

Carnival, New Media, and the Performance of Self in the Age of Sexuality Discourse

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Abstract

From the earliest of times, masking as revealed in carnivals had served as a means through which people expressed themselves overtly without moderation. Behind the veiled identity and freedom characteristic of carnival, individuals tend to be more relaxed to perform different identities, just the way one would in the privacy of one's cocoons. In this paper, attempts shall be made to deconstruct the activities inherent in the carnival and new media as a culmination of what the society frowns at but which, invariably, is what the "self" desires and ultimately performs especially in this age of sexuality discourse. Conclusions are drawn from the way people perform themselves behind such digital platforms as Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, BBM, WhatsApp, YouTube etc., owing largely to the explosion in Internet usage; as popular means of communication, less expensive as well as accessible to a large heterogeneous audience. As a result of the relative ease with which information is shared, cultural appropriations and expropriation play major roles as individuals are influenced by what they see on the social media platforms. The motivation of this paper is hinged on the premise of a society sandwiched between passivity in the erosion of value system and the thirst for postmodernist ideals of the contemporary times. Using Bakhtin's Carnival theory and performance analysis, the paper concludes that societies over the years have served as a moderator of life's idiosyncrasies and that carnival performance, which thrives on elaborate costuming and masking and the new media have, therefore, exposed our real selves as liberal, unhindered and carefree performers on the 'global space' of the social media. This freedom to express oneself behind the façade of the digital masks (new media), is a pointer that culture's fluidity, flexibility and permeability are occasioned by the changing times of the third

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millennium. This position presupposes a warm embrace with Western sexuality which negates Africanist ideals.

Introduction

Erving Goffman in his *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) argues that daily life bears a dramatic structure; each of us is an “actor” who plays certain ‘parts’ in front of a believing ‘audience’ of colleagues, acquaintances, family and friends. He calls this a ‘front’ – the posture one employs to convince someone else of something, or to earn a certain social standing. Goffman points out that an individual may not consciously be aware of his ‘performance.’ But this fact according to him does not mean that his behaviour is any less performed than that of a stage actor who is well aware of his acts and art (playing a role). This position is captured aptly by Marvin Carson, who avers that, “performance is always performance for someone, some audience that recognises and validates it as performance even when, as is occasionally the case, that audience is self” (Carson, 2015: 32). It is against this background that this paper contends that carnival – a street processional and caravan-like performance and the digital mask which is characteristic of the emergent new media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and WhatsApp – has thrust up scenarios where individuals perform themselves. The social media reveal situations where individuals in the privacy and comfort of their homes use their digital devices as masks to perform multiple roles. At the centre of this media convergence is the concept of status leveller, a situation where no one knows ‘who is who’. Roger Scruton, quoted by Samantha Schroeder, asserts: “I lie behind my face, and yet I am present in it, speaking and looking through it at a world of others who are in turn both revealed and concealed like me” (2015:1).

The explosion and revolution in the new media, made possible by the Internet and social media with their offspring: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube and even fashion and music, have been termed media convergence. This concept of convergence, according to Edde Iji (2015), is 21st century groomed and delivered. All the media of communication converge, unify, synergise, and form thoughts that are released to the masses that share and rebroadcast same information

thereby energising an attitudinal change, whether negative or positive. The social network is a major player and platform for this performance of self and sexuality narratives. Because of the relative ease with which information is shared on the social media, individuals hide behind their devices, use pseudo names and are at liberty to form different opinions, play different roles of 'self' and send same to unsuspecting members of this global platform. Samantha (2015:3), captures this inter alia:

The artful crafting of an identity on Facebook, the artistic rendering of everyday life on Instagram, the selective personal musings on Twitter, the sensual scrolling on Tumblr, and the Barbie dream house boards on Pinterest—the ways in which we digitally mask ourselves can seep into every aspect of our lives, virtually unnoticed. This masking of the self, however, is not a new human inclination.

This position by Samantha may not be new in the West; however, it has become a new trend in Africa and specifically amongst Nigerian youths. The newness is not unconnected with the revolution in Global System for Mobile communication (GSM) which came into force in Nigeria in year 2000. With smart phones, the youths can engage in all forms of information sharing and rebroadcast using the social media platform. Since people are both audience and performers on the social media, according to Nwamuo (2015:23), 'such audience engineering at media convergence should enable them aspire to the ideal world, the utopia state of affairs' especially for the developing nations, which consume what the West produces. However, they are usually at the vanguard of negative creativity, counterfeiting the West in their developmental strides. At the centre of it all are the individuals, 'the self' whose preponderance for image laundering on the social media is for no other reason than the search for an identity and its performance.

The 'Self' as subject and object of Performance

The word 'Self' is probably from the Latin word "suus" meaning one's own. It means the personality or character that makes a person different from other people. It can also mean the combination of emotions, thoughts, feelings and the individual's idiosyncrasies. These are what forms a person and sets him/her apart from the other. The self is the

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individual “I am” i.e. the material that is part of an individual organism, the ability of the immune system to distinguish “self” from “non-self.” Philosophers have taught and written much about the self. For instance, Rene Descartes in his ‘cogito ego sum’ (I think, therefore I am) postulates that to think of the ‘self,’ the ‘I’ is to exist, such that when one is incapable of thinking the ‘I am’ (self), then one does not actually exist. To exist, therefore, is the knowledge of the self. It is in the same vein that Socrates exclaims in his dictum “Man, know thyself, for unexamined life is not worth living.” The capacity to know the ‘self’ is the beginning of knowledge and success in human life. However, it is this same knowledge that, as an individual, you are the master of your actions and inactions that lead to points of abuse of the self, in this instance, its performance as one sees with the use of digital devices on the social media platforms. However, this performance of self is strikingly different from what Spalding Gray calls auto performance, a concept which refers to, “presentations conceived and performed by the same person.” (quoted in Mitchel, 1985:112). Rather, the performance of self in the social media, represents a personal style of working in which the actor actually uses himself as text; he literally structures his own performance material from bits and pieces of his personal and public life and sends across to friends on different group fora of which he/she is a member. The idea, is to create an impression of a status (social, economic and sexual orientation) different from the ‘real self’ in social reality.

Performance of Self and Sexuality Discourse

Performance is a timeless phenomenon that is engraved in the subconscious of every culture. Culture, on the other hand, is multifocal, aggregating everything; from nature to nurture. Gender and sexuality is a mixture of nature and culture, of biology and learned behaviour. Reflecting from the hindsight above, the concept of self and sexuality can be understood based on what the dynamism of societies has thrust on men and women in recent times. Women’s survival, for example, depends on beauty: hence, the more sexually attractive a woman is, the more attention she attracts and, conversely, the issue of ‘self and sexuality’ becomes laundered. In the words of Michael Ryan:

“Women’s survival may depend on beauty. If you go online, you will find sites devoted to Sugar Daddies (such as SeekingArrangement.com), who look for younger women to support financially in exchange for sexual favours” (Ryan, 2010: 26). In a world of uneven distribution of resources amongst the genders, the men may be endowed with economic and political powers, but it is the women who quench the sexual cravings of the men. Ryan defines sexuality as “the practice of gender,” and is characterised by a clear male-female binary opposition in most people. Citing an example of Japanese “queer-scape” he alludes that on the Internet, “adult women, many of whom, one can probably assume, are heterosexual, explore their fascination with adult male-boy homosexuality. However, sexuality is actually practised bearing in mind its many appendages; male-female, female-male, male-male, female-female and its attendant gender complexity and it is the new media through its many applications and uses that have brought us closer to this sexual liberty, and choices are made of these images of sexual attraction. But the media, whether old or new, can only report or broadcast and rebroadcast images it has access to. The individual with his/her digital devices and at the privacy of his/her hideout (digital mask) becomes the major broadcaster of ‘self’; hence, the sensual and lewd images (sexuality) assaulting the rest of the audience (group members in a forum) on the social media. They are instances where an individual sends a sex-texting chat across to a forum for discussion, another sends nude picture requested of her/him from a lover, and yet another posts a video of the sex act; all these images come from unknown and at times known individuals (who use pseudo names) and these go very far into trapping unsuspecting and innocent members of other groups because of the yoked connectivity associated with the social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, We-chat and others.

The study into gender and sexuality has always also been areas of enormous human creativity and play, where both the natural drive to reproduce humanity and the urge toward pleasure, through and with others, are on display on the several media of communication. This has resonated more especially in this age of media explosion and digital masking of the real self. It is against this background that Robert

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Samuel enthuses that: “we have entered a new era of cultural history, which is dominated by the paradoxical combination of social automation and individual autonomy” (Samuel, 2010: 3). The allusion to individual autonomy which is occasioned by the metaphor of hidden identity behind the façade of social media enhances the performance of self and the abuse of sexuality on digital devices through the aid of the Internet and the social network.

Social network (a mass medium), being a popular and an informal outlet, serves as a platform where attitudes are formed, shared and accessed. Because of its relative cheapness, accessibility, popularity, and heterogeneity, individuals deploy their devices to release, share and rebroadcast ideas, images, attitudes unmindful of their harmful effects. It is behind such ‘releases’ that our real self and intent are exposed. The metaphor of the mask as a disguise and façade of identity plays out here. Consider, for example, the freedom to perform in the privacy of our rooms; with our wives/husbands, boy-friend/girl-friend, carnival revellers with masks, armed robbers with face-coverings etc. Individuals perform optimally without inhibitions or restrictions when they are behind a veil of identity. The expression of the mind in privacy beclouds any sense of reasoning. This is the real ‘self’ in performance. We are invaded, confronted, and assaulted with different images ranging from pornography, nude music videos, naked fashion shows, and putrid lyrics on these social networks by people we hardly know and may never get to meet. As audience or performers, the choices we make do not negate the permeability and flexibility of culture which refracts and reflects in us. Schechner’s (2005) assertion of performance being all-encompassing, can be anywhere, at different times, including found spaces and special designated venues, implies, therefore, that we perform ourselves; from having sex, praying, eating, dressing, working, to taking ‘selfies’ and loading such images onto the social media networks.

Performance, therefore, can be anything in which the people involved (performers) are put in different roles and interactions. Role reversal is a *sine qua non* to performances. Victor Turner opines that performance enhances mutual understanding of one another’s cultures. He believes we will understand one another better by entering one

another's performances and learning their grammars and vocabularies (in Schechner and Appel, 1990: 1). The implication of this assertion is that cultures can appropriate and cannibalise to enrich themselves. This position leaves much to question and invariably exposes performances into being consumed by borrowed cultures or what has been termed cultural imperialism. As a result of the relative ease with which information is shared, cultural appropriations and cannibalisation play major roles as individuals are influenced by what they see on different platforms of the performance space.

The thrust of this paper is how individuals perform themselves on different media of performance; theatre, carnival and at home behind the façade of the new media enhanced by digital appliances: iPhones, ipads, laptops and several hi-tech smart phones. Theatre, simply defined, is the interaction of actors and the audience in a performance. This definition, as simple as it is, has its limitations especially within the premise of this paper: 'performance of self.' Restrictions of actors on the conventional stage (theatre) are a limitation to freedom of expression in real life situation where individual's liberty is assured. Konstantin Stanislavsky conceives of acting in conventional theatre as a psychological transformation of the actor into the actor-character through a temporary suspension of the actor-self (naturalistic acting) (Bowskill, 1973:175). Robert Cohen also believes in the actor moving out of the self and becoming absorbed in the work of art (1978:9). This style of acting is both self-deceptive and audience-deceptive. It is not dynamic because actors have little chance to use their initiatives, as they are constrained by the playwright's detailed instructions (in the stage directions) on how to act their roles convincingly.

However, carnival is one performance that thrives upon, and is enlivened in, role reversal and freedom of expression. In *Rabelais and His World*, Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) likens and describes carnival as an elaborate aesthetics of medieval peasant culture, referred to alternately as "the people," "the folk," "the second world," "the unofficial world," and "popular-festive culture," defined against the "official world" of civil and religious authority. Shanti believes carnival's reversal implies a change from principles of stability and closure to constant possibility. This possibility stems from the fact that in carnivals, there are no rules

as the world is turned upside down. Against this background, revellers or performers are free to exhibit all manner of roles since there are no restrictions. Restrictions avail moderation, and when there is no such restriction, the individual is at liberty to do anything and this is where the self is laundered during carnivals by revellers.

Carnival as platform for Performance of Self and Sexuality

Mikhail Bakhtin's famous "Carnival and Carnavalesque" deals with the event of the carnival, common throughout European history as a central form of celebration. He reveals rather startlingly why this subhead is titled as above, 'that the carnival is not a performance, and does not differentiate the spectator from the performer.' The implication of this revelation is that the carnival is an all-comers' affair designed to suit the masses, in fact, carnival is people-oriented. He adds further that 'all people who take part in the carnival "live it," yet it is not the extension of the "real world" but rather, as Bakhtin puts it, 'the world standing on its head', the world upside down" (Bakhtin, 1984: 182). The carnival, according to Bakhtin, is an event in which all rules, inhibitions and regulations which determine the course of everyday life are suspended, and especially all forms of social elitism and hierarchy. John Storey, quoting Scruton, writes:

In the Venetian Carnival the mask traditionally served two purposes: to conceal the everyday identity of the person, and also to create a new identity in its place—an identity bestowed by the other. Just as in the theater the mask wears the expression projected onto it by the audience, so in the Carnival does the mask acquire its personality from the people all around (Storey, 2007: 3).

Samantha (2015:4), notes that,

In today's carnival, our masks are digital. We display artistic renderings of ourselves, enhancing the good and obscuring the bad. No matter how close our profile photograph might be to our true face, our avatar can never be a substitute for the face. Our "friends" are merely interacting with a mask, which removes the real risks of human encounters.

The Rio and the Trinidad Carnival for example emerged from the entry of the French planters and African Slaves to the island and the brave new worlds. Irobi (2007) contends that, the French brought the principles of carnival (along with their culture and customs) in the form of elaborate masquerade balls, house-to-house visiting and street promenading in carriages or on foot (processional and marked route parades). According to Irobi, this carnival was confined exclusively for the upper classes during this period and often took place as a series of festivities during the pre-Lenten season, ushering Easter celebration in the Catholic calendar. The position of this paper counters the belief that carnival especially in Nigeria is meant for the rich. Calabar Carnival is one example that is classless. For example, there is the Calabar Children Carnival that precedes the main Carnival. This event is for every child within the Calabar metropolis. Critics are of the opinion that rural children are sidelined. But this is not true as every senatorial zone has a festival giving relevance to all classes of people irrespective of social status.

Following the history of carnival and its use by African slaves as means of emancipation and freedom from slavery, African slaves held their own celebrations: masquerading as their masters or mistresses and satirising their behaviour through performance, whilst incorporating African traditions, rituals, folklore and performances. Esiaba Irobi describes this as “a hybridized derivative of African festival and ritual theatre that has come to represent a performative re-theorizing of individualism and alienation – the twin ethos and punishment of Western capitalist ontology” (Irobi, 2007: 901). According to Alex Asigbo, carnival is “...a form of all fool’s day, where people are granted leave to poke fun at all societal institutions and dress outrageously to catch fun” (Asigbo, 2010: 5).

Spectacle is thus the crux of the carnival spirit. That is, carnival thrives on elaborate costumes, masking, elegance, gaiety, pageantry and choreography. These elements are harmonised into a visual aesthetics that is consistent with the worldview of the revellers through which the ‘self’ is conversely performed. Bakhtin again, reveals four aspects of

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what he calls the ‘carnivalistic’ sense of the world and upon which the argument of this paper rests.

1. Free and familiar interaction between people: in the carnival, normally separated people can interact and freely express themselves to one another. 2. Eccentric behaviour: behaviour that was otherwise unacceptable is legitimate, and human nature’s hidden sides are revealed. 3. Carnivalistic misalliances: the free and familiar attitude of the carnival enables everything which is normally separated to connect – the sacred with the profane, the new and the old, the high and low etc. 4. Sacrilegious: the carnival for Bakhtin is a site of ungodliness, of blasphemy, profanity and parodies on things that are sacred (Bakhtin, 1984: 251).

To him, these identified aspects, are abstract notions of freedom and equality, but to the best of the researcher’s knowledge and hindsight, they are rather a lived experience of the world, manifested in these sensual forms and acts that are played out as part of life. This is the ‘self’ in performance. The hidden desires revealed through an expressive freedom granted by a popular art form – the carnival spirit. To domesticate and buttress this position, Calabar Carnival (branded Carnival Calabar), in Cross River State, Nigeria, is an annual event that has become so huge with a global presence that it has attracted foreigners as tourists and reveller’s in its wake. Like all popular arts with massive presence of people of different classes and status, it has also become a platform for self-representation and performance. A celebration and festivity that thrives on elegant costume and masking ordinarily should be a hotbed for all manner of creativity in design elements. After a decade of celebration of African cultures and Nigeria’s diverse cultural affiliations, Carnival Calabar has abandoned its original concept of cultural celebration. Esekong and Ekpeyong have revealed the beginnings of the Carnival which took off as part of the annual Christmas festival.

The Calabar Carnival with the brand name Carnival Calabar, dubbed ‘Africa’s Biggest Street Party’ by its organizers has been held annually every 26th and 27th December since 2005. The idea of the carnival had

been on the drawing board since 2000 when the Cross River State government started celebrating the annual Christmas festival now renamed Calabar Festival (Esekong and Ekpeyong, 2012: 290).

The Calabar festival, re-branded Carnival Calabar, has come to stay no doubt, but it has also become an avenue of self-performance; ranging from carnival pageant show (to crown the Carnival Queen) where nude girls compete among themselves on who will outdo one another in the nude show, foreign tourists and native revellers whose costume is antithetical to the cultural and social life of the Nigerian people. Even the Children Carnival (an aspect of the Carnival Calabar) has also taken off on a bad footing as children wear all sorts of costume to reveal their 'coming of age' albeit negatively. The carnival has therefore become an aberration and an assault to the cultural conscience of the African. The Carnival Calabar should serve its mandate as an exporter of Nigeria's diverse cultures as well as the culture of its host to the international community. Their identity, though veiled with the carnival mask, (a trade mark of Viennese Carnival), this performance is characteristic of what the 'self' desires and ultimately performs on the carnival platform.

It is, therefore, believed that when a culture is exposed, it becomes alienated and compromised and when it is imported or borrowed, it is cannibalised and expropriated to suit the need and taste of the new owner. On this note, this paper is of the opinion that costumes worn in Calabar Carnival especially the female revellers, though a borrowed culture, has become compromised and more nudity (sexuality) has been given prominence in the course of the celebration, especially by foreign participants and even the natives, thus reflecting the performance of self by the revellers. Carnival is like a mirror through which the cultural life style of a people reflect, refract and are exported. It should not be a platform for self-aggrandizement of the individual and a market-place for indecent exposure. Therefore, revellers in recent times, as noticed not only in Calabar, Rio, Trinidad and Tobago, and Nottingham Carnivals, but also in Viennese Carnival, costume to perform innate erotic desires which have become rampant, a bargain for feminine sexuality and other undesirable elements.

New Media as platform for Performance of Self and Sexuality

Socha and Eber-Schmid in their work, *Defining New Media Isn't Easy*, defined New Media as “a 21st century catchall term used to define all that is related to the Internet and the interplay between technology, images and sound” (online). According to Wikipedia online dictionary,

New Media ... is a broad term in media studies that emerged in the latter part of the 20th century, and holds out a possibility of on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, creative participation and community formation around the media content (2012 online edition).

The term new media is more apt to describe the network of networks that overwrites traditional relationships in exchange for new ones. In many ways, traditional media outlets now rely on new media sources for data and information. The new media platform guarantees individual users the ability to write, share, report, educate, and to make connections to one another in a way that has revolutionised communication and sidelined the old media like newspaper, radio, TV, magazine, books and adverts. Today's media (new media) include an explosion of online/global networking systems (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, e-buddy, Naija-Chat, we-chat, as well as music and festival culture that has moved beyond musical exchange to include the marketing and selling of culture (festivalisation), lifestyle and products.

The new media is like a child of necessity. With the relative ease with which information is acquired, accessed and shared, and the permeability of culture, the button mode platform of new media is a revolution that has become a whirlwind in the social networking age of the third millennium, among cultures of the world. Violet Dixon articulates more on the importance of global village to communication and culture, the brain child of Marshall McLuhan:

...Marshall McLuhan, a media and communication theorist, coined the term “global village” in 1964 to describe the phenomenon of the world's culture shrinking and expanding at the same time due to pervasive

technological advances that allow for instantaneous sharing of culture (Dixon, 2009: 297).

As beneficial as McLuhan's ground-breaking theory is, there is a caveat to it. The explosion and revolution in the new media has its attendant conflicts among cultures. This has led to cultural fragmentation, cultural imposition and imperialism, cultural mutilation and abuse, cultural domination by the more developed and powerful cultures as well as led to hybridization of cultures where no culture lays claim of originality, thereby endangering natal cultures. It is true that due to the fluidity, flexibility, and permeability of culture, it is not static; it is bound to appropriate, expropriate and cannibalise to acquire new meanings. Nevertheless, striking a balance where original owners of cultures will understand and underscore the implication of the concept of global village without infringing on the rights of other cultures and their identities and yet, observe 'the rules of engagement'. This is what communication and cultural theorists should aspire towards. In the words of Dixon:

Understanding what these changes will mean for each existing culture individually, and being careful to consider all sides of the discussion with equal relevance is essential to forming a universal understanding of what globalization means. If we cannot agree on the implications of these cultural shifts, perhaps we cannot identify ourselves as members of a global village after all (Dixon, 2009: 298).

The problem and fear envisaged by the effects of cultural globalisation according to Dixon, "is that American media and culture have a negative impact on other cultures around the world." In other words, countries with more economic influence will eventually control the cultural standards by which the rest of the world will have to live. However, the belief that cultural contact, sharing and overlapping create uniformity, standardisation and homogeneity is false appearance. The question is, whose culture, and whose media devices should serve as benchmark on how to critically appraise developing nations and their participation in the global and explosive age of the new media and its attendant social networks? As June Johnson asserts,

“the idea of the world’s cultures drawn together in a global village raises questions about equal representation, reciprocal sharing, enriched diversity, and mutual understanding” (Johnson, 2007: 192). More than ever before, cultural globalisation made possible through the era of the new media, social networking and Internet can be seen in our daily lives in its shades and hues. The Internet which supports and drives the new media has automatically revolutionised the way we think, act, and perform ourselves.

This advancement in high-tech provides individuals of all classes and status all over the world with the opportunity to communicate spontaneously and instantly with one another. The information super-high way presents a platform where messages are shared and rebroadcast immediately using such devices as BBM, Instant messenger, Facebook, Myspace, WhatsApp, YouTube and many others. It is cheap, readily available, involves a lot of participants (a community of users), heterogeneous (can reach out to many in different locations). In fact, new media has become a popular culture. Yet, it is these characteristics that have leveraged on its negative appeal. Individuals abuse this platform since, at the privacy of their homes, they can send, access and share information, images, sounds, from the good, the bad and even the ugly. The objective of the Conference on “Neoliberalisation – The Self in the Era of New Media,” hosted at Goldsmiths, University of London, captures this position succinctly:

The proliferation of new media primarily, but not exclusively, conditioned by the popularity and widespread of the Internet, has fundamentally changed the world in which we are situated when it comes to social interactions, community relationships, bonding and the forming of the self. This new landscape, which we, as global community, are now a part of, conditions and enables our thinking about questions concerning the self, identity and emancipation (online blurb to the Conference).

The performance of self on the new media takes the form of status updates, sharing of photos, messages and information racketeering, chatting, BBM, Forum membership and so many others. Individuals perform different roles here from posting of nude pictures,

pornography, Internet scam and fraud, displaying tattooed cleavages, sharing sensuous and erotic words and messages, sharing of culinary recipes, dishes, wedding IVs, video clips of their acts (macho display and sagging of male acts in their music videos) to as little as birthday and marriage anniversary wishes. In fact, new media and its social network partners have become catalysts for social change through transforming from global village to global theatre space (stage) where individuals now perform the 'self' albeit negatively. On a general note, the advice for both sexes who are patrons of the new media is to consider the pleasures and risks of self-portraiture as it is not only subjugating, but can degenerate to a level of narcissistic psychopaths.

Conclusion

This study does not kick against the present social realities of a culturally globalised world made possible through explosion on the Internet and social networks. It rather speaks against the use of the new media and carnival platforms as avenues for self-representation and sensuous image laundering (sexuality discourses). This is because cultures are not static, they refract and reflect in other climes through cultural appropriation, acquisition and even 'cultural theft.' In appropriating alien cultures in carnivals for example, it is advised that the best be copied onto the performance space of the appropriating culture. Revellers with veiled identity using the Carnival (Venice-styled) masks, performing in Nigerian carnivals – Abuja Carnival, Carnival Calabar, Lagos Carnival, CarniRiv (Port Harcourt) – and engaging in indecent exposure are merely performing themselves, which is antithetical to the positive identity representation of the celebration. Such acts end up transposing to the global performance space un-African narratives and pseudo-African values. This study appreciates the multicultural and hybridised thrust of the Street Party; however, it calls on carnival organisers to distance themselves from alien values that generate controversy and indoctrinate young Nigerians with false and negative imitations. In the same vein, the new culture found in the new media through the Internet and the social networks, are platforms for 'self' performance especially among the youths. Yet, there is so much benefit associated with the Internet age,

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especially for the youths who are major patrons, other than posting of nude pictures, pornographic clips, Internet scam and fraud, displaying tattooed cleavages, sharing sensuous and erotic words and messages, video clips of their putrid lyrics and macho display and sagging of male acts. The Internet, through the new media, is a ready academic search engine and information on the go. Youths can utilise the opportunity this explosion in information sharing presents as members of the global new media community. This neo-liberalisation and permeability of culture will never abate, hence, the paper advocates that people should be good cultural ambassadors and imbibe the good spirit of the concept of global village in using the new media.

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