

**Segun Omosule**  
Olabisi Onabanjo University, *Nigeria*

**Artistic undercurrents of performance:  
A study of *Egungun* costumes in Ode Irele**

**Abstract.** Indigenous performances have often been misunderstood and relegated to the level of rituals. This, however, underestimates indigenous performances that constitute art to the folks. The difficulty in unraveling the artistic undercurrents of indigenous performances arises in part from the warped vision of critics who would match every creative endeavour with a western parallel. In this paper, the artistic ingredients in the costumes of *egungun* masquerade at Ode Irele will be unveiled and situated within the realm of art to which they rightly belong, and in so doing unravel the robust artistic constituents of indigenous performances that have not been given adequate attention over the years.

**Introduction**

*Egungun* are performers who are considered to represent ancestral spirits the moment they are dressed in their costumes, which cover their faces and their bodies. Their feet are equally covered, in consonance with the belief that ancestral spirits are far from human. Their hands, too, are covered and their croaky voices are unique as they relay prophetic messages to the audience at the arena. *Egungun* cult originated in order to solve the biological snag of a member of the society at Ijebu Igbo so many years back. The sexual undertone in the origin may be traced to the founder's barrenness and divine revelation that compelled him towards demonstrating against the situation as a means of resolving

his problem. The fruitless marital life of the mythical creator amounts to a conflict between patriarchal posture and the withdrawal of conjugal bliss needed for procreation and continuity. It could also refer to the resolution of human problems through art. Three *egungun* masquerades were associated with the original creative effort of the founder of the cult. The masquerades include *Awo Omoniyankan*, *Aworosaju* and *Baba Laelae*. The founder was reputed to have composed many of the festival songs that accompanied every performance. Other songs would have been added in the course of the dispersal of the performance across geographical boundaries. The design of other gestures accompanying the movement of the *egungun* performers was credited to him.

Members of the cult are usually referred to as *Oje*. They are distinct in every town and village because of their association with the *egungun* masquerades. People dread them because of the belief that they possess uncanny power that could trigger off fatal consequences. The names of members of the cult in every town are tied to the cult as they reveal their association with the guild. Names such as Ojewole, Ojedeyi and Ojesanmi reflect the association of the families to the cult. Specific families are associated with the performances of *egungun* in many Yoruba towns, and within the Oyo-Osun enclave, they may be identified through their names such as *Abegunde*, *Olalomi* and *Ojediran*. And as the crude metaphor of sugarcane's supremacy in the swampy area shows, *Oje* (*egungun* worship) cannot be detached from the household of *Ologbu*.

### **Concept and Definition**

Performance is the bedrock of festival. It is the vehicle through which the artistic undercurrents in festivals are brought to the fore more so when there seems to be a visible absence of narratives in them. However, through the potent vehicle of performance, the

gestures and movements reveal the significant imports of indigenous performances.

According to Chukwuma (1994), 'performance is the life of oral literature, and involves the totality of artist, audience and context' (209). No doubt, performance is synonymous with cinematographic efforts at projecting conflicts. However, the difference is that the conflicts in indigenous performances are subsumed in movements, gestures, and dance.

The oral performer is groomed in the lore of the land and may not have difficulties reacting to the scintillating beatings of the drums. He may have inherited his dexterity from his parent or due to his regularity at the festive arena. The nature of oral performance is the capability of members of the audience to take the place of the performers especially when the need arises. This is because the audience too is versed in the lore of the land as a result of their regularity at festive arena. It is salient for performance to draw its strength from members of the audience because of the subsisting rapport that exists between the performers and the audience. Members of the audience are equally drawn from the milieu and may not be quite different from the performers. They may perform the same roles as a result of their mastery of the artistic nuances.

### **Methodology/Theoretical Framework**

Postmodernism will constitute the theoretical framework for this paper. Data are synthesized from oral interviews, and the application of the theory to the revelations made by the informant. The preference for postmodernism arises from the relevance of the critical theory to the study of culture. Postmodernism is a theoretical canon that recognizes the uniqueness of cultures in the apprehension of reality and the fact that no single culture may be superior to the other. In the light of this, the incoherence that seems to be the hallmark of indigenous performances receives pedagogic sanction, as it seems to

depict the nature of reality. Postmodernism represents a departure from the tradition of criticism that seems to place a blanket regulation on the requirements of performance at the arena. In this regard, postmodernism recognizes the dynamism of every performance as a unique entity that may not be removed from the artistic peculiarities of the folks that created it. In other word, Spurgin (1997) sees postmodernism as the ‘consensus of educated western people about history, identity, core cultural values’. Jean-François Lyotard, however, considers ‘postmodern as a historical/cultural ‘condition’ based on dissolution of master narratives or meta-narratives, a crisis in ideology when ideology no longer seems transparent’. The strength of postmodernism is the break from convention and recognition of creativity and innovations and may not be relevant because of any dearth of ‘stylistic innovation’.

Postmodernism recognizes the difference in performances and term it a form of revolution. The hallmark of indigenous performances arises from the recognition of reality as a perception that may not have the same appeal to different people. This recognition informs the possible performance of the verbal script that does not have coherence because reality may not be a straightforward script that may be measured at will. Rather, the incoherence in the performance of indigenous scripts is a demonstration of scripts that are not time bound and thus meant for timeless appreciation. In other words, no conclusion seems to be made by festivals during their performances. Rather, the conclusions that are salient to individual members of the audience depend on the appeal they could make upon beholding the spectacles. According to Jameson, festivals make no clear-cut moral position and may harbour different genres in a single performance.

## Research Data

This study is the result of two months intensive fieldwork at Ode Irele in Irele Local Government area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The people in Ode Irele are variants of the Yoruba ethnic group. They speak Ikale dialect and traced their roots to Ugbo in the Ilaje area of the same state. The interview with Akin Ojuojo, 45, of 18, Idogun Street, Ode Irele provided insight to his father's billing as the owner and worshipper of *egungun* masquerade in the Idogun quarters of Ode Irele. Upon the death of the father, Akin Ojuojo told the researcher that he became the inheritor of the shrine as well as the tradition that was synonymous with his father before his demise.

The festival under discussion takes place between September and October 2005 at Ode Irele. The celebration provides an opportunity for the researcher to interview Mr. Akin Ojuojo on some salient issues concerning the performance as well as the costumes of *egungun* masquerade. The interview is equally backed up with a review of the performance that takes place on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2005 at the arena along Idogun Street, Ode Irele. Therefore, the analysis that follows is an attempt at situating the oral interview and the series of revelations within the framework of verbal art.

At the shrine, where much of the fabrics are woven, Akin Ojuojo has a number of equipment that serve as tools in fashioning the costumes of the masquerades. Among them are the cloths as well as needles. He reveals that the design is preceded by the pouring of libations to the spirit of the masquerade and that every stage of the design is attended by meet rituals and the chanting of necessary incantations in order to confer potency on the endeavour. The only taboo is that women are barred from the arena. He

may not know any reason for the development except that the fear that the women might reveal sacred matters by women if allowed within the shrine might be responsible.

### **Application/Analysis**

The performance of *egungun* would not have existed without the mimetic constituents. These are synonymous with movements, and encompass both artistic and liturgical undercurrents. The performance is accompanied with the appropriate costumes. The usage of these costumes depends on the nature of the performance. Thus, movements become significant means of communication of the script as indigenous performances rely greatly on communicative delivery and reception that may be achieved through imitation of the original steps, retrieved from their mythical entanglements. Hence, performances have both communicative and aesthetic capabilities.

The movements of *egungun* masquerades reveal an infirmity of gait as they dance forward and backward. They hesitate upon every movement while dancing in a conscious effort at modestly presenting their dexterity (*won njo siba sibo*). This display of amateurish dance steps, depicting a novice's attempt at a performance informed by limited understanding and skills becomes a symbol of the cult's association with wisdom. Thus, wisdom is associated with modesty, calculation and conscious delivery. As the masquerades symbolize the rare visitation of the ancients, they dance as if they lack the skills, and sing in voices exhibiting links with both celestial and terrestrial worlds. As the performance gathers momentum, their unparalleled demonstrations negate the original reluctance.

Performance is tied to imitation. Every performance is an imitation of a primordial parallel. The imitation is meant to entertain the audience. The captivation of

the audience through artistic nuances and movements is the quest of performers. The processes reveal instances of representations through gestures, which make it difficult to distinguish Yoruba indigenous performances from Aristotle's concept of imitation. In this regard, festivals have elements of tragic and comic references within a single delivery. To indigenous creative artists, performance like Aristotle's tragedy is an imitation from which movements cannot be detached.

If movements characterize Yoruba indigenous festivals, their exhibitions may be equated with the mimetic aspects of modern performances. And as their medieval origins can be inferred, these movements transcend the present as they betray a link with the past and may relate potent challenges that may have faced the founding fathers at the dawn of time. The performances are thus, means of documenting such situations that might have been lost to time if not scripted in the performances.

Indigenous performances are moments of social, religious and economic presentations, achieved through art. The uniqueness of every performance depends on the social climate. Except another medium was devised, which was not likely in view of the non-literacy of the people, it would have been cumbersome if the socio-political sensibilities of the era were not performed towards acculturating and entertaining the younger generation. It is within such songs and renditions that allusions are made to various landmarks that characterized the establishment of the milieu.

Verbal art provides a link between the past and the present. It equally represents a significant reference to the future. Even when the plausibility of the term performance is not in doubt, it is significant that a number of aesthetic spectacles may not re-enact a single primordial conflict and resolution. The eternal transition festival at Ode Irele,

known as *Ijengen* does not reflect any conflict. *Ijengen* is a performance that is celebrated at the burial rites of High-Chiefs simply known as *Ijama* and their wives. It is not time bound like other festivals. Rather, the movement of the deceased is summed up by his physical vacancy from partaking in the meal of life and every living being is liable. The activities of the dancers may be classified under performance while the subject and themes dwell on human helplessness.

Performance became the only means of documenting the challenges of the people at a time when writing was non-existent. It was imperative for the people to document their history through art. Therefore, the sensibilities of the era were performed towards acculturating and entertaining the younger generation through a wholesale presentation of the instrument of history. Muller (1999) reports the employment of *egungun* or *Orisa's* (god) costumes on the modern stage which utilization is preceded by approval from their custodians before they could be transferred from the shrine to the secular stage (18 – 9).

### **Egungun and the Costumes**

The masquerade's costume is celebrated as it protects his buttocks and enhances his gaiety. The attitude of the people towards clothing is highlighted thereby. A naked being is not different from a monkey. This makes the Yoruba world to be full of gratitude and veneration for whatever enhances the welfare of humanity. And the performance of *egungun* mentions three distinct trees to which man would be eternally grateful. The first two trees are the palm trees and cotton known for the provisions of palm oil and cloths respectively. But one wonders if salt ever grows on a tree and this perhaps reveals the scientific limitations of indigenous people especially as it became difficult for them to identify the source of salt. Among the three, cotton is accorded the greatest regard as it



provides the fabrics with which the masquerades' buttocks are covered.

Costumes are classified in two categories. The first is associated with the ritual arena. These costumes are kept in the shrine and may not be worn outside except during an outdoor celebration. Much care is exercised in the treatment of these costumes. At times, libations may be poured on them in order to retain their ritual potency. These costumes are known as sacred costumes. Thus, sacred and secular dimensions are perceivable in the employment of costumes during the performances of Yoruba indigenous festivals. This confirms what de Saussure (1916) terms synchronic and diachronic. The sacred is the primal energy from which the secular is drawn and its origin lies in myth. Ritual performers are associated with sacred costumes.

Sacred costumes fall under the synchronic class as they are the totality from where other forms are drawn and thus the basis for analyzing the secular category. If structuralism is a search for meaning within the level of physical totality, the descent into the realm of mythology in the classification of sacred costume is a negation of the ideals. However, this recourse is imperative as the synchronic level poses a great difficulty because the dividing line between the synchronic and diachronic levels of interpretation becomes inseparable. At a divide away from the ritual stage, the costumes worn by performers that are drawn from the audience are secular. The costumes range from highly ornamental dresses to rags. The costumes of ritualists conform to the specification of tradition and peculiarities of each phenomenal god. Several festival costumes are now prevalent on secular stage in obvious imitation of their sacred origin. The costumes are spiritually significant because they enhance fertility for barren women. The practice points to the pervading influence of women on the performance.

The interviews reveal that the emergence of masks may be traced to two origins finding expression in ‘unnatural’ and natural where the concept of ‘unnatural’ is classified along sacredness, just as the natural fulfils both religious and aesthetic significance. The employment of the term ‘unnatural’ in this paper refers to the metaphysical dimension of such masks especially those reported to be worn by gods and goddesses (that are often talked about but rarely seen) in whose imitation the supposedly natural masks are tailored. The concept of mask depicts a role – changing that is meant to create an illusion of reality.

These masks may be situated within the religious sensibility of the people. It assumes an embodiment of language and its utilization depends on individual deployment of language within the opportunities provided by the imagination. The diachronic masks considered to be metaphysically conditioned and their natural, artistically fashioned synchronic counterparts become the ideal and the real respectively. These ‘unnatural’ masks are not subject to any improvisation nor based on any known model but are subject of the imagination. Such masks exist in the spiritual realm especially as they are worn by supernatural elements. Their natural counterparts become the artificial equivalent whose origins are subsumed in religion and vague conjecture of the invisible realm.

The performance of *egungun* is associated with the employment of masks that have artistic significance. And these masks have aesthetic appeal. Their concreteness represents some conceived personalities, objects. Therefore, much devotion is exercised towards their upkeep. Akin Ojuojo reveals that the costumes comprising both the fabrics and the masks are called *eku* because there is no perceived difference between the costumes and the masks. And the functions are at two levels. They fulfill both artistic and

religious significance. Their spectacular designs point to the depth of artistry in indigenous societies and their adornment confers religious potency that may specifically lead to possession on the maskers

The beauty of *egungun* masks lies on the context especially as songs, drumming, dance, and colourful costumes accompany the performance. The structural appreciation of the series of images that are capable of inimitable forms as they transcend the physical realm, while at times dwelling on both, is subject to cultural dynamics. Within such spectacles are symbols, signs and codes that reflect the religious, philosophical sensibilities of the milieu but achieved through boundless inspiration and power of graphic representation of artists. From all indications, and especially as masks performance is involved, the physical, facial adornments of performers symbolize the psycho-sensual sensibilities of carvers. In them, the artists' level of intellectual harmony with religious, aesthetic and environmental realities informs the structures for which the wood becomes a potent tablet for representation.

There is no distinction between the masquerades and their physical adornments. Consequently, any reference to the costumes refers to the performers and the myths surrounding the cult. Aremu (1991) reveals the underlying ritual importance of *egungun* costumes to the Yoruba world, which he says contain 'medicinal, magical and religious powers'. The costumes are colourful and contribute to the success of the performance. In view of the taboos and religious aura surrounding the masquerades, much care is exercised in the treatment of their costumes; and they are either hung on the rooftops of ritualists or on *ahun* trees otherwise known as *laganga* (10). Usually, blood is spilled on them to retain their potency.

*Among the 'egungun agba' (elder masquerades), the costumes are worshipped in order to retain their power. Rituals are performed with sacrifices of cocks, goats, and pigeon to their ancestors. The blood of these animals is spilled or poured on the costumes (Aremu, 1991: 11)*

Kalilu (1991) refers to the cultural manifestation of the religion of the people in the *egungun* cult especially the attachment of the people to ancestral worship, which is a reflection of the people's visual art (16 - 7). The masks worn by the masquerades are important ritual and medicinal ingredients; and they may be used for concoctions such as family planning. The masks are what Irvine calls 'stylistic masks, image styles, without present content' as 'the meaning is in the mimicry.'

#### **Annual Competition, Drama and Eegungun**

No doubt, custodians of *egungun* meet occasionally as a guild during celebrations that involve the different families especially during their annual celebration where competition among the *egungun* in order to outpace one another through the deployment of magical powers is the order of the day. Some masquerades could dance on a tiny thread. Some may jump on the top of a roof in the company of their *amisan* 'assistants'. The assistants have a difficult task ahead of them as they are meant to carry out such difficult feats as may be performed by the masquerades. The assistants hold tiny canes that they use to adjust the costume of the masquerades each time the dance steps assume spectacular dimension that parts of their bodies may be revealed thereby. They equally direct the movements of the masquerades from going to areas where they could disappear completely from the arena.

The Festival period in Akure is known as *elefunta*. It lasts for three months.

Prelude to this, the monarch goes into solitary confinement in the *elefunta* shrine where he communes with the ancestors, soliciting peace and prosperity. This spiritual sojourn prevents him from interacting with any human being during the seven-day retreat. The decoration of the palace with palm fronds marks the end of the spiritual encounter laced with the performance of *Aramojajajo* masquerade at the palace arena. Significantly, other masquerades such as *Aramojajajo* and *Solu Ajagunmale* must accompany the king on his tour of the town. The ritual objects of kolanuts and cock are deployed to the spirits of the mythical benefactress of *Iyeye* on whose cause *Oro* ‘rite’ emerged at *Ijan*. Oral interview reveals that the few women that are allowed to participate in the ritual at *Ijan* are known as *Yeyeruku* ‘the holy ones’ and their admission is subject to their spiritual sanctification as they have been divorced of their assumed impurities.

The performances of the masquerades at the palace involve many members of the audience. They interact with the masquerades through dialogues and puzzles they throw at the *egungun* performers for a mandatory resolution. These questions are difficult and may transcend physical issues and dwell on esoteric. This segment of the performance is reserved for spiritually inclined members of the audience. The taboo surrounding this encounter confers instant death on any masquerade that cannot answer the questions correctly. Ogundeji (1991) identifies a number of mock duels in other Yoruba indigenous festivals typified by the conflicts involving *Olunwi* and *Ajagemo* during *Obatala* festival at Ede. He equally mentions the encounter between *Obalaayan* and *Obalufe* during *Edi* at Ile-Ife as a dramatic re-enactment of the original creative endeavour especially as good and bad are known to be involved in a mortal battle (16). The quality of the costume of every performer may be responsible for the aesthetic

satisfaction derived by the audience at the arena. At Ijebu Ode, Ijebu Igbo and Ago Iwoye all in Ogun State, the annual competition begins with the attempt at outpacing one another through gorgeous costumes. It is not out of place for Egungun to be costumed with expensive lace materials. The beauty of each masquerade would determine the attention it would receive from the audience. The dance steps could also add colour to the spectacular posture of the masquerades. Any masquerade that could perform magical feats would stand out and draw the applause of the audience.

### **Sacred and Secular Dimensions of Performance**

Both sacred and secular dimensions may be delimited in the performance of Egungun. All activities within the ritual arena fall within the sacred level as the religion of the people is embedded. It is at this stage that rituals and libations are made to deities for a favourable and hitch-free performance. The rain might be put on hold at this stage such that no drizzle is witnessed while the performance lasts. Crises that could mar the smooth performance of the festival might even be put at bay through necessary rituals to *Esu-Elegbara*. An indigenous Yoruba performance may be a meeting point of various genres such that ritual, divination, deital, incantation and myths can be delimited from it. Consequently, it is difficult to demarcate one genre from another without basic inter-relatedness. The uniformity is in the employment of songs and surrogate linguistic means of communication. Each oral genre is significantly directed towards aesthetic delight achieved through artistic excellence. The entertainment that attends every performance is accompanied with ritual and religious sentiments. The same motifs of devotion, morality and joy may be garnered from the performance of any oral genre. This development makes it difficult to tie festivals and any oral genre to a monolithic performative

objective, such as ancestral worship, or *egungun*, even when celebrating transitions. Yoruba beliefs about death harbour entertainment, narration of genealogical developments, and religion. The people's worldview is revealed in both sacred and secular performances. It shows that both human and celestial attendants are believed to be entertained. Performances can thus be linked with the entertainment of the audience through the movements, gestures, and lyrical compositions by the human audience and the pacification of the aggrieved spirits of phenomenal gods amid the cultivation of their favour. Such achievements are subject to the performance of the lore of the land that lies within the religious sensibilities of their custodians.

The performance of the hegemonic festival in Ode Irele is usually accomplished with the ritual employment of *Oro* 'rite' especially where cleansing is involved. The performative instruments are made up of string instruments that reverberate when drawn or blown. They are known as *aribeji* 'roaring calabash' and *Orele* 'bull roarers'. Akpabot's description of the bullroarers makes it synonymous with cleansing and social control. They are usually used to scare children and women from the ritual arena. In the past, the employment of *aribeji* 'roaring calabash' and *Orele* 'bull roarers' specifically attended the sacrifice of a human scapegoat. Consequently, members suspected to be babblers especially women and children are warned to steer clear for fear that they might reveal the secrets of the ritual performance.

The secular performance begins at a divide outside the shrine especially as the performance begins at the arena. The activities of the performers are considered secular because the audience is concerned with the entertainment inherent in the performance. The religious aspect of the celebration is not given any consideration order than the

prophetic deployment at the arena to members of the audience who might be having one problem or another. Solutions might even be proffered to some spiritual problems besetting the people.

### **Festival songs and the art in them**

The songs rendered during the performance of *umale* ‘sea nymphs’ during *eje* festival in Ode Irele, for example, confirm the artistic imports in some festival songs. Allusions are made to the beauty and inherent entertainment in these songs. The chorus’ renditions seem to emphasize the unparalleled performance of their own performers and thus a castigation of any other performance as insignificant.

The aesthetic of *egungun* reveal several axioms that condition the milieu to the associated moral rectitude over the years. Among them is the wisdom behind the exhibition of *egungun* masquerades from time to time. It is within the songs that such anecdotes may be drawn.

*Obakan obakan, on da bu yeke*

*Kimori o se eh Olofa O*

*Mo duro, owo mi o to’san*

*Mo bere, owo mi o tosan*

*Obakan Obakan ni kii ndubule*

*Mo dubule, osan kun owo ati enu mi*

A fellow walks in majesty

What are you up to *Olofa o!*

Standing, I cannot pluck apples

Stooping, I cannot pluck apples



A Fellow advises me to lie down

Lying down, apples fill my hands and mouth

A concerted effort may be fruitless but a little may lead to greater victories. The paradox in the preceding claim is, however, an expression of a fact of life to the audience. And from the point of view of Schechner, (1993) meaning is dependent on cultural internalization and not biologically determined.

Yoruba is a tonal language, and this significantly informs the rhythm, multiple meanings, and puns inherent in the deployment of every word. For instance, *Obakan* may mean a certain king just as *Obakan* may mean a half brother. The deployment of both words may actually be considered a repetition but this is not so. The usage here may mean a king who doubles as a half brother. The fluidity of the Yoruba language makes the rendition of every song sonorous, poetic and paradoxical in terms of meanings.

The primordial context and conflicts in indigenous festivals are subsumed in the songs, gestures and movements. These literary and quasi-dramatic constituents provide bases for such celebrations. However, critics are at a loss on account of their non-membership of the milieu, whereas the audience's exposure to the diachronic level confers meanings on such semiotics. These literary vehicles may be forced to reveal their inherent conflicts through an analytical examination of the linguistic, rhythmic and sociological anecdotes. The medicinal function of *egungun* masquerades is found in the resolution of an epidemic in Akure and its subsequent eradication. Lord (1976) becomes apposite as he attests to the importance of the past in any analytical exercise and explication of folklore genre. According to him, the contexts and traditions confer meaning on it 'in its creativeness' (148).

**Findings/Conclusion**

The worldview reveals the belief of the people in metaphysical beings as imbued with a spiritual potency that cannot be denied. Any performance is preceded by the quest for peace. The performance may be directed towards this search. The audience too is a product of the milieu but the degree of individual familiarity with tradition is relative. No one can, therefore, deny that festivals are dramatic performances that are meaningful and peculiar to their indigenous environments and geared towards basic social, moral and aesthetic specifications. Their conflicts are mythically subsumed but their re-enactments are symbolic, constituting an address to the sensibilities of the people as each foot of the performance lies between secular and metaphysical dimensions as well as potent instrument for the resolution of secular problems.

### Works Cited

Anozie, S. *Structural Model and African Poetics*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.

Chukwuma, Helen. *Igbo Oral Literature: Theory and Tradition*. Portharcourt: Thompson and Thompson Nigeria limited, 1994.

Clive Beck. *Postmodernism, Pedagogy, and Philosophy of Education.1996-2004*.

Philosophy of Education Society. Retrieved.October,16, 2005,

WWW.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/index.htm.

Fredric, Jameson. *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. (1991)

Retrieved October 16, 2005. www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/index.htm.

Aremu, P. S. O. 'Between Myth and Reality: Yoruba Egungun Costumes as

Commemorative Clothes' in *Journal of African-American Studies*, Vol. 22, No.1, Molefi, Kete Asante, ed., Temple: Sage Publications Inc., 1991.

Aristotle. 'On Poetic Art' in *What is Art?* Sesonske Alexander, ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Dasylya, A.O. 'The Carrier- Hero in the African Novel' in *OSUA Studies in Language and Literature*, OSILL, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1995

De Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1906.

Ibitokun, B. M. *Dance as Ritual Drama and Entertainment in the Gelede of the Ketu-Yoruba Sub-Group in West Africa, Ile-Ife*: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited 1993.

Kalilu, Rom R.O. 'The role of Sculpture in Yoruba Egungun Masquerade' in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 22, No1, Sage Publication Inc, for African American studies, Temple University 1991.

Ogundeji, P.A. 'An introduction to Yoruba Oral Literature' *LIY* 251, 1991, Adejuwon C. O., ed; Ibadan: the Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan 1991.

Mbiti, J. S. *Introduction to African Religion*, London: Heinemann Educational Books Limited, 1981.

Muller, Bernard. 'Mask, Medium and Form: The Nigerian Performing Arts in Transition' in *IFRA. Les Cahiers*, Bernard, Charlery de la Masseiere, ed., Nairobi: French Institute for Research in Africa, 1999.

Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, London: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Schechner, R. *The Future of Ritual*, London: Routledge 1993.

Sydow, Von C. W. 'On the Spread of Tradition' in *Selected Papers on Folklore*, Lauritz Bodker ed., Copenhagen, 1948.