

Preservation of Yorùbá Indigenous Drumming Heritage

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Abstract

The cultural and religious experiences and expressions of the Yorùbá people are mediums to their ways of life. Culture as defined is “a way of life” with both tangible and intangible elements embedded in the culture. Through culture, the behavior, beliefs, values, and symbols that the Yorùbá accept well represented. The indigenous drum, as part of the tangible aspects of Yorùbá culture from the past, has been one of the mediums of displaying their cultural heritage; and therefore instituting models of socialization. Despite the importance of the heritage, it shows that modernization and civilization have brought different reflections on the nature of Yorùbá drumming and this in a way reduces the cultural values of the drumming performance. This paper tends to look at the values of indigenous drum among the Yorùbá people through the phenomenological framework and then show how its lost glory can be revived in action and written forms. The submission of the paper is to emphasize that indigenous drumming orality amidst these challenges can still cope with modern influence.

Keywords: Indigenous, Yorùbá, Drumming, Heritage

Introduction

The Yorùbá people have a sufficient cultural identity to prove the essence and validity of who they are. In Laurent Magesa's opinion, African identity is worthy of recognition through its religious and cultural expression as this tends to give an outward explanation of human beliefs and philosophy.¹ The belief system and philosophy of Africans are fundamental in their cultural and religious expressions. Part of this philosophy is the act of drumming which creates identities through communication.

Among the Yorùbá people, however, drumming is a philosophy that makes their thinking and attitude culturally valuable and practicable. These thinking and attitude involve native or indigenous knowledge transmitted from generation to another. The word indigenous according to Babalola² means something arising from the soil or something that has been with the people from the beginning. The experience of the Yorùbá people which is borne out of their cultural knowledge of music, dancing and singing portrays their identities and also produces indigenous drumming system that is now used to express native philosophical understanding of oral values related to myth, legends, stories, proverbs, songs, praise-poetry and oracular verses³. These oral values are the bedrock of philosophical cultural and religious expressions that are emphasised in prayers, rituals and sacrifices.

The significance and usage of indigenous drumming in the expression of these oral values can never be overestimated. Bokor quoting Niangoranbouah⁴ submitted that drumming in African socio-cultural milieu is a unique symbol of belief and communication among the black Africans. These positions in his view show how the drum can be compared to the Bible and Qur'an with their primordial significance because they both communicate divine a message and words. Therefore, the noted ritual texts that accompany the language of the drum are very sacrosanct to the recreation of individuals and society in terms of religious, social, moral and other attributes of divine gestures. The foundations for the ritual texts in the act of the drum basically formed in the oral values, but, it is noted that the tenets of modernization and civilization have diminished the value that accrues to this heritage. Bearing in mind that the

1 Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication, 1998), 25.

2 Elisha O. Babalola, "Traditional Religion in Africa: Notes on Methodology for the Academic Study of Religion" Unpublished Manuscript, Obafemi Awolowo University, 2001, 42.

3 Oyeronke Olademo, *Gender in Yoruba Oral Traditions* (Lagos: CBAAC, 2009), 15.

4 Michael J. K. Bokor, "When the Drum Speaks: The Rhetoric of Motion, Emotion, and Action in African Societies," *Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, vol. 32, no. 2 (2014), 175—76.

effects of modernization and civilization were brought to Africa through the influence of the Bible and the Qur'an, this emphasize why African (Yorùbá inclusive) heritage was undermined.

The intent of this research is therefore to show how the cultural heritage of Yorùbá indigenous drumming can be retained under the influence of modernity, which was advanced through foreign beliefs and practices and to show the importance of this heritage in connection with cultural and religious life of the Yorùbá world. There are different kinds of drums among the Yorùbá people used for different purposes such as religious, social, political, and military purposes. Examples of these types are *Igbìn* for Obàtálá, *Bàtá* for Sàngó and Egúngún, *Àgèrè* for Ògún, *Ìpèsè* for Òrúnmìlà and *Dùndún* for both social and religious occasions. Nevertheless, this paper focuses on all the types with emphasis on their cultural and ritual relevance in modern and postmodern eras.

However, drumming was once regarded as an important way of communication in the traditional Yorùbá culture is no longer regarded thus. In addition, the leant communication skill of it is gradually eroding as many people from Àyàn families who understood the language of drums have died and the new generation of Àyàn seems to have no interest in preserving it. It is noted that the sacred/religious aspect of drumming is also affected. These facts in previous research are discussed sparingly. Aladesanmi⁵ identified how colonization has robbed the dignity of Yoruba drumming culture. Her research showed that the awesomeness and sacredness attached to the heritage were no longer there. However, Aladesanmi's position is devoid of engaging the aforementioned in a critical way. Also noted in this line of discussion is Idamoyibo⁶ who gave changes that have accrued to this heritage through the development of technical media. Idamoyibo showed how media has preserved the drumming genre through electronic reproduction and as well restricted the sphere of sacredness allotted to the ensembles genres. This also has not covered the main discussion underlined above.

The main objectives of this study are therefore to examine the philosophical significance of historical and religious orality that connect to indigenous drumming among the Yorùbá people in terms of its spirituality and sacredness. In addition, the study investigates the symbolic functions and the socio-religious

5 Omóbólá Agnes Aladesanmi, "Colonization and Cultural Values of Yoruba People: A Case of Traditional Drums in Yorubaland," *Journal of Language and Literature*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2019), 1—9.

6 Atinuke Adenike Idamoyibo, "The Media, the Reconstruction of Drumming and the Tradition of the Dundun and the Bata Ensemble of the Yoruba in South Western Nigeria," in *TydskrifVirLetterkunde*, vol. 51, no. 1 (2014), 132—140. <https://doi.org/10.4314/tvl.v51i1.12>

significance of the drumming orality in the past as well as the present. The discussion will also highlight how indigenous drumming is challenged through modern development with the aim of showing how it can still gain its prospect and effectiveness in this era of modernity.

Through ethnographic methods, in-depth interviews, and phenomenological analysis, this paper explores the effects of these challenges on the Yoruba drumming tradition in this era of globalization and then establishes how the tradition can survive within the reality of the present. Following next is the theoretical framework of the study.

Theoretical Framework

The instance of indigenous drumming in Yorùbá history remains sacred due to a specific kind of spirituality it generates. Analysing this occurrence, phenomenological appraisal will be employed. Phenomenology, according to James Cox⁷ is a tool that uses empathetic methods to enter into the experiences of believers to achieve in-depth understanding. According to him, this is done through particular historical and social data, which are organised into various categories or types. Historically, this method is engaged to examine the rituals, symbolism and cultural importance of indigenous drumming among the Yorùbá people. The method tends to show the explicit nature of spirituality attached to indigenous drumming in the context of this study.

Olupona⁸ also identified the term ‘sacredness’ as the type often used in the history and phenomenology of religion. According to him, the term “implies the recognition that something (an object, site, or person) is separated from everyday things or places, so that its special significance can be recognized and rules regarding it obeyed.” This emphasis, therefore underlines the fact that the drum among the Yorùbá is a sacred object and its importance seen in its historical use including the professional heritage attached because it is passed from one generation to another. The fact of its ritual, symbolic and mythical significance among the people underpins the usefulness of the heritage as well as its essence for its preservation in the Yorùbá worldview.

Previous Works on Indigenous Yorùbá Drumming

The work of Izu⁹ on indigenous drumming identified drum and drumming as one of the main hearts of African cultural lives. The drumming heritage ac-

7 James L. James, *A Guide to Phenomenology of Religion: Key figures, Formative Influences and Subsequent Debates* (New York: The Continuum, 2006), 209.

8 Jacob K. Olupona, *City of 201 gods: Ile-Ife in Time, Space and the Imagination* (London: University of California Press, 2011), 23.

9 Benjamin ObeghareIzu, “Indigenous Drumming Tradition in Abraka,” *Indlinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Vol. 18,

ording to this scholar, serves as a platform that makes African cultural life visible and meaningful. Izu therefore, established that the challenge and limitation to this cultural heritage are its verbal knowledge of preservation that side-lines the indigenous knowledge scholarship, which is supposed to inspire its creativity, and preservation for a long time. Since this is not documented verbal knowledge, it therefore, poses a threat to its development.

Abiolu and Teer-Tomaseli¹⁰ demonstrated the aesthetic nuances of Yorùbá talking drum given that as an indigenous heritage; its hallmark functionally creates symbolic features that promote the social practices of the Yorùbá people. The symbolic feature of the indigenous talking drum has a way of stage-managing the emotion and character of individuals. In effect, this allows decorum and sanity in the behaviour of the people and as well helps in building and maintaining the political, religious and traditional institutions of the society. Amidst these features, it is confirmed that the policies of Nigeria including the curricula that facilitate indigenous knowledge are found wanting in supporting the indigenous drumming tradition, especially in educational institutions. This is acknowledged as a bottleneck to the development of the existing treasures of indigenous drumming system.

Osakue's¹¹ work on *Saworoide* film, an indigenous piece that displays the ritual aspects of drumming among Yoruba indicated that indigenous drumming knowledge could also be publicised through the media in this era of globalization. However, it is noted that a big vacuum is shown in this dimension since the local idea and exposure of the indigenous Yoruba people is still to some extent limited.

Meanwhile, often assumed that mythical traditional practices and oral history are major hindrances to enjoy what is supposed to accrue to indigenous heritage of the Africans in this age of civilization.¹² These recognised facts, have restrained the Yorùbá indigenous drumming heritage as well. Constantly issues like stereotype traditional family bonds and the ritual history connected to hereditary businesses like drumming, considered among the Yorùbá people, are common templates that dictate the codes for participation and cognomen for the participant. The boundaries of socio-cultural improvement of

No. 2 (2019), 160—172.

10 Rhoda TitilopemiInioluwaAbiolu and Ruth E. Teer-Tomaseli, "Saworoide: A Depiction and Analysis of the Political and Socio-Cultural Characteristics of the Yoruba Talking Drum," in Uche T. Onyebadi (ed.), *Music and Messaging in the African Political Arena* (Pennsylvania: IGI Global, 2019), 65—86.

11 Omoera Stevenson Osakue and Chukwuma Anyanwu, "Politics of Succession in Nollywood Films," *CINEJ Cinema Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1(2020), 186—202.

12 Willie Anku, "Drumming among the Akan and Anlo Ewe of Ghana: An Introduction," *African Music*, vol. 8, no. 3 (2009), 38—64.

indigenous drumming activities therefore limited by these factors towards its systematic literary reconstruction.

Indigenous Drums from the Perspective of Oral History

According to Ifaleke Fatunbi, the origin of Yorùbá indigenous drums linked to the oral stories of the Òrìṣà (oral Interview). The story according to him started with Òrúnmilà. Òrúnmilà was young but wiser than his mates were. As a result, had more knowledge than other Òrìṣà and he was envied for this, was not always given attention, whenever he wanted to talk among the Òrìṣà. Always being shunned made him to consult the diviner for answers. Upon advice through divination, Òtúrùpòn Ògúndá was casted, with the *Ifá* chapter. Directed to carry out a sacrifice to remove the stigma. Based on the instruction, further directed to prepare *ìtì-ìgi* (large pieces of wood), *ewúré* (goat), *ìgbín* (snail), *òrí* (shea-butter) and *epo* (palm oil) for the rituals. Sacrificed a goat and its skin was later used as membrane to cover the hollow of the wood. The material made out of the wood used to make the drum of *Ifá* known as *ipèsè* or *àrán*. After then, he was directed to create an unpleasant story among his mates by saying that “a dead goat can speak louder than a live goat”, that is, *Òkú ewúré fòhùn ju ààyè rẹ̀ lọ*. When they met, he made the joke and was not given the chance to speak. Èṣù, who was the chairperson, asked that he explain why he stated that a dead goat speaks louder than a live goat. This made the rest Òrìṣà to dismiss Òrúnmilà for saying that. Thereafter, an agreement was made that he should bring his dead goat while the other Òrìṣà provides a live goat. The contest was slated for *ìtadógún* (a space of seventeen days). On the appointed day, the Òrìṣà brought a live goat. Òrúnmilà also brought the carved wood covered with the goatskin and Èṣù incubated it and spoke through it to make it sound loud and danceable (Oral Interview). The lyric of the drum then goes like this:

<i>Onígedejì</i>	Onígedejì
<i>Jìgedejì</i>	Jìgedejì
<i>Bòrìṣàtító</i>	With quite enormous number of Òrìṣà
<i>Kòrìlùjọ</i>	They could not get drum to dance to (oral Interview).
Onígedejì	Onígedejì
Jìgedejì	Jìgedejì
Bòrìṣàtító	With quite enormous number of Òrìṣà

Kòrìlùjò	They could not get drum to dance to (oral Interview).
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The live goat brought by other Òrìṣà was just bleating and its sound could not be compared with that of the drum of Òrúnmilà. Thus, Òrúnmilà won the contest. This contest between the Òrìṣà has several ritual implications. The ritual thus serves as the harbinger of drumming tradition among the Ifá worshipers and other Òrìṣà today. The Òrìṣà Àyàn: the deity of drum also emerged through this means as the praise invocation (oríkì) of the family of Àyàn established through this medium. The praise name of Àyàn rendered always as thus:

Àyànàgalú	Àyàn the deity
<i>A múnijèunahun</i>	He who makes one to eat the food of the miser
<i>A múnitẹ ònàtí a ò dérí</i>	He who makes one to walk through the strange road
<i>A sọ̀rò ịgị</i>	He who talks through the wood
Òkú ewúré tí ń fòhìn bí èyàn	The dead goat that talks like human being (Oral Interview)

The above myth identifies the philosophy and authority of indigenous drum as discussed in the piece written by Bokor¹³. The authority and the philosophy seen in the light of the canon of invention and arrangement popularised by Cicero, Matsen and Aristotle¹⁴. The canon in a way couched a place for ritual ordering and symbolic elements in the tradition of drum among the Yorùbá people. The act of authority and ethos found in indigenous drum of the people is a classical discussion of Aristotle and Cicero through their concept of PATHOS, which looks more into emotional appeal. Hence, the myth analysed a coincidence in which the incident in the story identified a stirred emotional state of the *orisas* and thus established the function of indigenous drum as a type that can influence the emotional state of any audience by putting them in certain frame of mind.

13 Bokor, “When the Drum Speaks,” 175—76.

14 Bokor, “When the Drum Speaks,” 175—76.

The contest in this story also identifies the effects of spiritual beings in human life in several ways. According to Wotogbe-Weneka¹⁵, “human beings have accepted the existence of spirits as part of human life and seem to believe that without spirits and spiritual entities the world of men will be incomplete.” This attests to the fact that the indigenous drum from the Yoruba cultural background has its origin from the *òrìṣà*. Some of these drums then became important in several celebrations and festivals.

Identifying the Past Memory of Yorùbá Indigenous Drums’ Heritage

Among the Yorùbá people of Southwestern Nigeria, there are different types and classes of drums, designated for different deities, festivals and occasions. They perform multifarious functions and these functions reinforce the beliefs and practices of the people in the past and now. The functions expressed during the time of distress, threat of invasion or war, seasons of planting and harvesting, environmental disturbance (storm and wind), festivals and feasts. The functions also seen during the periods or events of transition of life, which allow its use for social, ritual and aesthetic purposes. Awolalu and Dopamu espouse these practical functions of drums¹⁶ thus:

The West African peoples are found of singing and they have a veritable flood of songs enriching their heritage. Songs are employed in almost every sphere of their lives - in worship, in naming ceremonies, in wedding, in funeral, in wrestling, in cultivating the farm, in working, in going to war, in praising the ruler, in rocking babies to sleep and in many other activities. Such songs usually attended by drumming and dancing.

The above quotation shows that the act of drumming among the Africans plays an important role in their ritual practices as it involves activities that have to do with rites of passage. Drum usage attributed to communication skills that are useful at different occasions and particularly during ritual performances and celebrations. This explained from two basic dimensions, namely: the horizontal and vertical¹⁷. The horizontal dimension explains the ritual acts of prayers usually performed by human beings during worship. The

15 Wellington O. Wotogbe-Weneka, “A Conceptual Analysis of Spirituality,” in W.O. Wotogbe-Weneka (ed.), *Religion and Spirituality* (Port-Harcourt: Emhai Books, 2001), 1—19.

16 J. Omosade Awolalu and P. Adelumo Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion* (Lagos: Macmillan, 2009), 35.

17 Babalola, “Traditional Religion in Africa,” 58.

vertical dimension defines the interactions between human beings and spiritual entities.

Certain drums, played only for particular deities during religious festivals, or special occasions that involve rituals are claimed to possess sacred qualities; hence, they are regarded as sacred drums. Examples of these types are *Ìgbìn* for Ọbàtálá, *Bàtá* for Šàngó and Egúngún, *Àgèrè* for Ọgun and *Ìpèsè* for Ọrunmilá¹⁸. Other Yorùbá drums are the set of *dùndún* family used for both social and religious occasions. This set of drums consists of *iyá ilù* (mother drum or master drum), *agudà*, *gúdúgúdú* or *opón*, *omele-isaájú*, *omele-ìkèyìn*, *gáangan* and *kànnàngó*.

Drums among the Yoruba people are used as a means of communication. The use of drums to communicate during socio-cultural activities and events that involve ritual performances takes a descriptive form. This shows its function as musical instruments in ceremonies like naming, burial and other celebrations, while religious activities where some peculiar drums are used normally show the display of ritual performance. *Agèrè* (hunters drum), *ìgbìn* (Ọbàtálá's drum), *bàtá* (Šàngó's drum) *ìpèsè* and *àrán* (Ifá drum) are most applicable in such ritual performances. In such celebrations in the past, drums were very essential in the collective psychosocial and socio-cultural life of the people, as they dwelt on the pulse and inner feelings of the society. They also feature during life-crisis rituals such as birth, marriage and death. Drums among the Africans, especially the Yorùbá people, form part of the musical instruments, which influence the deities and their subjects to the level of spiritual ecstasy. Drums, therefore, promote certain activities that allow the society to grow in the past.

Yorùbá indigenous Drums and the Challenges of the Present

The phenomenon of Yorùbá Indigenous drumming in the present has witnessed serious changes from its actual ritual performance through secular influences generated by the winds of modernization and secularism. This heritage as it interacts with the challenges of the present shows that its ritual significance is weakened. The context of this discussion therefore shows the backdrop of its cultural usage in line with what we have now. A Yorùbá parlance identified below, underlines this fact:

18 Bade Ajayi, "The Talking Drum," in Nike S. Lawal, Matthew N. O. Sadiku & P. Ade Dopamu (eds.), *Understanding Yoruba Life and Culture* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2004), 575—588.

<i>Lówelówe là á n lulu àgídígbo</i>	Messages of àgídígbo drums are usually conveyed in proverbs
<i>Ọlogbón níí ọ,</i>	Only the knowledgeable dance its rhythm;
<i>òmòràn níí mò ọn...</i>	Only the discerning understands its pulsating nuances ¹⁹ .

The above context from Campbell's view shows the methodology adopted for drum uses, which untrained people cannot do. It also signifies the embodiment of drum as part of African heritage. This heritage, therefore, epitomises African music in which certain inner feelings of the Yorùbá expressed.

The language of the Yorùbá drum attached to the fora of instrumental music that talk²⁰. Drum as instrumental music serves as an ingredient that increases the level of ritual and religious oscillation in festivals done in three ways. First, the drum played as dance music with its rhythm used to guide the feet and body movements of dancers involved in festivals. This is applicable to *arugbá* in Òsun festival. Ogunwale emphasizes an example of this²¹ as follows: "as the 'bàtá' drums resound, people dance excitedly, and the procession leaves from the palace on its two and a quarter mile journey to the grove in River Òsun"

The use of drum in dance music is also common to most votaries of religious worshippers during the occasion of ritual or religious worships in festivals. Secondly, drum played as an accompaniment to a song or a chant with the rhythm of the music serving as a marker for the rhythm of the song in any festival. This marker in *Ọlójó* festival in Ile-Ife as an example identified during the period the votaries and the ritualists exhibit advanced levels of spiritual ecstasy on the return of Òni from the shrine of Ògún to his palace. The high tempo of the occasion controlled by the chant of the drum in its saying as follows:

<i>Ògún O, Ọwọ èrò</i>	Ogun, please do it gently
<i>Ògún O, ọwọ èrò</i>	Ogun, please do it gently (Songs collected at Ọlójó festival of August 2012 in Ile-Ife)

This chant allows the audience to observe a theatrical interpretation of a valuable and fascinating Yorùbá religious ceremony. This chant also, in the

19 Bolaji Campbell, "Oshinowo World of Drummers," in B. Campbell et al, (eds.), *Diversity of Creativity in Nigeria*, (Ile-Ife: Department of Fine Arts, 1993), 117.

20 Oludare Olajubu. *Seminar Paper on Yoruba Drum Poetry*, Department of African Languages and Literature, University of Ife.

21 Titus A. Ogunwale, "Osun Festival," *African Arts*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1971), 61—62.

light of the first point, prescribes the steps of the dances and movements of the celebrants. This delighted dance and movement give the audience the impression of being part of a traditional Yoruba festival.

Thirdly, drums played to talk. This talk passes the messages and brings out a performance of *oriki* (descriptive poetry), rendered in a stereotyped statement in form of proverbs. The *oriki* is a special praise for a deity. Vidal acknowledges that *oriki* forms an important part of the ceremony, since the song signifies the commencement of dancing. Vidal also shows that as the person chanting the *oriki* enters the song portion; he/she joined by drum accompaniment, echoes and dancing from the audience²². Those who have been educated in the language of the drum especially the talking drum could only understand the uses of Yorùbá drum from this particular talking mode. The *Ìyá ilù* (mother drum) used to play the *Oriki* for Ògún, while *Bátá* used to play the *Oriki* for Sàngó. The use, according to Vidal, emphasises the situation through which the language of drums replaces the human voice. These uses mostly exhibited during religious festivals.

The language of the drum seen so far as an important marker of ritual and religious actions in festival and celebration as “music usually accompanies African religious ritual and is used in prayers to request favours or help from the spirit world. The drum unlocks communication with the spirit world”²³ This marker seen from different perspectives as discussed. Since drum holds an important position in the affairs of celebration and festival, it is very clear that its uses in both ways must have a potential significance.

Smith-Shank²⁴ in her analysis of celebration and festivals identified the fact that most celebrations are of a religious nature and called “holy days.” She further emphasized that community celebrations in recent days are either religious or secular in nature²⁵. Therefore, the community platform of the events of the celebration is seen as the site for affirming cultural identity, renewing acquaintance with people and customs, and for other human benefits. The festival or celebration-fair, according to her, is then a way to display the event in different ways. Firstly, to show the basis of humanity; second, it identifies art behaviours; and thirdly, it shows how parts of the community are ritualized and how certain values of a community are publicly reinforced. Riley reiterates these opinions as follows: “Humankind created rituals or monodramas

22 Augustus O. Vidal, *Essays on Yoruba Musicology: History, Theory and Practice*(Ile-Ife: IMEF African Music,2012), 156.

23 Aloysius M.Lugira, *World Religion: African Traditional Religion*(New York: Chelsea House, 2009), 54.

24 D. L. Smith-Shank, “Community Celebrations as Ritual Signifiers,”*Visual Arts Research*, vol. 28, no. 2 (2002), 58.

25 Smith-Shank, “Community Celebrations as Ritual Signifiers,” 58.

that engraved order and acceptance of the circular cycle in the minds of the participants. Such rites are common in every society and they establish and maintain cultural identity.”²⁶

She informs us that the cycles of anticipation and remembering are significant human rituals that give meaning and coherence to life. The cycles of anticipation and remembering are bases through which drum language emphasises its significance and usefulness. As a medium of socialization, it serves as ritual signifier because it influences the behaviour of the participants and the celebrants in festivals. It also creates signs with coded ritual events that necessarily sometimes push the celebrants into a state of frenzy. Its uses in festivals and ceremonial rituals, therefore, provide a “reason for cohesion and cooperation which ultimately provides the habitual structure for the community to respond in the same ways to adversity and threat.” Drum language embraces the attitudes of people towards celebration. It also identifies the act of religious heritage of the people through its making of music, singing, dancing, and recitation seen as vehicles for ritual traditions. These methods that enacted rituals or entertainment are located within “activities that unite participants with their audience and the community as a whole.”²⁷

Yorùbá indigenous drum in this way seen as a memoir of tradition as it makes interaction between people and their environment cordial through a medium of socialization. This medium of socialization has experienced major setbacks because the tradition of drums in which the actualization made possible is gradually being receded by the spillage of modernism. It is noted that most indigenous drums confined to pure religious and ritual usage and more importantly linked to certain deities within Yorùbá tradition, but some of the drums are now desecrated to secular outfit due to their inclusion in profane musical displays. According to Ojuade²⁸, the usage of Bátá drum and its dance are confined by the Yorùbá oral traditions only to religious rituals that are peculiar to Egúngún or Sàngó, but with the influence of civilization, the drum ensembles now form part of the modern musical instruments that are used for entertainment. Johnson specifically emphasised the usage of bata as an indigenous drum with special heritage in its use to wake up the king of Oyó very early in the morning but the usage nowadays has gone beyond this as it used now as back up for secular musical songs.

Apart from this, the ritual aspects of most indigenous drums not given recognition any longer. Those who are to be involved in the usage of the drum among the Yorùbá people must be males who were purely from a particular

26 Smith-Shank, “Community Celebrations as Ritual Signifiers,” 58.

27 Smith-Shank, “Community Celebrations as Ritual Signifiers,” 63.

28 Jejele O. Ojuade, “Change and Continuity in Bata Performance,” *African Notes:- Journal of the Institute of African Studies*, vol. 29, nos.1&2 (2005), 17.

family background and they must pass through series of family rituals before they could be dedicated to the usage. It is observed in the present day, those females can now handle most of these drums on the platform that whatever a man can do, a woman can do better. This is a development from postmodern critics who believe that no restriction be drawn based on gender participation in certain practices. This has seriously contradicted series of indigenous rites attached to most indigenous drums and thus made the rites forgotten as they cannot be performed on females. This then implies that the knowledge of the tradition is no longer transmitted through generations, reflected in the vocations nowadays as many of the native drummers are seriously declining and this, therefore, and makes continuity of the rituals that are involved in indigenous drumming tradition impossible, thus challenging the sacredness of the profession.

The socialization of the new generation of Àyàn lineage done through a specialised form of ritual practices of rite of passage that involves special materials. This rite considered as *orò ilé* (family ritual). The rite among the Àyàn worshippers is a prominent one that links them to their ancestors anywhere in the world. The neglect of this rite could make any of their descendants lag behind in their various endeavours. Due to this, the aspect of professionalism in which the lineage adopted the usage of drum is no longer in practice because development has posed serious challenges to the tenets of mythical theories in the area of the profession.

Yorùbá Indigenous Drumming in the light of Future Sustainable Development

Sustainable development according to Olademo²⁹ is a means through which old heritage is given the chance to survive in the light of a new development. In this way, the upcoming generation allow their mind-set to improve upon the legacy already established by leaders even in the face of modernity. Dean Tipps and Giovanni Reyes³⁰ as a type of social change that has its impact both in transformational and progressive dimension identified by modernization.

Dean Tipps made a clarification that modernization should work with two paradigms. First, it should be definitional inclusiveness through which multi-faceted processes involving changes in all areas of human thought and activity. With this, modernization will be working with point or agenda rather than

29 Oyeronke Olademo, "Alternative Medicine in Africa as a Means of Sustainable Development," In David O.Ogungbile and Oyeronke Olademo (eds.), *Religion, Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa* (Ibadan: The African Association for the Study of Religions, Nigerian Publication Bureau, 2020), 32—33.

30 Giovanni E.Reyes, "Four Main Theories of Development: Modernization, Dependency, World-System and Globalization," *Sincronia*, vol. 04, no. 2(2001), 2—4.

discrimination. Secondly, that the question of unit analysis in which developmental projects are at par at all levels ranging from local communities to national and international level should be mandated.

The implication of this to indigenous way of life is that social change must influence traditional values positively towards developmental scheme and not opprobriously describe indigenous knowledge as obsolete. In addition, the need for development should not misplace its priority when it comes to local program. Spread progressive transformational agenda evenly in line with the traditional values found at the local units.

Ordinarily, it is heartbreaking when considering this in light of the development witnessed by African tradition and heritage today. The worlds of modernity and civilization have caused a severe damage to the uplifting cultural heritage of African people. The tides have also affected Yorùbá indigenous cultural habits and thus caused a serious setback to the continuity in the prestige attached to the habits and their elements. Without mincing words, it is agreed, that the Yorùbá indigenous drumming system is essential to the Yorùbá cultural heritage, but the transmission and the development of this heritage is seriously lagging behind in the social world. This shows that indigenous drums as tangible as they are within the Yorùbá cultural heritage have not socially lived to the test of time because they lack continuity in their generational legacy.

With this view and the acknowledgements of Dean's position, one could easily reappraise the tenets of this drumming heritage to give room for adequate future sustainable development. In another dimension, the position of Ali Mazrui can be a way out for this sustainability. Ali Mazrui³¹ identifies a form of cultural polarities among African people. This theory according to him highlighted new contact between modernity and tradition. He opines that the contact seen as a philosophy that makes continuity and change possible. The scholar believes that the ancient ideas if fully incorporated can engender a new dawn. Mazrui therefore identifies ancientization as a means or model of radical transformation. He notes that ancientization most time has been a way through which many African countries decolonized themselves from the border of western power. In the orbit of African cultural polarity, the face of cultural dualism configured both horizontally and vertically. Horizontal pluralism displays how indigenous cultures coexist within the same system with the features of local spirit and indigenous character while vertical cultural pluralism on its own revolves around western civilization with the feature of an elite culture. It also shows that both could as well affect each other with evidence of

31 Ali A. Mazrui, "Dual Zimbabwe: Toward Averting Political Schizophrenia," *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, vol. 11, no. 3/4 (1981), 5—12.

benefits. The attention Mazrui created here is that the African life as of today are influenced and motivated by two different cultures *visa-a vise* the ancient life and the western/modern life. He thus showed that black Africans operate within two systems of culture classified as an indigenous non-formal system and the western-based formalized structure both simultaneously. The intent of Mazrui in African cultural dualism here shows that there could be inauguration of fundamental changes in African lifestyle through training, socialization and acculturation if allowed to interplay with western development. It is, therefore, necessary to say that indigenous drumming can be of actual necessity if its ancient tradition opened up for learning to help actualize modern goals. With the essence of training, socialization and acculturation identifies by Mazrui, the following important models considered:

The repositioning of Yorùbá oral tradition in the language learning skills. The major reason given for this is the inadequacy of record keeping through which the new generation can learn. Comparing record keeping of oral history in Africa to that of western world shows that Africans are seriously lagging behind. This established with the percentage of indigenous language learning skills of the younger generation. The learning skills are only conventional and not found to be compelling as the language learning techniques adopted in the western world where indigenous languages are mandatory for national development. Since the indigenous language is a prerequisite for oral teaching, it shows that oral tradition will have no place among the Yorùbá younger generation because of its neglect. Without the knowledge of oral tradition drum language cannot be mastered; this then means that when the aging generations that are custodians of tradition cease to exist, the issue of continuity in the tradition of Yorùbá indigenous drum will suffer a serious setback. There is then the need for an urgent renaissance of Yorùbá oral tradition. This is a part in the level of acculturation that must be explored.

Incorporating ancient knowledge in the acts of socialization and learning. Onidare³² quoting Bernstein emphasised socialization as the process whereby a child acquires a specific cultural identity. In the past, indigenous drum was a special symbol of socialization because it serves as a medium of knowledge transmission especially in the area of cultural habits. However, nowadays, hip pop, high-life music and other western music dictate how the Yorùbá younger generation socialize among themselves. This is a negation to the idea of the ancient nation of cultural identity. It is supposed to be the platform of identification for the Yorùbá younger generation. Many of the Yorùbá children cannot identify types of indigenous drum talk less of decoding its language. This

32 O. Onidare, "Society and the Acquisition of Communicative Competence" *Odu: A Journal of West African Studies*, no. 28 (1985), 7

could be addressed by enforcing the new generation of Yorùbá drummers to learn from elders, as this will help in sustaining the legacy of drumming. The legacy learnt must also involve the ancient knowledge of rituals and religious tradition involved in the act of the profession.

Apart from having oral education as a medium of knowledge transmission, western education will also be required and encouraged in the actualization of the set goals. The vantage point of this discussion is from my own experience. My father was an indigenous drummer but was not educated and this was unable to give him the opportunity to influence the profession with formal education. This thought that he had in mind later achieved through me because of my formal educational background. I was able to document most of his thoughts and actions by choosing that field as my area of research during my doctoral training. During this programme, I placed emphasis on the varieties and usage of indigenous drums with reference to Yorùbá traditions. I was able to give a robust discussion on the phenomena of drumming due to my indigenous background coupled with my training. This has helped in the documentation of oral facts that remain with my father.

It is very important to reiterate the importance of establishing *Àyàn Àgalú* concert, seminar and symposium from time to time. This step is important because it will bring a global interaction in the field of the profession and it will afford the profession and the practitioner the opportunity to blend with the modern changes that can help in their development.

Conclusion

Theoretically, phenomenological approach used in this study identifies a viable conceptual scheme towards the systematic literary reconstruction of Yorùbá indigenous drumming. The approach at the same time allows ritual, symbols and myth in the heritage to be seen as an important ancient identity that can place indigenous Yorùbá drumming in the corridor of transcendence religious expression like that of the Bible and the Qur'an. This, at the same time, could improve mythical historical foundation connected to the heritage.

In managing the indigenous drumming system, the discussion so far allows one to wonder if most Yorùbá indigenous drumming heritage, as useful as they are, will not go into extinction if not well protected. This is because some people may have the opinion that these traditions are ancient and no longer relevant. However, by integrating it with new ideas, it may be useful in contemporary society. National policies through school curriculum could be adopted to support the development of the heritage. If carefully done, then, the hope of good management may rise for the survival of this heritage.

It is worthy of note that exploring cultural heritages like indigenous Yorùbá drum offers a robust variety of benefits especially in the area of socialization through which indigenous knowledge could be passed. The act of learning attached to the usage of the drum fortifies the entrenchment of certain elements like social values, beliefs, religious doctrines and customs, cannot be done with modern platforms because they are limited by their oral and archival documentation. These elements provide an automatic sense of unity and belonging among the people that also allow generations to be more equipped. It is then necessary to see that the preservation of the heritage done with utmost sincerity and diligence. Never the less, the study underlined that gender roles are strongly marked among the Yorùbá people due to the recognition given to the image of a male drummer as against a female counterpart. This in a way poses a gender conflict that could be an idea for future research agenda. There is as well the need to look at the transformation that is taking place in the usage of ensembles of Yorùbá drumming kits with that of modern drumming system in the church and other organization today. This could be a pointer to interaction, between the old and the new system of tradition under discussion that require an assessment.

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