

A Postcolonial Scrutiny of Performative and Utilitarian Aspects of Igbo Masquerade Theatre: *Adamma* of Nibo City in Anambra State of Nigeria

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Abstract

Whatever position anyone holds about the so-called Eurocentric tags on the analysis of indigenous theatrical performances of the Africans does not automatically dismiss the fact that they equally possess the essentials through which indigenous performances can be probed. It is in line with this that this article critically appraises, from a postcolonial perspective, the impacts of globalisation on the performative and utilitarian essences of the Igbo masquerade theatre, using the *Adamma* of Nibo City in Anambra State of Nigeria as a paradigm. Globalization, like every other thing under the sun, has its pros and cons. Postcolonialism, an in-depth academic appraisal of the impacts of western contact with the colonised affords various researchers an avenue to probe into the various levels of the impacts of colonialism on the socio-political fabric of societies. The interest of this study arises from an almost abysmal misrepresentation of African cultural values as a result of mongrelization. African home videos, cultural displays in the forms of masquerades and other such cultural practices have been considerably bastardized as a result of this admixture. It is within this cusp that this article juxtapositionally examines both the utilitarian and the aesthetic values of these

indigenous theatrical forms from the perspective of the original status of one of these performances, the *Adamma* masquerade vis-a vis what currently obtains. It is at the interface of this appraisal that we intend to theorize on the observable influences or impacts of the admixture with a view to leaving room for more academic polemics that could enrich the corpus of masquerade theatre in Africa.

Keywords: Masquerade theatre, *Adamma*, Nibo City, Postcolonialism, Igbo, Africa.

Introduction

Indigenous African performances are theatrical because of their aesthetic and utilitarian values (Omoera, 2008; Agoro, 2010). A close look at such performances reveals that, though essentially religio-cultural in outlook and intent, they do contain such theatrical elements as: conflict, pantomimic dramatization, music and dance, spectacle and language. The language, however, esoteric it may be, helps in presenting conflict, as well as establishing character and local colour in the display. Also, costumes and make-up are inalienable 'ingredients' of these performances. With the presence of all these elements in African performances, one cannot but accept them as theatre. Hence, the polemics on the status of African performances as theatre is no longer topical, as academics, over the years, had reached a consensus (or so it appears) on this issue. What is in vogue in academic circles at present (especially, amongst African scholars) is the suitability or otherwise of the 'post' theorizing yardsticks on African creative and literary endeavours as well as theatrical performances.

Among the numerous African critics who kick against the western tags used on the appraisal of indigenous performances as well as creative works of literature are: Niyi Osundare, a renowned Nigerian poet, Chinua Achebe, a foremost Nigerian novelist, and Dele Jegede, a social critic. The précis of their views is that there is a world of difference between the kinds of arts we have in Africa when juxtaposed with the type that obtains in the Western world. Thus, in their considered view, there is no justification whatsoever, for using the same theoretical lenses to appraise them. In an interview with Jahman Anikulapo and Uhakeme in the *Punch* of 20th May, 1998, Jegede Dele puts it more succinctly when he says:

...there is a vast difference between the kind of arts that we do here and the arts that is done in the West. But bear in mind that the art of a society is a reflection of the people of that society...I don't think it is proper to begin to use the same lens to evaluate the products emanating from the two societies (1998, p.24). Whatever position anyone holds about the so-called Eurocentric tags on the analysis of indigenous theatrical performances of the Africans does not automatically dismiss the fact that they equally possess the essentials through which indigenous performances can be probed.

It is in line with the foregoing that we intend to critically appraise, from a postcolonial perspective, the impacts of globalization on the performative as well as the utilitarian essences of the Igbo masquerade theatre, using the *Adamma* of Nibo City in Anambra State of Nigeria as a fulcrum of discussion and analysis. Globalization, like every other thing under the sun, has its pros and cons. Postcolonialism, an in-depth academic appraisal of the impacts of western contact with the colonised affords various researchers an avenue to probe into the various levels of the impacts of colonialism on the socio-political fabric of the African societies. This article's interest arises from an almost abysmal misrepresentation of African indigenous cultural values as a result of mongrelization. Local home videos, cultural displays in the forms of masquerades and other such cultural practices have been severely bastardized as a result of this admixture.

Having been opportune to have witnessed, as children, both the utilitarian and the aesthetic values of these indigenous theatrical forms, and seeing what they have turned out to be at present, have sparked off some kind of interest in us to juxtapositionally appraise the original status of one of these performances (the *Adamma* of the Igbo in Nigeria) vis-a vis what obtains today. It is at the interface of this appraisal that we intend to theorize on the observable influences or impacts of this admixture with a view to leaving room for more academic polemics that could enrich the corpus of masquerade theatre in Nigeria and indeed in Africa. In doing this, the article is further subdivided into the following: understanding the concept of postcolonialism; Anambra: a brief history; aesthetic and utilitarian essences of *Adamma* masquerade; a postcolonial appraisal of the performative aspects of *Adamma*; and conclusion.

Understanding the Concept of Postcolonialism

The prefix, 'post' attached to any word is suggestive of the time after what is denoted by the main word. For instance, the word 'post-war' simply denotes a time after war; 'postnatal' is suggestive of a time immediately after the birth of a baby and the likes. However, it might be somewhat parochial attempting to limit the concept of postcolonialism to the idea of time, and or periodization. Although, postcolonialism can be examined from the point of view of an epoch, which is strictly spoken of in terms of the period after colonialism, the various issues surrounding it gives it a denser outlook than that surface meaning associated with time. This somewhat misleading view of trying to limit the purview of the concept to the idea of periodization has given rise to various academic polemics. For instance, Ama Ata Aidoo, commenting on the term 'postcolonial' maintains that: perhaps the concept was relevant to the United States, its war of independence, and to a certain extent to the erstwhile imperial dominion of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Applied to Africa, India, and some other parts of the world, 'postcolonial' is not only a fiction, but a most pernicious fiction, a cover-up of a dangerous period in our people's lives (Mongia, 1996, p.1).

Homi K. Bhabha observes that the term postcolonial "... is increasingly used to describe that form of social criticism that bears witness to those unequal and uneven processes of representation by which the historical experience of the once-colonised Third World comes to be framed in the West" (Phil Mariani ,1991 in Mongia, 1996, p.1). Mongia (1996, pp.1-2) further claims that Aidoo and other writers and critics are troubled by the periodicity the term evokes since it is arguable that the colonial period has been followed by a 'post' - the sense of after- colonial one. Used with an uncritical, emphasis on the 'post', the term does direct attention away from present inequities - political, economic, and discursive-in the global system. He further maintains that the term postcolonial "...refers not to a simple periodization but rather to a methodological revisionism which enables a wholesale critique of Western structures of knowledge and power, particularly those of the post-Enlightenment period."

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin (1989, p.2) are of the view that the term, postcolonial covers "... all the culture

affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day". As described in the Free Encyclopedia, postcolonialism is a specifically post-modern intellectual discourse that consists of reactions to, and analysis of, the cultural legacy of colonialism. It comprises a set of theories found amongst philosophy, film, political science, human geography, sociology, feminism, religious and theological studies, and literature. Therefore, explaining away the concept of postcolonialism merely as a period after colonialism is inadequate. Gilbert and Tompkins (1996) are of the view that: "...the term postcolonialism - according to a too-rigid etymology - is frequently misunderstood as a temporal concept, meaning the time after colonialism has ceased, or the time following the politically determined Independence day on which a country breaks away from its governance by another state, not a naïve teleological sequence which supersedes colonialism. Postcolonialism is, rather, an engagement with and contestation of colonialism's discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies ... A theory of postcolonialism must, then, respond to more than the merely chronological construction of post-independence, and to more than just the discursive experience of imperialism.

Even as the postcolonial theory is charged with evading the specificities of identity, there is a concomitant view that the term postcolonial is "...simply a polite way of saying not-white, not Europe, or perhaps not-Europe-but-inside-Europe" (Mongia, 1996, p.282). In this case, we can, for the purpose of this paper, see the concept of postcolonialism as being about the third world and the recently decolonised nations. The theatrical forms of the Africans generally, prior to colonisation, were purely indigenous in outlook. What we shall examine from the point of view of postcolonialism in is that cultural medley that is the present feature of the Igbo masquerade performance. Does this medley in any way affect their aesthetic and utilitarian essences? With this new outlook, and the prevailing postcolonial influences on the generality of the cultural values of the people, does the masquerade performance still maintain that sanctity and awesome reverence which were associated with it in the pre-colonial times? As if reacting to these issues, Okoye (2007, p. 67) affirms that, "...although postcolonial African theatre is described essentially as syncretic, celebrating a medley of old concepts rather than the purity of form, its closeness

to folk and traditional modes makes it a much more focused and controlled mixture.”

Anambra: A Brief History

Anambra is a state in south-eastern Nigeria. Its name is an anglicized version of the original ‘Oma Mbala’, the name of the river now known as Anambra which the state is named after. The capital and the seat of government is Awka. Onitsha and Nnewi are the biggest commercial and industrial cities, respectively. The state’s motto is “Light of the Nation.” Boundaries are formed by Delta State to the west, Imo State and Rivers State to the south, Enugu State to the east and Kogi State to the north. The indigenous ethnic groups in Anambra state are the Igbo (98% of population) and a small population of Igala (2% of the population) who live in the western part of the state. Anambra is the second most densely populated state in Nigeria after Lagos State. The stretch of more than 45 km between Oba and Amorka contains a cluster of numerous thickly populated villages and small towns giving the area an estimated density of 1,500–2,000 persons living within every square kilometer of the area. The central language of the people of Anambra State is Igbo. Igbo is one of the many languages spoken in Nigeria. Since its independence, the main languages in Nigeria have been Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, also known by the word ‘wazobia’, i.e., ‘wa’ in Yoruba, ‘zo’ in Hausa, and ‘bia’ in Igbo, all meaning ‘come.’ Igbo is predominantly spoken in Abia, Imo, Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi and parts of Rivers and Delta States. Speaking English, you can get by in most parts of Igboland, though in some very remote localities, only Igbo language is understood.

Aesthetic and Utilitarian Essences of *Adamma* Masquerade

Among the various communities that make up the three major ethnicities of Nigeria, masquerade is the most obvious; and an ever present cultural phenomenon. Its ubiquity in these diverse cultural backgrounds makes a statement that underscores the preposterous concept of a non-theatrical oriented Africa prior to the advent of the white colonisers. Among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, hardly can any communal festival be complete without one form of masquerade display or the other. State visits, Christmas

celebration, New Yam festival, Independence Day celebrations, Easter, Children's Day are all occasions when masquerades parade the streets, however, sometimes, for sheer aesthetic cum entertaining purposes. At occasions such as the eve of a new year, and the New Yam festival, masquerade are used more for utilitarian purposes than at other festive occasions. Let us examine what masquerades actually are. The various ethnic groups that indulge in the culture of masquerade tend to hold a unanimous belief that masquerades are representatives of ancestral as well as other spirit beings that are usually invited to take part in the communal dealings of the people (Okoye, 2007; 2010; Omoera & Aluede, 2011; Omoera & Obanor, 2012; Omoera & Oseghale, 2012).

Okoye (2007, p. 60) claims that as supernatural beings, masquerades are received in communal ceremonies with awe and reverence. At any rate, Okoye's description of the Igbo masquerade is vivid and germane to the purpose in this discourse as he asserts that the masquerade is ostensibly a male secret society affair. Certainly, the central performers as well as their troupe or ensemble of performers, are usually initiated adult males even where the characters represented are females *as is the case with Adamma, in this study* (Okoye, 2007, p. 60, words in italics ours). Though, seen as representatives of the ancestors as well as other spirits in the pantheon of the people, there is, during performance, no obvious attempt by the performer to claim that, behind the mask is something other than mere humans who are known members of the society. However, simulations, role play and pantomimic dramatization allow for enactments that may create awe and reverence from the audience. More so, it is believed that some feats that are displayed by the masquerades which are beyond ordinary human endeavours are made possible by the spirits that take possession of them during performance.

Whichever way one sees it, the fact that the masqueraders are members of the community concerned cannot be ruled out. Okoye agrees strongly with this point when he analyses the audience perception of the performance in the following words: "...most of them (*i.e., the audience, including females*) know that they are members of the community engaged in an aesthetic performance. They, however, willingly play ignorance in order to sustain the most important foundation of the performance codes: the notion

that the performers are not simply male members of the community playing in the masks and costumes but ancestral beings on a special visitation of the human community" (Okoye, 2007, p. 60, words in italics ours). It is this suspension of belief that makes the entire performance not only theatrical, but also empathetic, depending on the dialogue, conflict and the entire gamut of spectacle articulated by dance steps, and other vigorous movements by the masquerades such as leaps, summersaults, and other such uncommon acrobatic displays.

Adamma is a contemporary maiden spirit mask that originates from the Enugu-Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria. The mask, though with a feminine nomenclature following the Igbo syntactic view on names, is performed exclusively by male initiates. The performance of *Adamma* is always accompanied by music which is an inalienable element in any true African traditional theatrical form. The following full description of *Adamma* and its performance, as presented by Hufbauer and Reed (2003) forms the basis of further analysis in this study. Costume, make-up and performance: A performer wearing a large mask of a woman's face looked out flirtatiously from beneath a set of swinging black plaits hung with beads and topped with a brilliant yellow chiffon head-tie arranged at a haphazard angle. The wooden mask was painted the colour of cafe au lait, its glossy surface accented by painted features: eyes rimmed with heavy black eyeliner and a red-lipsticked mouth. The masker was a tall man – more than six feet in height – wearing a body suit of patterned metallic cloth in red, green, and gold. Deep yellow chiffon ruffles encircled his shoulders and neck and were complemented by a ruffled pink, yellow, and green miniskirt and white polyester gloves. The masker dipped his shoulders and snapped his fingers, then began to dance in a virtuoso women's style, with rapid footwork and controlled arm and hand gestures, before breaking off and resuming his previous sauntering dance. Finally he came to rest on a low platform and seated himself demurely with his legs drawn closely to one side, posing for the cameras as though for a fashion shoot. This was *Adamma*, a contemporary Igbo maiden spirit performing in the 1993 *Mmanwu* festival.

From the above, we can see clearly an influence of Westernisation on this aspect of the Igbo cultural heritage. In the first place, *Adamma* is described using the epithet 'contemporary.'

This is indicative of the fact that it might perhaps have been a modern corruption of the real indigenous *Mmanwu* (masquerade). In its outlook and performance, as described above, we can see this particular masquerade tending more to the entertaining essence of the West. A typical Igbo masquerade of the pre-colonial era which was more of a periodic communal affair was essentially meant for pure spiritual cohesion between the world of the living and that of the dead. In spite of the minimal exotic aesthetic outlook, which, of course, gave it entertaining theatrical effects, the ritualistic essence had more impetus aiming, in all ramifications, at societal edification. But *Adamma*, from what is seen above is concerned with entertainment. A cursory appraisal of the costume and make-up of *Adamma* presents an element of hybridity.

It is a hybrid in the sense that, the entire masquerade is a display of an entity that is an admixture of the western elements and local ones. For instance, the costume is made up of 'chiffon head tie,' 'deep yellow chiffon ruffles' encircling the shoulders, 'green miniskirt,' 'white polyester gloves,' and the likes. These are certainly not materials that reflect the indigenous cultural outfit of the traditional Igbo ancestors. It is important to note that typical masquerades are always costumed in raffia from the palm. Thus, the *Adamma* costume, in this case, does not reflect this cultural background in its entirety. The "lipsticked" mouth is a Western theatrical approach of representing a female character, especially, in the classical era where female roles were played by males, as females were not allowed on the stage. One can, therefore state that *Adamma* masquerade is more or less a caricature of the original Igbo masking tradition. Also, the idea of the *Adamma* masquerade posing for snap shots, which, of course, are taken by non-initiates, is indicative of its lack of secrecy that would have fetched it that distant awesome perception characterized by reverence, which is what other masks have as their trademark.

Usually an annual event, the state-sponsored *Mmanwu* festival, held in a stadium in Enugu, celebrates local masking traditions and heralds the reinvention of masking in contemporary Nigeria. In many ways *Adamma* is an innovation that has broken with the maiden-spirit tradition as much as it has partaken of it. Maiden spirits customarily appear in village festivals in performances that variously incorporate dance and narrative. Those masquerades

often incarnate female ancestors of their patrilineages, and their white faces indicate their ghostly quality as well as their beauty and purity. For the Igbo, whiteness is associated with coolness, control, and benevolence, and is often considered a female attribute (E. Obi, personal Communication, 1994). Maiden-spirit masks have sharply defined, often arched noses. Some exhibit a closed mouth, while many others have flat, narrow lips that draw back from clenched teeth. Faces are often patterned with black designs that recall indigo body painting known as 'uli.' Most maiden spirits have complicated arched or mounded hairstyles adorned with coiled plaits and combs. Their black hair and curvilinear facial designs contrast with and complement the oblique white curves that define the planes of the face. The masker's body suit is typically made of heavy black felt as the foundation for densely appliquéd patterns cut from commercial cloth in vibrant colors such as green, yellow, pink, and orange. *Adamma*, on the other hand, has a tan face mask with smooth, naturalistic features accented by painted eyeliner and lipstick rather than 'uli' designs, and she wears a long plaited black wig hung with colorful plastic beads rather than a maiden spirit's crested hairstyle. Yet, although *Adamma* looks like a contemporary woman, her flashy patterned body suit evokes not only current international fashions but also the bright, multicolored appliqué costumes worn by maiden spirits, just as her light-toned face associates her with their femininity.

The venues in which *Adamma* performs are markedly secular in contrast to the occasions when traditional maiden spirits appear. Her masquerade play is not limited to the customary setting of the village square during the masking season in Akama, where she originated, but takes place at urban venues whenever possible. Furthermore, her masquerade troupe has incorporated theatrical practice and video technology into the traditional Igbo format of the play, and the solo performance of the lead character draws on elements of global media. Igbo maskers have a spiritual essence that varies in expression from the comedic to the sacred. Some masquerades can be watched by the entire community, while others may only be seen by society members after women and children have been banished from the roads and fields (B. Egbeji, personal communication, 1994; E. Okara, personal communication, 1994). Colonialism and the loss of local council authority reduced the power of masking societies, which are not supposed to

contravene Nigerian statutes. In rare instances, citizens may bring police complaints against a society and see the case taken to customary court, which deals with conflicts between customary and modern laws. Political patronage, religious change, and intimidation have also limited the authority of this institution.

A Postcolonial Appraisal of the Performative Aspects of *Adamma* Masquerade

The essence of any Igbo masquerade is ritualistic as well as for social cohesion. This also holds true of the institution of masquerade in most other communities. Among the Esan people of Edo State, Nigeria, the *Igbabonelimhin* is a masquerade theatre of cleansing, binding, communal and re-creative force, which brings the human society and the ancestral and spiritual into some cosmic harmony for society progress (Omoera & Aluede, 2011; Omoera & Oseghale, 2012). Among the people of Ibeno in Akwa-Ibom State of Nigeria, prior to, during and after colonialism the *Akata* masquerade, with membership drawn exclusively from the male members of the community, and operates mainly at nights, has no special value attached to the entertaining aspects. Its main essence is purely utilitarian. They are notorious at going about exposing every secret evil committed by any member of the community. The name of such a person would be chanted around the streets of the community in line with the social evil thus committed.

To cleanse the community of any evil of the incoming year, on the last day of the year this masquerade in the day time will parade the whole community chanting names of people and nature of crimes or social malaise associated with these names. By their standard, there are no 'sacred cows' in this as the society is far superior to any single member. This is done with so much precision that no member of the community knows the source(s) of their information. Hence, the masquerade is often held in awe. It is the shame and the ridicule attached to this open disgrace that make the community members to caution themselves on whatever they do. Again, there are other such divulged crimes that attract heavy fines with which the gods and, or the ancestors can be appeased. When this is compared with the *Adamma* masquerade, it can be seen that the latter is mainly for entertainment more in the tradition of the West.

William R. Bascom and Melville H. Herskovits quoted in Okoye (2010), argue that "... there is no African culture which has not been affected in some way by European contact and there is none which has entirely given way before it." *Adamma* masquerade adopts a syncretic outlook. Syncretism, hybridity and or creolization can be seen as the marks of this emergent new cum old culture. It is this admixture that Okoye (2010) refers to as "cannibalization." He explains this as a situation "...where one culture violently extracts cultural "pieces" from another for its own nourishment rather than the production of a new ethos." The dance steps of this modern masquerade tend towards the western "boogie" rather than the vigorous traditional Igbo dance which, like most other African dances, always obey the force of gravity in terms of posture. This cannot be said of *Adamma*. In terms of communication, *Adamma* relies more on gesticulations and sign language and occasionally, voice to dialogue with the audience and other members of the group of maskers. The esotericism associated with most masking cultures is absent in *Adamma*. Among the other masking traditions like the *Ekpe* masquerade of the Ohafia people of Abia State and the Efik of Cross River State all of Nigeria, the sign language can only be deciphered by members. Non-initiates cannot understand this. Same can also be said of the *Igbabonelimhin* and *Akata* masquerades noted earlier. For *Adamma*, it is the everyday sign language that everyone understands, as well as Igbo words that are used. Sometimes, English words are also used by these maskers. Okoye (2010) states that:

I then contend that Igbo masquerade performance practice (*especially, Adamma*, words in italics are ours) adopts an expropriatory strategy by which it subjects foreign Euro-American cultural forms to a process of indigenization, stripping them of their original symbolic accoutrements and immersing them in entirely local ones. Undoubtedly, some other cultures from across the globe, such as the Asian and Arabic, are exposed to the same process as they are encountered in the Igbo cultural experience.

Africa is patrilineal. In virtually all the aspects of the pre-colonial Igbo cultural institutions, patriarchy was upheld. Women in these cultural backgrounds were merely seen but not heard. At the council of elders, for instance, it was even an abomination for

any woman to enter the vicinity while the elders were seated in council. Ancestral cult veneration was a purely male affair. If ancestors that are believed to visit the Igbo communities, on invitation, in form of masquerades are de-robed of this awesome presence by making them appear as women, then there is some sort of watering down or casting of aspersion on the efficacy of the cultural heritage of the people. Of course, this can only be as a result of this external influence. Needless to say that feminism is a topical issue under postcolonialism (Izue, 2009). *Adamma*, being a modern Igbo mask is favourably disposed to feminist discourses. *Adamma*, as noted earlier dresses, makes-up and dances like a woman. The name itself is feminine. This is a clear move away from the pre-colonial Igbo masking tradition. This is obviously in line with Balme's position that the most striking feature of postcolonial theatre is syncretism. He claims that there is "...a fusion of the performance forms of both European and indigenous cultures in a creative recombination of its various elements" (Balme, 1999, pp 1-2).

Adamma, as Okoye (2007, p.68) observes about traditional Igbo masquerade, "... also deploys such postcolonial discursive strategies as mimicry, allegory, parody, ridicule and translations in its engagement with colonialism." However, in terms of space, *Adamma* performance breaks away from the Western culture of defined space specifications for the audience and the performers. The traditional arena theatre, which characterised the early Greek tradition and, even most indigenous African theatrical forms of old, is not strictly adhered to by *Adamma* masquerade. The interaction between the audience, which is not strictly defined, and the masqueraders can be cordial and this highlights the communal essence of this theatrical form, irrespective of its frolicking mutual cohabitation with foreign cultural elements. Thus, its syncretic nature does not make for a total alienation from its roots. Improvisation, as against the Aristotelian grand narrative approach of the Western literary drama, is one of the major features of *Adamma* masquerade. Situations dictate the role of the masquerader whose extemporaneous reactions to such situations allows for greater audience participation in the entire theatrical endeavour. In this case, there is no room for tedious rehearsals and role interpretation. This, of course, presents the *Adamma*

masquerade performance in light of being more presentational than representational in nature.

Another post colonial influence on the performative aspects as well as the utilitarian essence of the *Adamma* is the impact of Pentecostalism on the institution. The early Anglican and Catholic churches were not as averse to African tradition as the present Pentecostal faith. Today, entertainment masquerades, such as *Adamma*, of the youth are a part of cultural repertoires that coalesce youth as a category in opposition to older generations in ways that challenge or at least subvert the authority of elite, middle-aged men who have taken up Pentecostalism and now reject masquerade fellowship as a potential avenue of social advancement. According to Charles Gore, innovation and change in terms of iconography, ritual, and dramatic presentation have always been important components to these performances, as well as flexible adaptations and responses to changing social circumstances. However, in the last two decades, new mass movements of Christian evangelism and Pentecostalism have emerged, successfully exhorting their members to reject masquerade as a pagan practice. During this time, in many places in south eastern Nigeria, famous and long-standing masquerade associations have disbanded and their masks and costumes burnt as testimonies to the efficacy of Pentecostalism, affirming the successful conversion of former masquerade members (Codewit World News, 2010).

Conclusion

Would it have been possible for all the facets of the African culture to have remained pure after such a long period of contact with the Western world? A range of impacts on those vital aspects of African culture are observable. For instance, indigenous names are corrupted and, or anglicized, and sometimes even dropped with preference to foreign ones; some elements of African cultural values are labeled primitive, retrogressive and, other such derogatory epithets are used to tag them with the sole aim of discarding them. The Igbo masking tradition, just like that of other ethnicities has been drastically affected by this cultural interaction occasioned by colonialism. Among the Anambra people of Nigeria, there has been a shift from the cultural utilitarianism of the pre-

colonial Igbo masquerade to that of sheer entertainment with such masquerades as *Adamma*, which is less awesome and, obviously a non-representative of the dreaded ancestral spirits of the land.

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