African Culture and Performance Dynamics in the Dramaturgy of

AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye



Edited by:

Oludolapo Ojediran, Ph.D

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'African Culture and Performance Dynamics in the
Dramaturgy of AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye'
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Philip Arthur Gborsong and individual authors

First published in 2019 by
Department of the Performing Arts, University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Kwara State and Department of Theatre and
Film Studies, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast

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Cover design and Book layout by Tokunbo Esho

ISBN: 978-978-56453-1-6

Printed in Nigeria by Etchwise Consulting Ltd.
+234 803 805 9815
books.etchwiseltd.com

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Foreword



I feel honoured and humbled to be requested to write this forward to scholarly works written on Professor AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye, a scholar par excellence and Professor of Theatre and Drama, being a Festschrift in commemoration of his 50th birthday. My short stint at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, as a visiting Professor of French Language, gave me an opportunity to know and interact extensively with the vibrant scholar, Professor A. A. Adeoye. Undoubtedly, his lectures gave me the courage to write this foreword. I therefore, relish on the fact that I have submissions from theatre scholars of National and International repute who have done justice to their contributions on the witty, critical and experimental Professor AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye in particular, and on theatre scholarship in general.

Naturally, this work is yet another contribution to the ever dynamic discourses within the symbiotic gulfs of Theatre, Drama and Culture, which were carefully put together and edited by three vibrant and intellectually stimulated scholars: Drs. Oludolapo Ojediran, Tayo Simeon Arinde and Philip Arthur Gborsong. Truly, this bold step of theirs cannot be divorced from the obviously commendable efforts that have been invested in the work, considering the intellectual erudity and artistic depth of Adeoye's dramaturgical and theatrical quip which is reflected both in writing and practice.

African culture and performance dynamics in the dramaturgy of AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye is a work of about 500 pages, and (it) is made up of 38 Chapters. Notably, the book is divided into three (3) organic parts. Part One contains a wide array of well-articulated discourses within the experimental and socio-critical space of AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye's dramaturgy and theatre. Undoubtedly, the contributors of the Chapters in this part explore textual, sub-textual and inter-textual themes such as the total theatre aesthetics, socio-political discourse, the role of drama in nation building, ardent ideological and philosophical projection, interpersonal meta-function, indigenous aesthetics, religious tolerance, etc., all within the nexus of AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye's literary and performative theatre. The discourses in the Part Two of the book are geared towards the need to contextualise the liminality of performance aesthetics and communication arts under the permeating icons of feminism, humour and socio-criticism, media and film aesthetics, textuality and the third world, and so on. The third and last Part is the outline of an interview with the Dramaturge himself, which takes recourse through the influences and modalities

that have shaped his fulfilling life as well as his theatre on practical and theoretical wheels.

Indeed, all the scholarly contributions are convincing enough for us to assume that this critical work is part of the growing trends of scholarly explorations that are artistically crafted to address socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural challenges that are confronting Africans, and the world at large. In my candid opinion, this book can be considered as a ready source for consultation by scholars, researchers and definitely a coursebook for students in the expansive field of theatre scholarship and its other related disciplines. I invite you to a robust academic discourse leading to cross-fertilisation of knowledge and experience.

Professor Dowini D. Kupoole

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Preface

African culture and performance dynamics in the dramaturgy of AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye is an ensemble of artistic conversations that are dedicated to the cerebral scholar, Prof. A. A. Adeoye. A wide number of subject matters in the African culture and performance space are treated in the chapters with the intent to examine, and in cases of necessity, re-examine the structures and superstructures that govern them. This is done within the frescoes of the socio-political dynamism and topicality of the issues raised. Contextually, the forte of the chapters is premised on the spiral applicability of the wide range of perspectives discussed, in light of their locality, nationality and indeed, universality. Therefore, the various chapters tilt towards the poetics of glocalisation which is an unavoidable demand of the postcolonial theatre of the third world discourse. This timeless and borderless import translates the book into a castle of intellectual (artistic) distillation and effervescence.

The Form of Total Theatre Aesthetics in AbdulRasheedAbiodunAdeoye's Selected Works- Oludolapo Ojediran

Through textual perspective, the paper discusses the intertwining roles of the major components of total theatre;music, dance and dramainAbdulRasheedAbiodunAdeoye's*The Killer (A Social Drama)* and *The Smart Game (A Neo-alienation Script).*

Social Drama and Political Discourse in the Dramaturgy of AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye's *The Killers*- Abdullahi, KadirAyinde

This work analyses the epic dramaturgical techniques in Adeoye's *The killers* and how they are influenced by the writer's commitment to nation building.

Exploring Theatre of Performance and Responsibility in AbdulRasheedAbiodunAdeoye's Neo-Alienation Style- Adenekan, 'Lanre Qasim

This paper analyses Neo-alienation as a performance style. Using Adeoye's*The Smart Game* to explore the dramatic aesthetics inherent in the theatrical concept.

Nation Building and Attitudinal Constructs in Nigeria's Post-Colonial Drama: AbdulRasheedAdeoye's *The Killers* as Paradigm - Agboola Michael

The work examines the attitudes that have impeded Nigeria's development as portrayed in Nigerian drama. With Adeoye's *The Killers* as the archetype, it exposes the centrifugal attitudes that have distracted the nation from its prosperity.

Ideological Projection in Adeoye's Plays: A Critical Discourse Analysis of *The Killers* and *The Smart Game*- Taofiq Adedayo Alabi

The study analyses Adeoye's *The Killers* and *The Smart Game* with the aim of distilling the ideological commitment of the playwright.

Mood Choice and Modality in Adeoye's *The Killers* and *The Smart Game*- TaofiqAdedayo Alabi and Mary Titilayo Olowe

The paper examines conversational extracts from the two play-textsto explore the relationship between the dialogue and the authorial intentions for mood and modality.

Seeking Classical Parallels in AbdulRasheedAdeoye's Collective Characterisation: An Examination of Neo-Alienation's Eclecticism - Foluke R. Aliyu-Ibrahim

The study investigates the eclectic nature of Adeoye's Neo-Alienation. It presents the classical Aristotelian principle of empathy as much of an influence on the style as Brecht's Epic theatre.

Indigenous Aesthetics in the Production of *Tornadoes Full of Dreams* as Directed by AbdulRasheedAbiodunAdeoye - Aponmade Ayobami Afeez

This paper discusses the influence of indigenous African aesthetics such as rituals and festivals on the directorial technique of AbdulRasheedAdeoye in his Production of Bode Sowande's *Tornadoes Full of Dreams*.

Drama and Social Transformation: A Study of AbdulRasheedAbiodunAdeoye's *The Killers* and *The Smart Game* - Elegba, Florence. A.

Through textual analysis, the study examines AbdulRasheedAbiodunAdeoye's social interests in his plays, *The Killers* and *The Smart Game*, using the Marxist ideology as the theoretical framework.

Religious Intolerance and Disunity in AbdulRasheedAbiodunAdeoye's*The Killers* (A Social Drama)-AbdulGafar Olawale Fahm,

The study examines, with Adeoye's *The Killers* as a case study, the role of religious intolerance and disunity as a culture of violence threatening the society and how this leads to the destruction of ethical fabrics of the society.

Questioning AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye's Feminist's View in *The Smart Game* and *The Killers* - Olayinka Magbagbeola

The study adopts the textual analysis method to analyse and question the inference of feminist's view in Adeoye's*The Smart Game* and *The Killers.*

Lectalism and Code-switching in AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye's *The Smart Game* (A Neo-alienation Script)-Rafiu, Kamar Adewale

This work examines lectalism and code-switching in the dramatic language of AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye's *The Smart Game* (A Neo-alienation Script).

Philosophising Adeoye's Neo-alienation Dramaturgy in *The Smart Game* and *The Killers within* African Performance Tradition – Sanni Musliu

This paper philosophises Adeoye's neo-alienation dramaturgy in *The Smart Game and The Killers* within African performance tradition.It examines the textuality, inter-textuality and extra-textuality of the play with the aim of regarding the playwright as a philosopher.

Character and Characterization of *Ọmọlúàbí* in Adeoye's *The Killers* - Layọ Ogunlọla Ph.D.

This study analyses Adeoye's*The Killers* within the philosophical context of the Yoruba concept of virtue.

AbdulRasheedAdeoye's Purpose and Approach to the Use of Music in Play Productions - Taiye Shola Adeola

This paper discusses the purposes and approaches of AbdulRasheed Adeoye to the use of music in his written and directed plays.

An Analysis of Director and Choreographer Collaboration in AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye's Productions - Felix A. Akinsipe

The paper explores the cordiality, constraints and prospects in the collaborations between choreographers and directors with particular reference to the productions experienced with Adeoye as a director.

Ritualising the Dramaturgy of Neo-alienation style in Selected plays Directed by AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye- Arinde, Tayo Simeon

The paper examines the distinctive ingenuities in AbdulRasheed Adeoye's directorial style, Neo-alienation using two selected plays; Bode Sowande's*Tornadoes Full of Dreams* (1990), and Kola Ogunmola's *Palmwine Drinkard* (1972).

Theatre, Culture and Society – Elolo Gharbin

The paper investigates circumstances in which Western nations tend to influence the cultures of the less endowed cultures. It also seeks to analyse the power of theatre in strengthening the bond between nations and cultures.

A Comparative Analysis of Content and Themes of Ghanaian and Nigerian Home Video Industries- NAI, Samuel Anyetei

The study compares the content and dominant thematic preoccupations in Ghanaian and Nigerian Home Videos, vis-à-vis the cultural, sociological and political nature of the societies from which they were created.

Conceptualising Jimi Solanke's Theatre for Development Practice- Taiwo Afolabi

This paper analyses, evaluates and presents the work of Jimi Solanke, a theatre practitioner who is not within the academic institution but has contributed immensely to the development of TFD in Nigeria.

An Ecocritical Reading of Camara Laye's *The African Child* –Moussa Traoré

The paper unearths how Ecocriticism is at the centre of *The African Child*, by scrutinising certain factors like recycling, the forest and its role in the initiation of the young ones in the community and many other practices that are related to Ecocriticism.

Examining the Impacts of Colonial Film Legacies on the Nigerian Film Industry- Osunkojo Adeola Abiodun

This paper examines the origin of colonial films in Nigeria and how their production became a foundation of the emergence of the Nigerian film industry.

The Religious Philosophy Regarding Retribution in Aeschylus'*Oresteia* - Elolo Gharbin

The study analyses Aeschylus'*Oresteian trilogy* with the aim of identifying the solution to the retribution as observed in classical Greece.

Style and Language in the Yorùbá Indigenous Dramatic Tragic Plays: Insights from *Ṛẹ́ṛẹ́ Rún* by Ọládẹ̀jọÒkédìjí – Òkéwándé Olúwọlé Tẹ́wọ́gboyè

This study examines the use of style and language of the actors in *Ṛẹ́ṛẹ́ Rún* and stylistic use of songs in the text in order to demonstrate the effect of these stylistic dramatic elements in the text.

Stand-Up Comedy as an Alternative Theatre Practice in Nigeria - Helen Paul

The study examines some selected Stand-up comedy acts and programmes in Nigeria in recent years so as to appropriately evaluate the strategies for their successes with a view to recommending such towards the invigoration of the live theatre tradition in Nigeria.

(De)Construction of Language of Environmentalism and Resilience of the Poor in Some Selected Commonwealth Movies - Afutendem Lucas Nkwetta

This paper analyses *No Mercy* (2016) by Obi Olisa and *The Liquid Black Gold* (2013) by Aniekwe Ikenna Emma with the aim ofportraying the vital role the poor play in fighting to protect the environment and mitigate climate change.

The Socio-Cultural and Economic Impacts of the New Yam Festival in Boki Local Government of Cross River State - Odeigah, Theresa Nfam

This study examines critically the socio-cultural and economic impacts of the New Yam Festival in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, using historic-structural and multidisciplinary approaches.

A Critical Overview of the Principles and Characteristics of Islamic Literature - Lateef Onireti Ibraheem & Aliy Abdulwahid Adebisi

The study posits that Islamic literature, as a sub-literary tradition emanating from Muslims, consistently conforms to Islamic ideology and is characterized by truthfulness and service to humanity.

Media Roles in Harnessing Art for Peace Building in Improving Socio-Cultural Community Life- Silas Oghenemaro Emovwodo

This paper highlights how media can harness art for peace building and sustenance to improve socio-cultural community life.

Indigenous Knowledge System and African Musical Art Education: Toward a Responsible Pedagogy - Odujobi 'Kayode

This paper is an attempt to explore indigenous knowledge system and the aspect of content in-built of the musical art education as reflected in the Cultural and Creative Arts curriculum.

Re-Reading Spectacles: Historicizing Occupy Nigeria- Dotun Ayobade

This paper examines the arts of the Occupy Nigeria protest at the Lagos site, how performances enacted around the protest grounds became performative expressions of subaltern identity that ultimately shaped the protests.

Identity and Politics in Nigerian Dance Practice and Scholarship: A Critical Examination- Kene Igweonu

This paper examines questions of identity and politics in Nigerian dance practice and scholarship. It uses *A Ritual for Survival* (1989) by Peter Badejoas a metaphor to contend that there is a need to revisit the issue of identity and politics in Nigerian dance practice and scholarship.

Conclusively, the chapters highlighted above are critical summations of creative masterpieces that are engineered towards the need to build, re-build and re-appraise the interrelations between man and his culture, man and his social realities as well as man and his religious activities. While this book explores the sociological, cultural, political, economic, etc., activities of a nation, it is a reminder of the functionality and dysfunctionality of the society. It also discusses the role of art and the artist in identifying and correcting the various ills and vices therein. However, this book is recommended for everybody.

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Acknowledgments

The editors of this book sincerely acknowledge Almighty God who made this publication possible. We also acknowledge with thanks, the peer reviewers and those who painstakingly went through the various contributions to make them publishable.

We cannot forget the Department of the Performing Arts Academic and Non-academic Staff at the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, as well as Films and Theatre Studies at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. We know that without your supports, the enablement to conclude this book would have been elusive. Professors Ayo Akinwale, Zikky Kofoworola, and D. D. Kuupole, and a host of others too numerous to mention here are appreciated for their guidance in the course of editing this work.

We thank all contributors across the globe, who believe that scholarship is a cross-cultural arrangement and thus, present their thoughts for posterity.

Our appreciation goes to the subject, AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye whose 50th Birthday we used as the bridge to provoke discourses on drama and theatre in Africa, and indeed the world over. Happy Birthday! We wish you many more years of academic exploits.

On the Dramaturge



AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye was born in the late I960s to Mr. and Mrs. Musa Adeoye of Agbeye town in Odo-otin Local Government of Osun State. His Father is the scion of Ojomu dynasty of Agbeye while his Mother is a princess of Ahunloye ruling house of Okua, another agrarian and hybrid community in Odo-otin Local Government Area. He was formerly known as Rasheed Abiodun Musa and he changed his name on 12th June, 2008 to AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye.

His primary education took place at Baptist Primary School, Kano, Nigeria between 1974 and 1980. Kano afforded him the opportunity to learn the best of Christian doctrines in School, and Islamic ethics at home and at the neighbourhood. He attended Agbeye Community High School, Agbeye in his town for his secondary education between 1980 and 1985. Agbeye Community High School also prepared him for the prospects and challenges in literary and in debating activities. In his town, he was taught the history, culture, ethics, mores and cosmology of Yoruba people during festivals, marriage ceremonies and other social events.

Adeoye read Performing Arts and he received Senate prize for the best graduating student in Performing Arts at the Department of Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin during the 1995/1996 Academic Session. He was at the University of Ibadan, between 1999/2000 and 2006/2007 for his Postgraduate Programmes. During these periods, he bagged M.A. Theatre Arts (2000) and Ph.D. Theatre Arts (2007) degrees. Adeoye specialised in Play Directing, extending same to Cultural and Performance Studies.

The cerebral scholar started lecturing at University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria in 1997. He has however, been teaching Play Directing, Playwriting, Dramatic Literature and Criticism, Acting, Theatre History, Media Arts, Performance Theories and Theatre Practical/Workshop courses in the Performing Arts Department, University of Ilorin, Ilorin since 1999 to date. He has published in revered local, national and international journals. In the last ten years, he has contributed to the edition of notable journals and books. He has edited eight volumes of *The Performer: Ilorin Journal of the Performing Arts*, SONTA books and SONTA Book of Proceedings and many more. On the professional plane, he has directed many plays in the American, Asian, European and African traditions.

Adeoye belongs to the following professional and academic organisations; Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), National Association for the Promotion of Studies in Arts and Sciences (NAPSAS), International Federation of Translators (IFT), Nigeria English Studies Association (NESA), International Theatre Institute (ITI), Academic and Non-Fiction Authors' Association of Nigeria (ANFAAN), International Research and Development Institute, Performance Philosophy, Committee for Relevant Arts (CORA), International Association of Theatre Critics (IATC) and others. He has been privileged to serve, and is still serving in various Administrative and Academic Positions in the University of Ilorin such as Head of Department, Performing Arts (Twice), Member, Governing Council of the University, Chairman, Ceremonials Committee of the University and Chairman, University of Ilorin Environmental Protection Committee, amongst others. He has been a Presenter with Kwara State Television Authority since 2001 to date. Also, he is a Unionist par Excellence. Above all, he is happily married and blessed with children.

Dedicated To

The Two Women in the Life of Professor AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye:

Alhaja Sabitiyu Adeoye (Nee Popoola)

&

Mrs. Adenike Adekemi Adeoye (Nee Ibikunle)



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The Socio-Cultural and Economic Impacts of the New Yam Festival in Boki Local Government of Cross River State

Theresa Nfam Odeigah

Introduction

The Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State was established on the 28th of August, 1991 with its headquarters located in Boje. The Boki Local Government Area shares a boundary on its Southern border with the Republic of Cameroon, known also for commercial agricultural products such as yam, cassava, cocoa, timber and palm oil. To the north it shares a boundary with Obudu, Ogoja and Ikom (naijatimenews.com, 2017).The name Boki originated from the word *Bokyi*, it is also called *Nki*. It is located in the central part of Cross River State with almost 25 communities, sharing common boundaries with Ogoja, IKom, Obanliku and Obudu (kekerete.tripod.com, 2017). The communities that constitute Boki Local Government include: Ntamante, Okundi, Ise-bendegha, Bashua, Kakwargom, Bansan Osokom, Obubra Bansan, Bunyia, Bekpo, Nsadop, Borum, Oku-bushuyu, Orimekpang, Obubra-Ntamante, and Irruan among others. Boki is one of the largest local government areas in Cross River State. The ecology is made up of mangrove swamp forest and the vegetation follows the rainfall pattern in the area. Climatic factors are important to agriculture, and this is one of the great endowments of Boki Local Government Area (naijatimenewss.com, 2017).

This accounts for why agriculture is an important occupation among the Boki people, both the young and the old people. It was practised in almost all the different parts of Boki. With a lot of emphasis on agriculture it was possible for bumper harvests of yams to become the norm in Boki land. Yam is the chief crop in Boki land which was why celebration of the New Yam festival in the different parts of Local Government Area became a norm (calabarreporters.com, 2017). Yam cultivation was common in Boki land hence it is a crop that has dominated the economy since the colonial and the post colonial period. The crop has been a source of wealth to the various communities in the land (dailytrust.com,2016).

The concept of culture can be looked at from different perspectives and it has been variously defined by sociologists and anthropologists among other scholars. Tylor, defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs other capabilities and habit, techniques, ideas and values and the behaviour they induce" (Tylor, 1924, 1-6). Clyde Kluckhohn conceives culture as "the total way of life of a people, the social legacy that the individual acquires from his groups" (Clyde, 1963, 24). Thus it can be said that culture is abstract and that it is manifested in the behaviour and in the results of behaviour (Olurode, p92, 1999). Agriculture is the main economic culture of the Boki people of Cross River State.

The Celebration of New Yam Festival in Boki

Celebration of New Yam became a big festival observed annually in Boki Local Government, hence it is referred to as "Boki New Yam Festival". The origin of the Boki New Yam Festival is historic, it was said to have originated out of the hardship from the very poor yield of farm produce, especially yam following the economic depression in 1945 after the Second World War. Boki people at that time suffered from hunger and poor agricultural produce, they therefore sought divine intervention from the gods to put a stop to their hardship. It was therefore instituted as a way of appeasing the gods of the land for better harvest in the coming years. Secondly it was also seen as a mark of respect to honour the memory of late Chief Otu Agbor 11, a great king and a foremost custodian of the Boki tradition and customs, who died at about the same time of the great depression. As a result of these very significant happenings in the life of the Boki people, August 18th of each year was chosen as a date for commemorating the thanksgiving to appease the gods and also remember Chief Otu Agbor 11 (Otu, 2017).

The celebration of the New Yam Festival usually features songs and different cultural dance groups, such as *Atem,Agut, Iyatu* and *Basan* among others. Masquerades of different shapes and sizes, in their full regalia usually come out to display and entertain the people. The occasion is therefore marked with dances by different masquerades and the chief masquerade usually stands out in its regalia and dance steps. This festival is celebrated in Boki land on the 18th day of August every year to appease the ancestral gods for the divine guidance during the farming season, leading to the bumper harvest of farm produce. In contemporary times, it is believed that the celebration of the New Yam Festival has taken a new dimension due to its modernisation to include, meetings and workshops geared towards the economic development of Boki. The Boki New Yam Festival has contributed significantly to the cultural, social and economic growth and development of the communities in Boki land and beyond. It has created a lot of awareness and peace among the Boki people as well as acting as a major impetus for self determination and communal development (Mbu, 2016).



Fig. 1. A flyer announcing the 2017 Boki New Yam Festival and dance carnival
Source: Boki New Generation Voice

The New Yam Festival has attracted a lot of picturesque and colourful entertainment during the celebration. Before the people begin to eat the new yam, the ritual had to be performed by the elders (Nku, 2016). Chief W. B. Agbor was a high chief that came out once a year in the day light and that opportunity came only during the New Yam day on the 18th of August of every year. It is believed that before the new yam festival, the old yams would all be consumed or sold out to the non-natives of Boki land (Edoko, 2015). The process of the ceremony usually began early in the morning at about 6am with different activities. During this period, Chief W.B. Agbor 11 came out with his titled elders, men, women, and the children dancing round the town, and at certain specific areas of Boki land, he threw a live chicken, new yam, red oil and water to the ancestors (Otu, 2016).

This celebration was very symbolic to especially the farmers who believed that the gods of the land would bring a bountiful harvest the following year. After the initial celebration which was generally seen as the feeding of the gods and the ancestors, most people retired back to their homes for the cooking of the new yam and preparation for the rest of the day's activities. Before the masquerades come out with their colourful attires and revellers, some selected youths and the elderly ones thrilled out with thousands of spectators at the square to watch different dance groups and acrobatic display (naijatimenews.com, 2017)

The New Yam Festival Masquerades and Dance Carnival



Fig. 2. Sources: https://calabarreporters.com, 2017

It is pertinent to note that the New Yam Festival is associated with the presentation and showcasing of different cultural dances with their unique regalia. Some of these dance groups and special masquerades are seen only on the New Yam festival day. The second segment of the Festival celebration usually begins from midday with various dance groups, masquerades and singing groups among others showcasing their skills (calabarreporters.com, 2017). At this phase of the celebration, the people usually appear in their best attires to visit friends and relatives and exchanging pleasantries. During this period the traditional title holders, illustrious sons and daughters of Boki and spectators would move round to watch the cultural displays. At this time visitors from all works of life are recognised and given a warm welcome by the high Chief (voiceofcrossriver.gistabout.com, 2016).

The Boki people see the New Yam Festival as the commemoration of the people's ancestral power, creativity, unity, love and strength and this is what makes the festival unique to the people. One other colourful aspect of the Boki New Yam Festival is that it is one event in the history of the Boki people that attracts a lot of Boki people in the diaspora. This is because it gives them the opportunity to show case their rich culture and heritage. It also affords those in the diaspora to meet with old friends and relatives (Agbor, 2017). The commencement of the New Yam Festival with the appearance of masquerades embodies the spirit of the land. It is believed that masquerades are spirits which spring from the gods and during the New Yam Festival, the masquerades dance to appease the gods of the land.

The *Atem* masquerade has existed for several centuries and is seen as sacred by most



Fig 3. Atem masquerade and the clan head of Okundi. Source; Otu Agbor's palace, Okundi, Boki.

male adults. The *Atem* were seen to be controlled by the gods, and believed to have mystical powers (Offum, 2017). All these masquerades have different dance steps which make them interesting to watch and also unique. The *Atem* for example, is covered from the head to the toes with different regalia. The regalia is made from bamboo raffia. The mask of the *Atem* is frightening and intimidating (calabarreporters.com, 2017). It is believed that the *Atem* has mystical powers and as a result women were not allowed to move close to the masquerade. The excitement and the level of apprehension that heralds the appearance of the *Atem is* usually tremendous and women are asked to keep away from the masquerade and nobody is allowed to look directly at the face of the masquerade (egotickets.com, 2015). The *Atem* is said to have been in existence for several centuries and only the men who are members of the *Atem* group are allowed to walk close to the masquerade (facebook.com, 2017).

The Impact of The New Yam Festival

The Boki New Yam Festival has contributed significantly to the cultural and economic development of the people. The Festival has also contributed to the growth of tourism in Boki and in Cross River State at large. The celebration of the festival has attracted economic benefits such as the increase in trading activities and the provision of means of livelihood to some of the people (Abang, 2017). It is also believed that the New Yam Festival has an important impact on the lives and culture of the people, because the festival has helped in keeping them in touch with their roots and culture and thereby strengthening their identity and their self determination as a people. The New Yam Festival has also helped in bringing the people together and sensitizing them to work together for the success of their various

communities (kekerete.tripod.com, 2017).

One other major impact of the Boki New Yam Festival and dance carnival is on tourism in the area and Cross River State in general. The festival as an agro-cultural festival has the potential to boost tourism in Boki land and in the Eastern Niger Delta area in general. By attracting several tourists both local and foreign into the area, it has also created job opportunities and increased revenue generation during that period. Most hotels, traders and the various other service providers generate more income during the festival (dailytrust.com.ng, 2016).

The influx of tourists during the New Yam festival has motivated the State Government to upgrade and expand the facilities on ground in Boki resulting in more revenue generation and more job opportunities for the people. In addition to providing accommodation, the visitors make use of the restaurants, fast food outlets and nearby shops for their needs. The Boki people also take advantage of such an opportunity to erect temporary stalls to sell airtime, fruits, food, water and soft drinks (Enyia). There are many areas in Boki that attract tourists such as, Oku-Buabakong waters, Agba hill and its caves and Boki wildlife. These areas have attracted lots of people during the festivals. The local transport sector is not an exception as it has also tremendously benefited from the New Yam Festival and dance carnival. Visitors and even the indigenes are ferried from one area to another thus creating business for taxi owners, mini bus drivers and motor cyclists popularly known as *Okada* (Odok, 2016).

The New Yam Festival and dance carnival has encouraged trade and inter-group relations among the various communities and among distance communities such as Ugep, Ikom, Calabar, Akampa and Obudu among others. During the festival, transporters, traders, retailers, wholesalers and artisans of various callings record higher volume of patronage and sales compared to other periods. People generally look forward to the New Yam Festival and dance carnival with enthusiasm and a great sense of relief. One very important impact of the Boki New Yam Festival and Dance Carnival on the people is that, it promotes peace and unity in the area. For any socio-economic development to take place there has to be peace and unity. In recent times however, the Boki New Yam Festival and Dance Carnival has taken a new dimension because of a combination of several factors (Edor, 2016).

Decline of yam: The decline of yam in Boki in recent years has negatively affected the celebration of the New Yam Festival. The yam that used to enjoy a pride of place in Boki land now faces stiff competition for prominence by other crops most especially cassava. Most people now celebrate with rice, cassava and other crops unlike in the past when people celebrated only with yam. Cassava is more resistant to pests, easier to cultivate process and preserve than the yam and cassava has more economic value presently than yam. It is also cheaper to purchase cassava stems for planting (Abang, 2017).

Christianity: The recent development has tended to disrupt the economic culture to some extent. The spread of Western religion which diverted a substantial proportion of the new yam festival is one of the problems hindering traditional celebration of the New Yam Festival in Boki (Agbor, 2017). Several religious doctrines and misconceptions have affected the celebration of the New Yam Festival and the Dance Carnival. Most individuals now begin their New Yam Festival celebration by attending religious services to show their profound gratitude to the God Almighty for a bountiful harvest. Most of the people now see their ancestral gods as deities and so will not worship such objects as their gods. The notion that the new yam should be offered to the gods and ancestors before consumption has been described by some of the people as demonic (Obi, 2017). The Boki people are predominantly Christians and therefore, it will not be surprising that some of them are questioning why they should worship idols during the New Yam Festival and Dance Carnival. Because of some of these factors, the celebration of the New Yam Festival has been watered down to a point where most people prepare different delicacies such as, fried rice, pottage, beans, pounded cassava and so on, after which dancing and drinking and socialisation would start. The celebration has been modified over the years to the extent that it has conformed largely to Christian religious principles and values (Ejim, 2016). People in Boki are beginning to celebrate the New Yam Festival without the preparation of yam. Cassava is fast gaining more prominence than yam in Boki land. Cassava in most homes is being used to supplement yam as a staple food. The New Yam Festival that was once celebrated in a very traditional way has now being replaced by a New Yam Festival rooted in Christianity and its values (Obi, 2017).

Conclusion

The Boki New Yam Festival and Dance Carnival over the years had been a great rallying point for the people of Boki Land. It has brought fame, peace, unity cultural, social and economic benefits to the people. This agro-cultural festival has been recognised even by the Cross River State Government as a way to boost tourism in the state. The recent prominence and popularity of cassava over yam in Boki land as well as the influence of Christianity in the area has resulted in some modification in the way the festival is celebrated. Despite the more recent influence, the Boki New yam Festival and Dance Carnival remains an important festival to the people of Boki in the Eastern Niger Delta area of Nigeria. This heritage and agro-cultural festival can be improved upon to become the cornerstone of the positive marketing of Boki in Cross River State and indeed the Eastern Niger Delta's tourism potential which is a welcome relief at a time of economic recession.

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