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THE PERFORMER

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The Editor
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Farewell to a New Beginning

I am compelled, within my inner essence to write this brief but important editorial note. I cannot close the border or halt the space of my emotion because I will be lying to think that the job of editing *The Performer: Ilorin Journal of the Performing Arts*, the official journal of the Department of the Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria fifteen years ago is easy. I learnt the trade of editing from the best egg-heads that we have in the Nigerian theatre, and I have also used the assessments received on my major studies from critical scholars abroad to hone my editorial assignment. Thus, from 2007 to 2021, I have devoted part of any academic career helping others to grow when indeed, I equally remained the major beneficiary of the various intellectual contestations. I have learnt to accommodate scholars whose simplicity of ideas drive the intellectual space while I have learnt to accept scholars whose passion for garbage, courting in the process, the abstractionist-banality-complexity philosophy. I have also learnt little things about all Arts of the Theatre, their adjunct literariness, existential cants and all, leading to my own cultural, intellectual and artistic enlightenments. As an Editor, I play no role of an opposition to the works of contributors rather, I have been skillful and gifted at making supposedly ‘weak’ papers to be published by writing and researching together with my contributors. Indeed, I dedicate the papers under my editions to the service of humanity.

Scholarship is now in a special institution whose frequent dynamism and newness make it a confluence of man in perpetual harmony or disharmony with himself and fellows, searching to interpret and re-interpret, create and re-create conditions around him. Fortuitously, scholars are wandering animals and in their kingdom, absolute sovereignty has no place. The dialectics of my submission is simple: re-writing, researching, re-evaluating, reworking and revisioning are common stereotypes that have made my editorial journey rewarding but I am sending a signal: it is a farewell to a new beginning. Before my declarative pronouncement, something is in the offering and you need not wait too much to know it! Volume 23 of 2021 of *The Performer* is out with fifteen papers.

This Volume has four papers in Dramatic Theory and Criticism with Dr. Bode Ojoniyi’s brilliant work on race and class reconstruction leading. Three papers are in Music and the Musicological with Mrs. Victoria O. Ikibe and Professor Solomon O. Ikibe setting the tone for an art, whose universality cannot be overemphasised. We have two papers in Film and its relationship with social change, and the place of Active Light Theory on Sarah Hassan’s *Plan B* and Mo Abudu’s *The Royal Hibiscus*. Two papers are on Play Directing, while the remaining four papers are on Theatre-for-Development, Pragmatics, Teaching Pedagogy through Theatre and Drama, and Festival

Arts, making fifteen papers in all. These scholarly works are original and they indeed, reinvent the wheel of our humanity.

I cannot conclude this farewell without expressing my profound gratitude to all the members of the Editorial Board: Professor Solomon O. Ikibe, Dr. Taiye S. Adeola and Mr. Felix A. Akinsipe. I am grateful. I also appreciate Late Professor Ayo Akinwale whom I served as Assistant Editor. Importantly as well, I am grateful to all the contributors to *The Performer* in the last fifteen years. I am hopeful that we will collaborate in the future to promote scholarship. Editing *The Performer* in 2007 was a new beginning for me because I hit the ground running when I started. Although I wanted to bow out in 2015, the Departmental Board insisted that I should continue and, now, I say farewell to a new beginning. For I am moving on to new things and *The Performer* will also have a new Editor who will develop our Journal and take it to higher heights.

Prof. AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye
Editor

THE PERFORMER (VOLUME 23, 2021)

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
1. A Comparison of Musicological and Linguistic Usage of Punctuation Marks Victoria O. Ikibe and Solomon O. Ikibe.....	1
2. The Drama of Race and Class Reconstruction in Olu Obafemi's <i>Ogidi Mandate</i> and <i>Suicide Syndrome</i> 'Bode Ojoniyi.....	13
3. Symbols in Falz's "This is Nigeria" Hip-Hop Music Video Hairat B. Yusuf.....	25
4. Film for Social Change: An Exploration of Stephanie Linus' <i>Dry</i> Morountodun Joseph.....	35
5. Between the Use of Force and Negotiation: Theatre-for-Development as a Participatory Communication Tool for Inclusion and Peace-building Millicent Ahupa.....	48
6. Theatre and Drama Approaches in the Teaching of Igbo as a Second Language Sabina N. Nwokeji and Florence C. Nwosu.....	59
7. A Re-interpretation of Straight-take Theory and the Dramaturgy of Ayo Akinwale Biala O. Odegbaro.....	69
8. Playing the Author: The Director in the Staging of Haruna Yakassai and Yakubu Liman's <i>Malam Dabo</i> Qasim L. Adenekan.....	77
9. Mediating Peace in a Conflict-Ridden Society in AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye's <i>The Killers (A Social Drama)</i> Tayo S. Arinde.....	88
10. A Discursive Pragmatic Perspective to the Analysis of Selected Tweets on COVID-19 Pandemic Kifayat Gambari-Olufadi and Mariam T. Gobir.....	99
11. Cultural Relativism for National Peace and Unity in Nigeria: A Critique of Ziky Kofoworola's <i>Fotunje: Our Love</i> Tijime J. Awuawuer.....	114

12. The Dialectic Essence of Selected Yorùbá Songs in Health Education Folúkẹ́ B. Adékẹ́yẹ.....	121
13. Interrogating Active Light Theory in the Film Productions of Sarah Hassan's <i>Plan B</i> and <i>The Royal Hibiscus Hotel</i> by Mo Abudu Musiliyu O. Sanni.....	136
14. Drama and the Politics of Group Cohesion in Pierre Meunier's <i>Farin Dutse</i> and Regina Ode's <i>The Masquerade Called Religion</i> Philip J. Umaru.....	145
15. Peace Process and Conflict Resolution in Ọmẹbẹ Mask Culture of Igbo Land Charles I. Nnaji.....	153
Call for Papers.....	165

Peace Process and Conflict Resolution in Ọmẹbẹ Mask Culture of Igbo Land

Charles I. Nnaji (Ph.D.)*

Abstract

Administrative wisdom to achieve peace and resolve conflicts amicably has been difficult for man to achieve globally. The operational framework of Ọmẹbẹ mask culture of Igbo Land, Nigeria is important and cannot be overemphasised in the promotion of peace and conflict resolution. Interviews and participant-observation are used to gather data for the study in ten self-determined Ọmẹbẹ communities during the 2020 Ọmẹbẹ season (February to April). The results showed that Ọmẹbẹ cult promotes peace among individuals, groups and communities easily. The Mask Culture also intervenes and resolves conflicts between individuals, groups and communities in acceptable manners in their respective traditional communities. It is, therefore, recommended that indigenous, home-grown strategies and frameworks for sustaining peace and resolving conflicts should be encouraged and supported by the government in the communities in the nation.

Keywords: Omebe Cult Performance, Peace, Conflict Resolution, Nkanu People, Okanga and Ubo.

Introduction

The Ọmẹbẹ mask culture is an-all-inclusive cultural institution found in some parts of Igbo land (Nkanu and Nsukka areas) and among the Orrin speakers. Ọmẹbẹ intervenes in the political, social, economic and religious life of the people from time to time especially during its season. It plays a vital role in maintaining peace and social justice as well as managing conflicts among the people traditionally rather than through the modern judicial system and it does that more effectively than the Euro-American or Western system (Amaechi, 2018, Nwankwo, (2012), Ume (1983), Jone (1949) and Ezwanya (1979). Ọmẹbẹ season is for about four months and during that period everything is about the masquerade between the months of February and May in its year. Its year is once in every three years. Ọmẹbẹ is a secret society with full mask and the identity of the figure behind the mask is not usually made known to non-initiates or women generally. Ganyi, Inyabri and Okpiliya (2013) claim that “the identity of the masquerader is a closely guarded secret since the masquerade is essentially not regarded as a

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living being. Masquerades are believed to emerge from the ground or to come from unknown destination". It is an all male affair though it accommodates few women as associates and such women are called "òyímā" in Amagunze. Only few African societies like Sierra Leone, Ndoli jowei has a family of Mende spirit manifestations danced by women. Agud and Moninkim dance groups among the Ekajuk and Ejagham communities of Northern Cross River State and abang dance groups among the Efiks of Calabar have cases of female dance groups that don-on masks during their dances. Most of the Ọmẹbẹ masked figures represent male characters except "Néezè" and "Àdúàni" whose maskers are also males. Reed (2005) says that:

Masquerades are called mmanwụ or mmụọ ("masked spirit"), and the spiritual aspect of these beings is fundamental to their appearance and performance among Igbo people. Through the agency of the masker who wears the costume, the invisible spirit is made physically tangible. Masquerades may accord honor to virtuous ancestors and shower blessings and abundance on the living. Some also punish miscreants. They make the mysterious powers of the spirit realm visible to the members of the village in which the spirits live. Spirits are omnipresent but unseen for most of the year until they appear in masked form.

Ọmẹbẹ is believed to be spirit from the underworld or the dead forefathers (Nwankwo, 2018). The Guro people of Cote D'Ivoire define a masquerade as a complete living entity comprised of spirit, costume and performance. Ọmẹbẹ spirit replicates itself in some kind of God's creation picture of man of all sizes, shapes, normal and abnormal, the good and the ugly, young and old by multiplying itself in that same manner and co-existing harmoniously as a model to mankind in their lively, entertaining, peaceful and rancor-free life style despite manifest differences in their own world. Ọmẹbẹ cult is a traditional institution that does not compromise its cultural stand or violations by European ideology or government restrictive principles. It directly or indirectly attracts the spirit world or dead ancestors and local deities into the life of the people (Amaechi, 2018). It has a very well respected hierarchical system but one that respects the freedom of the individual figure to conduct its affairs unrestrained. It lives in the "ụham" (the groove) and its respected leader masquerade is the "uvudike" and the human head of the institution or the initiates is the "Atama". It has its own peculiar musical dances called "ọkanga" and "ụbọ". The "ọkanga" is the normal Ọmẹbẹ music played by human beings in the open for the Ọmẹbẹ and the people, the initiated and the uninitiated to dance. The "ụbọ" is another Ọmẹbẹ musical dance or more correctly music played by the Ọmẹbẹ itself usually in the "ụham" or secluded place or in the dark which the Ọmẹbẹ and the people enjoy and appreciate.

Ọmẹbẹ is a masquerade (mmanwụ) and has a shrine for its worship usually at the entrance of the “ụham” (groove). The go-between is the “Atama”. The worship could be at any time of need. People bear “Ọmẹbẹ” as a name after the institution. It should be recollected that anything people are named after are appreciated and/or respected. Ọmẹbẹ partakes in all kinds of professions: teaching, traffic controlling, vulcanizing, trading, treating of patients, fortune telling, security watch, solicitor and advocates etc. In its physical appearance period it is everywhere at all times, sees everything and listens to all conversations. Negative gossiping during its physical presence period is forbidden and when, seen, is punishable by serious penalty or fine. It adjudicates in all disputes and settles all scores. Here is the hierarchical structure of settling disputes in Igbo land:

- Deities and Masquerades
- Diviners
- Elders Council, Ozo title holders, Upper Level
- Village Assembly
- Age Grades, Women Association
- Extended Family Low Level
- Family Unit

During Ọmẹbẹ season each self-determined group takes turn to present their own performance which starts with the collection of a small earthenware from the Eke market square in the Amagunze case or the specific market day of the community involved. The collection of the earthenware on the market day is the way of announcing or advertising that it will perform on the second Eke market day (nine days) thereafter. Before the Eke of performance, the Ọmẹbẹ must make its appearance or perform in its own community on the Nkwọ day preceding the Eke. That Nkwọ day is regarded as the Ọmẹbẹ festival day of that concerned community. It is usually marked with spectacular environmental cleaning, general eating and drinking, colourful dressing, merriment, exchange of food and drinks and visits, watching of the Ọmẹbẹ performance and watching the new and returning Ọmẹbẹ masquerades at the “onokoro” (village square) of the community. Amaechi (2018) says that masquerade outing is characterized by social justice and entertainment celebrations, festivals and sumptuous feasting.

Methodology

The survey methods: oral interview and participant observation were used to conduct this investigation. The investigator was an initiate of the cult and therefore has unlimited access to the cult environment, operations, meeting etc. the period of investigation was between February and April, 2020. The 2020 Ọmẹbẹ season started before the outbreak of corona virus

pandemic in Nigeria and the attendant restrictions. The 2020 Ọmẹbẹ festival celebration was low keyed and so was audience and spectators participations as people could not travel freely due to federal and state government restrictions.

Twenty initiated participants and ten uninitiated observers including women were interviewed on the subject matter. The major questions were lead questions that were designed to make the respondents give the accounts of the subject without let or hindrance.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework chosen for this study is structural functionalism. Structural functionalism is a framework used for constructing theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts function together to promote solidarity and stability. It looks at both social structure and social functions. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions and institutions. It is theory in which the component parts are crucial for the proper functioning of the entire system. All aspects of a society serve a purpose and that all are indispensable for the long-term survival of the society.

The central concern of structural functionalism may be regarded as a continuation of the Durkheimian task of explaining the apparent stability and internal cohesion needed by societies to endure over time. The major functionalism theorists include Comte, Spencer, Parsons, Davis and Moore among others. Functionalism was criticized for being unable to account for social change or for structural contradictions and conflict and the fact that it ignored inequalities.

Masquerade and People in Igbo land

Masks are believed to have a very old history as Ida-Owens claims that it has connection with the historic man. Archeological searches have revealed masks in rock and cave paintings. There is no doubt that they were used as camouflage to hide identity before man, animals and in ritual performances for fun, entertainment or for important businesses. Some claim that they were used for hunting, taming animals and for primeval dances.

Ọnẹkwusi (2001) claims that masquerades were very powerful instruments of government before the advent of colonialism, christianity and the Western legal system. Other masquerades of similar nature and function as Ọmẹbẹ are the Odo and the Ekpe masquerades. The three are mutually exclusive. Communities that have one will not have the other two. Odo and Ekpe observe seasons as Ọmẹbẹ. There are a lot of other masquerades that do not observe seasons. They appear during festivals like new yam festivals,

funerals, Igwe or Eze coronations, Iwa akwa (Entrance into manhood) festivals etc. They could be regarded as general masquerades and they include, “*egbeka, mmanwudiegwu, avurukpa, nchata, ekejaaonu, awulu*” etc in Amagunze area; *Inyiagbaoku* in Okunano, *Izaga* in Nnobi, Nnewi, Aguleri and environs; *Agaba* in Nkanu and Agulu areas; *Ojiyonu* in Nkanu, Enugu and Arondizogu etc.

Omẹbẹ

Omẹbẹ is the masquerade of the Omẹbẹ cultural mask secret society. They are believed to represent the spirits of the dead ancestors who visit the living from time to time to keep them company, teach and guide them and to assist them surmount obstacles of life and oppositions. They are very numerous and of different shapes, sizes, regalia, adornment, professions and functions. All the maskers are male. There are no full female members of the cult but there are associate female figure-heads. Omẹbẹ’s abode is in the “*Uham*” (groove) from where it visits the community once every three years in Nkanu area or five years in Nsukka area and thereafter recedes to the spirit home in the *uham* unless otherwise solicited for particular functions in or outside the community.

The most popular names among Omẹbẹ include, “*Uvudike*”, “*Okoroocha*”, “*Okorojii*”, “*Okunaeredu*”, “*Ogbodo*”, “*Adaani*”, “*Neezee Ede*”, “*Afoekweghiokpa*”, “*Ogbajeeneta*”, “*Etanweani*”, “*Oriokpa*” etc. Uvudike is the king of Omẹbẹ masquerades usually bigger than all others and with a lot of historical illustrations and insignia on the head. Whenever it rises there are plenty of other Omẹbẹ to attend to it by controlling the crowd and clearing the way, some in the front and some at the back. The music for it is special and the dance steps are the most regal and dignifying. Afoekweghiokpa is almost as big as Uvudike but it is banal with no decorations and the head cover is most ordinary. It serves as the people’s day-guard; monitoring movements on busy roads, and interrogating suspicious movements and trailing such to point of crime and apprehending the person; greeting people, cracking jokes and inquiring about family members and welfare of passers-by. Ogbajeeneta is the escort of the Omẹbẹ masquerades. It goes out first to survey the arena and ascertain that the place is in order and safe before the others can go out. It usually carries cane and runs very fast. It is always on its heels.

Functional Use of Masquerades

Masquerades are used to evoke certain reactions in the beholder: fear in most people especially the guilty; awe of the god especially in the horrible way they are represented; ecstasy in possession of the overwhelming power for the maskers etc. Some masquerades are too ugly and fearful to behold.

The sight of them cause nightmares. Most pregnant women loath encounters with ugly masquerades as they are afraid that they can make them bear ugly or deformed children

Masquerades are used for debt recovery in many communities. Amaechi (2018) reports that the masquerades enforce the payment of fines for breaking of taboos and refusal to conform to culture related justices. They are, at times, used to hold family members hostage as women and children cannot come out while the masquerades are in their premises until the debt they came to collect is paid in full. Some debtors mortgage valuable belongings to rid their house of *Ọmẹbẹ* masquerade debt collectors.

Settlement of disputes between individuals, groups or communities is one of the very important functions of the masquerades. Masquerades are impartial in conflict resolution and are seen as the final arbiter in case settlements. The belief is that masquerades are spirits or the spirits of their dead forefathers and that make them accept their settlement intervention with a note of finality (Nwankwo, 2018). In some places opening up a case that had been settled by the masquerades is an abomination and an invitation to catastrophe as it could lead to death and destruction of the person and/or the family among other disastrous calamities.

Masquerades use satires to upbraid moral and criminal code violators in the communities and demand appropriate propitiation for the offences and they are obeyed unconditionally. In some areas masquerades *raison de etre* is entertainment. It creates great fun for the spectators and the maskers. It can entertain also through colourful displays of acrobatic skills and dances. It is used for tourist attraction and to generate revenue. Masquerade festivals are mainly to entertain. Entertainment is promoted through elegant costumes and stylish dance performances, jokes and displays.

Ọmẹbẹ also has didactic functions. *Ọmẹbẹ* masquerades teach a lot of lessons to the spectators and those who read about them. Through satires and ordinary dramatisation, the masquerade passes a lot of lessons to the listening and watching audience. It helps to mold the children in ways harmonious with the acceptable ways of life of the parents and community.

***Ọmẹbẹ* and conflict Resolution**

Ọmẹbẹ intervenes in all matters affecting the people of its community as an unbiased arbiter. As spirit, it is not regarded to be related to either of the warring parties and can therefore not be charged of any favoritism or partisanship. This does not actually eliminate suspicion and allegation of bias against one party or the other, at times, being a human founded institution. However, such charges are minimal and rare. As Amaechi (2018, p. 85) observes “it is important to note that the idea of the masquerade is tied to the

Igbo concept of ancestor worship. What is being personified in a masquerade is a revered Igbo ancestor invited back to life to commune with the living.”

Omebe visits the warring parties at night for their case hearing and adjudication. The Omebe is usually accompanied to the occasion by a few human initiates who form part of the entourage. Such people or persons do not contribute to the dispute discussion. The Omebe usually has an interpreter who ensures that the parties and Omebe understands the Omebe's language added to the fact that the voice is usually camouflaged with a wedge in its mouth adding to the difficulty of the people in deciphering the Omebe language.

When the hearing begins the parties are given time to each present his or her own account. The opportunity of cross-examinations is also allowed or available. The masquerade also allows comments and observation from the parties involved before further interrogation. Omebe gruels the parties seriously to get to the root of the matter. At times, the Omebe that would come to the judgment may be a diviner Omebe that has the ability to see beyond the obvious presentations. The traditionalists believe the diviners or soothsayers are impeccable.

Omebe's procedure for conflict resolution is not merely pronouncing that one party or the other is guilty. In most cases, the two parties are culpable but differ in the degree to which they are. Each party therefore is told the areas of its culpability and charged or fined for that. After telling each party their position and charges the Omebe now enjoins them to be united and love each other. At times, the Omebe would demand that the parties exchange handshake, embrace each other or eat together from the same plate to show that the quarrel is over. At other times they would be made to have a covenant between them never to war again. In some occasions they swear to an oath.

It is important to highlight the fact that it is not all matters that are resolved in a single sitting. Some take several hearings of up to four or five sittings to settle. Some cases are amendable to appeal and some are not. Some cases are very difficult to resolve but none is irresolvable to Omebe. The fines payable by the parties to the conflict range from; young chicks, hen(s), cock(s), goat(s), ram(s), yams and various amounts of money depending on the party's level of guiltiness.

Omebe's Game Hunting

People engage in hunting to harvest animal products like fur/hide, bone/tusks, horn et cetera. Those named products are widely used in Omebe's costuming and for dancing "Okanga". In its benevolence and kindness and consistent with its fatherly role of providing for its children, Omebe provides a day of provision of meat for the adherents for the celebration of its festival. It is the occasion of that provision that is known as Omebe's game hunting

day or ceremony. It is an elaborate ceremonial programme. Professional and non professional hunters go into the bush on that day because of the faith that *Qmẹbẹ* will make them catch plenty of animals. It is comparable to the popular Argungu fishing festival in Sokoto State. It is usually a free for-all hunting occasion with joy and hope. Akporobaro (2006, p. 366) claims that most societies' festivals play very important roles that are linked to the survival of the society and they include:

- The propitiation of gods, goddesses and spiritual powers.
- The celebration of some past historical event in the life of the community
- Festivals do also serve as social means of ushering in a period of prosperity and fertility in the life of the community
- To re-invoke the gods and secure their attention and help towards the protection of the society.
- To empower the people in time of war.
- To provide a contest for merry making for arranging marriages and for whirling the new seasons.
- The purification of the land and for warding off evil forces and to show off to the neighbors the power and strength and invulnerability of the community against external threats.

The hunting implements are usually knives, machetes, clubs, bows and arrows. Guns are not allowed in order to eliminate the accident of killing another person as people are usually very many and scattered in the bush. It does not include hunting on water. It is believed that *Qmẹbẹ* makes animals foolish and incapable of safety thoughts on that day to enable people have a good catch. The animals caught on that occasion include rabbits, antelopes, squirrels, rodents, bush pigs, snakes, guinea fowls, hyenas, gorillas, etc.

The hunting episode lasts from morning till the evening of that day. At the end of the hunting episode all the hunters will gather before the groove or the village square to display their catch, rejoice together, share experiences and share the catch with one another and the "Atama" (head of the *Qmẹbẹ* cult community). The animals killed are usually sheered or frayed or skinned in the after hunting meeting together. The innards are removed and roasted for public consumption among the participants. Thereafter, everybody goes home with what he has to prepare and preserve for the festival. The hunting episode is regarded and appreciated as uncommon favour by *Qmẹbẹ* to ensure a good celebration and festival. It is therefore only a lazy person who will not have meat to celebrate *Qmẹbẹ* festival. No part of the kill is sold or used to attract any commercial profit.

Okanga

Okanga is a dance and music which Oṃẹbẹ dances on outings. The various Oṃẹbẹ types have their different dance steps or styles of dancing okanga. Human beings also dance okanga to the extent that some people regard it as everybody's dance music because it is either you dance it actively, physically or passively by nodding or movement of any of the limbs. Oṃẹbẹ are usually involved in dancing competition or rivalry with their types and receive public approbation.

There is no strict order of dancing in turns when it is performing in public spaces or stage. They however have pecking order of taking turn that is well known by the masquerades, the drummers and the audience. They hardly clash even when they are running out of time and everyone of them wishes to take turn to perform.

The instrument include different types, sizes and configurations of "igba"(drums), "oja"(flute), "ogene" (gong), "ishakpa" (rattle), and wooden slit drums etc. The instruments are not easy to play and that creates opportunities for those who are good at them as they are hired from one community to another with very good remunerations. For instance, flutists are few and those truly adept in it are the scarcest. The messages of the flutists are understandable and enjoyable to the audience. The message of the adept flutist swells the head and moves people even involuntarily.

The Okanga music is played by the initiated members of the cult. Oṃẹbẹ and human beings dance to the music. Women can also dance to the music when Oṃẹbẹ is not there and so are the very young and uninitiated boys and girls.

There are times the Oṃẹbẹ or the people dance to the music in circular form. The male dancers always hold either an animal skin-fan, or horsetail, horn or tusk or even leaf on the hand while dancing signaling peace and happiness and oneness. Those without anything at hand will dance with hands akimbo. The audience at times, has to buy the opportunity to dance with money. When they appear, they drop the money before the drummers to drum for them. This is one of the ways of remunerating or generating income for the drummers.

Ubo

Ubo is Oṃẹbẹ's guitar music played by Oṃẹbẹ itself to the listening pleasure of the audience. It is used for nocturnal programmes and night vigils. It is mostly used for deeper reflections and contemplation. It is only played at great occasions like the vigil wake keep for the burial of a prominent personality. Ubo Oṃẹbẹ is not a real dance music as such. It is used for sober reflection during great tribulations. Sometimes, it is played with the accompaniment of the xylophone.

The Ọmẹbẹ player and his instruments are usually hidden from the public eye. It is purely a secret cult music. The Ọmẹbẹ and the music ensemble can only be seen by initiated cult members. It cannot be seen by women or young uninitiated man or the children. To see the Ọmẹbẹ playing the guitar is a sacrilege and a taboo. The punishment was death. Today the appearance and the occasion for the Ọmẹbẹ to play the guitar is severely limited and threatened.

Ọmẹbẹ Cult Performance

Omebe dance and music is open and they are not under any threat of extinction. The aesthetic and graceful dance steps of the different types of Ọmẹbẹ are mimicked from infancy by dancing the Ọkanga music. Dancing, generally is a skillful art. Those who are gifted in dancing tend to imitate or learn and excel in all forms of dancing. Before one becomes a masker he would have been recommended and commended through his steps and stylish displays while dancing Ọkanga, The Ọmẹbẹ performance is a combination of skills, devotion and learning. The initiates devote themselves to beating.

Ọmẹbẹ is renowned for sudden appearance, fairy-like look and movement, power and monstrosity. A frog does not run for nothing during the day says the Igbo man. Consequently, whenever you see Ọmẹbẹ something is fishing. It always has reason for leaving the Ụham(groove). It is either on an assignment like monitoring passers-by or tracking security development or an issue at hand to ensure that there are no violators of the norms of the community etc.

Initiated Ọmẹbẹ cult members meet from time to time with or without the Atama. If the atama is not in the meeting he must be briefed on the outcome compulsorily. They deliberate on issues like the admission of new members, review of the conduct of members, preparation for the Omebe festival, review of events, planning of routine events like game hunting ceremony etc. The decisions about what is compulsory or not, fines and penalties etc are taken in the general meeting.

The best of Ọmẹbẹ performance is witnessed on the first and second days of its coming in its season. The costume appears the brightest on those days and Ọmẹbẹ performs with the greatest amount of energy just returning from a three years vacation.

All the masquerades can arrive at the market scene of performance or the village square about the same time and dance one after the other until the last Ọmẹbẹ in the scene. Barring the eventuality of early night fall all the masquerades are given time to perform to the admiration of the audience and retire to the groove. The audience applauds good performance with clapping of the hands and laughter and loud ovations. They also spread money on

them in appreciation of the performances. The people producing the music are equally encouraged with gifts of money so that they don't stop the music midstream. The "oyima" also dances on those days and they receive gifts also. The performance is a mixture of dance and drama. Not all Omebe dances. Some usually appear to entertain the audience by dramatization. Those dramatizing have no separate time devoted to acting. They perform while the dancing is going on. This situation brings confusion as ovation for one, when they are two, may not be well or properly credited. It therefore demands active participation to understand the happenings in the theatre of performance. The place of performance seems to be dedicated as the masquerades use particular sports from year to year. The last set of Omebe to perform would eventually dance back to the groove with the Okanga.

Conclusion

The Omebe administrative strategy is an indigenous paradigm that works to maintain peace and order in their areas of operation. Absolute peace reigns in Omebe season. It provides an alternative and community-wide generally acceptable way of conflict resolution. Conflicts that arise are amicably resolved by Omebe's intervention and peace is restored. Alternative peace resolution paradigms arising from the indigenous traditional institutions should be allowed to exist side by side with conventional laws for genuine peace and progress of the society.

The potential of Omebe in tourist development should be explored to attract investors and to yield revenue to the government. Omebe festival is a very colourful season to promote and protect. It needs government protection for further growth and popular support to protect it from going into extinction. It is recommended that the Omebe cult programmes should be reformed to rid it of everything that is not in consonance with the popular faith.

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