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Foundation Editor-in-Chief

Prof Sunday Enessi Ododo, *fsonta, fta, fsna, fana*, FNAL

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Notes to Contributors

National Theatre Monograph Series is for dedicated research in Theatre practice, Arts, Culture, Tourism and Theatre Technology, etc.

Contributions in any of these areas should connect the National Theatre to our national life and the economy; proffer workable suggestions on how the National Theatre can make impactful contributions to the Nigerian economy, culture and social bearing. Locate a lucrative space for our youth, women and children in all of these. Above all, proffer how the National Theatre can help to

a) build a thriving and sustainable economy; b) enhance social inclusion to reduce poverty; and c) function as a tool for cultural diplomacy.

National Theatre should be deconstructed as just an edifice for hosting events and tourist attraction, but given wheels and mobility to connect with the nooks and crannies of Nigeria and the world.

Editorial requirements:

1. Well researched essay should not be less than 60 pages double spaced in A4 paper. It should not be more than 100 pages.
2. Apart from its theoretical foundation, essay should have practical ambience and rich examples from the Nigerian realities.
3. Contributors are to submit topic and an abstract of not more than 600 words for assessment.
4. Once a topic is approved, author is expected to deliver the full paper within two months for peer review assessment and other editorial procedures.
5. Upon completion of all editorial processes, the author shall be paid contribution honorarium.
6. The author shall be entitled to five complimentary copies of the monograph but may wish to buy additional copies.
7. MLA or APA are preferred referencing styles that could be used.

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It is very gratifying indeed that the maiden edition of *National Theatre Monograph Series* (NATMOS) was enthusiastically received by academics, government agencies, private organizations, foreign missions, and individuals across the country. The response to the first edition of NATMOS showed that there was a gap that needed filling and there was a thirst for knowledge that needed satisfying. I am very happy that this initiative is already making appreciable impacts in filling the vacuum in cultural knowledge and entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Our quest to document, project, preserve and disseminate the rich cultural heritage of this great nation is being realised; this makes our modest effort rewarding.

NATMOS is already showing that it can be a creditable image maker for Nigeria and Nigerians home and abroad. The issues to be presented, the manner of presentation which is aimed at setting agenda for the future while preserving the best of our cultural history and innovations will further entrench and enhance this publication as a must have for anyone, anywhere who is on a quest for current knowledge of the creative industry in Nigeria. The accelerating creativity of Nigerians need documenting as much as it needs intellectual guidance, and this is the role that National Theatre through NATMOS is playing.

The second edition of NATMOS has contributions from a medley of academics whose astute dedication has propelled them to the apogee where they continue to add richly to the stock of available knowledge in the creative arts, culture studies and practice. Similarly, it has contributions from administrators who have combined scholarly sagacity with administrative acumen in many spheres of the vast world of creative culture industry. These administrators are well qualified to speak authoritatively having made stratospheric impacts in their sphere of influence. Professor Duro Oni, Ph.D., FNAL, the President of the Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL) and former Chief Executive of the

Federal Government Parastatal, Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization from 2000-2006, is a well published scholar whose erudite outputs make him an intellectual and theatre practitioner well sought after. Professor Andrew-Essien, Ph.D. is Professor of Theatre Scenography and Carnival Arts. This man of many productive parts is also a specialist in Message Development for Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC). With an avowed scholarship aim to extend the value of visual and performative arts beyond aesthetics to utilitarian dimensions thus making arts a veritable device in development communication. Finally, Professor Mabel Itohanosa Erioyunvwen Ewrierhoma with her specialization in Dramatic Theory and Criticism, Gender, Women and Cultural Studies has brought a balance and wider appeal to this monograph; further making it a practical guidebook for all and sundry.

We the editorial board are indebted to the Honourable Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Muhammed, for his continued vision and astute leadership of the Ministry, especially for his love towards the National Theatre. Your indefatigable determination to bequeath Nigerians a 'new' National Theatre that we can all be proud of is already coming to fruition; for that and all your support, we say THANK YOU, SIR. I also appreciate the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Mrs Lydia Shehu Jafiya for her infectious passion and commitment to service. The management of the National Theatre and the Editorial Board of NATMOS are well appreciated for standing firm to make this initiative work.

Prof Sunday Enessi Ododo, *fsonta, fta, fsna, fana, fnipr*, FNAL

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Integration in a Globalising World, was published by Cambridge Scholars, United Kingdom in June 2022.

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THE NATIONAL THEATRE AND THE SEARCH FOR A COLLECTIVE IDENTITY OF THE NIGERIAN NATION STATE

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Abstract

While the capacity of Nigerian art forms to promote national unity has been emphasised and acknowledged by scholars and critics, the part that The National Theatre of Nigeria specifically can play in this process has not received appropriate scholarly attention. Apart from newspaper articles, there is very little and no detailed study about the crucial role of The Nigerian National Theatre as space and place in promoting national unity. Hence, it is this gap in the knowledge production about the National Theatre that this study seeks to fill. The study is divided into eight (8) sections. The first section provides an overview of what the study is all about as well as the conversation into which it enters. The second section is devoted to the conceptualisation of the fundamental terminologies of the study. The study, for example, differentiates and at the same time establishes a confluence between the National Theatre as a structure, place, and space on one hand; and the National theatre as the performative acts of a nation on stage with an audience on the other. The third section, offers a brief explication of what Henri Lefebvre's theory of space is all about and its relevance to this critical intervention. The fourth section is a sort of background to the fundamental argument of the study; it underscores the urgent need for/of a collective identity in the face of national disintegration. The fifth section of the study argues that the vision behind the setting-up or establishment of the National Theatre as space and place. Art as a performative gesture needs a space from which it could speak; and The Nigerian National Theatre as a structure is such a space. Conversely, space in isolation has no meaning without what inhabits

or occupies it. It is, however, against the backdrop of this established vision as enunciated in section five that the sixth section entitled “The Role of the National Theatre in Nigeria’s Collective Identity” goes on to revisit in detail Henri Lefebvre’s theory of space to highlight “what has been” and “what should be” the role of The National Theatre. The seventh section makes some recommendations, and the eighth and final section is the “Conclusion,” which recaps and hammers on the arguments/findings of the study.

Introduction

There is no gain saying that since its establishment and construction, the National Theatre as a structure has been submerged in one controversy or another. These controversies have ranged from its architectural design; to it being a transposition of a Western model, and therefore a symbol of the Eurocentric enslavement of the Nigerian nation-state; to it being too gigantic an edifice; to its fittingness taking into account the Nigerian socioeconomic and sociocultural realities; to its management structure; and to whether it should be privatised or not as well as to whether it should be outrightly sold. In an interview with Demas Nwoko (a designer and theatre architect), for instance, he submits that “When the Federal Government set up a 29-member committee in 1973 on the National Theatre, there were a few Theatre practitioners who were not happy with the plans to go round certain countries in search of designs or designers” (D. Nwoko, Interview, 25th October, 2021). According to him, “I should have been allowed to design the National Theatre as I was the only Nigerian Designer/Architect who made a bid for its design” (D. Nwoko, Interview, 25th October, 2021). Having built his studio and house from traditional materials by using clay and laterite found around the site of his studio and house, Nwoko strongly felt that the National Theatre should have been built as a truly Nigerian architectural model. Thus, beyond being an expression of a personal loss, what characterises Demas Nwoko’s submission as that of other theatre practitioners in Nigeria is that being an embodiment of the sociocultural practice of the Nigerian nation-state, the National Theatre should have been designed and built by indigenous brains and hands.

Another controversy around which the discourse of the National Theatre has revolved is its size, which is seen by theatre practitioners as not too fitting for theatre performance in Nigeria. For example, it has been argued that:

as grandiose as the NT is, it may not have fulfilled the basic functions for which it was meant, especially taking into consideration the foreign design of the theatre and facilities that are not very adequate to the theatre and performance culture in Nigeria....the more grandiose the theatre is, the less theatre (performance) that takes place in the theatre (Oni 2017: 69).

It is controversies such as the foregoing and others (which would further be developed in this study) that has dictated most of the discussions concerning the National Theatre. The result being that the objective for its establishment and what it can achieve in the same regard has been neglected. Nonetheless, appropriating Henri Lefebvre's theory of space that highlights how individual characters produce and reproduce their space, and are themselves products of the (re)produced space; this study examines the role of the Nigerian National Theatre in creating and sustaining what has been described as "a unitary collective" (Kuby 2015: 65) in the face of a Nigerian nation-state that is fragmented politically, religiously, tribally, and economically. A unitary collective is an articulation of the fact that persons making-up a nation-state recognise that though they are "internally homogeneous," they are also "externally bounded," thereby seeing themselves as persons "with common purposes" (Rogers Brubaker 2009: 28).

This internal homogeneity in the real sense, however, might not even be the case. In the case of the Nigerian nation-state, for example, it is more of a people who are externally bounded together but who in reality are internally heterogeneous. In the case of Nigeria, therefore, a unitary collective is not aimed at destroying or rubbing ethnic or regional cleavages or affiliation. Rather, it is geared towards making people think and act beyond their ethnic or regional interests. Hence, what this study examines is the role the National Theatre as space and place and as a performative gesture can play in engendering a situation and climate in which people belonging to the various ethnic and regional entities that make-up the Nigerian nation-state can begin to think and act beyond their primeval interests. In the words of Rogers

Brubaker (2009), it is to engender a situation in which people of different ethnic and regional entities can begin to act “with a common purpose.”

The need for this has even become urgent just as it appears to have become undermined by the “complex regimes of presence and absence through digitization” (Knoblauch & Martina 2020: 264) following the COVID-19 pandemic-imposed restrictions in which stage characters now act their part virtually. The Theatre is no longer what it used to be, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. In the world of a new normal, a complex regime of presence and absence through digitisation has been inaugurated. It is no longer unusual for the actors of a dramatic presentation to act their parts virtually with the performances on a virtual stage theatre being watched from the comfort of one’s home. Thus, the actors/characters and audience to a theatre performance are simultaneously present and absent. They are physically absent while at the same time being virtually present. They are physically distanced while being virtually tied and joined together. In a situation such as this, the begging question is - can the theatre as a space and place as well as a performative gesture play its role of engendering a unitary collective? The other engagement of this work, therefore, is whether the theatre can still fulfil its role of a unitary collective in the age of digitisation particularly in Nigeria and Africa.

The role of art and the artist in any given society has been a subject of vigorous debate from the time of the classical period, which is regarded as the beginning of the history of literary theory and criticism. Intervening in the ancient quarrel instantiated and substantiated by Socrates as to which is more useful to society between the disciplines of philosophy and literature, Plato like his teacher (Socrates) takes his stand in support of philosophy over and above literature. Banishing artists and the arts from his ideal republic, Plato condemns art forms in their imitation for being thrice removed from reality, and for appealing to the emotions rather than the rationality of man. He (Plato) insists that what the poet/artist creates is untrue and a semblance of existence (Charles Kaplan and William Davis Anderson 2000: 3). As noted by William Chase Greene (1918), Plato “fiercely criticizes poetry as a whole, and professes to banish the tribe of poets from his commonwealth; they are perverters of morality, mere imitators and deceivers, and their art is concerned

with the world of appearance, not of reality” (1). From that time onward, the business of every critic, either consciously or unconsciously, is to respond to Plato’s view of art and the artist. As Kaplan and Anderson (2000: 1) have remarked, critics have written either “in support, refutation, or modification of Plato’s views.”

This debate still holds sway in the world of literary representation and criticism, but has taken a different dimension outside it, especially within the Nigerian socio-political, socioeconomic, and sociocultural environment. Indisputably, the current debate in Nigeria along the axis of the present framework is - which is more useful to the development of the Nigerian society between literature and science? Although this debate between the utilitarian value of literature in contrast to science has also been there from the time of the classical period when Plato also compares Homer and his followers on one hand as against the Pythagoreans on the other, it is undoubtedly more pronounced currently in Nigeria. And from the perspective of those in government and even from that of those at the helm of affairs of most institutions of higher learning, literature is accorded a second-class status in relation to science. It is perhaps deriving from this development and the misconception of those at the helm of affairs of the governance of the Nigerian nation-state that Taiwo Oladokun (2001: 5) asserts that:

The crisis facing the humanistic arts in general is that many people do not readily find in them any obvious utilitarian justification as are readily found in scientific arts. The question of relevance should, perhaps, be laid to rest for now borrowing from Brockett’s view that what the spectator gleans from a work of arts (sic) depends in part upon his own background and his own sensitivity to emotions and ideas.

What Oladokun’s assertion highlights is not the subordination of literature or art forms to philosophy, but its relegation in relation to the sciences. Generally, the misconception, especially in Nigeria, is that the arts is not as relevant as the sciences to the development of the society.

Yet, the essentiality of art forms in any given society is not in doubt. Commenting on Maria Edgeworth’s artistic works, for example, John Ruskin asserts that “they contained more essential truths about Ireland than can be learned from any other source whatsoever” (cited in Eglantina Rempert 2018:

6). It is in the same vein that in his study of Irish theatre, Rempport (2018) observes that critics are in agreement about “the central role” the arts can “play” in “any educational programme that aimed at elevating public taste in Ireland, and by doing so, enriching the quality of life of the majority of the Irish population” (5). The quality of life to which Rempport refers is the social formation and cultural well-being of the average Irish citizen in the face of British hegemony. Commenting on Maria Edgeworth’s novel, *Ennui*, it is Rempport’s (2018) view that “the characters of McLeod, Hardcastle and Lord Y – offer various alternative perspectives on the improvement of circumstances for Irish men, women, and children” (7). What Rempport notes, therefore, is the capacity of art forms to educate and conscientize citizens about their social and cultural affinity in the face of disintegration or that of “foreign aggression and domination.”

Similarly, Sharmistha Saha (2018) argues that the emergence of an Indian nation was made possible with the emergence of an Indian theatre (v). Saha writes from the same standpoint of Rempport in terms of the essentiality of art forms in any given society. The only difference is that unlike Rempport who writes from the standpoint of the essentiality of theatre as contained in the cultural aesthetics of some individual writers in the formation of a social and cultural Irishness in the face of British hegemony, Saha writes of how Indian theatre in general contributed to the formation of a national identity of Indianness in the face of British colonial domination of India. What Saha’s argument, therefore, articulates is how the Indian nationalism as is presently configured is entangled with the cultural practice of India as embodied in its theatre.

Juris Sileniesk, writing within the framework of the Nigerian sociocultural production, observes that “literary creativity has largely been the outcome of efforts among writers whose commitments, with the emergence of new geopolitical realities, are directed toward the task of nation building, emancipation and accession to national consciousness” (cited in Umar-Buratai 2007: 143). Silenik’s observation is the capacity of literary creativity, inclusive of Nigerian theatre practice, in promoting nation building and national consciousness. Also, writing about the Yoruba travelling theatre, Karin Barber observes that it “opens a window onto popular consciousness

that is unique in its detail and clarity, revealing the anxieties, preoccupations and convictions that underpin ordinary people's daily experience" (cited in Adelugba, Obafemi, and Adeyemi 2004:138). Likewise, acknowledging that literature, especially theatre/drama have roles to play in the social development of any society, Oladokun (2001) explains that "art is an organized expression of the world in which we live, a communication tool making possible a kind of psychic interaction between the artist and the people" (5). This psychic interaction between the artist and his audience is not just for the fun of it. Rather, it is to activate the conscience and sensibility of the audience. Writing almost in a similar vein, Rupert C. Lodge in his *Plato's Theory of Arts* insists that the "art(ist) provides reinforcements for the attitudes considered right. He assists in developing the children into becoming good citizens and in some cases good leaders" (cited in Oladokun 2001: 6). And commenting on this, Oladokun advises that "Artists should endeavour to discover in what ways, and to what extent art can be used to reinforce what the community regards as right" (2001:6). But the real issue at stake is not what the artist or art should do or accomplish, prompting the kind of advice that Oladokun offers. Instead, it is what the artist or art, most often than not, does and accomplishes.

Debatably, it is basically what any given society considers to be right and wrong or essential that almost every artistic production upholds. The quest for adventure and heroism that characterises both the English and French medieval literature, for instance, is because it is what both societies hold to be of utmost importance at that period. Also, the Petrarchan courtly love in which a man falls in love with a woman and yet desists and refrains from having carnal knowledge of her which defines early English renaissance poetry is due to the value that the society as at then places on chastity and purity of emotional feelings towards the opposite sex. Thus, artistic productions at any given time in the history of literary development have been largely utilized to reinforce societal values and agenda. As Sylvian Levi (1890) cited in Saha (2018: 24) observes:

In Greece, the New Comedy flourished on the ruins of the ancient tragedy. In France, the tragedies of Corneille and Racine died with the regime which had nurtured them. A political, social and religious

revolution gave birth to the Romantic drama, which in its turn, made room for the Comedy of Manners. A common law seems to preside over the evolution of the dramatic art in all countries.

What Levi highlights is that, to a very large extent, every artistic work is an embodiment of the spirit of the age in which it is/was produced/written. As every society evolves, so does its artistic forms and presentations. The need for this evolution is not just to mirror society as it is, but also to portray the values of every given society.

The case is not any different in Nigeria/Africa where artistic productions are deployed to either ridicule dispositions and actions that are considered immoral or praise deeds that are viewed as moral and upright. Yet, while the capacity of Nigerian art forms to promote national unity has been emphasised and acknowledged by scholars and critics, the share that the Nigerian National Theatre as space and performance together can play in this process has not received appropriate scholarly attention. Apart from newspaper articles, there is very little and no detailed study about the crucial role of the Nigerian National Theatre as space and performance in promoting national unity. For instance, in an interview which the writer of this piece had with Demas Nwoko¹, what is uppermost to him (Nwoko) is not what the National Theatre can achieve in instituting and sustaining a collective identity. Rather, it is how the Federal Government missed out in realising a truly Nigerian cultural edifice. Also, in an interview she granted, Tofarati Ige (a newspaper correspondent), Kesiena Obue² bemoans the neglect of the National Theatre complex. She argues that owing to the fact that “several great thespians cut their teeth in the profession at the National Theatre” and the fact that “It is a national heritage that we should always cherish,” it should not have been neglected (Tofaratilge 2019). Obue’s focus is not on the unifying role that the National Theatre complex can play in bringing people of different affiliations and orientations together, but on its unfortunate neglect.

In an article published by the *This Day* newspaper, the intervention of Adebayo Adebajo is not on the neglect of the National Theatre, but on the Federal Government concession of the edifice to private investors. Describing the National Theatre as the “beacon of cultural nationalism” in Nigeria, Adebajo asserts that “Until something concrete and long-lasting steps are

taken to decide whether to be or not over the concession of the nation's prime National Theatre, the dream, the predictions, will be a wild revelry and hope of a giant and vibrant entertainment industry will remain a dream" (Adejobi 2016). Although acknowledging how significant the National Theatre is, it is not in relation to how it can contribute to national unity. On the contrary, it is as regards its essentiality to a vibrant entertainment industry.

This, however, should not be taken to mean that no scholarly study has been carried out about the Nigerian National Theatre as space and performance or that the role it can play in promoting national unity and consciousness has not been acknowledged by scholars and critics. The issue is that in such studies, the focus is not really on how the Nigerian National Theatre as space/place and as performance can engender national unity. For instance, in his study of the Nigerian "National Troupe," which is seen in the present critical endeavour as a study of the Nigerian National Theatre as performance, Ahmed Yerima (2001) notes that "the National Troupe helps to celebrate Nigeria's cultural heritage and therefore re-awakens those social inter-relationships which unify the country" (194). But this is not an observation that he contextualises within his study or dwelt on in detail. In fact, the observation was enacted towards the tail end of his paper entitled "Performance Company in a Modern African State: The Case of the National Troupe of Nigeria." It is, therefore, understandable that the unifying role of the Nigerian National Troupe is an observation he throws in the mix of the focus of his study, which is more on the historiography of the establishment of the National Troupe and how its management has so far fared.

It is the same phenomenon that characterised Jimmy Atta's (2001) study, which he simply entitled "The National Theatre, Iganmu, Lagos." As can be seen, in contrast to Yerima who undertakes a study of the National Theatre as performance, Atta takes as the purview of his study of the Nigerian National Theatre as space/place. But like Yerima, the focus of Atta's engagement is on the historiography of the edifice known as National Theatre, and not on the unifying role it has played or can play. Seeing the edifice known as the National Theatre as a national symbol and cenotaph, Atta remarks that "Probably the most important accomplishment of the Federal Government, under General Yakubu Gowon...in the promotion of arts and culture in

Nigeria, was the design and construction of the National Theatre...” (144). Beyond seeing the National Theatre as an important gesture in the promotion of arts and culture, what engaged the attention of Atte is what prompted the conceptualisation and construction of the National Theatre; how the government policy for its construction was implemented and by whom; its architectural design; its composition; its mission and statutory mandate; and its different management boards from the time it was formally declared open on September 30th, 1976 by General Olusegun Obasanjo, the then Head of State (Atte 2001:146).

Another related study like that of Yerima and Atte is that of Duro Oni (2001). The essay, which is entitled “Evaluative Analysis of Theatre Groups and Performance Venues in Nigeria” examines “the art and practice of the theatre” from “the perspectives of design and technology,” which according to Oni is commonly referred to as “technical theatre” in Nigeria (163). Focusing more on “the impact that performance venues and facilities have on the art and practice of the theatre” in Nigeria (Oni 2001: 163), Oni’s interrogation is on how “to achieve the unity of purpose which is mandatory in any performance” (163) rather than the prerequisite for the unity of the various federating units making up Nigeria that is needed for nation building or national transformation. It is, therefore, the gap in knowledge in the scholarship of the Nigerian National Theatre that this study seeks to fill by examining the role that the Nigerian National Theatre as space and performance can play in engendering a collective consciousness, which is essential in the task of national unity.

The National Theatre as Space and Performance

The study, however, employs some terms that need to be clarified in the sense in which they are being deployed. These terms are National Theatre, Collective Identity, and the Nigerian nation-state. The Nigerian nation-state is a country in West Africa that gained independence from the British in 1960. Thus, it is an Anglophone West African country. But what is of utmost importance in this study is not so much where the Nigerian nation-state is situated cartographically as its unique configuration. This is so because it is its unique configuration and its current political state that has informed this

research. For example, in contrast to other Anglophone and Francophone West African countries, and even other countries on the African continent; Nigeria is a very unique country as it is a conglomeration of many nationalities with different languages and religious practices in one nation. What Rogers Brubaker (2009) notes about persons making-up a nation-state recognising that though they are “internally homogeneous,” they are also “externally bounded,” thereby seeing themselves as persons “with common purposes” (28) does not really apply to the Nigerian situation. At the last count, it is estimated that Nigeria is made-up of over 450 ethnic groups with their own various languages and religious beliefs. Hence, the Nigerian nation-state is fragmented politically, religiously, tribally, and economically Dapo Adelugba, Olu Obafemi, and Sola Adeyemi (2004: 138) affirm this when they observe that “Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with one of the largest areas. It is a country of great diversity because of the many ethnic, linguistic and religious groups that live within its borders.” Beyond being populous and occupying the largest area, what is to be noted is that Nigeria is a country that is sharply divided along ethnic, religious, and linguistic axis.

Following the amalgamation of the different regions that make-up present day Nigeria in 1914, the general consensus has been that the British finagled people belonging to different ethnic nationalities together into what has been generally described as unholy matrimony. It is in a bid to find lasting solution to this company of strange bed fellows that Nigeria at its independence in 1960 adopted federalism – the thinking being that of fostering unity in diversity. Unfortunately, this dream of the founding fathers of the Nigerian nation-state has remained a mirage. Instead of becoming more united, what has been witnessed over the years is further disintegration. The first crack in the wall that signifies this disintegration was the Nigerian/Biafran civil war of 1967 – 1970. Following the civil war and the lessons learnt thereof, it was expected that bridges would be built across ethnic and tribal lines so that the country would become truly united in the face of its apparent diversity. But this has not been the case, prompting the interrogation of this work as to the role the National Theatre of Nigeria as space and performance can play in fostering a collective identity.

No matter the meanings that have been provided, at the heart of “collective identity” is a shared belief of common purpose, common interests, and solidarities beyond the existence of different individuals and groups within a geographical and imagined space. Anushka D. Kapahi and Gabrielle Tanada (2018) explain that “Collective identity refers to a shared distinction amongst a group of people or community, which comes from the community’s culture, beliefs and aspirations” (2). Likewise, Charles Taylor insists that “it is the cultural collective identity of a community that provides the moral and social frameworks that people use to determine who they are, how they see others and how they act” (cited in Kapahi and Tanada 2018: 2). The collective identity of a people within a geographical and imagined space is, therefore, how they see themselves as against how they see others. It revolves around the firm belief of “us” versus/against “them.” Irrespective of their internal heterogeneity, a people with a collective identity have a binding and bounding character that distinguishes them from others.

Another fundamental term, in addition to “collective identity,” that needs to be explained is “National Theatre.” On the face value, it simply refers to the theatre of a nation. But this “theatre of a nation” can assume two different but interrelated meanings. The first is the aggregation of the performative acts of a nation on stage, while the second is the edifice or structure constructed for the display of the performative acts of a nation. In the latter regard, such edifice or structure becomes the culmination of the symbol of a nation’s art and culture. These two perspectives to the meaning of the term “theatre” have been provided or suggested by scholars and critics. For instance, Saha (2018: 20) points out that “the word ‘theatre’ in English is derived from the Greek word ‘theatron’ which basically signifies a space for the spectators or an auditorium.” This etymological explanation of the term “theatre” shows that in its original usage, it denotes the auditorium or space rather than the performance. Yet, in his praise of his friend (Lady Augusta Gregory who wrote plays for the stage in Ireland), George Bernard Shaw remarks that:

If ever there was a person doomed from the cradle to write for the stage, to break through every social obstacle to get to the stage, to refuse to do anything but writ for the stage, nay, to invent and create a theatre if no theatre existed, that person is ... (cited in Rempert 2018: 1)

And commenting on this, Rempert (2018) notes that “Shaw’s admiration for Lady Gregory arose, in part, out of ...the social ideals that she brought to her work for the Irish Revival at the beginning of the twentieth century” (2). It is obvious that Shaw (even as explained by Rempert) did not employ the term “theatre” as space or auditorium, but as performance. It is Lady Gregory’s writing for the stage that is her major contribution to Irish theatre, and not the building or erection of any structure/edifice for performance. It is, however, in the foregoing two senses that the word has been applied or deployed that this work uses the term “theatre.” First as the space/auditorium, and second as performance in/within the space/auditorium. As a structure, however, it has been pointed out that:

The National Theatre in Lagos occupies an area 23,000 square meters built over a 1.1 million square meters of land in Iganmu, Mainland Lagos. Construction work on the theatre started in 1973 under the Bulgarian firm of Techno Exportroy. The theatre itself was modelled after the Palace of Culture and Sports in Varna, Bulgaria (Oni 2017:73 – 74).

Thus, the “Nigerian National Theatre” as used in this work refers to the structure/building/auditorium that goes by the same name in Iganmu, Lagos, and the performative acts of Nigerian dramatists on stage.

Although in her attempt to define theatre, Saha (2018: 4) asserts that “[i]t is not the stage, the lights and mise-en-scene but two people within a given spatio-temporal reality,” it can also be conversely argued that it is not just the two people on/within any given space. As valid as Saha’s assertion is, a constructed and known edifice and structure of a theatrical space makes and achieves better consciousness for the actors and audience in a way that Peter Brook’s³ understanding of theatre as “a man walking across an empty space with another watching” (cited in Saha 2018:4) cannot achieve.

In most studies, however, the term “Theatre” with its qualifier “National” or the single term “Theatre” in isolation are often employed to refer to the nature or complexion of the theatrical performance of a nation, and not the space or structure that is offered for such performances (Kurt Essien 2021; Sharmista Saha 2018; Ahmed Yerima 2006; Martin Banham 2004; Ayo Akinwale 2001). For instance, in his edited book *A History of Theatre in Africa*, Martin

Banham uses the word “theatre” more as performance rather than space/place. By “African Theatre,” what he refers to or ask his contributors to write about is the history of the performative acts of their countries. For example, writing from the perspective of the history of Nigerian theatre in their chapter contribution entitled “Anglophone West Africa: Nigeria,” Adelugba, Obafemi, and Adeyemi (2004) argue that while “tracing the historical development of Nigerian theatre is bound to be complex...an authentic historical study of Nigerian arts and of Nigerian theatre from the pre-colonial periods is (still) a feasible project” (138). Despite momentary references to spaces/places where performance have taken place over different periods in the evolution of theatre practice in the Nigerian nation-state, what really engaged their research was not the evolution of theatre auditoria in Nigeria, but the evolution of theatre as performative acts.

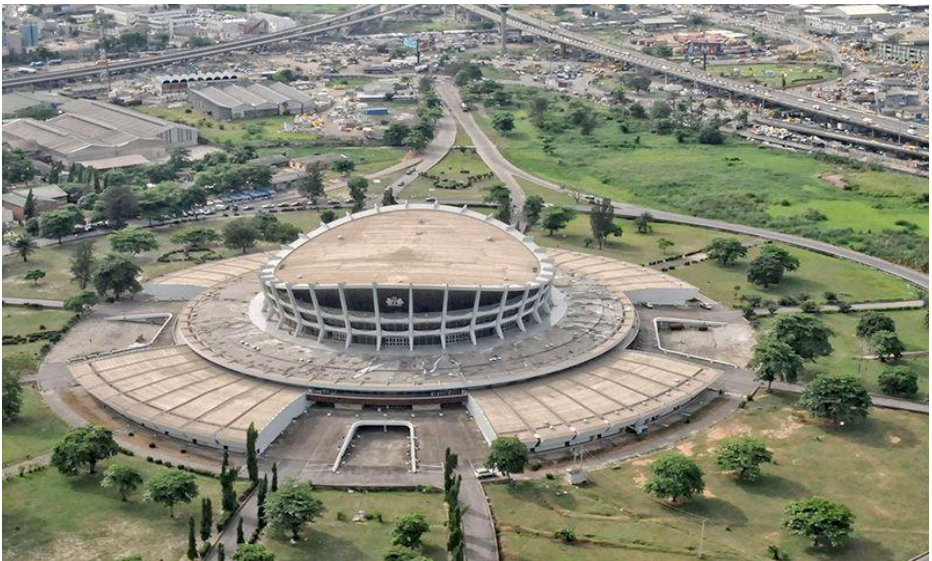
Also, when Ahmed Yerima (2006:39 – 66) remarks that “Soyinka, through his numerous essays, laid the intellectual basis for the future of play interpretation – or play directing in Nigerian theatre” (62), he employs the words “Nigerian theatre” to refer to theatre performance in Nigeria rather than the space/place known as the “Nigerian National Theatre.” This is also the understanding of Nigerian/National theatre that Kurt Essien (2021: 48 – 59) hints at in his comparative study of Nigerian and American theatres in which he compares and contrasts Obafemi’s and O’Neil’s dramaturgy as exemplifications of both national theatres. Undoubtedly, he does not write about the national theatres of both countries as space, but specifically about Nigerian and American national theatres as performative acts in Obafemi’s and O’Neil’s dramaturgy. It is this same perspective of national theatre that Ayo Akinwale (2000:24 - 31) enacts in his “The Nigerian Theatre and Economic Viability,” when he quipped that “[t]he Nigerian theatre has come of age. Its operations from 1945 to 1997 show that it has become an integral part of our society’s existence” (24). Akinwale is not, here, speaking in terms of the structure of the National Theatre in Lagos, Nigeria that came into being during FESTAC in 1977 neither is he speaking of any other structure that has been constructed or empty space that has been so named for performance in Nigeria between 1945 and 1997. On the contrary, he is speaking of the performative acts that have been put on display in Nigeria from 1945 to 1997.

However, this study differentiates and at the same time establishes a confluence between The National Theatre as a structure, place, and space on one hand; and the National theatre as the performative acts of a nation on stage with an audience on the other. The need for this is to demonstrate how both the physical and imagined space are symbiotic and can together be exercises in nation-building. The theatre director, Peter Brooks in his book, *The Empty Space*, remarks: “I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across the empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and that is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged” (cited in Saha 2018:4). Similarly, latching on Marvin Carlson (2008), Saha remarks that theatre is the “use of drama and the auditorium space” (12). Performance must take place in an empty space or in an auditorium for theatre to be realized.” As Henri Lefebvre (1991) notes in his theory of space, “it seems to be well established that physical space has no ‘reality’ without the energy that is deployed within it” (13). There can be no disjunction, schism, or break between physical space, mental space and social space (Lefebvre 1991:14). The physical space becomes the containment of mental space (the knowledge or aesthetic vision behind any given performance on stage/physical space), and both give birth to the social space (the knowledge derived from the expose of the performance within/on physical space).

Yerima (2006) insists that “theatre must go beyond the place or the play; it must also look at the collaborative process, the rhythm of creation which gives new knowledge and experience to the audience or spectator – and maybe invariably the response of the audience to the ideas thrown by the theatre as place and practice” (43). The theatre as place and practice must work hand-in-hand to provide the audience or spectators with new knowledge and experience. Thus, what Yerima, Lefebvre, Brooks and Saha `enunciate within the framework of the present study is that the National Theatre as structure, space and place in isolation amounts to nothing. It only comes alive with the performance in/within it. Within this frame of reference, therefore, the theatrical performance of a nation and the space where such is staged for the entertainment and education of the audience work hand in gloves in initiating and sustaining a collective identity that can spark off national unity.



Front/Day view of the Nigerian National Theatre



Aerial view of the Nigerian National Theatre



Night view of the Nigerian National Theatre

Henry Lefebvre's Theory of Space, and the National Theatre as Space and Performance

It is, however, with the appropriation of Henri Lefebvre's theory of space that highlights how individual characters produce and reproduce their space, and are themselves products of the (re)produced space that this study examines the role that The Nigerian National Theatre, as space and performance, can play in creating and sustaining what has been described as "a unitary collective" (Kuby 2015: 65). While mathematicians and philosophers have engaged with the concept of space long before Lefebvre's theorisation, the missing link appears to be the dynamism that can be associated with the conceptualisation of space. As Lefebvre (1991) observes: "We are forever hearing about the space of this and/or the space of that: about literary space, ideological spaces, the space of dream, psychoanalytic topologies, and so on and so forth" (3). But the problem as Lefebvre points out is that these different spaces are treated separately and in isolation without establishing the link between them. Seen as inextricably intertwined with each other or one another, and ultimately with social life, Lefebvre elevates the mathematical and philosophical conception of space in terms of its physicality and abstractness to a dynamic and complex phenomenon.

Lefebvre, for instance, asserts that there is no disjunction or schism between “ideal space’ and “real space,” which is “the space of social practice. In actuality each of these two kinds of space involves, underpins, and presupposes the other” (14). But these two kinds of space that presupposes each other within the framework of Lefebvre’s theory are three connected and interrelated spaces that work together to produce, in the final analysis, two interrelated spaces. Arguing that his theory of space is a unitary theory which connects “fields which are apprehended separately,” Lefebvre posits that his theory is first concerned with “the physical...secondly, the mental...and thirdly, the social” (11). The physical space is used for the enunciation of the mental space, and both tied together, are deployed to propagate social space/practice. In this wise, social space/practice informs the mental space on physical space; and mental space on physical space in turn reproduces social space/practice. It is the existing social life that informs what is put on stage just as what is put on stage reproduces social life. Lefebvre insists that:

When we evoke ‘energy,’ we must immediately note that energy has to be deployed within a space. When we evoke ‘space,’ we must immediately indicate what occupies that space and how it does so: the deployment of energy in relation to points and within a time frame. When we evoke ‘time,’ we must immediately say what it is that moves or changes therein: space considered in isolation is an empty abstraction, likewise energy and time. (12)

Performance, which is energy deployed within a space over a period of time, is determined by social life and in turn redefines social life. So, in Lefebvre’s theory of space, physical space such as the Nigerian National Theatre is not just an empty structure or place. On the contrary, it is an active locus of social relations. It is a space or place of containment of performative acts owing to the existing status-quo of social relations, and both in turn influence, determine, and reproduce social relations.

Writing, though without being aware of it and not specifically about the Nigerian National Theatre, of how knowledge production on stage is the product of existing social relations, which in turn reproduces social relations; Aderemi Bamikunle (2000) observes that “Obafemi’s plays are in fact very

lively and ‘entertaining,’ composed of many crowd-pleasing elements such as songs, dances, chants, mimes, music, and proverbs.” But that “these elements are made to serve his larger aim of liberation, generating ‘knowledge of the problem, the exposing of which the playwright hopes will generate revolutionary anger in the audience, which will spread to a general public that will lead to action” (cited in Essien 2021:56). It is the knowledge of the problem in the society (the social relations between the hegemonic political elites and the ordinary citizens) that informs what Obafemi as a playwright puts on stage, which in turn he (Obafemi) hopes would generate revolutionary anger (a reproduced social relation in which the ordinary citizens would revolt against the existing status quo of the hegemonic political elites). Yet, the revolutionary anger that the playwright hopes to generate, which he hopes will also spread to the general public is a collective action emanating from the collective identity of the audience and the actors on stage.

The Urgent Need for/of a Collective Identity in the Face of National Disintegration

The need for this collective identity, which the Nigerian National Theatre as space and performance engenders and which is essential in the task of achieving national unity has never been in doubt. This, as already indicated, is because of the peculiarity of the Nigerian nation-state. Although Nsemba Edward Lenshie (2014) points out that “The resurgence of old boundaries of ethnicity and religion has become a major challenge in many countries across the world” ...Nigeria with so many ethnic and sectional groups paint the picture of a potentially vulnerable society to conflicts” (154). While it is true that the conflicts between the different ethnic regions are largely due to the bringing together of strange bed-fellows, by the colonialists, within the same geographical space; the fact remains that the situation is becoming worse by the day. Thus, there is the urgent need of national unity presently than at any other period in the historiography of the Nigerian nation-state.

Arguably, since after the Nigerian/Biafran civil war, and the annulment of the June 12th, 1993 presidential election by General Ibrahim Babaginda on the 23rd of June 1993, there has been no other time in the history of the Nigerian nation-state that ethnic cleavage and affiliation as well as regional and tribal

loyalty has been so sharpened and pronounced to a breaking point of the nation. Repeatedly, the general complaint is the marginalisation of one ethnic group or another. This is even more so as the Nigerian nation-state runs an economy of the distribution rather than the production of wealth. As a result, believing that they are being short-changed in the distribution of the nation's wealth, different regional and ethnic nationalities are demanding for their own separate republic. The demand for the Biafran, Oduduwa, and Niger Delta republic are examples of such in recent times. Simultaneously is the fact that Nigerians are first and foremost citizens of their ethnic, regional, and tribal enclave before being that of the Nigerian nation-state.

It is against this background of a nation fragmented politically, religiously, tribally, and economically that this study interrogates the crucial space and place of The National Theatre and the role it can play in forging and sustaining a collective national identity. But the collective identity of what nation is to be forged and sustained? In what sense should Nigeria as a nation-state be understood by its inhabitants? Is it in terms of the space it occupies in relation to boundary markers and cartographic placements or in terms of how the inhabitants of the space and placement see themselves? And if the latter is what is of utmost signification, how should the inhabitants see themselves? Sudipta Kaviraj, in his *The Imaginary Institution of India* (1992), explains that nationalism is "the presence of an idea of a determinate nation with clear boundaries, unambiguous principles of inclusion, established by a clear act of choice" (cited in Saha 2018:3). Explaining further, he asserts that "although for the British it was a map that defined India, the colonized 'Indians' needed more reasons to internally justify themselves" (cited in Saha 2018:3). In this wise, it is not just by living within the cartographic markers or boundaries that is called Nigeria that really makes one a citizen.

It is more the choice or feeling one has of being a Nigerian rather than being of another nation-state, and of being a Nigerian first and foremost over one's membership of an ethnic or tribal group. While the membership of being the nationality of the Nigerian nation-state is decided and determined in advance by one's parentage, the choice and feeling of commitment to be or not to be a Nigerian still lies in the hands of individual characters, especially when such individual characters come of age. Furthering his argument as to the basis on

which the anticolonial enterprise can succeed in any given situation, Kaviraj cited in Saha (2018:4) posits that:

Unless the people who are subjected to colonialism are seen to engage in such an enterprise which – despite evident internal differences between periods, between high and folk culture, between the great tradition and the small, between anti- colonialists and the nationalists, between the radicals and the conservatives – is still seen as one – as a single whole historical enterprise – its history cannot be written.

The history that Kaviraj speaks of is an anti-colonial history – one in which the colonised of any given nation would define themselves in contrast to the definition of the colonialists. But this cannot be achieved without all hands, irrespective of their ethnic or ideological orientation, being on deck. The implication of this is the need for Nigerians to rise above the cleavages of their different affiliations and ideological orientations.

The Vision Behind the National Theatre and the National Troupe of Nigeria

This, undoubtedly, is the vision behind the establishment of the National Troupe of Nigeria on one hand, and the conceptualisation and construction of the edifice known simply as the National Theatre on the other. It is curious that it is at the same time in one breath, and the same Section of the Law, in the other, that legislates on the role of The National Theatre as space/edifice/structure, and the establishment of the National Troupe of Nigeria. Writing about the time period in which the building of the National Theatre was conceptualized, Jimmy F. Atte points out that “Hosting the World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, in 1977 (FESTAC’77), was the catalyst for the birth of the National Theatre, but the concrete arrangements for its establishment started in 1973 when the Federal Government appointed a 29 member Theatre Consultative Committee to advise on the concept and the organizational structure of a Theatre” (144 – 145). Writing in the same breath, but from the perspective of the establishment of the National Troupe, Yerima (2001) also points out that “The decision to establish a National Cultural Troupe, as this was the first

name which later evolved into the National Troupe of Nigeria started as far back as 1973 when Nigeria was preparing to host the World Festival for Arts and Culture” (187). That the idea to build the National Theatre and establish the National Troupe happened at the same time in 1973, in preparation for FESTAC’ 77, is not mere coincidence.

As Yerima (2001) explains, culture is “an identity symbol among a people. This is why most countries have what is called a cultural policy. A cultural policy is usually an agreed and well-defined statement of how a country wants to understand and use its culture as a symbol of unity within the country” (186). In preparation for FESTAC’77 where countries are coming to showcase and thereby celebrate and eulogise their distinctive Black and African culture, there was the need for Nigeria to present a common front despite its diversified culture. It was, therefore, not surprising that the first set of casts that were recruited into the National Troupe, in preparation for FESTAC’ 77, were from different parts of the country.

But beyond the time factor, which establishes an intersection between the National Theatre and the National Troupe of Nigeria, is the fact that it is the same Section of the Law that legislates on their objectives. According to Ahmed Yerima (2001), for example, it is “Decree No. 47 of 19th November, 1991, titled the National Theatre and the National Troupe of Nigeria Board Decree 1991 (that) established the National Troupe as a parastatal” (191). Beyond showing how the National Troupe of Nigeria became a parastatal, what Yerima also succeeded in pointing out is that it is the same enactment of the law that outlines the objectives of both the National Theatre and the National Troupe of Nigeria. As he (Yerima) pointed out, part of the cultural policy of Nigeria states that “The state shall establish a National Troupe of Nigeria whose repertoire shall draw their materials from drama, dance and music.” And that “The National Troupe of Nigeria shall be part of the National Theatre” (2001: 187). The aim and objectives of the National Theatre and the National Troupe are outlined in the law (Decree No. 47 of 1991) as follows (**see Appendix 1**):

- 1) There is hereby established a body to be known as the National Theatre and the National Troupe of Nigeria Board...which shall be

a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and may be sued in its corporate name.

- 2) There shall be established under the general supervision of the Board
 - a) a National Theatre; and
 - b) a troupe to be known as the National Troupe of Nigeria
- 3) The objectives of the Board shall be to –
 - a) encourage the discovery and development of talents in the performing arts;
 - b) achieve high artistic productions specifically designed for national and international tours;
 - c) ensure that productions of the Troupe are geared towards national aspirations;
 - d) encourage the development of children's theatre;
 - e) ensure the preservation of the repertoire of the Troupe; and
 - f) ensure that the National Theatre is efficiently managed as a commercial concern

Thus, deriving from the legislation of the law, it is obvious that the vision behind the National Theatre as space and place, and the National theatre as performative gesture, as embodied in the establishment of the National Troupe, is an enactment for a unitary/common purpose of national unity. Art as a performative gesture needs a space from which it could speak; and it is this reality that undoubtedly informs the decision to make the National Troupe of Nigeria part of the Nigerian National Theatre.

The Role of the National Theatre as Space and Performance in Nigeria's Collective Identity

It is against the backdrop of the established vision behind the conflation of the National Theatre and the National Troupe of Nigeria as enunciated above that this section goes on to deploy Henri Lefebvre's theory of space to

highlight “what has been” and “what should be” the role of The Nigerian National Theatre. As already established, this work employs “The Nigerian National Theatre” to refer to the edifice that goes by that name and the performative/dramatic acts of Nigeria on stage. Although the theatrical performance of a nation can take place in any given space in and outside the geographical boundary of a nation, and still enact and hold up its didactic message in terms of promoting the culture of a nation, but it does appear that such didactic message (especially in relation to the promotion of a nation’s art and culture) is more pronounced when enacted in/within the walls of a nation’s theatre.

This is what appears to make the National Theatre complex in Iganmu, Lagos, to be special among all other performance venues and facilities in Nigeria. It should be recalled that in his argument that his theory of space is a unitary theory which connects “fields which are apprehended separately,” Lefebvre (1991) posits that his theory is first concerned with “the physical...secondly, the mental...and thirdly, the social” (11). Although all physical/empty space might be regarded as the same (especially within Peter Brook’s assertion that all that is needed for theatre to take place is an empty space for someone to walk across while another is watching), the mental apprehension of one physical/empty space in contrast to another cannot be discountenanced. The mental apprehension of an actor acting on the stage of a university theatre as against on the stage of the Nigerian National Theatre cannot be the same. As Lefebvre (1991) insists “an already produced space can be decoded, can be *read*. Such a space implies a process of signification” (17). The “users and inhabitants” of a rural space are markedly different from the “users and inhabitants” of an urban space (Lefebvre 1991:17). In this way, the signification attached to the already produced physical space of the Nigerian National Theatre cannot be the same with that of other performance facilities.

The comprehension of what the Nigerian National Theatre stands for is not the same with what other performance facilities stand for. It cannot even be discountenanced, for example, that an actor might see his performance on the stage of the National Theatre as the culmination of his success on the stage of the university or State theatre. Put simply, just as university theatres and Art Council Halls (Oni 2001:176)⁴ are meant to be representational and reflective

as well as be the symbol of the art and culture of the universities in which they are situated and the State (as federating units of the Nigerian nation-state) in which they are located respectively, so it is with the Nigerian National Theatre in relation to the Nigerian nation-state. The Nigerian National Theatre is the seat of the nation's artistic and cultural productions. It is the face, pride, and symbol of theatre, and in fact of all cultural practices in Nigeria. As an edifice, it is the physical manifestation of theatre and cultural practice in Nigeria. Thus, it holds a unique place in the engendering and sustainability of a collective identity that is essential in achieving national unity.

It is apparently what the Nigerian National Theatre represents for the arts and culture of Nigeria that informs one of Wole Soyinka's numerous actions when it was put up for sale by the Federal Government. In his attempt to demonstrate that, though Soyinka "lived on writing and talking," but believed more "in action." Yerima (2006) discloses that Femi Osofisan once told him that "one of Soyinka's strategies of fighting on behalf of the National Theatre and the artistes, was to premiere the play ("King Baabu") at the National Theatre, even if there was only one line of wall still standing" (41). The general criticism that greeted the planned sale of the Nigerian National Theatre was that as a national cenotaph, it cannot and should not be sold to private investors; and this is the argument that Wole Soyinka also buys into by resolving to premiere his play in the National Theatre, "even if there was only one line of wall still standing." While the message of the play would not be lost if premiered in any of the performance venues or facilities in Nigeria, staging it within the walls of the National Theatre appears to have a special appeal for Soyinka, and it can be expected to have a special appeal for the audience. Of course, this is because of what it represents physically and symbolically for Nigerian arts and culture.

Significant also in terms of the special place of the National Theatre among other performance venues and facilities in Nigeria is the rumination of Ahmed Yerima. Following his appointment as the Artistic Director of the National Troupe of Nigeria, Yerima (2006) in his ruminations, about the role Wole Soyinka and Femi Osofisan can play or has played in preventing the sale of the Nigerian National Theatre to private investors, lets out his quandary when he admits that "[t]he bigger question then came: was the National Theatre,

Iganmu an ‘abortion’ or a mere ‘prestige symbol’? Was it a creative theatre whose structure could control or even manipulate the artiste positively, or had Nigeria, in a rush, built a monster that was alien to our culture, too big to maintain, and too foreign to be artistically and culturally inspiring?” (42). The focus of this research work, as already stated, is not to join issues with Yerima and others like him as to whether the architectural design and structure of the Nigerian National Theatre, Iganmu, is foreign or well thought-out. There are those who have taken up and are still taking up this issue in their research. Rather, the point to be noted is that the Nigerian National Theatre as an edifice is supposedly the prestigious symbol of Nigeria’s theatre/cultural practice. It is a space that is supposed to be artistically and culturally inspiring for the propagation of the rich Nigerian cultural heritage. It is against this framework that Yerima even ruminates as to whether the architectural design and construction is alien to the Nigerian culture or is too foreign to be artistically and culturally inspiring to Nigerian artistic and cultural productions. As such, the National Theatre as an edifice is the symbol of the collective identity of the cultural and theatrical practice of Nigeria as a nation-state; and it is in this respect that it can play significant role with the performance in/inside it to engender national unity.

The symbiotic relationship between space and performance, and the resultant effect in terms of a collective identity or national unity has been noted and highlighted by critics and scholars. Although writing under a different circumstance, Zulu Sofola (1979) in her explanation of what theatre is, articulates the kind of collective identity that the conflation of the Nigerian National Theatre as space and as performance can stimulate. According to her:

Theatre is a medium of artistic expression mirrored in a dynamic living form. A metaphorical image of reality, it reflects the total cosmic, moral, and metaphysical order of life of the people. It is an arena where human beings are presented in a cosmic totality, acting and reacting to forces around them and within them, perceiving and being perceived by those interacting with them, and by those in the audience who experience with them the enigma that is the common lot of humanity. (Cited in Ayo Akinwale 2001: 24)

Here, Sofola is not just speaking of theatre as performance but also of theatre as space; for it is t/he space offered by theatre as place that opens up the arena for the interaction between actors on stage and members of the audience. And as Sofola explains, the interdependent relation between the Nigerian National Theatre as space and performance is very important because it creates a collective experience in which the common lot of humanity is laid bare between actors and the audience. The effect of such collective experience can be hazarded. Irrespective of the class, gender, religious, and ethnic affiliations of the members of the cast and the members of the audience, they have all become one under the rubric of their realisation of their common lot as humans. Seeing themselves, first and foremost, as humans grappling with the same toil of the same existential reality of their society unequivocally neutralizes their ethnic affiliation as Hausas, Igbos, and Yorubas or as belonging to a majority or minority ethnic group; or as belonging to contrasting religious beliefs.

Writing almost in a similar vein like Sofola, but from a different perspective, Essien (2021: 48 - 59) also inadvertently conflates what the Nigerian National Theatre as space and as performance can achieve in bridging the ethnic walls that divide the Nigerian nation-state. In his comparative study of “American and Nigerian theatres,” he shows the kind of unity that can ensue thereof. As already indicated, though writing specifically from the perspective of performance rather than space, he nevertheless observes that:

Among the most persistent themes in his (Obafemi’s) writing for the stage and study is that of ‘demystification,’ the stripping away of false values and traditions that serve to maintain the hegemony of a repressive and inequitable order: ‘No more scapegoats, No more sacred cows,’ the concluding titular chant of his 1999 play, sums up his artistic project, not only in those two aims explicitly named but also in the direct audience participation that the chant provokes in performance. Each play traces a movement from mythos, the realm of beliefs and traditions, to ethos, where those values are not so much discarded as tested for their usefulness in modelling a social order that is revolutionary rather than tragic. (Essien 2021:49)

While what Essien sets out to demonstrate is how Obafemi deploys his plays to deconstruct “culture’s...mystifying, traditional elements” so as to reimagine “the possibility of actual social change” (2021:49), he nonetheless shows the evocative power of “the concluding titular chant” of Obafemi’s play under analysis on the audience. It is noteworthy that what Essien analyses is not Obafemi’s play text of the title “No more Scapegoats, No more sacred cows,” but the actual performance of the play on stage. Accordingly, Obafemi’s play is theatre as performance, while the stage on which it is performed is theatre as space. And as can be seen, it is the symbiotic relations between theatre as space and theatre as performance that brought the audience together under one roof, which in turn engenders a collective identity that can result in national unity.

Essien even observes that it is with the staging of this play at Tennessee Tech University in the United States that white and African American actors for the first time acted together on stage in the history of the university. According to him, “but with some notable exceptions, productions at Tennessee Tech University had not featured African American, much less African, roles (sic) very prominently. It was, therefore, gratifying to see this fuller racial integration on our university stage, and equally gratifying to see those talented African American actors take up parts in subsequent theatre productions...” (Essien 2021:58). As a result of Obafemi’s play on stage, white and African American actors, for the first time, became united on stage in Tennessee Tech University. The multiplier effect of such unity on stage in the university campus in general in terms of the kind of relationship that would ensue across racial lines and boundaries is better imagined. Remarkable, for instance, is the fact that the African American actors became recognized and appreciated by their white counterparts that they now “take up parts in subsequent theatre productions.” (Essien 2021)

Yet, this collective identity and unity that is provoked among the actors and audience is not merely because they are all together under one roof, breathing the same air, and enjoying the same performance. Beyond all of this, within Obafemi’s stage play under analysis, is the identity all members of the audience with the actors on stage assumed for themselves. By shouting “no more scapegoats, no more sacred cows,” the audience together with the actors on

stage identify themselves as “scapegoats” who have been oppressed and exploited by “sacred cows” - those who are at the helm of affairs of governance. Still, this identity that they claim for themselves is not so much as essential in itself as what it gestures. Notwithstanding the temporariness of the revolutionary stance advocated by the play, and the fact that the revolution dies on stage and is not taken outside the stage; that the audience as a unitary collective irrespective of their gender, class, and ethnic affiliations together with the actors on stage at the conclusion of the play shout the title of the play is a gesture that they are all one, have all spoken with one voice, and are tied together with the same mental disposition that “enough is a enough.” As Essien (2021) observes, “the play makes clear that unlike the classical scapegoat that symbolically bears the weight of society’s sins in isolation, in truth all are scapegoats who must participate in the purposeful disorder that is necessary to create fundamental peace” (57). It is this reinterpretation of the classical scapegoat that the actors and the audience together participate in by their vociferous chant of “no more scapegoat” at the end of Obafemi’s play.

Of course, this gesture that is achieved and the evocative power of the concluding titular chant on the audience would not be possible with the reading of the text, but only with watching the play on stage. As Yerima (2006) argues “In order for theatre to effect or point towards a social change within the thinking or the consciousness of the audience, this tension (“the tension – one of understanding and of questioning between the actors on stage and the audience”) must exist” (49 emphasis in the original). What Yerima’s argument points to is that without the collaborative performance of the actors on stage and the audience, social transformation cannot take place. It is because the audience are watching Obafemi’s play on stage that they are able to participate in the performance, and be affected by the performance. It is in this way, among others, that the Nigerian National Theatre as space and performance work hand in gloves to engender a collective identity, which is essential in achieving national unity.

As already underscored, this is the vision behind the conflation of the National Theatre and the National Troupe in the law establishing them. Although there was intense uproar when Ahmed Yerima was appointed to double as both the Director General and Chief Executive Officer of the

National Theatre and the National Troupe by Ambassador Franklin Ogbuewu, the Minister of Culture and Tourism (Oni 2017: 79), the move appears to have been motivated by the spirit of the law, rather than the letter of the law.

While not holding brief for either the Minister or Ahmed Yerima, the move appeared to have been informed by the need to bring both establishments under one management umbrella to achieve their set objective of unifying the nation. Yerima (2001:194) notes that “the National Troupe helps to celebrate Nigeria’s cultural heritage and therefore re-awakens those social inter-relationships which unify the country”. This even becomes especially so with the conflation of the National Theatre (space) and the National Troupe (performance). Lefebvre (1991:12) insists that:

When we evoke ‘energy,’ we must immediately note that energy has to be deployed within a space. When we evoke ‘space,’ we must immediately indicate what occupies that space and how it does so: the deployment of energy in relation to points and within a time frame. When we evoke ‘time,’ we must immediately say what it is that moves or changes therein: space considered in isolation is an empty abstraction, likewise energy and time.

Performance, which is energy deployed within a space over a period of time, is determined by social life and in turn redefines social life. So, in Lefebvre’s theory of space, physical space such as the Nigerian National Theatre is not just an empty structure or place. On the contrary, it is an active locus of social relations. It is a space or place of containment of performative acts (the National Troupe in this instance) owing to the existing status-quo of social relations, and both in turn influence, determine, and reproduce social relations.

It is noteworthy that among the objectives of conflating the National Theatre and the National Troupe as outlined by the law establishing them is “to encourage the discovery and development of talents in the performing arts.” This was what happened prior to the establishment of the National Troupe of Nigeria. Hubert Ogunde, as the first Artistic Director/Consultant to the Troupe, was mandated to travel from one part of the country to another recruiting talents that would represent Nigeria, with a common cultural front.

As reported, “Chief Ogunde was to...embark on what was later to be tagged ‘The Ososa Experiment.’ This later became the nucleus of the artists of the National Troupe of Nigeria. The objective of the Ososa Experiment was to prepare Nigeria’s representation for the Commonwealth Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland and to also convince Government that a group of artistes could be put together, organized and trained for the specific purpose of performance and future representations of Nigeria in both National and International engagements” (*The Guardian*, 19th January, 2020). Noteworthy about this development is that artistes from different ethnic and religious background came together as one to represent Nigeria.



The National Troupe as Nigerians (The Guardian January 19th, 2020)



The National Troupe in Performance (The Guardian January 19th, 2020)

In the same regard, was the arrangement for preparation that was put in place before the FESTAC Festival that took place from the 15th January – 12th February, 1977. Prior to FESTAC, the 1974/75 National Festival had been organised in Kaduna. The National Festival was a kind of dress rehearsal for the FESTAC festival, and it “was designed to bring out the best in Nigeria’s cultural heritage and provide a basis for selecting the artistes to represent the country at FESTAC” (*FESTAC’ 77 Report and Summary of Accounts* 9). As noted,

At the end of that Festival, some artistes and artworks were selected and entered for FESTAC. In order to present a virile contingent and ensure a high level of presentation, intensive rehearsals and reassessment of Nigeria’s artistic efforts were considered imperative.... The National Participation Committee was consequently inaugurated in July, 1975 and charged with the responsibility for camping and grooming the artistes, and for the selection, collection, and recovery of artworks for the various exhibitions. Apart from the participants in the Durbar and Regatta, the Federal Military Government directed that not more than 1,500 Nigerian artistes and officials should represent Nigeria at the Festival. The artistes were to be camped in the Festival Town along Badagry Road. However, since

the houses were not ready, they had to spend the period January 8th – 20th in the University of Lagos before they were transferred to the Festival Village... (*FESTAC'77 Report and Summary of Accounts* 10 emphasis in the original)

It did not matter which part of the country the actors and actresses were from. It did not matter the language they speak. It did not matter what their ideological or religious orientation was. They were all trained together. They all auditioned, rehearsed, and presented the same dance, music, and play irrespective of the extraction of the country that the dance, music, or play was from. For instance, one of the plays that was presented by the Nigerian contingent at the festival was *Langbodo*, which was staged at the National Theatre Main Hall on Sunday, 16th January, 1977 (**see Appendix 2**). Also presented at the Festival by Nigeria, for example, were films such as *SHEHU UMAR*, which was shown on the 17th of January, 1977 (**see Appendix 3**); *Overamen Nogbaisi*, which was presented on the 21st of January, 1977 (**see Appendix 4**); and *God Dance Man Dance* on the 25th of January, 1977 (**see Appendix 5**). As reflected in the Programme of Events, and as with the presentations of other participating countries, all these artistic presentations were presented not as a Yoruba, Hausa, or Benin plays but as Nigerian plays. Thus, the actors and actresses, rather than seeing themselves as belonging to their various tribes, saw themselves as Nigerians first and foremost. The authors of all the presentations as well were also Nigerians first, rather than belonging to their ethnic regions.

And the situation has not changed since after FESTAC'77 as the National Troupe in conjunction with the National Theatre has continued to rehearse and present dance, music, and plays that cut across the different regions of the country. The troupe has rehearsed and presented at the National Theatre artistic productions such as *The Trials of Oba Ovanranwen*, *Yemoja*, *Tafida*, and "The Kolanut Dance" (**see Appendix 6**). In his theory of space, Lefebvre (1991:27) holds that "What happens in space lends a miraculous quality to thought". He then adds that "a rough coincidence is assumed to exist between social space on the one hand and mental space – the (topological) space of thoughts and utterances – on the other" (Lefebvre 1991:28). Just as the thoughts of individual characters influence their actions in a given

physical/social space, so do their actions or inactions in a physical/social space influence their thoughts. It is the mental space of what is to be achieved that gave birth to the physical space of the planned camping and grooming of the artistes. And because of the social space of camping and grooming that has been provided for the artistes, a mental space of collective consciousness (thought) has been reproduced in which they see one another as having not different but a collective identity bound together by the same Nigerian cultural production(s).

It is for the same purpose of a collective identity that the National Theatre and the National Troupe has also been conflated, in the provision of the law, to achieve “high artistic productions specifically designed for national and international tours.” What is of utmost importance is not whether the artistic production is high or not. While not undermining high artistic productions, what appears to resonate in this second objective of the provision of the law is that the artistic productions should be designed for national and international tours. What this implies is that the production must truly be representative of Nigerian culture and art. It must be one that can be recognised both nationally and internationally, at first glance, as truly Nigerian. The FESTAC festival has come and gone. But the National Theatre in conjunction with the National Troupe are still expected to produce and present artistic productions designed for national and international tours. Although writing under a different circumstance, yet very much related, Lefebvre (1991:44) submits rhetorically that:

What is an ideology without a space to which it refers, a space which it describes, whose Vocabulary and links it makes use of, and whose code it embodies? What would remain of a religious ideology...if it were not based on places and their names: church, confessional Altar, sanctuary, tabernacle? What would remain of the Church if there were no churches? The Christian ideology, carrier of a recognizable, if disregarded Judaism...has created the Spaces which guarantee that it endures?

Just as the church (as in the persons and their ideology) needs a space from which to speak (the Church as a structure), so does artistic performance (the National Troupe) need a space (the National Theatre) from which to speak.

As Lefebvre (1991) again points out that “space embodies social relationships” (27). To be certain, all performance venues/facilities qualify for such a space/place from which the performance of the National Troupe can speak. But among all else of such spaces and places, the National Theatre is unique and first to the National Troupe.

The home of the National Troupe is the National Theatre, where they are expected to rehearse and fine tune their artistic productions. It is the National Theatre that is, then, the first and foremost physical space for the social relationship of the members of the National Troupe. Undoubtedly, therefore, as the cast of the National Troupe tour from one part of the country to another, their space and performance would become bound together just as members of the cast and the audience would bound together. As actors, dancers, and musicians of different ethnic cleavages and religious background travel on tour from one federating state to another of the country, and from one country to another; there is no equivocation that they would all be bound by one common purpose, which in turn would sustain a collective consciousness. The members of the audience, irrespective of their different affiliations, would also be bound with the performers. Not surprising, therefore, Lefebvre insists that “(Social) space is a (social) product” (1991:26). It is the social space of the national and international tours of the National Troupe, which in itself has been made possible by the social space of the National Theatre that engenders the social product of social relationships – first between members of the cast – and second between the cast and the audience. This is even applicable to the international tours of the National Troupe where the ovation that greets their performance can be interpreted as a kind of identification by an international audience with them and their performance.

However, the production of the National Troupe is not an end in itself. On the contrary, it should be a means to an end. As specified by the provision of the law, the production should be geared towards national aspirations. While the provision of the law under focus does not exactly specify what these national aspirations are, it stands to reason that within the framework of theatre practice it is the promotion of Nigeria’s cultural heritage; while outside it, it can be said to be the unity of the country, which repeatedly has been said

to be non-negotiable. It is noteworthy that the National Troupe has been described as “Nigeria’s cultural ambassador” whose “primary function is to celebrate the cultural heritage of Nigeria through dance, music and drama” (*Programme Brochure of The Contest*)⁵. Of course, the celebration of the cultural heritage of Nigeria is not an end in itself. Rather, it is for the preservation of Nigeria’s cultural heritage, which in turn is for the purpose of promoting what unites the country more than what disintegrates it.

Recommendations

Thus, for the National Theatre to make significant impact in engendering a collective identity for the Nigerian Nation-State, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is critical for the National Theatre to be strategic in ensuring that it remains relevant to other sections of the country whose resources are pooled to keep it running. While the National Theatre's present Play Reading Series in several Nigerian tertiary institutions offering theatre arts is innovative and admirable, this gesture should be extended to selected secondary schools as well as state councils for arts and culture in the 36 states and FCT. Listening to the reading of the same play as a Nigerian cultural production will foster a kind of collective identity.
2. An Annual themed drama performance festival at the National Theatre that features troupes, state councils for art and culture and performing arts departments from different parts of Nigeria is sacrosanct in creating a national framework for engendering a sense of collective identity of the Nigerian Nation-State.
3. Nigeria's National Theatre and National Troupe must be reawakened and made aware of their role in fostering a sense of national identity through the promotion of cultural values with quality performances and cultural displays. In order to do this, deliberate programmes aimed at fostering a collective consciousness among artists and the general public are essential.

4. The National Theatre in collaboration with the National Troupe should make it a point of duty to attend as many international festivals as possible so as to promote and at the same time celebrate Nigeria's rich cultural heritage.
5. In the current "complex regimes of presence and absence through digitization" (Knoblauch & Martina 2020: 264), the National Theatre can still remain relevant by digitising its productions and uploading them on the digital space for the consumption of both a local and an international audience.
6. The private sector must be included in the effort to forge a common identity. This is because government funding alone is insufficient to meet the demands of communal awareness development. As a result, the National Theatre must explore alternate funding sources, such as partnerships with business sector organisations. Inadvertently, this will provide the National Theatre with much-needed funding, as well as the necessary conditions for inclusivity and collaborative creative activity in the pursuit of a shared identity.
7. The search for a collective identity necessitates strong leadership. When it comes to appointing who should lead the National Theatre, the emphasis should be on ability and expertise. If the National Theatre is to fulfil its role effectively, the director must have a thorough understanding of the practise and administration of theatre. Professor Sunday Enessi Ododo's present leadership of the National Theatre is a testament to how competence and skill work together to deliver efficiency in the National Theatre's mandate.

Conclusion

It is, therefore, unequivocal that the Nigerian National Theatre as space and performance has a lot to contribute in engendering a collective consciousness that can spark off national unity. The first cause for this collective consciousness is the edifice itself, which serves the purpose of a communal space bringing people from all walks of life together under/within the same space. In this vein, the Nigerian National Theatre as space/place brings people

of different ages, gender, ethnic cleavages, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, and socio-political and ideological orientation together. Notwithstanding the debate and counter debate that has trailed its architectural design as being a foreign transposition, the Nigerian National Theatre is truly a Nigerian edifice. The emblem that adorns its front view speaks volume than what artistic scholars and critics have allowed in their interventions. As the “world-famous 16th century Ivory Mask worn as a pectoral by Benin Kings on royal ceremonial occasions” (*FESTAC’77 Report and Summary of Accounts* 6), the edifice (as already underscored) represents and is symbolic of the culmination of Nigeria’s cultural practice and heritage. Like Greek/European plays that have been given a Nigerian/African colouration by playwrights through adaptation, the edifice has also been given same by the emblem adorning it. Hence, rather than focusing on what is wrong with it, the concentration should be on what it can help to achieve; which in the present critical exercise is its capacity to engender a collective identity.

The second cause is the collective identity and unity that is provoked among the actors towards engendering collective consciousness. As already indicated, part of the objectives of the National Theatre and the National Troupe of Nigeria is to “achieve high artistic productions specifically designed for national and international tours” (Decree 47 of 1991). As actors, dancers, and musicians of different ethnic cleavages and religious background travel on tour from one federating state to another of the country, and from one country to another; there is no equivocation that they would all be bound by one common purpose, which in turn would sustain a collective identity. Most important is the emotions and psychological feelings they would all share as one in the process of their productions. Irrespective of the ethnic cleavage or region that such artistic production represents, it is no longer that of the ethnic region, but of Nigeria as a nation-state. For instance, as already pointed out, one of the plays that was presented by the Nigerian contingent at the FESTAC’77 Festival was *Langbodo*. Also presented at the Festival by Nigeria, for example, were films such as *SHEHU UMAR* and *Overamen Nogbaisi*. All these presentations represent and were taken from different ethnic regions of Nigeria. Yet, they were all presented and accepted as Nigerian cultural productions.

The third cause is the participatory ambience that the Nigerian National Theatre as space and performance opens up for both the actors on stage and the audience. The significance of such interaction between the actors on stage and the audience is not merely because they are all together under one roof, breathing the same air, and enjoying the same performance. Beyond all of this, is the identity all members of the audience with the actors on stage assumed for themselves within the framework of different stage productions.

The fourth cause is the time the actors spend together in the auditioning, rehearsing, and presentation of the play on one hand, and the time the audience spend together in enjoying the edutainment of the stage production on the other. It should be recalled that among the objectives of the National Theatre and the National Troupe of Nigeria is to “encourage the development of children’s theatre.” The impact of such socialisation on the psyche of the children as they grow up is better imagined. The effect of such socialisation cannot also be underestimated for adult actors who spend time together auditioning, rehearsing, and presenting artistic performances. The only difference is that for the children, it is a case of starting early with a bright future of a unitary collective.

Thus, the present management of the National Theatre complex led by Prof. Enesi Ododo has to be eulogised for the week-long festival that was planned and executed in December 2020. The week-long festival was/is an appropriate response to the existing phenomenon in which the cinema and television are stealing theatre audience. The theatre that had been dead for years came alive, bringing people from different ethnic, religious, and ideological orientation together. During the week-long festival, with the most minimal security personnel on hand, no single fight or case of violence was witnessed. While this could be attributed to the festive mood of the audience, the different performances put on display and the collective identity they engendered also played significant roles. Yet, such week-long festival should not just be a December affair. It should be as regular as possible. For instance, it can be made a quarterly or bi-monthly event with the sole purpose of bringing people of different ethnic nationalities together to celebrate and uphold Nigeria’s rich cultural heritage. The more regular such events are, the more bridges are erected across ethnic, tribal, and religious lines.

Notes

- 1) Demas Nwoko who is now 86 years old is a theatre designer and architect. He was in the Government delegation to the Algiers Festival in 1969. He was also in the team to Dakar that produced *Danda*, starring Sonny Oti. Although neglected and ignored by the Federal Government in the design of the National Theatre, he went on to design the Benin Theatre, the scepter for his brother's coronation as the Obi of Idumoje Ugboko, and the Cultural Centre in Ibadan.
- 2) Kesiena Obue is a writer, Director and founder of Kessavier Vanille Productions. She has successfully staged plays such as "The Bling Lagosians"; "Moremi the Musical"; "Fela and the Kalakuta Queens"; "Wakaa the Musical"; and "Hertitude."
- 3) Peter Brook is a Theatre Director.
- 4) Duro Oni (2001) establishes that there are three types of Government Performance Venues and Facilities namely University theatres, Art Council Halls, and The National Theatre (176). Within this context, it stands to reason that the National Theatre is the culmination of all Government owned performance venues and facilities.
- 5) *The Contest* is a play written and directed by Mike Anyanwu. It was presented by the National Troupe of Nigeria at Cinema Hall II of the National Theatre from the 24th of December, 2010 to the 2nd of January, 2011.

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APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1

Extraordinary



**Federal Republic of Nigeria
Official Gazette**

No. 64 Lagos - 19th November, 1991 Vol. 78

Government Notice No. 290

The following is published as Supplement to this *Gazette*

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APPENDIX 1A

APPENDIX 1A

A 335

Supplement to Official Gazette Extraordinary No. 64, Vol. 78, 19th November,
1991 Part—A

**NATIONAL THEATRE AND THE NATIONAL TROUPE OF
NIGERIA BOARD DECREE 1991**



ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

| | |
|--|---|
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|--|---|

Decree No. 47

[29th October 1991]

THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT hereby decrees as follows:—

**ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE AND THE
NATIONAL TROUPE OF NIGERIA BOARD**

1.—(1) There is hereby established a body to be known as the National Theatre and the National Troupe of Nigeria Board (hereafter in this Decree referred to as "the Board") which shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in its corporate name.

Commence-
ment.

Establish-
ment of the
National
Theatre and
the National
Troupe of
Nigeria
Board, etc.

APPENDIX 1B

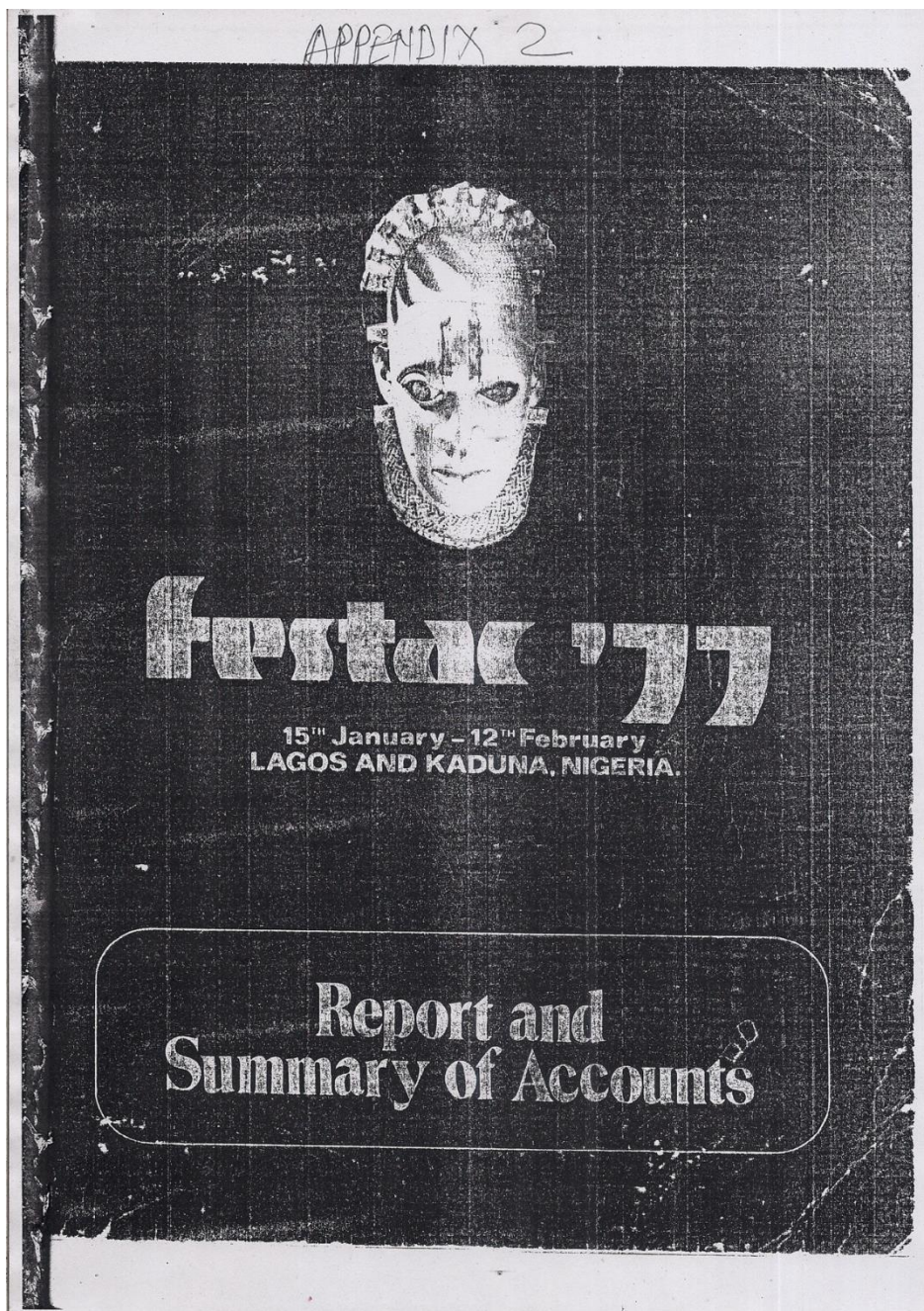
APPENDIX 1B

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1991 No. 47 *National Theatre and the National Troupe of Nigeria Board*

- Objectives.**
- (2) There shall be established under the general supervision of the Board—
(a) a National Theatre ; and
(b) a troupe to be known as the National Troupe of Nigeria (hereafter in this Decree referred to as "the Troupe").
2. The Objectives of the Board shall be to—
(a) encourage the discovery and development of talents in the performing arts ;
(b) achieve high artistic productions specifically designed for national and international tours ;
(c) ensure that productions of the Troupe are geared towards national aspirations ;
(d) encourage the development of children's theatre ;
(e) ensure the preservation of the *repertoire* of the Troupe ; and
(f) ensure that the National Theatre is efficiently managed as a commercial concern.
- Membership of the Board.**
- 3.—(1) The Board shall be generally responsible
3. The Board shall consist of—
(a) a Chairman who shall be a well known Art Patron ;
(b) a representative of the Ministry of Culture and Social Welfare ;
(c) a representative of the National Council for Arts and Culture ;
(d) one representative of the universities ;
(e) the General Manager of the National Theatre ;
(f) the Artistic Director, National Troupe of Nigeria ; and
(g) six other persons chosen from persons with adequate qualifications and experience in the fields of arts, music and culture.
- (2) The appointment of the Chairman and members of the Board shall be by the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces on the recommendation of the Minister.
- (3) The supplementary provisions contained in the Schedule to this Decree shall have effect with respect to the proceedings of the Board and the other matters mentioned therein.
- Functions of the Board.**
4. Without prejudice to the generality of section 2 of this Decree, it shall be the functions of the Board to be generally responsible for the policies and issue guidelines to the National Theatre and the Troupe and to—
(a) define and monitor policies relating to the operations of the Troupe ;
(b) establish and maintain the Troupe and direct all such services as in the opinion of the Board are usually provided by national troupes to attain the highest standard ;
(c) operate and artistically develop the Troupe as a performing body whose *repertoire* shall embrace drama, dance and music ;
(d) guide and give leadership to local efforts in artistic experimentation and strive to ensure that the Troupe is a centre of excellence ;
(e) impose scale of fees as may be regulated by the Board from time to time with the approval of the Minister, for services rendered by the Troupe ;

APPENDIX 2



APPENDIX 2A

APPENDIX 2A

SUNDAY 16TH JANUARY 1977

| VENUES | HOURS | DISCIPLINE | TITLE |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|--|
| NATIONAL THEATRE MAIN HALL | 4-6 P.M. | DRAMA | LANGBODO (NIGERIA) |
| | 8-11 P.M. | MUSIC | 1-TRADITIONAL MUSIC (MOROCCO) 2-GHANA AGROMAMA MUSIC (GHANA) 3-DANCE OF EGYPT (EGYPT) |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CONFERENCE HALL | | | COLLOQUIUM |
| | | | COLLOQUIUM |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CINEMA HALL I | 4-7 P.M. | CINEMA | 1st FESTIVAL CULTURE PANAFRICAIN D'ALGERIA (ALGERIA) |
| | 9-12 P.M. | CINEMA | KALA (SENEGAL) |
| | 9-12 NOON | LITERATURE RECITAL | GAMBIA-CONGO-NIGERIA-U.S.A.-BARBADOS-U.K.-KENYA-SENEGAL-AUSTRALIA |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CINEMA HALL II | 4-7 P.M. | CINEMA | 1-2000 YEARS OF NIGERIAN ARTS 2-T.B. CAN BE CURED (NIGERIA) |
| | 9-12 P.M. | CINEMA | IF WISHES WERE HORSES (GUYANA) IMAASHOI OI MAASAE (KENYA) |
| NATIONAL STADIUM SPORTS HALL | 4-6 P.M. | MUSIC | BIG GOLD SIX BAND (ZAMBIA) |
| | 8-12 P.M. | MUSIC DANCE | 1-ONDO ALAKETU (BRAZIL) 2-DANSES TRADITIONNELLES (BURUNDI) |
| TAFARA BALEWA SQUARE | 4-6 P.M. | MUSIC | AFRO NATIONAL BAND (SENEGAL) |
| | 8-12 P.M. | DANCE | DANSE TRADITIONNELLE DU NIGER (NIGER) 2-SWAZI DANCE (SWAZILAND) |
| NATIONAL STADIUM BASKET BALL | 8-11 P.M. | DRAMA | ETHIOPIA RISES (ETHIOPIA) |

APPENDIX 3

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APPENDIX 3

MONDAY 17TH JANUARY, 1977

| VENUES | HOURS | DISCIPLINE | TITLE |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|--|
| NATIONAL THEATRE MAIN HALL | 4- 6 P.M. | DRAMA | THE DRUM (SOMALIA) |
| | 8-11 P.M. | DANCE | 1-BALLET DU SENEGAL (SENEGAL) 2-SUDAN FOLK TROUPE (SUDAN) |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CONFERENCE HALL | | | COLLOQUIUM |
| | | | COLLOQUIUM |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CINEMA HALL I | 4- 7 P.M. | CINEMA | FROM ROYUMA TO MAPUTO (MOZAMBIQUE) |
| | 9-12 P.M. | CINEMA | 1-POUSSE-POUSSE (CAMEROON) 2-JEUX MEDITERRANEENS (ALGERIA) |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CINEMA HALL II | 9-12 NOON | | |
| | 4- 7 P.M. | CINEMA | 1-ETHIOPIA RISES-ETHIOPIA) 2-THE NEW SCHOOL (CUBA) |
| | 9-12 P.M. | CINEMA | 1-SHEHU UMAR (NIGERIA) 2-ISLAND OF RAINBOWS (MAURITIUS) |
| NATIONAL STADIUM SPORTS HALL | 4- 6 P.M. | MUSIC | ENSEMBLE VOCAL ET INSTRUMENTAL (TOGO) |
| | 8-12 P.M. | DANCE | 1-TRADITIONAL DANCE (GABON) 2-NATIONAL DANCE TROUPE (TANZANIA) |
| TAFAWA BALEWA SQUARE | 4- 6 P.M. | MUSIC | GOLDEN SOUNDS (CAMEROON) |
| | 8-12 P.M. | DANCE | 1-ENSEMBLE FOLKLORIQUE (BENIN) 2-TRADITIONAL DANCE (IVORY COAST) |
| NATIONAL STADIUM BASKET BALL | 8-11 P.M. | DRAMA | |

APPENDIX 4

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APPENDIX 4

FRIDAY 21ST JANUARY 1977

| VENUES | HOURS | DISCIPLINE | TITLE |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|---|
| NATIONAL THEATRE MAIN HALL | 4-6 P.M. | DRAMA | ON JOUE LA COMEDIE (TOGO) |
| | 8-11 P.M. | DANCE | ELLIOT POMARE (USA) 2- GUYANA MUSIC (GUYANA) |
| | | | COLLOQUIUM |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CONFERENCE HALL | | | COLLOQUIUM |
| | | | 1-A LUTA CONTINUA 2- THE STRIKE 3- A SILENT RAP 4- EL HAU MALIK EL SHABAZZ 5- FROM THESE ROOTS (USA) |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CINEMA HALL I | 4-7 P.M. | CINEMA | OVERAMWEN NOGBASI (NIGERIA) |
| | 9-12 P.M. | CINEMA | SWAZILAND, CONGO, NIGERIA, CANADA, GRENADA, EGYPT, UGANDA, NIGER |
| | 9-12 NOON | LITERATURE | |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CINEMA HALL II | 4-7 P.M. | CINEMA | 1-OURS TO BUILD 2- THIS IS GUYANA 3- WORLD OF THE CARIBBEAN (GUYANA) |
| | 9-12 P.M. | CINEMA | 1-CAR WASH 2- KWANZA (USA) |
| NATIONAL STADIUM SPORTS HALL | 4-6 P.M. | MUSIC | 1-RONALD INGRAHAM LOVENIA CARROLL SINGERS (U.S.A.) |
| | 8-12 P.M. | DANCE | 1-ETHIOPIAN FESTIVAL GROUP (ETHIOPIA) 2- DANCE OF TRINIDAD |
| TAFAWA BALEWA SQUARE | 4-6 P.M. | MUSIC | ORCHESTRE NATIONAL DU ZAIRE (ZAIRE) |
| | 8-12 P.M. | DANCE | 1-HARAMBEE DANCEERS (KENYA) 2- NIGERIA DANCE TROUPE (NIGERIA) |
| NATIONAL STADIUM BASKET BALL | 8-12 P.M. | DRAMA | OLUYIMBA WA WANKOKO (UGANDA) |
| LAGOS CITY HALL | 8-11 P.M. | POPULAR DRESSING | NIGERIA |

APPENDIX 5


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TUESDAY 25TH JANUARY 1977


| VENUES | HOURS | DISCIPLINE | TITLES |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|---|
| NATIONAL THEATRE MAIN HALL | 4- 6 P.M. | DRAMA | THE LOST FISHERMEN (GHANA) |
| | 8-11 P.M. | DANCE | 1- DANSES TRADITIONNELLES (COTE D'IVOIRE) 2- NATIONAL DANCE TROUPE (CUBA) |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CONFERENCE HALL | | | COLLOQUIUM |
| | | | COLLOQUIUM |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CINEMA HALL I | 4- 7 P.M. | CINEMA | 1- LE CORPS ET L'ESPRIT (CONGO) 2- DESERT WAR (LIBYA) |
| | 9-12 P.M. | CINEMA | 1- NUANGAAN (SENEGAL) 2- WAN PIPEL (SURINAM) |
| NATIONAL THEATRE CINEMA HALL II | 9-12 NOON | | |
| | 4- 7 P.M. | CINEMA | 1- GOD DANCE MAN DANCE (NIGERIA) 2- T.B. CAN BE CURED (NIGERIA) |
| NATIONAL STADIUM SPORTS HALL | 9-12 P.M. | CINEMA | 1- THE MUMMY (EGYPT) 2- AL-SHAIMA (EGYPT) |
| | 4- 6 P.M. | MUSIC | ENSEMBLE INSTRUMENTAL NATIONAL (NIGER) |
| TAFAWA BALEWA SQUARE | 8-12 P.M. | DANCE | 1- TROUPE NATIONALE DE DANSE 2- DANSES TRADITIONNELLES (MADAGASCA) |
| | 4- 6 P.M. | MUSIC | MODERN POP ENSEMBLE (NIGERIA) |
| NATIONAL STADIUM BASKET BALL | 8-12 P.M. | DANCE | 1- ENSEMBLE DE BALLETS NATIONAUX (TOGO) 2- ENSEMBLE DE DANSE (SOMALIA) |
| | 8-12 P.M. | DRAMA | MUZANG (ZAIRE) |
| LAGOS CITY HALL | 8-11 P.M. | POPULAR DRESSING | SOMALIA - NAMIBIA - LIBYA - SWAZILAND |

APPENDIX 5


APPENDIX 6



DANCE



DRAMA



MUSIC

THE NATIONAL TROUPE OF NIGERIA

The National Troupe of Nigeria, a parastatal of the Federal Ministry of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation is the apex performing arts institution in Nigeria. It was formally established in 1991 by Decree No 47, the same decree that established the National Theatre. The National Troupe is constituted by professional theatre administrators and artistes whose primary function is to celebrate the cultural heritage of Nigeria through dance, music and drama.

The National Troupe has since its formal establishment exhibited competence in packaging high artistic productions specifically designed for national and international consumption. The Troupe which has had a record of successful artistic outing both within and outside the country has toured Nigeria extensively, toured countries in Africa, Europe the United States, and Asia. Indeed the qualities of the Troupe's theatrical presentations are evident in the scores of successes it has

recorded with well acclaimed productions and projects like 'The Trials of Oba Ovanramwen', 'Yemaja', which won the best drama prize at the 2002 Cervantino International Festival in Mexico, South America, 'Tafida', a play on the life and times of Shehu Musa Yar'Adua which was hailed as a master piece by Nigeria's former President Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and 'The Kolanut Dance', the performance of which has received commendation severally.

Besides, the National Troupe has at various times been commissioned by the Federal Government to package national events like the cultural aspect of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which Nigeria hosted in 2003; the Presidential Inauguration performance (1999 to date) and the annual Abuja Carnival. Similarly a number of corporate bodies like the Chevron, NLNG, Texaco, Celcel, MTN have relied on the Troupes exhibited competence in packaging high artistic productions to multinational audiences.

The Troupe instituted a university circuit performance and a quarterly play reading session that have undoubtedly encouraged creativity in order to achieve excellence in the performing arts.

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APPENDIX 6

THE NATIONAL THEATRE AND THE REINVIGORATION OF NIGERIA'S CREATIVE ECONOMY: REVIVING THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

As Nigeria's economy continues to dwindle, the concern for the survival of the nation heightens. It has been postulated that oil and gas upon which Nigeria's economy hinges, will soon ebb out, and so it becomes necessary to find options for economic strength. Attention is shifting to developing a knowledge-driven economy where the creative enterprises are situated, among other productive domains. Creative arts in all diversities offer valuable contents for cultural tourism, and this collaboration has been proven to be economically viable in many countries. Specifically, the performing arts, fine and applied arts, and indigenous crafts are capable of reviving cultural tourism in Nigeria. Arts and tourism can offer jobs to a significant percentage of Nigeria's youthful population. With ample human and materials resources in the creative sector, Nigeria is expected to become a major art production hub and a prime tourism destination. But it would appear that the potential of the art/tourism binary is not fully understood and explored. This paper reviews the role of the National Theatre in reviving and promoting Nigeria's creative economy; in reinvigorating the performing arts and visual arts towards improving their economic viability levels and attracting patronage. The work examines possible trajectories of growth and suggests how art practices could be reconfigured in the context of cultural tourism to optimise value and

become key drivers of Nigeria's economy. The paper suggests ways by which other cultural institutions in Nigeria could partner with the National Theatre to galvanise cultural revival and to expand Nigeria's creative economy by promoting arts and tourism.

Introduction

For many years, Nigeria's economy has been dwindling mainly due to mismanagement of resources and the failure by successive governments to efficiently diversify the economy. Nigeria's economy has been built mainly around crude oil and gas export since the discovery of crude oil in the country in 1956. European, Asian and American countries are top buyers of Nigeria's crude oil. In the 2nd quarter of 2021, the export value of crude oil sold to Europe, Asia and America totalled 2.947 trillion Naira (www.statista.com/statistics/export-value-of-crude-oil-from-nigeria-by-region).

Unfortunately, the main patrons of Nigeria's crude oil are defunding investments in the hydrocarbon economy and rechannelling their resources towards developing alternative energy sources such as solar, wind and hydro power sources in their drive to promote the net zero carbon agenda. With the reduction in global dependency on fossil fuel, Nigeria's main source of wealth is threatened. It is now a matter of urgency to find alternative sources of generating revenue for the Nigerian Nation, which is highly populated, financially strained, heavily indebted to foreign countries, international organisations and multinationals and recently, badly struck by the crushing economic impact of global COVID-induced restrictions.

Economic Revitalisation Attempts in Nigeria

Successive Nigerian governments have attempted to diversify the country's economy in so many ways, one of which is the exploration of solid minerals. Nigeria is endowed with vast solid mineral deposits, including gold, tantalite, limestone, bitumen, barite, kaolin, topaz, amongst others. Unfortunately, the solid mineral sector has been mismanaged and the revenue returns to the national treasury have been meagre. The National Extractive Industries

Transparency Initiative (NEITI), in its 2021 audit report says that Nigeria made only N496 billion in 13 years, whereas oil and gas generated N13.9 trillion in 2019 alone (www.premiumtimesng.com/news/despite-solid-mineral-abundance-nigeria-makes-only-n496-billion). The low-level revenue from solid minerals calls for a total reorganisation of the management of the sector so as to improve revenue.

From the agricultural sector, interest is dwindling due to security threats and poor funding. Agriculture was the main stay of Nigeria's economy before the discovery of oil. Nigeria was noted for the production of groundnuts, cocoa, palm oil, latex from rubber, etc. Successive administrations have attempted to revive interest in agriculture by introducing campaign programmes such as Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, Back to Land Programme, fertiliser distribution incentives and most recently the Anchor borrower's programme. Despite these efforts, Nigeria can barely feed her population from agricultural produce; many food items, processed and raw, are still imported and in some cases smuggled into the country. The feeble attempts by some farmers to export cocoa beans, yam and cassava for starch do not attract enough revenue for sustenance.

In the search for alternative revenue sources, attention is shifting to developing knowledge-based economy. The educational sector is under pressure to produce manpower for the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and engineering towards encouraging production; and the medical and healthcare sector to improve service delivery. Still in the desperation to expand her revenue base, Nigeria has now increased customs duties paid for imported items and introduced heavy internal taxation and tariffs on utility services in addition to removal of subsidies on popularly consumed products. The result is intensive impoverishment of the people. The question is, what more can be done to improve the revenue base of the country and to evolve alternative means of livelihood for the masses that are becoming restless?

Nigeria's Creative Economy

In general terms, creative economy covers knowledge-based economic activities related to wide-ranging creative enterprises. In Nigeria, such enterprises include indigenous cultural and contemporary arts initiatives. Attention is shifting to the arts, culture and tourism sub-sectors where Nigeria has a comparative advantage, being a multi-cultural society with multiple creative resources, and being endowed with many cultural products and natural locations for tourism. The human and materials resources in the creative art sector in Nigeria are almost limitless. The arts can be sub-divided into the Performing Arts, consisting of theatre, film, music, dance, carnival, stand-up comedy, runway productions, etc.; Fine and Applied Arts, consisting of painting, sculpture, ceramics, graphic design, textiles and fashion design; Indigenous and Contemporary Arts and Crafts, consisting of pottery, wood carving, bronze work, beading, dyeing, leatherwork, weaving and metallurgy. With this wide array of creative resources, the country has become a major hub of creative productivity across all artistic specialties.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Nigeria's creative industry alone accounted for 2.3 percent, approximately N239 billion, of the nation's GDP in 2016 (<https://nairametrics.com/how-multichoice-is-getting-the-economy-working-with-bbnaija>). The creative industry is largely private sector-driven, indicating the ability of Nigerians to gradually wean themselves from total dependency on government with time. With a dwindling economy, a rising level of unemployment and other attendant social problems, the art and tourism industry has been strategically positioned to elevate talented Nigerians from the debilitating effects of poverty. Certain key governmental establishments and agencies have taken up the responsibility to promote arts, culture and tourism and to improve their economic value. One of such agencies is the National Theatre.

The National Theatre at the Centre of Reviving Nigerian Arts and Tourism

For several years since 1977, the architectural structure of the National Theatre in Iganmu, Lagos, Nigeria has been the symbolism of Nigerian arts.

It dominates the 'Artscape' of Nigeria in the manner the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of Liberty dominate the landscapes of Paris and New York, respectively. The National Theatre was the main venue for the Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), where African countries showcased their arts and culture from 15th January to 12th February, 1977. During and after the event, global attention has been drawn to the edifice and its iconography. The theatre is said to be modelled after the Palace of Culture and Sports in Varna, Bulgaria and was constructed by a Bulgarian company, Technoexportsroy, beginning 1973. Standing on an area of land covering about 23,000 square metres, the Theatre is a seven-storey structure towering about 31 metres.



Plate 1: The National Theatre, Iganmu, Lagos, Nigeria.

(Photo Credits: www.nationaltheatrenigeria.com.ng)

The physical structure houses a 5000-seat auditorium, being the main performance space; two 700-seat cinema halls, conference and banquet halls with the capacity of 1,500 seats; two main exhibition halls large enough to seat 1,200 persons; the press conference hall and the VIP lounge, each having the capacity to seat 300 persons. In addition to these calibrated spaces, there are some other functional spaces within the building and around the premises. (www.nationaltheatrenigeria.com.ng). Over the years, these spaces have been used for theatre performances, musical recitals, cultural and film shows; some spaces have been used as art galleries, museums, library, workshops, conference venues, indoor sports venues and offices for the National Troupe.

The usage is in line with the vision of the management of the Theatre “to host on a daily basis one form of entertainment or the other... a place that should bubble with entertainment activities which must be crowd pulling” (www.nationaltheatrenigeria.com.ng). The edifice has been undergoing renovation since 2020 through a government/private sector partnership towards improving the aesthetics and functionality of the building and its ambiances.

The National Theatre is a major tangible cultural heritage whose architectural aesthetics linger in the mind of the beholder as a reminder of Nigeria’s artistic might. It is an international centre for arts and creativity where many artists have either practised or performed, or are aspiring to have some form of contact. Basically, the National Theatre was established as a showcase of the material, institutional, philosophical and the creative aspects of Nigeria’s culture. By implication, the National Theatre is the showcase for the performing arts as well as the visual arts, and all the aesthetic and philosophical underpinnings of their creations. The Theatre has become very significant to the entire arts community – artists, artistes and connoisseurs for its role of preserving and promoting arts and cultural values. It fosters the revival, appreciation and development of culture through cultural exhibitions of performing and visual arts and crafts. By the nature of its establishment, the National Theatre is more or less a cultural centre, whose role is to manage the cultural heritage of the people in all ramifications as stipulated in Section 4 of the Cultural Policy of Nigeria. The arts gallery at the Theatre displays masterpieces of artistic creation, encourages creativity, cultural literacy, research and documentation.

The Theatre hosts a lot of events all year round, including newly introduced events by the current management team. In 2020, the management of the National Theatre introduced the annual Unity Festival to showcase and promote all ramifications of Nigerian arts, popularise ethnic cultures and preserve the rituality and succession of the peoples’ traditions. By organising festivals, the National Theatre promotes both tangible and non-tangible cultural resources. While the tangible cultural resources are those seen physically with and around the people, popular non-tangible cultural resources in Nigeria include impalpable cultural forms and practices such as

folklores, languages, artistic expressions, myths, legends, customs, norms, social values, proverbs, divinations, spiritual beliefs and indigenous knowledge. The National Theatre organises or hosts festivals to showcase these traditions, thereby preserving them for posterity as well as presenting them for touristic purposes.

The National Theatre does not only organise leisure and entertaining events, it also propagates academic ideals and professionalism by serving as a centre for learning. To this effect, many training sessions – workshops, seminars, conferences and meetings are held annually. In the last quarter of 2021, an Academic Writing & Publishing Workshop was held to offer training and mentorship for practice-based researchers in design, visual and performing arts. The workshop was facilitated by The British Academy, funded by Global Challenges Research Fund, and featured scholars from Middlesex University, University of Johannesburg and the National Theatre. The beneficiaries were drawn from cultural institutions and universities in Nigeria. Kochoska and Petrovski (1459) agree that it is ideal for cultural institutions (such as the National Theatre) to showcase informative programmes with educational significance because it introduces the participants to much deeper cultural and social values.

The National Theatre extends its educational networking by collecting and developing library resources in the form of publications, scripts, digital photographs, audio and video recordings of performances and films with the objective of producing culturally oriented educational aids to encourage art and craft forms in Nigeria. The activities of the National Theatre are widely disseminated through the media for public knowledge. The National Theatre also has a vibrant website to promote and document its activities.

Under the leadership of Sunday Enessi Ododo, a professor of theatre technology and performance aesthetics, the theatre has been repositioned as a centre for creative excellence. In this administrative dispensation, the programmes and activities at the theatre are meant to relaunch the organisation in the direction of managerial proficiency. The programmes are also meant to improve visual, performative artistic and cultural viability. The assumption is that managerial and artistic proficiency would accelerate economic productivity and heighten the value of Nigeria's creative economy.

There have been workers' capacity building workshops and theatre technology training workshops organised to improve technical and creative artistic contents in the entertainment industry. There have also been stakeholders' roundtable fora and meetings with corporate partners to discuss investments, management strategies and partnership in the art and entertainment sub-sector.

By reviewing the list of responsibilities, activities and the leadership profile of the National Theatre, it is clear that the establishment is poised to enhance its economic value. The mission statement of the National Theatre is unequivocal about the drive to commercialise:

- To be costumer oriented
- To recognise the social needs of the society
- To foster unity and understanding in the heterogenous community.
- To operate profitably
- To be able to meet the demands of patrons and members of the public and give the Parastatal a good image at all times
- To be a tourist attraction
- To contribute to the economic viability of our nation, while promoting Nigeria as a vibrant cultural destination, and
- To enhance the good image of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
(www.nationaltheatrenigeria.com.ng)

The National Theatre adopts a holistic approach in the management of creative and cultural resources. In this approach, there are multiple beneficiaries. The Theatre itself has been a revenue spinner through space rentals. *The Guardian* analyses that no other venue in Nigeria has the capacity of the National Theatre: "Imagine how much money government would be making if 5,000 people pay at least N1,000 to watch a film or play that would be shown thrice or four times a day?" (<https://guardian.ng/sunday-magazine/how-theatre-revamp-will-deepen-artistic-enterprise>). After the refurbishing by the CBN/Bankers Committee partnership, which is expected to gulp about N21.89 billion Naira, it is expected that the Theatre "can earn

over \$20 billion yearly from the creative industry and over one million jobs is expected to be created in five years.”, in the words of Godwin Emefiele, the Nigerian Central Bank Governor (<https://guardian.ng/sunday-magazine/how-theatre-revamp-will-deepen-artistic-enterprise>). The value chain of theatre space management and artistic production is endless, benefiting the art producers, enriching suppliers of equipment and materials; expanding the market place for splinter beneficiaries and opening up more avenues for governmental statutory earnings. Direct revenues also accrue to Nigeria's economy through tourism as arts and cultural activities are the main products that tourists patronise. It would be necessary at this point to do a mapping of the creative and cultural resources that are showcased at the National Theatre, and to assess their values to Nigeria's economy.

Performing Art Domains Impacting Nigeria's Creative Economy

The Film Industry: Leading the pack of economic ground-breakers in the creative sector is the Nigerian Movie Industry. The growth in the Nigerian movie industry, Nollywood is phenomenal, and the revenue base and patronage are gradually expanding. The statistics of Nollywood's growth in 2015 show that the weekly average number of films produced in Nigeria was about fifty; and the average cost of producing Nollywood films in Nigeria was between \$25,000 and \$70,000, against the average cost of producing top Hollywood films which was about \$25 million at that time. The annual revenue of the Nigerian film industry was estimated at \$590 million (www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine).

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2017, announced that Nollywood was the second-biggest employer of labour in Nigeria, engaging over a million persons. (<https://nairametrics.com/how-multichoice-is-getting-the-economy-working-with-bbnaija>). As at 2019, the estimated range of Nollywood's profit had increased to between \$500 million and \$1 billion. As at that time, the industry was also employing “300,000 people and more than one million people indirectly”. (<https://nairametrics.com/nigerias-movie-industry-nollywood-generates-about-1-billion-yearly-afreximbank>). The statistics simply illustrate the viability of the Nigerian film industry, Nollywood, which is rated number two or three in the world by various rating

agencies, using different benchmarks. When the Nigerian economy was recalibrated sometime in 2015, it was found to be the biggest in Africa ahead of South Africa. Nollywood was a major index in that economic recalibration. For the first time, economists in Nigeria recognised the viability of the film sector in providing jobs and creating products in high demand for audiences across the globe.

The strength of this industry is simply that there is a migration from the stage to the screen. Many graduates of Theatre or Performing Arts and a few other disciplines from Nigerian universities who are truly creative go straight to the movie industry and are practising successfully in acting, screenwriting, directing, producing, camera handling and editing, amongst other sub-specialties in the film industry. The film industry is developing rapidly and the manpower need is so much that many people from other professions and disciplines have also been engaged profitably.

The Attraction of Seasonal Reality Shows: Many reality shows on the screen, such as Big Brother Naija (BBN), MTN Project Fame, Nigeria's Got Talents, Nigerian Idol, Glo Naija Sings, Gulder Ultimate Search, are lucrative performances that attract heavy funding and patronage. Being typically entertaining, they draw wide global viewership, consisting mainly of the youth. BBN for instance, generates good money for the participants and organisers. The prize money for the 2018 *Double Wahala* edition was 45 million Naira, while the winner of the 2019 *Pepper Dem* edition got 60 million Naira. The star prize for the *Lockdown Edition* of 2020 was 85 million Naira and the ultimate prize for the *Shine Your Eye* edition of 2021 was a whopping 90 million Naira. It is noteworthy that the star prize money keeps increasing every year. The star prizes are different from the smaller offers by sponsors for winners of challenges or games within the House. Apart from the offer of cash prizes, BBN is a showcase to launch careers particularly in show business and the media. It has been described as "a training ground for potential stars... a feeder show for the music industry, film, drama, advertisement world and numerous other outlets in the entertainment industry" (<https://theconversation.com/big-brother-naija-why-nigerians-are-obsessed-with-the-reality-tv-show>). The long-term gains cannot be quantified. Ebuka

Obi-Uchendu, Uti Nwanchukwu, Bisola Aiyeola, Efe Ejeba and Hazel Oyeze Onou (aka White Money) and others from the Big Brother show have become big media, musical, fashion and film stars.

The contributions of Big Brother Naija to Nigeria's entertainment industry is significant, basically for opening up the entertainment industry for investors – producers, directors, actors, entertainers, designers and technicians. Orodare expatiates:

At the backstage making the work happen are more than 100 crew members – cameramen, photographers, housekeepers and many others in their hundreds who get paid for making the reality show a true reality... The multiplying effect of this on the economy of a nation cannot be underestimated (<https://nairametrics.com/2020/07/08/how-multichoice-is-getting-the-economy-working-with-bbnaija>).

Beyond the cast and the crew, the show is an outlet for suppliers and vendors of various products, including cosmetics, clothes, toiletries, food, furniture, décor, etc. This interdependency scales up the chain of economic activities. Very importantly, Big Brother Naija attracts multiple advertising interests, which generate enormous income for both the advertisers and for the companies promoting their brands. Products and brands advertised on the show are viewed by over 100 million viewers on various global media networks, including the internet. Inherently, BBNaija is also a promotional tool for marketing the Nigerian Brand.

The Virtual Domain- The YouTube Experience: YouTube is a popular web environment for learning, teaching, marketing and entertainment. It appears there is more entertainment, mainly music and comedy than other materials on YouTube. It is often said that YouTube spins money basically from the audiences it attracts. Entertainment draws a large audience because it is engaging. It appeals more to the youth who constitute a good percentage of users of YouTube. Entertainers make money from YouTube based on the number of viewers they can attract. Many of them have generated attractive contents such as music, comedy, dance, talk shows, etc., and have attracted

huge followership across virtual spaces. Creatives set up YouTube channels, uploading regularly, building audiences, monetising their products and generating money per ad click or per view. Many creatives have become YouTube partners and are reaping economic gains from the partnership.

Netflix: Netflix is a global streaming service which allows subscribers to watch TV shows, movies, documentaries and animations across a spectrum of countries. Netflix's incursion into the Nigerian movie industry (Nollywood) began few years ago, notably, in 2015 when the American owned media company acquired the rights of blockbusters such as Kunle Afolayan's *October 1st*, Biyi Bandele's *Fifty* and several others, after they had already been distributed in Nigerian cinemas. Since its incursion into Africa, particularly Nigeria's movie industry, Netflix, has dominated Nigeria's relatively new video-on-demand market. Since announcing its launch in February of 2020:

Netflix has been behind some of the biggest films and web series in recent years like *King of Boys*, *Òlòtūrè*, *Citation*, *Lionheart*, and *Namaste Wahala* to mention a few. Both financing and acquiring the exclusive streaming rights. 2021 has been a great and riveting year for Nollywood movies and web series. Movies and series like *King of Boys: The Return of The King* is a 7-part limited series directed by Kemi Adetiba. A sequel to *King of Boys* (2018), was released in August of 2021 exclusively on Netflix. Sola Sobowale and Toni Tones reprise their roles as Eniola Salami with *Reminisce*, *Illbliss*, Akin Lewis, Osas Ighodaro and Keppy Ekpenyong also reprising their roles (<https://nairametrics.com/2021/12/26/netflix-and-nollywood-how-beneficial-has-the-relationship-been/>).

Thus, it is no longer news that Nollywood has gained significant attention from film scholars, cinephiles, and investors around the globe and Netflix is now the new vehicle by which Nigerian cinema is made available to other nationals across the globe. By this new reality, Agina (1) submits that Netflix has made Nollywood transnational, and as such, the transnational audiences are enjoying the Nollywood-on-Netflix boom and as new constituencies are reaching out to Nigerian filmmakers for commentary and co-productions.

Thus, global streaming has paved the way for global collaboration. Collaboration requests are coming much faster than they did prior to 2020, now that streaming platforms have enabled on-demand spectatorship to global audiences in an unprecedented way; this inadvertently holds great potentials for the development of Nollywood and invariably the Nigerian economy.

Carnivals and Festivals: Apart from the growth in the film industry, there also appears to be a growing interest in carnivals and festivals. A prominent feature in the annual Unity Festival hosted by the National Theatre is the carnival.



Plate 2: Flier for National Theatre “Festival of Unity”, 2021

(Photo Credits: www.nationaltheatrenigeria.com.ng)

Originating from ancient African, European and Latin American traditions, the practice has been revitalised across the globe in many places in the 21st Century. Between 1995 and 2019, there was a proliferation of carnivals in Nigeria, the major ones being *Carnival Calabar*, Abuja Carnival, Carniriv in Port Harcourt and Eko Carnival in Lagos. Apart from the big carnivals, there are many other emerging smaller carnivals in other cities and communities.

These carnivals draw manpower largely from the performing arts industry and the patronage indicates that it is highly sustainable. A closer look at two leading carnivals will illustrate patronage and subscription to carnivals in Nigeria.

Carnival Calabar, popularly tagged “Africa’s Biggest Street Party” is an annual event held since 2005. It is modelled after the carnival at Trinidad and Tobago and the Rio carnival in Brazil. Apart from wide subscription from revellers, fun lovers and tourists, *Carnival Calabar* enjoys huge corporate sponsorship from banks, airlines, communication companies, insurance firms and conglomerates, funding various aspects of the Carnival. *Carnival Calabar*, therefore has the capacity to be self-sustaining. It has been so groomed that it has birthed other allied activities, including a beauty pageant, cultural parades, an essay-writing competition, intended to encourage students in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions to develop interest in creative writing. In the later years, motor and motorbike shows were added to the package. Apart from live audiences at *Carnival Calabar*, there are also media audiences, following the performances live on television.

The Abuja Carnival, envisioned as a catalyst for cultural renaissance in Nigeria was started by the Federal Ministry of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation as an annual event in 2005. It is a compendium of all forms of Nigerian arts, including performance, visual and literary arts. The turnout at the Abuja Carnival has been progressive since its inception. The Carnival Management Committee reported that as of 2008, the Carnival recorded 36 participating states and more than 11,000 performers. According to research conducted by the Cross River State Carnival Commission in 2008, the Carnival Calabar attracted 1.2 million spectators in 2008 while in 2009 an estimated 2.34 million spectators directly or indirectly attended the event. These figures have continued to increase from year to year. Mofinews magazine of January 2011, revealed that over 60,000 costumes, 2 million spectators and an audience of 50 million television viewers on international, national and local television networks participated in the 2009 edition of Carnival Calabar. This status attained by the festival however, can be attributed to the significant role of the performing Art; as through its various

activities, the culture of Cross River State of Nigeria has been promoted on the global arena (Agba 2013). Many international participants from Ghana, Niger Republic, South Africa, Egypt, Senegal and the United States have also attended the event over the years. No doubt, the participation of foreigners lends further credence to the international appeal and acceptance of the Carnival. Funding and sponsorship are drawn from both public and private sector partnership. (Andrew, *Visual and Theatrical* 65).

The essence of this analysis is to clarify that carnival in Nigeria is a huge industry with the potential to grow even larger than the carnivals in South America and Europe. Already, many performers, artistes and managers are benefitting from the carnivals in Nigeria, making costumes, floats and props; providing lighting and sound, and engaging in choreography, acrobatics and script interpretation. Even though carnival displays in Nigeria were interrupted by the Coronavirus pandemic and insecurity issues, the consciousness on the artform is already firmly established.

Apart from the carnivals, many festivals are also held in various Nigerian communities to commemorate harvesting and planting seasons, regal coronations, fertility rights and fishing seasons with displays of boat regattas and shoreline entertainment activities. For example, the Argungu Fishing Festival in Kebbi, Durbar Festivals in Kano and Katsina, the Igue Festival in Benin City, the Mmanwu Festival in Enugu, the Osun Festival in Oshogbo, the Odi Ogori ba uge Festival in Bayelsa and the numerous New Yam and agricultural festivals of South Eastern Nigeria, have attracted millions of tourists to Nigeria over the years. The COVID pandemic could hardly disrupt Nigerian festivals, partly because the virus was not as destructive in Nigeria as it was in other parts of the world, and partly because of the tenacity of the Nigerian people regarding festivities. At the peak of the pandemic in December 2020, the National Theatre organised the first Festival of Unity, featuring drama, dances, comedy and carnival in Lagos, and the participation from all parts of the country was massive. It was obvious that the performers could hardly wait to emerge from the lockdown to vent their creative skills. The annual National Festival of Arts and Culture, featuring states of the federation is also well attended both by performers and tourists. The festival features artistic displays and cultural events including drama, dance, craft

displays, indigenous games, archery, costumes parades, art exhibitions and culinary arts featuring indigenous cuisines. Apart from promoting unity in Nigeria, the Festival markets Nigeria's cultural products to both national and international audiences. The rotational hosting of this festival gives the opportunity to regular participants and tourist to experience different locations across Nigeria.

Carnivals and festivals have become major tourism products that draw “art-core” and “culture-core” tourists to use Hughes' classifications, referring to visitors dedicated to art and cultural events (3). These products offer multi-layered benefits to the economy. Many of the events have been featured in the global tourism calendar. The interest in carnivals and festivals is understandable when viewed against the earlier analysed scenario of a failing oil economy. Diversification into arts and tourism where there is so much potential and patronage is indeed justifiable.

The Music Industry: Music is a huge industry in Nigeria. This fact became clearer in the process of googling facts on Nigeria's top 10 richest entertainers when it was discovered that eight of them were in the music industry. The only two exceptions were Kate Henshaw and Genevieve Nnaji, who, by the way, have also started singing. (www.legit.ng/-meet-top-10-nigerian-entertainers-biggest-endorsement-deals). Patronage of music is high, and this is understandable; everybody listens to one type of music or the other. Nigerians, being generally very showy engage musicians in almost every social function. Musicians featuring in such functions collect fabulous fees. In addition, they frequently conduct shows for paying audiences. As part of the end of year activities in 2021, the National Theatre hosted a musical show, tagged “Thrillerbandz@Theatre”, featuring 50 live bands and the response in participation and sponsorship was tremendous.

Many Nigerian musicians are exceptionally creative and are generating global waves in the music industry. Innocent Ujah Idibia (2face), Burna Boy, Paul and Peter Okoye (P Square), David Adediji Adeleke (Davido), Ayodeji Balogun (Wizkid), Oladapo Daniel Adebajo (D'banj), Tiwatope Savage-Balogun (Tiwa Savage), Bukola Elemide (Asa), Iyanya and many others are top-notch Nigerian musicians who are profitably engaged both nationally and internationally. Many Nigerian musicians are inspirational. The twin pop

stars Paul and Peter Okoye who recently reunited after a brief break-up have provided inspiration to new up-comers DNA, the popular twins who were projected from MTN Project Fame in 2016. Innocent Idibia (2 Face) has equally inspired other young Nigerian musicians not just to make music, but also to diversify their engagements and wealth when they rise to fame. Innocent Idibia is a brand ambassador for many products and is said to have invested widely in real estates and stocks. Apart from the musicians, producers, technical personnel and managers behind the scene are equally expanding Nigeria's creative economy through music.

Afrobeats music is one of Nigeria's strong cultural exports. The influence of Afrobeats is so strong that popular American artists like Ciara have begun releasing Afrobeat-tinged songs. Ciara's "Freak Me", featuring Tekno, released in 2018, was a remake of Tiwa Savage's 2015 song, "Before Nko" featuring D'Prince. Earlier in 2017, a United States based pop-star Robert Sylvester Kelly, popularly known as 'R. Kelly' released a remix of Davido's 'If.' Davido, Wizkid, D'banj, Tiwa Savage, Asa and 2 face among other popular Nigerian musicians, are at the forefront of propagating Nigeria's musical and entertainment culture through peculiar Nigerian beats. (<https://thewhistler.ng/nigerian-artists-exporting-afrobeats-to-the-world>)

Stand-up Comedy & Spoken Word Art: This artistic domain is also drawing huge patronage as an offering in the theatre and tourism stable. Though it is often set in theatre ambiances with the requisite histrionics, it has recently been spread to popular event and informal venues and well accepted by varieties of audiences. Stand-up comedy is a veritable vehicle for satire and social criticism in Nigeria. The art is sustained by the raw materials drawn from the society; culture, politics, security system and other domains of life in Nigeria. Comedians simply satirise the complex socio-political and economic situation in Nigeria. The famous Nigerian comedian, AliBaba has opened up the space for stand-up comedy to thrive. Okey Bakassi is known for his mockery of the security and policing system in Nigeria; Aboki for Christ and AY satirise the Church and self-serving pastors; Klint the Drunk mirrors the greed in the society; Obinna Simon aka MC Tagwaye mimics President Buhari and satirises his style of governance; and Julius Agwu makes a mockery of 'honourable' politicians and other misfits in government and the private

sector. Other stand-up comedians such as Basket Mouth, I Go Die, Bovi, Akpororo, Kenny Black and other stand-up acts, are expanding the 'laughing business' selling a fully-packed capacity hall of about 500 seats to 700 at a cost of N10,000 per person. Some of them have gone as far as going on tour to Europe, America, Asia and other parts of the world. Nigerian comedians, undoubtedly, are extending the commentary on some socio-political issues of global interest.

Generally, stand-up comedy seems to be a bomb, soothing the pains, shame, disgrace and frustrations of Nigerians. So far, this genre has produced renowned icons from the days of Moses Olaiya (Baba Sala), Atunyota Alleluya Akpobome (Ali Baba), Julius Agwu, Okey Mac Anthony (Okey Bakassi), Bright Okpocha (Basket Mouth), Francis Agida (I Go Die), Helen Paul (Tatafo), Ayo Makun and many more. Many stand-up comedians multi-task as actors, musicians, dancers, poets and Masters of Ceremonies (MCs) in functions. Some comedy shows are notable for promoting stand-up comedy and for introducing new comedians in Nigeria. They include Opa William's *Night of a Thousand Laughs* and Bunmi Davies' *Stand Up Nigeria*.

Economically, Nigerian comedians are doing well; many earn millions from endorsements and from being brand ambassadors for products and services. Concluding his analysis on the growth of stand-up comedy in Nigeria, Ayakoroma submits that "very soon... Nigerian comedians will start competing favourably with their counterparts across the world both in rich, quality content and business exploits" (www.nico.gov.ng). But the contrary opinion here is that the rest of the world has a standard to beat in Nigeria at least in the display of wits and spontaneity. In 2021, the Vice President of Nigeria, Yemi Osinbajo remarked that Nigerian skits and comedy are some of the best in the world, the basis upon which the Nigerian government has intensified support for Nigerian creatives through the Technology and Creative Advisory Group. (<https://www.pulse.ng/news/local/osinbajo-says-nigerias-skit-comedians-are-among-the-funniest-in-the-world>). This analysis is to illustrate that stand-up comedy is well rooted and accepted in Nigeria, and that the art form now has international appeal, attracting tourists and extending the frontiers of Nigeria's creative economy.

Spoken Word Arts, being poetry enlivened by performance with high entertainment value is also gaining momentum and patronage in Nigeria. Great spoken word artists like Graciano Enwerem and Dike Chukwumerije are well patronised in Nigeria and beyond. Remuneration for this art form, like most others, depends on the patron, the forum and the acclaim or status of the performer. Frequently, this art form has been engaged in products marketing. For instance, Heritage Bank has projected the spoken words poetry of Titilope Sonuga and Efe Paul Azino in some television adverts in Nigeria. As much as spoken word arts has been adopted and patronised as an art form in its own right, it is also a good medium to market Destination Nigeria to tourists and investors, just as it has been used in marketing other products.

Fashion, Modelling and Runway Performances: Many Nigerian fashion designers and their signature products or brands are well known across the globe. Folake Folarin-Coker, Duro Olowu, Lisa Folawiyo, Lola Faturoti, Zizi Cardow, Mai Atafo and Frank Oshodi (who started as a model) are some popular Nigerian designers in the global fashion industry. Some of them use Nigerian fabrics – Adire, Akwete, Ankara and African prints to produce creative apparels for the foreign market. Models are partners with designers in the fashion industry; they are product promoters and, in some cases, Public Relations ambassadors. Some of the best models with the requisite physical profile, discipline, carriage and stage presence are groomed and taught in the performing arts. Fashion, modelling and runway performances are some of the unsung contributions of the creative design sector that have attracted earnings in foreign currency to Nigeria.

Creative Capacities and Potentialities in the Visual Arts Sector

Contemporary Nigerian arts are well recognised and patronised globally. There are at least 20 Nigerian universities approved by National Universities Commission to offer programmes in Visual Arts under different nomenclatures - Fine & Applied Arts, Fine and Industrial Arts, Fine Arts and Design and Creative Arts. (<https://servantboy.com/fine-arts-schools-nigeria>). Being that the sub-specialties of Visual Arts offer rich creative capital and are adjudged economically viable, students' subscription to the programmes is high.

Sculpture is one of the sub-specialities of Visual Arts. It is concerned with carvings and mouldings using different media. The popularity of sculptural practices is probably rooted in ancient sculptural traditions of Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Benin and Ife kingdoms. The fame of Nigerian sculptural art was amplified in 1977 when a piece of Benin art was chosen as the symbol of FESTAC. The sculpture is an ivory carving, of a hip mask that has become perhaps the most popular Nigerian sculptural piece. Contemporary Nigerian sculpture was popularised by the early creative masters of Nigerian arts like Ben Enwonwu, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Jimoh Buraimoh and Felix Idubor, whose works were either exhibited or retained in reputable galleries of the West. Sculptures are used as interior décors, ornamental items, commemorative items and for the adornment of public spaces. There are landmark contemporary sculptures in many Nigerian cities, some of them with deep historical value. A major reference is the sculpture of Queen Moremi, popularly known as “Queen Moremi Statue of Liberty”, erected in Oba Ogunwusi’s Palace in Ife in 2016. Standing at about 42 feet in height, it is the tallest statue in Nigeria and the fourth tallest in Africa. (<https://www.pulse.ng/lifestyle/food-travel/among-the-7-tallest-statues-in-africa-nigeria-shows>).

The statue of Queen Amina at the National Theatre Complex in Iganmu, Lagos; Gani Fawehinmi statue at the Liberty Park, Ojota, Fela Anikulapo Statue at Allen Roundabout in Ikeja, and the Bassey Duke marble effigy in Calabar, are some popular sculptures that attract art lovers to the sites. These and many other sculptural sites are popular destinations for tourists in Nigeria. The dispensation of Rochas Okorocha as Governor in Imo State, Nigeria can be remembered for the popularisation of statues. The city of Owerri was rechristened ‘City of Statues’ (<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/entertainment/travels-travelogue-a-reporters-visit-to-owerri-city-of-statues>). At the Hero Square, the statues of notable political leaders of the state as well as some former African leaders are erected. They include Akanu Ibiam, Sam Mbakwe, Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, Nnamdi Azikiwe; and Ellen Sirleaf Johnson of Liberia, Nana Akufor-Addo of Ghana, and Jacob Zuma of South Africa whose inclusion caused a stir. The Square was conceived to be a tourist attraction and still remains same considering the number of visitors to the site on daily basis. Recently,

sculptors have veered into productions of architectural items like pillars, gates, parapets and wrought iron balcony railings, and protectors, thus extending their tentacles of creativity to utility products. Suffice to say that sculptural art has not only positioned Nigeria in the global map of artistic fame, but it has also provided a means of earning and livelihood for Nigerian artists and art marketers.

Painting is one of the most elitist sub-specialities of Visual Arts. It consists mainly of works done on canvas, boards, walls and other surfaces. Most are used as décors in offices, homes and public spaces. The patronage for painting is strong as individuals and corporate organisations buy numerous paintings from artists at exhibitions, in galleries and at private studios. Popular painters in Nigeria include Ben Enwonwu, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Twin Seven Seven, Obiora Udechukwu, Tayo Adenaike, Uche Okeke, Dele Jegede, Chike Aniako, Gani Odotokun, Sam Ebohon, amongst others. Other painters in the diaspora, like Chris Ofili are creating strong waves. As a painter, Ofili won the British Turner Prize with his work "Orgena", a portrait of a black woman exhibited at Tate Gallery in 1998. Ofili is noted to have produced the work "The Holy Virgin Mary", a painting of black Madonna rendered with pornographic images and elephant dung in 1999. This painting generated much controversy, but it also propelled the artists to popularity. Such has been the case in history where artists became popular by veering from the norm. Pablo Picasso and George Braque became popular when, under the strong influence of African carvings they deviated from popular realism and started Cubism, which later became an art movement. Contemporary Nigerian paintings are highly patronised by collectors and tourists.

Graphics is probably the most popular of all the visual arts. Graphic designers create two-dimensional designs that are printed on substrates for billboards, fliers, calendars, signage, souvenirs, apparels, texts, etc. They also create designs for web pages, video and television productions using computer applications. Many universities and private institutions offer graphic design and the students' subscription level is high. By the exposure to Graphic Arts, many designers move into the domain of computer programming. The attraction of graphic design is understandable because the environment is dominated by graphics. Many items, indoor or outdoor are made up of

graphic prints. Graphic productions also dominate the virtual space – internet and phone screens. Photography is a component of graphic design which has also attracted much patronage. Graphic arts, photography and printing offer employment to significant number of people in Nigeria. Graphics as an indispensable tool in new age in marketing has been used in marketing tourism destinations and cultural products in the media. Moreover, tourism is not complete without photography, an aspect of graphic design.

Ceramics, like sculpture is rooted in the ancient tradition of pottery across Nigeria. Ladi Kwali had set a standard of artistic excellence in pottery working with Michael Cardew at the Pottery Training Center in Abuja in 1954. She began exporting and marketing Nigerian Pottery while touring the United Kingdom, France, Germany and later America with Cardew. This background established by Kwali set the tone for the collection of Nigerian ceramic pieces across the globe. Tourist still visit pottery centres in the middle belt of Nigeria to identify with the legacy of this traditional art. Contemporary ceramists produce sanitary ware, casseroles, vases, ornamental décors, beads and mementoes. All these items are highly patronised by tourists and by collectors.

Textile artists basically create designs on fabrics. In Nigeria, they are noted for dyeing and tapestry. Nigeria has long been reputed for the production of dyed fabrics. Products from the Kano dye pits are famed as well as the Adire fabrics produced in Abeokuta. Recently, the Ogun State Government launched the Adire Initiative with the aim of promoting export of this acclaimed product. Fabrics can now be ordered online. Naturally, many textile designers have delved into Fashion Design and the result has been impressive in terms of the array of products churned out from their creative stables. Nigerians generally patronise creative textile products, using them at functions as custom made individual dresses or as uniforms (Aso Ebi). Textile and fashion products are frequently displayed at fashion shows and expos and have become major exports from Nigeria. Textile/fashion designers also produce carnival costumes for the numerous carnivals in Nigeria. Textile production and fashion design are very lucrative arts and have created many jobs across the country.

The Attraction of Indigenous and Contemporary Nigerian Crafts

Nigeria has a rich and diverse cultural artistic heritage that dates back to more than two thousand years, looking back to 900 BCE – 200CE when Nok Terracottas were said to have been produced (Eyo 22). Several sophisticated forms of art from terracotta, bronze, brass, stone, wood and ivory have been produced over time. Andrew Observes that:

Many of these pieces have been described as being sophisticated because of the technology of manipulating the various media of production, the draughtsmanship of the producers and the sheer impact of such works in communicating the values of the people that produce them. The techno-artistic qualities of these pieces as well as the stampede by both foreigners and indigenes to acquire them suggest that they are truly classical (“Classical African Arts...” 52).

The artistic dexterity and the inspiration of contemporary Nigerian artists are probably drawn from these artistic traditions.

a. Nok Arts: Nok is the earliest iron smelting culture so far discovered in African South of the Sahara. It is also the earliest of all known African artistic traditions carbon dated to the period between 900B.C. and A.D. 200, more than 2000 years ago. One can only be humbled by the knowledge that such sophisticated civilisation existed in Africa so early in time. The ruins of Nok art were uncovered in the village of Nok near Jos, Nigeria by Bernard Fagg, an archaeologist who worked at the Jos Museum around 1944. The idiosyncrasies of Nok sculptures made from terracotta include a semi-circular or triangular shape of the eyes, pierced pupils, ears, mouth and nostrils and large lips in some cases. Most were representations of human heads with few examples of animal heads. One remarkable thing about Nok sculptures is the mastery of the terracotta medium by the artist. Terracotta is baked clay, which must be fired to a very high temperature to distinguish it from ordinary pottery wares. Interestingly, Nok sculptors understood the complicated techniques of terracotta firing early in time. They created openings in the eyes, nostrils, ears and mouth of terracotta heads to vent air bubbles during the process of firing. This technique is still used by traditional potters. The Nok

terracotta pieces displayed at Jos and Lagos Museums have attracted numerous tourists to Nigeria over the years.

**Plate 3: A terracotta figurine
produced by the Nok**

Culture: Louvre
Museum, Paris

Photo credit: Mary-lan Nguyen |

[https://www.worldhistory.org/image/10320/
nok-sculpture/](https://www.worldhistory.org/image/10320/nok-sculpture/)



b. Igbo Ukwu Bronzes: This ancient artistic tradition was discovered in the small village of Igbo Ukwu, located near Awka in South Eastern Nigeria. An indigene, Isaiah Anozie is said to have encountered a number of bronze objects while digging a water cistern in 1938. This prompted the Nigerian Government to invite a British archaeologist, Thurstan Shaw to excavate specific sites in 1959. The excavations revealed a number of artistic pieces done with copper alloys, the first in black Africa. Specifically, Igbo Ukwu art specialised in leaded bronze objects, many of which have been carbon-dated to between 9th and 10th Centuries A.D. It is speculated that the raw materials – copper and tin which alloy to form bronze may have been acquired from distant cultures since there were no metal mines around the locality of Igbo Ukwu. It is noteworthy that some bowls and masks found within the area bear motifs that are indigenous to the region. The implication is that even if the raw materials were imported, the pieces may have been produced by indigenous artists. The Roped Pot is perhaps the most impressive archaeological piece from Igbo Ukwu. This intricately crafted object suggests an early awareness of the science of *cire-perdue* casting, also known as the lost-

wax process, and the science of alloying metals to retard solidification in the process of production. It is evident that Igbo Ukwu must have been a wealthy society to have been indulged in such ornate fabrications. The Roped Pot and other works from Igbo Ukwu tradition are on display in some Nigerian museums.

Plate 4: Igbo Ukwu artist

Pendant

Leaded bronze

National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria,

Photo by Dirk Bakker

Source:

<https://africa.uima.uiowa.edu/chapters/ancient-africa/igbo-ukwu/?start=6#essay>



c. Ife Arts: The arts of Ife civilisation consist of terracotta, bronze and stone sculptures carbon-dated to between 12th to 15th Centuries. The world is still intrigued at the existence of such sophisticated civilisation that could produce super-realistic pieces from a variety of media early in time. Leo Frobenius, Kenneth Murray, Oliver Myers, Frank Willet, Peter Garlake, John Goodwin, Ekpo Eyo, William and Bernard Fagg were the archaeologists that worked at different excavation sites in Ife to uncover sculptural heads of Onis (Yoruba Kings), young men, animal heads, sceptres, receptacles and ritual pots, amongst other items. “This stampede towards Ife was not unconnected with the refined naturalistic art found there” (Andrew “Classical African Arts”... 56). Leo Frobenius compares the features of Ife arts with that of “an ancient colony of lost Greeks” (Eyo 80). A typical Ife head is stylised with scarification, probably to emphasise the fullness of the face. The eyes are upswept and the lips full. These peculiar features emphasised the realism for which Ife arts was

known. Sculptures from Ife civilisation are displayed in museums in Nigeria and abroad.

Plate 5: Yoruba (Ife) artist

Oni figure

Brass

National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria

Photo by Dirk Bakker

Source:

<https://africa.uima.uiowa.edu/chapters>

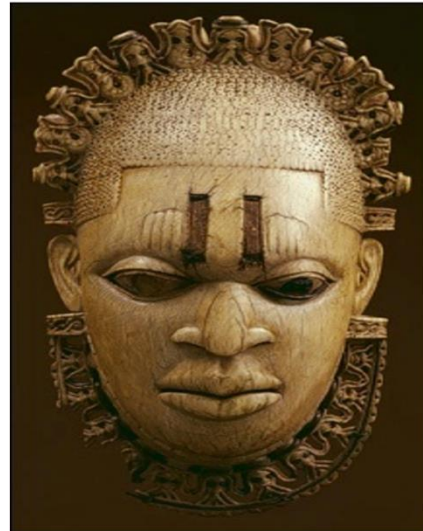
[/ancient-africa/ife/](https://africa.uima.uiowa.edu/chapters)



d. Benin Arts: Benin art, carbon dated to the period between 15th to 19th Century is perhaps the most popular in black Africa. Benin arts was exposed to the outside world because of the Punitive Expedition when the British invaders massacred the indigenes and stole many Benin art pieces to Europe in 1897. During the prime period of this civilisation, the Obas retained most works of art in the courts, hence the description of Benin art as court art. The Oba maintained a crop of specialist carvers, bronze smiths and bead workers that produced a wide range of artistic items ranging from heads of the royalty to animals, ornamental and utilitarian items. The subject matter includes every day activities; war and entertainment scenes rendered either in-the-round or on relief plaques. Most of the works are in bronze, while the rest are in ivory, terracotta and wood. As stated earlier, the FESTAC '77 hip mask carved with ivory is one of the most popular examples of Benin arts. The

original work is still being kept at the British Museum, but its replicas decorate many art-loving homes across the globe.

Plate 6: Ivory Mask from Ancient Benin used as Symbol for FESTAC '77
(Photo Credit: Ekpo Eyo/ From Shrines to Showcases...)



e. Nigerian Stone Carvings: Apart from the works of arts from early civilisations discussed above, Nigeria is also popular in stone carvings made from an array of solid minerals including soapstone, granite, gneiss and basalt. The stone carving traditions in Yoruba Land and in the Cross River Basin provide an insight to this artistic practice. They may not be exhaustive, but will suffice for the purpose of this paper to illustrate another area of Nigeria's indigenous artistic expertise. The Yoruba stone carvings can be grouped into those found in sacred Ore grooves, made up of granite, gneiss and quartz, consisting of human figures, mudfish and stone boxes; those found in Esie, consisting of seated soapstone sculptures, totalling about eight-hundred; the Eshure figures, consisting of hard stone carvings found in a dense forest near Eshure, Ekiti; and the Eshu of Igbajo, consisting of disproportionate stone carving, representing the Yoruba deity of Eshure, the spirit of chance,

uncertainty and trickery. Many of these carvings are housed in Nigeria's first museum at Esie, Kwara State.

The Cross River Monoliths also called *Akwanshi* are found in Ikom, within the bend of the Cross River at the South Eastern region of Nigeria. These figures, representing ancestral spirits are carved from outcrops of basalt. They are found in isolated occurrences among small groups of Ejagham Ekoi people – Ekajuk, Abamyom, Nnam, Nta, Nselle and Nkun. In all, there are almost three hundred of them located either in abandoned or existing villages. The carvings are all phallic in shape progressing from phallus to human forms with concentrated decorations on the face, breasts and navel. The original site where some of these stone carvings are still located is a popular destination for tourists the Cross River Basin.



Plate 7: Ankwashi stone Carving (Ikom)
<https://noma.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Akwanshiimage.jpg>



Plate 8: Sculpture of Ore's Priest Ile-ife
National Museum- Photo: Suzanne Preston Blier

Indigenous Nigerian Crafts

In addition to the sculptures from ancient civilisations, Nigeria is also acclaimed in the production of certain indigenous crafts, including wood

carving, pottery, weaving, raffia work, cane work and metallurgy. Across the country, there are many dexterous craftsmen depending on craft production for economic sustenance, meeting the needs of domestic collectors as well as tourists. There is hardly a city in Nigeria that does not have craftsmen specialising in some form of craft. Benin in Edo State and Ikot Ekpene in Akwa Ibom State are noted for the varieties of crafts they produce. Some popular contemporary Nigerian crafts and their production centres are discussed below:

Wood Carvings of Nigeria: Nigerian carvings are diverse, ranging from masks, stools, human forms, ornamentations, dolls, pillars to walking sticks and other personal properties with wide-ranging motifs. The carvings serve various purposes – spiritual, practical to aesthetics, and therefore susceptible to wide forms of appreciation. Carvings are rendered with varieties of hard and soft woods such as ebony, mahogany and cedar. Unfortunately, wood is more susceptible to damage than the traditional metallic media. Quite often, carvings have been destroyed by tropical weather conditions and by termites, but a number of them have been preserved in museums and galleries within and outside Nigeria. Some categories of Nigerian carvings are outstanding and will be discussed briefly here with reference to their artistic peculiarity, functionality and their touristic values:

- i. **Masks:** Masks are the most common of all Nigerian carvings. Great mask-carving traditions exist in Ikot Ekpene, Benin, Kalabari, Igala, Ogoni and Igboland, serving various mask users and performers. Andrew observes that most mask-producing traditions “exist within the forest and Guinea Savannah regions where raw materials for carving abound” (Andrew “Classical African Arts...” 62). Werner Gillon in his popular study of African masks creates two broad categories – the refined and the grotesque, attributing the differences to the quality of woods used. His submission is that hard woods are more difficult to carve and smoothen, hence they end up as grotesque forms, while soft woods which are easier to handle and their products are more refined (72). While this may not be entirely true, it is sufficient to note the stylistic variances – the grotesque and the refined. The functions of masks are wide, ranging from being

used in entertainment to usage in certain cult groups. The styles and motifs expressed in carving reflect the ownership and purpose. Some masks such as those worn as necklace by royalties and traditionalists are decorative. Masks are well patronised by collectors who use them as memorabilia and as décors.

- ii. **Figures and Figurines:** These are also commonly produced by Nigerian carvers. The popular ones are the *Ibeji* (twin) carvings of the Yorubas; the *Ekpu* carvings representing ancestral spirits in Oron, *Ibibio* puppet figurines; and the *Ikenga* figures of Igbo land. Generally, these figures and figurines are slender, often vertically placed with facial features emphasised above other body parts. It is possible that the emphasised parts of the figures relate to usage. For example, the *Ekpu* ancestral figures of Oron are made with long beards – a possible indication of ancestral age, while *Ibibio* puppet figurines are made with exaggerated body features to complement their comic usage (Andrew “Classical African Arts...” 64). Outside traditional usage, figures and figurines are popularly collected and preserved in museums and art centres for ethnographic and touristic purposes.
- iii. **House Posts Carvings:** These carvings serve architectural and decorative purposes. They consist of carved doors, frames and veranda posts. Decorated house posts are found in Yoruba Ketu and Ohafia, Igbo. Carved doors are produced in Modakeke, Ife, Ikot Ekpene and Awka, amongst other places. Some examples have been recovered and displayed in various Nigerian museums and private galleries.
- iv. **Ornamental and Utilitarian Carvings:** They include stools, chairs, headrests, pendants, receptacles, walking sticks and decorative plaque panels. These items have been given different sculptural interpretations by different carvers and carving traditions to suit specific needs of various cultures in Nigeria as well as collectors from all extractions.

There are many more forms of crafts in Nigeria. Some of them are shown along with the places where they are produced in the Table below:

Table I: Contemporary Nigerian Crafts and Places of Production

| Craft Work | Major Place(s) of Production |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Bead Work | Benin, Edo State; Calabar, Cross River State; Bida Niger State |
| Brass Beating | Calabar, Benin |
| Brass/Bronze Casting | Benin, Ife |
| Calabash Decoration | Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, Bauchi and some other Northern Nigerian cities where calabashes are produced and used. |
| Cane Work | Port Harcourt, Ikot Ekpene, Delta, Benin, Calabar, etc. |
| Chewing-stick Carving | Calabar, Cross River State |
| Coconut Shell Carving/Decoration | Akwa Ibom, Cross River |
| Dyeing | Abeokuta, Ogun State; Kano |
| Leather Work | Sokoto, Kano, Bauchi, Bornu, Kaduna and other locations in Northern Nigeria where animal leather is abundant |
| Pottery | Abuja FCT; Jos in Plateau State; Ikono/Ini in Akwa Ibom State; Ogoja in Cross River State and other locations with significant clay deposits |
| Raffia Work | Ikot Ekpene in Akwa Ibom State |
| Stone Carving | Northern Cross River, Esie |
| Weaving of Fabrics (Akwete & Aso Oke) | Akwete, Abia State; Kwara, Oyo, Ogun, Ekiti, Ondo, Osun, Lagos, etc. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Weaving of Sleeping, Roofing, Wall and Decorative Mats | Niger Delta Communities and other coastal settlements |
| Wood Carving | Benin in Edo State; Ikot Ekpene in Akwa Ibom State and some other towns in the forest belt where wood is abundant |

Nigerian arts and craft products are increasingly popular, as they remain irresistible to collectors and tourists across the globe. Commenting on the appeal of Nigerian arts and craft, Lamb and Holmes say, “Of late, a number of European museums, including the Museum of Mankind in London, have put on displays devoted to African textiles; and from these it is clear that in both craftsmanship and design the weavers of Nigeria, both men and women, are among the most skilled in the continent” (10). Many of the craft pieces discussed in this paper are on display in popular craft markets such as Lekki Arts & Craft Market in Lagos, Ikot Ekpene Multi-Purpose Craft Market in Akwa Ibom State, craft centres at museums, cultural centres, airports and some major hotels for sale to tourists and other collectors. Exhibitions, art fairs, expos, auctions and festivals also provide points of interaction between the artists, craftsmen, tourists and collectors.

The essence of reviewing the arts of ancient Nigerian civilisations, and the indigenous crafts is to illustrate the extent to which indigenous Nigerian artists explore materials and how they are able to produce arts with composite aesthetic and utilitarian values in space and time. Another point in this analysis is to show the transferability of cultural capital to generations across Nigerian cultures and how this cultural capital has translated to economic sustainability for the producers and for the nation.

Potential for Self-Employment in the Arts

Besides seeking formal employment in establishments, arts graduates and craftsmen are trained to engage themselves and possibly others by beginning private practice immediately after training in school or any training centre.

Many visual artists, theatre artistes, film-makers, carnival and festival artists, craftsmen and other categories of experts can practise independently. The visual artists can run a studio and gallery to produce and market arts; the film-maker can produce movies, adverts, jingles, documentaries and other media products independently, and the carnival costume maker can engage in fashion design particularly when pressure from the production of carnival costumes lessens. The same is with other sub-specialties. Typically, creative arts specialists receive proper tutelage and guidance to be able to swing through the demand tides. They can even adapt to produce items that are high in demand when patronage reduces in their core specialities. Situations where sculptors now fabricate architectural items and textile designers and theatre costumiers now veer into fashion design have already been cited to illustrate the versatility of artists. From all indications, the creative artistic sector has been adjudged economically viable, but unfortunately, the economic value of arts, culture and tourism has been downplayed and, in some cases, misrepresented. As earlier stated, the National Theatre, through its numerous programmes is poised to promote the creative sector more than ever before.

Consolidating the Gains of the Synergy between Creative Arts & Tourism

From the analysis of the current socio-economic realities in Nigeria and the review of the creative potential and dimensions of Nigerian arts, it is obvious that the arts and tourism industry must be refocused to increase Nigeria's creative capital maximally and to position the country on a more viable path for tourism development. To achieve this, Nigeria's creative industry must look in the following directions:

- i. Curriculum Change and Human Capacity Development:** Training is crucial for development in any sector. For the art and tourism sector, a curriculum change is desired. Currently, some theoretical courses offered in institutions do not address the practical situations and needs in the arts and tourism job market. Quite often, graduates are not employable because they simply do not understand their job schedules in the world of work. Training should be more practical and tilted to the areas of need in the job market. Andrew-Essien recommends that

the curriculum should include mandatory internship to expose the students early to the world of work (“Reinventing the Theatre Curriculum...” 114). This exposure is crucial to human capacity development. Using Nollywood as an illustration, the industry currently draws manpower mainly from the various theatre/performing art schools in the country, but it has been observed that the graduates from the academia cannot meet the practical manpower needs of the film industry and that fresh graduates are a misfit for the screen. To avoid engaging misfits, producers prefer to recycle stars who have been tested and trusted. The academia is therefore challenged to provide useable manpower for the growing film industry.

Similarly, specialised manpower training is needed to develop Nigerian carnivals and festivals towards enriching cultural tourism. Artists and administrators should be trained to enhance their techno-artistic competences, such that would step up the standards in float construction, costume building, make-up, props, choreography, robotics and pyrotechnics in productions. Training is also required to improve production planning, crowd management, audience analysis and catering, and other aspects of carnival production. If these concerns regarding curriculum and manpower development are addressed, the arts and tourism industry would become more viable and would compete with countries where creative arts and tourism are major foreign exchange earners.

- ii. Funding for the Arts and Cultural Institutions:** Direct grants or loans could be made available to art enterprises – theatres, galleries and arts studios to develop products for exhibitions and sales to collectors and tourists. If loans could be made available to farmers, creatives can also benefit from such initiatives. In the dispensation of Goodluck Jonathan as President of Nigeria, a revolving loan fund of \$200 million was provided to help finance the arts sector, particularly the Nigerian film industry in 2015. Such initiatives could be replicated by the multinationals and the private sector to boost creative capital in the sector. Emeghara asserts that poor funding results in poor coordination, implementation and sometimes total abandonment of cultural

programmes which may include art and tourism initiatives (8). This observation is particularly applicable to cultural institutions that need funding for arts and cultural programmes, projects and initiatives. Principally, cultural institutions require government and the private sector to support their initiatives in cultural resource management.

- iii. Tax Relaxation for Art Entrepreneurs:** The economic crunch in Nigeria has compelled the government to raise taxes. This is particularly true in states that are struggling to survive, where every enterprise is heavily taxed. Art entrepreneurs operating in such states are adversely affected as they have to pay so much to remain in business. With low patronage, it is already very difficult to make ends meet, and with excessive taxation on products and business premises, many private studios, galleries and theatres may soon fold up. Excessive duties on imported materials and equipment are also problems of a kind. All the allied cost of production is transferred to the end user and the result is low patronage. Taxes should be reduced on products that feed the tourism industry, knowing that growth in the sector is required to allow the industry to grow to the extent of providing dependable alternative income to Nigerians.
- iv. Intensifying Arts and Tourism Marketing:** While Nigeria has numerous artistic products and the potential for tourism development, the sectors are not sufficiently marketed. Intensive publicity using the media is required. Patronage can only improve when the product is publicised. The marketing strategy used by the Asian trade and tourism economies of UAE (Dubai, Abu Dhabi), Malaysia and Singapore, using the media intensively could be studied and adapted for use in Nigeria. An approach in marketing Destination Nigeria could be to flood Nigerian art and cultural products, especially films into the international media. In this regard, the distribution network could be widened to involve international and reputable movie streaming channels such as Netflix, Hulu and Home Box Office (HBO).
- v. Using the Arts for Publicity on Tourism Development:** Art has been an indispensable marketing tool, driving the sales of products and services on the screens and in live performances. For decades now,

manufacturers have realised the power of visual and performing arts in marketing and that is the reason for engaging elements and forms of arts in advertising and publicity. The arts can glamorise and create appeal for any product, no matter how bad. As much as art has been useful in the marketing of tangible products, it can also be useful for tourism marketing and promotions. Clips promoting tourism locations and products can be aired on different television networks and on the internet more intensively. The result is certain: patronage would improve. Tinapa and Obudu ranch resorts were intensively marketed using artistic media clips in the regime of Donald Duke as Governor of Cross River State, until they became choice destinations for leisure and business, at least for a period.

Many artistes and performers have been engaged as tourism ambassadors to help market Nigeria in a competitive global tourism market terrain. Some artistes and celebrities specifically endorse tourism products (Glover 16). For example, in 2019, Eucharia Anunobi, Frank Duru, Monalisa Chinda, Ejike Asiegbu and other top Nollywood stars jointly endorsed Project Tourism Initiative initiated by Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) in collaboration with Linas International Limited. According to Anunobi, one of the ambassadors, the essence was to “put our hands together to project the image of our country and the life that will attract people in” (<https://tribuneonlineng.com/nollywood-endorses-new-tourism-projects>). It is assumed that tourism products endorsed by successful artistes attract more patronage and much more should be done in this regard.

- vi. Addressing the Security Challenge:** This challenge has become more intensive than ever. There is a direct relationship between security/insecurity and tourism development not only in Nigeria but all over the world. Patronage dwindles in the face of social instability. The primary reason for tourism is recreation; to acquire refreshing experiences outside the usual environment, and no tourist would want to die in this process. The truth is that any tourist stepping into the present-day Nigeria is taking a risk. Andrew-Essien observes that the

situation in Nigeria “is uncertain... nobody knows where the next bomb will explode, or where the next robbery..., abduction and other social vices will take place, and who will be affected” (86-87). Within the country, tourism and patronage to artistic events are declining. Some festivals and carnivals have been suspended because of insecurity. Abuja carnival, for instance has not held in recent times and *Carnival Calabar* was suspended in 2021 partly because of insecurity. Where festivals are held in defiance of the situation, the patronage is lean, and the reason is obvious – Nigeria has become too insecure. The trend of insecurity must be reversed if the dream to turn around the economy using art and tourism is to be realised.

vii. Developing Infrastructure & Standardising the Hospitality Sub-

Sector: Infrastructure enhancement is key to arts and tourism development. In this regard, the general transportation network should be improved. Air transportation facilities should be reorganised, and equipment upgraded; roads should be rebuilt to create smooth access to locations; the rail system should be upgraded to standard gauge and expanded to all geo-political parts of the country; and standard vessels should be provided for transportation by sea to facilitate access to locations via waterways. From another perspective, the hospitality and catering sectors should be reorganised and funded. Through partnership with the private sector, standard hotels, motels and guest houses should be built to provide accommodation for all categories of tourists. Standard restaurants and eateries serving both indigenous and continental cuisines should be established.

viii. Improving the Communication Network: It is essential to develop a stable communication network to facilitate arts and tourism. In the era when tourists need to book their travels and accommodation online, and to select their tour itineraries online, it is necessary to have a dependable communication network. Moreover, on arrival, the tourist needs to stay connected to base. While the communication service providers should provide standard facilities, government through the National Communication Commission (NCC) should ensure that the

companies offer realistic price packages and maintain good customer relationship.

- ix. Engaging Museums, Galleries, Studios & Cultural Centres as Partners in Arts & Tourism Development:** The Cultural Policy for Nigeria, which was promulgated in 1988, gave some agencies the duties of taking custody and projecting the nations cultural resources. Some of these agencies are the National Commission for Museum and Monuments and the National Council for Arts and Culture. These agencies are valuable partners in art and tourism development.

Basically, museums are non-profitable cultural institutions “in the service of society..., which acquires, preserves, studies, exhibits and disseminates tangible and intangible cultural resources for study, education and recreation purposes (Sic)” (ICOM statutes, adopted at the XXII General Conference, Vienna, Austria, 2007). The primary responsibility of museums is to protect and promote cultural heritage. Museums also exist to research and to educate the public on the experiences of the past through objects, setting up institutional structures to pass cultural knowledge from one generation to another. Museums are learning resource centres for cultural revival and awareness, comparable to schools, university, libraries and other agencies of knowledge and culture (Etukudoh, Ezemokwe and Onyeoku 5). As cultural institutions, museums offer people the opportunity to explore public collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. It grants accessibility to cultural resources, artifacts, through which people can connect, explore and explain their cultural history.

Museums are a vital contact point between the tourist and the culture of the host communities. The items displayed naturally attract, entertain and educate connoisseurs as well as tourists. In the process, they generate tremendous economic value which has been widely recognised. In a study conducted by the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA), more than 105.5 million people visit the top 20 museums in the world every year. The study discovered that Louvre in Paris, France had 8.7 million visitors in 2017; the National Museum of China, Beijing, attracted 7.5 million visitors; and the National Museum

of National History, Washington DC, U.S.A attracted 6.9 million visitors. While the British Museum London, had 6.8 million visitors, the Vatican Museums, Rome had 6 million visitors in 2017. While some of these museums may not be collecting gate takings directly, visitors patronise all levels of tourism support facilities – transportation, accommodation, food and souvenirs in all the locations. These statistics underline the value of cultural artifacts in tourism and economic development on a global scale. In a similar manner, if museums are well set up and managed in Nigeria, the economic benefits can equally be derived. Therein lies the reason for this call for partnership. The National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) can partner with the National Theatre and other institutions to promote Nigerian cultures for touristic purposes.

Art galleries, studios and Cultural Centres can also function in this partnership. Being dotted in many locations across the federation, these art and cultural houses can become repositories of tangible and non-tangible cultural resources. Like the National Theatre, galleries, studios and Cultural Centres can foster the revival, appreciation and development of Nigerian arts, culture and tourism.

Conclusion

The arts, culture and tourism nexus are wrapped with so much potential and benefits. From creation or rehearsal to exhibition or performance, there are so many activities to engage creatives profitably. In the network of supplies of material and equipment, product promotion, marketing, distribution, and management of allied services, so much value is embedded, even for those not directly skilled in arts production, cultural and tourism resources management. With such viability profile, the arts and tourism economic sectors only require a socially and politically stable environment to flourish. The sectors also require favourable economic policies upon which investments could grow. In the dispensation when Nigeria's economy is dwindling and searching desperately for lifelines, it is necessary to nurture sectors where the country has comparative advantage, in this case the arts and tourism sectors where Nigeria has vast creative capital. All governmental

artistic and cultural agencies and the private sector should join the National Theatre to promote and invest on programmes and initiatives that would reinvigorate Nigeria's creative economy.

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THEATRE AS ENCHANTMENT IN THE SERVICE OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE NATIONAL THEATRE NIGERIA IN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Theatre being the mother medium of entertainment evokes positive aura in the life of a nation. Hence, it is used by practitioners to present and represent anthropocentric issues that engender discovery, recovery, growth and sustenance of a nation's identity as it captivates and enchants. The National Theatre of Nigeria was established to revive, promote and sustain the cultural life of the Nigerian people. In spite of this development, the role of the National Theatre in fulfilling its developmental agenda for the nation has become uncertain in recent times resulting to the decline of live theatre performance in the nation. This study examines the contributions of the National Theatre of Nigeria in the overall development of the nation's theatre practice, and the nation at large. A literary approach of qualitative research is adopted. The outcome of this study reveals that the National Theatre from its inception provided the platform for the nation to thrive in some critical sectors and enchant Nigerians. However, over time it has failed to provide a sustainable platform for the projection and sustenance of the nation's theatre culture as a result of administrative lapses. As a result, it is recommended that the National Theatre be revitalised under the current administration in order to fulfil its mandate for national development.

Introduction

The mood of a people and any nation can be transformed through theatre. The functions of theatre keep evolving and adapt to the changing times as the need arises, be it individual or corporate. To Domingo Adame, the theatre should be differentiated between the scripted play and performed play. To him, it is important to “distinguish the scenification act of the written play, which in this context is designated as theatre. In this sense, Performance Studies impulsed by Richard Schechner, have as foundation any kind of human representation; ... a new paradigm that replaces the theatre understood as the representation of written dramas” (48). This idea is that of a fascinating and absorbingly interesting theatre experience, of “enchanted and ... re-enchanted world that allows us to feel that we form a part of the infinite energy connected with everything that exists. (53). There are certain texts that bear the word enchantment in their titles, but remain in the domain of drama or the dramatic, like Robyn Johnson's *The Enchanted Doll's House Theatre* (Five Mile Press, 2007); Edward Stirling and the Birmingham Theatre Royal's *The Seven Castles of the Passions: A Drama of Enchantment in Two Acts*, (circa 1830s). Specifically, Adame cited above, helps to clarify the theatre of enchantment as one that is full of energy. During the pre-modern period in the USA, David Buch affirms the exploitation of enchanted and magical tales from the Arab world, deploying myths and fairy tales from Europe, occult practices and influence of supernatural phenomena by theatre producers, composers to draw on stage, entrancing productions.

A Dissertation by Aileen Robinson published as *The Theatre of (dis)enchantment: The Making and Remaking of Victorian Pantomime*, Harvard University Press, dissects the challenge of performances that hold much promise and some that eventually disappoint from the use of enchantment. Sherifa Zuhur seeks to affirm Middle Eastern delightful theatrical displays with much stress on the visual arts that thrill in *Colours of Enchantment: Theatre, Dance, Music and the Visual Arts of the Middle East*. Theatre enchants as a result of the design of the visual components or accompaniments of stage arts. Any applause from the audience to any production on stage or the street, for theatre is jointly owned by all the practitioners that jointly produced the display. This is justified because, in the

stance of Robert Edmond Jones, theatre is beyond the building. The theatre that thrills is expected to evolve from the fused efforts of the costumier, designer, make-up artiste, props man and the other theatre workers back or front stage. The inspiration generated by any enchanted theatre is sourced from the collaborative efforts of the personnel engaged in the package of the production. This point is further acclaimed by Washington Geoffrey Block, who derives much information from the collaborative efforts by different practitioners of the arts to please the audience as a result of their entrenched artistic concepts, goals and pursuit of excellence. The utmost outcome is the audience getting their money's worth from an evening of delightful performances.

It is crucial that Nigerian performative indices reflect the intention to please and reduce the psychological burden of current negative, violent realistic dispositions in the country. The objectives of Buch, Robinson, Block and Zuhur highlighted above relay the import of the imaginary as a source of inspirational theatre that reflects joyful, breathtaking and awe-inspiring outcomes for the audience. This viewpoint is also evident in the essay by Charles Rolf, "Theatrical Magic and the Agenda to Enchant the World". To Rolfe, the agenda of enchantment is based on consciously effected "enigmatic activities that are performed, experienced and commercialized as a form of entertainment" (574). All aspects of the theatre are propelled towards 'astonishment' or rousing theatre. Therefore, it is better to be an enchanted than alienated audience. William McEnvoy in "The *coup de théâtre* and the Enchanting Object of Performance" considers enchantment to be necessary in conceptualising theatre as a process, or product (184). Braun, Kazimierz, et al. "My Long Journeys into the American Theatre" chronicles experiences in different theatres across Europe. He discusses national theatres, like Theatre Nationale Populaire (TNP), the official theatre in France, Moscow Art Theatre, National Theatre of Poland, and wonders why there is no national theatre of America. In his opinion, contemporary theatre has "international and intercultural character" (84). Other writers would see a theatre of enchantment in the past tense, a relic of what subsisted in an age of boom and prosperity, like Felicia Hardison Londré's reminiscences about theatre in Kansas.

The practice of theatre has not remained the same as it was before the global digital transformation of our means of entertainment, education, information, sanction, censorship and the other means through which theatre affects lives and society. Theatre is unarguably a medium of communication that is as old as man. Theatre is an influencer and enchants its audience. Evolutionary trends in theatre history in the world reveal that “theatre was born out of man’s desire to connect to the metaphysical world through his physical expressions of piety to the supreme beings” (Nwosu and Agoha 181, Adame 53) and thereby thrill people. In Africa, man’s quest to understand the mysteries of natural occurrences around his environment and to emancipate himself from the doldrums of the enigmatic cosmos inadvertently resorted to theatrical means as a channel of inquiry. This inquiry led man in search for truth and knowledge for the development of himself and his environment.

The developmental strides are visible in the use of theatre by man as a medium of worship, economic and cultural presentation and preservations, communication, socialisation and relaxation. The awareness and consequent revelation of truth and knowledge concerning the mysteries of life, existence and event places theatre as an indispensable medium for both human and national development. Chijioke Iyamah and Dennis Obire thus, affirm that “it will not be out of place to say that, the theatre is one means by which man has been able to re-examine his life, dissect and arrive at a definite decision on how to improve and make life better” (138-9). Hence, world theatres: Western, Orient and Africa all rely on the enchanting nature of the theatre to critically evaluate their growth in line with evolving trends in society. Every nation develops on the strength of her culture and theatre, which is generally believed to be the way of life of that nation and her people including its performative aspects. Cultural beliefs, norms and values are usually the thrust of theatre performances.

The goal is to bring to light the uniqueness and strength of a specific society, in order to bring about transformation in the socio-political, economic and cultural fortunes of a society which Doki Gowon and Ali Ako assert will give “positive representation to such a society through the use of drama, songs or music, spectacle (42). It becomes glaring at this point that the culture of a nation is reflected in various theatrical performances pertinent to that nation.

Furthermore, Gowon and Ako examining the role of theatre in the advancement of cultural practices affirm that, “theatre encompasses the totality of human behaviour as dictated by the people’s ontological and cosmological values” (42). Implicitly, the worldview, beliefs, norms, mores and values are important factors that shape the behaviour of the people towards the nature and practice of theatre. Theatre in this instance purveys the culture and attitude of a people and functions as a vehicle for the projection and preservation of positive cultural practices that define such people. In addition, Sola Fosudo notes that the theatre is useful in several ways:

...it is a source of employment, cultural preservation, presentation, and projection. It also serves therapeutic functions and as social control mechanism in a society. It is a mirror of life, reflecting and highlighting the moral codes and the ills of society and castigating social evil and its doers. Beyond all of these, the theatre could also serve as an agent of civilization, community mobilisation, and youth development and emancipation. (422)

Fosudo’s view above offers the various dimensional roles of theatre in society, highlighting as it were, the critical role theatre plays in examining the total socio-cultural fabric that wears negatively on a nation in order to review them, and to bring about positive changes. In the light of this, the theatre serves as an enlightenment tool for awareness creation in order to campaign against all aspects of the people’s culture, social, religious and political life that nether both human and nation development. In support, Gowon and Ako note that theatre in general and drama in particular, “is the revelation of the society’s multidimensional problematic for the purpose of ameliorating these problems for change” (43). By and large, theatre becomes a basic tool for conscientisation that is committed to the provision of solutions and answers that can lead to the liberation of the oppressed and disadvantaged in society through awareness creation and action orientation. A theatre that is committed towards lifting people out of the grip of docility and underdevelopment usually possesses the ability to instruct, inform and educate beyond entertainment. Such theatre is usually engaging and participatory in nature. Izuu Nwankwo therefore notes that:

The participatory cum communal nature of conventional theatre and its other variants have been most useful to catalysing development within several societies through the agency of making the inhabitants of such communities practice the processes of their own emancipation using the theatre as a tool. (23)

Fundamentally, the need to expose some of the practices that stifle the development and freedom of people in society is the driving force propelling theatre practitioners like the dramatists, to question certain practices that impinge on the freedom and fundamental rights of persons in a nation. This is on the premise that development is the process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy (Sen Amartya Qtd. Iorapuu 9). Hence, playwrights in their creative works interrogate issues of gender inequality, underrepresentation of women and children in the distribution of resources, religious fanaticism, ethnicity and tribalism, corruption, political instability and unrest, violence and general insecurity, infidelity, greed, among many other ethical and moral problems that bedevil the nation. Consequently, these problems form the thematic concerns evident in both dramatic texts and stage productions across the nation.

The obvious imperative of theatre for the nation's development is central to policy making and implementation. Hector Pascual Alvarez opines that "from a historical perspective, the arts in general and theatre in particular have always played an important role in supporting state and/or religious ideology and strengthening national identity" (131). Theatrical productions in the nation's theatres history have also proved to impact on landmark decisions and reforms that have benefited the larger populace in the past. For instance, the role of the nationalist theatres of Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, A.B Davis, P.A Dawodu, just to mention a few during the colonial rule and agitation for independence, served as enlightenment campaigns aimed at the glorification of the culture of Africa over Eurocentric dominance on virtually all forms of indigenous cultural practice. Eburn Clark argues that the nationalist theatre was designed for cultural education as well as to encourage political participation among the populace during pre-independence agitations for self-rule. According to Clark:

In the era of the nationalist movement, there was a remarkably great interest in the existence and survival of the theatre as channel providing political as well as cultural education for the masses. The movement astutely realized that the theatre is ‘a medium of mass education having as wide an effect over the memory as the cinema’, and a medium which can foster ‘the theory and practice of association between citizens’. It teaches group participation and teamwork which is indispensable to a community’, provides opportunities for jobs for the citizens, and yields dividends to its proprietors. (79)

Clark’s observation is apt to the important role of theatre towards the enlightenment and emancipation of the people and indeed the nation from passivity to active involvement in politics and cultural revolution, aimed at redeeming the nation from the enigma of colonialism. Through the stage, Clark affirms that “the realm of the theatre became a “living reality” (90) of a nation in dire need for freedom, growth and development of her indigenous cultural practices. By and large, putting the nation on stage triggers the critical reactions that lead to positive changes. Both the artists and audiences become aware of their situation and thus, become active participants in decision making that border on their development. Wole Soyinka’s play *A Dance of the Forests* which was performed during Nigeria’s independence celebration lends credence to the power of the stage in setting agenda for nation development. The production of this play exposed the corruption and dissension of colonial and postcolonial Africa, and further calls on the nation to avoid the mistakes of the past in order to ensure development.

The active involvement of theatre during the pre-independence and post-independence stages of development in Nigeria, further informed the military government’s decision to rely on the potency of theatre and indeed the performing arts in general for enlightenment and development policy that will bring about growth in the cultural landscape of the nation. This laid the foundation for the production of the cultural policy document to guide the production, implementation and administration of the nation’s theatre practice. One of the immediate gains of this policy was the staging of the second Festival of Arts and Culture in Nigeria in 1977. The hosting of this festival popularly known as FESTAC in Lagos further deepened the interest

of the government to use the medium of theatre as a means of putting the nation on the global stage for political, cultural and economic growth through amazing performances. The success of this cultural festival further exposed the potential of the stage in developing other critical areas of need like tourism, infrastructure, security and job creation using approaches that fascinate. However, the fleeting success of this cultural festival which only held once, has been affected by the diffusion of ethnic and religious sentiments and political divide against integrative national consciousness which the festival aimed to achieve. One would expect that the nation will develop sustainable strategies to further maintain the achievements recorded especially in the area of administration and implementation of the cultural policy that will see to the viability of theatre practice beyond the academic institutions, and individual cultural outfits. Instead, theatre with its potentials is neglected and thus has become less assertive or enthralling in the development of the nation and her people, resulting to a shocking and embarrassing decline of live theatre practice, lack of attention to cultural and captivating performances from some ethnic groups termed 'minority'.

Theatre Enchantment for Development

Making enchantment happen through the creation of meaning using theatre allows several positive outcomes. Enchantment typically refers to the sense of wonder, amazement, the glue and delight that follows a theatre encounter or experience. Theatre basically is a unique experience that resonates in the audience an amazing feeling of awakening and excitement that triggers the creative and emotional energy that produces an immediate result. Where any theatre is national, its audience follows the same line of generation audience members. For instance, Kole Omotosho reminiscing on his childhood street theatre experience during the colonial era notes the efficacy of theatre experience in creating awareness for personal and social development. According to him "...the narrative of the above experience on the streets of a Nigerian city is not unique to me. Both Wole Soyinka and Femi Osofisan have given testimonies of their awakenings into the magic world of performance on the streets of their home-towns (5). Furthermore, theatre enchantment is also the experiential exchange that transpires between the three basic elements of

performance –the stage, the performer(s) and the (audience). This tripartite relationship creates minimised aesthetic distance that produces radical spectacles capable of generating a gestalt and startling the mind of the audience towards the various dimensions of understanding of a performance towards development. Hence, “a good understanding of these three elements reveal the relationship between the Theatre and the society” (Iyamah and Obire 139), and also how this relationship can metamorphose to positive developments in society. Sergei Eistention equates this enchanting feature of the theatre with the concept of attraction and thus explains that:

An attraction (in relation to the theatre) is any aggressive aspect of the theatre, that is, any element of it which subjects the spectator to a sensual or psychological impact, experimentally regulated and mathematically calculated to produce in him certain emotional shocks which, when placed in their proper sequence within the totality, are the only means whereby he is enabled to perceive the ideological side of what is being demonstrated—the ultimate ideological conclusion (The means of cognition— ‘through the living play of passions” specifically for the theatre). (942)

Therefore, theatre enchantment is the general outcome of the affective and the effective responses stage productions generate for the artist, the audience and in society, which further leads to development by enchantment across various areas of human need and national contexts. By facilitating education, enlightenment enjoyment, and rehabilitation, theatre enchantment completely transforms the theatre audience.

Personal growth and freedom are essential factors that engender development in society. The power of the theatre to enchant the mind provides the opportunity for inner self -reflection that can transform an audience. The audience presence in the theatre is not mainly for entertainment’s sake; Friedrich Schiller contends that the audience is schooled in the theatre, and are not there for entertainment only. To him, “...the stage does even more than this. It is a great school of practical wisdom ... guide for civil life, and a key to the mind in all its sinuosities” (442). Apparently, through the process of entertainment the audience is exposed to pertinent issues that can be beneficial to their personal growth. Undoubtedly, the stage ultimately

becomes a barometer for personal evaluation that can either cause an audience to get rid of or inject new attitudes. Fosudo highlights the process through which the audience undergoes to achieve self-development. He notes that:

Generally, the theatre gives new experiences, helps to develop awareness and teaches awareness of others. Drama helps the participants, both the artist and the audience to appreciate and evaluate new situations and come to terms with the social environment. For the participant, drama helps to develop self-expression, skill, and evaluation; it helps to increase confidence and self-assurance. It gives the participant an understanding of his/her emotions and fears and so on. (426)

Several stage productions speak volumes on the impact of the stage on self-development. For example, productions like Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, Femi Osofisan's *Many Colours Make the Thunder-King*, Ola Rotimi's *The Gods are not to Blame*, Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods*, Irene Agunloye's *Sweet Revenge*, Tess Onwueme's *The Reign of Wazobia*, ABC Toni Duruaku's *Matter of Identity*, generate such feelings of pity, purgation and self-appraisal capable of renewing the mind and bring about personal growth and development for the audience as well as the artists. By this, theatre acts as a catalyst for self-improvement that involves the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. Personal development in the theatre is not an isolated process. It involves both the artist and the audience who through participation and observation engage in psychoactive relationship. Omotosho affirms this by observing that "...performance is a celebration to be enjoyed by both the audience and the performers in a unified encounter of participants, rather than by players and onlookers in isolation" (9). This form of encounter enhances effective communication and understanding and fosters a strong relationship that transcends beyond the theatre space.

Every theatre experience, be it indigenous, conventional and non-conventional, performances are basically aimed at making man to be aware of his existence and the changing realities of this existence over time. In this regard, theatre offers the needed platform for personal and social enlightenment. As a mirror for reflection, the theatre creates an avenue for the audience to see the world as it is. More so, it provides the opportunity for the

artist and the audience to interact and explore the possibility of changing the world through self-reflective thinking and extant reactions that interchange to produce either rejection and acceptance of change or the adoption of new ideologies and strategies that can improve society. Iyamah and Obire agree by stating that:

The potency of Theatre Arts in the transformation of the society lies in its power to influence the thought and opinion of the people while treating issues that bear on social development. No wonder it seems to as a popular and effective means of political and religious propagation, economic empowerment and cultural diffusion. (140)

It is important to highlight that the search for suitable ideologies for human and social development led to the iconoclasms of revolts evident in theatre history across the globe. For instance, the Enlightenment age rejected Victorianism because it was based largely on metaphysical absolutism. This rejection ushered in modernism which saw science as the ultimate arbiter of truth and development. Hence, the modern theatre celebrated these changes through realistic, naturalistic and futuristic stage performances as a way of enlightening the audience on the radical revolutions in science and technological advancements in the world. Nevertheless, the postmodern theatre rejected the modern theatre for its grand and totalising ideology. Evidently, through the use of the stage, the modern and the postmodern theatre artists produced strong arguments for the adoption and rejections of these changes that have occurred over time in human history. Hence, theatre creates public awareness necessary for transforming and transiting human society from one stage of development to another.

Relatively, theatre is a place of seeing, where critical issues affecting society, ranging from the simple to the complex are presented or represented on stage before an audience whom these issues directly or indirectly affect. Chiduo Obadiogwu aptly notes that “theatre is responsive to the needs of the people” (xv). More often than not, these needs are social, ethnic, religious, cultural, political, economic, health, security, among others. For this reason, Ian Storey and Arlene Allan assert that “drama can speak to its spectators on several levels simultaneously” (62). The aim is to reveal ills, interrogate, ridicule, chastise and redirect the society. Schiller firmly believes that the stage alone can do this

with impunity, chastising us as the anonymous fool and allows us to bear this rebuke without a blush, and even gratefully (442). Interestingly, an audience relates with, and reacts to the issues presented before them mainly due to the intrinsic power of the stage to enlighten and inform. The society is usually the creative pool from which the theatre artiste draws inspiration to create. The decision to create is also aroused by the artiste's recognition of the power of the stage to accurately depict the issues that are germane for positive growth of society. This has been the basis for the existence of the African theatre. The essence of African theatre performances is tailored towards using the stage to attract the attention of the people to critically see the reality of their environment. This approach especially in the areas of community and popular theatres experiences afford the rural and economically disadvantaged populace to see the problems mitigating their progress and development. On the flip side, the audience is enthused by the ability of the stage interspersed with the artistry of the artiste to reflect their social conditions. For this reason, the relationship between the artists and the audience are built on a common goal, to bring about sustainable growth. The testimonies abound on the successful use of the theatre as a medium of driving development in rural communities in most African States. Stage productions with radical or revolutionary mint, especially those of African playwrights like Femi Osofisan, Ola Rotimi, Ngugi WaThiong'o and Ngugi Wa Mirii, Ebrahim Hussien, Tess Onwueme, Ama Ata Aidoo, Percy Mtwa, Athol Fugard, Tsitsi Dangeremba and a lot more dramatists provide a strong indication of the enchanting power of the stage for enchantment through enlightenment that eventually results to development.

The whole essence of using theatre for developmental purposes is because art cannot be divorced from the society and the people whom it represents. Education is primary to a nation's development and one of the major objectives of theatre practice. Primarily, an educated mind is a sound mind and any society that is devoid of a mental appraisal of its existence leaves itself exposed to bad leadership, anarchy and general underdevelopment. This explains why most nations of the world place theatre at the frontier of educating their populace. By educating the people, the tendency to understand the forces that nether as well as improve human and national development becomes invasive. Hence, theatre teaches civic education,

morals, social and cultural etiquette, religious tolerance, good healthy living, and respect for the dignity of labour among other things. Therefore Henry Bell-Gam affirms that “theatre possesses a pedagogic quality, which projects teaching and learning” (99) in society. For instance, the Greek society saw theatre as a cardinal part of civilisation where art was involved in educating the citizens on obligations and privileges towards the government. Little wonder, Western intrusion in Africa through the process of colonisation, Christianity and modernism followed the trade of using the theatre to educate the colonised states to adopt Western culture, religion and ideology. Interestingly, African elites also employed the use of theatre in the decolonization process of re-orienting the African people on the need to denounce western ideas and adopt African values. The constant reliance on the theatre for educating the people is based on the belief that the “stage will equally combat mistaken systems of education” (Schiller 444). By and large, theatre through its potency to instruct, inform and teach new things offers the audience the opportunity to be aware and active in the course of their development.

Theatre, more often than not, is involved in cultural development of a nation and serves as a medium for cultural expressions across different tribes, ethnic divide and nationalities. It serves as a major source of cultural celebration, promotion, education and sustenance especially in this era of cross-cultural exchange and interaction. The Indigenous African and modern theatres have shown to be the drivers of cultural beliefs, attitudes, values, mores and symbolic elements that bear much significance to the general cultural lifestyle of a nation. More so, it serves as an enabler in rejecting and speaking against obnoxious cultural practices that are no longer profitable or sustainable. Some of the obnoxious cultural practices like widowhood practice, exclusion of women in society, violence of any variant and witch crafting have been exposed and discussed on stage, leading to significant change in attitude and practice by communities who still engage in them. Furthermore, theatre, especially the indigenous theatre is a great way of developing tourism, infrastructure and the economy in traditional communities where this form of theatre thrives.

The National Theatre as Paradigm of Enchantment

The National Theatre of Nigeria was established in 1976 as part of the structural effort put in place to drive the cultural potential of the nation. Coming out of a dehumanizing Civil war that put a question on the existential unity of the nation, in addition to a “series of military coups and counter-coups which had shaken loyalties to Nigeria as a nation” (Yerima 1), the vision to establish a National Theatre became necessary in driving development. The establishment of the National Theatre and the process of ensuring its sustainability are contained in the cultural policy document. According to Chijioke and Obire, the cultural policy for Nigeria “identifies the power of the performing Arts and encourages it with the establishment of a National Troupe as part of the National Theatre, which is also duplicated in all the 36 states including the FCT as Art Councils, to preserve the Arts and culture of the nation through theatrical performances” (140). The obvious imperative for the establishment of an Arts Theatre with a national outlook, in addition to the evolvement of National troupes to drive indigenous performances, is to promote, project and market the cultural diversities and peculiarities of the nation, with the view of putting the nation on stage for both national and global recognition and exchange.

The immediate response to this advancement in cultural development is the attraction and successful hosting of the second Festival of Arts and Culture in Lagos State, Nigeria, which Ahmed Yerima, a former director of the National theatre notes that “there has been no other festival of comparable magnitude” (1). The monumental success of this festival of Culture and Arts further opened the doors for more development in critical areas of need. These areas include, but not limited to infrastructural development, job creation and tourism development, education and information communication. In the area of infrastructural development, the National Theatre is an edifice that resonates the image of the 1977 Festival celebration till date. Located at Iganmu in Lagos state, the edifice contains as outlined by O.A Asaju, A.O Dare-Abel and S. A Daramola:

- The National Theatre complex has the following facilities:
- Main hall (5,000 seats)

- Conference/Banquet hall (2,000 seats)
- 2 Main exhibition halls (1839 square meters each and 2,000 seats each)
- 2 Cinema halls (700 seats each)
- The V.I.P. lounge (500 seats)
- The press conference hall (300 seats)
- 2 Massive lobbies (500 seats each)
- The roof garden (round the theatre building)
- Car parks

These are in addition to, 7 floors and 25 lifts to complement its aesthetic nature, 250 toilet rooms and 300 urinals located in the basement, A 10-room public toilet building is also located outside the main theatre building coupled with 2 boreholes and an underground tank which provide the building's water requirements (Asaju, Dare-Abel and Daramola 121). Apparently, Yerima believes that "as a building the National Theatre contributed to the success of FESTAC 77", but the real benefit was as a legacy of the festival" (2). Part of the contributions of the National Theatre to development, especially in the cultural and creative industry was that:

...performances by the different nations involved in FESTAC re-awakened old performance cultures and traditions among the Nigerian population. The meaning and definition of culture was rediscovered. There was a new spirit abroad, a creative urge to perform, and the National Theatre became the ideal building for performances. (Yerima 2)

Pertinent to stage productions, Yerima observes further that there was a boom in stage performances, and this was "inspired by the success of the Nigerian drama entry for the FESTAC, *Langbodo*" (3) a play written by Wale Ogunyemi and directed by Dapo Adelugba (Awodiya 191). The effect of this to theatre practice was a rekindled interest in live theatre performances and attendance by audiences to see play productions on stage. Hence, theatre regained its presence back to the public. Inspired by this development, "established playwrights such as Wole Soyinka, Rasheed Gbadamosi, and

Bode Osayin, and new ones, including Ben Tomolaju, Bassey Effiong, and Fred Agbeyegbe, formed their own drama groups, and performed at the National Theatre” (Yerima 3). The growth of creativity within this era influenced other aspects of the creative industry like music, film, and dance. These cultural and creative products became a major source of income generation for both the practitioners and the government, and arguably is now a major source of revenue generation for the nation outside oil.

In the area of job creation, it helped to reduce the unemployment rate because it became a source of employment for the youths, especially in the creative industry and related agencies and parastatals of government, “such as the National Gallery of Art (NGA), the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) and the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC)” (Yerima 3). Today, the cultural/creative sector is one of the highest employers of labour in the nation, and contributing significantly to the Gross Domestic Product of the nation’s economy. Tourism development and increase in foreign exchange became also visible and contributed to the overall economic growth of the nation while also impacting on the foreign policy of Nigeria for African development. More so, the National Theatre fuelled by the cultural policy contributed to the educational need of the nation in the study of culture and creative Arts across the three main levels of education in Nigeria, and further provided a booster in the growth and expansion in information and communication technology.

In spite of the successes and the revenue it generated for the nation’s economy, the obvious question begging for answer would be, how has the National Arts Theatre fared in recent times? The answer is provided by Roland Amaefula who notes that “since its establishment in 1976, the institution has been fraught with numerous problems that are inimical to its functionality and/or continued corporate existence” (1). Scholars like, Ahmed Yerima, Chukwuma Anyanwu, Gloria Ernest Samuel in addition to Roland Amaefula believe that the major problem facing the National Theatre is administrative and borders on the inability of the government to implement the cultural policy. For instance, Amaefula decries that:

...the National Theatre (that is, the administrative arm of the theatre) extorts a fee from the National Troupe (that is, the artistic arm of the

theatre) before the latter can access the theatre and carryout a performance. This status quo has impeded optimal policy implementation and thus defeated the cardinal goals of the institution. Apparently, the National Theatre can hardly contribute meaningfully to nation-building, if the contending issues are not addressed. (2)

The implication of Amaefula's claims above is that the willingness to use the National Theatre for steady performances is not there resulting in infrastructural neglect and consequent decay as affirmed by Asaju, Dare-Abel and Daramola, Amaefula and Yerima. Amaefula succinctly captures the state of quagmire facing the National Theatre as he laments further that:

The dearth of performance at the National Arts Theatre is synonymous with the death of the institution. It is the performance that attracts members of audience to the National Theatre. The near absence of performances, as currently obtains, results in an unutilized facility and the attendant breakdown of infrastructure. Little wonder that most facilities in the institution have been completely knocked down as a result of abandonment: the lobbies, elevators, the open garden, the main hall which comprises a collapsible stage and auditorium are now shadows of their old selves. This deplorable state of the National Arts Theatre is a function of poor policy implementation and outright maladministration. (9)

The infrastructural decay caused by inactivity at the National Theatre is caused by several other factors which Yerima highlighted to be, the lack of professional administrators to manage the National Theatre, sprouting of other theatres and cultural centres like MUSON, Glover Memorial, the relocation of the nation's capital territory from Lagos to Abuja, the establishment of Councils of Arts and Culture in the 36 states of the federation, including the FCT and the growth and development of the Nollywood film industry. The failure of the National Theatre was further worsened by the move by President Olusegun Obasanjo to privatise the theatre during his second coming as president. All these inadvertently affected the flourishing of stage performances in the nation, relegating theatre practice to educational institutions with a few interventionists' theatrical activities in

rural and disadvantaged communities through community theatre and Theatre for Development. A few of Yerima's observation needs to be addressed for clarity. Firstly, the National Theatre has had seasoned professionals like Jimmy Folorunso Atte, Prof. Femi Osofisan, and currently, Prof. Sunday Enessi Ododo, including, the writer (Ahmed Yerima) to mention these, to manage the development of the Theatre. However, institutional support from government to assist in the effective management of the National Theatre has always been the problem, leading to laxity in administration and further leadership crisis that have undermined the growth of the National Theatre which Amefula highlighted above. Secondly, it is bewildering to note that the decentralisation of power from the centre to the constituent units through the establishment of Councils of Art at the state level across the nation can lead to slow activity, or inactivity at the National Theatre. During the national festival of arts, some states do not feature performances that prove the financial, administrative support provided to them. Other state councils portray the reverse of the scenario, and reflect gross deficit of financial support and improper administration of the arts. However, Yerima explains that the adverse implication of these prospective establishments across the states is that, each state developed their own Cultural Centre that weakened rather than strengthened the national structure; hence less attention was paid to the National Theatre. Furthermore, one wagers that if there were proactive linkages between the national theatre and the state cultural centres, the cross-fertilisation of ideas required for the cultural ferment towards development would be visible to all. Theatre practitioners, performance guilds and artistes evince the National Theatre in neo-nostalgic terms and often refer to the edifice and institution as a melting pot of the performative arts and continue to return to it for performances as they did in the period when it held a lot of national performative prospects as highlighted by Orlando Reade (Par 2)

Double Enchantment

There are nations where the theatre is used for enchantment during festivals, carnivals and performances that border on the magnificently sublime. These countries parade enthralling costumes, music and dance that captivate in

terms of colour, motif, and styles that reveal painstaking efforts to grip the audience through fascinating public visuals and sounds especially. Many of these countries are where African Diasporans are found, bearing links with the different groups like the Yoruba, Igbo, Edo, Tiv nationalities and other ethnicities of West Africa mainly. The double essence is steeped in the features that are recognised by the indigenous peoples at home in Africa, the blacks in the Diaspora, mainly of different cultural extractions who are able to identify aspects of material and non-material culture in the performances. In respect to these cultural markers, like language, dress, movements, props, a lot of collaborations exist between Nigerian Obas, Chiefs and individuals and South American, Caribbean and other countries like Brazil, Venezuela, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and other countries where many of these performances subsist. In Nigeria, Lagos, Ile Ife, Oyo, Osogbo and a few others are some of the communities whose monarchs have links with Brazil for example. They are also communities that have displays of enchanting cultural performances to date. The proof of the connection is that the Yoruba language has been adopted as an official language in Brazil.

In the Caribbean Island of Trinidad and Tobago, the theatre of Errol Hill- The Little Carib fostered the awareness of the use of indigenous Caribbean culture as a signpost for national development. Considered one of the pioneers of the development of National theatre in the West Indies, his plays and theatrical oeuvres were tailored to change the narrative of racial stereotypes, political corruption, the clash of cultures, and the idea of nationhood through the use of folklore, ritual, carnival, and national language. Hill's quest for a national theatre further inspired the formation of theatre groups in Trinidad and Tobago. The Idakeda theatre group is one of such theatre that has provided the platform for the teaching of history and culture, a training centre for youths, and a resource centre for research and development of national consciousness. Originally "formed to protect and promote the creative works of Eintou Springer, the group has since evolved and now engages in social activism, advocating on behalf of vulnerable communities and using carnival and Theatre Arts as medium of intervention" (Shrinagar Parr. 11). Kambule is the signature performance of the Idakeda theatre group with global recognition. Often tagged the "ritual of remembrance" Kambule is a re-enactment of Canboulay riots of 1881 that

shaped the history of the Trinidadians in their quest to defend and assert their organic existence, origin, and race against western intrusion. As a theatre of resistance, the Kambule performance is done annually to celebrate the African origin and the resilience and heroism of the forebears of national consciousness in defending their identity. Therefore, the performance is designed to form an intersection between the past and the present realities of the people and to further give a sense of direction to the younger generation. Its pedagogic, didactic, and enchanting aura helps to promote the idea of brotherhood. Beyond its educational qualities, the Idakeda theatre troupe has opened vistas for youth development through training and employment in various segments of the creative and cultural sector of the economy and also has become a source of revenue generation for the nation.

References have been made above to Brazil. In different spheres, Brazil, has shown the evolution and sustenance of theatre practice borne out of the recognition that theatre played a prominent role in defining key moments in the history and culture of the country. As an independent nation after the invasion of Portugal during the colonial era, theatre was put to very ideological and political uses. Just like in Trinidad and Tobago where there is a constellation of races, the Brazilian theatre or performative arts reflect through the fusion of folklore and music art of Portuguese, Indian, and African origins to form the operatic and carnival street theatres with their religious, economic and cultural significance. The importance of theatre as a tool for enchantment in Brazil can be seen in the two major phases of the nation's development. The first phase is the era of black theatre as a reaction against racial discrimination and the second is the political theatre that evolved as a reaction against the military dictatorship. In the first phase, the Experimental Black Theatre of Abdias do Nascimento evolved a stage that appealed to the subjugated black minority in Brazil in their quest for equity, justice, and equality. Hence, Fabio Leon argues that the Experimental Black Theatre was aimed to rescue Afro-Brazilian culture values"(Parr. 2) by using the stage as a means of teaching Afro-Brazilian values, ethics, and mores as well as the exploration of Afro creativity and arts.

During the phase of political theatre, the experimental theatre workshops of August Boal, Gianfrancesco Guarnieri, Dias Gomes, among other practitioners in form of the Legislative theatre, Newspaper Theatre, Invincible theatre, Forum theatre, Image theatre, Analytical theatre, x-ray the intriguing role of theatre as a resistance tool against military dictatorships that saw the theatre and artists as enemies of the state (Taylor par. 6). While the military government imposed harsh censorships on performance to undermine its enchanting efficacy towards awareness and development, Taylor notes that through a collective approach by the professional and amateur theatre practitioners, including the audience, the theatre became a “fantastic fighting trench...with the objective of producing plays that spoke about...difficult conditions of survival” (par. 8). Most Brazilian theatre forms are interactive, showing the synergy between the performers and the audience. This compact interactive theatre experience encourages the development of awareness of social realities and thus, engenders the collective response towards tackling the challenges confronting the people both in the rural and urban centres. While the serious nationalist theatres may have declined, Margo Milleret observes that in Brazil, the sensorial theatre of “encenadores” have become the new theatre of spectacle (123) that is used to enchant the audience by offering light-hearted entertainment with little intellectual content. In this regard, theatre becomes more of a therapeutic tool for the development of the human mind. In addition, the Brazilian street carnival theatre has become a global affair with a developmental impact on social infrastructure, trade and commerce, economy, and education.

The Chinese theatre has a robust history that spans for over five centuries. Though operatic in form, they are usually colourful and carnivalesque, with rhythmic movements that evoke the aura of ontology and cosmic belief in the Chinese religion, education, politics and culture. From the Shaman dance theatre, Canjun Opera (Adjutant play), Zaju, Kunqu opera, the Sleeve Movement, and Shadow Puppetry plays, to the western-oriented proscenium theatre of the contemporary era, the Chinese National theatre “offers a platform where tradition meets modernity and state-of-the-art performance is pursued to nurture theatrical masterpieces” (*National Theatre...*) that further reveals the history, tradition, and identity of the Chinese people. Developmental trends in the Chinese theatre affirm the role of theatre in the

development of martial art (military plays), religion, education, culture, social recreation, and importantly in enhancing economic growth. Margaret Chan notes that theatre in China emerged largely in an era of commercialisation when people travelled the country doing business, and Itinerant balladeers and storytellers took their songs, dances, and stories from village to village to ply their trade (2).

According to Chan, these earliest theatre practitioners “mesmerized their audiences by performing dramas peopled with larger-than-life gods and folk heroes” (2) and consequently positioned the theatre as a medium for economic development. Also, the recognition of the role of theatre in the education of youths and children about Chinese history and culture led to the establishment of The National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts by the Chinese government to foster the teaching and learning of tradition, values, and orientations of the Chinese identity. Chan argues that the spread of Chinese religion was through theatre and that Chinese theatre and religion share a dialectical relationship especially with the dramatisation of exorcistic rituals by exorcistic theatre troupes, which she observes creates “awe and inspire the audience of devotees” (1). By and large, Theatre plays a fundamental role in the sustenance of the Chinese identity through its enchantment.

South African theatre is heavily influenced by apartheid and post-apartheid experiences. Notable practitioners like Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona, Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema, Barney Simon, among others reflected these experiences in their respective theatre productions with the aim of using the enchanting power of the stage to confront the various discriminations against a black minority by the dominant white class in South Africa. From the conventional radical theatres to the musical and market theatres, performances were tailored to evoke a sense of national consciousness for the freedom of the oppressed. This in turn fostered the desire to evolve a more authentic indigenous theatrical tradition that could promote African values, norms, ethics, and ideology which Yvette Hutchison observes has the potential to transform the people towards mass political consciousness (354). Hence, the use of indigenous cultural elements like songs, dance, folklore, and rituals for the promotion of indigenous culture,

education and wellbeing became popular tools for national activism and cultural consciousness. For example, the 1974 Ipi Tombi is a typical reflection of the existing notion of African culture. This cultural classic as controversially packaged by Bertha Egnos is a medley of native Zulu dances and songs combined to form an opera-like music carnival that has remained relevant in the celebration of African cultural heritage both in South Africa and Europe where this performance toured. Ipi Tombi evoked a strongly enchanting audience reaction during FESTAC '77.

Unlike most nations discussed earlier, theatre practice for the development of the nation enjoyed robust support from the government of Ghana who perceived theatre to be an enchanting medium of fostering the development of traditional institutions, and sustenance of national consciousness and identity. The mix of academic-cum-folkloric theatres of Efua Theodora Sutherland, Ama Ata Aidoo, J.C de Graft, Martin Owusu, Asiedu Yirenkiyi, and Mohammed Ben-Abdallah consistently present the challenges of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial experiences through the avid use of traditional cultural elements like folktale and myth to explore national and domestic problems. However, James Gibbs argues that Sutherland for instance, was an influential, sometimes a dominating figure in the Ghanaian theatre, and her use of traditional allegoric materials to create stories for the enchantment of the audience makes most of her plays to be the true definition of classic African theatre. For example, her play *Foriwa* brings together ideas of festival drama with theatre for community development (Gibbs 164). More so, the concert party theatres, travelling performance troupes with a repertoire of comedy and satires that ridicule social ills remain relevant aesthetic commentaries on national situations aimed at changing the psyche of the people towards nation building. Paul Schauert highlights the artistry of Ghanaian Theatre and how the national theatre deploys its functions towards nationalism. To him, many performances were sensational, yet provided means of self-expression, education, political affirmation and development (288-9)

Nigeria and the showcase of Enchantment

There is a little or nothing known about academic or theatrical collaborations between a Nigerian University and its counterpart in Brazil after the initial ferment in this area with University of Ife now Obafemi Awolowo University, in the 1970s started by Olabiyi Babalola Yai. (Alan Charles Dawson, 39, 57). However the instruction in Yoruba in the university in Brazil commenced in 1959. There is need to have more performative collaborations in the areas of culture and development as both Nigeria and Brazil are known globally for culture and tourism as well as enchanting performances. Memory continues to serve theatre audiences right of the performances by Duro Ladipo in Nigeria and outside the country, the globally acclaimed FESTAC' 77 continues to be a storehouse of array of performances which connote the centrality of performance and its use for enchantment, memory construction and development. It is not agreeable that academic and cultural discourse between many of these countries have not corresponded with the display of performative cultures that both have engaged.

This may be due to the imperative of collaboration and diplomatic liaison to enchant apart from the pleasure derived from watching scintillating dances and festival shows like carnivals on an occasional basis. The need to further the linkages on institutional fronts using the national theatres of these countries is therefore paramount. Where staff and students are involved in the proposed linkage, amity, intellectual development and capital engagement are ensured as universities and national theatres remain repositories of knowledge for the past, present and future. These are no longer the 1970s. FESTAC '77 has come and gone, yet many disdain the festival. A lot has mutated between then and now and this is a new Century dominated by technological innovations, the new media and artificial intelligence. Since change is the only constant thing, there is need to revisit the partnership paradigms for performances between Nigeria, its cultural institutions and other countries, like Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, China, India, to inject some performative angles from culture, society and governance stances.

Enchantment through performative partnerships should help to realise the relevance and realities of the new century. It is essential that we utilise the strategic focus of culture, its administration in and outside educational

systems and processes to capture the gains of whatever links exist and ensure their relevance to the present realities in the countries involved. Therefore, it is essential to find out: how many staff, students, communities and civil society officers would benefit from the collaboration and projects? How many are to be involved in the exchange? What other impact in the areas of leadership and mentoring would be realised? If the National Theatre and Universities in Nigeria are directly positioned for researches on enchantment projects, the need for public enlightenment remains fundamental for the chosen sites for the research to be in the position to readily collaborate. It is vital to reorient and equip staff, students and civil society to be abreast the realities of performances, their study at home and in the Diaspora with approaches to culture, the various benefits of diasporic linkages, but more importantly, the need to equip upcoming generations of staff, students cultural administrators and civil societies on this imperative. This shall prepare them for the administration of culture within and outside the country especially if the cultural attaché cadre is resuscitated in the public service. The impact on the cultural policy, of Nigeria and other countries some of which were mentioned above, on the (global) implementation and effectiveness of Nigerian culture administration in the global marketplace becomes achievable.

There is a dearth of ethnographic research, contemporary research publications and other visible revision attempts on academic partnerships between universities in Nigeria and Latin American countries like Brazil in the sphere of culture and enchanting performances. Such partnerships would address the acquisition and development of strategic leadership skills in such areas, which the National Theatre can spearhead. To cite an example, Nigeria and Brazil share a very lengthy history and it is this history that informs the use of enchantment in performances. According to Alao, "Brazil has the largest population of blacks in the world outside Nigeria". (7). Nigeria and Brazil are involved in bilateral agreements especially in the areas of trade and cultural ties, between the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization and the Brazilian government. It is therefore important to extend the frontiers of the accord from the available perspectives of teaching, research, staff and student exchange and community engagement as well as cultural administration for "it should not escape our attention that even today Brazil has the second

largest African population in the world after Nigeria”. (Reinhold Wagnleitner, 6). The following set of activities can be incorporated into the enchantment project and methodology for sustainable impact and pursuit of set objectives.

- a. Baseline Survey of cultural and performative idioms in the target countries to be conducted by the National Theatre in collaboration with universities;
- b. Production of online cultural communication materials and videos;
- c. Conduct of research works for commercial purposes, on sundry aspects of performative culture at institutional levels which will investigate and develop credible data and information on the role that cultural learning and appreciation plays in the formation of positive performative identities; and
- d. Production of publications, which will systematize relevant information and findings from the bilateral or multilateral collaborations, researches, experiences of participants here in Nigeria or elsewhere, in the course of the enchantment project, project outcomes and achievements, relevant outputs and best practices, major challenges and lessons learned.

The benefits that accrue are:

- The development of the cultural alternatives to the appreciation of enchantments, cultural heritage from other cultures.
- Employment creation for cultural workers, students, researchers and civil society of the countries involved, especially Nigeria.
- Collaborative learning with students from diverse backgrounds.
- Publications and documented outcomes.
- Demonstration of a clear understanding of the nature of cultural leadership.
- Learning and deployment of critical skills in the study of the performance culture.

- Appreciation and understanding of the impact of culture and Diaspora realities.
- Development of strategic networks with artistes, peers from similar, yet different nations and groups that are related.
- Application of knowledge gained during the programme to wider social, political and economic issues in Nigeria and the countries concerned.
- Broadened diplomatic ties between Nigeria and other countries.
- Where possible, certification of participants after full participation and book projects where feasible, at the end of the series of cultural and performative exposure.

The Way Forward

It is for the stance highlighted above that this researcher opines that the amazement which theatre generates through its multiple areas of coverage and exposure is akin to the opinion of Guy Kawasaki on enchantment, that every attempt at enchantment should be to the advantage of the enchanter. In Domingo Adame's essay "Transdisciplinary Theatre for the Re-enchantment of the being and the World", it is presently difficult for individuals and groups to be optimists in contemporary human existence. To him, we have experienced enchantment, its opposite disenchantment seen in the decline, the move from the sacred to the profane and what is required at present is a re-enchantment and he refers to *The Valley of Astonishment* (2014) written and directed by Peter Brook and Marie-Hélène Estienne to prove his point.

To this end, the way forward for the National Theatre towards using its enchanting potential in recapturing the lost momentum in the stage visual culture are highlighted below.

i. Reconstruction of the National Theatre

The National Theatre in keeping its mandate free of different kind of encumbrances should make the edifice a place for enchantment to happen in the lives of its patrons. The ongoing reconstruction of the National Theatre

by the government in partnership with the Bankers' Committee/Central Bank of Nigeria, after over four decades, is a step in the right direction. This move also includes the construction of new hubs within the premises of the National theatre for fashion, information, technology, film, and music. The reconstruction and inclusion of new hubs lends credence to the potential of The National Theatre as a major marketing agency for global attraction and national economic growth. The First Global Conference on Cultural Tourism and Creative Industry to be hosted at the National Theatre between November 14 to 17, 2022, is an indication of the enormous possibility of the National Theatre in attracting global events in Nigeria, which also serves as a form of reconstructing the national image at the global level.

ii. Connection and Negotiation of Cultural Diversity

The practitioners engaged in stage enactment to one's opinion should enthrall the people. The theatre creates real connections with people because it is a live experience. The agency and channels for progress also lies in the capacity of the nation to engage the National Theatre as its marketing agent. The theatre as the commonwealth of citizens should work to regain its place of enchantment in the hearts of Nigerians. Through the theatre, it is possible to regain the advantages of being a cultural hub in Africa. It must market a cause, and influence people in the moral dimensions of creativity without trading in the people's simplicity. The nation can surmount the fractured reality of its existence by building solidarity through the theatre once enduring enchantment can be created. Ephemeral enchantment would generate distaste for the audience, and what is essential is that connection with the audience that keeps them returning to the theatre for more thrilling performances.

iii. Inclusion of Non-conventional Performances for Development

The National Theatre holds a central prospective space as a disseminator of synergistic information across all performative spaces in the country, akin to the watering hole before which the fauna of the forest gathers for renewal. The staging of free plays for the audience is a possibility that should be exploited. As school texts in Literature-in-English and English Literature are made real through staging, young students are guaranteed easy recall of what they saw

on stage. These plays can be further granted life by touring the country, a renascent travelling theatre experience. This links one to the need of the artists and other creatives of the theatre to think beyond staging only conventional plays. Short skits that are cost-effective to produce without the pufferies of embellished productions are also considered adequate. The Tfd process can be fashioned into the theatre's play production procedure to encourage the thoughts of the people towards development.

iv. Harmonisation of Cultural Agencies

A lot has been averred on the required synergy between the agencies in the Ministry of Culture like the National Orientation Agency (NOA), National Institute of Cultural Orientation (NICO), National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOURS), National Film Institute (NFI), National Film Cooperation (NFC), among others, with the National Theatre. The harmonisation of these agencies towards the promotion and sustenance of arts and cultural productions is important to the Nation's development, especially in adopting leadership strategies that can provide sustainable growth in the Cultural industry.

v. Alternative Funding for Stage Productions

Funding has been a factor mitigating the survival of stage productions in the nation. The collaboration of the government with the private-public sector in revamping the National Theatre evinces the quality of the National Theatre as a marketable brand for investors. Grants can be made available for performers to compete for and showcase their arts. The Bank of Industry's life line to theatre entrepreneurs in terms of loans require more strategies for low-budget theatre producers to stage their performances and tour major cities in Nigeria with them. Through this approach, a national performative ethos is deepened. However, in addition to other means of funding stage productions, the inclusion of Entertainment Tax could also be charged to further fund stage productions. In the light of the current revamping and reconstruction of the national theatre, it is expected that the efforts are not riddled by official corruption, nepotism or acts that hinder national institutions from thriving. Already, performances are being staged in the edifice which one argues may compete favourably with other theatre institutions in Lagos and other parts

of the country. The new commitments to rebuilding the national theatre, should be in good faith and help to envision a theatre of enchantment for national revival of performances and arts for national development.

vi. The National Theatre as Grounds for Enchantment

There is no need to over flog the stance that the National theatre can be a testing ground for the National Policy on Culture using the theatre for Development paradigms. It is possible for educational approaches to Theatre for Development to be tested on the stage of the National Theatre as a means of consciousness-raising. As an agency of government, the theatre is in the best position to interpret and channel government policies to the people. As a community of performers from across Nigeria, the theatre holds much hope for a national cultural cohesion. The national theatre is therefore akin to a national builder or moulder of identities. There is further need for the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) through the Students Industrial Work Experience (SIWES) Scheme to get trainee theatre artists to pass through the National Theatre at least once in their years of studentship.

vii. The Deployment of ICT

The consideration of non-human aspects of production and computer-aided indices are expected for the realisation of enchanting theatre on a national level. The time is no longer auspicious for the National Theatre to continue to showcase analog performance modes. The sphere of Artificial intelligence would have to be exploited to inspire theatre goers. This would help to facilitate technical innovation for staging and stage effects, design, theatre management and marketing as well as other aspects of theatre at the national echelon. The use of ICT would help to facilitate a directory of theatre houses, their categorisations and proper use for tourism, festival planning and revenue mapping.

Conclusion

Theatre involvement towards any nation's development is unarguable, and a nation that forgets her theatre always tows the path of retroversion. The artiste's environment influences his/her creativity. Recognising the need to constantly put the nation in check, theatre practitioners have shown and

remained committed to using the stage as a medium for critical evaluation on the progression of the nation in critical areas of need. The results are undeniable. However, the evaluation of the National Theatre shows a polarisation effect; where the successes of the National Theatre in the past are dragged tremendously by the present snags affecting the operational existence of the nation's theatre.

For Nigeria to remain relevant and continue to advance in growth and development in the global era of competitiveness, theatre practice should be taken seriously. Consequently, this study recommends the revival of the National Theatre which studies show can engender growth in critical areas of need for the nation. The ongoing revitalisation of the National Theatre by the national government in collaboration with the private sector is a welcome development that will further engender new cultural perspectives in the Nigerian cultural space. To sustain the efforts of the government in reviving the national theatre, the administrative crisis which has grossly affected the growth of the theatre in the past should not be allowed to reoccur. The current efforts to critically address this gap to ensure steady continuity of the National Theatre through the appointment of competent professional leadership and harmonisation of the various aspects of the National Theatre for the promotion of a vibrant stage visual culture that can compete favourable with other cultural forms is seen to be in good stead.

It is not agreeable that academic and cultural discourses between Nigeria and many of the countries with national theatres and with which diplomatic ties exist are have not engaged in corresponding displays of performative cultures that span such countries. The imperative of collaboration and diplomatic liaison through theatre furthers stimulates and enchants apart from the pleasure derived from watching scintillating dances and festival shows like carnivals on an occasional basis. The need to further development on national fronts using the national theatre of a country is therefore paramount. It behoves the National Theatre to harvest exciting productions of local flavour and reflect them on the national stage. A national theatre remains the repository of knowledge from the past, for the present and future and in the present national anomy, theatrical enchantment is the prescription required to transport Nigerians from the doldrums.

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