MASQUERADE HARASSMENT AND CULTURAL DECAY IN CONTEMPORARY IGBO FESTIVALS: A STUDY OF EGWU IMOKA FESTIVAL

Charles Ajaegbu

Abstract

The proliferation of masquerade harassment and bullying in festivals seems to thrive on the fundamental need to create side attraction. This act mostly carried out by the youth in most communities in Nigeria, has gradually, over the years, transformed into an uncertain and chaotic end; thereby denting the cultural image and masking what such festivals represent. However, this research exposes the danger which masquerade harassment poses to tradition, festivals and society at large, as well as proffers ways of preventing it. For this study, Berry's acculturation theory was used to explain how easily people adapt to decaying cultures. Using the participant observation approach of the qualitative research method, the researcher studied the Egwu Imoka Festival of the Awka people of South East Nigeria. Findings show that masquerade harassment largely deforms festival aesthetics and negatively impacts audience turnout. The researcher concludes that festivals like Egwu Imoka will never rise to their true potential unless violent practices that result from masquerade harassment are curbed.

Introduction

Festivals are part of the rich cultural heritage of Nigeria. Festivals are cultural events that bring people together to celebrate and enjoy different forms of artistic expression; music, food and traditions in a period of celebration. They serve communal purposes and function as agents of socialization. Masquerade festivals are famous around the country as they showcase in bit or totality, the belief system, rich tradition and

cultural heritage of a people. From around the world, the elaborate costumes and masks which evoke fear, shock and tension around people are the potency of its aesthetics. Nzekwu, narrating the potency of festival culture narrates his personal experience:

> Entering a small Eastern Nigeria village one morning, I was surprised by the pandemonium which had replaced the usual calm that precedes dawn. Men, women and children rushed towards their houses and disappeared through doors which they slammed behind them. One of the men who passed by me stopped long enough to ask what I was doing just standing and staring. Did a deaf and dumb need to be told when a battle was on? (131).

In his bewilderment at such a witty expression by the passerby, Nzekwu further narrates:

> The general confusion of his metaphor was lost on me and I stood listening for the clash of weapons which would warm me of the direction of the battle. Instead, my ears picked up the faint sound of a bull roar. Its noises increased every minute. I hurried to the nearest house smiling, for just then I had the answer. Masqueraders, ancestral spirits on a visit to mankind, were entering the village (132).

This religious cum cultural belief that masquerades themselves are linked with the divine, living as ancestral spirits among the living is in high repute and these spirits are also highly feared and esteemed. They are celebrated during festivals when they, the spirits, come on a visit to the living. The sacrosanct of these spirits beings, in those days, is incapable of being tampered with

or dishonoured, like Nzekwu's experience, even though he's not an indigene of the community: he is moved by the level of sacredness and cultural etiquette required and the indigenes tend to run away whenever masquerades approach. Even when one is not moved by the bewildering appearance of the masquerades, their acolytes will be forced to make them afraid of its presence and if caution is not applied, brute force is employed on the person. This is a glimpse of how people revered their culture.

Regrettably these days, masquerade culture has diminished in the hands of the youth, who in a bid to extort money from onlookers and passersby, seek, beg, intimidate and harass people into giving them money. The worst is not the act of begging which they have subjected masquerades to; it is the sacredness and belief system that makes the masquerade culture honourable that has been dented in the eyes of non-initiates as well. Unfortunately, the Christian faith, among many other alien religions to which many of the community members are now converted is in direct opposition to the sacredness of masquerade culture, which truthfully is the foundation for the desecration of the masquerade culture, as converts who were former members of the masquerade cult tend to reveal their secrets. People no longer feel committed to things that concern tradition and culture due to commitments to work, business or mere lack of interest, and therefore, those saddled with the responsibility of it are left to do as they deem fit.

Festivals, apart from being special occasions for merriment, feasting and other religious activities, carry with them the culture and traditions of the immediate society and how they interact with the outside world. Because masquerade bullying, harassment and extortion are not good representations of society, researchers tend to shy away from these vices that are

growing rapidly around festivals in the country, and if not very well restrained may escalate into violence or worse, death. Therefore, it is these vices that this research study intends to expose the danger they pose to sacred traditions, festivals and the society at large, as well as proffer ways of preventing them from escalating further: using Egwu Imoka festival in Awka, Anambra State, as a scope.

The Igbo and Masquerade Culture

In the olden days, masquerades served several purposes to the community. Chiefly among these purposes include serving as a means of keeping harmony and balance in the society. They also played the roles of judges and law enforcement agents to those who failed to align themselves with the prevalent harmony and peace in society. Consequently, dancing and entertainment are also peculiar characteristics of the masquerades: showcasing extraordinary exploits in movements, mime, acrobatics and stunts feats that evoke excitement in the audience. However, masquerades in Igbo land are a sacred and secret cult reserved specifically for males who are initiated through "Ikpu Ani" meaning to go through the earth. Okeke states that "among the Igbo, it is expected that every male child should be initiated into the masquerade cult between the ages of nine (9) and fourteen (14) years because this Initiation (Ikpu Ani) is the first rite of passage for the Igbo boy"(72). Therefore, it is during this process that the initiates are schooled and prepared for the masquerade cult, and thereby gain knowledge of the spirit world and how they operate in mask form (Adibe,136) and those who are not initiates, are not allowed around the masquerade activities as they are regarded as 'less' men in the society.

Masquerades are efficient in keeping the norms and values that are enshrined in the tradition and culture of the people. Through this way, they become the mouthpiece that ridicules and exposes those who go contrary to the people's norms and culture. They appreciate the effort of those who have distinguished themselves in good deeds and have brought progress to society. These masquerades include:

Ijele Masquerade: it is the biggest Masquerade in Igbo land and by extension has been pronounced the biggest in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO 1). Its appearance is highly captivating in that it is said to epitomise "... the aesthetic idea of Igbo culture, both in its striking visual image and its physical beauty. The representation of Ijele today reveals a major shift like material production in Igbo culture" (Falola & Njoku, 291). This shift-like material was necessary to keep up with the grandeur nature of the Ijele masquerade. The costume and paraphernalia that are used to build it reveal a clever show of craftsmanship that not only elevates the Igbo culture but also creates a visual bond between the Igbo and their masquerade culture. As far as the Igbo culture is concerned, the Ijele masquerade is a symbol of pride and identity for the people (Ali, 74).

It is known in the Igbo cosmology that the big masquerades dance last, as they serve as the highlight of every event. Hence, whenever the Ijele takes the floor in performance, no other Masquerade dares to perform alongside it as this is seen as a sign of disrespect for the big Masquerade (Nnukwu Mmanwu). However, it is rumoured that the Adamma masquerade is the only masquerade that can be permitted to be performed alongside the great masquerade. This exception has not been verified generally. Yet the possibility of it is hinged on different rules that guide different communities about the Ijele

masquerade. The competence of each masquerade is always limited to the level of the town to which it belongs, and it is to its community consensus that it gives expression (Onyeneke, 78). The masquerade has no particular time of appearance. It comes out only on highly special occasions such as the burial ceremony of a very elderly person or a member of its cult, and/or on special occasions.

Ajofia Masquerade**:** it is the most feared Masquerade in Igbo land and its appearance alone is so fierce. This connotes its name "Ajofia" meaning evil forest. Pinkston & Baloubi describe it in these words: "The name Ajofia means evil forest but stands for justice, Ajofia is the leading egwugwu" (43). In Igbo land; and so one wonders about, the forceful impression this name gives of the dreaded figure out of whose head smoke poured. Ajofia is huge and intimidating in size, as different types of animals, dead or alive, are seen on its paraphernalia creating eerie feelings at first glance. This Masquerade traditionally forbids performing in the presence of women and alongside other Masquerades. This Masquerade which hails from Nnewi, emits a discomforting smell and the enigmatic characteristics are enhanced by the smoke that comes out of its head. Folklore has it that Ajofia carries a branch of the most dreaded tree "Osisi Anunu Ebe." This is a tree on which no bird can perch; neither could any plant grow around it. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* features Ajofia as the "leading egwugwu of Umuofia as the lead spokesman of the nine ancestors who administered justice in the clan (151).

Ekpe: Ekpe in some parts of the Igbo society such as Abia, Owerri, Enugu and Ebonyi serves the society as some kind of law enforcement arm. This Masquerade is often controlled by the secret cult popularly known as the "Okonkor" or "Ekpe"

which are the same, as well as serve the same purpose. There may be similarities between the Ekpe cult of the Cross River areas of Nigeria, and that of their neighbouring Igbo communities but their Masquerades are entirely different. That of the Ibibio is masked with leopard or lion skin, and imitates the movements of the said animals in performance; while that of the Igbo differs in appearance from community to community. For instance, Ajaegbu (4) highlights that in the Umuwala community of Nkwerre, Imo State, the Ekpe masquerade is controlled by the Ekpe members (the apex rank of membership) in Okonkor. The masquerade cannot be seen by women or children as it is a nocturnal masquerade with a distinctive voice. In the same vein Ajaegbu started by stating that: in those days, no one dared shed a tear before the piercing wail of Ekpe at the death of an elderly man, member of the cult or the Igwe (1).

Ulaga: it is a popular masquerade in Anambra state and its presence is occasionally seen at grandeur events. It is a Masquerade with:

> Long snout, garishly painted, wooden headpiece with stripes of clothes covering the head and face of the carrier... The excitements of the Ulaga Masquerades were the songs of hideous invective when two of them confronted each other on the streets. (Njoku, 79)

This masquerade usually comes out in pairs or more probably for the sake of confrontational excitement that will come out in the form of song poetry and dance. Its signature movement is violently hitting its head on the floor to depict agility and strength. Its massive and significant appearance is all attributed

to its intriguing footwork. The masquerade is very skilled at putting up songs and poetry. It can sing the praise of a person to the delight of the audience. It can also "speak out against secrets like taboos and incestuous acts committed by members of the community (Falola, et 264).

Theoretical Framework: Berry's Acculturation Theory

Acculturation is a process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact or contact between different cultural groups and how it affects the individual in the cultural group (Unger & Schwartz 1). The Acculturation Theory by John W. Berry, who is a Professor of Psychology at the Queen's University, Canada. He is described by the International Congress of Psychology as someone whose academic studies span through cross-cultural psychology, seeking to discover links between human behaviour and the ecological, cultural and intercultural experiences of individuals across many societies (1). His book *Cross-Cultural Psychology* develops a framework that serves as "a general guide to classes of variables and their relevancies for the explanation of similarities and differences in human behaviour and experiences that can be found across cultures (Berry 11). Berry's theory is a modification of Robert Park's Unidirectional Acculturation Theory, which emphasizes that the majority group who associate themselves with European groups will gradually adopt European customs, cultures and lifestyles. The process begins with cultural assimilation and continues through structural assimilation, intermarriage, a change in an individual's ethnic identity and the absence of prejudices and stereotypes about minority individuals (Hepler & McCallister 3).

By extension, cultural changes may include alteration in a group's customs and their economic and political life. Psychological changes may include alteration in individual's attitudes toward the acculturation process and their cultural identity. This process can define the extent to which individuals seek to maintain their heritage, culture and identity, and seek to interact with people of other cultures in the large society (Renzaho, 4). Notably, these changes according, to Berry's theory, are based on the orientations shared in one group and those of the other group, and by so doing proposes four acculturation strategies which are explained as follows:

Assimilation: By this, it simply means a situation whereby an individual does not wish to keep his or her original cultural identity and heritage, thus, embracing in totality that of the other culture.

Separation: It is a direct contrast to the assimilation strategy: it is when an individual places more essence on his or her original cultural heritage and by so doing avoids interaction and intermingling with the larger society.

Integration: This strategy seems like a mixture of assimilation and separation; it allows the individual to hold on to his or her original cultural heritage while interacting and mingling with the larger society.

Marginalization: This is when an individual has little or no interest in his cultural heritage and the process discriminates him or herself from interacting with the dominant cultures (Berry & Sam 11-12).

The integration strategy has been proven to be more effective in the psychological state of the individual. This is so as it allows the individual to display no form of superiority over the dominant culture, as well as inferiority over his or her own

culture. But then, the danger that this strategy is likely to encounter is that "integration can be" freely" chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant grounds only when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity. Thus, a mutual accommodation is required for integration to be attained" (Berry, 30).

Egwu Imoka Festival of Awka People

Awka, the capital city of Anambra State Nigeria, is one of the ancient cities of the Igbo, emanating from the very heart of the great Nri civilization. They are known all around "because of their trade-blacksmithing." (AYA, 5). Apart from being renowned in blacksmithing, they are also good farmers and hunters and today they are scattered around the world in all works of life.

The biggest cultural event in Awka town is the *Egwu Imoka festival* which is celebrated in the fifth month of the year. Oral history has it that *Egwu Imoka* has been in existence since many centuries ago. Since there is no documented evidence of its emergence, what is been passed down are various contradictory tales of its historical evolution. Legend has it that at some point in the olden days, Awka people were weak and vulnerable. Hence, stronger communities started attacking them. In an attempt to defend themselves from these foreign invaders, a blacksmith from Umuzocha village travelled to Igala and brought a suitable medicine man who prepared charms that increased the strength of the Awka fighting force. It further gave the people a warming using an unusual sound through the help of monkeys when invaders are around to operate. In other to reinvigorate the potency of the charm it was ordered that the entire town gather annually to pay homage at the shrine of

Imoka. It is this homage that has turned into worship of Imoka as a god, and also the festival to be regarded as Egwu Imoka. Apart from the people, Masquerades are other characters that dominate the festival and they serve a greater purpose in terms of arts, religion, and other socio-cultural importance to the community (Nwanna 136).

Another account of the evolution of *Egwu Imoka* has it that the medicine man whom the blacksmith from Umuzocha brought to Awka was from Akwata in the present Benue state. This version believes that it is an attempt to celebrate the great victory that the charm has aided them to achieve. Therefore, to remember and mark the celebration yearly was how *Egwu Imoka* became an annual festival. Another tale states that during those days, war was rampaging Awka and there was a Priestess that usually prepared charms which she placed in the shrine at Nkwo for people to fortify themselves with that made them always come out victorious. After her death, when she died a natural death, the people decided to do an annual dance and celebration in her honour. This is said to be the reason why the celebration is characterized deeply by the activities of women and merriment.
Egwu Imoka festival usually takes place around April/May of the year which if calculated according to the Igbo calendar, "demonstrates a clear concept of time in the pre-European Awka" (Nwanna, 137). Nwanna goes further to describe clearly how Awka people do the traditional lunar calendar which will always place *Egwu Imoka* two or three weeks after the celebration of Easter. The celebration *of Egwu Imoka* for the year 2024 slides a bit into June which is quite unusual and rear.

The commencement of the festival is marked with different minor ceremonies. The first among these feasts is called "Ukwu Na Ije" whose significance is to herald the festival. The celebration is done by the "Uzu" - that is, the blacksmiths. On this day, masquerades are seen all over the place displaying. Another ceremony is the "Igu Isi Aro" literally meaning census, which is closely followed by the "Nnta Akwu" eating ceremony that is championed by women of the community. The next ceremony is "Agbara Imoka" another eating ceremony also piloted by the women: and characterized by dancing and merriment. The fourth market day after this ceremony is *Egwu Imoka* Day.

The first activity to mark the beginning of Egwu Imoka is the long walk to Umuokpu. History has it that one of the best hunters in Awka, Nkwo-Amaehi, went to Umuokpu to reside. Umuokpu was then known as Itikpu, and over the years the name transformed into "Okpu na ngwu bu dike" which is now known as Umuokpu. Masquerades, youths, women and children from across the villages in Awka assemble at Nkwo-Amaehi the groove of Imoka for the long-distance walk called "Oso na okpa". Everyone is expected to walk on their feet down to Umuokpu. On the journey, there will be plenty of masquerade displays and cheering and dancing. When the crowd gets to their destination, Umuokpu, they will be entertained with a traditional meal, "Abacha mmili na Aki Oyibo" which is cassava flakes and coconut after which the visitors will sing and dance back to Awka. The essence of this visit is to inform the people of Umuokpu that *Egwu Imoka* will be in four Market days- Nkwo market day precisely. After the significant walk, Masquerade appearances and displays become intense as every nook and cranny of the city will be filled with Masquerades until the Afor

market day, that is, the eve of *Egwu Imoka* when the women will carry out a ceremony called "Opi-Eke". On this day, no Masquerade is permitted to parade the city as it is strictly for women. On the day of the Opi-Eke, women dress in their traditional regalia fit for the occasion as Priestesses, with beads adorning their bodies and carrying staff in their hands. They sing, dance and are merry as they present gifts to Imoka on Thanksgiving and pray for other intentions for the coming year.
The day of *Egwu Imoka,* Nkwo precisely, is the highlight of the festival filled with feasting and merry-making, singing and dancing, Masquerades parading and performance. There is a traditional delicacy, specially prepared for this celebration called "ji na ovbe aruro" that is, yam and bitter leaf soup. Traditionally it is important to eat this food because it is believed that nobody can do the Imoka dance with an empty stomach. There is a folklore that says that whoever hasn't eaten the delicacy should not venture to do the *Egwu Imoka*. Everybody gathers at the groove of Imoka in Nkwo-Amaenyi, including Masquerades, men and youths who play vital performances in flexing their masculinity by way of flogging themselves with a long daring cane called "Anyasi" as they do their performance at the groove. Notably, Masquerades that grace the festival are "Agunabo" (the night Masquerade) from Umuzocha, "Onyekurum" from Umuike, "Onwubalu" from Achalla, "Onwuacha" from Ifite and many other masquerades that perform during the ceremony. After the performances that mark the highlight of the Egwu Imoka, there is a closing ceremony that marks the end of the festival. This ceremony takes place on the next Nkwo market day, which is four days after the grand finale. This ceremony features one of the most important masquerades, Agunabo (the

night Masquerade). Its presence signifies the closing of the Egwu Imoka festival.

Masquerade Harassment and Cultural Decay in *Egwu Imoka* Festival

When a cultural practice is trapped around new trends formulated by those who don't value it, it becomes a thing of caricature subjected to mockery by them. By so doing they hold no regard for their cultural values. This act slowly casts aside what the society holds tenaciously and within a period it rotten away ushering what is alien to the tradition. Ebert (93) gathers that a display of the broad range of topics that detail the disappearing of societal norms and values, and popular amongst several of them, is the loss of cohesion between the upcoming youths and the society.

When the youths of a community no longer have regard for the sacrosanctity of tradition, several practices that define the core of the society will be lost, thereby casting aside the lost values and cultural substances and introducing trends that are detrimental to society. In *Egwu Imoka*, amongst the many artistic displays, the exuberant display of masculinity by youths is an exotic part of the festival. In an interview with Okwuchukwu Okafor, he situated thus:

Traditionally, youths taste their level of endurance through a flogging duel of Anyasi, the long daring cane and how it is done, and you approach your "mate" who is also carrying the cane and have an agreement with the person to contest their endurance. Having agreed, the two have canes with them in their hands they start flogging each other, one after the other until one of them gives up or both of them do (Interview).

Today the practice has taken another dimension as the youths are now using the canes on on-lookers, non-indigenes, motorists and visitors who are enjoying the festivity passively. Others grab this as an opportunity to bully those who are not on their good side or are in dispute with them. With the rise of cultism in society, members of different fraternities who are aggravated target members of other fraternities. If this is not properly curtailed when it escalates, it becomes overtly violent, and physical harm can be caused, including killings.

This cultural disguise has been frowned upon because of the high level of insecurity that it poses to life and properties. The attacks in recent times have left many people in fear and turmoil. So it is not shocking but comforting to know that the Imo state government placed an embargo on masquerade activities around every community in Ideato LGA. The decision agreed upon was conveyed by the Council of Traditional Rulers to prevent the breakdown of law and order by these imposters who parade themselves as masquerades to cause havoc and mayhem during the festive season (Atungwu https://dailypost.ng). This growing trend in Awka has no proper cultural implication and its rapid growth is beginning to deface the actual practices, as visitors are considering it to be a violent festival that is anti-participatory.

Masquerades are integral parts of the festival as every village is allowed to bring their different Masquerades as they choose. These Masquerades in their numbers take to the streets harassing people and those who are brave to stand either settle them with money or be mercilessly flogged. People watch from a distance, some even cheer while others are disgusted as Masquerades flog people on motorbikes (Okada-men) and their passengers, extorting them and letting them pass without

harming motorists who give them money. Ladies who by mere coincidence wear trousers or skirts that they don't like or think are appropriate are brutally flogged and chased to wherever they find safety and solace. They flog for fun and not to correct if the aim was to be right or justified. People have come to lament strongly these barbaric acts: it is contrary to the principles of justice and an inaccurate manner of behaviour to masquerading to harass, beat up and extort money from road users or ordinary people going their way. Willingly people can give money to masquerades if they choose to but using force and or intimidation is inhumane (Okoli et al https://www.vanguardngr.com). Similarly, in Enugu state, government is beginning to decry this loss of cultural efficiency of the Igbo masquerade culture being dragged to the gutter by youths. The House of Assembly Enugu state has set up an ad hoc committee to address the rising abuse of human rights, what they conclude to be a significant threat to human life and destruction of properties by masquerades (Ulasi https://www.westafricanpilotnews.com), after a hinted condemnation on social media of masquerades harassing a woman carrying her baby.

This form of extortion and wickedness is purely a dent of the masquerade culture in Awka. The youths have used this avenue to enrich their pockets damning the consequences on their aged long tradition and custom. Traditionally,

Masquerades appear before the Chief Priest in his traditional hut, "Obu", genuflect before him and hail him by his praise name. The Chief Priest then gives "Nzu" a native chalk to the masquerades as a symbol of mandate, protection, and authority to perform. As a sign of acknowledgement, the masquerades will present gifts of money, goats, food items etc

to the Chief Priest. However, carrying of masquerade is done by age grade, that is, every age grade has their masquerade that they parade with and if a masquerade stops you on the road, it will greet you warmly and respectful, then introduce itself to you. After the formalities come praises: the masquerade begins to call you by your praise names, in response to the praises you give gift to the masquerade and if you don't have you can praise the masquerade as well and both depart. It is very disrespectful for a masquerade to harass anyone who is not a member of your age grade; such masquerade will be dealt with (Okwuchukwu, Okafor: interview).

Today, nobody checks if any masquerade has been mandated to perform anymore. People can carry masks and do whatever they like because they cannot be traced or identified. These vices also have untold effects on the individual and the society: the individual mental and physical health can be affected causing traumatic problems and injuries, as well as changing and weakening the culture of the society.

We as Africans are by our tradition and custom open to visitors. Hence, we willingly teach them our culture and they in turn apply the integration strategy, which allows the individual to hold on to his culture while interacting with the host community's culture. If cultural practices are not carried out in their original, visitors, foreigners and non-indigenes may be inclined to pick up the trends that mar the true culture of the society thinking it is traditional and if it is not corrected will become the mainstay that will represent how the society is viewed. No wonder majority of the unmasked masquerades who overstepped their boundaries in past Imoka festival, after much investigation are either foreigners from Abakaleke, in Ebonyi state, or from neighbouring villages around Awka.

Conclusion

Egwu Imoka is a traditional festival mapped out by the Awka people to promote their cultural and traditional heritage passed down by their ancestors. In recent times, there have been efforts to overpower enthusiastic youths who want things to swing their way. In the 2024 edition of the Egwu Imoka, the Nigerian police force in conjunction with other local security agencies were put in place to apprehend those who intend to dent the traditional ceremony. In the same vein, the traditional ruler of Awka Eze Obi Nwosu has passed a stern warning to non-indigenes residing in Awka to stay away from disrespecting the cultural heritage of the community and that they can participate passively without causing trouble or responding to one. Not actively as indigenes who have prepared themselves do (https://www.absradiotv.com/). This goes further to say that communities are becoming conscious of the danger of this cultural decay that is trending among the youths in the community and are taking serious steps to right the wrongs.

To further put things in perspective, the Chief Priest should delegate people to give mandates in the various villages that make up the Awka community. Any masquerade that receives the Nzu, the symbol of mandate should also be given a tag that will be boldly displayed by the masquerade as a visible sign of registration with the Chief Priest delegates. Hence, if there is any report of misgivings or misbehaviour by any masquerade, it can be easily traced and identified. And those masquerading without tags should be immediately arrested as imposters and handed over to the appropriate authorities for expedient actions.

Works Cited

Abuchi, Nwozor. *Egwu Imoka Festival: Awka Monarch Cautions Non-Indigenes Against Infiltration*. 2024. https://www.absradiotv.com/2024/05/13/egwu-imoka-festival-awka-monarch-cautions-non-indigenes-against-infiltration

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart.* William Heinemann. 1958.

Adibe, Gregory. *Mysticism In African Traditional Religion: Northern Igbo Cultural Area Experience*. Nssuka, University of Nigeria Research Publication. 2006. pp 134-155

Ajaegbu, Charles. *Okonkor Performance At The Coronation of Ezeala III*. Class Seminar Paper. University of Ilorin. 2013.

Ali, Abdael. *Short Stories From Africa: 40 Folktales of the Motherland from The Diaspora* | Gifts for Boys, Girls The Whole Family. N.p. drew dally Publishers. 2023.

Anayo Okoli, Vincent Ujumadu, Dennis Agbo, Chimaobi Nwaiwu, Ugochukwu Alaribe, Chinedu.

Adonu & Chinonso Alozie. *Misuse of masquerades in Igbo land unacceptable ― Monarchs*. Vanguard. May 15, 2024. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/05/misuse-of-masquerades-in-igbo-land-unacceptable-monarchs/

Awka Youth Association. *Title Taking In Awka: Our Cultural Heritage*. Bema Press, Enugu. . 2000. Pp5-6.

Berry, John. W. *Acculturation.* Editor(s): Charles D. Spielberger, Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology, Elsevier, 2004.Pages27-34, ISBN9780126574104,https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-12-657410-3/003846.(https://www.sciencedirect

Berry, John W. *Cross-Cultural Psychology: Research and Applications*. United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Berry, John.W. & David, Sam. L. *Acculturation and Adaptation*. In J.W. Berry, M.H. Segall, & C. Kagitcibasi (Eds), Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology. 2nd ed, vol3 Baston: Allyn and Bacon. Pp291-326.

Ebert, John David. *Cultural Decay Rate: Essays on Contemporary Art, Literature and Social Disintegration*. United States, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.

Falola, Toyin, Afolabi, Niyi. & Aderonke, Adesanya. *Migrations and Creative Expressions in Africa and the African Diaspora*. United States: Carolina Academic Press. (2008).

Falola, Toyin. & Njoku, Chijioke Raphael. Igbo *In The Atlantic World: African Origins And Diasporic Destination*. Igbo in the Atlantic World: African Origins and Diasporic Destinations. United States, Indiana University.Press, 2016.

Ije, Ulasi. *Masquerade Attacks in Enugu – State House of Assembly Steps In*. West African Pilot News. May 3, 2024.https://www.westafricanpilotnews.com/2024/05/03/masquerade-attacks-in-enugu-state-house-of-assembly-steps

Jennifer, Unger & Seth, J. Schwartz. *The Oxford Handbook of Acculturation and Health.United Kingdom*, Oxford University Press. 2017.

Njoku, Charles. *Images of a Native Son.* United States: Author House. (2011).

Nwanna, Clifford. *The Drama In Egwu Imoka. Theatre Experience*: A Journal Of Contemporary Theatre Practices. Vol. 2, No. I . 2003pg. 135-144

Okeke, T. "*Ikpu-Ani": The Initiation Tradition Of The Igbo*. Journal Of Theatre and Cultural Studies. Vol 6. No. 1. 2011. pp 69-87.

Onuora, Nzekwu. *Masquerade*. Drama and Theatre In Nigeria: A Critical Source Book. Nigeria Magazine. 1981 Pp131-135.

Onyeneke, Augustine. O. *The Dead Among the Living: Masquerades in Igbo Society*. Nigeria: Holy Ghost Congregation, Province of Nigeria and Asele Institute. (1987).

Pinkston, Christiana. & Bolaubi, Desire. *Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of 'Things Fall Apart'. (2020)*. Germany: Springer International Publishing. 2020. https://books.google.com.ng https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekpe

Reed Hepler, Jessica McCallister. *Acculturation Definition, Theory & Examples*. 2023 https://study.com/academy/lesson/acculturation-definition-theory-examples.html.

Renzaho, Andre *The Relationship of Acculturation Strategies to Resilience: The Moderating Impact of Social Support among Qiang Ethnicity following the 2008 Chinese Earthquake*. 2016. https://www.ncbi.nlm. nih. gov/ pmc/articles/PMC5065190/

International Congress of Psychology. *Psychology For The Future: Together in Hope*. Prague, Czech Republic. 2024.

Okwuchukwu, Okafor. (Ozo Eziokwu Awka). Source person. 5/27/2024
UNESCO Multimedia Archives