



MASQUERADE CULTURE IN IGBO RELIGION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Rev Fr Dr Christian O. Ele, PhD

General Studies Division, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani, Enugu, Nigeria

Keywords: Masquerade Culture, Igbo Religion, Theory, Practice, Pastoral Concerns, Sustainable National Development.

Abstract

Masquerade culture in Igbo society occupies a critical space in Igbo religious thought and practice. It is informed by the people's belief in the existence of spirits and the desire to interact with these spiritual realities whose abode is in the spiritual world but who can make intermittent appearances in the physical realm, that is, in the world of human persons. The spirits can appear on their own or when invoked by human beings or on the occasions slated for their celebrations. The findings of this work reveal, inter alia, that masquerade culture has refused to quit the cultural stage in Igbo society even with the advent and sustenance of westernization, urbanization and the robust existence of Christianity in the land. One becomes curious to discover what makes its thoughts pervasive, its practice sustainable and its future a possibility. This interrogation informs the fulcrum of this study. In this paper, therefore, we shall strive to discuss Masquerade culture in Igbo Religion from the perspectives of its theory and practice. In addition, it intends to highlight the pastoral concerns which this index of folk religion raises within the missionary fields of Christianity in the area. Furthermore, it shall interrogate the usefulness or uselessness of masquerade culture in the face of the needed contemporary sustainable national development. The methodology employed in this paper is Culture Area Approach which means that the study focused largely on the theory and practice of masquerade culture as found to exist in Igbo society.

Introduction

Masquerade culture is found to exist in all parts of Igbo land; it is gender exclusive and therefore has secrets and initiations meant largely for the males. The participations by the females are strictly restrictive in the sense that theirs are external like

watching them at displays, cooking at their feasts or coming to know their secrets at a very old age like the few instances of *Oyima Omabe* or *Oyi Odo* (*Oyodo*). It is believed that at this age of hers, the old woman can keep secrets and that it has been proven that she has antecedents of keeping secrets. *Oyima* is a combination of two words "Oyi" which means friend

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and “Ma” which is spirit. *Oyima* therefore means from its etymological derivative “friend of the spirit”. It is at once a title and a female name in Igbo society. *Omabe* and *Odo* are masquerade types; *Oyima Omabe* is a friend of *Omabe* as *Oyi Odo (Oyodo)* is a friend of *Odo*. The women who bear any of these titles get it at a very old age and by virtue of it can visit *omabe* or *Odo* in its hamlet and access its secrets.

According to Ugwu (1987:32), “The one common feature of all masquerades in Obukpa and the surrounding towns is the position of women and children. For men, the masquerades are men dressed in masks but the very moment they are so dressed, they are no longer mere human beings but men raised above others to the spirit level worthy of worship and adoration. Men surprisingly worship these masked men with awe and fear that beat imagination. Women and children are told that the masquerades are dead persons who revisit the earth. In spite of obvious proofs that the masquerades are ordinary human beings, women in their pious credulity and sometimes out of fear of men-folk worship and accept the masquerades as men and women of the spirit world.” Masquerades include dreadful, singing, occult, friendly, talking, playful and silent types. In the words of Arua (2014:44), “The masquerades are classified into categories based on specialization. Each possesses particular attributes (war like prowess, mystical powers, youthfulness and old age) and specializes in one or more skills (dancing skills, acrobatics, and other ritual manifestations).” Some masquerades have music as part of their performances and displays. Some of the musical instruments, compositions and performances allude to the fertile minds of the African forebears and the rich heritage of African traditional musicology. Some

move with bells tied to the dorsal space and others go with the accompaniment of flutes and music; there are silent types that go without speech, sound or noise like the *idugiridu*. Some move with live animals like cocks in their hands or goat and ram tied to their waists yet others emit smokes and fire from their heads as they display their unique activities in the public domain. As some go with acolytes of human beings, dancers or masquerades of lesser degrees, some do attract to themselves entourage of watchers as they move along the modern roads or village paths. As some go in clusters, others are loners. The masquerades have costumes made from fresh palm fronds and dried palm leaves, plantain dried stems or from clothes and woods, the sculptor’s masks.

Theory of Masquerade culture

Masquerade from its Igbo philological derivative is *muo*, *ma*, *nd’ma* (spirit) or *Muonwu*, a combination of two words *muo* (spirit) and *onwu* (death). So *Muonwu (Muonwu)* is “spirit of the dead” or “spirit of death” (Ele, 2022:6; Onwuatiegwu, 2019: 50). Masquerade culture has its underpinning thoughts and ideas in African Traditional Religion from which one gets the epistemology of the belief system. Onwuatiegwu (2019: 50) along this thought line explains *Muonwu* cult as an institution is deep rooted in pagan cultism and magical manipulation that involves a great deal of diabolical influence.” Masquerades are believed to be spirits whose visitations are from the spiritual realm through ant holes. There is no documentary evidence that shows the origins of masquerades in Igbo culture due to its orality-characteristic but suffice it to mention that the Igbo people as a highly religious race use their masquerades to concretize their belief in the world beyond the physical realm whose inhabitants are

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recognized in the visible masquerades. In the theology of the incarnation of Christ Jesus, God became man and shared in our humanity. In Igbo religion, the visible man as masquerade is said to have become a spirit who remained a spirit and not man among men. It is believed that through the masquerade culture, human beings interact with the spirit through whom their messages are delivered to *Chukwu* (the Supreme Being). These masquerades are believed to come with warnings, directives, afflictions, corrections and also blessings as the case may be. They help appease the gods. Some sacrificial rituals are performed by masquerades. And some of them are believed to be the spirit of the dead while others are created as spirits by God as such. In the words of Ugobude (2021:1), “In Igbo land, masquerades are seen as superior beings. When a masquerade is seen in public, they have to be treated with respect because it is believed that they embody both the spirit and human worlds. There’s also a popular theory that the masquerades spring from the soil, making them higher than man, and regard as such”. How the forefathers arrived at these ideas about the origins and nature of masquerades and hold them as true can only be understood in terms of tricks of cultural grips.

There is an Igbo proverb that says, “The world is a dancing masquerade. If you want to understand it, you can’t remain standing in one place.” - *Uwa bu mmownwu. Anaghi ano ofu ebe ekiri mmonwu*. In his interview with Ulli Beier who thinks that the proverb is an important statement and seeks to know the extent it is still relevant to Igbo today, Chinua Achebe responded thus: “Yes, you are absolutely right in thinking it’s a very important statement. First of all, the masquerade is, perhaps, the most typical of all

Igbo arts, because it contains so many things. It is a theatre; it is dance, music, architecture; all kinds of motion, graceful motion. Then there is the religious aspect. The masquerade is a representative of the ancestors – of eternity. It comes to visit the living, thus establishing a link between the past and the present. History is one continuous”. “How”? He rhetorically asked. He continued: “Now, the spectators in the arena, they cannot stand rooted somewhere or take a seat...They must get up and follow the masquerade around, if they want to see it in all its magnificence and from all angles. So that’s the literal meaning. But now the symbolic meaning, and why it is a proverb - not just a statement... The proverb is applicable to other things. You use it when you are telling people not to get so deeply in one thing that they don’t see the possibility of change. The world is in a continuous state of flux, and we, as inhabitants of the world, must learn to adapt, to change, and move. So the whole concept of mobility in Igbo culture is enshrined in that proverb. Even old customs – customs that are wonderful – may at times no longer be useful. We must be ready at any moment to try something new. That is basic to Igbo culture, the idea of change – you know, that “no condition is permanent...,” he so concluded on the proverb. It is instructive from his elucidation that even the masquerade is a subject to the dynamism of culture, continuities and discontinuities.

The mere covering of the face as a religious attire or to hide one’s identity does not make one a masquerade. There are some folk religious rituals that take place. Therefore it is not just that a figure appears from the spiritual realm in the human person covering his face; there are some rites and rituals that are performed behind the scenes. This description of

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the necessity of rites and rituals is critical to the definition of masquerades as it gives the distinctive and specific difference between masquerades properly so called and other forms of appearances in similar forms. Masquerade culture in its theory and practice in Igbo society and religion has both visible and invisible dimensions. It has process of initiation, domiciliation of ancient secrets and systems which are believed to have and command occult powers. Masquerade or masking culture has connections with genders, powers – physical, magical or metaphysical and identity as it depicts a people, a feast or a ritual and rite; hence *Akatakpa nkpurunkashi* n'Obukpa, *Oriokpa* Nsukka, *Akatakpa* Ibagwa, *Elu d'Ihe*, *Obodo Agu* Umunocha, *Otoshi* Umu-Ugwuoke, *Odo Ugwu* Amaozara, *Ekwe*, *Adada* in Obukpa, *Odo* Aku, *Odo* Neke and so on. There are *Muonwu Ijele*, *Izaga*, *Uлага*, *Ajulaka*, *Ikponyi*, *Ogede*, *Igele*, *Ajasi*, *Ojionu*, *Akataka*, *Okporompi*, *Adamma*, *et cetera*. Very close to the nature of any masquerade are the people's cosmology, the ecology and the environment. This explains their seasons, reasons and the materials from which their costumes, clothes, coverings or masks are made.

Practice of Masquerade Culture

The practice of masquerade culture begins from within the practitioners' circles; that is a reference to the intrinsic and esoteric operational activities known only to the initiates in the hidden places based on time like the darkness of the night or space such as forests, grooves, body of waters, caves, deserts, mountains and secluded places designated for the events. It is not an open affair. The appearances, displays and performances in broad day light or in open places are preceded by these aforesaid rites and

rituals known only to the members of the inner circles.

Masquerades are classified as dreadful, singing, occult, friendly, talking, playful and silent types. Some exhibit masculinity while others show feminine qualities. These show that the spirits from the land of the dead come as male and female. However, even the female types still have males behind the costumes or masks. Some masquerades thrill their listeners with their music whenever they are on the stage for performance and displays. There are varieties of music according to masquerades – *egwu omade*, *egwu ulaga*, *egwu ekwe*, *egwu adamma*, among others. The musical instruments, compositions and performances are credible evidences of the cognitive faculties of the African ancestors and the rich heritage of African traditional musicology. Some move with bells tied to the dorsal spaces or round their waists and others go with the accompaniment of flutes and music. The practice of masquerade culture is based on seasons, feasts and festivals or other cultural events like funeral ceremonies that call for their performance. In Igbo traditional society, the significance of masquerades are seen to be relevant in the areas of funeral ceremonies, entertainment / social displays, Judicial arm and security, Traditional festivals, Rituals and political expressions of bio-social roots.

- Funeral Ceremonies

In the celebration of the last rites of the eldest man (*Onyishi*) or traditional title holders or some persons including aged women whose positive contributions to the paternal or matrimonial community are known, masquerades are involved. In the case of the *onyishi*, the eldest man *akatakpa* and

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onyenweal' masquerades are involved in the different stages of the funeral rites. The appearance of *Ekwe*, *Adada* and *Oshimili* during the funeral ceremonies of men and women are taken to be rewards for life well spent on earth.

- Entertainment / Social displays
One can see the atmosphere charged with much preparedness towards display and readiness to watch masquerades perform during its seasons or at specific occasions. At the surface level, one can see the beauty of costumes, the music and dance, the awe and gifts. This is evidenced by the huge number of people who gather to watch these masquerades and offer their gifts and accolades.
- Judicial arm and security
Within the Igbo traditional society, masquerades form part and parcel of the judicial process. Some judgments are delivered by masquerades and some laws are implemented by the masquerades. In the same vein, some punishments are meted out to offenders by masquerades. In the sphere of security, they were applied as security operatives to ensure that law and order exist in the community.
- Traditional Festivals
There are Igbo traditional feasts and festivals that have masquerades as their essentials such as ancestor worship celebrated in *onwa eto*, *onwa eno*, *onwa ise*, *onwa esaa*, and new yam festivals (*Nkpuru nkashi*, *Ushujioku*). These have *akatakpa* in their numbers during these festivals. Some festivals (*Egba*, *Oriri*)

bear the names of the masquerades that constitute the major players at their events such as *Egba Omabe ne Egba Odo*, *Akatakpa Nkpurunkashi*, *Akatakpa Uke*, *Akatakpa Onwa esaa*, among others.

- Rituals
Some religious rituals are exclusive reserves of masquerades. The rituals around the *Onyishi* who has joined his ancestors are performed largely by the masquerade *onyenweal'*.
- Political Expressions of Bio-social Roots
Some masquerades are at once religious and political. In the latter, they depict the political statuses of kindred and clans. These are called *ma odudo*; they include *Ekwe*, *Adada*, *Oshimili*, *Enyanwu*, *Ogaeze*, et cetera.

Good readings of the above activities of masquerades in Igbo society reveal in more senses than one that they have Christian values or modern ways of doing things to dialogue with on serious grounds. It is in the light of this reality that masquerade culture in Igbo religion raises a lot pastoral concern.

Pastoral Concerns

Both Christians and practitioners of Igbo Religion dwell in same space of Igbo society. They are related by consanguinity and affinity but part ways in matters concerning their respective faiths. One is a disciple of Christ who has found the New Way but the other is a follower of the traditions of the Igbo forebears who practices the belief systems of the folk religion. As these share some commonalities of space and time, there are attractions and distractions, a call for continuities and an urge for discontinuities in matters of masquerade culture. It is about faith-meets-faith in mutual respect and admiration at one

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time but in another clime it turns out to be crisis and conflict between Christians and the adherents of the traditional religion. Therefore in the face of these situations, masquerade culture in Igbo religion raises some pastoral concerns as shall be discussed below:

Christian participation

Christian participation in masquerade culture is a huge pastoral concern in Igbo land and across Africa. It is a cultural index that has occupied the catechetical syllabus and synods, theological opinions and magisterial teachings of local ordinaries in Igbo land. At the universal level, the Church as Mother and Teacher “rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men”. Furthermore, she “exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men” (Vatican 11, 1965, *Nostra Aetate*, No. 2).

In the light of the above universal magisterium, Catholic Diocese of Nsukka, a local Church in Igbo land in her Post-Synodal Exhortation teaches that: “Masquerades in all their forms are symbols of African Traditional Religion and Culture. They form a very compact system. The functions of masquerades in African tradition range from entertainment to maintenance of law and order in the society. However, some of the masquerades serve a purely religious purpose”. In order to avert the clashes that

arise intermittently between these masquerades and Christians, the Church directs as follows:

- Effort is to be made by Parish and Diocesan Inculturation Committees to preserve what is good and noble in these masquerades such as artifacts, music, and noble ends of entertainment and discipline.
- The burning of religious artifacts by some overzealous Christians must be stopped. All such artifacts can only be taken with the due consent of their rightful owners. They are to be labeled with dates and necessary information e.g., its origin and history and kept in the Diocesan Museum for historical purposes.
- Because of the close link between African Traditional Religion and masquerades, it is very difficult to fully inculturate them now. We therefore instruct that for no in-depth studies and catechesis are to continue on these matters.
- Those parts of the Diocese where Christmas masquerades already exist are to continue with such practice since this will help to diminish and possibly eliminate the exclusive cultic undertone of pagan masquerades. It will also help to keep alive the possibility of full inculturation of the masquerade.
- In the case of clashes between Christians and pagan masquerades, violence is to be the least contemplated alternative. Instead, recourse is to be made to law enforcement agents and to the civil courts (2.3; Nos. 19-23, Pp. 22-24).

The Holy Mother Church is the “universal sacrament of salvation” (Vatican 11, *Lumen Gentium* 1 & 48).

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The Church is a missionary sent into the world and by the virtue of her mission in the world (Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8), she must encounter peoples and cultures. So the Church has a lot to do with culture because she must evangelize peoples; and no society, community or nation is a cultural desert. The Church to understand the people, she must necessarily understand their culture. Within the matrix of the people's culture, she would understand the behaviours of the peoples simply understood as a way of life. The way of life of a people is the people's culture. Culture can be understood, described or explained as those consistencies that are found to exist among human beings within the context of social interaction; this social activity is proper to human beings as social animals within their environment. So the Church has a lot to do with the people's culture. Some approaches to culture include rejection, acceptance, syncretism and evangelization. All about culture in its multiple aspects cannot be rejected blindly; all about culture cannot be accepted totally without proper studies and evaluation in the light of the gospel values; all about culture cannot be embraced in syncretism without caution. However, as evangelizer of peoples and cultures, the Holy Mother Church strives and speaks to cultures in evangelization.

It is to understand the relationship or otherwise between culture and religion. It is true that religion is part of culture but culture does not explain all about religion because religion has bipolar dimensions. Man is involved with culture and God is involved in religion and God is meta-culture because culture is man-made. Therefore, culture does not explain all about religion and religion is larger than culture. The aspect of culture we are talking about in this paper is

masquerade culture in Igbo religious metaphysics. Masquerade in Igbo socio-religious practice in its various forms is unacceptable to Christianity. This is because masquerade culture is a critical aspect of African Traditional Religion (Ele, 2022:5-10).

The theory of masquerade as spirit is a lie. Christians by virtue of their calling do not propagate lies as they have rejected Satan the father of lies, his works and empty promises earlier at baptism (John 8:44; Matthew 28:19-20). Masquerade as spirit does not in a way explain incarnation – the spirit taking flesh. Incarnation is real and is proper to Christ, true God who took flesh and dwelt among us as man, the Emmanuel – God-with-us (John 1:1-3, 14; Phil 2:1-10, Matthew 1:23). Christians do not participate in traditional feasts, rituals and rites that are essentials to African Traditional Religion. Christmas masquerades and the appearance of masquerades in Christian cultural competitions need further pastoral interrogations to be certain about their advancements or disadvantages to the gospel message. Both the theory and practice of masquerade culture in Igbo Religion raise pastoral concerns in plural. It also prompts the question about its place and contributions to Sustainable National development.

Sustainable National Development

The findings of this work reveal also that masquerade culture as it is being practiced today causes havoc and harm in the society. Without meaningful contributions to sustainable national development, they have ugly records of human rights violations.

Human Rights Violations

Chukwudozie (1999:48) describes human rights as “the freedoms which all human beings naturally have from the moment they are born. They are rights or

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freedoms which we all enjoy automatically because we are human beings”. The **United Nations’** Universal Declarations of Human Rights, 10 December 1948 and the chapter IV of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria of 1999 as amended recognize the right to life, right to movement, freedom of association and of religion, among others. These rights have been suffering gross abuses in the hands of masquerades in various communities across Africa. In Nsukka area of Enugu State, Nigeria the masquerades known mostly for these violations are the *omabe (oriokpa)* and *Odo*. (Ele, 2018:1-6). Other masquerades in other societies across Nigeria and Africa contribute injuriously to the diaries of violations.

Diaries of Human Rights Violations

Masquerade culture has recorded vast human rights violations across Igbo land. This ugly trend has raised issues on the legitimacy of its continued practice and whether it has any meaningful contributions to sustainable national development. According to Ede (2018) in Ugwuaji Awkunanaw, masquerades rule the night, traumatize victims, impose fines and demand appeasement. In this community, it is a taboo to see the night masquerades as they parade unless one has been initiated into the masquerade cult; whether one is in the house and opened the window or door to let in fresh air, or one mistakenly runs into them as a traveler or for whichever reason, the person becomes a victim. The proximity of this area to the Coal city, the state capital of Enugu and the presence of over 30 churches of different Christian denominations and increased urbanization, has not been to stop certain traditional practices, such as masquerade ceremonies and so they still hold sway today; and this does not recognize traveler, indigene or visitor. In the words of

The Chief Shepherd of the Catholic Diocese of Nsukka, Bishop Godfrey Onah (2017) condemned in strong terms the attack on a seminarian Lawrence Ezeugwu by a group of masquerades known as Oriokpa Nsukka. The seminarian was beaten to coma, dispossessed of his phone and given knife cut on his head. In his words: “It’s unfortunate that in this 21st century some youths in Nsukka area will cover their face and block roads, beating and extorting money from people who are going about their legitimate businesses in the name of masquerade.” He went on to say that “The security agents should treat these criminals who hide under the guise of masquerade to harass and harm law-abiding citizens as terrorists and cultists.” Going further, the Bishop taught that: “The Oriokpa masquerade is evil cult and a form of idol worship; anybody engaging in it is worshipping idol” (Uzodinma, 2017). In Neke, women, the non-indigenes or the natives but uninitiated stay indoors after 10 am until the next morning two days to the disappearance of Odo (Oguamanam et al, 2018:91). This is a restriction to people’s right to movement, a violation of people’s privacy, a distortion of public peace and an injurious harm on the social order.

Masking and masquerade culture promotes religious intolerance in various communities. In Plateau State, masquerades invaded a Church disrupted the church service. As reported by Amos Tauna (2022), “Some masquerades in Shikal village of Lantang South Local Government Area of Plateau State stormed a Church ... on Sunday flogged worshippers and the pastor. The masquerades were also said to have destroyed musical equipment and disrupted the Sunday service.” Throwing more light on the ugly event, the Pastor in charge of the Grace of God Mission in

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Shikal-Talbut where the incident took place Pastor John Dashe narrated: “The masqueraders destroyed all the musical instruments of our Church – the drum set, piano, loudspeakers – were destroyed.” They also destroyed the box in which church money was kept”. He went on to say that these masqueraders carted away 550,000 Naira with guitar, amplifier and the stabilizer (Dashe, J. 2022). In Aku and Neke communities in Enugu State, curfews are placed including Sundays by the practitioners of masquerade culture in the name of *Odo* traditions and festivals. According to Oguamanam et al (2018:91), during the departure *una* *odo* Neke, “No church activity would take place outside the church building, no school would function. In case of any breach, there is no fine, the punishment is death”. In all these *Odo* schedules of events, Christians are specially targeted for torture. There are records of masquerades menaces across Nigeria, invading Churches and injuring members. Examples include the stories of Anambra (Chukindi Joe, 2018), Akwa Ibom (Iniabasi Umo, 2019), Ondo (Ameh Comrade Godwin, 2015), Kogi (Adama, 2013:179), among others.

The frequent crises between the Church and the masquerade institution stem largely from the latter’s violation of the freedom of association and right to one’s choice of religion. The *Omabe* and *Odo* masquerades could have “home coming” (*uda* *ma*) or “departure” (*ula* *ma*) schedules on Sundays or Holy days of obligation. The fulcrum of the matter is that since women and children do not see their true nature of nakedness (*odo* *gba* *oto*, *omabe* *nkp’ta*), then Church activities have to stop. The Holy Mother Church has resisted these attempts but with wounds and scars. At other times, *Akatakpa* could schedule

its market ceremonies (*izz* *ashua* *ma*) and bans commercial activities for the day, days or native week. With these illegitimate infringements on people’s rights, victims are separated from their legitimate groups, fellow worshippers or business associates. However, with the lawful resistance by the Church in various communities and the neglect of their calls for closure of markets by some business men, the crises are ongoing as some of them are sponsored by politicians for cheap political gains or by literate but fallen or weak Christians in the garb of neo-paganism (Ele, C.O., 2018: 88).

Masquerades have perpetrated crimes such as ritual murder (Ajayi, 2015), rape (Ozor 2012), disruption of peace and social order, torture and extortion (Ozor, 2015), inflictions of physical injuries (Adegun, 2017), armed robbery (Rita Okoye, 2012) in contemporary societies to mention but these. These atrocities, violence and various shades of criminalities score the institution low and do not enhance it as an agent of sustainable national development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There are various schools of thought on the masquerades’ existence in contemporary Igbo society. Some explain the youth participation in masquerade and masking activity today as cultural revival, others see it as a critical part of Igbo culture and therefore should be supported with every sense of religious duty. However, the negative sides of masquerade culture dint its image in bad light and question its usefulness and right to existence. All the provisions of entertainment, security and religious value which are purported to enhance the significance and gains of masquerades in Igbo Society have been largely replaced with new realities in these sectors. Christians should face their religion and

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embrace it in sincere discipleship instead of backsliding in the religion they have rejected at baptism. However, there are some aspects such as Christmas masquerades, music, artifacts and discipline that could be studied with the view to understanding their worth and decipher their values which could be preserved. The African religious underpinnings of masquerades are not Christian and therefore should not be upheld or practiced by Christians. It is grossly misleading to plunge the youths into believing that masquerade culture is cultural revival and the way to go by politicians who keep them in chains for their selfish political interests. When politicians opt for the renovation of the hamlets of masquerades and support their festivals with millions of naira, it defines their mischief and erosion of values. The truth is that if the government engages the youths in meaningful ventures that enhance their integral development, the troubles posed by masquerades will be found only in history books. The judicial system should be committed to ensuring that masquerades that injuriously violate peoples' rights face the full wrath of the law. The traditional institutions in Igbo land should ensure that the positive cultural values of Igbo people serve the integral developmental needs of the present generation and the yet-unborn who are also important members of the family.

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Rev Fr Dr Christian O. Ele, PhD

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Rev Fr Dr Christian O. Ele, PhD