

BEYOND THE STAGE- PSYCHOSIS AND TRANSPORT IN SELECTED PERFORMANCES

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ABSTRACT: *The actors' role in every theatrical event is highly indispensable. The tools that are available to the actor to deliver his act before a live audience are his body, his voice and his mind. Since acting is a creative process these tools work together to transform the phantoms created by the playwright into living characters on stage. Actors require a lot of skills and training in order to fulfil the demands of their profession. The negation of acting theories and techniques can lead to catastrophic situations and this should be avoided. A director takes charge of the group and creatively harnesses their talent into an effective production. He leads and guides them, moulding, shaping, sharpening, and eventually an audience is thrilled on how everyday life is recreated in a confined space. Stage productions may not be as well celebrated or patronised in Nigeria as home videos or the cinemas are loved, but creativity, aesthetics and talent are still being displayed at their best in stage performances. Great directors cast men and women into roles and rehearse them extensively, preparing them and helping them learn to cease to be who they are, by being and living the new personalities they have been cast into. After the wonderful performance has been put on stage what becomes of these individuals who have given up their true selves to become people they never are? Do they get back to being their old selves again by simply discarding the adopted personalities? How long does it take to completely let go of this new being whom the actors have come to love or hate to be? Sometimes actors are not even aware that they have carried traits from the theatrical stage to the world stage. This paper looks at the life of an actor before, during and after a stage performance. It attempts to explain the harm done to his personality as a result of the interaction which might be unhealthy, that went on between the dual personalities housed within the actor.*

KEYWORDS: Psychosis, Transport, Performances

INTRODUCTION

Psychosis

It is necessary to explain some of key terms that make up this research. Psychosis is a state of the mind which R.D Laing in *The Divided Self* explains as a situation in where "the inner self becomes entirely unreal or 'phantasticized', split, and no longer able to sustain what

precarious sense of its own identity it started with" (138). This term which is used to embrace different psychological disorders, manifests in differing forms in different individuals. Given that the human mind is not static, but dynamic, a lot of things can influence and alter the function and thought pattern of the mind. In a situation where there is alteration, a deviation from the original state of the mind, be it temporarily or permanently, it would be said that the affected individual is in a psychotic state. It is characterised by delusion, hallucinations, disorganized speech and schizophrenia and multiple personality disorder.

Although psychosis could be interpreted as the 'sudden removal of the veil of false self' thereby revealing the true personality, it does so at a time when the individual is not in control and hence, cannot take charge of sudden revelation. Realism as a production style has the potency to introduce a new personality into an individual which could knock off the false phantom being and then leaves the individual grasping at understanding himself and striking a balance between these two new personalities within him. This is especially more troubling in the productions of plays with religious or ritualistic undertone. The interaction between the personalities become more spiritual than physical, destabilising the emotional and psychological state of the individual during the performance and in some cases, even well after the performance is over. Many actors have had to engage in spiritual warfare to be able to disentangle themselves from certain characters they played in some productions.

Transport

Transport is the term that we will use to explain the process or activity of spiritual possession on stage. The process of the out of the body experience which happens to the actor creates an atmosphere of the metaphysical that separates the actor from his spirit. Few people realize the dark spiritual side of acting which are often times viewed as non-existent. Most times people possessed in real life don't really remember what happens to them during the time they experience spirit possessions. Man is a spiritual being and whether we like to accept it or not, there is a link between the physical and spiritual, just like there is a constant interaction between the living, dead and unborn. Actors and directors must be careful in the course of rehearsals and productions to be on top of the game and have control over spiritual and psychological intrusions for the wellbeing of the actors. They need to come out a better person if not the same, at the end of a production, without any physical, emotional or psychological harm done to them.

Stage transport as we choose to describe it happens in various facets. Firstly if an actor is possessed he sometimes remembers what happens to him and at other times he might not remember. We will illustrate effectively later. Secondly an actor may unwillingly allow the role he played on stage to follow him outside the stage. When this happens we see this actor carrying unusual traits, gestures, speech that he never had before. Thirdly is the possession that happens when performing rituals on stage. The actor becomes a medium. The major difference in this possession process is that on stage, actors fall prey to phantoms created by the playwright, in real life human beings fall prey to demons and other entities except in the case of medium as we will elucidate later.

Transport on Stage

In order to effectively tackle the objective of this paper we are going to give accounts of occasions where transport has occurred on stage. We will limit our discussion to four performances; three of which will be treated under this section while the other will be treated in the subsequent section. The performances are Esiabia Irobi's *Colour of Rusting Gold* directed by Ndubuisi Nnanna, Esiabia Irobi's *Colour of Rusting Gold* directed by Uche Nwaozuzu and Emeka Nwabueze's *Echoes of Madness* directed by Uche Nwaozuzu. We shall now proceed to give a succinct synopsis and then later x-ray the moment of possession experienced.

Synopsis of *The Colour of Rusting Gold*

Esiaba Irobi's *Colour of Rusting Gold* is a powerful and evocative drama enshrouded in deep metaphysical thought. *Otagburagu*, a *Dibia* with deep and strong philosophical and moral value system, fails to adhere to rules binding him as an *Ahajioku*. *Otagburagu's* sacred oath is not to spill blood. He spills blood to save life and *Nnanimgabi* the corrupt politician uses this action as a thrust to make him spill blood a second time. This time he kills out of greed and revenge. His apprentice *Ogidi* who attempts to steal from him also falls prey to *Dibia* turned Lunatic *Otagburagu*. *Otagburagu* thus finds himself in dangerous web, the chords are broken and his fellow *Dibias* strips him of all his sacred rights.

Transport and Psychosis in Performance of *The Colour of Rusting Gold*

The performance which is highly metaphysical was also directed by Ndubuisi Nnanna a seasoned director with the mastery of stagecraft. The performance was staged at Arts Theatre, University of Nigeria Nsukka on 4th of April 2004. It was welcomed by audience as a great one but many people did not realise that one of the actors would have been murdered on stage. The character *Ogidi* (Ikechukwu Erojikwe) narrates that during the time *Otagburagu* (Boma Eremie-Ilamin) his master was meant to strangle him he was almost killed in real life. His account is that the act has been rehearsed a lot that both *Otagburagu* and *Ogidi* knew when *Ogidi* was meant to die on stage but *Otagburagu* did not stop at that point because he knew *Ogidi* was not dead. During all the rehearsals *Ogidi* never experienced any harm on stage. How then can we explain what happened on the performance night? He knew that *Ogidi*, though dead on stage was still breathing. The blocking given by the director was that once *Ogidi* goes limb *Otagburagu* should stop strangling him. *Otagburagu* (Boma Ilamina-Eremie) refused to stop. The whole process was both traumatic as it was frightening for the actor. At that moment the actor playing *Otagburagu* could be said to be suffering from multiple personality disorder. Considering the fact that he is mad onstage brings more influx of energy to the now possessed actor. The actor playing *Ogidi*, realising he was actually being strangled by his fellow actor and friend proceeds to use the actors' real name (Boma) to recall him back from his possessed state. Boma Ilamina-Eremie who played the role of *Otagburagu* in the 2004 production of Esiaba Irobi's *The Colour of Rusting Gold* directed by Ndubuisi Nnanna in an interview explains that,

In my experience I realized that in performance there is a certain degree of self-denial one must attain in order to give room for a character to live. It goes beyond theory and direction. It is a conscious act essentially required of each act. Playing Otagburagu was perhaps one of the most challenging roles I took on. For starters I was cast in a role that was physically daunting. *Otagburagu* was described as a mountain of a man and my diminutive stature was a far cry from ideal. Compensating for the size difference was pretty intense as I had to fall back on my voice and body in a bid to present the expected persona that was this character. Direction helped a lot. Fact remains that certain mannerisms are apt definers of stature and in a case like mine I needed plenty of that. In performance, the experience was stepped up a notch. *Otagburagu* metamorphoses from a confident and bold man, defender of tradition and cause to a mumbling demented shell, ridden by guilt and weighed down by the shackles of innocent blood. His transition is gradual but if far from controlled. For an instance during the performance I actually lost control of the act and almost strangled my co-performer. Looking back now I understand even better the reason for this incident. Characters create a presence of their own, a life as substantial as that of the performer. Understanding the motivations and stressors that propel a character is dependent on the performers own motivations and stressors. Acting is make-believe but the one factor that supports that temporary reality is the belief. So if a period of insanity is the key to belief there is little else to do but embrace the moment as it offers itself. For the performer it is not so much as being possessed by a character as it is consciously accepting the reality that two personalities cannot coexist for extended periods. The essence of characterization and rehearsals is to understand the depth of character while providing a control method. This understanding provides a frame so to speak for the character. I do not deny that in the throes of performance a character may break free from this frame. That would be akin to denying sunrise...but essentially there is no performance if the performer is consumed or replaced entirely by the character.

In an interview Steve Ogbodo narrates his own experiences, the two accounts he gives presents an occasion of him being possessed and on another account being attacked by a possessed actor. Steve who is a veteran actor explains that the first time he was to go on stage was in Esiaba Irobi's *The Colour of Rusting Gold* directed by Uche Nwaozuzu under the auspices of Creative Circle at Arts Theatre, University of Nigeria Nsukka. The actual date was not given but the performance went on stage in October of 1991. His role in the performance was *Ogidi*. Steve submits that,

...Otagburagu (Ndubisi Nnanna) wanted to strangle me on stage ... He was delivering his lines and I was hearing it (his voice) I was kneeling down and he was standing above me. The way he was rendering his lines made me believe that he was going to do what he was saying... I looked up and I said to myself, my God this man is going to kill me. It was no longer the guy (Ndubisi Nnanna) that I knew before but another person ... *Otagburagu*... I ran off from the stage. He

pursued and dragged me back... I ran because I was really scared and it was not part of my blocking. This is because Ndubuisi has transformed to *Otagburagu*. He really strangled *Ogidi* because people in the auditorium were all screaming 'you are killing him'. I could not put my hand to protect myself from the strings and he was tightening the noose... I had to go limb ... that was when he left me dead.

This account though disturbing raises some salient questions about transport and control. This motivated us to ask the actor to give us his own view on this. On that note Ogbodo reveals that "I was not in the spirit; the way *Otagburagu* was delivering his lines threw me off balance. I forgot my blocking (removing my hands from the strings)"

Furthermore, Steve Ogbodo gives another succinct account of his experience. He narrates that,

The first time I experienced transport was in Esiaba Irobi's *The colour of Rusting Gold* directed by Ndubisi Nnanna on the 4th of April 2004. I played *Oriakanjonauchichi* a mad man. It was very difficult to get into that role. I really lost my sanity... I got into the spirit of madness. On stage I knew I was raving mad, sometimes I lost control. After the production it took me up to a month to regain my sanity at least that was what I believed. But people that knew kept telling me to drop the role that I was still behaving like a mad man. It took almost six months for people to stop observing traits of madness in me...

Synopsis of *Echoes of Madness*

This thought provoking play portrays the crisis and psychological trauma that man encounters as he searches for meaning in life. It draws attention to the emotional havoc that society inflicts on the people. It vividly depicts the treachery of man as he seeks to fill his insatiable quest for power, revenge and authority. *Obiora Nnadozie* returns home from the United States to discover he is to become the chief priest of *Avuja* and that it was the oracle that brought him back. He refuses to conform to such absurdity; his uncle *Agamonye* in his bid to sit on the *Avuja* stool turns *Obiora* into a nervous wreck.

Psychosis and Transport in *Echoes of Madness*

The play was staged as a convocation play on the 26th of January 2007 at Arts Theatre, University of Nigeria Nsukka. It was an exhilarating performance for all the actors performed very well. After the play it was observed that the actor who played *Obiora* (Kene Igboeli) had traits that suggested the role he played did not leave him after the performance. There were some traits of madness in him and this affected his psyche for at least a week after the performance. This event shows that the actor did not endeavour to acquire the needed acting skills required.

Conclusively, the experiences narrated above leave us with so many questions to ponder and reflect on, it also portrays the reality inherent in this discuss. Surprisingly, the occurrence in Esibia Irobi's *The Colour of Rusting Gold* seems to be a reoccurring one, since other characters who also played the role of *Ogidi* narrated a similar experience.

Ritualizing Performance on Stage and Performing Rituals

The three indispensable elements that make a theatrical performance complete are the actors, the space and the audience. On the one hand the audience is the fuel that moves the vehicle of a performance. Without an audience the performance cannot hold. On the other hand the theatre is the meeting place of the actor and the audience. It is a place of communion as well as a place for entertainment. In African ritual arena, the audience, the performers and space come together to form a cyclic synergy that is needed to have a complete ritual with full efficacy. The questions that arise are:

- What happens when ritual and all its paraphernalia are brought on stage?
- Is it proper to do this effectively without endangering any one?

Performance elements like songs, props, scenery etc contribute significantly to the beauty of a performance. The songs, in creating the mood, charge the tempo of the play. In performances with ritual songs some directors and actors go to places where these rituals originate and transplant them on stage without theatricalising them. Stage props can be created to resemble the idea of the playwright or director, but some designers also bring real life props on stage to be used, be it for ritual or otherwise. This could be harmful. It is this 'harm' that leads us to examine the implications of doing this.

When ritual and all its paraphernalia are brought to the stage we find that the performance has moved from the confines of the stage to ritualizing on stage. The implication which this paper has isolated to discuss is the idea of possession. The chances of avoiding possession while ritualizing is very slim. Further damage is wrought when a director probably typecasts. If a director gives a role to someone on the basis that the person has had such experience in life before, he might end up endangering the character and his fellow actors on stage. The process of possession is inherent in the fact that the actor lacks control on stage. Control is a very important skill which the actor must acquire and master on stage. But in the bid to master his role the actor encounters many trials. One of these trials is the need to perfect his role. In the bid to perfect his role we realise that the attention placed on the subconscious has submerged with the character he is playing. This creates a change in the body system; a new being is thus created. We find the most members of the audience applauding the great spectacle, only a few will realise that what is happening has transcended the physical. It has passed the realm of entertainment into the metaphysical world of transmigration, only that in this case the spirit moving to possess the body is a phantom. The actor being spiritually dead at that instance creates the chance for another being to come and overtake the body. This multi personality disorder creates a psychotic situation that might bring casualties on stage. Theatrical

performances should be left to evolve and live out its experience while ritual performances on the other hand should be allowed to serve its purpose. The interference of ritual on stage performances is to be avoided. Any attempt by a director to submerge the two will bring a negation in the spiritual and social order and this comes with consequences. In addition some aspects of ritual are strictly for those that are initiated. Rituals are sacred and anyone who undermines them by distorting the mystical energy embedded in them causes a huge obstruction. The use of songs meant for initiates by non initiates might be viewed as profane. In the quest to deliver roles effectively, the actor or director might become initiated but he still stands the chance of violating some sacred rules. Theatre as an art form is guided by strong theories and ethics as does the African world view. The Igbo nation has some philosophical thoughts that guide their life styles. The thought that encapsulates our discussion is the idea of 'You will always find what you are looking for'. So if you seek good, you find good, if you seek evil, you find evil. If you seek what you don't know, you will always find what you don't know. It is vital to illustrate with an experience one of the researchers observed during his service year with the National Troupe of Nigeria (NTN). In the year 2007 the troupe was required to take multicultural performance to the United States of America. Auditions were conducted and artists were brought from all the geo-political zones of the country. Most of the artists were accustomed with the ritual implications of the performances they were to enact since they were brought from the zones that had the ritual performances to be enacted. The performance that reflects our thoughts is the *Bori* ritual drama of the Hausa's. After the roles were taken, the lady (Voa Blaa) impersonating the *Bori* goddess started to complain of nightmares and what seemed like apparitions. Our efforts to reach her did not yield any result since she was no longer in the services of the national troupe. In a telephone interview she disclosed that "granting an interview for you on that incident will involve a lot of things like schnapps, kola nuts and other things... in fact I will not be able to grant that interview, I cannot grant it now." Since we could reach her we decided to interview other members of the troupe that were around during the time. The Director of Dance of the National Troupe of Nigeria and foremost choreographer Arnold Udoka and Veteran Drummer Abah gave us accounts of what happened during the *Bori* enactment. Abah narrates that "Voa told us that she was having serious nightmares. *Mama Bori* was angry that the troupe performed rituals for other to appease other deities and she is being taken for granted ... I was the lead drummer and I experienced everything." It is evident from Abah's statement that nothing was done to checkmate Voa's claims of having nightmares with such horrific visits. It was probably taken as idle gossip. The week before the troupe was to leave the country we were in the auditorium for rehearsals, at the point of the *Bori* enactment, immediately the lady (Voa Bla) landed on stage with her buttocks after the height leaps as it is with the performance, she became possessed, transport had occurred. It was no longer the artist but a being had overtaken her. Everything came to a standstill as fear and pandemonium gripped everyone. The director (Ahmed Yerima) who's maternal home was Hausa land and who also had knowledge about the ritual approached the stage to listen to the dictates of *Mama Bori*. Arnold Udoka submits that,

... the is the presentational and representational style. It is the style that determines the level of the actor's involvement in the ritual. It spells out the depth and level of medium ship or possession. I was the choreographer of the *Bori* production. What happened is that we did everything possible to stay away from the ritual content of *Bori*. But you must know that once you say *Bori* you have not stay away from anything, because *Bori* connotes a certain kind of spiritual performance that has to do with exorcism. So if you are to perform *Bori* on stage there is the possibility that you may get into other forms of electronic media which is not known to man but exist in the spiritual realm. So as long as you play the *Bori* music ... in fact what I did as much as possible was to avoid the use of the *Bori Guje* ... which is made from horse tails. The pitch is so high that once it hits you, you are taken (transported). *Voa Blaa* really got into the role probably because she comes from that area and had witnessed the performances before. The borderline between believe and disbelieve is so thing ... *Voa* probably believed the character so much and she automatically became a medium. This occurred though we tried to control it. We also had to get into libation. This was done to get things under control. Since what we wanted was to present that form of religion that existed in Africa and called sympathetic magic by our colonial masters. Our intention was to show the deep rooted philosophies guiding our religious belief system and performances. By the time we started pouring libation and saying these things slowly, she was released and no longer caught in the psychic web the medium ship slowly left her.

The inherent questions that this experience arouses are: Why did this happen? Could it have been averted? These things happened because the troupe at that time did not take into cognizance the dangers of performing ritual on stage. It could have been avoided if the performance was perfectly theatricalised. It is also possible that the actress in delivering this role did exert the spiritual, body, and mind control required to deliver those roles. The *Bori* artist was placed in an environment that brings about conflict in the body system. This conflict further grows into a dichotomy that places the body at binary oppositions with the soul. The term binary opposition is used in this context to explain in clear expression what happens to the body mechanics. The actor is an endowed human being; his endowment is not meant to destroy him. So it is necessary the actor masters skill and techniques that will protect him. An actor should also ask questions, observe and be a great researcher.

Dangers of Transport and Psychosis on Actors

Theatre performances are aesthetic works of art, creatively put together, enhanced with theatrical embellishments for the satisfactory enjoyment and edification of the audience. Every director works with a bunch of men and women as cast and crew to bring such wonder before a visual hungry audience. His aim is not to offer something mediocre but to offer a piece that will be alluring and which will probably leave his audience captivated.

To achieve this feat, every director chooses a production style with a working directorial concept to be able to realise such creativity. Production style informs, to a large extent, the

acting, scenery, directing and other aspects of production. Realism is a production style which requires that all aspects of a production, from acting down to scenery, props and costumes, to be as real and true to life as possible. The question of transport and psychosis not left to the actor alone as the director has a specific role to play in order to checkmate the actor's excesses which lead to either bad role interpretation or complete transformation of his real self. Ndubuisi Nnanna a director of one of the productions discussed in this paper is of the opinion that actors and directors need to work together to forestall possession in plays with ritualistic elements. However, he believes that,

It is not just the actor's acting as much as the presence of other elements such as music, props, costumes and make-up that lead to transport and possession. Possession occurs as an actor accelerates in his representation of character he is wearing. It occurs as the summation of the actor's experience heightens and the intensity of action consistently builds up towards climax... scene by scene the actor's experience cumulates in the climax to give a definition to the character's true personality".

As a point he notes that transport and psychosis may be completely avoidable on stage. In addition Nnanna also affirms that "a return to reality during a performance adversely affects the excellence of acting as much as not getting into the role and inadequate role interpretation can affect the play".

Actors must therefore perform, during rehearsals as they would perform on production day. This would be an opportunity for the actor and director to discover excesses and limitations and be able to put them in check before the production proper. In essence just as a director has the creative ability to work on the psyche of an actor, transforming him from an incompetent actor to a tremendous one. He equally has the ability to curtail the actor's seemingly uncontrollable psychosis and transport. Uche Nwaozuzu insists that a "director has no contribution to possession because acting is 80% actor's work and 20% director's. Beyond the stage, the versatile director also submits that "every professional actor must be able to draw a line between his real self and the characters he wears. Any actor who is unable to discard a given role he played did not act that role, but only succeeded in playing his real self on stage. Such an actor did not evolve well. A real actor should be able to go beyond himself and diversify and having played several roles, he must not display any given trait beyond the stage"

For realistic acting, actors are encouraged to live the parts they are playing. The human psyche is rather unstable and when there is a drive, a strong stimulus that leads to action, be it primary or secondary, reinforced by the director, the actor tends to begin to adjust to and adopt the life or character of the role he is playing. But when there are dual personalities in one man, there may be some form of interaction which may be adverse on either the real being or the adopted being. This research advocates that the real personality remains same, unchanged and undamaged. This is especially pertinent after the production. In as much as the actor wears a new being during the production, it is of most importance to the well being

of the actor that he ceases to wear or be this person the moment he steps out of the stage. However, as stated earlier, directors go to unhealthy lengths to get the best out of their actors. Some directors exert themselves on actors and this drives the actor to seek for ways through which to arrive at creating his role; example of this is method acting. These sort of psyche-arousing actions do more harm than good, especially in situations where actors/directors do not realise when to draw the lines. While aesthetics and creativity are considered as vital elements of arriving at a powerful production, the psyche of the audience should not be left unattended.

Directors and actors also need to understand that there is a point of no return when different personalities inhabit one body. This has several implications like an actor becomes too possessed as not know when he acts beyond the blockings given to him by his director. An unhealthy interaction between these personalities could cause a great damage to the actor's real being. Directors always need to bear in mind that man's psychology is not as stable as he may appear in the physical.

The process of out of the body experience which happens to the actor creates an atmosphere where there is harsh reaction in the body system. The reaction turns the body against the new spirit that possesses the actor. The outcome of the reaction is a level of psychosis. We discover that the experience in each of the performances we discussed differ due to the nature of the actors interpretation and production styles. But the underlying similarity is that transport occurred. Though the experience differs according to the nature and form of the performance, in some cases we discover near death experiences which were averted; in others we discover traumatic and chaotic encounter which the actor faces.

Control of the Body and Spirit

In the face of this emergent issue, control becomes the actor's most valued asset. Though all the actor's assets are valuable and indispensable, control is priceless for it is only control that will allow the actor retain his sanity and his spirit while on stage and off stage. Stage performances are enactments put before an audience in a defined space. They are also creative, deliberate acts put together in order to entertain, educate, advocate or used as a propaganda or awareness tool. Performances in professional and educational theatres are meant to be adequately rehearsed with professional and seasoned actors and actresses. Performance styles, theories and concepts guide the acts put on stage before an audience. The ability of the actor to be in control of himself/herself means he is in control of his senses, imagination and spirit in extension. An actor who succeeds in mastering the technique of control masters the art to fight the spiritual law of attention. This law of attention is what makes the actor to place more attention on the role he is playing than on himself. This is what leads to the crisis of transport and possession. Udoka on this note narrates that,

I was made to ply the role of second witch in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. I used the Stanislavski's technique to realise my role. Since I have not seen witch or been one before I took the role so seriously that two weeks after the performance I was never myself, I was transmuting... I will desire to be in the hostel and I will be

there without knowing how I got there. Maybe I got into the role so much... so I became what I created- super human. For two weeks I was not myself. I have been in the arts for forty-two years now, I can say that it is not possible to control what happens to the mind or change of adrenaline. What we need is to find a technique that best suits us.

It is very important to control the mind while acting. The mind is said to be the power house of the body. If the actor therefore consciously or unconsciously sacrifices his mind on the stage altar then he must surely be ready to become a sacrificial lamb. Hence, if the actor does not wish to cause gross harm on his mind, soul, spirit and body then he should make sure to protect his being from all extraneous materials. Does this mean that the actors' dual nature cannot conflict? It is the shift in 'balance' in the actor's dual existence that necessitates possession. In African performances the audience does not only serve as spectators but are active participants in the dramatic ritual performance. In some cases the communal nature of the festival serves as a source of strength and spiritual energy to the major participants. Our ritual theatres have highly spiritual tendency of possession on an actor by unknown spirits. There is need to always bear in mind that such stage performances are only for pure entertainment as they are re-enactments. When the hunger for a truly realistic performance is confused for an enactment, the actor may be exposed to dangers of possession which directors may not be able to control in good enough time to prevent bodily, emotional and or psychological damage on the actor. When traditional performances are re-enacted on stage, the safety of the audience should be considered since the stage performance audience is not involved in the ritual process. The actual traditional audience is deeply involved in the process and are educated and informed about their roles in this process. As precaution, directors need to be aware of the dangers of transport and possession and be ready with a solution should a feared incident arise.

However, it is rightly said that prevention is better than cure, especially as some spiritual matters are beyond human solution. In the production process of a stage performance, the performance night often comes with a certain kind of spirit. Everything needed to have a performance is there- set, light, make-up, costumes, props, fellow actors, songs etc but all these are there during dress rehearsals. The missing element that ignites a certain fire is the audience. The audience completes the process. The auditorium thus becomes a cyclic whole, that when the actor faces the audience he has two choices- to be in control or allow the character be in control. In this lies the danger of 'playing to the gallery.'

CONCLUSION

Acting is a spiritual process as it is physical. The need for the actors to equip themselves with various skills and techniques that will help restrain extraneous intrusions is highly necessary. Concentration, relaxation, exercises, restraint and control all form part of the skills actors need to avert dangers while acting. This paper recognizes the indispensable role of actors on stage and off stage. Psychosis and transport have been identified as part of these negative

intuitions that cause severe damage on actors. Much have been written and said about actor training, actor performance and acting in general. This paper contributes and opens up new vistas to this thought process. So if encouraged and effectively articulated our ambition and efforts of equipping actors with the dangers inherent in delivering their roles will be realised.

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