

TRANCE AND THEATER:

THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

by

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The study of Trance and Theater in the African context can be richly rewarding. The study of Trance itself as manifest in African religious, ritual and social practice is relatively new in the Western world. Beattie's book, *Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa*, itself a pioneer work, only appeared in 1969.¹ In the introduction to the book, John Beattie and John Middleton submit thus:

*There is an immense literature on spirit mediumship, spirit possession, shamanism and related phenomena. Almost all of it relates to societies outside Africa, particularly to Asia and North America. The most comprehensive account is probably that by Eliade (1951). However, it contains relatively little African material, and it is not written from an anthropological or sociological viewpoint but rather from that of the historian of religion concerned with symbolic interpretation and the diffusion of items of culture . . . This volume of essays is an attempt to begin to fill this gap in the ethnography of Africa.*²

If, as Beattie and Middleton rightly say, studies from anthropological and sociological viewpoints on this subject are few, those written from a theatrical point of view are even fewer. Pierre Verger's essay in Beattie's collection, "Trance and Convention in Nago-Yoruba Spirit Mediumship"³ pays some attention to theatrical aspects of West African festivals and ritual practice. And Robin Horton's article, to some degree, does this too. African scholars of drama and theatre are exploring the field, but no full-scale studies have yet emerged on Trance and Theatre. The Dallas-based British scholar, Anthony Graham-White, acknowledges the potential of such studies in his recently published *The Drama of Black Africa*,⁴ but he wisely limits himself to speculations and careful restatement of other people's views. The present study too is exploratory and will be looked into in greater detail in the near future.

In this paper I will look at the phenomenon of trance in three Nigerian societies: Hausa, Kalabari-Ijaw⁵ and Yoruba, and relate this analogically to some of the Nigerian plays I am familiar with. I will end with some postulates about the interrelatedness of Trance and Theatre.

The Hausa peoples of Nigeria are concentrated in the high plains and river valleys of the northern part of the country but a good number of them live and work in the southern parts. In the latter case they often live in their own sections of the towns and cities of the South, and these 'reservations' are generally known as *SABO*.

I will now discuss the phenomenon of trance in a well-established Hausa cult--the Bori cult--which I have had the opportunity of witnessing in Ibadan and aspects of which I have also seen at our Fourth National Festival of the arts in Kaduna in December 1974. I have largely relied on an essay, *The Cult of the Bori spirits among the Hausa*⁶ written by a Nigerian ethnographer, Michael Onwuejeogwu, and other publications on the subject for historical, social and cultural data. I am fully responsible for any errors of aesthetic judgment that may exist in this analysis. I have chosen to discuss the *BORI* in detail as this is one traditional practice in which possession and trance take a central place, and one in which movement and dance are paramount.

In his essay on the *BORI* Michael Onwuejeogwu observes:

In order to illustrate its dramatic and expressive character, I shall briefly describe a typical Bori dance. The woman puts on the colour appropriate to the spirit and in some cases carries the miniature symbolic object, bow or spear, etc., in her hand. She is now the spirit and acts as the spirit. If, for example, she is possessed by the spirit called Mallam Alhaji, she walks around bent and coughing weakly like an old learned mallam and reads an imaginary Koran. If she is possessed by Dan Galadima, the prince, she acts like a noble man wearing kingly robes. She sits on a mat hearing cases, and people around make obeisance. If she is possessed by Mai-gangaddi, 'The nodding one,' who causes sleeping sickness, she dances and suddenly doses off in the middle of some act and wakes up and sleeps again and wakes, etc. If possessed by Ja-ba-Fari, 'neither red nor white,' a spirit that causes people to go mad, she eats filth and simulates copulation (see Tables 1-6). In some cases she leaps into the air and lands on her buttocks with feet astride--thrice. She falls exhausted and is covered with a cloth. During this state she may foretell the future. Spectators wishing to obtain a favour from or appease the spirit that has mounted her place their gifts and alms on the mat. Then she sneezes, the spirit quits her, and she becomes normal. During this period she is never referred to as herself but as the spirit.

Bori dances are held in time of national or communal crisis such as epidemics, the abandonment of an old town or the establishment of a new one, crop failure, lack of rain, when opening new and closing old markets, and on market days. (M. Smith 1954: 218-22; M.G. Smith 1962.)

A woman starts from the event of possession by first screaming loudly. Immediately other Bori women living around hear the shrill cry, they proceed to the scene and in a matter of moments the inner compound is converted into a small Bori stage.

The women sing and beat calabashes turned upside down, while the originator and some others become possessed, each Bori dancing and acting according to the character of the spirit possessing her. (Tables 1-6; of M. Smith 1954: 146-65, 229.) *Borin gida* is correlated with the occurrence of crises in the marital life-cycle of the female occupants of the compound--marriage, death, illness, birth, ceremonials, quarrels and divorce.⁷

As may perhaps be inferred from the above, there are two varieties of Bori ritual, the public and the private. The Bori staged in public for the public is known as *Borin jama'u*: it is more elaborate than the *Borin gida* staged by individuals, in compounds, for personal purposes.

The musicians in the Bori cult are males and they consist of fiddlers, guitarists, and calabash-rattlers. Each spirit has its own music, praise-song and other special songs. The musicians occupy one part of the 'performing' arena with mats spread in front of them. From behind the musicians, the *MASU BORI* emerge, in turn, to dance.

A few terms must now be explained. The *Masu Bori* are the Spirit Owners; the *Yan Bori* are Spirit Children. *Dwakin Bori* (literally, 'Horses of Spirits') is the name used for those possessed by the Bori. To be possessed is to be mounted by a spirit, if male, and as a mare (*godiya*) if female. The spirit mounts the head of the possessed through a miniature object called *tsere* (a bow, for instance) which most *Masu Bori* carry. The spirit rides the person and the possessed is synonymous with the spirit for the duration of the possession. And so the Hausa will say, without any difference in meaning, either that the spirit mounts the person or that the person mounts the spirit. It should perhaps be pointed out that no pejorative connotations are attached to the terms 'horse' and 'mount,' as the horse is a noble animal in Hausa society and indeed a symbol of aristocracy.

The Bori cult, as currently practised, is more a female affair than a male one. To account fully for this fact would take more space than present exigencies of space would allow. However it should be pointed out that current Bori practice is very different from the original manifestations in olden times in which men and women, it is believed, participated on a basis of near-equality. With Islamization, especially in the

last century, there has been a rapid change in the status of women in the society. According to the school of Islamic law followed in Northern Nigeria, Hausa women, being legal minors, must not hold political office: their proper place is in the home. Their pre-Islamic political, legal and economic freedom virtually lost, dependent economically and legally on husband or kin, secluded inside the compound, women came to use the Bori as a weapon for subverting male dominance. As Onwuejogwu writes:

*In Bori Hausa women experience in fantasy the trappings of officialdom. They experience the world of men, the world of political power, and the world of supposed splendour that society has denied them.*⁸

Bori is also an occasion for self-display and a mechanism for expressing or suppressing rivalry between co-wives and strains and stresses in the marital relationship. Bori is, in addition, an opportunity for courtship. These aspects of the cult are generally believed to predate Islamic worship. However, as Onwuejogwu points out, although in pre-Islamic days divorce was easily obtained by women, this is no longer the case: *Indeed, the situation now is that, in order to escape from an irksome marriage, a wife has to run away from her husband's compound, taking refuge with a Magajiya (Bori cult leader). While waiting to gain a legal hearing for her case against her husband, the refugee wife takes advantage of the public displays which Bori-dancing affords. And if divorce is thus almost synonymous with Bori, these circumstances have stimulated a new pattern of courtly prostitution based on Bori. The Magajiya thus assumed a double role--at once local leader of the Masu Bori, and keeper of a brothel.*⁹

Let us now look briefly at the ecological aspect of the Bori. Hausaland experiences epidemics and diseases such as cerebro-spinal meningitis, relapsing fever, undulant fever, louse-borne typhus, sleeping sickness, leprosy, mental illness, heat exhaustion, eye disorders and various skin diseases. The symptoms of these diseases have many common features such as sudden onset, rapid rise in temperature, headache, rigour, weakness, giddiness, nausea, vomiting, convulsions and delirium. It is a matter of interest that these diseases are commonly attributed to Bori spirits, and the Bori dancers simulate their symptoms. (See Appendix, Tables 1-6.)* It may also be noted that Hausa economic activities--agriculture, crafts and commerce--feature in Bori. Discussing Bori in relation to social change, Onwuejogwu points out that some European spirits have been added to the Bori cosmology.¹⁰ He also points out the use of Bori music and dance for self-display and sexual advertisement in the rapidly increasing brothels in urban areas.

* In Douglas and Kaberry, eds., *Man in Africa*

From 1950 to 1965, says Onwuejeogwu, with the rise of nationalism, the development of political parties in Hausaland, and the re-definition of the concept of freedom and individualism, Bori again took a new trend. The *Magajiya* and her followers became the core organization of the women's swing of political parties and rallies. These women now use Bori dance and music not only to win more clients but also to win over members for the political parties they support. These women, under the leadership of the *Magajiya*, are mostly practicing prostitutes, new divorcees, those waiting to be granted a divorce, runaway girls, and new girls from the rural areas seeking fortune and excitement in the urban areas.¹¹

And now, if we look at Segi's women in Wole Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest*, we shall find that they fit into these categories. Segi may be seen as a kind of *Magajiya* leading her political fortress of a night-club as a counter-force to Kongi's tyrannical regime. The nightly vigil at Segi's club may be seen as prototypes of the *Borin Jama'u* in one sense and of *Borin gida* in another. The women's 'performance' at the Harvest Square has the intensity, conviction and force of a *Borin gida* in its pristine, pre-Islamic fullness and glory. The climax of their 'performance' comes at the end of the *Second Part*:

The rhythm of pounding emerges triumphant, the dance grows frenzied...Segi returns, disappears into the area of pestles. A copper salver is raised suddenly high; it passes from hand to hand above the women's heads; they dance with it on their heads; it is thrown from one to the other until at last it reaches Kongi's table and Segi throws open the lid. . .13

Indeed the entire play excluding the "Hangover" may be seen as a sustained Bori rite with all the entranced characters acting in consonance with the spirit they are possessed by. For, in a sense, Kongi, Danola, Daodu, the Organizing Secretary, Sarunmi and the rest are entranced creatures, and Soyinka's comment in "Hangover" can be used to validate this interpretation. If Segi and Daodu are, by the Secretary's testimony, "mad,"¹⁴ "Roadside lunatics,"¹⁵ Danlola also thinks, *Myself I drank from the stream of madness for a while.*¹⁶ Kongi is undoubtedly the most prototypically 'Bori' of all the male characters in the play:

Kongi, getting progressively inspired harangues his audience. . . He exhorts, declaims, reviles, cajoles, damns, curses, vilifies, excommunicates, execrates until he is a demonic mass of sweat and foam at the lips.¹⁷

No less than Segi's women are Daodu's farmers (*metallic lunatics*)¹⁸ a cult group, and Kongi's Carpenters' Brigade are desperadoes who would dare the devil himself when mounted by the spirit of Kongi-ism. Their anthem is a good lead:

*Our hands are like sandpaper
Our fingernails are chipped
Our lungs are filled with sawdust
But our anthem still we sing
We sweat in honest labour
From sunrise unto dawn
For the dignity of labour
And the progress of our land.
For Kongi is our father
And Kongi is our man
Kongi is our mother
And Kongi is our Saviour
Redeemer, prince of power
For Isma and for Kongi
We're proud to live or die.*¹⁹

Before we get too embroiled in Wole Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest* and the Hausa Bori practice let us move on to another part of Nigeria and consider spirit possession and trance among the Kalabari and Ijaw peoples. In a term paper/demonstration presented at the Arts Theatre in June 1975, Mr. Bob-Manuel, a second year student in our Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Ibadan discussed the *Orukoro* possession dance, a ritual of the Ijaw people of Nigeria. Mr. Bob-Manuel also presented for his design project a model of *Orukoro*.²⁰

Orukoro is a 'performance' of rites of worship of the deities of the sea—the mermaids. It is a popular religious movement which attributes the creative and controlling force of man's life to the mermaids or *Mammywota* as they are sometimes called. This phenomenon, however, is not exclusively Ijaw, as many other African communities, especially those inhabiting riverine areas, have some form of worship or other associated with the mystery beneath the water's surface.

Osun, for instance, is a deity of the Yoruba people related to the River Osun. What is important to note, however, is that it is primarily functional as a medium of expression of the people's beliefs. 'Orukoro' therefore transcends the mere entertainment or secular function. The dance is essentially a performance of worship in supplication to the deity or in appeasement for a foreseen evil.

The Ijaw people in general have most of their deities associated with existence beneath the sea. *Mammywota* are referred to as *Oru* by the Kalabari people. There are several *Orus*, and each forms a

deity making up the Kalabari pantheon. Robin Horton has done a great deal of work on the Kalabari, but the narrow scope of this paper does not permit more than brief, passing references to his monumental studies.²¹

Orukoro includes the worship of deities like *Okpolodo* (symbolized by the python) and *Adun* (also symbolized by the python).

Mermaids have been known among the Ijaws to betroth themselves to human beings of their choice. The deities here have sexes. Therefore, if it is a male deity, he betroths himself to a woman while the female deity betroths herself to a man. This is said to be due to the amorousness of these supernatural beings. Those to whom they are betrothed then become their chief priests, gifted with the inner eye for seeing into both the future and existence beyond the plane of the physical. At definite seasons of the choice of the god, the priest or priestess (ORUKOROBO) is possessed by the god. The possessed is consequently transformed into the essence of the god himself or the goddess herself, and during the trance, characterized by ritual sacrifices, incantations, music, song and dance, the possessed is capable of the prophet's sight, communicating with man as a first-person representative of the deity.

With the inspiration of the possessed, the worshippers who are versed in knowledge and are on constant vigil assemble and sing the praise-songs and chants of the god, while the possession deepens gradually into ecstasy. The possessed is thus transformed into the essence of the god. Thus a priestess who, in ordinary life, is known to be very effeminate, old and weak, can be transformed into a fierce, agile, bold and awe-inspiring character capable of commanding the whole worship.

This explains the initial down-to-earth personal dance of the priest or priestess who is soon to be possessed. During this stage the personality of the performer is still distinctly individual. Communication with fellow humans is possible and still obtains. But when the trance is achieved the possessed becomes oblivious of all existence, even of himself and herself. The musical instruments, consisting chiefly of graded tonal instruments of waterpots, play the special tunes of the worship of the particular deity, while worshippers chant or sing and clap to a point of hysterical involvement.

The priest or priestess, made up with white paintings of ritualistic clay chalk on the face and body, is often dressed in two colours principally--WHITE and RED--most often a white band around the bust and another knee-length white loincloth worn on the waist and tapped

with another thigh-length red cloth. Usually a coral bead hat is worn on the head while some Indian bells are worn on the wrists and ankles. Coral beads are also worn on the neck and balanced in one palm in a saucer containing a fresh egg, some alligator pepper and, or, kolanuts and coins which significantly are part of the sacrificial offerings. In the other hand is an elephant tusk symbolic of authority.²²

During this ecstatic possession, the priest or priestess prophesies with the voice of the god or goddess. Sometimes there are punishments meted out to the body of the priest or priestess during this process. On this occasion, the deity may choose to teach its lesson through strangulation. The possessed is thus contorted or strangled by unseen hands and there is no salvation except in the appeasement of the deity. This is the case when the possessed is the offender.

In the light of this analysis of *-Orukoro-* a play like John Pepper Clark's tragedy, *Song of a Goat* (written in 1960 and first published in 1962),²³ starts to reveal multiple levels of meaning and significance, some of which have informed the present writer's three productions of it (in Los Angeles in 1963,²⁴ in Painesville, Ohio in 1964²⁵ and in Ibadan--at the Ibadan Grammar School²⁶ --in 1966).

Orukorere (the name is not accidental) is in a state of trance during large portions of the action. Tonye and Ebiere's incestuous love-act can be more readily accepted if we realise that they are in a state of trance during that section of the play. Tonye (the offender) suffers strangulation as in the traditional ritual. Zifa, who is also entranced at certain times during the play, walks into the sea.

My choreographic realization of the Ebiere-Tonye love-scene has, in my productions, emphasised their entranced states, and J.P. Clark's poetry in this section of the play has facilitated this kind of interpretation:

TONYE: *Why, Ebiere, you are made, so gone for Leaves-gathering, and you are hot all over, oh so shuddering, shuddering. So, you want to pull me down which is a thing forbidden, now take that then, and that--oh my father!*

EBIERE: *So I am crazed, completely gone leaves-plucking. And you? Aren't you shuddering too, Oh, So shuddering in your heat of manhood you have thrown me? Now, hold me, do hold on and fight, for it is a thing not forbidden!*

(Cocks crow beyond.)²⁷

The short "cleansing" scene in the Fourth Movement²⁸ has the veracity and ardour of the traditional 'Orukoro' ritual but the entire play can be (and indeed, one would suggest, should be) performed like sequences in a traditional ritual.

*In Kalabari communities today, says Robin Horton in his essay, "Types of Spirit Possession in Kalabari Religion", one can see several kinds of possession behavior in addition to the traditional ones. . . --notably the various kinds associated with the powerful and ever-proliferating separatist churches.*²⁹

The latter comment leads us naturally to consider Wole Soyinka's use of possession and trance in his *The Trials of Brother Jero*. The Penitent's fainting comes at the end of ecstatic dancing: she is mounted by the spirit of God, or so it is believed. Her performance lends variety to the congregational worship at the beach with Chume as temporary officiator due to Jero's exit in pursuance of one of the 'Daughters of Discord.'³⁰

(Jero is already out of hearing. Chume is obviously bewildered by the new responsibility. He fiddles around with the rod and eventually uses it to conduct the singing, which has gone on all this time, flagging down when the two contestants came in view, and reviving again after they had passed.)

Chume has hardly begun to conduct his band when a woman detaches herself from the crowd in the expected penitent's paroxysm.)

PENITENT: *Echa, echa, echa, echa, echa . . . eei, eei, eei, eei.*

CHUME: (taken aback) *Ugh? What's the matter?*

PENITENT: *Efie, efie, efie, efie, enh, enh, enh, enh . . .*

CHUME: (dashing off) *Brother Jeroboam, Brother Jeroboam . . .*

(Chume shouts in all directions, returning confusedly each time in an attempt to minister to the penitent. As Jeroboam is not forthcoming, he begins, very uncertainly, to sprinkle some of the water on the penitent, crossing her on the forehead. This has to be achieved very rapidly in the brief moment when the penitent's head is lifted from beating on the ground.)

CHUME: (stammering) *Father . . . forgive her.*

CONGREGATION: (strongly) *Amen.*

(The unexpectedness of the response nearly throws Chume, but then it also serves to bolster him up, receiving such support.)

CHUME: *Father, forgive her.*

CONGREGATION: *Amen.*

(The penitent continues to moan.)

CHUME: *Father, forgive her.*

CONGREGATION: *Amen.*

CHUME: *Father, forgive her.*

CONGREGATION: *Amen.*

CHUME: (warming up to the task) *Make you forgive 'am Father.*

.....
*Save us from trouble at home. Tell our wives not to give us trouble. (The penitent has become placid. She is stretched out flat on the ground.)*³¹

Obviously there is a lot of work in this scene apart from the Penitent's possession, fits and fainting, but these are used as counterpoint by the adept playwright. When Brother Jero returns, bruised and battered from his encounter with the Tough Mamma, it is significantly the Penitent, who has totally recovered from her trance, and who has since resumed her participation in the service, who recognizes him from a distance:

PENITENT: (who has become much alive from the latter part of the prayers, pointing . . .) *Brother Jeroboam!*³²

Considering Brother Jero's lascivious looks at women it might be argued that the possession and trances of members of his congregation could be seen as their way of drawing the prophet's attention to them. (Some analogy with the functional use of Bori in Hausa practice suggests itself here.) But that is not our main concern now. What we wish to emphasize is Soyinka's use of trance in the theatrical medium which is a pointer to what can be done on a more ambitious scale by future dramatists on the African continent.

Looking at other Soyinka plays³³ one finds equally exciting use in them of possession and trance. In *The Road*, for example, Samson, enacting Sergeant Burma, becomes possessed by Burma's 'spirit' and enters momentarily into a trance out of which he has to shake himself, tearing off Sergeant Burma's clothes which he had put on to make his 'acting' more realistic:

(Samson's face begins to show horror and he gasps as he realises what he had been doing.)

SAMSON: (tearing off the clothes) *God forgive me! Oh God, forgive me. Just see, I have been fooling around pretending to be a dead man. Oh God I was only playing I hope you realize. I was only playing.*³⁴

The Professor in *The Road* falls regularly into a state of trance; his mortal struggle with Say Tokyo Kid at the end of the play may be seen as a fight between two entranced people, and the Professor's final speech acquires greater force when seen as the statements of a 'possessed' person. The enigmatic Murano is probably in a trance all through the action of the play, for, as the Professor, he has one leg in each world.

Even an early Soyinka play like *The Swamp Dwellers* lends itself to interpretations along the lines of Possession or Trance. Igwezu's litany during his question-answer confrontation may be seen as the inspired utterances of one possessed by his ancestor-spirit, for he begins significantly:

Can you see my mask, priest? Is it of this village?

(Yes.)

Was the word grown in this village?

(Yes.)

*Does it sing with the rest? Cry with the rest? Does it till the swamps with the rest of the tribe.*³⁵

When the litany is over, and the Kadiye, having proved himself an utterly corrupt and unworthy leader of the village, has run out of Makuri's house, Igwezu says with the conviction and inspired assurance of a divine:

*I know that the flood can come again. That the swamp will continue to laugh at our endeavours. I know that we can feed the serpent of the Swamp and kiss the Kadiye's feet--but the vapours will still rise and corrupt the tassels of the corn.*³⁶

In a tired voice he says to his confidante, the Beggar:

I wonder what drove me on

*Do you think that my only strength was that of despair?
Or was there something of a desire to prove myself?*³⁷

We would like to suggest that perhaps there was something more—

the strength of his ancestor-spirit which made Igwezu, for the brief period of his confrontation with Kadiye, the Voice of the Village.

We shall now move on to make a few brief comments about possession and spirit mediumship among the Yoruba people. Several essays and articles have been written about Yoruba traditional ritual practices, but the phenomenon of trance as related to theatre is yet a subject for future systematic study. Pierre Verger in his essay, "Trance and Convention in Nago-Yoruba Spirit Mediumship", has indicated the all-pervasiveness of possession in traditional religious practice in Eastern Nigeria as well as in Dahomey. The theatricality of behaviour under a state of possession is stressed in his essay:

*Ogun (Yoruba) or Gun (Fon), god of blacksmiths, warriors, hunters, and all who use iron, is characterized by coarse and energetic manners; Shango (Yoruba) or Hevioso (Fon), god of thunder, by manly and jolly dances; Orishala (Yoruba), or Lisa (Fon), the creator god, by calm and serene behaviour; Shapana (Yoruba) or Sapata (Fon), god of smallpox and the contagious diseases, by restless agitation; Eshu Elegba (Yoruba) or Legba (Fon), messenger of the other gods, by cynical and abusive attitudes. These examples show just a part of the total range of behaviour which the 'horse of the gods' may adopt.*³⁸

Verger says of Yoruba-Nago festivals, *a propos* of our theme:

*These festivals give the impression of a theatrical performance or even an operetta. Their cast, costume, orchestral accompaniment, solo and chorus differ little in spirit from the Mystery and Passion plays enacted in medieval Europe in the forecourts of the cathedrals. The salient difference is that in the present case the actors, if we may so call them, are in a state of trance.*³⁹

And it is the entranced quality of the performers in Duro Lapido's *Oba Koso*⁴⁰ (especially in the version which recently toured the United States of America and Brazil) that recommends the production to audiences both local and foreign.⁴¹ Which perhaps would suggest that, in our particular kind of drama, directors and actor-trainers should seek inspiration for their work, among other sources, in the traditional phenomenon of trance and possession. For after all, the actor, to operate most effectively, should appear to be 'possessed' (though not mastered) by his role.

That traditional festivals and rituals have influenced the form, content and structure of the artistic products of our national playwrights such as Wole Soyinka, Duro Lapido, Hubert Ogunde, John Pepper Clark, Ola Rotimi, Wale Ogunyemi and 'Zulu Sufola is an undisputed fact. What is now being recommended is a more scientific study by drama and theater scholars and a more coherent and meaningful use of our traditional

inheritance by theatre directors and actor-trainers.

There is an element of 'theatre' in trance as manifested in traditional African ritual and festival practice. How much is real and how much 'acted' in the trances of the possessed is often difficult to determine. If trance has borrowed from theatre, as it quite clearly has done, we are suggesting that theatre can and should borrow from the veracity and soulfulness of trance.

FOOTNOTES:

1. John Beatie and John Middleton, (ed.) *Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969)
2. *Ibid.*, p. xvii.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-68.
4. Anthony Graham White, *The Drama of Black Africa* (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1974), pp. 20-23 especially.
5. The Kalabari and Ijaw are two different ethnic groups, some of whose traditional ritual practices are similar.
6. In Mary Douglas and Phillis M. Kaberry, (ed.), *Man in Africa* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1969), pp. 279-306.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 286-287.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 290.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
12. Wole Soyinka, *Kongi's Harvest* (London: O. U. P., 1967).
13. *Ibid.*, p. 83-84.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
20. The cooperation of Mr. Bob Manuel, and the Tutors of Dance (Miss Fidelma Okwesa) and Design (Mrs. Danielle Lyndersay) at the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, is gratefully acknowledged.
21. Robin Horton's work includes, among others, 1962 'The Kalabari world view: an outline and interpretation,' *Africa*, 32, (3), 197-220. 1963 'The Kalabari *Ekine* Society: or borderline of religion and art,' *Africa*, 33, (2), 94-114. 1964 'Kalabari diviners and oracles,' *Odu I* (I). 1965 'Duminea: a Festival for the Water-Spirits,' *Nigeria Magazine*, no. 86. 1969 'Types of Spirit Possession in Kalabari Religion,' Mary Douglas and Phyllis M. Kaberry, (ed.), *Man in Africa* (op. cit.), pp. 14-49.
22. See model built by Mr. Bob Manuel for his Final Design Project in a course in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan.
23. The edition used for reference in this paper is in J.P. Clark, *Three Plays* (London: O. U. P., 1964.)
24. A production done with Black students (African, Afro-American and Caribbean) of the University of California, Los Angeles, and mounted at the Presbyterian Church in Westwood, Los Angeles.
25. A production done with theatre students (female) and members of the Painesville Community (male) at the Department of Theatre, Painesville College, Painesville, Ohio.
26. The present writer was a tutor of English and Drama at the Ibadan Grammar School, Ibadan, Nigeria, from January 1965 to August 1967.
27. J.P. Clark, *Three Plays* (op. cit.), pp. 27-28.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-42.
29. *Man in Africa* (op. cit.), p. 14.
30. Wole Soyinka, *Three Short Plays*, (London: O. U. P., 1969), p. 47.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
33. The final set of speeches of Aafaa and Old Man in Wole Soyinka's *Madmen and Specialists* (London: Methuen, 1971), pp. 71-77, may be seen as speeches by entranced characters.

34. Wole Soyinka, *The Road* (London: O. U. P., Ibadan, 1965), p. 83.
35. Wole Soyinka, *Three Short Plays* (op. cit.), p. 37.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 40
38. *Man in Africa* (op. cit.), p. 51.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
40. Published in Yoruba and English by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, in 1972. A disc of this version has also been made.
41. It is felt that some of the qualities of the 1972 version have been dispensed with in the current version, but that is a matter beyond the scope of this paper.

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