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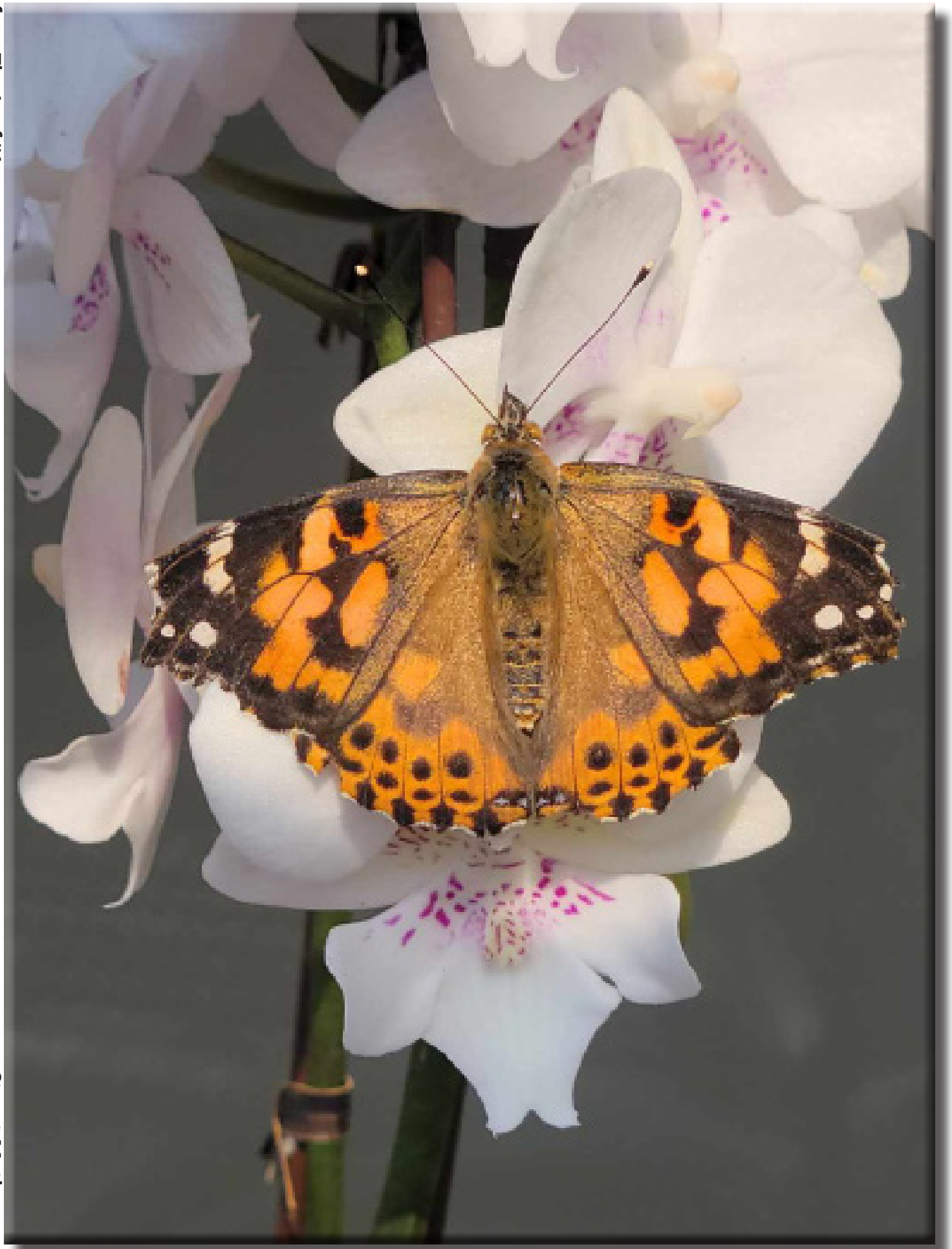

Stuart Matheson

EDITORIAL

It is March, and another spring is on its way to the North. The birds will return, and the light is already lengthening. Accordingly, this, *the quint's* sixty sixth issue, offers reading for our chilly nights and brighter days. Articles by authors from Nigeria, the Tunisia, the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom grace this catholic issue. Olayinka Esther Atoyebi and Isiaq Olasunkanmi Oseni's "Inflation, Economic Growth and Government Expenditure in Nigeria: An ARDL approach" begins this issue's offerings. Atoyebi and Oseni use Auto Regressive Distributed Lag to examine the dynamic relationships of variables associated with economic growth, and government expenditure, identifying risks and opportunities demonstrated in historical and transactional data. They offer insights about the implications of their findings for Nigeria's overall economic performance. Next, in "Political Trauma and the Burden of Memory in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*," Oluwakemi Abiola Kalejaiye and Oluwakemi Titilola Olayemi examine Chimamanda Adichie's treatment of the trauma of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War on the Igbo in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. They find Adichie not only offers a critical reflection of Nigeria's historical past in *Half of a Yellow Sun*; she also reveals the underlying cause of the spate of uprisings in the country today. Then, Zied Ben Amor's "Metatheatre in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: Recycling or Reviving the Script?" argues metatheatre, a dynamic inherent to *Hamlet,* complements, rather than recycles, delineating the residual from the recyclable. Metatheatre, he says, starts when the text halts. Following, Samson Sunday Akapo's "Street Dance Performance as Protest: Seun Awobajabo's *UNTITLED* in focus" also goes beyond the idea of the text being the model for cognitive exchange

and social interaction. Examining how the FOD gang from the Footprint of David Academy breaks performance norms in *UNTITLED*, Akapo finds dance uses its setting to create social awareness about the inadequate infrastructure and stands as a voice for the people and their audience.

Next, in "A Histo-Performance Discourse on Kuteb Festival Theatre in North Eastern Nigeria," Kyantirimam Riken Ukwen and Daniel Riken Ukwen explore two separate but interconnected Kuteb festival performances , Iki (Masquerade) and Kuchicheb (Harvest thanksgiving), highlighting their social significance and demonstrating the changing phases of festival theatre. Then, Nsikan Bassey Asuquo and Rasaki Ojo Bakare's "Communication and Performance Lighting: A Comparative Study of Two Performances of Ahmed Yerima's *Yemoja*" considers the efficacy of expressive or interpretive lighting by comparing the outcomes of lighting designs for two performances of Ahmed Yerima's *Yemoja.* Finally, Taiye Shola Adeola's "Contemporary Features of the Rebirth of Music in African Churches: A Nigerian Case Study" finds Nigerian Church music notable for its indigenization, secularization, instrumentation, and acculturation. Adeola argues the course of Nigerian Church music offers important insights into the development of African Church music and attributes its rebirth to today's emphasis on mission mobilization.

Film reviews of three must-see documentaries are also housed in this issue. In "*2040*: An Australian Exploration of a Sustainable Future" Forkan Ali deems Damon Gameau's positive approach to climate change a hopeful and powerful call to action. In "Teach the Children: The Urgency of *Paris Is Burning,*" Peter Piatkowski, gives Jennie Livingston's 1990 groundbreaking doc two thumbs up, finding it remarkabe the trans life and its drag queens are not exploited. In "Complicating Shakespeare:

Looking for *Hamlet,* 1603," Phillip Zapkin praises Sarah Neville's insight that the Bard was a working theatre writer, not a genius, concluding her first film an incredible resource currently avaiable on Youtube.

No issue of *the quint* can be complete without its creative component. Stuart Matheson's spring study of flora, *fromtheLeaf* records the stunning, colourful contents of Assiniboine Park's new conservatory at the turn of the season in southern Manitoba. Anticipating the warmer days ahead, *the quint* will return in June with more thought-provoking material for your consideration.

Sue Matheson
Editor

fromThe Leaf #2

Stuart Matheson

Inflation, Economic Growth and Government Expenditure in Nigeria: An ARDL approach

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Abstract

The Nigerian economy has experienced a decline in its growth rates that has coincided with a gradual rise in government expenditures. Using Auto Regressive Distributed Lag, this paper examines dynamic relationships of variables involved in inflation, economic growth, and government expenditure, identifies risks and opportunities in historical and transactional data, and offers significant insights about the effectiveness of fiscal policies and their implications for Nigeria's overall economic performance.

Annual series data from 1990 to 2021 was used for this study. Data was also sourced from the World Development Indicator (World Bank) and Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin. Our results showed a positive and significant correlation between the dependent variable, economic growth and aggregate government expenditure, recurrent government expenditure and money supply, while total current expenditure and inflation were negatively related to economic growth. Probabilities generated from our findings suggest government should promote efficiency when allocating resources to sectors and projects that exhibit a greater capacity to stimulate economic progress such as infrastructure, education, health, research and development. The adoption of a monetary policy that ensures price stability, encourages competition, reduces regulatory constraints, and encourages entrepreneurship is also recommended.

Keywords: Inflation, Government spending, ARDL, Economic growth

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1.0 Introduction

Over recent years, Nigeria's economic growth rate has been declining while the government's expenditure has been on a gradual rise. The 2021 edition of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin, reports that in 2009, there was a 9.41% increase in government expenditure compared to the previous year. However, during the same period, the GDP increased by 3.63%. The severity of the situation can be observed by examining the statistics from 2016, wherein the government expenditure increased to 17.43% from the previous year and the GDP increased to -1.61%.

Table 1 displays the percentage alteration in both economic growth and government expenditure, specifically to the economic growth of Nigeria.

YEAR	RGDP	Percentage change in RGDP (%)	Government Expenditure ₦B	Percentage change
2011	57,511,041,765,000	5.3079	4,712.1	12.337
2012	59,943,794,014,100	4.2300	4,605.3	-2.2665
2013	63,942,845,560,000	6.6713	5,185.3	12.5941
2014	67,977,459,215,300	6.3097	4,587.4	-11.5306
2015	69,780,692,718,300	2.6526	4,988.9	8.7522
2016	68,652,430,364,700	-1.6168	5,858.6	17.4327
2017	69,205,691,115,000	0.8058	6,456.7	10.2089
2018	70,536,348,621,700	1.9227	7,813.7	21.0169
2019	72,094,093,995,700	2.2084	9,714.6	24.3277
2020	70,800,543,492,000	-1.7942	10,231.7	5.3229
2021	73,382,771,385,200	3.6471	12,164.1	18.8864

An increase in government expenditure does not have a significant increase in economic growth (Chinedu et al., 2022) The government is anticipated to enhance the economic well-being and overall welfare of its citizens through the implementation of suitable economic policies. Apart from its responsibility of upholding law and order, the government is anticipated to assume a significant function in economic matters (Udabah S.I, 2002)

The allocation of funds by the government is a crucial tool for economic management within a nation. According to Faguet, (2004) and Gbadamosi et al., (2009), economists predict the allocation of government funds towards social and economic infrastructure has the potential to stimulate growth. The significance of the

government's role is of utmost importance in nearly all contemporary economies. One rationale behind this is that it guides the pursuit of a nation's macroeconomic goals, including but not limited to attaining full employment, fostering economic growth and development, maintaining price stability, and reducing poverty.

The allocation of public funds by the government is also a significant factor in influencing the state of the economy. Lucas (2012) innovatively forecasts how this might relate to growing concerns about the social exclusion of low income groups and communities. Studies, predominantly carried out in the United Kingdom (for example, Stenberg et al., 2017), include variables for SDG 3 (healthy lives and wellbeing) that refer to the allocation of public funds towards essential sectors such as infrastructure, social welfare programs, education, healthcare, and other areas crucial for advancing the economy. Investigating correlations between government spending and inflation is crucial when formulating fiscal measures. Wong (2005) finds the distribution and administration of public funds holds considerable consequences for both the expansion of the economy and the emergence of inflationary forces.

During the years 2012 and 2014, the government successfully implemented expenditure reduction measures resulting in a decrease of government spending by -2.26% and -11.53% respectively, as indicated by the negative sign denoting a reduction in expenditure from the previous year. During these years, the percentage increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) exceeded that of government expenditure. Specifically, the percentage change in GDP was 4.2300% and 6.3097% for 2012 and 2014, respectively. In contrast, the change in government expenditure was -2.2665% and -11.5306% for the same years, respectively.

As government spending increases, there is a corresponding need for increased financial resources to meet these expenditures. Consequently, the government seeks assistance from international financial institutions such as the IMF, and World Bank, procures funds from the central bank of Nigeria, or enforces additional taxes on the populace to fulfill their financial obligations. Prior research has shown that the utilization of loans or borrowing, as well as the implementation of taxes, have resulted in a significant adverse effect on the economic development of the nation. Daniel, (1985) posits that borrowing from the central bank tends to augment the money supply, thereby serving as a significant contributor to inflation and engendering economic uncertainty.

Public borrowing leads to a rise in interest rates and a decrease in domestic investment. The imposition of additional taxes results in economic distortions and diminishes both output and growth. Complementing empirical investigations of inflation in Nigeria, this study's specific aims are:

a) to measure the relationship between the rate of inflation and economic growth variable;
b) to measure the relationship between the economic growth variable and aggregated government expenditure;
c) to measure the relationship between economic growth variable, the rate of inflation and dis-aggregated government expenditure, i.e. government current expenditure and the government development expenditure.

2.0 Literature Review

In the extant literature, many studies have examined the corelations of explanatory and predicted variables concerned with inflation, economic growth, and government expenditure. For instance, Attari & Javed (2013) explores the relationship between the rate of inflation, economic growth, and government expenditure to identify a long-term correlation in Pakistan. From 1980 to 2010, the allocation of government funds were categorized into two distinct categories: current expenditure and development expenditure. Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test, ARDL, Johansen cointegration and Granger-causality test were used to investigate such relationship. These econometrics tools yielded results indicating that government expenditures generate positive externalities and linkages. In the immediate term, the impact of inflation on economic growth is negligible, whereas government expenditures have a discernible effect. Their causality test results show that there is unidirectional causality between the rate of inflation and economic growth and; economic growth and government expenditure.

In the same vein, De Gregorio (1992) investigates the relationship between inflation and long-run growth. De Gregorio's study presents an endogenous growth model that illustrates the channels through which inflation affects growth, highlighting the effects of inflation on the productivity of capital and the rate of capital accumulation. The reduction in growth noted is caused by a diversion of resources away from activities that lead to faster rates of growth toward activities associated with reducing the costs of inflation. The negative association between inflation and growth is assessed empirically for a sample group of Latin American countries.

Avicenna (1992) analyzes the effect of interest rates, inflation rates and government spending on economic growth in Indonesia from 2005 to 2012. By using

the method of data analysis panel, he confirms that interest rates, inflation rates, and government spending have a 99% influence on the dependent variable of economic growth. The results of his research show that government spending is positively significant to economic growth, according to Keynesian theory. The variable interest rate has a significant negative to economic growth, demonstrating the interest rate effect on economic growth. That is if the central bank decreases the interest rate, then investment will increase, and economic growth will also increase. While the rate of inflation also affects economic growth, inflation has a significant positive effect on economic growth, because the inflation rate in Indonesia is relatively low.

Gupta et al. (2009) investigates the impact of government expenditure on economic growth in Nepal. Annual series data between 2002/03 to 2015/16 is used for this study. Economic growth is a dependent variable whereas total capital expenditure, total recurrent expenditure, agriculture, non-agriculture, industry, service, and inflation are independent variables. The major objective of this study is to examine the effect of different components of government expenditure in economic growth. Data was collected from an economic survey of Nepal. Its tools of analysis are the regression model between the variables, the DW Test, and for multicollinearity between the variables, the VIF test is used. The empirical results show that there is a positive correlation between the dependent variable economic growth and predictors like the agricultural, non-agricultural, industry, and service sectors whereas, total current and recurrent expenditures and inflation are negatively related to economic growth. The beta coefficient is positively significant for agricultural, non-agricultural, industry, and service sectors, it implies that the higher the investment in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors,the higher the economic growth will be. Similarly, the higher

the investment in the industry and service sector of the country is, the higher the economic growth will be. More specifically, the D-W value is 1.301, which implies that there is no autocorrelation between the variables.

Anidiobu, Okolie & Oleka (2018) examines the effect of inflation on economic growth in Nigeria from 1986 to 2015. While Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) was adopted for the former, descriptive statistics explained the latter. The ordinary Least Square (OLS) technique was used to estimate the variables. Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) formed the dependent variable, and Inflation Rate (INFR), Interest Rate (Interest Rate) and Exchange Rate (EXCHR) made up the independent variables. The regression results indicated that INFR had a positive and non-significant effect on economic growth (measured by RGDP) in Nigeria for the period studied.

Likewise, Ojomolade, & Oni (2018) ascertains the existence of a relationship between inflation and economic growth in Nigeria. Employing the quantitative research design, the consumer price index (CPI) was used as a proxy for inflation and the GDP as a proxy for economic growth, to examine the relationship from 2000 to 2009. Their study employed the Ordinary least square method and t-test to test the variables most likely to impact economic growth in Nigeria due to inflation. These authors discovered a strong relationship between inflation and economic growth, that the exchange rate has a positive impact on economic growth, and that a high-interest rate discourages investment and hence forestalls economic growth.

Osuala, Osuala & Onyeike (2013) also evaluates the impact of inflation on economic growth in the context of an emerging market, using empirical evidence from Nigeria. from 1970 to 2011 to determine the nature of the relationship existing between the focus variables-economic growth and Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF),

and Philip-Perron (PP) tests were used to test for the stationarity of the variables, while the Granger causality test was employed to ascertain the direction of influence between inflation and economic growth in Nigeria.

Eggoh & Khan (2014) uses a large panel dataset from both developed and developing economies and employed the PSTR and dynamic GMM techniques. This study highlights the nonlinearity of the relationship and identified several thresholds for the global sample and various income-specific sub-samples. It also identifies some country-based macroeconomic features that influenced this nonlinearity. Its empirical results substantiate both views and validate the fact that inflation-growth nonlinearity is sensitive to a country[U+05F3]'s level of financial development, capital accumulation, trade openness, and government expenditures. Moreover,its country-specific characteristics result in some marked differences in this nonlinear relationship.

Taiwo & Abayomi (2011) examines the trends as well as effects of government spending on the growth rates of real GDP in Nigeria from 1970 to 2008, using the econometrics model with the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) technique. Their paper tests for the presence of stationarity between the variables used for the Durbin Watson unit root test. Their results reveal the absence of serial correlation and that all variables incorporated in the model were non-stationary at their levels. In their attempt to establish a long-run relationship between public expenditure and economic growth, their results also reveal that the variables were co-integrated at 5% and 10% critical levels. Their findings show that there was a positive relationship between the real GDP, recurrent, and capital expenditure.

Sanmi, Ayooluwade & Fawehinm (2016) investigates the effects of government expenditure and inflation rate on economic growth in Nigeria from 1981 to 2013. Employing the Vector Auto-Regressive (VAR) modeling approach, their variance decomposition shows that high levels of government expenditure and inflation contributed significantly to shocks in the real gross domestic product. The central focus of the study reveals that fluctuation in output growth over the years is a true reflection of the level of government expenditure as well as the inflationary level in Nigeria.

3.0 Materials and Methods

3.1 Data

This study relies on country-specific data for all the variables in Nigeria from 1990 through 2021. The choice of Nigeria was guided by the desire to limit our attention to Africa's most populous black nation. Economic growth was measured with data on the real GDP, as in Chaudhry et al. (2020) and Nasir et al. (2019). This paper also sheds light on the ecological consequences of CO2 emission. Following the example of. Anidiobu, Okolie & Oleka (2018), we introduced Total Government Expenditure AGEXP as used in the work to capture the Aggregate Expenditure in the country, also dividing the government expenditures into government recurrent expenditures; and government capital expenditures, according to the Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin on Nigeria Economy (2021). Inflation, measured with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as in the work of Ojomolade & Oni (2018), represents the Exchange rate as well as as a money supply as control variable indicating determinant of economic growth other than the variables of interest. The variable of the real gross domestic

product (Y), government expenditure (G), government current expenditure (GC), and government development expenditure (GD) are measured in local monetary unit (B). The variable of rate of inflation (P) is measured in the percentage change of log of consumer price index (CPI).

The variables of the study and their respective descriptions and sources are contained in Table 1.

Table 1: Description of Variables

Abbreviation	Description	Source
InRGDP	Real GDP	World Development Indicator, (WDI)
InCPI	Inflation rate	World Development Indicator, (WDI)
InAGEXP	Total Government Expenditure	Statistical Bulletin CBN
InCEXP	Capital Expenditure	Statistical Bulletin CBN
InREXP	Government Recurrent Expenditure	Statistical Bulletin CBN
InEXCH	Exchange Rate	World Development indicator *WDI*
M2	Money Supply	World Development indicator WDI

*WDI: World Development Indicator; CBN: Central Bank of Nigeria

4.0 Methodology and Model

The present research expands upon the previous investigations conducted by Atesoglu (1998) and Chowdhury & Mallik (2002), as cited in Atesoglu (1998), with a focus on the context of Nigeria. The present study examines the aforementioned correlation between the actual Gross Domestic Product (GDP), inflation rate, and government expenditure, utilizing the identical functional format as previously employed by Atesoglu (1998), Akhter et al. (2010), and Devarajan et al. (2015):

$$InRGDP_t = f(InCPI_t, InAGEXP_t)$$

.....(1)

Where

InRGDP = Log of Real GDP log of real total Government spending

InCPI = Log of the rate of inflation proxy by Consumer Price Index

InAGEXP = Log of real Government expenditure

Equation 1 above describes the relationship stated below:

$$InRGDPt = a_0 + a_1 InCPI_t + a_2 InAGEXP_t + \mu_t$$

Where

a_0= = one of the constants, a_1.....a_4 are the slope parameters μ_t is the regression error term

This study categorizes goernment expenditures into two distinct categories, namely government current expenditures and government development expenditures. This classification is based on the Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin on Nigeria's Economy for the year 2021. Initially, the impact of each expenditure was assessed individually. Subsequently, the joint impact of both expenditures was evaluated by

employing equation (1). Three distinct equations, denoted as N-2, N-3, and N-4, are derived in the following manner:

$$InRGDPt = a_0 + a_1InCPI_t + a_2InREXP_t + a_3EXCH_t + a_4M2_t + \mu_t \quad \text{..... N-2}$$

$$InRGDPt = a_0 + a_1InCPI_t + a_2InCEXP_t + a_3EXCH_t + a_4M2_t + \mu_t \quad \text{..... N-3}$$

$$InRGDPt = a_0 + a_1InCPI_t + a_2InREXP_t + a_3InCEP_t + a_3EXCH_t + a_4M2_t + \mu_t \quad \text{.....N-4}$$

Where

InREXP = Natural log of real Government Recurrent Expenditure

InCEXP = Natural log of real Government Capital Expenditure

InEXCH = Natural log of Exchange rate

M2 = Money supply

To check the relationship among these economic variables, we employed the Autoregressive Distributed Lag ARDL model introduced by Pesaran et al. (2001), when it was not known with certainty whether the underlying regressors were trend-or first-difference stationary. The proposed tests were based on standard F-and t-statistics used to test the significance of the lagged levels of the variables in a univariate equilibrium correction mechanism. The asymptotic distributions of these statistics were non-standard under the null hypothesis that there exists no level relationship, irrespective of whether the regressors are I(0) as posited by Kisswani (2017) and Pesaran et al. (1999).

4.1 Results

Table 2: Unit Root Tests

Variable	@FIRST DIFFERENCE			ORDER OF INTEGRATION	
	ADF	PP	ADF	PP	
	Intercept {Trend & Intercept}	Intercept {Trend & Intercept}	Intercept {Trend & Intercept}	Intercept {Trend & Intercept}	
CPI	-4.074** -7.134**	-3.153** -2.824	-2.006 -2.522	-2.263 -2.870	I(0)
AGEXP	-3.057** -2.690	-3.210** -2.004	-8.081** -2.918	-7.569** -9.929**	I(0)
CEXP	-2.334 -2.535	-2.047 -2.470	6.507** -6.745**	-6.447** -6.723**	I(1)
REXP	-2.388 -2.048	-4.311** -1.811	-7.746** - 8.393**	-7.726** -11.067**	I(0)
RGDP	-0.610 -1.789	-0.251 -1.841	2.853*** -2.788	-2.821*** -2.764	I(1)
EXCH	-2.062 -2.183	-2.184 -2.209	-5.111** -5.290**	-5.094** -5.414**	I(1)
M2	-1.026 -3.056	-0.819 -1.866	-4.385** -4.317**	-5.729** -6.018**	I(1)

Note:*** P<0.1

Table 2 displays the results of the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test and the Phillip-Perron (PP) test, both with intercept and trend and intercept. The tabular data shows each selected variable is either stationary at the level or after undergoing first-order differencing. Results vary depending on the type of stationarity test employed, indicating the variables are integrated at either order zero (I(0)) or order one (I[1]).

Table 2 displays the results of the unit root test, indicating that the variables of interest, including the regressor and regressand, exhibit a degree of integration of I(1) and I(0). This finding enables the utilization of the Auto Regressive Distributed Lag model (ARDL) which has been a prevalent tool in econometrics and surged in recent times, primarily for investigating cointegrating relationships. Two noteworthy contributions in this context are the works of Pesaran & Shin (1998, PS [1998]) and Pesaran, Shin & Smith (2001, PSS [2001]).

In our study, thet ARDL models possess notable benefits, particularly in their capacity to manage cointegration while displaying inherent resilience to the misrepresentation of integration orders of pertinent variables. Finding all variables stationary and integrated of order I(0) and I(1), we proceeded to the selection of VAR optimal lag order selection:

Table 3(a) Test Statistics and VAR Lag Order Selection Criterion of Model: (M-1 Endogenous Variables)

Lag	LogL	LR	FPE	AIC	SC	HQ
0	-101.5414	NA	0.001068	7.347680	7.583420	7.421511
1	72.21187	275.6086	3.86e-08	-2.911163	-1.496720*	-2.468177
2	107.9213	44.32893*	2.18e-08*	-3.649744*	-1.056597	-2.837603*

Table 3(b) Test Statistics and VAR Lag Order Selection Criterion of Model: (M-1 Endogenous Variables)

Lag	LogL	LR	FPE	AIC	SC	HQ
0	-102.6795	NA	0.001156	7.426174	7.661914	7.500005
1	62.02543	261.2561	7.79e-08	-2.208651	-0.794207	-1.765664
2	108.9790	58.28722*	2.03e-08*	-3.722692*	-1.129544*	-2.910550*

Table 3(c) Test Statistics and VAR Lag Order Selection Criterion of Model: (M-1 Endogenous Variables)

Lag	LogL	LR	FPE	AIC	SC	HQ
0	-118.4184	NA	0.003422	8.511617	8.747358	8.585448
1	56.46665	277.4040	1.14e-07	-1.825286	-0.410843*	-1.382300
2	89.21801	40.65685*	7.93e-08*	-2.359863*	0.233285	-1.547721*

Table 3(d) Test Statistics and VAR Lag Order Selection Criterion of Model: (M-1 Endogenous Variables)

Lag	LogL	LR	FPE	AIC	SC	HQ
0	-104.3120	NA	8.11e-05	7.607726	7.890615	7.696323
1	77.08738	275.2267	3.80e-09	-2.419819	-0.439598	-1.799638
2	138.2593	67.50007*	9.53e-10*		-0.478260*	-3.004051*

To determine the ideal lag order for the VAR model presented in Table 4 (a), (b), (c), (d), it is crucial to select an order that is sufficiently high to prevent the optimal order from surpassing it. The trivariate autoregressive models of second order have been computed for the temporal span ranging from 1990 to 2021. The AIC criteria suggest that the order is 2.

The log-likelihood ratio statistics, regardless of whether they were adjusted for small sample sizes or not, yielded rejection of order 0. However, they did not reject a VAR of order 2. Based on the aforementioned statistics, the decision has been made to opt for a VAR (2) model.

Table 4: Wald Test: Nigeria 1990-2021

Models	F-Statistics	P-value
N-1	3.370	0.041**
N-2	9.235	0.001**
N-3	7.003	0.027**
N-4	17.466	0.003**

Table 4 indicates that the F-statistic for the second order of lag was found to be statistically significant at a 5% level of significance. The findings suggest that there exists a robust long-term association among the variables within the complete models.

Table 5: ARDL Model Long Run Estimates: Nigeria 1990 to 2021

Table 5a.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LCPI	-1.022914	0.313045	-3.267626	0.0097
LAGEXP	0.810190	0.232209	3.489056	0.0068
LEXCH	0.337251	0.135089	2.496504	0.0341
M2	0.005396	0.012288	0.439150	0.6709
C	28.62453	0.626901	45.66036	0.0000

Table 5b. Model 2

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LCPI	-0.453786	0.111968	-4.052810	0.0016
LREXP	0.389229	0.068453	5.686061	0.0001
LEXCH	0.146532	0.095129	1.540348	0.1494
M2	0.021947	0.006068	3.616611	0.0035
C	29.95618	0.172277	173.8842	0.0000

Table 5c. Model 3

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LCPI	-0.940133	0.686591	-1.369276	0.1982
LCEXP	0.496119	0.456441	1.086929	0.3003
LEXCH	0.648355	0.314251	2.063178	0.0635
M2	0.029363	0.020073	1.462841	0.1715
C	29.81072	0.880869	33.84239	0.0000

Table 5d. Model 4

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LCPI	-1.417743	0.734817	-1.929381	0.1019
LREXP	0.258117	0.108200	2.385558	0.0544
LCEXP	0.569588	0.403943	1.410071	0.2082
LEXCH	0.731799	0.448086	1.633165	0.1536
M2	0.039338	0.010787	3.646726	0.0107
C	28.70104	0.801767	35.79721	0.0000

Results of Table 5

Table 5a shows that there is a negative coefficient of the rate of inflation (lCPI), which is statistically significant. While the aggregate government expenditure is positive and statistically significant, the exchange rate is positive and significant and the Money supply is positive but insignificant at 5%. Table 5b shows LCPI is negative and significant, Recurrent Government expenditure and Money supply are positive and significant, while the exchange rate is positive but insignificant. Table 5c shows LCPI is negative and not significant, Government capital expenditures are positive and not significant while the exchange rate is positive and significant at 5%. Table 5d shows that LCPI is negative and insignificant, recurrent government expenditure is positive

and significant while Government capital expenditure and exchange rate are found to be positive and insignificant at 5% but money supply is positive and significant. The findings reveal there is a positive relationship between real GDP as against the recurrent and capital expenditure. It can therefore be recommended that government should promote efficiency in the allocation of development resources through an emphasis on private sector participation and privatization\commercialization.

4.1 ARDL Model ECM Short run estimate

After a short-term disturbance, the estimated results of ECM permit the measurement of the rate of adjustment required to return to long-run values. The results of the brief run are shown in Table 6:

Table 6a

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(LRGDP(-1))	-0.157905	0.075035	-2.104404	0.0647
D(LCPI)	-0.265275	0.028573	-9.284268	0.0000
D(LAGEXP)	0.022264	0.010731	2.074836	0.0678
D(LEXCH)	-0.024562	0.006388	-3.844844	0.0039
D(M2)	-0.003490	0.000587	-5.947369	0.0002
CointEq(-1)*	-0.135566	0.008841	-15.33455	0.0000

Table 6b

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(LRGDP(-1))	0.280477	0.130988	2.141251	0.0454
D(LCPI)	-0.273043	0.058457	-4.670867	0.0002
D(LEXCH)	-0.030500	0.015350	-1.986931	0.0615
D(M2)	-0.003795	0.001722	-2.204304	0.0400
CointEq(-1)*	-0.046956	0.008603	-5.457856	0.0000

Table 6c

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(LRGDP(-1))	0.290394	0.120492	2.410075	0.0262
D(LCPI)	-0.269313	0.053193	-5.062928	0.0001
D(LEXCH)	-0.029126	0.014461	-2.014051	0.0584
D(M2)	-0.004702	0.001663	-2.827124	0.0108
CointEq(-1)*	-0.010724	0.001796	-5.972387	0.0000

Table 6d

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Stastic	Prob.
D(LCPI)	-0.188340	0.013920	-13.52996	0.0000
D(LREXP)	-0.070620	0.005293	-13.34138	0.0000
D(LCEXP)	0.060467	0.003124	19.35686	0.0000
D(LEXCH)	0.029609	0.003808	7.775424	0.0002
D(LEXCH(-1))	-0.013851	0.002997	-4.621890	0.0036
D(M2)	-0.003165	0.000247	-12.80598	0.0000
CointEq(-1)*	-0.127443	0.002537	-50.23014	0.0000

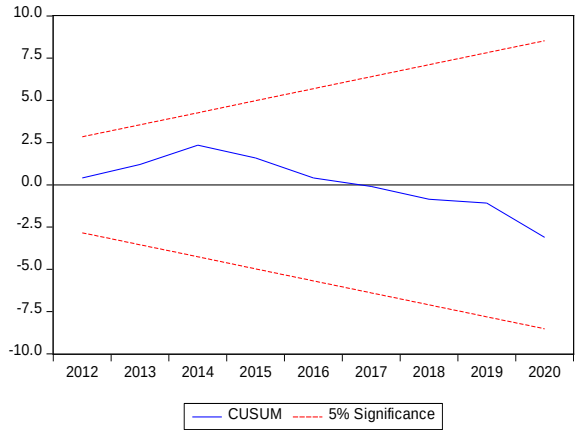
The error correction term (ECM) coefficients exhibit expected signs and significant p-values, specifically -0.135, -0.04, -0.010, and -0.127. The ECM coefficient exhibits a significant magnitude, indicating that a considerable proportion of the imbalances in the GDP resulting from the shocks of the previous year are corrected towards the long-term equilibrium in the current year, specifically at rates of 13.5.5%, 4%, 1%, and 12.7.3%. Such findings indicate that inflation is negative and show statistically significant with economic growth, while the money supply is also negative and statistically significant increases of environmental degradation. This result corroborates the findings of the previous work. Supporting the findings of Cole and Neumayer (2004), Han et al. (2014), Parikh and Shukla (1995), Wang et al.

(2020), our empirical findings suggest that urbanization has a deteriorating effect on environmental quality.

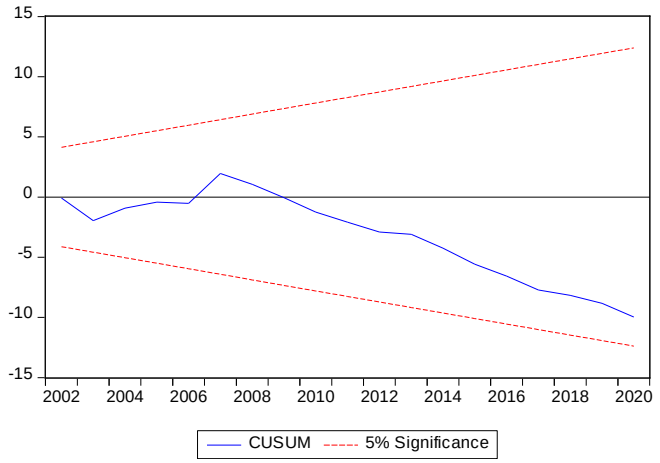
The stability test was also completed for the model. The CUSUM and CUSUMSQ techniques were employed as a final step in ARDL estimation to assess the stability of all coefficients in the ECM model. These methods involved calculating the cumulative sum of recursive residuals and the cumulative sum of squares of recursive residuals, respectively. Figure 1:6 displays the plots of the CUSUM and CUSUMSQ statistics.

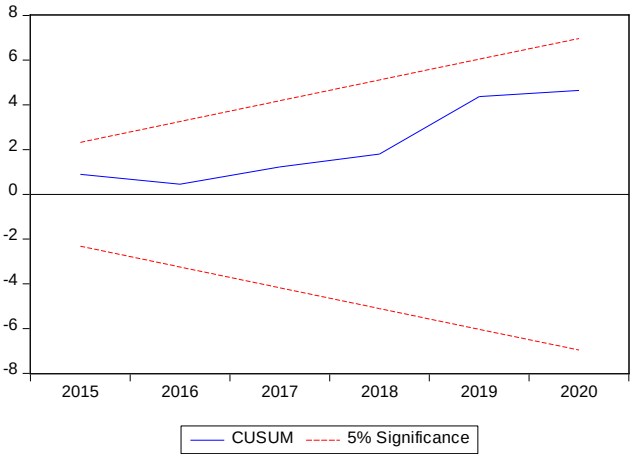
Fig 1.6 CUSUM STABILITY TEST

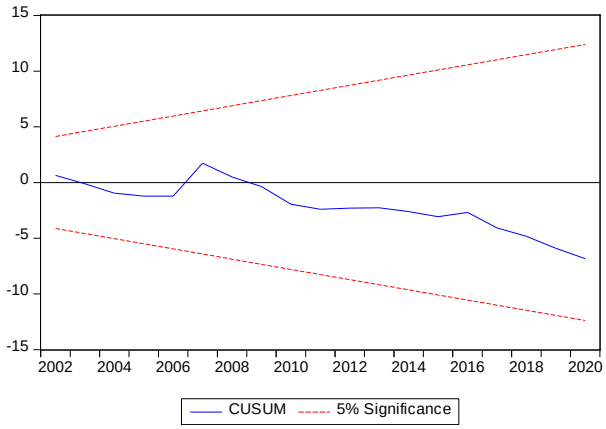
N1



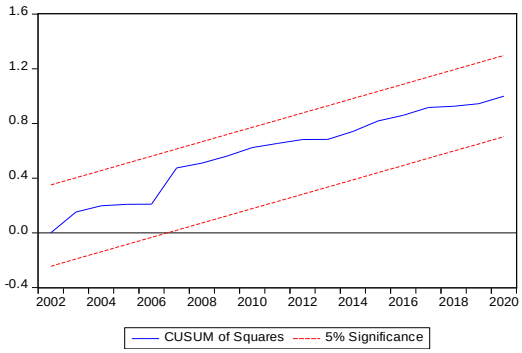
N2

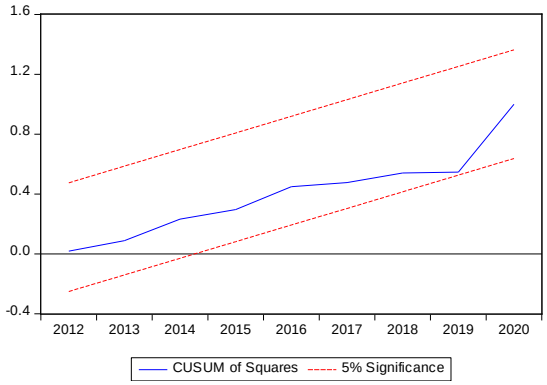


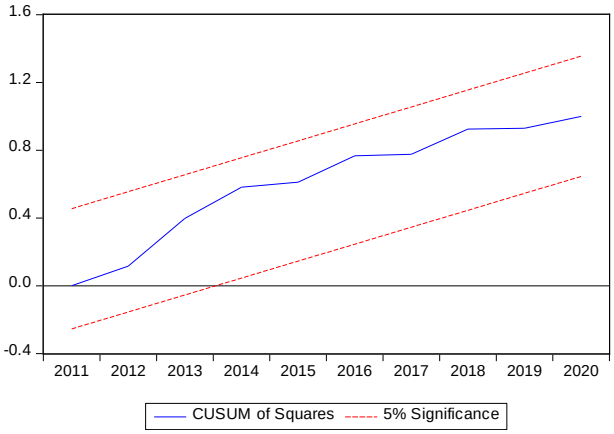


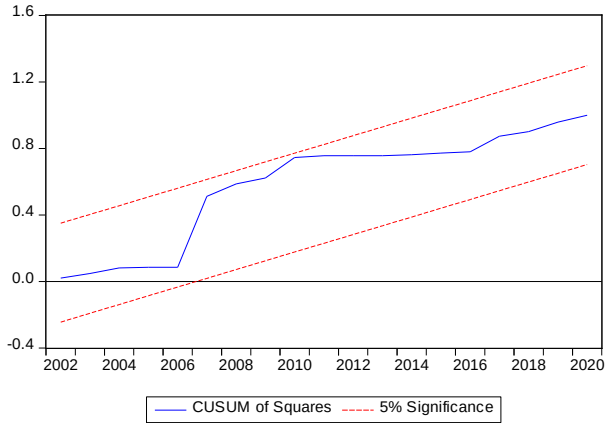


CUSUM of Square









5.0 Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between inflation, economic growth and government expenditure in Nigeria. The Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model was utilized to compute both the long-term and short-term estimates. Remarkably, the results disagree with the proposition of Ricardian equivalence in the new classical theory. Notably, the presence of a high negative coefficient of inflation was observed in Nigeria as well as in the United Kingdom and Pakistan. In cases where the inflation rate surpassed the threshold level, the growth nexus experienced a significant negative impact as a result of the inflation. The existing literature consisting of studies conducted in various countries, including Australia, Canada, Finland, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and the US, suggests there would

be a positive correlation between real income and government expenditure. Our estimation, however, reveals that the coefficient of government current expenditure is statistically insignificant when the government expenditure is disaggregated into government current expenditure and government capital expenditure.The statistical significance of the coefficient of government capital expenditure indicates that such expenditures generate positive externalities and linkages.

Throughout, this study assessed the robustness of the data via its application of cointegration analysis. Various diagnostic tests were utilized to examine autocorrelation, among them, the Breusch-Godfrey Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test. The findings of this test indicate that there is no evidence of autocorrelation. The stability of the model has been assessed and confirmed. The CUSUM and CUSUMSQ techniques were employed as a final step in ARDL estimation to verify the stability and suitability of all coefficients in the ECM model for effective policy analysis. The findings indicate the presence of a long-term equilibrium between the variables.

In final analysis, it is critical to undertake effective monetary policy initiatives targeted at reducing inflation.To successfully control inflationary pressures, it is advised that the central bank prioritize the adoption of tightening monetary policy measures such as rising interest rates, lowering the money supply, and adopting prudent fiscal management methods. It is also imperative to underscore the significance of upholding price stability by utilizing effective regulation and vigilant monitoring of prices in pivotal sectors. The implementation of measures aimed at addressing supply-side constraints is crucial. Such measures may include the improvement ure, the reduction of bottlenecks in production, and the promotion of competition to enhance productivity and reduce costs.

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Stuart Matheson

Political Trauma and the Burden of Memory in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

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Abstract

In contemporary novels by Igbo authors about the civil unrest and violence that characterizes 21st century Nigeria, the trauma of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War is part of the people's collective consciousness. Chimamanda Adichie, in particular, addresses the effects of the War on the psychology of the populace. For Adichie, the novel is a tool for interrogating the political structure as a catalyst for trauma and a site for the recurring psychic pain of the Igbos. Her stories, told by traumatized survivors and

her grandparents, demonstrate that memories of the Civil War have become insidious symbols of the socio-political crises in the national space. In *Half of a Yellow Sun,* she addresses the persistence of these psychic scars, finding political trauma reconfigured in the bodies and psyches of Civil War victims. In accordance with Maria Roots' argument that trauma at the subconscious level can be ameliorated if government policies address the collective suffering of the Igbo people, Adichie not only offers a critical reflection of Nigeria's historical past in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, she also reveals the underlying cause of the spate of uprisings in the country today.

Keywords: Political trauma, Nigeria-Biafra Civil War, Psychological and Emotional distress, Chimamanda Adichie

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Introduction

The persistence of memory often finds recourse in national consciousness. In Nigeria, the trauma of the Nigerian Civil War resonates in the civil unrest that permeates the politics of the nation. As Ojiako (1994), Achebe (2012), and Bird & Ottanelli (2017) point out, the Igbos have not recovered. The memory of Biafra has led to the political resurgence of dissident groups such as the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), the agitation of these secessionist movements rooted in grievances established during the three and half years of conflict and the various economic policies implemented by the government during the post-war period. Painful memories of Biafra also resonate in depictions of civil unrest and violence in contemporary novels written by Igbo

authors.

As Fassin and Retchman observe,"diametrical articulation of the individual and collective memory is fundamental to the representation of trauma across spatio-temporal space" (2009: 23). In literature, trauma can be viewed as any experience which is psychologically, mentally, and emotionally draining and is capable of negatively affecting human behaviour beit an experience of war, civil unrest, or political and ethno-religious violence. It is within the "context of narratisation of trauma that indignation is expressed and legitimized" (Fassin and Retchman, 2009: 188). To this end, the resurgence of violence in Nigeria's socio-political space called for contemporary Nigerian novelists to foreground their national trauma. Consequently, the dynamics of trauma in their works present shared ideas, values and ethics as well as the state's relations with its citizens. .

The Burden of Memory in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

The history of Nigeria evidences one very long night of colonialism, neocolonialism, corruption, ethnicity, bigotry, and underdevelopment. Added to these ills, coupled with the failure of dialogue and human reason to redress them, independence forced an "unusual assemblage of strange fellows into an unpleasant marriage"(Ezeliora, 2012: 103). It was this marriage that elicited cries for secession in the Eastern part of Nigeria. Acbehe, a writer of Igbo extract, who witnessed the horror of the Civil war, narrates in his memoir, *There was a Country* critical reflections of the three and half years of violence and death. Achebe describes the collective trauma produced war a "cataclysmic experience defined within the amplitude of reason and fundamental condition for [Nigerians'] continued existence as a people"(2012: 2). The memory of the wanton destruction of lives and properties is not forgotten when those of the Igbo

extraction perceive the possibility of a planned genocide (Waugh & Cronge, 1986).As Retchman and Faisser assert, "collective memory possesses a sort of latency" (2009: 16). Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* shows the hurt from collective and historical traumas remains indelibly inscribed in the psyches of individuals whose families have suffered during the Nigeria-Biafra civil war.

Retchman and Fassier further suggest the subjugated, the oppressed, the survivors, the accident victims, and the refugees are individuals whose wounded memories turn them into "concrete images of the vanquished whose history, far from disappearing along with their experience of defeat and misfortune, is reborn in the memory of subsequent generations"(2009: 16). They themselves are sites of memories. concretisations of the past that trauma victims can easily relate with and identify as pieces of evidence expressing their physic pain.

Adichie has often charged with narrating the Biafran experience from a single-story perspective (Alou, 2017: 105). Her characters, however, suggest her historical memory is informed by the personal trauma she suffered from losing both grandfathers and her family's inability to account for the disappearance of an uncle thirty-six years after the Civil War. For Adichie, confronting the suffering of her ethnic group and the horrors of the past and sharing the pain is essential to achieving a balanced citizenry and a humane society. As Ndebele notes, "narratives of memory in which real events are recalled, stand to guarantee us occasions for some moments of reflections" (1998: 20). Recollections of past events even are judged capable of offerring solutions to threatened national unity. One can submit that a deep inspection of Nigeria's troubled history is the only means by which its present challenges can be combated. Here, such reflections are conceived of in terms of the post-independence period, the Civil War

period, and Post-Biafra, especially in regard to the ruminations of citizens who have channelled their pain into various political protests which have worsened the already tense situation of their country.

On the "ineluctable penchant" of novelists of Igbo extraction to revisit the past, Amadiume notes

> [t]here is no escaping the burden of Biafra (having) denied ordinary civilian victims a chance to express their suffering, grief and anger. They were denied the right to tell their own truth and exposed the wounds of the past,… The unvoiced suffering of trauma continues to surface at critical moments. Biafra remains an unfinished business. Civilian victims were not given a chance to express their suffering, grief, and anger. They were denied the right to tell their own truth and expose the wounds of the past,...The top surface at critical moments. Biafra remains an unfinished business. (2000: 40-41)

The hasty nature of the reconciliation process and the injustices arising from completely obliterating Biafra from the national discourse and school curriculum re-invoked the anguish and pain occasioned by the loss of nationalist struggle. Most war narratives are often described by their anamnestic characteristics; they are imbued with traumatising properties when there is an individual or collective recollection. During this process, memory is refracted to produce psychological fulfillment which is the basis of literary production.

As Anyowu remarks, generally one can discern a crafted pattern of the commemorative recollection regarding a repressed past in the body of literature

(fiction and nonfiction) about Nigeria's socio-political life (2014: 3). In particular, Adichie explores changing patterns in the roles of women that result from political trauma. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, she shows that war increases the number of self-reliant women who reveal most become emotionally traumatised. More often than not, there is a reversal of duty with women taking up the responsibility of providing food and basic facilities for their children. To cope with this demand, a good number of women whose husbands have been killed, maimed, or are on the battlefront engage in consensual relationships with soldiers from the Federal troops. Adichie explores the vulnerability of such women. One is Mrs. Muokelu who provides food for her a large family despite the impending famine as a result of food blockage to the Biafran side. "I have twelve people to feed," she avers, "And that is not counting my husband's relatives who have just come from Abakaliki. My husband has returned from the war front with one leg. What can he do?" (*HAYS*: 293). She takes on the sole responsibility of catering for the children and the husband who has lost his means of livelihood and has lost his limb as a result of the war.

The trauma suffered by women and children during war produces an intricate web of traumatisation because of the vulnerability of these two groups. Inal notes, "for centuries. the physical pain of women has been translated into a social pain through the meanings attached to rape" (2013: 178). In *Half of a Yellow Sun,* rape is deployed as weapon of war. The willful violation of women and young girls, especially before their male relatives, is a deliberate act of crushing the resistance of the opposing side. Adichie illustrates the psychological and emotional experiences of victims of rape. The physical and emotional scars of such an experience, especially for the survivor, affirm the experience is shameful and difficult to acknowledge in a culture in which

rape is often taboo and generally perceived as the fault of the victim. Of course, the individuality of the traumatic experience of rape inscribes itself on the survivor and the community where such a sacrilegious act is perpetuated. Ultimately, the self, through communal perception, surrenders to the shattering of the inner image or physic suffering arising from such incidents. This corroborates Das'position's observation that "for women, the experience of rape must somehow be incorporated in their daily lives as they continue to function as mothers and providers, often in silence" (2007: 37).

Adichie's commitment to weigh in the trauma of families who watch their daughters and wives raped during the war is an open challenge to the aberrant and unethical behaviour resulting from warfare and the dehumanisation of women in wartime. Eberechi, for example, becomes the propriety of Federal troops. To prevent her family from being wiped out and to stop the only son of the family from being conscripted into the army, she is reduced to being a sexualised body exploited by the visiting soldiers. To them, she is only war booty, an object of sexual orgy, and a thrill for the soldiers. Although Eberechi depersonalises and detaches herself from her rape, she views her parent's actions as the only means of surviving the onslaught of the visiting soldier. The trauma of being offered to a total stranger and having to sleep with him each time he returns to the village reveals the price she has to pay to ensure the continued existence of her family. The situation in Ugwu's family is not in any way better. Anulika gang-raped and blinded in one eye, and Nnesinachi has a baby out of wedlock by a Hausa soldier who took care of her during the war. These victims' physical, psychological, and emotional pain cannot be addressed. Mibenge highlights the reason why survivors of rape are often emotionally shattered (2013: 41-42). He

points out that the trauma of rape victims is compounded by the fact that traditionally the attitude of most African societies is "rooted in patriarchal considerations (based on), fear of miscegenation; the idea that women raped by enemy army/ nation/ race will bear children that will be alienated from the targeted group".

The children produced by rape also suffer. Their status as unrecognised members of the community denies them the basic privileges which should naturally accrue to indigenes of such society. Bird & Ottanelli observe that the "ambiguity of the patrilineal line of offsprings of perceived enemy exudes them from holding office in the traditional structure" (2017: 196). In another instance, Ikuomola (2012) posits that the names borne by rape victims usually traumatise them throughout their lives. Another traumatic effect is that the children become more self-searching and introspective, and their actions often veer to violence. Adichie seems to suggest that the disaffection of present-day Biafrans can be attributed to social and political factors such as the violence and social breakdown caused by the war. In the specific case of Nigeria, the novelist asserts her position that the upsurge in violence experienced in all the states that make up Biafra and the country at large has been caused by the violent deaths of loved ones that has left many families distraught and emotionally unstable. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie's traumatised characters exhibit attributes that show that they continually re-enact their past traumatising experiences with their present world. In a way, the actions of these characters reiterate further the fact that trauma is not just a powerful negative psychological ordeal; its experience can assail the human mind making graphic representations of the painful past event possible with each recollection.

Representations of Collective Trauma in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

In the writings which resulted from the Nigeria-Biafra War, Ekwe-Ekwe (2006) and Amuta (1983) find a collective trauma that has continued to haunt the psyche of generations of the victims more than five decades after the tragedy. For the Igbos, the trauma of the incident of the civil war is complicated by the gruesome manner in which more than 3 million people, including men, women, and children, lost their lives in the pogroms preceding the war and in the actual war which lasted three and half years (Achebe, 2012; Waugh & Cronge, 1986; Ekwe-Ekwe,2006). Relics of the war still haunt the survivors, especially the Igbo. As Wole Soyinka notes, "memory is not governed by the statute of limitations and collective memory is the warp and weft of the tapestry of history that makes up society" (2000: 21). In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, a collective sense of loss has been woven into the history of the Igbo people by the Civil War. Denied closure, Nnaemeka's parents experience psychological and emotional trauma. knowing their son must have been killed in a gruesome manner with no one to remember his last hours. Nnaemeka's father, in particular, laments not being able to give him a befitting burial. He informs Richard, "We waited for him to return from the North and he did not return, so we had a funeral. We buried an empty coffin" (Adichie, 2006: 165). Closely linked to Nnameka's experience, a verbal report is the only evidence Olanna has that Arinze, Aunt Ifeka, Uncle Mbaezi, and Nwakwanze-Arinze's husband were killed during the riot that preceded the Civil War. She finds "the heavy weight of the four muted funerals weighted on her head, funerals based not on physical bodies but her words" (Adichie, 2006: 193). In both instances, Adichie's confirms Erickson's observation in collective trauma that although the "'We' continues to exist, it is damaged and permanently changed" (1995: 153-

154).This communal trauma is evident in the memorialisation of the names of the dead in specific historical sites in the Eastern states. Similarly, there is the communal trauma suffered by people in the middle-belt, especially in regard to the indigenes of Asaba. Federal troops decimated the inhabitants of this town, completely wiping out an entire community (Bird, 2011a, 2011b, 2014, 2015a, 2015b and Bird & Ottanelli, 2017).

Bird and Ottanelli also observe that the post-Nigeria-Biafra Civil War era ushered in a "unified" Nigeria because of "the actions of oppressive military governments that have negatively affected Nigerians of all ethnicities" (2014: 183). However, the trauma of the Igbos was worsened by feelings of injustice at the insensitivity of the regimes that

> [t]urned blind eye to or appeared impotent amid killings of persons from particular ethnic or religious groups and trigger-happy heads of state who gave shoot–on-sight orders to soldiers deployed to troubled sections of the country, particular ethnic or religious groups and trigger happy heads of state who gave shoot-on sight orders to soldiers, deployed to trouble section of the country, remain critical to understanding the contemporary waning of the affective Nigerians to the Nigerian state (Ukiwo, 2009: 12)

Trauma becomes institutionalised when government is perceived to have ratified violent acts by failing to intervene or prosecute the perpetrators of violence. The spate of violence described above generates social trauma, because the government in power failed to provide security for its citizens. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, memory

makes its forceful presence known via actual stories told by Adichie's parents who were active witnesses of the war, and Adichie's uncles who were participated in the conflict. Incidents in these stories memorialize actions at the war's front. Names of places such as Nsukka, Port-Harcourt, and Afikpo in South-East Nigeria which is the heartland of the Biafran enclave (and most importantly, where the death of Christopher Okigbo, a foremost player in the Biafran war occurred), remain etched in the collective memory of the Igbos. Bernadi observes that

> [p]laces of memory are places of consciousness. The absent bodies of the disappeared are an immense archive of information preserved from degradation through the collective art of memory. The unknown bodies of the disappeared are an immense archive of information preserved from the degradation through the collective art of memory. The unknown bodies have become private and public entities. Documents, photographs, literature and art narrate the history of the disappeared allowing a sculpture liaison between the vacant generation and all standing in this side of the abyss. Memory is a tool to build social consciousness. (2018: 177)

For Adichie, the loss of the Biafran dream concretises trauma for the Igbos. The proclamation of "no victor, no vanquished" by the Federal government assigns a stoic resignation to a good number of survivors. Odenigbo's sense of loss and hopelessness culminates in total disenchantment. Olanna observes that "his drinking silenced him. It made him retreat into himself and look out at the world with bleary, weary eyes" (Adichie, 2006: 380). Odenigbo affirms Van der Kolk and Van der Hart's

summation that "traumatised individuals may engage in self-destructive behavior" (1995). As the war comes to an end, Odenigbo feels that he has been and disempowered bythe Biafran surrender to Nigeria. Subsequently, he became emasculated because his vision and dream of a new nation has been annihilated. Odenigbos trauma advances Fassin and Retchman's argument that it is "wounds in the collective memory that contributes to the construction of identity of different social groups" of (2009: 15). I

Another factor that constitutes collective trauma for the Biafrans in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is the hardship occasioned by the change of currency during the period of the crisis. The Biafrans woke up to a directive by the Federal government after the civil war that all Biafran currency should be deposited in exchange for 20 Nigerian pounds. Aka (2005: 49) observes that "the action pauperised the Igbo middle class and the government earned at its expense a profit of £4 million for the nation's treasury". Negative feelings from this perceived injustice have constantly traumatised the affected families for decades, especially those who were unable to overcome the abject poverty as a result of this national policy.

Further concretising the Igbos' trauma, the indiscriminate bombing of civilian targets like churches and markets is another instance of unethical behaviour on the part of the state. Introducing the paradigm of predator and prey, Adichie casts the state in the role of the agressor attacking its own citizens. During the bombardment of St. Sebastian Catholic church

> Ugwu looked up and saw the planes, gliding low beneath the blue sky like two birds of prey. They spurted hundreds of scattered bullets before dark balls rolled out from underneath as if the planes were laying large eggs. The first explosion was so loud Ugwu's ear popped

> and his body shivered alongside the vibrating ground. blue sky like two birds of prey. They spurted hundreds of scattered bullets before dark balls rolled out from underneath as if the planes were laying large eggs. The first explosion was so loud Ugwu's ears popped and his body shivered alongside the vibrating ground (Adichie, 2006*:* 202)

The bombing of such non-military targets is a war crime generally undertaken to unnerve civilians into surrendering. Unfortunately, the outcome of this unnatural act of terrorism convinces the Biafrans that the war is ethnocide. This perceived stance of the Federal government towards the secessionist state has remained a source of trauma for the people collectively. As Fassin and Retchman observe, "historical traumatic experience is the source that marks and defines contemporary individual identity as well as a racial or cultural identity" (2009: 153). Accordingly, Adichie chronicles the intensity of suffering among the people so that the reader's mental balance is also threatened. An undertone of insanity reverberates among the characters as the devastating consequences and conditions of the war continue: there are hungry children with swollen bellies, air raids causing enormous loss of lives and properties, truncated education, and soldiers intimidatinf and brutalizing civilians. These situations are part of the traumatisation of the old Biafran nation. The damaging effects of these barbaric acts enforce more social trauma, especially the malicious act of starvation as a tool promoting surrender.

Throughout, trauma in *Half of a Yellow Sun* becomes insidious. It promotes that Fanon views as the "crumbling of the corporeal schema" of individual—the shattering of self that generates a "crisis in the soul," imposed by political and

economic institutions. In postcolonial Nigeria, psychic splitting of the state's citizens is the result of a national dysfunction in which traumatised individuals, like Aidiche's Odenigbo are "abraded into nonbeing" (Fanon, 1961: 109). The psychological and mental exhaustion that results often "causes [individuals] to develop feelings of an inferiority complex and self-hatred" (Craps & Buelens, 2008: 3).

Conclusion

In final analysis, the nexus of memory, trauma, and postcolonialism in *Half of a Yellow Sun* advocates for new expressions of Nigerian nationhood and more support for more overtly political movements that have gained considerable prominence in recent years. Here it is important to note the formation of secessionist movements like MASSOB and IPOB were rooted in grievances established during the post-war period. The complexity of trauma in twenty-first-century Nigeria is compounded by the countless violent and often ethically-based confrontations in different parts of the country. As Adichie warns, the future of the country isbound to be turbulent, because Nigeria is a nation held by the memory and the trauma of the War. As *Half of a Yellow Sun* points out, the cultural integration and economic growth expected to follow the War has been stifled, the consciousness required for the citizens to develop the nation has been eroded, and patterns of collective trauma have become evident in the country's socio-political spaces. It is time to recognise the memorialisation of the historical sites and implement policies to ameliorate the injustices of the past. It is time to foreground a national ethos that will help the Biafran nation heal from the psychological distress of her horrific past.

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Metatheatre in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: Recycling or Reviving the Script?

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Abstract

The article discusses whether metatheatre in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* constitutes a recycling of the remanent or breathing a new soul in the text. Recycling the remanent means that the Shakespearean text is residual, remaining, and invalid, and that metatheatre comes to recycle it. The analysis proposes to dwell on manifestations of metatheatre in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Detailed examples of metatheatre are displayed and explained. The study stipulates that the Shakespearean text does not end as a remanent because of its ongoing undercurrents. However, metatheatre comes as one of the dynamics inherent to the text, to complement it but not to recycle it. Metatheatre, thus, starts when the text halts. The latter only takes a theatrical pause before going ahead again. Metatheatre comes as a text beyond and space beyond to mock theatre and fill in the gaps of the main text. The study of metatheatre suggests

the limitations of both text and theatre but also shows how the concept offers new revival and interpretation scopes to this very text. As a technique, metatheatre allows transmigration through the enactment of silence.

Keywords: Hamlet; metatheatre; Shakespeare; Transmigration; theatrics; recycling the dramatic text.

The Residual and the Emergent

Recycling is a process that reuses leftover or excess, transforming it into new materials or new products. It is, thus, a re-fashioning of the residual that gives birth to something new out of something used. Recycling is also about recreating energy and new dynamics out of waste. As a transformative process, recycling does exist in literature. Literary components may be recycled and modified to generate new works while drawing on current literary norms, much as materials can be repurposed and transformed to decrease waste and save resources. In literary creations and within literary modes, recycling is the operation of reprocessing ideas, characters, storylines, or literary devices from earlier works to develop new stories, forms, and texts. The whole transformative procedure takes place within the framework of literary conventions. Recycling different components in literature includes referring to the same protagonists, stock characters, stereotypes, locations, storylines, symbols, and themes and conferring to them a new dimension.

Moreover, intertextuality could be read as an act of recycling since new texts rely on the remnants of old ones with explicit connections, references, or even rein-

terpretations of these textual remnants. Additionally, recycled literature can be re-contextualised to communicate new meanings or views, much as recycled objects can take on new forms and purposes.[1] From another perspective, literary conventions provide a standard set of strategies that authors and audiences can comprehend, such as story patterns, styles of narration, and genre standards. The act of recycling these conventions enables writers to subvert accepted standards, creating, thus, a transmigrant literary environment. Recycling in literature is also about reusing conventions, writing strategies, culture, history, and contexts. It can reveal shifts, changes, and worries of ages. However, while works from distinct eras may repeat identical ideas, they do so in different ways.

From a different angle, one must uphold the influence of postmodernism in literature and its focus on self-awareness, self-reference, and self-reflexiveness. For postmodern writers, recycling is a common strategy that enables them to build statements on the nature of narratives and texts. In this vein, metafiction, thanks to its self-referential nature, becomes an act of recycling where writers purposefully highlight the writing process and the story's design. Metafiction becomes an act of repurposing the residual, more precisely, the media through which stories, narratives, and devices are concocted initially.

Interesting examples of recycling are evident in Early Modern literature. For example, the Shakespearean dramatic texts and their theatrical performances are likely to include recycled residual elements. Thematically, many of Shakespeare's plays are re-visitations that interpret forgotten stories and older records. Reviving, re-interpreting, and remodelling older sources is an act of recycling the remnant. Shake-

1. For instance, contemporary retellings of traditional fairy tales frequently challenge gender norms to reflect modern views.

speare uses older, often overlooked stories to create different versions. Out of Geraldi di Cinthio's *Gli Heccatomithi* (2023), he, for example, makes *Othello* (2015) and invents the character of Iago.[2] The histories, the legends, and the stories are transmitted from one generation to another with residuals that constitute a remanent of stories. New dramatic texts create fresh perspectives out of the remanent. Theatrically, on-stage plays and adaptations reuse sets and build on past performances. At every performance of William Shakespeare's plays, the props encompass small, portable items and more substantial furnishings. Even though the theatregoers of that time occupied the front stage and the sides, posing challenges in concealing, changing, or introducing extensive scenery and weighty decorations once the play was underway, the performances included recycled sets, costumes, and hand-held props.[3]

The article proposes to reflect on the dynamics of the residual and the emergent in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (2008) from the lens of metatheatre. The research dwells primarily on metatheatre as a distinct and a posteriori process from the dramatic script. Detailed examples of metatheatre in the play are displayed and explained after surveying the literature review of the concept. The study of manifestations of metatheatre in *Hamlet* is crucial since it allows us to determine all that is leftover and to designate the recycled area. After examining the manifestations of metatheatre in the play, the concluding part of the present study discusses whether the latter is an act of recycling or breathing a new soul in the text.

At this level, it is crucial to define what constitutes the residual and what consti-

2. For further details about the invention of the character of Iago by Shakespeare, see Ben Amor, Zied. 2022. "'Santiago Matamoros' or Saint James the Moor Killer: Who Wants to Kill the Moor in William Shakespeare's *Othello*?" (153).

3. Thomas Larque details, in "A Lecture on Elizabethan Theatre", that everyday items frequently used in Elizabethan theatre, like swords, daggers, goblets, breastplates, armour sets, candles, animal hides, crowns, chairs, and flowers, were integrated into the scenes. A designated "prop manager" was responsible for maintaining the arrangement and accessibility of these props to actors during their performances.

tutes the transformative in the realm of drama. The dramatic script is the written material that constitutes the foundation for a theatrical performance. It includes dialogues, stage directions, and all the textual elements that guide actors and directors through the process of bringing a play to life. The script is, thus, the written embodiment of the dramatic text; it is the core component that communicates characters, plots, and central ideas. Consequently, the written script is residual since it includes the essence of the story that remains, whatever the interpretations and theatrical productions are. The script is the foundation and the blueprint for the performance; it paves the ground for the transformative dimension of metatheatre, which incorporates self-references, self-awareness and a re-assessment of what theatre and performance are.

The theatrical production goes through different stages, from a written script on pages to metatheatrical occurrences where theatricality is brought to the forefront, the on-stage performance where the play comes to realisation, and performances of the same text across ages and cultures.[4] The questions of theatrical production layers, theatricality, performance on stage, and selves and voices inhabiting the lifecycle of a dramatic text are challenging to tackle. Do we have a text and a text beyond? Is a performance a remnant of a text or a text recycled? What about metatheatre? What are the residual and emergent verandas within a theatrical production? In the context of an article on residual versus recycled remnants in *Hamlet*, examining the literature review on metatheatre is essential since it enables an extensive investigation that leads to an accurate and clearly defined comprehension of this nuanced concept.

4. The theatrical production englobes the whole procedure of interpreting the written material (script), adding metatheatrical aspects, and finally producing a performance where players bring the protagonists and plot into existence on stage.

Literature Review on Metatheatre

The fascinating possibilities that dramatic texts and their performances offer are rich. Within the multitude of procedures of making a play, to name but a few, there are playwrights, actors, audiences, directors, critics, and various corporate bodies. There are also infinite possibilities for migratory processes of plays from page to stage or via different receptions of dramatic texts through ages and cultures. James Calderwood, in *Shakespearean Metadrama* (2012), explains that "the dramatic art […] its materials, its media of language and theatre, its generic forms and conventions, its relationship to truth and the social order, is a dominant Shakespearean theme" (Calderwood 2012, 5). For him, drama exists, but there are also dramatic genres that go further than drama, which introduces possibilities of intermingling between plays as self-contained entities and life in general. Lionel Abel was aware of the multi-dimensional aspect of theatre when he coined the term "metatheatre" in his book *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form* (2012). Whether we agree with Lionel Abel's view of Shakespearean tragedies[5] or his definition of metatheatre,[6] his book invites critics to revisit the different multi-layers a dramatic text offers. Abel, for example, believes that plays "and characters in them are of the playwright's invention" (Abel 2012, 59). He insists on differentiating between the character of a play and a character on stage: "Persons appearing on the stage […] knew they were dramatic before the playwright took note of them" (Abel 2012, 60). The characters' awareness of their theatricality and the possible existence of a self-contained identity for actors are fascinating issues

5. Lionel Abel considers in his *Metahteatre: A New View of Dramatic Form* (2012) that the only genuine tragedy by Shakespeare is Macbeth (Abel 2012, 59).

6. Thomas Rosenmeyer states in his article "'Metatheatre': An Essay on Overload" (2002) that the concept of metatheatre should not be followed anymore because it is too generic and because it "elicit[s] responses that undervalue the traditional inventiveness and the wonderful immediacy of the emotional power of theatre" (Rosenmeyer 2002, 119).

to discover in plays like Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (2008).

Richard Hornby's book *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception* (1986) introduces the concept of metadrama in theatre. Hornby believes that plays are self-contained parodies reflecting themselves rather than reality. He claims that: "drama is not a mirror held up to nature" (Hornby 1986, 27). Hornby lists six different variations of metadrama, which are "the play within the play" (30), "the ceremony within the play" (49), "role-playing within the role" (67), "literary and real-life references within the play" (88), and "self-references" within the play (103). The culminating point in Hornby's research on metadrama resided in the fact that the concept does not only dwell on the manoeuvring of drama. His investigation bridges the gap between drama in operation and cultural complexities on the one hand and drama and perception on the other. Hornby's ideas allow reading metadrama or metatheatre from the supra textual or supra performative lens. Dealing with supra layers within metatheatrical occurrences, one can mention Katherine Maus, who has worked on the idea of the self and theatre. In her book *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (1995), Maus introduces the notion of the theatrical self. She highlights that dichotomies between visible outward theatrical appearances and an inward disposition make characters theatrical subjects who display what she calls the "theatricalisation of inwardness" (Maus 1995, 32).

At the level of performance, Leonard C. Nathaniel introduces what he calls the "Spectrum of Dramatic Layering" (Nathaniel 2023, 11). To emphasise the different levels of performance present within a single theatrical production, Leonard develops a theoretical framework for comprehending metatheatrical staging. He explains how a production may make a statement on its theatricality, erasing the distinction

between the audience's actual reality and the imaginary world of the play.

Focusing on the above definitions enables us to state that metatheatre is a mode, a convention and a writing technique of a transformative and transmigratory nature that could be read as an act of recycling. Before reflecting on the nature of metatheatre within the residual versus the emergent paradigm, one must display significant examples of such a concept in *Hamlet*. Doing so would enhance our contemplation on whether metatheatre is an act of recycling or an injection of fresh perspectives into the dramatic narrative. The upcoming subsection will, consequently, delve into the practical implementation of metatheatre in *Hamlet*.

Metatheatre in *Hamlet*

Lionel Abel considers Hamlet in *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form* (2012) as one of the most famous exemplifications of metatheatre. Abel believes that Hamlet is a metatheatrical character par excellence. For him, the Prince of Denmark "has the capacity to dramatise others, and, thus, put them in whatever situation he is intent on being in" (Abel 2012, 61). In *Hamlet*, metatheatre is present in different forms and variations. The Prince's soliloquies, notably in Act 2, Scene 2, are metatheatrical par excellence. The Prince's soliloquy includes transformative dimensions that go beyond reading a script. In this soliloquy, Hamlet plays the role of a theatre critic, a dramaturge and a stage director whose primary role is to decide upon the most suitable interpretation of the play while showing an awareness of the main elements of drama on stage. The first part of this soliloquy displays one of the most refined definitions of a theatrical performance in the history of world literature. The greatness of his definition could be compared to the one Edgar Allan Poe gave about the short story.[7] Ham-

7. Poe's review entitled *Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'Twice-Told Tales'* (2001), published in *Graham's Magazine* in May 1842, brought him the title of the father of the modern short story. Poe's ideas have been considered guide-

let provides readers and critics with minute critical details and an exhaustive diet of specifics related to the making of the play and blocking[8] it from the perspective of a stage director. He asserts that a good play is dream-like: "fiction, a dream of passion" (2.2.546). By doing so, he acknowledges theatre's illusory and transcendent dimension as Abel has displayed it (Abel 2012, 12). Hamlet, then, parades a professional knowledge of performers' direction with a focus on minute details like facial expressions, personality traits, physical demands of the character, actors' state of mind, eye and body postures, attitudes on stage, character objectives, small scale movements, vocal techniques, voice and tone specificities, acoustic qualities on stage, pace and tempo, acting potential, placing actors in space and time, physical and verbal action, workable floor plans, stage vibes, motivation and the importance of creating a cathartic effect to seek audiences' responses. Hamlet's speech is character-oriented, a token of his awareness of the importance of theatricality and the necessity of creating a theatrical being on stage. Moreover, the directions given by Hamlet transport the script from a text on a page to a new dimension related to performance:

> But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
>
> Could force his soul to his own conceit
>
> That from her working all his visage wann'd,

lines for the short story and quoted by imminent scholars and critics. Poe declares that "a skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents, but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents-he- then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tends not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition, there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one preestablished design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction." (Poe 1984, 586)

8. The expression "blocking" is technical regarding the minute staging of actors that directors do before any public performance. Hamlet, in the soliloquy mentioned above, does blocking.

Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

With forms to his conceit […]

He would drown the stage with tears

And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,

Make mad the guilty and appall the free,

Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed

The very faculties of eyes and ears.

(Shakespeare 2014, 1.2. 545-551, 556-560)

Hamlet's comment about the player's performance of Queen Hecuba mourning the death of her husband, King Priam, tells the play's story compellingly; it describes a good stage performance with a clear vision and an articulate description of the emotional temperature of the scene. Most importantly, it accentuates the role and the importance of characters on stage who become performers with selves, personalities, feelings, frustrations, and hopes. That is precisely what a good play Director is supposed to do; that is also what a theatre critic or a playgoer would say while watching or commenting on a play. One should remember that before this soliloquy, Hamlet participates in a pure act of dramaturgy when holding auditions with the actors from the company of the players. His encounter with them could be compared to a technical meeting between the play Director and his actors before the rehearsal schedule. The Prince's exchange with the players shows his awareness of technical components such as dramatic composition, theatrical representations, and actable forms of the-

atre. Hamlet's words deeply reflect on acting, cast members, and theatre in general. At this level, it is possible to read *Hamlet* from the lens of Stanislavsky's system.[9] While exchanging with the players and during his ensuing soliloquy, Hamlet practices conscious thinking and indulges in the "art of experiencing a role" (Milling and Ley 2001, 32). By commenting on theatre, Hamlet uses his conscious thought to provoke an emotional experience in the soliloquy of Act One, Scene 2. In addition, in the "to be or not to be" soliloquy, Hamlet is an actor in rehearsal whose conscious thought is mobilised to activate a whole psychological process and emotional experiences that will culminate during the dumb show.

From another perspective, Hamlet's metatheatrical tendencies are related to recycling and regenerating new dimensions. His awareness of the repetitive nature of human actions, the primacy of theatre, and his meditation on fate reflect his tendencies to move a step further towards the recreation of a new world and a new universe.[10] His critical comments on life and performance and his staging of a play within the play are tokens of a *mise en abyme*. Hamlet's awareness of deceit and duplication is in harmony with the broader themes of recycling and repetition in the play, underscoring the interconnectedness of his role as a commentator, a participant, and a director within the larger narrative of the play.

Theatrically speaking, the presence of the company of the players in *Hamlet* is metatheatrical and multi-dimensional. Hamlet brings on stage a company of profes-

9. For further details about the "the system" concept, see *An Actor's Work on a Role* (2010) by Konstantin Stanislavsky and Jean Benedetti. In the above soliloquy, Hamlet is a reminder of the immersive dimension of Stanislavski's system, which aims to create realistic characters by working on their emotional recall explorations of the sub-text, motivations, and experiences.

10. For further scrutiny of issues like the meta-self and identity development in times of crisis, see Zied Ben Amor in "From Illness to Meta-selves in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *King Lear*: New Identities in the Time of Disease" (2022) and "Staging Violence in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: From the Theatrics of the Mind, the Image and the Stage to the Creation of the Meta-Self" (2023).

sional actors who do not participate in the play. They are invited to perform in front of an audience constituted by the play's characters. Consequently, the actors in *Hamlet* become spectators of a new performance. Two sets of audiences are created: the audiences of the main play, on the one hand, and the actors of the play transformed into audiences of the play-within-the-play, on the other. In such a situation, the focus of the playgoers and theatre audiences is undoubtedly not on the performance of the play-within-the-play; it is instead directed to the response and the reaction of the characters on stage. Consequently, real-life audiences watch and observe on stage illusory audiences who, themselves, watch and observe and comment on a performance, which is a re-enactment of a performance. Like Russian dolls, the technique of the *mise en abyme* functions perfectly at this level to create a dimension that goes beyond the script. Dieter Mehl ascertains that "the more skilful dramatists often took care not to make the inserted play too absorbing, so as not to distract the audience" (Mehl 1965, 44). However, the impromptu performance by the company of the players in *Hamlet* accentuates the excellent quality of the show to the point that Hamlet expresses his bewilderment after their spectacle, as we have seen previously in the analysis.

On another scale, the acting self and the acting mind are characteristics of Hamlet. His "to be or not to be soliloquy", which takes place in Act 3, Scene 1, is an excellent example of how serious matters like suicide are enacted. Hamlet plays the role of the reflexive impresario who cogitates coldly on universal matters without being emotionally involved. His soliloquy takes the form of an exercise of a rehearsal of a play text. Richard K. Sanderson, in his article "Suicide as Message and Metadrama in English Renaissance Tragedy" (1992), comments on the link between performance

and the theme of suicide: "The fame of Hamlet's 'to be or not to be' (3.1.55-87) is suggestive and appropriate: it hints at a deeply felt if rarely articulated, connection between suicide and play-acting". (Sanderson 1992, 199).

Sanderson differentiates in his article between actual suicide and stage suicide with a focus on the notion of multiplicity of layers and meanings and the consideration of what he calls "self-dramatising" (199) and "self-fashioning" (199) theatrical suicide as forms of "Theatrum Mundi" (200) since the stage becomes the world and the world becomes a grand stage: "Stage-suicide served as a flexible device for creating a dramatic closure, a kind of *diabolus ex machina* with a multiplicity of meanings and uses". (Sandersen 1992, 200).

Sanderson's above expression, "*diabolus ex machina*", shows that the whole dramatic construct includes regenerative dimensions that bypass the text. In the "to be or not to be" soliloquy, for example, the idea of suicide becomes an on-stage mimetic manifestation narrated through dramaturgy and enacted in a soliloquy. In that instance, metatheatre takes a multi-layered dimension. It stems from a paradoxical situation since what is expressed as a desire to obliterate life is impossible to accomplish on stage. The expression of suicide in theatre is transformed into a denial of death on stage. In a nutshell, the desire to suicide, once staged, creates a metadramatic effect and enhances the unreal, the transformative and the illusory. Suicide becomes an instrument used to show the power of theatricality in the hands of a skilled actor.

Other manifestations of how new dimensions are created beyond the written script in the play come to the fore when characters become transcendent and play roles beyond their initial ones. Characters in *Hamlet* are both players and playmakers; they are simultaneously actors and makers of trouble. The play has almost a Beck-

ettian atmosphere where what happens on stage comments on theatre. Characters do not stick to their original roles; they go a step further by over-acting, disguising their true selves, and concealing their identities. In this vein, Claudius never shows that he is a cold-blooded, calculating murderer. After the famous closet scene, Gertrude hides her knowledge about the murder from her husband. While exchanging with Hamlet, Ophelia does not inform him that she is under her brother's and father's control. Almost all the characters indulge in over-acting; they conceal their true motives, including the buffoonish Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. One can thus talk about performances-within-performances in *Hamlet*. Act One, Scene Two is a perfect example of a performance-within- a performance where a whole play has been concocted by King Claudius and supported by the court of Denmark. King Claudius's first encounter with the court and the nobility is a play on its own since it contains monologues, observations, and anecdotes. It is like a company of players' entrance on stage in any Elizabethan theatre with music and trumpets:

> *Flourish. Enter Claudius, King of Denmark, Gertrude the QUEEN, Council* […] *Hamlet* [dressed in black]. (Shakespeare 2008, 1.2. Stage direction)

From the perspective of scenography and, more precisely, scenic design, the play's stage has become a theatre's reproduction. The floor plan in this scene can be sketched out; it is divided into two main areas: the performance scene, the acting area, where Claudius is going to perform a new role, and the scene of the audience or the House where the performance of Claudius is observed, commented upon, and applauded by the spectators. Within the acting area, we have an Upstage, a Down-

stage, a Stage right and a Stage left. Claudius, who will play the King's game, could be Upstage on the Tarras before the curtain or Centre Stage, and Laertes and Polonius could occupy Stage Left and Stage Right. Prince Hamlet, dressed in black, could be Downstage, and the court occupies the audience's area or the House. Graphically speaking, the stage of *Hamlet* in this scene is a reproduction of a theatre.

Apart from the stage organisation, Claudius, in this scene, is metatheatrical. The murderer performs the role of the King of Denmark. His melodious opening speech, dominated by a flowing blank verse, seems balanced and well-rehearsed, with particular attention to the audience's reaction when he introduces his questionable incestuous marriage. His utterances are well-structured. However, they are contradictory and hollow. Words, thus, become residuals that acquire new meanings. Claudius' sorrow is described as "wisest" (1.2. 6), his joy is "defeated" (1.2. 10), and his eyes are "auspicious and dropping" (1. 2. 11). The speech of Claudius is paradoxical; on the hand, it looks poetic and balanced, but on the other, it is of a buffoonish and caricatural nature. It is there where the regenerative dimension of metatheatre resides. Its purpose is to mock theatre and show its illusory nature and limitations.

The burlesque reprocessing performance of the murderer, who usurps the King's role and theatrically tries to carry the court with him, is also visible through his interchange with Laertes. Claudius becomes verbose; his verse transports him; he enjoys parading a bombastic, snobbish self. Shakespeare insists on Claudius cosying with Laertes by citing him at least five times in less than nine lines. The theatrical effect of such an emphasis is to accentuate Claudius's parading theatrical, exuberant, over-acting nature. As for Laertes, he accepts to play into the hands of Claudius and takes part in the performance, endorsing the role of the obedient, meek subject whose main

reason beyond his return from France is to attend the coronation of Claudius and not the funeral of King Hamlet. Very soon, after he displays an indulgent self, Claudius is confronted by his black-suited nephew in a different area of the stage in this carefully managed performance. The fact that Hamlet is dressed in black and occupies a different place on the stage floor or the apron stage accentuates the idea that this scene has its proper visual, experiential, and spatial dimensions, all along with a rhythm, pace, and tempo, which make of it metatheatrical par excellence.

Out of the initial stage, new stages are born. While Claudius, Hamlet and Laertes are actors in the King's game performance, the other members of the court play the role of the audience. They undoubtedly comment on and discuss the play-acting of Claudius, Hamlet, and Laertes. They probably allude to the incestuous marriage between Claudius and Gertrude, make fun of the usurper and pity the destiny of Hamlet.

The regenerating dimension of metatheatre goes beyond the idea of presenting theatrical selves in performance to cover staging difficulties. Correspondingly, the staging of a ghost figure, whose nature is ambiguous since nobody knows whether it is "a spirit of health or goblin damn'd" (Shakespeare 2014, 1.4.40), becomes both problematic and of a remodelling nature. In the literature review section, we have seen that metatheatre stresses reflexivity in theatre and accentuates its artificial dimension, as Lionel Abel claims in his book *Metatheatre* (Abel 2012, 133). Consistently, the staging of the ghost is metatheatrical. The heavy-armoured figure appears for the first time in Act 1 just after the exchanges between the sceptical Horatio and the impatient sentries in the battlements, which could take place in the apron stage. His first appearance in the opening play is like a pantomime sequence. His initial exit is probably from the main trap raised onto the stage or the Upper Stage via mechanisms using

ropes and winches or from the stage door into the Centre Stage or the Tarras, as John Dover Wilson claims in *What Happens in Hamlet* (1913, 143). Different interesting possibilities of interpreting the staging of the ghost are discussed by eminent critics of Shakespeare like Wilson in his book *The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies* (1913) and Herbert E. Childs in his article "On the Elizabethan Staging of *Hamlet*" (1962) and James G. McManaway in "The Two Earliest Prompt Books of *Hamlet*" (1949) and Diana Macintyre DeLuca in "The Movements of the Ghost in *Hamlet*" (1973). Also, a plethora of directors and filmmakers have attempted to personalise the staging of the ghost in the different screen versions of *Hamlet*, such as Franco Zeffirelli (1990), Kenneth Branagh (1996), Peter Brook (2002) and Gregory Doran (2011). However, what makes the ghost metatheatrical is not how it is interpreted; instead, it is the way Shakespeare suspends the audiences' disbelief through a very particular staging of such a figure in what is known as the "cellarage scene."[11] In this scene, the ghost bids Prince Hamlet's companions to "Swear" to keep the secret. The repartee between Hamlet and the ghost is not only a humorous banter with a grotesque dimension due to the rude language used by Hamlet, who is lampooning the ghost and distancing himself from his control; it is also of a reassembling dimension since words are converted to visual theatrical directions and signs:

> Ah ha, boy, say'st thou so? Art thou there, truepenny?
>
> Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellarage […]
>
> Well said, old mole! Canst work i' th' earth so fast?
>
> A worthy pioneer! Once more, remove good friends.
>
> (1.5. 158-159, 170-171)

11 Act 1, Scene 5.

Their exchange indicates precisely how the ghost and Hamlet move on stage. When Hamlet mentions "the fellow in the cellarage", we understand that he is on stage and that the ghost is moving beneath the stage. Shakespeare, in this scene, does not only suspend the disbelief of the audience as to the veracity of the ghost, since the latter is a supernatural entity, but he also suspends the belief of the audience as to the reality of theatre and ridicules the boundaries of stagecraft by showing its limitation while staging a supernatural character. At this level, out of the script, fictional action merges with the theatrical one; the play mocks itself, and theatre shows its limitations. This scene is metatheatrical par excellence since it invites audiences and readers to reflect on theatre-making. Shakespeare delivers the message not through dialogue but through action and performance; the message is non-verbal but visual. There is grotesquery about the scene and a sudden shift from a cathartic tempo to a carnivalesque one with gaming and buffoonery. In the "cellarage scene", Shakespeare shifts from solemnity to farcical gaming, challenging the audience's expectations by conferring a comic dimension to the ghost rather than a horrific one. In a kindred way, A. C. Bradley acknowledges, in his notes about *Hamlet* in *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1991), the presence of the grotesque in the "cellarage scene". Bradley believes that the grotesque is visual; it happens when the Prince moves from one part of the scene to another, accompanied by the injunctions of the ghost coming "from under the stage" (Bradley 1991 Note E, 412). Such a scene shakes the audience's certainty about the realism of theatre. Shakespeare creates an effect of estrangement to invite readers and spectators to think of the upcycling artificial nature of theatre. The Prince himself mocks the ghost and asks his companions to "shift [the] ground" (Shakespeare 2014, 1.5.164) and "remove" (1.5.171) so that he can prepare his play-within-the-play and

dream of the dumb show preceding the *Murder of Gonzago*. Expressions like "shifting" and "removing" are tokens of the transformative dimension of theatre. Hamlet not only debunks the ghost but also signals its theatricality; he reminds the audience of the artificiality of the situation. It is remarkable, then, to notice that the dynamics of the play in *Hamle*t are based on a series of inter-connected metatheatrical episodes leading to one another. Consequently, Claudius' speech in front of the court in Act 1 Scene 2 is a preparation for the soliloquy that follows by Hamlet, which is, along with the "cellarage" scene, a preparation for the dumb show and the play-within-the-play. There is something organic about metatheatre growth in the Shakespearian play.

The presence of metatheatre in this scene could be explained by the necessity for a Renaissance director like Shakespeare to subvert the creation of a realistic play caused by the written script and to accustom his enterprise to the requirements of the space, the tools, and the machinery in his disposition and to acknowledge the artificiality of the performance. It is not surprising, then, to see Elizabethan actors on stage interrupting their performances and addressing the audiences present in the theatre, directly adding injunctions the way the ghost does in *Hamle*t, sometimes in a vulgar and grotesque way. Barbara D. Palmer explains this in her article. "Playing in the Provinces: Front or Back Door?" (2009) how before the building of permanent theatres, itinerant players and actors were associated with vulgarity and considered agents of trouble and were not dissociated from vagabonds to the point that there was a necessity to create laws for the sake of controlling them. E. K. Chambers (2009), in the same vein, cites the "Acte for the punishment of Vacabondes and for Relief of the Poore & Impotent" issued in 1572, stating that:

> Fencers Bearewardes Comon Players in Enterludes & Minstrels, not belonging to any Baron of this Realme or towardes any other honorable Personage of greater Degree; all juglers Pedlars Tynkers and Petye Chapmen; whiche seid Fencers Bearewardes Comon Players in Enterludes Mynstrels Juglers Pedlers Tynkers & Petye Chapmen, shall wander abroade and have not Lycense of two Justices of the Peace at the leaste, whereof one to be of the Quorum, when and in what Shier they shall happen to wander ... shalbee taken adjudged and deemed Roges Vacaboundes and Sturdy Beggers. (Qt. in Chambers 2009, 270)

The above quotation from the royal legal act destined to punish troublemakers cites actors with other social and professional categories; it gives evidence of the confusion existing at that time regarding the situation of actors and itinerant players. The reality of the Elizabethan performances and the expectations of the audiences could suggest the presence of something that bypasses metatheatre to reach exaggerated acting forms on stage that could be called anti-theatre, where actors ridicule what they are supposed to perform and interact in a vulgar and grotesque way with audiences present in theatres to make them laugh. At this level, one can suggest that the on-stage performance is an act of recycling the text. Patrice Pavis (1998) defines anti-theatre as a "term used to designate a dramaturgy and an acting style that negate all the principle of theatrical illusion [...] anti-theatre is characterised by a critical and ironical attitude toward artistic and social tradition" (Pavis 1998, 26). In a correlation, actors ridiculing the original script and disrespecting the roles allotted to them break the initial dramaturgy and stage conventions; they create a distance between the dra-

matic script and the on-stage performance. They also build a reprocessing dimension since they stem from both the dramatic script and the on-stage performance. By doing so, they defy the accepted rules of acting, enhance the illusory notion of play-acting, and make the separation between performers and audience porous. Actors of one play exercise anti-theatricality within the play itself. Anti-theatre transforms the theatrical act into experimentation and reconditioning by rejecting established norms.

In *Hamlet*, the staging of the ghost shows the limitations of theatre and alludes to its illusory notion. Additionally, there are other forms of metatheatre in the play where actors enhance the artificiality of their acting, encode underlying meanings in their performances, and add a transmigrant regenerative nature to both script and performance. The nunnery episode in Act 3, Scene 1 is a token of a multi-layered theatre that displays many stages and performs different selves. Ophelia and Hamlet occupy the centre stage during this episode and play the role of actors in the performance. Meanwhile, Polonius and Laertes take the position of the *œil du prince* (the Prince's eye, my translation) to watch a metatheatrical performance starring Hamlet and Ophelia. By doing so, they play the role of actors in observation. Being spied on by her father, Polonius and her brother Claudius, Ophelia performs a formal, meek, and obedient self. Her words are hollow, and her speech is emotionless. Hamlet takes a two-step disposition with her. His true self manifests at her arrival when he calls her "The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons" (3.1.90). As soon as he realises that audiences (Claudius and Laertes) are watching him, he changes into a theatrical being who uses tirades and puns and moves spectacularly on stage, parading a buffoonish metatheatrical cryptic self and molesting Ophelia. Hamlet's answer to her attitude, "Let the doors be shut upon him that he may / play the fool nowhere but in his own

house" (3.1.143-144), implies metatheatre and play-acting. The characters' changing attitudes and becoming performative are proof of the transcendent dynamics of the dramatic script since they move from a residual dimension to a performative one.

The play teems with other instances where metatheatrical selves conceal inward selves. After the famous closet scene between Hamlet and his mother, Gertrude's encounter with Claudius in Act 4, Scene 1 is metatheatrical since she tries to hide her true feelings from the King to protect her son to the point that she feigns that Hamlet is "mad as the sea and wind when both contend /Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit" (5.1.7-8). In the closet scene, Gertrude and Claudius embody one Shakespearean motif: the discrepancy between appearance and reality. Such a motif is linked to the illusory nature of drama where metatheatre builds a bridge between concept, message, meaning, and artefact. So many other metatheatrical episodes can be mentioned, such as the spectacle of Ophelia's madness, who becomes an actress-like persona whose performance is observed and commented upon by Gertrude and Claudius. By the end of the play, the gravedigger's scene is both carnivalesque and metatheatrical since the tirade of the gravediggers stages the cycle of life and death in *Hamlet*. The Prince's last soliloquy in Act 4, Scene 4 has a parallel semantic logic to the soliloquy of Act 2, Scene 2 since Hamlet, the spectator, reacts to the metaphorical performance or the parade of Fortinbras and his army. The fencing challenge between Laertes and Hamlet in Act 5, scene 2 is metatheatrical.

Kate Flaherty believes that "*Hamlet* is a play deeply concerned with notions of play: the power of play, the danger of play and the threshold between play and reality" (Flaherty 2011, 3). Our understanding of metatheatre is not limited to considering it as a mode, a convention, or an independent construct; it is embedded everywhere and

cannot be separated from the text, the characters, or the actors. Metatheatre is also situated at the script level and displays elements challenging the traditional theatrical conventions and drawing attention to the artificiality of the performance. On-stage, metatheatre is present through the actors' interactions with the spectators, breaking the walls, adding layers, reusing theatrical conventions, or engaging in actions that enhance the performative. Metatheatre challenges the traditional separation between the play's fictional world situated at the script's level and the theatre's real world, creating a distinctive self-reflective experience.

Recycling or Reviving the Script?

The study of manifestations of metatheatre in *Hamlet* is necessary to delineate the residual from the recyclable. The written dramatic script is the essential tool that helps implement metatheatre; the residual foundation displays narrative structure, dialogue, soliloquies, and characters. The metatheatrical occurrences are the emergent acts that reprocess the script since they repurpose, recontextualise, and creatively manipulate elements of the script. Within metatheatrical situations, characters and stages are re-invented, and their performative nature is theatricalised. Also, narratives are repurposed since new selves and new roles are enacted. Self-references and self-awareness add new dimensions to the characters portrayed in the dramatic script. Moreover, metatheatre reviews the traditional boundaries between audiences and actors; the fourth wall is broken, and staging limitations are mocked. Equally, metatheatre blurs the lines between the play's fictional world and the theatre's real world. This interplay recycles the concept of reality within the script by inviting the audience to consider the relationship between the two worlds and how they influence each other. From another perspective, metatheatre implies the idea of play-back between actor

and character. Hamlet is more than a character on pages; he is played by an actor who is both self-conscious and aware of the character.

One needs to discuss, however, whether metatheatre in *Hamlet* is an act of recycling or breathing a new soul into the dramatic script. Indeed, the idea of recycling includes the notion of re-contextualisation within a performative dimension that creates layers of meanings and stages. At the same time, metatheatre breathes new life into a text by infusing elements of self-awareness and reflexivity. By doing so, metatheatre invites the audiences to engage with the play and its text. In *Hamlet,* the *Mousetrap* scene is an act of recycling since it re-enacts King Hamlet's murder. It aims to defy the fake characters and unravel their motivations. Thematically speaking, metatheatre recycles significant concerns such as illusion, deceit, and discrepancies between appearance and reality. However, breathing a new life into the text is relevant by offering new perspectives on the narrative and heightening tension. In a cognate way, Hamlet's soliloquies invite the audience to engage with his internal struggles and, thus, grasp the magnitude of the tragic hero suggested by the script.

Stating that the script of *Hamle*t is a remnant does not mean it is useless. The script is the window that survives; it still carries the artistic legacy and holds the base that triggers emergent transformative and transmigrant manifestations such as metatheatre. Furthermore, all possible adaptations of *Hamle*t are calibrated with an awareness of the original text. Independently from metatheatre in the play, the script remains essential thanks to its poetic mastery, intricate character development, and exploration of universal themes, societal values, beliefs, concerns of the time, artistic influence, and continued relevance. Metatheatre comes as one of the dynamics inherent to the text, to complement it and breathe a new life into it but only partially recy-

cle it. Metatheatre, thus, starts when the text halts. The latter only takes a theatrical pause before going ahead again. Metatheatre comes as a text beyond the script that mocks theatre and fills in the gaps of the original written text. The study of metatheatre suggests the limitations of both text and theatre but also shows how the concept offers revival and interpretation scopes to this very original script. As a technique, metatheatre allows transmigration through the enactment of silence.

The study of metatheatre in its relation to the script enhances the discursive dimension of both script and performance. Thanks to its rich dialogue and wide range of themes, the script engages in extensive discussions. Additionally, it is owing to the meandering and tangential dimension of the original script that one discovers the discursive nature of metatheatre in *Hamlet*. Metatheatre, through plays-within-plays, soliloquies, self-reflexive and transcendent theatrical allusions, and the problematisation of the ghost, engages the audience to reflect on the nature of theatre, reality, and the power of performance. It also allows audiences and readers to measure the journey from the dramatic script to the on-stage performance and assess all the metatheatrical possibilities from within. Even though metatheatre offers a dichotomous experience since it merges the actual world with the theatrical one in a transcendent way, it is not in dichotomy with the original dramatic script; it instead adds layers of complexity to the textual signs, co-exists with the written text, and enriches the theatrical experience. Metatheatre functions thanks to the reiterative function of the words printed on the script; it thus drives the narrative, unravels the characters' motives, and enables the theatricalisation of major thematic concerns related to deception, representation, and truth.

From another perspective, some metatheatrical occurrences in *Hamlet* are

markers of power. Claudius' opening eloquent speech reflects his power and ability to manipulate those around him. Hamlet's staccato and witty response comes as a challenge to his uncle's authority. All in all, the remnants of powerful speeches linger throughout the play. Hamlet's soliloquies, the gravedigger's words, the songs of Ophelia, and Claudius' confession scene are remnants that serve as markers of the characters' inner struggles; they impact the narrative's power dynamics and inscribe the theatrical situation. The ghost's staging and words are a powerful remnant that haunts the narrative, influencing the Prince's thoughts.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a masterpiece that continues to captivate audiences and inspire scholars and critics centuries after its creation. One of the play's most significant features is metatheatre, a transformative force that recycles and revitalises the script, enriching the theatrical experience. Through metatheatrical occurrences, such as the Mousetrap scene and Hamlet's soliloquies, elements of the script are repurposed, recontextualised, and creatively manipulated, breathing new life into the narrative. These instances recycle thematic concerns and invite the audience to engage with the play, transcending the boundaries between the fictional world and the real world of the theatre. Some may argue that the script of *Hamlet* is outdated and irrelevant to modern audiences. However, considering the dramatic script on pages as a remnant does not undermine its significance. Instead, the script serves as the groundwork upon which metatheatre functions. As the analysis has shown, Metatheatrical occurrences are driven by the reiterative function of the words inscribed on the page. The script remains essential; it displays poetic mastery, imaginative power, and complex character development. It also allows the exploration of universal themes, reflecting societal values, beliefs, and concerns of the time. The script is indeed the

benchmark necessary for all adaptations; it is a testament to the continuing power of Shakespeare's work that keeps inspiring scholars, actors, directors, and audiences alike. The text allows transcending time; it is legitimate and relevant in literature and performance. Metatheatre in *Hamlet* discusses the nature of theatre, reality, and the power of performance. Thanks to its generative dimension, it traces the journey from the dramatic script to the on-stage performance, accentuating the multifaceted layers of meaning embedded within the text. At the same time, it enriches both the readers' and the audience's reflections on play-acting and theatre. A transmigrant dimension to metatheatre allows the transcending of the boundaries of time and space. The present article has attempted to show that metatheatre in *Hamlet* is a vital component that simultaneously recycles and revives the script. Metatheatre is a witness to the enduring power of Shakespeare's work that continues to inspire scholars, actors, and audiences alike.

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Stuart Matheson

STREET DANCE PERFORMANCE AS PROTEST: SEUN AWOBAJO'S *UNTITLED* IN FOCUS

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Performance studies principles are at the inevitable point where new forms are created to disrupt the existing due to the need and the constant drive that arises from the desire to express suppressed ideas and fears. As Paul Gilroy opines, scholarship should go beyond the "idea and ideology of the text and of textuality as a mode of communicative practice which provides a model for all other forms of cognitive exchange and social interaction" (1994: 77). Following this premise in an empirical study, this paper looks at the unfamiliar form of the FOD gang (Footprints of David) which breaks performance norms with dancers who can be adequately classified as street urchins and who have also been trained to perform dance.They constitute a whole body of individuals who have been abused and severely battered by the hardship and

trauma. These performers have consistently (and peacefully) disrupted communal viewpoints of what it means to be tagged street urchins by 'happening' in spaces that cannot be adequately referred to as the stage, and dancing, for example, in abandoned pot-holes and muddy ponds created by poor drainage systems. Performer/audience spatial allocations rather than performance spaces are shared concretely by these dancers and their audience. The audience empathizes with these performers, because they share common experiences. In a unique manner, these performances also share these spaces with pedestrians, motorists and motorcyclists. Audience participation is constant, not by an act of instant reaction but a reflective mirroring of oneself and current predicaments, even with an insight into the future. These performances employ, more dominantly, dance in conjunction with other arts to communicate.

Keywords: Performance, Activism, Dance, Protest

Introduction

Across time and cultures, dance has been a powerful form of human expression. Dance is a means of communication which allows a person to speak with their body. Dance also creates embodied spaces, drawing attention to the radical nature of dance with its ability to cut across all genders and race. As a performing art, dance entails a well coordinated presentation of bodily movements before an audience. Dance is so diverse and complex in its form that is difficult to proffer a concrete definition and purpose; it is therefore necessary to understand the basic concept of dance as an art form and a

means of human expression. Members of the audience represent a community, which has a representation of genders, and so the different dances have different effects on members of the audience. Dance serves a complex diversity of social purpose, and it usually has a principal as well as a number of subsidiary purposes which may express or reflect the values and social relationships of the people.

Dance has been employed politically to build or uphold societal standards and conduct regulations. Since dance is not as easily censored, unlike other forms of media, such as TV or the radio, dance is often employed as a non-verbal form of communication, in order to express political protest, resistance or a general movement. In the 2020 Black Lives Matter protest, dancers were seen protesting and dancing; this was where the Electric Slide dance was invented. Choreography as a form of activism can also be equaled to dance as protest or activism which involves the use of movement to express a displeasure or grievance as one function, or should I say the aim of dance is expression. Dance as protest started in the 19th century and since then it has evolved. According to Siobhan Burke (2020) in *The New York Times*, "[a]s protesters streamed through the streets of New York on Sunday afternoon, one group's chants of "Black lives matter!" and 'No justice, no peace!' gave way to a sound more often heard at weddings and block parties. On 125th Street in Harlem, hundreds of people, many of them professional dancers, had congregated for a peaceful march across town and a collective performance of the Electric Slide." Oliver Marchart believes that there has to be a sense of communality and a cause for the goal to be achieved as evident during the Black Lives Matter protest where all dancers, irrespective of age, styles and country all came together to march against the

way Black people are been treated.

Choreographers use different styles or forms of movement to speak up, and the most effective tool they use is the body. The dancer is a tool used by the choreographer to portray or express these emotions and feelings. Movements can range from either line dancing, forming shapes and angles or staying still – which is also classified as movement. Opportunities for people to voice their ideas, select their preferred way of living, and participate in politics are increasing. Consider the formalization of a number of civil rights and freedoms, the development of democracy, and the expanding availability of information. However, responses to democratization waves typically include the opposite of constraint, where Democratic principles are under attack, confined to the civic space.

Marchart's discussion of dance as a protest medium of in "Political Reflections on Choreography, Dance and Protest," bases its argument on Emma Goldman's slogan, 'If I can't dance, it's not my revolution,' and Hannah Arendt's concept of Political Acting. Marchart is more focused on the role dance plays in politics, that is how it would seem if dance is being done as protest, instead of the usual marching with protesters. He makes reference to dance being a part of the usual atmosphere of protesting and demonstrations, noting: "[W]here protest occur, as a rule, there will be trucks with sound systems and a crowd of dancing people following them." Goldman's slogan also describes "something rooted in the very logic of political mobilization," Marchart (2018) says, a supplement that is "added to a concrete demand or cause." He points out, for a protest to be more concrete there has to be a Cause or a Goal to be achieved, an agenda to be carried out, because of the relationship that exists between

Cause and Goal. If a goal is attained without achieving what it is meant to achieve, then there is this feeling of dissatisfaction that comes with not achieving the said goal.

According to Arendt, the idea of protest should be approached as "fun," or as she puts it "public happiness" (in Marchart 2018). There are three criteria which are sources of this experience:

- Happiness emerges from the fact that we can only act together (communality);
- The existential condition of natality that lies at the root of happiness;
- Acting or performance takes place on the stage of the public.

Arendt compares acting to dancing: as Marchart points out, for Arendt acting is not concerned with a particular product, rather the work of acting "is embedded in the performance" and because it is "an end in itself," Arendt says, "the 'product' is identical with the performance act itself" (1958: 198-99; in Marchart, 2018). It should also be noted that Marchart reminds us the fact there is no protest without violence, in as much as there is fun and communality involved, there is always a certain level of violence associated with staging protests.

Activism as an Art

According to Emily Wilcox, the process of activism is to form a vision, react, respond, and act. "Activism, for its part, has been described as the policy of taking direct and militant action… it is an intentional action to bring about social, political

or environmental change" (in Christopher, 1994: 98). Forming a policy here is the consciousness or recognition of the vices of society, which are most often political but not entirely all about politics. Such examples are human rights abuses, cultural degradation, and any kind of imperialism (colonialism or post-colonialism). Artists stand up to fight against these forces with their instruments: art. While some agitate with mural paintings and some with sculptors, some protest with music, and many others with dances. In doing this, their consciousness has awakened them to action, and through their arts, they speak without being physically harmful.

Fela Anikulapo Kuti was a social and political activist in the history of Nigeria who used music to project his opinion, protest, and correct the highhandedness of the ruling class in the Nigerian government of the time. Ghariokwu Lemi is another artist who designed various music covers for Fela Kuti's albums. These music covers were not art for art's sake; there were messages embedded in them that spoke loudly even before the voice of Fela was heard.

The Badagry Slave Museum is a place where various drawings, ceramics, paintings, and many other art works put the experience of the slave trade in Nigeria into physical representation so people can see what it means to be a slave. This art and act pass a message of peace and freedom to the world and frown at the actions of slave masters who exploited African nations for their selfish benefits. This way, without making any noise, art is taking the front seats while partaking in activism in our society.

Activism is not hooliganism. The act of activism should be a liberal one where nobody is physically harmed. Emily Wilcox aptly puts "It is good to give some

energy to a course, but people think they need to give themselves energy, and this is dangerous." "No worthy cause will ask you to give yourself, because once that is given, what more do you have to fight with?" (in Christopher, 1994: 98). Activism demands not only one's physical self but also one's harmless action toward oneself and another person.

However, the awareness of the kind of environment in which one operates should determine the kind of approach to activism. In a country like Nigeria, where fundamental human rights are being strangled to death, involving oneself in physical, yet harmless activism, such as physical demonstrations like protests, can be hijacked and turned into a harmful threat to oneself. Here is one pivotal problem with activism in such a society:

Alternatively, other approaches that are not prone to violence are strongly advisable for activism.

Dale Carniege's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936) encourages people who wish to win other people to their side to have a sense of understanding of other people while in a conversation with them. One should speak from the second party's point of view. No good communication happens between two parties who do not understand each other or if one party does not understand the other party. Therefore, art is not seeking what is right or wrong; it is seeking what is beautiful. And beautiful here does not necessarily mean pretty or good. Art can be ugly in physique but beautiful in philosophy. Activism as art is not necessarily expected to be pretty, but inasmuch as it is right, it is beautiful.

"Performance is an inclusive term" opines (Schechner, 2004: xvii). However,

theatre as an art represents only a fraction as there are several other artistic events that can be broadly classified as performance.Throughout history the practice of certain artists has been differentiated of new spaces non-conventional extra-scenic, non-accessible and ordinary spaces.

The FOD gang using dance within the space of the street as its format is an example thereof. Dilapidated roads and street spaces become a site of resistance in dance performance exemplified in the work, *Untitled,* as created by Seun Awobajo. Seun Awobajo is known for his persistent interest of taking children off the street to give them some hope in order for growth and confidence.

Casquete defines street demonstrations as "collective gatherings in a public space whose aim it is to exert political, social and/or cultural influence on authorities, public opinion and participants through the disciplined and peaceful expression of an opinion or deman" (2006: 47). Note that the peacefulness and the disciplined nature of a street demonstration event may vary but that demonstrations clearly differ from riots or street violence.

Street activism has become part of the modal repertoire of today's citizens (Tarrow, 1998; Tilly, 2008). Street activism/demonstrations are examples of what Tilly called contentious performances. Tilly argued that contentious performances obey the rules of strong repertoires. Participants are enacting existing scripts within which they innovate, mostly only in small ways (Tilly, 2008: 17).

Like an improvising street theatre group, people who participate in contentious politics normally have several versions they can play, but these are not infinite (Tilly, 2008: 14). Similarly, participants in protest and organizers match their performance

to local circumstances. As a consequence, street activism is the same and different every time their acts occur. There is a lot of variation in how street activism look and feel, in their atmosphere, in how they are organized, and whom they are targeting. And, accordingly, in who participates, why these people get involved and how they get to do so.

Politics exists within our bodies, as an often doorman knowledge. That is to say that unconsciously we practice politics even without supporting or disagreeing with a government or political body. Dance has developed into a much deeper form that may be used as a political instrument for social change, moving beyond simply entertaining audiences on stage.

The performers in context rarely understand what it means to perform theatre: they are not bound by the academic/scholarly theories of performance or performance studies but are constantly provoked by the persistent urge to communicate and protest against the anomaly that are constantly experienced both in daily activities and on the political circles.

They therefore disrupt, though peacefully, communal viewpoints of what it means to be tagged street urchins by ‘happening’ in spaces that cannot be adequately referred to as the stage like abandoned pot-holes, muddy ponds created by poor drainage systems and market places. They constitute a whole body of individuals that have been abused and severely battered by the hardship and trauma of such experiences. There is hardly a discriminatory performer/audience spatial allocation. Rather performance spaces are shared concretely by dancers and their audience. The audience empathizes with the performer because they share common experiences.

And in a unique manner, these performances also share these spaces with pedestrians, motorists and motorcyclists. The performance is also in line with the criteria Hannah Arendt mentioned: a sense of togetherness, approaching dance in a new light, and performing to an audience.

Contemporary dance movements were characterised by expressive and largely stretched, jerky and staccato routines. Although there are occasional skits narrating common scenes symptomatic of the challenges of living life in such a poor, degraded and dangerous environment, most of the movements are abstract and affective, with very scanty literal, mimetic or narrative threads. The movements are laboured, occasionally erratic and uncoordinated, and seem consciously designed to emotionally move or shock rather than entertain the audience.

Audience participation is constant, not by an act of instant reaction but a reflective mirroring of oneself and current predicaments even with an insight into the future. One performance may or may not change someone's world, but, as James Scott (1990) reminds us, acts of resistance amass rather like snowflakes on a steep mountainside and can set off an avalanche. Everyday forms of resistance give way to collective defiance. The expectation is for the performers and spectators to appropriate the rhetorical currency they need, from the inner space of the performance to the outer domain of the social world, to make a material difference. This, for them, is the 'performance field'. These performances employ, more dominantly, dance in conjunction with other arts to communicate. 'Performance field' to a performance studies scholar means much more. Within the performance field is a much broader space that includes all the performative elements: anthropology, religion, pop culture

and many more. Guillermo Gómez-Peña remarks, "If we utilize humour, we are not seeking laughter like our comedian cousins. We are more interested in provoking the ambivalence of melancholic giggling or painful smiles, though an occasional outburst of laughter is always welcome" (2005: 22).

Dance is known to be an ephemeral art with a lot of functions. The non-verbal expression of the art makes it easy to pass across messages freely and easily, unlike some of other art forms. Dance serves many functions; one of those functions is that it can be used as a form of protest. The use of choreography as a form of political protest, according to Susanne Foellmer (2016) highlights two specific examples: Erdem Gündüz's act of standing still on Istanbul's Taksim Square and Ehud Darash's choreographic interventions in public spaces during a social justice protests. This shows that dance has been a form of protest everywhere and also as long as time itself.

Foellmer describes Gündüz's silent protest, in which he stood motionless for hours on end. This behaviour confused the police officers who were unsure whether it was legal or not. Foellmer mentioned that Gündüz's act created a sense of uncertainty and disrupted the normal functioning of the police, making it a political act. Foellmer also mentions the role of participation in translating choreographic movements into political acts. She argues that the observation and decision-making regarding an act that deviates from the norm are essential for its transformation into a political act. The article mentions Ehud Darash's performances in Tel Aviv, where the actors moved against the stream, but were largely unnoticed. However, the act cannot be dismissed as apolitical, as the element of space plays a crucial role. Overall, the potential of choreography, as a medium for political expression and how it can challenge established

boundaries between art, performance, and protest ,cannot but be overemphasized.

Findings and Analysis

The performance under analysis was created by Footprint of David Academy, otherwise known as FOD gang in July 10, 2021, an academy which was created to use art as a tool to tackle matters affecting the people. The choreographer of the dance piece was Seun Olubajo, and it was a site specification performance unfolded in a public space in Bariga. It was performed by professional dancers of the academy and was created primarily in response to the effect of inadequate road infrastructures in Bariga on the people. However, it also delves into other existing issues in the country that are socioeconomic, political, and religious. This essay will analyze the choreographic techniques, music, and symbolism within the dance piece to demonstrate how dance powerfully exemplifies the use of movement as a means of protest, providing a voice for those seeking change.

The dance opens, featuring a dancer hastily running across the stage to meet with other four dancers, with one sitting on a structured fence with a fuel tank right behind him. He watched nonchalantly as the other dancers are in conflict with each other as to who will stay where on the queue and who not. After much deliberation, they then came to an agreement, carried their kegs and moved accordingly to the dancer on the fence who filled up their keg and they dispersed one after the other to create another a horizontal line on the other part of the stage. In their horizontal placement, they slowly carry their kegs and pour its content on themselves and slowly return it back to the floor, and they abruptly start another movement round it, making

use of movement such as forward rolls, ripple effects and swaying the kegs, until they lay on the floor, passed the kegs on after the other and began to sway their hands.

The style of dance used in this piece is an African contemporary dance infused with some dramatic enactment perhaps with the intent of the choreographer to ensure that the audience was able to relate adequately to each circumstances displayed before them. The piece was divided into sections that in one way or another conveyed themes that speak about several issues, such as, socio-economic and political concepts, as well as religious conflict and neglect of the people's rights and how it has affected Nigerian society. It was a site specification performance as it was done in the rural area in Bariga. The performance starts with an enactment at a filling station. We can see from the beginning one of the dancers running in a haste to join a queue made up of three other dancers and last dancer sitting in front of a fuel machine holding on to the fuel pump; we see commotion errupting from three other dancers about who is to be in a position in the queue and who not, while the other dancer seated in front of the machine watches the disoriented queue fill with people and seems to caution them but does it with so much concern until he successfully gains their attention. This makes them fall back in queue.

This particular aspect speaks about one of the socioeconomic and political concepts that affect the citizens which is the issue of fuel subsidy. Each of the five dancers served as a representation of individuals at the filling station, a typical everyday drama when fuel subsidy or raise in fuel price hits hard in the country with citizens displaying different emotions, such as, impatience and anger, when someone tries to outsmart them, which was probably what led to the griping, pulling and

fighting demonstrated by the three dancers. It also portrayed the effect of division and unity, as demonstrated by the dancers who were pulling and wrestling on the ground illustrated that division would further results to destruction, until the person sitting in front of the machine made them realize the importance of unity and orderliness by using his hands, to caution themselves on the queue thus, facing their business which is the purchase of the fuel.

Kegs were used as significant narrative element in the filling station to symbolize fuel and the importance of fuel power energy and transportation system in the African society. However, another significance of the keg and its content is the people's struggle against oil exploitation and resource related conflicts, corruption and unequal distribution of oil by the government in some parts of the community, which got me thinking about the rate of oil theft and environmental damage that oil spillage has done in Niger Delta.This was seen in the aspect where the dancers poured the fuel on themselves. It also symbolizes a range of emotions and experiences faced by the people as a result of, for example, government decisions and inflation in goods and cost of living which leads to different forms of protests, forceful shutdown of academic and economic institutions as we experience today. But their reaction to it was that of indifference as they slowly dropped the keg on the floor, which I felt was not so necessary, because their after-reaction gave an attribute of anger and frustration over one's self and the surrounding situation that was depicted, while they danced round the keg in a ripple effect mode and then to a forward roll movement over the keg and back to ripple effects. This then leads to them laying on the floor and passing the keg from one person to the other.

The swaying of hands in the air one at a time connotes instability in every part of he society, as well as inadequate political issue of the country, and then we see three of the dancers abruptly stands and leaves the space that transitions into a duet. The duet performance symbolizes the way forward to each problem to ensure justice prevails. This art was demostrated in the movements of the dancers, while they play with levels as they swiftly bend and stand with their right hands raised in a fist in a circle format, then transitioning to create a larger circle as they interchange position and came to a halt repeatedly, before running to join the others in a different space entirely which is occupied by water.

The water section of the dance was one of the primary aim of the dance as a means of protest. It can be seen that their movement in the water, however, was restricted, thus, reduced their flow, fluidity, and made some of the movements incomplete compared to when there were on dry land. Although the water is muddy, but the movement on the water played a significant role: at first instance it felt strange as they all walked into the water at opposite sides bouncing them on a spot as though they were preparing themselves for war with those in front of them, and then suddenly was a wrestle which illustrated a sense of defeat as they all fell into the water at the same time. This portrayed the theme of the psychological effects of personal conflicts which is quite significant as the effect varies from a person to another and from one situation to another.

The internal struggles faced by individuals are often linked to broader social issues, such as inequality, discrimination, and political oppression, all purged out in emotions such as, anxiety, depression, confusion, anger, and other types of emotional

responses, and this was demonstrated using floor movements: some bashing the water to express the emotion of anger, another moving in a circular form and simultaneously jumps from one place to another to express confusion while they engaged in freestyles. However, these movements were neither so precise nor complete. It was also noticeable that at some point, they all went to the same spot to bath themselves in the water, in my opinion, this served as a root or a source of cleansing, spiritual cleansing from all sort of impurities.

There is also a section where they are seen with another props as they created triangular formation, one holding a red piece of cloth, two holding different rosary, another with a wand and the last with a traditional neckpiece. This depicts different religions practice across the country, and their demonstration and expression of each tells us more about each religion: a dancer shaking his head depicts a Christian praying, and we hear the Muslim who says his prayer to Allah; the dancer with the wand depicts another Christian but of celestial denomination as he dances and waves his wand to different directions; the dancer with the red piece of cloth denotes the Yoruba worshipper of Sango with the red to represent the usual costume of any traditional priest as well as to signify the presence of Sango; and the last dancer holding a traditional neckpiece to signify a magician. However, it emphasizes the religious conflict, because each religious representation, as the dancers transition from a line to a semi-circle where the dancers face each other and slowly exchange their means of religious identification, ends with either person being disgusted as they play around with the props to signify mockery of each religion.

The artistic fluidity and transitioning of the dancers from one movement to

the other at the beginning was precise as they moved from a slow-paced movement to an agitated one to form different angular lines and played with different levels simultaneously. However, during the performance in the water, their movement seemed restricted, and their formations were not clear, especially in the freestyle section.

The musical instruments used were the Gbedu drums and a gong. The Gbedu drum is a drum that signifies royalty among the Yoruba people, and as the largest of the Yoruba drums, it is played during important functions and occasions. The Gbedu drums and gong play a significant role in this dance pieces, as they bring rhythm and a sense of community to the performance. They both provided a powerful rhythmic foundation for the dance, driving the movements and setting the tempo, and the dancers synchronized their steps and movements with the drumbeats, creating a dynamic and energetic performance.

The costume used was a white singlet and a Yoruba traditional trouser basically signifying the fusion and balance between the contemporary and traditional influences in culture. Again, as a piece that serves as a means to convey a protest message, it emphasizes the call for peaceful change and unity within the African community. Moreover, the deliberate use of daylight as a design element in these performances added an extra layer of symbolism and connectivity. Daylight, with its associations of hope, renewal, and connection to the natural world, amplifies the message of protest, casting a metaphorical light on the issues being addressed. It reminds us that, just as the sun rises each day, there is always the potential for positive change.

Conclusion

In conclusion, dance as a means of protest is a vibrant and impactful form of expression that transcends language and unites people in the pursuit of justice and change. Through movements and choreography, dancers communicate their messages, challenge the status quo, and raise awareness about pressing social and political issues. As demonstrated in the dance piece created by 'Footprint of David Academy', in which not just the dance piece but the use of the rural area as its setting play pivotal roles in creating awareness about the inadequate road infrastructure, affecting the smooth movement of people and vehicles, and thus, standing as a voice to the people.

Inasmuch as the dance 'happens' in the most unconventional way, this brought about an awareness of the populace and the government towards the dilapidated roads, full of potholes and muddy waters, and the constant struggles of commuters around Bariga. It is noteworthy that the roads have been properly attended to as a result of the (un)popular publicity it received.

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Stuart Matheson

A Histo-Performance Discourse on Kuteb Festival Theatre in North Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract

This essay explores two separate but interconnected Kuteb festival performances – *Iki* (Masquerade) and *Kuchicheb* (Harvest thanksgiving) – with a view to highlighting their social significance and the changing phases of festival theatre. These festival performances are critical to the folk religion of the Kuteb people of Central Nigeria, and both play functional roles in the cosmic balance of the society. The connection of

mortals with deities remain functional, social control is effected, peace is maintained and communal welfare is believed to be achieved through the esoteric rites of these performances. Over time, the structures of these performances have been altered by various factors that are occasioned by extended human interactions, social development as well as inevitable cultural adaptations. Masquerades are believed to be the embodiment of the Kuteb ancestors and their appearance is a phase of communion between the celestial and terrestrial inhabitants for particular purposes while the annual harvest festival is a grand thanksgiving event held on the 25th March. This work offers an overview of these performances, their traditional roles in Kuteb community, and the consequence of their mutation from deistic to secular forms. This work sourced data from observation and oral interviews with authorities in Kuteb tradition with the goal of interrogating the developments in their festival theatre. The paper also posits that Kuteb folk performances, aside the esoteric value, have social relevance and demonstrate potential for theatre tourism.

Keywords: Kuteb, Festival theatre, Mutation, Performance, Theatre tourism.

Background

Community festivals in African societies are windows through which to view and appreciate the divergences and convergences of cultures as well as identify the roots of theatre performances. They are vital communication avenues with specific goals, in many cases dedicated to deities or guardians of the society. The tradition of celebrating

agricultural produce from the earth has roots in many ancient religions that revered the super-human forces or spirits that controlled planting and harvest. The festivals are essential to the histo-cultural expression of the people and are linked with Kuteb folk religion, as we intend to show in this essay. To illustrate this point, we briefly cite here an ancient oral legend of Kuteb migration story in which a hippopotamus was said to have rescued them on its back across a river while escaping from their enemies. Similar to the biblical account of the Red Sea, the animal returned to the other shore and in the same manner carried their enemies but instead shook them off its back mid-way into the river, thus drowning them. In awe, they attributed the miraculous event to a divine cause and it is the continuous expression of this belief that is evident in the festival performances in discourse. The religious inclination of Kuteb people have thus been expressed in *Pyin*, their folk religion prior to their earliest contact with Christian missionaries around 1921 (Ukwen, 2014).

While conversing with custodians of Kuteb culture and festival enthusiasts, we found their passion to ensure social order via the festival activities is dominant. At the centre of Kuteb cosmology is the relationship between the mortals and the divine, essentially an ancestral community that watches over mortals, receive their queries and respond to them. Masquerades are the intermediaries between the divine and the mortals and their appearance at specific seasons signal moments of contact and exchange with their seniors who Mbiti (1969) describes as having a foot in both worlds. As an agrarian community, major concerns of the people are productive farming season and good harvest, thus their desire for fertility, not only of their farmlands but of animals and human beings. In our quest to know the essence of a

certain rite by an heir of a deceased masquerade cult custodian, we were simply told that once performed, *everything* will be set right. What it means is that the cosmos will be refreshed, in a way that is akin to toggling the reset button on an electronic device.

When Ogunba (1978) described festival as a dynamic part of the culture of Africans, he invariably threw light on the critical role it plays in maintaining social integrity of communities. Again, since most of African cultures exist in unwritten form, the performances are active avenues of documenting them in virtual forms. The structure and pattern of community festivals thus constantly mutate in response to the function intended. Moore (1977) assert that social life presents a variety of situations, ever-shifting sets of persons and changing moments of time that defy established order, leaving gaps that require adjustments. This assertion explains the cultural and technical adjustments employed to fill in the gaps and interpret particular festival situations. However, Turner (1987) argues that even if subject to periodic changes, the performances have definite structure and pattern. It is in this light that we intend to show how adjustments and shifts have given Kuteb festival theatre a dual form – originally as a folk religious event and secondly as an adaptive social performance with several potentials for both participants and the audience.

Kuteb people, found in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, inhabit a common area on 7°00'N 9°00'E where Nigeria shares a boundary with Cameroon. Oral historical sources claim that the Kuteb are grandchildren of a man named Kuteb, who migrated from Egypt in about 1000 BC and reached the present location around 1510. Kuteb cosmology is grounded on the belief in a tripod relationship: the celestial realm where

God resides, the terrestrial abode of mortals and the dwelling of the dead. These are believed to be intertwined and specific activities facilitate the transition of members of the society between these abodes as well as communication across the gulf separating them. Festival theatre of the Kuteb is a web and accommodates the active participation of community members of all age grades and social status. Certain sacred ceremonies are connected with their worldview and are integral communal events. *Ndashe* (marriage) festivities are important rites of passage for young women into their matrimonial homes. Re-incarnation is a core belief in Kuteb society, and good members of the family are believed to be reborn into families as infants. Marriage and child bearing have high premium among the Kuteb. Another rite of passage among the Kuteb is the *Tsin kutxin* (circumcision), which is performed on adolescents either as individuals or in group (Ahmadu, 1991).This rite of passage to adulthood confers responsibility on young boys and prepares them for their traditional duties in the home. The new status sets their mind towards starting their own families. Other festivals which this essay focuses on are *Iki* (masquerade) and *Kuchicheb* (harvest) festivals. The *Iki* and *Kuchicheb* festivals have intrinsic links with human fertility as well as the fertility of the earth.

Kuteb festival performances convene multiple art forms, assenting to the opinion of Epskamp (1992) that almost all theatrical elements are integrated in festivals. Elements of sculpture, painting, weaving and embroidery are visible in these performances. Spectacle is created by displays of masquerades, puppets, mime, and other stylized dances. Costume, props, choreographic movements and audience create a total theatre experience. Let us now consider closely these two performances.

The Kuteb Masquerade Theatre

One foremost feature of African masqueradeartis their variety and the specific purpose they serve in their societies. *Iki*, the Kuteb masquerade traditionally has in its repertoire a number of masquerades like *Iki Fong, Tsigben, Tugbug, Wusi, Cwumam, Ugben, Ndakwe,* and *Waeru*. Aside the first two which we shall say more about, we found that most of these are no longer featured due to the particular role they play such as inquisition and execution of death sentences. Since the appearance of the masquerades is for specific needs of the community, some have not featured in a long while. *Iki* festival kick starts a week-long sacred ceremony that ushers in *Kuchicheb,* the grand harvest thanksgiving festival of the entire Kuteb race which holds in Takum town, bringing participants from all the villages featuring processions, mime, dances and songs. The masquerade performances take place in the various communities prior to the grand event. The communities thus have opportunity to commune with their forebears on each of the days that the masquerade features. Sometimes, various homesteads within a village feature masquerades, thus varieties are often available for participants and observers to be engaged for the period of the festivities.

Typical *Iki* performances feature music produced by a set of small drums, metal gong and flute. The dancers sing the songs and move to the rhythm of the music in a round circle with the *Iki* and drummers in the middle. The wordings of the songs (either of praise or criticism of certain behaviour) are considered as the voice of the deities since the masquerades seldom speak. The mask of typical Kuteb masquerades is mainly a set of elastic fitting brownish woven regalia pulled over the head to conceal the face and neck. A detached body covering of the same material extends to the mid

section while the lower part is either a trouser or wrapper. The features that distinguish the male and female masquerade are the visible phallus for the male (*Tsigben*) and the rounded appearance of a pregnant woman and breasts for the female (*Fong*) as well as draping hair for the latter. Palm leaves and clothing are worn round the bosom and waist to enhance the female features. Documented photographs provide convincing evidence of the earlier use of carved head mask by Kuteb masquerades.

Iki Tsigben, the male masquerade performs a policing role in Kuteb society rather than entertainment. The society is believed to be inhabited by good and evil people and this masquerade's appearance in Kuteb belief is to clear the environment of any form of evil that may be lurking around, unnoticed by humans. It is assumed to have powers to identify and expose a witch or wizard or anyone with an evil intention against the community and in such cases, it advises the evil planner to lay down the plan or face repercussions. Kuteb people believe that some people possess evil powers which they use to wreck misfortunes on others and even kill them, and we relate here two historical narratives to explain this. First is the case of a man who was said to have paid for and acquired some magical power from a neighbouring tribe and used it to retard the farm yields of other people in favour of his own. Second, an incident was reported in Ticwo Yiware, a Kuteb community, where a certain woman allegedly disrupted rainfall to cause poor yield of peanuts cultivated by other women in the community. In that particular situation, *Tsigben* was said to have traced the evil woman and brought her in the full view of everyone at the market square, where she confessed to her deed and vowed to reverse her action. *Iki Tsigben* is in charge of restoring order in chaotic situations and settling disputes by judging between feuding

parties. The masquerade is claimed to be capable of travelling long distances at mysterious speed and possessing great acrobatic skills like leaping from the ground to tree tops or house roofs. Such dexterity was proven when we witnessed how the masquerade sprinted after a moving motorcycle, held onto it, and brought it to a halt.

The masquerade expresses itself in a guttural voice scarcely intelligible but the guide readily explains to interlocutors thus our request to take photographs of and with the masquerade was routed through its guide who interpreted the speech. The permission was not instantly granted, as *Tsigben* sook for time to consider it and returned about thirty minutes later. We learnt that the masquerade usually requires time to find out (by some sort of seer's ability) the real motive for the photograph and the affirmative response derived from the confirmation that it was not for an evil purpose.

The masquerade is particularly jealous and protective of its female counterpart and tends to be hostile towards women. When they fail to steer clear of the environment around it, the palm sticks it holds in both hands are used as spears to hurl at them. In a performance we attended in Ticwo Yiware, *Tsigben* had cleared the way for the female counterpart which was performing in the arena and retreated into its enclosure. However, when the excitement at the arena rose to a crescendo, the male masquerade stormed the arena in a frenzied whirling display that sent many scuttling away. This done, the masquerade retreated again into its enclave. This, we learnt was an action to assert its authority and ward off potential evil in the crowd of dancers and spectators from *Iki Fong*, its female counterpart.

Figure 1: *Iki Tsigben* (Punitive Masquerade) in performance at the market square in Ticwo Yiware, Ussa LGA, March 18, 2015. A phallus hangs from the front waistline of the masquerade.

Derived from two words, *Iki*, (masquerade) and *Fong*, (farm), *Iki Fong* literally means farm masquerade. Farming is the major vocation in Kuteb communities and the symbol of this masquerade is an inverted tree stump in the middle of the farm (Ahmadu, 1991). The typical period of the year for performances by *Iki Fong* is in the month of March when rainfall begins, to prepare the ground for the ensuing farming season and cleanse the land for good harvest. It is sometimes a specific rite for families of departed *Iki* cult members, a valedictory display or prayer for healing people in the community suffering from unusual ailments as it is believed that knowledge of medicine by native experts and healing power lies with God. The masquerade performance is thus believed to reset the cosmos.

Figure2: *Iki Fong* (Farm Masquerade) in performance flanked by drummers and a flutist in Ticwo Kwae, Ussa LGA on March 18, 2015.

Iki Fong is friendly and tolerant. The masquerade performs in company of dancers made up of men and women but the lead singers are strictly women. The songs are often words of praises for the deeds of the *Iki* in times past and appeal for favours. The dressing often takes place in a secluded enclave fenced off with raffia palm mats and cactus plant. Access to the shrine and its vicinity is restricted and only accessible to the custodians and initiates of the *Iki* cult. The common features of this masquerade are long fluffy fiber strands like feminine hair, breasts on the chest and the full rounded appearance of a pregnant woman. During performance, some men would mimic the women by dressing in female attires and form their line or join the women to dance (Ahmadu, 1991). In the middle of its head is a bright red

decorative ornament made from red coloured seeds of abrus precatorius, a slender, perennial climber plant that twines around trees, shrubs, and hedges. The breasts of the masquerade are also decorated with abrus seeds, portraying the elegance and beauty of women.

The mid-section of *Iki Fong* is covered with a skirt made from fresh palm fronds. It is sometimes covered with a wrapper to enhance the feminine features. This part of the masquerade is carefully decked to give it the form and appearance of a pregnant woman. Palm fronds also decorate the wrists, hanging down in fluffy bunches. In each hand of the masquerade are three corn stalks, about two feet in length tied together with bunches of palm fronds on each end. The guinea-corn stalks signify the farm produce and remind the mortals of the source when the masquerade shakes them to the rhythm of the ecstatic dance from the drums and waves it to acknowledge the prayers. The ankles of the masquerade is fitted with bands of cocoons made from dried palm fronds with abrus seeds to make rattling sounds with each step it takes.

Music for *Iki Fong* performance is produced by *Ka*, a set of small drums. These are positioned under the armpit by the drummers and beaten with one hand. Three drummers each play one of the drums in varied rhythms to produce a harmonious drum beat in tune with the dance steps of the masquerade. The *Kenkong* (gong) is another percussion instrument that synchronizes the drum beats with the percussion bands on the legs of *Iki*. Other instruments include *Mbaera* (flute), carved out of wood which plays out a continuous shrill lead sound produced by the artistic manipulation of the flutist. With one hand placed below the flute, blocking the opening, the other hand controls another opening by the side. The air blown in through the top is trapped and

released at various intervals with the thumb and index finger, producing variations of rhythm. The flute is often the instrument that heightens the ecstatic dance. The *Tumbu*, (trumpet) is one of the instruments for the masquerade performance which produces a deep sound that creates an interlude when the singers are taking a break between song verses or one song and another. It is typically the horn of a wild animal, burrowed near the tip through which air is blown and its escape manipulated by the hand to produce the desired sound. The songs are composed in line with theme of the performance at that particular time. The songs in *Iki* festival theatre performances reflect poetic and musical dexterity as well as verbal skills. The themes range from mythical actions of the ancestors, invocations, prayers and praises.

In *Iki* performances, women are vital in the spiritual exchange between mortals and the spirits through songs or chants. The spiritual strength is built up systematically with drums and music, the patterns of which often change at climactic moments. The spiritual strength of the performance is highly dependent on the choric participation of the women in the arena of *Iki* performance. The effect is similar to the gender sound (*ololyge*), a cry which women also used when praying to divinities in Greek religious rites (Clark, 2009). In *Iki* performance, this is marked by a frenzied display while the drummers intensify the beats, propelling the spirits in their downward flight to the mortal domain.

The dance usually takes a cyclical formation by the dancers and singers who move in step with the music made by the drums round the arena in a line. The *Iki* dances in the middle of the formation in any desired direction and in response to the wordings of the songs by the singers. It could surge towards the part of the circle

in a moment of excitement where songs of praises seem to be loudest and then move back to the centre. The masquerade responds to the messages in the songs with corresponding gestures as it shakes the fluffy palm fronds in a various non-verbal actions. The fast stamping of the feet on the ground produces the rattling that heightens the participation of the dancers who seem to receive some impetus from the sound. The drummers and flutist flank the masquerades on all sides and move along in any direction it takes. Bystanders who are impressed by the music usually join in the dance, while those who get tired fall out of the cycle and become spectators.

The Kuteb Harvest Festival

Kuchicheb is an annual harvest thanksgiving festival of the Kuteb people held on the 25th day of March. The *Iki* festival performances in various clans within the week culminate in this grand ceremony which holds in the Palace of Ukwe in Takum where each clan gathers with its masquerade and dancers. This usually takes three whole days. The first day is dedicated to the procession to Ussa hill (Kwen Ussa), accompanied by the paramount ruler, Ukwe, riding on his horse. The procession returns to the palace where the paramount ruler addresses the participants before they dismiss in preparation for the second day that will feature dance performances from various clans and groups. The occasion signifies thanksgiving to God for a good harvest the previous farming season and prayer for the next farming season. The festival week is a period to celebrate peace and make petition to God (Ejwocwu, 2000), a period of spiritual rebirth for the people, the land, and animals. The festival reminds the people of their common root and encourages unity when participants from all the clans and

distant locations gather together. The role of *Iki* in the fertility prospects of the earth and humans is brought to bear on this collective period of celebration beyond the level of various Kuteb clans. The high points of the festival are dances and feasting and the cosmic balance of Kuteb society is at the centre of *Kuchicheb* festival.

At the end of the sacred week, a pilgrimage is made to the foot of *Kwen Ussa* (a section of the Ussa mountain where there is a large rock) where the representatives of each of the Kuteb clans wait for the *Kukwen* (Chief Priest) to get the fire of blessing from the mountain. This holy fire is made by striking a stone against a rock. The representatives of each of the Kuteb clans lights his torch – a tightly bunched guinea corn chaff or stalk. The fire is blessed by the ancestors' representative before it is carried to the people at the foot of the mountain. This becomes a new source of fire throughout Kuteb land as all fires would have been put out before then. It is from this location that the procession begins and culminates in Takum where the palace of Ukwe hosts participants from all the Kuteb clans.

The performance arena of *Kuchicheb* festival is a combination of fluid and static stage forms. The events in the festival take place on different stages, each with its form of performance. In the carnival formation by participants and masquerades from the twelve (12) Kuteb clans to Ussa hill from where fire will be taken, the stage is the road on which they move. Spectators, comprising of little children, very old people and others who will not be attending the festival usually stand along the road and cheer the participants as they dance along. Another performance arena is at the foot of the hill where the participants gather and wait for their clan representative to go up and get fire from the hill. Here, the bushes provide suitable performance stage

for the mime and re-enactment of hunting expeditions. These performances occur simultaneously some meters apart and offer variety for spectators. Participants often take interest in watching performances of clans other than their own and observe new innovations. Some stages feature dances and singing and rehearsals also take place in the process and the participants from different clans share and exchange newly composed songs.

The traditional attire of the Kuteb in the present time consists of white or blue hand woven cloth with thin black stripes. These colours are often combined or used separately. The priests, however, wear only blue attires with their gowns reaching below the knee. Each of them hangs a receptacle made from animal skin. During the procession that is characterized by fanfare, it is common to find some participants holding a pestle, sickle, some carrying earthenware pots or other implements signifying harvest or processing of food. The men hang animal skin around their neck or carry animal skull on the head, brandishing hunting tools like spears, bows, arrows and shields, reflecting the hunting occupation of the people. The charcoal or chalk on their faces and body, hanging fresh leaves on parts of the body reflects the traditional way hunters disguise themselves to blend with the environment to outwit animals when they go on hunting expeditions.

Music during *Kuchicheb* performance, as in *Iki* performance is produced by a set of small drums placed under the armpit of the drummers. The gong, trumpet and flute are key instruments in the making of music. Some of the songs in *Kuchicheb* festival take the call and response pattern. The themes of some of the songs attempt to describe the appearance of the participants as a way of cheering them. Other themes

of *Kuchicheb* songs reflect current events in the society that affectthe entire race.

Interesting moments in *Kuchicheb* festival are the performances that mimic the act of hunting. Some mimic certain wild animals crouching while a hunter armed with a spear tiptoes behind at a distance. The hunter engages in various tactical moves to track down the animal which also eludes him by swift movements, hiding behind shrubs. This performance is common in hunting communities as Harper (2016:5) observes that hunters reenact their exploits or mime the movements of animals as a ritual means of controlling wild beasts and allaying their own fears, placating the spirit of the beast and informing the community of the manner in which it was killed. They brandish hunting tools in expression of aggressive war-like movements or hold farming tools in vigorous movements. In between the varieties of songs by the men, they take a break, and a deep throated praise chant to invigorate the dancers is thundered, *"Teb re woh! Teb re woh!"* (Kuteb people, Kuteb people), and the chorused thunderous response goes *"woah hah hah hah!"* made by the dancers in acknowledgement of the cheer. These theatrical features and their artistic application to Kuteb folk festivals situate them in the earlier definition of what we conceive in this treaty as festival theatre.

Secularization of *Iki* and *Kuchicheb* Festivals

Folk festivals are prone to various changes and alterations largely due to their oral forms, and the mutation or change could be deliberate or occur unconsciously. In some cases, in response to contemporary social factors, the forms of the rites we observed are modified in ways that basic components are retained, but some of the

values are lost in the process. In Kuteb traditional society, *Iki* festival was a fusion of spiritual function and social activity. *Pyin*, the religion of Kuteb forebears before the introduction of Christianity by the Sudan United Mission around 1921, had *Iki* performances as major component. However, masquerade tradition is steadily waning, as many Kuteb communities have given it up largely due to the influence of Christian religion and the acquired orientation with which it came. Besides the psychological factor, physical structures like churches, schools, and clinics were novel and provided a new experience. A mission station established in Lupwe, in the heart of Kuteb land provided a base for the spread of Christianity and proportional depletion of passion for some traditional values. Many Kuteb communities no longer have active masquerade tradition, though some have sustained it to date with pockets of enthusiasts keeping it functional.

The ritual content and form of many African masquerade performances have undergone metamorphosis and adaptations. The performances are being taken out of their religious context to the social arena, and some ritual aspects are trimmed in order to fit the secular audience. Harper (2016) traces the emergence of secular masqueraders who perform as entertainers from the ritual societies, citing the example of the Egungun entertainers of the Oyo-Yoruba who perform at Egungun ancestral festivals, but may be invited to perform for a fee as entertainers. The sacrifices the performers are obliged to offer before their display indicates that the originally ritualistic performance cannot fully acquire a secular status even in a social setting. It is thus rational to think the socio-religious function of such performance traditions remains as the indigenous base from which emergent practices are evolving, birthing

new forms of culture and theatre (Dugga, 2017).

The performances of *Iki Fong* particularly have not been restricted to its ritual function in contemporary times. The masquerade and the accompanying ensemble travel to various places and perform at social functions chiefly for entertainment. Featuring of the masquerades in political campaigns has a remote link to the belief that it is a form of approval of the candidate by the ancestors. However, the requirements to commission a performance must usually be met for the custodians of *Iki* to permit such. During cultural festivities at the state and national levels, Kuteb contingents usually have *Iki Fong* in their ensemble. These instances point to great possibilities of cultural tourism for Kuteb masquerade art. *Kuchicheb,* beyond its primary function as a thanksgiving and prayer festival, it is an emerging national event that strengthens communal bonds, uniting the entire Kuteb nation. Over time, solo local artistes and dance groups were slated in the programme for performances. Innovations in dance and music from various clans feature in the festival event. The interest in masquerade performances is not limited to the indigenous participants, as residents of other ethnic groups seek out where these performances are held in far away communities in order to watch.

Conclusion

Major influences that account for the creative modifications in the Kuteb expressive archetype are positive indicators for instituting theatre tourism. Involving government and tourist developers encourage committed participation when competition is promoted, and business opportunities are obvious for investors as well as individual

sand group participants. There are possibilities of upgrading Kuteb festivals and limitless potentials exist when they are promoted and marketed beyond their present traditional base.

In view of the various changes societies are undergoing due to physical development and technological advancement, cultural practices are not likely to be exempt from alterations or mutations. Though some societies may idealistically attempt to remain unyielding to emerging trends, maintaining such a course is not practical. Accommodating change opens up vistas to explore and other potential in the performance heritage of communities. While paying close attention to documenting performance history in literature, photographs, video recordings, and other forms, the mutations arising from current developments are responses to inevitable trends in the theatre.

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Communication and Performance Lighting: A Comparative Study of Two Performances of Ahmed Yerima's *Yemoja*

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Abstract

This study considers the efficacy of expressive or interpretive lighting as a tool for enhancing communication in theatrical performances.A qualitative research methodology was used to compare the outcomes of lighting designs for two performances of Ahmed Yerima's *Yemoja*. In total, 250 questionnaires were randomly administered to the audience members who watched the performance; interviews were conducted with the play directors and the lighting designers of the two performances;

and focus group discussions were also conducted with expert lighting designers in the academics and a few non-academic lighting designers and some of the audience members. Secondary data was also collected from journals, textbooks, the internet, and other related extant literature. Simple percentage analysis used to analyze the data found that light and lighting effects effectively communicate narrrative sub-texts.

Keywords: Yemoja, Yoruba Myth, Subtext, Communication and Interpretive Lighting

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Introduction

Drama is an enacted story. Its function, as Aristotle would agree, is not just to entertain, but also to educate a society.When playwrights write, they have an idea or a message they want to communicate that could be about religion, culture, politics, or social issues (Awoyemi 2019, p. 6; Hurwitz, 2021, par. 3). When a director picks a play to direct, the onus rests on them to clearly communicate the subject matter in the play without ambiguity to its audience. Some theatre scholars, like Akinwale (cited in Adeoye, 2011, p.42), have argued against the necessity of deploying interpretive lighting in theatrical performances, but ideas in plays are often left untold if the expressive design elements are not utilized.

Aim and Objective

This paper investigates the effectiveness of performance lighting to enhance the interpretation of plays by comparing a performance of Ahmed Yerima's *Yemoja* (using expressive lighting) that took place on the 18th of December, 2021 with a

performance of the same play, staged earlier in Western Nigeria, on 21st of November, 2021. These performances are identified as "Performance A" and "Performance B," respectively (in the order of the dates of their stagings).

Definition of Keywords

- *Yemoja* celebrates the river goddess, Yemoja. It is a self-conceived myth and an attempt at explaining the spread of the worship of the river goddess, drawn from the Yoruba cosmology into the entire diaspora (Yerima, 2002, p. 6).
- Yoruba Mythology belongs to the Yorubas are members of the West African people living chiefly in southwestern Nigeria. They are known to be the originators of the worship of the river goddess, Yemoja. The term, mythology, refers to a traditional story that is accepted as history and serves to explain the worldview of a people. Yoruba mythology is the belief of the traditional Yorubas that Yemoja, Ogun, Sango and Obatala are (their) deities.
- Subtext is used to mean the underlying meaning or the unspoken meaning of a text.
- Interpretive or expressive lighting is used to mean the art of deliberately using or designing light(s) and/or lighting effect(s) to connote, imply, express or give explicit meaning to an action or object(s), or to give a semblance of, or to signify a generally acceptable notion.
- Communication, according to Agber and Ejue is a conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional process in which feelings and ideas expressed verbal and or non-verbal messages, are sent, received, and comprehended (2013, p. 17).

Playwriting and Creative Interpretation

As Hurwitz points out,

> [p]laywrights begin with something they believe needs to be said, whether that is a story, a political or religious point, a question to be addressed, or a humorous observation revealing the human condition. The biggest differences between plays and other forms of writing is that plays are meant to be experienced in real time and to be experienced communally (2021, para. 3).

In a bid to establish the huge creative responsibilities attached to the art of playwriting, Johnson also observes that "tonnes of moulding, creating, crafting, engineering and architecturing [are] involved in this unique business which involves the head, the pen, and the stage necessarily" (2000, p. 11). To emphasize the enormous task involved in playwriting, Johnson says that

> [f]ew words exist with the word wright attached to them. One of such is 'shipwright'. And strangely enough, it designates a builder of ships. If we can imagine the degree of technology which goes into the creation of a vessel which successfully cruises on the high sea, the intellectual demands carefully translated into physical properties through which the finished product is called ship; then we can appreciate the ingenuity which a man who must set about making plays, needs to reckon with (2000, pp. 11–12).

Because playwriting is a serious task with deliberate intent, every theatre practitioner

must be deliberate too, when carefully deploying every theatrical means to elicit the meanings in every way possible. Audience members do not only hear the story of a play being told in its literal sense; they also watch the literal signs of text being expressed. According to Parker et al., "[t]he basic obligation of stage design is to give . . . meaning" (2009, p. 324). In particular, the lighting designer assists in reinforcing the theme of a play. As Appia states, "Light is the most important medium on stage . . . without its unifying power our eyes would be able to perceive what objects were but not what they expressed" (cited in Asuquo 2019b, p. 141). Enna succinctly adds that the duty of the lighting designer includes the clarification and intensification of the meanings and concepts of a play (cited in Asuquo, 2009b, p. 27) .

Basic Functions of Stage Lighting

"[L]ight is necessary to the human visual system to operate. With light, we can see; without light, we cannot" Boyce (2014, 43). Crabtree and Beudert point out "[e] lectric light had so many advantages to play in productions that its presence was unavoidable. Once adopted for the stage, there was no turning back. Electric lighting facilitated translucency effects and it also made radical colour shifts on the scenery on stage" (2005, p. 417).

Stage lighting, of course, has other objectives beyond creating visibility, including but not limited to providing illumination in a three-dimensional form of light and shadow for the composition and creation of mood (Shelley, 1999, p. 29). Brockett agrees that light is used to create selective visibility; to direct the eye to the most important elements creating emphasis and subordination; to affect perception of dimensionality **(**alter apparent shape and dimension), and to enhance mood and

atmosphere**.** (1992, pp. 397-8). Brockett goes further to adding that lighting, among other functions, may also reinforce "style", by establishing the time of day, weather conditions, or season, and may also suggest a play's period through its fixtures used on stage (1992, p. 400).

A Synopsis of *Yemoja*

The play, *Yemoja,* is a myth about the Yoruba hero-gods, Ogun, Sango, Orunmila, Obatala, Esu, and the emergence of the river goddess, Yemoja. All these deities are endowed with human feelings, attitudes, and frailties. The story begins with a town-crier announcing that the Kabiyesi wishes to celebrate Yemoja - the river goddess. The next scenario reveals Ogun visiting his lover, Yemoja, at her hut. He dances, eliciting her admiration, and professes his love for her.

In the midst of this romantic sequence, a voice calls, urging Ogun to join them in a war against the people of Ijase Oke (who have come to attack his people). Enraged, Ogun responds that he is joining the warriors at the battle front. Yemoja begs him not to go, asking that he spends the night with her. Instead of heeding her, Ogun calls on Esu to keep Yemoja company until he returns from the battle. He then hands Yemoja his "calabash of life," charges her never to open it or look into it, and leaves for the battle. Esu sees his company with Yemoja as a perfect opportunity to punish her for turning down his romantic overtures. He tricks her into opening Ogun's calabash. She becomes partially paralyzed, and at the same time, Ogun is seriously wounded at the war front by "a little boy". Yemoja begs Esu for help, but he will agree to save her life only if she spends several nights with him. Yemoja argues that she does not want to be unfaithful to Ogun. After bargaining, she agrees to spend one night with him, and Esu calls on Obatala to come and heal her.

While Obatala begins the treatment, Esu dashes to the battle-field and lies to Ogun. He says that Yemoja deliberately opened the calabash of life, because she wanted to have Ogun killed and reveals that she is having an affair with Obatala. Ogun becomes enraged and dashes to Yemoja's abode to confront Obatala. He challenges Obatala to a fight to death at the market square. Obatala, in turn, runs to Sango (Ogun's foe) to fight in his stead. Yemoja runs to Orunmila (a diviner) to help her consult *Ifa* to know what to do to avert the duel between Ogun and Sango. Orunmila reveals to Yemoja that she has a greater mission to fulfill—that of going into the river to become the mother of all sea creatures and answering the needs of those who call on her for help. Therefore, as Ogun and Sango meet at the market square for their showdown, Yemoja intervenes. She explains that she cannot keep quiet and watch Ogun allow his temper to take her love for him to the market square for ridicule. She asserts that she will not be the reason the two men would fight and kill each other and will step into the sea to answer those who call on her for help. Suddenly, she transforms into a mermaid and wriggles her way into the sea.

Methodology

Content analysis and survey techniques were used for data gathering. Data was also gathered from video-recordings of the two performances of Ahmed Yerima's *Yemoja,* tagged "Performance A" and "Performance B", from the live performances (via observation by participation), and from related extant literatures.

Probability samplings of opinion through focus group discussions and (Face-to-Face and Telephone) interviews were adopted as instruments of data collection. The decision to adopt a survey was made to allow for an intimate setting for a free-flow discussion.

The focus group discussions were carried out with two categories of audience members. The first focus group discussion consisted of 8 technical theatre students. The second focus group discussion consisted of 93 people (who watched the unedited video recording of "Performance A"). The participants chosen met two criteria: those who indicated interest and watched "Performance B" under study. These participants were assured that they would only be mentioned as participants. Face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with the director and lighting designer (respectively) of "Performance A".

An interview was also conducted with an expert lighting designer who is also an academician. Copies of a questionnaire were administered to a total of 250 (randomly picked) out of the 345 members of the live audience of "Performance B". The following questions guided the discussions and interviews:

1). From the author's note in the play-text, do you understand that Yoruba mythology is one of the major themes in Ahmed Yerima's *Yemoja?*

2). Do you agree that characters like Ogun, Sango, and Yemoja are portrayed as deities in the play-text?

3). Do you agree that the "performance A" effectively communicated the myths surrounding the characters of Ogun, Sango, and Yemoja as supernatural beings or hero-gods in the pay?

4). Do you agree that the "performance B" effectively communicated the myths surrounding the hero-gods in the play?

5). Do you agree that the use of light as an expressive tool in "performance B" aided in evincing and communicating the myths

of supernaturalism surrounding characters like Ogun, Sango, and Yemoja?

Results from the Audience

Out of the 250 administered copies of the questionnaire (with options as follows: "Agree", "Strongly Agree", "Disagree", and "Strongly Disagree"; 240 (i.e. 96%) was retrieved. 223 (i.e. 92.9%) respondents strongly agreed that the lighting in this scene helped them to understand that Yemoja entered into water (river), 7 (i.e. 2.9) ticked "Agreed", no (i.e. 0%) respondent ticked "Disagree" or "Strongly disagree". There were 10 (4.16%) respondents who did not tick any option.

Results from Focus Group Discussions

A total of 8 Technical Theatre students and the researcher made up the first Focus Group Discussion. The participants were all allowed to watch the unedited video recording of "Performance A". After watching the video, 3 of the students admitted that though the myths surrounding the Yoruba hero-gods in the play were not effectively communicated, they could still identify the characters of Ogun, Sango, and Yemoja as beings with supernatural power because they were already familiar with the Yoruba myth surrounding their persons; but that the second performance produced better information about the myths surrounding the characters. While the other 5 members of the Focus Group Discussion claimed they could not gain any insight about the myth surrounding the Yoruba hero-gods from "Performance A", until they watched "Performance B".

A group of 93 non-technical theatre audience members were also gathered for a focus group discussion. This was carried out to determine if the difference in the

lighting of “performance A” and “performance B” could affect the perception of non-technical audience differently. 91 (i.e. 97.8) out of the 93 non-technical theatre audience members said though they are familiar with the Yoruba myth surrounding a character like Sango, it only in “performance B” that his fire-spitting prowess was communicated. The entire 93 participants averred that Ogun’s portrayal in “Performance A” only communicated him as a strong man; that it was not until the lighting that separated him (at Yemoja’s house) from the warriors at the forest in “Performance B”, that he was portrayed as a supernatural being with the ability to hear from/communicate with people miles away. 34 (36.5%) said even when they watched “Performance B” and saw the ambience transformation when Yemoja transformed into a mermaid and wriggled her body to the edge of the market square, they could not understand that she was entering into a water (river) until they saw the projected scene on the backdrop as she was swimming in the river. While 59 (i.e.63.4%) said that the ambience transformation via the lighting aided them in understanding that Yemoja was entering into water. In the end, the entire 93 participants said that not only did the expressive lighting in “Performance B” aided the interpretation of the unfolding scenarios in the play, but it made the performance to be more aesthetically appealing to them.

Director’s Remark

According to the director of “Performance A”, “we tried our best in interpreting the play with available resources . . .; yes, I believe the audience enjoyed it. But I must admit that the use of lighting designs in the second performance [‘Performance B’] produced a better and deeper interpretation.”

Performance "A" and Performance "B": Selected Scenes

As Parker et al. remark, theatrical form in its simplest description is the communication of ideas between the performers and the audience (2009, p. 3). Appia observes that light is a unifying factor for projecting the communicative or interpretative import of any theatrical performance (cited in Asuquo 2019, p. 141). Expressing or communicating the playwright's and/or the director's vision to the audience, light (in any theatrical performance) must follow the rule of its expressive or communicative engagement. As Brawne remarks, "[h]ow light is reflected and what we read into the qualities of that reflected light affects our perception" (2003, p. 147). Because Ahmed Yerima's *Yemoja* is situated within the Yoruba cultural milieu, the ostensible meanings associated with the use of light are culturally driven.

Performance "A" Version

Picture 1 Scenario: Yemoja's abode which simultaneously accommodates the Warriors at the battle-front are calling on Ogun to join them at the battlefield). Ogun is dancing and being admired by Yemoja, but he is interrupted by the call from the warriors, telling him to join them at the battle-field (Yerima 2002, pp. 18 - 20).

<u>Scene Lighting</u>

As Light reveals Ogun and Yemoja, the voice of the warrior who is calling on Ogun is heard from outside Yemoja's hut. It can be observed here that the warriors who are calling on Ogun to join them at the battlefront are not seen. This way, the information of where they are calling from, is not properly interpreted and transmitted to the audience. By so doing, the audience is only left to engage in guesswork (as per whether the warriors are within Yemoja's abode), which can actually result in misconceptions; whereas, the text says they are calling from a battle-front.

Performance "B" Version

Picture 2 Scenario: Ogun dancing to please Yemoja, but is interrupted by the call to join the warriors at the battle-field (Yerima 2002, pp. 18 - 20). This is a scene with a simultaneous setting - the scenario on stage right (from actor's point of view) is the war-front where the warriors are calling on Ogun to join them in the battle against the people of Ijase Oke. While on the stage left is Yemoja's abode; where Ogun is with Yemoja.

Scene Lighting

To establish the two different locales and their atmospheric conditions (with activities happening simultaneously) without the audience being confused, the lighting designer

had to deploy controllable qualities of light (i.e. colour, direction, movement and intensity) and to enhance a clear interpretation of the scenes drew on iconography familiar to the audience. As Sebeok says, "an icon is a sign that is made to resemble, stimulate, or reproduce its referent in the same way" (2201, p. 9). The greenish ambience is created for the warriors' scene in the forest is used to simulate natural ambience of a forest scene, communicating a mangrove milieu (the battle-front). The clear atmosphere around Yemoja's abode represents normal daytime. In this way, although the warriors at the battlefront are communicating with Ogun who is at Yemoja's abode (as the play stipulates), the audience can clearly see and distinguish that the two scenarios are happening at different places.

N/B: the above expressive lighting not only allows the audience members to see, understand, and enjoy the actions in the two different locales happening simultaneously, but the fact that Ogun (who is at Yemoja's abode) can hear the voices of the warriors who are in a faraway battlefield, also helps to interpret and/or implicitly communicate his supernatural ability to hear voices miles away (a rare attribute associated with a deity) to the audience – a fact which is not explicitly stated by any character in the play, but is implied in the text. In this way, the lighting does more than reveal actors and scenery; it also expresses the inner essence of the playwright's/director's vision (the Yoruba myth that Ogun has supernatural powers).

It should also be noted that in the Performance "A" version of the play, the voice calling on Ogun to come and join them in the battlefront was heard from behind the stage (and no lighting was used to establish the locale of the scenario). This leaves the audience members to wonder about who is calling on Ogun, and from where the voice is calling him. Audience members who have not read the play before watching

the performance must take part in guesswork to decipher where the voice is coming from – some may even have assumed that the battleground was behind Yemoja's hut (since the voice is coming from there). Not every audience member would know that Ogun possesses supernatural powers (as a god).

Performance "B" Version

Picture 3 Scenario: On sighting Ogun at his arrival at the market square, Sango begins to spit out fire.

Scene Lighting

Apart from a bright illumination to communicate a morning scene, the added light used here (by the lighting designer) for the "B" version of the performance is a fire effect. According to Sebeok, an index is "a sign that refers to something or someone in terms of its existence or location in time and space, or in relation to something or someone else. For example, smoke is an index of fire. (pointing out where the fire is); cough is an index of cold; etc" (2001: 10). Sango is a Yoruba hero-god that spits fire (especially when he is angry).Here, the added light is used as an index to the temperament of the Yoruba hero-god, Sango. Communicating Sango's fire-spitting prowess, the lighting designer offered a practical interpretation of the

play's mythological subtext. Without the fire effect,audience members might have mistaken Sango for an ordinary person who has come to fight Ogun. As 99% of the respondents who filled out the administered questionnaire confirmed, the fire-spiting effect deepened the Yoruba mythology associated with Sango, and the audience was better informed of the nature of this special character and the unfolding scenario. Also, during the performance,as soon as the character started spiting fire, many of the audience members started shouting: "Sango!" The fire-spiting effect was non-existent in the Performance "A" version of the performance, and the name-hailing at the character's appearance on the scene was also non-existent.

Performance "A" Version

Picture 4 Scenario: At the Market-square, after Yemoja stops the fight between Sango and Ogun, contrary to the playtext, she walks out of the scene rather than transforming into a mermaid in the presence of the town's people, as the text stipulates.

Performance "A" Version

Picture 5 Scenario: Yemoja returns after changing into a mermaid costume.

Observation

In "Performance "A," light was not used to express Yemoja's supernatural nature, communicate her metamorphosis and transit into the river. Her transformation was played-down and arguably nonexistent. Merely walking out of the scene and returning in a shining dress, she could have been an ordinary human.

Performance "B" Version

Picture 6: Market-square. **Time:** Day, **Scenario:** Yemoja is about to transform into a mermaid, thunder stricks, lightning flickers and the atmosphere becomes cloudy.

Remarks on the Lighting

As Sebeok points out, a "symbol is a sign that stands for its referent in an arbitrary, conventional way" (2001, p. 11). For example, a cross figure can stand for the concept of Christianity, and the colour white can be symbolic of cleanliness, purity, and innocence. On stage, the use of lighting effects produce a sudden thunder-strike and lightning, and the atmospheric transformation changed from being that of a bright clear morning atmosphere to a bluish ambience. First, this effect established and then reinforced the idea of the supernatural before it made Yemoja's metamorphosis meaningful. Second, this lighting transition simulated the natural cloudy ambience of an impending rainfall. According to the Yoruba mythology, Yemoja is a supernatural being associated with water. Third, the changed lighting enhanced the illusion of an aquatic milieu (and its supernatural invocation) that dramatized Yemoja's movement into the river (implied in the play-text).

Performance "B" Version

Picture 8: Market-square. **Time:** Day. **Scenario:** As Yemoja metamorphosed into a mermaid, Iyaji, the head of Yemoja's priestesses, begins to eulogize her. Then Yemoja begins to wriggle her body away from the market-square.

N/B: As implied in the play (at page 60 and 62) by the character and the stage direction

(respectively), after Yemoja's metamorphosis, she says, "I shall today step into the big blue sea answering to the different needs of all who call me Yemoja" (Yerima 2002, p. 60). Since the play explicitly states that Yemoja left for the sea, it becomes germane to express the moment of her entry into the river to become a river "goddess" – this is fundamental information which no dialogue effectively communicates to the audience. If not expressed via lighting design, very significant information about the incipience of the worship of the river goddess could have eluded the audience. A vivid stage picture of Yemoja entering a river had to be created via lighting design. As she wriggles her body towards the edge of the market space, the area is transformed into water (see Picture 9 below) which links her to the sea.

Performance "B" Version

Picture 9: Market-square. **Time:** Day. **Scenario:** As Yemoja gets to the edge of the market-square, the area turns to water (see the Down Stage Left area of Picture 9 above). The water serves as her links to the sea. The priestesses sing and dance in honour of her; which marks the incipience of the worship of the river goddess (see Picture 10 below).

Performance "B" Version

Picture 10: River Bank. **Time:** Day. **Scenario:** After Yemoja had disappeared through the water by the market, the people sang in her praise, then left. Afterwards, through the use of a lighting device known as projector, Yemoja is seen swimming in a deep blue river as she had said; and the people gather in worship of Yemoja (as it is today) at the river bank. A careful scrutiny of the picture above shows the image of Yemoja swimming behind the motif on the backdrop.

Performance "A" Version

Picture 11: The Market-square. **Time:** Day. **Scenario:** rather than Yemoja entering into the water or river as stated in the play-text, Yemoja is seen returning to embrace Ogun.

Findings

This study offers following observations:

- Not only does the expressive use of lighting establish and differentiate the battle-front from Yemoja's abode help to communicate to the audience that the two simultaneous scenarios on stage are happening at two different locales, but the possibility of the conversations between Ogun and the warrior at battle-front (despite being miles apart) also helps communicate and reinforce the Yoruba myth of Ogun's possession of supernatural powers as a deity.
- The creation of the fire-spitting effect by Sango and the creation of water and river effects, into which Yemoja entered, help communicate and validate the supernatural powers that these characters possess.
- The mythological incipience of Yemoja as a mermaid and her worship is also well-established via expressive lighting. In Performance "A", the water in which Yemoja is to depart (as implied in the texts), is not realized; she merely walks out of the scene contrary to the myth which holds that she left the terrestrial world for the aquatic realm to become a river goddess.

Conclusion

Since a play performance is intended to be an interpretation of a text, a design component like light, must be used for interpretive purposes. Minute salient sub-text in a play can be expressed for audience consumption without ambiguity. Expressive lighting also enriches the aesthetics in play performances, engineering audience interest and patronage.

Recommendation

This study recommends that the art of expressive lighting be encouraged, especially in educational theatres. This will not only offer opportunities for students to specialize in the art of performance lighting by honing their skills and expanding their creative horizons. The art of performance lighting also deepens the interpretation of plays and creates aesthetics that regale theatre audiences, encouraging the patronage that keeps the stage alive.

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Contemporary Features of Rebirth of Music in African Churches: A Nigerian case study

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Abstract

The cultural awakening that began in the early nineteenth century with the returning slaves from Sierra Leone after the abolition of slave trade with the promulgation of an act in 1807 by Britain making trade in slaves illegal had its impact on the Church and set the foundation for the development of Christian music in African Churches. Once liturgical, Nigerian Church music is now indigenous. Notable for its indigenization, secularization, instrumentation, and acculturation, the course of Nigerian Church music informs the development of African Church music, attributing its rebirth today to mission mobilization.

Key Words: Rebirth; Church Music; African Churches; Indigenization; Secularization; Instrumentation; Acculturation

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Introduction

In Christian service, regardless of the field of one's endeavour, Music has a major role to play (Osbeck, 1961, p.13). Music is a universal gift God has put in the hands of mankind. No tribe, tongue, or nation is without music. God's most important institution, the Church has always been filled with music, and true followers of God are also filled with Music. God has destined that people, music, language and culture all work together to form and define a people. People and their love of music cannot be separated (Janvier, 1995, p.3). These statements, made by Osbeck and Janvier, are true of Music and what it has capacity to do when it is employed the way intended by God. But it must be noted that Music itself is not the exclusive property of the Church. Secular music is also attractive, especially to the youth who may leave the Church to experience it or bring it into the Church. Contention between entertainment and ministry, between honoring God and just having fun, often lies in secular music being hostile to the message of the gospel that sacred or church music seeks to propagate. As a means of communication, invocation, supplication, and mobilization, music is as indispensable today as it was when the African Church emerged in the early nineteenth century. But once liturgical, Nigerian Church music is now indigenous. This paper finds the history of Nigerian Church music notable for its indigenization, secularization, instrumentation, and acculturation. Its course informs the development of African Church music, and its rebirth is evidence of the importance of mission mobilization.

‘Church Music’

> The terms ‘Church music’ ‘Christian music’ and ‘Gospel music’ are often used interchangeably by many people (including this author) in a variety of contexts relating to music with Christian themes within and outside the church. Such inter-changeability and disregard for restrictive terminologies may be excused because the textual content of the three terms are essentially Christian; based on Christian doctrines and biblical themes. (Emielu, 2014, p.110)

First, it is necessary to situate the African Church music in its proper context. As Emielu points out, ‘Church music’ ‘Christian music’ and ‘Gospel music’ are often interchangeable terms. ‘Christian music,’ however, is a generic term embracing all forms of music that developed or emerged from the musical practices of the Christian faith whether in the strict liturgy in the Church or in the adaptive contexts outside of the Church. It is the religious music of the Christian faith that gives expression to the Christian doctrines.Over time, ‘Christian music’ has become an an umbrella term for ‘Church’ music and ‘Gospel music,’ the tree out of which other branches shoot out.

‘Gospel music’ refers to the Christian branch of religious music employed for the purpose of propagating the gospel of Christ to Christians and non-Christians and edifying the believers through its performance in both a strict religious context (in the Church) and a social/entertainment context (outside the Church) made popular by the electronic media, technology and its performance.

In “Church Music in Nigeria: A Historical Trend,” Kayode Samuel (2013) identifies ‘Gospel music’ as one of the new forms that emerged from the liturgical music of the church in Nigeria. In his view, gospel music is one of the most widely

accepted musical genres in contemporary Nigeria and above all, probably the most controversial, because of its popular status and its highly variegated nature. This music, according to Samuel, has witnessed many revolutionary changes, especially in recent times. He suggests that the definition of 'Church music' covers any music used as part of liturgical service. That is 'Church music' includes hymns, psalms and canticles, special choir renditions in form of 'Native' and Western anthems, localized and imported gospel music as well as 'Native air' and choruses. Also included in the definition of church music by Samuel, one finds vocal and instrumental music used by Christian faithful or bands at socio-religious activities outside Church services. He traces the origin of church music in Nigeria to the advent of Christian missionary activities of the second half of the nineteenth century. This music, which was initially strictly reserved for worship, later grew, developed, and became variegated.

The inclusion of 'Gospel music' in Samuel's definition of 'Church music' is worthy of note. That 'Gospel music' is a branch of 'Christian music' and an offshoot of 'Church music' is a fact that cannot be overlooked. However, having developed from church music, 'Gospel music' carves a unique identity for itself that distinguishes it from 'Church music,' especially in terms of its performance context and styles. 'Gospel music' can be regarded as 'Church music' only when it forms part of the liturgy in Christian worship. We consider 'Church music' to be more restrictive and confined to the four walls of the Church, and 'Gospel music' as a variation of the 'Church music' taken out of the restrictions of the Church and employed in social functions and serving, in some cases, as entertainment music which 'Church music' does not encourage. A distinguishing feature between Church and Gospel music is the sanctity and sacredness of 'Church music' because of its use in worship as part of the

liturgy. Another is the adaptive nature of 'Gospel music' to different contexts within and outside the church and the liberty that the performers have in the employment of the music. Alluding to the sacredness of 'Church music,' Robertson states

> There was, indeed a marked antithesis between the secular music of the time (Time of the early church fathers) and the kind of music felt to be suitable for Christian worship: restraint, tranquility, nobility and solemnity were not qualities to be found in theatrical entertainment or at private parties, nor could such be said to express states of the soul. (1950, p. 70)

Femi Adedeji uses the term, sacred music, to describe 'Church music.' defining it as the music of the Christian liturgies or music used for Christian worship (2014, pp.103-117). It is a sanctified, holy, revered music for the worship of God. As Robertson above would concur, sacred music is 'the kind of music which spiritually, aesthetically, and practically consorts most closely with the sacred words of the Christian liturgies'.

In terms of progression, 'Christian music' gave rise to 'Church music,' and 'Church music' produced 'Gospel music.' For the purpose of this discussion, 'Church music' is defined as music, associated with Christian faith, that is music engaged in strict liturgy within the four walls of the Church, including the hymns, psalms, choruses, choir anthems, and the same music taken out of the Church's setting to secular spaces for crusades, revivals, festivals, musical concerts (and so on), as well as 'Gospel music' that has emerged since the 1960s as a distinct branch of 'Christian music.'

Nigeria Church Music—a case study

The cultural awakening that began in the early nineteenth century with the returning slaves from Sierra Leone after the abolition of slave trade with the promulgation of an act in 1807 by Britain making trade in slaves illegal had its impact on the Church and set the foundation for the development of 'Church music' in African Churches. The Church was the strongest challenge to European power, because it was a place of convergence for western-educated African elites in the nineteenth century Nigeria. There were agitations for African friendly policies that countenanced the African customs, beliefs and practices and this was instrumental to the emergence of Nigerian hymnody at the beginning of the century. According to Omojola, the new indigenous Church music constituted the most significant artistic symbol of the nineteenth century Nigerian challenge to European hegemony (1995, p.9). Omojola also observed that one of the most important issues which engaged the attention of the early leaders of the Churches was the extent to which European elements should be retained in the new Churches, especially in regard to hymn, liturgy, and dogma. Traditional music had been banned in the orthodox churches, because it was said to carry pagan connotations. The leadership in the new African Churches therefore was deliberate in deemphasizing European and promoting African elements in their worship. Worthy of mention is the leader of the Native Baptist Church, Mr Mojola Agbebi who strongly advocated for the use of hymns based on or derived from traditional African music. He actually instructed members of his Church in Ekiti land not to use European Hymns for seven years to allow traditional music to take its rightful place in Ekiti Churches. Agbebi's efforts were complemented by those of

A.K. Ajisafe, an outstanding hymnologist, who pioneered the use of native airs in his Church, the United African Methodist, Eleja, in 1917. In addition, drums were introduced by the Ethiopian and Brotherhood Churches, two missions established in 1918.

The cultural awakening in the African Churches became inevitable in the orthodox Churches whose leadership initially was reluctant to use African music, because African songs were termed paganistic and offensive and thought not worthy for worship. However, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, African songs were allowed in the Anglican Churches because the orthodox Churches were losing converts to the new African Churches in increasing numbers as music became their chief means of propaganda. Churches like St Judes Anglican Church, Lagos, had musicians like Emmanuel Sowande, the leading Nigerian composer of African modern art music and J.J. Ransome Kuti, one of Nigeria's most popular musicians, who began to introduce traditional songs set to Christian texts for use in the Church. Alaja-Brown (1981) observes that by 1902, Church musicians began to compose indigenous hymns whose melodies were based on local song styles, t marking the establishment of the Native air tradition. A good example of such song is "E t'olorun lawa o se o" (We shall do the will of God) derived from a Yoruba folksong, "Epo nbe, Ewa nbe o" (There is palm oil, there is beans) usually sung by parents of twins. Songs in this style and at this stage in the new African Churches are described by Abayomi Bello as products of experimental works of the pioneering organists, Catechists, and choirmasters, among whom were the Rev. Canon J.J. Ransom-Kuti, Ekundayo Phillips, Revd T.A. Olude, Akin George and Emmanuel Sowande (2014, p. 316).

The use of music and its practice in African churches continues to have different

dynamics with different phases, flavors, and expressions at different periods with the emergence of different churches and denominations. Music in the African-instituted churches, like the Aladura, and the western-influenced Pentecostal churches, as well as the mainline churches, all present different features in their engagement of music in worship and its deployment for other Christian activities. Pentecostalism remains a strong influence on Christianity, and this, in turn, has influenced the types, forms, styles, and content of music in African churches today. However, since the concern of this paper is about the rebirth of church music in African churches for mission mobilization we shall now focus on what we consider as some general features of the rebirth of church music in the African churches.

Contemporary Features of Rebirth of Music in African Churches

Because, rebirth generally implies renaissance or renewal, rebirth in this paper refers to a new phase and dynamics of music in the African Churches, that is the new way in which 'Church music' is being packaged in African Churches today for the purpose of mobilization for missions. This rebirth of music in African Churches presents the following features that are common to all denominations: indigenization, secularization, instrmentation, and acculturation.

Indigenization

As earlier stated, the cultural awakening that began in the nineteenth-century Nigerian church began a process of indigenization—of worship and its elements, including music. Starting with the direct translation of western hymns to indigenous languages with the original western tunes, this process moved to composing native airs which adapted the existing folk songs to Christian texts and then to composing

original compositions conceived and executed in the indigenous cultures with their peculiarities. The indigenous musical instruments which originally had been rejected and banned by the missionaries as evil and paganistic found their way back into the Church and have been continued to be used to date. Indigenization of music in the African Churches is reflected in the language, musical instruments, scale structures, melodic directions, and performance modes. Indigenous Churches, especially the Aladura (Spiritual) Churches, began to spring up, being more aligned to African cultural identity and cultural nationalism. Some clergymen composed native airs and native anthems for Church use: for example, the Reverend J.J. Ransome- Kuti collected fifty seven Yoruba sacred songs written in indigenous poetic and musical idioms based on pentatonic scale characteristic of the African tuning system. This situation continued until the Seventies when the Pentecostal movement emerged and gave rise to the growth, development, and spread of 'Gospel music' (Samuel, 2006, p 19).

The indigenization of 'Church music' in the African Churches was and is still an effective means of mobilization for missions. In its early stage, it attracted and retained the Africans in the African churches because of the vibrancy and dynamic activities that the African music contains and that was lacking in the western hymns and mode of worship. Africans were able to relate with the visual and communicative essence of their musical instruments when engaged in worship. For example the drum language, which an average indigenous person understands and their local language communicates to them in worship, makes the message of the gospel easily accessible. Accordingly, the indigenization of 'Church music' has remained constant as a tool in the mobilization of African Churches for missions.

Secularization

The tern, secularization is used here to imply the process of taking music from within the four walls of the Church where it was used in a strict liturgical setting to public or secular spaces for the purpose of socialization and evangelism.Secularizing 'Church music' started with the activities of a new breed of musicians, "church musicians," in the first six decades of the twentieth century. These activities culminated in the production of 'native airs' and 'musical entertainment' within Christian communities in different parts of the country and resulted in the development of several hybrid forms with ethnic flavors. According to Vidal, the efforts of these musicians in developing church music was celebrated in the grand interdenominational open-air service that featured mass choirs from all churches, held on Sunday, October 2, 1960, at the Lagos Course, now the Tafawa Balewa Square (2017, p. 30). The service was held as part of the activities marking Nigerian Independence. It featured 'native airs' in many Nigerian languages.

This secularization of church music brought about the development of what is now known as Nigerian 'Gospel music.' Omibiyi-Obidike (1994) and Ojo (1998) both trace the origin of 'Gospel music' in Nigeria to the Church. According to Omibiyi-Obidike (1994), 'Gospel music' originally was used in the Church and was performed at special festivals, such as harvest and thanksgiving. However, with electronic technology and the need for youth to have the type of music that caters to their social interests, 'Gospel music' was taken out of the church. Ojo concurs with Omibiyi-Obidike when he states that it soon became apparent that a different kind of Christian music was needed for festival occasions, for example, harvest rituals, funeral ceremonies, births and marriages (1998, p. 215). Initially, church choirs had

provided music at such occasions.

As Omibiyi and Ojo point out, the need to cater for the musical needs of the members at social gatherings set the stage for the development of Nigerian 'Gospel music,' and that 'Gospel music' developed from the adaptation of 'Church music' to meet the social needs of the church members. Bode Omojola remarks that Yoruba 'Church music' being the first western influenced musical tradition in Yoruba land was the major plank for the development of new musical genres and practices (2014, p. 35). This category certainly includes 'Gospel music,' which later developed as an extension of this "Church music.'

The secularization of 'Church music' manifested in a new genre of music now known as Nigerian 'Gospel music' engages in the use of popular and secular styles. The Nigerian Gospel musicians use various musical styles in their performances. The use of traditional and contemporary popular styles, like Waka, Senwele, Apala, Ijala, Fuji, Hip Hop, Rock, and Afro beat, especially attracts the youth and serves as entertainment at social functions. The use of traditional musical instruments and the performance of such styles (exactly the waythey are done in the secular but for the text) usually generate dance steps, movements, and interactions that are entertaining.

Merged, popular and secular styles have forged their own performance identities in Nigerian 'Church music' through the activities of the 'Gospel musicians.' It has been observed that the 1980s marked the emergence of the use of popular styles in Nigerian 'Gospel music' because of the influence of popular culture, on the one hand, and the desire to commercialize 'Gospel music,' on the other. This, in Emielu's (2006) opinion, is a product of the steady cross-current of musical ideas and cultural exchanges that takes place between Africa and the Diaspora.

An examination of the current trends in the performance of Nigerian 'Gospel music' reveals that while some of the Gospel musicians are known for using specific popular styles to occasionally spice their performances, others have come to be known and identified with the use of a specific popular style, while still other employ a blend of several styles in their performances. For example, Frank Edward is one of the Nigerian Gospel musicians who is known for his hip hop style, Adekunle Oloyede Michael Olalekan, popularly known as Dekunle Fuji, performs using Fuji and a trio that goes by the name 'Bois Olorun,' meaning God's boys are known for the gospel Apala Style. 'Bois Olorun' is comprised of three young men, Feranmi, Kayode and Kolade, who formed Apala music group in 2007, using the method of 'scripturising.' Blending everyday language, slang, and indigenous comedy into their music to communicate the gospel, while other musicians like Bukola Akinade, Tope Alabi, and Kenny Kore are known for the use of multiple styles in their performances.

Evangelist Rachael Bukola Akinade, popularly called 'Senwele Jesu,' carved an identity for herself in the Nigerian gospel music scene through her use of Waka and Senwele musical styles. An examination of her music recordings reveals that she mainly employs the popular highlife, Waka and Senwele genres, in her performance. Tope Alabi is another house hold name in the Nigerian 'Gospel music' scene who spices up her performances with Macosa. The use of music and popular or celebrated Gospel musicians is a strategy has been found to be effective in mobilizing for missions and evangelizing. Taking the sacred to the secular through Gospel musicians often engaged in gospel crusades, mission campaigns, and musical concerts has strengthened the Church's mobilization for missions.

Instrumentation

Another contemporary feature of the rebirth of 'Church music' in the African churches is found in instrumentation. The elaborate use of musical instruments is found throughout in the African churches. A blend of the western with the traditional musical instruments, especially the percussions, is an especially prominent feature. According to Omojola (2014), Christian churches across Yoruba land now commonly feature dundun drummers, both during worship services and at Christian social gatherings outside the church. This observation is quite true. Some musical instruments such as the western keyboard, guitars, drum set, saxophones, trumpets, congas, and the traditional talking drums – *Gangan, Bata, Sekere, Agogo* – seem to be generally employed by the Nigerian Gospel musicians and in the churches. The number of each of the musical instruments also varies from one church to another. In the case of gospel musicians, this varies from one to another, depending on how large the band is and the style of performance, but the basic combination of the instrument in the small band is at least one each of the keyboard, bass guitar, drum set, and talking drum. The use of multiples of each of the musical instruments and the dominant instrument, whether western or traditional, is also a function of the style of the musician. One of the major attractions to Christian gatherings is good music driven by good musical instruments manned by skillful musicians.

Plate 1: Shola Allison uses a blend of Western Keyboard, Guitar and traditional drums in a live performance at the Stella Obasanjo Hall in Ilorin on Sunday 27th December, 2015.

Plate 2: The percussion section of 'Bois' Olorun using multiple talking drums in a musical concert on Sunday 27th December, 2015 at the Stella Obasanjo Hall, Ilorin.

Plate 3: The western drum set, a basic instrument employed by most gospel musicians being played by the drummer on December, 2015 at Stella Obasanjo Hall, Ilorin.

Acculturation

Whereas indigenization was a feature of the rebirth of music in African churches, acculturation was also a dynamic expressed in the music of African Churches. Western culture, resisted and deliberately deemphasized at some point in the African Church, was later amplified and fused with the African culture. The fusion of the new with the old gradually became a feature of music in African Churches, as African and western elements blended together. According to Axelsson,

> [a]s the people of Africa have accepted cultural traits and ideologies of Western origin, but changed them in meaning and content to suit their own environments, they must also be allowed to accept

> European musical idioms and change them according to their own concepts without the superimposition of neo-colonial attitudes. Therefore I have called the present-day church music activities an acculturation process. (1974, p. 89)

Tunji Vidal (2017) identifies a category of musical expression in Nigeria as the 'western and Africanized church music.'According to him, this is the result of the importation of European Christian religious institutions into the Nigerian society and the subsequent process of acculturation, adaptation, and assimilation. He observes that the earliest practice of this category of music can be traced to the missionary activities of the Wesleyan (Now Methodist) missionaries and Church Missionary Society (Now Anglican) that both landed in Badagry in 1841 and 1843 respectively. More recently, with the advent of Pentecostalism is the elevation of western concepts and models in Nigeria and their reintroduction into African worship, especially in its music.

A blending of different African cultures for the purpose of appeal and communication with various cultural groups or people of different ethnic backgrounds also became a feature. This brought about the assimilation and utilization of other people's languages, tunes, and performance styles in Church music. Churches in cosmopolitan settlements engage in using music that reflect their settings and benefits their memberships. It is now a common feature to hear songs of different Nigerian and other African languages intentionally performed in a service, especially during the praise sessions, reflecting the cross-cultural demography of the congregations. This usually generates a sense of belonging in all congregants and facilitates inclusive

participation in worship, thereby mobilizing the worshippers.

Conclusion

To say that music influences the religion of Africa or vice versa is merely an isomorphic statement, because religion and music are two indivisible superstructures that constitute the culture of the Africans (Agbo & Keke, 2013, p.259). As Blacking points out, music derives its strength from the culture that regulates its emergence, performance, patronage, and continuity, because it is a product of human behavior (1973, p. 60). In light of its dynamic history and complicated development, 'Church music' music remains one of the strongest and most effective tools for mission mobilization both on the part of the missionaries and the evangelized. Music itself has remained an age-long instrument for conveyance of the gospel message when properly handled, but in recent times it has also been mishandled, especially in its secularization and instrumentation. There is the need to strike a balance between the sacred and the secular, gospel and entertainment, and musicality and spirituality, as well as, ministration and performance. Whereas ministration can be performative and entertaining, music for mission mobilization is essentially sacred, spiritual, Christ-centered, and biblical in all its intent, because it is meant for drawing souls into the kingdom as well as edifying those who are already saved.

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FILM REVIEW

2040: An Australian Exploration of a Sustainable Future

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2040, an Australian documentary film released on February 11, 2019 and directed by Damon Gameau,[1] is a thought-provoking exploration of the concept of climate mitigation that deserves renewed interest in today's times. The film presents interviews with experts and footage of innovative technologies and sustainable practices, providing a glimpse into the possibilities for a green future. Through the use of splendid animation, interactive interviews and variations of footage, Gameau focuses on the pressing issue of climate change in an engaging and enlightening manner.

1. Damon Gameau is an Australian actor, director and producer best known for his science-fiction style, future-casting documentaries *That Sugar Film* and *2040*. He is now a full-time director and was recently nominated for NSW Australian of the Year for his work in the "Regeneration" movement. Gameau's *2040* documentary had a large impact campaign that helped farmers switch to regenerative practices, and his current film *Regenerate Australia 2030* is a vision for Australia in the near future.

2040 convincingly presents a unique perspective on the topic of climate change by showcasing the advancements and realistic, achievable solutions that are currently available to mitigate its effects. Unlike Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), which primarily focuses on the negative consequences of climate change, this film offers a more positive and hopeful outlook—like Tim Flannery's book *Atmosphere of Hope* (2015)—by telling the story of an Australian father imagining a sustainable future for his four-year-old daughter Velvet 20 years from now, while also emphasizing the urgent need for action. Through the use of real-life examples and inventions, the film highlights the potential for a safer, cleaner and more equitable world for future generations if these solutions are more widely adopted.

One of the most striking aspects of *2040* is indeed its focus on solutions rather than problems, which aligns with the key focus of the UN's COP 27 (2022)[2] and is important for several reasons. Firstly, a focus on solutions can help to maintain a positive mindset and inspire hope. This can be motivating for individuals and communities to take action when they see that there are feasible solutions to the challenges they are facing. Secondly, by highlighting solutions, individuals and communities are empowered to take action themselves and to implement sustainable practices and technologies in their own lives. Furthermore, a focus on solutions is more action-oriented, spurring progress toward mitigation and adaptation rather than just raising awareness about the negative impacts of climate change, and it can also lead to a more efficient use of resources and money, potentially finding more cost-

2. The United Nations' Climate Change Conference 2022 (COP 27) brought nations together to take action on climate change, focusing on climate funding, technology, education and innovation to achieve collective climate goals.

effective solutions. Lastly, by focusing on solutions, we can start to view problems as opportunities to innovate and create new technologies and practices that can help to mitigate the effects of climate change. In general, *2040* provides a valuable and refreshing perspective on the importance of solutions-oriented thinking in addressing the challenges of climate change by highlighting the various technologies and practices that are currently available for mitigating its effects, rather than focusing solely on the negative impacts and dire state of the planet. The film adopts a hopeful and optimistic approach by exploring a diverse range of possibilities for sustainable living, from renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power to electric vehicles and vertical farming.

2040 also employs the use of personal storytelling as a powerful tool and effective method in communicating the importance of climate change mitigation and inspiring individuals and communities to take action. Personal stories have indeed an important role in conveying the message about climate change and inspiring people to take action. By sharing personal experiences, a human connection can be established with the audience, making the subject matter more relatable and engaging. Personal stories indeed help to humanize the issue, making it less abstract and easier for people to understand. They also serve as inspiration for others to take action, as they showcase real-life examples of individuals and communities who have made a positive impact. Moreover, personal stories add credibility to the issue and the solutions being presented, as they are based on real experiences. Through the use of footage of his own daughter and her future in *2040*, Gameau effectively creates an emotional connection to the subject matter, making the viewer care about the future

of the planet in a way that dry statistics and facts alone cannot.

The film is noteworthy for its narrative structure, which employs a combination of animation, interviews and footage to divide the content into manageable segments. This approach facilitates the audience's comprehension of the information and serves to mitigate potential feelings of being overwhelmed by the subject matter. The film's light-hearted tone and use of humour as well as the use of personal storytelling contribute to making the content more accessible to a broader audience. On the other hand, the approach taken in *2040* could be perceived as oversimplifying certain topics, and not providing a comprehensive examination of the various challenges that may impede the widespread implementation of climate change mitigation solutions. This results in the perception that the film could have benefitted from a more in-depth examination of the economic and political barriers to the implementation of these solutions, as well as potential strategies for overcoming such barriers. The film's approach may thus not be sufficient for those seeking a more in-depth examination of the issues surrounding climate change mitigation.

Overall, *2040* received positive reviews from critics, who praised its message of hope and the potential for sustainable change. The *Los Angeles Times*, for example, noted that the film effectively illustrates the need for transformative change and the possibility of achieving it (Crust). Gameau's documentary also serves as a valuable starting point for further research and discussion on the topic. Accordingly, *2040* is a powerful call to action for individuals and communities to take steps toward a more sustainable future.

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FILM REVIEW

Teach the Children: The Urgency of *Paris Is Burning*

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According to the ACLU, as "the 2023 legislative session begins, politicians across the country already introduced 124 total bills restricting LGBTQ people,"[1] targeting drag performers, transgender people and queer education. After the seeming optimism of the Obama years, which saw such advances like the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, the Supreme Court's striking down of DOMA, and the passage of marriage equality, we have entered a new chapter in the exhaustive series of culture wars that have pitted conservatives against the queer community for over fifty years.

Since the 1970s, when then-progressive anti-discrimination ordinances were popping up throughout cities in the United States, the Right mounted an effective

offense to block progress. From the sexual freedom of that decade came the AIDS crisis in the 1980s, which galvanized the queer community and its allies. But these great strides led to the current backlash, which found strength after Obama's successor, Donald Trump, won the 2016 election, on a campaign largely predicated on enflaming animosities against queer communities. In this toxic culture, we saw more anti-trans sentiment, which overlaps with anti-drag hostility, mushrooming into a deceptive moral panic that suggested drag and trans were somehow dangerous for children. (This pearl-clutching cry of "What about the children?!" echoes Anita Bryant's successful campaign in Dade County in the 1970s).

Drag and trans culture should be celebrated, and Jennie Livingston's[1] 1990 documentary, *Paris Is Burning*, is a vital and urgent document of this vibrant art form and lively community. Recorded through the 1980s, *Paris Is Burning* is a chronicle of queer life, at the height of the AIDS crisis, under the looming shadow of the hostile Regan administration. The film eschews respectability politics and endeavors to depict this complex community. Livingston does not need to create heroes because her subjects are entertaining and compelling. By focusing on ball culture, the director zeroes in on an underground subculture that thrived while existing on the margins of mainstream society. Of course, because of the fifteen seasons of *RuPaul's Drag Race* (2009–), much of mainstream culture has embraced ball and drag culture, often flattening and smoothing out its grittier elements, thereby giving casual audiences a very reductive and capitalist idea of what drag culture is. Though Livingston's

1. Jennie Livingston (b. 1962) is an American documentarian and filmmaker whose work deals with themes of queerness and sexuality. In addition to *Paris Is Burning*, Livingston's filmography includes short films, documentaries, music videos and narrative films. Alongside her work as a filmmaker, Livingston is also an educator and scholar.

documentary does not tell the *whole* story, it is far more interesting and complicated and addresses the varying social conditions under which so many of these individuals lived.

When approaching *Paris Is Burning*, it is tempting to lionize the film, its subjects and the director. It is easy to see why the film has been mythologized in the thirty-three years it has been released and is considered a seminal entry in American documentary filmmaking. The subject matter of Livingston's work was so thought-proving and innovative that empathetic and receptive audiences embraced the film, which is rightly praised for its aesthetic and artistic content. It is also an important production because it highlights a marginalized culture contending with a devastating health crisis while operating under systemic racism, sexism, classism and homophobia.

The format of *Paris Is Burning* is deceptively simple: Livingston turns her camera on to various drag performers who have ties to ball culture and the fiery competitions. As MC Junior Labeija announces the different categories, we see innovative and masterful artists use their art to create, question and blur questions of race, class and gender. These questions directly speak to a larger cultural zeitgeist that could be glibly reduced to the 1980s yuppie "Me Generation." The subjects repeatedly reference cultural milestones like the soap *Dynasty* (1981-89) and its two stars, in particular: Joan Collins and Linda Evans. More so than any other pop culture icons of that decade: Evans and (especially) Collins epitomized the decadent and free-spending tone of the decade, reflecting Reaganomics' central pillar of deregulation. On any given episode of *Dynasty*, audiences lived vicariously through the flashy lives of Collins' and Evans' characters: decked out in thick, rhinestone-encrusted

Nolan Miller gowns, these two women were touchpoints for several of the queens interviewed in the film.

Livingston pulls back the camera, not just focusing on pop culture (though pop culture and drag are irrevocably linked), but she highlights cultural tropes that mark the celebratorily capitalistic decade. As a sharp contrast to the nighttime scenes of the drag balls, we see shots of New Yorkers in the daytime: many seem finance workers, though some look to be ladies who lunch, too. Making the point that the clothing dressed by these denizens is as much drag as what is paraded in the drag balls, Livingston creates satire from the unabashed materialism of the businessmen: one gentleman is standing at the curb, wearing suspenders and dragging on a prominent cigar. In another shot, a wealthy Manhattan matron glides through the street, the camera taking particular interest in her prodigiously complicated chignon. Livingston juxtaposes these eccentricities with the drone-like appearance of the suited New Yorkers who move en masse on the streets, contributing to American commerce and capitalism, being given entry to these social contracts.

But the drag queens of the balls are left out of contributing to "the American Dream." It is telling that one of the many fascinating, intricate categories at the balls is executive realness. In this category, performers take to the runway, wearing business suits and armed with briefcases or attaché cases. The category aims to successfully mimic the superficial trappings of a "businessman," thereby highlighting how arbitrary and "drag" these looks are. It is an important point. The definition of drag is expanded and not presented as simply men in women's clothing. Drag becomes a commentary or a critique. In an early appearance on Geraldo Rivera's talk show, a young RuPaul

utters her catchphrase, “We’re all born naked, and the rest is drag,” as she points to audience members, focusing on two men in three-piece suits.[2]

Drag queen Dorian Corey further elaborates on the societal conditions around business attire by astutely pointing out that race and access to education broadly define access to these markers of “success”:

> In a ballroom, you can be anything you want. You’re not really an executive, but you’re looking like an executive. And therefore, you’re showing the straight world that “I can be an executive. If I had the opportunity, I could be one.” Your peers, your friends are telling you, “Oh, you’d make a wonderful executive.” The fact that you are *not* an executive is merely because of the social standing of life . . . Black people have a hard time getting anywhere. And those that do, are usually straight.[3]

Other categories include “going to school,” “military realness” and “butch queen realness.” A panel judges each category and the ball is moderated by Junior Labeija, who wears many hats: entertainer, narrator, diplomat and moderator. Junior Labeija is one of the most memorable subjects in the film, making his mark with his quick wit and savage humor.

The comedy found in the sharp wit of the subjects contrasts with the tragedy that hangs over much of the film. Though none of the queens feels she is a victim, viewers get a glimpse of the intersection of race, poverty and queerness in the 1980s. AIDS is a specter that casts its shadow wide—no one is free from its presence. Many of the queens featured in the film would succumb to the disease. And because poverty is prevalent among the interviewees, the film takes a glancing look at sex work and

its inherent risks. Livingston's film attempts a tricky balance: not to eschew complex topics and be 'happy' talk, but also not to engage in trauma exploitation, particularly Black queer trauma. Until 1990, cinema has done a shoddy job of representing the complexity of Black queer subjects, often relying on trauma to tell the stories. Though *Paris Is Burning* does not deny the presence of violence, it does not define it as the prominent theme of the film.

For the most part, the film is a carefully joyful chronicle of people doing what they can to create their art. So much of the rhetoric of these recent efforts to criminalize or demonize expressions of queerness works to sexualize it to scare people unfamiliar with the art form. Because the film is aimed at adults and the drag balls are adult entertainment, sexuality is not far from any of the presentations. However, it is important to note that we see these queens as complicated and well-rounded individuals and not amoral predators. We also see the intended consequences of marginalizing and ostracizing vulnerable people.

The subjects in *Paris Is Burning* are the film's main selling point. Livingston focuses on several queens whose interviews are dispersed throughout the film. One of the most arresting subjects is the aforementioned Dorian Carey, a seasoned queen seemingly straddling a seismic shift in drag culture, coming from the old school but having to survive in the new school. As she diligently applies her makeup, she regals the audience with a brilliant soliloquy that touches upon various queer culture points, including the direction of drag and its history, the practice of reading, and making profound statements on race, class and sexuality. Pepper Labeija captivates her audience with her powerful, smoky voice as she recounts the history of the House

of Labeija as well as her own history; Venus Xtravaganza, the doe-like beauty from New Jersey, shares her dreams of an almost-conservative version of domesticity (though seemingly demure and serene, she delivers one of the film's most memorable passages when she engages in reading, her insults becoming legendary and quoted to this day). Octavia St Laurent, a striking trans queen with designs on being a supermodel, is a compelling storyteller, speaking to the larger anxieties of wealth and power. All of the queens in the film are very aware and astute in their understanding of power hierarchies: they are shrewd in their grasp of wealth and privilege and where they stand in those hierarchies. Livingston does some of the sloganeering herself, presenting the tropes of wealth as somewhat ridiculous and vulgar, but the queens make the most compelling and forceful arguments.

In assessing *Paris Is Burning*, one must appreciate the movie and what it does without ignoring some of the concerns that came out once it was released. In telling the story of these queens, Livingston also highlights a significant disparity in access and privilege. A white, middle-class queer person, Livingston was able to attain much of the social trappings that eluded the queens: in that respect, we are left with questions of exploitation and agency. We are also left with the question of whether it is Livingston's story to tell.

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FILM REVIEW

Complicating Shakespeare: *Looking for Hamlet, 1603*

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While performing William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as an undergraduate, we student actors were told some audience members take a very rigid, even pompous view and will rankle at even the slightest deviation from the immortal Bard's singular language. There is a widespread public belief in one correct version of Shakespeare's works, and any change may mar that perfection. However, as demonstrated in the documentary *Looking for Hamlet, 1603* (*LFH*, 2021)—produced by the students of Ohio State University's Autumn 2020 ENGL 4520.02: Special Topics in Shakespeare course—this perception of a singular version of Shakespeare is inaccurate. The documentary, directed by Sarah Neville,[1] examines the problem(s) created by the first quarto (Q1, 1603) edition of *Hamlet* when contrasted with the much longer second quarto (Q2,

1. Sarah Neville is an Associate Professor of English at Ohio State University. She is an early modern and book history specialist, and the founder of Lord Denney's Players.

1605) and first folio (F, 1623). The film was created alongside a production of Q1 by the Ohio State English department theatre company, Lord Denney's Players. What *Looking for Hamlet, 1603* suggests is that exploring Q1 and that text's relationship to the *Hamlet* we think we know from Q2 and F opens up new possibilities for seeing Shakespeare as a working theatre writer, rather than a Romantic genius whose plays emerged fully formed in their singular glory and perfection.

The documentary traces the history of Q1 in relation to the texts of Q2 and F, showing how the latter became the dominant public perceptions of *Hamlet* and shaped Romantic ideas about Shakespeare. It also argues that Q1 challenges these perceptions by showing *Hamlet* (likely) underwent revisions, demonstrating that Shakespeare edited his plays. *LFH* opens with two voiceovers, one mentioning an essay by William Hazlitt suggesting *Hamlet* is so well known that the play is difficult to criticize; the other voiceover reflects that it is difficult to love a cover version of a song when you loved the original. Various people try to summarize the plot of the tragedy, piecing together an interesting, quilt-like version hitting many of the high points in greater or lesser detail (with some good humor, especially from early interviewees who admit they know nothing about the play). The history of Q1, Q2 and F is explained, including basic information about some of the changes from Q1 to Q2: the text doubles in length, some character names shift, speeches are rewritten, and one scene is deleted—all discussed in more depth later. Images of original copies of Q1 and Q2 are frequently shown to illustrate differences in things like the cover pages or specific textual shifts, which the documentary points to through a mix of highlighting on the page and text overlays. Romanticism scholar Jacob Risinger and

Shakespearean Zachary Lesser explain that Q1 dropped out of circulation until it was rediscovered by chance in 1823. By that time the Romantics had developed notions that *Hamlet* (Q2 and F) was a reading text rather than a performance text, and that Shakespeare was a natural genius whose works came to him in a single burst of perfect inspiration. The much shorter Q1, with its major differences from the then-known versions, challenged these narratives by suggesting that Shakespeare revised and that the play was definitely written for the stage. *LFH* then catalogues differences with scholarly discussions of why those changes may have occurred. Often this cataloguing involves textual comparisons and contrasts—a technique that makes sense for a documentary produced by a literature class—where the texts from Q1 and Q2 are shown side by side to quickly and accessibly display differences. For instance, in Q1 the character who would later be Polonius is named Corambis. There are significant differences in the "To be or not to be" speech and in Gertrude's reporting of Ofelia's (renamed Ophelia in Q2 and F) drowning. The film then concludes with a meditation on what Q1 means for the reception of Shakespeare in general and *Hamlet* in particular. If Q1 is an early version that Shakespeare revised by the time of Q2, this challenges the iconic status of Shakespeare as literary demi-god. This also opens new avenues for seeing Shakespeare as a *theatre* writer, rather than a literary writer, as the changes improve how the plays work on the stage.

In the companion video, "*Looking for Hamlet, 1603*: Artist Talk," Neville compares the process of making her first documentary to throwing herself and twenty-four students out of a plane and trying to knit the parachute on the way down. The filming process for *LFH* was fraught with challenges, most notably the Covid

pandemic and the limited budget for a student film production, but the class admirably overcame these challenges to create a documentary that is cinematically, structurally and stylistically better than many produced professionally. Apart from one scene—Act 1 scene 1, filmed outdoors and masked—all of the performances from either Q1 or Q2 were done through Zoom, as were the various interviews with scholars. And while this does lead to a few video quality issues, overall production values are strong. Zoom allowed the students to interview scholars from around the world, including as far away as Laurie Johnson of Australia's University of Southern Queensland. Zoom's national and international reach facilitated a much more comprehensive analysis of Q1 than would have been possible using only local resources in Ohio or bringing in interviewees. The performances by members of Lord Denney's Players, as well as the narration and performance by Mya Brown of UNC Greensboro, are all extremely good—which is especially impressive considering the challenges of performing theatre over Zoom, challenges discussed in the "Artist Talk."

LFH, besides being an interesting and informative exploration of Q1 in its own right, will be useful for various audiences, including classes learning about Shakespeare/*Hamlet*, actors/actresses or theatres performing the play, scholars and teachers/professors looking for creative projects for their students. The new ways of reading *Hamlet* and Shakespeare's creative process opened by Q1 are well explained in this clear, accessible documentary, making it a useful resource for producing deeper, more complex discussions of the play. And while making a full-length documentary will generally be prohibitive for most classes, instructors may find inspiration for investigating texts and working with students to produce a scholarly alternative to

the traditional essay. Easily accessible on *YouTube*, the documentary *Looking for Hamlet, 1603* is an incredible resource contributing both to public understandings of Shakespeare and providing a useful model for public facing scholarship.

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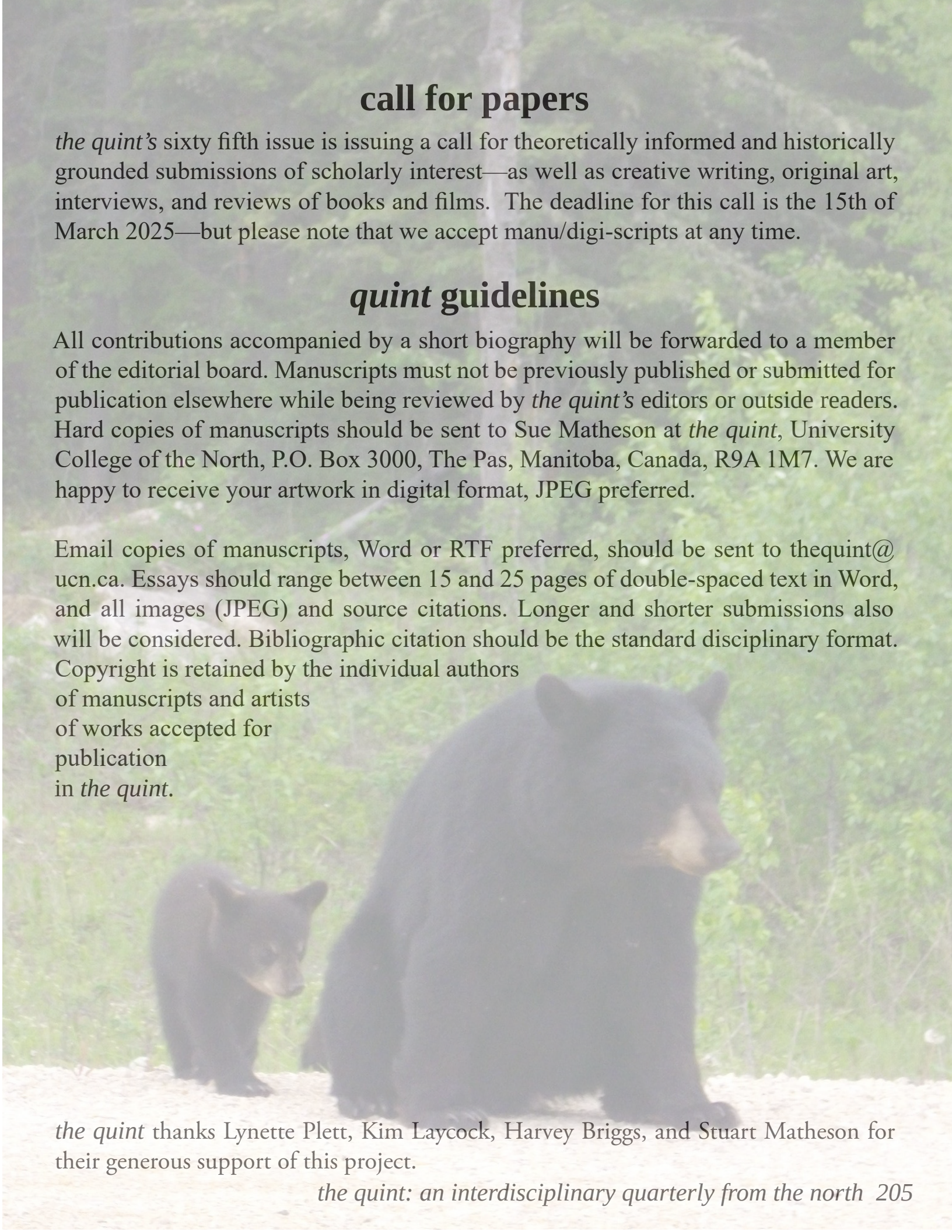
All contributions accompanied by a short biography will be forwarded to a member of the editorial board. Manuscripts must not be previously published or submitted for publication elsewhere while being reviewed by *the quint's* editors or outside readers. Hard copies of manuscripts should be sent to Sue Matheson at *the quint*, University College of the North, P.O. Box 3000, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada, R9A 1M7. We are happy to receive your artwork in digital format, JPEG preferred.

Email copies of manuscripts, Word or RTF preferred, should be sent to thequint@ucn.ca. Essays should range between 15 and 25 pages of double-spaced text in Word, and all images (JPEG) and source citations. Longer and shorter submissions also will be considered. Bibliographic citation should be the standard disciplinary format.



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