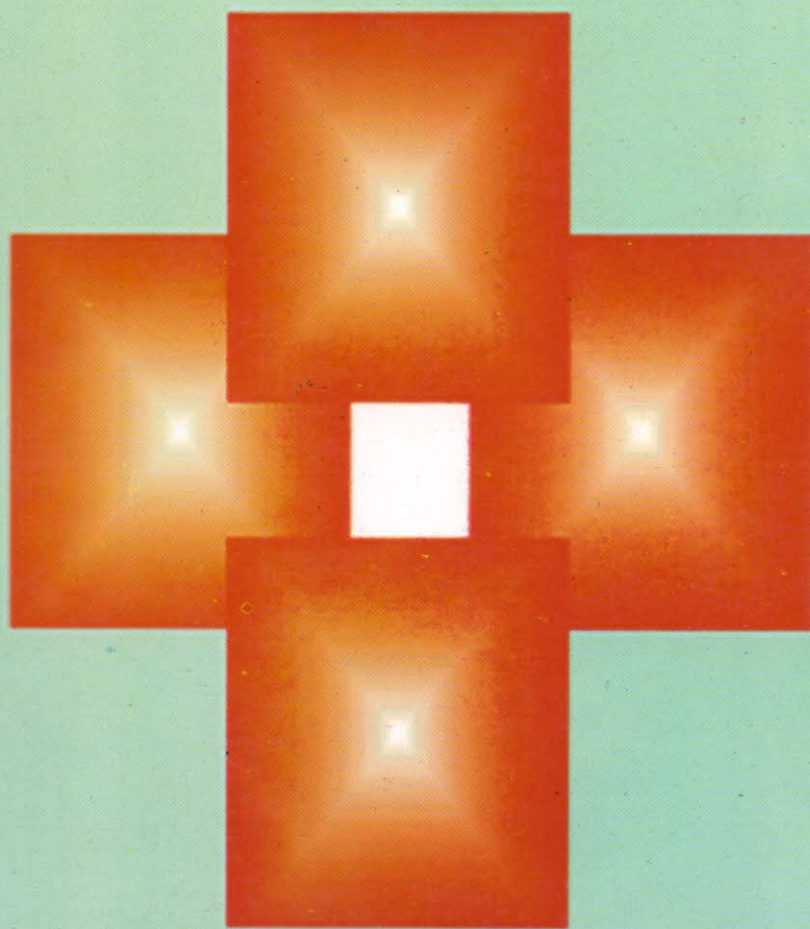


Human Views on God

Variety Not Monotony

(Essays in Honour of Ade P. Dopamu)



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HUMAN VIEWS ON GOD: Variety Not Monotony

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CHAPTER TWELVE

At The Crossroads of Theatrical Interpretation: The Character of Èsù in The Nigerian Theatre

ADEOYE ABDULRASHEED A.

Introduction: art has no permanent colour

Theatrical interpretation is within the control of the dramatist to work and imaginatively toy with. It can be located in the body of a performance which is a creative transformation of the play-text in practice. A dramatist is therefore, free to interpret an issue, person, character, myth, hero or heroine within his own expanse of creativity on the gamut of "as I see it" or "as he sees it".

Generally in art, there cannot be intellectual or artistic self-sufficiency especially within a cultural issue or artistic commodity which is rooted in orality or mythology. Myth, whether we like it or not, is now giving way to factionalisation – an artist's dual tension between creative inventiveness under the guise of poetic license and the crude fact of history. In art matter, it is important to think responsibly and in the words of George Cukor, "you can't put a ceiling on creativity."¹ It has also come to the fore that:

Creativity is endless. No artwork is a finished work because any creative artwork is an endless exercise which is subject to analysis, explication, appreciation, interpretation or misinterpretation, representation or misrepresentation. Creativity is thus an exercise in navigation and a reflection of the inherent difference in man's inspiration and imagination.²

Thus, art is an ass. It has no permanent colour. It swings to the tide of culture and recreates itself to build the society.

Considering the above, many theatre historians, artists and dramatists such as Soyinka (1976), Fatoba (1997), Osofisan (2001), Yerima (2003) and so on have written extensively on the place of some Yoruba's gods in our sensibility. They, therefore, interpreted some of these gods (Ògún, Òrúnmìlà, Èsù, Yemoja, Sàngó, Sànpóná and so on) within their own artistic license and the sheer oral materials at their disposal. Invariably also, two important Nigerian Dramatists: Wole Soyinka and Femi Osofisan adopted Ògún and Òrúnmìlà respectively as their heroes and artistic figures in their intellectual and artistic quest to mythologise and re-order our dying society.

Consequently, the crossroads is seen as a place where three footpaths meet. It represents Èsù (Yorùbá god of change) who, in Yorùbá mythology is unapologetically the owner of the crossroads. The crossroads is a metaphor of peace and trouble, evil and good, deliverance and deception. Through the analytical methodology, this study therefore, discusses the character of Èsù in relation to theatrical interpretation in the Nigerian theatre. The existing literature on Èsù, Yorùbá myth and ritual aesthetics will be reviewed, the place of Èsù in the Nigerian theatre through play-texts and performances, offer some relevant suggestions on myth and demythologisation within artistic interpretation and present our conclusion which celebrate the notion that Èsù does not exist rather Èsù exists only in our illusion.

Èsù, Yorùbá myth and ritual aesthetics

The character and myth surrounding Èsù will continue to be a subject of controversy. Oral tradition has it that Èsù was a bad god and devilish yet it was Èsù who taught Òrúnmìlà, the scientist and head of all Yorùbá oracles the art and

science of divination, herb and medicine. Èsù is bad yet we need him, within Yorùbá traditional religion, for him to accept our sacrifice at the crossroads so that our problems can be solved. Èsù is bad, yet the conspiracy of the society sent him to live at the crossroads to feast voluptuously on man's sacrifice.

The Yorùbá are traditionally ritualistic and they worship many gods that they believe will intercede for them as they transverse the cycle of life which is a continuum that celebrates birth, growth, death and re-birth. In fact, Samuel Johnson has confirmed that most Yorùbá heroes were later venerated and deified and that Èsù is a religion or object of worship in Yorubaland. He recaps that:

Èsù or Elégbára – Satan, the Evil one, the author of all evil is often and specially propitiated. Offerings are made to it. The representing image is a rough lateritic stone upon which libations of palm oil are poured. It is superstitiously believed that the vengeance of this god could be successfully invoked upon an offender by the name of the person being called before the image while nut oil is being poured on it. The image of a man, with a horn on its head curving backwards, carved in wood and ornamented with cowries, is often carried by its devotees to beg with on public highways. Passers-by who are so disposed may give each a cowry or two, or handfuls of corn, beans, or any product of the field at hand, as he or she may choose. This curved headed figure is called "Ogo Elegbara" – the devil's club.³

The statement above has shown that Èsù represents what is good and that which is bad. Èsù was a character in Yorùbá myth, he later became a hero and subsequently, he was deified and turned into a god among the over four hundred and one gods and goddesses that have existed and still exist in Yorùbáland.

Ogunba (1967, 1973, 1975 and 1978), Adedeji (1981) and Ajayi (1998) have written on the metamorphosis of the Yorùbá heroes to gods and goddesses and later, their transition from ritual and religions to theatrical aesthetics. The deified have thus anthropomorphised and in the words of Omofolabo Ajayi,

their anthropomorphic qualities further provided the background to the many stories and myths subsequently woven around them, detailing their exploits on earth but also related to their original creation tasks. At the same time, they are able to transcend the mortality of ordinary human beings by the fact that they can *parada di orisa* i.e., metamorphose into *orisa* rather than die... The manner of deification often reflects the human attributes the deity in question had acquired while living as a human being.⁴

It is imperative to note that man to god's transition is symbolic because all gods and goddesses first and foremost appear as human beings before becoming gods and goddesses. Their inherent negative and positive attributes are thus celebrated within the ethics and ethos of culture and the endless creativity brought to bear by their worshippers. To further confirm this, Wole Soyinka's voice eloquently testifies that the "deities exist in the same relation with humanity as these multiple worlds and are an expression of its cyclic nature."⁵

Though Aristotle (1449), Murray (1961), Horn (1981), Schechner (1988) and Musa (2008) have laid to rest, the interconnection between ritual, religion and theatre, it is important to examine more, on the intersection between myth, ritual and theatrical interpretation within the autonomy of the play-text and the reflection of performance heritage. Wole Soyinka, again, submits that:

The drama of the hero-gods is a convenient expression: gods they are unquestionably, but their symbolic roles are identified by man as the role of an intermediary quester, an explorer into territories of essence-ideal around whose edges man fearfully skirts.... The setting of ritual, the drama of the gods, is the cosmic entirely, and our approach to this drama might be made useful through the comparable example of the Epic which represents also, on a different level, another access to Rites of Passage.⁶

Ritual drama and myth related performances should, therefore, be seen as theatrical instead of calling them peritheatrical or pseudo-theatre as E.T. Kibry and Andrew Horn will want us to believe. Ritual, in all honesty, is man's endless search to make a meaning out of his existence and essence. Its celebration, through ritual drama should be accepted within theatrical performativity rooted in man's culture. Inasmuch as ritual has been made to move out of its original intention of atonement and sacrifice to the stage of life with a life audience watching, it is theatrical and should be seen as such. The origin of drama, no matter the argument, cannot be divorced from ritual aesthetics. In fact, Gowon Ama Doki quoting Wole Soyinka is correct for concluding that the question of the supposed dividing line between ritual and theatre should not concern us much in Africa, the line being one that was largely drawn by the European analysts.⁷

The power of spiritual intersection can also be found in Èsù and Òrúnmilá in Yorùbá cosmology and worldview. After Obàtálá or Òrìsà Nlá, the confirmed Yorùbá's moulder of mankind, "there are two deities, Òrúnmilá and Èsù who are considered as intermediaries between man and the gods, and, therefore, all Yorùbá worship them and ask for their intersection... Èsù, the god of change, represents that which is unpredictable in a person's life."⁸ The main paradox of Èsù is, however, the negative and positive part in us which build the tension for conflicts and crises and repel same, for peace and unity.

To our knowledge, we have not seen or read any comprehensive work dedicated to the origin, person, character, attributes and mode of worship of Èsù than that of Ade P. Dopamu's *Èsù: The Invisible Foe of Man*. This work is a comparative analysis of Èsù religion to Christianity, Islam and Yorùbá religions. Crafted in Six Chapters, this Book clearly shows that Islam and Christianity condemn Èsù (Satan or devil) through the Writer's references to many Quranic and Biblical Chapters and Verses. What is important to us in this Book is "what the Adherents of Yorùbá Religion" say about Èsù through the questionnaire administered by the Writer of the Book:

Majority of the respondents (60%) believed that Èsù is both good and evil. This represents the opinion of many scholars that Èsù is not outright evil because some positive elements can still be associated with him despite the belief in his evil tendencies.⁹

This position, though difficult to believe by adherents of Christianity and Islam is, but the reality of Èsù in Yorùbá religions and mythology.

The character of Èsù in the Nigerian theatre.

Èsù has been confirmed as the "Yorùbá trickster god, Èsù, also called Elégbá and Elégbará is the embodiment of uncertainty in Yorùbá culture. He is a mischief-maker, who can be found at the crossroads."¹⁰ Joan Wascott, Joel Adedeji and June Clara Balistreri and Inih Ebong have written on the character of Èsù in the Nigerian Theatre. Inih Ebong in his cosmo-human African theatre which he called "cosmic-envelope" is re-interpreted by Gowon Ama Doki as the theatre "brought into being by the communal presence of the living, dead, gods and the unborn, and all the concrete and elemental phenomena that are identifiable with the environment of the society."¹¹ Here, Ebong is in total support of the drama of the gods and ritual aesthetics within the traditional African theatre.

Of importance also, is Joel Adedeji's historical account on the place of the Yorùbá Alàrinjò's theatre in the Nigerian theatre. While documenting this theatrical landmark, Adedeji reflects that "Alàrinjò theatre chants praises to Èsù during the Ijuba (opening) section of the performance." He goes on to say that the performer or the dramatist "is anxious that he does not get into trouble with the agency of Èsù. The deity is needed more for his benevolence and protection than for his capacities in mischief-making."¹² Thus, this marks the second theoretical position that Èsù should be praised before the beginning of any performance to avoid unmitigated disaster or a group visiting evils on another group especially in the famous magic display of the Yorùbá traditional theatre.

The third theoretical position on Èsù can be located in the performance of change. This, and surprisingly too, Èsù symbolises. As "an agent of change, Èsù allows the Yorùbá society, which, is highly structured to have an outlet for development"¹³ and that Èsù is naturally, a "generating symbol who promotes change by offering opportunities for exploring what possibilities lie beyond the status quo."¹⁴

The dual nature of Èsù is also related within available theoretical positions. June Clara Balistreri again reflects that the "dual nature of Èsù is emphasised in his mythology. He is represented as evil and good, large and small, young and old, children and father to all, friendless and friend to all, and social and anti-social."¹⁵ Most of these theoretical positions as we will see later in this work have been interpreted and re-interpreted within play-texts and performances in the traditional, literary and popular theatre traditions in the Nigerian theatre.

Most of these theoretical positions on the character of Èsù have found themselves within published play-texts in the Nigerian theatre. Reviewing the first set of the published and revised plays of Wole Soyinka such as *The Lion and the Jewel* (1963), *The Trials of Brother Jero* (1964), *Jero's Metamorphosis* (1973), *Kongi's Harvest* (1967), *Dance of the Forests* (1973), *Madmen and Specialists* (1971) and so on, June Clara Balistreri also documents the theatrical, mythological and intellectual dimensions to the numerous Èsù-like characters in the plays of Wole Soyinka. Dramatic

characters such as Jeroboam in *The Trials*, Baroka in *The Lion and the Jewel*, Oba Danlola in *Kongi's Harvests*, Eleshin Oba in *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975), Kamini and the other Giants in *A Play of Giants* (1984), King Baabu in *King Baabu* (2002) and so on are replica of dribblers, pranksters, cultural destroyers, political demons and pessimists dotting our socio-political landscape.

Perhaps, Wole Soyinka did not make direct references to the characters above as Èsù but they symbolise Èsù within man's social reality as spiritual beings. Soyinka, however, combines the character of Èsù and Orò called Eshuro in one person and this can be found in his play, *Dance of the Forests*. Orò in Yorùbá traditional religion is mystique, intrinsically male dominated and chauvinistic.

Ola Rotimi, the late Nigerian Dramatist also recalled the duality of Èsù in his play titled: *The gods are not to blame* (1975), an adaptation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. Baba Fakunle, a sheer and a diviner in the play rejects Odewale's money but adds, very quickly that Èsù should be worshipped to ward off unexpected or unmitigated disaster which failure to worship him may lead to. The following exchange between Odewale, Boy and Baba Fakunle in the play only helps to reinforce the positive side of Èsù:

Odewale: Have this for your troubles.

Baba Fakunle: How much did he give you boy?

Boy: Ten cowries, Baba.

Baba Fakunle: Hand him back nine. All I am taking is one cowry for Èsù the Messenger of Ifá and Olódùmarè. No more.

Odewale: I don't want the balance.

Baba Fakunle: Then hand him back his money, boy....¹⁶

The brief encounter above is the demythologisation of the character of Èsù within dramatic ambience. Èsù is eminently represented among the Yorùbá gods. However, he has been interpreted and re-interpreted within the myth/demythologisation nexus which can be clearly located under the performance theory of historicism and of course, its new strand of new historicism in the ever expanding post-colonial discourse.

Ahmed Yerima in *Yemoja* (2001) equally de-mythologises Èsù by telling us more about the "other side" of Èsù. In his play, Yerima sees Èsù as the god of revenge, a prankster and a cunning creature whose trade in stock is to cause disunity and disaffection in a peaceful environment. Èsù, in his game of discord causes disaffection between Ògún and Yemoja and his unbecoming necessarily makes Yemoja, though after suffering, to transform to a sea goddess. A glimpse into the play is important so as to justify Èsù's irrepressible disaster weave through betrayal:

Èsù: Taunt you do I? Yemojaa...

There are lovers, and there are lovers.

Some lovers are there, and some lovers are not there

Yemoja mi o... I... Èsù Láàlú wants to be the lover...huuhum...the husband that is there

Yemoja: What do you take me for Èsù? My heart is given to Ògún. You know that.

Èsù: I know that, and I also know that Ògún is not a man who gives his heart to one woman. You heard him, I am his trusted friend, I should know.¹⁷

Ògún, while going to the battle field entrusts Èsù to take care of his wife, Yemoja and Èsù, swimming in ludicrous humour, cleverly seeks for Yemoja's love. Yemoja is Ògún's wife in the play and this is one of the core myths surrounding Èsù. Basically, Èsù creates disunity between Ògún and Yemoja, attempts to marry Yemoja and ensures the fight between Sàngó and Ògún after disgracing Yemoja and Obàtálá in the play. As the "impartial" umpire waiting patiently to see Sàngó and Ògún shake

the world, the following statement from Èsù can be properly located within man's happiness and joy while watching and waiting for the destruction of his fellow man:

Crowd: We greet you, too

Èsù: We all know why we are here today. For those who go to places without asking, it is to witness the fight to the end between Ògún lákááyé, Osín-inmòlè and Sàngó Olúkòso Arèkújayé! The fight is not Sàngó's own, but as it is in his character, Sàngó carries another axe for Obàtálá. Yes, go on and ask me what the prize is (Turns and points to Yemoja) There she is, Yèyè-Omo-Eja, arè'wà obìrin. Eléji pamí nkú, the jewel in the crown of the gods.¹⁸

Listening to and obeying the prediction of her father (Òrúnmìlà), Yemoja moves slowly but rhythmically and "dances off into the sea" through the Cuban-like song of "Emanja Apetu" in a rebirth of the interconnection between Nigerian theatre and the diasporan image of it.

In A. A. Adeoye's *The Killers (A Social Drama)* (2009), the contention between Èsù and Òrúnmìlà is further dramatised through the melodramatic gamut that the play represents. The Messenger and the Diviner (two Luciferian agents) in the play say it all:

Diviner: Òrúnmìlà and Èsù are friends initially but the battle for survival and greed separated the duo...

Messenger: You are Èsù ...

Diviner: No, I am Òrúnmìlà ...

Messenger: No, I am Òrúnmìlà, the leader of all Yorùbá gods.

Diviner: (Shouting) No...

Messenger: (Shouting) Yes...

Diviner: You are mad...

Messenger: You created the madness...

Diviner: No. Can a dog kill a lion?

Messenger: Yes and no!...¹⁹

Departing from the above very radically is Femi Osofisan, through his play, *Èsù and the Vagabond Minstrels* (1988). This, to our knowledge, is the only play totally dedicated to the psychology and the dynamics of Èsù. What has come to the fore in the play and typical of Osofisan is the radical demystification of convention and of traditional values. Èsù does not exist but if he does exist, he only exists in our psychology and his existence can be clearly located in man's inhumanity to man and other vices within our social reality. Èsù is seen as a compassionate but vengeful god. He is humorous but deceitful. Desperate people are nonetheless the ones attempting to bribe Èsù so that he may do their wishes through sacrifice. Omele, one of the musicians in the play reflects that:

Omele: ...So Èsù, the lord of Sèpètèrí, is regarded as a kind of intermediary, between men and their wishes, between destiny and fulfilment. If you wait, in a short while you will see. They will soon begin to arrive with their baskets and pots, to placate Èsù. The whole place will be laden with food!²⁰

The main issue at stake in this play is the promotion of morality in our immoral society. Èsù, in the words of Muiyiwa Awodiya:

Tests the vagabond musicians by giving them the magic power to cure suffering people.... All but one of the musicians abuse the power by exploring their patients and thus enriching themselves. Èsù punishes the poor greedy musicians and rewards only the musician who was compassionate and healed without amassing material wealth from his patients.²¹

Èsù is thus used in this play as a confirmed “instrument for moral instruction” and societal regeneration.

Èsù is a recurring decimal in the Nigerian theatre especially in the plays with Yorùbá setting. Equally as well, Èsù has been theatrically interpreted in so many unpublished plays such as Femi Fatobá’s “The Dead of Sànpònná”, Felix Emoruwa’s “The Rebirth” and so on to further show his importance in our society.

Demythologising Èsù

It is the intention of the author to argue in this work that Èsù is a myth, he remains a myth and he does not exist. We must submit here that myth and legendary stories are recalled to re-order a lawless society through theatrical productions.

As an enigmatic god, Èsù critically gives to the individuals, what they use their own hands to choose. This can sufficiently finds solace in the Yorùbá destiny-created-myth of Àyànmó. Hence, the saying that “Àyànmó ni kádàrá” which literary means that man’s choice is his destiny. Again, the myth surrounding the concept of Orí (head) cannot be divorced from the old age tradition of destiny: “Orí eni làwúre eni” (man’s head is his benevolence). Èsù can also be properly located within man’s free will to do what is good and be rewarded and in contrary, do what is bad and get punished.

In man’s creative muse which is a fallout from his natural gift, behaviour, exposure and experience; the tendency is for man to claim that which is bad or all destructions affecting him as Èsù’s creation. To us, Èsù does not exist and as Femi Osofisan codes it:

Èsù does not exist

Save in your imagination...

And if evil does persist

We must each search our soul

What we’ve set ourselves as goal:

If wealth is all we seek

And don’t care what means we’ve using,

If our ways seem so sleek....²²

If we do what is bad within the laws of man and God, the Supreme Being and chorus Èsù’s name as the cause of our bad actions we must remember that Èsù can only use those who are ready to be used as instruments of destruction. If the Bible and the Quran say that: don’t steal or kill and man, due to his dangerous quest for materialism kills and steals – behaving contrary to the norms within the myth-created-zero sum game of a Luciferan agent, he is the Èsù NOT the deity Èsù.

To some dramatists also, Èsù has been deconstructed, demythologised and reconstructed within the ideology of new historicism in the ever expanding post-colonial discourse. On Femi Osofisan’s Marxist philosophy, Tunde Awosanmi submits that Osofisan is drenched in the “socialist materialist ideology” and has succeeded to relay to us, “the fusion, ideologically intended to effect a demystification of Èsù’s magicality, invariably strengthens the god within the context of a post-colonial social malaise.”²³

The universe has a cosmic structure. It is ordered in such a way that both man, animals, gods and the Supreme Being all have their roles to play in ordering and re-ordering the structure. A dramatist who projects Èsù as evil is doing so within the creative impulse of ordering a society along the traditional myth of Èsù as the real devil. In the contrary, a dramatist who creatively projects Èsù as good, he is paradoxically re-ordering the society within “the alternative technique of demythologisation” which may be the dramatist’s “practical demonstration of the theoretical doctrine that has fermented his creative vision.”²⁴ The two poles fall within the ageless tradition of myth, a culture vehicle and the basis of historical reflection. Life is a cycle, whether we like it or not, whatever goes up will come down: if we do evil, we will reap evil abundantly and if we do that which is good, we shall equally be rewarded. The god, Èsù should NOT

be seen as the god causing man's destruction. Man must be good to himself and be good to his neighbours and if he is notorious and bad to what surrounds him, he should not look far, he is the Èsù troubling the crossroads and the people of the crossroads.

Interpreting the character of Èsù for stage performance: some suggestions for directors

Èsù is a genius of creativity and the character of Èsù must thus be interpreted dexterously within the aesthetics of change and the erudition of the comic vision. As a humour merchant and merry-maker, the interpretation of Èsù must be captured and re-created along the melodramatic cornerstone. Would-be Èsù's character must be athletically flexible with deep energy for prank making.

Physically, Joan Wascott and June Clara Balistreri have made the following useful remarks which may be useful while characterising living personalities for the reconstruction of Èsù who represents man's symbolic paradox of duality:

Èsù is one of the few Yorùbá gods with an identifiable physical description. His statues are of two kinds. He is often represented by a simple laterite or mud pillar with no distinguishing features, but when a statue of Èsù is carved it has definite features and symbols. He is represented as a handsome young man with long hair worn down his back in a curved style, usually carved as a phallus. He wears trousers or lion cloth and carries a club, again, a phallic symbol. Other symbols connected with Èsù and depicted in his carving are the calabash, the mirror, the comb, the whistle, the pipe, the spoon and strings of cowries and coins.²⁵

Èsù should be physically beholding and attractive. Èsù's character must radiate dignity, power and invisibility. The physical description of Èsù above is, but one of the ways in which Èsù can be characterised.

On costuming, two schools have emerged. Èsù can be made to wear a cap, trouser (Sokoto) and big top (Buba) with the combination of black and white colours or in the alternative, red and black colours. If Èsù plays a positive role in the dramatic re-creation, black and white colours should be used. However, if Èsù, the irrepressible god of vengeance plays a negative role in a play, black and red colours should be creatively combined. Èsù should NOT be costumed with one single colour. Giving Èsù two colours will nonetheless be an extension of the essence of duality and paradox noted with the character of Èsù.

The face of Èsù's should be painted white and black or black and red to complete the circle of his ultra positive and negative nature in exaggerated creative admiration. Coins, mirror and cowries can then be fixed into Èsù's costumes. Importantly, Èsù's costumes should be a study in contrast, balance and harmony within African cultural and judgmental aesthetics.

The voice of Èsù should be creatively musical. The character of Èsù for performance must be a profound chronicler of events and issues. The character must act within the Stanislavskian inner resources school by internalising his roles very well. His voice should be melodious and comical yet he must speak with tone of finality if he has to take a major decision. His voice must confuse and trouble the audience. As a master of confusion, his resonating voice must create, in the minds of the audience, moments of indecision and uncertainty. Èsù's character should also distinguish between his worldly roles and his terrestrial cum deistic one.

The stage movement of Èsù should be snake-like. Èsù's character must always bend down and rooted to the earth. While moving, Èsù's character should move swiftly to the mood of the moment. The stage movement of Èsù should also be distinct and take the form of a dance. Èsù should dance very well but his dance should be located within the absurdist and avangardist schools where meaninglessness, uselessness and nothingness of life are constructed to connect and disconnect the vanity of life. All these suggestions, to all intents and purposes, are minimalist approach to the interpretation and characterisation of Èsù. Èsù's character should rove between love and hatred, stability and instability and between deception and reception.

Conclusion

While the Christians and the Muslims will continue to see and robe Èsù in evil regalia, we have shown in this work that Èsù does not exist – his existence has been deconstructed within man's social reality. Our position has been critically practicalised and theorised by scholars and dramatists such as Femi Osofisan and Ahmed Yerima. This choice, as we have argued is, the reality of post-colonial discourse which celebrates social vision along with local, national and global reality. Perhaps this is why Ade Dopamu concludes that "Èsù is not completely Satan or the Devil as the Christians and the Muslims regard him."²⁶

The Èsù in us is our negative tendencies which Sigmund Freud treated in his psycho-analytical fraternisation with man's crisis of identity within the conscious and the unconscious. How man, in his glamour and best, can control himself or fail to control himself lies his Èsù. The myth of Èsù will continue to elicit reactions within the league of the black writers and dramatists who have been aptly described as "devotee of Èsù"²⁷ due to ideological crisis of identity in most of their creative works. If Èsù creates crisis as the traditionalists may want us to believe, the dramatists help him to carry his crisis to the crossroads through theatrical interpretation and performance articulation. If Èsù typifies change, a constant phenomenon, then the dramatists who are celebrating Èsù must theatricalise him within the timeless space of aesthetic change, a creative cauldron within culture and its dynamic tension.

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