

ROLE OF MUSIC FOR VALUE RE-ORIENTATION IN THE NIGERIAN SOCIETY

By

MARTHA U. OKEKE

*Department of Music,
Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu,
Enugu State.*

Abstract

Music is a language, a phenomenon that is integral in all aspects of cultures. It determines the essence of man and forms an integral part of his existence. Values influence the way we construe events and situation, and are linked with our emotions. Values can either be positive or negative. It is positive when it helps in the growth of the individual and the society in some desirable ways. It is negative when it retards the growth and development of the individual and the society. The negative values implies that there is need for a re-orientation. Re-orientation refers to the re-channeling of people's attitude of the mind into a more desirable ways of behavior. The average Nigerian of today is ethnocentric for the fear of being cut-off from his ethnic root. It is because of that, that Nigeria today seems to lack an articulated goals and value system. Music being one of the disciplines that can educate people anytime and anywhere should be used to correct this negative values. This paper therefore, highlighted various ways music can be used to re-orient Nigerian society towards establishing articulated goal and value system.

Nigeria gained independence in 1960 under the civilian government. In 1967, a section of the country felt discontented with the political atmosphere in the country and seceded, plunging the nation into a civil war. Government coined the slogan to keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done. With this, it intended to bring about oneness at all cost. The war ranged for almost three years. Lives were lost and properties destroyed. Destruction, fear and lack of confidence were ingrained in the minds of some sections of the country. The people were physically and psychologically devastated. There was the

need for rehabilitation and reconstruction of both personalities and infrastructures. Nation building and National unity became uppermost in the minds of the citizenry and education was seen as a veritable instrument to bring about national unity.

Some educationists like Naibe in Ikegbunam (2000) was of the view that Nigerian schools were training the individual as an individual instead of training him as a member of a community and of a nation. In other words, the individual should be trained as a citizen. The educational system should inculcate in the students the idea of belonging, not to one clan or tribe, but to the whole nation. In the words of Coockey in Ikegbunam (2000):

The ideal state is one where every citizen is determined to be part of the community, to share its burdens, his own wishes, convenience, time and money to it.

If this was what the educational system was expected to do, it has failed woefully because Nigerians had not begun to think of Nigeria as one and each citizen are intrinsically part of the Nigerian society. It is as a result of this that this paper comes up with suggestions on how to re-orient the Nigerian value systems, especially the role of music.

The Concept of Values

Value according to Vivck (1985) as reported in Onyeze-chukwu (2001) is defined as a determination or quality of an object which involves any sort of appreciation or interest. Psychologically, appreciation involves feeling based on desires or tendencies. Values are “subsistents” that is entities which do not exist in space and time, but are held to the real. The values such as truth, goodness and beauty are independent of human desire and preference, they are in the world to be discovered.

Krech, Crutohfid and Ballachy (1992) in Anoke (2012) see values in positive and negative aspects. In their positive aspects, values refer to beliefs about what objects and actions are good and desirable, and therefore, ought to be (e.g. honesty in dealing without fellows). In their negative aspect, they refer to beliefs about what object and actions are bad and undersirable and, therefore, ought not to be (e.g dishonesty in dealing with our fellows). To illustrate this with a homely example, Nigerian of the so called oil boom era, appear to value in a peculiar way the state or goal of being wealthy and the trappings (big cars, lace materials etc) that signify the attainment of that state. Wealth has to be accepted of course as desirable depending on one’s interpretation of the concept. By the same token, and in a social atmosphere in which wealth is valued, the other side of wealth namely poverty, must be accepted as undesirable. The means and the behaviours we exhibit in the course of attaining our values, both individually and as organizations constitute some psycho-social-problems.

Jones and Gerard (1976) reported in Anoke (2012), defined value as “Any singular state or object for which the individual strives or approaches, extols, embraces, voluntarily consumes, incurs expenses to acquire, is a positive value. This implies

among other things that value are both realistic and idealistic in nature. As ideals, value ought to inspire people, animate them, and move them around their environment.

Values are thus not only individualistic but societal and generational. A value that is ought to be should be transmissible to future generations, and since the present generation is the foundation of future generation, present values ought to possess transmissible qualities. Transmissibility is one of the yardsticks against which the values we pursue now ought to be judged. It may be argued that both good and bad values are transmissible. Transmissibility as it is meant to be understood here should possess qualitative durability of a kind that is likely to promote the social, psychological, moral and economic health of present and future members of a society. A bad value may be transmissible but is unlikely to be durable Jones and Jerard (1979) as reported in Anoke (2012).

Inter Ethnic Group Perceptions and Value System in Nigeria

The status of Nigeria as to whether it is a nation, state or nation state have been a subject of controversy. Many scholars have argued in favour and against this on their personal or tribal convictions. The incompatibility of the Nigerian state has been traced to a major factor in the history of the nation. According to Hornby (2012), incompatible can be defined as two actions, ideas etc that are not acceptable together because of basic differences. It is evident and historical that today Nigerian is a conglomerate of many empires, kingdoms, clans and stateless autonomous communities. It is equally factual to say that each of these autonomous lands had its agents of law and order before they are coaxed with a country called Nigeria. The foundation and subsequent politicization of ethnicity in Nigeria polity had its origin in the British colonial policies. That a nation of small “nations” like Nigeria was coaxed together by colonialists for their own convenience should be seen as an asset rather than a liability. Our values and attitudes have much to do with how we perceive one another in relation to Nigeria. Nigerians can desire formidable social, political, economic and psychological strength from conglomerate if the perceptions of one another are not distorted.

Obasanjo (1977) as reported in Odoziobodo (2003) saw Nigeria in a similar light when he was talking of virtues of leadership, thus:

Our leaders must appreciate that as an emergent nation, size and diversity, which are our great assets, must be handled with insight and perception because they all our weakness. Our future leaders must really reflect on the important contributions which our size and diversity have made, to our economic development, and to giving us a place as a nation among nations. The contributions are truly magnificent. That is why we must give due regard to the factors which unite us, containing our diversity within our strong nation of people who love, respect and accommodate one another.

The problem has been that getting together of Nigerians, peoples have forced them out of familiar linguistic, social and cultural ethnic units and exposed them, as never before, to interactions with one another. The attitudes they learned as guides within their familiar ethnic units, their life ways and folk ways (custom), they had as abiding values have been directly or indirectly perceived as threatened by the real or imagined influences of other people.

Ethnic identity must exist and must be encouraged, but not abused. As Simpson and Yinger (1965), observed|:

Differences in language, in religion, in belief in the best methods for achieving life values – these are permissible but necessary for a society that is eager to find better ways of solving its problems.

The values cherries by the various ethnic groups in Nigeria are not so divergent that the unifying elements cannot be found in them.

Re-Orientation the Nigerian Society: The Way Out

The following techniques or combination of them, among others would help in the efforts at national re-orientation.

1. Consciousness re-awakening

It has been noted that selfish people are in control in all the sectors of Nigeria and are deliberately hypnotizing Nigerians into believing that no service, no duty, no pursuit can be undertaken in a natural, socially and morally clean manner. People must be convinced through consciousness re-awakening campaign that Nigeria holds a lot of promises for every Nigerian and that change is possible and attainable and that change in the short and long term is for the good of every one. In this connection, the media must be used extensively but effectively for consciousness re-awakening. Moreover, the government should commission a pamphlet on consciousness re-awakening. The pamphlet should be distributed to all Nigerians young and old, and should be transmitted into all Nigerian language. Musicians should be encouraged to develop songs that can be used to re-awaking of ancient of Nigerians.

2. The use of children's literature/ song books

It is because of the strategic importance of children's books in the inculcation of national values and national identity, the writings and publications of children's books in advance countries (America, Russia etc) are highly monitored and controlled. In those books, in addition to intellectual elimination and knowledge, the heroes are deliberately built in, to inspire patriotism and national identity. Thoroughly detribalized Nigerians must be the heroes in such books. Such heroes must always win in conflicts of good versus evil. This vital technique will achieve a double purpose. It will insulate the young against the unhealthy behaviours of the adult and will encourage the young to question the adults whose behaviours deviates from the ideal part. Children book should include

songs or values that will help to re-orient their minds and make them grow, to become better Nigerians.

3. Permeating the school curriculum with healthy Nigerian ideals

It is the opinion of this writer, that there is no school subject, scientific, technical, social or artistic, which cannot be permeated with Nigerian ideals and examples, without prejudice to the internationally accepted knowledge contents. If this is done, the child can come out a committed Nigerian at the end of any of the level of education. The school music curriculum should embrace values that leads to healthy ideas which must be accepted internationally.

4. Promotion of a feeling of fairness and justice

One important way of ensuring that the concept of Nigeria is sustained in the minds of Nigerians is to ensure that the feelings of fairness and justice are thoroughly entrenched. Feeling of injustice and unfairness generate fear and mistrust. No nation can live with fear and mistrust for long. In all matters, political, economic, religious etc. justice must not only be done, but must be seen to be done. Children should be taught in school how to promote justice and how to be fair when dealing with their fellow human being. This can be done by teaching them songs that contain positive values.

The Role of Music in Re-Orientating Nigerian Value System

Music plays vital roles in national development and can be used to re-orient Nigerian society. For example when Nigerian was suffering terribly from political instability and military intervention, as plight of the poor worsened and the country threatened to pull itself apart, Fela Anikulapo Kuti used his music to criticize and attack the military and the then military government. He retains mass followers both inside and outside Nigeria and his albums were treasured throughout the continent for their forthright criticisms of failure of government. It is because of Fela's album, many, Nigerians were re-oriented towards condemning the military government and that helped to usher in democratic government in 1979.

Musicians have used music as an easy vehicle for spreading their measures and for moving people towards a certain goal or action. Nigerian musicians have gone into social mobilization and re-orientation in the country not only as organizers but as artists who have used the power of music to move people forward and to get certain old attitudes corrected. An example of such musicians is Sunny Okosun, and his album "which way Nigeria" of 1984.

Commenting further on how music can be used to change Nigerian value system, Ohwofasa (2003), stated that:

Music can be used to entertain, educate and unite Nigerian populace. It is aimed at uniting Nigeria as a family, foster cultural re-development in Nigeria by bring about a re-birth and repositioning of the moral and spiritual essence of our rich cultural

heritage and to create an annual event that will boost the tourism potential and industry in Nigeria.

Music could be likened to the “prophet or teacher” who directs the people to the world of truth or light. Furthermore, music can be viewed as the “mouth-piece” of a nation, because it does the following.

1. Music preaches freedom and need for a democratic society.
2. Music preaches justice and equality in our society.
3. Music preaches unity in our society.
4. Music preaches the need to be strong and self-reliant both individually and as a nation in general.

From the points highlighted above, one can conclude that music can successfully be used to re-orient Nigerian society.

Conclusion

The foundation and subsequent politicization of ethnicity in the Nigerian polity had its origin in the British colonial policies. The colonialists coaxed together small nations into a country called Nigerian for their convenience sake. Since this creation, ethnicity and tribalism had penetrated into the minds of Nigerians no matter how educated they are. This paper therefore comes up with techniques on how to re-orient the Nigerians into a common and united country. Some of these techniques are: consciousness re-awakening, the use of childrens’ literature etc. The role of music in re-orienting Nigerian value system were also discussed.

Recommendation

The government should encourage musicians by giving them money to establish music industries.

There should be a serious music curriculum. Student should be taught how to make music so that they may use it earn their living and also learn how to use music to move people forward.

The government should provide enough instruments for music programmes.

The general public should be educated on the importance of music and should know that music form a part and parcel of any societal culture.

The government should also sponsor some reasonable musicians outside the country for music programmes.

Parents should encourage their children to study music in universities and Colleges of Education.

Music should be recognized fully in the secondary school curriculum and should not be under the umbrella of creative arts. This will help to create positive impact and make those students reading music as a course to be proud of themselves and they will use it to promote our values system in Nigerian economy. They government should build music schools where literate musicians should be trained.

The government should also encourage authors to write music books by giving them sufficient money as a support.

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