construction, advertisement, branding, animation, instruction, preservation, development, advancement, improvement, renovation, improvisation, or innovation. There are different types of Technology (ToT) but Phillips (2017) cited in Ajayi, Oluwa and Aiyeteru (2018) specifies ToT as science technology; physical technology; and informationtechnology. But for this study, we will limit ourselves to the physical technology of Phillips. According, to Phillips physical technology (PT) deals with all tools, machinery and gadgets used both in industries and by consumers. This includes anything, from a simple hammer to the hardware within a computer to highly sophisticated machinery used in industries, medical settings, aviation, and research of all forms. Consequently, Fine and Applied Arts fall under this type of technology; especially sculpture and ceramics.

Above all, we can say ceramics and sculpture technology are the act and process of using tools, machines and gadgets equipment to create beautiful objects for human consumption. The duo are three-dimensional art that involve mouldeling and casting (CaC) as the main classification. Its three dimensions imply that it has length, breadth, and height or depth. The casting aspect of ceramics and sculpture is the concern of this paper which, is further classified into slip casting and fibreglass casting.

Slip Casting

Slip casting is one of the most commonly used traditional methods of membrane preparation, although the casting time is usually longer depending on the types of mould you are casting, during the process, it's easier to control the wall thickness, and it can be calculated or measured before the cast, casting is widely used for the fabrication of components with complex shapes. Tiller and Tsar (1986) give a comprehensive discussion of the theory of slip casting, which provided a method for the selection of the mould with an optimum pore diameter, casting is commonly carried out with aqueous suspensions which are also known as slips or slurries, achieving it in good quality must be low in viscosity, high solid content, high in homogeneity and must have storage stability, in getting this done in a perfect way it requires the use of technology equipment which will mix and mill the materials together such as surfactants, plasticizers, and binders. Kingery (1976) considered slip casting as the simplest technique for forming ceramics articles the process is less costly compared with other forming techniques which need special equipment such as pressers, extrudes, and filter presses, furthermore slip casting can be used to produce complex shapes that cannot be made by other techniques. This technique helps in making exact replicas of a certain model, such as crucibles. This technique helps the ceramic industry in a wide range of production of ceramics wares such as sanitary wares, kitchen wares, etc. however, Hlavac (1983) explains the method which involves the preparation of suspension where the ceramic powder is mixed with a liquid substance such as plasticizers and anti-foaming agent so that a well dispersed and no agglomerated ceramic slurry can be achieved. The slurry can be cast in the porous mould such as plaster mould, where solid-liquid separation takes place and the water is drained out through the porous mould leaving a dense green body. The remaining slip inside the mold is driven by low-pressure gradient where capillary suction provides the driving force for liquid removal and the settlement of the cast layer at the mould surface and it can be achieved with the availability of the materials used in the production.

Materials and Methods of Slip Casting

Two major materials used in the production of the slurry that was used for slipcasting are Clay and Kaolin. Both materials were socked inside the water to form the slurry

substance with the addition of de-flocculant before it was poured inside the mold. Other materials for smooth slip casting are thick rubber bands, Plaster Mold, Clay Slip, Pither, Stirrer or Turning Stick, Bucket or Vessel (for Excess Slip), Dowelsor Grate, Liquid soap, Sponge or Form and Knife.

In DTCaS, there is need to study slip casting techniques so that we can gain a better understanding on how the materials can be utilized to create simple and unique objects or more intricate parts for various industries. It is important to learn about the various components that make up the slip casting method as it is one of the most widely used today for the production of ceramics wares in industry or any ceramics centers for common uses. Also, it is necessary for the students and all grades of the learners to have a greater understanding of the basic technique in which gypsum is put to use for mass production of slip cast.

Gypsum or Plaster of Paris (POP) is one of the most commonly used materials for the production of porous molds for slip casting. It is used because it has the property of absorbing water into the porous plaster from a particulate-water suspension called a slurry or slip. For instance, slurry clay can be poured on the plaster mold within some hours and it will remove the water inside the slurry and leave behind relatively leather hard clay (ball clay). The plaster mold reproduces fine details in molds that can be easily trimmed and manipulated. Gypsum plaster or plaster of Paris (POP) is made by heating gypsum to approximately 300°F (150°C).



Plate 3: Shows gypsum powder in a bag. © Oridola (2022).

The gypsum powder above in plate: 3 is inexpensive and it can be found all over the earth both for its interior or exterior use and is quite abundant in supply. Its common name was derived from its large deposit at Montmartre in Paris, which today is popularly called Plaster of Paris (Merten, 2012). Typically, POPcan be found in art, hardware, and hobby stores. When the Plaster of Paris powder is mixed with water, it re-forms into gypsum.

Procedure of Slip Casting

Step 1: Modeling of the artifact. This is the very first step of every casting be it in ceramics or sculpture. The artist has to mould the object of his/her choice to perfection and satisfaction. In doing this through deferent references, a relative proportion and perspective will be considered based on the nature of the object.

Step 2: Separating the negative mould. After modeling the object to satisfaction, thereafter the object will be ready for the negative mould casting. The modeled object will be divided into two with the use of ball clay and lubricant applied to the artifact which serves as separator and this can be palm oil or engine oil. After this, plywood constructed in box shape of the artifact size will be fixed to it so as to form negative mould A and B of the artifact in question. The clay separator is demonstrated in plate 4 below:



Plate 4: Shows how the model object is divided with clay. The clay serves as separator here. Oridola (2022).

Step 3: Casting the negative mould. The POP was mixed to pastry form and plywood was constructed in a box shape round the artifact, the POP pastry is poured inside the constructed box in order to get the negative mould of the artifact, The function of the box it to house the pastry (mixed) POP until it is set and solid against the artifact to form the negative shape of the object. After 30 minutes, the clay separator will be removed in order to cast the second side of the mould. This process

is indicated in plate 5, 6 and 7 below:







Plate 5: Shows POP mixed with water. side ready.

Plate 6: Shows the pouring of POP.

Plate 7: Show Second

Plate 5-7 showing negative casting process. The POP was mixed with water and pour inside the frame box in other to cast the sides of the moulded artifact. © Oridola (2022).

Step 4: De-molding the artifact. After few minutes of the casting, the POP would have set and it will be de-mould; after that the negative moulds will be removed for cleaning; after cleaning the mould, it would be sun-dry for days before it can be used for slip casting.



Plate 8: Showing both sides of the artifact negative moulds was demould and ready for cleaning. © Oridola (2022).

Step 5: Preparation of slip. In preparing the cast slip (2) two natural earthen materials were mixed with water in making ceramics slip. Clay and kaolin were used as the main ingredients in ceramics slip with additional chemicals (de-flocculants) that are required to maintain a uniform consistency of the slip as well as being free of clots. Binders and de-flocculants were used to increase the strength of the clay slip; they were added in a drop and to prevent it from settling, a hand mixer was used to ensure thorough mixing; after that the clay slip is ready to be used for casting. The materials and their mixture are shown in the plate 9, 10, and 11 below for the purpose of clarity and understanding:







Plate 9: Shows powder kaolin.

Plate 10: Shows slip clay and kaolin.

Plate 11: Shows Mixing.

Plate 9-11 showing the powder kaolin, both kaolin and clay in slip form, how both clay and kaolin was mixed together (Oridola, 2022).

Step 6: The slip casting proper. This is the production stage: After the mould has dried, the plaster mould would be coupled together with the use of a rubber band to hold the mould together, the mould can be in two (2) or three (3) pieces plaster moulds depending on the cast mode. But the one used for this research has two moulds. The rubber band held it from different angles so that the clay slip or slurry will not escape from the mould; a separator is applied at the surface of the mode in order for easy removal of the cast. The clay slip is then poured slowly inside the mould and allowed for 15-20 minutes for the slip to thicken. The particles settled against the plaster mould in order to form the object (artifacts) as the water is drawn from the suspension into the plaster mould. The slurry or slip was going down gradually and was topped up to a certain desired level, until the level of thickness was achieved during the pouring which showed that the amount of slurry poured inside the mould will determine how thick it becames. Once the desired thickness is achieved, then you pour off any remaining fluid inside the mould by turning it upside down inoder to allow the excess slip to pour out inside a bucket, and allow the mold to rest on the rack for another 20-40 minutes, depending on the thickness of the wall. This will allow the green body to look firm and mostly dry, then it can be removed carefully and allow to air dry; smooth out any creases or impactions from the mould using adamp sponge or wooden tools and allow it to harden to bone dry before it can be setfor firing.



Plate 12: Pouring slip.



Plate 13: Turned upside down. Oridola I. A, 2022

Plate 12-13 showing how the mixed slip is poured inside the mould and allow it to settle for few minute and turn it upside down to remove the excess slip in other to allow it to form before it been removed.

Step 7: The finished product. Here, when the artifact has dried, it should be removed for final touches; sand-papered for smooth effect and texture where necessary. Polish or glaze could be added for shinning effect if you do not want to fire it, but in this research ceramics polish was used to achieve such effect.



Plate 14: Removing the artifact.



Plate 15: The finished product. © Oridola I. A 2022

Plate 14-15 showing how the object is been remove from the mould, the finished work is been removed and allow it to dry before firing.



Plate 16: Sample of gas kiln (Oridola, 2022).

Step 8: Firing of the artifact. This is the last stage of slip casting process.

Firing is the process of bringing clay and glazes up to a high temperature. The aim is to heat the object to the point that the clay will mature into terracotta stage (Peterson, 2019).

Sculptural Casting

Apart from ceramics slip casting, sculpture has a list of casting starting from the bronze casting, metal casting and plastic casting (fibreglass). All of these are different types of casting with different materials and techniques of casting in sculpture, but for the purpose of this paper, we are going to limit the scope to plastic casting (fibreglass) with slip casting.

Plastics casting (fibreglass)

Plastic materials, or resins, are widely used in casting as binders for all cores of sizes and production volumes, and low-volume high-accuracy molding. Generally, these materials fall into three categories which are

- a. Those composed of liquid polymeric binders that cross-link and set up in the presence of a catalyst (thu stransforming from a liquid to a solid).
- b. Those composed of two reactants that form a solid polymeric structure in the presence of a catalyst.
- c. Those that are heat activated.

Fluid-to-solid transition plastics are primarily furfuryl alcohol-base binders that are cured with acid catalysts. The polymers coat the sand when in liquid form and are

mixed with the liquid catalyst just before being placed in the core box. Alternatively, the catalyst can be delivered to the mix as a gas once the sand mix is in the core box.

Reaction-based plastics include phenolics (phenol/aldehyde), oil/urethanes, phenolic/polymeric isocyanates, and polyol/isocyanate systems. Curing catalysts include esters, amines, and acids, which can be delivered to the core mix either as liquids or gases.

Heat-activated plastics are primarily thermoplastics or thermosetting resins such as novolacs, furans (furfuryl alcohols), phenols, and linseed oils. They are applied as dry powders to the sand, and the mix is heated, at which time the powders melt, flow over the sand, and then undergo a thermosetting reaction. Alternatively, they may consist of two liquids that react to form a solid in the presence of heat.







Plate 17: Moldered LASU crest. Plate 18: Casting the negative mould.

Plate 19: De-moulding



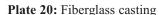




Plate 21: Spraying process



Plate 22: The finished artifact

Plate 15-20 showing the artifact in clay work (Lasu crest), separation and application of palm oil, which serves as a separator between the clay work and POP. After applying the plaster (gypsum) the work is demoed for casting to begin, with resin and fiber mat that turns it to plastic, and finally filing and spraying of the crest to the finished fiberglass.

Sustainability via casting

Sequel to the help of abundant earthen materials in the Southern part of Nigeria, casting can now be used as daily survival and needs to be developed, especially in place of white collar jobs or to corroborate it for self-reliance, if one can invest in this it will reduce the poverty rate in the country and it will provide opportunities for the younger generation and help them to be self-independent and acquire the entrepreneurial skill, both ceramics and sculpture are entrepreneurial ship in nature, lack of attention and patronage in this skills makes many artist to abandon the skills in term of production.

Challenges of Casting

Developing technology of casting for sustainability (DTCaS) poses various challenges, some of the challenges occur during the production of the casted artifacts, started from how to move the materials down to the studio for production to the finished stage (patronage). Firstly, the lack of adequate equipment in the studio does not encourage the production and does not allow for effective teaching to the students on how to make use of the materials and the equipment because what they will need to teach or demonstrate to the student is not available, more so the cost of some of the materials is every high and not affordable to the students, but if its available in their disposal it will encourage teaching to be effective and the learner will learn how to make good use of it in other to practice and to develop their skills. Apart from the equipment another challenges that is even greater than this is the patronage, lack of patronage to our own local made wares needs urgent address, after all the stress of producing its take more time than its expected in the market which bring low turnout in production.

Discussion of Findings

The findings are based on the observations during the execution of the project; developing technology of casting for sustainability (DTCaS) and the theories that guides the paper. It was found out that clay can be cheaply acquired at bank of the river, apart from resin and firbre mat that are expensive. Thus, youths who want to practice DTCaS must be ready and determined to learn as guided by the self-determination theory (SDT) of Daci and Ryan, (2000) cited in Ajayi, (2022). It was also found out that the caster should be ready to acquire the skill through skill acquisition theory (SAT) where the five stages of the Dreyfus model demonstrate means of understanding the learning needs and style of learner's learning at different levels of casting skill (Stephan, 2017 cited in Ajayi, 2022).

Conclusion

In this paper, the use of gypsum and it's important to the production of slip casting

have been discussed effectively and how it can be used for self-reliance. The constant use of these materials will surely improve slip casting production and promote its relevant in Nigerian society, which also applicable to fibreglass casting. Based on the observations and findings from the research of developing technology of slip casting for sustainability, the researchers strongly recommend the following.

- i. That government should invest into all vocational courses especially casting in higher institution in other to reduce unemployment after graduation.
- ii. Government should encourage the students and the lecturers by providing all the tools, materials and equipment that is needed to teach, learn and develop technology of casting for sustainability (DTCaS) effectively.
- iii. Special DTCaS training program on casting through physical contact and online should be sponsor within and outside the school in other to encourage the learners.
- iv. With the collaboration of government the teaching can be made available to the rural area in other to create awareness on how important the use of locally made tools, materials and equipment.
- v. The parents should support and encouraging their wards to study Fine and Applied Arts where they can DTCaS which some parents erroneously term to be a discipline for the dull. They should be responsible for getting the appropriate materials and tools at the right time, while the government should endeavor to make those materials available cheaply.

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CRISIS OF RELIGIOUS HYBRIDISATION IN SONNY OTI'S *EVANGELIST JEREMIAH*

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Abstract

The missionary religions of Christianity and Islam widely accepted by Africans can be described as hypocritical because many African Christians and Muslims still patronise African Indigenous Religion (AIR). The crux of the matter lies in societal perception of this hybridism in religion. While the evangelism in missionary religions are applauded, the strive to maintain a balance of preserving the culture and tradition through AIR is despised. It is against this backdrop that, this paper through the prism of the play, Evangelist Jeremiah by Sonny Oti, foregrounded with theory of hybridism examines the ambivalence of embracing two religions faithfully by an evangelist of God. Critical reading of the play reveals that, Evangelist Jeremiah is torn between denting his reputation as a pastor and abandoning the indigenous religion to incur the wrath of ancestors. Among other findings, Evangelist Jeremiah epitomises the traits of many Christians and Muslims in Africa but lack his gut. It is therefore recommended that in postcolonial encounter of missionary religions, with the indigenous religion should be characterised by synergy of doctrines, syncretism of the modern and indigenous for hybridization and tolerance by fanatics.

Keywords: Religious Hybridisation, Missionary, African Indigenous Religion.

Introduction

Before the introduction of Christianity and Islam into African society, African indigenous religion is the only religion of praise and worship. Adherence to indigenous religion is strengthened by its symbiotic relationship with culture of the people as exemplified in rituals and rites that characterise naming, marriage festival, ancestral worships, burial ceremonies among others. However, the aggressive drive of Christian and Islamic evangelists to win followers and converts in the missionary years change the trend of faith and beliefs in Africa. This is further compounded by the attendant condemnation of mode of worship in indigenous religion as paganistic, idolatry, heathenic, polytheist, superstitious, fetish and barbaric. Fallout of this unhealthy rivalry between the Christian and Islamic converts and adherents of indigenous religion, popularly called 'traditionalists' is the emergence of what is best described as religious hybridity. While those who are convinced with thedoctrines of

the abandoned indigenous religion, others choose to blend the modern and the indigenous.

Therein lies the dilemma of Evangelist Jeremiah, in Sonny Oti's *Evangelist Jeremiah*. While Evangelist Jeremiah accepted Christianity openly and wins many converts in the community, he finds it difficult to abandon his indigenous religion, as the man of God still secretly consults the deity in the corner of his room. Subsequently, this hybridity in faith and worship to please the Christians and the traditionists instigates crisis between him and his nuclear family on one hand, and the community at large. Critical exploration of this thematic pre-occupation was informed by prevalence of religious hybridisation in the Nigerian society and its attendant crisis in different spheres of life. What this portends is the fact that, professing Christianity and Islamic faith by some Nigerians is hypocritical because many Nigerian Christians and Muslims still patronise African indigenous religion especially in times of emergency. This affirms the potency of indigenous religions in moment of crisis.

This is typified in spiritual fortification for alternative policing in Nigeria and use of charms in intelligence gathering as dramatized in the film *Issakaba* directed by Lancelot Oduwa, (2001). In providing spiritual solution to the problems of their clients, some Muslim clerics and pastors blend the indigenous and the doctrines of missionary religions for efficacy. An attestation to the believe in efficacy of indigenous religion is portrayed in day light worship in mosques and churches and the romance with the indigenous in secrecy.

The hypocrisy lies in labeling of the adherents of indigenous religion as pagans and idol worshippers by fanatical Christians and Muslims. To change this mindset, there is need for more tolerance from the evangelists of missionary religions. The symbiotic relationship of indigenous religion and culture necessitates the need to synergize the positive aspects with the missionary religions and reformation of paganistic trappings.

Conceptual Clarification of Tradition and Indigenous

Conceptual clarification of the choice of the word 'indigenous' in preference to 'traditional' is necessary to justify its appropriateness to our exposition on religious hybridism. Traditional does not necessarily mean indigenous as can be deduced from these definitions. Tradition can mean: a belief, custom of way of doing what has existed for a long time amongst a particular group of people and not necessarily inborn or aboriginal; a set of these beliefs or customs. (Oxford Dictionary 1271).

Indigenous, on the other hand, means, "aboriginal, home grown, inborn, inherent,

native" (Webster's Dictionary 609), "belonging to a particular place rather than coming to it from somewhere else" (Oxford Advance Dictionary 609). From the above definitions, it is preferred to call it the Indigenous Religion of African (AIR).

This is because AIR is one religion with different versions from one country to another in African continent, just as Christianity has different denomination and versions with variety of practices all over the world. African indigenous Religion can therefore be defined as "the inborn and aboriginal religion of Africans, embraced by the forefathers of the present generations" (Awolalu 114). It is described as the religion that emerged from sustaining faith of the forebears of the present generations of Africans passed from generation to generations and still practiced today (Awolalu 111-118).

Theoretical Framework

Content analysis of the play in focus is foregrounded with concept of hybridism. The term originates from biology and was subsequently employed in linguistics and racial theory in the 19th century. In post-colonial theory:

hybridism popularly known as hybridity commonly refers to creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonisation. As used inhorticulture, the term refer to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross pollination to a form athird, 'hybrid' species. Hybridisation take many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc (Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin 108).

Two key words expound Bhabha's postulation on hybridism, 'ambivalence' and 'mimicry'. Ambivalence, describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsionthat charaterises the relationship between the colonizer and the colonised (Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin 10). What this implies is that, the colonized is torn between his indigenous culture and that of the coloniser. The outcome of this duality are beings who are hybrid of their own cultural identity and that of the coloniser. Mimicry on the other hand implies imitation of the coloniser's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values that can descend into mockery. In the case of Evangelist Jeremiah, his ambivalence of embracing two religions of Christianity and indigenous religion qualifies him as a hybrid of religion.

Crisis of Religious Hybridisation in Nigeria

To Mercado, the missionary version of Christianity accepted by Africans can be described as hypocritical because many African Christians still patronise African

Indigenous Religion (AIR), especially in times of emergency (104). This means that the influence of AIR is still strong. In Nigeria, this is characterised in open embrace of Christianity and Islam in practice as evidenced in congressional and individual prayers and nocturnal consultations with priests of indigenous religion for salvation. This ambivalence in faith for modern and indigenous religions stems from obsession for short cut to success and spiritual fortification.

Despite the intensity of Christian evangelism and the thousand years of Muslim proselytizing recourse to divination and others, rituals still persists. Mbiti quoted in Adamo, testified to this fact when he stated that, "many millions of Africans are followers of more than one religion, even if they may register or be counted in census as adherents of only one religion is correct" (1). In fact, Hickey quoted in Adamo recalls that, a local chief of Degubi village in Borno State in Nigeria used to take part in the Christmas celebration and the Muslim Idel-fitri, as well as sponsoring the traditional *Barrakau*, a local festival (1). Some Christian and Muslim clerics are not left out of this hybridity in religion. This isexemplified in hybridisation of Islamic doctrine and indigenous rituals in divinity and solution to problems of clientele by some Muslim clerics and the use of fetish items by some white garment churches.

Crisis of confidence and identity creep in for these religious hybrids in the way they perceive themselves and the way religious observers and fanatics perceive them. While the blend of the modern and the indigenous is seen by the hybrids as an experimentation of their potency in spiritual intervention to worldly affairs, the fanatical adherents of modern religions (Christian and Muslim) frown at this hypocricy in religion. At the communal level, this duality of religious belief create beings who are hybrid of modern religion, and that of the indigenous, while the strife to participate in rites and rituals of naming, marriage and burial ceremonies to preserve the tradition and religion of forebears will be applauded by the traditionists, the Christian and Islamic converts will decry his divided loyalty to their doctrines.

In marital life, if the hybrid is able to convince his wife and children on the potency of the blend of the modern and the indigenous for divine guidance in their affairs, hybridisation of religion will be rooted in the family. But where they disagreed based on education and exposure, the indigenous belief may be relegated to the background. Fall out of this type of multiple belief and faith in a family may attract to them calamities of severing ties with the ancestors through indigenous religion as characterised in worship, sacrifices, rituals, rites and avoidance of taboos. Consequences of this indifference to spirituality in modern and indigenous religions can manifest in the form of setbacks in educational career, professional career, marital life and communal life among others. Crisis of religious hybridisation in the play, *Evangelist Jeremiah* unfolds in the wrong perception of his ambivalent stance

of serving the church in his community faithfully for educational development and the secrecy of preserving the indigenous religion. The climax of the conflict with his community over divided loyalty is the forceful retirement and the choice of a life partner by his daughter at the home front.

Synopsis of the Play, Evangelist Jeremiah

Set in Abonkwu Clan, somewhere in Eastern Nigeria, the play dramatises the dilemma of 72 year old Evangelist Jeremiah for being a hybrid of Christian and indigenous religions. As one of the early converts in his community, Evangelist Jeremiah serves the church diligently and meritoriously by winning many souls for Christ. Ambivalence of the church minister in religious belief and professing is characterised in his active participation in church activities and traditional ceremonies that are closely align to indigenous religion. At the home front, Evangelist Jeremiah has to contend with a daughter, Rebbeca, who is not convinced of the Christian doctrines as she rejects two Christians, a pastor and a teacher who seek her hand in marriage. Crisis of identity sets in for Evangelist Jeremiah, when one of the church elders leads the oppositions against the hypocrisy in religious belief, he is subsequently forced to retire to avoid humiliation.

Religious Hybridisation in Evangelist Jeremiah

In act one, scene one of the play, Evangelist Jeremiah is introduced as a faithful Christian as he conducts a catechism class for women with his wife, Naomi assisting him. In continuation of the study of Ten Commandments in the Bible, the pastor, whose teaching can be likened to that of most Christian and Islamic clerics, that do not practice what they preach emphasizes the need for the women to be steadfast in their faith in Christianity with these words:

Evangelist Jeremiah: And the next one is every important because in this clan a lot of you and your husbands, relations and household are still heathens and pagans. Even when you profess to be Christians, you still commit the sin of worshipping idols and yourso-called gods secretly (Oti 4).

The fact that, Evangelist Jeremiah is guilty of the same offence is exposed at a subsequent meeting of the elders of the church in Act one, Scene two to deliberate on lost/loss of early believers in the church. After brainstorming on reasons for the dwindling population of the community church and the resentment of the headquarters in England, Elder Nwafor who has always nurse personal grudges against Evangelist Jeremiah seizes the opportunity to hit the nail on the head with this accusation.

Elder Nwafor: I don't care about my goat; let's not drag my goat into

this. I accuse Evangelist Jeremiahof greed and embezzlement. I accuse him of befriending pagans and participating secretly in their rituals. I accuse him of casting lustful eyes on younggirls who are his great grand daughter's age (Oti 7).

As if confirming the accusation, Evangelist Jeremiah reacts in fury with threats that are unbecoming of an evangelist of God:

Evangelist Jeremiah: if this mouth with which youhave talked like a sheep doesn't hang open for flies tobe its guests, call me...

Elder Nwafor: Do you think, I am a child? Go and sit down, you old devil, you can't harm me.

Evangelist Jeremiah: I give you only two market weeks...(Exits angrily).

Elder Nwafor: Did you hear that? And yet he professes to be an evangelist of God, I'll face him (*Exit*) (Oti 8).

Passion of the evangelist for tradition in defiance of the criticism unfolds in Act one, scene three as he presides over a traditional marriage proposal. This encompasses, the proposal, acceptance and negotiation of the bride price in riddles and symbol objects. The meeting of the bride to be and her in-laws is rounded up with merry making of dining and wining with imported liquor, local liquor and palm wine which are also tasted with relish by the pastor. The fact that Evangelist Jeremiah abandoned catechism class for the ceremony is revealed in this entrance remark of Elder Nwafor, who arrived late:

Elder Nwafor: So you were here eating drinking while your catechism class waited and waited.

Evangelist Jeremiah: (*drunk*). Is there anything wrong with someone like you taking the class?

Elder Nwafor: You are paid for the job, I am not.

Evangelist Jeremiah: But you benefit by it. Elder Nwafor: What do I gain?

Evangelist Jeremiah: Security of your soul is assured and of course, you get fat chunk of anythingwe share. Even right now you did not

quarrel with meuntil you had gulped down a fat measure of whisky and mowed down a mountain of rice. Go and sit down (Oti 15).

In the next scene, worried by the waning participation in traditional festivals that are avenues of thanksgiving and seeking blessings of Indigenous gods and ancestors, age groups in Abonkwu clan meet to ruminate on extinction of tradition occasion by exposure to Christianity, western education and migration to the cities. Opening remark of first and second villagers at the village square paint a bleak future of tradition and culture of the people:

First villager: Whiteman's education is spoiling ourculture. Unless we do something positive, a day willcome when there will be no one alive who can say anything about the tradition of ikeji.

Second Villager: The gods will be angry with us in ashort time. Look at what has been happening for thepast five years. The great Eke-Ekpe day is now a mockery of its former self (Oti 15).

To guard against the wrath of the ancestors and the culture going into extinction, it was suggested that, fine should be imposed on offending villages. On a second thought, it was reasoned that exhibition of money in such traditional festivities is inferior to "exhibitions of the ritualistic dances of the fathers" (17). In Act one, scene six, indifference of Rebecca to Christianity and western education, so much revered by her father is exposed in her rejection of the love advances of a teacher. Rebecca's resentment for Christianity and western education is captured in this dialogue with teacher Nwangoro:

Rebecca: Teacher Nwangoro, please put in for anything you like. There are two suitors I must neverpay attention to:one is a teacher, the other a churchman.

Teacher Nwangoro: It surprises me that most of the time churchmen's children are usually devil why is this so? (Oti 21).

Ironically, in the next scene, the two being in one of Evangelist Jeremiah as a pastor and traditionalist is again enacted. To the dismay of his wife, Naomi, the evangelist of God chants an incantation in between inhaling of snuff to neutralize the effect of poison. When the shocked wife exclaims, on hearing the incantation, he justifies the chant with these reasons:

Naomi: (entering). Rebecca's father, what I am hearing?

Evangelist Jeremiah: (*laughs long and loud*): ElderNwafor poisoned my drink when Were at a meeting.

Naomi: An Elder of the church? What will the paganssay? By the way, how did you find out that, the drinkwas poisoned?

Evangelist Jeremiah: God found it out for me. As soon as my hand touched the drink glass containing the poisoned palm wine, it shattered into pieces. In fact, it exploded into Elder Nwafor's face: I laughedand he understood.

Naomi: Then what kind of Christianity are we Practicing in this clan?

Evangelist Jeremiah: I don't know. I'll continue totrust in the Lord. As his servant, he will continue to offer me a shield to ward off my enemy's bullets (Oti 25).

Evangelist Jeremiah's dilemma of professing Christianity and preserving the tradition of his people unfolds in Act two, scene one, as he receives an emissary from the community, Mr. Ezuma. Mr. Ezuma has come to convince Evangelist Jeremiah of the need not to allow Christianity to relegate tradition and culture to the background. While Evangelist Jeremiah is convinced of the need to sustain the link with ancestral gods through rites and ritual, he advocates a refinement of pagan trappings.

On the need for his active participation to prevent the wrath of the ancestors, the evangelist of God is wary of the perception of the mission. He is afraid of being thrown out of his vocation and profession. After much persuasion that his family needs to represent the village in the Eke-Ekpe dances to prevent disintegration, he damns the consequences of participating in a ritual dance that encompasses the sacrificing of a white cock to keep the human skull, he will carry intact. When the elders of the church got the hint of his participation in the traditional festival, Reverend Ukpabi summons a meeting to discuss the issue. After appraising his contribution to the mission that outweighs the charges against him, Evangelist Jeremiah is compulsorily retired with full benefits.

In appreciation of the services of Evangelist Jeremiah and the intention to strengthen the relationship through marriage, Reverend Ukpabi visits him. Rebecca, however politely rejects the marriage proposal of the man of God as she maintains her resolve not to marry a pastor. A reconciliatory meeting is subsequently convened to settle the rift between Evangelist Jeremiah and Elder Nwafor.

In the last scenario that could be likened to the last chance of Rebecca to get hooked

to a life partner, Evangelist Jeremiah's obsession for wealth and position almost make her to lose the last option of settling down with Ndubuibi Eze, a Lagos returnee whom the father mistook for a Senior civil servant. When the suitor reveals his true identity of junior civil servant with bright future, he instantly withdraws hissupport for the marriage proposal. But Rebecca, who is already in love and is scared of remaining a spinster for being too selective of suitors, swears to spend the rest of her life with the last suitor against the wish of her materialistic father.

Potency of indigenous religions that manifest in charms, incantations, herbal medicines, rituals, rites among others inspite of the onslaught of missionary years necessitate the need for a synergy of the modern and the indigenous as personified in Evangelist Jeremiah. To achieve this, the following are recommended;

- (i) Hostility and condemnation of African indigenous religion of the missionary years should be discarded for a relationship characterised by mutual respect, understanding and tolerance to reduce suspicion.
- (ii) Symbiotic relationship of African indigenous religion and culture necessitates the hybridisation of positive elements with modern religions and modification of paganistic trappings as suggested by Evangelist Jeremiah.
- (iii) The fact that intensity of Christian evangelism and thousand years of Muslim proselytising did not overshadow African indigenous religion as characterised in worship of deities, homage to ancestors divination and other rituals underscores the need for synergy of doctrines and practice to enrich the spiritual and cultural lives of Africans.
- (iv)To fully accommodate hybridism, religious fanatics of the missionary religions of Christianity and Islam in Africa should be tolerant like the faithful of African indigenous religion. The negative influence of the fundamentalism from Asia, America and Europe should not becloud our sense of reasoning to despise the religion of forefathers.

Conclusion

The play in focus dramatises religious hybridism of embracing Christianity and indigenous religion for a harmonious relationship among the adherents of the two religions. While the man at the centre of the controversy, Evangelist Jeremiah is convinced of his faithfulness to the modern and traditional religions for protection and blessings on one hand and for human development and preservation of tradition, the perception of him by the adherents of the two religions ignites crisis of identity: while his evangelistic crusade for Christ is applauded by the missionaries, the

romancewith traditionalists, who equally need his services to avert extinction of tradition is frowned upon with disdain.

However, duality of faith in modern religions (Christianity and Islam) and indigenous religion is a common trend in our social reality: while the doctrines of the modern religions are propagated openly individually and in congregation, the visits to the traditionalist is in secret. There are therefore many Evangelist Jeremiahs, among the Christians and Muslims in Nigerian and African societies. The hypocrisy lies in identifying with the modern religions and deriding the indigenous that is rooted in culture and tradition.

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DOCUMENTARY, FICTION OR NON-FICTION: AN EXAMINATION OF THE DOCUMENTARY *AFRICA: BLOOD AND GUTS*

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Abstract

Documentary films have been categorised as non-fiction films since their inception; however, are they actually non-fiction? This paper examines the concept of creative handling of reality using the documentary film *Africa: Blood and Guts* (originally titled *African Addio*), which was created in 1966. The paper highlights the presence of ethnographic taxidermy in the documentary and how it provides a paradigm for a manner of representing indigenous people. Furthermore, this paper explores the parallels in current anthropology's romantic primitivism with a focus on Third World countries. This paper concludes that *Africa: Blood and Guts* is a "Shocumentary" film rather than a documentary film due to the distorted events buried in it which do not correspond with the conceptual understanding of documentary that this paper underlines.

Keywords: Documentary, Ethnographic Taxidermy, Fact and Fiction.

Introduction: Conceptual issues

Documentary films are non-fiction motion pictures whose primary goal is to document reality for artistic or entertainment purposes. A documentary, according to Spottiswoode, is a dramatised presentation of man's relationship to his institutional life. not of imagined things, but only real things, and as films that give up control of the events being filmed (284). Spottiswoode's definition specifies that a documentary should not be a figment of the creator's imagination, but rather of actual events, and thus should be factual and not embellished. Scottish documentary pioneer Grierson, who coined the term documentary in 1926, defines it as "a creative treatment of actuality" (12). While Spottiswoode and Grierson's definition of documentary remains strong, scholars have recently begun to question the authenticity of the actuality that documentary film claims to capture.

Scholars such as Aufderheide believe that a documentary film tells a true story about real life. How to do so honestly and in good faith is a never-ending debate with many answers (2). Although she acknowledges that a documentary may be objective

and not completely truthful, and that different techniques may be used totell the story, however, she believes that "we expect a documentary to be a fair and honest representation of somebody's experience of reality" (3). Thus, there is a problem when a documentary is referred to as factual while ignoring other external factors such as technology and the filmmaker's intuition, because these factors may influence the documentary's actuality. This is why Barnouw avers that a documentary cannot be considered "the truth," but rather "evidence or testimony of a fact or situation within the complex historical process" (312-313). The complex historical process can be political, entertaining, and educational or a means of economic gain. However, reality appears to be the primary goal of documentaries but reality is subjected to the filmmaker's creativity, which he/she can manipulate through a process of selection and editing, which sometimes gives it a politicallyoriented meaning. Aufderheide goes on to say that there is no way to make a film about real life without manipulating the information; choosing a topic, editing, and maximizing sound are all manipulations (4). Therefore, in a documentary film, it is difficult to tell the difference between fact and fiction.

Furthermore, documentary, in the words of Nichols, claims to describe the real, to tell the truth. Yet, in more obvious ways than any other, the documentary film can blur the lines between fact and fiction, art and documentary, entertainment and knowledge (22-25). I agree with Nichols' point about documentaries, and my argument is derived from this point. I do not consider a documentary film to be a complete reality because there are influences as well as the filmmaker's instinct that can affect the overall intention of the documentary. However, it has been observed that underdeveloped countries, also known as Third World countries, appear to be the subject of most documentaries, particularly ethnographic documentaries. The Third World countries refer to the decolonised countries that are economically developing like Africa, the Middle-east and Latin America.

Scholars have nonetheless approached this topic in such a way that there is a misrepresentation and depiction of the black man in films regardless of genre. Some filmmakers have challenged representational norms and sought a storytelling form that would be more authentic to their subject, breaking away from the ideological implications of traditional Western films. Third World countries have thus created a black cinema where they can tell their own stories because, according to Caldwell, "if we could tell more of our stories, we can but, you can't do that within someone who's captured and conquered you" (345), implying that there is a clear disadvantage on the part of the Third World countries if the colonisers tell their story. For this reasons Ophuls states:

Documentaries - or whatever their directors care to call them - are just

not my favourite kind of movie. The fact is, I don't trust the motives of those who think they are superior to fiction films. Idon't trust their claim to have cornered the market on the truth. I don't trust their inordinately high, and entirely undeserved status of bourgeois respectability (81).

Between Fact and Fiction

The issue at this point is the distinction between fact and fiction in a documentary film. This paper agrees with Ophuls that all documentaries, whether they are believed, in the end to be reliable or not, revolve around questions of trust (81). In addition, this paper discusses ethnographic taxidermy in the documentary film *Africa: Blood and Guts*. The paper examines the film closely to demonstrate how it represents a paradigm for a mode ofrepresenting indigenous people that parallels the romantic primitivism of modern anthropology. According to Rony, "Taxidermy seeks to make that which is dead lookas if it were still living" (101). Haraway speaks further of taxidermy "as a means of guarding against loss, sothat the body can be transcended. Taxidermy satisfies the fatal desire to represent, tobe complete; it is reproduction politics" (10). To create a visual representation of indigenous peoples, one must believe they are dying while also employing artifice tocreate a picture that appears truer, purer. Because indigenous people are assumed to be dying, if not dead, the ethnographic taxidermist resorts to artifice in order to create an image that is more true to the posited original.

The ethnographic documentary has focused on developing a written representation of a culture, or aspects of a culture, as the result of extensive fieldwork. However, it becomes appalling when some film practitioners create an ethnographic documentary film and consider it the fact. This claim usually applies when Third World countries are captured and this has become a legacy of ethnographic documentary. In addition, the World Union of Documentary describes documentary as "allmethods of recording on celluloid any aspect of reality that is interpreted either bysincere and justifiable reconstruction, to appeal either to reason or emotion" (quotedin Barsam 1). Although some film practitioners, such as Vertov, argue that the camera is the most truthful tool in capturing reality, however; the camera only captures what the operator wants it to capture. In the article; 'The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle, Rony explains that Regnault studies the movement of African people in the flesh with the aid of the camera but he came across the notion of gaze from the Africans he was recording. It was noted that the observers were aware of being viewed as objects of ethnographic spectacle, and resisted this status by challenging the illusion of scientific voyeurism. Rony notes that the Africans being viewed demanded money and thus, threaten to turn a supposedly real daily activity into a staged performance hence, questioning the authenticity of film as fiction or nonfiction. Hence, the camera can distort facts, alter

reality, or formulate evidence. What then constitutes 'actuality' or reality in an ethnographic documentary? The distinguished theorist of visual culture, Mitchell, argued that:

Photographs...were comfortably regarded as casually generated truthful reports about things in thereal world [...]But the emergence of digital imaginghas irrevocably subverted these certainties, forcing usto adopt a far more wary and more vigilant interpretive stance[...] Today, as we enter the post-photographic era, we must face once again the ineradicable fragility of our ontological distinctions between the imaginary and the real (225).

Mitchell posited that the photochemical response of film to light had traditionally underpinned the truth claims of photography.

Examination of the documentary film-Africa: Blood and Guts

This is a documentary produced in 1966 by Italian filmmakers Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi. The goal here is to ascertain its authentic nature because this film claims to have recorded and captured some African countries and their real state after they gained their independence. Also, this paper argues that since the documentary was told through the lens of a country that colonised some African countries depicted in this documentary, there might be a form of bias in its representation.

This shocking documentary records the violence that occurred in the African continent during the 1960s when some countries in Africa were transitioning from colonial rule to other forms of government. This film features several events in some African countries after its independence. These include: the footage of the Zanzibar revolution which entails the massacre of over 20,000 Arabs in 1964. The war of liberation in Angola, the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, the violence between the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda, the aftermath of the massacre of Stanleyville in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the departure of the last Governor of Tanganjika in Tanzania, and footage of hunters and poachers slaughtering different types of wild animals.

This paper's intention is not to take away the hard work and some factual aspect of this documentary, but rather to ascertain the film's claim on its authenticity of every event depicted. The creators of the documentary presented themselves as impartial movie journalists, stating: "We didn't have a political viewpoint... We were witnesses to a tragedy; political meaning left aside" (Gregory 23). Also, the narrator repeatedly insists that the documentary is a testimony to the historical realities of decolonization, not ... an artwork. However, the authenticity and actual location of

the events portrayed in the documentary is in doubt. Hence, this paper assesses their claims and assertions, their perspectives and arguments to the world as we know it, and decide whether they are worthy to be believed.

The film opens with inter titles stating that the old Africa has disappeared and that the new Africa of blood and guts has emerged. In the opening sequence, the narrator abruptly states, "Europe has abandoned her baby just when it needs her the most. Who has taken over, now that the colonialists have left?" This statement is derogatory, implying that many African countries were still babies not ready for independence which they judiciously fought for. Independence has come too soon, the narrator tells us. Africans are not ready for self-government hence, their lack of maturing and inexperience in politics became a problem for them turning the new Africa into a state flooded with misery and blood bath. This documentary presents Africa with a contemptible judgment, if not ethnocentric, voice-over commentary like; 'Africa is now controlled by raw, wild, brutal, modern-day savages!' They maintain his documentary already has a premeditated idea that Africans were not ready for selfgovernment and so showed events to back up their claims even if it means manipulating some fact to reside with their ideology. Events like the thousands of Hippos that were plundered by the blacks at Zambesi River to provide cheap food for Rhodesia in 1963, however, Rhodesia does not eat a lot of Hippos and, the Zambesi was in the control of the white in 1963 and not blacks as the documentary states. This claim by the film does not align with the fact of the Zambesi and the people of Rhodesia.

In addition, the narrator highlights how poachers have taken over Africa with gruesome footages of elephants, hippos being butchered with spears and, points that there was nobody to protect Africans from the poachers. This scene portrayed Africans as the poachers and evaded to name some of the western benefactors of these animals. The documentary solely focused on Africans butchering these animals, I agree that for some, West Africans, wildlife is food; for some, it is the symbol of their culture; for others, it is their religion and even their identity. However, more non-African countries benefit from the butchering of these animals. The filmmakers failed to distinguish between the unchecked poaching forhorns and the controlled, once-a-week hunting for food that was imposed by the new government of some African countries; all of the killings are shown as a gory indication of the downfall of Africa. According to Hsu:

Certain buyers in Vietnam and China the largest and second-largest black market destinations respectivelycovet rhino horn products for different reasons. Somepurchase horn chunks or powder for traditional medicinal purposes, to ingest, or to give others as an impressive gift. Wealthy buyers bid for antique rhinohorn carvings such as cups or figurines to display or as investments, and a modern market for rhino horn necklaces, bracelets and beads has also sprung up (1).

Anderson and Jooste posit that there are a proliferating number of middle and upperclass consumers of ivory and Rhino horns in Asia and Eastern Europe (2). Also, the factors driving the crime of Elephant poaching and the illicit ivory trade in Africa according to Kideghesho include rapid growth in the demand for ivory in Asian countries for fashion and medicinal purposes (6). Hence, the presentation of poachers in this documentary depicts the blacks as the perpetrators and not as victims, in the word of Chissano a former President of Mozambique and Founder of Chissano Foundation Wildlife Preservation; "I condemn poaching and condemn those who entice young African people to go hunting because the game they kill is not for them, It is at the behest of the powerful. There is someone who makes a lot of money from hunting" (1). Hence, Africans are not solely responsible for the poaching that this documentary claims.

In addition, the violence between the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda depicted in the documentary was one-sided as well. The documentary failed to highlight the main source of this violence and the involvement of Belgium their coloniser in the situation. The documentary claims to be factual but left out a vital part of the origin of this battle between these two tribes. Belgium favoured the minority tribe over another because the majority tribe consist solely of the black man. The Tutsi tribe got preferential treatment resulting in the other tribe getting harsh jobs. The Hutu tribe fought for what belonged to them. Nonetheless, the documentary painted and depicted Rwandans as a violent and brutal nation and disregarded this important information.

The Documentary's Ethnographic Taxidermy

Ethnographic cinema is, above all, a cinema of the body; the emphasis is on the anatomy and gestures of indigenous people as well as the body of the land they inhabit. *Africa: Blood and Guts* is a clear example of ethnographic cinema; it was portrayed in a cinematic ethnographic present in which intertitles establish the camera and the filmmakers as observers. The film begins by depictingthe various countries addressed in this documentary as well as Africans in a primitiveand savage manner; there was a close-shot of African soldiers in contrast to the longshot of white soldiers; this close-shot of African soldiers made them appear chaoticand disjointed in arrangement, which is the narrative the filmmakers intended to sendacross to its viewers. In the documentary, they believe that Africans will not survive this new life that they have created for themselves. So there is a need to record thissoon-to-be-extinct culture for documentation purposes. The filmmakers also captured a scene

where some South African youth were singing and dancing whilethe women were naked from their waist up in order to showcase their beautiful culture and how they have abandoned this way of life just to be savages leaving this beautiful culture to die, which is not true as this culture fifty years later is still aliveand well. The subjects in this scene also stared at the camera, which critics interpretas childish and primitive. "Until 1930, it was unseemly in the United States and Europe to face the camera smiling; smiling was considered to make the subject look foolish and childlike" (Rony 111).

The documentary made their subject look childish in more than one scene, as they looked straight into the camera and smiled while still acting making their subjects imprudent and primeval. Correspondingly, some scenes where dead African bodies were displayed are horrific representation of the black man, the dismembered bodies, charred flesh, agony and death were regarded by some critics as staged for our entertainment, cloaked in the respectability of a 'neutral' documentary, making this documentary repulsive.

Furthermore, I watched this film about seven years ago, and considered it horrific, and disturbing but not until recently when I read Solanas and Getino article "Towards a third cinema", and "Question of the third cinema" by Teshome, did I realise how the colonisers viewed the Third World countries and as a result exploiting and making them insignificant. The articles reject the Western assertion that Africa returned to its wildness and obscured solitude because the colonial empires abandoned the continent tooearly. It makes virtually no references to past atrocities and exploitations committed by European colonialists; instead, the film mainly focuses on the crimes committed by Black Africans. This documentary fails to tell its audience how Africans were before the white men came, Africa was not this horrid. It could be possible that therules and methods of the colonialist brought about these wars and inter-tribal battles as their method was novel and unfamiliar with African cultures and doctrines.

Africa: Blood and Guts was lambasted for promoting the view that Africa without the European colonial powers would quickly revert to primitive brutality and bloodshed. Some critics austerely condemned the film but this paper adds to the reason of this criticism standing on the definition of documentaryand the ideology of ethnographic taxidermy to detached events from the film that donot align with the truth which some critics failed to point out but only focused on the display of events such as the showcasing of dead bodies making it very horrific. These critics include, film directors Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas who harshly criticised the film in their manifesto "Toward a Third Cinema", calling Jacopetti a fascist, and asserting that in the film, man is "viewed as a beast" and is "turned into an extra that

dies so Jacopetti can comfortably film his execution" (18). United State of America Ambassador Arthur Goldberg wrote to the *New York Times* complaining that this Italian-made documentary about the Dark Continent was "grossly distorted" and "socially irresponsible" (1). Roger, a film critic equally castigated the documentary as "a brutal, dishonest, racist film. It slanders a continent and at the same time diminishes the human spirit. And it does so to entertain us" (1). I agree with these criticisms because the filmmakers, in my opinion, paint Africa as primitive and disorganised. I see the film as a manipulative, pro-colonialist documentary about Africa's politicalturmoil and the slaughter of wildlife. Although I also agree that war, genocide, and elephant hunting are all wrong, I never knew how complicit the directors were in the events that are filmed, and the narrator is very paternalistic, which is, of course, exploitative. It jumps from country to country with little historical context.

Conclusion

The paper has made the point that this is a very important documentation of the 1960s documentary approach to Africa and the onset of colonial powers withdrawing; it is an unsettlingeye-witness account of the chaos in Africa after the pull-out of the English, French,and Portuguese. This documentary can somewhat aid people to understand what happened to Africa and why it's not simply "poverty" or "debt" that created the horriblestate of impoverishment on the continent, but also due to the invasion of Westerners who claim to have rescued Africa from its primitive nature, believing that Africanswere somehow inferior by nature and better at being enslaved. The involvement of the West contributed to the anarchy Africans experienced whenthey left.

This documentary has a good technical standpoint, striking cinematography combined with its powerful visuals and music however, not all its claims are verified and it could easily reinforce racist views due to its intentional or unintentional racial bias and certain directorial sadism through the condescending voice of the narrator as well as its titillating and repugnant display, little wonder why it was referred to by some critics as a 'shockumentary'. There is more to Africa than this documentary presents.

This paper holds the view that a documentary is meant to document reality rather than create it; thus, *Africa Addio* should not be classified as a documentary because it reveals the racist lineage of documentary, created some scenes to suit the filmmaker's overall vision, and thus tempers with the actual reality a documentary film is meant to capture, thereby presenting claims in this film are false.

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DRAMA IN EDUCATION AND ITS GRADUAL SHIFT TOWARDS DIGITAL LEARNING: A STUDY OF AIFCE DEMONSTRATION PRIMARY SCHOOL, OWERRI, IMO STATE

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Abstract

Drama in education is one of the oldest and conventional methods of teaching that engages children in active learning experience. Many authorities have emphasised that play is a vital part of children's learning process. This method of education is a self-directing kind of learning that enables children to explore new ideas, while interacting with one another within a learning environment. Since the existence of technology, there has been this mutual interdependence between the various innovations and education. The precipitous increase in the use of digital devices and their perceived swelling levels of productivity and efficiency in learning has remained a great challenge to children's learning. The paper adopts qualitative method, using the tools of observation and content analysis to ventilate on the issues and prospects of digital learning, using AIFCE Demonstration Primary School, Owerri as paradigm. The paper is hinged on Social Constructivism Theory, which views that learning occurs through social interaction. Findings show that the education sector is highly susceptible to the fluidity and dynamism of technological innovations since it has affected the thinking, communication and pattern of learning of individuals. It therefore concludes that digital learning could be a better alternative to drama method, if it becomes an inclusive venture. It recommends that government and other relevant authorities should ensure the provision of equipment and materials that will encourage digitalization of learning in all schools in Nigeria.

Keywords: Drama methods, Education, Digitalization, Learning, Technology.

Introduction

Over the years, the education of children has achieved teaching and learning effectiveness through the use of drama in education techniques which require physical interactions and illustrations. Drama in education has helped children to activate and explore learning in fun ways, using natural skills and competencies. This pragmatic learning situation has obvious advantages in children's learning capacities, as it affords them the opportunity to be more interactive through the use of language, body movement and facial gestures to aid communication and

understanding within a learning environment. Asen opines that:

In the philosophy of drama in education, the notion that children and young people learn by doing, that critical standards of procedure and understanding that emerge from the application of concepts, and directly experienced subject matter has been called pragmatic (94).

This is opposed to digital learning, where children basically interact with technological and electronic devices such as; smartphones, laptops, palm tops and other accessories to explore learning. Often times, it is either that the equipment and materials are not available, non-functional, insufficient, or that some learners have difficulties in coping with the dynamics of the new technology. Apparently, digital learning lacks active one to one participation and interactive propensities that could induce speedy learning from some children who are still struggling with adapting to the new technologies. It is on this note that Obadiegwu avers that:

Dramatic method of teaching such as; games, mime,dance and count down can provide not only a more pleasurable way of achieving learning, but greater freedom to the slow learners... drama helps in the development of attitudes in which the children learn that the outcome of various activities are not asextreme as they hope or fear (8).

Nevertheless, the dynamics of technological influence in the society has heightened the consciousness and clamour for innovative learning. In recent times, the applications of digital technologies in teaching and learning have been a consistent dialogue on policy makers in the education sector. This is due to the fact that the role and impact of digital skills and competencies in the education industries is strategic in fostering novelty in education. Ododo describes digital technologies as:

Those devices that enable the creation and storage ofinformation and processes in digital form; with the potentials to deliver across electronic networks. This connotes an ecosystem highly dependent on electronic and digital form, in which access to the attendant digital gadget is guaranteed for all players (7).

Technologically based learning is quite innovative, and innovative learning outcomes are essential in bringing out qualitative changes in both the education sector and the society at large. These changes are needed to increase efficiency and quality of human existence in this competitive global economy. In effect, the impulsive use of digital devices and the Internet in learning shows that education has a great stake in digital technologies. This underscores the need for education system to equip young learners with the overall skills they need, in order to benefit from the

proceeds of the new technology.

However, the digital divide witnessed mostly in the rural community schools has become a skill gap between the high and low classes of learners. This gap is worthy of emphasis because; both the rural and urban learners have the same curriculum assessment for external examinations. A typical example can be drawn from the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), where issues of inefficiency in the use of computers by mostly rural candidates, power outage, network failures, malfunctioning of computers, among other complaints were grossly registered and debated. Obviously, digital skills could generate weighty returns in learning, employment, income among other social and economic stance. The setbacks, challenges, barriers and frustrations of children in rural schools, who do not have access to these facilities, are the major concerns of this paper.

Theoretical Clarification

This paper adopts the Social Constructivism Theory to substantiate its facts. Social constructivism theory views that learning occurs through social interaction with one another or between a group and another. The theory was developed by Soviet psychologist named Lev Vygotsky. The foundation of this theory is on the authority that knowledge is not a copy of an objective reality, but rather the outcome of the mind selecting and making sense of and recreating experiences. This means that knowledge is the result of interactions between both subjective and environmental factors. Vygotsky illustrated this by proposing that the processing of new knowledge involves three steps which are:

- Construction This involves the creation of new concepts through individual contributions of knowledge.
- Storage This is the mental process of retaining the new information in the memory of individual participants.
- Retrieval This is the process of using the information already stored in memory to create superior ideas.

Social constructivism strongly believes that superior ideas are developed out of individuals' interactions within their environment. As such, knowledge evolves through the process of social negotiation and evaluation of the viability of individual understanding. Basically, every conversation or encounter between two or more people presents opportunities for knowledge expansion. It is on this instance that social constructivism teaches that new knowledge development is as a result of social interaction and language use rather than an individual perception. The process of learning requires that the learner actively participate in creative activities and self-organization. The theory recognises discourses and sign-systems operating not only upon the objects of a given knowledge structure, but also upon its human subjects.

This learning theory defies the hegemony of grand narratives, and questions the authority of the natural sciences as the only way in which to create knowledge. In essence, the major duty of a teacher is to recognise the individuality of each student. This is what Vygotsky describes as the "zone of proximal development" (117). This concept stipulates that a learner may be challenged but not overwhelmed; and can remain unthreatened to learn something new through interactive experiences.

Literature Review

The concept of drama in education as a teaching model basically means, the use of drama to simplify learning. Duruaku defines drama in education as "the use of drama as a method of instruction in the classroom situation" (38) Drama in education calls for flexibility, creativity and originality in the acquisition of knowledge. This is because its approach is demonstrative and requires no specific convention. Drama in education has a way of engaging children in active learning, and induces experimental discoveries through creative dramatics in the classrooms. Creative dramatics entails that teaching and learning should be a joint activity between the teacher and the learners. Asen defines creative dramatis as:

The use of theatrical components and dramatic exploration in the classroom, to support children's natural tendency to learn through play. This implies that, it takes on informal and imaginative dimensions in engaging the child in order to enable him/her learn(130).

The relevance of creative dramatics is that it offers opportunity for children to increase their self-awareness, develop imagination, think independently, work cooperatively, improve communication skills, express worthwhile release of emotions and build social awareness. The potentials of creative dramatics could help a child to discover his personality and boundaries, movement, language capacities and interest. This is the reason why Olayiwola defines creative dramatics as:

Any activity which presents a situation involvingpeople in active role playing, and which emphasises attitude rather than character. This is because when achild takes on a role, he adopts an attitude rather than character. This attribute contributes in no small measure to

transformative child development (1).

In affirming to this fact, Johnson posits that "attitude is a combination of concepts, verbal information, and emotions that results in a predisposition to respond favourably or unfavourably towards particular people, groups, ideas, events, or objects" (130). As such, Creative dramatics neither requires any script nor conceived

for audience validation. It is an immediate experience that enables a child to supply his thought, words and actions.

Children appreciate the fact that attention is drawn to them, and that values are attached to their participation and contributions to learning activities. Perceptively, Onuoha believes that "of all the methods in teaching, dramatization is one of the most effective in stimulating pupil's interest in what they are to learn" (14). This is because; this method enhances children's speaking abilities, gives rapid visual experience and improves their writings, discussions and reading abilities. According to Umukoro "the creative process is seen as part intellect, and part intuition requiring a masterly coordination of the head and heart of the rational and emotional, to attain singularity" (141). Creative dramatics is an art for children and a group experience; where every child is guided towards expressing himself as he works and plays with others. In the same vein, Brown contributes to the importance of children's play as a tool for effective learning when he posits that "Play is a vital part of children's learning process, especially as they begin to experience life. It is a self-directing learning nature of education" (168). In essence, drama enables the child to explore new ideas as they listen, observe, touch, smell and taste things within the environment.

The relationship between the educational experience and creative abilities of the child has tended towards the conclusion that drama gives the quality of experience that is most essential for the satisfaction of education and development of the child. According to Kolucki:

The creative process integrates mental and physical activity, engaging the whole child in an improvisational process oriented experiences. These dramatic learning activities nurture and develop both individual and group skills and enhance the participants' abilities to communicate their ideas, images and feelings in concert with others throughdramatic actions.(139).

The developments of the school child through formal and informal education play essential roles in the positive formation of the child. Thus, creative dramatics predispositions are expected to be introduced early in a child's life in order to give the required knowledge and training, which grows along with the child in life as he faces the world. The drastic increase in the use of mobile devices and cheap high-speed internet; which serve as platforms for many socio-economic technologies and the new educational technologies are revolutionizing the world and the education system in Nigeria. This has gradually relegated the use of drama technique; which is pragmatic and experiential to digital learning.

21st Century Digital Learning in Perspective

Technological development could be said to have found its boom in academic enterprises in the 80s and 90s, before its application in the policy domain and innovation management. Since the existence of technology, its various innovations have been influencing the society in both predictable and unpredictable ways. It plays fundamental roles in improving the quality of life and productivity of individuals, which culminates into wealth creation. In fact, the real economic growth, educational advancement and transformation of the present day society has been technologically driven. The education sector cannot boast of its progression without the technological impact in the system. In effect, they have greatly influenced the lives of humans to the extent that it is hard for human beings to exist and function effectively without its various outlets. Consequently, it could be stated that technology and the society are co related, co-dependent and co-influence each other. In the same vein, it could also be noted that; as human needs and demands for technological advancements continue to increase, the innovations of its various devices and platforms continue to develop, in order to meet up with human expectations.

There is no doubting the fact that technological innovations are gaining prominence anddominance in every society. As such, every human attempts to integrate into its dynamism and fluidity as new normal way of existence. Indeed, most individuals and corporate institutions of the world, have tried to integrate at least an aspect of this innovation to remain afloat. Technology has paved way for multi-functional devices such as smart phones, smart televisions, smart watches, smart computers and smart cards; which are increasingly faster, more portable and higher powered in service delivery than ever before. These innovations have strengthened connectivity's in the forms of Facebook, X Corp WhatsApp, Instagram among other social media platforms. Their various platforms have directly or indirectly influenced the dissemination of information and learn patterns; thereby, by making learning, fun, faster, exciting and more rewarding. Suffice it to say that digital learning in Nigeria arose from the concern of transforming the goals and daily practices of learning, to meet up with the 21st century challenges; which are characterised with technologically driven knowledge and proficiencies. Boh and Adoka assert that:

The command and knowledge of digital technologies has become a necessary skill for success in the 21st century. The technological innovations and their tools are rapidly affecting, influencing and changing virtually every facet of human life; constructing new and innovative ways to use technology to improve professional operations. With emerging technological developments and enhancements, the collection and distribution of information can be accomplished at lighting speeds in almost any location, and within a

global network; which have altered the ways that many individuals and businesses function (27).

This novel approach to learning requires creative and critical thinking, problem solving and communication in collaboration with technological skills. The concept of digital learning is geared towards productivity and efficiency in teaching and learning, with knowledge explosions that will help individual to meet up with the global challenges.

Some educational institutions in and outside Nigeria have presently imbibed different online schooling for children, unlike the previous situations; where most students had to attend physical school before they could get basic education. The invention of the internet, Wi-Fi, personal computers, smart phones and numerous educational tablets have presented a new method of learning to most children and homes. Digital learning is therefore available to every child at different levels of education both in and outside Nigeria. While some students have been introduced to this method of learning early in life, others are still lost with the idea, as they seem strange and unrealistic. This is due to the fact that these later categories of students are yet to be properly integrated and groomed into understanding the applicability of these modern technologies.

Digital learning can connect teachers and students from every part of the world by providing a more in-depth understanding of the global industry; helping children build their networks to develop a comprehensive mind-set. This is one magical attribute that dramatic learning method does not possess; as location dictates where classes should be held and at a given time. Online learners can sign up for classes from every part of the world. This method of learning offers young learners flexible learn hours, by allowing them to learn at their best moments and times. Digital learning gives children more freedom to explore and exploit learning competences. It equally avails children the privilege to be efficient with the use of modern technologies. The ability of a young learner to have the capacity to use and control various computers and accessories such as; laptop, ipads, smart phones and other educative media devices, help to maximise their potentials and gain the most in their academics.

Regrettably, digital learning with all its superiority over other methods of learning has achieved limited success in some Nigeria schools. Some fragment of the elucidation on this gross limited accomplishment lies with government and policy makers; who have consistently feigned ignorance of the fact that many public schools in Nigeria are seemingly not yet ready to tap into the potentials of digital learning; as a result of the breaches in the provision of digital facilities and skills for both teachers and students. Consequently, there is obvious lack of clarity over

learning goals, and insufficient pedagogical preparation on how to blend the new technology into teaching and learning; in order to transform expectations into reality. In every sense of rationality, this is a far cry from what it should be in this technological driven age; where children are expected to develop expertise and know-hows with computers and ICT platforms.

The researcher observed that, communities where some schools are cited are not even connected to the national grid. Instances of such can be drawn from Nkwessi Primary School in Oguta local government, Obibiezenna Primary School in Owerri North local government, Ife Primary School in Ezinihitte local government all in Imo state. In effect, the pupils experience difficulty in utilizing the digital platforms. Also, situations such as shortage or absence of power supply create difficulties in powering computers and educational gadgets needed for learning. In effect, most teachers and students lack adequate training on the functionalities of the modern technological facilities in this tech savvy generation. Another obstacle to digital learning in Nigeria is tied towards the high cost of internet data services. The internet service provider that connects these learning platforms requires lots of data bundles. While one must acknowledge the fact that change is a constant variable in every society, at the same time, the education of children is supposedly not to succumb to those changes that can neither be sustained nor inclusive.

It is a fact that some private schools in Nigeria are exploiting the essentials of the internet to create several sites, and online learning platforms that offer classes for children, regardless of their ages. These sites have many learning tools that make learning a great experience for children. They include but not limited to; Ulessons, Edx, Udacity, Linkedin Learning, Skillshare learning and many more. This numerous lessons could be assessed via WhatsApp, Telegram, Google, Zoom, voice notes, etcetera. Examples of such schools are Madonna Model primary school, Mountain Crest Primary and Secondary School, Princess Shekinah Model Primary and Secondary School, to mention but a few in lmo state. The advancement of modern technologies and their levels of acceptability have made it a compulsory daily use for individuals who have access to them. Their user friendliness and exquisite experiences has continued to place more value to their demands and supplies. The great benefits of digital learning could comparatively be said to have surpassed the value of other learning methods; the only lacuna is that it is not inclusive to all schools in Nigeria.

The Pedagogical Challenges of Digital Learning in AIFCE

Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education (AIFCE) Demonstration Staff Primary school was established in 1983, as a demonstration school to the College. The fundamental objectives of establishing the school was to help students of the College on site professional development programmes for qualified teachers, as well as

assisting enrolled pupils to develop personal life through creative learning strategies. This has enabled the pupils to respond to programmes within local school boards, andother educational jurisdiction both in and out of the college community. The establishment of the school also provides in-service teacher education, as the college uses the pupils to demonstrate practical knowledge, competencies and learning assessment.

The foundation of the school was deeply rooted in the development of the child through active learning, taking into cognisance different behavioural tendencies in children. This enthusiasm and commitment to early childhood education sparked an unequal dedication in their teaching skills, as the teachers strive to bring out the best in each child through the adoption of teaching of the whole arts; Drama, Music, Dramatic Literature, Cultural and Creative Arts, Foreign Language, and other core subjects are thematically intertwined in the children's creative propensities. As a demonstration school, the teachers understand the concepts of individual differences and the learning capability of every child in order to guarantee learning effectiveness. Duruaku opines that:

Drama as an art have served mankind over the millennia as a means of advertising self and of communicating ideas to one another or of being at peace with oneself through the satisfaction of self- expression. This comes from whole or fragments of experience even if some art appear to lack any link towhat is in the sphere of the experience (109).

This attribute has in no small measure contributed to the academic excellence of the pupils of AIFCE demonstration primary, as the school stands out among other schools within and outside Imo State. The school strives for special colourful and synthetic quality in children's learning, by using the ideologies of play simulation. In essence, drama in education has held strategic positions, assisting the educational works of the children. Uzondu opines that:

Children need consistent exposure to arts and can benefit greatly through the use of creative modalities in drama. Drama is an important learning medium because of its ability of imparting growth, confidence and learning of skills in children (91-94).

It is worthy to note that, the demonstration school is a combination of theatrical and educational functions, with the ideological aim of ensuring effective learning outcome. However, the upsurge of COVID-19 exposed the gap in digital learning in AIFCE primary school. The fact that Nigerian educational system is largely built around traditional/conventional pedagogical learning pattern, made it difficult for the school to adopt digital learning approach during COVID-19 rampage. Without

anticipating the realities of the virus, many schools in Nigeria were contented with the conventional teaching method. In effect, there were no plans of incorporating digital learning at all. This is worsened by the lack of infrastructural facilities and competenthands that could help in this divergent learning method. Consequently, the effect of the spread of the virus crippled the effective functioning of academic activities as there was no alternative learning method.

The school lacked ICT and virtual facilities, though there were few computers in the library, but without internet facilities. The knowledge of computer as a subject in the school never went beyond the learning of the different parts of a computer, which is grossly inadequate. Another pertinent revelation is that most of the teachers in the school are still analogue teachers; as they have not undergone training on the use of computers, ICT skills and other modern facilities. It is shocking to note that these teachers have no idea of the boundless potentials of computers, including the use of smart phones. These issues and challenges constituted severe setback in the adoption of digital learning in AIFCE demonstration staff primary school. Suffice it to say that the present day society cannot survive without acquainting with the use of technological facilities and consistently upgrading with the dynamism and fluidity of the diverse facilities. Hence, there is prodigious need to incorporate virtual platforms in children's learning; considering their palpable remunerations as elucidated in this paper.

Conclusion

Drama in education has always served as a potent tool that induces and facilitates learning in children. It has invaluable activities that contribute immensely to the growth and intellectual well-being of children in all gamut of academic and human development. Considering the emergent of new technologies, digital learning could be a superior alternative to drama method, if all young learners could have access to the facilities. This will enable young learners to explore new knowledge potentials in order to fit into global competitiveness.

Based on the findings of this paper, the following recommendations are hereby made: Government should build on the opportunities digital learning offers to educational institutions to raise the overall worth of children by taking appropriate measures to equip schools with basic digital facilities and the maintenance of those facilities by competent individuals. There is need for the provision of stable power supply to mostly the rural schools and adequate plans for internet connectivity's and data bundles to support easy and fast teaching and learning. Finally, there is need to train and retrain staff on the potentials and effectiveness of digital learning as a method that is gradually coming to stay in the educational system in the world. Hence, the present technological age requires its integration into the various levels of academics, especially in primary and post primary stages of learning. This will help

to equip the young learners with competencies early enough for better outcomes.

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EFFECTIVE PATHWAYS FOR LOCAL EMPOWERMENT IN THE NIGER-DELTA REGION: A STUDY OF NPTA'S TfD EXPERIENCE IN OTUASEGA, BAYELSA STATE.

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Abstract

In recent times, issues affecting communities in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria have become quite topical. This is owing to the fact that there have been severe neglect and inequitable developmental approaches leading to violent resistances that have hampered the region. Although some efforts have been made such as the establishment of government parastatals like the Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) aimed at addressing the developmental needs of the Niger-Delta region, nonetheless there is this erroneous assumption that sustainable solution towards revamping the Niger-Delta and its communities lies in outsider's interventions. This paper therefore x-rays the Theatre for Development (TfD) process for community empowerment. It aims at revealing the important role of local engagement and conversation towards creative and sustainable social development. From the case study examined, the paper advocates for approaches that facilitate real community participation as pathways for local empowerment and greater social development for communities in the Niger-Delta region and beyond.

Keywords: Empowerment, Local Communities, Niger-Delta, Theatre for Development.

Introduction

Local empowerment initiatives as essential factors for the sustainability of community development are vital to ensuring that people assume greater responsibility over their own development processes as well as the consequences of the decisions they make. In socio-political parlance, power is seen in the light of making others act according to one's will, as well as influence others to respond

favourably to one's own specific intention or mindset. It is the ability to influence others to meet one's own decision. On the other hand, empowerment involves a process that seeks to redistribute power in such a way that it favours the other. It entails the relinquishing of power from a personalized and institutionalized monopoly of power into the hands of stakeholders of any particular undertaking or collective (Mulwa 161-162, Chambers 11 & Idebe 150).

On the one hand, according to Chambers, empowerment "entails enabling the poor and powerless totake more control over their lives and secure a better livelihood with ownership and control of productive asset as one key element" (11). Mulwa on the other hand conceptualizes empowerment "as the capacity to manage one's own life, whether as an individual or as a community. This involves influencing and changing public policy that may adversely affect the freedom of choice towards becoming master of one's own destiny" (97). It is a process whereby community members take initiative for a greater sense of responsibility over their own lives as principal agents of their change. The process is marked by an effort by the people to develop new knowledgeand abilities, which best serves their collective needs and aspirations. According to Eade and Williams, empowerment "entails a measure of people's capacity to bringabout change, whether this is modest or far-reaching in its impact. It involves enabling individuals and groups to develop enough courage and confidence to be proactive, challenge, and overcome oppression and injustice" (12). Mathie and Cunningham further emphasise that marshaling of locally available resources is central to the process of local empowerment. This involves deliberate effort to locateand utilise human potentials such as personal attributes and skills. It also entails building on relationships among people through social, kinship, or association networks (6).

Empowerment also implies the need to equip people with the correct details on which basis they plan and act for social change and transformation. This principle is anchored on the premises that people will identify with, protect and maintain what they have worked collectively to build. It is that level of community participation that builds true sense of ownership of local development initiatives and projects. To pave the way for local community empowerment, the principle argues that the best experts on matters concerning a people are the people themselves. They know their situation better than the outside agents. Empowerment is the most effective way of power decentralization that gives local communities opportunity to exploit the diverse complexities of their condition and adapt to changes as they generate their own innovations, find their own solutions, and determine their own pathways to social change and development.

It is on these fundamental principles that Theatre for Development (TfD) seeks to

advance participatory methods that advocates empowerment and social change. TfD in its democratic nature and processes is described by Abah as a "theatre for the people, by the people and with the people" (30-31). Duruaku equally notes that this form of theatre is among emerging forms that gives attention to the social relevance of theatre in the 21st century (189). A very important social relevance is that of enabling local community people challenge barriers to community emancipation; and the emergence of new situations that contribute to the enhancement of their potentialities. Like Okwori argues that TfD:

...intervenes to motivate, animate or catalyze the people so that they can dialectically question their existing reality, critically determine the roots of their problems and work out strategies for solving them. This is an empowering process, a process of reinvigoration through which people find meaning to their lives and reasons for their existence (121).

In its bid to empower communities, it is important to note that every TfD experience produces its own peculiar approaches and outcomes. Okwori (123) further states that "Every workshop produces its own discoveries and experiences. The nature, place and timing of workshops produce different problematic" Iorapuu and Bamidele while examining the empowering impact of TfD state accordingly that:

First TfD has its roots in the philosophy of empowerment. The current view in developmentstruggle respect the need to build on what people know, with the belief that this type of theatre seeks toliberate, demand innovation and effect potential change in the lives of those that use it...TfD uses localresources and enable programme beneficiaries tomake use of the tools it offers to change it realities...TfD also provides a means of exploring and addressing dynamic relations between people. It offers a means of reflecting upon why and how changes might be necessary and why and how they come about. It is this dimension that practitioners of TfD are deeply involved with, and attempt to promote by seeking to create Theatre with the People aroundissues that question the contradictions that have reduced them to objects not subject...TfD is therefore a praxis; a process of reflection and action that uses the medium of drama to deconstruct the myths that makes people become split personalities or social, economic and political lepers (35).

This understanding of TfD is what makes it a potential tool that can be used to facilitate the much needed community empowerment among the Niger-Delta people. Over the years, big multi-national organizations working in communities of the Niger-Delta region as well as the Government have come out with plans on how to

empower the people of the Niger-Delta. However these plans are never known by vast members of the community and as such they have no idea of the direction that these stakeholders are taking for their wellbeing. Even the implementation of these plans are often skewed and poorly done. As such they do not satisfy the yearnings of the people (Asagba 2, Akpomuvie 212-214 & Uzie 1). In this vein, Akpomuvie therefore argues that "A people-centered development paradigm would help not only to achieve the goals of physical and socio-economic development, but also to empower the local people who are undoubtedly the most important factor in the development process in the Niger- Delta (212). This paper recounts the TfD experience facilitated by a non-governmental organization (NGO), known as the Nigeria Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) in Otuasega community of Bayelsa State, reveals the empowering potentialities of the TfD process for local communities.

Otuasega Community in Perspective

Otuasega is located in Ogbia Local Government Area (LGA) of Bayelsa State in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria. Based on the documents obtained from NPTA, Otuasega is about thirty minutes' drive from the State Capital, Yenagoa. The people trace their origin to Oloibiri, the first community where oil was first explored in Nigeria. The people belong to the Ijaw ethnic group with a common ancestry traced to Olei who is said to be the father of Ogbia. It was said that one Emeyal migrated from Oloibiri and founded a place called Emeyal. Emeyal's son, Asega, migrated from Emeyal and settled at Otuasega. In spite of all the stories of migration and founding fathers, they do not have traditional rulers who are appointed by lineage. Instead, the rulers are elected in a popular election by the entire community. The community is made of mainly fishermen, traders and farmers although some of the inhabitants are employed as menial workers with the Transnational companies (TNCs) in their domain that include Shell and Mobil companies. The signature' sign to this community as one approach it, is a Shell flow station with the unyielding gas flare.

Otuasega also houses a good amount of Oil reserve. However, the community is affected by terrible environmental degradations caused by oil spillage which has affected them. There are obvious and significant parts of the Otuasega community that remains swampy as a result of the environmental degradations in the community. Apart from the environmental problems, there are also serious disgruntlements and agitations from youth members of the community who are angered over the fact that a number of them have not been considered in terms of good job offers from the TNCs operating in their communities. The community has also had serious challenges that have led to different scenarios of leadership crisis in the community. It is important at this point to note that the social challenges which bedevils the community especially in the area of youth challenges, unhealthy relationship with

TNCs; and community conflicts arising from leadership crises affecting them have led facilitators from NPTA to deploy the use of TfD intervention as a way of empowering the community with more effective approaches of handling social challenges affecting them so that they can create an enabling environment for social change and development in their community.

The Otuasega TfD Experience

The Otuasega TfD experience involves the following stages as examined below. These stages are here presented with an elucidation of their implications in concretely demonstrating the empowering impact of the TfD intervention undertaken in the community.

(i) Community Research and Data Gathering in Otuasega: The NPTA worked mainly with the youth group members, who were drawn from the Otuasega Youth Association (OYA) to carry out the community research and data gathering. OYA is the umbrella youth organization in the community. They were about 15 of them who were part of the process and the enthusiasm shown by the participants was quite impressive. From the NPTA's documents on the TfD intervention done in the community, Transect Walk, Community Map and Pair Wise Ranking were the PLA tools employed to engage the community research.

The transect walk was done across major roads in the community and the drawing of the community map, allowed them to see different parts of the community and revealed a number of social challenges plaguing them. These include: abandoned buildings, abandoned farmlands, lack of women and youth empowerment, abandoned overhead water tank, uncompleted public toilets, abandoned library project, lack of educational scholarship for the indigent within the community, uncompleted school building, oil spillage, gas flaring, lack of community market, bad roads, poor drainage, gas flaring and oil spillage. leadership crises, lack of youth employment/empowerment and serious dissatisfaction from the efforts of TNCs operating in their community to execute social responsibilities were top most in the course of findings. Making use of pair wise ranking they prioritized and ranked amidst debates and disagreements among the participants as follows: Youth unemployment/empowerment, lack of scholarship, leadership conflicts abandoned projects by TNCs and Government. bad roads, lack of community market poor drainage gas flaring, women empowerment, environmental degradation caused by oil spillage, poor water distribution.

The use of PLA tools such as Transect Walk, Pair Wise Ranking, and Community Mapping enabled them to embrace new ways of unlocking and teasing out their social challenges. Furthermore it opened the room for them to form a team spirit to

properly address the issues affecting them.

(ii) Scenario Building and Drama Performance in Otuasega: The process of arriving at the final drama involved the community participants trying out different storylines and scenarios. Having made their different contributions during the scenario building, they came out with the drama performance as given below:

In a family house, husband and wife discuss the hardship they are facing in the community. (Song of Lamentation):

This life is very hard/unbearable
Suffering is killing us
There is no good school
There is no scholarship

Husband asks whether food is ready. He calls out to the daughter who is playing and he queries why she is playing instead of reading. She complains that the library where she should go to for studying has not been completed. Meanwhile, the other daughter in a nearby secondary school returns to joyfully announce the good news that she has passed her examination to enter the university. Man's mood is further dampened, as he does not have money for sending the daughter to the University. While in this sour mood, his son comes in to lament and express his frustration over his inability to secure a job.

A wen dirawagisoriema	This life is very hard/unbearable
Ogirikpawawoema	Suffering is killing us
A wen dirawomo school ema	There is no good school
Scholarship bawawoema	There is no scholarship

Chief is seated. Youth leader comes in to complain about the growing restiveness of the youths over their inability to secure proper means of livelihood. The Chief did not say anything. Husband in the scene comes in to lament about his condition to the chief. In the midst of the confusion, two young ladies storm the chief's place to complain of lack of job. In anger the Chief decides that he has had enough; he decides to write a letter so that the youth leader can take it to Shell to demand employment and scholarship.

A wen dirawagisoriema	This life is very hard/unbearable
Ogirikpawawoema	Suffering is killing us
A wen dirawomo school ema	There is no good school
Scholarship bawawoema	There is no scholarship

At the Shell Office two youth leaders, a lady and a man walk into the office of the Human Resource Manager of Shell to present the letter from the Chief requesting for employment and scholarship on behalf of the needy in the community. The Shell official receives them enthusiastically and assures them that there is no problem. Immediately the youths leave, she (Human Resource Manager) dumps their application in the waste paper bin, saying: "I have not given jobs and scholarships to my qualified brothers, why do these people think I will attend to them just because the company is situated in their area?"

A wen dirawagisoriema Ogirikpawawoema A wen dirawomo school ema Scholarship bawawoema This life is very hard/unbearable Suffering is killing us There is no good school There is no scholarship

Two ladies are in a boat on the creek paddling with difficulty because of water hyacinth. They come back home exhausted only to discover that there is no water from the tap to wash their itching bodies. The men are also having problems as they cannot cast their nets to catch fish because the water hyacinth has taken over the water (Freeze!)

The drama performance in Otuasega, carried with it traditional songs at intervals. The drama was performed at the Otuasega community social centre and it was watched with keen interest. It was immediately followed with an audience critical discussion of the issues affecting the community as mostly captured by the performance.

(iii) Post-Performance Discussions: Discussions were done around the issues of the inability of community members to get sponsorship of their children's education, poor surveillance of transnational and government projects in the community leading to poor or abandoned projects. The issues of the water hyacinth, the lack of women empowerment, the problem of oil spillage, bursting of pipelines and other social vices as affecting many youths in the community. The issue of lack of Jobs and youth empowerment was given some emphatic discussion. Community members expressed huge disappointments especially with endless unfulfilled promises of government and transnational companies' jobs and how these have led to vandalizing of pipelines. One of the women participants who spoke, in the person of Gloria Igbeta said the drama reflected the reality of the social challenges in the community and lamented that the surrounding communities are more developed than Otuasega because of the divisions they have within their them. She thus suggested the way out for the community is for them to ensure that the community leadership should work

out ways of ensuring that they properly engage the oil companies and the Government to provide the youths with means of livelihood. She finally added that it will be important for the community to amend their constitution to ensure that they properly address the issue of leadership conflicts affecting them.

A youth member of the community said that he is very pleased with the programme been carried out in their community as it has saved their community from fanning the hot flames of community leadership crises and violent conflict with oil companies. He appealed to the audience members to make sure that they take the drama serious and become a more peaceful and prosperous community. He said that the community leaders must also begin to think of what they can do within to empower the youth and women in the community, because they cannot continue to rely on the false promises of oil communities and government. Another community member in the person of Chief Friday Alegbe categorically stated that "... this drama has really saved this community from an impending violent crisis with Shell. The drama and our discussions with the team of facilitators have really helped us avoid a bad war with the oil company". He further stated that on his part, he is ready to do all at his disposal to work for peace, reconciliation and community development. Other persons, who spoke, appealed to different parties that have different court cases to immediately withdraw them. This was further emphasized by the NPTA facilitating team.

Following the robust discussion by community members on the myriad of social challenges affecting them as captured by the drama, and how they can change for the better, they came up with the following resolutions which formed the CAP which they unanimously agreed to pursue:

- Both Elders and youth leaders are to develop a strategy for follow-up actions as against violent reactions. And with specific reference to Shell Transnational Company, the Chief and community members agreed that there was a need to set up a monitoring team that would liaise with Shell once applications have been submitted from the community to address the unemployment menace.
- The participants also agreed to reach out to warring parties in the coming weeks to ensure that the different court cases are withdrawn as decided by them.
- Regarding the water hyacinth, the community agreed that clearing the water hyacinth must become a joint action by all men and women; and with regards to the road construction in the community, they shall intensify efforts that will see to completion of the road construction.
- The community members also agreed that both Shell and the Community Development Committee (CDC) need to work together to ensure execution

of abandoned projects. This would also demand that the contract process be made more participatory to involve the CDC.

- The chief also decided that a little community market will be constructed as way of empowering the women and youth in the community. Also they agreed that the community will collaborate with NGOs and transnational companies in developing some youth enlightenment and empowerment initiatives.
- A constitution amendment committee was also set up for the amendment of the community's constitution.

Through their involvement in the drama and post-performance discussions, the community was given a greater sense of optimism. The drama offered the participants opportunity to shift from a disjointed and self-centered thinking to a more practical and collective understanding of the social issues. In the light of this the community was triggered to an impactful dialogue on the way forward for the transformation of their community.

Follow-through: In a follow-through undertaken by the researcher to assess the extent to which the TfD project undertaken in the community affected them, it was discovered that the community members in Otuasega attested to the fact that the project was quite impactful. This is where they are very pleased and appreciative of the NPTA T D intervention carried out in their community. They believe that such platforms have brought about significant input for their community. They also pointed out some of the practical action plans which they have done so far as a result of the initiative carried out in their community. For instance, the community youth and leaders among other things were able to build a small community market through internally generated funds. The youths of the community have equally engaged in organizing talent shows and musical events that are aimed at youth empowerment. Outside the area of the arts, they also have reinvigorated their yearly football competition for the young men in the community. These innovations and development rightly demonstrate the positive responses which the community members that participated in the T/D intervention have started adopting. The outcomes from the TfD intervention testifies to the potentials it possesses for the wider Niger-Delta Region as an empowerment tool. These potentials have come about as a result of its ability to propel commitment to popular participation and popular decision making that ensures the attainment of community solidarity and responsibility for change and sustainable development.

Conclusion

TfD, as examined in this paper, makes it paramount that real community participation/empowerment is a vital pathway to quickening and bettering the

process of development plans and initiatives in the Niger-Delta and its communities. As an empowerment tool, TfD makes it mandatory that people have a say in the appropriation and allocation of opportunities and benefits that accrues the people. Furthermore the TfD experience as examined in this paper also point to the fact that projects execution in communities should not always be done as a sole donor funding, there should be aspects however little that is coming from community's contributions. This will strengthen a sense of commitment to participation and maintenance of the project which they have equally contributed to.

Identifying withlocal people voices, their initiatives and collaborations as a whole, will not only empower them to give greater outputs in the development process, but will equally have ripple effects in a long term and wide scale development sustainability as it affects local communities and the Niger-Delta Region as a whole. The results will definitely be obvious in the calming of youth restiveness, effective community andtransnational companies' relationship, prioritising and executing socio-economic projects in communities that achieve the right impact and an overall peace and tangible prosperity that is accruable to the oil rich zone of the nation. Finally, it is important to state that a peaceful and a better developed Niger-Delta region will nodoubt serve the best interest of social justice, equitability and common good in course of nation building.

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GENDER INEQUALITY: A CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF OSADEBAMEN OAMEN'S THE WOMEN OF ORENAARE WISER THAN THE GODS

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Abstract

The primary thrust of this paper is to examine the trend and nature of gender inequality in the selected play-text as it relates to the age-long patriarchy and women's quest for identification in socio-political cum economic strata of the Nigerian state in the 21st century. The paper is anchored on Radical Feminism Theory. The play shows the female characters exhibiting radical flagrant, excessive bravado, and dogged charisma towards achieving their goals of recognition and inclusion. This can create negative impression on the society, thereby questioning the rational for identity. The paper attempts to dissect the character delineations of the play in order to understand the motivation of the playwright and identify his thematic thrust regarding the issue of gender inequality in Nigeria as portrayed by the male characters. The finding shows that the issue of gender inequality in Nigeria has provided argumentative and dramatic representations, yet, the issue is still prevalent.

Keywords: Gender, inequality, Character, Radical Feminism, Analysis.

Introduction

The issue of gender inequality exist in Nigeria. This is a situation where the male occupies the major political cum economic positions in Nigerian. This is becoming alarming. Generally, women constitute about half of the population of the Nigerian

State and are known to play vital roles as mothers, producers, managers, community developers/organizers etc., which exposes the weakness of the male gender if given opportunity. Their contribution to the social and economic development of societies is also more than half as compared to that of men by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. Yet their participation in formal and informal structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant. The Nigerian society has been patriarchal in nature which is a major feature of a traditional society (Makama 1).

This is against the backdrop that the constitution of Nigeria takes cognisance of the disadvantaged position of women and has no provision for gender equality. Clearly, it is plausible to deduce categorically that there is nothing in the constitution redressing the disparities existing along gender lines. In other words, the Federal character principle which is meant to ensure equitable representation of states and ethnic groups in National appointments, actually places women at additional disadvantage by implying that they can only represent their states of origin (Linda 5). In the same vein, the political parties have so far not demonstrated any inclination to introduce mechanisms for equal representation within the party executives as required by the creation of post of the women leader, most political parties in Nigeria fail to adopt any system to increase the number of women holding party offices (Linda 5). The injustice behind some oblique references to the women's lifestyle, which shows that Nigeria electorate are still largely based against women, clearly flouts section 191 of the Beijing declaration and platform of action which require political parties to remove all barriers that clearly discriminate against women participation in politics (Linda 5). It is a structure of a set of social relations with material base which enables men to dominate women (Lerner quoted in Makama 2).

Furthermore, gender inequality, according to Makama, is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females (2). The patriarchal society sets the parameters for women's structurally unequal position in families and markets by condoning gender-differential terms in inheritance rights and legal adulthood, by tacitly condoning domestic and sexual violence and sanctioning differential wages for equal or comparable work (2).

Historically, tradition or culture and religion have dictated the relationship between men and women for centuries and entrenched male domination into the structure of socialorganisation and institution at all levels of leadership. To this end, patriarchy justifies the marginalisation of women in education, economy, labour market, politics, business, family, domestic matters and inheritance (2). Also, this culture of

patriarchy is a verystrong determinant of male dominance over female and as a result men will sit backin the family to keep the family name and lineage growing while women will be married out. Thus, men are being trained for leadership activities while women are confined to domestic activities; roles ascribed to them by culture which affect themlater in life, thereby making them to lose self confident/worth and have low self- esteem in their career in adult life, politics inclusive (Makama 20).

In addition, despite the pronounced commitment of the international community to gender equality and to the bridging the gender gap in the formal political arena, reinforced by the Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action, women are highly marginalised and are poorly represented in political activities (UNDP Report 123, quoted in Makama 1). This position of women in society in relation to men and the subordination, oppression and marginalisation of women has attracted the attention of scholars, activists, feminists and development workers (2). The issues relating to what is also known as gender inequality has become very prominent in the last few decades. The paper therefore aims at drawing a comparative analysis on the male characters that portrays the attributes of gender inequality in the selected Nigerian play. It will equally interrogate the dimensions of gender inequality and discrimination that excludes women from governance and politics which is detrimental to national cohesion, progress and development and attempts to address these issues and the rights of women in Nigerian society in the 21st century and beyond. To achieve these objectives, the paper is hinged on Radical Feminism Theory: while deploying qualitative research method, using the tools of discuss and textual analysis to explicate the issues therein.

Conceptualising Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is ubiquitous, in varying dimensions and proportions. In considering the dimensions of economic gender inequality, women still make less than men in the formal work sector, are more likely to live in poverty, are less likely to participate in the formal work sector, and do a larger share of work in the household sector. The dimensions of political gender inequality include women's lower representation in elected office and lower representation in political and corporate appointments. Social gender inequality has numerous dimensions, some of which are less favorable to men while others are less favorable to women: men are more prone to violence, imprisonment, and disability, while women are more likely to be the victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. In some countries men have lower educational attainment than women, while the pattern is reversed in other countries (Jacobson 34).

Demographic gender inequality includes the fact that men live shorter lives on average than do women -65 years for men, 69 years for women (CIA 167). However,

there is also concern that many women are never given the chance to be born, and in the younger generations men now outnumber women, by large numbers in China and India in particular with gender ratios respectively of 113 men and 117 men per hundred women in the under-15 age range (CIA 34). While many of the costs of gender inequality are ultimately borne by particular individuals, they can also be calculated at a society, or even worldwide level. If individuals of different genders are not given equal opportunity to develop their potential, then societies forego the increased level of output and ultimately wellbeing that would derive from their higher productivity. If societies do not invest equally in educating and training men and women, do not give them equal opportunities to engage in more productive forms of work, and do not give them equal opportunities to advance to more productive positions over time, then the societies do not harness the full potential of their members.

Worldwide, women participate less in the formal or paid work sector of the economy than do men. The International Labour Organisation (ILO), estimates total worldwide female participation in the paid workforce at 40 percent, with generally a lower rate in the less developed countries (closer to 35 percent) and a higher rate in the more developed countries (closer to 45 percent in the OECD). For our purpose, it will not make much of a difference if we assume a constant rate of 40 percent participation versus assuming some variation. This lower participation of women than men in the formal sector appears in large part due to their having much greater work responsibilities in the informal, or household, sector. Whether these responsibilities are assumed by free choice, by following of social norms, by coercion, or by lack of opportunities in the formal sector (whether due to gender discrimination or general lack of opportunities) can vary by person and by society.

For the developed nations, it appears that women now exhibit free choice to participate to a greater degree in the household sector (as compared to men); for less industrialised nations, particularly where women may receive less schooling or training that is useful for paid work, the matter of choice is much less clear. However, studies show that when opportunities forwomen's work expand in the paid sector, with the concomitant rise in women's wages, women increase their participation in paid work significantly. This is well-documented for the rise of manufacturing employment, particularly in textiles,in the U.S.A and the U.K. (Mary 120). Thus rising wages and rising female participation in the labour force increase hand-in-hand, implying that there are gains to the society from women's movement into the paid work sector at various times.

The Trends and Patterns of Gender and Governance in Nigeria

In the pre-colonial and colonial eras, Nigerian women never enjoyed parity with men in issues of governance; the same is witnessed in the post-colonial era. The history of

the growth and development of politics in Nigeria is replete with issues of male dominance and women token participation in public affairs (Aina & Olayode 635).

The political system in Nigeria remains male-centric as witnessed under military dictatorships and in the emerging democratic civilian structures and practices (Mary 132). The military era provided women with the least opportunity to challenge the structure of gender inequalities as the junta promoted female subordinate positionin the society through the 'first lady' syndrome (a process which hindered the women's quest from being addressed within the mainstream development praxis (Aina & Olayode 134). It is against this backdrop that Mary notes that under such arrangements, the 'women question' was treated within the private interests of wives of political leaders - a mentality which is almost difficult to erase even within the party politics and democratic governance (32).

Today, more women serve as members of their countries legislative bodies at the local, regional, and national levels (Agbasiere 634). In Namibia, for instance, women account for 44% of local government official (Amaka 132). Interestingly, the first women's quota was established in the Local Authorities Act of 1992, which stipulated that in the elections of local authority councils with ten or fewer members, there had to be at least two women on party lists. On the lists of parties in elections to councils of 11 or more members, at least 03 had to be women (Agbasiere 634). In 1997, these figures were increased to 03 and 05, respectively, and in 2002 this rule was adopted as applicable to future elections (634). In Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, women make up more than 36% of the legislators at the National level, and are making a difference in creating public policy beneficial to women. On 5th June 1849, Fredrik 7th signed the Constitutional Act of the Danish Realm. With his signature he abolished the absolutism introduced 189 years earlier by Fredrik 3rd – in 1660. Denmark had become a constitutional monarchy with the monarch as a head of the state, but the power being concentrated in the Parliament and government (Amaka 132).

So far, Denmark, according to Amaka has had 03–so-called – June Constitutions. The first is the one that was adopted in 1849. The result was a two-chambered system consisting of a low-chamber (Comprising 100 members, directly elected) and an upper chamber (Landsting 51 members, indirectly elected), known jointly as Parliament (Rigsdagen). According to this act, all independent men of unblemished reputation over 30 years of age were given the vote. The constitution guaranteed the freedom of religion, freedom of press, freedom of assembly and compulsory education (133).

In 1915, the second constitution was introduced. Women and servants were given the

vote and proportional representation was introduced. In this way it became virtually impossible for a single party to have a majority in the parliament. Women got seats in the Folketing at the election of 1918 for the first time. At Stauning's government in 1920's Nina Bang was appointed as a minister of education. She was the first woman to become a cabinet minister (133).

In the United States, almost 50% of all women of working age work in labour force and career opportunities have expanded for women. On the global level, Baumgardner & Richard aver that "the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel is a woman; the President of Liberia (who recently handed over after two terms) and Malawi, not to be exhaustive, are women. They are proving their mettle (132). Poland oncehad a female President in the person of Mrs. Mercy McAlese (Nidham & Aseel 321).

If these are plausible and these women have contributed tremendously to the advancement of their own countries, why not in Nigeria? Why can't Nigerian women be given equal rights in all fronts? Why can't Nigeria produce a female President? Even a single female governor is far from reach. Alas, why can't the Nigerian Senate President be a woman? Why can't Nigeria have an Attorney General of the nation, Chief of Defense, Air and Aviation staff be a woman? The women in Nigeria are seen as second filial; if not, why have all these female deputies not been able to succeed their bosses even after serving together two terms of office? A woman, Mrs. Patricia Etteh, was the first woman to become the Speaker of the Federal House of representatives, though she was eventually impeached in controversial circumstances (Nidham & Aseel 352). Anambra also had a female Governor under Peter Obi, Virgy Etiaba who served as Governor at the impeachment of Peter Obi. Ada Okwuonu served as the deputy of Ohakim in Imo State. Rivers State also had a female as deputy governor.

Opinions of Nigerian Dramatists on Gender Inequality

The criticism of African drama and Nigerian drama in particular cannot overlook the gender prejudices that are overtly or covertly presented in their texts. Characterisation and the topicality of the sociological and socio-political experiences underscore the overt and/or covert gender dialogic in a dramatic text (Mary 132). The discourses on gender representation in Nigerian drama focus more on how women are represented within the patriarchal cultural norms. Most of the arguments are on the facts that women are not adequately represented because of the cultural limitations. The andro-dramatic texts have been critiqued much from the gender representation of their male and female characters even when the criticism is from other ideological perspectives. This criticism is usually informed by the gender ideological orientation of critics. For example, Duruaku's *Cash Price*, as the name suggests, gives a derogatory view of women as being obsessively fixated on

materialism even to the point of succumbing to prostitution. The playwright made the character, Chinwe, and her old school mate, Maria, to exhibit gross financial heroe-worship as Chinwe trades her peaceful home and a loving husband for glamour, not realising that she is being "trapped in a death web" (31).

Also, in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, the characters of Iyaloja and the market women are represented as agents in the propagation and sustenance of the culture of a people. This manifests in their roles which endorsed the cultural proclivityof Elesin-Oba's inevitable ritual suicide. Showcasing their value for culture vis-a-vishuman rights. Clark's *Song of a Goat* takes another swipe at women's integrity inthe character, Ebiere, who is portrayed as a seductress that lures her brother in-lawinto an amorous relationship resulting in his untimely death.

In his play, *Spokesman for the Oracle*, Nwabueze shifts the bulk of the blameto his female characters in the tragedy that unfolds: the character, Nneka, exhibits unrepentant promiscuity as she commits fornication and blatant callousness by throwingaway the fruit of one of the acts of fornication (a son) in the latrine; and later commitsincest, albeit unwittingly, with the son. The incestuous act was even given femininerecognition as "a female abomination" (79). Oyibo is blamed as the cause of her husband's philandering nature for "... being obsessed with the university education that you wasted the best seven years of our marriage in university campuses" (77).

Radical Feminism Theory and its application

Radical feminism is a type of feminism which was propounded by Ti-Grace Atkinson in the year 1969. It was influenced by famous radical feminists including Andrea Dworkin, Catharine MacKinnon, Valerie Solanas, and Alice Walker. Radical feminists sometimes called 'radfems' argue that society is a patriarchy (Eschle 78). Radical feminism is a branch of feminism that seeks to dismantle the traditional patriarchal power and gender roles that keep women oppressed. Radical feminists believe that the cause of gender inequality is based on men's need or desireto control women (78).

Radical feminists thus see patriarchy as the root cause of inequality between men and women and they seek to up-root this. They aim to address the root causes of oppression through systemic change and activism, rather than through legislative or economic change. Radical feminists theorise new ways to think and apprehend the relationships between men and women so that women can be liberated. Radical feminism sees women as a collective group that has been and is still being oppressed by men. Its intent is focused on being women-centred, with women's experiences and interests being at the forefront of the theory and practice. It is argued by some to be the only theory by and for women (Rowland & Klein 78).

Synopsis of Women of Orena are wiser than the gods

The play presents the collective resistance by the women of Orena against the gods for undue revenge through armistice, cooperation and adherence to deliberate abstinence from child bearing. They took advantage of being the only endowed source of procreation and threatened to kill the existence of the gods in their consciousness. The play revolves around Ataje the central character who painstakingly mobilised the women of Orena to revolt against the men due to the subsequent and painful deaths of six crown princesses, married to Prince Zolobo by the Chiefs and the retrieval of Omeme, the 7th crown princess who is supposed to put an end to the curse that was placed on the royal household due to the taboo created by King Omena and Queen Atohan. This act was perpetrated when Prince Zolobo as a child fell from the mothers back when beaten by King Omena. As part of Orena culture and tradition, seven princesses are to be sacrificed to appease the gods, which will in turn keep the royal lineage.

The women, led by Ataje, question the notion of sacrificing seven innocent maidens, thereafter, highlighting the biased nature of the gods, king, chiefs and the men in the community, who consider Orena women as nothing in the society. To change this level of inequality, the women decide to show their importance by blocking the means of procreation. With this, they believe that their worth will be well noticed by the men, who will in turn, respect their gender. This they did by deciding that they will never get pregnant or give birth to young ones for their husbands unless the gods and the king finds lasting solution to the killing of young maidens in the royal family. After five years, the women were called back to repeal the decision and start bearing children. However, the women, led by Ataje refused. This obviously made King Omena and the chiefs to pacify Otua into believing that he can change the decision of the gods by yielding to the demands of the women. The play comes to an end when the solution to the death of the princesses was discovered: women's opinion in issues that concern their life, rights, and general obligations are put to consideration.

Character and Characterisation

Characters in the play are delineated such as it explains their age, plight, ambition, pain, anger, and propensities. The actions of most of the characters were explained by the playwright in most occasions. The play has eleven major characters and other minor characters. It is plausible state symbolically that Ataje is the protagonist, while King Omenathrough the protection, the culture, tradition, norms, mores, and artifacts, lures theyoung princesses into their death trap, is the antagonist.

The characters and their delineations are listed according to their personalities such as:

Omena: He is supposedly the antagonist in the play. He is strong, powerful, intelligent, egocentric, harsh, considerate, and the king of Orena community, who according to culture and tradition equips his son Zolobo into getting married at a tender age. It was because of him that the curse of the deaths of the crown princesses that was married to Prince Zolobo was cast by the gods because out of frustration, Omena beats Queen Atohan who mistakenly threw Prince Zolobo who was wrapped at her back on the floor.

SEER: ...the king and his wife first caused it... Do you remember you beat your wife when she gave birth to your first son? Do you remember that as you were beating her, she had your son on her back? Do you know it was a taboo to beat a woman with a baby on her back, not to talk of the heir apparent? (99).

This extract is the major ideology that Radical Feminism theory tries to address. Radical feminists believe that the cause of gender inequality is based on men's need or desire to control women (Eschle 78). This is obviously seen in the play as King Omena consistently molest, beats, abuses Prince Zolobo's mother, which resulted to the curse in the community. Even with this revelation about King Omena being responsible for the curse in the royal palace, King Omena, like many Nigerian monarchs, still shows the attribute of arrogance, rather, he calls it an ordinary fight. Thus, king Omena's statement "It was an ordinary fight between a husband and his wife (100)". He is equally a promoter of culture and tradition, mostly as it concerns women purity. To this, he was steadfast, wishing to know the outcome of Zolobo's first mating with his wife, Onomose.

OMENA: No, let my day begin with it. The white cloth does not spend another day in an in-law's house. If the result is good, my son is expected to take the cloth along with a white goat, one hundred and twenty tubers of yam and other items to the parents of our bride before it is dark. If the result is good, it is another celebration here tonight (5).

His level of curiosity and delineation also prompted him to reply Queen Oyeme when she was demanding the efficacy of the female virginity. Thus, the extract below:

OMENA: What kind of sterile question are you asking me? If I wasnot alive or around, you mean you wouldn't have been able to inquirefrom your son if he met his wife at home? Please give me a chair andlet me sit down and wait for the result (5).

Obviously, Omena, as the custodian of culture and tradition was not allowed to

witness death scenes of family members or villagers. He was considered as high and mighty. Even at that, he was perplexed at the sudden deaths of the crown princesses, thus, reluctantly proffers solution to the mysterious death of the princesses in the palace.

OMENA: My Chiefs, issues of such are bound to generate sensitive and destructive rumours. Please, stand behind this palace and debunkevery rumour that is meant to destroy the image of this palace. Don't the people add to the sorrows that have bedeviled this palace for along time. Thank you. I depend on you as worthy ambassadors of this palace (75).

There and then, Omena persuaded all his chiefs to pay less attention regarding the rumours hovering around the community which aims at providing lasting solutions to the issue of mysterious death of the princesses in the palace. Finally, Omena, on this note, represents most of the kings, religious leaders, clan heads, and traditional rulers in the Nigerian society who see themselves as custodians of culture and tradition, even when the culture and tradition does not favour the people. They pragmatically shield the culture to the benefit of the gods without considering the people who are directly affected by unhealthy cultures.

ZOLOBO: He is the crown prince of Orena community. He is young, handsome, strong, emotional, respectful, calm, peaceful andconsiderate. As the crown prince of Orena community, Zolobo allowed himself to be used by his father King Omena mostly as it relate to choosing his crown princess and bride. He was ready to follow his father's footsteps towards sustaining the culture andtradition of Orena people. One of the unscrupulous attributes of themen of Orena, is the believe that women are not considered as majorcitizens in the community, and should be married off at will or meantto concentrate on household activities. They believe that women in the community should not be respected appropriately even at death. Thus, the extract below:

CHIEF OMONI: That is why we have come to remind you that griefhas lasted for three days. By our tradition, no man mourns his wife formore than seven days. My lord, we must begin our search for anotherbelle that will match the position of the crown princess (20).

The Chiefs believe that they can easily replace the princesses without any qualms. The above extract is an example of cultuaral theory because it exhibits the way that humans interpret their biology and their environment (Smith 90).

ATAJE: She is Kali's wife and Omeme's mother. Ataje is the protagonist of the play. She is stubborn, resilient, strong, eloquent, aggressive, problematic,

admirable, intelligent, and loving. Shepainstakingly mobilised fellow women of Orena against the gods for undue revenge through armistice, cooperation and adherence to deliberate abstinence from child bearing. Ataje's statement on the painful infliction and abuse by men of Orena below justify it:

ATAJE: My beloved fellow women of Orena, is it a crime to be a woman? Six of our children have mysteriously been plucked by an unseen hand of death. The man or woman who cracks kernel on a stone may lose count but the stone that does the cracking does not. Ithas been the harvest of young women by death at the king's palace. The king and his chiefs have deliberately decided not to bother, noteven to find out the cause. Could it be that they know the cause andthey don't want to say it? Or do they deliberately mean to sacrifice ourchildren for an unknown cause? Do we marry them so as to give birthto children for an unknown cause? Do we marry them so as to givebirth to children that would be rewarded with crown princesses in their graves? Many who died were either openly or secretly married, yet they died with or without fourteen days of mourning (88).

The outcome of this demonstration brought about the revelation that it was as a result that Prince Zolobo fell off the back of Queen Atohan that resulted to the curse on the palace that claimed the lives of the crown princesses. It is on this note that Ataje vehemently questioned the reason why women should be held responsible or meant to suffer for the ordeals of the men, either as wife's, mothers, sisters, or spouse.

ATAJE: Why is it that it is the innocent wife who bears the penalty? Aman beats his wife with a child on her back. The man did not respect the innocent child and the gods did nothing to the man, his wife or the son but continues to kill every woman that is married to the child atadulthood. Why not the man, his wife or the child? Why the innocent wife? It is deceptive. No seventh wife shall die. I am going home withmy daughter (101).

This extract is another ideology which radical feminism theory seeks to dismantle, that is, the traditional patriarchal power and gender roles that keep women oppressed, abused, and blamed for the mistakes of the men (Eschle 78). Radical feminists believe that the cause of gender inequality is based on men's need or desire to control women. Through her efforts, the women of Orena took the advantage of being the only endowed source of procreation and threatening to kill the existence of the gods in their consciousness by deciding never to give birth to children that would in turn worship the gods. Her statement below justifies it:

ATAJE: Before we go, hear this, if the gods insist that the circle mustbe completed, we also insist that none of our daughters shall die againand no woman in this land shall give birth to any child from today, except those already in conception. We don't want to give birth to daughters that would die mysteriously. Just like the gods are angry, we are also angry (102).

To change the above decision, mostly as it becomes pertinent that the wish and demands of the women should be granted, the women led by Ataje demands for attention and recognition on the part of the gods and the men. The extract of Ataje's statement:

ATAJE: Thank you my lord. We have not changed our position andwe are not likely to change it. Henceforth, the gods must not hold anywoman responsible for a backed male child that fell, or the future wifeof the child. If it were a female child, would the gods have reacted the same way? Importantly, the crown prince's wife must be spared. Except our demands are met, we shall not go back to our primary motherhood duties and labour wards (109).

Finally, Ataje represents the entire radical feminist and gender equality advocates in the Nigerian society who painstakingly stands to speak and protect the right of the women and girl child alike. These set of people have been labeled and discriminated in the Nigerian society, yet, their radical impacts are acknowledged.

OTU, OMONI, ELLO: They are trusted chiefs and King Omena's cabinet members. They are greedy, arrogant, corrupt, pretentious, tricky, ambitious, overzealous, and overbearing. They connived intopersuading King Omena to stop mourning the death of the crown princess, with the backing of the culture and tradition of Orena's community. Due to their vast knowledge of Orena culture, they engaged new wives for Prince Zolobo with or without the permission of King Omena. Chief Otu subtly exposes the importance of the chiefin these words:

CHIEF OTU: If you are looking for the King and you meet his Chiefs, you have seen the King. The King does not listen to announcement of death. It is a taboo. It is not allowed because the King forbids grief. Again, our wives must not hear it because it willaffect their joy which would have been used to usher in our new wife. The King and Chiefs are forever the same. Please don't ignore the need to go back tonight and come back with another wife (34-35).

Through their mischievous conducts, the King was not able to know about some

critical happenings in the community, thus does not give consent before some cogent decisions that concerns the development of the community are taken. They even prevented the King from seeking the urgent solution when Onomose the first Crown Princess died mysteriously.

CHIEF ELLO: My Lord, we have had one, we have had two, three, four and five. It is no longer a new thing to us. We shall one day leavehere and all we are doing now shall serve as reference for our children. If nothing has happened, nothing would have been left behind to serve as a point of reference. We are doing our best. Part of it is to look for another belle for our son. There should be no room forfuture regent or interregnum (62-63).

Instead of proffering solution to the heinous issue bedeviling the palace, the Chiefs still insist that another bride be married and brought to the prince. This attitude is prevalent in the Nigerian society where most people that serves either as chiefs, cabinet members, or high officials who are supposed to render good advice towards providing lasting solutions to the issues affecting the development of Nigerian state, are busy giving frivolous opinions that further endanger the state. In the play, the chiefs masterfully exhibited this notion when Chief Otu opines that: "Chief Otu: Let us take the responsibility to secure replacement immediately in secret. That is what our King favours" (63).

Succumbing to this, **King Omena** joyfully said: "King Omena: My spirit dances within me to have you around me. You have suggested a good thing. It is a good thing to have another wife as quickly as possible but what will my people say? (65-66)". This statement obviously explains the nature of the chiefs who exhibits same characteristics with that of most Nigerian leaders.

OMEME: She is Ataje and Kali's only daughter. She is attractive, obedient, patient, calm, and caring. She is the major reason why thewomen of Orena revolted against the mysterious deaths of the crownprincesses. She obediently followed the Chiefs to the palace as Prince Zolobo's seventh wife after Kali her father decided to marry her out without the acceptance of the mother Ataje. Her death was supposed to put an end to the mysterious deaths of the crown princessdue to the curse laid against the King and his household for defilingthe tradition of Orena people.

As a result of this revelation, the women, led by Ataje, revolted, claiming that no daughter of theirs must be used as sacrifice for the sin of the King. Conclusively, Omeme represents the humble and loving daughters in the Nigerian society, who are submissive to their parents and the culture of their society. This set of girls, like Omeme are reasons for divine changes in their families and the society at large.

KALI: He is Ataje's husband and Omeme's father. He is loving, peaceful, considerate, hopeful, obedient to rules and regulation, articulate, accommodating and patient. He accepted that his only daughter, Omeme should be married to Prince Zolobo not considering the mysterious deaths of six crowned princesses who were married to Prince Zolobo. Kali believes that even if Omeme dieslike the other crown princesses, she will be buried in the royal buried ground and he will still remain an in-law to the King. Kali's statementbelow justifies it:

KALI: Does this woman know that you don't contest the orders from the king, if she succeeds, I shall be regarded by my people as disloyal and I will have failed in my promise to the palace. The queens who died where born by men like me. It will be written at last, in the minds of men that they lent a helping hand to the survival of the palace though not successful. If my daughter goes there and she is not successful, I would have played my part as a patriot. She must go with them. She might be the only survivour (84).

It is because of his loyalty to the palace and his softness to the community people that Ataje his wife considers him a weakling, challenging him to join them in the revolt.

Ataje: Join us to put forces together against the forces that cut the lives of crown princesses shot in their prime (86-87).

Even when she discovered that she is the cause of the mysterious deaths of the crown princesses, Atohan hated herself and sorrowfully said: "(*In tears*) What evil will please me against my son or my queen. I married his majesty so as to take care of him and bring forth kings that will take after him on his throne" (61-62).

Atohan represents those mothers and wives in the Nigerian society who are passing through one form of intimidation, molestation, abuse or death due to gender-based violence by their husbands in their matrimonial homes. These women, are often tagged witches, or enemies of the home while their husbands, that are the real culprits are working free.

Conclusion

Change as an indomitable and dynamic notion is the only constant thing in life. Oamen interrogates how women in Orena decided to revolt against the gods for undue revenge through armistice, cooperation and adherence to deliberate abstinence from child bearing. They took the advantage of being the only endowed source of procreation and threatened to kill the existence of the gods in their

consciousness. The success of the collective resistance by the women, led by Ataje againstoppressive traditions, culture, norms and values in Orena indicates that the womenare wiser than the gods. In his opinion, Oamen believes that whatever culture that does not protect, provide, guide and keep the citizens irrespective of sex and gendershould be abolished and the deities or gods whose case the efficacy of the culture is made visible should be abolished from the people's conscienceness without fear ofdeath.

The paper recommends that considering the effect of gender inequality on the female gender and Nigeria's development status, there should be a level play ground between the male and female gender in the wheeling of political cum economic strata of the nation for development purposes. To achieve this, government and nongovernmental organizations need to intensify efforts and work hand in hand to organise workshops and seminars in both urban and rural areas, and also widen their sensitisation campaigns against gender inequality in the 36 states of the federation and the FCT. Even so, there is also urgent need for more studies by academics and other relevant stakeholders on the various dimensions and nature of gender inequality. These will enlighten the general public on their obligations in the fight against gender inequality and propel the government to act drastically and urgently towards stemming the tide and paving the way for meaningful socioeconomic development in the country. Finally, considering the influence of the media and social media, creative artists and writers should further utilize the arsenal of creativity like plays and films in further promoting this agenda until it becomes an acceptable way of life.

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TRADITION, CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN THE LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY OF AFRICAN PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Theatrical lighting is essential in the preparation, articulation and expression of the mythos of African performances. It is a core performance element that livens, embellishes, reveals and frames both the content and context of African performances. However, the continuum of theatre and human society has made such creative dexterity less sacrosanct as it continues to adapt to emergent ideas and innovations. On this premise, this paper examines the tradition, change and continuity in the lighting technology of African performances. The paper deploys qualitative research methodology in collating andanalysing data. Finding reveals that this technical element has experienced three levels of transition, namely; "simplistic" technology; "complexified" technology; and "hybrid" technology. The paper concludes that the knowledge of African performance lighting craftsmanship is essential for future generation of its bearers as it will guide in the creative process. The paper encourages more research in this area for purposes of documentation and transmission of these creative ideas.

Keywords: Lighting Technologies, Traditional Performance, Transition.

Introduction

Lighting technology of African performances is evolvimg with society and appeals to the changing philosophies and ideologies of their bearers. While lighting may interlace due to cultural contact, this may alsolead to the obliteration, revision or improvement of some conceived technological precepts. Regardless, many African societies strive to sustain their authenticities in the wake of "glo-calisation". This is because, they are embodiments and mechanisms for expressing, articulating and communicating their daily ideations and methods of copping with social problematics. Evidently, every phase of human experience and or evolution impacts community performance traditions in many ramifications. New pattern of thinking, challenges and influences from other cultures may inform the injection of new songs, movement patterns, and technologies in many performance traditions.

Pavis maintains that "...each historical movement, and each dramaturgical and stage practice corresponding withthat movement, possesses its own criteria of dramaticity (way of setting up a conflict) and of theatrecality (manner of using the stage)" (208). This also explains the intricate nature of theatre to live up to its expectation as the mirror and or chronicler of the society. In this sense, some cultural performances find themselves adapting tocurrent realities by evolving new ways of communicating these realities to community audience, while others maintain their status quo.

Performance traditions across the globe exhibit peculiarities in design and technological innovations. Cultural variations, pattens of thinking, conceived ideologies and philosophies, general cosmo-spatial realities and social contentions are basic to the formation and or origination of performances. Molinta affirms that "the influence of technology is obvious and manifested in all times, in all cultures and in all traditions; influencing them, creating, shaping, ordering and facilitating them; bringing smooth functioning, efficiency, predictability and most times safety into theatre practice" (2). Beyond the quadrupleelements of the performer, space, performance and audience required for performativity to be said to have occurred, every performance rely on some level oftechnical and or technological innovation, be they 'simplistic', 'complexified' or 'sophisticated' to articulate, propel or tell the tale. Adjudging technological innovations in traditional performances in terms of their 'simplicity', 'complexity' or 'sophistication' is subjective. Such assessment must be carried out bearing in mindthe nature of performance, period of conception, available techne (skill), and their roles. This will vary from performance to performance and from culture to culture. This paper attempts to trace the transition in the lighting technology of Africaperformance. The paper also points readers to the dearth of literature covering this bit on lighting. Odeh puts this problematic in perspective as he writes that:

Most researches favour the cultural signification of traditional performances like usability, aesthetics, ergonomics and functionality while old and new forms and innovations in lighting and craft technologies of traditional performances are ignored. This problematic is affirmed by Duro Oni's periodization of the evolution of lighting technologyin Nigeria beginning from 1880 to modern times, a period that witnessed the fusion of foreign and local performance materials in Nigeria. The implication is that there is no recorded or documented evidence of lighting design of traditional performances in Nigeria (297-307).

As a theatre tradition which is created and stored in the memory of bearers, African performances do not have documentation of its lighting design and technology. There is no documented evidence on the specific periods or times when these lighting designs and technologies were deployed. To put more succinctly, the oral nature of documentation made is impossible to give a vivid and accurate time when these sources came into use and the order or sequence in which they were created and used. Also, related to this challenge is the differences in culture and performance which may determine the innovation in lighting design and technology, and the sequences in which they evolved and deployed. Arising from these problematics, this paper takes a general look at the evolution of lighting design and technology in African performances. This paper is therefore significant because it caters for the dearthof literature on the evolution of lighting technologies in African performances. It draws random examples of African performances to illustrate and corroborate each stage of the evolution of the lighting formation. It makes use of computer Aided Designs (CAD) to provide pictorial representation of the use of lights in the arena stage. The essence is to direct the reader's attention to the placement and focus of such lighting sources. This will give them a graphical understanding of the discussion.

Conceptual Grounding

The mention of African performance connotes three performance typologies and or traditions; traditional and or indigenous performances, popular theatre and the literary tradition. This classification prevents any form of indistinctness and the phrase from being engulfed in a conceptual minefield. This paper is premised on the indigenous performance tradition. Performance ideation, content and context in Africa is disembodied, it defies singular authorship, recognises collectivity and commonality of authorship and utility. Different societal contentions breed different performance styles which are broadly bifurcated into ritual and social performances. Africans rely on memory for the documentation and transfer of its performances from one generation to the another. African performances are created to serve the diversity of its socio-political, economic, religious and cultural narratives and experiences. They exist in form of dances, songs, chants, incantations, lullabies, wrestling, snake charming, etc. African performances are less dialogical, highly participatory and always activating a proactive audience in any performance instance.

The design component of African performances is basically formalistic in style. The formalistic structure of African design formation is informed by its found space. This is advantageous because it prevents the danger and or challenge of orienting scene design to a particular section of an audience who seats round the performance space. This limits its design technologies to sound, light and costume/make-up. It is however, speculative or rather inappropriate to conclude that this design orientation

is a form of escapism from the challenge mooted above. Rather, it is rational to think of this orientation as one also informed and or pre-ordained by the content and context of African performances. Dance, music, wrestling, chants and incantations among others are key African performances, hence it necessarily differs the construction of sets and or commodification of the arena space. However, its performance space can be inundated with light without reaching the point of saturation. With regards to the role of light in the formation of performance style, 4Brewster and Shafer maintain that:

Stage lighting is elemental in establishing the style of the production. The aesthetic look of the lighting, coupled with the mode in which lights shift from one look to another, sets up certain conventions for the production. The look of the stage lighting can be realistic, and the shifts between light cues can be subtle, with imperceptible changes that seem to happen organically with the action of the play; alternatively, stage lighting can be presentational, with strong non-realistic looks and bold changes in the cues that are obvious and purposeful. In stage lighting, these two variations in style are classified as motivated or non-motivated designs (188).

As a formalistic theatre tradition, the presentational and or non-motivated lighting approach best describes it lighting style. Brewster and Shafer further explain that "with non-motivated lighting, the primary interest is creating and establishing a mood and supporting the theme of the play. Non-motivated lighting is typical of highly stylized productions like dance and music concerts, where the mood of the piece is primary. Experimental or avant-garde theatre pieces may also employ non-motivated lighting" (189). Therefore, the deployment of natural lighting like sun, moon and lightening coupled with the nature of space as well as the nature of performances fundamentally determined the style and or approach to performing in Africa. To this end, the interest in lighting in African performance is nurtured by two premises; (i) itspeculiar function as meet the demands of specific performances and periods, and (ii) it none-hypostatic and or evolving nature.

Livingston posits that\:

...light is acomponent of artistic expression or a tool used to achieve that expression. It can be used to direct attention and emphasise elements of a composition, reveal three- dimensional form and texture, set a mood, create an ambience, support an activity, define the boundaries of a space, and so much more (41).

To extrapolate, light in which ever form and performance tradition serves the visual and aesthetic needs of the bearers in the same manner it does to the performers that need it to express, reveal and shape the mood of the audience. Livingston infers that "the goal of every design is tocreate, in collaboration with the rest of the design team, an environment that is appropriate to the use and the users, and that meets the owners' requirements of cost, project timeline, efficiency, etc." (7). This presupposes that light in African performance serves different intentions as mooted and necessitated by different cultures and periods. Though, it is difficult to point exactly to the year and or years inwhich these changes may occur. However, for the purpose of this paper, the three erasnamely, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras is used.

Tradition, Change and Continuity in the Lighting Technology of African Performance

The evolution of lighting design and technology in African performances may have begun with the use of natural lighting technology. These lighting sources include moon light, sun light and lightening. Since African traditional performance space is open-air, performances are naturally illuminated by these natural light sources. However, the use of artificial lighting sources, particularly bonfire may have been integrated in this performance tradition at a later date. This innovation, perhaps, may have been motivated by the need to create performances that require new lighting sources or to create variations and aesthetics in productions. In this instance, a heap of fire may be lit and players made to perform round it. In other performance instances, some sort of kinetic lighting is created with a performer who doubles as the lighting man moving around the stage with a burning flame. Gradually, the contact between Africa and the west led to the use of other artificial lighting sources like kerosene lamp, incandescent bulb and flood light. These lighting sources created general illumination for the stage and venue of performance. As time went on, the expansion in knowledge and creativity gave birth to more profound lighting systems with the capability of creating special effects, atmospheres and moods in performance contexts. Bellman writes that "from 1898 to the present time, there has been a constant development in the art of stage lighting, which appears to be moving in the direction of the fulfilment of Appia's broad aesthetic dicta" (296). Andy agrees that "creative practitioners are caught up in the march of culture. They produce altered dramaturgies that chime with the 'techne' of the moment, which itself is always evolving" (4). This implies that, modern theatre designers have so far leveraged these innovations by harnessing them with traditional forms of lighting systems to create new expressions and deepen meaningsof performances. The figure below explicates the different forms of light utilised in African traditional performances from traditional society to modern times.

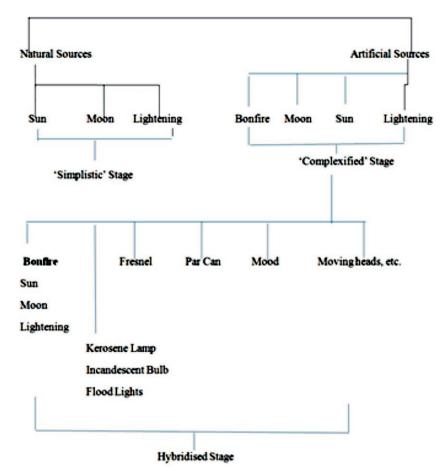


Figure 1. Evolution of Light in African performance.

These phases in the evolution of lighting technology and deployment in African performance is period specific and applies conveniently to the socio-temporal and cosmo-spatial aesthetics of the time. Each phase explains the use of available technology, skills and artistry of the time in transmitting cultural messages to the audience. These phases of transition are further explained with diagrammatic and pictorial illustrations below.

The 'Simplistic' Stage

This stage in the evolution of lighting in African performance embodies three natural sources of illuminating performances namely; sun, moon and lightening. The use of sun light as illuminating force in African performance culture is ancient. It is by far one of the oldest sources of lighting in African performance culture. African theatre is well known for carrying out various social and sacred performances in the day time

with such performances inextricably relying on the natural sun light for illumination and performance visibility. Performances such as *Argungu* fishing festival, *Akatanka*, *Aita*, *Ikiahoho* among others are examples of traditional performances that rely on sunlight for illumination. This form of lighting is described by Gloman and Napoli as "the biggest and brightest key light...". A form of "one-point lighting" (323). It is a form of lighting that creates moving shadows since thebeams emanates from only one direction. Below is a diagrammatic rendering of sunlight in production context.

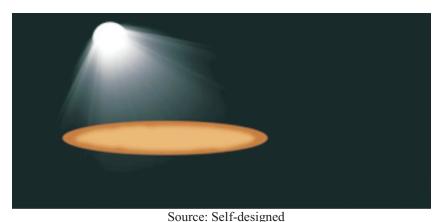


Figure 2. Illustrates how sun Light illuminates the arena stage.

Brian Fitt and Joe Thornley give a broader perspective on sun light thus:

Light in its most basic form, daylight, consist of a mixture of sunlight and skylight. These can be analysed as the sun which provides extremely hard light that gives well defined shadows and a sense of depth; and the sky which gives very soft diffused lighting without any obvious shadows. The reason that the light behaves in different ways is that the sun is a very small source in comparison to the subjects it illuminates, hence it produces the hard shadows, whereas the sky is an extremely large source in area and thus produces almost shadowless lighting (3).

While visual clarity in terms of proper exposure of subjects and objects on stage is achieved with this lighting formation, control of light intensity and aesthetics creation and simulation remain problematic. Other problematics associated with the deployment of sun light in African performances is the probable hazard accruable during performance. Hotness of the performance space and uncontrolled heat

experienced by both performers and audience is caused by direct sunshine on the performance space.

Another source of light used in this stage is the moon light. Moon light as a source of lighting in African performance is also one of the oldest sources of lighting. It is of immense significance in African performance culture. Moon light performances abound in African society. Beyond folk tales, rituals and other forms of social performances also enjoy the enduring beam of the moon light. Some performance began from moonlight stories embellished with actionable narrativity. An example of such is the Tiv *Kwagh-hir*. The major challenge associated with this light source is the inability to manipulate, control intensity and create aesthetic opulence. Below is a diagram of moon light as deployed in production context.



Source: Self-designed *Figure 3. Illustrates how moon Light illuminates the arena stage.*

Lightening is the last form of light deployed in this stage of the evolution of lighting in African performance. Lightening is a rare lighting source to the extent that it can only be deployed and or used when there is rain that produces thunder and lightening. Like the sun and moon, lightening is functional when any performance is carried outin the rain. Sun, moon lights and lightening have remained unchangeable, static andsacrosanct in their deployment in African performance culture. It follows that once a performance is done in the day time, it must depend on sun light; if it is done at nightor in the rain, it cannot avoid the beam of the moon and lightening. This explains whythey are the oldest forms of lighting systems in African performances.

The 'Complexified' Stage

This stage witnessed the creative syncretisation of natural and artificial lighting technologies. However, before the intermixture, the invention of a new source of

lighting called bonfire was made. Bonfire or flame-based lighting source finds relevance and application in day and night performances in Africa. The material used in actualising this light source depends on the culture and the creative dexterity of the designer. In some cultural performances, woods are placed at the core arena and then set ablaze and harmonized with the sun or moon lights to create the needed visibility for performances. while in other performance traditions, the source may be kinetic or placed in order strategic areas of the performance space. Examples of performances that make use of bonfire as source of illumination include *Ogrinye* and *Kwagh-hir*. Research has shown that most performances that make use of bonfire blur time. To put more succinctly, whether such performances are carried out in the day or night times, they make use of the bonfire. Light within the context of production begun to be suggestive, a pointer, a representation of ideas of some sort. It became more meaningful, more indexical of something in the cultural life of the people. This lighting source is exemplified in the diagram below.

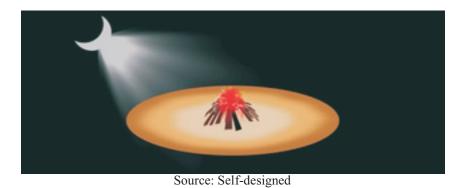


Figure 4. Illustrates how bonfire Light illuminates the arena stage.

This also presupposes that the lighting source performs functions beyond illumination. Instances can be drawn from the Igede *Ogrinye* where the bonfire is used for roasting yams, lighting cigarette and warming the body of both performers and audiences. AnopUd the *Kwagh-hir* where light is functional in directing and or leading the performers while also revealing the performers for audience viewership.

The Hybridised Stage

The hybridised stage is a classic example of the marriage between the traditional and modern. The introduction of Western theatre coupled with the development of skills set in the use and maintenance of more advanced lighting systems informed the integration of modern lights into African performance. Jones may be referring to this when he writes that: "in our time, the theatre is mixed, confused andhybrid"

(122). With hybridisation, the performance space has transformed thus making the stage environment completely new. To light these new spaces requires the designer's understanding of both the physical and nonphysical environment that houses performances. Shelley explains this thus: "The physical components of a lighting design must work in tandem with the other various elements of the physical and non-physical environment, including the theatrical space, the scenic components, various personnel, and the schedule" (1). Shelley further writes that "While the aesthetics of the design are the primary concern, the lighting designer must also possess a practical knowledge of the physical and conceptual framework of the theatrical lighting environment, in order to effectively communicate, coordinate, and execute those aesthetics" (1). It is not enough to have plethora of advanced lighting equipment and facilities. This is because they cannot operate themselves. Sequel to this, there is every need for lighting designers to have the necessary skills to put them in to functional use. A majoropU feature of modern lighting is its automation and impeccable aesthetic stimulation. Cadena corroborates that:

Today's automated lighting systems are technological marvels with incredibly sophisticated engineering, arich feature set, a high level of reliability, and increasing efficiency. They're still getting smaller, lighter, and brighter (relative to power consumption), and the optics are still getting better and more efficient. Lamp manufacturers are doing their part bydeveloping a wider range of lamps with better efficiency, longer life, and better quality of light. Forthose of us who use automated lighting, life is good (4).

Ogrinye and Kwagh-hir are performances that have experienced the use of modern lighting. The integration of modern light began as an unconscious and or deliberate act. As indigenous performances began to enjoy patronage beyond boundaries and or other contexts, many occasion organisers would light the venue of the occasions and such lighting would spill into the performance area. This synergy perhaps, began with the experiment with gas lamps, and kerosene lamps. Although these lights may enhance more visibility of performance carried out at night, they possess some challenges as those of sun, moon, lightening and bonfire. They are basically used in creating general visibility of the performance venue and participant alike. The beam emitting from these light sources cannot be controlled and it cannot be manipulated to create special effects. However, with the invention of electricity and its application in the theatre, a diametrical shift the theatre lighting occurred. Pilbrow captures this succulently thus:

Stage lighting is a remarkable part of modern theatre. Remarkable because, although theatrical productions have been presented for many thousands of years; thenew ability to accurately and sensitively control

lighthas led to stage lighting's emergence as an ever more significant element in the creation of theatre (xxv).

As lighting technology improves and designers able to purchase them, the integration of more sophisticated lighting like the Fresnel, Mood, Par Can, Moving heads, Profile spot lights, etc. became possible. In this instance, the integration of modern lighting is no longer accidental but a deliberate and creative drive to enhance the aesthetics of African performances. Below is a diagram of the deployment of flood lights in production.

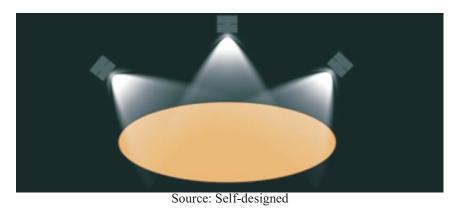


Figure 5. Illustrates how flood Lights illuminate the arena stage.

Lighting becomes more functional and deliberate in design and application. It became possible to create special effects, moods and general performance atmosphere using different shades of colours and instruments for productions. Odeh (*Lighting Design in Ogrinye and Kwagh-hir...*) affirms that "innovations in theatre technology, particularly in the area of lighting has shaped theatre practice and added more aesthetic value to theatrical productions in contemporary times" (1). Below is the intermixture of traditional and modern lighting in the performance of the Igede *Ogrinye*.



Source: Jerry Idah Odeh. PhD Lighting Experiment

Figure 6. Showing the intermixture of bonfire and modern Lights.

With the hybridisation of both lighting sources, aesthetic became more profound. Variation of the visual text was achieved through the use of different colours. Stanton and Banham posit that "stage lighting in the 100 years since the first use of electricity in the theatre, has had a profound effect upon staging, scenery, styles of production and acting, and even upon the shape of the theatre building itself" (16). Therefore, the marriage led to the inclusion of other elements in the theatre space. These include poles and cables which the modern lights were mounted on and connected with. From a bare sandy performance space to the erection of poles and connection of cables-the space itself is already evolving. This therefore, corroborates Stanton and Banham's position that modern light affects the nature and or shape of the theatre. Below is another lighting intermixture with the *Kwagh-hir*.



Source: Jerry Idah Odeh. PhD Lighting Experiment *Figure 7.* Showing the intermixture of bonfire and modern Lights.

This lighting interaction exhibits similar aesthetic characteristics with that of *Ogrinye*. Visibility is high, beauty is heightened, meaning deepened and audience perplexed by the marvel of the creative synergy. Writing on the functionality of modern lighting Duro Oni maintains that: "The new lighting ...has the ability to situate the action of the play in time and in space and also provide information on the place (locality) of the play, that will serve as the alternative environment of the new future drama. This new function of stage lighting was the exclusive preserve of scenery" (78). New perception of these forms in the context of a hybridised lighting approach became palpable. Local lighting designers and performers are forced to see and understand their performances in new light and approach. It is the exquisite outcome of the lighting continuum, exhibition of enthusiasm and interest in the new performance context that marks the beginning of the bearers and modern designers move for continuity and or sustenance. This move is also heralded by the need for local lighting designer to up their skills and understanding of lighting. This is because as John informs:

The real key to fine lighting is not only to simulate reality, but to communicate the proper mood and feeling to the viewer. You need to know more than just basic techniques or tricks; it's best to have an understanding of how certain looks will communicate to your viewers. You need to develop an artist's eye for light and shadow and colour, and thetechniques for reproducing them (1).

With such understanding and skill set, local lighting designers will be able to creatively synergise both lighting systems and perhaps, pass this creativity to the next generation.

Conclusion

This paper examined the evolution of lighting in African performance. The paper is pre-set to unravel the tradition, change and continuity in the type, application and function of lighting within the context of performance. In concomitance, three traditions of transition were uncovered; 'simplistic', 'complexified' and hybridised stages. In each of these stages, light performed different functions, first, as meet the specifications of diverse performances, and as demanded by the available lighting technology and the will to experiment with them in order to create new aestheticism and appreciation of these indigenous forms. One factor that runs throughout these phases is the maintenance of the original and or traditional lighting forms in every performance instance. Therefore, contrary to speculations that the integration of modern lighting will amount to total mutation of the content and context of African performance, the consistency in the use of the original lighting forms in every phase of evolution points to the bearer's acknowledgement of the value and the maintenance of the cultural aesthetics even in the face of hybridization.

It is on the above premise that performance bearers and modern lighting designers are encouraged to work together to ensure continuity in the design formation and application of indigenous lighting in African performance. This is important because these lighting in African performance is indexical; if substituted, could mutate the intention. Also, the continuous application of emerging lighting technology in African performance will contribute in keeping them alive. This is because they can be performed outside the boundaries of their birth place and on different forms of performance spaces.

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SEMIOTIC ASPECTS OF MBOMAMA/IRI-JI FESTIVAL OF UMUEZEALA ANCIENT KINGDOM AND THE VESTIGES OF CONTINUITY: A REVIVALIST APPROACH

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Abstract

Traditional festivals are culturally based and some of these cultural festivals are either at the verge of extinction or already flattened by modernity. This also applies to traditional festivals where the norms and cultural embellishments of a particular society are showcased. This paper observes that the *Mbomama* festival, which serves as a cultural identity of most parts of Ehime Mbano people of Imo State, is gradually losing its flavour and cultural appeal because of the neglect of some aspects of it that contribute to the overall cultural essence of the festival. The paper however finds that during the festival, the only prominent thing that sustains peoples' interest at the moment is the carnival procession around Aba Branch where costumes and make-up are riotously displayed to the admiration of the spectators. Anchoring on participatory-observational method, the paper concludes that those aspects of the festival that have gone into extinction are still part of the cultural essences of the festival and should be revived if the festival is to serve its finer role of cultural preservation and propagation.

Keywords: Mbomama, Iri-ji, Festival, Umuezeala Ancient Kingdom, Vestiges of Continuity and Revivalist Approach.

Introduction

Festivals constitute part of the cultural heritage of a people. They are an integral part of the cycle of life of an African man or woman. From conception to birth and finally to death, there is a strong inclination towards festivals and ceremonies which are part and parcel of a traditional institutions. These traditional institutions are common to all human societies.

Virtually in all African communities, festivities constitute a benchmark for marking various stages associated to befitting life. It is one of the ways through which man expresses his awareness of transcendental beings outside himself. Duruaku argues that "humanity is about celebrating together. More formally, festival is an occasion for communal celebration presenting cultural performances, exhibitions and competitions" (7-8).

Furthermore, festivals are occasions for feasting or celebration, especially a day or time of religious, social and cultural significance that reoccur at regular intervals or an often regularly recurring program of cultural performance, exhibition or competitions". All these are reflections of what happens during the *Mbomama* festival of Umuezeala as people converge to make merry and appreciate the gods for protection and fruitful harvest. Similarly, Okpoko argues that "festivals are generally encompassing spectacular displays, enjoyment of music, food and wine. People express their happiness through dance, indicating the hedonistic characteristic of the festival" (15). Festivals, whether religious, cultural or secular, play a very essential role in any community, because it helps to develop the pride and identity of a people. Festivals provide an opportunity for local communities to develop and share their culture. It showcases values and beliefs held by the individual in a local community and provide opportunity for members of the local community to exchange experience and information.

Mbomama or Iri-Ji is a thanksgiving festival performed by the people of Umuezeala Autonomous Community in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State. Though it is known by different names among various sub-ethnic groups in Igbo land, however, throughout the history of Umuezeala Autonomous Community, certain days or periods of time have been set aside to commemorate and ritually celebrate events and seasons which consolidate community solidarity (Ezenagu and Olatunji 44). The community sees this festival as mostly a religious even to be served with meditations and incantations. These acts bring about repetition of actions which give rise to rituals. Rituals are important part of the festival especially when it is meant for gods and myth. Thus, *Umuezeala* people regard the *Mbomama/Iri-Ji* festival as a special period that is sacred and ritualized. It is a time for man to identify and reunite himself with his gods, community and ancestors. This is so because the community acknowledges their duty to return gratitude to Chukwu, their God, for providing them with such a gratuitous gift as yam, a major food that satisfies their gastronomic requirements by ensuring their physical and material well-being. The festival also offers the people the opportunity to cherish the bounteous gifts of nature; especially those products that have sustained their lives over the years and have enriched some members of their community, enabling them to become rich and wealthy before the advent of British currency and a market economy.

Hence, understanding the spirit of *Mbomama/Iri-Ji* festival of *Umuezeala* Autonomous Community, its relevance, its condiments and its programming creates a learning atmosphere which helps to fashion out and brings to public domain the history of socio-religious activities of the community. As festivals are events that go beyond dancing and singing, they are also emblems of peace and unity. Regrettably, very many aspects of the festival which revalidates its cultural and religious undertones have been eroded because of economic hardship and modernity. The main thrust of this paper therefore is to initiate a critical discourse on *Mbomama/Iri-Ji* festival of *Umuezeala* Autonomous Community, the moribund status of some semiotic aspects of it and the need for their revival. In the course of this investigation, *Mbomama*, *Mbomuzo* and *Iri-Ji* will be used interchangeably.

The Nature of Mbomana/Iri-ji Festival of Umuezeala

The *Mbomama* festival of *Umuezeala A*ncient Kingdom is an annual event that takes place every August before the commencement of harvest. It is a period of harvest and an opportunity to thank *Ahiajoku* (god of yam) for bountiful harvest. During the month of the festival, villages engage themselves in the brushing, clearing and maintaining of connecting pathways and roads before the commencement of the ceremony. This practice ensures that the roads are maintained and drained of flood water. No doubt, a clean environment makes for healthy persons; healthy persons encase and possess healthy minds; healthy minds radiate healthy ideas and healthy ideas precipitate progress and development (Duru 57).

The month of August in *Umuezeala* is regarded as a month of joy, peace, love and socialization. It is a month of cleanliness, harvest, eating and drinking; a period when a bonafide indigene of *Umuezeala* does not join his or her ancestors during *Onwa* Ano (the month of August) Umuezeala and even if that becomes the case, the person did not die. Rather, he or she is just waiting till the eve of 1 September when the ancestors will open the gate of transition. Above all, the month of August is a "holy month during which time every member in the community is forbidden to fight, quarrel or perform marriage ceremonies" (Nwaneri 4). Duruaku agrees to this when he opines that "festivals being communal celebration...forbids rancour, hatred, quarrels and all such negative social behaviour that impede development both of the mind, at an individual level, and the super structure of the society" (14). Prior to the commencement of the event, the traditional rulers in old Umuezeala comprising of Umuezeala Ogwara, Ezike, Umunagbara and Umuezeala gather at Umuezeala Ama to decide on the date of the various events that make up the festivity. Having agreed on the date, processes are put in motion for its actualization. Radio announcements are made to create awareness and prepare peoples' minds about the event.

The *Mbomama* festival is done in segments and each segment is an integral whole of the entire celebration. It is well planned and religiously followed. The first, according to historical accounts provided by His Royal Highness, Late Eze Nwaneri (4) in his anniversary brochure, included what he describes as '*Ito Omu* or *IgbaJi Omu* - breaking of the palm frond- (4). This is the ceremony that ushers in the holy month that signals the beginning of the observances of all the dos and dont's of the season. This "serves as social control mechanism in society by establishing patterns of loyalty and prescribing parameters of acceptable conduct of the people thereby integrating them into the religious system; the framework of socio-cultural customs and ... socio-psychological needs of man" (Turaki 149).

It is followed by Ida Ekwekpuru which can also be referred to as Iwe Ewe Ahia (Clearing stock from the market). This ceremony is performed on Nkwo (name of a market) Umuezeala market day. After this, Mbomuzo Umuezeala (clearing of foot paths and roads) take place. This is the "most significant of all the ceremonies. It is performed with fanfare and merriment on the following Afor Ezuru (name of a market) market day. This is in tandem with the view of Uchendu as cited by Ukachukwu that "each community holds the rite on its market day" (248). The rite is celebrated in many Igbo villages and the festival marks the beginning of the first harvest and the eating of new and fresh yams in most Igbo homesteads. It is an appeasement ritual with thankful prayers in a rite marked by the slaughtering of live animals especially, fowls, the pouring of libations and the invocation of the ancestral spirits and the local divinities. Privately, every adult male in the community performs his own ritual to the extent that he can afford in his own home. On the said day, yams are cooked in the palace of the traditional ruler and eaten by the Eze (king) himself and members of the Eze-in-council (the league of kingmakers) (Ekweariri 122). This is done with necessary propitiation because it is "thought an impiety to have new yam eaten or fully harvested without first being offered to the gods in preparation for a bountiful harvest" (Ukaegbu 43). IriJi Ohuru Festival re-enacts and reflects the typical Igbo communitarian experience of the philosophy of *Umunnawuike* (power is great when we are together). After this, the people troupe to the central location (Aba Branch market Square) and have unlimited fun. Small groups are formed as singing partners and move from one place to the other singing and dancing; apparently waiting for the return of the traditional rulers who went to Nkwo Umuezeala Market. The carnival reaches to a crescendo when the traditional rulers come back from their visit to Nkwo Umuezeala, the ancestral market of the community. Their return is heralded with *mkponala* (canon shots) and the singing and dancing now reaches its peak. Indeed, some people view the Mbomuzo Umuezeala as the actual ceremony of all the festivities. This takes place at Aba Branch Market Square with participants' displaying riotous costumes and make ups of different shades. It is a carnival of a sort where old songs are reinvented while new ones are formed. The spirit of camaraderie is exhibited as people share drinks and other kinds of edibles together. The third segment is Mkpom Obia (feasting) ceremony where friends, relatives and well-wishers are lavishly entertained. This is done on Nkwo and Afor market days respectively. However, it should be noted that this feasting is not done simultaneously. Umuebo/Umudim does their son Nkwo market day while *Umuopara* does theirs on *Afor* market day. After the feasting on Afor market day, there is the ceremony of Mmanya Ura. This enables the villages to come together and consume the leftovers of yesterday's feasting with palm wine and local salad as embellishments to the occasion. Following this closely is JiAro Umuezelala (the king of the yam). This ceremony is also known as Ibu Ji Aro Umuezeala (carrying of the king of yam) and is performed either on the next day after the Mbomuzo ceremony but more often on the second Nkwo Umuezeala market day following the *Mbomuzo* ceremony. On this day, the special yam (i.e. the fattest yam harvested in the entire community) is carried to Nkwo Umuezeala amidst singing and dancing. The yam is decorated with fresh palm frond and a white cock tied to it. Ibu ibishi nku follows the next four days. This involves carrying logs of wood to peoples' homes in preparation for the Harmattan season. This is kept in the family obi where they are lit to provide warmth during the Harmattan. All these rituals culminate to the last phase of the ceremony, which is *Ite Ofe Awa* (special soup with crab) where special dishes are prepared by the women and served to the male adults in the family. This of course marks the end of the festival.

Semiotic Aspects of the Festival and the Vestiges of Continuity

Semiotics is the study of the production and exchange of signs and meanings in the society. As such, it is "equally concerned with processes of signification and with those of communication, that is, the means whereby meanings are both generated and exchanged. Its objects are thus at once the different sign-systems and codes at work in society and the actual messages and texts produced" (Elam quoted in Gasper 483). Indeed, semiotics aims to take in any "system or signs, whatever their circumstance and limits, images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems and signification" (Gasper 383). Festivals are embedded in signs and significations and *Mbomama* festival of *Umuezeala* is not an exception. Through the understanding of these signs and their symbolic undertones, meanings are generated which at the long run engender good communication. However, where such is not in existence, meanings are eroded which ultimately affects the communicative nuances of the event.

It is no longer refutable that traditional African festivals are not only declining but certain semiotic aspects of it which add flavour to the festival have become relics of culture. Ukpokolo, Okoye and Lawuyi argue that "as Africans conform to the processes of modernization, synonymous with westernization, imposed on them in

the name of progress, they are increasingly losing their rich cultural heritage along with their identity (160). This is a clear manifestation of the challenges of *Mbomama* Umuezeala. The Mbomama festival of Umuezeala Autonomous Community is an occasion for thanksgiving to the earth goddess who is in close communication with her to intercede for higher productivity of the land. The occasion served for annual entertainments, merry making and cultural exhibitions. It involves a series of performances including music, plays, dance and so on organized annually that people ... assemble to eat and drink to celebrate and share a common tradition (Adegbite 13). However, owing to the conflict of Christianity and traditional African religion (paganism) over certain cultural practices, the Mbomama festival fell victim to conspiracy of misinformation. It became branded as fetish, its procedure declared profane and objective interpreted as forum to offer sacrifice to pagan gods. More so, the economic hardship ravaging the citizenry has frustrated the festival. This led to the decline of interest and the waning of enthusiasm in various semiotic aspects of the festival which were hitherto, popular socio-cultural annual event that showcases the cultural undertones of the community. These semiotic aspects as earlier stated include the Ito Omu or Igbaji Omu, feasting, Mmanya Ura, Ibu Ibishi Nku and Ite Ofe Awa.

Ito Omu or Igbaji Omu: This is essentially a ritual ceremony designed to intimate and inform people that the ceremony is about starting and as such, there should be no fighting and bickering. During the ceremony and if for any reason somebody violates the peace week by fighting, quarrelling or holding any other ceremony of public engagement such as traditional or white wedding, severe penalty awaits the defaulter. Such penalties are not fixed but ranges from a goat, fowl, gallons of palm wine and kola nuts. All these are dependent on the decisions of the Eze-in-council and the Oji Ofos. Though the consciousness is there, but the fact that this event no longer takes place during the ceremony, it has created opportunity for miscreants to exhibit dissident behaviour that often times breach the peace of the festival. Cases abound where people, who because of religious inclinations have continued to violate the rules and nothing seemed to have happened. This may portend a big problem if such unacceptable behaviour is not addressed.

Feasting: This is one aspect of the festival that brings friends, family relations and well-wishers together. Guests come from neighbouring villages as the ceremony is not performed on the same day throughout *Umuezeala* Autonomous Community. The day is greeted with jubilant celebrations. Communal and musical entertainment groups and masquerade troupes display their dances and acrobatic skills. It is really a thanksgiving celebration in which the whole community participates. This happens because the traditional Igbo culture is community oriented. As a people who "trace their unity to a single ancestor, they re-validate their unity by worshipping and sharing food together" (Ukachukwu 249). This practice has

gradually phased off because of economic hardship and mistrust. People no longer have the financial muscle to host others, coupled with mutual suspicion and doubts.

Mmanya Ura: This is part of the festival celebration that is no longer practiced. During this ceremony, the leftover's of the yesterday's palm wine is brought before the men for consumption at kindred levels. At this event, in-laws, friends and wellwishers also come with gallons of palm wine while the women prepare Ugba (oil bean) with okporoko (stock fish), usu and akidi (local beans). The palm wine is cooked and while it boils, people scoop it from the pot and drink. Most times, people drink from the same cup. This is accompanied with traditional dances and songs. Visitations and exchanges are made from one kindred to the other and drinks shared. Communal eating remains a cherished value among the people of the community. It is through eating together that people come to renew their commitment to the primacy and sacrosanctity of the blood bond and the significance of consanguine relationships in the kin group. He who refuses to eat together with his *Umunna* is looked upon as dubious, diabolical and malicious. It is in eating and drinking together that the people celebrate their sisterhood and brotherhood ties. It is at such gatherings that they know persons who are deviants in the community. This has a lot of significance in various ways. The Mmanya Ura ceremony is a form of covenant making. When the wine is boiled and people scoop wine from the same pot, a covenant of nonaggression, mutual respect for one another, love and team spirit is unconsciously entered into. This is 'igbandu' (covenant) which is renewed annually. Offenders are liable to attract/invite 'oriko' (curse) to themselves which requires propitiation on their part. However, the absence of this in recent celebrations has indirectly brewed hatred, diabolism and witch hunting. Despite the idleness as a result of the relaxation which accompanies festivities, it enhances community life. Mbiti outlines the following benefit:

Through festivals the life of the community is renewed. People are entertained and their tension finds outlet. It also brings together the people as a group, thus, strengthening their unity and cohesion.

Religious and secular values are repeated and renewed through communal festivals. Artistic talents are utilized; drama and oral communication where the festival involves beliefs concerning the unseen world, the link between human beings and the spirit is renewed (52).

Thus, the *Manya Ura* ceremony promotes unity of purpose, cohesion and ensures dexterous liveliness during the event. Regrettably, some of these things have gradually become things of the past.

Ibu Ibishi Nku: This ceremony brings both the old and young together in a gregarious atmosphere. It involves going round the villages and carrying logs/stumps of wood to every family. The choices are made by the head of each family on where the stump/log of wood is located and it is the responsibility of the people to get it for him. Usually, the stump/log of wood is kept at the hut (obi) in front of the compound. At the end of the exercise, the people are feted with local delicacies that most times make them over jocund. The stump/log of wood so provided helps to keep the families warm during harmatan period and provides outlets for them to roast corns and pea. Incidentally, this event is no longer practiced and where it is, people now make individual efforts to fend for themselves.

Ite Ofe Awa: This is the final phase of the festival and one of the aspects that the people enjoy so much. It involves the cooking of a special soup prepared with nshiko (crab), okporoko, (stock fish), dried and fresh fish and served with well pounded foofoo. Here, every family is expected to present one dish before the kindred which would be consumed by the family heads and adults present. The meeting point is the kindred's village hall but at a point, it was left in the hands of individual family heads. When the food is more than enough for the head of the families (which is usually the case), he shares it with the other male members of his family. Every male adult of the family look forward to this ceremony. It serves as a sort of family reunion and an opportunity for the men to discuss the affairs of the family. The benefit of such a discussion cannot be underestimated because of its ability to bond the family and create brotherliness and unity.

Navigating ways for Revival

The moribund state of some semiotic aspects of our cultural festivals and the dangers they portend to the existence of Igbo nation has continued to engage scholars of cultural anthropology. Some of them have maintained that cultural festivals are emblems of a particular society on whose identity and pride the society revolves. As Owen-Ibie observes, cultures of nations are their identity and sign of national pride (73). They gave a sense of identity, dignity, continuity and bind people together. No doubt, the infiltration of western cultures has done much

to dampen the enthusiasm in our own culture but the need to reconstruct and remodel our festivals to conform with the realities of the moment has become imperative. Today, African tradition is held with contempt especially festivities because of its associated root in African traditional religion. In view of the tie between festivities and traditional religion, derogatory word such as 'fetish' is used in describing such traditional events. Given the damages inflicted on African festivities, it calls for cultural revival, reincarnation of traditional art and revolution of our cultural festival. Ejiofor quoted in Ukpokolo, Okoye, and Lawuyi contends that "the only remedy that may eventually reverse the trend of centuries of white prejudice against the black race is a cultural revival" (160). Such cultural revival

will serve as a springboard for festival renaissance in Umuezeala Autonomous Community in particular and Igbo land in general. For the purposes of this paper therefore and the sustenance of our cultural heritage, the following are the proposed action plan for the revival of some semiotic aspects of *Mbomama/Iri-Ji* festival of Umuezeala Autonomous Community.

Generally, there is need for the formation of a think tank committee that will initiate ways of reviving some aspects of the festival that have been discarded. Such a committee should be spearheaded by the traditional ruler and have the Traditional Prime Minister, the Village Chairmen and notable sons of the community as members. There should be a mock presentation of these neglected aspects of the festival in their original form and constant awareness created for their revival. This will help to instill confidence in them and further boost participation.

Nothing is static. Festivals have evolved over time and continue to evolve. This allows for the modernisation and harmonization of some cultures and festivals in line with contemporary reality. The reason for the abandonment of some aspects of the festival may not be unconnected with the changing nature of time and the need to embrace it. As one of the reviving strategies, there is need for the modernization of these aspects. On the day of *Mmanya Ura*, the women should be encouraged to prepare local salad and oil bean collectively and present to the men as against the old practice of tasking individual families. People with financial muscle should be encouraged to support the course by procuring beer and other drinks to make the celebration ground. The women and youths should be encouraged to participate and a sizeable quantity of what is provided should be given to them. The Eze-incouncil should visit each village on this and participate. This will restore confidence and encourage active participation. However, the efforts of *Umuoparanyara* and *Umuakunaba* kindreds should be applauded for restoring peoples hope in the revitalization and modernization of this aspect of the festival.

A state of emergency should be declared in the area of *Ibu Ibishi Nku*. The villages should see it as a collective responsibility and galvanize the youths for support. The first port of call should be the palace of *Eze Aro II* of *Umuezeala* Ancient Kingdom. And even if there is no log or stump to be carried, he should at least, show commitment and appreciation. Any form of entertainment including cash given to participants should be collected and shared centrally at the end of the exercise.

Ofe Awa is a tradition. It has a unifying force in individual families and the community. Like what is obtainable during the pre Iwa-akwa activity where oil beans are mixed together in a basin for consumption; the same can be replicated during the Ofe Awa ceremony. The old practice of eating it together instead of

allowing individual family heads to organize it should be re-introduced. This will help to create better understanding and unity and debar people from thinking evil against others. The writers align themselves with the views of Lawuyi who argues that this kind of practice "impacts the space with meaning and identity as well as serves as a means of cultural reinvigoration, and forms of visualizing and imaging the community, assigning the space origin, lives, meanings, practices, and values for community bonding"(44).

Feasting brings joy, happiness and excitement. The idea of feasting presupposes that people must come together in a defined place for interaction and merriment. In spite of the difficulties of the moment occasioned by economic hardship and mutual distrust, the gains derivable from the feasting associated with *Mbomama* festival of Umuezeala Ancient kingdom are enormous. There is a saying that there is joy in sharing and if that is truly the case, then, there is need to revitalize this ceremony. Even if it is not elaborately done, extended family members can be invited to share good moments together. Through this means, family ties are cemented and broken relationships fixed.

Conclusion

The *Mbomama/Mbomuzo/Iri-ji* festival of Umuezeala Autonomous Community has been a veritable means of social interaction and unification. It provides a convivial atmosphere for jocundity and jollification. But owing to modernity, religiosity and economic hardships, the festival has lost some of its appeal and flavor usually found in events like *ibu ibishi nku, mmanya ura, ofe awa*, masquerading, feasting amongst others. Times were in the past when citizens of the community in Diaspora defy all odd to grace the ceremony but such no longer happens. It is the opinion of this paper as espoused above that something could still be done to salvage the situation. Therefore, the period of peace week which is almost at the verge of extinction should be modified and every traditional ruler should endeavour to enforce the rule in his

Autonomous Community. Those found culpable should be seen to have gotten the appropriate punishment required of them. Favouritism, indolence and partisanship should be eschewed in dealing with offenders. An enabling environment which will ensure peace, harmony, love, unity and development should be created. These can be promoted through the efforts of our traditional rulers. The first step is to continue to de-politicize the festivity and insulate it against political manipulation. Everybody, irrespective of political leaning, association, creed, philosophy or aspiration should be seen as a stake holder and should be encouraged to participate fully in the festival. Seminars should be held and awarenesses created to disabuse

the minds of some of our brothers and sisters who see the festival as an act of pagan worship. Above all, audience control should be activated in a way that will guarantee peace and mutual respect for participants and observers, especially during the carnival float at the Aba Branch Market Square. This will rejuvenate the festival and create more participation.

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