The Convergence of Popular Theatre, Entertainment-Education and Theatre for Development in the Performing Arts Discipline

Chinyere Lilian Okam
University of Calabar, Calabar-Nigeria

Abstract
This article analyses the points of confluence of Popular Theatre, Entertainment-Education and Theatre-for-Development and by identifying their histories, objectives, medium of transmission, it addresses their convergence in the performing arts discipline. Part of their interconnectedness is in the audience-character relationships, and their diverse renditions, some of which address clear-cut issues of morality, politics, and economy and many others. The paper also identifies their common objective which is the focus on systemically designed or inherently induced attitudinal change in societies where they are engaged. It further makes a case for their inclusion in theatre studies curriculum due to their content and the way they appropriate dramatic tools in carrying out their goals
Keywords: Popular Theatre, Entertainment Education, Theatre for Development, Postmodernism

Résumé
Cet article analyse les points de convergence du théâtre populaire, du divertissement éducatif et du théâtre pour le développement et en identifiant leurs histoires, objectifs, moyen de transmission, il aborde leur convergence dans la discipline des arts de la scène. Une partie de leur interdépendance réside dans les relations entre l'assistance et les personnages, et leurs interprétations diverses dont certaines traitent de questions bien définies de la moralité, de la politique et de l'économie et autres. L'article identifie également leur objectif commun qui est l'accent mis sur les changements d'attitude systématiques ou intrinsèquement induits dans les sociétés où ils sont engagés. Il fait également appel en faveur de leur inclusion dans les programmes d'études théâtrales en raison de leur contenu et de la façon dont ils s'approprient les outils dramatiques dans la réalisation de leurs objectifs.

Mots-clés: Théâtre populaire, divertissement éducatif, théâtre pour le développement, Postmodernisme

Introduction
Theatre has been defined variously over time; but two of these adequately serve my purpose here. Zulu Sofola calls it

> … a medium of artistic expression where societal happenings are mirrored in a dynamic living form. A metaphorical image of reality; it reflects the total cosmic totality, acting and reacting to forces around

> them and within them, perceiving and being perceived by those in the audience who experience with them the enigma that is common lot of humanity. (Akinwale 8)

Here, Sofola impresses the aesthetic form of the present to what has always existed. Consequently, dynamism in artistic expression is shaped exclusively by the fluidity of time and should be thus followed. We can equally view it ontologically from Boal's statement on the nature of theatre before what could be referred to as its conventional development.

> In the beginning, theater was the dithyrambic song: free people singing in the open air. The carnival. The feast. Later the ruling class took possession of the theatre and built the dividing walls. First, they divided the people, separated the protagonists from spectators: People who act and people who watch … the coercive indoctrination began! (Boal 119)

It is noteworthy that the usurpation of the first theatre by aristocracy, however, impoverished and restricted the potentials of Greek theatre to become truly people-oriented, thereby it could not become a channel which people adjusted to their communal lives without external impositions. From the above, one sees that popular theatre is present in the ordinary and cultural observances of the people. It is characterized by social relationships, ritual, the expression of the life of people, celebration of the joy and pain of live, ownership and democracy that which is owned by the people and, used by them mostly for common good. The development of African theatre, for instance, did not come solely for entertainment, but also as a functional drama which people use to address economic, political, as well as sundry socio-cultural issues in their communities, through persuasion, re-education and entertainment.

Consequently Popular theatre has been described as the kind of performance that belongs to the people or

> whatever lives most among the common people, that which is popularized and enjoys popularity, or that which springs from among the people or appeals to people, without intellectual or aesthetic intervention from outside…that which links on to the oral tradition, to a rustic atmosphere, to the anonymous collective, or to what some call folklore, and others call primitive. (Epskamp 163)

It is an eclectic collection of art forms of a people, tied to their cultural development, and used for entertainment. It is rooted in the tradition of the people who own it, as well as in their ritual, festival and other ceremonial activities. Yemi Ogunbiyi describes it as an expression of the relationship between man, society and nature arising from the

fundamental needs of the people (3). It originated within different societies to meet needs of humanity in handling the environment. A sizable number of traditional theatres in Nigeria like the Ekpe festival which is rooted in ritual, dance drama, and masquerade; the Bori spirit medium-ship; the Alarinjo festival of the Yoruba people; the Kwag-hir Puppetry performance of the Tivs, could be regarded as popular theatre forms. Others include the Leboku festival of the Cross River people, the Ogene-Nkirika festival of the Oguta people and so many others (Ogunbiyi 1981; Harding 2002; Okam 2007).

These traditional forms entail the use of songs, dance, drama, music, mime, puppetry (in some cases), storytelling, folklore, among others. There is also the involvement of directors, performances, audience and space; which are the basic elements of theatre. In most cases, the audience participates whereas within the accompanying ritual moments, content is created based on specialized roles given to specific individuals for the benefit of the entire community. These events bring economic, political and religious gains to the society. Example is the Ogene-Nkirika festival which is a total theatre which uses myriad art forms to represent the experience of an event which can be real, prophetic, imagined. Sometimes to express messages, the performers use effigies, costumes, make-up, props, movement, speech patterns and mannerisms to satirize and lampoon social ills. The summary is that the intention of the popular theatre is about edification, entertainment and education and change towards the social, economic and political development of the people by specifically deploying performance techniques indigenous to the community.

Theoretical and Methodological approaches
With the rising of globalisation which has caused delocalisation of cultures, many art forms are intermeshing. Theatre on its own is understandably affected especially by the postmodern turn itself. Postmodernism decontextualizes and disassociates as well as creates a "no-boundaries" perspective that enables the definition of multi-plural realities. Izuu Nwankwo avers that postmodernism "highlighted the dissociation and diversification of mainstream tradition. Drawing from Hutcheon, Nwankwo states that postmodernism is a

> …fundamentally contradictory enterprise', intrinsically inbued with art forms/theories that 'used and abused, install and then subvert convention in parodic ways, thereby creating a model of mapping the borders of art and society from a 'position within both and yet within neither' a model that is profoundly implicated yet still capable of criticising that which it seeks to describe (27-28).

Popular Theatre n its traditional form thrives on the platform of localised identity, but with globalisation, it has attained transformational energy. In a unique postmodern way, Theatre for Development has switched its standpoint to the angle of using theatre to challenge the conscience of the people in openness towards the realisation of the capability to address their issues. It takes an extraordinary standpoint that propels

individuals and groups beyond the confines of entertainment and other performative gains of popular theatre to shift to development objectives. Copeland argues that postmodernism led to the mere flexible attitude towards popular culture and great accessibility (Espkamp37). Popular in this instance is that technological pluralism that a subject such as an Entertainment- Education has come to accept which makes it exclusionary in a little way to Popular Theatre or Theatre for Development.

Conceptual Clarifications

Entertainment-Education is a communication strategy which entails the insertion of educational or motivational information in existing theatrical genres into entertainment mode to create an expected maximum impact on specific social groups. It has also been described as "the process of purposefully designing and implementing a media message both to entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members' knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, and change overt behavior" (Singhal& Rogers 9).Singhal elsewhere, calls it a "performance which captures the interest or attraction of an individual, giving him pleasure, amusement, or gratification, while simultaneously helping the individual to develop a skill to achieve a particular end by boosting his/her mental, moral or physical prowess" (qtd.Onuekwe 4).Entertainment-Education thus encourages the use of art forms and aesthetics that exist within the socio-cultural proclivities of the target audience in pursuit of its set goals.

Theatre for Development uses drama and its myriad techniques to research and address the issues of development. It is thus an annexation of the popular theatre to the course of development. It is variously referred to as: Theatre for Integrated Development (TIDE), Participatory Theatre (PT), Popular Theatre, Community Theatre among other nomenclatures. It embodies the idea of conceiving developmental approaches from the perspective of the inhabitants of the community, then using theatre as an effective strategy for involving, sensitizing, and stimulating critical consciousness in stakeholders. In the words of Tim Prentki, Theatre for Development is a process "whereby communities are enabled to address the issues of self-development through participation in theatre process" (Epskamp xiv). Its major aim is given as offering:

> an alternative approach and medium by which theatre can be of direct service to the marginalized urban, and rural peasants' masses. It uses music, dance, songs, storytelling, puppetry, mime to either validate those cultural forms or serve as an adequate instrument to bring about social change in those communities. (Akashoro, Kayode & Husseini 111).

Consequently, TFD is not just a performance in the tradition of art for art's sake but a cultural tool for research and action of developmental issues within specific communities. It builds a coalition for political and developmental action. Its potentials lie in its debunking of the myth of non-changeability of the society; people are collective authors, actors strategizing on how to resolve their problems within the context of entertainment. It uses the cultural forms of the people through their

involvement and in domain of ownership to appreciate the relationships between stakeholders while addressing their concerns. Tim Prentki is of the view that TFD finds ways to connect the micro practice with the micro-agenda that directly impact upon the lives of the participants. Also, the inclusion and the identification of issues, analysis of such and the mapping out of solution and strategies for monitoring interventions are the indicators that control the concept of this form of applied theatre. (Epskamp xiv)

Objectives of the Concepts

Femi Osofisan captured the objective of Popular Theatre in the following statements

> As far as we know, every human society has always been conscious of the need to nurture its youths, promote group solidarity among its members, mobilize citizens and, from time to time, harness their energies towards some communal project. In order to realize this goal, therefore, it invents a number of strategies, among which the theatrical arts are always prominent. (1).

Here, he points out the objectives of popular theatre to include: encouraging togetherness towards the attainment of communal goals of the people. Ebun Clark also believes that a good example of Popular Theatre in Nigeria's past is Hubert Ogunde's work which was used to "expose the evil machinations of colonial rule and demand outright freedom while instilling cultural consciousness into Nigerians" (Okam 27). Ogunde's theatre was popular largely for its abundant use of Yoruba folklore and songs, as well as the employment of *Ijuba* (opening glee). It is believed that "Ogunde led the pack of practitioners of that period to perform works that in the estimation of theatre-going audiences denounced falsehood, tyranny, and extolled the virtues of truth, justice and equity in our national life" (Akashoro, Kayode & Husseini 111). Ogunde's works employed traits of ancient Alarinjo Travelling Theatre in creating a terrain of familiarity which encourages participation and sustains the attention of his audiences. For the subversion of his theatre against the then colonial administration and the overwhelming followership he received, Ogunde's theatre was overtly persecuted and suppressed. The discomfort of the government at that time was fanned by the fear of an uprising going by the massive support and positive reception that Ogunde and his troupe received from the people. This is a good example of how popular theatre forms succeed in different communities because the people often identify with such performances more than they do when foreign theatre motifs are employed.

The cardinal objective of entertainment-education, is to create entertainment and education messages or stories targeted at behavioral change, this happens through identification. Identification is the emotional bond and cognitive process an audience shares with a character in a narrative. The audience is oblivious of his or her being and temporarily takes the perception of the character he or she is viewing. The audience imagines "being the character and replaces his or her personal identity with the identity and role of the character". This according to Cohen involves: empathy (shared feelings); Cognition (shared perception); motivation (internalizing the goal of the character); and

absorption (loss of self-awareness during viewing) (251).It is this magic packaging of entertainment-education through the formative process of research that helps the producers to know what appeals or otherwise to their target audience and the kind of character that can hold their attention.

In consonance with the cardinal objective of EE, TFD is created to raise the consciousness of people and gives voice to the common people. It thus instigates change in perceptions and initiates action towards the surmounting of whatever difficulty individuals within a location are facing. Its target is to produce tangible positive results especially for marginalized people. Even though it is sometimes referred to as a theatre for the poor, or oppressed; it can also be appropriated in tackling issues that bother wealthy folks. It is essentially aimed at reinstating the function of the theatre as a creative tool for cultural expression and articulation and as an empowering process through which people could develop a critical awareness of their environment. Robyn Eversole, perhaps for this reason avers that Participatory Theatre "provides an active way for the audience and community to become involved in the issues explored, and form a sense of ownership. It engages people to identify issues of concern, analyze and then collectively think about how change can happen" (32). It creates a platform that exposes people to take up the challenge and use their own methods to shape their issues. What is required here is the application of the traditional methods of resolving issues that have helped man to co-exist with the other. What this concept does is to create general problematic in a bid to socially produce messages that will link to the realities of the people. This message must be filled with information that can spur intervention, that is, a forum for the discussion of the issues that always culminate in action planning. Invariably the functions of TFD is to bring topics, information and processes which when the people access can produce such change in attitudes and behavior.

Methodology/ Medium Transmission
The methodology of Popular Theatre is not conventional, because most times, the actors go beyond the natural due to the African world view of the gods, ancestors and unborn (Soyinka 1979). Thus popular theatre in fulfilling this ritual content requires such expertise as directors, designers and experts in various fields of specialty. These include: the chief priest, kings, titled men and women (the latter, though rare) and cult members perhaps. The benefit of this is that it organizes the community, strategizes to find solutions to problems, and thus becomes a platform of mending and building new relationships between, the performers: the gods, unborn, ancestors, human, etc. It forms an awareness and consciousness element among the people which always drag them towards building positive attitudes for the common good of the land. An example is the Ogene Nkirika festival, and Ogunde's itinerant popular theatre performance.

Entertainment-Education relies on formative research, a process that gives information that is culturally related to the audience of the drama for the development of the models and storylines. EE also relies also in summative evaluation to help measure the

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effectiveness of the programme on the intended audience. It relies on message pre-test and post test to determine the effectiveness of the programme on the audience. Its messages could be transmitted through theatre, radio, television, internet.

On the other hand, TFD, does not provide the stakeholders the false impression of participatory equilibrium, but rather creates actual space that moves them to generate themes through such processes as: participatory community research, participatory analysis amongst others.

The process of TFD progressively journeys through familiarization, data collection and analysis, play-making and performance, post-performance evaluation, action planning, monitoring and evaluation which in a successful TFD practice lead to scale-up. Epskamp (2006) avers that TFD does not entirely reject the physical evidence of any project but works to identify the condition in which these realties become sustainable. With this approach, conclusion of findings is not drawn from specific hypothetical observations whereby the researcher's findings are final. It tries to understand the relational, spatial as well as the ethical issues that influence a particular product. This is evidenced in Abah's (2005) preference for symbiotic methodology as a means of generating themes, conversations and ensuring participation and empowerment by breaking down the canonical research process informed by positivism and encouraging community and researchers coming together in a learning process also favoured by postmodernism due to its emancipatory nature. Hence, it covers the framework to provide a deep encounter between the spectators so that everyone should take with them a changed perception and a new way of interacting with realities.

Points of divergences and convergences
Popular Theatre is folkloric, celebrative and democratic, rooted in ritual, possesses territorial identity ideals, wide within the circumference of the folk, and folk mediated. Entertainment-education is majorly mass-mediated, interdisciplinary, theory laden. While Theatre for Development stimulates immediate action, has small coverage, it is a process and practice specifically meant for development purposes. Despite their differences, one sees that they are all experimental in their approaches The estrangement seen in this is the de-familiarization of the medium from what has been, however, this does not obscure their interconnectedness in the sense EE only emphasized a change in paradigm of structure, little of content and not much of aim which is arousing consciousness, and educating through entertainment. Furthermore EE has created new spaces for multiple interpretations making it less owner-oriented confirming the assertion that "intercultural relations have ensured that emergent traditions do take forms of their constituents but are never exactly the same way with any of them" (Nwankwo 27). This is a support of their connect- a configuration of contemporary culture, which though creates a distancing reality, but in effect speaking to the mind of people in the language of their understanding.
Entertainment-education's connectivity with Popular Theatre is reflected in Singhal's statement:

> To take a stock on how deeply the entertainment-education tradition is entrenched on the African continent, one may glance at the west African groit, who is unbelievably a storyteller, an oral historian, a poet a musician, a satirist, and a political commentator- all rolled in one…griots are walking- talking- singing encyclopedias, both repositories and disseminators of existing indigenous wisdom, and creators of new worlds for their audience…(Onuekwe xi)

Singhal elaborates the importance of this art in his analysis of the functions of the groits:

> The groits and their countless counterparts on the African continent have purposely utilized the crowd engaging prowess of storytelling, music, drama, and dance for instruction, devotion, agitation, and reformation In recent years, more mass mediated forms of entertainment-education have emerged on the African continent that utilize popular genres in radio, television, popular music, films and interactive digital media (Onuekwe xi).

In like manner Abah comments on the same work: "the practice of making use of entertainment as a vehicle for education is not about to die. If anything, there is a renewed interest in the subject, and the issues to tackle are forever multiplying" (Onuekwe xiii). Entertainment education is thus seen from Singhal and Abah as marrying the totality of the popular theatre culture, which includes the folk, the territorial identity, the common, the dominant, and any other definition that one can ascribe to the term popular (ix-x).Be that as it may, some practitioners have taken Entertainment-Education away from the academic roots of the performing arts and annexed it to other disciplines to underscore its interdisciplinary nature. Howbeit, the root is not lost, even when the curriculum of performing arts hardly reflects it. In addition to this, the Theatre for Development's connectivity with popular theatre is not that it operates as a reinvented form of Popular Theatre in its deployment of indigenous languages and cultural symbols in it communicating issues. It however, has its roots in the philosophy of collectiveness, and empowerment "using the people's flora and fiona as they take possession of their culture and use it for their own benefit" (Alachi 50).

At the level of content, TFD and EE borrow from the entertainment genres inherent in popular theatre, while popular theatre maintains its mode to folkloric tradition, others use same genres in specific ways.

It is in this area of content that this paper sees a clear rationale to formulate its claim that all three belong to the performing arts. Furthermore, considering functionality, the fact that the three genres under discussion are connected in function as education and entertainment genres are not disputable. Popular theatre metamorphosed from ritual function, even while maintaining its educational and entertainment values just in the same manner that Enekwe argues on the reciprocal function of ritual and theatre, that ritual becomes entertainment once it is outside its original domain (42). However, in Entertainment –Education, behavioural change is the focus. The objective is clear both

from the angle of what it offers to the public and their implications for audience. It is uses technologized version of transmission in the same way early alternative theatre of Erwin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht did, thereby creating a separated domain for itself not only through using technology but by reaching out to almost all field of study in generating theories and concepts. Entertainment- Education is a subset of the performing arts, i and its use of technology is not limiting or alienating factor neither is its objectives. Even when the proponents are not artiste, the reality that entertainment-education is within the colony in content, function partly in transmission and the very field that has given it its foundation..

On the angle of Theatre for development, there is no such dispute or unclear horizon that its discipline is under the performing arts. It has features of popular theatre and is still using indigenous forms to express and quite extensively to challenge current issues of marginalization of the less heard/visible people. It is a platform practically driven by the dynamics of localizations (creating a localized act of cultural intervention), while entertainment -education is trans-local (creating a form of globalised art of cultural production; turning its art into a typical image of culture in a globalized framework.

For TFD, it is its medium of transmission which is mainly through the physical theatre that has made it to remain under the ambit of theatre undisputed. But the issue is that Entertainment-education also employs the physical theatre strategy as exemplified in the documented works of Lynn Darymple in South Africa, Yaya Mohammed, Chima Onuekwe, Oga Steve Abah, Edisua MerabYta (Offoboche), Hubert Ogunde etc in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the cultural link that TFD uses are not just folkloric but a case of assimilation of tools to symbolically represent the participatory reality of the theatre even while working in a different situation. Most theories of TFD are from: Development, Education, Communication, Psychology, Development Communication, amongst others. Yet it has not compromised leaning on the strength of Performing Arts. Based on that, Entertainment-Education can as well be situated within the theatre/performing arts curricula.

Conclusion

Therefore, it is not inapposite for Entertainment-education as a course to come under the Performing Arts discipline like TFD despite their, objective, methodology, method of transmission and differences. It is also not out of place to place them under the ambience of the Performing Arts discipline considering their historicity. What this article sees as the failure to attribute them to a proper discipline is the current dearth of building an encompassing curriculum for the theatre. This does not stop schools from choosing the areas they want to focus on but let it be a unified curriculum. By way of conclusion, the argument of this article agrees with Dapo Adelugba's key note speech on the event of "Three decades plus of Popular Theatre/ Theatre for Development (TFD) in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria":

> We in Africa have an analogous opportunity but it will not last forever. We must embrace not only the knowledge of our new technological age but also the knowledge of our indigenous inheritance, marrying technology to the rich resources of knowledge in our folk culture. And it is this possibility of borrowing both from the literary and the oral traditions of the world that probably made the pioneers of our new Department unwilling to settle for the nomenclature of Department of Theatre and chose to lay equal stress on theatre and performing arts in the formulation of the Department. (14)

The above statement as well as the foregoing discussion calls for related courses outside of the mainstream ones to be renegotiated into the performing arts curriculum. This will send a message of hope to the progenitors that early dramatists have visible heirs (Osofisan xxiii) and to agree with Nwankwo (34) that the realities of today cannot be seen with a convex lens of inter-culturality, but a concave lens of multi-plurality. It will also help us to accept the fact that media does not exclude the performing arts.This is not an attempt to force a practice on another or an intention to mutilate neutral concepts but an attempt to deconstruct the practice that is changing.

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