



Aesthetics in “*Oluwen*” Cleansing Performance

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Abstract

The paper dwells on the tragic personality, the scapegoat, whose role is tied to the redemption of the people and cleansing of the land by metaphorically sacrificing himself during “Olofungbogho”. This is another act in the fertility drama and it is instrumental in the regeneration of the land. The tragic hero is central to the cleansing, fertility and other allied ceremonies. The paper attempts an examination of the functions of the scapegoat during “Olofungbogho” and situates the tragic hero within a selfless desire to redeem the land from accumulated sins. The tool of analysis is aesthetics and the paper uncovers the underlying imperatives in the performance and situates them within art and the fulfilment of the people’s desire for entertainment.

Introduction:

No other argument seems so closely connected to the definition and functions of the artists in indigenous society than Wallace Stevens’ (1965) polemics that artists perform sociological functions in “an age of disbelief” or “in a time that is largely humanistic” by meeting the needs of individuals as well as moulding morality in

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the general society (p. 217). The artists provide these through periodic convergence at the arena. According to Wallace, poets like artists in indigenous societies, play a “spiritual role”. For what else is the goal of the critic or the audience when savouring a work of art other than the search for the values in it? Having found a facilitator in Wallace (1965), this essay attempts an exploration of the aesthetic in the scapegoatist performance at *Ode Irele* known as “*Oluwen*”. The performance accompanies the “*Olofungbogho*” festival. “*Olofungbogho*” is the annual new yam performance that is performed by the monarch (known as “*Oba*” “*Olofun*”) on behalf of the community. The current “*Olofun*” of Irele is “*Oba*” Olanrewaju Lebi Oyenusi III.

The performance allows the monarch to display his royalty, pray for peace and prosperity for all and sundry and cleanse the land and people from their accumulated sins. The tragic carrier, “*Oluwen*”, is the scapegoat and he is associated with the feast of the monarch during the performance of “*Olofungbogho*” festival. The performance is restricted to the monarch known as “*Olofun*” and it portrays the monarch as indispensable to the maintenance of societal cohesion. It is meant to amplify the monarch as desirable just as the “*Oluwen*”. He too is equivalent to the king who is ready to sacrifice his joy and humanity in the interest of the people. The “*Oluwen*” begins his performance with the desire to satisfy the aesthetic yearnings of his audience, the fulfilment of a cultural necessity and the satisfaction of the ritual obligation of the community to the gods. The denouement follows when a thanksgiving festival is held during the *eje* festival.

The performance of the cleansing ritual may be situated within art because it fulfils all aspects of the desires which this paper terms as “animal behaviour” that may have necessitated the need for the ritual in the first place. Animal behaviour is noticeable when the king performs, in mime and expresses sexual and other selfish desires of the people which may be responsible for committing sins and other anti-social behaviour.

Leo Tolstoy (1965) could be considered a compelling starting point for providing the empirical justification of the classification of the performance as art, his treatise, however, falls short by virtue of a

definitional concern. The paper negates the various definitions of art provided by him. From the physiological-evolutionary to the experimental and the metaphysical definitions, the attempts at delimiting art are geared towards situating art in its proper perspective. The robust definitions provided by critics are in tandem with what this paper considers to be the focus of the cleansing ritual during "*Olofungbogho*" as the redemption role of the scapegoat fulfils the various attributes that may be found in the definitions of art. Leading authorities from Charles Darwin (1965) to C.G Jung (1965) considered art to have originated from "sexual desire" and "the propensity to play" which Tolstoy (1965) while quoting Grant Allen considers to be "accompanied by a pleasurable excitement of the nervous system" and this, Tolstoy (1965) situates within the physiological-evolutionary definition (p. 300). According to Tolstoy (1965) the experimental definition sees art as an "external manifestation" which may be composed in lines, colour, movements, sounds or words" which may lead to emotional reactions just as the metaphysical definition considers art to be a form of object cum action that has the capability of amusing the creator and equally impress the audience "quite apart from any personal advantage to be derived from it" (p. 300).

Tolstoy (1965) defines art from the point of view of the capability of passing across as an "experience" embedded in "feelings" that are infectious as others could be drenched in the same experience and feelings.

"Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that others are infected by these feelings and also experience them" (p. 301).

Irrespective of whether we agree or disagree with Tolstoy's position on the definitions of art, the various definitions are significant in illuminating the concept. Art, from the standpoint of this essay, is the totality of all expressions whether physical or verbal that could lead to the creation of an affective state in the mind of the audience through a rapport that may last for a while and from which unconscious feelings might have been aroused. This definition takes cognizance of indigenous scripts as well as

their modern equivalents that seek to document landmarks, sensitise the younger generation, moralise and entertain as well. It is within such expressions and the attempt at creating a state of mind that the artistic quest, entertainment, reason and the socio-cultural engineering in art may be situated.

Definition of terms:

Scapegoatism refers to the selfless submission of the ritual personality named "*Oluwen*" to the onerous task of personally taking the ritual load to the shrine known as *Ugbodu*. *Ugbodu* is the arena of the spirits and its significance may be seen from the fact that it is the location where communion may be held between the living and the dead/spirits. A visit to the arena is rare and the deposition of the ritual load takes courage and personal commitment. It is the belief of the people that no one may remain the same after a visit to *Ugbodu*. From *Ifa* divination, *Ugbodu* is the location where the destiny of the initiator will be unveiled. The initiator is confronted by the grim realities of his existence right at the arena and whatever may be his fortune cannot be changed. At the moment of the visit to *Ugbodu*, the "*Oluwen*" sheds his garb of humanity. He ceases from being human and his companions are assumed to be spirits and ancestors. Of course, he is cared for at the expense of the town. At the outset, he is promised a bride, if he has no wife and could visit the market and take whatever he needs without being challenged by the owners. It is assumed that his ill-fortune is on the account of the people and this is duly appreciated by the larger society as an indisputable fact. A universal correspondence in the personality of the scapegoat seems to be applicable in this regard.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical thrust of the essay revolves around aesthetics. Aesthetics is generally associated with beauty. However, the most relevant definition of aesthetics that the paper will adopt is Immanuel Kant's (1965). Donald Mackay Wonderly (1991), while paraphrasing Kant, claims that "the appreciation of beauty represents a sympathetic bond between the viewer and the reality behind perceptual experience" (p. 236). The aesthetic sense is synonymous with the appreciation of the affective content of the

aesthetic object and this is what philosophers consider to be beauty in any work of art. The holarchic model too represents a very potent voice in the analysis of behaviour. The model "holds the view that behaviour is motivated by the arousal of desires in conjunction with beliefs regarding the capacity and opportunity to satisfy them" (Wonderly, 1991, p. 314). This model submits that "aesthetics are functional" and that whatever might be considered beautiful, "although culturally influenced, has value as an instinctive or learned need" (p. 237).

Aesthetic evaluation represents the projection of percepts on a scale that, in instinctive forms of life, relates to their ostensible need value (p. 236). The aesthetic goal or need value may be conditioned by the need for "stimulation" which is "related to the assertive and transcendent urges" which "is experienced through all perceptual modes" (p. 237).

Application/Analysis

What is the intention of the indigenous artists in fashioning the personality of the scapegoat named "*Oluwen*" at the *Ode Irele* milieu? Tolstoy (1965) places the intention in art to be above pleasure but "as one of the conditions of human life" and therefore "art is one of the means of intercourse between man and man" (p. 301). The scapegoat, no doubt, enters into the consciousness of the people and takes over their shortcomings thereby heaping their sins on himself. He enters into a union with the people through art "joining them together in the same feelings". The relationship between the artist and the audience may be "indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and of humanity" (p. 301). The reality of the mission of the scapegoat in the cleansing bid may be considered from "man's capacity to express thoughts by words" through the translation of the desire for peace and progress into a concrete performance that may provide psychological satisfaction to members of the society periodically (Tolstoy, 1965, p. 301). Therefore, the scapegoat plays a dual role in the cleansing bid: he projects the religious belief of the people which is otherwise artistic in that it takes place like a ceremony that is orchestrated towards presenting the collective rejection of sins that may have been committed all through the

year. The other role is the search for a new order typified by the presentation of a human scapegoat as offering to the spirit that might represent purity and holiness.

The performance amounts to a prayer and the expression of the disapproval of sin symbolises atonement and remission for sin. This is a demonstration of the attachment of humanity, psychologically to a spiritual essence from which it can hardly detach itself. It is curious that the human sensibility has been glued to the notion of the capability of sin constituting a stumbling block to the full evolvment of humanity. From modern religions to the superstitions of indigenouse people, the idea guides the quest for prayer and perception of the link between human beings and the spiritual essence. This realisation constitutes "sensation" in the holarchic model. The performance may be situated within the need to mitigate the course of sins and maintain the path of decorum. The holarchic model equally classifies the immediate result of the sensation under "drive" and "perception". However, it is the position of this paper that "perception" rather than "drive" should be the immediate result of the sensation. Whichever comes first, both "drive" and "perception" are subject to the consciousness of the people. In other words, this may be tied to the belief system of the society from which every human being can hardly be detached.

The performance of the scapegoat, where the tragic hero named "*Oluwen*" submits himself in order to engender the rejuvenation of the society, may be termed "conception" and "desires". Conception is the recognition of the need to mitigate the incidence of sins. The ultimate, in this regard, may be termed "desires" which cannot be removed from self-assertion, self-preservation and conscious elevation of society above parochial and sinful degeneration of the flesh. Conception is responsible for the emergence of the scapegoat on the arena during the festival termed "*Olofungbogho*". The cleansing performance is a liturgical celebration of the collective remission of the sins of the people. It is a prayer for forgiveness of sins and may be equivalent to the Catholic Mass and similar supplications in Christianity and Islam whereby the worshippers make a plea for their inadequacies. The submission of a human scapegoat may be another example of the presentation of the Christ figure for the remission of the sins of humanity. The assumption is

that the people would have committed sins consciously or unconsciously in their various abodes that might not be known to the monarch of the land. Therefore, the need arises for the authority to make atonement for these sins every other year.

Fear comes first in the attachment of the people to the spiritual essence. This is a realisation that purity can be ruffled just as the desire to get something worthwhile must be followed by a sacrifice typified by the submission of the scapegoat named "Oluwen" to the spirit of purity and sacrifice. This recognition represents the perennial subjugation of the people to the whims and caprices of the spiritual realm whether or not the spiritual essence can be considered a living or sensitive entity. The reversal of the order of arrangement of the holarchic model brings conception to the fore where "desires" are subject to the "conceptualisation" of the "situation" and the need for change or alteration of the situation. The ability to situate the problem within some inadequacies of the people is what is termed the "cognitive process". Therefore, repetition of the performance of "Oluwen" engenders cohesion and moral regeneration of the land and people. Unlike the claim of the holarchic model which places "affective conviction" before "emotion", this essay assumes that the reverse should be the case. That is, "emotion" should precede "affective conviction" unlike the conclusion of Wonderly (1991, p. 316). The people look forward to the festive season with glee, convinced that the performance is capable of bringing the society back to normalcy even when it is in a state of flux.

Reason and morality are salient to every performance of the "Oluwen" ritual. Again, there is the need to modify the holarchic model by locating reason and morality, capacity and opportunity within "affective conviction" rather than "emotion". In the process of the performance, the ritualists agree on the result of the endeavour and they are psychologically convinced that the results would be a form of regeneration of the land and people. This is "the dominant" emotion even among the audience and the performance may influence the behaviour of members of the audience which in turn can be instrumental in capacity building, knowledge, decorum and general acceptability by the larger

society, especially with the exhibition of the traits that are germane to the growth of the society.

The ritual load represents the collective sins of the land and people. It is a symbol of the recognition of their inadequacies and the preparedness to banish all sins from the land because of the awareness that the people could hardly live without committing sins. The presentation of the human scapegoat represented by the "*Oluwen*" (the tragic hero), is equivalent to the submission of the blood of a human being to mitigate the sins of the people. Reason is the root of the admission of guilt while the performance is meant to regulate the moral climate by periodically sensitising the people about the need to strive above sins. Equally tied to reason is the attachment of the people to phenomenal spirits, as higher beings, and constituting parts and parcels of both physical and spiritual environments to which they must submit because of their supervisory roles.

Aesthetic and Scenic Objects

The palm frond is a symbol of the link with the unusual inhabitants of the spiritual realm. Palm fronds are considered to be the effigies of spirits and phenomenal beings and any performance that is meant to serve as a link between human beings and the spiritual realm would be symbolised by the leaves. It is believed that the palm leaves may attract the spirits to the arena. Members of the audience too may quickly recognise the sacredness of the performance where the necessary ritual objects are sighted. The result is the arousal of the right emotion and the consequent "affective conviction".

The mat is a symbol of the primordial clothing that served as the cover for corpses. Until recently, mat was associated with sleep, both eternal and casual. Therefore, the deployment of mat may signify something serious. It could mean the departure of the individual, and his being dignified with a burial. Apart from the bits of cloth used to tie the load, another full-length white cloth is used to cover the load all together while only a few ritualists are allowed to be privy to the contents of the ritual load. This segment represents the total submission of the people to the remission of their sins.

What could be responsible for the spirit of sacrifice that permeates indigenous and modern societies? This spirit of sacrifice that ties human sensibilities to the need for sacrifice in anticipation of a renewal may be located within the belief that nothing may be earned without a corresponding sacrifice. The same spirit of give-and-take may be responsible for prayers. In order to receive anything from the spiritual realm, prayers must be offered. A correspondence in the Christian Bible explains the fact that prayers must be offered before anything worthwhile may be given. Adam's defence when he was confronted by God for eating the forbidden apple is often claimed to be the basis for the non-preparedness of God to offer anything to man except by request as evident in the utterance, "And the man said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen.3, p. 12). The defence of Adam, naïve as it might seem was said to be plausible on the grounds that God could hardly deny that it was a mistake to have given Adam a wife without a formal request from him. It was, therefore, the case that a similar necessity for request-offer, prayer-answer, sacrifice-atonement must have been salient to humanity from that very moment.

The grove is the stage for the performance of the tragic hero's re-enactment of the redemption story. The exposition begins at the moment he disappears from the community. This aspect is characteristic of the reluctance of the Christ-figure to continue with his venture of salvation. "*Oluwen*" is apprehensive of the danger inherent in his task.

Suspense becomes a vital part of his involvement. His capture and eventual conviction to continue with his selfless mission mark the beginning of the ritual drama of restoration. He carries his ritual load and his sight arouses pleasure and pity. The pleasure arises from the unusual spectacle and the pity because he is embarking on a mission that would alter his humanity. An aura of catharsis or purgation of emotion surrounds every step he makes. He is prepared to face the challenges associated with the redemption of the land and people. This becomes an inherent quality of the redeemer in every culture.

At a point, the audience is driven back. "*Oluwen*" and a group of elders comprising *Aghorota* and *Bojutoro* (both are official ritualists

at the Malokun shrine) continue the allegorical movement. This stage is the climax of the performance as the last group of people bows out of the spiritual cleansing journey to the grove. "*Oluwen*" reluctantly battles with his fate. He carries the destiny of the community in his corpse-like load. His diffidence and refusal to continue the arduous and hazardous spiritual movement into the world of the spirit spell doom for the community. He goes alone. He is determined not to disappoint the people. The denouement is the successful communion with the spirits. He drops his gifts. He, however, retrieves the load immediately as it must be returned to the shrine. This time, the load is not on his head, but on his shoulder as he returns to the Malokun shrine. At this stage, the spirits constitute the audience. They equally play significant roles in the drama. As "*Oluwen*" takes his leave, the spirits would chase him. This conflict is brought to a close as "*Oluwen*" pants for breath on arrival at the Malokun shrine.

This religious ceremony continues as the spirits interact with the living members of the community. They sing and pay visits to their relations. The audience is the people while the actors are the spirits of the dead ancestors. Messages are passed to the people while women are allowed to respond to their calls. Food prepared for them will be brought. Before the event commences, the women would have signaled to the spirits about their intentions of opening the door so that they could pass whatever gifts they had to them. The door is stealthily opened while the spirits take cover near the wall. It is a taboo for both male and female folks to see the spirits known as *Ogungun* at a ceremony that marks the zenith of the cleansing ritual. This aspect of the performance is known as *Ogungun-Pipe*.

The royal court form is restricted to the exclusive act involving the traditional ruler. "*Olofun*" (the title by which the "*Oba*" of *Irele* is known) will approach the shrine for what could be termed a communion with the ancestors. The stage is the Malokun shrine while the audience is the spirit of the ancestors. The performers are the Aghorota and Bojutoro whose responsibility it is to present the "*Oba*" (monarch) in a ceremony involving the breaking of kola nuts. Prayers will be said reminiscent of the first act performed by "*Jagboju*" on arrival from "*Ohunmo*" (the original home of the

people prelude to the migration to *Ode Irele*) several years before. Performance, in each case, involving the "Oba", ancestors or the common people is laced with occasional songs and dance. These soul-searing tunes are capable of inducing recollections. The religious undertone instills fear and awe on the audience.

The costumes of each performer comprise masks, assorted dresses and a device to alter the voices of the participants in an attempt at creating verisimilitude. Drums, such as *agba* (big drum), *Iya Ilu* (mother drum) and *Omo Ilu* (small drums), are beaten when occasion demands. At each step in the ritual drama, the tune or tempo of the drumbeat changes in conformity with the established tradition. The drummers are drawn from the group of *Bojutoro*. They are also called *Gbowolagba* in reference to their drumming function and dexterity.

The significance of "Oluwen" and the performance could be seen from the point of view of traditional ritual performances to induce nature to yield to the demand of the people. In the earliest version of the ritual performance, the propitiation ceremony was meant to satisfy the need for sacrifice. As prayer is significant to Christians and Muslims alike, so is sacrifice a means of expressing the expectations of man or woman. Closely attached to the claim of religion is the function of "Oluwen". The tragic hero surely has an archetype. Even if the people could no longer recollect who he was, it is certain that the tragic figure is not a recent innovation. His role, therefore, is the re-enactment of the mythical parallel.

Christianity and Islam have personalities that are idolised because of their dedication, tolerance and selflessness. One of such is the Christ figure. Ishmael, for who Sallah is celebrated, once (Isaac in Christianity) laid down his life. Christ, on his own, was actually tied to the stake. He died that people might live. It is not far from the truth if the early founders of *Ode Irele* had such a personality for who death was imperative that his people might live. The ritual load is synonymous with human regeneration. More so, he becomes tormented all through his life because of his interest in the development of the people.

“Oluwen” and Transcendental Desires

Transcendental desires are quests that negate self “as they reach the level of mind”. The tragic hero, “*Oluwen*”, is considered not as an individual but a symbol of the town and people as well as the link between them and the phenomenal spirit to whom the sacrifice is directed. He pursues the goal with pleasure conscious of the fact that the mission might impact negatively on his physical and spiritual essence. He forgets the injury to his personality in the quest for the uplift of the larger society.

Wonderly (1991) provides the reason for the desire of the individual to forfeit the pleasure accruing to himself in the quest for the preservation of the society. With pleasure and pain as localised matters, it would be reasonable to expect individuals to lose interest in their relationship to a more inclusive existence without some form of knowledge of their partness (p. 208).

The motivation by the “*Oluwen*” to embark on the cleansing rite may not be due to the promise of care from the people all through his lifetime but the recognition that society could only attain its ultimate height through his submission. This awareness conditions him in this quest for self-dissolution. He is part of the society and this self-dissolution may be tantamount to the preservation of the society. From the point of view of the general society, the performance may be equated to “total control through the fixing of responses that direct activity toward system preservation” (Wonderly, 1991, pp. 208-209).

The urge to relate or contribute to a significant institution is an example of the same type of response at a higher level of life. Where the drive towards belonging or membership is recognised as a desire, the source of motivation lies in the relating of the biological self to a more general existence (Wonderly, 1991, p. 209).

The performance of “*Olofunghogho*” is directed towards some “transcendental entities” that is culturally relevant. Being “*Oluwen*” is, therefore, an activity that is geared towards community preservation. The performance is an explanation of the place of the individual in the growth of the system. It equally explains how an individual can be instrumental in the search for the preservation of the people: “This desire encourages activity which in many

instances appears to violate intellectual soundness" (Wonderly, 1991, p. 209). The scapegoat, "*Oluwen*", may be grouped under "deficit desire" which is "assertive". This is because the submission of human scapegoat amounts to "aggression or acquisition-a propulsion of the individual into the world". The "*Oluwen*" is forced to lose his humanity in order to atone for the sins of the people. His interaction with the phenomenal spirits may have robbed him of his composure.

The recognition of the negative effects of sins which compelled the improvisation of the script and the performance of the tragic hero is an admission of guilt. The threat to the fulfillment of physical and spiritual potentialities may be located within sin and this is defined as "protective". Wonderly (1991) considers protective desires to be "aroused when the integrity of the individual is at risk. The signal is one of pain or discomfort, and relief rather than pleasure is sought" (p. 197). The *Ode Irele* milieu is believed to be capable of being physically and spiritually diseased as the effects of sins can weigh her down. The search for relief too must be associated with both spiritual and physical injuries as the spiritual change that overwhelms the hero may serve to show. These negative traits are "signals" that are "associated with elimination needs" (Wonderly, 1991, p. 197).

The cleansing bid and the appearance of the scapegoat are not meant to entertain except aesthetics is taken to mean the totality of the reason and morality that are inherent in the display as well as the picture of the unusual that the presentation may portray to the audience. Of course, the emotional reaction that may necessitate aesthetic fulfillment in the performance may be different in individuals. Some members of the audience could find fulfillment, pleasure and beauty in the performance even when the script is directed at transcendental entities while others may not understand the imports of the performance especially when it has no story-line. Wallace (1965) provides an illuminating hint on the object of worship which this essay considers salient to the emergence of the god-figure that may have been pacified during the performance of "*Oluwen*": "the people, not the priests, made the gods" (p. 218). The truth of the claim becomes apparent when the performance of

Ogungun-Pipe follows with the completion of the ritual segment of the scapegoat.

The need to present a father-figure to whom reverence could be directed and whose fear would compel decorum may have informed the creation of the orchestrated interventions of the gods and goddesses in the affairs of the people. This claim may therefore be a fulfilment of Wallace (1965) that society may have been conditioned by the realities that are salient to it and the corresponding reflection of the imagination may determine whatever art may be imputed to the society. Reality is life and life is society and reality; that is to say, the imagination and society are inseparable. That is pre-eminently true in the case of the poetic drama (Wallace, 1965, p. 219).

Indigenous artists are concerned about the resolution of some persistent problems and they can only achieve this through a dramatic presentation where the audience and the active bearers of tradition may react against such negative developments. The presence of members of the audience at the arena may further expose them to the need to be wary of committing sins such as murder and incest because of the awareness of the negative effects on themselves as well as the society.

The performance of the cleansing ritual gives everyone a psychological satisfaction that their sins may have been cleansed through the ritual. The cleansing performance and the associated psychological assurance of remission of sins are a form of “escapist process” (Wallace, 1965, p. 220). The performance is far from rational and the object of sacrifice may not approach the endeavour with reason. However, within the ritual and the performance of the scapegoat, certain cultural and ideological imperatives have been fulfilled, chief among which are the banishment of sins, social re-engineering of the younger generations as well as the fulfilment of the aesthetic needs of the audience.

The motif of “self-preservation” or the preservation of the milieu takes the “drive” or “desire” that might have motivated the offer of a human scapegoat to the level of sacrifice. Wonderly (1991) sums up the objective of the performance of the “*Oluwen*” script and locates it within “survival” and “growth” in indigenous societies.

Since desires, as the mental representation of drives, function to enhance survival and growth, and since the survival of life is commonly considered to be desirable, they represent a positive force (Wonderly, 1991, p. 194).

Rather than "drives" being considered negative, this essay considers the process of fulfillment of "desires" to have "positive values" and as such may not be associated with "negative affects". The symbolic destruction of the tragic hero because of his scapegoatist submission may be interpreted from the point of view of Freudian homeostasis which "refers to the dissipation of uncomfortable feelings" (Wonderly, 1991, pp. 194-195). "Drives" may amount to negative experiences, and the submission of the "Oluwen" even when it is associated with pain may be responsible for the tranquillity that indigenous societies have witnessed over the years. The removal of a part of the whole in order to pave way for the unhindered growth of the remaining may amount to wisdom. This also explains the reason behind the sacrifice. The feeling of loss is, therefore, insignificant in relation to the relative bliss that may result from the endeavour when compared with the magnitude of the disasters that could be salient to the milieu in the absence of a prompt remission.

The intervention of the scapegoat named "Oluwen" during "Olofungbogho" is a form of "assertive desire". It is performed when society is considered to have witnessed a negation of the golden rule at a level that can necessitate cleansing. In this case, the performance is both "spontaneous" and "contingent". It is "spontaneous" as the festive season makes it imperative and "contingent" because it is "aroused when a state of confusion, conflict" or negation of natural order presents itself in the milieu (Wonderly, 1991, p. 194).

Festival Songs and Movement

The search for the scapegoat takes prime importance in the performance of the cleansing ritual. The segment is meant to show the importance of the "Oluwen" to the survival of the society. At the peak of the performance, the scapegoat goes into hiding. Members of the community become apprehensive and every nook and

cranny of the town is combed. The search is accompanied with a song which reveals the importance of the scapegoat:

Be ti ri "Oluwen" o
Bo ba ti ye, e gbe
If the scapegoat is not found
If it falls, we won't carry it.

When the scapegoat is found at last, he presents his demands. He may ask for a new wife and a new building. All these would be obliged. At this stage, the ritualists would heave a sigh of relief as a result of the success in apprehending the scapegoat at last.

The second song is associated with the ritual load. The load was originally placed on a platform like a table (*aka* in the *Ode Irele* parlance). That explains why the panegyric of the people is "the children of people who place the "Oluwen" ritual load on a platform" (*omo taka gbuwen*). The ritual load is now placed on the fence of the Malokun shrine. It is from there that it would be placed on the head of the scapegoat. The "Oluwen" *ruwen* song would accompany this stage.

"Oluwen" ruwen daso bori o
The scapegoat carries his load

When the scapegoat is outside the Malokun shrine and with the ritual load firmly clutched by the "Oluwen", he bows to the *akoko* tree three times and each time he recedes backward. The monarch and the High Chiefs too will bow to the scapegoat three times. The ordinary folk would follow the scapegoat up to a certain stage when another song would warn the audience to go back.

Omolore deyin, uwen rugbo
The well-bred go back, the scapegoat heads for the forest

Other songs will be rendered such as those that tend the burial of people at *Ode Irele*. They include:

Janjan ko,
Ogungun e le o
It is unusual
Hello ancestors

Another ritual song that depicts the importance of *Ojomo* in the clime would be rendered.

Ojomo e le
Ojomo tarako
Hello Ojomo
Ojomo the great.

The rendition of the needed songs laced with the appropriate dance steps will inform a psychological satisfaction in the people. At this stage, the *oro fen* song would be rendered.

Oro fen o, oro gba
Arima o loro
The offerings have been accepted
Never would such sins oh scapegoat

Conclusion/Recommendation

The tragic hero and the monarch occupy a veritable position in the socio-cultural hierarchy of the town. They both represent the soul and nucleus of the growth and ills of the town. They bear the brunt of the misdeeds of the people. That explains why the position of monarchy was abhorred by many people in the past. The belief is rife that the tragic hero and the monarch are synonymous with ritual objects that are sacrificed in order to enhance the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom. Just as the monarch is respected and cared for at the expense of the people, so is the "*Oluwen*". He could visit the market and take any material from the stalls of traders without any objection. His sight in the market sends everyone scurrying for fear that he might take very expensive materials from their stalls. Of course, he is as important as the monarch because of the redemptive role he plays in the rejuvenation of the people.

The death of the "*Oluwen*" may be a matter of concern to the ritualists. This is the occasion for scampering for another tragic hero. This search could take months because of the non-preparedness of the offspring of people to allow their parents to be offered as scapegoats in the regeneration of the society. It is a matter of concern too as their offspring might consider the responsibility demeaning to their status. No doubt, their colleagues might turn them to objects of ridicule. The stigma might be difficult

to erase. These factors make it difficult to get a volunteer in the performance of the role of a scapegoat. Where the festive season dawns without a volunteer, the lot might fall on the High Chiefs. They would collectively carry the sins of the people to the grove and face whatever might be the consequences. They cannot renege on this because they too are contributors to the sins of the land. As the embodiments of both peace and disquietude of the society, they cannot afford to betray the trust that the people have reposed in them.

It is, however, debatable if an animal such as a cow or goat could not take the place of the tragic hero in the future. This is a possibility in view of the fact that many families might not be favourably disposed to the performance of the role by their relations. As society develops and selfish interest takes the place of individual contributions to the growth of the community, the performance might become a burden and High Chiefs would have to look inward in the search for a scapegoat.

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