Gods-Induced Festivals: Man's Expression of the Numinous

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Abstract

Many of the existing studies in oral literature, especially by Non-Africans leave the intricacies of performance context largely unexplored. In addition, there is a continuous threat to indigenous art forms, particularly the oral variety from Africa by two major religions; Christianity and Islam, coupled with the attendant problem of cultural imperialism of the West, especially digitalized multi-media technology. The present study provides an opportunity for exploring, locating and situating the peculiar intricacies of context in a ritual festival drama situation; a significant factor that bestows relevant on ancient ritual performances by revealing the communal creative ingenuity. This study confirms that context determines performance and that the intricacies of such performance context could be exploited to facilitate the resuscitation of African Oral art forms, including ancient ritual performances like the African festival. This study of African festival performance serves as a way of preserving the cultural heritage of the African people. Besides and contrary to existing belief of critics that a ritual can be drama only when performed outside its original context, the present study has demonstrated that African festival performance is illustrative of ritual drama in its original religious context of performance.

Keywords: Festival, Africa, Ritual, Drama and Religious.

Introduction

Indigenous festivals are characterised by unique performance and audience participation, which a times may accommodate rivalry and carnivals. However, whether or not a festival would be ferial, merry, joyful or solemn depends on its central purpose. By their sacrosanct nature, festivals stand out as extraordinary occasions observed at periods distinct from ordinary times. Throughout a year, a community's calendar (time) is divided into festival times and ordinary times.

Festival times or periods are sacred and transcendental. Things done at such periods are special in that they back to those in which community's patterns of religious, socio-cultural institutions and activities were established. However, through ritualistic re-enactments, indigenous festival events usually inform the community about its origin, identity and destiny, and participants at any such events identify with the sacred time.

Religious festivals may also take place on days that the participants recognise as "Holy days". This later gave rise to holidays in the English culture and language vocabulary. However, the later developments show that the relationship between festivals and holy days or holidays go beyond the original semantics as such days now pervade both religious and secular calendars. Festivals whether religious or secular are periods of renewal.

In Palaeolithic times, seasonal sequence attracted humankind and well, up intense emotional reaction in all facets of culture and society. The means of substance was man's primary concern, and for which purpose seasonal observances were made to function. Fertility and hunting rites were evident from early anthropological ends. Ancient caves, such as the Tassili N'Ajjer prehistoric rock paintings of the group of mountains in the eastern Sahara and the Font-de-Gaume at Les Eyzies in the Dorcraine, all reveal that fertility of animals and vegetation was primary in the ritual of food survey.

The ritualist was usually costumed in the likeness of the totemic and the mimicked impersonated for the purpose of the rites. It was believed that for the ritual lasted, he was what he represented. Through measured and definite movements, he did what he had set out to do, namely, catching and killing his prey in the true spirit of initiative magical process. Using muscular movements in dance, expression was to intimate emotional orgy and desire, which were associated with fecundity and under Palaeolithic conditions, birth and regeneration, particularly in critical junctures in real or natural life or in members of the community. The urge to act was predicated upon the symbol-making ritual, as well as visual language and a release of emotional longings. The ancient man was therefore said to dance "out his religion" expression of fundamental requirements, deepest emotional impulses in sacred actions rather than words with the exception of exclamations and normal utterances (Encyclopedia Britannica, 201).

As the artist employs visual techniques and effects in painting and sculpture to express his inner convictions, so does the ritual expert give visual and dramatic expression to the will to live. It is not a surprise that ritual, art, dance and drama have been integral in their earliest manifestations and from this integration, the seasonal sacred observances had emerged, when life was generally outside human control, to survive a precarious environment, it was normal that any ritual technique, which succeeded in eliminating or ameliorating any problematic situation lessening the burden of coping with it, was welcome and sustained to meet the various challenges for the purpose of maintaining a psychosocial equilibrium.

Before the development of modern agricultural methods, and its relationship with solar and lunar calendars therefore, hunters and fruit and tuber gatherers to give favourable seasonal conditions probably celebrated ritual festivals. Such conditions are important for food supply maintenance, migrations and fertility of animals and the growth or decay of tubers and fruits upon which the tribe or clan had depended for its existence. Believing that the control of the seasonal changes rested on the supernatural powers,

man developed rituals, which included ceremonial festivals. Such powers were reached through some religious personages such as priests having healing and psyche transformative powers or through clan or tribal leaders with specialised skills or inherited powers.

This concern with subsistence by man is traceable to the classical period both became further broken down so that instead of the general concern with food supply, growth in knowledge made it necessary to have a rite for soil fertility in particular with reference to growth and crops. Classical Greek culture derived from an admixture or attitudes of the early settlers, the Cretans and those of the Indo-European invaders. While the Cretans were sedentary peaceful farmers, the Indo-European invaders were nomadic herdsmen who hunted as they moved along. Both people therefore conceived reverence for fertility totem because of their habitual burrowing of the earth, with harbours "the growing corn", were important to their Minoan fertility goddess, the survival of the Indo-European nomads depended on a needed strength of arm, fleetness of foot and a cuncial mind (Morford and Leonardon, 1951; Burkert, 1915:19.When the two people mixed, their religions fused and the gods in the Home's pantheon, besides a few important ones, may be traced to the Indo-Europeans while the goddess may be traced back to their Cretan predecessors. The fusion represented in mythology by a series of divine marriages such as the one between Zeus and Hera, produced a polytheistic Greek religion (Burkert, 1915:217). It entailed belief in many deities conceived in anthropomorphic terms, each with his or her functions and attributes guarding and determining human existence. Twelve gods occupied Mount Olympus, the sacred and symbolic abode of the Greek gods. Beside these twelve, there were several others, which had other functions and attributes (Morford and Leonardon, 1976).

The Olympian faith foregrounds the poetry of Hesiod and Homer and upon this poetry rests the foundation of all Greek thoughts in pre-historic and classical times. The Olympian gods are the common epic conception placed in Olympus, which is often taken as Heaven (Quarnos)

and presumably identical. The Olympian gods are supernatural and therefore inhabit a supernatural abode, which is perceived and accessed by man when only in a transcendent mood. Zeus became the kind and father of the gods as he emerged dominant partner in his divine marriage with Hera (Burkert, 1915:218-219).

Homer eventually codified the Greek religion with his poems *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which became grand collections of the various traditions of the deities and is seen as posing a kind of unity on them as it made them out as a divine faming having credible inter-relationships. Similarly, Hesiod wrote *Theogony* (or generation of gods), and Pindar, a Thedan, wrote odes in the fifth century.

Zeus was king and father of the Olympian gods and was regarded as the Lord of the bright sky, thunder and lighting. Romans called him Jupiter derived from the-pater meaning god the father. The Latin version is *dues pater* (godfather). (M. Grant, 19) Zeus was seen as protector of justice who took charge of oaths (Horkios), strangers and who held the law of host and guest in high esteem, and protected suppliants. Greeks honoured their gods and goddesses with a number of festivals and being polytheists, ancient Greece was a land of many festivals. (Burkert, 1915:225-246).

King Zeus was honoured with an important annual festival, the "Diplomat", the festival was usually held at full moon during the Greek month of "Skirophorer" (June). A significant feature of the ceremonies was known as "Bouphonia" or ox staying, a remarkable ritual in Greek religion. Usually at this point of the festival, gods were thrown on the altar of Zeus and an ox was lured to go and eat them. In doing so, the ox was technically guilty of sacrilege and the ox-slayer or "bouphones" then would kill the ox but he must immediately flee, drop the axe used which was, in turn, tried for murder and cast into the sea. The ox, having eaten the grains, was regarded truly as guilty while the axe became a scapegoat for murder. The feature asserts Zeus's role as protector of justice while the slain sacrificial ox emphasizes the retribution for sacrilege to ensure that the religious status quo was intact, (Powell, 136-140).

The godfather status of Zeus, which was derived from his being the lord of the bright sky, is significant in that his attributes and instruments of office culminates in his being responsible for rainfall and fertility of crops for growth and fruits. In this fight, it is in consonance with the Palaeolithic times' concerns as dependent source for human subsistence – food supply.

However, concern of the classical period was not only subsistence or food. There were issues of security, industry as represented by artisanship, power, love, morality, rivalry, health, among others. The Greek had gods and goddesses who they believed protected and directed such affairs. These gods and goddesses are worshipped and celebrated in festivals. The myths behind the religions are documented in the works of Homer, Hesiod and Pindar, among others.

Similarly, it is noteworthy that the diverse people of Greece and the adjoining actions worshipped the Greek gods and goddesses in various ways for various purposes. Zeus was, for example, worshipped for his many attributes: *Zeus Boulaios,* (counsellor), *Zeus Phratrois* (clan protector), and *Zeus Meilichios* (gracious one). Zeus and his daughter, Athena, were jointly given the attributes of "saviour of the state£ and "Zeus *Maimaklets"* which lexicographers translated as "Zeus the troublesome" (Powell, 140). Festivals like "Pindia" were characterized with welcoming guests and showering children with gifts in a Christmas fashion. There was also "Diisoteria," a festival hold in honour of Zeus and his daughter, Athena to commemorate their joint role as "saviour of the state".

Important too is the Greek god, Apollo who, according to the Greek myths was born in Delos. He was the divination god responsible for the curing of deadly diseases. As the god of prophecy, he dispensed all kinds of inspiration for poetry and music and his oracle was believed to be a Delphi. His son, according to the myths surrounding him was "Asclepius" while his chief festival was "Thargelia" named after the month of July. The festival was held jointly for Apollo and his sister, Artemis. During the celebration, two people were chosen to carry the society's entire evil and they were cast out of his community never to return. Cooking and offering

of the first fruits of the harvest Apollo by celebrants characterised "Thargelia" festival (Burkert, 265). There was also the "Pynepsia" the "Metageithia" and the "Boedronia" festivals in honour of Apollo. While the "Pyanesia" or beans boiling, was held in October with its major feature being the presentation of a dish of pulse porridge to Apollo, the "Metageitnia" festival held in honour of Apollo's sacred cry "Paian" in September.

Another popular god among the Greeks was Dionysus. The god was the focus of an ecstatic religion derivant from the myths, which represented the conflict between reason and social convention on the one side and emotion on the other. This is sequel to the Pentheus. He was associated with fertility and power. Some other worship of Dionysus saw him as god of wine, fertility and vegetation. The fig fruit was this God he was worshipped as god of spring during the "Festival of Flowers", and the plain was his symbol. The festival of "Rustic Dionysus" always featured phalli procession.

Other festivals associated with Dionysus had included the "Anthestria" festival which lasted for three days; "Theionia", an ancestral festival restricted to families who were linked with the wine's first introduction; "Lanaia," related to the ecstatic side of Dionysus worship and the rural and city Dionysia, among others, (Harris and Platuner, 116).

Forms of Indigenous Festivals in Africa

In Africa, the indigenous festival remains the "great artistic institution" (Ogunba, 1973), from which many have drawn creative inspiration. Religious occasion in an indigenous setting are often tied to supernatural beings or deified ancestors, they provide avenue for entertainment in various forms.

Indigenous festivals in Africa often constitute a rallying occasion for village settlers who are made to converge at the village square, the king's courtyard, or even on the streets at least once at regular intervals. Such occasions do not lack ecstatic moments when participants unite in singing

and merry-making. They remain avenues for meeting old friends and opportunities to make new ones. More recently, festivals have played these roles much visibly with the growing urbanisation of African settlement patterns. They have become veritable means by which the urbanised African communities bring back home their sojourning kindreds for annual reunion, which modern economic trends engenders tourism.

However, Ogunba (1978:5) had noted, about two decades ago, that in indigenous festival enactments, the "arts of costuming, masking, drumming, chanting, dancing and several others are utilised in a manner not very dissimilar to their usage in other dramatic traditions". This undisputable facts further proves that the entertainment value of festivals remain sacrosanct.

In most African communities, the audience at festivals is a thoroughly participatory one. Even where the members are not active participants, they go to the performance as supporters who could be vocal critical spectators. In either form, they are vital determinants of how successful a particular festival is on the long run in aesthetic terms.

Festivals and Form in Africa

Categorisation of festivals nto secular and non secular would encounter a problem if applied to traditional Africa. This is because there is no clear-cut demarcation between the religious occasion and the secular in most indigenous African communities. J. A. Adedeji (1981) in a study of traditional Yoruba theatre explains this fact and argues further, "as masque theatre – that is, as a courtly form of entertainment characterised by song, dance, lavish costume, and spectacle – Yoruba traditional theatre emerged from three developmental phases, ritual, festival and theatre". So, he explained the emergence of *Egun Alare* and subsequently, *Alarinjo*, where the masquerade serves both ritual and secular occasions.

The categorisation of festivals into secular and religious can therefore only suffice if it is based on context, while a much more encompassing classification would group festivals into hegemonic and

non-hegemonic. The latter classification is based on identifying the festival's chief celebrant. Hegemonic festivals, according to Oyin Ogunle (1991:51), are festivals of kings. Though Ogunba's treatise was on Yoruba festivals while our case study is non-Yoruba, the similarities are vivid. Hegemonic festivals serve both religious and secular purposes. Most times, they are designed to be ceremonies, which legitimize the royalty-a political purpose.

During hegemonic festivals, the royalty is seen attempting to attain super-human appearance and image. First, the physical image of the kind is elevated as he appeared special costumes during the festivals. Second, various acts of submission to the kingdom enacted by his chiefs and subjects, this is followed by praise songs and, or chants which generally tend to raise the monarch to the pedestal of a deity. The festivals are deliberately designed not to present royalty as an all rosy affair. Aspects of its portray the king as the chief risk taker too who carries the responsibilities for the people's sins to pay penance for them.

Non-hegemonic festivals on the other hand, are those, which have other people for chief celebrants. They could be titled chiefs, religious or ritual priests or selected members of the public. In other words, it is non-hegemonic if the chief celebrant is not the kind at the festival.

A Critique of Rituality

Mythical time past, man was confronted by forces, which govern his world. While that of the forces are now controllable, others remain beyond man's control or comprehension. The forces include tangible ones such as rain, earthquake, animals, ages and intangible others like fate, luck and the apparent breakdowns and continuities of causality, (Horn, 1981). The combinations of man's desire to influence supernatural powers that control the forces and the "tendency of anthropomorphise" led to the evolvement of "a bureaucracy of gods".

The humanization of the controlling forces, presumably the gods, makes man to know he can now talk with them as he does with fellow

humans. Nevertheless, because as supernatural beings, man believes that such communication needs to be in a special way. He chooses a totem for such gods sometimes and may have the screens and appoints as priests and medium for the communication. At some levels, man may compose songs, dances, or movements the performance of which invoke the spirit of the god and make it possess fervent adherents who become the sum in trance for the ritual. There is, therefore, something psychological, emotional and rituals.

While leading social scientists' viewpoints in the study of ritual often emphasize stylized formality and consequently end up mystifying it, (Gennep, 1960; Drever & Malinowski, 1966 and Turner, 1979), early studies in religion did not elevate above the mythic level, (Durkheim, 1952).

However, later critics have identified, in addition to its formality, the inter-and personal religious communication functions of rituals. Nabofa (1999) with Campbell's (1991) opinion that ritual is an enactment of myth observes, are symbolic and dramatic or theatrical presentations of specific religious concepts. The notion that ritual is to mystify the worshipper may be far fetched.

Ritualised worship is characteristic of most, if not all indigenous African symbolism plays very important role in religious worship in Africa as recent in religion have revealed. Any religion without actions such as genuflection, heading or head bowing before certain personages, things or places to convey symbolism is considered destitute, (Nabofa, 1999:35-6).

Sociology of Ritual Performance

It should be emphasised that in Africa, ritual is also a tool for raising social and psychological awareness in society. So, rather than perceive ritual along the barrenness which modern usage has foisted on it, we should purge ourselves of the insinuation of fear associated with it for us to discover its social relevance. The negative insinuations must have probably emanated from early ethnocentric opinions put forward by scholars, mostly

anthropologists, and other deductions. For example, Bolaji Idowu on Yoruba ritual patterns observes:

> These traditional patterns are carefully preserved and systematically followed, especially is this so because they have acquired magical virtues in consequence of which it is believed that they can only be efficacious when they are correctly conducted. This magicality may create fear, (Idowu, 1996:109).

Ritual performers are as numerous as there are rituals in Africa. Generally, there is no special class exempted from ritual worship in Africa. Kings, priests, titled chiefs, elders, myths, peasants and others have roles to play in African ritual performances.

Major literary traditions in the world have traced the origins of their drama to religion and ritual performances. Though some scholars argue that drama developed simultaneously with religious performances and that they are independent of one another, discerning line remains contentious (Dasylva, 2004:7). This contention bred the activist and evolutionary schools of thought, which engage in the controversy over other theatricals of ritual, constitute drama, or not. While not joining issues with the tendencies, it is apposite to pursue an explication of the arguments they relate to the purpose of our study, which, among other things, is exposition of "royal drama".

A proponent of the relativist school of thought, Ossie Enekwe (1981) maintains that drama and ritual "are not anti-podal" but "reciprocal in function and structure". This relies so because one can easily lead to the other, depending on context. Exploring the transformability of ritual and theatre, Enekwe (1987:22-24) asserts that a ritual entertain, once outside its original context or whenever the belief that sustains it losses its potency. The problem of ascertaining the "original context" or defining when the belief that sustains the ritual becomes impotent may subsist. Yet what

recommends the relativists' position to critics like Ogunbiyi (1981), Ogundeji (2000) and the present researcher, is the point that theatre is "first and foremost an experience", and the "context of African art is an integral of it", (Ogundeji, 2000:23). What can pass for ritual, drama or plain entertainment would vary from a given context, time, and space to another – its contextual dynamics.

On the other hand, the evolutional school expounded by Cambridge Anthropologists led by Harrison, Murray and Comford and to which Echeruo gives tacit support, conforms to Finnegan's (1970) position that there are considerable limitations in the classification of some festivals, especially of the Igbo, as drama. Echeruo, (1981) asserts that until the ritual content of the Igbo festival is forced "to yield its story", its dramatic content will remain subsumed in "ritual purity". Since evolutionist thought regards ritual as dead-end, its proponents recommend that the ritual be expanded into it, which could then be given a secular base for it to metamorphise into drama. The evolutionists emphasise content of ritual while relativist thought is context based. We align with the relativist thought and stress that there is drama in the context of performance of rituals since drama, "in general sense, is any kind of kinetic performance, an exhibition of human actions on the stage, a situation in which patronages act out the story".

More studies that are recent have however harmonised these contentious views. Ogundeji (2000) contending that both theatre and ritual could be religious or secular acts, identifies mimesis as "the requisite feature that qualifies ritual as theatre" and take up initially with three types of indigenous theatre practices – sacred-ritual performances, ritual festival performances and the deritualising performance.

The origin of Greek drama is traced to religion and the performances, which took in the Dionysian temple, an origin suggested to have been responsible for the violence on stage. Drama in medieval England is also, believed to have enacted from the church. In indigenous Africa, two broadly classified schools contest the origin of drama.

According to Dasylva (2004:1-13), the ritual-to-drama school, which is the more convincing, believes that from ritual performances emanated drama. For them, religious festivals observe ceremonials of songs, dancing, drumming, pouring of libations, acrobatic displays, exchange of gifts, prayers (evocatory and invocatory), ushering in the few year.

In addition, there are persons who may be specially costumed and making special gestures or masked to impersonate spirits or other supernatural powers (imitation). Worshippers and on-lookers constitute the audience just as paraphernalia attached to the performance are all veritable aesthetics for stage effect and usually associated with drama. The audience of both ritual and drama are therefore presented with "characters". Imagined people who can only appear and be active in the course of a performance are only imitated by other people, by actors and medium in instances of possession (Dasylva, 2004:11).

Nevertheless, the other school of thought on the origins of African drama believes that drama developed independent of ritual and simultaneously with it. Its proponents on rituals are held in so serious reverence that any true worshipper cannot approach the shrine intending to be entertained, (Dasylva, 2004:8) proponents hold that enactments which abound in ritual perform dual communicative roles – one to the worshippers and the other to the worshipped deity, neither of which is in anyway entertainment. So, the worshippers, according to the school, play the music, songs and enact performances taking after the characteristic behaviour or features of the spirit or its totem and which invokes it to possess particular worshippers or the entire gathering.

The folklore of indigenous African life supports the latter school's argument. Local art is not all about religion or worldview as the 'basic play interest' cannot be ignored, (Okpewho, 1979). There have been story-telling, praise or heroic and the epic narrative performances, which functioned as agents of the process of pre-literate Africa. The creative artist is considered fit to perform functions only after his works have earned high ration.

While we are not attempting to adjudicate, Dasylva's (2004:13) observation that the schools agree that drama has a form traceable to sacred as well as secular arts, and drama as entertainment gives memorable 'pleasure' to the audience as strictly secular additional performance does, is very apt.

Nowadays, hitherto 'serious' ritual performances are staged at airports as entertainment for visiting dignitaries and especially, foreigners (strangers to such enactments) in the full glare of otherwise adherents of the religion. Therefore, whether or not the original worshippers would for this reason 'now' approach the religious shrine for the aim of being entertained is a function of individual's disposition and degree of such de-ritualisation. This also supports Enekwe's position on ritual as entertainment when the context of its performance changes. If it is agreed that religion is an agent of society's socialisation process, then it could have existed side by side with folkloric traditions of story-telling, praise chanting etc, making both the origin of creative art forms.

Granted that ritual performances may be theatrical, not all of them can be classified as drama. Though mimesis and representation may be achieved, the dialogue makes ritual performance fall short of being drama. The ritual performer in possession to 'acting' the spirit, possesses a "pressing sense for the real" (Okpewho, 1979:16), so he concretises his gods with animals, plants etc and appoint priests for applying "the spirit regarding order" for visualisation – a kind of representation.

Unlike the "anti-podal" relationship that Enekwe accuses Echeruo of suggesting ritual and theatre, they (ritual and theatre) are similar in structure. The theatricals performances may qualify them for proto-theatre hinging much on spectacle. In line of its meeting, the Aristotelian mimetic and imitation criteria, ritual falls short in the absence of a developed plot and dialogue. Though there are instances where alot may not be essential to good drama, to jettison the dialogue criterion for drama occurrence with Leonard C Pronko who dismisses western actors as exceedingly "focus" and only capable of talking, may not be wholly acceptable.

Whereas drama presents man in communication with other men, human actors, other fellow actors or fellow human audience, who may even reply them, indication in ritual is for an effect on the spirits, to get action from the god, a somewhat "magical" effect. The actor in ritual as in drama is, of necessity, involved and controlled by the character he is playing to succeed. While the conventional drama actor must be in the character he or she is representing, the actor in Brechtian and lately Femi's "neo-rationalist" drama may not be as deeply involved. In the neo-rationalist days, the actor distances himself from the character he is imitating so that the drama performance's "pleasure" is in the awareness of the performance as conscious mimesis.

Writing on "Ekpe festival as religious ritual and dance drama", James Amankulor (1981) observes that "Ogbom" one of the festivals in his Ekpe ritualistic has mimetic action, gorgeous costuming, good dancing, music and song. It is a short of drama "because dialogue and word sequence remain mainly repetitive and elevated beyond the sphere of traditional ritual. That the distinction had been between the Ekpe festival and its tendency to erroneously pass as dance drama does to diminish its artistic qualities, neither does it inhibit the creative inhibit the creative prowess of the ritual performers. The only thing Amankulor's study can do is engender further interest in the ritual and this may enable us de-emphasize its shortcomings and develop it into drama. That is why it may be more rewarding to the present researcher to form to a critic's position that "if generic distinctions between ritual and drama are distinct" "the understanding of both would be enhanced.

Acknowledging that indigenous festivals and rituals have influenced the form and structure of artistic products of many African playwrights, Dapo Adelugba who could identify only "an element of theatre in trance", even then, he observes that it is difficult to determine how much of trance is real and how much is acted.

Conclusion

When in Palaeolithic times, the concern of man was with subsistence, he generally celebrated ritual festivals to induce favourable seasonal conditions, which were core determinant factors for food and meat supply. With the belief that supernatural powers controlled seasonal changes, man depended on religious personages who have physical transformative powers/or tribal leaders with skills and inherited powers to get the desired changes.

With growth in knowledge, the desire for soil fertility, as basic for increased food supply and increased fleetness of food, as basis for effective hunting and herdsmanship grew. The consummation of the dual desires in classical Greek culture led to the polytheistic religious expressions in sacred festivals performances that pervaded that era.

In modern times, digitalised multi-media technology in a global village poses growth challenges to the earlier concerns of man. The relations of production have changed considerably. Man's concerns have grown beyond subsistence in food and meat supply and meeting their demands more comprehensive moves to attain psychosocial equilibrium.

Yet, it is obvious that the epochal colonialism, its immediate offspring, neo-colonialism and the attendant problems of cultural imperialism of the west have ensured that indigenous Africa may perceptually trail the technologically advancing West. One step taken after, or derived from, an adequate exploitation and/or exploration of African indigenous creative ingenuity will facilitate a change of the situation.

From the ongoing, we have been able to establish that the context of performance is a major fulcrum upon which the creativity of artists revolves. This assertion holds both the past and contemporary times and does not exempt even the artist in ritual religious performances.

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