University Research Compendium

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Category of Research

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<tr>
<th>Field of Research:</th>
<th>Theatre Arts – Performance and Cultural Aesthetics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher’s Name:</td>
<td>Prof Sunday Enessi Ododo</td>
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| Researcher’s Address | Department of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Maiduguri  
Telephone: +2348033516379  
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| Research Titles | a. “Facekuerade”: The Transformational Duality in Ebira-Ekuechi Festival Performance”.  
b. “Performance Structure and the Theatrical Action in Dubar”. |
| Publication Status | Published |
| Nature of Publication | I am the Immediate Past President of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) (2013-2017) and now one of the Trustees of the society. The first essay (a) is journal publication and the second (b) is a chapter in a book. However, the first has been expanded into a book titled “Facekuerade Theatre: A performance Model from Ebira-Ekuechi”- 306 pages. (2015 publication of SONTA). |
| Funding | a. Routledge  
b. UNESCO |
| Abstract | a). This essay theorizes the Ebira mask practices using the Ekuechei festival of Ebira Tao of central Nigeria. The study is essentially a field work engagement involving participatory observation in the Ekuechei festival performances, recording of these events and oral interviews. The core of this theorization is located around the dual transformation and doubling essence of maskless characters conceived and perceived as masquerades. It is from this phenomenon that we evolved the *Facekuerade*
notion which is meant to capture the non-masked masquerade types, which abound in Ebira masquerade repertory and some other Nigerian and African cultures. From nomenclature to paradigm, the *facekuerade* notion is derived from the Ebira concept of Eku (the domain of the dead and masquerade), the Ekuechi event and the general understanding of the masquerade motif. The essay concludes by anticipating the *Facekuerade* concept as theatre because of its performative essence which also embodies a vibrant ritual process.

b). Durbar in Northern Nigeria is exotic and flamboyant. It is a product of the peoples’ socio-cultural experience nurtured and honed into a formidable entertainment heritage. Its performative contents and paraphernalia have a lot of cultural influences of the Trans Saharan and Sudan trade. Most of the costumes used during Durbar today that reflect the sophistication, grooming and wealth of the users exhibit that cultural reality. This essay presents the Performance Structure and the Theatrical Action in key Durbar performances in Nigeria. The paper observes that the Durbar is a celebration of high temporal order with rich cultural display that defines the military might, political orientation and the religious system of Northern Nigeria are emphasised. Its entertainment values take a lot of energy, planning and financial investments to coordinate and achieve. Thea author concludes that indeed, Durbar is a Northern Nigeria’s export to world tourism and cultural heritage.

| Research Impact/ Contribution to Knowledge (h-index; patenting, etc.) | a). The essay identifies the generic and conceptual distinction between masked and unmasked characters otherwise bound together as masquerades. Consequently, *facekuerade* is, in this study, recognized as a motif for the purpose of classifying unmasked masquerade characters. As a word and concept, Facekuerade has gained currency of usage within the theatre sphere and academic space.

b). Through this essay attention is directed at the Dubar not to be appreciated just as a vital component of Muslims’ Salah festival celebrations but as a cultural heritage with a lot of economic benefits as tourism product. |