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SONGS AND IMPLICATIONS ON THE NIGERIAN SOCIETY: YORÙBÁ SONGS IN FOCUS

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Abstract

Singing has become part of Yorùbá culture and indeed, the human race as a whole. It is as old as man's existence. This implies that no society in the world does not sing. Singing is an art and it forms part of the people's literature. The importance of song in the political, social, economic and religious life of the human race in general cannot be underestimated. The love people have for singing is so great that we can relate it to the Yorùbá saying: "etí were ni tèkúté ile, abiyamọ kii gbọ ẹkún ọmọ rẹ kó má tatiwere". This is to say that no one hears a song and will not "react". The Yorùbá people for instance, sing all the time. It is however worth mentioning that in as much as songs promote and enhance people's' lives, its use calls for serious caution because it may have negative effects also as we shall see in this study. It is within this context that this article uses Yorùbá songs to critically examine the role of songs in people's lives.

Keywords: Yorùbá songs, Singing, National development, Nigerian society

Introduction

The issue of national development has been a subject of discussion for a very long time now. Nigeria at fifty-two has passed through different systems of government such as parliamentary, military and presidential with a number of constitutional conferences held where the country's constitution was reviewed and is still being reviewed. It is disheartening however, to note that with the abundant resources at her disposal, Nigeria is still in the group of developing nations of the world and the need to address the situation is highly desired. This paper examines the role of the people's literature (song/music) in life of the Yorùbá society in particular and the Nigerian society in general using the Yorùbá song as basis for our discussion.

Since October 1st 1960, the country Nigeria has passed through different stages of life as an independent nation under four different republics, yet the country cannot be described as developed despite being one of the most naturally blessed nations of the world.

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Unfortunately Nigerians still wallow in an unstable political system, poor health facilities, lack of qualitative education, religious intolerance, insecurity of lives and properties and the like. The spate of tribal and religious crisis is alarming. Examples include the Ife/Modákél kéí crisis, tribal and boundary clashes, restiveness in the Niger Delta, the Boko Haram sect believed to have killed several innocent citizens in the last one year. They engage in burning of churches, attack on military and police posts and facilities, kidnapping and murdering of innocent citizens, and so on. This is due to the insensitivity of people at the corridor of power, to the people's yearnings. This situation calls for urgent attention as it is no doubt a bane for national development.

Because of these problems, the country could not celebrate her 52nd independence anniversary with funfair. People in authority are daily accused of unprecedented attacks and unwarranted destruction of lives and properties. We experience religious intolerance through religious violence, culminating in hatred, enmity, discrimination, arson, oppression and the likes, despite efforts of inter-religious dialogue experts and peace makers. It has been religious violence. This paper is not aimed at discussing the uprisings per-se, rather, to discuss how Yorùbá oral literature (Yorùbá songs), can be used as a way out of the mess.

Yorùbá, one of the Major ethnic groups in Nigeria has a high regard for national development in all its ramifications. One of the veritable tools for achieving this objective is through their oral literature, song (music) being one of them. This implies that the role of songs (music) in the maintenance of peace, unity, safety, consequent national development cannot be underestimated.

The paper discusses the roles of song in solving the ageing problem of hatred, insecurity of life and properties, unwarranted killing of innocent citizens in order to ensure political, economic, religious and social stability, using the Yorùbá song as our yardstick. Our findings reveal that there are two sides of the coin. This implies that no matter how good the intention behind rendering a song, if not carefully rendered, it may turn sour.

What is a Song?

Literature has important roles to play in the life of the people that owns it. This paper examines the impact of Yorùbá oral literature (Yorùbá songs) on the political, social, religious and economic development of the Nigerian society as a whole.

The Macmillan Encyclopedia (1990) defines song as: "A short composition for one or more singers with or without accompaniment. Song is usually regarded as the foundation of music and is certainly the oldest form of musical expression".

The World Book Encyclopedia Vol. 18 (1990) defines song as: "A musical composition usually sang by a solo voice. It may be performed with or without accomplishment. Most songs have a simple lyrical style".

Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2002/2009) defines song as: "a piece of music with words that you sing". When the Yorùbá talk about music, they refer to the combination of singing, drum beating and dancing. Wherever the three are present, the Yorùbá will say "wón ñ şeré", literally meaning "they are playing". It is however noteworthy to say that "eré" does not best interpret "song" or "music".

Speaking on song, Olúkòjù (1994) asserts that song is a vital instrument in human life in general. 'Song' is interpreted as 'orin' in Yorùbá language. Song (Orin) is self-creative. It is melodious but the melody may not be glaringly noticed if music is not added. This implies that music gives melody to song. This notwithstanding, there are Yorùbá songs that do not require music. They include: the twins mother song (orin iyá ibejì), the co-wife song (orin olórogún), the child's pacifying song (orin aremo), the lullaby song (orin erémódé/iwérénde) to mention just a few. This is to say that Yorùbá songs can be classified into two broad groups namely the musical and non-musical songs.

Song affords practitioners the opportunity to air their minds on political, religious, soivial and economic issues. It also serves as a source of entertainment and enjoyment. It is an aspect of the Yorùbá oral literature. The place of song in the life of the people in general cannot be underestimated and this is appreciated the world over. Testifying to this claim, Beier (1950) asserts that:

There is no occasion in Yorùbá life that is not accompanied by songs....., everyday life is accompanied by a great deal of impromptu singing.

This opinion is in line with Adeoşun (1995) who opines that: "most literary scholars agree that song is very important in making peoples' views known". He mentions among others, names such as Lomer, Finnegan, Deny, Ołájubù, Gbàdàmóşí, Ołátúnjì and Ilesanmi. This is to further affirm our claim that singing is a global issue and the importance of song is recognized globally too.

The words we utter are the beginning of the song we sing. For this reason, we can group song as an aspect of the Yorùbá oral literature. There is no difficulty in mastering songs. It is also easy to spread and very easy to remember. Singing is an art that manifests in all daily activities. It is already a part of the people. Singing has become part of Yorùbá culture and indeed, the human race as a whole. It is as old as man's existence. This implies that every society in the world recognize the importance of song. Singing is an art and it forms part of the people's

literature. The importance of song in the political, social, economic and religious life of the human race in general cannot be underestimated.

It is music that gives melody to a song. This implies that not all songs require music. The role of music however, is to create rhythmical, harmonious and meaningful expressions aimed at addressing specific themes.

The love people have for singing is so great that we can relate it to the Yorubá saying that: "eti were ni tèkúté ilé. Abiyamo, kii gbó, èkún omo, rè, kó maa tati were". This implies that no one hears a song and will not 'react'. The Yorubá people for instance, sing all the time. In the same vein, all events have their songs. This is to say that song has its relevance in all situations in the life of man. When one is in distress, you sing to alleviate it. When you are happy, you sing to express and appreciate it. It is however worth mentioning that in as much as songs promote and enhance people's lives, its use calls for serious caution. This implies that there are some factors that determine when to sing, where to sing and what kind of song to sing. This is because singing may have negative effects as we shall see later.

'Song' is interpreted as 'orin' in Yorubá language. Song affords practitioners the opportunity to air their minds on political, religious, social, cultural and economic issues. It also serves as a source of entertainment and enjoyment. It is an aspect of the Yorubá oral literature. The place of song in the life of the people of the society in general cannot be underestimated and this is appreciated the world over. Testifying to this claim, Beier (1950) asserts that "There is no occasion in Yorubá life that is not accompanied by songs... Everyday life is accompanied by a great deal of impromptu singing".

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Song is an aspect of the Yorubá oral literature. There is no difficulty in mastering songs. It is also easy to spread and very easy to remember. It is hereditary and we come across it in all our daily activities. It is already a part of the people.

Speaking on song, Olúkòjù (1994) asserts that "song is a vital instrument in human life in general". Song (Orin) is self-creative. It is melodious especially when music is added. This implies that music gives

melody to song. This notwithstanding, there are Yorùbá songs that do not require music. They include: the twins mother song (orin iyá ibejì), the co-wife song (orin olórogún), the child's pacifying song (orin aremo), the lullaby song (orin erémodé/iwérénde) to mention just a few. This is to say that Yorùbá songs can be classified into two broad groups namely the musical and non-musical songs.

After knowing what a song is, we shall proceed further to discuss the implications of songs on the life of the entire Nigeria society. We would examine the economic, political, religious and social implications of Yorùbá songs.

(i). Yorùbá Songs and Politics

In politics, songs are used in various ways. During installation or crowning of a new 'Ọba' (king), conferment of chieftaincy titles, songs are used to show the peoples' support for the crowned head (Oriádé). On the other hand, the people can also sing to show their opposition to any form of oppressive rule. During wars, songs are used to encourage warriors, to show support for the ruler and to ridicule the actions of their opponent in war. A typical example is the one sang by the Ibàdàn people to show their support for Látóòsà as their only recognized political and economic leader, and to show their hatred for Efunṣetan, the then Iyalóde of Ibàdàn. They sang:

Kó tó bèrè, kó tó wọ búkà	- before he bends down and enter the Cafeteria
Jàn án ní kóndó	- hit him with the baton
È bání sòrò náà kó yé wa	- explain the issue for us to understand
Bíkún ló loko, bí pàkúté ni	- if the farm belongs to the rat or the trap
È sòrò náà kó yé wa	- explain the issue for us to understand.
(Isòlá 1973:70-71)	

In *Lísàbí Àgbògbò Àkàlà*, the 'ààró' drummer beat his drum to ask the poor masses to wake from their slumber thus:

È sẹ girí, ẹ dide	- do quickly and rise up
È sẹ sàsà, ẹ dide	- be fast and rise up

The song was asking the poor workers to cooperate and help themselves to survive. The song makes their work easy to endure and to be able to continue for a longer time. Secondly, the song forms the beginning of the discussion on how the workers would have their freedom. This actually materialized because they all cooperate to fight for their freedom from the Òyó political dominance. (pp 51).

In like manner, the song sung by workers in *Réré Rún* was also calling on the workers to cooperate and free themselves from the oppressions of Onímògún and his council of chiefs. They sang:

Èrò tí n ròjéje	- people going to Òjéje
È wi fún iyáà mi	- tell my mother
Eyin tó fi silẹ	- the eggs she left for mi
Lorogún sẹ fómo, re,	- her co-wife gave to her own child

Ewùrà to kan bóbó	- the rotten water yam
Lorogún ẹ́ fún mí jẹ	- her co-wife gave me to eat.

This song points to the fact that the workers were in a strange land. These kinds of song are many and cannot be exhausted here. Although they look like war songs, probably because they were politically motivated, they were sung to oppose any form of oppression which is one of the vices the Yorùbá frown at. Among the Yorùbá, if a king is tyrant in his rulings, people can call for his remover through songs.

Another form of political songs are songs sung by politicians and their followers during political rallies/campaigns. The content of these songs are such that intimidate political opponents. In most cases, the songs are proverbially rendered, however, there are times when singers are too direct by mentioning the name of the political opponents they intend to attack. For instance, at a political rally in Lagos in 2003, the supporters of an opposing party to the Action Congress of Nigeria Party which had Babatúnde Rájí Fáṣọlá (SAN) as its gubernatorial candidate, sang a song thus?

Ó lárùn opọlọ,	- he is mentally ill
Ó n fẹ́ itojú nílá	- he needs serious treatment
Ẹni bá ń ẹ lọyà tẹlẹ,	- a practicing lawyer
Tó tún wá ń sagbálẹ, ojà	- who now sweeps the marketplace
Ó lárùn opọlọ	- he is mentally ill.

A critical examination of this song shows that it is directed to the governorship aspirant of the Action Congress of Nigeria Party who is a lawyer by profession and the broom which represents his party's symbol is an instrument used for sweeping the market place. This is proverbial. Political songs as we have earlier pointed out are 'war songs'. They are sung to provoke rival political groups. This song is not different from the one sung by the women of Israel in the Holy Bible to applaud David's victory over Goliath, the dreadful Philistine who always threaten the peaceful co-existence of the entire Israelite nation. The book of 1st Samuel, 18:6-9 reads in part:

...the women came out of all the cities of Israel,
Singing and dancing to meet King Saul with tumbrels,
with song of joy and with instruments of music, and
The women sang to one another as they make merry.
'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten
thousands. And Saul was very angry, and this saying
displeased him; he said, they have ascribed to David,
ten thousands, and to me, they have ascribed
thousands, and what more can they have but the
kingdom and Saul eyed David from that day on.

This song further ignited the hatred King Saul had for David. Such songs are rebellious and can be used to incite passion for uncommon desires and more serious feats which are ordinarily

considered impossible for others. This implies that song (music) is an effective tool for inciting serious actions in the individuals. These kinds of songs pose security threat to the nation as a whole. Conversely however, when a song is positively motivated, it is a powerful weapon in controlling the individual mind towards the direction of normal behaviour.

In the same vein, co-wife songs are sung to intimidate and to provoke a rival co-wife. It may be intended to win the love and confidence of the husband or to show displeasure to rival co-wife. This is borne out of the Yorùbá belief that no woman wants a rival (*òrìṣà jé, n pé méjì obìnrin kò dènú*). The moment a woman gets a rival, the probable result is chaos, envy, backbiting and backsliding which is believed to be more dangerous than magic and medicine, hence they result into singing proverbial songs (*orin òwe*) such as this:

<i>Ilé lo bá mi pé mí ní iyálé</i>	- you meet me here. See me as your senior
<i>Ò bàà lè fí mótò kèrù délé òkò</i>	- even if you bring your load in a lorry
<i>Ilé lo bá mi pé mí níyálé</i>	- you met me here. See me as your senior

This kind of song is antagonistic and can cause disaffection and rivalry between two people no matter how closely related they are. The language use is abusive, intimidating, provocative and capable of brewing crisis.

On the other hand, musicians also sing to advise politicians to play the game according to the rule. For example, Kollington Ayinlá, during the second republic political era in Nigeria (1983), appealed to politicians through his album saying:

<i>Èbè, la bè, yín èyìn òsèlú o</i>	- we appeal to you politicians
<i>Chief Awolòwò, ó dọwọ, yín</i>	- chief Awolòwò, we look up unto you
<i>Şehu Şagàrí, ẹ, mama jẹ, ó bàjẹ, o</i>	- Şehu Şagari should not allow things to spoil
<i>Azikwe, ó dọwọ, yín</i>	- Azikwe, we look unto you
<i>Ibrahim ọmọ Waziri</i>	- Ibrahim, Waziri's son
<i>Ọlátúnjì, ọmọ Braithwait</i>	- Ọlátúnjì, Braithwait's son
<i>Ẹ, jẹ, ká sọwọpọ, kó lè dára</i>	- let's cooperate for success.

(ii). Yorùbá Songs and Nigerian Economy

Before the coming of the Europeans, the method of trading employed by the Yorùbá people was referred to as 'trade by batter'. It was a system whereby goods were exchanged for goods; items for items. If I need Gàrí, but I have Rice, I have to look for somebody who needed Rice but lacked Gàrí to exchange with.

With the coming of the Europeans, the use of money in trading was introduced. The use of cowries was replaced with pounds, shillings and pence, now naira and kòbò), so also was the establishment of radio and television stations and the newspapers in the country. The economy of the country changed. This led to the need to advertise goods and services because there was competition in the market. The Yorùbá will say "*ìpolówó ojà ni àgúnmu òwò*" (advertisement of goods is the medicine for business). There and then, government, companies,

corporate bodies and individuals begin to advertise their goods and services on radio and television networks the newspapers. One of the most effective means of doing this is by the use of songs in form of jingles.

Musicians such as Alhaji Jáyégbadé Àlào (dadakúàdà), Síkírù Àyindé Barrister and Àyínlá Kollington (fújì), King Sunny Ade and Chief Commander, Ebenezer Obey (jùjú), Dáúdà Epo Àkàrà (àwùrèbe), Bàtùlì Àlàké and Sàlàwà Àbèní (wákà), Ògúnyemí Elémùre Èkiti who sings in Èkiti dialect and poets such as Àlàbí Ògúndépò (ijálá chanter), Yemí Èlébúbọ̀n (iyèrè chanter) and the likes are employed to advertise goods and services through their songs. Their songs have been used to promote peoples' business. For instance, Chief Ebenezer Obey in one of his albums affirms he has made a remarkable impact into the success of some prominent Nigerian businessmen and women alike. He sings:

Lead Vocal:	Mo ti pèniyàn títì	- I have sang for many people
	Mo pe Rẹ̀mọ̀ Carpet	- I sang for Rẹ̀mọ̀ Carpet
Chorus:	kaka kòwò, è, lojè,	- instead of liquidating
	Pipele ló ñ pele si	- he becomes more prosperous
Lead Vocal:	Mo ti pèniyàn títì	- I have sang for many people
	Mo pe Olóládé, aya Èjiòserè	- I sang for Olóládé,
Èjiòserè's wife		
Chorus:	"Cash Madam",	- cash Madam
	pipele ló ñ pele si	- she becomes more prosperous.

What Ebenezer Obey is saying here is that none of his mentors he has sung for ever regret it. Rather than 'fallen', they have their businesses boomed.

Àlàbí Ògúndépò on the then Radio OYO used ìjálá chant to preach safety on the road. It goes thus:

Má gbe wò ọ, káì má gbe wò ọ yéé ẹ̀gídí
 Ìwọ̀ nìkàn k'ó o nìbíirè gbogbo ọkò tóo bá níwájú ló nìbíi lẹ
 Ẹ̀e bóo lójú lágbárí àwé, ẹ̀e bóo rọ̀kò tó ñ bọ
 O ọ̀ yé kánjú wa mọtò ní pópó kóo mába à kánjú rọ̀rún alákejì....
 Onímọtò rọ̀ra sáre o/ẹ̀ẹ̀mẹ̀jì
 Ẹ̀mí ọ̀ láàrọ̀, oonímọtò rọ̀ra sáre
 Ẹ̀sọ̀ pẹ̀lẹ̀ oonímọtò rọ̀ra sáre.
 (Do not overtake. Stop playing strong head
 You are not the only one, all other vehicles have places to go
 After all you have your eyes and can see the vehicle coming
 You better stop hurrying on high way, in order not to hurry to
 heaven...

Mr. Driver, limit your speed/2times
 Life has no duplicate
 Mr. Driver, limit your speed.

to the advertised products and services. Would-be customers are made to believe that the products advertised have no equal. They would want to have a taste of the products and services to confirm what is said about such products..

Not only this, government programmes are advertised on radio and television stations through songs. This is to bring awareness to people in rural and very remote areas. A few examples are the following:

E, tètí e, gbó, mòrán yíi	- listen to this advise
Ti kéré ti kéré o nípínlè, yíi	- young and old in this town
Ìjoba kùàrà ló ñ ké, kélèran	- kwara government is asking
ó méran rè, so	- everyone to take care of his goat
Ìjobá gbín òdòdó sójú pópó o	- government plant flowers on
Nípínlè, yíi	the streets in this state
Eni bá gbabè kojá, e, jòwó,	- passer-bye should please avoid
e má sẹ̀ tẹ̀, ẹ̀,	stepping on it
Kilú wa le dùn ún rí nijobá sẹ̀	- government plant them to
gbín ín	beautify our town
Ilú kùàrà o, ó sì maa dùn ni	- kwara state shall continue to be
	interesting.

Or this one by MAMSER on immunization:

Wá gbabéré, àjẹsára	- come and be immunized
Kárùnkàrùn kó má wọlé wá	- to prevent the outbreak of
	dangerous diseases
Wá gbabéré, àjẹsára	- come and be immunized.

This kind of song no doubt changes people attitude towards the government immunization programme especially the illiterates most of who reside in rural and remote areas. The resultant effect is a reduction in the rate of infant mortality.

In the Yorùbá traditional society, the community head (Ọba or Baálẹ̀) announces the community's environmental sanitation programmes by the use of songs. Songs are used to announce the clearing of roads to the stream, renovation of the town's market to encourage traders from far and near to patronize the market and so on.

(iii). The Role of Song in the People's Religion

Songs play vital roles in the people's religious worships. First, it serves as unifying force among worshippers. They praise God (the Creator) and the deities in their songs. They also express their joys/sorrows, requests through songs. Even in churches today singing dominates most part of their worships. This is borne out of the fact that worshippers believe that God derive joy in praising Him through songs. Some church denominations that were not known for singing before have now see reason why they should sing to praise and express their feelings to the Almighty. A good example is the Catholic Church Mission who, probably have now realized that failure to introduce singing into their worships can make them to lose their members to other denominations who use songs in their worships. More so, it is evident that songs are more sermonic than anything else.

In their worships, the Yorùbá speak to the Creator and the divinities through songs. The contents of the songs reveal a lot about their belief in the efficacy of the powers of God and the divinities over man. The songs also contain their heart desires from the Creator and the deities. A few examples are given below:

(a). **The Òṣun Worshippers**

Òṣun is believed to be a 'mother physician' (iyá àbíyè). Barren women and children with any form of ailment visit Òṣun shrine always to appropriate her and make their requests. They believe that through the Òṣun goddess, the Creator will listen and honor their requests. An example of songs usually sang during the Òṣun festival is this:

Sélèrú àgbo, àgbàrá àgbo	- 'sélèrú' herb, 'àgbàrá' herb
Lòṣún fí n wé'mọ, re,	- òṣun used to birth her child
Kí dókítà ó tó dé	- before the era of the medical doctor.

(b). **The Sàngó Woshippers**

The Sàngó worshippers sing to praise the power and might of Sàngó as one of the powerful Yorùbá divinities. They sing:

Olúkòso, Àlàdé	- 'Olúkòso' Àlàdé
Arùkúta láì sósùkà	- one who carries a stone without a guard
Olúkòso Àlàdé	- 'Olúkòso' Àlàdé.

(c). **The Ògún Worshippers**

The worshippers of ògún sing either to commit their hunting expedition into ògún's hands, to praise ògún for success recorded in their hunting expeditions, or during annual ògún festival. The content of the song most times explains the reason for rendering such song. The following songs come to mind.

Ògún mama jé, n bímo, olè	-	'Ògún' do not give me a thief for a child
Kii jèyèyèn ó niláárí	-	it prevents one from being prosperous
Ògún mama jé, n bímo, olè	-	ògún, do not give me a thief for a child.

Or this:

Olóde, to règbé, o, tí ò méran bò, -	a hunter who goes to the bush and brings no meet/animal
Yóó jòrúnlá, panságà oḃè,	- will eat ripe okro, a tasteless soup

(iv). **Yorùbá Songs and Socialization**

A song can be referred to as a social agent. It plays vital roles in the peoples' socialization process. Most of the songs rendered by Yorùbá musicians can be grouped under social songs. The Yorùbá call them 'orin igbáfé'. Although, it is possible to view such songs from another perspective, yet the fact remains that they are rendered on occasions such as child naming, burial/outings ceremonies, wedding programmes and so on. Singers use their songs to entertain, to advice

and even teach good moral values. Here is an example by Ebenezer Obey.

Ètò ìgbéyàwo láyé,
Tóba Olúwa mi fi lélè, pèlú àṣẹ ni
'What God has joined together,
Let no man put asunder'?

What the musician was saying here is the marriage is an ordinance by God. It is therefore forbidden for anybody to tamper with it.

At outing ceremonies, songs are rendered to express peoples' minds and expectations about the hereafter. The Yorubá believe that the dead (the aged ones) still come back as a new baby in the family, hence the names Babatúndé, Babájídé given to a male child born sooner than the aged father dies, and Yétúndé, Yéjídé or Ìyábòde, given to a female child born sooner than the aged mother dies.

Because of this belief, they sing songs praying the aged father or mother to come back to the family through them. Example is the following:

Lówó, mi ní ó ti yà bó dé	- he/she will come through me
Nijò, Àsòlá domo, tuntun	- the day Àsòlá turns a new child
Lówó, mi ní ó ti yà	- he/she will come through me.

We can also group consolatory songs under the social songs. There are occasions when people as a result of one happening or the other (death, illness, or any other calamity that may befall them) are dejected. To pacify and appeal to such people, songs can be of immense value. For instance, people sing to congratulate the child of the deceased because everybody prays that they survive their parents. An example is the following:

A bá o, dúpé,	- we rejoice with you
Eni elèni kò sin baba/iyá re	- another person does not bury your father/mother on your behalf
A bá o, dúpé	- we rejoice with you

(v). Songs and Moral Philosophy

The Yorubá teach good morals through songs. Most social songs teach one moral lesson or the other. The most prominent song under this category is the Yorubá folksongs usually found in Yorubá folktales (the tortoise and the co-wife tales). Apart from allowing for audience participation, the content of the songs lead us to the moral lesson(s) intended to teach.

In a co-wife tale, where the husband went on a journey and he did not arrive at his appointed time. After exhausting the food he left for the wives and their children, one of the wives decided to live at the mercy of a concubine. On arrival, the secret leaked to the husband, but the erring wife failed to confess. The wives were taken to the family shrine

because the offence was against the family myth. After all processes were completed, both wives were given a leaf each. They were to sing and appeal to the sheep to take their leave and eat. This determines their innocence or otherwise. The song goes thus:

Gbewé mi, gbewé mi je,	-	take my leaf and eat
Àgbò gbewé mi je,	-	sheep take my leaf and eat
Odún méta okò, ti lo,	-	three years my husband had left
Èmi ò téní fókùnrin sùn rí	-	I never lay mat for a man to sleep
Èmi ò ròbà fókùnrin jẹfó,	-	I never prepare Gàri with vegetable for any man to eat
Gbewé mi, gbewé mi je,	-	take my leaf and eat
Àgbò gbewé mi je,	-	sheep take my leaf and eat.

At the end of the exercise the culprit was exposed and she was sent out of the home. From this, we have learnt one lesson or the other.

As earlier said, most of the social songs also teach one moral lessons or the other. The Yorùbá musicians sing against societal vices. The Yorùbá masquerades also sing to condemn the society's moral bankruptcy. For example, to a man who steals another man's goat, they sing:

Opa agbèran/2times	-	the king/head of goat thieves
Ò ó lèwọn olóşù méfà	-	you will go to jail for six months.
Opa a gbèran	-	the king/head of goat thieves

To a fornicator, they sing:

Àgbà ni tara má sẹ sìná o	-	you are old don't fornicate
Tójú èmii re, kò o ba à lè pé, láyé	-	take care of your life to live long
Àgbà ni tara, má sẹ sìná o	-	you are old, don't fornicate.

Sir Sìná Adéwálé, in one of his albums warns the society against evil acts such as oppression. He sings:

Dákun màmà sẹ,	-	Please don't do it,
Ìkà ò da òré, mi	-	Evil is not good my friend
Dákun màmà sẹ o	-	Please don't do it.
Aláya méfà gba toníkan	-	a man with six wives snatch yet another man's only wife.
Ó ní kínni yóó je, yàtò, sówó	-	saying it costs nothing but money
Dákun màmà sẹ,	-	Please don't do it.
Ìkà ò da òré, mi	-	Evil is not good my friend
Dákun mama sẹ o	-	Please don't do it.

In like manner, the Asùnyèrè (ifá reciter) will say:

E, má sịkà láye	-	do not do evil on earth
Torí a n ròrun	-	because we are going to heaven
Bá a bá dé bode, a ó rojó,	-	when we get to the boarder, we shall give account.

Conclusion

In this study, we have tried to examine the roles of Yorùbá songs in the development of the nation (Nigeria) as a whole. We have established the fact that songs have vital roles to play in the life of the generality of the people. In fact, the most disappointing situation in one's life is consoled through singing. In all situations, songs are used to talk to God (man's Creator) and the belief is that God hears and answers even when supplications are rendered in song.

Through songs, a lot of happenings which would have resulted in chaos are being resolved amicably through songs. Couples and families alike do resolve their differences through song. In worships, songs play vital roles. The Yorùbá masquerades (egúngún) sing not only as an interlude to their dirge or for audience participation during their performances, rather, most of their songs are to condemn and correct anti-societal behaviours. Olájubù (1978:685) opines that:

Yorùbá verbal artists occupy a unique position in the society. They serve as the moral police and are therefore free from arrest and punishment for offences committed during the course of their performance. They are at liberty to say whatever they pleased in favour of or against anybody in the community. Obas, chiefs and nobles inclusive.

He goes further to say:

A counterpart of members of the press of the modern society. They are also free from molestation during wars and public disorder. Some of them are referred to as representatives of the gods on earth.

This implies that poets, musicians or even anybody within the society are free to sing. It is however disheartening today that the situation has changed. People at the corridor of power want to enjoy immunity. They have turned sacred cows and so they perpetrate several anti-omolúàbí acts that brings the society backward. Yorùbá poets and singers are no more faithful to their professions. Today, the situation on ground determines when and where to sing what.

This notwithstanding, we would not lose sight of the fact that songs, if not carefully and tactically used, can ruin a family, a community or even a nation. This is to say that most times, occasion and even the existing situation determines the song to sing at a particular time. For instance, there are songs which are meant to console one, yet it cannot be sung in a place where there is hatred enmity and disaffection. Where these situations exist, consolatory songs may turn to be 'war' songs.

Not only this, there are songs that corrupt the society. This is common among the so-called 'modern' musicians of today. Such songs, instead of discouraging, they encourage social vices such as fornication, adultery and so on.

In the same vein, Yorùbá songs, such as the political and co-wife songs are not peace-loving songs, rather, they brew trouble. What we are saying in conclusion therefore is that in as much as the society cannot avoid singing for reasons enumerated above, its use calls for caution.

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CONTRIBUTORS' LIST

**DIALOGUE AND CHARACTER CLASSIFICATION
IN WOLE SOYINKA'S KONGI'S HARVEST**
Adekunle MAMUDU

**A SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF OLU OBAFEMI'S SONG OF HOPE
AND ONLY HOPE PERSISTS**
Oladimeji Kaseem OLANIYI

**COOPERATIVE PROFESSIONALISM IN THEATRE ARTS
PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT**
Osedebamen David OAMEN & Remigius Anayo ANYANWU

**SYNTHETIC DESIGN AND THE ART OF VIRTUAL REALITY
IN THEATRE AND FILM PRODUCTIONS**

Chidiebere. S. EKWEARIRI
**DANCE FOR CHILDREN: A FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION FOR
NATIONAL GROWTH**

Cyrus Damisa SURU
**'FROM THE CLASSROOM TO STAGE': DEVELOPING AN AFRICAN
POPULAR MUSIC PEDAGOGY**
Austin 'Maro' EMIELU

**THE HEGEMONY OF ENGLISH IN A GLOBALISING WORLD:
IMPACT ON THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN NIGERIA**
Bibian ANYANWU, Rita Ebele OKECHA & G. I. OMO-OJUGO

**FROM 'FOLKISM' TO PERFORMANCE: A NEW SCENIC STRATEGY
FOR AUDIENCE INTEGRATION**
Eunice I. UWADINMA-IDEMUDIA

**CREW PARTITIONING: ITS EFFECT(S) ON FEMALE DIRECTING
IN YORUBÁ VIDEO FILM MAKING**
Olúkáyòdè R. ADÉSÓYÌ

**SONGS AND IMPLICATIONS ON THE NIGERIAN SOCIETY:
YORUBÁ SONGS IN
FOCUS**
Layó OGÚNLOLA.

**NATURE AND SCULPTURE IN THE CREATION OF AFRICAN
THEATRE SCENERY**
John IWUH

**MUSIC EDUCATION AND MUSICAL ACTIVITIES IN LAGOS:
HEN AND NOW**
AdéOlúwa OKUNADÉ

**THE LITERARY TEXT AS A TESTAMENT OF SOCIAL DISPARAGEMENT:
ESIABA IROBI'S HANGMEN ALSO DIE IN THE HUB**
Benedict BINEBAI

**A REVIEW OF LITERATURE: RAPE AND COMMUNICATION MEDIA
STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA**
Omolola Tosan AKINWOLE & Osakue Stevenson OMOERA

**TWO PERFORMANCES TWO-WORLDS: DAPO ADELUGBA'S
DIRECTORIAL INTERVENTION IN SOYINKA'S KONGI'S HARVEST
AND SOTUMINU'S "THE ONION SKIN" CONSIDERED**
AbdulRasheed A. ADEOYE

**BETWEEN EGWU-OTA, TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND
GOVERNANCE IN ASABA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA**
Mariam Asabe IYEH

**THE PRESS AND ART JOURNALISM IN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL
OF THE GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER**
Uche NNADOZIE

**THE INITIATIVE TO DEVELOP MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ARTS IN ILORIN:
A PRELIMINARY REPORT**
Monica O. SUNNIE-ODODO

**THE 'FOLK-CHORAL CONCEPT' OF THE MUSIC OF OKECHUKWU
K'DUBUISI**
Albert OIKHILOME

**DRAMA AS IMAGINATIVE HYPNOTIC IMPULSE: A POSTULATE
ROOTED IN THE AFRICAN DRAMATIC EXPERIENCE**
Charles AGHA & Patrick AGHA

RITUAL AESTHETICS IN AFRICAN DRAMATURGY
Uzoma Thaddeus NWANAJU

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