DECOLONIZING MUSICAL ART EDUCATION AND CONFLICTS RESOLUTION: A CALL FOR RECOVERY OF THE TRUE NIGERIA MUSIC PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

When the flutes are played, the spirits dance and the ancestors are awakening. When the drums are beaten, nature answers and it is the sound of war but often the call for peace. Music to the Nigerian People (Africa at large) has their historical origin and benefits to the African people. Nowadays one could not tell if at all we had our music at the very beginning or we borrowed it. In the days of our fathers, Musical Art Education (although informal education which the Whiteman made us to understand so) were tools for conflict resolution. What then has happened? This paper reviews how we can decolonize our musical art education and conflict resolution; reawake the psychology of music to the African people, Nigeria being inclusive.

Keywords: Music, Nigeria, Education, Conflict, Whiteman, Decolonize, Art

Introduction

To the Nigerian people, music is more than a play of some musical instruments and a dance to the melody of the music that is produced by the togetherness of those musical instruments. To the Nigerian man there is more to music than the physical play that is made. In the 50s, 60s and 70s, the music that were played were all originally born from the African mind and not copied from the Western world. Our world was originally Africa and every bit of it was enjoyed to the fullness.

As a people, music is a culture which is being passed on from generation to generation. It meant something to the African people. The dance, rhythms and colour of the Nigerian music, perhaps

the African music, has in the past motivated bravery, a stand for justice and in the future a call for justice. Although the first music department in Nigeria was established in 1961, under the faculty of Technology and named after Fela Sowande College of Music; it was headed by Dr Edna Edet (nee Smith) who happens to be an African American lady, married to a Nigerian (Adebowale, 2018). This greatly affects the psychology of music because she headed the department with experience from the Western music technology. Truth be told, this might in one way or the other affected our ethnomusicology. Well, there was no much choice since the traditional musical ideology was far from the four walls of the University.

Adebowale (2018) wrote extensively, in a few words, on the very beginning (officially) on music in Nigeria. It is not to tell that the foundation of music was not built, in regard to the Universities, on our socio-cultural values. It was not like; let us bring together our reigning musicians at that time to formulate personnel of the Music Department. Perhaps we were looking at some papers endorsed by a Whiteman on a suit. There were reigning musicians at that time, in the 50s, and 40s. Musicians like Idowu Animasaun, Tunde Nightingale, etc. One could also observed that some of these outstanding musicians who were lecturers in the Department of Music were not taught with the local music instruments technology. For instance, Fela Sowande schooled abroad, learning Western music. It is therefore facts that much work might not have be done as regard the socio-cultural impart of music on the Nigerian people.

Musical Art Education in Nigeria

Art is not new to the people of Nigeria. It is as old as our dear nation. Art comprises dancing, drama, singing and many other physical activities. Musical art can be fun to the Western world but it is spiritual to the Africa man. Musical Art Education started in UNN in the year 1960. It was part of the department that was dreamed to exist in the autonomous University in Nigeria (Adebowale, 2018). Before now music was played to mark some festival activities, although there was no proper documentation, but one attest to the fact that we had our kind of music.

According to Gouldron (1968) we never ever know when and under what circumstance the first musical utterance was made. This assertion could be true being that ancient musicians were never found in the habit of documentation but were passing on this ethnomusicology orally. Research has shown that such methods are not void of lost of originality.

For a proper note, musical art education is fully established in the universities in Nigeria. University music education is seen as the process of preparing dedicated individuals for positions of leadership so as to give vitality and priority to a society's musical life. It encompasses the study of music to be in command of musical thoughts, values, tastes, practices, and wisdom not

only of one's society but also of others' and to interpret such from one's own perspective (Adebowale, 2018).

University music education has existed in Nigeria for more than 50 years but knowledge of its development is limited among music academics. Even though there is a rise of interest in the history of music education generally in Nigeria, the history of Nigeria's University music education is often given in few words. Such studies occupy one and three paragraphs which are given to its development, and in some instances, one finds only one or two sentences about it. This shows that there is no much details on the development of University music education in Nigeria (Ekwueme, 2004; Idolor, 2005; Kwami, 1994; New, 1980; Nketia, 1998; Okafor, 2005; O. Omojola, 1992, 1995; Sowande, 1967; Vidal, 1977).

Despite these discrepancy, some major facts are been established in the origin of musical art education in Nigeria. Given Ajayi, Goma, and Johnson's (1996) admonition, it is apposite locating the development of University music education in its broader historical context, including the indigenous African and Islamic (Higher Music Education) systems in Nigeria. As Kwami (1994) notes, "there are three major aspects of music education—indigenous/traditional African, Arabic and European—which would need to be discussed in a comprehensive survey of music education in West African countries" (p. 544). Hence, predating the founding of University music education in Nigeria were indigenous African and Islamic Higher Music Education systems. Even in the 21st century, these systems, although officially marginalized and occluded, continue to have untold significance in what Nigerians and their communities do to keep alive.

Largely, from time immemorial, indigenous Africans conceptualize music as something communal, continual, and known by practicing it to ensure the continuity of their age old music traditions and culture. At its seat is a long-standing tradition of "oral University" (Saether, 2003) which produces devoted master-musician-teachers who must musically educate others, and keep and protract the community's musical standards and repertory too. Its product is the today's "culture-bearer" which Nzewi (1997) describes as:

> . . . the accomplished traditional or neo-traditional (popular and contemporary musical developments) music practitioners who know and practice music without the modern training or orientation to articulate the theories and processes of his/her culturally rationalized musical experiences and products. This is the primary respondent whom the ethnomusicologist encounters and interacts with in the field, and whose often research suggested responses or otherwise un-

verbalized music-cultural facts the ethnomusicologist relies upon for analytical inferences, critical opinions and theories. (p. 16)

The indigenous African music culture-bearers, as they continue make music part of daily life and ritual, remain an invaluable and reliable source for modern scholars. While indigenous Africans have not set up academic music learning spaces similar to those in Universities in the contemporary Euro-Americanized societies, their oral Universities fulfill missions that are analogous in their principles. Though it has faced immense denigration in the course of Nigeria's encounter with exogenously spawned music education systems, it is still operational. Its accommodative stance enables it to coexist with the Islamic and Western Higher Music Education systems in Nigeria. So to say is that we had oral Universities which was not quite bad and needed a form of documentation process. This musical art was very effective in the days of our fathers, they have significant use.

Conflict Resolution in Nigeria

Conflicts can result from fight for power, retaliation of the oppressed, marginalition, inequality, etc. Majorly in Nigeria, conflict result from unequal share of the national cake. Humanity cannot live peacefully on earth without being provoked to conflict. Our fathers fight in those days for land ownership, wife ownership and many other things which are not serious to the modern society. Most scholars posit that conflict occurs "when two or more people engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Akpuru-Aja, (1997) believe that conflict emerges whenever one party perceives that one or more goals or purposes or means of achieving a good or preference is being threatened or hindered by the activities of one or more parties. These parties use any means to ensure the compliance of each of the parties. This lead to casualties like injuries, loss of properties and lives.

Nigeria is a country of many nations with hundreds of tribes and ethnic groupings. It is observed that as a country of several ethnicities, little or no sense of togetherness will result. So Nigeria often experiences several cases of ethnic conflict. The relationships between for instance political parties in underdeveloped nations like Nigeria are likely to be more conflictual than those in advanced politics (Tyoden, 2016). This is as a result of the methodology used to resolve conflict in Nigeria. In modern day's society, leaders often copy the Western world method of resolving conflict. This was not so in the days of our forefathers where the head of clans put heads together to solve conflict arising. Most times, conflict is resolved with song accompanied with a fight. Our ways these days do not really resolve conflict because it is not ethno-traditional base.

There are various ways of resolving conflict. Studies show that fostering feelings of empathy is one potential conflict-resolution strategy (Cohen & Insko, 2008), making parties aware of their similarities and shared goals is one method for enacting a cooperative transformation (Cohen & Insko, 2008) and reminding the parties of the aftermath of conflict is also an effective way of managing or resolving conflict. In the Africa setting the resolution of conflict is done on basis of the African believe.

Use of Musical Art in Conflict Resolution

We borrow the words of Mbaegbu (2015) that African music is another area of Africa's great contributions to world civilization and recreational facilities, and that Africans are notoriously music lovers. This means the heart of an African is bond to music and such heart can be cooled by music. This in all regard is true being that music has been used to begin a war and also to end a war. In fact history has been told that there were players of music which are very important at the outset of war. Also history had it that most composed lyrics were used for peace making. So music can be a two edge swords, at one edge to resolve conflict and at the other edge to bring about war. Since music induces empathy, we believe the lyric of those musical play were strongly African reminding us the suffering of our heroes. These are depicted in our country National Anthem. In the African setting musical play is more spiritual than physical. So most times, during resolution of conflict, the dance and play of the music invites spirit of peace. It is a culture in Africa to set the stage for conflict resolution by the play of music that pear through the soul. These were the beliefs of the African people, Nigeria inclusive.

Music as a social activity and distribution mechanism of ideology is often used to foment conflicts. It is therefore important to note that not harnessing the power of music in conflict resolution will leave it open to abuse by those who attempt to maintain boundaries between enemies, either by performing music that emerged during a conflict, by creating new music that commemorates a conflict or through music that highlight latent conflicts. Mother Africa can be said to be a land of diverse music, and any type of African music plays a vital role, hence the existence of such, because Africans believe that the purpose of anything give meaning and existence to the thing itself. Mother Africa hosts three categories of music among which are traditional, popular and classical. Traditional music includes all traditional or folk music that serve as media of expression of African people's culture and according to Nwamara (2009: p. 534):

> They are being transmitted orally from one generation to another. In its transmission process, allowances are made for each generation to make selections and variations from the original composition without destroying

its tone of continuity. The music and its practitioners are found in greater number in the rural areas. Their composers are not known because the music/s is/are communally owned.

Agordoh (1985: p. 15) records the following functions of music among the people of Africa, "music is used as a social control, and there is music to criticize those in authority. For example in Benin Republic, there are 'songs of allusion' which are topical songs of current events of interest and gossip, and to perpetuate knowledge". Although there are few or no documentation of the account of the relevance of music in conflict resolution, we believe that the reason why Nigeria has lesser conflict than now is because of the nature of our modern day's music lyrics. These days, our music is not Africa base with any emphasis on the very essence of such music.

Psychology and Meaning of Music

Psychology is the science which deals with the study of the mind and behavior. Every decision is born from rigorous thinking. Research has shown that music erupt some uncontrollable response. This is because music produces various forms of waves which send various electrical charges to the various part of our brain for corresponding responses. Therefore Music is clearly an active stimulus to which people generally make some form of response, frequently unconsciously. Even though the degree of response that a person makes is under voluntary control and can also be affected by many situational factors, it is clear that music is a relatively powerful stimulus for eliciting a response. Music can be said, rather neutrally, to have a variety of actions on people. Those actions can be directly observable changes in behaviour or changes in mental state that can only be inferred. These actions are not the same as the phenomenological experience of perception. In view of this, Sloboda (1991) has elicited descriptions of non-perceptual bodily effects of music. These are manifestations of the emotional and mental state of the listener, rather than manifestations of the sensations of pitch and so on.

Music can have an action on a listener that is neither direct nor is it associative. Such music is said to be expressive. Music is frequently written to depict events (e.g. a battle) or objects (e.g. the sea) or states (e.g. a mood). Composers of music are frequently inspired by non-musical objects around them. Musical expression is necessarily intentional, but the action of expressive music is not necessarily robust. For example, music may well express emotional states, but it does not necessarily follow that the expression of any given emotional state will have the same action on every listener (Roger and Raisin, 1998).

There is a long history of enquiry into the meaning of music which goes a long way to explain music psychology. It has become widely accepted that music can represent (and possibly therefore mean) the emotions. Meyer (1956) provided a carefully thought out account of how

music might represent the emotions. Cooke (1959) took it for granted that music represents the emotions and established a vocabulary of musical/emotional correspondences which he claimed to be universal across all western tonal music. The implication is that however it achieves it, music has a domain of meaning that overlaps substantially with the domain of the emotions. Others have undertaken research of various types, based on the premise that music means the emotions (Scherer and Oshinsky. 1977; Wedin, 1972; Brown, 1981). Another line of thought concerns the structure of music and the question of whether this implies semantics and then implies a meaning. Cooke (1959) described his work as a language of music, although this was a little inappropriate since his work was not concerned with structure but with a basic vocabulary. Bernstein (1976) set out to develop a theory of musical syntax and semantics from notions of phonology. Whilst his success has been questioned, it was undoubtedly an intriguing start. The process was partly developed in a more formal, and much more limited but successful fashion by Lerdahl and Jackendoff (I983) who developed a theory to describe the relationship between sequences of notes (i.e the musical score) and the resultant percept in a listener's mind. This theory does not, of itself, either address or imply any notion of meaning.

Another and different line of approach comes from the application of semiotics to music. Peirce (1931) introduced the distinction between iconic signs (where the sign resembles the referent like the sign for falling rocks), indexical signs (where the sign has some other association with the referent. such as smoke being a sign of fire) and symbolic signs where the signs have an arbitrary relationship with the referent (like language). The study of semiotics has continued from this starting point to be concerned with the nature of how meaning is achieved. Since meaning must necessarily involve a sign and a referent, on the one hand, and a sender and recipient of the sign on the other hand, it will be readily understood that this is a complex subject.

Decolonizing Musical Arts Education in Conflicts Resolution

Nowadays, everything we the Africans do are attributed to the Westerner. The fact remains that civilization begins in Africa; so whatever the Westerners are bringing to us has been here before now. Music of these days erupt aggressions with no sensible basis. This has a major effect on the people of Nigeria, especially the Youth. This simply means the indigenous musical Art has been colonized. The effort is to find ways of decolonizing musical art in conflict resolution. Below are some of the ways we can decolonize musical art education in conflict resolution.

Sensitization of the relevance of our indigenous Musical Art: music has always been part of the African history. Many, if not all, are historically composed. They meant something which has to do with the message from the past or from the gods. They are basically used to mark some victory in wars. They are also used to induce bravery. In fact, almost all indigenous musical art

Pan-African Journal of Humanities and Social Science
ISSN 2682-6364
Available on-line at www.pashass.org

Vol 2 │Issue 3│2020

has major relevance to our society. These musical arts were taught orally which now called musical art education. Reminding the modern society of what we are could go a long way to bring back the lost glory of the African music.

Creating Museum for Indigenous Musical Art Instruments: Artifacts induce memory of the heroes' past. They tell how important were the art to our ancestors and therefore it should be valued. Creating new museums for musical artifacts and equipping the existing ones will also go a long way to remind the modern society of the relevance of indigenous musical Art instruments.

Employing the scanting players of these musical Art in our Universities: The originators of this musical Art are abandoned with the mentality of this is outdated. They are not often invited to perform music except during festivity. The society does not give any form of relevance to them neither do they feel welcomed in most cases. In fact the Western's culture has eaten into the very fabric of the consciousness of the African so much that he considers himself to be inferior to his own culture. This mindset does not only push us away from our ways of life but make us to forget our root. If these players are employed, we think it will help rebuild our value system.

Conclusion

There is psychology of musical Art in the African society, Nigeria. The Musical Art Education we now have does not show an effective way of resolving conflict. In fact, the very essence of musical art is not been taught as regard to conflict resolution. Musical Art education should encourage peace among learners. The numerous listeners should be able to pick up things that foster peace. We believe that if the suggestions made above are put to practice, we would have more peace rather than war.

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