Culture and Society in Post-Colonial Nigeria

Essays in Honour of Ulli Beier

Guest Editors

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Editorial

African Notes is a unique forum for Africanist discourse and construct. The journal remains a platform for expressing cultural ideas in an intellectual context and it is distributed all over the globe. It has always been intellectual in scope and standard.

Nothing spectacular has changed in the house style of the journal. Even though there was a mix-up in the covers of about three past volumes, there has been a return to the original conception of the cover with artistic representation of African symbolic artworks. This is noticeable in the current edition.

Logistics problems threatened the regular and continuous "outing" and "outreach" of *African Notes* to our readers and subscribers alike. The Editorial Board wishes to impress on all that the problems have been solved and all the backlogs of *African Notes* are to be published with renewed vigour, vitality and heightened hope.

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All manuscripts should be submitted in CDs to the Editor, *African Notes,* Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Manuscripts are to be typed double-spaced and proofread. All graphs, charts, maps, tables, illustrations, drawings, etc. must be camera-ready.

The Chicago Manaul of Style is the recommended format for articles. Manuscripts are submitted to outside assessors without identifying the author. The cover page should include title of paper, authorship, affiliation or address. The article itself should also bear the title. Simultaneous submission is not encouraged. Contributions must not exceed 5,000 words or 20 pages. Authors will get a free copy of the issue in which their paper is published.

African Notes is an Africanist forum that encourages interdisciplinary study of African and related cultures.

Preface

Ohioma I. Pogoson
Ayo Adeduntan

Definition, redefinition and affirmation of African culture and cultural experience are some of the principles that distinguished Ulli Beier's life and intellectual avocation. These strains of Ulli Beier's vision and work avow the Africanist commitment of the faculty and friends of the Institute of African Studies, Ibadan. The death, in 2011, of this maker, re-maker and vendor of culture has since been motivating the reassessment of his life and work. The Institute accordingly organised a three-day conference on the theme of culture and society in postcolonial Nigeria in his honour in November, 2011.

The essays in this volume were drawn, through peer review, from the papers presented at that conference. Ulli Beier straddles the chronological "colonial" and "post-colonial." It is however in the understanding of "postcolonial" as an ideological category that his contribution is best guaranteed a foothold in this discourse. The contributions are delineated into five sections: Ideology, Worldview and Praxis; Ecology, Spirituality, Medicine and Human Health; Politics and Governance; Gender Roles and (Wo)Men's Rights; and Material Culture, Media and Performance. The essays approach the broad theme of culture and society from these scopes. It is our hope that as a work that engages directly the contribution of Beier as it also speaks to many aspects of culture that his contribution addresses, this volume would add not just to the growing number of wreaths on the cenotaph of this cultural hero, but indeed push his ideas beyond familiar frontiers.

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I

Ideology, Worldviews and Praxis

CHAPTER ONE

He Lived Among the [illegible]: Ulli Beier and Yoruba Cultural Revival

Wole Ogundele

The second half of the title of this paper, "Ulli Beier and Yoruba Cultural Revival," is an apt acknowledgement of the contributions of Beier to Yoruba society from 1 October, 1950, to February 2011, when he died. In various ways and through various literary and non-literary media, he continued to reflect on, and make contributions to, society in Papua New Guinea, Germany, and Australia – the last place being where he settled and lived till he breathed his last. Thus, it is important to add to the title 'to February this year when he died' for even though he effectively stopped living physically in Nigeria in 1974, his soul, mind and spirit never left Yoruba society. I could also add 'even after his death' for, when he was terminally ill in faraway Australia, his wife Georgina wrote to tell me that she had to look for some Yoruba people in Sydney to come home and speak Yoruba to him and, she said, this visibly comforted and soothed him. And when he finally died, his wife of almost 50 years wrote again to say that she was sure he had gone to join Obatala.[1] In truth, it may be said that though Ulli physically left Yoruba society, Yoruba society never left him, for he carried it in his heart every day till that great heart stopped beating. Why was he so viscerally attached to Yoruba society? Foreigners – among them white men and women – have been born in our land, and even lived several years here without feeling that kind of attachment; Ulli was even already 28 years old before he came here – why such an unbreakable umbilical cord in his own case? These questions I will attempt to answer in brief compass in this paper, but before then, let me dilate a little on the question of cultural revival.

'Culture' and 'cultural revival' are now buzzwords on everybody's lips, but do most of us who mouth these words routinely really know what they mean and entail? By the kind of life he actually lived in Yoruba

society, Ulli Beier tells us what it means to live a culture, and that is the import of the first half of the title of this paper; by the variety and sheer quantity of his writings on the society, he points us in the direction of what kind of cultural revival, or cultural renaissance, we need.

As said earlier, Ulli Beier landed in this country on 1 October, 1950 and while the precise date – 1 October 1 – may be merely fortuitous and of no significance, the period around 1950 is of great moment. By then, Obafemi Awolowo and his [illegible] had self-transformed from a cultural organisation into a political party, but even now that the Action Group party is remembered mainly for its great deeds of 'modernisation' in the Western Region, it is still important to remember its cultural origin. Secondly, obviously, Awolowo and his co-founders of [illegible] did not start on a [illegible]: there had been a Yoruba cultural renaissance – or an attempt at one – before them. I need not bore you with the details of that earlier renaissance, so I will just sketch out its brief outlines.

Yoruba society in the 19th Century literally tore itself to pieces in civil wars: whole towns were destroyed, large populations were perpetually moving from one safe haven to another. As we also know, the Yoruba returnees played decisive roles in bringing an end to the wars. Following the achievement of peace was the determination, among these Saro and Brazilian Yoruba, to unify and modernise the society from within. Since an orthography had already been evolved for the language about half a century back, creating a literature in the language was one of their earliest and perhaps most successful efforts. And so from about the end of the 19th century to the third decade of the 20th century, there was a veritable flood of writings in the language, apart from the Bible, which by then had provided what we now call Standard Yoruba and thereby started the process of making all the sub-ethnic groups able to communicate with each other as never before. Strange as it may seem to some people today, these modernisers insisted on Yoruba as the language of instruction in schools – that is, they believed that modernisation of the society can only come through the modernisation of the most important cultural vehicle of all: language. They researched into every aspect of the culture and tried to sustain traditional religion upon which, by then, the two foreign religious had laid siege. In this aspect of religion, perhaps their most lasting impact was the remodelling of the Ogboni cult[2] as the Reformed Ogboni, to which civil servants, magistrates, lawyers, pastors and catechists belonged. Lastly, a lot of these returnees,

who came with either English or Portuguese names, changed their names to local ones – usually after Yoruba [illegible][3] as was the practice in the society. Thus, one of them changed his name to Esubiyi, which he bore proudly till he died. I will have cause to return to this question of names in my concluding remarks. Meanwhile, let me conclude this part by reiterating the points already made: there was a real and very vigorous Yoruba cultural nationalism from about the end of the last decade of the 19th century to the third decade or so of the 20th; this cultural nationalism had not properly transformed into political nationalism, as was certainly intended and might have been when Nigeria as a country came into being, and rather rapidly, Nigerian political nationalism overtook and shunted it aside. The withering away of the cultural nationalism in the face of the larger political nationalism meant that the comprehensive renaissance that it was meant to bring about was also doomed to failure – and this did happen. But although the renaissance failed, its afterglow lasted long enough for it to inspire Awolowo and his friends to start their cultural organisation. Lastly, Ulli Beier still felt in the air the warm rays of that afterglow when he arrived in 1950.

But rather than look up to the new Western-style educated Yoruba elite who were bent on modernising the society from without, Ulli went back to the source of the cultural fire, as it were, for his own edification, education and illumination. Hence the first half of my title: 'Among the [illegible]', for it was to the [illegible] themselves and their human representatives on earth that Ulli went.

Soon after settling down on the temporary campus of University College Ibadan at Eleyele, Ulli started exploring his new environment – on foot. Leo Frobenius had given a wonderful description of the Sango shrine in Agbeni, and it was one of the first places he asked directions to and visited – only to discover that the shrine was no more. Within his first few months, he made friends with Dr. Awokoya, whom he accompanied home to Ijebu one weekend. Once he arrived in Ijebu-Ode, Ulli immediately disconcerted his host by asking to be taken to a [illegible]![4]

Dr. Awokoya was part of the new Yoruba political elite bent on 'modernising' Yoruba society as fast as possible, and [illegible] for him represented the tradition that the westernising elite was escaping from. He therefore had great difficulty acknowledging their continued stubborn existence, and certainly was most uncomfortable with the prospect of

actually being seen in the house of one! But so persistent was this white man with his awkward request that he had to take him to one – with all the reluctance in the world. Ulli duly met the [illegible] and was impressed, not by whether the man's divination was accurate or not, but by a combination of other things: the priest's modesty, the sheer music of the language in which he chanted (of which, of course, Ulli did not understand a word!), and by the simplicity and luminosity of the whole process. That experience was the beginning of a special relationship with Yoruba religion that Ulli had all his life.

That lifelong relationship is encapsulated in Ulli's oft-repeated statement – which he still repeated to me in 2008 in Sydney: "If I had been born an African," he always said, "I would have been born a Yoruba man, and if I had been born a Yoruba man, I would certainly have been a Sango[5] worshipper." First in Ilobu, then in Ede, and finally in Osogbo where he stayed longest, Ulli was friends with all the [illegible],[6] all the [illegible],[7] and the ordinary worshippers of this deity. But contrary to the fiery and oftentimes destructive personality of this deity, Ulli found the actual worship very calm and calming. He attended every [illegible] (the 'weekly' devotion) that he could, contributing his own modest means to maintaining the shrines. The worship, he said, was always simple, brief, and soothing. His 'adoption' of Sango as his personal deity may have been due partly to the influence of Oba Laoye, the Timi on the throne in Ede when he settled there, but I think it was also because he and Sango were 'kindred spirits' in certain respects: for instance, Ulli too had a fiery temper which he kept under control most of the time, but which occasionally flared into a scorching fire. Also, the Ede-Ilobu-Osogbo axis was famous for Sango worship right up to the 1960s and the [illegible] of these towns were great patrons of the religious cults (as well as of the arts in general). Given all of this, it was almost inevitable that once he became part of the Duro Ladiipo theatre, the story of Sango's reign as Alaafin of Oyo would be dramatised by the company, flaming temper, tragic suicide, deification and all. The production of [illegible], on which Duro Ladiipo, Ulli and Georgina lavished so much theatrical and artistic ingenuity, was clearly a labour of love for a soul-mate.

And Ulli's relationship with the Sango priests and worshippers was really intense. Of the numerous [illegible] between Ede, at one end, and Ila-Orangun, at the other, in those days, he was especially close to two: Bandele of Otan-Ayegbaju and Ajofoyinbo[8] of Ila-Orangun – the

'white man' for whom the latter danced being no other than Ulli. Both were frequent visitors at his 46 Ibokun Road residence in Osogbo, with the latter in fact staying several days at a stretch. His description of Bandele's possession dance was always vivid, and his photographs of Bandele possessed by Sango are some of Ulli's most memorable pictures. In the two dancers, he always said, he saw the two sides of Sango: while Bandele came out roaring and danced very energetically to , Ajofoyinbo's dance was always gentle and sinuous, thereby portraying the suffering, tragic Sango.

But it was not Sango alone that Ulli felt close to among the Yoruba deities. Of the over seven hundred photographs that he took and lovingly preserved (the negatives and slides of which are now in the archive of Centre for Black Cultural and International Understanding, Osogbo), more than one hundred are of the different Yoruba deities – their icons, priestesses, priests and festivals. There is a particularly memorable one of the priestess of Sonponna in Ilobu. The face of the priestess, so vividly captured in the picture, is actually the 'face' of that deity of suffering for, contrary to popular conception, Ulli believes that Sonponna, though the deity of small-pox, is more the Yoruba embodiment of the inescapability of suffering – physical and emotional – in this life, and how to cope with it. Evident in these photographs are not just the eyes of a good photographer, but a person who loved and respected the people he photographed. Indeed, Ulli said several times that he never could photograph or interview his subjects the first time he met them; he always needed to come back several times and get thoroughly acquainted with them before he could start intruding his camera on them.

Next in number to the photographs of the deities are those of Yoruba oba, particularly those of his friends, mentors and teachers: Timi Laoye of Ede; Oba Moses Oyinlola of Okuku; Oba Adenle, the Ataoja of Osogbo; Oba Adegoriola of Ikere-Ekiti; and a few of Ooni Aderemi. This of course was not surprising, for Yoruba in those days were truly the custodians of culture. While Oba Moses Oyinlola, though a Christian, celebrated all the festivals of his town with great gusto and conviction, Timi Laoye, an accomplished drummer for whom Ulli arranged a tour of Europe, took pains to explain the deeper and more arcane aspects of the culture to Ulli – he even sponsored Ulli into the society. The lack of time will not allow me to go on and on about this aspect of Ulli's life in Yoruba society, but what is important to

stress here is that, in a way, Ulli led two parallel lives in Yoruba society.

There is the life of Mbari Club, Ibadan, and the Osogbo Art Movement (which really was Georgina's baby, Ulli being no artist though a lover of art – "From childhood," he said, "I could never sleep in a room without at least one work of art hanging on a wall.") that everybody knows, which is also the life of all his equally famous writings, magazines and numerous other publications, especially the anthologies of Yoruba poetry and of modern African poetry in English. But deeper than all of that, and of more value to Ulli personally, is the other life: the full immersion in the life of the Yoruba [illegible] institution, in the Yoruba [illegible] tradition and its variety of priests and festivals and poetry, and in the lives of ordinary people (both in Ilobu and Ede, he lived right in the market place). It was among the traditional Yoruba intellectuals that Ulli Beier felt truly at home, and that his ever restless spirit found rest, nourishment and fulfillment. He kept the two parallel lives strictly separate for most of the time; but perhaps they met once – in the theatres of his two great friends Duro Ladiipo and Kola Ogunmola. His collaboration with the former in the production of [illegible] is well known, but not so well known is the fact that it was Ulli who translated Hugo Hoffmannsthal's [illegible] for Duro's company. [illegible], the resultant Yoruba adaptation, remains Duro's next most popular play. That Ulli chose this medieval play to translate with Duro and put on his stage showed how observant he was of his adopted society: after more than a decade living in it, he was beginning to see how crass materialism and sheer hedonism were creeping into the society.

There is no space here to give a detailed account of his equally deep friendship and association with Kola Ogunmola, so suffice it to just mention that he played a decisive role in getting a foreign grant for Ogunmola's Yoruba stage adaption of Amos Tutuola's [illegible], a work in the realisation of which the Theatre Arts Department at Ibadan and the artist Demas Nwoko (a member of the Mbari Club) also played crucial roles.

In view of all this, though it may sound like nitpicking to do so, I still must correct the popular impression that Ulli was 'a scholar of Yoruba culture' in the sense in which we understand that term. Ulli came more or less as a refugee from Europe and found welcoming arms among the Yoruba people who also happened to have a very great culture at that point in time, and who were extremely tolerant. This was the life he met

in 1950 and lived for almost a decade. But by the end of the 1950s, Ulli began to discern that the great culture was already declining fast: each passing year saw fewer and fewer followers and spectators at the festivals and [illegible] or that of any other deity. The combined forces of colonialism, western-style education, Christianity and Islam, all together termed [illegible] in Yoruba (wrongly, in my view), were beginning to take their toll. These forces were too great to be resisted by anyone, least of all Ulli. But their strength, he thought, could in fact be used to modernise the culture from within. This thinking motivated the other life – the life of Mbari, [illegible], and of publications like the magazines [illegible] and [illegible].

This was at home here in Nigeria where all that Ulli desired to do was to give something back to a culture that gave him so much. Abroad, all his efforts, both then and subsequently in Papua New Guinea and in Bayreuth (as first Director of [illegible]), as well as in Sydney, Australia, were to let others see, know and appreciate what he found in that culture.

Ulli Beier's literary productions are more or less well known: the excellent anthology of Yoruba poetry and the no less pioneering anthology of modern African poetry in English which he did with Gerald Moore; another anthology of essays on modern African literature; plus the founding, editing and publishing of [illegible] and [illegible], both of which, we now know, he did virtually alone (otherwise, how come the two journals died the moment he left?).

Less well known, however, are the numerous essays he wrote and published in magazines and little journals all over the world, all of them specifically on Yoruba culture, society and traditions. It is on these I wish to concentrate in this last part of my paper. But again, I need to preface that overview of the essays with a few remarks.

Writing about any aspect of Ulli Beier's lifelong relationship with Yoruba society, I have come to conclude, is not an easy task at all. To start with, that relationship was as multifaceted and multilayered as it was intense and unique. Then, it was a relationship of emotional involvement in which he viewed his own cultural identity as that of a Yoruba man. The well-informed books and essays he wrote about several aspects of the society were only by-products of his immersion in the culture at the higher level of Yoruba kingship institution, Yoruba traditional religion and its festivals. The involvement at this level meant

that he never could write about these things with the objectivity of a disinterested academic: all his writings were one long and untiring advocacy for the society he had made his own by choice. So this presents anybody writing about him and his writings with a huge problem – especially if that person happens to be Yoruba: how do you write about a man who wrote so glowingly, and with such obvious conviction and passion, about your own society – how do you write about such a man without descending into hagiography? This is a particularly important question if one considers that our missionary-colonial Western-style education was (and remains) designed to lead us [illegible] our society and culture and here was a man who took it upon himself to show us some things that could [illegible]. And at any rate, since he was not a 'scholar of Yoruba culture and society' (a description he himself was always quick to reject), it means that his writings were not for 'fellow scholars' and, indeed, as will be seen presently, he neglected all the rules of scholarly writing. His writings, rather, though well-informed and even researched, were for the information, education and edification of the general reader.

But first, a brief discussion of the circumstances surrounding the writings. Ulli Beier was an intellectual, but a non-academic in the conventional usage of that term. In this wise, he might simply be described as a non-academic intellectual. Throughout his active years, he chose to remain at the margins of whichever university he found himself working in. He remained a generalist who wrote only on what interested him – and he was interested in everything Yoruba. He was also a non-conformist in what he wrote and how he wrote them. It was this freedom from academic conventions that allowed him to write about Yoruba society the way he did. Here was a man who did not come to study the society but adopted it as his own while his marginal position gave him the freedom to write about it as an interested insider.

Ulli Beier came to Nigeria with a selective cultural baggage. While thoroughly disenchanted with Europe and rejecting many things European, he nevertheless was a great lover of baroque music. His father had taken him to all the great museums in Berlin, Paris and other European capitals, and so he was deeply steeped in the ancient cultures of the Near East. He was also conversant with much of contemporary European literature, art and theatre. But once he settled down and, as it were, fell in love with and adopted Yoruba society as his own, he underwent a

permanent transformation, the stages of which can be outlined as follows: from the mono-perspective of an outsider to the dual perspective of an insider-outsider (an insider who never lost the outsider ways he brought in – he never 'went native'), to that of an insider who latter acquired multiple perspectives, but with the Yoruba insider-perspective as the measure of all others. Thus, although very familiar with the culture of his native Germany, and although he had more than passing familiarity with those of India and Papua New Guinea and the Aborigines of Australia, it was from the perspective of his Yoruba cultural identity that he gauged them all. His initial marginal, insider-outsider position in Yoruba society allowed him to see Yoruba society differently: to value things in it that the natives themselves no longer valued, to draw his Yoruba readers' attention to, and promote, things that they wrote off as of little or no consequence, and to not take for granted practices and traditions that his friends thought would always be there. He of course could not arrest the changes that were taking place, but he could, as a witness, at least write about those things that were being overtaken. In other words, his motivations were almost the exact opposite of those of the normal academic.

The sheer quantity of Ulli Beier's scholarly writings is truly prodigious – and equally breathtakingly varied. As far as Yoruba society alone is concerned, he wrote on virtually every aspect of it. He wrote on Yoruba myths and their psychological significance; on Yoruba deities and their shrines; on Yoruba attitude to dogs and dog magic; on Yoruba kings and their festivals; on D.O. Fagunwa's novels; on the difficulties of translating Yoruba poetry into English; on Yoruba sculpture; on electioneering campaigns and campaign songs; on children's songs and toys; on Yoruba textile production; and on and on. One characteristic of the essays is that of the passionate belief, till the end of his life, in the values and ethos of the culture, especially in its capacity to generate change and growth from within. Another is that they all came out of just plain curiosity and empathy, and all the essays are suffused in the light touch of geniality and gentle humour.

The essays span a period of about 30 years, most of them being written between the early 1950s and the mid-1980s. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, and in Bayreuth, Germany, Ulli Beier continued his work on the society by engaging in long, ruminative, retrospective and searching dialogues with Yoruba intellectuals like Wole Soyinka, Biodun

Jeyifo, Rowland Abiodun, Sophie Oluwole and others. As Director of Iwalewa-Haus of the University of Bayreuth, he also facilitated artist-in-residence visits for some of the original Osogbo artists, during which period he encouraged them to write their autobiographies. In other words, a kind of socio-cultural account of how Yoruba society has changed between 1950 and the 1990s can be gleaned from his writings alone! His essays constitute an account of a man who saw, learnt and did much, and who also witnessed changes much more drastic than anybody could ever have imagined between 1950 and, say, 1980. There may be a tinge of romanticisation in some of his essays, but there is no indulgence in sentimentalism and nostalgia in them.

Ulli Beier's singular cultural base, Yoruba society, gave him an emotional and ethical perspective from which he continued to approach and judge all other societies, as well as his personal engagements with them. He thereby proved that the ethnic can be universal—that in fact, there is something universalistic in Yoruba culture, as another scholar of the society, J. Munoz, has argued in a book. In this matter of the potentials of Yoruba culture as a 'universal culture' it was in the area of music that he made his greatest efforts. In Germany, performance by Yoruba[illegible] and[illegible][10] musicians in one of the 'cathedrals' of German classical music was an annual ritual. He got them to play with musicians from countries like Norway, the USA, Germany, Indonesia, Egypt and India in yearly public festivals to which he also brought musicians from Senegal and The Gambia. His advocacy of Yoruba and, indeed, African culture, is also there in his critical essays on Leopold Sedar Senghor and Richard Wright.

Because Ulli Beier's cultural integration into Yoruba society did not take place in the midst of the then emerging Western-style-educated elite but rather blossomed among those who still embodied it in their daily practices, it also enjoyed the benefit of a different kind of intellectual perspective. In this, he was lucky, for Yoruba culture, always stronger in orthopraxis than in orthodoxy and doctrine, provided him much food for intellectual contemplation on its verbal arts, religion and institutions.

The essays written in the 1950s and 1960s reflect the political and intellectual climate of the period. The Yoruba cultural nationalism that had started so optimistically toward the end of the 19th century had all but petered out; Yoruba historiography too had been reduced to rival

local historiographies in which individuals from different Yoruba sub-ethnic groups and towns produced pamphlets meant to redress the omissions or 'wrong' accounts given by Rev. Samuel Johnson in his monumental work. In this narrow-minded politicisation of Yoruba history, Ulli Beier intervened with his critical essay "Before Oduduwa," and the result was a renewed general interest in the pre-colonial periods, followed by more vigorous scholarship in them.

In several of his essays, Ulli Beier also took a different tack in attacking the subtle but more powerful erosion of the African's belief in himself, in his history and culture, that Islam and then Christianity and colonialism had wrought. Indeed, precisely because these new religions and politico-cultural realities created a new elite in whose interest it was to naturalise and promote them, their more deleterious effects were glossed over while the 'evils' of the indigenous religious system were exaggerated. Ulli Beier did not of course announce his counter-project in the essays dealing with this problem, but simply pointed to what materials were available and where to look, and how they could be used in the much-needed projects of historical reconstruction and cultural self-renewal. The essays on Oduduwa, on Yoruba myths and their possible psychological use attest to this counter-project of his.

| | |, the journal which he founded and edited, was a cultural journal specifically devoted to Yoruba studies and meant for a Yoruba audience. The numerous essays he published in it were accordingly not only about that society but also addressed to it. As the essays were not meant for the A&P (Appointments and Promotions Board) of the university, they are characterised by a semi-informal style and intimate tone: here was one Yoruba man addressing other Yoruba people with the aim of getting them to 'do something'.| | | also published articles and poems in Yoruba – this at a time when the craving for English was already on, and to 'speak vernacular' in schools was a punishable offence.

As many and varied in subject as Ulli Beier's essays are, there are unities in them: unity of subject; unity in the personality of the author. Recurrent in all of them is a personal tone (which I have already mentioned): the warm, friendly tone of an insider sharing his knowledge, experiences and encounters with other insiders. The personal pronoun with which he most often addresses his reader also discloses a personality that just wants to satisfy the curiosity and hunger to know the society whose every aspect so deeply fascinates him – and to share that knowledge

with others. For instance, only a person so deeply fascinated could have written two articles on Yoruba people and their dogs: "Yoruba Attitude to Dogs" and "Dog Magic of Yoruba Hunters," or for that matter, "Children in Yoruba Society".

Finally, there is what I would call Ulli Beier's 'humanism'. Implied by this term is also that idea of Renaissance Humanism, for the breadth and interests of Ulli Beier were wide indeed. But, more appositely, what is meant here is his deep and abiding interest in human beings: human beings as distinctive personalities and individuals, rather than human beings in the abstract. If the essays reveal the personality of Ulli Beier, that is because they say much about the individuals who embodied or shouldered the burdens of the institutions and traditions he wrote about. Who these individuals are is of as much interest to him as the traditions, institutions and practices that are the subjects of the essays, be they Yoruba oba, priests and priestesses of the various [illegible], or children. The numerous photographs he took also testify to this. He could, for instance, have written academic papers on the Yoruba Travelling Theatre based on his intimate connection with Duro Ladiipo and Kola Ogunmola, or on the Osogbo Art Movement. He chose, instead, to write devotional memoirs on the two. It is perhaps this interest in human beings as persons, more than anything else, that makes his essays very readable narratives and not grand theories or impersonal analyses.

Any sustained consideration of Ulli Beier's activities and essays is bound, at some point, to be confronted with a question: of what use are 'studies' if they cannot add to or improve the cultural, social, political and even economic life of the society or people so studied? The question, indeed, is almost inevitable, for here is a man who did not come to study anything, but whose practical contributions to the society have been so seminal. Also, the question forces itself on us because the concrete contributions for which Ulli Beier is justly famous contrast so starkly with whatever routine academic studies in Africa have been able to achieve – especially by African scholars themselves in the area of culture. To raise the question is to portray Ulli Beier in a better light, so it must be quickly noted, perhaps, that he had a paradoxical advantage: he came to Nigeria equipped only with a B.A. in English Literature and a Diploma in Linguistics – in short, not yet a specialist in any field, his mind was still open to all things. But the reason why he took the Diploma course in fact explains those later concrete achievements better: so as to be

better able to teach children with speech handicaps in London (he would, in Nigeria in the early 1950s, try to use art as therapy for mentally-disturbed patients at Aro Mental Hospital, Abeokuta). In other words, from early in life, he had always wanted to put whatever academic knowledge he acquired to practical use.

Academic studies 'for its own sake' in any particular field of course has an illustrious history in the West, for even scientists whose discoveries lead to technological inventions, advances or improvements do not start with such practical use in mind, no matter how vague. In the West, however, the university is a cultural institution fully integrated not only into other cultural institutions, but also into the social, political and economic ones. But even then, different Western nations have, from the beginning of the Renaissance, found the need to create separate agencies for the development of the arts: art schools, music schools, acting and dance schools, etc. Universities may do critical studies of the arts, but the discovering and nurturing of talents are left to such agencies. Ulli Beier quickly found that the colonial university he came to in 1950 was by its very constitution hostile to native culture in all its forms. Hence the founding of the Mbari Club, Ibadan (plus its organ [illegible]), the organising of a Yoruba conference, the founding of Mbari Mbayo in Osogbo and the active support for Duro Ladiipo and Kola Ogunmola and, finally, the founding of the Osogbo Art Movement and the nurturing of the young artists who constituted the movement.

It may be as a result of retrospection long after these events that Ulli said that one motivation for these activities was the desire [illegible] to a culture and society that was giving him so much. I personally do not think so, and, in any case, the lesson is there for us all to learn: in the present state of both our culture and society, doing studies alone will never do; we need to also be putting something back. Ulli Beier's advocacy essays constituted another way of [illegible].

What Ulli Beier and the Yoruba cultural nationalists before him were embarking upon was a gradual secularisation of Yoruba culture in all its aspects – and this is why 'renaissance', rather than 'revival', is a more suitable term. But now the wheel seems to have turned full circle, for the trend now is in the opposite direction: the pervasiveness of religion, especially Christianity in our society, has meant giving all the [illegible] and what they stood for such horrible names as are alien to their nature. The ethical, philosophical and aesthetic essences embodied by these [illegible]

which the cultural nationalists and Ulli Beier were trying to distil and make available to everyone, have been abandoned, together with the distinct cultural identity that they gave Yoruba people. Even our language, on which the early nationalists fought and won a big battle against the missionaries around 1893, will soon become a threatened language. While 'culture' is on every one's lips, there has been a narrowing and constricting of the term – and, worst of all, a separation and compartmentalisation of it. We have moved from names like Esubiyi and Agbebi to horrid contraptions like Jesubiyi, Peculiar, Precious, Jesunifemi and Jesuferanmi. What is in a name? you might ask. If Ulli were here, we might ask him: he, after all, was the ultimate signifying monkey who signified on names like Akanji Arabagbalu and, most culturally enigmatic of all, Obotunde Ijimere.

Endnotes

1. Yoruba deity of purity; primordial designer of the human form in its various shapes and colours.
2. A powerful occult body, sometimes playing the role of the senate, in the precolonial time
3. Deities.
4. Ifa (Yoruba deity of divination) priest, diviner and healer.
5. Yoruba deity of lightning, thunder and rain.
6. Sango priests.
7. Sango mediums.
8. Meaning "He-who-dances-for-the-white-man."
9. Civilisation.
10. [illegible] and [illegible] are Yoruba drum ensembles.

CHAPTER TWO

An Introduction to the Cosmology and Beliefs of the Yoruba-speaking Peoples of Nigeria

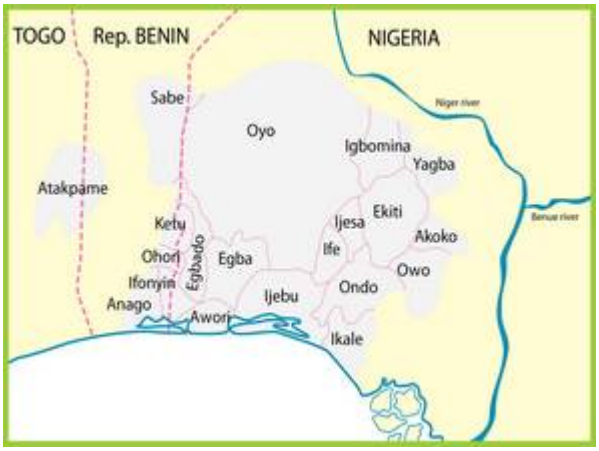
Doig Simmonds

Introduction

One of the effects of globalisation is that populations travel and work in different environments. Their reasons for doing so may be any one of the following or a combination of several: civil unrest or war in the country of origin; the pursuit of education; the search for better jobs in any field but particularly in education, science, or commerce. The result is an ever-growing body of expatriates who move from one place and settle in another, often absorbing the lifestyles of the new place. These new lifestyles may make it impossible or at least very difficult to maintain their older traditions. Yet it seems most natural that people should feel that there is something missing in their background, and this often leads them to search for their 'roots'. This applies particularly to succeeding generations as they follow on from the initial move made by their parents. The 'old ways' may be regarded as 'backward' – the result of illiteracy, or they may be in conflict with newly accepted religions or beliefs and thus willingly denied.

Cultural change and exchange are nothing new. Conquerors have come and imposed changes. Large volumes of people have been forcibly evicted by slavery or poverty or commercial exploitation. This has been going on for centuries. What happens to the habits and lifestyles of those who move? If they can stay together as a group the chances are that they will try to protect and maintain their beliefs and traditions, even though this may lead them into conflict with their new neighbours. Some groups are strong and may survive despite persecution. Outstanding examples of survival in spite of being considered expatriates in the countries where they live are those persons who are Romanies, Jews,

Palestinian Arabs and those of Yoruba descent in Brazil. The latter are now no longer expatriates since they have lived there long enough to become Brazilian. What is interesting about this group is that they have protected and sustained many of their original ways by creating a new culture based on their ancient Yoruba tradition. A syncretism has occurred between Roman Catholic saints and pagan Yoruba Oriza. Smaller or less tenacious groups may be weaker and bend with the prevailing wind, becoming absorbed thus losing their original traditions completely.



The data for this work were collected between 1954 and 1973. Since then many things have happened such as the rise of an extreme version of fundamentalist interpretations of the two Abrahamaic religions of the Bible and the Koran. Judaism does not affect the issue in Yoruba land, but fundamentalist sects of the other two religions have had a devastating effect on the existence of shrines and the 'old' beliefs. Shrines and their artifacts have been destroyed, often violently, by both religious groups.

The map herewith shows the extent of the Yoruba nation, as it is at present, extending into parts of neighbouring Benin Republic and Togo. The Yoruba are a conglomerate of groups, with some variations both in custom and language yet linked by an overall belief in a common origin. It is not only these geographical variations that can give rise to differences in describing the workings of Yoruba belief, but also the important fact that Yoruba culture is flexible, growing and changing over time.

What follows, therefore, must be prefaced by making it clear that the account is a result of my personal experiences in the Yoruba-speaking areas of Nigeria between 1954 and 1973. I have had to interpret what I heard in terms familiar to my own background as a white European. This is therefore a personal viewpoint.

Yoruba beliefs are part of a highly developed system of practices and ideas, designed not only to explain life's phenomena but, more importantly, to provide a mechanism for controlling them. It was not until the end of the 19th century and the early part of the twentieth that these ideas were written down. Hitherto, they had been recorded in the memory of the initiated as part of an oral tradition. The first people to write about Yoruba religion and transcribe the Yoruba languages were not Europeans but Yoruba intellectuals, often leading Christian churchmen of their time. Crowther in 1849 and Johnson in the early 1900's were concerned to have some sort of written descriptions of the Yoruba language and religion. Since then, many writers have attempted to describe this fascinating subject.

The Basic Scheme

Yoruba religion places humanity standing at the focal point of three major forces. The first of these is the influence of the senior gods (called Oriza). The second is the influence exerted by the ancestors. The third is the influence exerted by witchcraft, sorcery and malevolent forces. At every moment of every hour of every day, a person must adjust himself or herself to the varying intensity of these currents and influences. You carry a shrine on your shoulders – your head (*ori*) – where your fate can be influenced by actions on your part. The rainbow snake is a symbol of the ultimate unity of all things that exists forever by constantly consuming and renewing itself - a universal symbol which is also found in much Yoruba iconography.

"The Yoruba Cosmos is a binary fusion of opposites", B. Lawal.

The prime life force (*aṣẹ*, Breath, Olódùmarè, Òzùmàré, Olórun, Olúwa)

This is a concept of an abstract, primordial force. It is unity without form. The name for this supreme energy can vary from place to place, from shrine to shrine, or from occasion to occasion, and may even depend on who is qualified to say these names. This emphasises a Yoruba belief that names are in themselves power tools and should be used with caution. More will be said about this later.

As Professor Lawal points out in his article entitled "Ejiwapo", Olodumare, being the source of all primal energy, has a duality which embodies both positive and negative values. Do not confuse 'positive' and 'negative' with 'good' and 'bad'; the latter pair of words are judgemental and depend on a personal or culturally determined prejudice. In the Yoruba view, the prime force is never depicted in any of the visual arts, or described as being just, righteous or have any other human type of characteristics. Being fundamentally abstract, it can have no personality, no will and is normally not directly appealed to. It simply is that which makes existence and non-existence possible.

The Yoruba may, however, use symbols to represent this fundamental driving force of existence. It is sometimes said to be like the rainbow, or a big snake such as a python (both the rainbow and python are sacred to Òzùmàré). The rainbow might be seen for a moment but it can never be reached and it soon disappears. The snake may be seen in the darkness of the forest but if you try to approach, it too slides away and disappears. These symbols for eternity and primordial energy can be found all over the world.

So how do you connect with this almighty spiritual force? The Yoruba have a saying that "You cannot speak to the King except through his servants". In order to live your life happily and in tune with the primal force and keep malevolent influences under control, there is an array of agents to help you. They are called the Oriẓa. The Yoruba, and indeed many other groups in other parts of the world, see their Supreme Spiritual Force (which I have called Breath), as being a kind of never ending supply of electricity. This energy supply can be connected to the batteries of both the individual as well as the community. The batteries must be topped up and recharged by ceremony and ritual in order to maintain the health and well-being of everyone. Spiritual possession, which is a feature of so many ceremonies, provides the visual reassurance that the deity has entered the community and the recharging process is under way.

Orizas or Activating Gods: Personifications of Different Aspects of Àzv[1] or Òzùmàré

These are powerful spiritual entities capable of doing things and making things happen. These you can certainly appeal to for help when needed. Some may be considered more powerful than others. They may be associated with particular places or with historical heroes. For instance, the god Zàngó is thought to be the fourth Alafin (King) of the Ancient Yoruba kingdom of Old Ôyö. Zàngó is regarded as the owner of thunder and lightening. He is warlike, aggressive, extrovert, generous and highly volatile. This Oriza appeals to persons with similar characteristics, and they will become his devotees. Zàngó is, of course, popularly worshipped in Oyo, but because of his awesome power, he is also worshipped in many towns and villages throughout Yorubaland. Zàngó controls rain, storms, and floods. He is therefore appealed to when disasters related to storms occur. But as the controller of rain, he will also be appealed to when drought threatens the welfare of the community.

Note about 'aggression'

Zàngó has been described as an 'aggressive' character. But in many parts of West Africa, aggression is not seen as a failing, it is seen as necessary for success. It is regarded as the energy required to 'get something done'. None of the oriza, except one called Èsù, are represented in carvings but only by the symbols associated with them. Thus, Zàngó is represented by the double bladed axe and by so-called thunderbolts. These are, in fact, Neolithic stone axes which occur quite frequently in archeological sites in Nigeria. Similarly, a large forest snail may represent Obàtálá.

A person is usually assigned to an Oriza at birth. The choice may be to follow in the family footsteps and be assigned to the same Oriza as that worshipped by the head of the family or the mother of the child. Or it may be that special circumstances at birth, such as the local river rising in flood, a serious bush fire or a thunderstorm guided the family to choose a specific Oriza for the child. Or it might be that the Oriza has been selected through a divination process. In any event, once a person has reached an age where he or she is able to choose for themselves, then they may well select a more compatible Oriza. There are dozens of Oriza but only a few will be mentioned, just to give an idea of how the scheme works.

Obàtálá

The sculptor whose creativity made the creatures of the world including men and women. He is considered a most important Orisa. There are many synonyms such as Orisafunfun, Orisanla and Orisaogiyan. There is a story that in the early days Obàtálá once got drunk on palm wine and created all manner of deformed people. He then regretted it, and decided to make all deformed people his own children. From that day on, palm wine became taboo to his cult members. But it also means that disabled persons are regarded as the children of an important God and this gives them an honoured place in society, ensuring their acceptance. Obàtálá devotees are inclined to be introvert, intuitive, artistic and creative, and so people with these characteristics will become his devotees.

Ògún

The enabler (the maker of tools/weapon and patron deity of warriors), Ògún paved the way for the spirit world to gain access to the earth by providing an iron chain for the gods to descend to the earth. A variant of this story is that Ògun cut the way from heaven to earth with an iron machete. In any event, Ògún is master of metals.

He is the deity of all technology; without him nothing can be done. He taught the art of iron smelting, and is therefore likely to have soldiers, lorry drivers, farmers, hunters and others who make their living using metals, as his devotees. For example, any Yoruba carver or carpenter will recite the praise songs (called *oríkì*) of Ògún every time they open their tool boxes. Inside the tool box will be a specially chosen instrument that is not used but contains the power of the spirit. This tool will have been handed down from father to son through several generations. This selected instrument, together with the powers confirmed by Ògún, reinforces the craftsman's connections with the skills of his ancestors. The power in this tool has the ability to enter into all the other tools he uses. The craftsman will touch it lovingly while singing the oríkì before he uses any other tool in the box.

Oxun: Female Deity of Fertility

Many towns in Yorubaland have an important annual festival for its own particular Orisa. Òxogbo, for example, is particularly identified with Oxun, a river goddess of fertility.

The annual festival celebrates the rededication of the town and its people to the legend of its foundation, to the goddess who guided the wandering ancestors to settle near the banks of her river, and who, in return for perpetuating her cult, has cared for successive generations of the town's inhabitants. It is alleged that nothing dreadful has ever happened to Òẓogbo. Even the Islamic Jihad is said to have halted outside her walls.

The significance of the annual Qẓun Festival was summed up by the Atáqja (King) of Òẓogbo:

> No Christian teaching can disallow the performance of the necessary rites at this occasion. Tradition enjoins us, Christians, Muslims and all others, to remember our ancestors at the appropriate season. This is the period when we operate within the bond of common nativity. It is everybody's anniversary.

The Festival, occupies about nine days during August. After divination and waiting for the correct phase of the moon, the celebrations start in the palace compound of the Atáqja, where sixteen bowls of palm-oil candles flame. These represent the sixteen senior Odù (chapters) of wisdom from the oracle of Ifá.

The next formal step in the Festival is for the Atáqja to visit the tombs of his ancestors, and to make sacrifices to all the other gods in the Yoruba pantheon, in order of importance. Finally, the ninth day arrives; this is the great climax of the Qẓun Festival, when almost the entire population of the town and many thousands of visitors converge on the shrine by the river.

A young and beautiful virgin, the Arugba (one who carries a calabash), has set off from the Palace of the Atáqja. She carries a sacred calabash on her head, full of relics of the goddess, and takes a secret path through the forest. This calabash has been prepared by the chief priestess of Qẓun, who will later dedicate a basket of food to the goddess at the river.

As with so many African festivals, it is a time to express those tendencies latent yet buried beneath the constraints of normal social behaviour. For example, the town's people can use the occasion of the Qẓun festival to criticise their chiefs and rulers. For some communities, it was the only way in which they could depose a despotic ruler. Nowadays, the participants at Qẓun confine themselves to a sartorial exchange of sexual roles, in which men wear earrings, necklaces and braid their hair in feminine styles. Some of the women carry aggressive weapons like Dane guns (these are the basic weapons of the hunter),

axes and swords. The symbolism gets carried one stage further by the fact that some of these weapons are actually toys.

Finally the crux of the ceremony for Qzun is reached. Sanctified food is brought down to the river by the chief priestess, who throws it to the fish in the river, which are the messengers of Qzun. Sacrifices and special requests are then made to the goddess, particularly centring around her chief function to bring fertility. There are annual festivals for most of the Òrìzà. The above is simply presented as an example.

Note on fertility

To have children is such an important facet of family life in Africa; failure to do so casts an unhappy stigma on the wife. So Qzun is particularly close to the hearts of the women of Òzogbo, who may also come to her during the rest of the year, to immerse themselves in the fertile waters of the river.

Women desirous of becoming pregnant, may be advised to carry small wooden dolls called *qmqlangidi*. These may be hidden somewhere in their clothing. These carvings are often no more than 12cm long and highly stylised. The important thing is that they are made of wood. The spirit children (*elére*) like to inhabit trees and forests as well as articles made from this source. *Qmq* means child and *gidi* can mean 'genuine' or 'not counterfeit'. A woman who carries such a doll will be recognised by the spirit children as a desirable mother for their physical materialisation. Fertility is the concern of all Oriza but the female Oriza have a special duty in this respect. It is important to note that in the Yoruba pantheon many of the Oriza may appear interchangeable with other Oriza. This depends on which area of Yorubaland is being considered. Qzun, for example, can also be synonymous with Yemq ja, goddess of the sea.

How does one approach the Oriza for their aid? This is either via the custodian of the relevant shrine or after consultation with the oracle of Ifa.

Ifá: a System of Divination and the Principle of Order in a Chaotic World

A body of priests called *babaláwò* or father of secrets operate this system. When West Africa was first colonised, these persons were called witch doctors but now we know better for they are often highly skilled in pharmacy, psychiatry and medicine. We have to be careful when using

terms that are the names that western science gives to these subjects. In the case of the *babaláwò*, we are referring to empirical knowledge, gained over many years of trial and error, and which has proved very effective in the treatment of human malfunctions. Yoruba people see malfunction as not only the simple physical ailment but also as the intervention of spiritual forces; something we might call bad luck or an accident. Any malfunction must have a cause and this is what will concern the Ifa priest as well as the supplicant who brings the problem to him. The prime concern of a person who is suffering any unusual experience is 'why is this happening and/or who has caused it? (Note: Women diviners are called Ìyánífá).

Ifá will indicate a way of solving the problem and suggest a solution or suggest a treatment if it appears to be an illness. The *babaláwò* recognises that physical sickness and psychological distress are usually linked. To the 'western' scientific mind, the physical manifestation of disease may be ascribed only to physical causes such as viruses, microbes etc. and these are combated with treatments scientifically proven to be effective against them. The Yoruba patient wants to know what lies behind this illness. 'Why have I caught this disease when others around me have not?' Ifá will search for the spiritual cause and may or may not also provide a good antidote. An example of straightforward sickness might be influenza. Even in such a condition, a mystical element can also be present, 'Why did I get this just before travelling to an important meeting'? An example of another kind might be having an accident that prevents you from turning up at a job interview. A Yoruba person may well think that some rival for the position on offer has ill-wished him and prepared bad medicine against him.

The Divination Process

There is a significant sacrifice to be made and shared by all the participants prior to an Ifá divination consultation. Babaláwò must pour a libation of water while saying a prayer for the success of the event and all those present must take a small mouthful. Water is seen as nature's cutting tool. Water will find a way from the land to the sea. It will cut a path through any obstacle. Thus, Ifá, too, will discover a way to solve a person's problem.

The instruments of divination usually consist of a wooden board (*qpön Ifá*), white powder (*iyèrosùn*) that can be sprinkled on the board, a

special short stick (*ìrókẹ̀*) with which to tap on the board and call the spirit of Ifá and sixteen palm nuts. All the instruments used in the divination procedure must be blessed and purified before they can be used.

Ifá is like a numbers game. The sixteen palm nuts (*èkùrọ́*) are held in left hand. These are quite difficult to hold in just one hand. The *babaláwò* will then try to grab as many as he can with his right hand. Normally one or two nuts are dropped in the process, what are left behind are counted and it is this that initiates the numbers that will be represented by marks on the board. If one nut falls, two strokes are recorded in white dust on the board. If two nuts fall, then one stroke is made. This is done eight times. This results in a pattern on the board of two columns of four throws, each consisting of either one or two strokes. This pattern identifies a particular poem in the Ifá oral tradition. There are 256 such poems and these usually refer to an experience of one of the heroes of antiquity. Thus the present-day supplicant feels he is linked to an experience shared by an illustrious being who managed to solve the problem. Some Ifá poems are short and simple, others may consist of many verses. There are 4096 such verses in all and the *babaláwò* will have to memorise the majority of these. The best diviners can memorise them all. The selected verses are then recited and their meanings may either be recognised as significant by the supplicant, or the diviner may be asked to offer an interpretation.

The supplicant will often have to make a sacrifice of some kind and certain actions will be demanded, before any remedial action can occur. For instance a childless woman may approach Ifá for help. She may be told that certain foods are taboo, that she must wash in a certain way using specially prepared soap and she may well have to sacrifice a chicken or a goat. She may be told only to approach her husband on certain days and so forth. Some of these demands may have a good scientific basis such as the one that stipulates an approach to her husband on certain days. These might coincide with the days the wife is most fertile. Washing with the soap on the other hand has a psychological benefit as it provides the lady with assurance that she is 'doing something' positive to her body. She will feel content and more relaxed. This in itself is an aid to increased fertility.

The lady may or may not get pregnant. If she does, it will be due to the help from Ifá. If she doesn't, it will be because she omitted one of

the tasks or may have fallen victim of a subsequent curse from someone who is jealous of her. There are many variables to cause failure. One of these is to ignore Èzù, the messenger of the gods.

Note on sacrifice

Not all sacrifices are bloody. For instance, the gift of food to a handicapped person is a sacrifice to Obàtálá. The initial sacrifice to Ifa is always of water. But the more serious sacrifices certainly are bloody. At the annual ceremonies to honour Ògún, a dog may be sacrificed. A ram is the chosen sacrifice to bango.

Èzù-Elégba

Sometimes referred to as the 'Trickster', not unlike the Joker in a pack of cards, Èzù has a special role as the messenger of the gods. As Ifá seeks to bring order from chaos, it can be argued that Èzù is controller of the chaotic.

Èzù, "the messenger of the gods", is the one who carries our prayers and requests to the Oriza. It is therefore wise to befriend him so that messages always get delivered. Èzù has a special place in Yoruba cosmology, being the embodiment of the chaotic principles of paradox, uncertainty and chance and therefore of opportunity. He is also the only deity depicted directly in sculpture, the others are referred to by the symbols they carry or wear. When the first colonists and missionaries came to West Africa, they found Èzù a very convenient equivalent to the Devil of Christianity, because of his association with chaos, bad luck and trickiness. Not only this, Èzù is often painted black, and in some carvings may have very obvious sexual attributes. All this added up to the embodiment of evil for these European visitors. Unfortunately this bias has been handed on to the present-day Nigerian Christian sects and churches, blinding them to the beauty and poetry of their pagan religion.

Èzù is considered to be the owner and controller of the market place and there will always be a shrine to him there. Buying and selling of goods is attended by a certain element of uncertainty and risk; there are offers and counter offers. At the start of the day, a person selling will offer a little present at the shrine of Èzù if his or her business is to succeed. The first purchaser of the day may be offered a special discount. This is considered as another little sacrifice to Èzù. Success in trading is

important to every market women, but too much success can be dangerous. It can give rise to envy in those who are not doing so well and invite malevolent influences or curses against the one who is successful. This is the paradox. A trader may pray for success, but when it comes in large doses then she is presented with a dilemma. The more successful traders may be also very generous to others in an effort to spread their luck around.

In the version depicted here, from a private collection, it is important to note that the face is duplicated, facing backwards on the end of the hair piece. This emphasises the fact that nothing can be hidden from *Èẹ̀ù* because he can see in all directions.

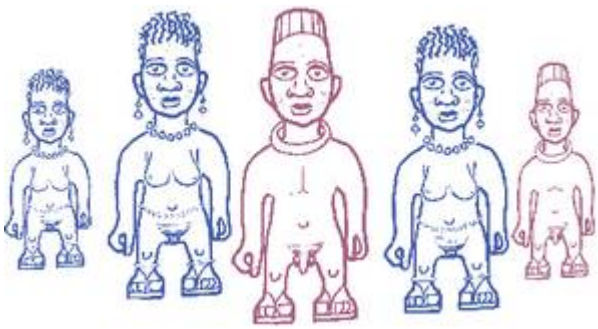
Markets are also thought to be the place where the unseen and the seen mix; where the spirits come to observe the living and enjoy their company and where the spirit children come to select their future mothers. Markets are, therefore, much more than places to merely buy and sell. They are an essential part of Yoruba society and the well-being of the community. It is worth noting that markets in Yorubaland are usually under the authority of women.

Èẹ̀ù is also controller of the crossroads. Crossroads are a place where decisions have to be made. If there are any signposts, can you be sure that some trickster hasn't turned them to face the wrong way? Taking the wrong turn can be costly. This is where you have to pray for guidance. I once found a doll placed at the centre of crossing tracks in a forest and was told later that this was a typical place for a person to leave their bad

luck. Any person finding it and stupid enough to pick it up would then contract the bad luck. Or if there were any malevolent spirits involved they would not be able to return it to the former owner because they would be uncertain of the direction they had taken.

Èzù is also an important household deity for, not only is he the carrier of messages to the gods, but also to the ancestors and therefore must never be ignored. Èzù has sometimes been called the 'Owner of the Day'. I think this is paralleled by the phrase 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof', meaning that each day has enough of its own problems and Ècù will get you through provided you never ignore him.

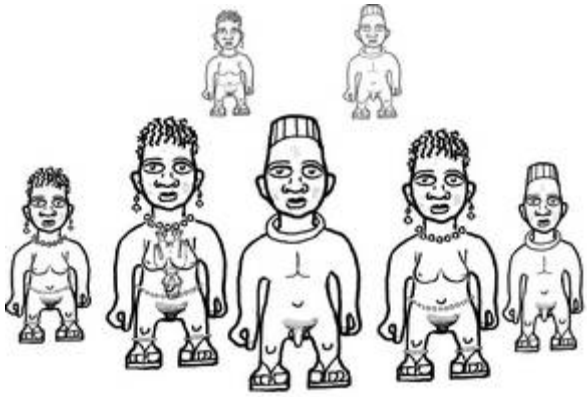
Èzù can play tricks. For example, you must never ask questions concerning a persons' wealth. Never ask: 'How many children, or goats, or chickens or money do you have'?



In this picture, the man has two wives and appears to have two children.

The answer will always be evasive or avoided. A direct answer to such questions would be tempting fate. For example if you were to reply 'I have three children' Èzù would immediately laugh at you for knowing better than the Gods. Èzù will say: 'So, if you think you are so clever then that is all you will ever have – don't come and beg for more later'.

Even if you ask a question like: 'Are you coming to see me this afternoon.' The answer is likely to be vague, such as: 'I will try' and will certainly be ended with: 'by Gods power'. Christians are also aware that fate may intervene and end their answers by: 'DV' or 'God willing' or for Muslims it is 'Insha Allah'.



But this is the 'true' picture: one wife is pregnant and there are two more children allotted to him by fate and are ready to come, so they are all his children but he cannot know ahead of time what fate has in store. This is the reason he cannot answer the question: 'How many children have you got?'

Orí: the Head, Fate

Orí is the head and is considered to be the place where an individual's personal destiny or fate resides. This means that each person has a shrine on their shoulders – a shrine to their own fate. In Yoruba land, I have often witnessed a person dipping a finger into their drink, especially if it is gin or any other spirit, and putting the wet finger on their foreheads while at the same time saying a short prayer. If an important ceremony is taking place, people may often be seen touching the ground where a libation has been poured and then touching their foreheads with the wet finger. This is a way of sharing the benefits of the ceremony with one's own personal fate. There may also be a small shrine in the house consisting of a crown shaped object with a lid. This container is usually covered in cowrie shells representing both temporal and spiritual wealth. Inside, there is always a selection of small sacred objects pertaining to the particular individual and not seen by others but kept secret.

Egúngún: Ancestors, Masquerades and Societies

Masquerades often have a major festival once a year. However, they can also be called out either by the community or by an individual if the need arises, such as in the event of a disastrous crop failure, or an

important occurrence like the installation of a chief. Very often during a masquerade an individual in the crowd or a priest may become 'possessed'. This is taken as a good sign and means that the Deity has entered into the community and is demonstrating his presence.

The masquerade has two main functions. One is to link the living with the dead and the other is to provide entertainment when a special occasion demands it. To keep in touch with the ancestors is a constant duty for the Yoruba. Ancestors must be remembered on a daily basis. If ancestors are ignored, they may disown you and refuse to help when needed or even turn against you and make trouble. According to some of my informants, there are seven stages to pass through before you can be born. At one of these stages, you are asked to choose a number of talents, at another stage, you must say what you want to achieve. Likewise, at death there are seven stages to pass through before you can reach the status of an ancestor. You will be examined on whether you achieved your goals and if not you will be held to account. Finally, after playing your role as an ancestor, you will return to unity and the process of rebirth can begin anew. An ancestor is more powerful dead than when they walked the Earth. So very old people are often feared and always greatly respected. The younger ones around want to make sure that they will receive great benefits when the older relatives pass away. This obviously has important social significance. It means that the elderly are not cast aside as is so often the case in a western industrial society.

Gèlèdé: Social Harmony

This masquerade has several important aspects. It seeks to pacify or eliminate any evil influences arising out of witchcraft. Gèlèdé also seeks to make sure that all the reproductive processes are encouraged. Thus, human fertility is a vital concern, as is success in farming. Reconciliation and forgiveness are an essential ingredient of Gèlèdé. It always tries to encourage the return of harmony in human relationships. There is a Yoruba proverb which says: 'Anything handled with care becomes easier; anything handled with force becomes harder.'

There are many unhappy spirits around who must be 'bought off' by the appropriate sacrifice. And the possible malevolent effects of evil doers must be neutralised. Disturbed ancestors may be causing a problem and they must be pacified or the effects of witchcraft must be reversed.

There are two parts to the festival. The first is sacred and takes place

at night. There are two principal masks. One is female called Tètèdé and the other is male called Èfè. It is the function of the female mask to invite her partner, the male mask, to come and bless the community and the surrounding farmland. But this takes some doing.

Without this blessing, women could remain childless and the farmers could suffer drought giving rise to a shortage of food. Tètèdé has to do a lot of begging. Èfé on the other hand has heard it all before and is reluctant to come. He blames the people for being lazy; for not carrying out his instructions in the years past; for their ingratitude. The performance may start at about 8pm and Èfé won't appear until after midnight. Meanwhile, during this begging by Tètèdé and apparent refusal to appear on the part of Èfé, the crowd will be worked up to a great pitch of excitement. Then, he finally enters the arena to the cries of joy from all those present.

He may then sing songs with a moral content to which all must heed. For example, he might mock young girls who wear their skirts too short thus encouraging sexual laxity. He might well make a veiled threat that if they don't change their ways, it will be remembered, and he may not come again next time he is called. Èfé might also make fun of some overbearing politician or other dignitary, reminding them that humility is a virtue worth cultivating if they want to remain popular and so get re-elected. Having gone round the market square blessing those who ask for it and cautioning those who need it, Èfé must dance with his drummers all round the town and the surrounding farms, without stopping, until the first rays of dawn.

The second day is a time for theatrical entertainment. The female section of the Gèlèdé society will perform a well-rehearsed dance-cum-ballet. Their choreography is often very feminine in character, with long supple sweeping movements, dancing in curves and circles. When this is completed, then the male members will appear. Their choreography is masculine, almost military, with dancing that is in squares and lines. After this, pairs of masks will appear together with singers and drummers. These masks will re-enact any sensational events of the recent past, or re-tell funny stories and jokes.

Ajogun: Malevolent Forces

In Yorubaland as in much of Africa, only the very old die a natural death. On many occasions death may be considered untimely, being often caused by a curse or by witchcraft. Witchcraft in Yoruba land is

considered to be mainly a female activity. If you ask who the witches are you may well receive the answer that they are 'our mothers'. This usually refers to the older women who are past child bearing. However the witches of Yoruba land, though often feared, are also considered to be useful agents of the spirit world. The community does not normally persecute witches but seeks to placate them by prayers and gifts, thus acknowledging their sometimes useful power. A 'good' witch can recognise evil before it takes hold. Senior women, whom some would call witches, may often be regarded as much valued advisers to priest of cults or to masquerades and societies.

Àbíkú (born to die): Child Mortality

It is thought that some young children miss their playmates in the spirit world and hear these spirit friends calling them to come back. A woman who continues to have children who die young will feel she has fallen victim of these malevolent child spirits called *àbíkú*. The remedy may often be to seek advice from one of the so-called witches or from Ifá. The next child to be born may well have magic beads strung around the waist, wrist or ankles to 'tie' it to the earth. It will certainly have a lot of care and attention, being spoilt with special foods and presents to make it want to stay. Once again, the names given to suspected *àbíkú* children are set by tradition. Many of them begin with the word 'Dúró' which means 'wait'. Some mothers of a suspected *àbíkú* child have been known to mutilate the corpse of their dead child then wait to see if the next one to be born carries a similar mark thus proving the existence of an *àbíkú* child.

Names and the Power of Words

The Bible says: 'In the beginning there was the word and the word was God'. So Christians too know that words have power. The phrase bears some resemblance to the Yoruba idea of the primordial 'breath,' but in their case without sound. Yoruba are very careful about the use of names, either for people or for things.

It is thought that to use a name gives the user power over that object or person. Certain major diseases are never mentioned by name. The Yoruba word for smallpox, for example, must never be used except by a person empowered to do so. This would normally be the Babaláwò. If the uninitiated speaks the name, this can open a spiritual door and allow

an unwelcome visitation of the disease. Conversely, prayers for assistance from the deities must be sung out loud in order for that help to find existence and be forthcoming.

Unless you know someone very well you do not use their name but either a nickname or some euphemism. Married women are often called by the name of their firstborn child. If the first child's name is Gloria then her mother will be called 'Mama Gloria'. Many Yoruba names embody a strong spiritual element: Olúwafúnmiláyo means "God gives me joy". Babátúndé means "Father has returned". The latter name makes sure that a revered ancestor is constantly remembered.

Ìbejì: Twins

The Yoruba have four times as many twin births than anywhere else in the world. Twins are called Ìbejì. They have a special significance for Yoruba people. The birth of twins may be celebrated with great joy yet it is also likely to create a good deal of apprehension. In a country where there used to be a high degree of infant mortality, the more children that survive the better. This is because children will eventually become responsible for their parents' security and welfare when they become too old to manage for themselves. This makes good sense in those countries that have no state welfare services. So two children all at once may be considered 'good' but as twins often have a mysterious way of communicating their thought without speaking and often experience similar events even when they are nowhere near each other, they are thought to be very much closer to the spirit world than other children.

Twins are spoilt rotten in order to encourage them to stay on earth. If one were to die then it could entice the survivor to follow it to the spirit world, unless, that is, the survivor so loves the parents and all the good things it is getting, that it chooses to stay. It is very common for twins to have either one or usually two carvings made for them. Carvings can be made at birth or be made after consulting a diviner, should special circumstance so require, such as when sickness threatens them. If one twin should die then the survivor must care for the carving that represents the deceased: this maintains the spiritual link between them. A mother who bears twins may feel endangered by this powerful event and will often be quite glad to have subsequent normal single births. Names for twins are set by tradition as are the names of any children following. The first twin is called Táíwò while the second is called Kehinde; the

name for a child following the twins is Ìdòwú. The third fourth and fifth child must also have special names given to them.

Orò

This society is owned by men and is described by some as being the repository of the community's knowledge about the past. Hence its importance when justice and punishments have to be administered, a task it also shares with the Ògbóni society. Orò has no images. You cannot see Orò. To make his presence known he makes a very distinctive sound with a device called a bullroarer.

Women are barred from taking part or even being outside their own homes when Orò is celebrated. They must shut themselves in and cover their ears. If they even hear the sound they could become barren. In spite of the fact that Orò is usually an exclusively male society, I have met very senior and elderly women who were members of it. They are invariably very old and much venerated by being close to the ancestors. When I asked how these women became accepted as members, I was told it was because of their wisdom and the fact that they were long past the childbearing age. They were accepted in an advisory capacity bur not as participants in the Orò rites: "Men know 60 percent women know 100 percent" is how it was expressed.

Ògbóni: Secular Power and Law

This is a society to which both women and men can belong. Ògbóni is principally concerned with law and order. It considers serious offences against the community, such as witchcraft, rape or murder. The images with which it is associated are of bronze and are usually cast in pairs linked by a chain. These are instruments of justice in that they can inform the accused of acquittal or impending punishment. The male image is connected with guilt and the female with innocence. If an offender finds the male one outside his front door one morning, he would be wise to leave town quickly. Banishment is often the most severe punishment.

Postscript

There are several important features of Yoruba traditional religion. The first is that it is dynamic. The Gods themselves can go out of favour if they don't deliver. A particular God belonging to a particular village

may simply be forgotten if, for example, the village is abandoned and the inhabitants move to a new town where different deities are worshipped.

The second feature is that there are no prophets and there is no proselytisation. It is therefore not an arrogant religion and seeks no converts. It easily synchronises with Christianity especially with Catholicism and this it has done successfully in Brazil, with Catholic Saints and the many Yoruba Òrìẓa meshing in together.

It is a flexible religion. When a child is born, it may be assigned to an OÌrìÌcaÌ according to circumstances at the time such as the day of its birth, or because of a coincidental event such as a thunderstorm. But it can choose another Òrìẓa if it finds this more sympathetic.

Fourth, people are thought to be responsible for their own destiny. At best, they can alter its course; at worst they can ameliorate any suffering through the intervention of their Òrìẓa or by appealing for help via divination which will identify the cause of their problems. They can then change or improve their fate with the aid of supernatural forces through the offering of a suitable sacrifice.

Fifth, the elderly, because they are so close to the ancestors, have a special place in society through which their well-being is catered to. The deformed and the mentally and physically handicapped, being the special children of the Òrìẓa, are also cared for.

This may sound like an ideal social organisation but as with most things, there is a downside. Priests may seek to increase their power through fear. For example, priests responsible for the Òrìẓa of smallpox were accused of spreading the disease so that they could obtain the property of the deceased. If a devotee of bango is killed by lightning, the priest of the cult may demand not only the body of the one who died but also all their property. Black magic and witchcraft can be used to ill effect. However, there is a widespread belief that any person using sacred knowledge and power for personal gain or any destructive purpose may well be destroyed by the very power that they manipulate. 'Good' and 'evil' co-exist but the evil can eventually be overcome.

Today, many aspects of the indigenous spirituality have been negatively affected. For example, the 'genuine' masquerades have become theatre pieces for entertainment and only lip service is paid to their cultural importance. Tourism and the desire of the African community living overseas for an identity and a recognition of their 'heritage' are shallow

replacements for the genuine masquerade which used to be undertaken because of a deep spiritual need to connect with the great 'breath' of the creator or to appeal to the ancestors for their continued support. Nevertheless, many people still have a firm belief in the existence of witches and other malevolent beings. They might also have a sneaky feeling that the old Gods are lurking about somewhere. The sophisticated, science-loving person or the devout follower of Mohammed or Jesus might be forgiven for having a small figure of Ezu-Vlvgba near the back door – just in case. Double insurance is better than one!

How do some of my informants see the future? I have been told that there have been two periods of extinction and we are now awaiting the third. The first was by fire, the second by water and the third will be caused by the fact that people will replace the love of the Gods, by whom they are supported, by a love of money which will destroy them.[1]

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Endnote

1. Conversation with David A. Adeniji, historian, Iwo, I970.

Conversations with

His Highness the Timi of Vdv, late John Laoye II
Professor Babatunde Lawal
Professor Ulli Beier
Fatunmbi Pierre Verger
Dr. John Picton
David A. Adeniji

CHAPTER THREE

Transnational Religions, Colonialism and Cultural Effacement in Africa: A Study of Some Selected Ethno-Cultural Groups inKebbi State, North-West Nigeria

Nathaniel D. Danjibo, Ph.D

Introduction

Religion is as old as the human community. In the quest for transcendental fulfilment humans invented religions, given the fact that the material world could not serve nor satisfy the human need. Religion is not just borne out of fear of the supernatural as many would aver, it is rather the quest for the spiritual connection between the human and the transcendental being(s). There is the other side of religion too that has not been explored which can be linked to the Hobbesian 'state of nature'. When men lived without the dictates of the law, life became 'nasty, brutish and short'. Perhaps this was what informed the Code of Hammurabi to institute a lawful society on the famous dictum of 'an eye for an eye' and 'a tooth for a tooth', which the Jews adopted to govern the community of Israel during the Levitical days.

Every society has introduced and practised one form of religion or the other in order to maintain law and order through the institution and teaching of moral values. Both older and newer religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam were all established at one point in history to bring about order in the society and to promote the culture of peace. Ritzer (2008: 78) opined that "Durkheim's studies were driven by his concern about the moral health of modern society", just like Kasongo observed that in African traditional society, "religion was used as a vehicle of moral and spiritual values". These sociologists of religion see religion as playing a

key functional role in the moral health of societies. As Noss (1969: 2) pointed out:

> All religions imply in one way or another that man does not, and cannot stand alone, that he is virtually related with and even dependent on powers in nature and society external to himself. Dimly or clearly, he knows that he is not an independent centre of force capable of standing apart from the world . . . Religions as a general rule relate men closely with the power or powers at work in nature or society.

Contrary to the postulations of social scientists, mainly sociologists such as Emily Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx, who opined that religion would be phased out in the face of modernisation and industrialisation, religion has experienced a global influential resurgence in international politics today (Thomas, 2005). This has established religion as a generational force that cannot be eliminated or even be ignored by scholarship.

In the ages of empire conquest and colonial expansion, religions of conquered territories were oftenartificially phased out and supplanted with colonial religions, often brought about by the administrations of the colonisers. This was what happened to most traditional belief systems in Africa, where both Arab and Western colonisers intruded on and captured African societies, uprooted their religions and belief systems, and entrenched both Islam and Christianity in the name of civilisation. Today, the pangs of dying traditional beliefs and cultural practices are made manifest in all facets of African life. This paper presents a critical discourse on the influx of Christianity and Islam in Northern Nigeria and how these two potent colonial religions have done incalculable damage to the cultures and belief systems of traditional African societies in North-western Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Concepts such as colonial religions, African traditional religion and culture require brief clarification in this study, because these are terms that are germane to the understanding of the study.

Transnational Religions

Transnational religion is here defined as any religion(s) that is/are alien to (African) indigenous religious practices. In this case, the study considers

both Christianity and Islam as colonial, transnational religions. This is because both Christianity and Islam, which religions originated in the Middle East among the Jews and Arabs, came to Africa from the Western and Arab worlds.Today, both Christianity and Islam are large and fast growing religions, spreading like wild fires among new cultures that have replaced the indigenous cultures with great totalitarian effects. Both Christianity and Islam came to the African soil and brought along with them the cultures and civilisations of the exporters of both religions-Jews, Romans, English, Germans and Arabs. In the face of the 'clash of civilisations' therefore, colonial transnational religions have succeeded, to a large extent, in diffusing, and in some aspects, effacing the cultures and civilisations of the conquered recipients. In the words of Haynes (2001:143), "Christian and Muslim transnational religious communities predated the emergence of centralised secular states . . . Both Christianity and Islam grew to become world religions, conveying their associated civilisations around the world via colonisation, conquest and the expansion of global trade".

African Traditional Religion (ATR)

This study adopts the definition provided by Ekwenife (1990: 8) who defined ATR as those "institutionalized beliefs and practices of indigenous religion of Africa which are rooted in the past African religious culture, transmitted to the present votaries by successive African forbears mainly through oral tradition". In most world societies, especially African societies, it is not easy to separate cultures from belief systems. In fact, belief systems are deeply rooted in cultural practices to the extent that to know and practise one's culture is synonymous to knowing and practising one's religion. Therefore, we can extend our definition of ATR to mean the cultural expression of belief.

Culture

Culture is one of those elusive and flexible words difficult to assign a definite definition. Barley (1995) observed that culture is a "notoriously difficult concept" to define. Earlier studies by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) identified 164 definitions of culture. The difficulty in defining culture stems from the fact that the word culture has come to embrace virtually everything in life. For example, we have pop culture, animal

culture, youth culture, even aquaculture. However, this study would like to limit the definition of culture to its anthropological form. In this respect, a few definitions would suffice. Tylor (1871: 1) defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society". In the 1930s, Margaret Mead tried to distinguish between what is culture and a culture. By the former, Mead described culture as "the whole complex of traditional behaviour which has been developed by the human race and is successfully learned by each generation" (cited in Brumann, 1999:16). Harris (1975: 7) defined culture as the "total socially acquired life-way or life-style of a group of people. It consists of the patterned, repetitive way of thinking, feeling, and acting that are characteristic of the members of a particular society or segment of a society".

Culture is, however, not static; it moves, changes and sometimes becomes extinct depending on the nature and pattern of transmission and transition. Migration, urbanisation and diasporic phenomenalargely account for cultural shifts or assimilation, which often becomes very difficult to reinvent. It is observed that cultural changes occur as communities and peoples respond to social and economic shifts, new technology, new environment, armed conflicts and development projects (see, Pronk, 2009). Some cultural attributes survive and remain a fact of historical linkage through generations of migration. Such surviving attributes of culture can be in the form of art, symbols and rituals, which can be used to trace the historical origin of a group or link one group of people to another.

Religion and Culture

Religion is a cultural attribute because there is no religion that is not part and parcel of a given culture. Both culture and religion are codified and defined by values cherished by peoples and societies. Igboin (2011: 98) is of the opinion that "In so far as values are universal, they can be material, spiritual, religious, moral, aesthetic, communal or individualistic". He went further to observe that values are found in all religions, and that people's values are derived from their moral and religious inclination. This is to say that there is no religion that can survive purely on its own merit without recourse to its cultural foundation. Things like mode of dressing, rituals, eating habits, etc. are mostly derived from

the culture of the people. For instance, it has been interpreted in several circles that the dress code of the Jews and Arabs has to do with their environment. Turbans and veils are necessary to provide protection from the extreme heat of the sun and the dust, given the fact that they inhabit a desert.

Pristine religions like the African Traditional Religion (ATR) have been cemented to the cultures of their respective societies. This therefore, makes religion and cultureintricate. Scholars like Ray (1976) came to the conclusion that culture remains the backdrop against which religion is to be understood, especially ATR. And in spite of the contact with other foreign religions, the cultural aspect of ATR still remains strong (Oyewole, 2003). As a matter of fact, the evolution of the African churches had a lot to do with a deviation from the way Christianity was practised based on foreign cultures that alienated the African people. Therefore, African churches today are an admixture of both Christianity and ATR. Gbenda (see, http://www.thembosdey.com/talk_africa.htm) posited that the "desire of African to understand the New Testament message in the context of African culture and religion has produced many theories of Christology". He went further to illustrate this point by citing an example fromBujo (1978) who presented Jesus Christ as a proto-ancestor of the Africans. Today, it is observed that "The Apostolic church, the Church of the Lord, the Cherubim and Seraphim, the Celestial Church of Christ have taken over the functions of indigenous religions as many of the traditional practices and customs are seen in them" (Gbenda: 12). Even Christianity and Islam have deeply borrowed from the culture of the Romans, the West and the Arabs. This can be seen in their arts, crafts, symbols, sacred places, and rituals.

"Civilising Mission"

Through the slave trade and missionary activity, the West justified its imperial incursion into Africa inwhat was referred to as the 'civilising mission'. Africa was considered a dark continent that had no history, culture or civilisation. For this reason, Western imperialists decided to come to Africa, to help the continent and its people to become 'civilised'. This justified the fact of colonialism with the suggestion that the colonialists would remain on the soil of Africa until Africans were civilised enough and capable of self-government. For this reason, Western explorers, colonialists and missionaries invaded Africa because of the

erroneous presentation of Africa as a 'dark continent' that needed cultural liberation. Using the Darwinian theory of evolution, racism was hierarchised, with the white race on top of the ladder and the black race at the bottom, which hierarchisation gave superiority to the cultures of the white race and subordinated the cultures of the black race. Armed with this feeling of superiority, colonial anthropologists and missionaries painted African indigenous religions as fetish andanimism, or as ancestor worship (Chepkwony, 2003). By this classification, a new form of doctrine was introduced which projected the colonial religions and cultures as superior to the indigenous belief systems (Chidester, 1996; Burris; 2001 Okoduwa, 2008).

Colonial Transnational Religions and African Cultures

Though the transnational religions came with the vigour of evangelical spread and the intent of 'civilising' the African 'primitive cultures', it must be noted with profound caution that "Civilization was just another concept of domination: imposition of incoming new cultures over traditional culture values" (Kasongo, 2010: 314). The character of colonialism is to conquer, dominate and subjugate. This was precisely what happened to most African societies that had keenly or forcibly embraced the colonial religions. Most of them were captured and subjugated to the extent that their cultures and civilisations were swept off completely or are at the brink of extinction. As earlier mentioned or defined, by colonial religion we refer to both Christianity and Islam on African soil. Prior to the incursion by these competing religions, Africans practised their indigenous beliefs systems in varied forms, mostly according to the community spirit. However, the transnational religions which often gained inroad through empire conquest and expansion were more or less directly and indirectly imposed on Africans through the forces of both Arab and Western colonialism. Igboin (2011: 101) depicts the cultural imperial character of colonialism thus:

> It is doubtless that colonialism stimulated positive and negative changes in Africa. More importantly, colonial rule was an imposition that unleashed deadly blow on African culture with the immediate consequences of the introduction of such values as rugged individualism, corruption, capitalism and oppression. Colonial rule disrupted the traditional machinery of moral homogeneity and practice. The method of moral inculcation was vitiated, which resulted in the abandonment of traditional norms and values through a

systematic depersonalisation of the African and paganisation of its values.

Igboin (2011) singled out Christianity and Islam as being responsible for the many changes that are taking place in African societies with respect to cultural value shifts. In similar comparative studies, Charlton and Brunnette (2010) came up with a factual presentation of how the American government connived with American missionaries to stamp out Indian culture, religion and civilisation. The objective was to allow the 'savage' to enjoy the benefits of the superior Christian civilisation. DeMallie (1982) gave a vivid account of how the government, in order to achieve this objective, attempted to ban what was considered 'pagan' and 'heathenish' dances and other religious practices.

Pre-Jihad Ethnic Configuration of Kebbi State

Prior to the jihad of Usman Danfodio in 1804, the major ethnic groups in Kebbi state werethe Kabbawa and Zabermawa, Arawa and Kambawa,Yawurawa, Dukkawa, Gungawa, Shangawa and the Kamberi, Achifawa, the Bangawa, the Dakarkari, the, Gelawa, Kelawa, Fakkawa and Katsinawan Laka. Before the Jihad several group identities had existed as autochtones, independent of the Hausa-Fulani identity.

Even among the seven real Hausa and seven pseudo-Hausa states (Hausa Bakwai and BanzaBakwai), ethnicity was mostly defined in territorial terms- such as Gobirawa, Sakkwatawa, Kabbawa, Arawa, Zanfarawa, Zazzagawa, Katsinawa, and Kanawa. However, the jihad movement provided a unified identity for these groups under the general banner of Hausa/Fulani reinforced by Islamic culture (*Musulunci*) and through intermarriages between these groups and the Fulani (Usman, 1980; Sa'ad, 2000; Danjibo, 2005). For example, the Arawa, Kabbawa and Yawurawa which existed as separate identities have now embraced the Hausa/Fulani identity (Adamu, 1980). Other minority identities like the Beriberi, Kanuri and Nupe have completely lost their identities and history to the assimilative strength of the jihad. The *Yawurawa* were able to secure their identity through tributary allegianceto the jihadists. The Achifawa, Dakarkari, Dukkawa, Gelawa, Kelawa, Gungawa, the Kamberi and Zabermawa resisted assimilation. In the case of the Zabermawa, both the French and British colonists shared the people into three territories. Some of the Zabermawa people are inthe Republic of Benin, some are in Niger Republic, while some are in Nigeria.

Kebbi State was carved out of SokotoState in 1991. Four of the five emirates that made up Sokoto State then became part of the newly createdKebbi State. Under Sokoto State the emirates were Sokoto, the capital of the caliphate with the Sultan as the head, Argungu Emirate, Gwandu Emirate, Yauri Emirate and Zuru Emirate. After the creation of KebbiState, only Sokoto Emirate remained in Sokoto State while the other four emirates became part of Kebbi. Table 1 below presents the ethnic configuration of the present Kebbi State.

Table 1: Major Ethnic Groups in Kebbi State

Ethnic Group	Location
Arawa	Argungu Emirate
Kabbawa	Gwandu Emirate
Yawurawa	Yauri Emirate
Dukkawa	Yauri Emirate
Gungawa (Reshe)	Yauri Emirate
Lopawa	Yauri Emirate
Kamberi	Yauri Emirate
Shangawa	Yauri Emirate
Dakarkari (Lelna)	Zuru Emirate
Achifawa (Derne)	Zuru Emirate
Bangawa	Zuru Emirate
Gelawa	Zuru Emirate
Kelawa	Zuru Emirate
Fakkawa	Zuru Emirate
Katsinawan Laka	Zuru Emirate
Hausawa	All the Emirates
Fulani	All the Emirates
Zabermawa	Gwandu Emirate

Today, most of the ethnic groups that resisted assimilation into the dominant Hausa-Fulani religion and culture find themselves gradually being enclosed and subtly giving away their ethno-cultural and traditional belief system. In Yauri Emirate, the Lopawa, the Reshe (Gungawa) and the Shangawa are fast jettisoning their ethno-cultural identities and have completely accepted the Hausa identity, mostly through inter-marriages and conversion to Islam (Salamone, 1985).

Transnational Religions and Indigenous Cultures in Kebbi State

Laatikainen (2008) observed that in a global community, religious transnationalism undermines legitimacy from both within and outside the state. It does that through the spread of fundamental and sectarian ideologies that oftentimes threaten not only the authority of the state, but also the cooperate existence of multi-cultural and religious societies. The transnational modern religions that gained acceptance among local communities have condemned and dismissed adherents of ATR as pagans and hell-bound. This damning style of preaching has made many a convert to completely reject the traditional belief and cultural practices of the people. Unlike the popular fallacious assumption that categorised group identities in the whole Sudanic Northern Nigeria as simply Hausa-Fulani, Kebbi State as indeed most other parts of northern Nigeria, is a complex, plural and multi-cultural society. Studies like those of Alkali (1973), Prazan (1975) Mahdi (1978), Salamone (1985), Augi and Lawan (1990) and Danjibo (2005) have illustrated the multi-cultural and ethnic complexity of Kebbi State. However, conversion to both Christianity and Islam has pervasively eroded the cultural fabric and foundation of ethnic groups in the state. It does so through the abandoning and jettisoning of the languages, marriages and death rites and other forms of traditional practices by convertsin preference for transnational religions.

Islam in Northern Nigeria

Before the advent of Islam in Northern Nigeria, religion was based on cosmology through the worship of spirits and ancestral cults, especially among the Hausa and Fulani. Maishanu (2007: 53) observed that:

> The whole cosmology of these societies (Hausa and others) revolved around the little world which constituted the epi-centre of their existence. Thus, their religious system was associated with spirit worship. These spirits appear in different forms and sizes. This was in addition to their belief in the existence of a supreme deity often referred to as Ubangiji. The spirits were associated with such natural objects and phenomena like rivers, streams, hills, trees, and were said to dwell therein. These nature spirits, it was believed, were the ones that directed the day-to-day human affairs in these communities and thus the necessity of making sacrifices not only to appease, but also to keep in communion with them.

This suggests that religious interactions were based on the natural objects of worship. This is often referred to as primitive religions.

With the advent of Islam in the tenth century in Kanem Bornu and later in the 13th and 14th centuries in other parts of the north, especially in Kano and Katsina, the Arabic culture began to infiltrate the cultural practices of the Kanuri and Habe (Hausa) kingdoms.These earlier dates are to correct the erroneous views of associating Islam with the Jihad revolution of UsmanDanfodio in 1804. The revolution of 1804 was only meant to purify the practice of Islam which had been corrupted by the Hausa (*Habe*) ruling classes. The autonomous Habe states like Katsina, Gobir and Kano were famously recognised for the long distance trading in kolanuts, salt and leather. The Kanuri were known for their unrivalled salt extraction way up to North Africa. It was established that most groups that were not Hausa struggled to get assimilated into the Hausa identity, while commerce and Islam provided the platform (Lovejoy, 1980).

Though the jihad was successfully carried out by a tiny Fulani minority, the Fulani language and culture was conquered by the Hausa language and culture, to the extent that most urban Fulani people today cannot speak Fulfulde (Fulani language). The capture and submergence of the Fulani language and culture was made possible through intermarriages with the Hausa people. This fact is buttressed by Salamone (1976: 197) when he noted that: "the Muslim Hausa have used interethnic marriage as a means of incorporating new members into the over-lapping groups that constitute 'the Hausa' for no non-Muslims may marry a Hausa woman". Salamone was actually analysing the process of conversion of the Gungawa ethnic group in YauriEmirate into becoming Muslims and Hausa.He observed that there was a great deal of prestige among the male Gungawa in marrying a Hausa woman; and that male Gungawa went as far as teaming together to help anyone of them who wanted to marry a Hausa woman (Salamone, 1976: 196). In other words, Islam and the jihad became catalysts of assimilation and the emergence of new ethno-religious and cultural identity- that of the Hausa-Fulani. It must be emphasised that Islam in northern Nigeria had existed seven centuries before the 1804 Jihad of UsmanDanfodio, and that prior to this period, mercantilist activities had been associated with the *Habe* (Hausa) people.

With the jihad expedition, colonial administration and Christian

missionary activities in Northern Nigeria, Arabic but also Hausa language were adopted and imposed as the official lingua franca. During the colonial period, Hausa officially became the language of administration and commerce, while Islam became the officially protected religion. Again, as Salamone (1973: 59) noted: "The British tended to preserve and strengthen the interethnic situation in Yauri while adding to the prestige of the ruling Hausa by strengthening the power of Islam."In fact, the colonial government carried out its transactions and record keeping using Hausa language. Today, the many colonial records found in the National Archives, Kaduna, are all written in Hausa. Furthermore, reading and writing in Hausa language became part of the school curriculum from primary school to the university. According toAbdullahi Smith,

> The Islamization of these kingdoms . . . paved way for their incorporation into the wider world of Muslim culture and laid the foundation for the religious jihad (holy war) of the Fulani warriors under Shehu Dan Fodio that cemented the kingdoms together into a more unified whole of the Sokoto Caliphate (Smith, 1970: 329-346).

Even Christian missionary activities such as catechism, hymns and songs and sermons were and are still being conducted using Hausa Language. Also, the bible and prayer books are written in Hausa. In fact, for the missionaries, Hausa became the official divine language.

Impact on Language

The German philosopher of language, Ludwig Wittgenstein once remarked that the limit of one's language means the limit of one's world. This is to say that knowledge is gained through the language we speak. Young (1993:19) observed that language "has long been recognised as a central aspect of identity". This is because language has been perceived to be "a system, a code of signs: a sign is something which stands for – is a symbol of – something else" (Billington, 1991). However, signs and symbols only make meaning in a systematically codified style of expression understood by a particular set of people who define such terms in contradistinction to others (Harland, 1987). It is a universally accepted principle that every people is defined by its naturally transmitted language, and that a people's cultural identity only makes meaning by the language that defines its expression. Unfortunately for most groups

in Northern Nigeria, the advent of Islam, Christianity and British colonial conquest has helped to set the stage for the erosion of their various language and cultural identities. Islam, for example, brought about the spread of Arabic language whose vocabulary has gained wide acceptance in Hausa language.

Furthermore, colonialism and Christian missionary activities in Northern Nigeria recognised and ascribed superiority to Hausa language thereby adopting and imposing it as the lingua franca of administration, commerce and religion. According to Garuba (2001: 12):

> In northern Nigeria . . . where Hausa is the major language, other minority groups are expected to adopt and speak it because of the power and status conferred upon it . . . Minority languages were effectively marginalized and a new ethno-lingua identity was created from a coupling of the power of the conquerors with the language of the conquered. In this manner, the Hausa-Fulani oligarchy was established, which has dominated the region for almost 200 years. Local identities were suppressed by a combination of power and religion. When the British colonialists took over, the system of indirect rule, which they have instituted, promoted this identity through their language and bureaucratic policies and practices . . .

Hausa language, therefore, became a superimposed language in the entire Northern Nigeria. Presently, both Muslim and Christian converts believe it is a status privilege to speak Hausa language rather than speak in their respective indigenous languages. It is therefore, not surprising to find many families not communicating in their local languages but Hausa, making most languages of the minority identities in Northern Nigeria to run the risk of extinction. A sample of most families that are not Hausa/Fulani reveal that most people between the ages of two and forty-five cannot speak their local languages, an obvious sign that these languages are on their way to extinction.

Impact on Physical Features (Facial and Body Marks)

In the not-distant-past, marks whether facial or on other parts of the body were regarded as symbols of personal and group identities. You could tell if someone were *Ba Dakkare* (from Zuru) *Ba Gobiri* (from Gobir), *Ba'Are* (from Argungu), *Ba Katsine* (from Katsina), *Ba Zazzage* (from Zaria), *Ba Zamfare* (from Zamfara), etc. by the particular marks on their bodies. Among the minority ethno-cultural groups, marks defined their unique identities at the ethnic, sub-ethnic and even clannish levels.

It was much easier to distinguish the Dukkawa from the Gungawa and the Kaberi, just as it was with the Dakkarkari, the Fakkawa, the KatsinawanLaka and the Bangawa. In response to the submission by Gunn and Conant that "Tribal marks are no longer a basis of identification; often they are omitted, or simply cut to individual taste", Prazan (1977) stated that the "style of markings – the very delicate and precise incisions, the effect of the rubbing of charcoal into them – all clearly differentiated a Ba Dukku from a person of any other indigenous tribe in Yelwa area" of North-western Nigeria.

Facial and body marks were also part and parcel of the fashion of the different ethnic groups, particularly among women. Women with marks were admirable and admired. It is said that women with facial and body marks often got suitors faster than those who did not have them. As a matter of fact, it was taken for granted that all children must be marked. However, the practice of facial and bodily mark is fast eroding. It is strange to find persons below 30 years with facial or body marks; it is no longer a conventional practice.

With the introduction of both Islam and Christianity in Northern Nigeria, conversion to both religions by groups other than Hausa and Fulani has brought about the eradication of the practice of facial marks. This is because these two transnational religions brought about civilisations that interpreted facial and body marks as something primitive. The Hausa term '*Kauyenci*' used to depict such practices is an indication of primitivism and backwardness. Today, as a mark of 'civilisation', many ethnic families in Kebbi State no longer take delight in using marks to identify themselves for fear of being tagged primitive. In fact, some Pentecostal churches have gone as far as condemning facial marks are something occultistic.

Initiation/Naming Ceremonies

Every cultural group has unique way(s) of initiating their young ones into the larger cultural society. Apart from that, there are other life cycle events such as the age grade system that define a cultural group. Presently, baptism among Christian initiates and naming among Muslims have supplanted the cultural patterns of initiations among hitherto traditional groups. With baptism and Islamic naming ceremonies, both Christian and Muslim converts adopt foreign names that only make meaning outside of the cultural groups. Moreover, as Salamone (1976:204)

observed, the "Islamic naming ceremonies have rapidly replaced traditional ones". As at the present, large segments of the non-Hausa/ Fulani who convert to Islam, especially among the Gungawa, Dukkawa, Dakkarkari, Fakkawa, and other splinter groups seldom bear traditional indigenous names. For example, my late uncle and several of my cousins who converted to Islam would never answer to their indigenous names but would only answer to their Muslim names. On the part of the Christian converts, however, most of them retain their traditional names as middle names and also retrain their traditional surnames.

Marriages

Unlike what obtains in other parts of the country, especially in the southern and Middle Belt regions, where traditions are not isolated from marriages, but are rather showcased in ceremonies often referred to as traditional marriage, most ethno-cultural groups in north-western Nigeria have jettisoned traditional marriages and have adopted either the Muslim or Christian way of celebrating marriages. Among the Dakkarkari (Lelna) and the *Dukkawa Golmo*[1] is necessary in the processes of marriage (Harris, 1955; Prazan, 1976). It must be emphasised that for the *Dakkarkari*, *Golmo* is not just a process for getting married but one that involves rigorous disciple and regimentation that ultimately makes a Dakkarkari man very brave. Be that as it may, a young man cannot get married without engaging in *Golmo*. However, in the present circumstances, the culture of *Golmo* is fast fading away.

The fading of the culture first started with urbanisation, then Christianisation and later Islamisation. Most of the Dakkarkari who joined the army right from the period of the First World War to the present period do not have the opportunity of bringing back their children to partake in *Golmo*. Secondly, conversion to either Christianity or Islam completely and subtly annihilates the culture of *Golmo* in the sense that the process is seen as part of the traditional religions of the non-converts.For example, the *Senche* community in Zuruland, which near totally accepted Christianity, has abolished the *Golmo* practice for more than three decades now; so it is among the Fakkawa who mostly converted to Islam. Of more serious concern is the fact that money has taken the place of *Golmo*. In other words, money is now charged in place of the seven years farm labour that a young man is expected to offer to his father-in-law. Most young men would certainly prefer to give money in

exchange for the rigorous discipline they have to go through in order to fetch a wife.

Death and Funeral

The non-Hausa-Fulani in North-western Nigeria had different ways of celebrating the dead and conducting funeral rites. Among Lelna and the Dukkawa, Fakkawa, Gelawa and Kelawa, the death of a community member was announced using a special drum called *KirV'nWee*. At this special announcement, drummers of different kinds assembled in the compound of the deceased. However, only the talking drum *D'gula* and the supporting drum *D'kurya* are used to accompany the deceased to the ancestral home where the body gets interred. The design of the grave is usually dependent on the social status of the deceased. In other words, it was easier to tell if the deceased were a hunter, a blacksmith, a great farmer, a wrestler or a warrior. Clan chiefs, head chiefs and their wives were also buried in a dedicated hut-tomb known as *Kuric Gomo* (See, Augi and Lawal, 1990; Danjibo, 2005). Most of the dead are given final funeral rites amidst big feasts known as *Swo* to liberate them from limbo and usher them into the cult of the saintly ancestors.

Today, traditional practices concerning death and funeral rights are fast fading away as the number of traditional worshippers has declined drastically. Both Muslim and Christian converts distance themselves from traditional practices to the extent that children whose parents die as traditional believers do not attend the funerals of their parents.[2] Moreover, most of the ancestral settlements where such funeral rites and festivals take place have been abandoned by the growing young. Furthermore, the fact that most of the settlements are built on hilltops with mud and straw, and the fact that their long years of neglect has made such settlements uninhabitable suggests disconnect between the new generation and ancient cultural practices. Even the traditional settlements are fast becoming part of history.

In the past, it was mandatory for aged persons from the ages of 65 and above to relocate from their farm settlements (*Herge*) to the ancestral home (*Ile*), as part of their preparation to transit to the great beyond. Such elderly people served as link between the living members of the lineage and the ancestors. It is their responsibility to offer sacrifices, prayers and supplications on behalf of the living to God and the ancestors. Among the Dakkarkari, such elderly people as referred to as *Kongamna*

Ile (the old ones of the ancestral home).It is the responsibility of their children to ensure their care and health until they pass on. In the old cultural practice, a mature grandchild is attached to such elderly ones to help out with the house chores so that they are not stressed beyond their age. This practice has totally ceased to be and no thanks to modernity.

The Extinction of Communal Life

Among the Dakarkari, Dukkawa and the Kamberi, communal life was celebrated to the extent that living an isolated and individual life was considered a taboo. At the family level, male children always lived in their father's compound even when they got married except they chose to go out of the compound. Usually, if the oldest boy got married, the father took him out and showed him a portion of land where he could build his compound and do his farming. The same practice was repeated for all the married male children except the last male child who automatically inherited the father's compound and last portion of the farm. One remarkable thing to note is that while the married male children settled in their various compounds, usually not too far from their father's compound, they gathered in their father's compound for meals.If they however chose to remain in the father's compound, all of them, including their wives and children, worked on the same piece of land and did other things in common.

Even when the male children were separated by compounds and farmlands, they all gathered together to eat in their father's compound. If the father was dead, they gathered in the compound of the first male child to eat. Their children could go to any compound to get food. The barns were commonly used such that no member of the family lacked. With the introduction of the cash economy, however, individual consumerism set in and the noble communitarian life was abandoned. Today, most families live as strangers.Family members who have converted to Islam and Christianity live in isolation and in fact, alienate those they consider as 'pagans'. Those who have embraced radical Islam such as the Izala movement do not in fact, allow members of the same family institutions to step into their compounds, neither would they allow their wives to interact with the wives of members of their families.

Conclusion

The cultural practices of the non-Hausa-Fulani people in Northwest

Nigeria are fast eroding, and this can be attributed to the incursion of colonial transnational religions – Christianity and Islam. First, the Islamization of northern Nigeria and the attendant Jihad that swept across the region paved the way for the submergence and assimilation of the cultural practices of the various groups into the dominant Hausa-Fulani culture. Second, British colonial administration and missionary activities also contributed to assimilating the cultures of non-Hausa/ Fulani ethnic groups in northern Nigeria into the dominant culture, especially through the Indirect Rule Policy. There should be a new wave of cultural revivalism amongst minority language and cultural groups in northern Nigeria so as to save them from receding into extinction. This can be done by promoting the teaching of local languages through formal and informal channels and the celebration of varied cultural festivals. The loss of one's culture is the loss of one's national identity.

Endnotes

1. Golmo is a process where a young man who intends to get married providesservices by working in the farm of his father-in-law for at least seven years among the Dakkarkari (Lelna) and the Dukkawa. Whereas the Dakkarkari members of *Golmo* work as clan teams, the Dukkawamostly work individually.
2. When my grand uncle kaka Nasaya died, his son and one of the grandchildren who converted to Islam refused to attend his funeral on the grounds that they converted to Islam and embraced the *IzalatulBidi'awaIqamatulSunna* sectarian ideology, which considers such practices as birthdays, naming ceremonies and funeral outside of their cult as paganism.

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II

Ecology, Spirituality, Medicine and Human Health

CHAPTER FOUR

Cultural and Ecological Information Dissemination in PostColonial Nigeria

R.R. Aduradola and M.O.O. Oyatogun

Introduction

Information and communication are interrelated subjects. Their processes are intertwined and integrated with each other. Griffiths (1993:96) describes information as "recorded messages that convey meaning to both the creators and intended users". The mess media of information dissemination, as they relate to culture and ecology, therefore are concerned with the methods or means of conveying messages of culture and ecology to the community of users. The recording of messages may be in symbolic or non-symbolic form, and it may be in verbal or non-verbal form.

The whole gamut of post-colonialism focuses essentially on relationships after independence in the area of culture, environment, language, gender and religion, among others. Two broad perspectives in the field of postcolonial studies centre on major and minor studies. The former considers all contexts where the effect(s) of colonialism could be felt, while the latter relates significantly to subaltern studies and seminal disciplines (Layiwola, 2001). The search for a re-definition of issues and challenges confronting the society make the discussion on post-colonial contexts quite appropriate particularly in the era of globalisation and technological innovations.

Post-colonialism speaks of observable experiences in African societies which were formerly colonised by the European. The "marriage of inconvenience" which brought together divergent societies under the same umbrella and the positive and negative impacts of such relationships represent two sides of a coin in the discussion on post-colonialism in

Nigeria as it relates to cultural and ecological information dissemination.

The concern of this paper is to assess the post-independence experience in culture and ecological communication in Nigerian society, and identify developments in the two areas in order to shore up their sustainability and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Culture and Ecological Perspectives

Culture is a word derived from the Latin *cultura*, which literally means *cultivation.* The emergence of the concept began in Europe between the 18th and 19th centuries and it connotes the process of improvement in agriculture. At the dawn of the 19th century, the term *culture* basically referred to the refinement of the individual or the society through education and communication with the focus of fulfilling certain ideals and expectations for healthy living.

In another context, the origin of the conception of culture is traceable partly to "European political subjugation of the rest of the world . . . bound with the historical reality of colonialism and total invisibility of the colonised peoples to the European worldview" (Layiwola, 2001:2). This conception relates significantly to the discussion of the legacy of colonialism which projects a myopic view of others which runs in a parallel line to "European superiority".

Williams (1989:4) provides two useful definitions of culture. In the first, he holds forth that:

> Culture is ordinary: that is the first fact. Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing themselves into the land.

Raymond William's first definition of culture focuses on the peculiarity of every society and its ability to shape itself by the pressures exerted on it through "experience, contact and discovery." His second definition is descriptive and stresses the features of culture. According to him:

> Culture is a description of a particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and

> ordinary behavior. The analysis of culture from such a definition is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture.

William's expressive definitions of culture reflect on symbolic representations of a particular system which manifest in verbal and non-verbal expressions which clarify meanings, pointing out the values, institutions, attitudes and behaviours peculiar to a cultural system. These two definitions of Williams corroborate the American Anthropologists' attempt to describe the meaning of culture from their own perspective. Two definitions provided by this group also project the clarification and symbolic representations of the imaginative creativities of human beings and the distinctive ways by which people represent their peculiarities.

Culture captures the peculiar descriptions and meanings conveyed through symbolic representations and the analysis of the relationships existing within the complex structure of society. To this end, culture and ecology are two broad concepts with broader linkages in their descriptive forms. Krist Hirst sees cultural ecology "as an anthropological theory developed earlier by Julian Steward who perceived it as 'the study of the processes by which a society adapts to its environment'" (http://www.archaeology.about.com/ad/terms/g/cultural ecology.htm). This paper analyses the information dissemination methods of both culture and ecology in post-colonial Nigeria.

From Colonialism to Post-colonialism

It is significant to point out that the interjectory appearance of colonialism in Nigeria indirectly instituted the dislocation of indigenous cultural values and institutions. The implication here is that the circumstances of colonialism posed serious challenges to indigenous African societies and bequeathed certain legacies in relation to the cultural contexts of colonised societies (Aduradola, 2010). Thus, the experience of colonialism in societies such as Nigeria paved the way for a re-definition of cultural and ecological forms in the post-independence period.

The significance of culture and ecology in the post-colonial period is succinctly described in Bill Ashcroft's discussion on "Post-coloniality and the future of English." According to him, "post-colonial cultural discourses of all kinds problematise the distinction between culture as

'art' and culture as 'ways of life' and indeed problematise the concept of culture itself" (Layiwola, 2001:14). Therefore, a discussion on culture is quite significant: it can assist the analysis of the relationships between culture and other spheres of life among a community of people. In this light, culture shares a linkage with ecology and environmental issues.

Centrality of Communication to Culture and Ecology

Communication is central in the analysis of the relationship between culture and ecology. It is a process of exchanging information, ideas, attitudes, feelings, and beliefs between two or more people. Therefore, the main reason behind information dissemination borders on the meanings derivable from symbolic forms and distinctive representations of experiences and imagination acquired over a period of time.

Andah (1982:4) conceived of culture as "both material and non-material expressions of people and the processes through which such expressions are communicated." From this perception, culture is communicative; it reveals the tangible and intangible aspects of a community of people.

Ecology, the study of plants and animals and their relationships with the physical and biological environment, derives from the Greek term *oikos*, which means *household* and evolved from the same root as the word *Economics*. The first use of the word *ecology* was in 1866 by Ernst Heinrich Haeckel, the German biologist. Modern study of Ecology emerged with Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, where he emphasised that organisms adapt to their environment through natural selection. Human ecology, therefore, investigates interactions and relationships between people and their natural environments. In an effort to understand the interrelationship between organisms, ecology has delved into multi-disciplines and relates with Chemistry, Climatology, Physics, Geology, Soil Science, Hydrology, Oceanography, Animal Behavior, Mathematics, Taxonomy and Physiology (Smith, 2009).

Through ecology, awareness of environmental challenges and the protection of biodiversity in an ecosystem has been instituted. With this background in mind, the significance of culture and ecology in post-colonial Nigeria rests largely on sustainability and the achievement of development goals. The United Nations in September, 2000 enunciated the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015. In sum, the goals are to

(1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
(2) Achieve universal primary education
(3) Promote gender equality and empower women
(4) Reduce child mortality
(5) Improve maternal health
(6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
(7) Ensure environmental sustainability
(8) Develop a global partnership for development.

Achieving the MDGs throws up a further challenge of paradigm shift, good governance in all facets of society, injection of development assistance from rich countries to poor ones and improvement in and observance of global rules and regulations. More importantly, we should show more than a cursory interest in our environment, particularly our culture, our forests and wildlife and how these affect or are affected by the MDGs. Attention should be paid to how and to what extent we appreciate our cultural and ecological heritage and dissemination of appropriate information and sustainable technology to preserve these both for our own present existence and the future generation.

To this end, there are diverse ways and indices to measure the achievements of these goals in the face of the dynamism introduced by post-colonial experiences. Five broad ways to be discussed in this paper which are available for the dissemination of cultural and ecological information in Nigeria include the following:

(i) Use of indigenous/traditional media of information.
(ii) Use of educational opportunities.
(iii) Use of institutions' resource persons – (institution-based medium),
(iv) Adoption of historical antecedents of cultural and ecological locations and settlements.
(v) Use of logos, symbols as symbolic non-verbal media.

It is essential to stress that culture as a platform provides the required atmosphere and observable context, through which humans or societies can perceive their world and create common and shared meanings to aid the dissemination of necessary information of what their world entails.

Indigenous/Traditional Media of Communication

Within the last two decades of scholarly discourse on the role of

communication in development processes, the contribution of traditional media of information was noted by Soola (1999:33). His submission pointed to the fact that:

> Traditional media of communication are rooted in the culture, tradition and practices of most traditional African societies. They constitute a way of life and enjoy an age-long, proven credibility status as sources of information on a wide range of social, economic, cultural, political issues and interests. As an environmental awareness tool, traditional communication genres can be formatted and packaged using the principle of "edutainment".

Drawing from Soola's submission, information and education are disseminated through traditional entertainment comprising theatre/ drama forms, use of town criers, songs, folklore, oral poetry and festivals. Their modern counterparts rely heavily on the use of broadcast and print media. For example, indigenous religions communicate sacredness, inculcate reverential and spiritual values and morality in the people, while cultural and ecological practices offer credible information on issues of significance to people in the community. Major contributions of African Traditional Religion (ATR) to ecology rest largely on the appreciation of nature and the inculcation of moral values. In particular, forest preservation, wildlife protection, environmental health, sanitation and waste management, among others, are built into festivals, proverbs, beliefs, recreation, aesthetics and the moral fabric of the community.

In religious parlance, man occupies a very unique position and status among God's creation. His exclusive reserve to survive and enjoy total well-being creates the imperative for preservation of both animate and inanimate creatures. Man needs edible plants and animals to feed on for healthy living. He depends on forests and grasslands for shelter. Plant produce provides clothing, ornaments and furniture for the comfort of his home, while roots, shrubs, herbs and bark of trees are needed for healing and medicinal preparations for his welfare. However, man's interaction with nature has engendered certain ecological problems – famine, deforestation, extinction of some species of plants and animals, desertification, pollution and associated health hazards.

Ifa divination of the Yoruba stresses the traditional value of preserving some indigenous trees and forests. For example, *Irinmodo*, a West African hardwood, is specifically preserved by religious injunction. An Ifa verse establishes the instruction:

Ifa divination was performed for Irinmodo,
Who would be installed as queen of all forest trees.
Ifa installed Irinmodo as a queen . . .
Orunmila married Irinmodo as a wife
Ifa made Irinmodo the queen of all trees!(NCF, 1995)

Trees such as Iroko (*Chlorophora excelsa*), Irinmodo (hardwood), Kolanut (*Cola* species) and Araba (*Ceiba pentandra*) are regarded as sacred trees because of the belief in their abilities to harbor spirits. Forest trees are sometimes preserved in sacred places like "Igbo Oro" (sacred forest and grove) which is a place dedicated to the worship of deities and ancestral spirits (like *Agemo*, *Oro*, and *Egungun*). Farming, grazing of cattle and cutting of trees are clearly forbidden to avoid desecration of such traditional places.

Moreover, functional uses of forest plants stress their religious, social and economic values. For example, among the Yoruba, Igbo, Idoma and Benin people, kola nut enjoys a variety of ceremonial uses for marriages, naming ceremonies, funerals, chiefly and kingly installations, divinations, sacrifices, rituals, establishment of vows, oaths and pledges (Mohammed, 1995). Some symbolic ways of showing hospitality as a manifestation of cultural affinity in some parts of Nigeria include the presentation of agricultural produce such as yams, kola nuts, coconuts, plantains, palm wine and palm oil, depending on the occasion and the society concerned.

The folktales and fables of indigenous societies recognise sacred animals like monkeys, believed to share relationship with twins among the Yoruba people, and the boa constrictor, usually treated as a human being in Igbo society. Folkloric tales which depict some moral and cultural values relating to animals like hares (*Lepus capensis zechii)* have been summarised by Oyatogun (2010). Some cultural taboos restrict the killing of sacred animals regarded as totems by some families and societies. Such animals include the python, the monkey, the leopard, the tortoise and the giant rat.

Annual yam festivals conducted in Igbo, Yoruba, Igala, Tiv and Idoma societies strengthen the importance of religious beliefs in deities like *Ani/Ala*, the Igbo earth deity, or *Orisa-oko* the earth divinity of the Yoruba people and their supportive roles in the agricultural production of edible plants (Aduradola, 2010). Sacrificial offerings and thanksgivings are rendered to deities to express gratitude for good harvests, while ritual sacrifices, drink and blood oblations are offered during planting, fishing,

hunting and initiation festivals to appease them. Fishing festivals in riverine areas in Nigeria promote stiff competitions among farmers during annual events. It is however, a taboo to fish in sacred rivers at any other period to allow for preservation of natural resources. Traditional beliefs in spirits prompt the worship of the spirits inhabiting hills, rocks and mountains. Such supernatural beings are believed to initiate the fertility of man and crops (Awolalu, 1979).

Educational and Economic Opportunities

Educational and economic opportunities are created through tourism and excursions to forest reservations, zoological gardens, botanical gardens, nature trails and historic sites. Cultural displays can be organised, including recreational activities (such as fishing, hunting, game-viewing, wrestling), physical utilities of food, shelter, maintenance of health, clothing and organised visits for research activities in protected areas and conservation centres to enhance dissemination of information about preservation and conservation of the species of plants and animals. Seminars, workshops, and distinguished lectures series are conducted in educational institutions, while radio is used to offer information on culture and ecological issues.

Institutions' Resource Persons (Institution-based Media

Use of institution-based medium/resources persons: Traditional institutions such as kingship, chieftaincy titles, family lineages, traditional religious and worship fora, age-group, occupational group and gender-based structures all contribute significantly to information dissemination of culture and ecological environmental issues. Such institutions operate as training and socialising agents for the inculcation of moral, spiritual, economical and physical knowledge to ensure individual survival and societal stability. For example, the family institution is responsible for nurturing the child to a responsible adult. Home training is a major responsibility of parents, while the maintenance of law and order for sustaining and stabilising the society rest on the shoulders of kings, village authorities and local hierarchies. Age-groups promote cooperation, support and responsible conduct among its members. Gender structures legitimatise distinctive gender alignments towards masculine and feminine responsibilities. Although some of these responsibilities have been overtaken by government and its allied forces, the age-long traditional institutional responsibilities still remain.(Aduradola, 2010).

Adoption of Historical Antecedents of Cultural and Ecological Locations and Settlements

Historical antecedents of cultural and ecological locations and settlements are deduced from names and descriptions given to such places. Certain towns, villages or traditional locations reveal their historic, cultural and ecological contexts. Some places still retain their antecedents. Even though their ecological manifestations are no longer visible, their names reflect observable ecological significance before the interjection of colonialism. Table 1 shows examples of locations in some parts of Yorubaland and their ecological meanings. The cultural beliefs behind sacred objects and places encourage the retention of their ecological zones and names before and after the events of colonialism.

Table 1: Ecological Locations in Yorubaland and their Transliteral Information Meanings

Ecological Location/ Name	Symbolic Meaning
Abeokuta	A place of rocky hills
Ibadan (Eba-Odan)	A place located near marshland/plain land
Osun	Female divinity of Osun river located in Osogbo
Idi-Ayunre	Place of wood (used for facing board, table, doors, windows, etc.)
Idi-Ose	Named after a cotton
Labeodan	Near a wetland Or a place near the 'Odan" tree, a tree with robust buttress that provides good shade. It belongs to the *Ficus* group
Oke-Odan	Hilltop of a place, with the *Ficus* spp tree
Oke-Sokori	Hilltop of Sokori river
Orita-meta	A junction where three roads meet
Orita-mefa	A junction where six roads meet
Idi-Mangoro	A location with plenty of *Mangifera indica* (mango trees)
Idi-Ope	A place where palm trees abound
Oja-Sango	A market place named after the Yoruba god "*Sango"*
Ita-Iyalode	A place named after a woman of repute, the Iyadode of Egbaland

Itaoku	A monumental place where the dead are believed to meet as a convergence point for the departed souls
Oke toku	The upper portion of the area where the dead are believed to meet or converge
Ibara	(Onibara of Ibara Palace)the owner of Ibara
Olowu	The owner of Owu Kingdom
Oke-Ona	The hill of "Ona"
Ago-Ika	Camp of the wicked
Idi-oparun	Place of bamboo
Ago-Oko	Oko's settlement
Abule-Eredo	Named after a person called Eredo
Idi-Araba	Named after *Ceiba pentandra* tree
Idi-Emi	Named after a *Vitellaria* (formerly called *Butyrospermum paradoxium* tree)
Idi-ose	Place where the Baobab tree (*Adansonia digitata*) is prominent. It indicates the relics of old traditional settlement
Idi-Isin	Named after a fruit tree called *Blaghia sapida*
Idiroko	A place where Melicia excelsa (iroko tree) is found
Idi-aba/IdiAraba	A place where the Araba trees (Ficus spp) are in abundance
Panseke	Wood used for building houses
Olorombo	A place where lemon trees are numerous
Apata	A rocky area
Ita-Osin	Second to the king in command (i.e. Osin Oba or Igbakeji Oba)
Oke-Mosan	Hilltop place where orange trees are prominent
Odeda	A hunter's enclave
Omi-Adio	The settlement where the man called Adio settled and prospered
Oju-Elegbara	Named after a deity, Elegbara or Esu
Olumo Rock	A rock of safety/a hiding place for refuge
Lisabi day	A day to remember Lisabi, an Egba ancient warrior

Igbo-Oniye	Sacred forest already overtaken by urbanisation
Igbo-Lisabi	A sacred place where Lisabi was believed to have been "swallowed" alive by the ground
Oke-Ijeun	Hilltop place named after a person called Ijeun

Post-colonialism has retained the level of awareness of the people to preserve their own environment and culture. In modern times, traditional festivals are still held at palace squares, market locations and junctions. However, opinions differ whether to clear some trees, monuments, and remove sacred animals and structures to give way to urbanisation. In most places today where awareness is adequate, you have a combination of the old relics of traditional pasts and the modernised structures side by side. Many of these locations reveal the attachment of the people to the past and show that they are strongly connected to the future. These need to be combined in such a way that we do not lose our past and as well to show that we are strongly connected to the future. What needs to be done now is to leave the ancient ancestral monuments as museums to be visited by others so that there will be a clear picture of where we are coming from and where we are heading to. Our traditional festivals are being advertised by the GSM operators like MTN, GLOBACOM, AIRTEL, ETISALAT, Celtel and others. Many of these telecommunication providers still use the locations of the traditional leaders' palaces, market squares and festivals of importance to promote and market their products. The need to conserve our flora and fauna in Nigeria is further stressed by the media houses such as the Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation (OGBC) through her annual carnival of "adire" fabrics in Abeokuta. These adaptations stress the significance and need to conserve the indigo plants and other biotic components in our environment. Most of the dyes were obtained locally to produce various forms of Nigerian batiks. Products such as "adire-elewe" and" "adire eleko"are now popularised globally to showcase the creativity of Nigerians in clothing and textiles. These result in the promotion of ecotourism and international trade. More, however, still needs to be done to globalise the use of "aso oke", "ofi" traditional attires of southwest Nigeria, the indigenous batiks of Kogi State and the tie-and-dye of Kano State.

Culture and ecology also have a meeting point in our artistic media such as paintings, pottery, sports and historical monuments which if properly disseminated through all forms of communication will enhance our true independence and self-actualisation as a sovereign nation.

Cultural and information dissemination is also vividly displayed in our nation's coat of arms where some of the symbols show our ecological heritage. The plant *Cactus spectabilis,* the eagle and the green and white national colours all show how naturally endowed we are as a nation. These non-verbal communication symbols communicate messages of purity (no corruption) represented in the colour white, and there is also the symbolism of strength represented in the eagle.

Nigeria as a sovereign nation now has seven National Parks under the unified management of the National Park System (Table 2). All the National Parks were established after independence. Over 40 game reserves and several forest reserves are being managed by state governments (Table 3).

Table 2: List of National Parks in Nigeria

S/No	Name of National Park	Location	Year of establishment
1.	Old Oyo National Park	Oyo	1991
2.	Chad Basin National Park	Bornu	1971
3.	Kainji Lake National Park	Niger	1979
4.	Cross River National Park	Cross River	1991
5.	Gashaka Gumti National Park	Taraba	1991
6.	Okomu National Park	Edo	1999
7.	Kamuku National Park	Kaduna	1999

Many companies have been helpful in communicating ecological principles through the use of plants and animals as their symbols and logos. For example, the elephant is used as the logo in detergents by PZ and Lever Brothers; it is also used by First Bank Plc. The horse is the logo of the Union Bank. The peacock logo is used by manufacturers of Okin Biscuits. Song lyrics depicting the beauty of the peacock are also used as jingles to introduce cultural and special programmes on some radio stations. Folkloric tales and stories are also communicative ways

Table 3: List of Zoos and Wildlife Parks in Nigeria

	Name	Location/ Management	Year established
1.	Jos Museum and Zoo	Jos/Federal Government	1945
2.	University of Ibadan Zoo	Ibadan/Unibadan	1948
3.	Agodi Garden and Zoo	Ibadan/Oyo State	1960
4.	Ahmadu Bello University Zoo	Zaria/ABU	1967
5.	Agodi Garden and Zoo Ibadan	Oyo	1967
6.	Obafemi Awolowo University Botanical Garden	Osun	1968
7.	Kano State Zoo	Kano/Kano State	1970
8.	Calabar Zoo	Calabar/Cross River State	1971
9.	Enugu Zoological Garden	Enugu/ Enugu State	1971
10.	University of Nigeria Nsukka	Nzukka/UNN	1972
11.	Ogba Zoo	Benin City/Edo State	1980
12.	Jos Wildlife Park	Jos/Plateau State	*
13.	Kyarimi Park	Maiduguri/Borno State	*
14.	Ikogosi Zoo	Ekiti	1988
15.	Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta Zoo	Ogun	2009

*date not indicated

Table 4: List of National Parks and Game Reserves in Nigeria

S/No	Name	State	Area (Km^2)
1.	Kainji Lake National Park	Niger	5340.0
2.	Ebazikampe	Kogi	117.3
3.	Old Oyo National Park	Oyo	2500.0
4.	Opara	Oyo	*
5.	Onosu	Edo	*
6.	Okomu	Edo	*
7.	Ologbo	Edo	*
8.	Ivi-Ada-Obi	Delta	*
9.	Ologbolo-Emu-Urho	Delta	194.4
10.	Gilli-Gilli	Edo	382.0
11.	Orle River	Delta	54.4
12.	Anambra	Anambra	194.4
13.	Udi-Nsukka	Enugu	56.0
14.	Akpaka	Enugu	194.4

15.	Cross River National Park	Cross River	2800.0
16.	Obudu	Cross River	582.3
17.	Stubbs Creek	Rivers	*
18.	Ibi	Plateau	1580.0
19.	Wase Sanctuary	Plateau	*
20.	Wase Rock Bird Santuary	Plateau	1800.0
21.	Pandam Wildlife Sanctuary	Plateau	780.0
22.	Pai River	Plateau	2214.0
23.	Ankwa River	Plateau	*
24.	Nasarrawa	Plateau	1900.0
25.	Bamper Sanctuary	Plateau	*
26.	Yankari Game Reserve	Bauchi	2240.0
27.	Lame Burra	Bauchi	2059.7
28.	Lake chad Basin National Park	Borno	580.0
29.	Falgore	Kano	*
30.	Dagidda	Niger	294.2
31.	Alawa	Niger	296.2
32.	Kamuku	Kaduna	1200.0
33.	Kwambana	Sokoto	2614.0
34.	Gashaka Gumti National Park	Taraba	5950.0

*Not indicated

Source: Inah (1991)

of educating the populace on the importance and necessity to conserve our culture and ecology. Animals such as tortoises, elephants, hares, snakes, birds and lions are prominent in many such Nigerian folktales.

The postcolonial era, especially the 70's and 80's, witnessed a lot of cultural and ecological information dissemination through publications in some local languages such as the "atioro" "baba atiala" "omo atiele" in the Yoruba newspaper called "*Imole Owuro*" depicting the parrot as a voice that mimics its owner and a watchdog for the society. The Hausa equivalent was the "Gaskiya tafi kobo", meaning that truth is more precious than money. These were regular columns in the local newspaper disseminating cultural and ecological information of cherished national values.

Some of our commemorative stamps bear pictures of plants and animals to communicate non-verbally how we cherish our national heritage, culture and traditional values.

The history of forestry in Nigeria have been thoroughly articulated by the Forestry Association of Nigeria and published in the book titled *100 years of Forestry Development in Nigeria*. The book traced the development of Forestry in Nigeria from pre-colonial days to the year 1989. Major forestry industries in Nigeria manufacture products including plywood, particleboard, safety matches, raw hard-wood, pole treatments, pulp and paper. Many of these industries need to be reactivated, renovated and utilised to prove to the world that we can manage our ecologically based industries. Postcolonial ingenuity has made us start utilising biodegradable wastes of plants and animals to generate methane cooking gas and liquid fertiliser. These are alternative sources of energy urgently needed to solve the current problem of epileptic supply of electricity in Nigeria (Oyatogun *et al* 2010).

Conclusion and Recommendations

More efforts are needed to adequately pass information about our cultural and ecological environment at all levels of our educational sector. Information should be disseminated about our flora and fauna to highlight and take advantage of their importance and contribution to our existence through the use of traditional and modern communication media.

Our developmental efforts should be balanced and synchronised with our cultural and ecological contexts. Our schools, tertiary institutions, research institutes and conservation centres should be adequately funded. Appropriate manpower development related to our culture, ecology and communication media forms should be ensured to make us relevant and a force to reckon with in the community of nations. We should package our cultural and ecological heritage to create an appeal to other cultures and the rest of the world through information dissemination media in the form of ecotourism development, carnivals, conferences, workshops, seminars and cultural displays. We should encourage the blending of traditional and modern means of communication through effective use of print and electronic media. Establishment of more nature trails, protected areas, national conservation and cultural centres should be encouraged. This effort will showcase our cultural, ecological and natural endowments and promote their sustainability for national economic and all-round development.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Medicine, Spirituality, and Health: Connecting the Nexus for Heuristic Research in Nigeria

Alex E. Asakitikpi

Introduction

The chequered history of health policies in Nigeria since independence is inseparable from the nation's colonial experience and the earliest contacts with the first European traders, explorers and missionaries, which led to significant change in socio-political institutions as well as in people's mentality and psyche. Indeed, the country has witnessed dramatic changes in its health, political, religious, economic and ideational framework. In the early years of independence, the nascent government did not only embrace the colonial desire to supplant indigenous health systems with the western form, but it went further to expand on its drive to make it its mandate for all citizens to access this form of health service. This mandate led to the massive training of medical personnel both in the country and overseas with the aim of developing indigenous capacity to facilitate western health care delivery. Besides this, there was importation of hospital equipment and the establishment of bureaucratic structures for the management and delivery of health care for all citizens. The agenda was to provide a universal western medical coverage for the citizens thereby effectively obliterating indigenous health system, which was labelled as "backward," "infantile" and incapable of meeting the health needs of the citizens. This commitment by the nationalists to "improve" the lives and well-being of the populace underpinned national health policies. To achieve this goal, the primary accent of the health sector was to provide "modern" medicine to the bulk of the populace by establishing primary health centres for the provision of drugs and supplies at heavily subsidised rates. At the state and federal levels,

secondary and tertiary health centres were respectively established mostly in semi-urban and urban areas. At the same time, attention was given to the training of health personnel – nurses, midwives, and doctors – both in the newly established teaching hospitals within the country and those outside it for the primary purpose of staffing the medical institutions which the government of the day had set up and was eager to develop (Erinosho, 1993). This welfare scheme, although desirable to a majority of the populace, was not particularly successful and the government of the day had to resort to enlightenment campaigns to persuade local folks to abandon traditional medicine, which had been variously labelled as witchcraft, magic, or voodoo. The government emphasised the superiority and relevance of modern medicine to the people's overall well-being, thereby justifying the need to utilise modern health centres. The initial reluctance of the public to patronise the introduced health care was due, first, to the variance in the conceptualisation of health and the pathway to restore good health between western-trained medical personnel and traditional peoples. The second factor was the dual function of the different explanatory models of the aetiology of illnesses and diseases as well as the long tapered roots of traditional medicine in relation to the newly introduced form. While western-trained medical personnel operate within the germ theory to explain the causative factors of diseases and illnesses, local folks, on the other hand, had an explanatory model that incorporated not only the germ theory but also traditional beliefs in supernatural and preternatural factors. Subscription to a completely new health system became problematic and the government was faced with the onerous task of educating and enlightening the people on the benefits of modern medicine.

The ideological interest of the nationalists that the state is the coordinating instrument to drive development and solve social problems influenced massive investment in health facilities, personnel and consumables, and the overt encouragement of the public to patronise these facilities. For the first two and a half decades after independence, most of the public medical centres that were established in urban and semi-urban areas functioned relatively well in terms of the provision of essential drugs and the availability of qualified medical personnel and other paramedics that were needed to render services, while the public, especially in urban centres, responded positively to the new development. Financial subventions from government, both at the federal and state

levels, met the operational expenses of the health ministry and were also regular even if not always sufficient due to competing demands from other sectors of the economy (Aregbeyen, 1988). Notwithstanding these demands, the health sector still witnessed rapid expansion that commanded the confidence of the general public as an important source of health care. However, by the mid-1980s, the spiralling economic crisis that began at the twilight of the Second Republic in the early 1980s put a halt to the development process. The consequence of the economic downturn was the mass exodus of highly qualified medical staff from the country for better conditions of service elsewhere. The IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which imposed a series of stringent conditions on government, became the final blow that eventually broke the proverbial camel's back (WHO, 2005; UNDP, 2006; Olukoshi, 1993). Pressures on government to finance the burgeoning public service and increasing foreign debt impacted adversely on Nigeria's capacity to provide subsidised health services to the public. The virtual collapse of the state led to a medical vacuum that eventually encouraged quacks to start the sale of fake and sub-standard drugs in urban and semi-urban centres, which resulted in a rise in mortality rate. The group that suffered most in the crisis was the rural poor who were in the process of embracing modern health care due to the enlightenment efforts of government but were now excluded due to the economic and political crises. The abandonment of health posts in the rural areas by government and the lack of drugs and qualified personnel made the rural folk suspicious not only of government but also of the health system it had once promoted. The consequence of this disappointment was that the rural folk reverted to traditional health systems and beliefs regarding health matters. But because most traditional health practitioners had stopped practicing due to poor patronage and, in some cases, the demise of highly skilled traditional professionals, quacks took up the practice and mortality rates in the rural and semi-urban areas exacerbated. Today the statistics are dismal.

In the literature and in government circles, including the international community, there has been an uncritical claim that mortality and morbidity rates were extremely high in pre-colonial Nigerian communities and that the coming of the Europeans, with their health care system as well as their sophisticated lifestyle, heralded the gradual decline in mortality amongst the locals. While this may be true, it will need to be

taken with caution since there are no reliable statistical data on morbidity and mortality in pre-colonial Nigeria. Therefore, the claims of early missionaries, explorers and merchants regarding health situations should not be taken as final and definitive. The consequent colonisation of the country and the castigation of traditional ways of life, including health care practices, and the final imposition and institutionalisation of western values all give logical reasons to theorise that some of the claims of high mortality would have been exaggerated. It may not be too presumptuous therefore to postulate that it might be in an attempt to hang a dog that a bad name was given to it. It was in order to provide a fertile ground to sow the seed of western medicine that the traditional form was deplored.

To acknowledge the fact that the health indices in the country today are unacceptably high and a function of the problem of maintaining a bogus and burgeoning health system laced with gross corruption and hampered by the financial downturn in the country is a pointer to the graphic reality that other forms of health care will need to be explored if the health challenges of citizens are to be met. The problem of sustainability is even more general and pervasive within the context of a globalising world. With the increasing competition for economic survival among nations, it is natural for nations to engage in the production of goods and services in which they have some comparative advantage so that they can define their own economic space and also project their cultural identity. Nigeria has not been able to get it right in almost all aspects of life because government has failed to look inward and tap from the rich cultural heritage that is associated with the peoples that make up the nation. In this paper, our attention is drawn to other forms of medical knowledge by interrogating the monolithic assumption that positive knowledge (that is, positivism) is, and should be, the only and dominant form of knowledge production. I contend that science, like other types of belief systems, is only one way of constructing reality, and it will therefore be expedient for other forms of knowledge production (in this case, traditional medicine) to be explored for the benefit of knowledge for its own heuristic value and for humanity in general.

The Structure and Evolution of the Nigerian Health System

The Nigerian health ministry is structured as a three-tier system. At the primary level, health provision is largely the responsibility of the local governments with the support of state ministries of health within the

overall national health policy. There is surprisingly no formal recognition of traditional therapies, which are common to the grassroots. At the secondary level, health care provisioning is confined to specialised services that are referred from primary health posts through out-patient and in-patient services for general medical, surgical, pediatric patients, and community health services. Adequate supportive services, including laboratory, diagnostics, blood bank, rehabilitation, and physiotherapy, are also provided. The secondary health care services under the state governments are directly funded by the states with special budgetary allocation from the states' coffers. Private medical practitioners also provide health care centres, maternity homes, and dispensaries under the auspices of the local and state governments, but without any formal recognition of traditional health care. The tertiary level consists of highly specialised services provided by teaching hospitals and other specialist hospitals that provide care for such specific matters as orthopaedic, ophthalmic, psychiatric, obstetric and paediatric cases. Care is taken to ensure an even distribution of these health facilities across the six geo-political zones of the country. Also, appropriate support services are incorporated into the development of these tertiary facilities to provide effective referral services. Similarly, selected centers are encouraged to develop special expertise in advance modern technologies to serve as general resources for the country. Provision of health care at this level is the direct responsibility of the federal government through the Federal Ministry of Health and while generous resources are earmarked for research into various health problems at this level, little attention is paid to coordinated research into other forms of health care delivery.

However, with the expensive nature of western medicine and its delivery, Nigeria, like other countries of the world, has, since the early 1980s, begun cutting down on funding in the health sector. Cutbacks on health have been particularly drastic as a result of numerous instructions coded as "technical advice" passed on to various governments by international institutions to introduce austerity measures that cut budgets on social services. Of particular significance is the Structural Adjustment Programme that was foisted on the Nigerian government by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and implemented to the letter by the Babangida military regime in the mid-1980s. This development led to the near collapse of the Nigerian health sector as it witnessed the mass exodus of medical personnel and the deterioration

of health service. From this period onwards, till the twilight of the twentieth century, Nigerian health care witnessed a total eclipse as the federal government shirked its responsibility of providing health service for its citizens. This long period was interrupted by the short Abdulsalam military regime, which established the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), vide Decree 35 of 1999. The scheme is a social health insurance programme that is to operate through health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) and designed to complement sources of financing through cost sharing. The contributions to the scheme are earnings-related and currently represent 15 percent of one's basic salary. The employer is to pay 10% while the employee will contribute 5 percent to enjoy the benefits of the scheme, which will entitle the persons and their dependants (a maximum of four) to good quality and cost effective health services. The basic objectives of the scheme include ensuring good health for all Nigerians, protecting families from the financial hardship of huge medical bills, ensuring efficiency in health care services, and encouraging equitable distribution and patronage of health centres in the country. It is this scheme the Obasanjo civilian administration launched on March 22, 2002 and which the Musa Yar'adua administration embraced and the Jonathan administration is currently promoting. While this new health policy is laudable and seems to have a strong promise on equity and accessibility, the scheme does not have any structure on the ground that will sustain itself.

Conceptual Framework

Health, from a medical model, is considered in terms of diagnosing and combating diseases especially during the era of the germ theory, which emphasised the isolation of germs and viruses. As Kannan and colleagues put it "[the] environmental influence on health, in the biomedical context, is often conceptualised in terms of the organism's interaction with other macro- and microorganisms, toxins, pollutants, temperature, trauma, and such other physical, chemical or biological agents" (Kannan *et al* 1991:1). Based on this disease orientation, rather than a focus on the patient as a person, the physician was expected to return the sick person to normality.

The biomedical conception of health, however, changed in the 1970s following the Alma Ata Conference, jointly organised by World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), when health was seen as "a state of complete physical,

mental and social well-being and not the mere absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1978; Walt and Rafkin, 1990). That conference, subsequently focused attention on primary health care that came to be associated with essential health care made accessible at a cost that the country and community could afford. Five principles were identified as pivotal to primary health care strategy, namely: equity, community participation, appropriate technology, prevention and inter-sectoral collaboration (Phillip and Verhasselt, 1994; Olutayo, 1993; Streefland and Chabot, 1990). What then became the greatest challenge to the Nigerian government was the inability to develop an appropriate medical technology that conforms to its culture and, at the same time, that can be maintained, sustained and made accessible to the general public at minimum cost. The inability of government to engage in medical research to explore indigenous forms of medical practice and knowledge becomes the single most important factor for the poor development of the health sector in Nigeria.

With the shift in the conception of health came new concepts such as "health development" and "investment in man," which primarily placed the individual and the socio-political and cultural environment at the centre (Erinosho, 1993). As Walt and Rafkin (1990:13) noted, "[the] call for social justice and equity permeated all the spheres of political and social life in both developing and developed countries." Accordingly, health was understood as a consequence of and a contribution to the political and social order, and not solely the result of the availability of medical services. For this reason, among others, the Federal Government of Nigeria has made it as its cardinal health policy that the entire Nigerian population is serviced with adequate medical facilities at affordable price. The Nigerian National Health Policy therefore represents a comprehensive health care system that is promotive, protective, preventive, restorative, and rehabilitative to every citizen of the country within available resources (Erinosho, 1988).

Health Policy and the Culture of Ideas

Michel Foucault's (1973) notion of analysing medicine as a "political technology of the body" is very instructive especially in relation to the production of drugs and in the organisation of treatment process, which, in the western tradition, is external to the patient. The increasing contraction of the world into a global village and the concomitant pervasiveness

of capitalism, which exerts pressure on national health policies, is a useful analytic framework to understand the difficulties that are inherent in health care provision, especially in non-western societies. The focus on the individual rather than on structures and the corporate community undermines the capacity to address universal health coverage, which simultaneously leads to the issue of health inequities. Also, in order to command the public space, focus is not directed at the need to embark upon research in traditional medicine. As enunciated by Feieman (1985), the contestation for the public space on the issue of who has the right to initiate social change in that space is the primary aim of policy formulations. But these policy formulations are rooted in the ideology of international health policies which are articulated by fragmentalising the general notion of health into specific areas of concern, creating expertise for each and a system of decision-making that does not emanate from those who benefit from the policy.

Conducting Research in Spirituality, Medicine and Health

The interface of spirituality and religion (SpR) and health as a scientific research focus is relatively new probably because of the assumptions that there is no direct relationship between the two variables or owing to the empiricist stance of science that does not have the appropriate methodology to explore the seemingly intractable relationship between SpR and health outcomes. But since the late seventies, there has been an increasing interest from medical and social science researchers, which has also led to the development of sophisticated methodologies that help to illuminate the role of SpR in health outcomes. While this research focus is still relatively new in Africa, significant strides have been made both in Europe and the United States. This section relies heavily on the excellent review made by Koenig (2011) of the most important research works conducted by scholars on the subject of SpK and health. Incidentally, very few research works have been carried out in Africa to explore the interface of spirituality, religion and health even though the continent could arguably be regarded as one of the most religious in the world. This poor development can be traced to the whole notion that religious and spiritual matters are not scientific, and in the bid to be seen as "modern" and "scientific", African countries have completely relegated this important aspect of research to the background. But African governments must pay particular attention to this field of research if

any significant progress is to be made in the health sector. This step must be taken because it is clear that the organisation of the modern form of health services is too complex and expensive to be sustained by African countries. Secondly, the reliance on only western knowledge and therapies limits the potential of African countries developing their own forms of health care and thereby robs them of important savings and earnings and the opportunity to contribute to world health.

Studies that have been conducted to find out the relationship between religion and spirituality and heart disease indicate that SpK interventions result in better cardiac surgery outcomes, lower cardiovascular reactivity, and greater heart rate variability. The literature also reveals that of sixty-three studies that examined the relationship between SpK and hypertension, 57 percent reported lower blood pressure in those who were more spiritual or received SpK intervention. Similarly, studies that focused on the relationships between SpK and stroke, or carotid artery thickness, or those that examined the effects of SpK intervention on these outcomes show significant positive relationships. Similarly, studies that have examined the relationships between SpK and cortisol levels, or those that reported the effects of SpK interventions on cortisols found lower cortisol levels or a decrease of cortisol or reported an inverse relationship between SpK and the reduced levels of cortisol. Furthermore, studies that have examined the relationships between SpK and either the onset of cancer or its progression over time found inverse relationships with about 65 percent of the studies reporting lower risk or greater survival among those who were religious and spiritual. Finally, there is strong evidence in the literature that greater involvement in SpK predicted greater longevity. In summary therefore, the literature on SpK and health indicates that religious commitment or behaviour correlates positively with a large variety of beneficial health outcomes including longevity (Zuckerman, *et al* 1984), lower cancer rates (Lyon and Gardner, 1980), overall health (Comstock and Partridge, 1972), life satisfaction (Hanay, 1980), lower rates of substance abuse (Gorsuch, 1995), and increased survival after cardiac surgery (Oxman *et al* 1995).

Conducting Medical Research in Nigeria

It is clear from the literature that there are inexorable links as well as benefits that are associated with spirituality, religion and health. Nigerians are deeply religious and are involved in various forms of religiosity. There

is certainly a need for more scientific research to be conducted in Nigeria to understand the interface of religion, spirituality and health so that health policy makers can tap from this huge resource for the benefit of the citizens. While this is desirable, there is also the need for research to be further conducted in the field of traditional medicine since it is a field that has not been systematically documented and researched due to the excessive association of it with religion and spirituality. Of course there are some efforts in this direction, especially in some of the research institutes, notably the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER), the Departments of Pharmacology of the Obafemi Awolowo University and the University of Nigeria, among others. While these research efforts must be commended, there is a need to identify the various facets of traditional medicine and coordinate the various research activities for the benefit of the society. For example, Boston (1982) and Okafor (1982) have argued that there are different forms of traditional medicine which they classified as natural, preternatural, and mystical medicine. This categorisation will be useful in conducting important research into traditional medicine, especially for those who are blindfolded to think that traditional medicine is one unified medical system that has to follow a predetermined scientific framework that is associated with western medicine and science. In this respect, it is appropriate, for example, to conduct research into the working models of herbal medicine to find out about their properties and how these can be synthesised for the benefit of producing drugs from them. This approach has been used a great deal by western pharmaceutical industries. But African researchers must go beyond this level. The realm of preternatural and so-called mystical medicine must not be classified as a no-go area and therefore regarded as a field for mysticism or occultism.

Knowledge certainly has different forms. These different forms of knowledge are produced based on other forms of episteme, ontology, and logic. Until these bases are understood, the production of such knowledge becomes fuzzy logic to the uninitiated who sees but does not understand how the knowledge is produced. It is for this reason that some aspects of traditional medicine are regarded as magical and unscientific. If we have to flip the other side of the coin, the same will be true if it is argued that to the uninitiated, modern science, as we know it, is magic because they do not understand its working model. For example, the old woman in the village, who is asked to speak with her

son in Lagos or outside the country would marvel at the magic of science; but she will probably accept it as one form of magic that is different from the one she is familiar with, such as magically invoking the name of her son until his image appears for her to converse with. What is clear is that there are various forms of knowledge production and manifestations, but while others have been tarnished and banished to the backwaters of traditionalism, witchcraft, and magic, others have been elevated to assume the status of science and the only true knowledge base, by which other forms of knowledge must be gauged and assessed. It can be argued, therefore, that there is nothing mystical about some forms of traditional medicine. Labelling them as mystical is a gross display of ignorance and a parochial way of thinking and seeing reality. By understanding the mental framework of this form of medicine, we will begin to understand the structure of its production and the power of its logic. Hence, for example, the traditional healer does not conceptualise the human body as one indivisible gross matter; rather, the body is conceptualised as constitutive of other human bodies and the environment in which it operates. For them, the body, other bodies, the environment and the cosmos are all interwoven, connected and mutually reinforcing. From this framework, it is understood that a dysfunction of one constituent part affects other parts. Therefore, to repair the broken part, parts of other constituents will be needed to create the harmony that previously existed.

Although simple in its presentation, in practice, it is much more complex as the world of man, his physical environment and the cosmic forces are all mobilised for the wholeness of not only the sick individual but also the family and community in general. Just as the novice will regard the automatic door as a manifestation of magic because s/he does not understand the principles behind it, so also will the novice categorise some aspects of traditional medicine as magic. What the researcher needs to do is to understand the theoretical framework within which some aspects of traditional medicine is practised and, within that framework, investigate its working model which can be replicated elsewhere, thereby making it truly universal. The current narrow and localised application of traditional medicine is hinged precisely on this misunderstanding of its episteme and internal logic which make it difficult to reproduce the knowledge universally. The onus therefore lies with African researchers to go beyond the orientation laid down by their

conventional scientific training and develop an appropriate research methodology that will capture the nuances that are associated with traditional medicine. When researchers use western scientific framework to examine traditional medicine and find contradictions based on irreconcilable differences in both bodies of epistemology and logic, the conclusion is usually on the outcome of the study and never on the methodological approach adopted. Because knowledge is not inherently objective but is constructed based on people's experience, training and interpretation, knowledge production and its analysis must follow prescribed methodology that is consistent with its fundamental assumptions. That such feats are yet unknown in western medicine does not foreclose their possibilities in other medical systems; what is important is for researchers in the medical field to expand the research methodology to accommodate other forms of knowledge production. The seemingly fuzzy logic of non-western knowledge indicates that there are other forms of knowledge production and if such forms of knowledge are to be useful to humanity there is a moral need for them to be explored.

Scholars have argued that traditional medicine should be subjected to the rigorous analysis that is used in the production of synthetic drugs and where traditional medicine does not pass the scrutiny, it should be jettisoned and regarded as ineffective and, in some cases, classified as harmful. While this approach of assessing the efficacy of medical knowledge may be appropriate in some aspects of traditional medicine, especially in relation to some herbal remedies, it falls short in exploring other forms of traditional medicine, including those that border on the "supernatural" and "mystical" because they do not fall within the ambit of scientific experimentation. Some scholars have derogatorily referred to some aspects of traditional medicine as the mere use of placebo in the treatment of patients. What they fail to realise is the integrative nature of traditional medicine which locates the patient within the locus of social relations and attempts to heal the patient within that framework. This is in contrast to western medicine that relates to the patient strictly as a biological entity with a dysfunctional system and therefore tries to heal the ailment by returning the patient to normalcy. In traditional practice, although the patient is the focus of attention, the practitioner also considers the role of others and sometimes the community at large in the healing process; so rather than focus on individual behavioural change, as is the case with modern health services in Nigeria, the family

and the whole community are empowered not only in the healing process but also in the prevention of diseases. Such communal health is what is today lacking in Nigeria's health care policy.

Conclusion

Since independence, various Nigerian governments have made extensive efforts to make available quality western health services to the generality of the population by providing good health. Yet, despite years of concerted efforts, the status of the average Nigerian is dismally poor. Moreover, there are indications that in some parts of the country the incidence of some common communicable diseases is actually on the increase. From this point of view, it becomes critical to pose the question: since the diseases that abbreviate the lives of Nigerians are commonplace and have been with the people for centuries, why is the problem of inadequate basic health care delivery still intractable in the country? In trying to understand the complex and intractable aspects of health care, scholars have attempted to investigate the complex relationship between health care provision and health, and between health and politics, among other relationships. Although most of these researchers have revealed important dimensions of the problem, they nevertheless have failed to either explain or halt the continued slide in health indices. This is because neither the researchers nor the government is willing to explore the interface of spirituality and health because it has been associated with traditional medicine and therefore a taboo to venture into. Rather, they have channelled their energies into investigating scientific rationality of all forms of knowledge and have unwittingly placed their faith in western medicine as the magic wand that still has the answer to the myriad of common ailments that pervade both urban centres and the countryside. Thus the Director-General of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) observed that the current insurance scheme that is crafted within the western health paradigm is the panacea that will solve the health problem in the country (Lecky, 2005). But this conclusion seems to be tenuous as current indications prove otherwise. Until the government sees the need to develop appropriate health technologies that are not only cheap and effective but also conform to the cultural lives of the people, its efforts are unlikely to yield any significant fruit.

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CHAPTER SIX

Socio-Cultural Beliefs and Ecological Development: a Critical Look at the Yoruba Ecological Zone of South-Western Nigeria

Olubayo Oladimeji Adekola

Introduction

The concept of culture has been a fundamental issue in the life of man and his society. Culture is one attribute that all tribes and tongues strive to protect and preserve. It is characterised by the fact it is shared, learned, ideational and gratifying.

It is worthy of note to state that when man was created at the primordial time, he was put in an environment which seemed inimical and disturbing to him. There were lots of hindrances and uncertainties confronting his existence. Probably, he was let alone by his Creator to make some research and fend for himself through the inspirational attributes with which he had been endowed. There and then, man started to experiment, manipulate and adapt to his immediate environment for developmental purposes. Through innovations and self-discoveries, he could separate the positive from the negative and produce what is good for his living.

From time immemorial, man started to be inquisitive to know what the environment had in store for him and how he could adapt himself in order to live happily and comfortably within the universe. However, it is pertinent to note that to acquire knowledge of the environment is fundamental but not an easy task. At the same time, it is mandatory on all living beings (plants and animals), particularly the humankind, to know a great deal about their immediate environment so that they could be able to subdue some of the problems which they would encounter as a result of their interactions with the natural habitat. Therefore, man's encounter with the phenomenal universe has been a continuous and long

struggle for survival between himself and nature. In this process therefore, humankind has been privileged to live and find a place in the universe (Adekola, 2005).

In the age-old struggle for survival, man has continued to encounter one problem or the other through time. Scholars in various fields have continued to probe into the problems engendered by the environment but all efforts to get permanent solution have proved abortive. Therefore, this paper seeks to look at some of the problems militating against man and his environment with the aim of suggesting some antidotes to the perennial cankerworms that are continually eating deep into the fabric of society. The Yoruba ecological environment is particularly focused on to know what could be done to correct the anomaly so that necessary progress and development can be guaranteed.

In order to embark on the above arduous task, this paper looks at the Yoruba ecological zone and the socio-cultural beliefs of the people and how these have contributed or could contribute to positive development of man and his environment. Hence, the paper reflects on how the cultural environment and beliefs of the Yoruba people could be harnessed to develop the society and guarantee comfort.

The Yoruba Forest Zone and Socio-cultural Beliefs

The Yoruba forest is wide and extensive. It spreads from the coastal region of Lagos and extends northward to Òyö, Òzun and Èkìtì States and to the eastern areas of Ondó and Ògùn States. In these areas, various natural phenomena are found. These include tall and large trees which are believed to be inhabited by both benevolent and malevolent spirits. The Yoruba believe that all plants, particularly the big trees in the forest zones, are inhabited by spiritual beings which should be appeased and celebrated in order not to incur the wrath of those supernatural beings inhabiting them. Examples of these trees are the *àràbà* (*Ceiba pentadia*), the *irókò* (*Chlorophera excelsa*) or the *osè* (*Andasonia digitata*).

In some decades past and until recently, some trees were tied with white clothes around them and the spirits of these trees are propitiated, venerated and worshipped. Worshippers of these trees believed that the spirits of these trees could give them children, riches and other necessities of life. Examples of such spiritual trees are the *àràbà* trees of *Odò-òkun* compound in Ibadan, the oseÌ tree at *Ìdí-Osè* also in Ibadan and the *qrê* tree in Ilé Ogbó, Osun State, all in Nigeria. These trees are periodically

propitiated and annually worshipped by devotees. However, plants are believed to harbour malevolent spirits who could work against the welfare of human beings. Examples are the *Lógbòkíyàn* trees which could invisibly harass children especially at night. Apart from this belief, the people are of the conviction that each of the small plants within the plant kingdom also has medicinal potentials and could be used for various medicinal purposes. Furthermore, the dry woods are also used to make fire for cooking or for other purposes.

The belief in the sacredness of trees has entered every facet of the Yoruba indigenous faith from time immemorial. According to Tonukari (2007), the belief in the sanctity of sacred trees rests on the earliest conception of the unity of nature. Consequently, the big trees in the Yoruba ecological habitat provide an avenue for communion and communication between man and divine beings.

Unfortunately however, most of these beliefs are being eroded by foreign religions which are indirectly used to re-colonise the African peoples. Many indigenous peoples have therefore been blindfolded to believe in the efficacy or potency of the foreign religions to the detriment of the indigenous faith.

The Mountainous Regions and Indigenous Belief

The availability of high altitudes and mountains has brought about the strong belief that supernatural beings have made those peculiar phenomena their living abodes. In Yoruba land, places where mountainous peaks abound are usually reserved and these hills are worshipped, venerated and propitiated by traditionalists. Examples of these are the *Òkèbàdàn* Hill in Ìbàdàn, *Òkè Olúmọ* in Abéòkúta, *Àsabàrí* Hill in Sakí, *Ìdànrè* Hills in Ìdànrè, *Ìyámôpó* Rock at Ìgbëtì, to mention a few. All these natural phenomena are still being given prominence by traditionalists in some places up till today. If those hills or mountains were properly recognised, developed and managed, they could have been great sources of income for the people. This is due to the fact that valuable mineral resources may abound underneath them and could be exploited to earn huge revenue for the people and the country in general. Unfortunately, the so-called educated elite who have imbibed the foreign religions have poisoned the minds of many other indigenes by castigating the indigenous faith for their selfish ends; whereas the hills and mountains are given prominence as areas where spiritual entities abide or where the

supernatural beings of these religions dwell. However, this conception is not peculiar to the Yoruba environment. For instance, in Christian theology, prominence is attached to the sanctity of hills or mountains. Here, one reads of Mount Horeb, Mount Sinai, Mount Olive, Mount Carmel, and the Mountain of Transfiguration where extraordinary feats were performed by the great prophets of the Bible. Also, Mount Arafat in Mecca is believed to be one of Allah's sanctuaries which a pilgrim to the 'Holy Land' must visit and climb to perform necessary 'rituals'. Any Muslim pilgrim who fails to climb Arafat is deemed not to have completed his/her pilgrimage rituals.

The Big Rivers or Pools of Water and Yoruba Belief

The Yoruba people, like other Africans, believe in the existence of spiritual beings inhabiting the deep or shallow waters. These water spirits include *Olókun, Yemọja, Ọ̀ṣun, Ọ̀bà, Ọya*, etc. These water goddesses are believed to control the ocean tides and the wrath of river spirits. This is why some Yoruba traditionalists claimed that the floods that ravaged Ibadan, Lagos and some other Yoruba towns in 1980 and 2011 were a result of *Yemọja* or *Olókun's* wrath. They strongly believe that the wrath of the water spirits were incurred because they (river goddesses) had been neglected. The belief in water spirits is a universal phenomenon and it is a widespread faith in Africa. This submission is attested to by Vogel (1991) when she states that

> The belief in water spirit is so widespread in Africa that the representation of the goddess as Caucasian may very well be a modern interpretation or transformation of an ancient belief that associates pythons with water goddess.

However, if modern science and technology will prove the above claim wrong, efforts should be geared towards developing the water channels to evade floods and other water disasters. Meanwhile, the people who live near big waters tend to worship or propitiate the water goddesses for peaceful and harmonious living within the environment. A notable example is the Òsun at Òsogbo whose worship has become an international affair. If properly harnessed, the worship of river goddesses in Yoruba communities could serve as a source of revenue for the people and the government.

Plant Kingdom and Ecology Issues

Plants are also believed to be living beings that influence societal growth and development. In this wise, the relationship between the soil and the plants is of paramount significance. For instance, the types of soil available in an environment will automatically dictate the type of plant which will be more suitable or which will grow well on such land. There are soils which are good for food crops such as yam, cassava, melon, pepper, etc. while some soils are good for cash crops like cocoa, palm-oil, rubber, etc. This is probably why the appetite of some ethnic groups among the Yoruba (Èkìtì and Ìjêsà) is associated with pounded yam *(Iyán)* while some *(Êgbá/Ìjêbú)* have an appetite for cassava meal *(àmàlà, êbà)*. These meals are prominent in the dishes of these Yoruba sub-groups due to the fact that the crops they are made from grow well in those areas. However, with the astronomical growth in population, land tends to be over-used and needs technological innovation and development to increase yields.

Environmental Development and Socio-Cultural Beliefs

The ecological arena of the Yoruba cultural space is of utmost importance due to the fact that there exist in it several manifestations of vegetation, demography and other natural phenomena. Therefore, the development of this ecological zone is a task that must be accomplished. In this wise, if the Yoruba cultural space would be developed, it is necessary to actually explore the materials found therein and apply scientific and technological innovations to optimise their benefits.

Conclusion

It has been established that the cosmological landscape presents multifarious facets which affect the socio-cultural beliefs of the inhabitants (both higher and lower animals). The Yoruba landscape and the natural endowments therein have been seen as an extension of the African region. There are various examples of ecological manifestations in this area and how these relate to the cultural beliefs of the people. Unfortunately, the indigenous faith in these natural phenomena has been negatively affected due to the importation of foreign religions and practices. The neglect of the natural landscape and its spiritual representation has led to the under-development of Yoruba society.

However, if the African ecological relationship could be given proper consideration and the Yoruba cultural environment could be given necessary attention, adapting it to contemporary scientific and technological innovations, it would bring about positive development.

In achieving this goal, the government should try as much as possible to integrate scientific findings with traditional knowledge in order to avert ecological and environmental disaster. For an ecologically sustainable environment, efforts should be geared towards keeping the natural balance of plants, animals and people, taking into cognisance the products which help in keeping the world around us in good condition. In essence, there would certainly be cultural emancipation and technological development in Yoruba community and the global society in general.

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III

Politics and Governance

CHAPTER SEVEN

Quest for the Preservation of Preventive Measures Against Conflict in PostColonial Yoruba Society

O. B. Olaoba

Introduction

The practice of preserving norms and traditions was not totally alien to the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria. It was deeply rooted in their thought pattern and experience. Preservation has been associated with the "identification, documentation and storage"[1] of the well-articulated norms and traditions of a group of people living in great harmony. This is done with a view to making them survive and thrive from generation to generation. Such preserved norms and traditions must stand the test of time and promote development in the society. They must lubricate the engine of socialisation or association (to use the language of Akiwowo).[2]

In traditional Yoruba society, the preservation of cultural elements (especially non-material culture) was carried out through performance (dramatisation). The performance was exhibited through the display of what had been registered in human memory. Thus a peace process and manifestations of its ideals were dramatised to educate a lot of people. Indeed, it can be stated that performance, in traditional Yoruba society, was the brainbox of development of cultural heritage. Therefore, its loss meant a great deal of disaster for any generation of people.

A peace process follows an occurrence of conflict. Conflict was no doubt inevitable in Yoruba society. It was, however, preventable and averted. There were preventive measures against the occurrence of conflict in traditional Yoruba society. The preventive measures accommodated and tolerated the principles of conflict management.

Prevention, as is usually said, is better than cure. Preventive measures

against the occurrence of conflict were in the past, therefore, ennobled by the norms and traditions which evolved in indigenous Yoruba society. Conversely, this discussion recognises the fact that preventive measures against the occurrence of conflict were in place to move Yoruba society towards greater development. There could be no development in an atmosphere of conflict or war. Although the colonial (British) administrators recognised this fact at the point of dousing the tension of conflict of the nineteenth century civil wars in Yorubaland, they went to the extreme of institutionalising colonial structures which contradicted the Yoruba process of reconciliation and even bastardised it. Had they resolved the issues of conflict at that period and left the scene for the Yoruba kings to continue the governance of their jurisdiction, the situation would have been different.

This paper focuses on the various levels of preserving preventive measures of conflict in post-colonial Yoruba society. It, however, unearths historical antecedents bordering on and enshrining both pre-colonial and colonial traditions of preservation. The talking points of the paper include preventive measures of conflict throughout the ages, patterns of conflict resolution and how they have been (and are still being) preserved in Yoruba society.

Precolonial Preservation of Preventive Measures of Conflict

Performance was the bedrock of preservation of preventive measures of conflict in traditional Yoruba society. Such preventive measures were listened to and watched during the drama of conflict resolution in palaces, market places, shrines and family chambers. What was learnt during the performing arts[3] of conflict resolution was akin to a warning system against the future occurrence of conflict. This was why the performance was made public and popular. The seriousness of the performance, within the context of Yoruba norms and traditions, was such that it had a well regulated pattern with stipulated sanctions[4] of infraction. Some of the performing arts were couched in oath swearing and ordeals.[5] This performance has been geared towards making the audience monitor and understand the culture of preventive measures against the future occurrence of conflict. At any scene of conflict resolution in traditional Yoruba society, the audience was all the more educated[6] of the preventive measures against future conflict and therefore took time to understand the devices of social control and engineering. This was done with a view

to preserving the norms and traditions of preventive measures which had been functional, practicable and promotional to the dynamics of development in Yoruba society. Thus the performance was always carried out and experimented on by experienced elders living their life as was bequeathed to them by their ancestors[7].

The demonstration of *esprit de corps* anchored on social engineering and collectivist approach to justice had been part of the preservation of the Yoruba norms and traditions which had been handed down from generation to generation. Such a demonstration, as practical and functional as it was, attested to the desirability of the preservation in unwritten form of preventive measures against conflict as enthroned in Yoruba cultural heritage. Hospitable norms also suggest that in traditional Yoruba society, there was a collective approach to normalising tension, which usually prevented conflict and strengthened the cord of relationship that existed in the community. There was, indeed, community living[8] which enhanced social control and harmony. Thus it was the responsibility of the individuals in the society to rise to the occasion of collective action for a common and just cause as well as projecting functional brotherhood (where the individuals believed in being the other person's keeper). Obviously this entails contributing to warding off calamities through collective propitiations of the supernatural as a way of maintaining stronger ties with the deities. This suggests, therefore, that preservation of preventive measures was also done through the maintenance of ontological balance between the deities and the humans.[9]

Apology was also enshrined in the preventive measures against conflict in traditional Yoruba society. Apology was adjudged a therapy for the prevention of conflict. It was a dynamic process of enhancing the principle of conflict resolution which is enshrined in the ideology of give-a-little-take-a-little.

Covenant making was also designed to prevent an outbreak of conflict or war. Covenant making[10] was a serious art and an antidote against conflict in Yoruba society. It deterred people from flagrant abuse of agreement and also dissuaded people from causing harm or inflicting wounds that could cause conflict. When properly documented, a covenant could be invoked as a record of agreement which must not be infracted. Its documentation (or registration) in the minds of the people ensured the preservation of a Yoruba preventive measure against the occurrence of conflict in the society.

Preventive measures against conflict have been diligently preserved in Yoruba proverbs, maxims, precedence and folktales. Many Yoruba scholars have documented the values of Yoruba proverbs in the development of cultural norms and traditions. These include Ajibola (1947),[11] Fasanya (1962),[12] Delano (1966),[13] Sobande (1967),[14] Odunjo (1969),[15] Bamgbose (1968),[16] and Olatunji (1984).[17] Adewoye,[18] Olatunji,[19] Olaoba[20] and Akinlade[21] have identified such proverbs which had been preserved to showcase their relevance in juristic thought and preventive measures against conflict. Odunlade[22] researched on the Yoruba proverbs as a mechanism for conflict resolution.

Folktales project cultural ideas and moral ideals in Yoruba traditions. They promote the people's consciousness of ethics and ethos. They also provide avenues for understanding the social psyche of the Yoruba people – all geared towards enlightening people in the act of goodness and ethical behaviour. Many of the preserved folktales on Yoruba ethical norms demonstrate sufficient evidence of deterrence and social engineering. Many of such folktales have been interpreted and analysed by Folarin Shyllon.[23] Indeed, a lot of lessons have been learnt Yoruba folktales, serving as preventive measures against the occurrence of conflict in Yoruba society.

It is significant to emphasise the point that the documentation of Yoruba proverbs, maxims and folktales paved the way for modern man to understand them and, quite often, use them as reference points. The scholarly documentation of these Yoruba cultural elements has made possible the survival of the preventive measures against the occurrence of conflict in Yoruba society. Even though these cultural elements were kept in the mind and memory of pre-colonial users, they were not readily transmittable for use by the latter generations. It was quite obvious that there was very little that would have been retained by the memory. Thus the preservation of the Yoruba cultural elements, as carried out by the identified scholars, is a step in the right direction.

Colonial Preservation of Preventive Measures of Conflict

"Prevention" is a keyword in this paper. It could be defined as the "art of averting"[24] a thing from occurring. The colonial (British) authority, on arrival in Yorubaland, did not, and had no wherewithal to, prevent the 19th century civil wars but put in place the necessary machinery for preventing the future occurrence of such a large-scale conflict situation.

Although there had been little political misunderstanding and misgivings in post-colonial Yoruba society, such did not escalate into terrible conflictual situations. Akinjogbin's[25] work on the situation surrounding the 19th century civil wars has remained a classical and monumental documentation in the annals of Yoruba history. There had been a lot of preservation of preventive measures against the occurrence of conflict which that documentation typified.

On arrival on the soil of Yorubaland, the British administrators were obviously ignorant of the norms and traditions of the society. They were, however, resolved to govern for over a century. In order for the British administrators to understand the Yoruba norms and traditions by all means and devices, they documented the various performances of preventive measures against the occurrence of conflict. The documentation became so necessary and significant to effectively understand and adequately apply Yoruba norms and traditions to diverse situations and governance of Yoruba society. Yoruba kings and elders who were adept in their norms and traditions were consulted and used.

The documentation of Yoruba norms and traditions by the British administrators resulted in the creation of colonial Intelligence Reports and Colonial Annual Reports. Both documents covered a lot of dealings and interactions between the Yoruba people and the colonial district officers. The Intelligence Reports contained the political culture and judicial procedure germane to the governance of Yoruba people prior to the advent of the British administration. The document was part of the colonial agenda of subjugation.[26] It contained very scanty information on Yoruba legal traditions and was indeed largely bereft of substance and objectivity.

Since it was difficult for the British administrators to understand preventive measures of conflict in Yoruba society, they abandoned it and designed their pattern of imposition in the form of colonial laws, the enforcement of which meant preventive measures against uprising and uproar. This was increasingly utilised towards the maintenances of law and order. The colonial courts that were established further enhanced the enforceability of the colonial laws. The British administrators were very diplomatic in enforcing the laws. They used Yoruba kings who were appointed as presidents of the colonial courts. Ordinarily, one would think that the kings would have relied on precolonial antecedents and applied indigenous preventive measures against conflict, but they did not.

Yoruba kings were under the strict control of the British Administrators who opted for strict compliance with the colonial law, which was *sine qua non* for the maintenance of law and order in British colonies. Conversely, the Yoruba kings were in a dilemma as to applying colonial laws against their legal traditions. They kings were reduced to mere instruments of authenticating British administration in Yoruba society. They did not only collect taxes (an avenue through which their salaries were paid) but also had their power curtailed.

The interference of the British administrators in the governance of Yoruba society upset the idea and intention of preserving Yoruba norms and traditions, many of which had not been documented. The fading out of the performance strand and trend of preventive culture in Yoruba cultural heritage did not allow for its preservation under the colonial administration. Thus, the starting point of the extinction of Yoruba norms and traditions began under the British administration. What was more, further interference in the pattern of kingship tradition marred the process of king making, thus creating a situation which often resulted in violent altercations. Indeed, in colonial Yoruba society, the maintenance of law and order through the colonial courts and officers meant that the British legal system stood for the prevention of conflict. Yet there were eruption of conflicts in all aspects of governance which the British Administrators handled with dispatch.

Postcolonial Preservation of Preventive Measures of Conflict

The colonial authority left a legacy of their legal system and this was copied and used by the succeeding political administrations. Although the Yoruba kings were not properly reckoned with by the educated elite, their relevance at the grass-root level of judicial governance had been instrumental to proper administration following the disengagement of colonial administration. It is still, however, difficult to measure the degree of sustenance of the kingship traditions (most importantly the indigenous preventive measures against the occurrence of conflict) in contemporary Yoruba society.

Preventive measures against conflict followed the pattern of colonially inherited cultural legacy. Thus the statutes and ordinances which encapsulated the letters of the colonial laws became the blueprints of compliance not only with the judicial system but also the principles behind the maintenance of law and order. The colonial laws were,

therefore, subjected to constant review and amendment to conform with the trend and situation in contemporary society. While the letter of British laws and legality blossomed (as preventive measures against conflict which modern-day government embraces), the indigenous preventive measures against conflict in modern Yoruba society suffered a lot of neglect, resulting in the need for their revival.

Furthermore, the notion of law and order is apparently popular in contemporary Yoruba society. Government has constantly inaugurated review commissions or commissions of enquiry when things are not in order. From the submission of the commission, a white paper would be written and issued by the agents of government. This suggests that the colonial legacy still engineers the process of preventing disregard of the rule of law. Thus the rule of law is considered necessary to ensure a conflict-free contemporary society. This, however, is not to say that conflict has been completely written off in modern Yoruba society but that it has been greatly reduced. Nonetheless, at the grassroot level, indigenous preventive measures against conflict still play a substantial role in the reduction of conflict. Indeed, it is very necessary to preserve indigenous preventive measures of conflict to guarantee the rule of law.

Perhaps the most significant medium for the preservation of preventive measures against conflict is the inauguration and existence of television court in southwestern Nigeria. This electronic court programme on television has reduced congestion in the colonial inherited court of law. As indicated elsewhere,[28] the electronic court has been people-oriented, society-focused and functionally tuned. The electronic courts include *soda bee* (on BCOS, Oyo State) *Agborandun* (on NTA, Ibadan) *Olowogbogboro* (on OGTV, Abeokuta) and *Ijoko ojogbon* (on OSRC, Akure), to mention a few. On these programmes, the level of preservation of preventive measures has been very great and encouraging. Although it sets out to manage conflicts, the mechanism for doing so on the programmes has been geared towards preventing further escalation of conflict and cementation of understanding and harmonious relationship in the society.

The preservation of preventive measures against conflict as anchored on the electronic court of the television programmes in southwest Nigeria derived essentially from the free use of proverbs and maxims, pithy sayings and philosophical allusions. Convincing stories and folktales are also part of the sources used as illustrations to participants on the

programme and the audience at home towards the understanding and appreciation of preventive measures against conflict. Thus, experienced, good-mannered and articulate elders are always on the programme to lend credence to the substance of preservation. Wisdom and integrity become essential tools for actualising the ideals and philosophy of well-being and development in the society, since development and progress can only take place in an atmosphere of peace and harmony. Thus preventing conflict is the appropriate measure of development. But for the existence of television court in southwestern Nigeria, the poor masses would have suffered injustice in the British-style courts. Thus, it can be inferred that the electronic courts have been facilitating peace and harmony in modern Yoruba society.

Scholarly documentation of preventive measures against conflict is yet another appropriate attempt at preservation of the tradition. In pre-colonial Yoruba society, as earlier discussed, preservation of preventive measures against the occurrence of conflict was by performance (enshrined in the norms and customs). Foreign religions, western education and loss of a value system have discouraged such a performance of legal heritage which hitherto was dramatised[29] in family chambers, palace courtyard and market squares. Documenting Yoruba preventive measures against conflict will go a long way in preserving them. Since the preventive measures of conflict have hitherto been largely unwritten, it was very easy to fall into desuetude or be obliterated.

Researching the preventive measures against conflict in modern Yoruba society will enhance proper comprehension and appreciation of peace and harmony towards greater developments. Research, therefore, precedes documentation. Academic research efforts are already being directed towards understanding the dynamic process of preventing conflict through the early warning system.[30] Such efforts are in the form of dissertations, doctoral theses, journal articles and chapters in books. The textual popularisation of preventive measures against conflict in modern Yoruba society will increase the awareness of traditions and norms governing successful progression of ideas and appreciation of cultural heritage. A lot must, therefore, be done by scholars and researchers in this regard to preserve preventive measures against conflict through research and documentation.

Challenges of Contemporary Preservation of Preventive Measures of Conflict

Preservation of preventive measures is not that easy. Even at the level of performance, which was hitherto the practice in pre-colonial Yoruba society, certain aspects of the preventive measures might have been less regularly emphasised than others. Gradually, the least emphasised aspects might go into oblivion. Indeed, no two performances are the same. In other words, the performance of preventive measures in indigenous Yoruba society had its challenges. In modern times, the preservation of Yoruba preventive measures against the occurrence of conflict is not without concrete challenges as will be subsequently discussed.

The loss of cultural values in modern Yoruba society poses a serious threat to the preservation of preventive measures against conflict. The younger generation has little or no knowledge of the Yoruba cultural heritage. The attention of the youth is focused on modern political and philosophical ideologies. They hardly think of or appreciate cultural norms. Since preventive measures are cushioned in cultural norms, the youth are at a dilemma to decipher the grain of knowledge inherent in it.

Western education, which brought about effective research schemes and documentation, has not in any way embraced Yoruba cultural norms. It has not properly and adequately appreciated Yoruba cultural norms. Indeed, it has delimited the dynamics of the cultural process. Thus, on the one hand, it has brought down the substance of cultural education by replacing it with the western ideals while, on the other hand, it has encouraged the significance of documentation made possible through the print revolution.

The availability of print technology presents a suitable opportunity. But as good as this opportunity may be, it has its own challenges. Scholars and researchers may not have the financial capacity to publish the outcome of their research findings in book forms. Getting the research done has its own challenges as well: many elders, knowledgeable in Yoruba cultural norms and traditions, from whom one would have sourced data, are fast dying.

There is a lack of research fund to engage in thorough investigation of Yoruba cultural norms and traditions, especially the preventive measures against conflict. There are indeed many other cultural sites that should be equally given attention.[31] Finding the right source of information and identifying appropriate personalities and authorities, and

recording the existing norms and traditions are intimidating challenges in the face of the scarcity of fund. Thus data collection becomes a herculean task and documentation almost an impossibility.

The acquisition of the knowledge and the understanding of preventive measures are no doubt desirable. However, using the knowledge and understanding for the development of contemporary Yoruba society seems apparently daunting. Thus turning theory to practice in the acquisition of knowledge of preventive measures is often flawed by the passive knowledge-based interaction. The documentation of preventive measures of conflict thus becomes a "museum" of knowledge, kept for use only when the occasion calls for it.

Associated with the occasional usage of the documentation of the preventive measures of conflict is the unending debate on the possibility of harmonising the indigenous forms of conflict resolution with the western model. Zartman,[32] Osaghae,[33] and Oke[34] have been hesitant in doubting the desirability of integrating both models of conflict resolution. In modern Yoruba society, how can the documentalist of preventive measures of conflict ascertain the degree of either indigenisation or westernisation of what is to be recorded and preserved. The western model of conflict resolution has stayed for too long in Yoruba society with a very strong integrative force. Scholars and researchers of preventive measures of conflict in modern Yoruba society, therefore, have an onerous task in working with both the ancient and the modern processes of prevention. To determine what to preserve deserves critical thinking and clinical observation. This is a great challenge to contend with.

There are challenges that could mar the proper investigation and documentation of Yoruba preventive measures against the occurrence of conflict. The understanding of the problems of preservation will enhance the intensification of efforts to put in place necessary dynamic instruments for actualising the preservation despite all odds. As formidable as the problems of preserving Yoruba preventive measures of conflict are, they are not totally insurmountable.

The Future of Preservation of Preventive Measures of Conflict in Yoruba Society

The present level of preservation of Yoruba conflict resolution measures locally and internationally is impressive. What remains to be unearthed properly and copiously is the preservation of preventive measures of

conflict. As a matter of fact, discussions on the preventive measures are scattered in some scholarly works. A lot still needs to be done by scholars and researchers.

Future preservation of preventive measures of conflict in Yoruba society lies in the hands of individuals, families, institutions, government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It should be the collective responsibility of all in the society. Appropriate efforts must involve interacting with others and demonstrating copious enthusiasm towards facilitating peace and harmony in contemporary Yoruba society.

The institutional framework for the preservation of preventive measures must be properly articulated. The institutions to be so engaged and committed include the palace, town associations, social clubs, societies and universities. These institutions have a lot to offer towards the preservation of preventive measures of conflict. They must build on the existing structures and advance the course of social justice and harmony in the society. Scholars and researchers in the universities in Nigeria and the diaspora must be properly engaged in the art of investigating and documenting preventive measures of conflict.

The federal government should fund the various institutions in southwestern Nigeria, especially in the area of research relating to preventive measures against conflict. The state government should also join hands and assist state-owned institutions in their bid to carry out research on the various aspects of human development. The involvement of the private institutions is also necessary.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on the quest for the preservation of preventive measures of conflict in postcolonial Yoruba society. It unearthed various levels of preservation and the challenges associated with them. It also reflected on the future of preservation of Yoruba cultural norms and traditions, focusing sufficiently on the preventive measures of conflict.

Significantly the need to preserve preventive measures of conflict has become so pertinent in order to ensure adequate knowledge and demonstration of the measures towards the facilitation of peace and harmony in contemporary Yoruba society. Development thrives in an atmosphere of peace and orderliness. For the society to measure her level of growth, she must look towards actualising preventive measures of conflict. Therefore, in order to prevent incessant conflict, certain

concrete measures must be put in place.

All hands must be on deck to preserve the preventive measures of conflict so that conflict can be reduced to the barest minimum in contemporary Yoruba society. Individuals must be ready, the society must be prepared, various institutions should intensify efforts and government must give sufficient support towards the preservation of preventive measures of conflict. This will guarantee a future of positive development.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Culture, Democracy and Governance in Nigeria

Ighodalo Akhakpe, Ph.D and C. Justine Igbokwe-Ibeto

Introduction

Culture, democracy and governance have an organic relationship that, if fully explored and internalised in the political and socio-economic life of the people of Africa, could lead to peace, stability and the development of the continent. Democratic culture and governance have become widely recognised as basic prerequisites for sustainable socio-economic and political development around the globe. This imperative becomes urgent, following the failure of previous prescriptions from the West to turn the continent's fortunes around. For many scholars (Mamdani, 2002; Davidson, 1992; Onimode, 2007), going back to the past for the necessary solution to the problem of the present may be the way out of the continent's quagmire. To this end, the communitarian nature of the people and the moral order that condition service to the people in pre-colonial Africa are fundamental bases on which the continent's governments could predicate their services to the people. These elements are also compatible with the demands of development which require a shift in emphasis from the individual to the community as an organic whole.

Indeed, the core values of African societies are found in the extended family system, shared concern for the vulnerable, collective actions in farming and building, among others. Through these cultural practices, Africans were able to confront and overcome crises and conflicts. Social structures such as families, lineages, clans, and ethno-religious groups remain strong, social units which could well fill the gap created by the absence of organised social welfare schemes by government. If such structures are carefully managed, they could play fundamental roles in realising the goal of collective well-being of the people, which is one of the core democratic values.

Thus, it is widely assumed that democratic governance fosters

transparency, accountability, the rule of law and constitutionalism, and respect for civil and political rights, among others. All these values are necessary for securing economic prosperity, equitable distribution of resources and state legitimacy (Diamond, 1999). However, since the 80s when Africa first swept by the "Third Wave of Democratization" (Huntington, 1991), democracy has remained largely unconsolidated in Africa. This is demonstrated in widely disputed election results, excruciating poverty, rising insecurity, political instability, religious fanaticism, etc.

In the light of all these, this paper examines the imperative of adopting Nigeria's cherished cultural values to produce the much needed democratic consolidation, good governance and development in Africa. To realise these objectives, the paper is structured into the following sections. The first section examines the conceptual and theoretical issues central to the discourse. The second discusses the nature of Africa's cultural values as played out in the pre-colonial and colonial dispensations. The third analyses the interface between traditional cultural values and the search for democracy, good governance and development in the country's Fourth Republic. The fourth discusses some challenges which might inhibit the integration of indigenous cultural values into democratic and development practices in the country. The fifth proffers the way forward in the context of the challenges identified.

Conceptual and Theoretical Explorations

Some of the concepts used here belong to the category often described in the social sciences as disputed concepts to which no universal meanings can be attached. One of such concepts is culture. The word culture was originally developed to be used as a tool for describing differences and similarities between groups of people. This is why it is described generally as the way of life of a people. In specific terms, culture can be referred to as a configuration of learned and shared patterns of behaviour and understanding concerning the meanings and values of things, ideas, emotions, and actions (Odetola and Ademola, 1990). In this view of culture, what comes out boldly to the fore is the point that culture is the learned and shared ways of behaviour and of understanding different kinds of things that man encounters in life.

This definition of culture resonates with others. For example, culture is said "to relate to the beliefs and values people have about societies,

social change and the ideal society they seek" (Billington *et al* 1991). While there are different levels of culture, modern anthropologists' perspective on culture emphasises the idea of culture as "a way of life". In particular, we are much interested in a culture where the natural end of man is his virtue and the well-being in his community (ibid.). Even democracy is affected by culture in the area of guaranteeing that citizens have access to its necessary and civilising influence. This civilising process, Mannheim argues, is "ideally part of democratisation that avails men the chance to broaden their abilities to participate and contribute to democratic governance" (cited in Billington *et al* 1991).

Democracy, following the Lincolnian approach, is regarded as government of the people, by the people and for the people. While there are different perspectives to this concept, Moroeto Bobbio admonishes that:

> However, much is reiterated that democracy is a term with many meanings which one can interpret in his own fashion, it does have one predominant meaning fully accepted by all those who invoke democracy and who are concerned with realising socialism through it, so that once realised, socialism governs democratically (cited in Onyeoziri, 1988).

Thus, democracy is:

> a cluster of rules permitting the broadest and surest direct and indirect participation of the majority of citizens in political decisions that is, in decision affecting the whole collectively (ibid.).

No country has been able to achieve a perfect democratic system as stated above. This explains why Robert Dahl (1971) came up with what he calls " Polyarchy". Polyarchies, according to Dahl, are "administrations that have been substantially popularised and liberalised, that is highly inclusive and extensively open to public contestation" (Dahl, 1971). The process of making polyarchies more democratic is referred to as democratisation.

Garreton (1995) sees democratisation as the process of establishing, strengthening and extending the principles, mechanisms and institutions that define a democratic administration. Democratisation involves a political system embracing mere political openings, the rule of law and constitutionalism in spheres of the political system.

A related concept to democracy is governance. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), governance is

defined as "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authorities to manage a country's affairs at all levels" (UNDP, 1997). Similarly, the World Governance Survey Report conceptualised governance as "the formulation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulates the public realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and social actors interact to make decisions" (quoted in Hyden and Court, 2002).

What is at stake in Africa is the development of man's well-being in the community. In contemporary times, the concept of development has moved away from the fetishism of growth and development to the ability of a people to recover their resources and use same according to their cultural values, to solve their individual and collective problems, and to bring about new a frame of life where each stage is an improvement on the preceding one (Rudeback, 1997). The re-invention of the people's cultural values is central to the sustainability of democracy and development, particularly in ways they can impact on the people positively.

There are several theoretical platforms on which the subject matter of the paper could be predicated. These include theories on political culture, the elite, political participation, the two publics and the nature of society theories. While other theories may be relevant in their own right, we anchor the paper on the nature of society. Politics is grounded in the nature of society in which it takes place. Dudley (in Osaghae, 1997) made one of the elaborate attempts at explaining the political, behavioural and institutional patterns of societies in terms of Weberian postulations on individuals and collective values embedded in their culture. The central thrust of Dudley's perspective is on the impact of the country-wide premium placed on wealth and status in politics. In Nigeria for example, there is the use of political office to enrich oneself. This is not seen, however, as corruption inasmuch as the person involved is seen as contributing such ill-gotten wealth to the welfare and development of his community (in Osaghae1997). Also, Osaghae (1994) stresses that the material perception of the state has made the political elite seek for power mainly to enrich themselves and members of their groups. The reason why people seek power is not to further the ends of the people and community but for self-promotion.

This emergent political culture is negative because it promotes waste, poverty, political instability and violence. Also, it runs against the grain

of African traditional cultural values of service, security and development of individuals and the community. We should return to these values for democracy and development to be sustained in the country.

The Nature of Traditional Socio-political Culture

The multiculturality of Nigeria makes it difficult to find a singular representative culture for it. Though difference in cultural values is the hallmark of a heterogeneous society like Nigeria, these values could be harvested to create robust and vibrant politico-social and economic systems. There are positive aspects of the different Nigerian cultures that inform the core values of its societies.

The foundations of Nigerian traditional values are humanistic and communitarian. Nigerians place great emphasis on community and human welfare, and on what philosophers describe as "personhood." Communitarianism fosters a strong sense of community and a spirit of collectiveness. It emphasises the relationality of individuals – the fact that individuals are interdependent and subscribe to the same communal values. The notion that individuals must always seek the communal, rather than individual, good encourages people to be their brother's keeper. Communitarianism is what also informs the custom of holding land in trust for future generations rather than for individuals. The spirit of communality seeks the welfare of other less-privileged members of society, and requires that well-to-do family members provide for and uplift poorer members of the family.

Communitarianism sees the community as a fundamental human good in an interdependent world, it constantly stresses harmony and co-operation and recognises that the actions of individuals affect the community as a whole. This does not mean that the individual is considered unimportant. Nigerian, and indeed African, morality promotes the well-being of individuals and emphasises that the attributes of a *person* are those things that bring about dignity, respect, contentment, prosperity and joy to the individual and the community. The communal being does not live in isolation; he is embedded in society.

A communal being, therefore, naturally relates to others and is constituted, to an appreciable extent, by social relationships. The notion of "personhood," which is defined as moral achievement, explains the importance Nigerians attach to certain "humanistic" values. Personhood is attained in proportion to how one lives his life, and how one participates

and discharges duties to the community. When an individual's conduct is consistently cruel, selfish and ungenerous, that individual is described as "not a person" (Gyekye, 1977). On the other hand, a person is that individual who has good character, is generous, considerate, respectful to others, etc. Thus, being considered a person is a moral quality that is based on the assumption that there are certain basic norms and ideals to which the individual must conform.

The emphasis on humanity and personhood finds expression in several African maxims. A common name among the Igbos is "Madukaku" [*a person is worth more than wealth*], and "Ezi aha ka ego" [*a good name is worth more than money*]. These are the principles and philosophies our founding fathers and nationalists abided with during the liberation struggle and after Nigeria's independence in 1960. Their well-known achievements in the development of the country despite the meagre resources at their disposal are a testimony of the appropriateness of their orientation.

Linking Africa's Traditional Political Culture with Liberal Democracy

The mal-integration of Western political culture with Africa's traditional political values has been at the heart of the debate for sustainable democracy in Nigeria. The emergent political institution and structure in Africa have failed, after several years of experimentation, to bring about a stable socio-economic and political order on the continent (Ekeh, 1981). At independence, expectations were high that the new Western administrative and political systems would contain and represent the diverse group interests and resolve the different claims by groups and individuals to power through the mechanism of an appropriate alliance or compromise between political parties (Davidson, 1997). The Western political system, particularly liberal democracy, with its emphasis on individuals who are carriers of human rights, is said to be "at variance with the group structure of socio-economic organisation and rights in Africa" (Osaghae, 1999).

This lack of synergy between these two processes and institutions made Arthur Lewis (cited in Joseph, 1989) to posit that a "political system based on majority rule in which the victorious party directs the government and the unsuccessful one opposes, violates the fundamental rule of full participation for all". He went on to submit that plural

societies cannot function peaceably if politics is regarded as a zero-sum game, which functions according to the erroneous definition that the majority is entitled to rule over the minority" (ibid.).

It is in view of the divisive nature of the Western liberal democratic system that the African variant of socialism has been propounded and experimented with in some states on the continent. The central element of this perspective is that:

> One way of looking at Africa socialism is to see it as a search for effective methods for creating a new order built on the best traditions of the old, especially on the traditional sense of community and of solidarity between the individual and the group whereby the welfare of each member was bound up with the welfare of the whole community (Busia quoted in Osaghae, 1989).

This system of sharing with one another and working for the welfare and well-being of same formed the bases of stability and development in the pre-colonial time. But this system has since been overtaken by several forces that have unearthed the divisive tendencies among the African peoples such as ethnicity, class, religion, etc. While these elements of traditional African political culture have been with the people through the ages, they were never politicised or instrumentalised to cause disorder.

Indeed, the core values of Nigerian society such as the extended family system and shared concern for the vulnerable have sustained Nigeria through decades of crisis, and could serve as the cultural foundation for future development. Some critics have perceived the extended family system as a burden on the more ambitious and hard-working individuals who are pressured to support their unachieving relatives. But Nigeria's social structures such as families, lineages, clans or even ethnicities remain strong social units, and compensate for the absence of organised social welfare schemes. If such structures are carefully managed, they could play a key role in seeking collective well-being, as they have done for South East Asians and Indians.

Furthermore, the communitarian character of Nigeria society serves the purpose of democracy, if political power is decentralised and attention paid to the formation of town and district councils. This will ensure the participation of the local people in the decision-making process. Local assemblies, if open to all, will foster indigenous ideas of free expression, popular will, consensus and consultation, and help integrate in the modern system the traditional intolerance of misrule and abuse of power. It will help to facilitate communication between representatives and

constituents as it did in traditional society, and alert the governing executive to the seething concerns and discontent of the people, for which remedies may be sought to avert crisis and instability. The colonial system created a distance between the rulers and the ruled and had no such early warning mechanism. In the words of Adedeji (1982:297), "self-reliance can only be fostered in an environment that promotes the democratisation of the development process, i.e. the active participation of the people in the development process".

There is, therefore, a need for some form of adaptation or transformation in order to mitigate, if not eradicate, the divisive tendencies that characterise the practice of Western liberal democracy in many nations in Africa. But such an endeavour will throw up its own challenges which must carefully be analysed and addressed.

Challenges Facing the Linking of the Pre-colonial Political Culture with the Present

There have been some attempts to manage the forces of change that attended the incursion of Western culture into the continent. Attempt to find a middle ground in terms of structure, institution and behavioural pattern between the indigenous social structures that underwent changes and the "migrated social structures" that came with colonial rule brought about "emergent social structures" (Ekeh, 1989). Osaghae argues that these "were neither indigenous nor migrated, but emerged to meet societal needs which indigenous social structures and the migrated social structures could not fulfill in the colonial environment, such as 'tribalism' and 'ethnicity'" (Osaghae, 1989).

To all intents and purposes, these emergent social structures have neither been efficient nor effective in addressing the problems which emerged in the post-colonial dispensation. This is partly due to the use to which they were put. This use was certainly not to serve the common good, but parochial interests. This attitude and behaviour of the ruling elite is what Richard Joseph (1987) describes as prebendalism, that is, "patterns of political behaviour which rest on the justifying principles that such offices should be competed for and then utilised for personal benefit of the office holder as well as of their reference or support groups".

Working in tandem with the emergent social structures and institutions is the materialist perception of the state by political office seekers and holders. This materialist perception makes the primary

objective of seeking state offices that of amassing material gains rather than serving the commonwealth. This was never the main motive of seeking power in pre-colonial Africa. The competitive liberal democratic system makes this type of politics a winner-takes-all enterprise that is against the sharing philosophy of the communal African traditions.

Lack of respect for rules and regulations, both written and unwritten, is a major impediment to stable democratic rule in Africa. Institutional rules are what sustain and bring about change in the society. In the Western political system, apart from codified laws and conventions, there are unwritten rules of the game which limit the exercise of state power. In Africa, constitutional provisions are flaunted at will while political contestants follow the path of war rather than apply institutional means to resolving conflicts.

There are also external challenges arising from attempts by the Western countries to impose their ideology on the rest of the world. They believe they have a destiny to civilise the world through their own ideas, religion, politics and so on. Most African peoples have resisted such cultural imperialism. But there are those who for selfish reasons would want to serve as cronies and stooges of the Western ideological crusade through globalisation, modernisation and various security arrangements with Africa states.

African leaders and people have not been able to effectively deal with these forces partly due to the parlous state of their economy that is made so by the exploitative capitalist system and the integration of Africa's economy into the unjust and oppressive economic order where the continent's economy plays second fiddle to the economy of the West. All attempts by African states to wriggle out of this quagmire are effectively blocked by the massive infrastructure of economic domination by the West.

Also, part of the difficulties African states experience is borne of the greed of the political elite who prefer to follow Western precepts and examples insofar as they will enable them to gain privileged positions in the scheme of things in their countries than liberate their people from ignorance, hunger, poverty and underdevelopment. In this circumstance, the privileged political elite transform the system in order not to come into collision with their benefactors in the West.

Many African societies have come to see the existing socio-economic and political order as a "fait accompli". Increasingly, they are being

convinced that the existing order is the best for them. And as they get more westernised, it is believed that they are modernised. But the failure of Western country's economic and political policies has started surfacing, with riots occurring in the major cities of Europe. Crises in these economies are an indication that the Western Liberal economic system is not the only system that can work or bring about development.

What Is to Be Done

In Nigeria, efforts at redirecting the ship of state in the positive direction appears to have failed. This naturally calls for a change of strategy. First, it is necessary to demand for a re-orientation of leadership in all facets of societal life. The deficit in positive leadership has been responsible for the decay in all aspects of the country's life. Yet, no country aspires to greatness without a critical mass of men and women of integrity working with zeal and enthusiasm for their nation. The sooner the country provides this crop of leaders the quicker the country's dream of greatness can be realised.

It is only when positive leadership is in place that the socio-economic crisis in the country can be tackled and resolved. Crisis is an inevitable outcome of the capitalist model of organising any economy. But it is not immutable if the country's leadership could discipline itself and cut down on wasteful spending. If Nigeria could prosecute its civil war without borrowing, it should be able to do better in peace time. Yet, no system can enjoy stability without economic growth and development. This is not to make a case for the modernisation "ripeness" argument but to affirm that economic stability creates room for peace and order in the polity.

The citizenry, for their part, should demonstrate patriotism in dealing with issues that affect the nation. They should have confidence in the country rather than be despondent and critical of its prospects. They should carry out their duties and obligations to their country rather than focus on what they could get from the state as units. Going back to the past will be a fundamental step to ensuring stability and sustenance of democracy in the country. One significant aspect of the pre-colonial political system that could be relevant to the present dispensation is the group solidarity basis of the state in Africa. This shares similarities with the social contract theories but with important variations. Awogu (in Osaghae 1989) put it graphically:

> The common link between social contract and Africa concept …. The difference was on degree, in African societies, there was near total surrender of rights for obligation, in Europe, John Locke and Jean Rousseau took the opposite view while Thomas Hobbes was closer to the African viewpoint.

Such a change in community-state relations in Africa present a brighter prospect for confronting the developmental challenges in the continent in general. But one disturbing aspect of this relationship is that the states in Nigeria sometimes prevent groups or individuals from embarking on self-help projects by either invoking state laws against such efforts or physically resisting such attempts in the public place.

Poverty in the land presents yet the biggest obstacle to the realisation of democracy and development in Nigeria. It is difficult to preach ethics or morality to a hungry man. The gap between the rich and poor is growing bigger daily and where there is such an unmitigated economic rift between rich and poor people, society will be consistently prone to crisis and lawlessness. Therefore, poverty is a principal, if not *the* principal, obstacle to democracy and human development. This point is made vividly by Samuel Huntington (1991) when he avers that:

> Poverty is a principal – probably the principal obstacle to democratic development. The future of democracy depends on the future of economic development. Obstacles to economic development are obstacles to expansion of democracy.

However, beyond waiting for the state to provide the wherewithal for the people's empowerment, the people could help themselves by organising for production, distribution and other self-help activities as they have always done, except that this time they have to mobilise in greater and better dimensions using best practices from all over the world as the Asian Tigers have done drawing from their cultural values to change their present and future state of being.

It is significant that the state apparatus of most nation states in Africa include various cultural motifs and symbolism that capture national ideals and virtues. These may depict objects whose features and traits best exemplify a desired quality (Makoba, 2004). Although maxims and visual symbolism in themselves do not ensure praxis, they are mementoes of cultural ideals that have shaped national fortunes. The state staff used in Ghana's parliament to announce the arrival of the Speaker and his entourage demonstrates Ghana's commitment to pristine cultural values

at the founding of the nation state. The symbol of the eagle portrays the attributes of grace, vigilance, and farsightedness for which the bird is known, and thus envisions same for the speaker and the legislature.

Similarly, one could advocate a careful adoption of cultural symbolism within the state apparatus to reinforce good governance and democracy. The relevant motifs may be based on already existing maxims and cultural symbols that have guided good governance in traditional Nigerian society. Nigeria may, for example, adopt the symbols of a hand holding an egg, two heads and the beaks of two birds touching at the tip. This would be complemented by relevant messages; for instance: Good governance is like holding a fragile egg; two heads are better than one; and when two mouths meet, crisis is averted. The symbols and maxims would serve as constant reminders of the fundamental ingredients of good governance – judicious exercise of power, consultation, and consensus building (Makoba, 2004).

Conclusion

The paper discusses the unending search for good governance and democracy in Nigeria. It advocates the return to those relevant values in the people's traditional political culture that were abandoned due to the colonial interregnum. These include group solidarity, high moral order in governance, and community and state relations based on the duties and obligations of the people to the state. The culture put a premium on hard work and self-reliance, even as it embraced best practices from outside the continent of Africa. With these and other steps, if these cultural values are adopted, the emerging polity will launch the country on the path of good governance, democracy and development.

Cultural values and institutions have proved highly resilient in spite of the onslaught of colonial and post-colonial impositions. Modernity has not succeeded in submerging the institution of chieftaincy and traditional rule in Nigerian societies. Clearly, the undergirding values of chieftaincy have not only survived, but have occasionally helped to consolidate and shape the fortunes of modern democratic systems. Thus, even modern Nigerian liberal democratic constitutions have made provisions for non-elective second chambers; modern elected presidents have adopted some of the trappings of traditional rulers in the area of mass communication and oath taking.

A critical evaluation of Nigerian cultural values and governance has

shown that aspects of chieftaincy and traditional governance, coupled with some principal indigenous values, are very much in accord with the basic tenets of modern democratic governance. Traditional political systems are often all inclusive and accommodate civil society. In addition, the power of the chief, though largely hereditary, is not autocratic. The occupant of a chieftaincy stool regards himself as having a binding social contract with his subjects, and the legitimacy of the chief is secured by both sacred oaths and good performance.

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CHAPTER NINE

Governance and Violent Conflicts in Nigeria: Interrogating the Linkage

Osumah Oarhe and Efe Oyibo

Introduction

The primary essence of government and governance in a state is to promote and preserve national security. In this way, the policy decisions and activities of those charged with the responsibilities of managing the affairs of the state fundamentally impinge on national security. The crisis of governance, which manifests in economic decay, corruption, institutional erosion, collapse of infrastructures, autocracy, tyranny and despotism, warlordism and unabating violent conflicts has become a hegemonic issue in the analysis and appreciation of the complex, multiple and recurring problems that confront third world countries, including Nigeria. This is not only because there has been a search for good governance as a panacea to development crisis in African states, but also because there are indications that the vast majority of the citizenry are no longer willing to put up with being victims of bad governance. The people are retreating from the state and constructing parallel structures for survival. Such an action, which has been perceptibly regarded by Osaghae (1999) as "exiting from existing state", smacks of a rejection of this particular form of governance crisis and desire for a more responsive, accountable, effective and efficient form of public administration.

This paper seeks to unveil how the rebuff of this form of governance crisis and the resort to a construction of parallel mechanisms in Nigeria fuel violent conflicts, political instability and impinge on national security. Before proceeding to address the above issues, it is necessary to unpack the central concepts of the subject matter for the purpose of aiding comprehension. These are the concepts of governance, violence and conflicts.

Governance

The term governance is not new in political science literature yet its analytical framework is nebulous, dubious and imprecise. Essentially, governance refers to the manner in which the affairs of a state are managed, administered and regulated for the purpose of the common good. Thus, it is characterised as good government (Hyden 1999:134). The World Bank (1989 cited in Hyden, 1999) defined governance as the exercise of political power to manage the affairs of a nation. Governance encompasses the state institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making processes and implementation capacity and the relationship between the government and the governed. In this way, governance has been associated with certain salient attributes presented as follows.

Good governance is accountable. Accountability denotes formal, legal requirement to answer to others for obligations conferred and subjection to sanctions for failures of performance. Thus, a good government shuns abuse of power and authority, laxity and negligence.

Good governance is transparent. This implies openness, prudence and lack ambiguity in the management of the affairs of the state. Responsiveness is also a key element of good governance. For any government to be qualified as good, it must be responsive to the legitimate needs and aspirations of the people. Such needs include provisions of modern infrastructure, security, employment and poverty alleviation. Furthermore, good governance guarantees effectiveness and efficiency in transacting public business, produces concrete results and ensures sustainable development in the state.

In addition, good governance ensures respect for the rule of law, which denotes absence of arbitrariness. It protects the fundamental human rights and ensures impartiality and justice in dealing with every member or segment of the state. It generates equal opportunities for all. Also, popular participation or inclusiveness is a fundamental pre-requisite of good governance. A good government provides all with equal access and a sense of belonging in the management of the affairs of the state. It manages the interests of the majority and minority with a reasonable sense of inclusion, equity and justice.

Bad Governance

Based on the discussion of good governance, it is easy to appreciate the

concept of bad governance. Implicitly, bad governance can be regarded as the antithesis of good governance. Thus, the elements of bad governance can be given as follows. Bad governance is associated with arbitrariness, and utter disregard for the principles of the rule of law such as equality before the law, supremacy of the law and independence of the judiciary.

Also, poor management of public affairs characterises bad governance. It is ineffective and inefficient in the management of public resources, resulting in poor outcomes, wastefulness, squanderism, prodigality, extravagancy, ineptitude, profligacy, brazen financial indiscipline and rascality. Furthermore, bad governance mainly promotes personal interests rather than the public interest. A bad government uses public resources to pursue private goals and justifies it as being in the public interest. Essentially, a bad government pursues policies and programmes that are highly insensitive and unresponsive to the plight of the citizenry.

In addition, bad governance is associated with low level of transparency. It limits popular participation in decision-making. It hoards, conceals and hinders free flow of information about government transactions. Also, bad governance is rent seeking. It encourages a rentier economy through licensing requirements that impede the operation of a perfect market system. Furthermore, bad governance is grossly unaccountable and irresponsible. Thus, it treats the citizens with laxity, negligence and reckless abandonment, palpable hubris and arrogance.

The above elements of good or bad governance provide an analytical framework for comprehending the transaction of government activities, which have implications for stability or violent conflicts in Nigeria.

Violent Conflict

Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in human society. As Bassey (2001) noted, conflict occurs where there is interaction between at least two individuals or groups whose ultimate goals differ. There is no universally acceptable definition of conflict among scholars. For the purpose of this paper, conflict denotes a condition of disharmony within an interaction process owing to a clash of interests between parties involved in some form of relationship and in which each rival seeks to neutralise, injure or eliminate their opponents. Conflict may either be non-violent or violent. Notably, what constitutes violence and non-violence varies depending

on whether people consider the use of force or the challenge to authority as being legitimate or otherwise. Max Weber (cited in Wolff, 1999), in conceptualising the state, contended that violence is legitimate in the rule over men. To Wolff (1999), violence is the illegitimate or unauthorised use of force to effect decisions against the will or desire of others. The criminal model of violence differentiates between legitimate and illegitimate violence. It places emphasis on the identification of the criminal in the target domain. In this perspective, the problem of violence is ascribed to outlaws and thugs who unleash terror on law-abiding citizens and cause social and political instability in the society. This model tends to ignore the socio-cultural factors that breed violence (Turpin and Kurtz, 1999).

In an attempt to provide an analytical framework for a deep appreciation of the causes of violence and conflicts, it is pertinent to analyse the various forms in which violence manifests. Violence has been categorised as small or large-scale depending on its intensity. Large-scale violence is difficult to control and its consequences are hard to predict (Coady, 1999).

Violence has also been categorised as physical and psychological. Psychological violence is an act of violence in the absence of a violent act. It arises from systematic deprivation in the way of transactions within a state. The destructive effects are gradual and cumulative. It involves brainwashing, indoctrination and threats. On the other hand, physical violence is an act that palpably involves physical means such as bombardment, whipping, stabbing to death, overpowering, poisoning, forceful intrusion, and malevolent intrusion among others. This form of violence is often rationalised on the basis of a great range of social injustice and inequalities prevailing in a state. Usually, reformers, leftists and even terrorists rationalise their violence and opposition against the state on the basis of seeking to correct the prevailing social injustice and inequalities in the state. Its destructive effects are swift and direct (Turpin and Kurtz, 1999). Notably, the distinction between the two is for the purpose of analytical clarity, as the borderline between both is unclear and sometimes difficult to draw.

Beyond the conceptual and categorical perspectives, violence has been part of human history. In this perspective, the social contract theorists such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau, held that man, prior to the emergence of the contemporary

state, lived in a state of nature characterised by lawlessness.

To elaborate, several theories and models have been developed to explain violence. The micro and macro approach to violence is one of the several approaches. This approach draws a web of causal links between personal biological impulses and psychological dispositions, on the one hand, and global structures, processes, and behaviour, on the other. At the micro level the propellant of violence is identified as individual psychological factors and biological impulses, while in the macro perspective socio-cultural factors are adduced for violence (Turpin and Kurtz, 1999).

Studies have also shown that violence has been perceived as an instrument for survival under difficult circumstance. In this perspective, the frustration-aggression theory is the most explored. The exponents of the theory identify major conditions in which individuals or groups deploy violence. To them, the obstruction or blockade of efforts by the individual intended to achieve desired ends such as power, wealth, social status, security, equality and freedom leads to frustration that breeds violence. Also, a causal link has been drawn between unfulfilled rising expectation and violence. In this perspective, it is contended that the tension or violence arises from unfulfilled expectations in people who have experienced hardship or enslavement but are suddenly promised improved material condition or freedom. Furthermore, a relationship has been drawn between relative deprivation and violence. In this sense, violence is not predicated on the objective material condition but by the undercurrent of the sense of relative deprivation in past or present conditions. Thus, violence is undertaken with the intent to redress the situation of relative deprivation (Dowse and Hughes, 1982).

The greed and grievance analytical framework ascribes violent conflicts to grievances arising from limited economic opportunities, poverty and inequalities (Bredal and Malone, 2000). There are two strands of contentions in this analytical framework. The first perceives violent conflicts as undergirded by irrationality originating essentially from hatred. In the second perspective, violent conflict is hinged on a number of grievances such as systematic discrimination and gross human rights violation, inequality in economic and political power, or dearth of resources especially in a multi-ethnic and natural resource producing state. In this regard, violence is perceived as an instrument for seeking redress (Apter, 1997).

Violent conflict has also been explained from the industry perspective. It is believed that the dominant propellant of violence is economic benefits and commercial interest rather than grievance (Smah, 2008). This presupposes that the preoccupation of the belligerents and insurgents is the economic spoils and booty that they appropriate from protracted violence.

Another theoretical explanation for the etiology of violent conflicts is systemic pathologies arising from the dialectical changes in the structures and processes of society. According to Potholm (1979: 149, cited in Deeka, 2002), when a system does not deliver what its leaders have promised and the political elite continue to ask the masses to make sacrifices that the elite themselves are unwilling to make, much of the aura of legitimacy gained during the decolonisation period is dissipated. The symbolic strength of various regimes is eroded.

In another theoretical prism, eruption of violent conflicts is linked with group pluralism and interactions to achieve their diverse objectives (Deeka, 2002). In seeking relevance or retention of political power, the elite manipulate and massage religious and ethnic sentiments. Many ethnic clashes and sectarian conflagrations are rooted in the context of the group conflict theoretical assumption (Jega, 2002).

Several other factors such as over-population, impotence, loss of power, displacement, the quest for social values, as well as natural disasters, earthquakes, environmental scarcities, disease outbreaks, droughts, and famine can be identified as contributory to violence (Tshitereke, 2003).

The conceptual and theoretical excursion reveals various perspectives for the appreciation of violence. Notably, each of the perspectives may be perfunctory, deficient, incomplete and restrictive but in sum they are contributory and complementary. In this work, violence is perceived as a legal and legitimate instrument used against unresponsive and reactionary governments when all else fails. In this sense, violence assumes the form of strikes, demonstrations, protests, civil disobedience, riots, civil rights marches, terrorist and criminal acts, attacks on symbols of authority, mutinies and other weapons used by the governed to seek the reversal of a callous, unresponsive and anti-social policy of government or to seek response to the genuine and legitimate interests, aspirations and needs of the ordinary citizenry in a state. On another plane, violence is perceived as manifestations of governance crisis such as corruption, unemployment, poverty, decayed infrastructure, repression,

emasculation of the press, hounding opposition leaders and critics, violation of the constitution and police brutality, among other such instrumentalities, used by reactionary and unresponsive representatives in the corridor of power in the state.

Governance and Violent Conflict: The Conceptual Linkage

Having examined the major concepts governance and violent conflict, it is germane to show the links between them. Good governance entails elements which promote peace and stability. Conversely, governance crisis entails neglect, injustice, marginalisation, exclusion and denial of the values of life. This engenders frustration, dissatisfaction, disillusionment and disenchantment, which rebound in violent conflict. Thus, violent conflicts can essentially be regarded as indications of poor governance. Ineffective governance affects the mental consciousness, dispositional and attitudinal components of the citizenry. Thus, on account of neglect and insensitivity to their legitimate demands, the people can persistently question the legitimacy of government. In fact, it has been contended that any system that exposes a majority to agonising hardship, monumental social justice, severe neglect, and insensitivity must necessarily be an embattled one due to the irrepressible desire of people to pull themselves out of such imposed disability (Buzan, 1992; Lohor, 2002).

On the other hand, violent conflicts can affect governance either positively or negatively depending on their scope, intensity and how they are managed. Large-scale violent conflicts bring about catastrophic consequences such as paralysing governance and its institutions. Also, violent conflicts impair the principles of good governance. They result in huge carnage, destruction of valuable material resources and humanitarian tragedies which gulp huge chunks of public resources that were not budgeted for. Notably, violent conflict, if well directed, could serve as a means of registering resentment to poor government performance and demanding public accountability from the leadership of any government.

Analysing the Paradigms of Governance and Violent Conflicts in Nigeria

The essence of governance is to promote common good. This has

essentially not been the case in Nigeria in spite of the nation's human and material resource endowments. In fact, Nigeria has increasingly become emblematic of what has been perceptibly characterised as the "paradox of plenty", "affluence and affliction", "resource curse", and "the Dutch disease". A vast majority of the Nigerian populace are mired in poverty, misery, disease, unemployment, under-employment and lack of access to the basic needs of life such as food, good health care system, drinkable water, decent housing, quality education and social justice. In particular, since the mid-1980s, following the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) under the General Ibrahim Babangida administration, the incidence of poverty and unemployment has assumed an alarming dimension. The poverty rate in Nigeria rose from 46.3 percent in 1985 to 66.6 percent in 1996. By 1999, it was estimated that more than 70 percent of Nigerians live in poverty. By 2008, the nation moved from 142 to 178 in the list of economically poor nations in the world, with about 80 million Nigerians surviving on less than $1 a day (Ajibade, 2008). In Nigeria, life expectancy has been put at a mere 54 years, and infant mortality is 77 per 1,000 and maternal mortality 704 per 100,000 live births. These statistics are among the highest in the world (National Planning Commission 2004: 30).

Also, unemployment, particularly among the youth, has become a national crisis. The national unemployment rate, which was 13.1 percent in 2000 increased to about 15 percent in 2008 and went up to 20 percent in 2009. The rate of unemployment palpably indicates that all levels of government (federal, state and local governments) have not put in place appropriate policies to address the problem (Ekpo, 2011).

The failure of successive governments to create an enabling environment for employment and poverty alleviation for the vast majority has become a major source of disconnect between the Nigerian state and its citizenry, which breeds discontent that finds expression in violence (Aghemelo and Osumah, 2003; Chiedozie, 2009). Furthermore, in Nigeria, the rising cases of insecurity such as the spate of terrorist attacks, kidnapping, armed robbery, breakdown of law and order and recruitment of people to participate in sectarian violence have been blamed on poverty and youth unemployment (Imobighe, 2003; Osumah and Aghedo, 2011). The Economic Commission for Africa nicely puts it thus: "frustration caused by persistent unemployment and lack of opportunities is likely to prompt the young people to gravitate toward

charismatic and opportunistic social revolutionary who blames the current structure of society for their problems" (Ekpo, 2011:38-39).

Furthermore, a measure of good governance is the promotion of common interests above narrow interest. However, governance in Nigeria has borne the burden of skewed geo-politics, hegemonic struggle, marginalisation, personalised rule, wastefulness, lack of sharp policy focus, and insensitivity. This character of governance has generated intense hegemonic struggles for control of federal resources and power. Since independence, the huge fortunes and stakes of the national government have been hijacked, controlled and dominated by the Hausa-Fulani and northern ruling elite. The hegemonic control has been to the detriment of other groups. Those who control political power have used it for the benefits of their region and ethnic group (Jega, 2002; Imobighe, 2003). This orchestrated the feeling of marginalisation, exclusion, injustice and inequity. In fact, the orchestrated agitation and violent implosion in the Niger Delta reflects the feeling of neglect, injustice and marginalisation. Also, it has fuelled coups and countercoups. The April 1990 abortive coup, masterminded mainly by people from the minority ethnic groups, was undertaken to break the yoke of northern hegemony. Also, at the root of the civil war (1967-1970) was the crisis of confidence and participation. The intense call for sovereign national conference and even secession emerged due to hegemonic control of government. Furthermore, the agitation of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) reflects deep frustration, alienation, dissatisfaction and loss of confidence in the nation since the end of the civil war. The Ogoni Crisis is also a deep reflection of frustration and grievance with successive government neglect. Also the feeling of alienation, deprivation and marginalisation among individuals and groups owing to the hegemonic control and prebendal use of governmental power has been adduced to explain the emergence of militant communal and ethnic organisations which have been readily available for prosecuting communal and ethnic wars. The Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Arewa People's Congress (APC) and Egbesu Boys emerged to secure their respective ethnic interests.

Accountability is also a measure of good governance. Unfortunately, successive governments in Nigeria have been deficient in accountability. Evidence of corruption abounds at various levels of government under successive administrations since 1960. The political leaders have

massively looted the national treasury. In fact, for about four decades it is estimated that about $500 billion or #85 trillion has been stolen by the political leaders (Osumah 2012). By managing or stealing public funds, the trustees of the state have engendered infrastructural decay and collapse of state enterprises. For instance, the Ajaokuta Steel Mill, the Nigerian Railway Corporation, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Nigeria Telecommunication Limited (NITEL), Nigerian Port Authority (NPA) and National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) now Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) have become moribund owing to wastefulness, prodigality and corruption. This has indirectly resulted in job losses, compounding the problem of unemployment and poverty in the country, which nurtures subjective conditions that find expression in violent conflicts.

In a country like Nigeria with the problem of corruption, the level of cynicism, apathy and despondency is palpably on the increase. Many people become increasingly individualistic and essentially preoccupied with the problem of survival and sustenance (Oyesola, 2010). Widespread corruption in government circle has distorted the economy to the disadvantage of the poor, it has deepened poverty and exacerbated inequality, and it has sustained the informal sector, contributing to a further weakening of vital institutions of governance. This stokes anger, distrust, resentment and desire for revenge, terrorism and violence (Chiedozie, 2009; Dress, 2005). Violent military coups such as the maiden coup of 15 January, 1966, the 29 July, 1966 coup, and the 31 December, 1983 coup were engendered by widespread corruption. Also, domestic violence by various groups such as the Youth Democratic Movement (YDM), which claimed responsibility for burning down of the Lagos Zonal Office of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) on December 23, 2002, the Maitatsine riots in the early 1980s, youth militancy in the Niger Delta and Boko Haram insurgency in the North East geo-political zone have been largely blamed on the corrupt activities of the political class (Momodu, 2003; Brownsberger, 1983; Kogbara, 2009).

Popular participation and respect for fundamental human rights are measures of good governance. In Nigeria, the mechanism of popular participation in democratic governance has remained a challenge. There is largely a disconnect between political leadership and the governed in Nigeria owing to the distortion and subversion of vibrant mechanism of

popular participation in the processes of governance. Election, which is the most common means of ensuring participation in the political process, has been a major source of violence and threat to national security in the country. In 1983, the violence, arson and killings in some states such as Ondo and Oyo were on account of the subversion of the popular will. Similarly, the series of pro-democracy struggles, agitations, protests, demonstrations, riots and violence occasioned by the annulment of the 12 June, 1993 presidential election under the General Babangida administration were propelled by the need to restore popular mandate (Osaghae, 2002). The wild violent protests in the wake of the 2007 general elections in Edo, Ekiti, Kaduna, Katsina and Oyo States were on account of disappointment and dissatisfaction with the attempt to subvert the will of the people (Osumah and Aghemelo, 2010).

The paradigm of governance, particularly under the military regimes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sanni Abacha, has resulted in the crystallisation of youth rebelliousness and a culture of violence in various segments of the Nigerian society. In a number of communities across Nigeria, youth deploy crude force and coercive power freely. They compel motorists to pay for dubious stickers, real estate developers to pay for development levies, and shop owners to pay security fees (Jike, 2004:88). In the tertiary institutions, since the 1980s, vice has become the vogue and virtue thrown overboard in the wild quest for and display of naked power. The phenomenon of cultism has become widespread. The operations of the cult groups have been characterised by violence, bullying, harassment, assault, rape, murder, armed robbery and kidnapping (Azelama, 2005). In addition, this political development has changed the psychological orientation of some members of civil society, who have become boisterously aggressive. With serious erosion and loss of faith in the institutions of regulating social conduct, parallel extra-authority structures flourished with the use of naked power at will to settle various forms of conflicts such as land disputes, leadership tussle, and political contests. For example, members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) have seemingly accepted the use of force and dangerous instruments such as cutlasses, daggers and guns in the process of leadership tussle (Ojo, 1994:52).

Good governance requires sound economic policies that can guarantee economic prosperity. In more than five decades of independence, successive governments have largely not been able to generate sound

and coherent economic policies for managing the huge resource endowment and guarantee economic prosperity. Some of government policies have not been effective. Most public policies such as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) have generated macroeconomic disequilibra, social exclusion, income inequality and poverty. For instance, it has been contended that the introduction of SAP in 1986 largely incited the struggles of oil minorities social movements and heightened local pressures and resistance in the Niger Delta and worsening inter- and intra-community conflicts (Obi, n.d.).

Government policy in Nigeria has galvanised 'we' and 'they' feelings and the cry of marginalisation or exclusion. 'We' have been unjustly treated while 'they' have gained privileges. This animates withdrawal, retreat and exit from the state into ethnic and religious shelters that have served as platforms for nurturing and fuelling most of the violent conflicts in Nigeria (Deeka, 2002). Also, the content and implementation of government policies have direct effect on the fuelling or renewal of violent conflicts in the country. Successive governments in Nigeria have often directly or indirectly influenced decisions that have become ready fuel for violent conflicts. At the root of the Ife-Modakeke conflict in Osun State and the Ijaw-Itsekiri conflict in Delta State were the inconsistent decisions as to the location of government headquarters under the Abacha administration.

As noted earlier, poor governance is inclined to rent seeking. Since independence successive governments left the control of the commanding heights of the economy in the hands of foreign investment companies such as multinational oil companies and depend on rents and taxes collected from them. The revenues that the nation derives from such an economy are usually squandered in an ostentatious lifestyle while paying little attention to the level of compliance of such enterprises to international standards of operation. Thus, these organisations carry out their activities with little or no care for the environment of their host communities. The deleterious effects of exploration activities on the source of livelihood of host communities and the lack of responsiveness and sensitivity on the part of the companies are at the root of the antagonism, hostility and conflicts between the oil companies and their host communities in the Niger Delta region. The violent conflicts between the oil communities and oil companies are also discernible in the context of poor or lack of corporate governance. Such conflicts include Iko versus

Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in July 1987, Oboburn versus Elf in October 1987, Umuechem versus SPDC in October 1990, Uzere versus SPDC in July 1982, Ogoni versus SPDC from 1990 till date.

Having shown the link between bad governance and the eruption of violent conflicts in Nigeria, it is instructive to note that violent conflicts impact on governance positively or negatively. Negatively, violent conflict erodes the vitality of the institutions of governance. Notably, the recurring insurgency, terrorism, kidnapping, communal ethno-religious conflicts adversely affect the processes of governance with huge financial cost in terms of management of internal refuge crisis, security surveillance, and rehabilitation of infrastructure. Also, the concomitant effects of military coup and counter-coups as well as military rule gravely eroded the values of accountability, rule of law, constitutionalism and prudent management in government. Violent conflicts scare foreign and local investors. This makes governance more tasking.

On the flip side, some of the violent conflicts have somewhat positively strengthened accountability, responsiveness and sensitivity to collective interest in governance. For instance, the political crisis in the First Republic and the Civil War provided the opportunities for responding to the minorities, which began with the creation of the Mid-western region in 1963 and creation of 12 states in 1967, and increase to 19, 21, 30 and 36 states. In the same vein, the increase of the derivation principle to 13 percent and the establishment of various commissions such as the Niger Delta Development Board, the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission, Niger Delta Development Commission and Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs are all dividends of the violent struggle in the Niger Delta region.

Understanding Violent Conflicts in the Context of Governance Crisis in Nigeria

The phenomenon of governance crisis may not entirely be the reason for violent conflicts in Nigeria. It coalesces with other factors to cause violent conflicts. This is because not all poorly governed countries like Nigeria are entangled in or are at a high risk of violent conflicts. In Africa, there seems to be no country that has not suffered governance crisis, yet many of the countries do not experience or are not at a high risk of becoming caught in the violent conflict trap. A number of factors are

pivotal to explaining this variation or seeming exception in Nigeria. In a number of such countries, there is a relative element of order in terms of functionality of infrastructure. Ghana has celebrated one year of uninterrupted electricity. Republic of Benin has a reliable port system for clearing of imported goods. In Nigeria, social services such as electricity, refineries, port authority and roads have become grounded. Nigeria ranks much lower than many other African countries in terms of compliance with United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) benchmark of 26 percent fiscal allocation to education. Nigeria spends less than 7 percent of her budget on education, while Botswana spends 19 percent, Swaziland 24.6, Lesotho 17, South Africa 25.8, Cote d'Ivoire 30, Burkina Faso 16.8, Ghana 30, Kenya 23, Uganda 27, Tunisia 17 and Morocco 17.7 (Okecha, 2008).

Another factor accounting for explaining the convergence of violent conflict with governance crisis in Nigeria is lack of elite consensus and predatory disposition. Unlike some other African countries such as Botswana, the elite in Nigeria are factionalised, non-enterprising and more predatory. Recently, the World Bank in its World Development Report on Conflict, Security and Development held that Nigeria recorded the highest illicit financial transfer in Africa with $89.5 billion in eight years (Nnabugwu, 2011). In addition, some of the countries such as Ethiopia and Somalia are not as richly endowed as Nigeria. Nigeria is one of the leading producers of crude oil, and it has a huge deposit of natural gas. It has other natural resources such as tin, coal, gypsum and bitumen that are not being harnessed. Violent conflict in some parts of Nigeria is predicated on the massive exploitation of natural resources, marginalisation and underdevelopment. Just like Nigeria, some other African countries, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, blessed with natural resources, have experienced governance crisis experience have been enmeshed in violent conflict. Furthermore, the increasing mass awareness among Nigerians, particularly the youth, contributes to violent conflicts in the context of poor governance (Imobighe, 2003).

Finally, the colonial legacies and the neo-colonial influence underlying the constructs, confrontations, contradictions and incompatibilities of the Nigerian state have made governance ineffective, and fuelled violent conflict with dire consequences on human security. In fact, many of the issues and problems underlying the structures of governance in the post-independence era have their roots in the colonial situation (Ekeh, 1983).

Unlike many other African states which are also colonial creations, Nigeria is more complex comprising about 250 ethnic groups and various linguistic groups whose interrelationships are readily manipulated by the self-seeking elite to cause violent conflicts (Suberu, 2006). Also, the predatory, exploitative and selfish inclination of the leadership and institutionalized amorality are perceptibly corollary of the colonial experience and neocolonial situation.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of the "failed state" in some parts of the world has been a direct consequence of leadership. Since independence Nigeria has largely suffered from governance crisis. Governance in the country has been characterised by declining legitimacy, erosion of authority, lack of credibility and corruption. The poor quality of governance, which manifests in chronic poverty, mass unemployment, scandalous abuse of human rights and infrastructural decay, has engineered majority of its victims in the past and present to withdraw from the state and resort to the construction of parallel structures which fuel violent conflicts with consequent general insecurity.

The recurring violent conflicts and general insecurity in Nigeria can be effectively addressed with improved quality of governance. First, the national resources and wealth should be prudently utilised to address massive unemployment and poverty among Nigerians, particularly the youth. Meanwhile it is realised that a few efforts and programmes have been undertaken by successive administrations aimed at addressing unemployment and poverty. Essentially, these efforts have been uncoordinated, ad-hoc and threatened by brazen acts of corruption. Thus, it is imperative to strengthen all institutions and processes that promote efficiency, accountability and transparency in the management of public resources such as the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit, the Nigerian Extractive Industry and Transparency Initiative (NEITI), and the Freedom of Information Act.

Also, it is imperative to encourage popular participation, which engenders a sense of stakeholder-ship and interest in the processes of governance. Opportunities to vote for political leaders are important for ensuring a sense of stakeholder-ship in the processes of governance at

all levels. Thus, the sanctity of the processes should be upheld. To this end, institutions such as the electoral commission, security agencies and the judiciary, charged with various responsibilities of managing elections, must be strengthened to ensure credible election.

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CHAPTER TEN

Culture and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

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Introduction

Nigeria is in its fifty-first year of political independence. Interestingly, the period has witnessed more of military than civilian or democratic governance. Indeed, but for the decade between 1999 and 2009, when civil or supposedly democratic rule prevailed, Nigeria's post-independence political history could have been one of military dominance with occasional civilian intervention.

In the last fifty-one years, the country organised several elections. All the elections but for the ones of 1993 and, to a large extent, that of 2011 had varying degrees of flaws. These include outright election rigging, where the votes counted at polling centres out-numbered the figures of registered voters. There were also rampant reports of the snatching of ballot boxes and the "buying" of votes. Other activities which subverted the electoral process included intimidation of voters and connivance of the security agents, especially the police, mainly with the political party in power to rig elections. Unfortunately, the media of mass communication, the fourth estate of the realm, and an organ which should perform its duties with transparent objectivity, failed abysmally. For instance, some radio and television stations, announced unauthorised election results so long as such results favoured the political party with interest in the media house.

Even the print media, in reportage and editorials, brazenly reflected and projected partisan views and interests to the detriment of the sacred tenets of journalism on fairness, truth and objectivity. During the Second Republic, the *Tribune, National Concord* and *the New Nigerian* were the worst offenders. The consequence has been that more often than not the

Nigerian polity is over heated and, as a result, open debates and frank discussions, which are the hallmarks of democracy, are curtailed. Thus, in such a precarious and chaotic environment, mass participation in governance also becomes difficult and nearly impossible. Put otherwise, the volatile and intolerant Nigerian political environment not only makes democratic practice seemingly difficult and unattractive, it equally makes the derivation of its benefits a forlorn and far-fetched dream.

Ironically, while democracy has proved beneficial to the western world, Nigeria and indeed other African countries are yet to come to terms with the gains of democracy. It follows that something must be wrong. Since democracy has succeeded in many parts of the world, it is not plausible to argue that something is wrong with either the concept or phenomenon of democratic governance. Instead, it only stands to reason that the searchlight should be beamed on Nigeria in the effort to unravel the cause(s) of the failure of democracy. All of the above point to one fact. That is, democracy has not taken a firm root in Nigeria.

This paper therefore, addresses some key issues. First, what is democracy and what is democratic consolidation? Second, to what extent has our values, traditions, heritage and institutions, that is our culture, been made the bedrock of our democratic experimentation. Third, what can we as a people do to entrench democracy, get the peoples to understand and appreciate it and ultimately maximise the gains which are derivable.

Conceptual Analysis of Democracy

There are as many definitions of democracy as there are scholars. The simple definition, merely conceptualises it as government of the people, by the people and for the people. But, because of the complexity of modern societies, in terms of governance, the concept of democracy now seems to defy precise definition. Its main emphasis is mass participation, its ultimate goal is good governance that would ensure the greatest good for the greatest number. Its driving force is, while the majority rules, the views and interests of the minority must be safeguarded. In different societies, it grew and blossomed in response to the peculiar cultural and historical experiences of the people involved. That is why, for example, we have the British parliamentary democracy and the American presidential democracy as products of the unique historical experiences of these societies. For example, Britain does not have a written constitution, yet the society is functioning well. This is in

contradistinction to America where the constitution is written. Regardless of this difference, democracy is functioning well and serving the best interests of these countries. Diverse and varied as the practice and definitions of democracy are, yet there is a consensus that it conforms to some minimum conditions. In this regard, Obasanjo and Mabogunje (1992:30) capture it succinctly as follows:

They define democracy as a way and system of governance whether in an organised setting or otherwise, based on the following essential elements:

(1) Right of choice;
(2) Freedom from ignorance and want;
(3) Empowerment and capability;
(4) Respect for the rule of law and equality before the law;
(5) Promotion and defense of human rights;
(6) Creation of appropriate political machinery;
(7) Sustained political communication to create trust and confidence amongst leaders and the populace;
(8) Accountability of the leadership to the followership;
(9) Decentralisation of political power and authority;
(10) Periodic and orderly succession through secret ballot.

Comprehensive and convincing as the above definition may be, we could criticise it on two main grounds. The first, it made the issue of majority rule more implicit then explicit. Majority rule is so vital to democracy that it should be explicitly stated in any definition.

The second is the use of secret ballot. Good as this may sound, it is not until an election is based on secret ballot before it could be adjudged as free and fair. If an open ballot system could constitute a safeguard against election rigging, then there is nothing wrong in its adoption. After all, the 1993 elections based on Option A4, a system by which voters queued behind the candidates of their choice, was an open system yet it was seen as the freest and fairest election in Nigeria's electoral history. These objections notwithstanding, we shall adopt their definition as a point of departure for this paper.

The challenge of electioneering is that votes hardly count in Nigerian elections. As a matter of fact, election monitoring groups from within and outside the country attest to this. It is true that election materials, where available, may arrive late at polling stations and it is also true that

election results have been announced for places where voting never held.

So much has been said and written about electoral inadequacies in Nigeria, yet very little attention has been paid to the costs and consequences of the deficiencies so easily noticeable in our elections. These costs and consequences range from the political to the social and the economic.

(1) Politically, fraudulent elections make it possible for the wrong people to be at the helm of affairs. Instead of the majority, it is the minority that governs. The examples of Anambra State under Chris Ngige, Ondo State under Olusegun Agagu and Edo State under Professor Osunbor are good cases in point. This breeds political violence and intolerance thereby heating up the polity.
(2) It portrays the country in very bad light as a place of politically immature and intolerant people who cannot conduct free and fair elections.
(3) Socially, it leads to apathy and cynicism. The number of people on voters' register shows that only a few people are interested in the electoral process.

Nigerians have actually grown cynical about elections on the premise that their votes may not count. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Nigeria is a country of 150 million, yet only a small percentage of the population register as voters. INEC's report has it that only 67,764,327 million Nigerians registered to vote during the last voter registration exercise. The number of those who actually voted also gives cause for worry. During the elections, the presidential election recorded the highest voter turnout of only 38,209,978. For other elections, such as the senatorial gubernatorial elections, the figures were dismally very low. On the economic front, the cost of conducting elections has become so high. To ensure vigilance, a lot of personnel are involved in overseeing elections which are eventually criticised and ultimately condemned as falling short of international standards. It therefore portrays Nigeria negatively in the international scene and scares away foreign investors and the much needed foreign exchange. As a result of political violence, the brightest minds are too scared to participate in politics. This leaves room for mediocrity to thrive in Nigerian politics.

Democratic Consolidation

Logically, a keen observer of Nigeria's political history, especially with regard to the practice of democracy, will not have to look too far to conclude that Nigeria is still far from democratic consolidation. But first of all, what is democratic consolidation?

By democratic consolidation we refer to a system and a process by which democracy has come to be accepted and entrenched as a way of life in a society. It refers to a society which has practised democracy for a reasonably long period of time with minimal or without disruption at all. For instance, India, which gained independence in 1947, is a good example of a country where democracy has consolidated. Others include Britain and the United States of America. But for the long period of apartheid, the Republic of South Africa could easily pass for another country where it could be stated that democracy has consolidated. Countries which have consolidated democracy share some common attributes. In these countries, democracy has become a way of life, or, in another sense, the people's way of life include democracy as an essential ingredient.

Nigeria, in spite of all the mistakes of the past, is gradually graduating into the group of countries where democracy has consolidated. However, the plethora of election petitions and election dispute cases in court casts a shadow of doubt on its willingness to accept democracy as a way of life.

In the countries listed above as places where democracy has taken firm roots, there exists remarkable political tolerance. In these places, politics is not a do-or-die affair. Because there is tolerance and adherence to the rule of the game, politicians know that the loser today may be the winner tomorrow. These are societies where plurality is well managed and does not constitute a clog in the wheel of progress. For example, contrary to the common notion, a country like Britain is far from being homogenous. It has some small nationalities like the Irish, Welsh and the Scottish. Yet the smaller nationalities, while pressing for self-determination, have always ensured that they act in a manner that will not hinder democracy.

Though we are all conversant with the resistance and struggle of the Irish for greater self-determination, yet it is noteworthy to state that such separatist tendencies have not been allowed to assume uncontrollable dimensions. This claim is, however, not unmindful of the occasional

armed conflicts between the Irish Republican Army and other British forces. The fact that a polity has a consolidated democracy does not necessarily mean that it is completely devoid of differences and disagreements. But such differences are made to recede into lesser focus in the overall interest of the larger society. For instance, in India, we have heard of political differences which sometimes culminated in assassination (e.g. the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984), but the country has managed to remain united.

Additionally, in such countries, the military has learnt to remain subordinated to civil authority. India has been independent for more than sixty years, yet there has not been one instance of military takeover of the affairs of state. In Nigeria, and some other African countries, the military is the greatest threat to democracy. Because the military sees itself as the government in waiting, they don't allow the politicians to make and learn from their mistakes before taking over the reins of government. It is heart-warming that in the West African sub-region, Ghana is also emerging as a consolidated democratic polity, because she has had uninterrupted civil rule for over a decade.

It needs be stressed also that, a vital platform on which enduring democracy has been established is the existence of strong institutions such as the legislature, the judiciary and to a large extent the police and the electoral body. In these places where democracy has been consolidated, the legislature cannot fail in the discharge of its oversight functions. While one checkmates the other, the legislature and executive are essentially partners in progress. This could be contrasted with the situation in Nigeria where the legislature is a self-seeking and self-serving arm of government. Nigerians are too conversant with the bribe for budget scandal that it may not be necessary to dissipate time and space on it here. Under the current dispensation, apart from being generally unproductive in failing in their oversight functions by passing only a few bills and motions, the legislature at both the federal and state levels have actually turned out to be one of the burdens of democracy. In a country where the majority of the masses are under suffocating and excruciating poverty, it is appalling that legislators earn obscene and worrisomely outrageous salaries. For the avoidance of doubt, the National Association of Seadogs, in an article in *The Guardian* of Monday, 13 September, 2010 captured this situation as follows:

> It is quite troubling that despite being fully aware of the increasing desperate financial situation of average Nigerians on the heels of ongoing worldwide financial meltdown, the lawmakers could display such insensitivity by proceeding to vote for the following increases in their salaries and sundry allowance for themselves and their presiding officers. The Senate President is to receive in addition to his salary and other entitlements the sum of 1.6 billion annual "Constituency Allowance". The Deputy Senate President will in addition to other benefits earn a constituency allowance of #600 million, senators each will make monthly salary of #2.48 million plus allowances and annual constituency allowance of #380 million while, the Speaker of the House of Representatives in addition to his salaries and other benefits earns #350 million annual constituency allowance. Other members of the House of Representatives shall earn #1.98 million monthly salaries plus #45 million quarterly constituency allowances which translate to #182 million annual constituency allowance.

The statement continues:

> It is curious and indeed worrisome to note that these increases were not provided for by the "Revenue and Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission" (RMAFC).

It concludes:

> The increases were not only arbitrary but fly in the face of the financial realities facing average Nigerians. This is nothing short of treasury looting by legislative fiat.

For more details, please see tables one and two below

Table One: Newly approved Salaries and Allowances for National Assembly Members

Federal Law-Makers	Monthly Salary	Annual Salary	Annual Constituency
Senate President	₦278,477.28	₦3.4 Million	₦1.6 Billion
Deputy Senate President	₦259,781.28	₦3.2 Million	₦600 Million
Senators	₦2.5 Million	₦30.00 Million	₦380 Million
Speaker House of Reps	N175,461.92	₦2.105.00 Million	₦350 Million
House of Reps Members	₦1.985 Million	₦23.82 Million	₦182 Million

Source: The Guardian Newspaper Monday 13 September, 2010, p. 65.

Table 2: Additional Information on approved Allowances for National Assembly Members

Approved Allowances	Senators	Representatives
Accommodation	150%	150%
Furniture	150%	150%
Car Loan	250%	250%
Personal Assistant	25%	25%
Duty Tour Allowance (per night)	N23,000	N21,000
Estacode (per night)	$600	$550
Domestic Staff	50%	50%
Entertainment	20%	–
Utilities	25%	10%
Recess	10%	10%
Newspaper/Periodicals	10%	10%
Responsibility	10-5%	–
Constituency	125%	75%
Severance Gratuity	300%	3,000%

Source: The Guardian, Monday 13 September, 2010 p. 65.

The legislature is not alone. The judiciary is another source of worry in relation to the successful entrenchment of democracy in Nigeria. The judiciary has to contend with structural problems which make cases to be unnecessarily delayed, and it is a well-known saying that justice delayed is justice denied. More problematic is the fact that cases which have to do with elections are also delayed, sometimes for years before judgment is delivered. For example, in Anambra, Edo and Ondo States, the wrong candidates occupied offices for upwards of two years before judgments were delivered against them. For the period, the people of such states were under the governance of those they did not vote for.

If the delay in the dispensation of justice may not always be the fault of judges and other ministers in the temple of justice, what can be said of corrupt judges? In a situation where corruption has crept into the rank and file of the judicial system, the law court is no longer the last hope of the common man and this is a big threat to democracy. The

example of Honourable Justice Salami and the Chief Justice of Nigeria is a case in point. It is however heart-warming that the new chief Justice of Nigeria has promised to fight corruption in the Judiciary. To this end, he has promised far-reaching judicial reforms.

Another factor which attests to weak institutions as contrasted with places where democracy is deep-rooted is the absence of a free and fair press. The practice of journalism is done in such a way as to promote and project the interest of media owners and their partisan affiliations. The subtle and unwritten policy is: he who pays the piper has a right to dictate the tune. While journalists may be free in editorials to air their views as they may deem fit, this must not be the case in news reporting, especially on political issues. In many instances, unauthorised announcement of wrong electoral results led to political violence with dire consequences in terms of the loss of lives and property.

A corollary to the above is the issue of the Nigerian police. In advanced societies with a strong democratic tradition, the police are not used as a weapon of the state for the harassment and intimidation of hapless citizens. Experience has shown that this is not the case in Nigeria. Examples abound where the police have been used by politicians for partisan purposes, and particularly for the settlement of scores with opponents. Recall, for example, that a one-time Governor of Anambra, Dr. Chris Nwabueze Ngige, was arrested for some hours by the Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) in charge of his zone. The said AIG claimed that he was acting on instructions. In the same manner, during the Second Republic, the commissioner of police in Anambra State was alleged to have defied the instructions of the State Governor.

In the same vein, strong political parties and strong politicians who are ideologically committed are part of the feature of countries where there are strong democracies. For example, in Nigeria, there is frequent carper-crossing and change of camps for flimsy excuses. The most disturbing scenario was during the Abacha regime when the then five political parties were bent on the adoption of Abacha as presidential candidate in his self-succession plan. In a society where politicians are worth their names, such self-succession plan would have been unheard of. According to Tunde Babawale (2007), weak parties, where members are not loyal to the party leadership and parties in which there are no party programmes are some of the problems of democracy and development in Nigeria.

An Analysis of Culture

Culture is one of those concepts that are so commonly used but whose meanings are quite often taken for granted. Nonetheless, despite the variety of ways in which it is used, it could still be subjected to a definition. For instance, A.C. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, as quoted by Okpo Ojah (2001:16), define "culture as consisting of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including artifacts … ideas and especially their attached values". However, another universally accepted definition of culture was offered by a renowned British anthropologist, Edward Burnett Tylor (1871:20), who said that "culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits of man acquired by man as a member of society". In his definition, Hutchinson defines culture as "the class of all the behaviours exhibited by a group". From the above, a few things are easily deducible. Culture is a group thing and not an individual affair. To that extent therefore, it is neither biologically acquired nor biologically transferable. There are two sides to culture, the material and the non-material. The material part of culture refers to those things which are the creations of man in his quest to conquer, dominate and harness the resources of nature to the optimum. They include such things as houses, farming implements, clothing, utensils, etc. created or invented by man to enable him maximise the benefits of the resources of nature.

The non-material aspects of culture refer to the ideas and values created by members of a social group. While ideas refer to notions, views, and beliefs about things, values are things to which people attach importance. The nexus between the material and non-material aspects of culture is that material culture exists because of the values attached to them.

Based on the above, it follows that all societies have cultures. It is the mechanism for the regulation of human affairs in terms of man's relationship to his fellow man and to the larger society. It is through the lenses of culture that human conduct could be assessed as right or wrong. Though culture is universal, in its practice and manifestations it is specific and peculiar to each society. Another characteristic of culture is that it is dynamic. It keeps changing by the influx of new ideas and practices. Ideally, as it receives, it also donates cultural traits to other cultures. The phenomenon of globalisation has further aggravated the dynamism of

culture change and contact.

Unfortunately, under the influence of globalisation, it is Euro-American cultures that are globalising. As a matter of fact, democracy, as we know it today and as currently practised globally, is one such product of globalisation. It would be easily noticed that under the unipolar world, American emphasis on its brand of democracy is part of its grand design to foist its culture on the entire world. This statement makes a discussion of ethnocentrism appropriate at this juncture. Ethnocentrism is the evaluation of other people's culture by the standards of our own. Indeed, more often than not it is the view or impression that one culture is superior to another. Ironically, the pioneer anthropologists who discussed ethnocentrism and propagated the notion of the equality of all cultures are the ones who sought very desperately to demonstrate that African cultures were inferior to the cultures of other human species. It is for this reason that we have such usages as 'primitive', 'tribe' etc., which were pejoratively used to refer to aspects of African cultures. Indeed, the current African cultural disorientation is easily traceable to the orchestrated onslaught and negative campaign of the west against African culture. For instance, our religion is seen as primitive, same as our language and other aspects of life. The goal is to assert that Africa, before the advent of colonialism, had no cultural or epistemological achievements.

Refocusing the discussion on Nigeria, we ask, is there a Nigerian culture? In other words, are there set of practices on the basis of which one could talk of Nigerian culture. According to Onwuejeogwu, there are about 445 ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. Therefore, it may not be possible to speak of a Nigerian culture, yet there are some traits common to Nigerians.

There is the culture of respect for elders and for constituted authority, though different peoples put different emphasis on it. However, the fact that not much respect and support is given to constituted authority will be discussed in subsequent parts of this discussion. The question is: Constituted authority by whom? Deep religiosity is also another trait that is common to all Nigerian ethnic groups. Other common traits include the culture of honesty, transparency and hard work. The list also includes family continuity, communalism and creativity.

Culture and Democracy

In the earlier section of this paper it was submitted that democracy grew in different societies as a response to the historical challenges of such

societies. It is therefore a product of their culture. Therefore, to examine and understand the challenges of democracy in Nigeria, we need to understand the nature of the Nigerian state. In the first place, the Nigerian state is a colonial heritage. Before the white man came there was no country called Nigeria. The present ethnic sub-nationalities existed as autonomous groups and were independent of each other. It was in 1914, based on the ideas of Lord Lugard, that Nigeria came into being. That is why the country has been described as a geographical expression or the mistake of 1914. Till date Nigeria is still an aggregation of societies in search of nationhood.

During colonialism there was a disconnect between the state and society. Rather than the state serving the interest of the society, the reverse was the case. Thus, there was distrust and recriminations between state and society. The masses actually knew and felt that they had nothing at stake in the state. The relationship between the state and society under colonialism was based on the ideology of the superiority of European culture over our indigenous culture. On this, Oloruntimehin (2007) writes:

> . . . every form of colonialism constitutes a veritable revolution in the life of societies which it subjects to alien rule. Colonialization as a process involves profound transformations of the world views and values of the colonized. It involves a deliberate cultivation of a *sense of inferiority* on the part of the dominated, and their reorientation towards the goals and value systems of the dominant people (Oloruntimehin, 2007:15).

Even in instances where the colonial overlords found traditional institutions acceptable, on the premise that it could serve their political and administrative purposes, such institutions were modified into new entities. For instance, the chieftaincy institution is a case in point. Because the colonial masters wanted to rule through Nigerian chiefs, the institution was modified in such a way that the traditional source of their legitimacy was no longer their societies but the colonialists. Since the colonial overlords had the power to appoint the chiefs they (the chiefs) had no choice but to give allegiance to the colonial masters. Normally it should be expected that the culture of the master is the culture of the servant. As a result of the distortion of indigenous cultures, the educated elites who took over governance at the demise of colonialism had no firm grasp of Nigerian cultures. They therefore attempted to govern the country on the basis of alien cultures. The net result has been a further aggravation of the disconnect and alienation between state and society.

The effect of all these is that Nigeria, culturally speaking, is in a state of flux. While the people have neglected their own cultures, the efforts to be westernised have proved tragically futile.

More tragic is the fact that existing political structures are borrowed. Therefore, their implementation has been less than successful. This has made military intervention in politics very easy. Unfortunately, the military did not fare better than the politicians they replaced. Military administrations in Nigeria occasioned so much callousness, insensitivity and treasury looting, that at the end of the day they left the country in a far worse state than they met it.

Where Do We Go From Here?

In Nigeria, though the last elections have been adjudged free, fair and internationally acceptable, by other indices, democracy is still a long journey ahead. The starting point of this journey is that there is need for our mode of governance or more appropriately our democracy to be made relevant to our culture. On this, Oloruntimehin, once again states:

> . . . congruence between culture and mode of governance is an urgent necessity, the fulfilment of which would bring Africa and Africans into the mainstream of humanity and world civilization. We need to mobilize our cultural heritage to promote democratic forms of governance that would make us live our life as part of humanity and make contributions to human progress (Oloruntimehin 2007:19).

Nonetheless, so much of this has been stated in the past. The consensus is that the non-inclusion of our culture not only in our democratic experiments but also in our overall developmental agenda accounts for our current state of underdevelopment. The point is that we should now go beyond advocacy or statements of intentions to the enunciation of practical steps on how in real terms we can incorporate or make our culture relevant to our democratic practices.

This is what Kitgard puts forth in a paper titled *"From let's to How"*. In this paper, Kitgard appears to have been fed up with the emphasis on 'let's incorporate culture into governance'. According to him, emphasis should shift from the acceptance of the desirability of our heritage and culture to be infused into our systems of governance to an explication of how this could be done in practical terms. In his paper, it is the belief that to fully incorporate our culture into democratic governance long

and short term approaches are required. In the short term, there is the need to overhaul our system of federalism. Under the new arrangement, there should be more decentralisation in such a way that the local government which is closer to the grassroots is enhanced and strengthened. This will entail that specific roles should be assigned to traditional chieftaincy institutions. We base our argument on the following premise:

(a) They are the real representatives of the people, the custodian and embodiment of their cultures, traditions, values and heritage. Because of their closeness to their peoples they alone, more than any other authority, can preserve, project and represent their interests. The issue of whether their roles should be constitutionally spelt out has attracted arguments and counter-arguments. While Obasanjo and Mabogunje argued against constitutional assignment of roles to them, we think otherwise. The argument is that constitutionally defined functions may bring traditional rulers against or sometimes under the influence of politicians. This argument is weak because lack of constitutionally defined roles may easily lead to abuse and usurpation of functions. It has also been argued that the chieftaincy institution is anachronistic and its mode of ascendancy undemocratic. But the important questions are: Is it generally acceptable to the people? Does it serve their best interests, wishes and aspirations? If answers to these questions are in the affirmative, then it serves the best interest of democracy. Without prejudice to the above recommendations, efforts should be made to insulate them from partisan politics.

(b) The strength in the incorporation of traditional institutions is that it makes for stability and continuity. This is because they derive their authority and legitimacy from the people. They are therefore accountable to them.

Other short-term measures could come in the form of sustained and aggressive cultural orientation and reorientation for the masses on the gains and benefits of democracy. The Nigerian peoples should understand that their vote is their power and that office holders are in power on behalf of the people. They should therefore learn to vote not on the

basis of sentiments or primordial considerations but on the consideration of popular programmes that will improve the living conditions of the peoples. In this respect, agencies like the National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) and the National Orientation Agency have key roles to play. It is also possible to encourage and promote culture among the masses through the theatre. Associations like the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP) and similar associations should be encouraged to produce plays and films that would project the essential ties and linkages between our culture and democracy.

The long-term measures would require that the totality of our educational system be overhauled. Our educational institutions at all levels, especially at the tertiary level, are places of intellectual consumerism, and this should not be. So much of our educational curricula are still products of colonialism. The issue is to encourage the use of the mother tongue, first from the primary schools then to the other tiers of the educational system. It is desirable that in some homogeneous states of the federation, businesses in the state assemblies should begin as a matter of urgency to be conducted in local languages. Otherwise, how expedient is it to be discussing the improvement of the lot of a people in a foreign language?

This naturally leads to another vexatious issue. That is, the exclusion of history from the school curriculum in Nigeria. It is disturbing that history has become a very unattractive subject that some universities now have to combine it with other programmes in order to attract students into their departments of history. It is for this reason that you have departments such as *History and Strategic Studies* or *History and international relations* etc. It should be noted that the discouragement of the teaching of history in some Nigerian schools is a plan that would make us forget our past, such that we do not fully understand the challenges of the present, so that we do not engage the future constructively.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have attempted to raise some key issues with respect to the failings of democratic governance in Nigeria. We found that, far from being consolidated, democracy as a form of governance is still in its infancy and a number of factors account for it. These include political intolerance, bad management of our pluralism, weak institutions such as the legislature, the judiciary, police and the press. These institutional

weaknesses are further compounded by the inordinate ambition of the military which regularly intervened in the nation's political administration on flimsy excuses.

The most profound of the causes of democratic failure is the disconnect between the state and society in Nigeria. It is a situation where the Nigerian people see the state, which is a colonial heritage, as an instrument of oppression. All of the above culminate in one thing – the failure to fully comprehend and incorporate our culture as the basis of our democracy. Disheartening as the situation may appear, it is not irredeemable. It is still possible, for Nigeria to begin to get it right in her bid to enthrone sustainable democracy. This is, however, subject to some preconditions. In the first instance, politicians must learn to see politics and elections not as a do-or-die affair but as opportunities to serve and contribute to national growth and development. In another sense, the impression that politics is business must stop in order to pave the way for a new national orientation and attitude that sees politics as service. For democracy to be fully entrenched, the electoral body, in this particular instance, the Independent National Electoral Commission, must be truly independent in two fundamental areas. The first is in the appointment of key officers of the commission. We are of the view that this should be the prerogative of the National Assembly or the National Judicial Council. This does not suggest that undue pressures and influences may not be exerted but the effect will be minimal. The second is in the area of funding. We recommend that this should be removed from the Executive arm of governance. Rather, the funding of the electoral commission should be constitutionally spelt out.

Furthermore, for Nigeria to have true democracy, the press has a strategically important role to play. As a body, the press is an agent of mass mobilisation. It is very possible for it to reach the masses in all the nooks and crannies of the country within a very short space of time. In addition and more importantly, the press, print and electronic, must uphold and adhere tenaciously to the tenets of the profession. The sanctity of the truth, the beauty of fairness and the gains of objectivity must guide the press at all times, especially in reporting and commenting on political issues.

Added to all these is that to bridge the gap between state and society, the government must fashion policies and operate in a people oriented manner. By so doing, the people will also be seen as part and parcel of

governance. That the masses do not support the government of the day and the rules and regulations are not obeyed is not because Nigerians are naturally disobedient or difficult to govern. Rather, this problem will be solved once the alienation between the masses and the government is removed. In this whole process, the youths have an important role to play. Expectedly, they are young, dynamic, adventurous and possibly altruistic. As leaders of tomorrow, they should be properly guided on the dire consequences of election rigging and political violence. This is because a stable, democratic and progressive society is their only guarantee for a prosperous future. As a long-term measure the issue of has to be addressed. It is always easy for poor people to be bought over and manipulated. The gap between the rich and the poor is too wide and appear to be increasing by the day.

Finally, the imperative for the incorporation of culture into politics and democracy is long overdue. It is our submission that until this is done, our search for peace and progress in the context of a strong, stable and democratic country will remain a wild goose chase and Nigeria will continue to operate without purpose or direction.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

Cultural Transformation of the Yoruba Under the Nigerian Democratic Dispensation

T. Kehinde Adekunle

Introduction

Central to the understanding of the transformation of the Yoruba is the concept of culture, which Edward B. Tylor defined as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, 1865:4, 369). Thus, we can say that the culture of the Yoruba springs not only from their belief and customs but also includes what is regarded as their morals, that is, normal rules of social behaviour. It also includes their law which comprises the rules and regulations guiding their daily routine, that is, things that are permitted and those forbidden by the society. Whereas the modern-day African leader will cling to power in the face of obvious rejection by the people, the culture of the Yoruba forbids the leader from continuing in office as if nothing has happened whenever his conduct pits him against the people. Even though the tendency is for people to argue today that there is nothing to learn about the undemocratic past of Africa which is typified by autocratic rule, this paper sets out to show certain things that may be learnt today about the past African leaders, especially among the Yoruba of the south-western part of Nigeria.

Historical Evolution

The origin of the Yoruba can be traced to Oduduwa, their great progenitor whom history records as having migrated from Mecca to settle at Ile-Ife together with the people who followed him to the new settlement. The migration, according to recoded accounts, took place as a result of political crisis in Arabia (Atanda, 1980:2). However, one other legend

says that at the beginning of time, when the whole surface of the earth was one watery matter, *Olodumare* ("king of heaven") sent down some heavenly beings to create solid land, as well as plant life and animal life, on the earth. They brought with them some quantity of earth, one chicken and one palm nut. They came down by a chain and landed on the spot now known as *Ife*, in the heart of Yorubaland. They poured the earth into the water, and thus created a piece of solid land. They then set the chicken on the land, and as the chicken scratched at it with its claws, the small piece of dry land continued to spread until all the continent and islands of the world came into existence. The heavenly beings sowed the palm nut, and it sprouted and grew, thus beginning plant life in the world. The heavenly beings became progenitors of the human race. The place where all this began was named Ife, meaning "the source of the spreading." It is the belief of the Yoruba, therefore, that theirs is the first race of human beings, and that all human life and civilisation originated in their country (Akintoye, 2010:1). Going by this tradition, therefore, Ile-Ife is the cradle of the universe, the centre of the world and the origin of mankind. In fact, Henry Higgins, the leading British agent who visited the interior of Yorubaland in 1886, wrote about Ife thus:

> There are all manner of legends as to the wonders to be seen at Ile-Ife . . . the Ifes call themselves the conservators of the world and the oldest of mankind and boast that all crowned personages in the world, including the white man's sovereign, went out originally from Ile-Ife, and it was curious the deference with which other tribes treat them although they are at war with them . . . and as everyone was supposed to be a descendant of the Ifes, they looked upon all strangers who visited their town in the light of pilgrims who came, as they put it, "to make their house good" that is to pay reverence to departed ancestors (Akintoye, 2010:2).

Moreover, it is not easy to conclude which of these two accounts of the origin of the Yoruba is valid but while the first version looks real, the latter appears to belong to the realm of myth. It is only reasonable to adopt the first version which renders itself easily understandable in the thought pattern of modern-day reality. Assuming Oduduwa migrated to Ile-Ife, therefore, it has been argued that his place of migration could, in all probability, be somewhere around Ile-Ife or its neighbourhood where Yoruba or a related language was then being spoken and not Mecca, Egypt or anywhere else in the Middle East. Through the use of

glottochronology, the linguists have placed the linguistic pattern of Yoruba language in the Kwa group of the Niger-Congo family of languages. They have also asserted that the *Kwa* group of languages has been the predominant language in West Africa for thousands of years (Atanda, 1980: 3-4). Since Mecca, Egypt and Arabia are not found in West Africa, it is only reasonable to suggest that Oduduwa could only have come from a region where Yoruba language is the main medium of communication which, of course, could only be within the West African sub-region.

Yoruba Executive in the Pre-colonial Era

Traditionally, the executive arm of government of the Yoruba is headed by the *Oba*, that is, the monarch, who reigns for life and is entitled to wear a crown (usually a beaded one). However, some small settlements which are not large enough to enable their monarchs to wear crowns do have their titular heads assuming the title of '*Baale'* literally meaning 'father of the land.' Otherwise, the traditional ruler of each Yoruba town always has a specific title peculiar to the respective town. Thus, titles like 'Ooni of Ife', 'Alaafin of Oyo', 'Olubadan of Ibadan', 'Ataoja of Osogbo', 'Orangun of Ila', 'Ewi of Ado-Ekiti', 'Alake of Egbaland', 'Olowo of Owo', 'Osemawe of Ondo', 'Deji of Akure' and a lot of others are familiartitles for the monarchs of Yorubaland.

As the head of government, the *Oba* is regarded as a divine king who has absolute power in theory because he is regarded as "*Oba Alase, Ekeji Orisa",* that is "King, the Authority-giver and Companion of the gods." He is addressed as *'Kabiesi,'* meaning "we dare not query your authority." The Yoruba *Oba* or King thus has the divine power of life and death over his subject. Although the king has absolute power in theory, as he could punish any of his subject even without trial, there exists in practice some state apparatus which act as checks and balances on the power or excesses of the '*Oba'* or king. The *Oba* rules his subject in conjunction and consultation with his traditional council generally referred to as the *Igbimo* but specifically called the *Oyomesi* in Oyo, *Ogboni* in Egba towns, *Ilamuren* in Ijebu-Ode, *Omolowo* in Owo and *Iwarefa* in Ile-Ife, Ondo, Ekiti and Ijesa towns. These traditional councils constitute some of the various checks on the arbitrary or tyrannical use of power by the Yoruba *Oba* or kings whenever they overstep their bounds. Speaking of the *Ogboni* system under the *Egba* administration, Earl

Phillips once observed:

> The Ogboni system, said to have derived from Ile-Ife, was an institution highly developed by the Egba. Made up of important personages and not completely a masculine preserve, its function was to stand between the head of each town and his people. Ideally, the system restrained chiefs from becoming despotic, while ensuring that the governed did as they were told. In fact, *Ogboni* constituted court and council, selected and controlled chiefs, and preserved custom and tradition, it was the executive, legislative and judicial body of each township in a single entity.

The *Igbimo Ilu* in each Yoruba town usually consists of the most senior chiefs who represent the various lineages, descent groups or quarters in the town which are bound together by strong family ties. In order to make laws or take decisions on any issue which fundamentally affects a town, the *Oba* must meet with and consult his traditional council or *Igbimo* which, of course, must give its consent before laws or decisions are effectuated. The failure of an *Oba* to follow or observe this age-long tradition usually results in grave consequences as the *Oba* could be sentenced to death or, at least, forced to abdicate his throne. For instance, if an *Alaafin* of Oyo acts *ultra vires* or arbitrarily, his traditional council known as the *Oyo Mesi*, usually headed by the *Basorun*, will pronounce its sentence of rejection through the latter thus: "The Gods rejects you, earth rejects you, the people reject you." The *Alaafin* rejected in such manner would, of necessity, commit suicide (Atanda, 1980:50). Alternatively, however, the traditional council may send a covered calabash basin containing some taboo objects (eggs of parrot) to the *Oba*. Such an *Oba* will normally commit suicide. It follows therefore that both religious and traditional taboos can be used to checkmate the excesses of an *Oba*. While commenting on this issue, Akintoye observed:

The Yoruba system provided that a king could be removed if he habitually acted beyond the established controls on royal power, or if he made himself repulsive through greed, tyrannical tendencies or immorality. In such situations, a committee of the high chiefs existed to counsel, admonish or even rebuke the king in strict privacy. If the king would not mend his ways, the situation could develop to the point that this committee would bring the matter before the other council of state as well as before the *Ogboni* – and the decision could be taken to remove the king (Akintoye, 2010:123-124).

Thus, the *Ogboni,* backed by popular opinion and the authority of

religion, still has a moderating effect on the power and influence of the *Oyo mesi* even though the latter reserve the right to wield the big political stick (Salami, 2006: 72).

Present-day Dethronement of Monarchs

As a continuation of this ancient practice, the *Oba* does not actually enjoy absolute immunity today. Thus, many *Oba* have been dethroned or banished on this particular account. The case of *Oba Orioge v. The Governor, Ondo State & Anr.* is instructive in this regard.The Plaintiff in that case who was an *Oba* had been accused by his people to be fond of drinking beer and other alcoholic beverages in bars, hotels and other public places on several occasions. This made the Plaintiff behave in a manner unbecoming of a traditional ruler. In addition, the Plaintiff was adjudged a debtor and his car was sold in satisfaction of the debt; he was found to be engaged in criminal activities, high-handed in ruling his people and administering their affairs in a manner which was detrimental to the progress, development and peace of his domain. It took no time for the Plaintiff to be removed from the throne. Likewise, the late *Olowo of Owo, Oba* Olateru Olagbegi, was deposed in 1968 even though he was later reinstated in 1993 by the Ondo State Government. The *Oloko of Oko* was also sentenced to death for killing the brother of a rival *Oloko* installed by the *Olugbon of Igbon* in the case of *The State v. Oba Gabriel A. Adeyemo.* Only recently, the *Deji of Akure* was removed from the throne because he beat up his *Olori* in public in flagrant disregard of tradition. A number of traditional rulers have at one time oranother been dethroned or banished. They include King Akintoye of Lagos who was removed in 1845 and *Oba* Adeyemi I, *Alaafin of Oyo* who was banished in the 1950's. All these were done in order to retain the dignity and honour attached to the throne.

It thus appears that even though the king no longer has absolute power, he can still be removed if and when he misbehaves. Many issues are put into consideration in determining whether or not a king is to be removed. Basically, morality is the major factor to be considered but the way and manner of handling the affairs of state especially when it concerns issues pertaining to the people will also count. In other words, a king's style of administration speaks volumes about the success of his reign.

Operation of the *Eso* in the Administration of the Government

Another dimension to the matter is the behaviour of the errand boys of the *Alaafin* known as the *Eso*. These were the seventy titled military officers who commanded the armies in battle and reported directly to the *Alaafin* through the *Oyo Mesi,* the highest council of state. The *Eso*bore an awesome reputation for bravery, and commanded honour and respect. According to Samuel Johnson, each *Eso* wears an *Akoro* (coronet) and carries in his hand no weapon, but a baton or staff of war known as The Invincible. A popular praise song of the *Eso* is:

> One of two things befits an *Eso*
> An *Eso* must fight and conquer (or)
> An *Eso* must fight and perish (in war).

Another saying goes thus:

> An *Eso* must never be shot in the back,
> His wounds must always be right in front.

We have gone to this extent in order to highlight the military prowess of the *Eso* during the time of war and emphasise the honour accorded to these *Eso* in the time of peace when they go about the town tyrannising and dehumanising the citizenry. They could seize the property of some and deny others the rights of movement while they generally subject people to abuse of their human rights. This is a negative reflection of the democratic practice of the Yoruba in ancient times.

Modern-day Democracy

The term 'democracy' originates from two Greek words: "*demos*" which means 'people' and "*kratia*" meaning 'rule' (Molemi, 2006:30). The two words when joined together become "*demoskratia"* meaning 'democracy'. Democracy is therefore the rule of the people. It is a government in which the people take part directly or through their representatives. It is not less than a representative government. In a country like ours with a population of over one hundred and forty million people,the people must be represented in parliament and their representatives must be democratically chosen. The spirit of democracy is therefore expressed in President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in which democracy is identified as "the government of the people, by the people and for the people" (Salami 2004:315-328). For a government to be truly seen to

be democratic, therefore, it must be:

(i) legitimately set up by the people in common
(ii) put in place and installed by the people
(iii) set up to cater for the well-being or welfare of the people.

Thus the welfare of the people must be of utmost importance to a democratic government.

This was how democracy started in the Greek city states. It is the prototype of this government that the modern states now adopt. Democracy is the government that takes the interest of every adult into consideration. All the people who are qualified take part in election. They choose their leaders by electing or rejecting them and their programs at the polls. It remains the best form of government throughout the world. From this principle of democratic practice emanates the need for election. The modern Yoruba nation started its march towards democracy with the election of 1922 under the Clifford Constitution. This constitution could not last for long as it was fraught with many anomalies. A series of constitutional developments soon followed, culminating in the Lyttelton Constitution of 1954.

About this time, *Egbe Omo Oduduwa*, a socio-cultural group, was formed by the Yoruba elites in the United Kingdom. Chief Obafemi Awolowo spearheaded the formation, organisation and operation of the *Egbe* which later transformed into a political party, the Action Group. The party eventually fielded some candidates who contested for some political posts in the then Western Region. The Action Group was basically the party of the Yoruba; this is evidenced in the party's electoral victory only in the Western parts of the country which is the home of the Yoruba. Chief Obafemi Awolowo emerged as the Premier of the Western region and leader of the Yoruba.

He led them till 1960 when Chief S. L. Akintola became the Premier. The democratic experience continued till 1966 when a military interregnum set in for the next thirteen years. Between July, 1960 and December, 1962, Sir Adesoji Aderemi, the Ooni of Ife, was made the Governor of the Western Region and this was the first attempt to bring an *Oba* directly into the mainstream of modern politics. Unfortunately, the experiment did not meet with much success as the period of the Governorship was so short and turbulent that there was no adequate room for proper assessment. However, within the short period, a serious

crisis erupted in the Western House of Assembly. The constitution of Western Nigeria provided that if it appeared to the Governor that the Premier no longer commanded the support of the majority of the members of the House of Assembly, he (the Premier) could be removed from office. Consequently, on receiving a letter from 66 out of the 124-member House of Assembly stating that they no longer supported the Premier, the Governor removed him from office and the Premier then went to court (*Akintola v. Adegbenro)* to challenge his removal. The trial court referred the main issues for decision to the Supreme Court which held that the removal was unconstitutional. On appeal to the Privy Council*,* it was decided that once it appeared to the Governor that the Premier no longer commanded the support of the majority of the members of the House of Assembly he was left with no other option than to remove the Premier from office. How the Governor came to the knowledge that the Premier no longer commanded the support of the members of the House of Assembly was immaterial. It is, therefore, an irony that this first attempt of the Yoruba to democratise governance in modern times did not meet with outright success and it, in fact, led to the first *coup d'état*in Nigerian history and the eventual bulkanisation of the countryinto various units.

Moreover, the former Western region has been today divided into six states – Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti and Lagos states in each of which an executive Governor now presides. The question now is whether any of the Governors could wield power similar to that of the *Oba* of the olden days. If yes, should such power be wielded absolutely?

The first issue in this discourse relates to the constitutional provision limiting the tenure of the governor to a four-year term which could become eight years if the Governor is re-elected for a second term in office. Unlike the *Oba* who rules absolutely till the end of his life, the Governor is circumscribed by the constitutional provisions. Thus, while a Governor only has a limited period to rule, an *Oba* rules till the end of his life barring any misconduct which may lead to his removal. Just like the *Oba,* the Governor too could be removed from office for misconduct by impeachment.

Likewise the constitutional provision for separation of powers, which stipulates that the three different arms of government must operate independently of each other in order to checkmate the excesses of any of the arms, makes it quite unlikely for any modern-day Governor to

wield absolute power like that of the *Oba*. These limitations include control of the budget of the government by the legislature. The legislature oversees the actions of the executive arm of government with a view to censuring it if found condemnable. The judiciary is likewise empowered to review the administrative actions of the executive. All these were not the practice during the time of the *Oba* in the olden days.

Despite these limitations of the power of the present-day Governor, Section 308 of the 1999 Constitution provides the Governor with a limited version of the absolute power of the Oba of old in the sense that whatever he does in his official capacity as the governor cannot be challenged by anybody in a law court except after the expiration of his tenure. It is designed to allow the Governor sufficient time to carry out his official duties, but then, it is more or less like giving the Governor an open cheque to do whatever he likes while in office. This, of course, looks like giving the modern-day Governors an absolute power similar to that of the *Oba* of old. It was for this reason that Keane observed about European democracies that:

> Most parliamentary democracies in Europe began to look like democracies without democrats. Why? Certainly not because Europe suffered outbursts of collective insanity triggered by psychopath dictators, as many contemporaries liked to believe. The reasons lay elsewhere. Constitutional delirium – the naïve belief of politicians, lawyers, diplomats and government officials that good constitutions could overcome bad political and social conditions – was among the many causes of the death of representative democracy. So, too, was the presumption that well-designed parliaments could provide leadership strong enough to make lions lie down with lambs (Keane, 2009:568).

Conclusion

It is a pity that today, the *Oba(s)* reign but do not rule as there is no role carved out for them in the constitution. Although they superintend over their various communities, the real administration of government is no longer in their hands. Back in their palaces, the *Oba(s)* settle various disputes among their subjects. These matters range from land disputes to inheritance cases, succession and marriage disputes. In performing such duties, they seem to attract to themselves more respect, honour and dignity. They are thereby regarded as the fathers of all. However, there is a need to carve out a constitutional role for them so that they can be more useful to the society. The struggle for leadership among

these traditional rulers could be avoided in the present dispensation if a specific constitutional duty is laid down for them to perform. For instance, the Council of Traditional Rulers in Oyo State, which is currently enmeshed in a legal battle over its leadership, would have benefited from such a move. So also will other traditional councils spread all over Yorubaland.

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IV

Gender Roles and (Wo)Men's Rights

CHAPTER TWELVE

Gender, Culture and Power: Understanding The Nigerian Context

A.I. Pogoson

Introduction

In life, groups not only provide a supportive space for participation and exchange, but also for exclusion. Whenever one group of people accumulates more power than another group, the more powerful group establishes a setting that places its members at the nucleus of the emerging culture and other groups at the margins. People in the more powerful group and their behaviour are accepted as the norm. Being in that group makes it difficult to see the benefits one receives, or perceive the feelings of those on the margins (http://www.niusileadscape.org/docs/pl/understanding_culture/activity3/Culture_Acad3_Facilitator.pdf). Thus, if, as a woman, you walk into an exclusive men's political meeting, you may be apprehensive and insecure, feel invisible, unnoticed or marginalised. You will also feel that you have ventured into a setting where you have to step cautiously.

This is the situation with gender. "Gender is about power, and power is gendered". How power operates in this way becomes noticeable in an examination of the relation between femininity and masculinity (Pearson, 2000: 11). We live in a culture in which men have more social, political, and economic power than women such that it is often not noticed that women are treated differently. That is because the prevalent setting is generally a male culture of power. In this setting, it is expected that men are to be treated with respect, to be listened to, and to have their opinions valued. The expectation is that there will be more men in positions of authority; more books and other publications that are written by men, that reflect their perspectives, and show men in central roles will be readily available. What we do not necessarily notice is that, as accounts

of women politicians indicate, women are sometimes treated less respectfully, ignored, or silenced; that they are not quite visible in positions of authority nor welcome in certain settings and are not always safe in situations where men feel perfectly comfortable (see Akiyode-Afolabi and Arogundade, 2003; Mangvwat, Ibeanu and Mahdi, 2009). .

The problem with such a culture of power is that it reinforces the prevailing hierarchy in society. When we are within the core culture of power, we expect to have things our way, the way we are most comfortable with. We remain unaware of the superior position and opportunities we have over others. Such a culture of power also dramatically limits the ability of those on the margins to participate in an event, a situation, or an organisation. They are only able to participate on unfavourable terms, at others' discretion, which puts them at a big disadvantage (http://csma.aas.org/spectrum_files/spectrum_Jun04.pdf). The broad, overall, power asymmetries between men and women and the relationship between culture and oppressive power structures and behaviours which applies in a multitude of spheres (for instance, within organisations, in political systems, within political parties, and between ethnic groups) constitute the main focus of this paper. As traditionally constructed, gender differences which have power asymmetry at their heart, are integral to the culture of domination (Francis, 2000). Essential to the notion of culture is that it is variable and particular to societies and individuals within them, the paper argues that a line running through almost every culture, Nigeria inclusive, is the central value placed on domination of one group over others; of one culture over others, of one person over others and of one sex over the other. The paper also argues that the oppression of women is often explained and justified in terms of culture, custom and traditional belief.

Understanding what gender is involves understanding power, how it is used and shared. This paper thus seeks to show that as it pertains to women, within an overall culture of domination, it is the 'power over' model that is favoured, as against the cooperative 'power with' and 'power for' model. Within that overarching cultural context, the gender roles assigned to women and men result in gross power asymmetry between them, which is expressed structurally, in terms of behaviour, and advancement of rights. The paper maintains that the vast majority of cultures in Nigeria have systematically limited the power of women in their social, political and religious institutions. It also argues that the

cultural pattern inherent in the definition of culture is constantly being negotiated, revised and reproduced, and the power to participate in the process of negotiation has historically been divided along gender lines.

Understanding Culture

Culture is the way that people make sense of their world, both as individuals and as part of larger collectives. It is often imagined to be "a set of archaic practices contained within an unchanging, bounded community". A more nuanced understanding of culture, however, expounds " cultural practices as fluid, contested, and connected to relations of power" (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/BriefingNote4_GREY.pdf). Cultures are not fixed or monolithic, but fluid, complex and changing. Cultures have always been subject to change – both internal and external. Cultures are never homogenous and are shaped by people's actions and struggles over meaning. From this perspective, respect for cultural differences exists simultaneously with the belief that cultural practices and beliefs can and do change over time.

The working definition of culture adopted by this paper is the patterning of assumptions about life, its realities and requirements, and intrinsic or accompanying values and norms. Arguably, the very notion of culture is itself a cultural construct; it is a concept so nebulous and problematic as to be near meaningless; yet the difficulties of definition do not disprove its importance. Not only is culture too important to discount or ignore because it provides a way of talking about the fundamentals of human thought, activity and relationships but because it bears a close relationship to the concept of identity. (Francis, 2000)

Culture and Gender Relations

The term "gender" has been linked with the recognition of social and cultural differences associated with men and women in society. The term sharpens our perception of discrimination and allows us to perceive and accept the wealth of cultural expressions that abound. Like our working definition of culture, gender can be defined as the social construction of sex difference, expressed in constructions of masculinity and femininity (Francis, 2000). Gender is a social identity that changes over time (historically) and space (geographically). Gender is used to designate

social relations between the sexes. Its use clearly rejects biological explanations and has become a means "of denoting 'cultural constructions' – the entirely social creation of ideas about appropriate roles for women and men". Gender, by this definition, "is a way of referring to the exclusively social origins of the subjective identities of men and women" (Scott, 1986: 1056). Consequently, the gender roles of men and women differ from society to society. These relations and the roles that women and men may assume are culturally and institutionally embedded (Pearson, 2000; Aina, 1998). The socially embedded inequities are structured into institutions that represent patriarchal and hegemonic interests.

Gender and cultural relations have many elements in common. In many societies, women have to be better than men in order to get the same opportunities. Indeed, the same is true for human beings with skin colours other than pale and with other than the so-called "Western" cultural background. The obstacle of culture is complicated by the fact that it is men who have the exclusive right of interpreting culture – what it means, on what conditions and to whom it applies – and they will always do this to their own advantage. Some cultures still do not believe that women can be leaders while men are followers. Because of this, women who for instance venture into politics are seen as cultural deviants. In other words, patriarchy is entrenched in the society and women are expected to subordinate themselves to men. In some societies, this problem also has religious connotations. For instance, in the predominantly Muslim North, when the purdah system was in vogue, women were generally expected to stay at home and cover their faces so that they could not be seen by other men. Until 1976, these women were not even allowed to vote for candidates of their choice, let alone stand for elections themselves (Charles & Ikenna, 2009).

Indeed whilst a wide range of cultures put forward notions of rights and human dignity upon which to condemn violence and oppression, some aspects of culture may still be used to violate women's human rights. For example, before contact with the colonising powers, many indigenous communities practised relatively egalitarian gender relations, and reproduced worldviews that define gender roles as complementary, rather than hierarchical. Thus, for indigenous women, cultural preservation as an element of cultural rights may be a strategy for transmitting values that support women's human rights (http://

www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/BriefingNote4_GREY.pdf). However, some Cultural practices and traditions promote the violation of women's rights and are responsible for the discrimination and violation of women's rights in society.

Discriminatory Customs and Laws

The customary practices of many contemporary societies are biased by subjugating women to men and undermining their self-esteem. The overall impact of gender bias, cultural norms and practices has entrenched a feeling of inferiority in women and placed them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their male counterparts in the socio-political scene. These socially constructed norms and stereotyped roles make women overplay their 'femininity' by accepting that they are a 'weaker sex', overemphasising the dainty nature of their sex and regarding exceptional achievement as masculine. For example, most customs often prefer sending the male child to school over the female, who is expected to nurture siblings and to be married off. This marginally increases the illiterate women and stiffens their competition with their male counterparts (Agbalajobi, 2010: 079).

Throughout the ages, there has always been bias and prejudice against women in all societies and in all epochs. Discrimination against women is manifested in all spheres of human relations. It has always come in different forms: socio-cultural, economic, religious, and political. Socio-culturally, there have been several norms and traditions in different societies which prevent women from realising their full potential. These are cultures that make them second class citizens and inferior to men. In traditional society, it was the belief that women's original position was in the kitchen. Education was not considered important for them. Their training was directed towards their natural destiny in marriage, housekeeping, and motherhood. There was practically little opportunity for freedom of expression and choice. The husband's or father's opinion was supreme on every issue, including when it was time for the girl-child to get married (Charles and Ikenna, 2009: 114). Where culture does not permit a woman to represent her place of birth, she loses a golden opportunity. We have seen cases in Nigeria where a woman's state of origin disallowed her from a political appointment and the husband's state also refused to endorse her for political office (Ibrahim and Salihu, 2004 and Akiyode-Afolabi and Odemwingie, 2008). In many of these

instances the government plays safe by appointing a man instead. And this has continued to consolidate women's under-representation in national politics.

Culture and Power

The notion of culture is a variable which is particular not only to societies but to individuals within them. As argued by Riane Eisler (1990), what she describes as "dominatory culture" is a thread that runs through almost every generalised, mainstream culture and this is the central value placed on domination: of one species over others; of one group over others; of one person over others and of one sex over the other. Eisler (1990) contends that, despite assumptions to the contrary, egalitarian, cooperative relationships have in some societies, in the past, been the norm – and could be again. In the meantime, however, the culture of domination overshadows our view of both past and present, and that perspective reaches out, depressingly, into the future.

Domination has power asymmetry as its goal and is dependent on it. It represents the kind of relationship that most people, in most cultures, most readily associate with power, i.e. power over people and things, as against the capacity to do something or the responsibility to act on behalf of others (Boulding 1978). There are many different mediums for the exercise of power over others: wealth; control of resources and terms of trade; language; education; fashion; political structures and practices; laws (their enactment and application); imprisonment and physical violence, or the threat of it, on whatever scale, including military systems and wars. Similarly, the means and the outcome of domination is violence: the harmful and destructive exercise of power over others. A culture of domination is a culture of violence. According to Johan Galtung, "cultural violence makes direct and structural violence look, even feel, right – or at least not wrong" (Galtung 1990, 291). The oppression of women is often explained, and indeed justified in terms of culture.

Individuals within all groups and in any sphere of life compete for power, and most individuals in some areas of their lives are likely to be relatively powerful and in others relatively powerless. Furthermore, all human beings are likely to display, in different contexts, both dominatory and cooperative approaches to power. This is not to suggest that men are born more aggressive and controlling than women: there are many powerful and exploitative women and men. The contention is that within

an overall culture of domination, it is the 'power over' or dominatory power model that is favoured, as against the cooperative, 'power with' and 'power for' model (Francis, 2000). "Within that overarching cultural context, the gender roles assigned to women and men result in gross power asymmetry between them, which is expressed both structurally and in terms of behaviour"(Francis, 2000: 4).

As traditionally constructed, gender differences are integral to the culture of domination. Masculinity is constructed as powerful, aggressive, controlling; femininity as inferior, weak, submissive, serving or (more positively) nurturing. In the more extreme versions of this construction, women are regarded as a subspecies, to be treated by men as their chattels. Since women are those who also spend the most time with children and are their chief educators, it is clear that they participate in the perpetuation of this cultural viewpoint. The domination of men over women is the most fundamental and widespread form of power asymmetry in human societies. In some parts of the world, the oppression of women by men is lessening; in others, it continues unabated. However, in most (if not all) societies, domestic violence against women is common and in many, it is tacitly, if not explicitly, sanctioned. In some countries, women's movements and activities are restricted and their treatment under the law is harsh and discriminatory.

Women are also oppressed economically. The work that women do, overall, far exceeds that which is done by men, yet they earn on average far less than men, control a small fraction of the world's wealth and are often debarred from inheritance. In essence, the work women do is an extension of the feminine role assigned to women as mothers and wives: caring for dependents, serving the needs of others, providing social and physical necessities and being docile, flexible, emotionally supportive and sexually attractive (Macdonald and Sirianni, 1996). In global terms, then, there is a clear power asymmetry between men and women. In countries where discrimination against women is justified by dominant local traditions, many men and some women defend that discrimination in the name of culture, accusing those who question it of cultural infidelity and collusion with imperialism. However, while cultural influences and power asymmetries may help to explain attitudes and behavioural patterns, they do not justify them. Cultures, like structures and actions, are open to evaluation, critique and change. Counter-cultures can become mainstream (Francis, 2000: 7).

Do women have power? Feminists maintain that we live in a male dominant world where patriarchy is the order of the day. The essence of patriarchy is that women have no power, whether it be in the public or private sphere (Pogoson, 2012). Women are however assumed to belong to the private sphere, tied to 'home and hearth' and conditioned to fulfil domestic functions of reproduction and the allied skills connected with it – birthing, nurture of children and the spouse, elder care, care for the sick, food processing and budgeting, subsidising and supplementing spousal income when it is inadequate, and deferring to the spouse who, as the privileged male, is the head of the household. Were women to make a foray into the public sphere, they would be co-opted into a men's world, where all meaningful positions of power are occupied by men. For a woman to advance in such a world, she would need to intern as the protégée of a male patron who helps and grooms her for success, that is, if she plays her cards right. Naturally, the women who succeed would be those who learn and take to heart the strategies guaranteed to propel them to success. These strategies are often those associated with males in the popular culture – being cold, dispassionate, aggressive, hard driving, determined to succeed at all costs. For learning and internalising these traits, they're called aggressive, while their "successful" male counterparts are adulated (Okome, 2006).

That women are thus scrutinised is indicative of how their objectification in popular culture affects perceptions of how they should be and what they should do in all aspects of life. Thus, good dressing trumps commonsense and substance and an opinionated woman is derided. As objects, it is expected that women are dainty, decorative, demure, unobtrusive and increasingly, even in Africa, skinny. Feminists have challenged these assumptions and expectations. However, they also differ in significant ways on the nature of women and the relationship between them and power, politics and leadership.

The term 'empowerment' has often been used to represent a wide range of concepts and to describe a proliferation of outcomes. The notion of power is evidently central to the concept of empowerment, but its reverse, powerlessness or the absence of power, is equally relevant. Power in its various forms provides a useful framework for understanding empowerment. Lukes (1974) identifies various forms of power: "power over", "power to", "power within". Kabeer (1994) conceptualises "power with" as solidarity and alliances, which she considers vital to

empowerment; "power within," as transforming consciousness and reinterpreting needs; whereas "power to," is power to mobilise for change. In doing this, however, she replaces the latter with "power over". "Power over", "power from within", "power with" and "power to" (1999:43): all these are considered as processes and not as ends in themselves. As noted by scholars such as Kabeer (2001), Bisnath and Elson (1999), Sen and Grown (1987) and Batliwala (1994), "women's empowerment requires systemic transformation of institutions, especially those supporting patriarchal structures". One of such supporting structures is culture.

Gender, Culture and Power in Nigeria

In Nigeria, women represent about 49.7 percent of the population. Inequality between the sexes varies from one ethnic group, geographical setting, social class and historical epoch to the other. However, the male sphere was traditionally accorded more value and respect in Nigeria. Various institutions of society such as the family, religion, law, politics, education, economics, media, socio-cultural practices, state policies and agency have perpetuated the subjugation and disempowerment of women in Nigeria. Other factors include gender ideology and cultural patterns, pre-determined socio-roles assigned to women and men, as well as male dominance and control. Socialisation processes are embedded in wider social relations of power that determine which codes, such as familial, linguistic, cultural, economic, political, etc. are dominant. As happens in most patriarchal societies of the world, a Nigerian woman is socialised into a culture of female subordination. She is not only subordinate to her husband and men in her own family of orientation, but also to the entire members of her husband's family (male and female). The kinship structures places men in an advantageous position from the past to the present. Patriarchy in Nigeria subordinates the women and gives room for vulnerability (Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi and 'Lanre Arogundade, 2003).

From research, I have met women who are outraged when violence against them is justified in the name of culture, and who are working with courage and determination to confront it – whether it takes the form of female circumcision, restriction of movement, debarment from inheritance, or discrimination and harassment at work. They are also aware of the need to challenge the cultural basis for this oppression. Unfortunately, there are some societies in which culturally sanctioned

forms of oppression, whether related to caste, ethnic identity, sexuality or ability are evident. For instance, it is a well settled rule of native law and custom among the Yoruba (in Nigeria) that a wife could not inherit her husband's property. Under Yoruba customary law, a widow under intestacy is regarded as a part of the estate of her late husband to be administered or inherited by the deceased family. Particularly in the regions where unemployment and poverty pose a grave problem and patriarchal culture is more repressive to women, scarce economic resources reflected in gender-discriminatory traditions and practices – such as son preference, early marriage, gender-based seclusion and segregation reinforced by Islamic beliefs – have acted as barriers to women's education.

Nebulously defined, culture and traditional practices underlie the continued discrimination against women. Structural sources of discrimination, such as the family, condition its members to conform to socially acceptable gender roles. Local, non-formal networks of decision making reflect a dominant male ethos that restricts women's ability to participate equally; negative stereotypes are stressed without sufficient appreciation of the achievements of women or the rights they enjoy. From the viewpoint of maintaining tradition and culture, stereotyped portrayals of women deny the significance of women's contributions to development. The "traditional" conception of the role of women in society is one located in a world of domestic drudges, wives and mothers; women are advisers on the home front, women are the weaker sex and traditionally expected to be subordinate to men. For instance, Section 55 (1) (d) Nigerian Penal Code states "Nothing is an offence, which does not amount to the infliction of grievous harm upon any person and which is done by a husband for the purpose of correcting his wife. Such husband and wife being subject to any natural law or custom in which such correction is recognised as lawful".

For women who strive for a voice in the political realm, they tend to be labelled as cultural deviants. The argument is that Nigerian culture does not accept assertive, or public, or leadership roles for women. Concerted campaigns portraying female aspirants as acting in contravention of their culture were designed to marginalise them. Many party officials made overt or covert statements that some female aspirants are too assertive and independent, and therefore cannot be team players. Closely associated with negative labelling is the use of

abusive language to demoralise and delegitimise female aspirants. Many of them were subject to smear campaigns centred on their alleged loose moral standing, and some were insulted directly (Ibrahim *et al* 2006).

Women and Power in Nigerian Society

From the foregoing, many may look upon Nigeria, and indeed Africa, and conclude that the nation and continent are so poor and so marginalised, that their women are the most embattled, the most oppressed and the most impoverished people on earth. Being all of the above, could these same women be powerful? Could they be leaders? Are all Nigerian women powerless? Do women have any power in Nigerian societies? Under what circumstances? Given the manner in which African women in the global economy are embattled, given the relative absence of their voices in intellectual discourse, given their relative scarcity among the official power holders in their countries of origin, how could one possibly not consider them voiceless, powerless, more likely to be acted upon, than to act on their own behalf? In order to begin to challenge the pervasive global view that homogenises and essentialises women's experiences, it is pertinent to explore the multiple ways in which African women exercise and deploy power and leadership despite the myriad constraints that they face.

In Nigeria, as elsewhere, class differences among women imply that some women are granted social, political, and economic privileges that are not open to others, including men (Awe, 1992; Johnson-Odim and Mba, 1997). If we take the feminist contention that gender is socially constructed seriously, it is inevitable that constructions of gender differ from one geographical location to another. While there are conditions under which women are legitimately able to exercise power, each and everyone cannot perform identically. As earlier noted, not only does personal capacity matter, but social and political institutions can intervene to empower or disempower individuals and groups in society. Thus, women may have power in society in some institutions: the family, kinship group, community, ethnic group, state. Women may also exercise power within the different roles they play: mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, mothers-in-law, political officials, owners of capital, monarchs, nobility/aristocracy, deities, religious leaders (Okome, 2006).

Nigerian history abounds with examples of powerful women leaders. Opportunities existed for women in pre-colonial Nigerian society to take

leadership roles in politics, religion, social and economic life. The works of renowned scholars such as Bolanle Awe and Nina Mba established the documentation of their accomplishments (Awe, 1992 and Mba,1997). In the context of African indigenous culture, numerous legends and oral traditions point to the power of women in pre-colonial Nigerian society. Instances of power would include women's power as mothers vis-à-vis children, regardless of age. As wives in a polygynous family, the first wife has more power than other co-wives. As political officials, there are examples of women who are queen mothers, e.g. the Edo of Nigeria. Women can also have economic power based on their ability to own the means of production, or the ability to control the gains that they make from exchange. There are also examples of women's ritual power. The Yoruba pantheon is composed of both male and female deities. The female deities include *Oya* and *Yemoja*. In the worship of these deities, many opportunities exist for women to lead (Okome, 2006).

Princess Inikpi of the Igala people, Iyalode Efunsetan Aniwura of Ibadan, Madam Tinubu of Abeokuta, Queen Amina of Zaria (who was a warrior that led her troops in battle), Queen Kambassa of the Ijaw and Owari of Ilesa all participated in political leadership and gained recognition for their accomplishments. Princess Inikpi and Queen Moremi of Ife also made the ultimate sacrifice of life. Princess Inikpi, the only child of the Igala ruler, was offered as a sacrifice and Queen Moremi's only child, Oluorogbo, was sacrificed, to ensure the well-being of their people and end wars that threatened to destroy them. Nana Asmau (1793 to 1864) was a Muslim scholar and a poet. She was a top scholar in the Sokoto community in Nigeria. She taught and participated in the running of the state from her matrimonial home (Okome, 2006).

The Aba Women's War of 1929 is a watershed event in Nigeria's history. Igbo women of South East Nigeria, led by Margaret Ekpo through the tireless and mobilisational efforts of women's village associations, organised a formidable resistance to colonial efforts to tax Ibo women. Their resistance was so effective that Ibo women were not taxed until after colonial rule ended. Also, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti undermined the myth of male superiority by confronting patriarchy. She challenged the power of the Alake, Oba of the Egba, who was forced to abdicate the throne for injustices against the people, particularly in siding against his own people to foster colonial rule.

The fact that women had the opportunity to participate in the public

sphere and wield power within the family in pre-colonial and colonial Nigerian societies is to say that such zones of power in the public sphere and in the exercise of power within the family are not the exclusive preserve of men. Positive cultural mores must be harmonised, derived from in-depth understanding of women's history with the best ideas about women's empowerment from human experiences.

Conclusion

Individuals play an instrumental role in the creation of structures, their maintenance and their transformation. The development of alternative rules, norms and procedures provides the avenue through which structural transformation may be engineered. The process of engineering transformation involves both the manipulation of rules, norms and procedures as well as organisation for political action by women to protect their rights, enhance the quality of protection and increase the comprehensiveness of the rights to which they are entitled. In this view, the agent-structure concept is useful for understanding the centrality of structures in constraining as well as enabling human agency. A structure can limit or foster change, but structures also allow for the transformative intervention of human agents. The exercise of agency to foster change, whether in the area of expanding existing rights, or of demanding new rights, should not be seen as limited to the contemporary period.

It is important that we learn to recognise the mores of power inherent in our cultural practices so that we can challenge the hierarchy of power it represents and the confinement of some groups of people to its margins. The fact of being on the inside of a culture of power should not allow us to deny opportunity to those who are on the outside. Equal opportunity and full access and inclusion not just for those groups that are a part of the hub of power, but also for those groups that are not should be advanced. That means acknowledging insider status compared to some other groups, and acknowledging access to power, resources, and privileges, listening to those on the margins and working with others to open up the structures to those who are excluded.

African traditions that invest women with the right to hold and exercise power must be recovered from the detritus of past and contemporary history. Such recovery can be construed as facilitating an improvement in our understanding of not just what the mores and ethos of African cultural traditions are, but of the restoration of the

philosophies and deep meanings that underlie social practices. Scholarly responsibility entails saving from obscurity those valuable practices that define the essence of the human experience in African traditions. If such efforts bear fruit, the wounds inflicted by past skewed and biased interpretations can be healed, and the values that undergird the recognition of the importance of women in society preserved. In consequence, ideals will be re-established, and values revived and renewed.

Today, women human rights advocates from a wide range of cultural contexts are working to ensure the continuation of positive cultural practices and values, while working to change cultural practices that may harm women. Women – those who navigate the lived realities of debates regarding gender and culture – are paving the way for nuanced and historically specific negotiations of "culture" and "human rights". They are challenging this binary by demanding that states respect, protect, and fulfil both women's human rights and cultural human rights, recognising that both sets of rights and the interplay between them are integral to people's enjoyment of the full range of human rights.

Women who experience human rights violations on the basis of both gender and culture explain that it is not "culture" that lies at the root of women's oppression, but practices and norms that deny women gender equity, education, resources, and political and social power. While culture needs to be understood as part of the context in which human rights abuses occur, it does not rationalise or justify these abuses. The report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (1996) declares: "It is important to emphasise that not all customs and traditions are unprotective of human rights . . . However, those practices that constitute definite forms of violence against women cannot be overlooked nor justified on the grounds of tradition, culture or social conformity" (United Nations, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, E/CN.4/1999/68/Add.2).

Better understanding between men and women is a good first step for intercultural understanding. Appreciation of cultural diversity is a good first step to providing equal opportunities for men and women.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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Introduction

Human beings are unique in that they are able to communicate through verbal and non-verbal means. Language, which consists of a number of complexities including gestures, physical appearance, social space, and even smell, must be learnt. This learning process involves an understanding of the culture from which the language is used for communication.

As human beings we have also learnt how to economise our communication act through the use of symbols. A symbol here can briefly be defined as a physical object representing a concept, idea or a phenomenon. Through the use of symbols, aspects of human culture, which ordinarily would have taken hours, days or even years to explain, can be compressed into a physical object.

In relation to Nigerian culture, various peoples represent power and authority in their society through the use of a number of symbolic objects. In an exhibition guide compiled by the National Commission for Museum and Monuments (National Museum, Lagos) titled *Symbols of Power and Authority* (1998), a number of the symbolic items used by Nigerian cultures (most of which have religious connotations) to communicate within the respective cultures were presented. These symbolic items embody the people's philosophies and concepts about life here on earth and beyond. Through these symbolic items, spirits and gods were worshipped and revered. For example, to represent the presence of Sango, the Yoruba god of thunder, his devotees use a symbolic item in the shape of a wooden double-headed axe/staff. Ancestral spirits

believed to be watching over the families they left behind can also be represented in the form of sculptural figures, which are kept in family shrines, or in the form of masquerades that come out at specified times. Sometimes, an item may be designed to represent a powerful cult in the society which in turn represents foundational concepts in the culture of the people. Through these cults the people are guided, rewarded, punished and promoted accordingly.

This paper considers a group of people who have developed a major cultural ritual event around women while deliberately excluding men through the use of taboos and religious rites. These are the Owo women of southwestern Nigeria who, through the use of a cloth form known as the *Aṣigbo* sash, have created a powerful cult that is recognised and respected by all members of the Owo society, including their men. In the production of this sash, the Owo women undergo and perform certain rituals as guided by the older women in the society with the aim of initiating and educating the younger generation of Owo women. During this initiation process which involves the production of the *Aṣigbo* sash, every male member of the society, irrespective of his age or status, is firmly kept out.

The Owo women through their cloth production represent an aspect of 'womanism' common among many African women. The concept of womanism refers to the ability of women to create a common bond through rituals, religion and symbols as a means of empowering all women in the society (Kolawole, 1997:27). Through such institutionalised bonding, which often excludes men, women are able to educate themselves in a variety of things including the production of material items such as utensils and adornment objects and immaterial concepts which border on spirituality. This unique empowerment is represented in different traditional African cultures in varied forms. For this paper, the phenomenon will be considered though a material item (namely cloth) used as a symbol to represent an immaterial aspect of the Owo culture. This unique combination will be further discussed below.

Cloth and Identity

The question that borders on the relationship between cloth and women was posed by Weiner (1989: 33) when she likened cloth to an agent through which kinship identities are translated into political authority. Though her research was on South Pacific societies, it is believed that

her analysis may have a global resonance in societies where women produce cloth that symbolises power and wealth within the society. The process involves not only the production but the performance of rituals the aim of which is to bind and weave together relationships. In the process of production such women are empowered not only socially but also economically, politically and spiritually. Through the production of such cloth forms, the women also unite the living members of the society with the supernatural as well as the present and future generations.

Some scholars have also tried to prove that there is a link between cloth production, use and meaning on the one hand and other cultural physical activities such as music and dance. Adams (1989) tries to push this theory by likening the irregular repetition of form and colour found in African cloth (with special reference made to the Yoruba people) with rhythmic musical sequences and religious beliefs in the presence of multiple powers or forces. This link makes the argument of the unifying force of cloth in African societies even more interesting as it suggests that cloth does not only link kinships and relationships but also sustains philosophies and ideologies that make up the foundation of a people's culture. Thus despite the restrictions placed on women in the participation of certain religious rituals, women's contributions are essential for the very existence of the ritual through their functional role of cloth production.

The Yoruba people, the ethnic tribe the Owo women represent, have been known to have played significant roles within their families and communities. The Yoruba woman is unique in many ways, ranging from her economic independence to her ability to rise and become a political figure thus making major decisions in the community in which she is a part (Denzer, 1994). In relation to cloth production, Yoruba women engage in the spinning of cotton into yarns and the dyeing of yarns for cloth weaving. Through this method, a number of cloth forms were produced which include the *Kijipa* cloth produced by women on the broad loom. *Kijipa* served more than a domestic function. It served social, religious, ritual and medicinal functions as well (Aremu 1989). Aronson (1992) also highlights the importance of Yoruba women in the society through their role as cloth producers. She writes on a cloth form known amongst the Yoruba as *Aso-Olona*, which was originally the design of Ijebu women, and today is still being produced by Yoruba women in various parts of Yoruba land. The cloth serves political and religious functions especially

for members of a secret society known as the *Ogboni*. Members of the *Ogboni* society wear the cloth on their shoulders or heads as a symbol of power and authority. The cloth is also worn by lesser crowned rulers, chiefs and priests as a symbol of their positions and their relationship to the king. Aronson also reports that the Ijebu women weave tripe–like cloth similar to the *Aso-Olona* and used by mothers to strap their babies to their back. This latter cloth plays the dual role of providing physical comfort for the baby while keeping the baby warm and protected, and in the constant presence of the mother. Thus while one cloth form represents a link to power and authority, the other represents a bond for warmth and protection.

The *Aso-Olona* cloth forms are in themselves a symbol of identity but beside this, the cloth has motifs which are the essence of the power behind the cloth and its use. Ultimately, the production of this cloth is not limited to knowing how to weave but also extends to understanding the meaning behind the motifs. Added to this is a basic understanding of the colours used in the production of the cloth and the formation of the motifs that make up the cloth. The Yoruba (as with many other African cultures) believe that there are spiritual powers behind colours (Aremu and Ogunsiakan, 1997). In other words, a cloth or the motif woven on the cloth can be ascribed certain spiritual powers because of its colour. Thus even though the weavers may not be a part of the *Ogboni* cult, they nevertheless are essential in giving the cult their powerful status and meaning in the society through their role of clothing the members.

[illegible]

One of the major cloth forms produced by women in Owo is the *Azigbo* sash characterised by its famous alternate indigo blue and white striped sash woven together to form three stripes sewn together to form a single strip of cloth (Obilade, 2005). This cloth form is mainly worn during important ceremonies including the second/final burial rites of a prominent Owo indigene. Akinwumi (1990), citing Willet and Poynor (1987), gave an account of the last burial ceremony in honor of the *Olowo's* mother (the king's mother), which took place in 1944. For that occasion, the *Azigbo* sash was made along with a burial effigy known as *Ako*. An *Ako* is a life-size wooden carving of the exact image of the deceased. The *Ako* was buried, like a dead person while the bereaved family kept the *Azigbo* sash as a memorial of the event.[1]

Before an *Azigbo igbo* sash can be made, it must be ascertained that the deceased was an important person from the society and the relations of the deceased must then seek permission from either the *Agwaba* or *Sasere* family (both of which hail from Owo and played major roles in the history of the town) to reproduce it for the burial. Permission must be sought from these two families because the cloth, according to oral tradition, is their property. According to these accounts,[2] a slave woman captured by *Agwaba*, a sub-chief under the *Sasere*, brought the cloth to Owo.[3] The *eru* or slave whose duty was to be an assistant to the wife of *Agwaba* brought along with her a cloth from her native land. The slave girl cherished this cloth dearly and always wore it everywhere she went with pride and dignity irrespective of her misfortune. Her action caught the attention of her mistress who was prompted to ask her why the cloth was so important to her. The slave was said to have replied that where she came from, the cloth was very important and of great value and prestige. With this explanation the mistress desired to have the cloth for herself and asked that the slave girl to make one for her. The slave girl replied that because the cloth was so great, certain things must be done before it could be reproduced. The mistress insisted that she must have the cloth. Based on this request, the slave girl demanded from her mistress 200 units of various food items. These included plantains, bean cakes, sticks of sugarcane, eggs, kola nuts, bush-meat and alligator pepper. The items were quickly provided by the mistress and the slave girl taught her how to weave the cloth. She explained that because the cloth was of such great value both the weaver and the wearer of the cloth must perform special rituals and observe various taboos. Providing the items demanded by the slave girl transferred the ownership rights to the families of *Agwaba* and *Sasere*.

Akinwumi (1990) cites another possible origin of the *Aîigbo* sash. According to him, *Agwaba's* wife who was believed to have hailed form Ile-Ife, introduced the cloth to Owo in the 14th century. Her husband liked the cloth and personalised the cloth for his use. The *Olowo* of the time coveted the cloth and ultimately copied it. Akinwumi also notes that the possibility of the cloth originating from the family of the *Sasere* should also not be ruled out as their family cognomen refers to them as '*Omo Olaîigbo'* meaning, 'children of the owner of *Azigbo'*.

Irrespective of the family or person through whom the cloth was introduced, three major factors can be deduced from both oral accounts.

The first factor is that the cloth was introduced by a female immigrant; secondly, the cloth was introduced as a prestigious item; and thirdly, the cloth was coveted and this covetousness led to the reproduction and reverence of the cloth. Based on this reproduction, the concept of ownership rights were established and enforced through traditions and rituals as dictated by the female leaders of the two families.

Today, the right over this cloth still remains with the female heads of these two families (directly to the *Agwaba* family through the slave girl but indirectly to the *Sasere* line because their head was a sub-chief under the *Sasere*). When someone within the society dies, and the children and other family members feel that the deceased should be given an honourable burial based on past deeds, permission must be obtained from the female heads of the *Sasere* and *Agwaba* families to produce the *Azigbo* sash as a symbol of honour to the dead. It is only after this permission has been given that the weaving of the cloth can commence. The cloth is only woven in the event of the death of an elderly and prestigious Owo indigene. Thus the weaving of the cloth may take place only once in five to ten years.[4] Once woven, the cloth is kept as a valued possession, which can be handed down from mother to daughter. This does not mean that people outside these two families cannot wear the cloth during other socially important events. According to Mrs. Lagundoye, the cloth can be loaned out to people who wish to be accorded respect during an important occasion.

As stated above, the weaving of *Azigbo* is not a common occurrence. When it is woven a number of rituals must be observed. The first stage in the process of weaving starts with obtaining permission from the female heads of the *Sasere* or the *Agwaba* family. This means buying the right from the family. According to Poynor (1980:49), the deceased's family must present two hundred pieces each of plantains, bean cakes, sticks of sugarcane, eggs, kola nut, and so on. In addition to this, the head of the deceased's family, after seeking permission three times, must pledge his political support to the two families. If the permission is not properly sought or not given, the female heads of the *Sasere* or the *Agwaba* have the right to seize or even destroy the cloth or administer any other punishment they deem fit.

Once the permission has been obtained, the cloth must be woven within nine days. It is the responsibility of the female heads of the deceased's family to weave the *Azigbo* or commission those who know

how to weave the cloth. On the seventh day from the commencement of the weaving the female heads of the house of *Sasere* and *Agwaba* go to the house where the weaving is being done for inspection. If the quality of the cloth does not meet their standard, or if the ritual conditions are not met, they have the right to slash the cloth from the loom. This means that the weaving must begin all over again. If everything is up to the standard, the permission is given for the weaving to continue. This action ensures that the standards laid down generations ago are met and maintained. In this case, it is not only ensuring that the sash is woven correctly in terms of its form, but also ensuring that the environment is clean, the food items are present and that there are no men in the area when the weaving is being done.

Azigbo sash as a cloth is highly valued and revered. Because of this, anything that comes in contact with it must be clean and pure. This includes the weaver, wearer and even the environment in which it is woven. Before the importation of various cleaning agents, cow dung mixed with water was used to wash and scrub the floors and walls of the room in which the cloth was to be woven.[5] This must be done daily. The weavers themselves must be physically clean by ensuring that they bathe before they begin weaving. They must also keep themselves spiritually clean by abstaining from sexual intercourse and they must not be in their menstrual period during the weaving process. In addition to all these, the weavers must stage a daily procession around the town with singing and dancing in honour of the cloth until the ninth day when they finish the weaving process.

The weaver is not allowed to cook any food during the nine days of weaving. Food is brought to her every day. The weaver is also not allowed to eat of any food which was cooked the day before nor drink of the water that was fetched the day before. She is only allowed to eat fresh food cooked on that day as well as fresh water. It is a taboo for the weaver to eat or drink of anything that was not made on that day

While the cloth is being woven, songs telling of the greatness of the cloth are sung. The women sing and dance praising the cloth. Women who visit the weavers must also sing and dance in honour of the cloth. They eat of the food items placed by the weaver's feet daily. These food items are similar to the 200 items required for the weaving rites to be given. As the women eat of these food items, they praise the cloth even more. As the women sit to eat and sing, they also sit and learn. Stories

of past achievements as well as other secrets of the land are told, thereby vital information is handed down from one generation to the next. For the nine days that the weaving is done, the women sit down near the weavers from morning till dusk.

During the weaving of the *Azigbo*, men are not allowed to be at the venue. The restrictions are so firm that if one of the weavers or a visitor has a male child she is not allowed to bring the child into the area where the cloth is being woven. It is also a taboo for any woman to strap a male child on her back with the *Azigbo* sash. It is believed that these restrictions help to ensure that the secrets told during the weaving activities are kept intact among the women.

Once woven, the wearer (whether male or female) must observe a number of rituals. The sash must not be worn on a dirty body. Anyone who is going to wear the cloth must first have a bath and must ensure that there was no sexual contact prior to wearing the sash. Because the *Azigbo* is highly respected, anyone wearing the cloth must also be treated with respect. For example, no one, while wearing the *Azigbo* strip, may prostrate himself (if he is a man) or kneel (if she is a woman) to anyone, not even before the *Olowo*, the traditional ruler of Owo.

The *Azigbo* Sash: An Old Strip, a New Meaning

Over the years, the young generation of Owo women seems to be defiant of the delicate settings developed by their mothers. Today, young ladies during a social event of great importance wear the *Azigbo* cloth strip. Such events include the wedding of important people in the society and the public appearance of high chiefs during social events, or during ceremonies involving the *Olowo* or the governor of the state. During such events, young ladies between their teenage years and early twenties dance and sing traditional Owo songs. They wear two traditionally woven cloths, one tied around their chest and the second worn around the waist. The *Azigbo* sash is worn across the left shoulder and pinned at the right hand side of the waist. The outfit is completed with a headgear made of beads.

The older women of Owo see this new trend as an abuse of tradition. This is especially so as the young girls do not adhere to the taboos, which must be met while wearing the cloth. Mrs Lagundoye lamented that the girls kneel to the parents of the celebrants and other special guests at the wedding ceremony as a show of respect or in order to get financial gains.

This is against the rules of wearing the cloth.

The clash between the older and the younger generation of women is a new trend fired by various factors ranging from the economic to the social. For the older women, ensuring that the taboos of the cloth are met means not only that the secrets of the cloth and the female essence are kept but also the power of authority transferred to the female heads of the two families are maintained. The fact that the opposition is not coming from the male members of the society gives the older women a cause for concern. Without the cooperation of the younger women, who are needed to sit at the feet of the weaver while the cloth is being woven, partake of the food items and get initiated into the female cults of Owo, the authority claimed by the older women becomes irrelevant. For the younger women, redefining the cloth use means redefining the order of authority, freeing themselves from the shackles of tradition while creating their own social identity and attracting economic empowerment without seeking permission from their elders.

Kolawole (1997:27) in her book *Womanism and African Consciousness* discusses the concept of 'womanism' which encompasses discourses on positive female and feminine bonding and collective self-assertion aimed at developing a common welfare in social, cultural, economic, religious, and political matters. Within this concept, Kolawole considers the relationship between womanism and myth. According to her, myths confer unto traditional feminine bonds a dynamic power which gives selected women in a society the ability to ensure checks and balances in the society through the rituals and rites they perform. This power applies to every member of the society irrespective of gender. This projects the ideology that in many African societies, women through religious rites act as the power behind the power. Mengara (2001: 296) strengthens this argument further by outlining the supernatural features in African worldviews, the foundation of which are rituals and religious tenets. Based on this, he observes that women are dominant in the spiritual domains of mythology and religious medical practice. They control the tradition and therefore the society in general.

With the rapid embracement of Western material and immaterial culture, as inspired by education, religion and even the media, the factors that encouraged female myth, bonding and empowerment are being eroded from the African continent. This erosion is one thing that Western feminist movements have either ignored or downplayed. The Western

form of feminism emerged out of the logic of the patriarchal nuclear family. It is therefore not only alien to the African culture but also inappropriate to cater for the complexities African gender relations involve. The Western feminists undermine the oppression created by Western scholars, missionaries and colonial administrators in the creation of artificial gender stratifications which were not aimed at improving the lot of Africa but rather that of the Western world. Ignoring the impact of such a foundation means that the study of African gender relations cannot capture the essence of African philosophy and ideologies (Oyewunmi, 2004).

Unfortunately, the Western definition of marginalisation often has an economic undertone and the fight for power translates into a struggle for economic and social dominance. Unlike what a number of Western feminists would conclude, this fight for power in many African societies is more apparent between age grades of the same gender. This seems to be the case with the Owo women who are going through a transition of empowerment based on age and not gender with the ultimate aim being economic and social recognition and not cultural continuity. The contemporary generation of Owo women declares their economic independence from the 'stranglehold' of taboos laid out by their mothers by introducing modern uses for the *Azigbo* sash. This disagreement has reduced the cultural value of a symbol which once empowered and united the Owo women, transforming it into a tool for division. The Owo women's story thus provides modern proof that feminism cannot bind African women together because the concepts pushed by feminism are structured on Western values that cannot capture the complexities of the African woman's realities.

Conclusion

Owo women, through the *Azigbo* sash, have been able to create a powerful avenue through which they are united and aspects of their culture are protected. Through rituals and taboos associated with the production of the *Azigbo* sash, the older women ensure that their powers are retained and by this they seem to have been able to achieve three major things. First, through the aid of rituals and taboos, older women create an aura of reverence around the cloth. Secondly, by ensuring reverence for the cloth, the women empower themselves, and their approval as to who may wear the cloth is a symbol of that power. Thirdly, they are able to

initiate the younger women of Owo into the cultural secrets which are made even more powerful with the exclusion of men irrespective of their age and status. The aim of this is to transfer the power to the younger generation to ensure continuity. These activities have ensured that a delicate display of power is achieved. The women are able to cut out men in the production of the cloth while ensuring that the appropriate respect is accorded the cloth from the stage of production to the occasion of use and even to the wearer.

This delicate balance seems to be tilting based on defiance of the reverence accorded to the cloth by the younger generation of women whom the older women have depended on to ensure continuity. This defiance by the younger generation of women can be likened to the adoption of Western feminist ideologies which are not aimed at understanding and developing the power established for women by women through a bonding process. Rather Western feminism, by introducing Western values which hinge on capitalism, patriarchy and empowerment, impose a mix that is irrelevant to the traditional society. In Owo, the fact that the defiance comes from the younger women questions the ideologies of Western feminism which suggests that women must wrestle power from their male counterparts. In this case the younger generation is wrestling power from their older counterparts and this process means that ultimately the power established by the older women for their younger women may be eroded thus ensuring the very marginalisation that Western feminism is fighting against. In the process, the future of the *Azigbo* cloth as a symbolic tool for female power and social authority may be eroded.

1. According to Chief Aina Adejoro, the last time the *Ako* was made was in 1984 at Ipele (a neighboring village) in honor of Oba Asiba, who was the father of the mother of Oba Folagbade Olateru Olagbegi the third, who is the present Oba. Chief Adejoro explained that the *Ako* was carved as the spitting image of the deceased and in a sitting position. The *Ako* was dressed in the attire of the deceased and placed in the forest for people to see. The *Ako* was not buried. In this case the *Azigbo* sash plays no significant role in relation to the *Ako* figure.
2. As given by two key informants Mrs. Lagundoye and Mrs. Yemilatu Olabode during an interview.
3. This account was also mentioned briefly by Poynor (1980:49).

4. Mrs. Yemilatu Olabode and Mrs. Lagundoye stated that the last time the Azigbo cloth was woven was in 2001 for the second burial ceremony in honour of late Sasere Adetula who died in 1967.
5. According to Agbaje-Williams, cow dung was also used as a form of paint to beautify the surroundings.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Widowhood Rites: An Overview of Inter-gender Conflict

Ebenezer Tegbe

Introduction

Past studies on society focus almost exclusively on men and their achievements, thus giving the world an image of male dominance and chauvinism. This is particularly true of the African continent, where writers like Obbo (1980) express concern about the invisibility of African women in any serious study of history and society in spite of the fact that anthropology has not been an exclusive male preserve. His sentiments are echoed by Imam (1988) who wrote that women have been seen as inferior and subordinate to men. These observations are succinctly re-emphasised by Awe (1991) who deplores the fact that, the entire eight-volume *General History of Africa* published by UNESCO in 1981 says nothing about female contributions to history.

As a result of these prejudices, studies about women's privileges and rights are few. Studies of human society without careful attention to women's conditions would, however, be distorted and one-sided. Furthermore, a worldview that relegates women to the background has obvious negative implications for the treatment of women. Although salutary efforts have been made on some recent topics such as the family, the economic and political rights of women, the subject of widowhood rites practices has, however, been largely neglected, with references being usually restricted to burial and funeral rites. Although there are studies on the conditions of widows and the sociological conceptualisation of widowhood in few African communities, they are not enough, particularly comparative studies of widowhood rites and treatment of widows on the African continent, especially as these mourning rites have shades of differences, variances and similarities even within same culture bloc.

This oversight has been pin-pointed by Potash (1986), Afigbo (1986, 1989), Ahoso (2002), Fasoranti and Aina (2008), Triveldi and Himanshu (2009) and a host of others, who consequently draw attention to this lack of systemic and comprehensive investigation into widowhood rites and treatment of widows generally, as just few attempts have been made to examine the sociological and anthropological context, and the social, economic and psychological implications of their status on the widows. The Beijing 2000 World Women Conference in its deliberations also referred to the painful absence of widows in many development reports, especially in the developing countries. It berated the omission of widows in the statistical data of both government and non-governmental organisations, especially the numbers and ages of widows in many societies, despite widows being 16 percent of women worldwide. As such, there is an absence of dynamic studies of the effects of widowhood in the social and economic lives of the widows, resulting in their being referred to as the 'invisible group of women'.

In an attempt to make a contribution towards filling this vacuum, the focus of this paper is on the experience of women as widows, the circumstances under which they are widowed, the family and societal pressure, and the consequences and agony they repeatedly endure as they struggle to come to terms with, and adjust to, the harsh realities and dictates of the unenviable new status conferred on them by the untimely death of their husbands.

However, as Lynn Brooks (1997) pointed out, when discussing gender issues, it is not that males and females are not different anatomically or biologically but that the difference takes on significance within cultural perspectives. Nevertheless, African traditional societies place much emphasis on male-female role dichotomy, an attitude that reflects much on the different treatment of the genders. Females are often seen as inferior to their male counterparts, and this sentiment reflects on the roles expected to be played by females as political, social and economic contributions to the society. Gender encompasses a lot of things beyond biological sex. From our early childhood, certain expectations are premised on our gender. Thus we initially learn to behave in certain ways from our families. It has been observed that society, especially African society, tends to be more careful with girls than they are with boys. Most societies in Africa believe that boys should act in a different way compared to the girls. As adults, it may be generalised that women behave

in a certain way and men in another without taking into considerations the incredible number of factors which have influenced African lives along the way.

Although psychologists are always debating over the theories of nature versus nurture, it is fairly clear that boys have been, and are being socialised in a different way from girls. Boys' rules have always been different from girls'. In social settings, at work, at play, boys have always been expected to be different from girls. Many who subscribe to theories of a natural imperative on gendered behaviour point at the males of livestock and wildlife such as bears, lions, horses, gorillas, etc., who spend their lives establishing and protecting statuses and domains. Traditionally, men and women have assumed different roles. Society often sets expectations which are reinforced in a variety of ways. In African societies, tradition places mild and tough sanctions on non-conformities. Men and women are seen more favourably when they conform to stereotypical roles than when they deviate from them. Men are supposed to act like 'men', and women to act like 'women'. Generally, it is frowned upon if women act in masculine ways or are masculine in their behaviour by acting consistently tough. And the African society does not like men to be too soft. Even though men and women are anatomically different, the disparity in roles and our attitudes towards them can only be dictated and explained within the cultural conceptualisation.

Definition and Clarification of Terms

A widow is a woman who has lost her husband to death regardless of the age of both the wife or the husband, a situation in any society in the world requiring some form of mourning.

Parrinder (1962)states that rites are ceremonial activities commemorating one event or the other marking different phases of life. Rites can be divided into two: communal rites and personal rites. Widowhood falls between the two categories. According to Parrinder, a rite reveals religious sentiments as well as the doctrines of faith. He categorised communal rites as those involving rain, agriculture, purification, communion and sacrifice, and described personal rites as those that surround principal events in the lives of individuals, marking stages of life like birth, puberty, betrothal, marriage and death. He says further that the ritual surrounding death is longer and complex in most places in Africa. The aim of spending much time and resources for burial

ceremonies is to ensure a proper funeral for the departed so that the spirit may be contented in the world beyond and not return as an unsatisfied guest to plague the family. He explained further that funerals are the last transitional rite introducing a person into the world of spirits.

Beattie (1977) describes rites as symbolic, expressing something. They are institutionalised procedures that either produce certain effects or prevent some undesired ones. He terms rites as magico-religious. Explaining further, he says most African cultures do not dichotomise the universe as western cultures do; they see the natural and the supernatural as the same. In the area of things that are beyond science, there is no way of expressing them except symbolically.

Radcliffe-Brown's explanation is that rites express and reinforce certain sentiments or values, adherence to which the smooth running of the society that has the ritual depends upon. He says rites contribute to and maintain solidarity.

A rite is something standing for something else and an essentially expressive element. Rites are both expressive and instrumental. In agreement with Beattie, we can say that rituals and religions translate uncontrollable natural forces into symbolic entities which, through the performance of rituals, can be manipulated or dealt with. However, rites are a language with social importance for the people that have them.

Rites are explained theoretically by Gennep (1960:2, 3, 11, 12, 146, 161) as rites of passage. He postulates three stages of these rites: firstly, the pre-liminal rites, i.e. rites of separation; the second, being liminal rites, i.e. rites of transition; and the third, post-liminal rites, i.e. rites of incorporation or integration. Gennep states that the overall goal is to ensure a change of condition or a passage from one magico-religious or secular group to another, with each ceremony having its separate purposes. These purposes may be for protection, purification or propitiation. He states that the period of mourning is a transitional period for the survivor, the widow, who enters it through rites of separation and comes out of it through rites of integration. He says this transitional period for the living is a counterpart of the transitional period for the dead; the termination of the former coinciding with the termination of the latter. Gennep explains that during mourning, social life is suspended for all those affected by it and the length of the period increases with the closeness of the social ties with the deceased. He states that rites which lift all the regulations and prohibitions of mourning should be considered rites of

integration into the life of society as a whole.

Explaining further, Gennep says "like children who have not been baptised, named or initiated, persons for whom funeral rites are not performed are condemned to a pitiable existence since they are never able to enter the world of the dead or become incorporated into the society established there". These are the most dangerous dead, he elaborates, since they would like to be re-incorporated into the world of the living, but because this is no longer possible, they behave like hostile strangers towards it. They lack the means of subsistence which the other dead find in their own world and consequently must obtain them at the expense of the living. These dead, with no hearth or home, have an intense desire for vengeance. Gennep states further that the funeral rites also have a long range of utility; they help to dispose of external enemies of the survivors.

Literature Review

The subject of widowhood and its accompanying mourning rites, especially on the African continent, have received a lot of attention from many scholars and writers. Leonard (1906:174), explaining the worldview of this practice, gave the reason for its existence as a means of finding a clue to a death, since witchcraft and evil spirits are always seen as the cause of any death in these societies.

Talbot (1926:474) also posited that death at whatever age could not have come about except through 'juju' and the machinations of 'enemies'. Widowhood practice therefore seeks to avenge the death of the kinsman on whoever is instrumental to it. In Meed's (1931:226) explanations, among the Junkuns, it is a period for profuse lamentation, involving cries and weeping by the wife of the deceased and her female co-mourners.

Triminghan (1958:182) stressed the disadvantaged position of the widow in the Moslem communities in Sudan after her husband's property has been taken over. Among the Ngonis of Malawi, Reed (1970:196-7) proffered a cosmological explanation in the belief of the people. He said it is an assignment that must be carried out by the living for the dead, for the good repose of the dead man's spirit in the world of the ancestors. It is a restoration of the equilibrium in the lineage which the death seems to destabilise. Failure or omission of performance may incur the wrath of the ancestors.

According to Ilogu (1974:40), among the Enugu people in Igbo-land, Nigeria, death could not have occurred naturally but through poisoning, witchcraft or 'juju'. Thus certain rites must be performed by the closest person to the dead man, especially the wife. Nwoga (cited by Korieh, 2000), opines that economic reasons are the main cause of this practice. Stressing the weak position of a widow, Nwoga points out that all the rituals, sanctions, superstitions are aimed at further making the widow more amenable to oppression to pave the way for the in-laws to dispossess the widow of the husband's property such as land.

Nzewi (2003) observed among the Igbos that immediately after a man's death, a list of the dead man's property is requested from the widow after the widow has been made to swear not to conceal anything.

From the foregoing, several reasons may be deduced as accounting for the practice of widowhood rites. Basically it is informed by the need to restore the balance that the death seems to threaten, or the stability of the lineage under the threat of the vacuum created by the death of a male member. The cosmological belief of the people in searching for the good repose of the dead man's spirit in the other world may also be another reason. Furthermore, economic reasons seem to be a strong inducement for this practice. But what about a dead man that had no property and was poor in his lifetime or a newly married man yet to acquire any property? Are women in these societies so poor that this greed of in-laws does not extend to the widower in the case of the wife's death to warrant this practice being applied to the men? More importantly, this practice is not found among matrilineal or double descent groups regardless of the deceased husband's state of wealth. It is also apt to point out that this practice is prevalent and seems to be more horrendous among groups with bride-price, bride-wealth and bride service tradition.

It is also observed that women in the societies that have this practice are also actively involved in meting out these inhuman treatments to their fellow women. Or is it also an arena of intra-gender conflict? If so, why is it more prevalent in the patrilineal societies that pay bride-price? But among the Igbo, there is a group of sisters to the dead man known as 'umuokpu', or patrilineal-daughters, who are renowned to be vigorously active in meting out this maltreatment to the widows. Are they then goaded by the demands and cost of marriage in patrilineal societies? Can the situation then be summed up as males indirectly demanding back or hoping to reap or harvest what had earlier been sown into the

naturally forcefully dissolved marriage, which the death has caused? Or could it be a reflection of problematic inter-gender relations? Why is this practice prevalent among the patrilineal groups and not prevalent among matrilineal and double-descent groups? And why are women so actively involved in this tradition that obviously treats their fellow women harshly? However this would be another research focus on intra-gender conflict. There are a plethora of questions yearning for answers.

Theoretical Framework

Tensions evident in gender relations are discernible in women's positions and statuses. Ortner's (1974) view is that when thrust into contradictory and somewhat hostile relationships, individuals or collectives will become creative. The creativity is in response to the situation. Ortner argues that the creativity is derived from the tension between two sets of demands which she explains as impulses of human universal and cultural particularism.

The tension of gender relations, on one level, reveals a universal value, though on another level it conveys impressions of cultural particularism. Because, within the universal purview, the specific cultural conceptions and symbolisation of women are extraordinarily diverse and even mutually contradictory, Ortner (1974) opines that the relative power of women is at variance with their actual treatment by the society. This treatment varies enormously from culture to culture, and over different periods in history.

George Simmel (1956:22-23) explains the conflict in the web of group affiliations. He states that sociation always involves harmony and conflict, attraction and repulsion, and love and hatred. An entirely harmonious group cannot exist empirically. The group in its life process would be incapable of change and development. Sociation is always the result of both categories of interaction; both are positive ingredients structuring all relationships, giving them enduring form. Even though a conflictive relationship may be considered wholly negative by participants or by outside observers, it nevertheless, upon analysis, shows latent positive aspects. To Simmel, conflict can serve as an outlet for negative attitudes and feelings, making further relationship possible. Because conflict can strengthen existing bonds or establish new ones it can be considered a creative rather than a destructive force.

Coser (1956) posits that conflict is the very essence of life, an

ineradicable component of social living. The 'good' society is not conflict-free; it is on the contrary sewn together by a variety of crisscrossing conflicts among its component parts. Coser states that 'peace and feud, conflict and order are correlative. Both the cementing and the breaking of customs constitute part of the eternal dialectics of social life. It would therefore, be a mistake to distinguish a sociology of order from one of disorder, a model of harmony from one of conflict' (Coser 1979:185).

Sociological and Anthropological Explanation of Widowhood Rites

The death of a husband is generally an extremely harrowing experience for the widow. Death in traditional African society is not seen as natural and inevitable to the deceased existence, but, a handiwork of enemies within or without. Sometimes, the widow is the prime murder suspect in the ensuing 'witch-hunting' exercise that follows. The hapless widow is already identified as the 'enemy' by her in-laws, and she is expected to prove her innocence by providing a satisfactory explanation for her husband's death. The trauma of separation experienced by the widow on the death of her husband is therefore tragically exacerbated by suspicion, loneliness, and emotional and, in extreme cases, physical agony.

There is a role reversal undoubtedly which needs psychological and sociological realities because in many societies in Africa, at the instance of a man's death, the wife suddenly becomes a pariah to be avoided, or a pollution to be cleansed; and, worse still, the woman's integrity is questioned soon after the husband's death. A stigma is put on the woman, with an onus to prove her innocence of the cause of her husband's death. She undergoes a series of rites, presumably rites of passage, from wifehood to widowhood. These widowhood rites entail lots of activities most of which have been described by the widows as horrendous, terrible and traumatic. The rites undergone by theses widows, and the treatment meted out by the deceased's kin, i.e. the in-laws, have been described as not only dangerous and un-hygienic, but also debasing to womanhood and humanity. Strangely enough, it has been observed that men who lose their wives do not undergo these rites in the lineages where these practices occur. However, there is a reported case of a widower being subjected to slashes of razor cuts by the dead wife's sisters in Ehime Mbano local government area of Imo state in Nigeria. This looks like an

isolated case and not an institutionalised regular patterned behaviour, which may interest the law and not anthropology.

Widowhood rites in many African societies are primarily used to establish who, or what evil spirit, caused the death of a kinsman. But ironically, as stated earlier, these rites are not imposed on men who have lost their spouses. Widows suffer accusations of witchcraft and murder. They are often reported to be desperately poor, ill and may be evicted from their houses. Also, they rarely remarry out of their free will unless, in some cases, if they are childless. Illiterate women are mostly at the receiving end of this treatment. However, it has been observed that some educated women are also victims of this debasing and dehumanising practice. Reports of widowhood rites practices are many on the African continent and, from reports and studies, they are found mostly in the patriarchal societies than in matrilineal societies, and the tradition takes different horrendous dimensions.

The origin of widowhood rites is not very clear. Though it has been observed that it has been with these societies from inception and the practice is scattered all over Africa, the lineage typology is the same patrilineal descent with patrilocal type of residence all over. The reasons and explanations behind these rites can be found in the different cosmological worldview, social values and norms of the societies.

Furthermore, it is observed that in most societies in Africa, the dictum stating "till death do us part" does not apply to marital relationships. A wife remains the wife of the extended family or the lineage even after the spouse's demise, especially if the wedlock produced children. That invariably ties the widow to the lineage after the husband's death.

Korieh (2001) stated that the rituals performed for the dead man and the widow among the Igbo are meant to sever the link between them since in African societies generally there is no dichotomy in their universe: the ghosts of the dead can come back to dispute over former property and other things, including spouses. All the unhygienic and appalling rituals a widow is made to undergo are to make the dead husband find her unattractive and no longer desirable. For example, a man died three years after the wife's death and it was believed the late wife killed the man because the man had married another wife. The dead woman's remains were exhumed and the skull burnt in a ritual fire so that the dead woman's spirit would rest and desist from tormenting the family, especially the living wife and the children. Furthermore, Korieh (2001)

explained that the Igbo believe that death created for the dead the problem of gaining admission into the convocation of the ancestors, or the community of the deceased relations. All the practices and rituals associated with death and funeral must be meticulously observed, and if not, the deceased would be considered to have been improperly and inconclusively buried and would be denied admission. Korieh posited further that the widow's contribution to meeting these conditions includes the observation of the widowhood rite. The satisfactory performance of these ceremonies and rituals also helps to restore the balance and security which the death had sought to overthrow: "among other things, a perfunctory performance of the regime would not only annoy the existing ancestors, but expose the community to the danger of being haunted by the ghost of the recently departed" (Korieh, 2001).

The shaving of the widow's head, the ritual burning of the black mourning dress the widow is expected to wear during mourning period and the ritual "cleansing" bath are all symbolic rites of passage. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the stability of the community or lineage which seems threatened by the demise of a male member is a strong reason behind these practices.

Areas of Widowhood Rites Prevalence

Nigeria: Igbos of Uturu-Okigwe, Enugu, Awka, Awka-Etiti, Igbo-Etiti, Mbaise, Nsukka, Owerri
Kalabari in Cross River State
Binis of Edo State
Junkuns, Nupes at the middle belt
Malawi: Ngoni
Ghana: Twi, Ewe, Kusasi, Kasena, Nankana, Asutifi district of Brong Ahafo
Kenya: Bantus
Uganda: Sebei, Baganda, Acholi.
Zimbabwe: Nguni

Not surprisingly, this horrendous practice is not observed among the matrilineal groups, for example, among the Akans in Ghana who are matrilineal. The only semblance of widowhood rites practice is the act of giving out another woman from the matrilineal lineage of a deceased wife in marriage to the widower. This happens if only the proposed new

wife wishes so. This practice is not found among the Afikpo, Mbembe and the Yako in Nigeria nor among the Ashanti and Ga in Ghana who are double descent groups. The Venda of South Africa and the Lovedu in Zimbabwe who are double-descent do not have these agonising widowhood rites. The women in these societies, according to age-long tradition are accorded respect and enjoy some level of prestige and powerful positions. This is also true of the Tuaregs a sub-group of the Berbers in Northern part of Africa, and the Herero, Mbundu, Nyaneka in the southern part of Africa. Thus the agonising and horrific rites can be seen as a practice of some patriarchal lineages.

Treatment of Widows During and After Mourning Rites

Mourning period in Africa generally varies from one society to another and, for widows, it starts immediately the husband dies. The time of burial, which marks the first phase and second phase, continues for a period of three months to one year, depending on the society.

In respect of the ordeal of widows, the following treatments are recorded during and after confinement period among the Baganda, the Acholi and the Karamajong of Uganda. According to Barton Thomas (1992)in 'The Plight of Widows', Noerine Kaleeb of 'The AIDS Support Organization', and Philly Lattaya of UNICEF Kampala, sexual acts are sometimes required as part of the rites. Among the Sebei of Uganda, the legal heir has to have sexual intercourse with the widow three days after the death of the husband to avoid misfortune. Also the widows have their heads shaved and scarified with a knife. Levirate marriage is common and widows rarely remarry, out of fear for their children, into another family. Wills are disputed, stolen or ignored and widows have everything seized from them, even down to pots.

Among the Kusasi, during mourning rites, widows tie ropes around their necks as dictated by the community; they are often forced into marriages, they have their heads shaved, they are asked to sit on mats with only leaves covering the private parts and they spend most nights alone outside the compound. With the Kasena-Nankana, hot and cold water are splashed on the widows intermittently, and if they are scalded, it is an indication of their unfaithfulness to their husbands while alive. They are often taken out to bath on refuse dumps.

In the upper east region of Ghana, widows are forced to drink concoctions prepared from leaves worn by previous widows, they are

exposed to black ants and, if bitten, it is an indication of unfaithfulness to the deceased husband. They are stripped naked with only shea tree leaves as covering, and followed everywhere by the community youths, carrying sticks, calabashes and knives. On the fourth day after burial, they are led outside in nudity for bath. In the Asutifi districts of Brong-Ahafo, also in Ghana, widows are prohibited from eating certain foods, they are required to cry often and observe ritual bath (Widows Rights International).

Nwoga (1989) recorded the case of a seventy-five-year-old widow forced to relinquish the husband's valuables, including the bank savings book. He also recorded the case of a thirty-five-year-old mother of four stripped of the husband's property, cash, investment, and made to swear on oath to forestall concealment.

Korieh (2001) recorded the practice of forceful wailing, head shaving and outdoors cold-water bath taken early in the morning among the Igbo of Owerri in Nigeria. Widows are often locked up with the husbands' corpses, with the instruction of waving away flies from perching on the corpses.

Tony Ubesie (2001) and Onah (2001) recorded widow's seclusion from seven to fourteen weeks of husband's death among Mbaise and Nsukka Igbo referred to as 'ino na nso'. According to Afigbo (1989), among the Igbo, widows are an unhappy lot; the usual response from a woman who had successively repelled an injustice is: 'Do you think I am a widow?' There is also the saying that why should a man be in a hurry while visiting a widow-concubine, after all he knows where the husband has gone and why would he be afraid. All these succinctly picture a widow's weak position in the society.

Nzewi (2003) mentioned the prevalence of levirate, isolation, seclusion and depravity among the Mbaise Igbo. Women are referred to as 'isi nkpe' immediately the husbands die, explaining and emphasising the new status which ushers them into 'igba nkpe', that is the rites of widowhood that follows.

The fact sheets of 'Women for Women International', a non-governmental organisation, show many cases of depression, isolation, fear, social, economic and cultural deprivation, and physical abuse of widows in Igbo-land. In traditional Igbo society, daughters exist to be given away in marriage and are considered a waste-pipe from their father's house. Investing in them educationally is seen as throwing away 'good'

money. Even in her husband's family, a woman is considered an outsider or stranger, cannot own property with her husband, and is unlikely to inherit any property when her husband dies.

In traditional Edo society in Nigeria, wife inheritance (levirate) is still widespread. A widow might be given out in marriage to a younger brother of the deceased. A case was reported in *The Nation* newspaper Friday October 10, 2008 in an editorial opinion by Rukky Oseme. In Benin, capital of Edo State in Nigeria, an eight-month pregnant widow was made to dance with the husband's corpse in a state of near nakedness round the community in a most humiliating manner. She was compelled to chew kola nuts that had been placed on the eyeballs of the corpse. In this same editorial, Oseme mentioned the case of a driver in a government parastatal proposing to take over the widow of his late university professor brother.

Among the Yoruba, wife inheritance is still prevalent in the traditional settings. It is called 'opo sisu'. This is when a brother or the first son from a different mother would inherit the widow in a family. Only a few incidents have been reported of widows drinking the water used to wash the corpse of a husband or any other concoction among the Ijebu, Ilaje and Ikale Yoruba. This is mostly when foul-play is suspected in the cause of death. This, however, is restricted to the 'aiyelala'(a local water deity) cult members.

Levirate marriage occurs among the Nguni, Ndebele, and Zulu. Referred to as 'seed raising' levirate, a widow lives with but does not marry her late spouse's younger brother. The children she bears by him are ascribed to the deceased brother.

Resistance

As mentioned earlier, could this practice be a reflection of problematic gender relations resulting from many factors? Nevertheless, it has been observed that not all widows acquiesce to this practice. Incidents of resistance and protest have greeted this practice from the widows and sympathisers. Various non-governmental organisations have risen up to the assistance of widows, with a series of empowerment projects. At the forefront are the Women in Africa and the African Diaspora, Association of West Africa Women Scholars, Women for Women International and International Federation of Women Lawyers. Also, churches and religious missions and UNICEF have programmes on

assisting displaced and maltreated widows.

The functional school of anthropologists, including Emile Durkheim (1915) and Radcliffe-Brown (1922), reiterates that rites promote solidarity and social integration of the individual into the society. They affirm that rituals express symbolically certain sentiments of values, upon the acceptance of which the smooth running of the society depends. This might be so, but it obscures the eternal dialectics of conflict and harmony in the society and the dynamics of culture.

We observe that widowhood rites and the horrible treatment meted out to widows in these patrilineal societies might be a reflection of problematic inter-gender relations. In spite of the belief of these societies in the age-long functions of these rites, it has been observed that not all widows acquiesce to this practice.

There are conflicts between the widows and the deceased husbands' families. This is obvious in view of the series of litigations that ensue between some widows and the husbands' families. Okoye (2001) cites litigations brought by widows seeking redress from the law courts, and there have been interventions by governments leading to amendments in the penal code in Ghana in 1989 and in Tanzania in 1999, ushering in the abrogation of widowhood rites in these countries. In Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Kenya, there are reports on widows' plight and various agitations by non-governmental organisations for widows' rights and assistance through various empowerment programmes.

Okoye (2001:1-6) reports various litigations instituted by widows for the enforcement of their rights. The case of Dosumu versus Dosumu brought before the West African court of Appeal is an example. The court held that under native law and customs, property can only be allotted by descent not through marriage. If such native law and custom existed, the court reasoned that it would then mean that on the death of a childless wife, the husband's property vested in her would pass away from the husband's family, from whom the wife became entitled to it, to the wife's family.

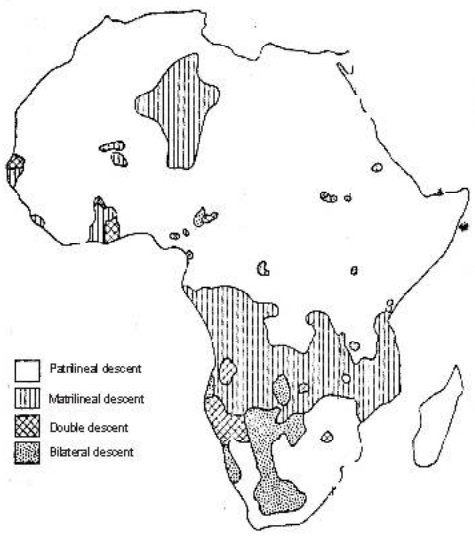
In another case, Quartey versus Nartey, a widow sued her deceased husband's family under the native law and custom, claiming, inter alia, a third of her husband's intestate estate. The court dismissed her claim with the reason that a widow cannot inherit a deceased husband's estate.

In the same vein, in Oshilaja versus Oshilaja, the judge affirmed that a widow cannot inherit her deceased husband's property. There is a slight

difference in Sogunro Davies versus Sogunro Davies and others. Beckley, the judge, held that in intestacy under native law and custom, the devolution of property follows the blood. Therefore, a wife or widow, not being of the blood, has no claim to the deceased husband's property.

In Suberu versus Suberu, the judge stated: "It is a well settled rule of native law and custom of the Yoruba customary law that a wife could not inherit husband's property since she is like a chattel to be inherited by a relative of her husband".

In Omo Ogunkoya versus Omo Ogunkoya at the court of Appeal 1988, the court held that under the Yoruba customary law, a widow has a right to her late husband's estate subject to good behaviour and if she does not remarry, and that a widow who does not wish to marry a relative of her dead husband may have to repay the bride price.



Map showing African descent groupings
Source: George Peter Murdock (1959)

Conclusion

There is no society in Africa where men are made to undergo any rite at the demise of a spouse. Widowhood rites are not performed on widowers. On the contrary, the living husband of a dead woman would receive the

sympathy of the lineage to the extent of providing a helpmate for him to cook and perform domestic chores. Soon after the demise of the wife, a new wife would be arranged for him by his kinsmen. But a widow rarely remarries of her freewill except in the event that she is childless, since a childless widow may have no real attachment or loyalty to the deceased family and may thus be allowed to go away. She might also be given out in levirate to one of the relations of the deceased if she has children for the dead husband.

It is important to note that there are more widows than widowers, with a large proportion of older women population being widows since in Africa wives are generally much younger than the husbands and tend to have lower mortality rate than men due to wars, border clashes and other armed conflicts that allow women longer period of life in loneliness.

These horrifying rites are not practiced among the matrilineal or the double-descent groups. It is noted that in the matrilineal and the double-descent groups, a person inherits property only from the maternal uncle, thus removing the likelihood of inheriting from a brother or father and thus dispossessing a widow of any property. Moreover, this practice is observed to be more prevalent among societies that have the tradition of high bride-price and bride-wealth payment.

Recommendations

1. It is true that a people's culture is unique and the right to practise the culture is not objectionable, yet traditions that negate the universal human right and violate any form of human well-being, including acts that are unhealthy and unhygienic, should be discouraged.
2. Women's education, especially the education of the girl-child education should be encouraged and incorporated into education and social programmes in Africa. Though educated women are also victims of this practice, education would give a sure footing to a rejection of any obnoxious treatment of widows and provide them economic independence.
3. Men on the African continent should imbibe the culture of writing their wills. This would give the widows and their children a good legal ground to seek redress in cases of property dispossession and reduce the propensity of relations to visit their greed on the hapless widows and their children.

4. The customary law on the African continent should be reviewed to reflect the enforcement of women's right to property inheritance and gender equality.
5. More women should be encouraged to study and practise law as a profession because women will be more confident to discuss their plight with fellow women, and female lawyers would be in a better position to empathise with other women.
6. Although widows' plights are now the focus of many non-governmental organisations, especially in the area of economic empowerment, this is not enough. A lot of women are still suffering from this tradition. More women enlightenment programmes are still needed, especially on women's rights. More networking aimed at combating and ameliorating the plights of widows should be intensified.
7. Women should insist on legal/statutory marriage rather than opting for traditional/customary marriage alone. The law on property devolution has in its provision that certain percentage of the property of a deceased person should accrue to the legal wife.

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V

Material Culture, Media and Performance

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Adaptation of Traditional Art Forms to Develop New Ideas in Modern Nigerian Art

Ayo Elebute

Introduction

Discourse on modern Nigerian art forms is not complete without alluding to the important role played by primordial cultural elements of Africa in its development. These elements include societal norms and legends, as well as the pre-historic art forms such as the pictorial arts and engravings found on "the rock surfaces" identified by Adepegba (1995); traditional symbols such as the ephemeral body paintings called *Uli* from the Igbo land; the textile/decorative arts *Ona* and *Ara* from Yoruba land; *Nsibidi* from Ibibio land; *Ebiebe* from Urhobo land; *Akugbe Etin/Olokun* from the Benin; *Arewa/Islamic Calligraphy* from Hausa-Fulani group; and the traditional plastic arts from different Nigerian cultures such as Nok, Igbo-Ukwu, Ife, Owo, Tadda-Gara, Esie and Benin. These pictorial, symbolic and plastic arts were embellished with floral, linear, zoomorphic, anthropomorphic and calligraphic motifs/symbols that serve as models from which contemporary Nigerian artists develop new ideas.

The significance of modern art forms lies in the realms of beauty, but the aforementioned pristine primordial traditional African antiquities were mostly produced for social and religious purposes. The major objectives for their production, according to Trowell (1964), "revolve round the reconciliation of human beings with issues relating to birth, survival, social well-being, longevity, death and reincarnation". She classified these traditional African art forms into three: (a) *spirit-regarding art* (b) *man-regarding art* and (c) *art of ritual display*, and declared that "they were used mainly in the context of rituals and glorification of kings and rulers". Her conclusion is that "the early foreign art scholars that came to Africa failed to formulate, in clear terms, their ideas about

the traditional artworks they saw, rather they synthesised and analysed them from the perspective of an outsider tagging them *naïve* and *primitive* arts that have affinity for religion and cultural activities" (Trowell, 1964:34).

Fagg (1986) corroborated her arguments when he said that "European art scholars first discovered how to misunderstand traditional African art". According to him, "the unconscious bias of the European observers can be informed by ethnology", and for them "a lack of good field research creates not only bad science, but also bad art criticism". Studies have shown that most of these foreign scholars have been misinterpreting African antiquities, using wrong techniques such as the *etic* approach in which they viewed African traditional artworks from their own cultural perspective not minding the makers' cultural views. The problem of these inappropriate analyses should not have arisen if they had adopted the *emic* approach, which considers cultural and artistic situations from the makers' viewpoint not from the foreigners' cultural biases or nuances. However, painstaking fieldwork has enabled indigenous art scholars, art connoisseurs and individual African artists to attribute modern African artworks to specific African values. It is as a result of the misconception of traditional Africa arts, by foreign scholars, that this study focuses on the role they have played in the development of modern arts in Nigeria. The study also shows how modern Nigerian artists have been attributing their artworks to African norms and values and articulating their creative ingenuity through adaptations from traditional motifs and/or development of new ideas from cultural beauties of the past.

Both semiotic and archetypal theories are adopted as the basic narrative structure to decode the symbolic traditional African images embellishing modern Nigerian artworks and to show how the images have served as models to the artists producing the works. Semiotics theory is a theory of signs and symbols that belong to the internally coherent system that refers to a number of events, which permeate human daily semiosis. The theory provides a notational system around which myriads of mythical past activities of Nigerian peoples are described in modern art forms. Archetypal theory is a theory of patterns and models that serve as prototypes from which copies are made, or from which new ideas develop. The embellishment of modern artworks with a body of symbolic and archetypal images, derived from shrines, totems, sayings, body decorations, calabash decorations, dreams, textile motifs and

proverbs, supports the researcher's intentions in using these two theories. Data were collected from two basic sources: primary and secondary. Primary data were collected from in-depth interviews conducted to elicit information from art practitioners and connoisseurs at their different places of work. In collecting secondary data, the researcher did objective, systematic and qualitative description of the manifest content of existing records on modern Nigerian art found in the library. He identified and defined problems to be investigated and formulated questions to be answered. This was followed by a definition of the study population. Since the volume of literature to be analysed is large, a sample was drawn as in survey research. Categories of contemporary artists were then defined for classifying message content and the contents of the sampled works were coded according to objective research rules. The contents of sampled documents were subjected to hermeneutical interpretation, in order to unravel the manifest and latent meanings of the issues discussed in them.

Adaptations from Societal Norms, Legends and Traditional Plastic Art

Nigerian artists have been adapting from primordial forms of traditional art to enrich their artworks. All their perspectives have been shuffled back to the beginning of all time. An encounter with *African curios,* traditional African objects admired for their beauty, their intricacy, their rarity or their marvellous and even mythical properties, has helped art scholars, art practitioners, art connoisseurs, first generation art masters and even budding artists to understand Nigeria's creative ideals, cultural symbolisms and general belief systems. For instance, in the 1920s, Aina Onabolu, the progenitor of modern Nigerian art, used the basic knowledge of African beauty to depict naturalistic images of important personages in Lagos and its environs in order to formulate new pathways for arts that are uniquely modern to Nigerian society. His predecessors, Akinola Lasekan and J.D. Akeredolu, engaged in representing daily activities of typical traditional Yoruba society naturalistically in their modern paintings and sculptures.

Ben Enwonwu, a renowned Nigerian painter/sculptor, adopted the traditional symbol of the legendary *Sango* the Yoruba god of thunder and lightning as a design "for a new form of expression to embrace nationalist concept in a new Nigeria" (Fosu 1985: 26). He chose a

naturalistic figure of *Sango* to symbolise strength of power and energy supply for modern Nigeria. This monumental bronze sculpture adorns the façade of *Power Holding Company of Nigeria* (PHCN) building in Lagos, Nigeria till today.

Lamidi Fakeye emerged after participating in Oye-Ekiti workshop experiment organised by fathers O'Mahoney and Kevin Carroll in the 1940s. He used a contemporary approach by fusing primordial traditional images into modern ideas that are indicative of the Yoruba art style. He followed the abstracted humanistic and ethnographic style of the Yoruba, which are characterised by angular and plane forms to revisit traditional patterns in producing new art forms, which Catholic churches in Nigeria now use in their liturgical practices. Fosu (1985) stresses that: "the catholic encouraged him to revisit traditional art forms of the Yoruba for use in liturgical services in order to show deep integrity of an established artistic practice in the service of the sacred".

Taiwo Olaniyi (aka Twins Seven Seven) also emerged after participating in *Mbari-Mbayo* workshop experiment organised at Osogbo in the 1960s. A naïve artist, encouraged and nurtured to maturity by Ulli Beier, he created new stories based on personal imagination and Yoruba folktales and lore through the use of polyrhythmic designs that have distorted floating figures and bright illuminating colours.

There are two other artists who belong to this category: they are Tunde Ogunlaiye and Joe Amenechi. They also participated in workshop experiments organised by Bruce Onobrakpeya, Nigeria's master print-maker, after attending formal art schools. Ogunlaiye produced a deep-etching titled *Images from the Past* (Plate 1) measuring 56.5cm x 45.5cm as evidence of his adaptation from traditional forms. In it, he depicts nature without idealisation or imaginative treatment of the subjects while deriving his inspiration from Nok terracotta heads and Ife images. At the background of these images is an idyllic scene of illusionary faces of African ancestors surrounded by geometric and floral motifs.

Amenechi produced traditional images that reflect societal practice in Yoruba-land. His artworks that show adaptation from traditional forms are two in number. These are *Warriors* and *Ogboni*. *Warriors* (Plate 2) measuring 24cm x 30.5cm depicts equestrian figures bearing arms; this depicts *jagunjagun* a common motif in traditional Yoruba wood sculpture.

His second artwork, *Ogboni* (Plate 3) measuring 25cm x 30cm is presented in a horizontal format and divided into three sections. In the

first section Amenechi shows an initiation ceremony where members are being inducted into the *Ogboni* cult, a system of religious belief and ritual in Yoruba-land. At the centre of the picture is the high priest of the Ogboni society holding the symbols of authority: a pair of *edan* staff. Below this is a scene that depicts an initiation of a new member. In the second section, figures of three chiefs, that have tribal marks associated with the Egba people in the south-western Nigeria, are shown wearing the ceremonial attire of the indigenous *Ogboni* society. In the third section, the high priests are shown sitting on a large *Agba*: a drum that is beaten to call members to meetings. A high priest is depicted presiding over a meeting.

These artworks by Amenechi have angular and plane forms with geometric and floral motifs traceable to the traditional arts of the Yoruba. The motifs have incised patterns depicted for decorative purpose. The two themes used by the artist are based on tradition that calls up the Yoruba past. The African proportions adopted by Amenechi are related to those found on Ife sculpture and exemplified by wood carvers such as Lamidi and Bisi Fakeye.

Plate 1: Images from the past

Plate 2: Warriors

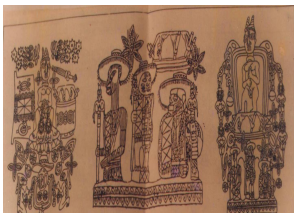

Plate 3: Ogboni

Adaptation of Indigenous Symbols and Motifs to Develop New Artistic Ideas

By 1960, the year of Nigeria's political independence, most Nigerian art scholars and practitioners had started to propagate the philosophy of *Natural Synthesis* of the old and new art forms as well as working towards a radical and positive transformation in the practice of art in contemporary Nigeria. According to Irabor (2008), a group of artists from the Zaria Art School took bold steps towards achieving this goal by opposing the use of western art curriculum in Nigerian art schools, but they still

supported the marriage between foreign and local art materials and cultures for the development of art in Nigeria.

Uche Okeke took the first step in this direction by developing a new stylistic ideology from *Uli* art: traditional body painting of the Igbo, his kinsmen from South-Eastern Nigeria. He used the old *Uli* forms as an African nationalist alternative to the existing West-influenced tradition. For him, it was "a struggle for artists to redefine themselves in the face of Western-Christian cultural imperialism, a struggle to re-learn what was rich and enriching about African cultures, and a struggle to create a modern idiom within the context of African culture" (Okeke, 1979:100-118).

The word *Uli* in Igbo stands for indigo dye, which is extracted from different types of plants, *Uli oba, Uli edeji* and *Uli okolo.* Ifeanyi Nwakpa's (2009:18) comment provides a veneer for contextual analysis of the *Uli-Indigo* dye when he states that "paste and liquid substances that are obtained from different types of plants are mostly placed on wooden receptacle or coconut shell from where the designers scoop them by using spoon-like local instruments to beautify the human body with different designs". Another view from Nwanna (2008) would be that such body beautifications translate not directly into the content of artistic display, but into a societal usage of the designs to commemorate events such as marriage ceremony, childbirth and naming ceremony, manhood initiation and burial of great warriors and gallant men.

The renewed interest in *Uli* traditional motifs has fully developed among teachers and students of arts at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in the 1970s. A prominent student of Okeke, Obiora Udechukwu, has been using the *Uli* designs to explain daily activities in modern Nigeria; a good example of his artwork that has explained daily activities in Nigeria is *The Road to Abuja* (Plate 4). This is a pen and ink drawing produced in the year 198,3 measuring 15.5in x 11.5in. It shows graphical elements such as lines, triangles, squares, and circles that are universal to the concentric image at the periphery, which contains reflections of daily activities as seen through the eyes of art experts and connoisseurs.

In the mid-1980s, a group of art graduates from University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, started the *Ona* movement to make contributions to the stylistic development of modern Nigerian art. The movement was christened *onaism* to reinforce the artistic ideology derived from the Yoruba concept that stands for decoration,

embellishment, design or motif, and relates to sculpture, patterning of textiles and many other art forms as well as to artistic vision and aesthetics. The *Ona* designs are drawn from the asymmetric, cultural symbolism of wall paintings on Yoruba shrines and the symmetric patterns on *adire*, a dyed cloth by the Yoruba cultural group. Okediji (1988) has illuminated the concept of *Ona* in the works of Yoruba artists reproduced in *Nucleus* (1985).

According to him, "some of these artists reveal *onaism* in their artworks more clearly than others . . . for an instance, Gani Odutokun does so in the interplay of colour; Abayomi Barber, a realistic painter, shows a more subtle use of decorative elements but still falls within the context of *onaism*, as do the other realists such as Josy Ajiboye, Aina Onabolu and Akinola Lasekan". Okediji mentioned other Yoruba artists such as Ayo Ajayi, Sina Yussuff and Jimoh Buraimoh, because their artworks, which are represented in *Nucleus*, also fall into the mainstream of *Ona*.

The case of Tayo Adenaike, a Yoruba who identified with the *uli* form of the Igbo school of art, is of utmost interest to Okediji because he sees in his artwork titled *Through the Broken Wall we watched the Chameleon Change its Colours* (Plate5) the *Uli* designs that are being manipulated as elements of *Ona*. Adenaike has represented in this work, produced in 1990 and measuring 24inchesX18.5inches, abstracted (non-realistic) chameleon and comb images that are prominent traditional Yoruba artistic images in *Uli* art style. In the Yoruba worldview, a representation of the chameleon is associated with medicine. According to Adepegba (1986), "it is a vital ingredient in preparing traditional medicine in Yoruba-land. It is close to the great creation god, *Obatala* who, it is believed, always grants it all its wishes as shown in its ability to change colour". The comb, on the other hand, symbolises separation.

Still on Adenaike's work, Okediji compares the stylistic range of *onaism* with that of *ulism*, discovering that the latter is restricted to non-realistic styles while the former adopts both the realistic and non-realistic tendencies. Akatakpo (1997), in his critique of *Onateniola* (Treasure from Ona), supports Okediji's point when he reiterates that "the *Uli* and *Ona* designs have represented the most significant stylistic development in Nigeria since 1960s after Nigeria's political independence from the British government". According to him, "the artists who adopted both *Uli* and *Ona* mostly produce abstract images probably because the motifs used

in the two artistic movements are drawn from traditional African art, which is basically abstraction" (Akatakpo. 1997: 8).

A typical *Ona* art form is depicted by Okediji in his work titled: *Eleda*–Creator (Plate 6). This is a soil painting measuring 30in x 18in produced in 1990 and showing designs of *Opon Ifa* (divination bowl), *Opele* (Ifa string) and *bird*. The latter is associated with witchcraft in Yoruba tradition. A ram's horn is also incorporated as a major design in the work. It is worthy of note that such a ram's horn is used as a container for traditional medicine in Yorubaland and such a medicine container is referred to as *ase*, the native concoction that has the power to make one's wishes come to pass.

Plate 4: Road to Abuja

Plate 5: Through the Broken Wall we watched …

Plate 6 Eleda/Creator

In 2006, Mufu Onifade, a prolific artist, started an artistic movement he calls *Araism*. The concept of his *araism* is derived from the Yoruba word *ara*, meaning wonder, spectacle, lavish display or impressive performance. The wonderful identification of spectacles in the aspirations of Onifade echoes Makanjuola (2010) in his description of the word *ara* in Yoruba proverbial parlance:

> *Alara ni toun ara*
> The spectacle man says his is a spectacle
>
> Ara, mo ri ohun ti enikan ori ri
> A spectacle, I have seen what no one has ever seen before

According to Makanjuola, "the *ara* experiment, which has integrated Yoruba idioms, proverbs, norms, colours, patterns, materials and philosophy into the academic practice of art in contemporary Nigeria, emerged from a combination of hobbytex and acrylic hue that eventually

re-established gradual stability and acceptability for *araism* as a method in transition". Onifade, the exponent of *Ara*, reiterates that "the experiment started from the study of batik crack effects" (Onifade 2010:13). The batik is an indigenous textile art, design and pattern of the Yoruba that is rooted in what is called *adire eleko*, which is traditionally derived from cassava paste.

At first, Onifade used this technique "to create cracks through the process of drawing on the canvas, waxing the canvas, cracking the wax on the canvas, dyeing the waxed canvas, de-waxing the canvas and using colour pigment such as acrylic to create chromatic effects for details, depth, form and fascinating results" (Onifade, 2010:14). Onifade (2010) affirms that in the year 1995, he discarded all textile materials such as dyes and wax to give way to his unique painting technique through the combined study of batik crackles and tree bark. The first painting produced in the year 1995 in this technique titled *Layewu* laid the solid foundation for the *araism* movement. The painting *Layewu* (Plate 7) depicts a "hunter masquerade", executed with the use of palette knife to apply tempera on jute sack. The work, measuring 60cm x 200cm, portrays three hunters (olode) in the left corner of the panel, an acrobat (olokiti) at the extreme right, a masquerade (layewu) and drummers (alubata) at the centre of the picture.

Plate 7: Layewu

In his analysis of Onifade's artistic techniques, Babawale (2010) sees *araism* sharing certain similarities with *ulism* and *onaism* "because they are all adapted from indigenous art forms and transformed into modern means of artistic expression". This notion found justification in the writing of Adepegba in 2010 when he confirms that "*araism* shares a lot with *onaism* and reiterates that Onifade has been living under the spiritual

influence of *onaism* to be able to introduce the dimension of *ara* (wonder)" (Adepegba, 2010:16). He opines that Onifade's art should be called *ona-ara* meaning 'wonderful art' because araism has added flavor to *onaism* in terms of intricate workmanship and artistry.

The *Nsibidi*, an ancient system of graphic representation, is indigenous to the Ejaghan, Ibibio and Efik people in Nigeria. It is an aesthetically compelling idiographic script that has myriads of symbols that refer to abstract concepts and actions that facilitate communication among people speaking different languages in the south-south region of Nigeria. It comprises nearly a thousand symbols that can be drawn on the ground, on the skin as tattoo, on walls of houses and on art forms such as masks and textiles. The symbols of *Nsibidi* were mostly used by the secret society that controlled trade and maintained social and political order.

Eyefoki (2001) refers to the *Nsibidi* as a symbol that is being endowed with unique powers that reinforced the prerogative of important members of the Ekpe secret society. For example, members of Ekpe society in the south-eastern Nigeria have created a number of brilliant and elaborate displays of *Nsibidi* on ritual occasions; they mostly have a dramatic presence on such occasions with *Nsibidi*-laden cloth showing forms of leopard, lizards, drum, staff, and geometric and organic shapes. The emblem of the leopard on the cloths of the members is associated with knowledge, power, agility, strength and beauty. The *Nsibidi* symbols are very important to the conceptual and visual basis of Victor Ekpuk's artwork titled *Paradise is Here* (Plate 8). The forms in the work, inspired by the ancient *Nsibidi* writing, are reduced to basic essence resulting in new symbols made up of script-like drawing, which are used to express his contemporary experience. The central theme of the painting, which was produced in the year1993, is the exploration of the relationships, challenges and responses to changes that characterise the human condition. The painting was created to cater for the well-being of more

Plate 8

than 100,000 world children who are stricken by polio every year and to support the UNICEF programme to eradicate the disease by the year 2000.

In the late 1980s, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Nigeria's master print-maker, started to make significant contributions to stylistic development of Nigerian art forms by experimenting with abstract images on Urhobo shrines in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. A complete set of ideograms that he calls *Ibiebe* symbols emerged from this experiment and are merged together as complete abstract forms in his artworks. Among the *Ibiebe* symbols he has adopted to embellish his plastograph, additive plastograph and collagraph methods are *Ufuomah* (Plate 9), meaning "Peace and Contentment"; *Idolo* (Plate 10), which represents a zoomorphic form bearing two horns; *Otovwe* (Plate 11) meaning "long life" and *Abiverh'ohwo*, (Plate12) which symbolises two sides of a coin. He has used these symbolic representations to explain coded messages in his artistic presentations.

Plate 9

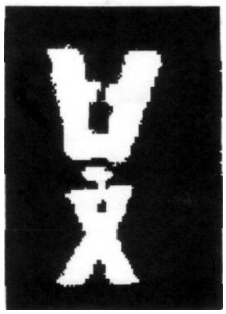

Plate 10

Plate 11

Plate 12

One of the creative ideas developed from the royal art of Benin, in Edo State of Nigeria, is *Akugbe Etin* meaning "Unity is Strength". This novel idea was generated by some graduates of fine and applied arts at the University of Benin to embellish their artistic productions. One example is the adaptation of attributes of Benin royalty, the *Eben* perforated dagger and *Ada* sword by Kunle Adeyemi in his deep-etching titled *Paraphernalia of Royalty* (Plate 13), a print that measures 25.5cm x 30.5cm, produced in 1999. The abstract images of *Eben* and *Ada* in this work symbolise the unity and strength of the Edo-Benin kingdom. The symbols exude a spiritual aura that is enhanced by solidity of forms and assumed royal presence.

Other primordial patterns from Benin culture have been associated with *Olokun*, goddess of the waters by Ben-Amos (1999). These patterns are the background designs on the plaques produced to commemorate the victory of Oba Esigie during the Igala war in the 16th century. The *Olokun* pattern on a majority of these plaques, according to Ben-Amos (1999), is a quatrefoil, that represents river leaves, which are used in curing rites during *Olokun* worship while the one on a minority of the plaques is a circled cross, which is referred to as *aghadaghada*, a chalk-drawn pattern used to embellish the central interior of *Olokun* shrine. Some of these abstract designs associated with *Olokun* have also been creatively adapted by Peju Layiwola to embellish the calabash installations that accompanied her Travelling Art Exhibition tagged: *Benin 1897.com; Art and the Restitution Question,* mounted both at the foyer and the museum space of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, from 20 August-27 September, 2010.

Plate 13: Paraphernalia of Royalty

Dagi motifs depicting rosette, crescent and diamond as well as *Arewa* designs are adapted from pristine Hausa/Fulani culture by some artists who trained at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In their departure from the popular art traditions of the south, these artists ingeniously developed a new synthesis of expression that combines both the Islamic calligraphy and *dagi* symbolism to foreground Africanness in their art creations. The *dagi* is a traditional motif incorporated into almost all northern Nigerian artistic expressions such as cultural and traditional embroidery, wall decorations, architectural design and the Durbar. It has also been transformed, over a period of time, into myriads of shapes and patterns.

According to Ibrahim (2011), "The *dagi* motif has been subjected to adaptations by modern artists and this has given rise to its transformation to various stylistic tendencies". For example, a stylistic tendency towards abstracted decorative *dagi* motifs is clearly evident in *Emeravwe PhruGro-O* (Plate 14), a plastograph that measures 68.1cm x 49cm produced in 1988 by Bruce Onobrakpeya, an alumnus of the Zaria Art School. The work is embellished with the Hausa-Fulani motifs that are popular with cloth embroidery and wall decorations as well as crescent moon and star-like bands derived from *Arewa* signs; all these are placed at the top left segment of the panel to identify the etched work as Islamic in iconography.

Another graduate of the Zaria Art School, Abdulfattah Adeyemi, used verses from the Holy Qur'an and words such as *Bismillah,* Birth, Hope, Peace and Time in his artworks. His *untitled* artwork in Plate 15 shows Islamic calligraphy that is common in the Islamic tradition. In the work, he used brilliant colours, and myriads of designs and forms that can draw the attention of art connoisseurs who will appreciate his creative ingenuity.

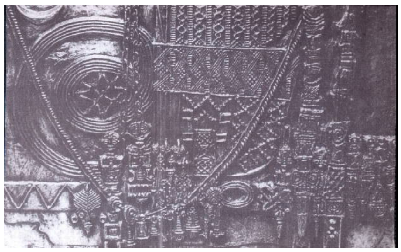

Plate 14: PhruGro-O

Plate 15: Untitled

Conclusion

In the traditional African society, there was a belief that thought prefigures all physical existence, and that thought could be expressed by symbols and graphic signs, such as those that are being adapted from various traditions by modern Nigerian artists to articulate their artistic concepts. The artists discussed in this study incorporated traditional symbols and graphic signs in their artworks with the aid of the principles and elements of artistic design and they used the symbolic and graphical elements to give accounts of daily activities they have witnessed in modern Nigerian society.

The traditional African motifs have been a significant working element in the development of modern art in Nigeria. Most important is the adaptation of traditional symbols such as *Uli*, *Ona*, *Ara*, *Nsibidi*, *Ibiebe*, *Dagi/Arewa* and *Akugbe Etin* by contemporary Nigerian artists from diverse cultures in Nigeria. This has major transformational effects on the stylistic tendencies of modern art in Nigerian society. The traditional forms and motifs are currently serving as models for contemporary artists in Nigeria to imitate; they serve as archives of ideas and events, which allow the artists to integrate themselves into the working of their immediate environment and which address a mass audience that has become accustomed to finding fragments of reality far removed from their original spatial and temporal context.

Since African symbolism provides creative ingenuity around which group of activities are clustered, it is not surprising therefore that myriads of signs adopted by the aforementioned artists are manipulated into three-dimensional forms that incorporate references to myth and symbolism. It is evident that there are direct and indirect relationships

between African symbols and creative artworks such as paintings, prints and sculptures some of which are discussed in the light of the artists' creative contributions to the Nigerian society.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Performance and Orality as Cultural and Pragmatic Strategies in the Musical Performance of 9ice

Adewale Ajayi

Introduction

Colonialism stimulates wide ranging cultural responses. One prominent response is resistance to the colonial enterprise. The colonial enterprise set itself up to be resisted because it unleashed violent attacks on the economic and cultural institutions of the colonised. In the post-colonial era, cultural responses to domination continue in order to recover and preserve indigenous culture. Another response to the colonial enterprise is the reception of foreign cultural imports into the indigenous culture in a way that both are made to interact without the domination of the foreign (Ngugi, 1972, 1986; Achebe, 1975, 1990). We find this latter response in the Nigerian musical scene, where there have been bold and courageous attempts to create healthy interaction between the new and the indigenous forms of musical performance. Akande Abolore's[1] performance typifies this awareness and the resultant cultural syncretism. In this work, I look at his musical performance as representative of the trend in Nigerian music to utilise foreign elements along with indigenous elements to produce a hybrid product which innovates musical production across cultures and shows efforts by cultural performers to turn the pains of colonial and postcolonial existence into gains.

Creating artistic works in a postcolonial environment where the structures of creativity and the indigenous language are just emerging from domination poses challenges. This has been the case from the onset of the imperialistic phase of capitalism and in the era of globalisation in which cultural boundaries have become artificial. With globalisation, works produced in cultural environments possessing vast resources invade

other less endowed environments. The unequal status of indigenous and foreign cultural products is a challenge to the artistic performer. 9ice confronts these emergent challenges by using orality and performative elements in peculiar ways. His works come at that crucial phase of transition from oral to scribal culture. Using these resources, he expresses and interprets cultural concepts and contemporary social experiences to the delight of his audience. It is my intention in this paper to show how he uses performance elements and oral resources to stabilise his musical performance.

The research was conducted by gathering data from live shows of the musician; particularly the LTV Multi artist show of 2009, the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro show of 14 May, 2011 and the Ebute Igboro Carnival of 7 November, 2011, and his recorded works. Interview of key informants was also conducted.

Globalisation, Postcoloniality and Cultural Responses

Globalisation has implications for cultural production in postcolonial states and all over the world. Cultural products from the West approach former colonies as privileged products because they are usually well packaged with the vast resources at the disposal of the producers. The scale then appears to be tilted in favour of these culturally privileged imports. This leads to the issue Schaefer presents here:

> Embedded in the concept of globalization is the notion of the cultural domination of developing nations by more affluent nations. Simply put, people lose their traditional values and begin to identify with the culture of dominant nations. They may discard or neglect their native language and dress as they attempt to copy the icons of mass-market entertainment and fashion. Even James Bond movies and Britney Spears may be seen as threats to native cultures, if they dominate the media at the expense of local art forms (2009: 59).

What Schaefer summarises as the criticisms of globalisation here are the factors we regard as part of the challenges of being involved in the creative enterprise in the postcolonial era. The postcolonial audience has her cultural antennae primed to pick signals emanating from the dominant cultural capitals of the West even as two of these capitals struggle to upstage themselves. As Ashcroft (2001), leaning on the work of Leavis, shows,

> . . . while America gained control over the popular culture of the world today (to the extent that it could be said that the popular culture of the world today is American popular culture) Europe, and in English speaking colonies, England, maintained firm control over high culture.

In some respects Leavis battle reflects the predicament of decolonising countries trying to carve a cultural space for themselves against the overwhelming imperial presence (9).

The cultural dilemma in the African environment is not limited to pressures from Western powers as there are possibilities of an Asian pressure even as the reality of an Arabic cultural pressure is also real. "Modern African popular music is quite often a product of two or more distinct streams of cultural influences. These influences include Western music, Black diasporic forms, indigenous African music, and Arabic music" (Omojola, 2006: 3). The picture then is that the colonial heritage of Africa combines with other realities to influence works of African artists.

Culture in whatever form or construct is strategic. Geertz expresses its importance in terms of negation and abnegation and as a compelling reality:

> without men, no culture, certainly; but equally, and more significantly, without culture, no men. We are, in sum, incomplete or unfinished animals who compete or finish ourselves through culture – and not through culture in general but through highly particular forms of it . . . (1973: 49).

The manner of the emergence of the creative activity in the era of postcolonialism is as important as the fact of its emergence. As Geertz says, culture is essential and given. Marx and Engels put the cultural enterprise in perspective, posing it as part of the social superstructure. For, as they say, the dominant forms of consciousness in society emanate from the ideology of the ruling class and in the era of postcolonialism, which is concurrent with cultural imperialism, the dominant cultural forms in the postcolonial state is a product of a struggle (overt and covert) between states of consciousness, cultural forces and the reality of resisting or accepting cultural products packaged and marketed by imperial powers.

Orality and Performance as Postcolonial Responses

Cultures with roots in orality, which are in the process of transiting from

oral to scribal forms, usually have oral structures, elements and constructions seeping into and sometimes determining expressions.

The indigenous idiom in language, performance and presentation has benefitted from the focus of linguistics on sound (Ong, 2009). Also, the study of the performance of the oral bard as an artistic and textual incident shows that there are modes of organisation of thought, conceptualisation and interpretation of experience which the oral bard uses in ways that constitute the essence of his style. These are evident in the works of Homer and other oral bards (Lord, 1960; Gagarin, 1999; Okpewho, 1979). In Africa, the performance of the oral bard also reveals these characteristics of the spoken and the sung tale. Considering this phenomenon, Ong says "an oral culture has no texts. How does it get together organized material for recall? This is the same as asking, 'What does it or can it know in organized fashion'?"(2009: 34).

The denial of textuality in oral cultures by Ong is a misconception because the oral text is not textuality as we know it in the sense of the written text. What is anyway apparent from the analysis of Ong is the peculiarity of the imagination based on orality. The interpretation and organisation of experience by the non-scribal imagination is peculiar. Many of the basic elements of style of expression utilised by oral bards and found in works based on orality or cultures transiting from oral to scribal culture are essential performance elements.

For Okpewho the combination of music, performance and narration affects the material that emerges from performance:

> But nothing makes the difference, in an open performance of the heroic tale in Africa, quite so much as the music. A full consideration of the relative roles of music and narration would no doubt reveal that they constitute the two arms of the balance in a performance. This means that the more the music is emphasized, the less likely it is that verbal exactitude and a faultless narrative order will be observed (57).

He recognises that wherever the bard swings in the music/narration equation, towards music or towards narration, determines the nature of the performed material. Where the emphasis is on music, the lyrics would be presented in a way that the flow of narration would be affected.

Performance History

9ice began his musical career as a Fuji musician. He was particularly

disturbed and affected by the bitter rivalry that existed among Fuji musicians, especially during live performances.[2] Seeing this situation, he came to the conclusion that for him, crossing over to another genre of music, particularly hip-hop, was the right step. He started performing in the new genre as part of two groups: Mysterious Boys and Abinibi (Benjygh). After working with these groups as back-up vocalist, he decided to launch out on his own as 9ice.

Live performances

9ice has shown that he loves performing to young audiences, particularly on campuses. This is because the brand of music that he sings is patronised mostly by the young. Additionally, the youths are the future economic power of the nation and the future of the nation. So, by segmenting and servicing that part of the market, he is sure to be relevant in future. However, performance on campuses comes with its own challenges. The campus environment today has the challenge of the operation of criminal gangs. These groups sometimes carve out their respective territorial spheres of control and demand ground rent from would-be business operators and artistic performers. 9ice has found a way around this challenge by sending advance teams of personnel to identify would-be disrupters of the show and adopting strategies fit for each campus to overcome this challenge.[3]

Appearance and Identity

9ice has been instrumental to the popularisation of a particular fashion trend in Nigeria. This trend has been christened, *gbamugbamu*.[4] The musician recognises the need for carving an identity for himself by employing elements that constitute a particular identity. He has therefore used some fashion styles as an identity strategy to make himself visible in the cultural landscape. He basically wears three types of styles:

(1) an exaggerated baseball cap, tee-shirt and jeans trousers;
(2) a *gobi*-style traditional cap, an outer *agbada* in colours contrasting *buba* and *sokoto;*
(3) the style his followers have now christened *gbamugbamu*.

The *gbamugbamu* style is, however, the one that fascinates his supporters and fashion enthusiasts. The *gbamugbamu* fashion style

consists of a *kaftan* with long split tails and matching trousers (see Plate 1). The *kaftan may be* taped with embroidery along the tails, the neckline and at the cuffs. The trousers too may be taped at the ends with embroidery. The preferred fabric is voile or *ankara*, often striped.

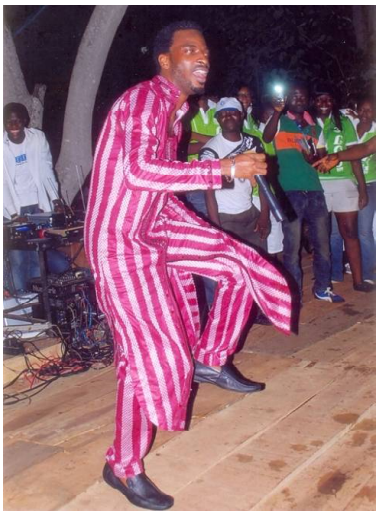

Plate 1: 9ice on stage in *gbamugbamu* style

Fictions About the Performer

Some of the fans of 9ice believe that he prefers to sing in the dark during a live performance. They claim that this is because he sings under the influence of alcohol and he is shy. However, from the findings, it is clear that though there are incidents where the musician has had to sing in the dark, it is because there was outage of stage lights. The musician has no particular preference for singing in the dark. Rather, what happens is that the musician draws mammoth crowds to his performances. The crowd is always so large that the venue always becomes too small for that kind of audience. The situation is usually compounded whenever the show is held in an open air theatre, particularly an arena that is not purposely designed for shows and events. In such situations, especially as happened at the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro show, the audience throngs the stage area and usually tramples on the electrical cables, thereby cutting off power supply (see Plate 2). Also, as a popular musician who goes to

campuses to perform, many fans usually want to take pictures with him while he is backstage. Even when he comes on stage, those who have not had the chance to take pictures with 9ice also approach or even come on stage thereby making a mess of installations.[5]

Plate 2: 9ice performing with the audience surging to the stage

Orality in the Musical Performance of 9ice

9ice employs the spoken word composed into verse as his medium. He sees himself as a poet and a composer.[6] He actually claims to compose a new song every nine days.[7]

He employs multilingualism in his compositions. He uses his indigenous Yoruba and English predominantly, mixing this with pidgin English and a smattering of *Igbo* as we have in songs like "Photocopy" and "Gbamugbamu". He mixes and switches codes freely; even the title of his songs reveals a mix of English and Yoruba: "Photocopy", "Partyrider", "Gbamugbamu", "Gongoaso".

9ice uses a call-responsorial style in his songs where one line is the call and the next is the response. He sometimes uses an extensive framework in which he converts the stanza of a song to the call and the chorus to the response. The call and response style is used in "Energy":

Call:	A o para wa layo	We contest stiffly to overawe
Response:	Olenle	Surely
Call:	A o para wa layo	We contest stiffly to overawe
Response:	Olenle	Surely
Call:	Idi ore mi lemi o fi si,	Touch base by my friend's bum
Response:	Idi ore mi tala n tolo	Checkmate by my friend's bum
	Ma fori omu re takoto	Your nipples, my plaything
	Ere ale labe osupa	Playmates in Moonlit night play
	Ohun owo mi o to ma fi gongo faa.	[I shall employ the pole to draw whatever is beyond my reach]

The material used for this song is taken from folklore. These lines have been sung for ages but he uses them to great effect in the song. It takes great insight and talent to insert this kind of material from folklore and use it in such a way that it blends into the other parts of the song, adding to the song's quality.

The structure of some of 9ice's songs runs like a string of climaxes and anti-climaxes because they are strung together as an episodic conjunction of riddles. This makes the content interesting to the young people. The structure is episodic because he combines a number of elements on one canvas. In this musical style, the songs do not have a straight run to a climax like a story but a sequence of ascents and descents (climaxes and anticlimaxes) where the climaxes are the highpoints of the riddle call and the anticlimax are at descent in the riddle response. The musician uses a style of vibrant phrasing reinforced with a quick succession of riddles. This is strengthened with line structures in which unpunctuated twists and turns take place in the middle of the lines, giving a sense of riddle and meaning, ascent and descent, mystery and clarity. When a riddle is called in a song, it is followed with a response and that response immediately gets a new riddle tagging after it and its own answer is quickly supplied, sustaining a structure of ascents and descents. We have this in the call and response style used in "Gbamugbamu":

Call:	Gbamugbamu jigijigi	
	Gbamugbamu jigijigi	(Mighty, awe inspiring)
Response:	O le geshin nnu mi	Your horse can ride right through me
Call:	Gbamugbamu jigijigi	
	Gbamugbamu jigijigi	(Mighty, awe inspiring)
Response:	Adigun temi yemi	Adigun I am worldly wise

Call:	Elede mi a d'oyo	The pig would travel the distance
Response:	Ariwo e laa po	though it squeals
Call:	Olowo lo lowo	capital oils business
Response:	Eleru lo leru	The slave's lord owns slave and all

The call and response used here is such that each line of the call ends on a high pitch, while the response to that call ends on a low pitch. This verse provides an example where the call and response, proverbial expression and the sense and structure of riddles are combined. These elements are combined in quick succession to create an aggregation of effects.

"Gbamugbamujigijigi" is an onomatopoeic expression which requires no response. "Temiyemi" is also a lone expression. However, the performer has combined both into a call and response. The proverb, *"elede mi a doyo, ariwo e laa po"* is also converted by the musician into call and response. The run-on proverb is broken into two end-stopped lines where the first line is the call and the second is the response. In the creative twist with which these lines are converted, the meaning of the calls and the responses are not immediately available to the casual listener, especially those that do not belong to the indigenous culture from which they are taken. This situation in which some listeners may not have the insider knowledge with which to decode the run of meaning and supply the response leads to the onset of the sense of riddle at this stage of the song. This enriches the performance. The use of call and response and riddle-and-answer incubates two elements which are both structural and thematic. The call and response introduces a dramatic exchange while benefitting from the structure of the riddle.

Additionally, the tone and pitch of the lines in songs like "Gbamugbamu" follow the same pattern. In this particular case, the tone of the call is contrasted to the tone of the response, thereby making the lines tonal counter-points to one another. We then see diverse turns and switches in tone and pitch of the lines of the song, so that there are many internal contrasts in tone and pitch. In a stage performance, 9ice uses these tonal switches to good effect as the high and low waves of the song make it interesting to the audience and involves them in a conversational and interactional exchange with the musician. The musician gives the call and the audience gives the response or they both take the calls and responses. The artist allows the audience to feature prominently in the performance by pausing to allow them take their own lines of the lyrics (see Plate 3).

Plate 3: 9ice pauses during performance as the audience sings

Also, the use of Yoruba language along with English and Igbo ensures that the youths who constitute a majority of the fans of the musician become immersed in the language of their culture rather than being enslaved to a foreign language. However, the cultural effect here transcends that of a language. It is an attempt to make the culture appeal to the audience as the audience is made to appreciate it better. This factor is better appreciated when it is realised that most of the songs of the musician are sung offhand by the audience.[8] In actual fact, when the audio equipment is weak, the voice of the audience drowns out the voice of the musician in the songs. Also, it must be remarked that the non-literate identify with the music of 9ice because of his use of the indigenous language in his songs. It is therefore not unusual to find artisans generally mixing with students during the performance. 9ice has also performed at such local events as the Ebute-Igboro Carnival 2011 and the audience related to him and sang his songs with ease. [9]

Audience Participation and Use of Space

9ice believes in close interaction with the audience. Actually, most musicians reduce the public space in which they perform to one in which a closer interaction exists between the audience and the performer. The

demarcation of stage and auditorium as estranged spaces within the performance environment is a concept that 9ice abhors. He encourages the audience to interact with him. At the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro show, he had to cancel the security plan that removed the audience from the stage area. He prefers to have the audience clustering the fringes of the stage like a performer in the public square in the traditional African village setting (*see* Plate 2).

Performance and Oral Resources

9ice makes creative use of oral forms. He extends the frontiers of tradition by taking stock expressions and using them with his own embellishments.

Portmanteau Words

9ice uses a number of polysyllabic Yoruba words like "*gbamugbamu*," "*jigijigi,*" *"Sakatapara," "erin-lakatabu," "arabataribiti," "aribitirabata," and "Kutupu*." Apart from the fact that these words have a way of colourfully decorating the lyrics when inserted, the scale of objects communicated by them is grandiose. The sense of the grandiose possessed by the oral poet is usually evident in his use of words and imagery. From a background and tradition of dealing with monsters and heroes that have larger-than-life attributes, the oral poet has over time come with a conviction that nothing is too big to be expressed and the bigger the better. In the expression of the grandiose is also the attempt by the bard to compensate for the lack of visual illustration with realistic representation and dramatisation (Okpewho).

9ice combines sound and imagery into jaw-tasking words. "*Gbamugbamu jigijigi"* essentially captures ecstatic revelry, combining the force involved with the reach of the experience and the exertions of kinesis in bringing revelry to life. "*Gbamugbamu"* expresses the dimensional reach and depth of revelry; on the other hand, *"jigijigi"* concentrates on style and mimesis. It captures the kinetic exertions and pictures the moves and swerves as being in tandem with the texture of the revelry being described. "*Arabataribiti, aribitirabata"* express might and extent. It represents a formidable presence, essence and being.

We again have in these words the use of double structures. One way of doing this is by replication of the earlier expression as we have in

gbamugbamu which is *gbamu*^{2}, and *jigi*^{2} in *jigijigi*. Another way in which this is done is the doubling of structures through variation, but using the same principle. In "*arabataribiti, aribitirabata,"* you have the slight variation on the second word where some vowels differ from what you have in the first. "*Arabata"* becomes "*aribiti"* and the latter part *ribiti* becomes *rabata*. It must be said that 9ice did not create these words but has used them in creative and thoughtful ways.

Rhymes

One of the features of the lyrics of 9ice that shows a deliberate attempt to leverage the property of sounds in his vocal performance is the rhyming of the lines. We have an example of copious use of end rhymes in these lines from the song "Gongoaso":

Forget say you owe money	*a* Forget you are a debtor
Call your pady dem make una join body	*a* Summon your friends to get together
Chikitos deh there dem wan follow judi	*a* ladies all too willing to jiggle their bums
Party jolly, jolly party,	*a* party, jolly, jolly, party
Fidi gbodi, make u shark scordi, make	*a* Rub bums, down shots, get your eye dirty bloodshot eyes
From now till eternity,	*a* from now till eternity

In these lines, the rhyme scheme is a, a, a, a, a, a. The first line is the only one that does not perfectly rhyme with the others.

Apart from these end rhymes, there is the repetition of sounds in portions of the lines of songs. There are times that these repetitions pander to the oral nature of the performance as the oral performer produces from his memory words with the same syllabic length and tonal structure as words already used. These sounds and words punctuate the flow of the normal lines as the sounds are made conspicuous, attracting the listener to the message in these lines. This is a sort of pause and the listener's attention is riveted to this point. We have this in these lines from "Street Credibility":

Categorically I"m the best
Mentally
No gainsaying I"m the cutest
Physically
Don't doubt me

I go bring home grammy
Incredibe, remarkable, unbeatable, palatable, reliable
Gudugudu, akinkanju, arakangudu, okunrin ogun, yeah!![10]

There appears to be a normal flow of expression down from "Categorically, I'm the best," and this line rhymes with "No gainsaying I'm the cutest". Also, "Mentally" rhymes with "Physically." In the composition of these one-word lines, there is a deliberate attempt to catch and hold the attention of the listener. "Categorically" in the line holds the attention of the audience. He reinforces the style with another single-word line which is like a stopper: "Mentally". The message he is getting at comes after this: "No gainsaying I'm the cutest". Then comes "Physically", and then in the next line the message "Don"t doubt me"; he then concludes that message with "I go bring home grammy". This style of drawing and holding attention to these lines is in consonance with the message. He draws attention to himself as an oral performer praising himself and showing how skilful he is. After "I go bring home grammy," this phase is taken to a climax with "Incredibe, remarkable, unbeatable, palatable, reliable Gudugudu, akinkanju, arakangudu, okunrin ogun, yeah!!"

The plosive sounds and polysyllabic words used along with rhymes are deployed to praise 9ice's prowess as a person and an accomplished professional performer.

Orality and Structure

The structure of some of the songs affects the forms of the words used. This is because the length of the lines used earlier, particularly the syllabic structure of the words therein, tends to constrain the musician to phrase succeeding lines to match the previous lines. In some cases, the line length would not accommodate the normal form of a particular word and this leads to word contraction. . The word or expression is restructured to fit into the context. We have this in "Gbamugbamu":

Opo lape die la o fifun cause ofe koni sayo	Many are called, few are chosen cause booze is not free
Ifa n'fani lapo'ya, ore mama'muyo	Freebies tear your pockets, friend don't get drunk on them
Mole'mi loye ti mo fi nmu asiama	I know my stuff, that's why I sip *asiama*
High na high all join Chineke omenma	You can get high on anything, God

	is good
You never see anything until ti nba ra Bentley o	You ain't seen nothing, until I buy Bentley
The more you see the less you know	The more you look, the less you see
You wanna know my trick lo sa'bule mi o	You wanna know my trick go to my village
Bere omo ya'gba l'oke aro	Ask after grandma's son at Oke Aro

In the line, "opo la pe die lao fifun cause ofe koni sayo," we have a line that has been crafted by shortening some of the words: the musician could not use the word "because" in this line but removes the initial syllable "be-" from it so it can fit into the line. Also in the line, "you wanna know my trick lo s'abule mi o" you have the contraction of the word "si." The expression should have been "you wanna know my trick lo si abule mi o." Using the words "si abule" instead of "s'abule" would have meant having an extra syllable than the performer needed and would have impeded the flow of the song as it would not have sustained the conversational style and tone of the lines. This restructuring of words shows that orality is, for 9ice, a major factor in determining the structure of lines and songs.

Also, repetition as it occurs in 9ice's songs is more systematic and typical than we have noted so far. The grafting of an idea into others through repetition occurs in "Gbamugbamu". He uses the clause: "How you feel" repeatedly in three lines of the third stanza to propel the song and progressively bring in new ideas in bits while varying the expression and detail.

Olowo lolowo	Capital oils business
Eleru loleru	The slaveowner owns slave and all
Toju ba farabale dada arimu	Patience pays in the long run

Easily the pace is going Crazy
Many sounds have been made but none is classy
Many steps have come through but surely not like this
Hear this and dance to this and tell me how you feel
how you feel attentively and notice the brand
how you feel and criticize and tell me wetin I miss yarn

He first says, "hear this and dance to this and tell me *how you feel*" but goes on in the next line with "how you feel" even though it does not

fit into the expression but he uses it nevertheless to propel the song. The phrase, *how you feel,* becomes a capsule, a formulaic expression which he reinserts into successive lines. –In the next line, he says "how you feel and criticize and tell me wetin I mis-yarn" the expression here makes profound meaning as he is saying: tell me how you feel and criticize and tell me wetin I mis-yarn but he represses the antecedent to this line which is "tell me how you feel", inserting only what he needs here which is how you feel as the use of "tell me" in that line is unnecessary in a verbal composition. The listener would be able to connect with what has gone before and relate to the antecedent to the line and thereby extract the meaning of the sentence.

He also intensifies the colloquial and conversational style of the song by introducing the slang, "yarn" meaning "sing." He prefixes the slang with "mis-" to create "mis-yarn". 9ice here engages his audience to listen to his lyrics, to draw them in to see the quality infused into them, and if somewhere, he makes a mistake, they should spot it. However, the entire track is bombastic and upbeat, indicating he is rather exhibiting the quality he believes is there to be encountered.

Conclusion

9ice has used orality as a strategy to immerse his music in the indigenous culture. This makes his music truly popular as he is able to reach a wider audience and become relevant across social classes. He uses multilingualism to enrich his songs and to locate his works in the popular culture of his people.

9ice uses orality to forge an authentic musical idiom out of a mix of elements, both indigenous and foreign. This makes the performer able to secure the following of a wide spectrum of popular music enthusiasts; he thereby strips hip-hop of the foreign toga in which it came into the country, and localises and enriches it. He has thus become the musician for the mammoth audience, whose performances indigenous audiences feel they own and non-indigenous ones find fascinating.

Endnotes

1. The performer shall hereafter be referred to as 9ice.
2. Recorded interview, 21 September 2011; 9 November, 2011 and 4 January, 2012.
3. Recorded interview, 21 September, 2011.

4. Personal interaction, 18 December, 2010 and interview, 4 January, 2012.
5. Live performance, 14 May, 2011 and 7 November, 2011.
6. Interview, 4 January, 2012.
7. Interview conducted by Toni, 2011, Retrieved from www.nigerian entertainment.com
8. Live performance, 14 May, 2011 and November 7, 2011.
9. Live performance, 7 November, 2011 and recorded interview, 21 September, 2011.
10. Primed-up, brave one, lightning sharp, man-of-war.

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Discography

9ice 2008. Gongoaso. Gbamugbamu

LPs

_____ (Not dated) Gongoaso. Lagos: Afrobest Production Ltd

_____ (Not dated) Certificate. Lagos: Edge Records

_____ (Not dated) Tradition. Lagos: Magnet

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Social Media and the Question of Cultural Identity in Nigeria

James Okolie-Osemene

Introduction

Nigeria is one of the largest and most geographically, socially and culturally diversified African countries. Culture is a very significant means of identity in every society. The rate at which people in Nigeria flock to social networks is alarming considering the implications of such practice for the growth of indigenous culture. Women, men, children youths, students and even professionals from all walks of life are involved in the use of social media daily. This has made social networking a significant part of the everyday life of many Nigerians.

Since 2002, the use of cell phone and computer has have grown significantly, thereby making it possible for Nigerians to unreservedly embrace the social media technology (Olafia and Iwuanorue, 2011). Social media has introduced a new order in information and communication industry. Most people hardly feel comfortable until they spend some time on social media either watching music and movies, discussing with friends or relatives, networking, making transactions, engaging in a discussion, gossiping, sharing news, ideas and links or advancing an ideology.

Statistics have shown that more than 90 million Nigerians own mobile phones, while over 45 million have access to the internet (Natsa, 2011). Latest Terragon's State of Digital Media Nigeria 2013 report reveals that the number of internet users in Nigeria is 48, 366, 179 while the internet penetration in the country is 28.4 percent; between December 2011 and June 2012, Nigeria added 3,326,468 new internet users.

Across the world, the adoption of these technologies is consistently more common among the young people and the well-educated.

Specifically, people younger than 30 years and those with a college education are especially likely to use the internet and own a cell phone. Significant differences across age and educational groups also characterise computer and email usage. The survey by the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project, conducted between April 7 and 8, 2010 shows that involvement in social networking is relatively low in many less economically developed nations due to the fact that many in those countries do not go online at all, rather than having a lack of interest in social networking. When people use the internet in middle and low income countries, they tend to participate in social networking. In Nigeria, when people have the opportunity to go online, they tend to use social network sites. 17 percent of Nigerians go to these sites, while 7 percent go online but do not access such sites (Pew Research Center, 2010).

Social networks are also used by students, professionals and also politicians. The level of addiction to social media is very high to the extent that it threatens the position of indigenous culture. Social media which connects people from all parts of the world is enhanced by access to the internet. Research has shown that social networking is especially popular among people younger than 30. With case studies, primary and secondary sources including observations, this article examines social media and the question of cultural identity in Nigeria.

Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

Social media

Social networks are sites that allow people to create communities on the internet around shared relationships, interests and activities. The multi-user nature of these environments creates a problem of culture and identity leading to complex questions. One of the manifestations of social media is social freedom which contends with culture and tradition, leading to moral decay among young people.

Identity

Seymour (2003) opines that identity can be described as the norms, beliefs, practices, and traditions with which one engages one's environment. Identity is not an immutable concept, rather it forms and changes depending on the particular historical moment. Malkki (2001:56) notes

that people are often thought of and think of themselves as being rooted in a place and as deriving their identity from that rootedness. Users of social media see themselves as emotionally attached to the networks and have identification names or what you call username. According to Gellner (1981:4) this has to do with the manner in which researchers have often conceptualised the spatial arrangement of peoples.

Zuniga (1999:60) states that to build an identity involves deciding what projects to join and also means deciding whom you differ from and whom you feel equal to.

The mobile phone has become a central device in the construction of young peoples' individual identity (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Linchuan Qui and Sey, 2006). This is found in present-day digital revolution devices such as I-Phone, Androids, Blackberry phones, as well as tablets such as I-Pads.

Culture

Culture is an established pattern of behaviour among a people in every society. Nwadialor defines culture as "a means of communication and a label of identity; a body of stored knowledge, characteristic way of thinking and feeling, attitudes, goals and ideas" (2011:91-92). Similarly, Ekeh (1989:3) avers that culture is the important link between the individual and society. According to Moore and Woodrow (1998), culture is the cumulative result of experience, values, religion, beliefs, attitudes, meanings, knowledge, social organisations, procedures, timing, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe and material objects and possessions acquired or created by groups of people, in the course of generations, through individual and group effort and interactions.

In addition, Edo (2005:1) sees culture as the pattern of learned behaviour whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society from one generation to another. It is made up of the customs, traditions and beliefs, behaviour, dress, language, works of art and craft, way of living, network of relationship, attitude to life, as well as the technology and institution of the people in the society. Ekeh (1989:1) notes that culture is used in attempts to analyse and interpret events and ideas in a broad spectrum of areas of society: in a community as little as a village and in historical epochs which include vast networks of nationalities and states. Dare (2008:12) posits that knowledge and interaction with the environment and other cultures could

bring about the need to change certain aspects of a people's culture thereby making culture adjustable and adaptable. Tylor (1891) believes that culture is 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'. This definition affirms the present situation in Nigeria where the use of social networks has become a common habit or everyday practice. Users now establish relationships with people from all walks of life and other regions of the world.

Biobaku (1983:5) notes that an obstacle that militates against the development of Nigerian culture is misinterpretation of the past (which lingers on). Labelling African art and culture as primitive was the best way for the colonialists and the neo-colonialists to discourage their continuance. Branding them as primitive and agents of 'fetishism', the adherence of the two world religions of Christianity and Islam would shun African art and cultural manifestations like the plague. Secondly, in the justifiable modern African craving for technological advancement, there is the danger that cultural subjects would be relegated to the background, if not entirely ignored. This point is apt considering the way most institutions, students and parents now downplay subjects that promote indigenous culture such as Nigerian history, arts and performance studies. We are cognisant of the fact that some parents prefer to speak English with their children and encourage them to study courses like medicine, law and sciences thereby neglecting cultural subjects. The implication of neglecting cultural subjects is that students would be ill equipped with traditional ethics that ought to regulate their activities on social networks to avoid losing the necessary moral principle in this era of globalisation. It is obvious that social media life has become an established pattern of behaviour among Nigerians.

Medium Theory

Medium theory was proposed by Joshua Meyrowitz (1985) in the book 'No Sense of Place'. The theory states that technologically-mediated communication is a sui generis context that exists outside and is opposed to ordinary individuals. Turkle (1998) expands it by saying that our sense of self and deeper understanding of our own ego is shaped by our own image as seen on computer screen, a second sense of selfhood. We can agree with this from the fact that most social networking sites create space for people to upload their image. Technology is also seen as a

consequence of the cultural and social choices that precede it. Technology is society incarnate and social media would thus become a consequence of a game that has been played. Medium theory is significant here because it highlights how media are themselves social contexts that foster certain forms of interaction and social identities. As identified in medium theory, the online media are especially suitable to construct and develop several identities of the self.

Cultural Imperialism

According to White (2011), cultural imperialism gained prominence in the 1970s. The theory provided one of the major conceptual thrusts behind the movement for a New World Information and Communication Order, involving international organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and regarding the flow of information between nations of the world.

Cultural imperialism theory proposes that a society is brought into the modern world system when its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping its social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating center of the system (Schiller, 1973). The theory states that Western nations dominate the media around the world which in return has a powerful effect on Third World cultures by imposing on them Western views and therefore destroying their native cultures.

Technology has actually played significant roles in altering and shaping people's experiences. Most Nigerians now find it difficult to resist activities that take place in social networking sites. The relevance of this theory here is that Nigerians have shaped the country's social institutions to be in line with those of Western nations with the help of social media.

Social Media and the Place of Indigenous Culture in Contemporary Society

Presently, indigenous culture would not be said to be at its best because many forms of pop-culture have been introduced through social media. A good number of traditional values and practices have proved themselves to be functional in contemporary modern society. In the areas of political governance, ethics and social institution, traditional African societies have a great deal to offer to contemporary society (Ochoche,

2002). This opportunity has not been explored by people, especially the youth, who continue to embrace social media and everything that it offers. They are yet to understand the fact that indigenous culture is promising with undiluted positive values. Unfortunately, most Nigerians are victims of cultural imperialism.

Social ills such as endemic corruption, cyber crime and poor upbringing threaten the indigenous culture and the nation's moral fibre. Most Nigerians, especially the youth, are now interested in knowing more about Western ways of life through social media. Labinjoh, (2007:57) points out that consciousness of national identity is as old as social consciousness itself. Social media has the potential of over-shadowing the cultural values of various communities in Nigeria through pop media forms such as blogs, Youtube, Facebook and other social network sites that facilitate relationships.

Social networks are a rallying point for Nigerian youths who have accepted most of the things that such networks offer. This is part of cultural imperialism because these networks have succeeded in alienating Nigerians, especially the youths, who frequently participate in social networking and derive pleasure in activities that do not conform with indigenous cultural values. Instead of embracing the indigenous values, most people in the country continue to embrace those aspects of social networks that alienate them the more. It is a truism that there is erosion of indigenous culture. As Nwafor (2011:178) puts it, "traditional values for the preservation of society are fast being eroded in Africa due to increased culture contacts. Television and internet give a lot of information, but not all information are beneficial. Foreign television channels and internet are manufactories of make-belief. due to the dependency syndrome, Africans are always imitating what they see about America and Europe, even when those things are very injurious to health and reputation. Youths are seen as worst-hit due to crisis of discipline in African families and institutions".

Nigeria's Minister of Information, Labaran Maku, recently expressed concern over the increase in the number of social media in the country and attributed the revolution that took place in Egypt, Syria, Libya, Yemen and other Arab states to the reports dished out by the social media (Next, 2011). It is gradually becoming difficult to sustain social values and maintain standard behavior on social media as it exposes people to various practices and ways of life. Through social networks,

people indulge in immoral activities and develop bad habits that negate their tradition.

Identity conflict has become a source of disintegration even in social network sites where people hardly trust members of the group(s) in which they find themselves. Most times, there is mistaken identity or confused identities between people and even groups created in such networks which lead to identity conflicts that raise questions of who, how, when, and even where events take place. There is identity conflict that continues to threaten the credibility of most users of the networks.

Unending Dilemma of Social Networks

Africa's cultural heritage contains positive attributes including the ideals and values of patriotism, peaceful co-existence, honesty, respect for the dignity of man, commitment to the good of community, spirit of unity, among others (Babawale, 2009:13). It is not disputable that indigenous culture has unique attributes that promote intergroup relations. Marriage and some relationships that are built through social media tend to collapse because of many questions that remain unanswered after a long time. Such relationships collapse because parties involved either feel unfulfilled or cheated.

For instance, some youths now search for male and female friends online and get emotionally attached to each other to the extent that they get into serious relationships that could lead to marriage. It should be pointed out, however, that there is nothing wrong with getting married to the opposite sex. But the problem is that most partners in such relationships established through the social media do not know much about themselves due to deceit and pretence that usually permeate the relationships initiated on social networks. Again, at this stage, most of them may rarely know the families of those they are relating with, a problem that could lead to culture shock with attendant distrust.

Most youths now use social media as a channel of carrying out fraudulent activities. As a result of this, trust hardly exists anymore in social networks. There are reports of how people use fake documents and names that are not theirs to gain favour unnecessarily. Social networks are often regarded as channels of deceit where dishonest people plan to take advantage of unsuspecting persons. Many users tend to fake being victims of disaster, accidents, armed robbery and even pretend to be sick and hospitalised in order to get the sympathy of others and possibly

some financial assistance.

Similarly, an undergraduate student in Lagos was alleged to have raped two girls after exchanging contacts with them on social media. According to Naijaurban report (2013) the boy's mode of operation involved chatting up his victims on the Blackberry as a 'big boy'. Along the line, he would invite them for a date, an offer the girls did not turn down because of his posh car and deceitful lifestyle. Unfortunately for the ladies, rather than take them to an eatery as anticipated, he would take them to an uncompleted building in Ikeja Government Reserved Area, Lagos, where he used them mercilessly. The report showed that nemesis caught up with the culprit after one of the girls he raped in that manner, who found out she used to be his senior in secondary school, decided to take action. She reported the 22-year old undergraduate to the police, leading to his arrest and later arraignment for allegedly raping the lady in an uncompleted building. When facing a four-count charge preferred against him by the police before Magistrate Sule Hamsat, Ugochukwu pleaded not guilty. He was granted bail in the sum of #100,000 with two sureties in like sum. According to the police, immediately he raped any of the victims, he would delete their contacts from his BB Chat. The first lady he raped decided to withdraw from the case to protect her identity, but the lady he raped on 27 August, 2013 was prepared to pursue the case to conclusion. Such dilemma that is associated with social media is not found in any Nigerian culture.

There was also another media report in 2013 on how a 23-year old law student of the University of Abuja went to meet an unknown rich man in a hotel. She earlier met the man on Facebook and exchanged contacts with him but despite warnings not to embark on such mission by her roommate, she still went to honour the man's invitation. Unfortunately, she was found dead in the hotel room the next day and autopsy revealed she was poisoned.

In the area of cultural development, social media has been a minus considering the dangers that come with it, especially activities that are carried out through social networks. Most Nigerian ladies were alleged to have been killed by men they met on social networks. Many were also said to be victims of rape and fraud after accepting advances by the men that requested to be their friends. Such experiences and reports create negative perceptions of the social media in enhancing social integration in Nigeria.

Attention of stakeholders should be drawn to the fact that social media aids ethno-linguistic shift and cultural assimilation to the Western world. This has become necessary considering the way most Nigerian youths now prefer to write letters and send messages with the slangs they use on social networks. Unfortunately, such an attitude does not end there. They use the new media language while communicating at home and during community meetings.

Some Social Networks

The social network sites that are popular with young people in Nigeria include CliqueIt, Kontain, 2Go, ForecastforAn, Seydo, Bebo, Friendster, Free Calls, Liveshare, Fring, AppFriends, IMobile Market, textPlus, FringSocial Networki, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Linkedin, Nairaland and Chatrain. People now join these social networks at a voracious rate. Chatrain, for instance, encourages people to share their stories in pictures, videos and blogs as they explore, connect, and become part of the new sharing media community. On 2go they have various groups called rooms, such as my favourites, advice, ages (30plus, 40 plus, 50plus), entertainment (big brother, comedy club, movies, naruto, poets, wrestling), faith, flirt zone, football, game rooms, hangout, languages, lifestyle, music, news, places, politics, universities. On 2go, people are encouraged to find friends through Facebook contacts or by mobile number. Various service providers now offer users the opportunity to choose any of the data plans daily, weekly or monthly which aid their presence on social networks.

The implication of patronising these networks which are foreign to the fundamental values of our culture according to Nwadialor (2011:103), is that they already have their mission and individuals end up being engulfed in them. Abuse of these networks through questionable acts could be counterproductive in the sense that most users are likely to see them as lacking moral and cultural values. Some values on social networks are alien to us and the present generation, according to Livingstone (2008), could be described as people who have many friends but little sense of privacy. Therefore, this article maintains that to address the question of how we can shape our identity, users of social networks need to apply caution as they embrace the social media.

The networks have introduced a culture of laziness as some users battle to accommodate the productive things they could do to help

themselves. Using networks could also be time – consuming, financially wasteful and a threat to privacy. The earlier people realise that social networks do not only have benefits but also come with pains, the better for them.

Power Users of Social Networks and Strategies for Promoting the Potentials of Indigenous Culture

A survey released on 26 August, 2011 by the Pew Internet Life Project shows that women are leading the way in the number of people who use social networks and that the percentage of internet users who are on social networking sites continues to climb (CNN, 2011). The report shows that the percentage has doubled in the past three year from about 29 percent to 65 percent in 2011. This year's Pew report also marks the first time that more than 50 percent of adults surveyed (users and nonusers) used social networks. According to Pew report, in 2005, 5 percent of adults told Pew that they used social media. Young adult women are seen as power users of social media sites. About 8 percent of women online between 18 and 29 years old are on the sites while 69 percent of them say they tend to log onto social media every day.

Women have been significantly more likely to be on social sites than men since 2009. The implication of this is that most families risk having children that know little or even nothing about their culture because mothers spend time with their children more than the fathers. To avoid being a people of confused cultural identities (Ogwu, 2010:76), we need to apply caution as we use social networks. Failure to apply caution has enormous economic, social and security costs. In essence, indigenous culture should be recognised as the guiding principle for Nigerians to use social networks without being lost in the sites. To overcome the dangers associated with the use of social media, it is crucial that stakeholders in all sectors of the economy revive moral values and make people understand those practices that are regarded as taboos in the context of our cultural practices. This has become necessary because indigenous culture does not encourage deceit, insincerity and fraud. Young people need to be acquainted with cultural values in order to get the right thing from social networks.

It is apparent that social networks offer the opportunity for pictorial representation of events and incidents, just like the story of some politicians from the South-South rgion visiting a shrine as reported by

Anioma Crime Watch on 19th September, 2013 with picture of the Keleng shrine posted on the Facebook page of the group. This was done because pictures enhance the objectivity of reports. Such opportunity should be explored in promoting indigenous culture, festivals and events at the grassroots.

Academic and professional networks especially those that have similar interests, such as researchers, peace advocates, conflict managers, human rights activists, advocacy to eradicate violence against women and enhance gender mainstreaming also share information and organise virtual conferences on social networks. This, no doubt, promotes education through knowledge sharing. Social media would be more relevant to cultural development when people take advantage of social networks to promote cultural festivals, and the traditions of various groups in Nigeria. Any society that values its culture would be regarded as a serious society. If Nigerians are able to prevent the use of social media to dilute indigenous culture, it would be a great achievement considering the dangers of embracing Western ways of life through the activities of most users. For instance, Babawale (2009) notes that the internet is advantageous to Western world while other cultures (especially those in Africa) are at a disadvantage due to the threat of extinction.

To save Nigerian culture from being overshadowed by social media, there is the need for stakeholders to take steps to regulate usage of social networks. Youths should therefore take advantage of social media to promote Nigerian languages especially now that Blackberry Messenger (BBM) has more than 60 million customers who send and receive more than 10 billion messages each day. According to Halliwell (2013), the BBM features that are now available in Android and iPhone include BBM Chat which offers users the opportunity to enjoy immediate conversations with friends, brands, celebrities, artists, virtual communities on Android, iPhone and Blackberry smartphones. With BBM people share files on their phones such as photos and voice notes even as they respond to messages; users are entitled to BBM groups of up to 30 friends to chat together, share schedules and photos; people post status updates; every BBM user has a unique PIN that maintains privacy when communicating with people that may not necessarily have his/her phone number or email address.

Concluding Remarks

The rise of social media and sharpened appetite for social networking is changing the cultural equation of Nigeria. This phenomenon should be given prime attention by policy makers. In fact, it needs to be addressed as part of the constitutional amendment. It is the responsibility of our lawmakers to protect our culture through legislation. Presently, the trouble with Nigeria is no longer that of leadership as earlier stated earlier by Professor Chinua Achebe in 1983 but a failure of family and cultural values in the sense that many families do not question their children or caution them not to undermine cultural values. At the community level, elders no longer caution younger ones not to undermine traditional values and even when they do, younger people do not listen.

It is obvious that the neglect of culture has become the bane of value system in the country. This is so because the morality level has reduced since the emergence of social networks. The state of culture in contemporary Nigeria cannot be said to be at its best because the activities of users of social media undermine the growth of indigenous culture. Globalisation, of which the new media is a significant aspect, promotes a unified system of thought and ensures trans-border relationship between states. But people should use social media to project our values based on present-day reality.

In conclusion, as Nigerians, especially young people, continue to embrace globalisation, they should do so in such a way that cultural values are not relegated to the background. Rather, they should imbibe the positive attributes of indigenous culture to strike a balance and also take advantage of social media to project indigenous culture to the world. It is only culture that can provide a reliable link between the present generation, the unborn generation and the ancestral world.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Re-Africanising 'Motherfucker': Nigerian Hip-Hop and the Translocation of [illegible]

Ayo Adeduntan

Most definitions of hip-hop are agreed on the two points that it is a counterculture and that it is youth culture. Tricia Rose, in her pioneering work on hip-hop, [illegible] (1994), states that as a "hidden transcript," hip-hop "critiques and resists various aspects of social domination" (100). Halifu Osumare (2005) also considers "the entire expressive culture of hip-hop" as resonant "not only with the anxiety of youthful social rebellion but extant global socio-political equities as well" (268). Osumare's definition seems to have taken into consideration subjectivities that emanate from the relocation of hip-hop to non-US cultures. As such, the entire hip-hop community is commonly defined by the subalternate position imposed by the mainstream, the defiance of and resistance to which constitute hip-hop's subjects and mode of expression. That global hip-hop community is, according to him, united in "connective marginality" (267).

Since Tricia Rose identified three expressive constituents of hip-hop as rap, break dancing and graffiti, other items have been added to the list. Jeff Chang (2007), for example, says that "hip-hop's original elements" were "MCing, DJing, b-boying (or 'breakdancing'), and graffiti" (61). In a recent work, Jannis Androustopoulos (2011), after naming the four elements as "breaking, DJing, rapping and writing" (43), advises that in view of many expressive hip-hop sites – such as informal talk, broadcast shows "and an array of everyday talk and computer-mediated discourse" – there is a need to pay more attention to other hip-hop forms that are not rap. Androustopoulos' counsel apprehends the dominance of focus on rap in hip-hop studies so much so that rap has become for many a synonym for, and not a constituent of, hip-hop. Nicole R. Fleetwood (2005) similarly points out the need to give specific

attention to couture not as an accessory of rap but as an identifiable site of expression in hip-hop.

The above review, largely from studies in the US, is meant to put in view the impermanence of hip-hop taxonomy. It especially provides anchorage for our definition of the Nigerian type because some of the modes of musical performance categorised as hip-hop here sometimes diverge from theparamusical tonality that defines rap. Such examples as 9ice (AboloreAkande), MallamSpicey (Michael Tari-Davies) and Wande Coal (WandeOjosipe) largely employ straight musical tonalities and sparingly use rap as guest features. The parameters therefore used in categorising them as hip-hop artists include (1) the artists' use of the same idioms, instrumentation and performance style as their Nigerian rap counterparts; (2) their categorisation as hip-hop artists on internet fora such as Nairaland, Notjustok.com, and musical charts on the radio and television, (3) and the artists' self-identification with hip-hop.

"Diss," also sometimes called "beef," a hip-hop word, is understood in this paper in its traditional sense as "insult, implicitly or explicitly, directed at somebody you know, especially another musician."

The Hip-Hop Other

On 12 March, 2010, a member who signed himself as ElRazur, posted his thought on the entertainment section of Nairaland, a Nigerian on-line forum, under the heading "Beef This, Diss That, Haters, Enemies and Music Lately":

> What happened to innovation and what is happening to music . . .Why the need to constantly engage or fan all of these so called Beefs and Disses? It seems people can't disagree in a logical manner these days without resulting to a Diss song and some who thinks they are friends from each sides fanning the trouble by creating further Song that are nothing but Diss!
>
> Seriously, what happened to real creativity? Sunny Ade and Obey existed side-by-side for years and I am not sure there was never any spat between them both. Fela never dissed any artist to make a living . . . Looking back now, it appears that music is perhaps getting dumber and more silly. Looking at the history of music in Nigeria, there appears to be more intelligence in it way before the advent of NaijaHiphop.[1]

Niyi Osundare, literary scholar and poet, similarly feels strongly about the overcast of what he terms "hip hop hysteria" on the Nigerian artistic

climate:

> There is a hip hop hysteria in the present atmosphere: an exogeneist mentality that urges one to take leave of one's very self and assume the borrowed, clichéd mask of the foreign other. Many, many members of the new generation are doing to our literature what Islamic and Christian faiths have done to our indigenous religion and cultural integrity (2005: 21).

The above reactions are typical of anti-hip-hop sentiments in public and in formal theses. Two broad issues, represented in the two views cited, that always emanate pertain to quality of artistry and fixation with foreign culture. Accordingly, ElRazur indicts [illegible] as a practice as he does hip-hop generally. For him, dissing is antithetic to "logic" and "creativity." It is by thematising dissing so prominently that Nigerian hip-hop, in his reckoning, has fallen below the high standard set by the much older artists performing Juju and Afrobeat. Osundare similarly sees the entirety of hip-hop in Nigeria as culturally undignifying because it is exotic. This paper addresses the formation represented in the arguments of Osundare and ElRazur, and the reigning definition of hip-hop as a performance of rebellion. It particularly isolates [illegible] to show that hip-hop entrenches itself in continuance with an African tradition – past and emergent – of performance. Second, while bearing in mind the inequality of different artists' ability and quality of performance, it is argued that dissing is no less a brilliant work of art than works based on such other themes as praise, admonition and so on. Finally, [illegible] is seen as a device for re-routing emotions that could have been expressed in physically violent terms.

Origins

Rap, the hip-hop form from which the concept of dissing came, is largely of African-American origin. Cheryl Keyes (1996) writes that "historically speaking, the concept of rappin – talking in rhythm over music or to an internally realised beat – can be traced from Africanbardic traditions to the rural oral southern-based expressive forms of African Americans" (225), and that "it represents a continuity of African-derived concepts consciously as well as unconsciously" (241). Some works have, however, queried the privileging of the African-American input, calling attention to the contributions of other marginal nationalities. In a recent work, Michael P. Jefferies (2011) notes the growing tendency to ignore the

Latino, Asian and American whites' contribution to hip-hop. But as Jefferies himself admits, the African participation is dominant. One can therefore hypothesise that there has been an inflow of African traditional elements into hip-hop. According to BabatundeLawal (2002), "it is in the realm of African American music that African carryovers are most conspicuous and profound" (49).

It is appropriate at this point to show that traditional African – extinct, extant or emergent – performance cultures use(d) protocols similar to that of dissing. Daniel Avorgbedor, the Ghanaian ethnomusicologist, has written extensively on the performance of verbal aggression among the Anlo-Ewe of Ghana. Before its proscription in 1962, [illegible] used to be a performance involving "two villages or two wards from one village, and is characterised by direct or comic forms of provocation, aggravation, and sung or spoken insults, which are sometimes exaggerated through dramatic elements" (2001, 17). Even as some [illegible] performances ended in violence, one could infer from the description of the last stage of the performance – termed "pseudo-[illegible]" by Avorgbedor – that the ultimate essence of [illegible] was to heighten animosity in order to bring it to an end:

> The curtain closes, in many instances, with these elders performing a ritual of cessation of hostilities by symbolically "burying" [illegible]. The ritual forebodes ill for anyone who re-initiates the drama (1999, 146).

Tanure Ojaide, poet and scholar, also describes [illegible] performance among the Urhobo of Nigeria:

> [illegible] is a unique type of dance in which rival quarters or towns perform songs composed from often exaggerated materials about the other side on an appointed day . . . Since there were no prisons in traditional Urhobo, major crimes were punished by either selling the offender into servitude or by execution. Minor crimes were, however, punished by satire. [illegible] dance songs fall into the corpus of satire (2001, 44).

But beyond the punitive, [illegible] expresses interpersonal and interparty animosity, tempered with "self-praise and boastfulness. Since [illegible] contest is a form of warfare, each side attempts to intimidate the other" (59). One prime social significance of [illegible] is in its ability to re-express war as songs.

Many extant and emergent Yoruba traditional forms that are not theme-specific like [illegible] and [illegible] nevertheless opportunely use the

resources of abuse. In a discussion with AlabiOgundepo, a popular Yoruba ijala poet, he spoke on the place of abuse in the performance of praise in his work:

> Ìgbàkanwà tó jẹ́pétẹ́ẹ́bá ń sùn'jálá, tẹ́ẹ́bá ń kìí'yàn, tẹ́ẹ̀bá tíìbúàwọnọ̀tá ẹ, kòníídùn, aráyésì lè márà á. Papàá,káníọbakanlẹ́ ńkì, t'ẹẹ̀bábúàwọntíwọ́njọ du ọbayẹn [kòníídùn]. Óti'èpọ̀níúàṣà [Yorùbá] nígbàyẹn.
>
> [There was a time that when you performed ijala, praising a man without abusing his enemies, the performance would not be well-recieved. Especially, if the person being praised was anọba, until you abused his rivals to the throne (that performance would not generate enough excitement). It was prominent in the (Yoruba) culture then.]

The fact that Ogundepo's reference was to the past might suggest that abuse in ijala is now out of fashion. But in the ijala of Ogundepo itself, now mainly performed as political campaigns, announcements and jingles on the broadcast media, the ancient device of abuse serves to highlight the praised referent. It is particularly so with his performances commissioned by political parties and politicians. Ogundare Fọyanmu, another popular ijala artist is more conservative in his adherence to formula in composition and performance. In an audio record entitled Orin Òjòwu, he attacks the portrait of , a man who cannot keep a secret:

> Olóríburúkú, abiàtàrípàlàbàpalaba
> Òkúùgbẹ́ti se t'éegbọ́s'ọ́rọ̀yírí?
> Ab'ẹsẹ̀ bíẹ̀yaodó
> Olóríburúkú, abọrùn bíèèkàn à 'lù
>
> [The big-headed, ill-fated one
> How did he come to hear about this matter?
> His legs like a mortar split in two
> Ill-fated one with a neck thin like the drum peg].

The above insult is directed at a nameless stereotype, but, as will be shown later, Fọyanmu also addresses abuses to known adversaries.

The idea of battle, manifest in diss-songs, is central to mainstream hip-hop. This site of battle is called "the cipher" (Jeff Chang, 2007) or "thacipha" (Sammy Alim, 2009). According to Chang, journalist and

music critic, "partly for competition and partly for community, the cipher is the circle of participants and on-lookers that closes around battling rappers or dancers . . . Here is where reputations are made and risked and stylistic change is fostered" (60). In the performance, "the crews line up and verbally attack each other either one-on-one or 'commando style' all at once" (65). Jeff Chang's observation does not just describe the relocation of the principle of war into performance, it also points out that both the performers and the audience invest in it. The similarity to the African indigenous forms such as [illegible] and [illegible] becomes patent here. Nigerian hip-hop is, in view of this, a legatee of the performative infrastructure of war on both the indigenous and the exotic sides.

Hip-hop artist 9ice (Abqlqrv Akande), in a diss track, "Talk, I am Listening," aimed at his erstwhile patron and ally, Rugged Man (Ugochukwu Stephens), opens with a popular Yoruba battle cry: "B'o le d'ogunk'od'ogun [Let the war start, I do not care]". As the song closes, 9ice renews the martial metaphor with "Michael Ogochukwu Stephens, o ti dá'ná ogun o/Màá fi yé v pé qmq akin ni mí/Qmq Ògbómôzö ìlú t'ógun ò kí n jà [You Michael Ogochukwu Stephens have started the fire of war/I shall prove to you that I was born of the valiant/From Ògbómôzö, the town that was never invaded by war]". This figural association, patterned after the Yoruba [illegible], is employed not only in indigenous forms such as [illegible] and *ê*[illegible], but indeed in 20th century genres such as [illegible] and [illegible]. 9ice's forte especially lies in this resource and extensive recapitulation of proverbs.

Dissing as prosecuted in hip-hop is discourse – agonistic and polemic – performed as battle. Tqpv Qmqniyi (2009) considers Nigerian hip-hop in similar terms when he describes "freestyling", a mode of performance that includes what Chang calls "the cipher", as "a version of discursive, practices such as ewi, a disciplined and Yoruba oral poetic form, and orineebu or orin owe, the abuse songs and proverbial songs employed in 'song lashing' episodes . . . among the Yoruba" (117). In one of the most significant points in meta-musical criticism in Nigerian hip-hop, 9ice and Rugged Man (who both would later become adversaries) collaborate to critique the Nigerian artist. The song "Ruggedy Baba," addresses the important questions of language, public acceptance and the artist's income. Its thesis, in sum, is that even as culture is continually generated and updated, the imperatives of communication and identity constitute a valve that dams the overflow of the exotic so that the culture does not

receive at its own peril:

> From Nigeria the world only knows juju, fuji and Afrobeat
> But we all know hip hop is running the streets
> Wetin go [What will] make them know where your music come from
> In the long run
> Na[Is] the fusion of grammar, your slang and your mother tongue

The performance of this argument as a fight relies on the dramatic casting of Rugged Man in the video as paramount ruler and 9ice as a chieftain. As Rugged Man the king fumes at known performers such as Paul Play (Paul I.K. Dairo), rhetorically asking "What will it take for me to rearrange and eventually blow [become successful]?/While you sit around and talk shit/Our elders mock our shit/ Cos of our too much metaphorical out-of-space type shit", 9ice plays the role of a lieutenant soothing the angry general with a chorus partly composed of oriki and appeal:

> Opomulero Mɑjaalekan za maa wo wɑn niran
> Oro ma sɑ'ko, dakun ma sɑ'ko mɑ
> Ruggedy ma sɑ'ko moɑɑ o
> .....
> Oro ma sɑ'ko mɑ
> [Opomulero Mɑjaalekan, please ignore them
> Oro, please stop pelting them with stones, please stop
> Ruggedy, stop pelting stones
> Oro stop pelting them with stones]
> .....

Oro is a male-only Yoruba ritual institution, and Opomulero Mɑjaalekan a Yoruba lineage name.Now, Rugged Man, re-invented as Opomulero and oro in the performance, is Igbo and not Yoruba. 9ice's appropriation of a Yoruba narrative to protagonise him illustrates one major strength of Nigerian hip-hop, its capacity for sourcing myths from many cultures and recycling them into one. Tɑpv Qmɑniyi has noted this strain in the deployment of language in the performance of hip-hop in Nigeria. "Multilingual repertoire", he writes, is a "property of urban multilingual performers as well as an indicator of groups that comprise individuals drawn from more than one ethnolinguistic community" (126).

Individual artist's selection and use of idioms in the performance of

abuse is determined by the culture he grew up in. Wande Coal (Wande Ojoʒipv) has a metropolitan background, having grown up in Lagos. In his "Who Born da Magga?" a diss song that Kelly Handsome (Kelechukwu) would later consider an attack on him, he depends solely on the Nigerian urban idiom of music and sport fandom. Fandom, when it relates to soccer, especially the Premier League, manifests in verbal aggression among supporters. It sometimes escalates into physical violence. There is also hip-hop fandom which likewise generates a lot of animosity expressed in such internet fora as Nairaland and Rhymesville. Many users of these social networks are similar to the village audience split between the halo- or udje-performing groups or artists (Avorgbedor, 1999, 145), staging parallel performances of abuse on the sidelines. In the virtual arenas of these social networks where users benefit from facelessness, they curse the opponents as if they were the artist, and are cursed back in like manner. Wande Coal yokes these fandoms of soccer and hip-hop to intimidate the antagonist:

> You be Arsenal, ɑmɑ, I be Man-U
> You come dey vex because we dey outshine you
> Hey, I don't want to harm you
> No be threaten na the truth I dey yarn you
> Before my fans go gather up handle you
> You go think say na mooluv jam you

Of Baba, Small Boy and Other Kin

Karin Barber (1991) observes that among the Yoruba:

> "You are a small boy to me", "I had given birth even before you married", "I was walking before you were born" are comments that are heard continually as the hierarchy of seniority is reproduced in daily life (183).

This, which is also true of many other cultures of Africa, is reflected in the performance of abuse in both indigenous and 20th century forms. Sunny Ade, the juju exponent, responds to the jibes from Emperor Peter, also known as Qmɑ Qdv, in the 1970s:

> Vkilɑ f'Qmɑ Qdv
> Ko ma rin n'ipado
> Koma ʒeeʒi f'ara b'ogidan lojiji
> Igbɑnran san jvbɑ riru

[Warn the young apprentice hunter
Not to stray to the waterside
Lest the leopard comes upon him unawares
Obedience is better than sacrifice]

In Emperor Peter's text, with which Sunny Ade's song is considered an exchange, "ɑmɑ ɑdv" means "man born of the hunters' lineage". It is in order to give emphasis to seniority that Sunny Ade emphasises the word's second sense: "young apprentice hunter". It is in similar light that Sikiru Ayinde Barrister, the fuji musician, warns a younger artist, Iyanda Sawaba, in the 1980s:

Igbo ɑdaju la n re yi ɑmɑ ti o ja'yan
Ko ma ẓe ẓobɑleẓan o
[We are set for the evil forest
Let the suckling return home and not meddle]

"Baba" in Yoruba literally means "father" or "man". But it also often translates as "patron" or "sponsor". O.B. Lawuyi, drawing from the model established by J.D.Y. Peel, comments on the appropriation of the concept of "baba" by Nigerians as a term for negotiating challenges imposed by socioeconomic exigencies:

> There are so many [illegible] (and [illegible], mothers) in the various socioeconomic sectors able to articulate and fix the nexus of authentic achievements through demarcated field of expertise and the projection of an exotic culture (2008, 319).

As Lawuyi further points out, "baba's" term of relation with his "children" is amoral because "the individual is in constant search not only for the [illegible] (my emphasis), but also for the Baba whose support is vital to the removal of the dangers on a journey (321). "Baba" as a term of relation is replicated in hip-hop where the artist's access to the public via record deals and regular airtime on radio and television is moderated by cartels of influential entrepreneurs. For example, one of the factors responsible for the break-up and dissolution of the group PlantashunBoiz in the early 2000s was the patronage of Tu Face (Innocent Idibia), one member of the group by Kennis Music, a label run by men with experience and influence in the broadcast media. In the video clip of the work of Wande Coal cited earlier, there is a raw dramatisation of the link between this fabricated kinship and material success: Wande Coal, at the end of the song, is let into a vault full of money, welcomed by the

"Baba", owner of Mo Hits label, Don Jazzy, and his friend and musician, DBanj. As I intend to show later, the semiotic potential of this drama also increases in view of the subsequent claim that the song is a diss songaimed at Kelly Handsome, an artist not in good terms with Mo Hits. Not only the patrons of record labels, but also artists who consider themselves successful enough also assume the role of "baba", which they or their fans and "children" affix to their names. Tu Face, for example, is now frequently referred to as Tu Baba both in songs and in public.

One important dimension in the use of "baba" in performance as an indicator of status relates to aggression and intimidation. Rugged Man is named Ruggedy Baba by his erstwhile "child" 9ice. This status develops from Rugged Man's career of dissing other hip-hop artists, many of whom fell from stardom after that. For Rugged Man himself, it is a portfolio that involves the responsibility of sanitising the process and quality of hip-hop production, some sort of law enforcement:

> Where them been dey when I dey speak for mechanics and shoe makers
> Dem dey talk around the subject like our lawmakers
> Before I dropped V v the industry was messed up
> Fakers dey rule while realer rappers them dey stressed up
> Nobody did a damn thing until I came through
> I cleared the whole area now real rappers have a say too
> Now people dey listen to and come for our shows and clap for them
> Some dey take am to the next level with hip hop forums.

It is this aggressive import of "baba" that the paramount-ruler portrait of rugged man is meant to strengthen.

But kinship terms such as "baba" are also vulnerable to deconstruction. One unwritten rule of performative continuity in not only hip-hop dissing but in the enunciation of verbal aggression in many African cultures is that a performer replies to an abuse with a better crafted one. As such, an attack on an artist may result in a response that incorporates the attacker's kin. For example "You are a fool" may beget "Your father is a fool". In his performance cited earlier, Ogundare Foyanmu, the ijala poet, switches from addressing his target, another artist from Ilorin, and focuses briefly on the latter's parents:

> Oko baba re ri dqqrq bi afara oyin
> Vvke iya woo bi v n difa

Ojungun baba rv ri peregede bi ifa fọre
Esv gbogbo lo bu pvpvvpv bi ilv amq

[His father's penis is as long as the bee trap
His mother's cheeks are sunken
His father's legs are emaciated
The sole of his feet are cracked like the surface of a clayey floor]

Wande Coal's "Who Born da Magga?" is considered a reaction to Kelly Handsome's "Magga don Pay," a song that celebrates hedonism and confidence game. In his reply to Wande Coal, Kelly Handsome sings:

Dis story o e
Na true story o e
E happen for Lasgidio e
Between me and Mo Hit o e
I dey my own
Dem send small pikin to insult me o e
Say "Na who born, na who born, na who born the magga?"
Chorus: Na your papa born, na him born, na him born the magga.

Kelly Handsome's portrait of young Wande Coal as "small pikin" [little boy] is intended to put in relief a cultural ethical breach: a little boy abusing an older person. "Who born the Magga?" the term employed by Wande Coal in the offensive song is similar in import to "Who born you" [Who gave birth to you?], a rhetorical question that denotes not only the speaker's defiance of the addressee, but contempt for him as well. It is in the light of this that Kelly Handsome's reference to "your papa [your father]" becomes appropriate.

The performance of the "war" between Rugged Man and his former "child" is also enunciated in kinship terms. The popular origin narrative of the fight is that 9ice, in his song "Once Bitten, Twice Shy" insinuates that a friend was having an affair with his woman. Not long after the release, 9ice and his wife, Tony Payne, were separated. The hip-hop public, like most audiences, started to circulate several theories, the most widespread of which was that Rugged Man is the "friend" referred to by 9ice. Rugged Man's point against 9ice therefore was the failure of the latter to speak up and clear his name. Following Rugged Man's outburst on the internet, 9ice turns on his former patron:

Ogochukwu Stephens boya loma gberi
I know you're squatting with your mama

Mile Two too wa is for your **brother**
Take care of that Touareg u know no be you get am
.....
Allow me to deal with this **motherfucker**
He calls himself original rapper
He calls himself the best amongst others
I named him **RuggedyApa**

[**Ugochukwu Stephens**, I doubt if you'll ever make it in life
I know you are squatting with your **mother**
The house you live in in Mile Two {in Lagos} is owned by your **brother**
Take care of that Volkswagen Touareg because it is not yours
.....
Allow me to deal with this motherfucker
Allow me to deal with this **motherfucker**
He calls himself original rapper
He calls himself the best amongst others
I named him **Ruggedy Apa**

The degeneration of relations between the two artists can be gauged from the highlighted items. The reference to Rugged Man by his first name inaugurates a conscious affront before the more definite insult "boyalomagberi [I doubt if you'll ever make it in life]." As motifs, "squatting with your mama [squatting with your mother]" and "Mile Two too wa is for your brother [The house you live in in Mile Two (in Lagos) is owned by your brother]" are meant to dismantle the construct of "baba" as self-sufficient and benevolent, which he 9ice earlier helped to create and sustain. RuggedyApa in the last line negatively reinvents "Ruggedy Baba" in the song of the same name earlier performed by the two feuding artists.

The response to 9ice's abuse by another artist retains a template similar to Kelly Handsome's "small pikin" model. Chinaydu, a man younger than 9ice, refers to himself as "ɑmɑ Rugged [Rugged's child] and begins his debut, "9ice the Ingrate" in speech mode with:

> Abɑlɑrv abi ki lɑn ti n pe ? [Abolɑrv or whatever you are called] You must be out of your mind to think Ruggedy Baba, the man that brought you up in this industry will stoop low to exchange childish words with you.

Chinaydu ends the song with "ɑmɑ Rugged l'o n da v lohunyi o" [This is only a child of Rugged replying you] and uses the plural first

person "a [we]" in the next line to suggest intimidatingly that more "children" are still linedup: "A maa bu ṿ pa, Ọlọun [We shall diss you to death, I swear by God]."

Baa ba n Ja Bii Ka Ku Kọ²: Exorcism of Fight-to-the-Death

As I have suggested earlier, performance of abuse, with its idioms of battle and mortality is an exercise in social homeopathy. War and violence are performatively invoked in order to apprehend and neutralise same. Ethics in some performance culture enforce that feuding artists do not quarrel outside the performance arena. It is in view of this that moderate members of the audience sometimes read the artist's fight as a strategy for boosting records sale. In 1981, Ayinla Ọmọwura, the Apala singer and one of the most eloquent performers of Yoruba verbal aggression, died. Before Ayinla's death, Sikiru Ayinde Barrister, the fuji musician, had consistently been the target of his attack. Since Ayinla's death was violent, it came with the potential of the theory that Barrister was responsible. Barrister promptly pre-empted this by releasing a song in his honour, some part of which is composed as epe, Yoruba malediction:

B'aye lo ba pae
T'obak'ogunile a wo
B'o ba r'ṿgbṿfa mọto, a danu
B'o ba b'igba ọmo ko ni ku'kan ẓoẓo
Onitọun o nii ku sibi azọ rṿ gbe wa
[Whoever killed you,
If he built twenty houses, may they all collapse
If he bought a thousand vehicles, may they all crash
If he had two hundred children, they all shall die
He shall die where there is no relation to bury him]

The epe, meant to prove the performer's innocence, is informed by the awareness of the enormity of fighting a fellow artist's to the death. The ultimate intention of verbal aggression therefore is pacifist, most especially as the feuding parties must have once had a cordial relationship. In Rugged Man's own contribution to the "war" between him and 9ice, the artist both reaffirms his innocence and dwells emotionally on the gains of their relationship that the fight has undermined:

You had the gut to call me a bastard over something that never happened
You tried to tarnish my image and that of your wife because you wanted to sell

CDs
God bless you, boy
You can diss me all you want, but it will never change the fact that
The first stage you ever got on was through me
You started making money after I introduced you to the world
The wife you married I introduced to you
The first child you ever got was from the woman I introduced to you
I am part of your history
.....
God bless rugged Man's fans
God bless 9ice's fans
God bless you 9ice

Conclusion

US hip-hop history is full of sour memories of violence and mortalities. This baggage is sometimes invoked in the condemnation of the Nigerian variant as a received culture. But a more attentive study would reveal that performance in Nigerian hip-hop is convergent in many ways with the traditional performance culture. As Osundare points out disparagingly, hip-hop invites us to use the "mask of the foreign other." But the predicament of using the performative mask is no less dignifying than that of writing undeniably African poetry, play or fiction in English. The predicament of the hip-hop generation is in fact more enviable in that they use the language of their marginalised kinsmen. As the world's differences and subjectivities multiply, and cultural discontents are expressed in literal violence, Nigerian hip-hop provides us a remedial example of how not just to relate peacefully with one another, but how to "fight" peacefully with one another.

Endnotes

1. http://www.nairaland.com/nigeria/topic-412057.0.html#msg5677358 (Retrieved 3 October, 2011).
2. Yoruba, meaning "If we fight, let it not be the death."

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