

# Aesthetics and the Rhetorical Discourse of the Ojọjọ Masquerade Festival of the Igbudu People of Warri, Nigeria

Peter Emuejevoke Omoko

## Abstract

Contemporary reality has shown that the colonised people of Africa and other third world countries have developed inferiority complex towards their indigenous literary productions. In many African societies, such indigenous observances like festivals, rites of passage and ancestral venerations are neglected by the youths who see such practices as fetish. However, the cultural provenance and performative creations in African festivals have established the fact that it can be placed at par with those of western cultures. Besides, ritual and drama have overtime become the artistic signification of traditional festival enactments composing of the three forms of poetry – chants, music/recitative verses, elaborate costumes and dance as well as narratives which are often dramatised as oral performance constituents in many African festivals. Much of these dances and poetry are punctuated by drums of various kinds, and the masquerades costumes and mock dramatic enactments of many of the African festivals constitute a whole lot of artistic ingenuity packaged by the African people for their spiritual edification and entertainment. These elements are manifested, in plenty, in the Ojọjọ festival of the Igbudu people of Warri in Nigeria and they form part of an oral performance with heavy reliance on contemporary dramaturgy. This essay therefore examines the aesthetic manifestations and rhetorical discourse of the Ojọjọ festival. It relies on the post-colonial theory as the critical approach not only to establish the artistic and aesthetic rhetoric of the festival but to refract the artistic orientation between west and the provinces. It concludes that the Ojọjọ festival is a ready source of dramatic entertainment and cultural unification of the African people.

**Keywords:** Aesthetic, Rhetoric, festival, Ojọjọ , Igbudu People